Queensland Closing the Gap Report: 2007/08
Indicators and Initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
The Closing the Gap Report: 2007/08 provides indicators and initiatives for all Queenslanders who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The Queensland Government acknowledges that these are two distinct cultures. The report uses the terms ‘Indigenous’ as well as ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’. When the report refers to ‘Indigenous’ Queenslanders or peoples, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are being referred to, in the understanding that they are not an homogenous group.

Contacts and Feedback

This report was produced by the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Department of Communities, with the assistance of the Office of Economic and Statistical Research, Queensland Treasury, and in liaison with the Indigenous Government Coordination Office, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and other Queensland Government agencies.

Copies of the report are available at www.atsip.qld.gov.au or can be obtained by contacting the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships by email at max.parsons@communities.qld.gov.au or by telephoning (07) 3224 8199.

Your feedback is welcome on this report and can be provided in writing to max.parsons@communities.qld.gov.au or by telephoning (07) 3224 8199.
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Foreword

The Queensland Government is committed to closing the gap between the life outcomes and opportunities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their non-Indigenous Queensland counterparts.

Current data shows a clear disparity between Indigenous communities and the wider community in health, education, employment, and socio-economic development.

To close the gap and achieve the results that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people deserve, the Council of Australian Governments has agreed on the establishment of six priorities and targeted goals.

Long-term vision and strong leadership is needed to achieve these priorities and goals.

A combined effort from all levels of government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, the private sector and wider community is also needed to achieve these priorities and goals.

There are no easy solutions to the problems that have become entrenched over generations. I accept that government policies and practices of the past have contributed to the current situation.

The Bligh Government is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to find new ways and new solutions. The welfare reform trial in the communities of Aurukun, Hope Vale, Mossman Gorge and Coen is an example of this willingness to work in partnership to find new ways.

As a state we must acknowledge and build on the many achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and the contribution they are making to Towards Q2 - Tomorrow’s Queensland.

It is only by working together toward a common set of goals with clear targets that we can measure our progress and move forward to realise the shared aspirations of all Queenslanders – for a strong, smart, green, healthy and fair Queensland.

The Honourable Lindy Nelson-Carr
Minister for Communities
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth

In late 2007 the Queensland Government committed to a concerted national Indigenous reform agenda through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) centred around six national closing the gap targets:

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

This first Closing the Gap Report aligns Queensland’s reporting on improving Indigenous outcomes to the COAG strategic agenda, and continues our commitment to robust performance management and transparent reporting. The 2007/08 Report builds on the Partnerships Queensland Baseline Report 2006 and associated policy and performance frameworks, as well as the recent Quarterly Reports on indicators and initiatives for Queensland’s discrete Indigenous communities.

This 2007/08 Report provides a state-wide snapshot with the latest available and reliable point-in-time data, aligned with directions identified by the COAG Working Group on Indigenous Reform. A more comprehensive five yearly report on trends will be produced in 2012/13 using 2011 Census data.

The data in this 2007/08 Report demonstrates again the size and scope of the gap in life outcomes and opportunities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders experience significantly poorer outcomes than non-Indigenous Queenslanders on all indicators, demonstrated by:

- a gap of 17.7 years in life expectancy for men, and a 19.4 year gap for women, compared with all Australian men and women respectively
- infant and childhood mortality rates twice as high for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders
- a gap of 24 percentage points in Year 12 attainment – 36.1 per cent of all Indigenous students who attained Year 12 were not awarded an Overall Position (OP) or vocational qualification, compared with 12.1 per cent of non-Indigenous students
- a gap of 28.4 percentage points in Year 7 numeracy benchmarks – 49 per cent of Indigenous students achieving the benchmarks compared with 77.4 per cent for all Year 7 students
- a difference of 19 percentage points in unemployment.

The 2007/08 Report also details the gaps in areas such as overcrowded housing, juvenile detention, and child protection.

Significantly, the 2007/08 Report demonstrates that the gap across almost all indicators is greatest for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders living in remote communities, especially the discrete communities.

The Queensland Government is committed to concerted and sustained efforts to close these gaps. The strategic directions and initiatives outlined in the 2007/08 Report indicate the priorities for our actions at national, state, regional and local levels.

At a national level, during 2008 Queensland has pursued new mainstream national agreements in relation to health, education, housing and disability services to drive improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as Indigenous-specific National Partnership Agreements (NPA).
Executive Summary

In July 2008, COAG agreed to a $564 million NPA for Indigenous Early Childhood Development. Work has progressed on further NPAs for:

- remote Indigenous Housing
- Indigenous Health
- remote Service Delivery
- Indigenous Economic Participation, and
- Indigenous Family and Community Safety.

Queensland will also contribute to the development of a more comprehensive National Strategy for achieving the six COAG Closing the Gap targets.

The Government’s efforts have also been directed at the state, regional and local level. In September 2008, the Government’s vision and plan for the future – Toward Q2: Tomorrow’s Queensland (Q2) was released. Q2 outlines five ambitions for Queensland in 2020 – to be Strong, Green, Smart, Healthy and Fair – with ten related targets. These are ambitions for all Queenslanders and all regions. The Government’s commitments to closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders also serve the Q2 ambitions and targets.

The Queensland Closing the Gap Report: 2007/08 outlines significant initiatives with a view to closing the gap such as:

- development of integrated Early Years Centres, where parents can access a variety of services, including child care, early childhood education, child health services and various family support services, and the establishment of the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care which will plan for 240 new or enhanced kindergartens state-wide and drive other early childhood education and care initiatives
- development of a comprehensive new Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy
- continued implementation of the Positive Dreaming, Solid Futures – the Indigenous Employment and Training Strategy 2008-2011, aimed at improving outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders in the area of vocational education and training
- ongoing implementation of Alcohol Reform and the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, including legislative changes, the new Family Responsibilities Commission, and the investment of over $200 million in State and Commonwealth funds into new or enhanced services, in order to lessen the extent of alcohol and substance abuse, welfare dependency and truancy.

The Queensland Government acknowledges that it cannot close the gap by itself. The Government will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and groups, other levels of government, community and representative groups, non-government organisations, the business/corporate sector and the wider Queensland community in an effort to close the gap.

To this end, initiatives to strengthen engagement and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and other stakeholders include:

- establishment of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council to provide the Government with advice on strategies to close the gap
- establishment of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation, a new trust with start up capital of at least $25.8 million, to focus on supporting educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- development of a new 2009-11 Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan with a key focus on mobilising the efforts of Queensland Government agencies working in collaboration with other organisations and sectors.

Future Queensland Closing the Gap Reports will be informed by feedback on this initial report and the input of the soon to be established Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council. Enhancements in data at national, state and local levels, such as the results from the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, will also be included. Further work is also underway to improve the collection and sharing of Indigenous knowledge to better inform both government policy and reporting on performance and progress.
Part A – Introduction

- Queensland’s Commitment to Closing the Gap
- The Gap in Queensland Against National Targets
- Queensland’s Plan, Toward Q2: Tomorrow’s Queensland
- Relationship with the Quarterly Reports on Key Indicators in Queensland's Discrete Indigenous Communities
Queensland’s Commitment to Closing the Gap

In 2005, the Queensland Government released Partnerships Queensland, an Indigenous policy and performance framework with the vision that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have their cultures affirmed, heritage sustained and the same prospects for health, prosperity and quality of life as other Queenslanders.

In late 2007, the Queensland Government committed to a concerted national Indigenous reform agenda through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), centred around six national closing the gap targets:

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

At a national level, during 2008 Queensland has pursued new mainstream national agreements and partnerships in relation to health, education, housing and disability services to deliver improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In July 2008, COAG agreed to a $564 million National Partnership Agreement (NPA) for Indigenous Early Childhood Development. Work has progressed on further NPAs for:

- remote Indigenous Housing
- Indigenous Health
- remote Service Delivery
- Indigenous Economic Participation and
- Indigenous Family and Community Safety.

Queensland is contributing to a National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) to ‘frame the task of Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage’. It is anticipated that the NIRA will evolve over time to reflect changed or new agreements.

Queensland is also contributing to new Service Delivery Principles for Programs and Services for Indigenous Australians, and National Investment Principles in Remote Locations. These will guide our future policy and program work at all levels.

Queensland will also contribute to the development of a more comprehensive National Strategy for achieving the six COAG Closing the Gap targets.

This 2007/08 Report provides a state-wide snapshot with the latest data available and reliable point-in-time data for Queensland, aligned with the COAG targets and the following ‘building blocks’, or strategic areas for action, identified by the COAG Working Group on Indigenous Reform:

- Early Child Development
- Education and Training
- Healthy Lives
- Economic Participation
- Home Environment
- Safe and Supportive Communities
- Governance and Leadership
- Land and Culture.
This is a recognition that effort will be required across a range of areas and improvement in one area relies on improvements in other areas.

As work proceeds on the National Strategy, next year’s report may not look exactly the same. In time, more consistent reporting at national, state, regional and local levels will be possible.

The chapters in Part B of this Report are titled to reflect the ‘building blocks’ or strategic areas for action. Each chapter summarises the current evidence relating to the extent of the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders, matching the COAG targets and relevant Toward Q2: Tomorrow’s Queensland ambitions and targets, and outlining strategic directions and current major initiatives and actions to close the gap.

Not all strategic areas for action – such as Governance and Leadership – have a national target, agreed indicators or readily available data as this stage. They are reported on because of their contribution to other areas. For example, good governance is essential for effective service planning and delivery.


Future Queensland Closing the Gap Reports will be informed by feedback on this initial report, the input of the soon to be established Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council, and improvements in data at national, state and local levels. Work is also underway to improve the collection and sharing of Indigenous knowledge to better inform both government policy and reporting on performance and progress.
There is a significant gap between the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people across Australia. Based on currently available data, the status of Indigenous Queenslanders in relation to the national targets is as follows.

**Target 1**

**Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator – Life Expectancy</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Males (Qld)</td>
<td>58.9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Australian Males</td>
<td>76.6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Females (Qld)</td>
<td>62.6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Australian Females</td>
<td>82.0 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Target 2**

**Halve the gap in mortality rates for Queensland Indigenous children under five within a decade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator – Childhood Mortality (children who have died before reaching 5 years old)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Childhood Mortality (2004-2006)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>2.5 per 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
<td>1.2 per 1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Registered deaths, Australian Bureau of Statistics; Registered live births, Registrar-General, Queensland. Data analysis undertaken by Queensland Health.

**Target 3**

**Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders within a decade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator – Employment Status</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate (2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2006 (unpublished data)
(a) Community Development Employment Projects participants are included in the unemployment rate.

**Target 4**

**Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for Queensland Indigenous children within a decade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator – Years 3 and 7 Reading, Writing, Numeracy (percentage of students meeting the standard)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading (2007)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Year 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>89.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>95.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Years 3, 5 and 7 data only currently available. Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 reading, writing, and numeracy results will in future be available through the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) which commenced in 2008.
Target 5

Ensure all Queensland Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years

Indicator – Preparatory Year Enrolments (as a proportion of the estimated five year old population cohort)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non-Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory Education Enrolments of 5 Year Olds</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Reliable data not available for four year olds. Current data relates only to five year olds.
Source: Department of Education, Training and the Arts.

Target 6

Halve the gap for Queensland Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

Indicator – Year 12 Attainment or Equivalent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 12 Attainment</th>
<th>OP eligible, no VET</th>
<th>OP eligible with VET</th>
<th>OP ineligible with VET</th>
<th>OP ineligible, no VET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Indigenous young people</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous young people</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note OP refers to ‘overall position’
VET refers to a ‘Vocational Education Training’ qualification
Source: Queensland Studies Authority.

General demographic information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders is in Part C of this Report.
In September 2008, the Government’s vision and plan for the future – Toward Q2: Tomorrow’s Queensland (Q2) was released. Q2 outlines five ambitions for Queensland in 2020 – to be Strong, Green, Smart, Healthy and Fair – with ten related targets. These ambitions and targets are for all Queenslanders, and all regions of the State, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders living in urban, regional, rural or remote areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2 Ambition</th>
<th>Q2 Target</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong</strong></td>
<td>• Queensland is Australia’s strongest economy, with infrastructure that anticipates growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a diverse economy powered by bright ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smart</strong></td>
<td>• All children will have access to a quality early childhood education so they are ready for school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering world-class education and training</td>
<td>• Three out of four Queenslanders will hold trade, training or tertiary qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healthy</strong></td>
<td>• Cut by one-third obesity, smoking, heavy drinking and unsafe sun exposure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Queenslanders Australia’s healthiest people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td>• Halve the proportion of Queensland children living in households without a working parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting safe and caring communities</td>
<td>• Increase by 50 per cent the proportion of Queenslanders involved in their communities as volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green</strong></td>
<td>• Cut by one-third Queenslanders’ carbon footprint with reduced car and electricity use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting our lifestyle and environment</td>
<td>• Protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q2 does not have an Indigenous-specific target, rather, the Government’s strategies to realise the Q2 ambitions and targets will have regard for outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The Government’s commitments to ‘closing the gap’ serve the broader Q2 ambitions and targets. The following table shows the links between Q2 and Closing the Gap.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closing the Gap (COAG) Targets</th>
<th>Areas for action to achieve COAG Targets and Q2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade</td>
<td>Early Child Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years</td>
<td>Home Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for Indigenous children within a decade</td>
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<td>Halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020</td>
<td>Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation</td>
<td>Healthy Lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade</td>
<td>Safe and Supportive Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade</td>
<td>Governance and Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Land and Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relationship with the Quarterly Reports on Key Indicators in Queensland's Discrete Indigenous Communities

The Quarterly Reports provide data related to the health and wellbeing, against a select number of indicators, for the discrete Aboriginal and mainland Torres Strait Islander communities (the discrete communities¹) plus the two other Cape York Welfare Reform communities of Coen and Mossman Gorge. These reports focus on indicators directly relevant to the Government’s alcohol and welfare reform initiatives. A summary of the three Quarterly Reports produced to date (Jan-March 08; April-June 08; July–Sept 08) appears below.

Initially, quarterly reporting occurred against four key indicators for health and wellbeing in Indigenous communities: violence against people, hospital admissions due to assault, court appearances for breaches of alcohol restrictions, and school attendance. In the latter two quarters, rates of substantiated child protection notifications and finalised child protection orders have also been reported.

The Queensland Closing the Gap Reports will be annual and report on how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are faring across the whole of the State, against indicators emerging as nationally agreed measures. Part B presents data, where possible, for major cities, inner regional, outer regional and remote communities, as well as for the discrete communities and the Torres (Strait) Region.

The data presented in the Quarterly Reports are not directly comparable with the data presented in Part B because of different reported time periods, data extraction methods and different statistical methodologies between the reports. The Queensland Government will continue to work with the Australian Government to align and improve data and reporting at national, state and local levels.

The information summarised below provides a broad picture of the data for each of the six indicators across this first year of reporting. While this information cannot be construed as establishing definite trends, it does give a sense of the movement throughout the reporting period and areas of positive or poor results. It is noted that most of these communities have small populations and accordingly a small number of incidents can impact significantly on reported rates per 1,000.

### Hospital admissions due to assault

The overall community rate of hospital admissions for assault for the twelve months to September 2008 was 22.8 per 1,000 persons. By comparison, the rate for the second report was 23.7 per 1,000 persons for discrete Indigenous communities (2006/07). It should be noted that this did not include data for Coen and Mossman Gorge.

Rates of hospitalisation for assault for people from the communities for the twelve months to September 2008 ranged from 1.7 per 1,000 persons for Lockhart River to 133.8 per 1,000 persons for Mossman Gorge (some of these assaults may have occurred outside the community). Rates of hospitalisation were above the overall community rate of 22.8 per 1,000 persons for people from Cherbourg, Palm Island, Mossman Gorge, Mornington Island and Woorabinda.

Comparing rates from the most recent 12 months with rates from the 2006/07 year shows that hospitalisations for assault have fallen markedly for Doomadgee, Lockhart River, Northern Peninsula Area, and Woorabinda (27.1, 23.1, 9.7, and 59.3 per 1,000 persons respectively in 2006/07, compared with 13.8, 1.7, 2.7 and 39.2 per 1,000 persons). In contrast, the hospitalisation rate for Palm Island has increased compared with 2006/07 (up from 24.5 to 36.2 per 1,000 persons).

The rate for the whole of Queensland for 2006/07 was 1.3 per 1,000 persons.

### Court appearances for breaches of alcohol restrictions

The overall rate of persons convicted for breaches of alcohol carriage restrictions was 47.0 per 1,000 persons (aged 10 years and over) for the twelve months to September 2008. Comparisons cannot be drawn with previous rates, which were per 1,000 persons including those aged under 10 years.

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¹ These communities encompass the 19 discrete Indigenous communities of Aurukun, Bamaga, Cherbourg, Doomadgee, Hope Vale, Injinoo, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mornington Island, Mapoon, Napranum, New Mapoon, Palm Island, Pormpuraaw, Seisla, Umagico, Woorabinda, Wujal Wujal, and Yarrabah.
The rates of persons convicted for breaching alcohol carriage restrictions (aged 10 years and over) for the twelve months to September 2008 ranged from 116.8 per 1,000 persons at Hope Vale to no people convicted in Mapoon.

Communities with rates well below the overall community rate included the Northern Peninsula Area (4.8 per 1,000 persons aged 10 years and over) and Palm Island (4.2 per 1,000 persons aged 10 years and over – this is an artificially low rate because of a current legal challenge over Alcohol Management Plans). Communities with rates well above the overall rate included Aurukun, Hope Vale, Mornington Island and Yarrabah.

**Reported offences against the person**

The rate of reported offences against the person overall across the communities of interest was 83.6 per 1,000 persons for the twelve months to September 2008. This was similar to the 86.8 per 1,000 persons reported for 2006/07 and 84.4 per 1,000 persons from June 2007 to May 2008. The final reporting period included data from Mossman Gorge and Coen, which were not included in the earlier reporting periods.

Rates for the twelve months to September 2008 ranged from 146.1 per 1,000 persons in Coen to 34.7 per 1,000 persons for Mapoon. Rates in Aurukun, Coen, Lockhart River, Mornington Island, Mossman Gorge, and Palm Island were all significantly higher than the overall community rate of 83.6 per 1,000. While rates in Mossman Gorge appear to be highest, they are subject to a high level of variability.

Comparing rates from the most recent 12 months with rates from the 2006/07 year shows that rates of offences against the person have fallen markedly in Doomadgee, Pormpuraaw and Woorabinda. In contrast, the offence rate on Palm Island has increased compared with the rate for 2006/07.

The rate for Queensland for 2007/08 was 7.4 per 1,000 persons.

**Substantiated child protection notifications for child safety**

The overall rate of substantiated child protection notifications across the communities of interest was 40.1 per 1,000 children for the twelve months to September 2008. This was not significantly higher than the rate reported for the twelve months to April 2008, which was 36.3 per 1,000 children, however, this figure did not include data from Mossman Gorge and Coen.

Communities with rates significantly above the overall community rate in the twelve months to September 2008 were Palm Island and Woorabinda. Rates ranged from 0 in Mossman Gorge to 62.8 per 1,000 children on Palm Island.

There was a significant decrease in the rate of substantiated child protection notifications for Cherbourg (98.3 per 1,000 children in the twelve months to April 2008 compared with 52.4 in the twelve months to September 2008).

The rate for Queensland for 2007/08 was 7.2 per 1,000 children.

**Finalised child protection orders**

The overall rate of children subject to finalised child protection orders across the communities of interest was 49.6 per 1,000 children as at September 2008. The rate reported at April 2008 was 41.8 per 1,000 children, but did not include data from Mossman Gorge and Coen.

As at September 2008, rates ranged up to 88.6 per 1,000 children for Mornington Island. Rates of finalised child protection orders for Yarrabah and Northern Peninsula Area were well below the overall rate for the communities of interest. Rates for Hope Vale and Mornington Island were well above the overall rate.

The rate for Queensland for 2007/08 was 6.8 per 1,000 children.
Relationship with the Quarterly Reports on Key Indicators in Queensland's Discrete Indigenous Communities

School attendance

In most communities, average student attendance rates in term three were lower than those in term one (which follows the usual pattern for attendance), with the exception of Hope Vale, with 83.3 per cent in term three – following 80.6 per cent in term one and 87.6 per cent in term two.

In term three 2008, average student attendance rates for students enrolled in a state school in the communities of interest ranged from 44.5 per cent at Aurukun to 87.4 per cent at Coen.

The sharpest decrease was from 83.8 per cent to 65.5 per cent at Lockhart River. Average attendance rates were most stable in Aurukun (44.5% in term three) and Woorabinda (76.9% in term three).

By way of comparison, the average student attendance rate for all Queensland state schools was 91.1 per cent in semester one 2008, which was slightly higher than the 89.0 per cent recorded for semester two 2007.
Part B – Strategic Areas for Action

- Early Child Development
- Education and Training
- Healthy Lives
- Economic Participation
- Home Environment
- Safe and Supportive Communities
- Governance and Leadership
- Land and Culture
Early Child Development

The physical, mental, emotional and social nurturing, support and opportunities that children receive in the early childhood years are crucial to their development and their life-long health, education, economic and social prospects.

Overview

Improving child and maternal health care, supporting good parenting, and strengthening early childhood education and care for Indigenous children, especially in the discrete communities, are priorities of the Queensland Government.

The measures which will be used to monitor progress, as well as the strategies which will best address the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children, are presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COAG TARGETS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for Indigenous children within a decade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2 TARGETS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All children will have access to a quality early childhood education so they are ready for school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRESS MEASURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Perinatal mortality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Childhood mortality (0-4 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low birthweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participation in early childhood education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Improve sexual and reproductive health, especially of young women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve access to health services for Indigenous children and mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure greater access to early childhood education services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage family participation in early learning health and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase access to universal early childhood health and development services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure all services are delivered in an integrated, culturally competent way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Evidence

Perinatal mortality (deaths)

Perinatal deaths include stillbirths and deaths of babies within 28 days after birth. Perinatal deaths are most likely to be due to factors arising during pregnancy and childbirth. The rate of perinatal mortality reflects the health status of the population as well as the accessibility of quality health care.

Over the three year period 2004 to 2006:

- the perinatal death rate of babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women was almost twice that of babies born to non-Indigenous women (18.9 per 1,000 births compared with 9.9 per 1,000 births): see Figure 1.1
- there were 165 perinatal deaths of babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Queensland
- there were no significant differences across remoteness areas.

Source: Queensland Perinatal Data Collection, Queensland Health.

Note: The term ‘Discrete communities’ in these graphs refer to the 19 Aboriginal and mainland Torres Strait Islander communities, namely: Aurukun, Bamaga, Cherbourg, Doomadgee, Hope Vale, Injinoo, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Mornington Island, New Mapoon, Napranum, Palm Island, Pompuraaw, Seisia, Umagico, Wujal Wujal, Woorabinda, and Yarrabah. The term does not include the Torres Strait communities. The Torres Region refers to the communities within the Torres Strait Regional Council, and the Torres Shire.

Fig 1.1 Perinatal mortality, rate per 1,000 births, Queensland, 2004 to 2006

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3 It should be noted that these rates are based on small numbers of deaths and should be used with caution.
Low birthweight

Low birthweight is defined as babies weighing less than 2,500 grams at birth. Children with low birthweight are more likely to have problems early in life, or even die in infancy. Low birthweight can also have long-term influences on the development of chronic diseases in adulthood, including diabetes and heart disease. If Indigenous babies had the same birthweight and gestational age as non-Indigenous babies, it is possible that the perinatal mortality gap would be reduced by 87 per cent.

Over the two years from July 2005 to June 2007:

- babies of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were more than twice as likely to have a low birthweight as babies born to non-Indigenous women (99.7 per 1,000 births compared with 47.0 per 1,000 births): see Figure 1.2

- there were 577 babies with low birthweight born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women residing in Queensland

- babies born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in the Torres region were least likely to be of low birthweight (59.1 per 1,000 births). However, this may be a result of obesity and diabetes which can lead to heavier, but not healthier, babies.

![Low birthweight, rate per 1,000 live singleton births, Queensland, 2005/06 to 2006/07](image-url)

Source: Queensland Perinatal Data Collection, Queensland Health.

Note 'Singleton births' do not include multiple births.


6 Regional rates are based on small numbers of births and should be used with caution.

Childhood mortality

Improving the health of Australia’s children has significant implications for the positive social and economic wellbeing of individual families, communities and the country as a whole.

Over the three years 2004 to 2006, Indigenous children were 2.1 times more likely to die before reaching the age of five than non-Indigenous children (2.5 per 1,000 compared with 1.2 per 1,000): see Figure 1.3. It is worth noting that 80 per cent of these deaths occurred before the age of one year for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and that the causes of mortality in infants are quite different from those in children aged one to four years.

Hospital separation data for 2005/06 to 2006/07 indicate that children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent were more at risk of being hospitalised than non-Indigenous children, particularly for preventable conditions, including those impacted by overcrowding. For example, children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent were hospitalised at twice the rate of non-Indigenous children for acute respiratory conditions and 3.6 times for disease of the skin and subcutaneous tissues.

Note: Discrete Indigenous communities and Torres Strait region – numbers too small to report. Under-identification is likely to have impacted on the results reported, particularly for the remoteness regions.
Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

**Improved health services for children and mothers**

Maternal and child health services are essential to all aspects of the growth and healthy development of children. In Queensland, these are provided through both general and Indigenous-specific facilities and programs.

Key strategies to improve health services for Indigenous children and mothers in Queensland include:

- the Queensland Government’s $10 billion Health Action Plan and the Advancing Health Action Plan
- the $564 million National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Indigenous Early Childhood Development agreed in July 2008 by COAG, which includes $77 million for Queensland for child and maternal and related health services
- development of a proposed NPA on Indigenous Health
- The Queensland Government’s 2006 Best Start initiative which included an extra $11.5 million for Indigenous parenting programs
- the Queensland Government’s new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy, to be released in 2009, will also prioritise Indigenous child and maternal health services.

Specific initiatives being implemented by the Queensland Government include:

- funding Apunipima Cape York Health Council in 2008/09 to deliver improved maternal and child health services in the Cape York communities of Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Pormpuraaw and Napranum. This will build on existing services and capacity in the region, including through community involvement, and support a universal and targeted primary health care model. Core local services will be enhanced through services such as: community based Chalali roles (‘women supporting women’), parent carers, Indigenous Maternal and Child Health Workers and provision of Baby Baskets (containing pamphlets, baby slings and pharmaceutical products) on attendance at antenatal and post natal services. This scheme will be expanded to other Indigenous communities later in 2009
- $4.4 million over three years allocated to target the high rates of ear disease amongst Indigenous children through the Deadly Ears Program. This initiative includes systematic screening and surveillance of Indigenous children up to 14 years of age and training for health workers to undertake screening and health promotion activities
- Health checks of young Indigenous children conducted to catch early indications of preventable diseases including in discrete communities such as Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge
- support, training, resources and scholarships to develop the skills and expertise of child health workers are also being provided to strengthen the Indigenous child health workforce.
Early Childhood Education

The Evidence

As at August 2007, 6.6 per cent of the children enrolled in prep-Year were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander five year olds in the population in 2007 was estimated to be similar (7.0%).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander five year olds in major cities were less likely to be enrolled in prep-Year than their non-Indigenous peers (53% compared with 62%): see Figure 1.4. To some extent these differences may be because Indigenous people in major cities are relatively less likely to identify as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

Across the remote areas, between 53 per cent and 58 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander five year olds were enrolled in prep-Year in 2007: see Figure 1.4.

Participation in the prep-Year is relatively high in the discrete communities, with just under 90 per cent of all five year olds enrolled in 2008.8

Fig 1.4 Proportion of 5 year old children enrolled full-time in prep-year, August 2007

![Proportion of 5 year old children enrolled full-time in prep-year, August 2007](image)

Note: Includes both state and non-state schools, geo-coded by the location of the school facility. 2007 was a half-cohort year, and as such, the numbers are likely to be lower than those reported in subsequent years. 2007 is the latest available data for all Queensland students (inclusive of the non-state sector).

8 Note that this estimate is subject to variation due to the level of uncertainty in the denominator populations in remote and very remote zones (the latest available population estimates for each community are based on 2007 data).
Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

Greater access to early childhood education services

The critical role that quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) can play in providing children with the best possible start is widely recognised. High quality early childhood education facilitates the development of the cognitive, physical, emotional, social and language skills required for positive life outcomes.

Early childhood education options in Queensland encompass a broad range of alternatives including formal childcare, kindergarten, preschool and preparatory year. Compulsory education for Queensland children does not commence until children are at least 5½ years old and can commence year one of primary school. Prior to compulsory schooling, Queensland schools offer a preparatory (prep) year – a fulltime play-based program for children who are 4½ to 5½ years old. Following a trial period, prep-Year was introduced in 2007 on a ‘half cohort’ basis. The first ‘full cohort’ year for prep-Year is 2008.

Queensland has, relative to other jurisdictions, lower levels of participation by children in early childhood education and care. In contrast, Queensland has high levels of access to early childhood education in discrete communities. Due to the Government’s Bound for Success initiative implemented since 2007, children have access to pre-Prep programs across 35 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Queensland Government is committed to increasing the participation of Indigenous children across Queensland in high-quality, accessible and affordable integrated early childhood education and care services.

In 2006, the Queensland Government committed $32 million over four years to develop integrated Early Years Centres where parents can access early education services, child care, child health services, parenting programs and other family support all at one location. Two centres are now operating with planning underway for further centres.

The $564 million National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development agreed in July 2008 by COAG, will see an extra $75 million invested in this area in Queensland by the Australian and Queensland Governments.

Nationally, $126.6 million over four years has been committed for early childhood workforce strategies with a strong focus on high need areas and the establishment of at least 50 integrated children and family centres in identified areas for vulnerable children and families.

The Queensland Government has allocated funding of $21.3 million over four years for Child and Family Support Centres at Pormpuraaw, Mackay, Aurukun and Rockhampton and there are plans for nine new integrated Indigenous Child and Family Centres, with four in urban areas and five in rural and remote locations, where there is a high proportion of Indigenous children aged 0 – 5 years. These centres will incorporate services for early learning and development, teenage sexual health and pre-pregnancy support, and antenatal, child and maternal health.

The Queensland Government has also recently established the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care to implement the up to $300 million Q2 commitment to roll out 240 new and expanded kindergartens across the State. This initiative will build on the existing 347 State Government funded kindergartens and has expanded coverage to include areas where approximately 12,000 children are not currently accessing a centre-based early childhood education and care service.
As part of the Queensland Government’s commitment to ensure all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years, the Department of Education, Training and the Arts has **enhanced the provision of pre-Preparatory education services** in 34 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This initiative had a budget in 2007/08 of $6.3 million for the development and delivery of a curriculum resource in Indigenous communities, professional development and capital works; in 2008/09 the budget for this initiative has increased to $20.7 million.

**CASE STUDY: Deadly Ears**

Deadly Ears is a state-wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ear Health Program which supports screening programs and increased access to speech pathology, audiology and ear, nose and throat (ENT) services in rural and remote communities. In particular, it seeks to detect, treat and prevent otitis media (glue ear), a condition of the middle ear which is well documented as limiting educational outcomes for Indigenous children. An additional $4.4 million has been allocated over the next three years to support increased screening and surveillance to ensure essential services are provided to all rural and remote communities.

Otitis media and its more serious forms such as Chronic Suppurative Otitis Media (CSOM) are best regarded as a disease of poverty. CSOM is very rare in developed nations, and the World Health Organisation indicates that a prevalence of more than 4 per cent in a defined population is a public health problem which requires urgent attention. In Aboriginal communities, CSOM affects up to ten times this proportion. The associated hearing loss of otitis media and CSOM has a life-long impact, as it generally occurs during speech and language development in early childhood and education, which impacts heavily upon not only educational outcomes of young children, but also on their social and emotional development due to their reduced ability to communicate.

Comprehensive screening programs have been undertaken in Cherbourg, Woorabinda, and the inner islands of the Torres Strait and the Northern Peninsula Area. ENT clinics have been held in Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Eidsvold, Mornington Island, Doomadgee, Bamaga and Mt Isa. Additionally, low level ENT surgery such as grommet insertion has also been performed in Kingaroy Hospital, Bamaga Multipurpose Health Centre, Woorabinda Multipurpose Health Centre, Rockhampton Hospital, Mornington Island Multipurpose Health Centre and Mt Isa Base Hospital.

Training of health care staff across agencies has occurred in the Torres Strait, Cape York, Woorabinda and in regional centres such as Rockhampton, Cairns and Bundaberg as well as at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre. The program has also undertaken an extensive campaign in the Torres Strait Islands to increase public awareness of ear disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

Due to the extremely high prevalence of otitis media and CSOM in Indigenous communities, and the life-long impacts of the associated hearing loss, the work of the Deadly Ears program is essential to the future development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and performs a critical role in helping to close the gap on Indigenous outcomes in Queensland.
Education and Training

With schooling to Year 12, the opportunities open to people for employment and further study are greatly enhanced. Giving Indigenous students the same opportunities as non-Indigenous students is vital. With these opportunities, students have a greater ability to engage in the economic, educational and political affairs of our State.

Overview

The Queensland Government is committed to addressing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy achievements as well as the gap in Year 12 attainment or equivalent. Further trade, training and tertiary qualifications are also seen as essential to providing improved prospects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The measures which will be used by the Queensland Government to monitor progress, as well as the strategies which will best address the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, are presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COAG TARGETS</th>
<th>Q2 TARGETS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for Indigenous children within a decade</td>
<td>Smart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.</td>
<td>• Three out of four Queenslanders will hold trade, training or tertiary qualifications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRESS MEASURES</th>
<th>STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Year 3, 5 and 7 reading, writing and numeracy</td>
<td>• Develop responses for improved reading, writing and numeracy outcomes for all ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Year 12 or equivalent certification</td>
<td>• Increase young people’s engagement with school or other learning pathways</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Ensure curriculum is relevant and flexible
• Improve teacher and school leader quality and support, particularly for remote Queensland schools
Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy and Numeracy outcomes presented in this report are based on 2007 state based testing where basic literacy and numeracy standards are expressed as benchmarks. Students who do not meet these benchmarks will have difficulty progressing satisfactorily at school. The data from the Years 3, 5 and 7 literacy and numeracy testing in August 2007 show lower percentages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reaching the benchmark for each respective year level than all students: see Table 2.1.

In general, students in remote and very remote areas were less likely to achieve literacy and numeracy benchmarks than students schooled elsewhere.

Reading

- in reading tests, Year 3 students were more likely to score above the benchmark than Year 5 or 7 students, irrespective of remoteness or Indigenous status.
- Year 5 students in remote areas (including most of the discrete Indigenous communities) were least likely to score above the benchmark.

Writing

- schools servicing the discrete Indigenous communities had the lowest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving the writing benchmark. This was consistent across year levels 3, 5 and 7.

Numeracy

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 and 7 students were less likely to achieve the numeracy benchmark than the reading or writing benchmark.
- in numeracy tests, Year 3 students were more likely to score above the benchmark than Year 5 or 7 students, irrespective of remoteness or Indigenous status.
- an examination of student test scores over time shows that, compared with the Queensland average, the literacy and numeracy skills of Cape York Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students trail by two to four years in Years 5 and 7.

From 2008, basic literacy and numeracy standards (expressed as National Minimum Standards) have been established under the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and endorsed by state, territory and Commonwealth Ministers responsible for education. There will be a time-series break as the different testing regimes are not comparable.

2 Data relating to remoteness areas were geo-coded by school location and analysis was undertaken on simple counts of students above and below the benchmark. Source: Queensland Studies Authority, unpublished data, 2007.
3 Department of Education, Science and Training, Submission to The Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Inquiry into the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Amendment (Cape York Measures) Bill 2007.
Table 2.1: Proportion (%) of students above Year 3, 5 and 7 benchmarks for Reading, Writing and Numeracy, by Indigenous status, Queensland, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum area</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indigenous status</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>87.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>84.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>89.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>91.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These proportions are not exact estimates. Refer to Appendix A for the 95% confidence intervals as an estimate of the variability of these proportions.
Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

**Literacy and numeracy initiatives**

The Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) delivers public education to more than 480,000 students, or approximately 70 per cent of all Queensland school students in the State school system and provides support to 466 Catholic and independent schools. In 2008, DETA’s budget was over $6 billion including $5 billion for education, $98 million for Arts and Culture, and $978 million for Vocational Education and Training (the remainder includes funding for higher education, non-state education and corporate services). The Commonwealth Government provides program funds which the Queensland Government manages (totalling $35.5 million in 2008) for allocation to schools across the State.

As shown in the early childhood section, the Queensland Government is committed to providing all Queensland children with strong educational foundations as demonstrated through its investment in pre-Preparatory education programs in remote Indigenous communities. This complements the introduction in 2007, extended in 2008 through-out Queensland, of a non-compulsory full-time prep-Year of education before Year 1 to provide a seamless transition into more formal schooling.

The Queensland Government along with other states and territories is negotiating a new National Education Agreement, as well as specific National Partnership Agreements on Teacher Quality, Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities and Literacy and Numeracy. These will contain both general and Indigenous-specific targets and initiatives that will benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and contribute to closing the gap in educational outcomes.

DETA actively engages key stakeholders to inform Indigenous education strategies, including a revitalised Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee, the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute, and groups such as the Yalari Foundation and the Higher Expectations Program.

As well as general initiatives to improve educational facilities and practice, specific Indigenous initiatives underway to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, including curriculum and teacher quality, include:

- the Indigenous Education Support Structures project pilot, which focuses on working with Indigenous students, teachers and families in five clusters of state schools in Cunnamulla/Charleville, Ipswich/Moreton, Mount Isa, Cairns and Rockhampton. The project budget of $10 million over four years starting in 2007/08 includes funding to support the project in non-state schools.

- the Let’s Stay Put for Literacy and Numeracy Learning pilot project, which focuses on addressing student mobility as a major factor influencing low student achievement in literacy and numeracy. The Commonwealth is investing $2.4 million in the two year pilot (2008/2010), which will target schools across central and northern Queensland, with the State Government providing in-kind support.

- the Palm Island Senior Phase Program, which provides a vocationally oriented curriculum, including a literacy and numeracy component, for the young people of Palm Island. In 2006/07 it had a budget of $2.7 million over three years and an additional $700,000 in capital funding was allocated in 2007/08. The program functions through a partnership between Kirwan State High School, the Barrier

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Reef Institute of TAFE and the Australian College of Agriculture

- the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, which incorporates a project to improve school attendance and literacy which has commenced in the three trial communities of Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge in 2008 and will extend to Aurukun in 2009. Each school has made available an existing room and teacher for the Making Up Lost Time In Literacy (MULTILIT) program, and support for the school attendance case managers, employed by Cape York Partnerships

- the Bound For Success Consistent Curriculum (also known as Scope and Sequence), which was developed explicitly for the schools servicing discrete Indigenous communities on Cape York and in the Torres Strait. The curriculum reflects local, regional and systemic priorities across all learning areas for Years 1–9

- the Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP), which was established in 1990 and has been extended to rural and urban areas. With funding of $1.1 million from the Queensland Government and $700,000 from the Commonwealth Government, the program provides flexible, community-based training to Indigenous teachers in 19 remote, rural and urban sites across Queensland. To date, 120 teachers have graduated from the program through James Cook University and 442 through the Tropical North Queensland TAFE.

The Evidence

Year 12 or Equivalent Attainment Rates

In 2007, 1,231 Senior Certificates were awarded to Queensland students who identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, representing 3.0 per cent of all certificates awarded to students throughout the State. In the same year, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 17 year olds represented 5.7 per cent of all 17 year olds.

Queensland students have a range of study options, including working towards tertiary study or completing a vocation certificate (VET). Students wishing to undertake tertiary education normally require an Overall Position (OP). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were almost three times as likely to complete Year 12 without receiving a vocational qualification or an OP (36.1% compared with 12.1% of non-Indigenous students): see Table 2.2.

Queensland Year 12 students completing school in 2007 were the last group to receive Queensland Senior Certificates – a new certification scheme has now been introduced – the Queensland Certificate of Education.

Table 2.2: Year 12 OP eligibility and vocational qualifications, Queensland, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OP eligible, no VET %</th>
<th>OP eligible with VET %</th>
<th>OP ineligible with VET %</th>
<th>OP ineligible, no VET %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Indigenous young people</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous young people</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were significant variations in certification across remoteness areas for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people:

- the likelihood of not being eligible for either an OP or VET qualification increased with remoteness, ranging from 23.3 per cent for students who lived in major cities to 53.2 per cent for students who lived in remote/very remote areas. A similar pattern was evident for non-Indigenous students, however, the proportions were much smaller. It is worth noting that options for completing Year 12 in remote and very remote areas are limited, thus students are more likely to be attending boarding school: see Table 2.3
- as a proportion of all 17 year olds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in major cities and remote/very remote areas were slightly more likely to participate in Year 12 education (as measured by senior certificate eligibility) than those in inner and outer regional areas (40.7% compared with 32.1%).

### Table 2.3: Year 12 OP eligibility and vocational qualifications, by remoteness area, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remoteness Area</th>
<th>OP with/without VET %</th>
<th>VET with/without OP %</th>
<th>No OP-No VET %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Cities</td>
<td>37.8 67.4</td>
<td>53.4 39.6</td>
<td>23.3 10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner Regional</td>
<td>27.3 64.4</td>
<td>52.7 40.6</td>
<td>28.8 13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer Regional</td>
<td>16.9 61.4</td>
<td>46.3 43.0</td>
<td>40.1 14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote/Very Remote</td>
<td>16.5 51.4</td>
<td>35.0 54.1</td>
<td>53.2 15.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data are not additive as some students have been counted in both the OP and VET categories: OP with/without VET represents all students eligible for an OP, including those who also obtained VET qualifications; VET with/without OP represents all students with VET qualifications including those who were eligible for an OP.

Source: Queensland Studies Authority.

- the level of achievement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in 2007 declines on average with increasing remoteness. For example, of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Year 12 English in 2007, the proportion achieving a sound achievement or higher (i.e., a pass mark) varied from 72.1 per cent in major cities, down to 53.0 per cent in the remote/very remote areas. This could possibly be attributed to English being a second or third language for the students in the more remote regions. This is supported by the level of achievement in Year 12 English of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from the discrete communities, where only 26.1 per cent of students were awarded a sound achievement or higher in English. In comparison, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from the Torres Region and the Balance of Queensland (areas other than the discrete communities) were awarded sound or higher at twice the rate of those in discrete communities (57.1% and 65.5% respectively).
Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

Encourage and maintain involvement in learning

The Queensland Government is pursuing a range of general and Indigenous-specific initiatives, to actively encourage the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to achieve Year 12 or equivalent qualifications.

The Education and Training Reforms for the Future strategy has been designed to improve young people’s senior phase of learning experience and opportunities through:

- more flexible learning options such as a mix of schooling, vocational training and work-based programs
- the development of the Queensland Certificate of Education to recognise a broader range of learning achievements and strengthen the overall education standards attained by young people
- improved career planning through individual Senior Education and Training Plans which identify young people’s education, training and career goals.

Key initiatives to increase young people’s engagement with school or other learning pathways have included:

- **Flexible Learning Services and Access to Pathways** programs introduced specifically to support 15-17 year olds who have disengaged, or are at risk of disengaging, from full-time education, training or work
- the **Get Set for Work Program** for young people 15-17 years of age who no longer attend school or are at risk of leaving mainstream education to help them prepare for work. With funding from a total budget of $11.7 million, 124 Indigenous participants were supported in 2007/08
- the **Youth Support Coordinator Initiative (YSCI)**, a state-wide initiative funded at $10.9 million annually (ongoing) to support young people at risk of disengagement from education, training and employment to successfully transition into and through the senior phase of learning (years 10, 11 and 12)
- **School-based apprenticeships and traineeships (SATs)**, which allow high school students to work for an employer, train for a recognised qualification and complete their secondary school studies. The Government made an election commitment to double the number of school based apprenticeship and traineeship commencements from 6,200 to 12,400 over three years between 2007 and 2009
- **Transition Support Services** to assist Indigenous students and their families in rural and remote areas to attend secondary school in locations away from their communities. Funding of $1.7 million in 2007/08 and $1.5 million in 2008/09 has helped 360 students (from Cape York and the Torres Strait) to attend school at the start of the 2008 school year.

A further recent initiative is the establishment of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation, an independent trust with start-up capital of $25.8 million, which will focus on improved educational opportunities through scholarships, bursaries and like support commencing in 2009.

The Queensland Government is also committed to supporting the transition of Indigenous young people from school to work and/or further study, and to providing opportunities for the Indigenous working age population to obtain the skills and capabilities required for the 21st century labour market.
CASE STUDY: Spinifex State College
Mount Isa – Residential Campus

The Spinifex State College, a residential campus in Mount Isa, is the first state-run boarding facility in Queensland. Its purpose is to provide access to quality education for students from rural and remote areas who otherwise would not attend school through to senior level.

The College consists of a Junior and a Senior campus, Special Education Program, Education and Training Precinct and the Residential Campus. As at February 2008 Spinifex State College had 1064 students enrolled, with 693 students in the Junior campus (33% Indigenous) and 371 in the Senior campus (28.3% Indigenous).

Since its opening in 2003, the Residential Campus has expanded from an initial intake of 23 students to 40 students in June 2008, drawn from 11 communities. The majority of its boarders are Indigenous (66% in 2008).

The Residential Campus provides pastoral support and case management that ensures individual needs are met and chances of success maximised. The formation of partnerships with parents is central to its philosophy.

Outcomes achieved include 100 per cent school attendance, 100 per cent student participation in daily afternoon activities and study sessions, 100 per cent attendance in life-skills programs and an 85 per cent pass rate. All of the seven Indigenous Year 12 students successfully completed Year 12 in 2007 and transitioned to either employment or employment-based training, in the form of apprenticeships or traineeships.

Source: Spinifex State College – Residential Campus database. The school attendance outcome relates to periods when students are in residence and it excludes authorised absences (eg, illness).
Healthy Lives

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience significantly more ill health than other Australians. They typically die at much younger ages and are more likely to experience disability and reduced quality of life because of ill health.

Overview

The Queensland Government is committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations, the many health-service providers, institutions and organisations across Queensland, and other levels of government, to close the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and address the large gap in chronic disease and disability, particularly where this is preventable.

The measures which will be used by the Queensland Government to monitor progress, as well as the strategies which will best address the gap between the health of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, are presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COAG TARGETS</th>
<th>Q2 TARGETS</th>
<th>PROGRESS MEASURES</th>
<th>STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation</td>
<td>Healthy</td>
<td>• Life expectancy</td>
<td>• Ensure effective primary care services that deliver on their objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade</td>
<td>• Cut by one-third obesity, smoking, heavy drinking and unsafe sun exposure</td>
<td>• Causes of death</td>
<td>• Increase access for Indigenous Australians through culturally appropriate, integrated service delivery arrangements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Disability and chronic disease
  - Diabetes and end stage renal disease
  - Circulatory system disease
  - Cellulitis
  - Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Improve access to health services for Indigenous children and mothers
- Encourage healthy lifestyles at all ages through good nutrition, physical activity, reduced use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco products
- Expand and develop innovative, evidence-based programs for difficult to reach groups, including Indigenous men, disconnected young people and the homeless
- Improve quality of, and access to, mental health services for Indigenous Queenslanders
- Improve quality of, and access to, services for Indigenous Queenslanders who are frail or have a disability
- Encourage use of preventative health initiatives
The Evidence

The onset of disease and infection can often be prevented or delayed through immunisation, good hygiene, healthy lifestyle, healthy environment and protection from parasites. However, prevention of disease may be affected by socio-economic status, social marginalisation and lack of access to health and welfare services.¹

Hospitalisation rates for health conditions provide an indication of serious illness being treated in hospitals. However, they are not a measure of the prevalence of a condition in the community, as individuals may have more than one admission in any particular time period for the same condition. Hospitalisation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders are much higher than for non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

Life expectancy

Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males have a life expectancy 17.7 years less than that of all male Australians (58.9 years compared with 76.6 years). The life expectancy of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females is currently 19.4 years less than that of all female Australians (62.6 years compared with 82.0 years).²

To close a 17 year gap, Indigenous life expectancy needs to increase by around one year per year over the target period. This requires an overall reduction in Indigenous mortality of around 80 per cent. Gains of this magnitude have taken around 80 years to achieve in the Australian population as a whole.³

Causes of death

All causes death rate

For the four years 2003 to 2006:

- the death rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for all causes in Queensland was 982.3 per 100,000 persons, compared with the rate of 616.0 per 100,000 for non-Indigenous persons⁴: see Figure 3.1
- the higher death rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is due to the higher prevalence of deaths at younger ages
- the death rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples increases with remoteness, with the lowest rates in major cities and inner regional areas (794.1 and 729.7 per 100,000 persons respectively) and the highest rates in very remote areas (1,239.7 per 100,000). However, this difference may be due to poorer identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in urban areas compared with remote areas.⁵

² These data are subject to a degree of uncertainty, and apparent differences in life expectancy estimates may not be statistically significant, hence differences should be quoted with caution.
⁴ Age standardised death rate.
⁵ The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that the implied coverage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths of residents of Queensland was 51% over the period 2002 to 2006. See Australian Bureau of Statistics, Deaths Australia 2006. Cat no. 3302.0.
Leading causes of death

Over the years 2003 to 2006:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mortality rates were higher than non-Indigenous rates for all causes of death except nervous system diseases.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples died from diabetes at around seven times the rate of non-Indigenous people (113.5 per 100,000 compared with 15.0 per 100,000).

The higher death rates from diabetes in the Indigenous population are likely to be in part due to the earlier onset of diabetes (see renal (kidney) failure for further information) in this population compared with the non-Indigenous population, combined with higher prevalence of some of the risk factors associated with diabetes such as smoking, hypertension and obesity.

Higher death rates from diabetes may also reflect poorer management of diabetes among Indigenous people, in particular those living in rural and remote areas.6

It is likely that diabetes is an important contributor to the considerably higher circulatory disease mortality rate among Indigenous Australians at young ages (9–10 times higher in Indigenous men aged 25–44 years, and 12–13 times higher in Indigenous women aged 35–54 years).7

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The leading cause of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders was circulatory disease (326.0 per 100,000 persons) followed by cancer (210.5 per 100,000 persons): see Table 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1 Cause of death, age standardised, per 100,000 persons, 2003 to 2006</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non-Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circulatory diseases</td>
<td>326.0</td>
<td>226.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>210.5</td>
<td>182.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endocrine/metabolic diseases</td>
<td>127.9</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>113.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory diseases</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents/poisoning/violence</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other causes</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digestive diseases</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney disease</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infectious/parasitic diseases</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous system diseases</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions originating in the peri-natal period</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All causes</td>
<td>982.3</td>
<td>616.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The addition of each cause of death rate does not equal the all causes of death rate. This is because some categories are sub-categories of others – e.g. diabetes is a subcategory of endocrine and metabolic disorders, as is suicide of accidents/poisoning/violence – these are shown in italics.
Diabetes and end stage renal (kidney) failure

For the two years 2005/06 to 2006/07:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were at least four times more likely to be admitted to hospital for diabetes and related complications than non-Indigenous Queenslanders (1,449 per 100,000 compared with 322 per 100,000): see Figure 3.2

- Hospitalisation for diabetes was highest in remote areas. The highest rate was for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents of remote areas (2,601 per 100,000 compared with 1,986 per 100,000 or less in other areas)

- The most common reason for hospitalisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland was for dialysis (36,146 per 100,000 compared with 3,508 per 100,000 for non-Indigenous Queenslanders). Dialysis is necessary to maintain life after the onset of renal failure

- Patients in the discrete communities who make the decision to take up renal dialysis treatment are required to relocate to access treatment. Relocation affects patients’ quality of life and their ability and willingness to maintain treatment regimes and often results in financial difficulties and social and cultural isolation.8

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regional hospitalisation rates for pyelonephritis (an infection of the kidneys and ureters) followed a similar pattern to diabetes hospitalisations, with the highest rates in remote and very remote areas (1,201 and 1,043 respectively per 100,000 compared with 612 per 100,000 or less in other areas). State-wide, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were three times as likely to be hospitalised for pyelonephritis as non-Indigenous Queenslanders (635 per 100,000 compared with 210 per 100,000)

During the three years 2004 to 2006:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients were younger on average than non-Indigenous patients when they commenced treatment for renal failure (median age: 54.1 years compared with 68.3 years), with the highest age specific rate occurring in the 55-64 year old age group (283 per 100,000). In contrast, the highest rate of onset among non-Indigenous patients was among those aged 65 years or older (42.5 per 100,000)

Type 2 diabetes was the most common reason for renal failure among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, being the primary cause of 67.5 per cent of new cases: see Figure 3.3.

![Figure 3.3](source: ANZDATA Registry Report 2007, data analysis undertaken by Queensland Health.)
Circulatory system disease

Circulatory system diseases include: coronary heart disease, hypertension, stroke, vascular disease and heart failure. Rheumatic heart disease is also included in this category. Rheumatic heart disease is caused by long term damage done to heart muscle or valves and is a complication of acute rheumatic fever, a preventable disease.9

During the two years 2005/06 to 2006/07:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were about 1.7 times more likely to be admitted to hospital for circulatory system diseases than non-Indigenous Queenslanders (3,299 per 100,000 compared with 1,950 per 100,000)
- hospitalisations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders for circulatory system disease were highest in remote areas of Queensland at 4,430 per 100,000
- almost 30 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander admissions were for residents from very remote areas of Queensland. However, the largest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients resided in outer regional areas of Queensland (29%)
- in contrast to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hospitalisations, there were only small differences between major cities, inner and outer regional areas for non-Indigenous hospitalisations for circulatory diseases (range: 2,363 to 4,429 per 100,000 compared with 1,924 to 1,985 per 100,000).

Cellulitis

Cellulitis is an acute skin infection caused by bacteria and is most common on the lower legs and the arms or hands. Cellulitis is a preventable cause of illness and mortality among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Over the two years 2005/06 to 2006/07:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were three times more likely to be hospitalised for cellulitis than non-Indigenous Queenslanders (493 per 100,000 compared with 149 per 100,000): see Figure 3.4
- there were 1,071 hospitalisations for this disease during the reporting period. It was particularly problematic in remote and very remote regions where the rate of admission was 1,106 and 980 per 100,000 respectively – more than double the rate of other regions
- admissions of residents of the discrete Indigenous communities were also high at 1,493 per 100,000 and accounted for 38 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hospitalisations for cellulitis.

Overcrowding, poor dwelling conditions and inadequate basic services can pose serious health risks.10 The high level of overcrowding and deficient infrastructure in the discrete communities is well documented, as is the link between poor standards of housing and infrastructure and infectious and parasitic diseases. It is likely that these issues contribute significantly to the high rates of hospitalisation for cellulitis in remote and very remote areas, the Torres Region and the discrete communities.


Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a long-term lung disease characterised by shortness of breath that becomes progressively worse over time. COPD is a major cause of mortality, illness and disability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and there is no known cure. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare notes that tobacco smoking is by far the strongest risk factor for COPD and estimated that in 1998 about 71 per cent of deaths from COPD (74% for men and 65% for women) was attributable to smoking.  

During the two years from 2005/06 to 2006/07:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were admitted to hospital for COPD at four times the rate of non-Indigenous Queenslanders (1,102 compared with 264 per 100,000)
- with the exception of remote areas, there was little difference in regional rates. Rates were highest in remote areas (2,463 per 100,000 compared with 1,417 per 100,000 or less elsewhere).

Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

The Queensland Government is investing significantly in health care and services for all Queenslanders through the **$10 billion Health Action Plan**, which has laid the foundation for a better public health system — more hospital beds, more doctors and nurses and improved clinical quality and safety, benefiting all Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. Recurrent funding of $110 million has been committed in 2008/09 ($654 million over four years) and capital funding of $190 million ($472 million over four years) for expansions to the nursing and medical workforce, refurbishment and redevelopment of hospitals, improved ambulatory care and rehabilitation services and renal health initiatives.

During 2008, the Queensland and the Australian governments have signed up to the Closing the Health Gap Statement of Intent. Along with other states and territories, the Queensland Government has been negotiating with the Australian Government for a new national healthcare agreement and specific National Partnership Agreements including for Indigenous health, chronic conditions, preventative health and better cancer care to contribute to closing the gap in life expectancy and health status.

In recent years, the Queensland Government has committed to a **range of programs specifically addressing health issues impacting on Indigenous people**, including a significant investment of approximately $89 million, over four years, which was announced in 2005/06 to support the first Queensland Government implementation plan for the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. In 2007/08, funding was made available for **approximately 60 additional service delivery positions** specifically focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The majority of these positions were placed with non-government sector service providers and many were filled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, thus contributing to the provision of culturally appropriate health services. The positions addressed the health issues of: nutrition; physical activity and healthy lifestyle; alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; child and youth health; sexual and reproductive health; cervical screening; and women’s sexual health.

**Preventative and primary health initiatives**

The Queensland Government is working with Indigenous Queenslanders to ensure that they remain healthy and free of preventable disease through a number of preventative health measures including:

- as part of the **Immunise Australia Program**, the National Indigenous Childhood Hepatitis A Vaccination Program offers free vaccination state-wide to all Indigenous children under five years old. Similarly, the **National Indigenous Pneumococcal and Influenza Immunisation Program** aims to reduce respiratory illness by giving vaccines to Indigenous people. In both cases, the vaccines are provided by the Australian Government with Queensland Health undertaking the inoculations.

- **the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Cervical Screening Strategy 2006–2010**, which is showing some significant results, with increased participation by women in the discrete communities. In Queensland, between 1991 and 2004, there was a 51 per cent reduction in the incidence of cervical cancer and a 45 per cent decrease in mortality associated with it. This downward trend is expected to continue as a result of the 2006–2010 Strategy.
• BreastScreen Queensland, an established program which aims to make effective, culturally appropriate breast cancer screening services available to all Queensland women. Working closely with Indigenous health workers in rural and urban areas has been effective in encouraging Indigenous women to attend the program.

• the Queensland Bowel Cancer Screening Program, which includes a project among people living in remote Indigenous communities implemented in Cairns and Townsville with culturally appropriate resources.

The Queensland Government is also committed to Indigenous people remaining healthy and free of preventable disease through access to primary health care. The Queensland and Commonwealth Governments jointly fund a Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program to provide specialist health services to remote and discrete communities, such as the Cardiac Outreach Service operating from Cairns (see case study at the end of this section). Other support includes: the Healthy Women’s Initiative which aims to provide a state-wide workforce of Indigenous health workers to promote women’s health in their communities and the Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health (Community Care – Women’s Health), which is currently being piloted with Indigenous health workers.

Healthy lifestyles

The Queensland Government is supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to remain healthy and free of preventable disease through good nutrition, physical activity and reduced levels of smoking and use of alcohol and drugs through general and Indigenous-specific programs, including funding for councils, community organisations and sport and recreation bodies across Queensland.

Sport and recreation plays an integral role in facilitating healthy lifestyles; providing positive role models for communities; building self-esteem; improving health outcomes; improving self-discipline and teamwork; breaking down barriers; increasing social cohesion; and offering a healthy and positive diversion to a range of behavioural issues such as alcohol and drug abuse and juvenile offending.

Given poor health status and limited infrastructure in remote Indigenous communities, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation (DLGSR) is investing some $4.4 million in 2008/09 providing sport and recreation opportunities in these communities. DLGSR’s key initiatives supporting healthy lifestyles include:

• investing more in Police-Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC) as a primary provider of sport and recreation opportunities in Indigenous communities. The Yarrabah, Mornington Island and Palm Island PCYC centres continue to provide a focal point for sports and a centre for youth activities. The CAPE – PCYC program in Hope Vale, Wujal Wujal and Napranum has a similar role, utilising existing infrastructure in discrete communities

• funding sport and recreation infrastructure from the Major Facilities Program, including multipurpose centres, sports fields, and shade structures over outdoor courts, at a total cost of $2 million in 2007/08

• supporting the Former Origin Greats Program to foster the participation of community members in sporting activities by using well-known role models. $150,000 in funding was provided for developmental and mentoring services to particular Indigenous communities

• providing $300,000 in funding to State Sporting Organisations including Netball Queensland, AFL Kickstart and Queensland Rugby League for developmental and coaching clinics in select Indigenous communities

• providing $105,000 to PASS Sports Australia to support 35 student placements within their Sports Leadership program across Queensland. The program encourages Indigenous youth to complete Year 12 and on completion of the training they are provided with through the program, they will gain a Certificate II in Sports Leadership. The program also increases the participation of primary school students in sport.

Under the Queensland Government’s Chronic Disease and Indigenous Health package, 29 Indigenous-specific alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention and clinical positions are funded state-wide and 11 new positions were established in 2007/08.
Other initiatives underway to increase participation in physical activity, improve eating patterns and encourage healthy lifestyles include:

- **Healthy Eating** project between Islander Board of Industry and Service (IBIS) stores in the Torres Strait, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Retail Stores Unit and Queensland Health for a nutritionist to be placed with each of the retail groups to engage with the community to provide advice and education, and to improve the availability and minimise the cost of healthy foods and drinks

- **Community Partnerships Grants Program**, a joint initiative between the DLGSR, Queensland Health and the Department of Education, Training and the Arts which supports breakfast programs and nutrition awareness sessions, community gardens, and a variety of physical activity opportunities in Indigenous communities

- **SmokeCheck**, a state-wide intervention program, for Indigenous people to help them reduce or quit smoking. More than 200 Indigenous health workers were trained in the program in 2007/08, and over 600 have been trained since it began in 2005

- The Queensland Government has recently been actively encouraging healthy lifestyles due to Queensland’s increasing inactive lifestyles and rising levels of obesity and related health issues such as Type 2 diabetes. This has been supported by the Q2 vision which has set an ambitious target of cutting obesity rates by a third. The Queensland Government administers a number of innovative programs such as the **Inala Chronic Disease Management Service** to assist people in developing and maintaining healthy lifestyles. This service treats people with Type 2 diabetes by providing care in the community and helping people to self-manage their diabetes, including maintaining healthy living habits.

**Mental health services**

The Queensland Government is investing in enhanced mental health services for Indigenous Queenslanders. The **Queensland Plan for Mental Health 2007–2017** aims to provide dedicated strategies to reduce suicide risk and mortality with a focus on specific high risk groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. To date, a total of **107 Indigenous mental health workers** are employed in community mental health services in Queensland. More Indigenous mental health workers are needed state-wide, and over $5 million has been allocated to 13 new positions over three years.

The **Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy** adopts a whole-of-life suicide prevention framework and incorporates a particular focus on population groups known to be at higher risk such as Indigenous communities. As part of this strategy, the Department of Communities has funded Indigenous-specific projects including the **Rural and Remote and Indigenous Communities Suicide Prevention Project** which operates in the communities of Aurukun, Cunnamulla, Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Mount Isa and St George. The project raises awareness of suicide risk factors and helps community members to intervene effectively, focusing on cultural strengths from within family or clan groups.

Disability Services Queensland (DSQ) has allocated $1.3 million over three years (2006-2009) for the **Transition from Correctional Facilities Program**, to provide non-clinical support to people with moderate to severe mental illness exiting a Queensland correctional facility, including people with an Indigenous background. It will provide valuable support to people from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background to transition to community for up to six months post-release. DSQ will work with Queensland Health to evaluate the program.

**Sexual health**

There is a disproportionately high incidence of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) in rural and remote Indigenous communities. The Queensland Government is working
in partnership with communities to support Indigenous Queenslanders in remaining healthy and free of preventable disease through improved sexual health.

The Queensland Government has taken action to reduce the incidence of STIs through education and clinical services, including contact-tracing. In 2007/08, funding of $1.6 million was allocated to provide an additional 14 Indigenous Sexual Health Worker positions, and in 2008/09 the budget increased to $2.2 million to create a further eight positions. Filling the positions presents difficulties because of skills shortages and therefore an Indigenous Sexual Health Worker short course is being developed to train generalist Indigenous health workers in sexual health. At least 25 health workers are to be trained over three years.

**Disability services**

Disability Services Queensland (DSQ) is responsible for developing and providing policies, services and programs that support people with a disability, frail older people and those with a mental illness, their families and carers. It also funds a range of non-government services to provide disability, mental health and aged care services to Queenslanders. Investment in specialist disability services through the Commonwealth State-Territory Disability Agreements in 2007/08 was $716.8 million,12 $348.5 million for the Home and Community Care Program and $16.5 million for mental health services provided by non-government service providers13.

Through the Home and Community Care Program (HACC), DSQ allocated $14 million in 2007/08 to Indigenous service providers for the provision of services to frail older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The program currently provides services through 62 contracted Indigenous service providers as well as a broad range of non-Indigenous-specific service providers across Queensland. The HACC Queensland Triennial Plan 2008-2011 proposes growth funding of $5.4 million over three years to purchase additional HACC services specifically directed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The program is reviewed regularly as part of the recurrent funding process.

12 Source: CSTDA NMDS, Queensland tables, 2006/07 and DSQ Budget 2008/09.
13 Ministerial Portfolio Statement 2007/08 State Budget.

**CASE STUDY: Indigenous Cardiac Outreach Clinics**

The Indigenous Cardiac Outreach Clinic program recognises that a purely medical model approach to service delivery has not produced positive or sustained impacts on Indigenous cardiac (heart) health.

This innovative program was initiated through the concerns raised by the Cardiac Clinical Network through Dr Darren Walters about the increasing gap in Indigenous Cardiac Health. Program authors David Tibby (Director of Nursing, Cardiology) and Rohan Corpus (Indigenous Program Coordinator), both of The Prince Charles Hospital in Chermside, Brisbane, have developed a model of care which is more effectively assessing and treating Indigenous patients and empowering Indigenous people to take a proactive approach to their health. The cardiac outreach model is based on a carefully constructed relationship between the clinical team delivering the service and those community members who attend the outreach clinics. Mutual respect and responsibility is not only the underlying philosophy for how the clinic operates, it is also the foundation for enhancing the ability of local Indigenous community members to take greater control and care of their heart health.

The clinics successfully began delivering an Outreach Service in 2007 to 16 sites throughout the state. Community participation has been evident by the overwhelming number of community members engaging in ongoing clinical sessions.
Economic Participation

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to fully participate in Queensland’s society and economy, and enjoy the opportunities and benefits other Queenslanders experience, they need to be able to participate fully in the mainstream economy. Doing so will have major flow on benefits and help close other gaps in life outcomes.

Overview

Addressing the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is a priority for the Queensland Government. Though economic policy and employment programs are primarily the responsibility of the Australian Government, the Queensland Government makes a major contribution through its investment in public services, public infrastructure, enterprise support, tourism promotion and facilities, trade and industry programs, and in training and employment programs.

The measures which will be used by the Queensland Government to monitor progress, as well as the strategies which will best address the gap between the economic situation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, are presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COAG TARGET</th>
<th>• Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Q2 TARGETS | **Smart**  
• Three out of four Queenslanders will hold trade, training or tertiary qualifications  
**Fair**  
• Halve the proportion of Queensland children living in households without a working parent |
| PROGRESS MEASURES | • Labour force participation  
• Employment rate  
• Unemployment rate |
| STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS | • Improve participation and outcomes in the area of vocational education and training  
• Support Indigenous participation in Queensland’s economy through building sustainable business skills and capacity  
• Maximise Indigenous employment through government procurement policies  
• Incorporate Indigenous workforce strategies into all new major COAG reforms  
• Increase job opportunities and enterprise development for Indigenous people in Queensland in Natural Resource Management services and Indigenous tourism  
• Development, management and marketing of sustainabile tourism in Cape York and Torres Strait, guided by the Cape York and Torres Strait Tourism Action Plan. |
The Evidence

Labour force participation rate

The labour force comprises persons aged 15 years or over who are either employed or unemployed and seeking work. The remainder of the population are not in the labour force. People may not participate in the labour force for a variety of reasons: they may be retired, studying, have poor health, or be discouraged from looking for work because of lack of skills (see Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage, 2007).

In 2006:

- non-Indigenous people were more likely to be participating in the labour force than Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples: 65.4 per cent compared with 56.2 per cent – a gap of 9.2 percentage points: see Figure 4.1
- the participation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons was highest for those in major cities, followed by those in remote areas, with the lowest participation rates reported for residents of inner and outer regional areas (53.1%)
- participation rates in the discrete communities were relatively high at 55.1 per cent, possibly due to high levels of participation in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) in these communities. Labour force participation in the Torres region (65.0%) was higher than for the mainland discrete Indigenous communities, and was similar to that for the non-Indigenous Queensland working age population.

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2006 (unpublished data). These rates are not age standardised.
Employment rate

In 2006:

- non-Indigenous Queenslanders of working age were about 1.4 times more likely than Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of working age to be employed (624.3 per 1,000 for non-Indigenous Queenslanders compared with 433.0 per 1,000 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples): see Figure 4.2

- the employment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was higher in the major cities, and decreased with each increasing level of remoteness, ranging from 536.4 per 1,000 in the major cities to 310.2 per 1,000 for remote areas

- the discrete Indigenous communities reported the lowest rate of employment (179.0 per 1,000), with less than 200 working age persons (15 years and over) employed per 1,000.

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2006 (unpublished data). These rates are not age standardised.

Note: Community Development Employment Projects participants are not included as employed.

The working age population is aged 15 years and over.
Unemployment rate

In 2006:

- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were significantly more likely to be unemployed than non-Indigenous people: 23.5 per cent compared with 4.5 per cent – a gap of 19 percentage points: see Figure 4.3
- unemployment rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples increased with remoteness, with the rate in remote areas more than three times that reported for major cities (45.0% compared with 12.8%) and the discrete communities reported the highest unemployment rate, with 67.6 per cent of persons unemployed. This was more than four times the unemployment rate for those outside the discrete mainland communities (14.9%), and nearly three times that for the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Queensland (23.5%).


Note: Community Development Employment Projects participants are included in the unemployment rate.
Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

**Participation in the labour market and enterprise development**

The Queensland Government is supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders’ participation in the labour market and in enterprise development through a number of key strategies. Despite the recent global financial crisis, the Queensland economy remains strong and jobs growth in recent years provides an opportunity for those traditionally unable to access the labour market, including Indigenous Queenslanders to obtain employment.

Roughly 3.3 per cent of the Queensland public sector workforce is Indigenous, slightly higher than their proportion of the population. A growing number of agencies have active recruitment, retention and development strategies in place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders employees.

The Queensland Government has also been negotiating, along with other states and territories, with the Australian Government for mainstream national agreements in relation to skills and workforce development and vocational education and training, as well as a National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation to close the gap in employment, especially in the private sector where the majority of job opportunities arise. Queensland is also supportive of private sector-led initiatives such as the Australian Employment Covenant.

In addition to its mainstream programs, the Department of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry (DTRDI) contributes to strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business capacity, targets partnership and mentoring opportunities, and supports Indigenous enterprise to increase income generation and employment outcomes. Indigenous Queenslanders’ involvement in tourism is also seen as a key enterprise development opportunity. A whole-of-government strategy for Indigenous tourism is being finalised as part of the Queensland Tourism Strategy to increase Indigenous participation in mainstream tourism and assist Indigenous people develop commercially sustainable tourism ventures.

DTRDI administers the Indigenous Business Development Grant Scheme, which has two programs that provide funding assistance to build Indigenous business capacity and business establishment and growth. In 2007/08, a total of $597,000 was distributed to eleven projects, with the largest proportion being provided to North Queensland, the Cape and the Gulf areas. Indigenous Business Development is currently looking at better alignment with major sectoral business opportunities, such as mining, forestry and tourism. In addition, the Department in a partnership arrangement with the Australian Government, funds a network of Indigenous Enterprise Development Officers. The network is staffed by Indigenous officers and provides support to Indigenous clients pursuing opportunities in business development.

As part of the Queensland Government’s Reconciliation Action Plan, DTRDI organises and hosts the Annual Reconciliation Business Forum to build the capacity of Indigenous businesses throughout Queensland. The forum facilitates interaction between Indigenous business owners and successful business representatives, including industry representatives and government stakeholders.

DTRDI has provided over $1 million into Indigenous tourism projects including support of $170,000 towards the Lockhart River Aerodrome Motel; $320,000 into various Indigenous
owned and managed camping ground development projects; and $95,000 for the Mapoon Turtle eco-tourism business.

In conjunction with the Australian Government, the State Department of Mines and Energy runs the Working in Partnerships program to foster relationships and partnerships between Indigenous communities and the mining industry. The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries has a $1 million state-wide Enhanced Indigenous Agribusiness project. This supports business opportunities and economic independence through primary industry taken up as a result of increased access to, or ownership of, traditional lands. An example is Lockhart River Pichiwu Fishing Ltd.

The Department of Public Works’ Repairs and Maintenance Program, with funding of $6.3 million in 2007/08, aims to increase community capacity and provide local employment by outsourcing repairs and maintenance in the discrete Indigenous communities to local Indigenous Councils. The program has engaged tradespeople, trainees and apprentices in the communities of Doomadgee, Mornington Island and Palm Island.

The Department of Natural Resources and Water’s Wild River Rangers program currently employs 20 Aboriginal rangers on Cape York and in the Gulf region, which will increase to 100 from 2009. The rangers provide environmental services by looking after the cultural and natural values of the river systems and contribute to the development of natural resource management capacity and economies.

A new e-learning resource has so far helped 27 Indigenous people get jobs in the mining and civil construction industries. The Jobs for Our Mob CD-ROM has been designed for Indigenous learners, using culturally appropriate communication. The Myuma Aboriginal Corporation, based in Camooweal in Queensland, identified a need to provide pre-employment skills to Indigenous people in north-west Queensland.

Training initiatives

In 2006, the Queensland Government launched the Queensland Skills Plan, backed by an investment of over $800 million and an additional $300 million in capital funding. The plan has been developed to respond to the state’s workforce needs including building workforce skills. The Queensland Skills Plan continued the successful Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiatives which have helped more than 120,000 Queenslanders into jobs. There are several training initiatives supported by the Queensland Government to promote training outcomes to facilitate employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

The recently released Positive Dreaming, Solid Futures – the Indigenous Employment and Training Strategy 2008-2011, provides a new framework for the delivery of employment and training services to Indigenous people in Queensland. This is a partnership between the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) and the Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA). The strategy is designed to address a number of priorities aimed at improving outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders in the area of vocational education and training.

Recent training initiatives to assist Indigenous people enter and remain in the workforce include:

- DETA’s VET Revenue General Program which in 2007 funded 1,563,713 hours of training to Indigenous students through the mainstream public VET system, to the value of approximately $22.2 million
- DETA works with industry, the community and registered training organisations to match training to the economic needs of Queensland. DETA provides vocational education and training to 246,000 students through 13 TAFE institutes from 101 locations across the state, and administers the apprenticeship and traineeship system across Queensland
- the Training Initiatives for Indigenous Adults in Regional and Remote Communities is a joint State-Commonwealth
funded initiative which commenced in 2007 with project funds totalling $18.1 million over four years

- the **Cape York Employment and Training Strategy** assisted 700 people in 2007/08 to undertake training in a diverse range of qualifications including construction, conservation and land management, engineering, agriculture, business, tourism and hospitality in the Cape York region

- the **First Start program** whereby Indigenous Councils and organisations can access $1 million in subsidies to employ Indigenous people as trainees. This provided 94 traineeship opportunities in 2007/08

- the **Youth Training incentive** which provides up to $4,000 in incentives to employers to provide opportunities for young people to combine senior secondary education with workforce experience. In 2007/08, 273 Indigenous students undertook a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship as a result of this incentive

- the **User Choice program** which works in conjunction with the Australian Apprenticeship system and assists by paying for the cost of training delivery for the 'college' component of training for apprentices and trainees under certain circumstances. In 2007/08, it assisted 1,193 Indigenous apprentices and 1,522 trainees

- the Queensland and Australian Governments both contribute to the **Joint Indigenous Funding Pool** to target education and training opportunities for Indigenous people and improve vocational education and training outcomes for Indigenous students. In 2007, contracts to the value of $3.8 million were awarded to seven private providers and two TAFE institutes, enabling approximately 650 Indigenous people to receive training in areas as diverse as primary health care, business, broadcasting, community development, performing arts, horticulture, conservation and land management in Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) levels II to Diploma.

The Department of Main Roads (DMR) funded the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traineeship to Employment Initiative** $240,000, as a partnership between the Department, the Jagera Daran Indigenous community and Greening Australia (Queensland). Under the initiative, trainees completed a Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management in October 2008 and, additionally, completed high-quality landscaping, environmental management and basic civil construction work on numerous DMR-owned green areas around Brisbane.

### Skills and workforce development opportunities

The **Skilling Queenslanders for Work** initiative is funded around $80 million per year to assist those Queenslanders most disadvantaged in the labour market to achieve sustainable employment outcomes. Under this initiative the Queensland Government’s **Indigenous Employment Strategy** has a strong focus on developing the skills needed for work, providing access to jobs, and assistance through mentorship and other support. For example:

- the **Customised Employment Assistance program** offers a mix of paid work placements, job preparation, accredited vocational education and training, formal recognition of skills and post participation support for job seekers and assisted nearly 670 Indigenous people in 2007/08

- in 2007/08, a network of **Indigenous Employment and Training Managers** and **40 Indigenous Employment and Training Support Officers** assisted 3,100 Indigenous apprentices, trainees, vocational students and jobseekers with their participation in the labour market.

The Queensland Government is also supporting the participation of Indigenous women in the workforce. For example:

- the Wide Bay Institute of TAFE has engaged up to 14 Indigenous women in a nine-month, full-time pre-vocational **program for non-traditional career paths** – such as automotive, engineering and construction industries

- the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE has engaged up to 20 Indigenous women in the Mackay and Rockhampton regions for a **construction industry related training program**.
The government sector directly contributes to improved workforce participation through its **Indigenous Employment Policy** (IEP 20%) which created 203 jobs on 18 civil and 16 building projects during 2007/08.

The **Wal Meta Unit** in the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations has facilitated 94 Indigenous individuals in obtaining employment in the public sector.

**CASE STUDY: Mining Opportunities in the Gulf**

The 1997 Gulf Communities Agreement between the State Government, Zinifex Century Mine and local Traditional Owners provided opportunities that led to the establishment of Waanyi Mining Services Pty Ltd. The business goals of Waayni Mining Services are to provide employment and training opportunities for local Indigenous people.

In 2005 the Department of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry provided a $150,000 Indigenous Business Establishment grant to Northern Project Crushing, one half of a joint venture company set up by Waanyi Mining Services Pty Ltd to provide crushed aggregate to the Century Zinc Mine, 250 kilometres north-west of Mt Isa. Century is the second largest zinc mine in the world based on zinc production.

In 2007, due to gaining additional contracts with Century Mine to provide Indigenous workers and hire out equipment, Waanyi Mining Services received a $500,000 Indigenous Business Development Program grant as a contribution towards purchasing a CAT front end loader. The equipment has increased the company’s income base significantly and brought forward the buy-out of the joint venture.

Waanyi Mining Services has expanded its services and its customer base over the last four years to include the Queensland Department of Main Roads and local shire councils, establishment of a labour hire pool service, contracts around mining rehabilitation and, recently, the buy-out of the joint venture company itself. Plans for the near future include a mobile mining school utilising one of only four mining operations simulators in Queensland.

The company presently employs more than 40 people, with about 25 local Indigenous people working full-time.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders face significant disadvantage in terms of the quality and availability of housing and basic facilities. Many Indigenous people live in houses that are overcrowded or in need of repair. Relatively more Indigenous people are homeless than non-Indigenous people. Relatively few Indigenous people own or are purchasing their own homes. The health and safety of people living in poor housing conditions is also of concern.

**Overview**

Addressing the problem of overcrowding in Indigenous households and providing environmental infrastructure and other essential services, are priorities for the Queensland Government. These are essential to the successful achievement of health and other targets endorsed by the Queensland Government.

The measures which will be used by the Queensland Government to monitor progress, as well as the strategies which it believes will best address the gap between the housing situation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, are presented below.

There is no COAG target or Q2 target which is directly addressed by this strategic action area. However, improvements in this arena may have long-term impacts on a number of the COAG targets. For example reductions in overcrowding in housing and enhancements in environmental health may result in better health outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRESS MEASURES</th>
<th>STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Overcrowding in housing</td>
<td>• Reduce overcrowding and improve utilisation of social housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bring Indigenous housing into a robust tenancy management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure all Indigenous people have access to housing and related infrastructure that meets regulatory standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase opportunities for Indigenous home ownership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Evidence

Access to housing

Persons living in overcrowded households

In 2006:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were at least five times more likely to be living in an overcrowded household than were non-Indigenous Queenslanders – 27.0 per cent compared with 4.8 per cent\(^1\): see Figure 5.1

- 13.6 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households in Queensland were overcrowded (requiring additional bedrooms).\(^2\) This equated to 27.0 per cent (29,900 persons) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders residing in overcrowded households

- the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders living in overcrowded households increased with remoteness, ranging from 15.4 per cent in major cities to more than twice that in remote areas (45.2%)\(^3\)

- the proportion of persons living in overcrowded households was highest in the discrete Indigenous communities with more than one in every two persons living in an overcrowded household (61.9%).

Overcrowding places increased stress on kitchen, bathroom and laundry facilities as well as on sewerage systems such as septic tanks. Overcrowding increases the risk of the spread of infectious diseases such as meningococcal disease, rheumatic fever, tuberculosis, skin infections and respiratory infections.\(^3\)

\(^1\) ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2006.
\(^2\) Based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standard.
Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

**Housing outcomes**

The Queensland Government is committed to Indigenous families living in appropriate housing with access to all basic services, having improved housing amenity and living environments and reducing overcrowding, particularly in remote areas and discrete communities.

During 2008, the Queensland Government, along with other states and territories, has been negotiating with the Australian Government for a new national affordable housing agreement and specific National Partnership Agreements (NPA) including for social housing and homelessness and a specific NPA for Indigenous housing to contribute to closing the gap in housing.

The Department of Housing’s goals are to deliver integrated social housing and housing services to low income households for the duration of their need, provide support for low to moderate income households in the private market, and help build sustainable communities.

During 2007/08, the Department of Housing assisted almost 259,600 Queensland households by providing 78,108 households with social rental housing and helping 181,489 households access or sustain private market tenure. This included assisting more than 18,103 Indigenous households and 25,086 households with a person with a disability.

In the remote Indigenous communities, the Department of Housing has a number of initiatives to improve housing, including the Housing Improvement Program for Indigenous communities, which aims to close the gap through increasing the supply and improving the standard of housing, and improving housing asset and tenancy management. Under this program, $76.8 million was allocated in 2007/08 (including $4.8 million under the Government’s Rural and Remote Indigenous housing initiative) to:

- complete construction of 24 dwellings, replace 32 dwellings and perform 272 upgrades to dwellings
- commence construction of 69 dwellings and begin upgrade work on another 158 dwellings (in 2007/08 major upgrades resulted in 87 dwellings returned to housing stock)
- purchase 46 dwellings outside of Indigenous communities
- conduct maintenance on 4,092 dwellings.

In 2008/09, $90.2 million (including $25 million under the Rural and Remote Indigenous housing initiative) will be invested to:

- complete construction of 103 dwellings, and begin constructing another seven
- replace 35 dwellings
- purchase 14 properties outside communities
- maintain more than 4,200 dwellings
- complete 271 upgrades.

The Department of Housing is currently:

- working with individual Indigenous councils to develop Housing Improvement Plans. These plans provide strategies aimed at enhancing the quality of houses and extending the life of housing as well as providing a focus for improving governance, tenancy and property management

... Queensland Closing the Gap Report: 2007/08
• delivering the **Fixing Houses for Better Health** program under an agreement with the Australian Government. This program involves assessing dwellings on the basis of healthy living practices. In 2007/08, health and safety repairs relating to electrical, plumbing, general maintenance and gas works were undertaken in 318 dwellings in Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama

• supporting good tenancy management practices to improve utilisation of social housing assets. In 2007/08, the Queensland Government provided **tenancy management services**, including housing allocations, rent collection and arrears management for the rental premises in the communities of Kubin, Lockhart River, Napranum and Wujal Wujal, resulting in a 20 per cent increase in the monthly rents collected. Hope Vale divested tenancy management to the Department of Housing in March 2008 and Doomadgee divested in July 2008. In 2008–09 the Department of Housing will begin managing rental units at Doomadgee and anticipates finalising an agreement with the Australian Government to begin tenancy management of units at Aurukun. It will also introduce the 25 per cent rent policy and other social housing policies in remote Indigenous communities.

Across Queensland, the **Healthy Indigenous Housing Initiative** aims to close the gap by improving governance in the Indigenous community housing sector. In 2007/08, three housing officer workshops were conducted focusing on providing housing officers with tools, resources and support to better deliver tenancy and property management services in their respective communities. **Tenant Awareness Kits** containing maintenance and repairs fact sheets were developed for residents of Indigenous communities.

The Queensland Government supports home ownership as a choice for Indigenous people. The **Aboriginal Land Act 1991** was amended, effective from July 2008, enabling **99 year private residential provisions on Deed of Grant in Trust communities**. This will enable community members to purchase existing social housing and will provide community members with the opportunity to lease vacant land and build their own homes. The Queensland Government is working through issues of home ownership such as land administration prior to implementation.

### Essential infrastructure and environmental health initiatives

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation (DLGSR) has an integral role in developing sustainable and healthy communities and improving quality of life for all Queenslanders. The **Indigenous Environmental Health Infrastructure Program** expended $46.4 million in 2007/08, and a further $47.3 million will be spent in 2008/09, to address environmental health infrastructure issues including improving water supplies, sewerage schemes, waste systems and development of capacity and expertise of the Indigenous workforce in managing sustainability.

DLGSR also provided $1.7 million in grants to the remote communities through the **Indigenous Environmental Health Worker Program** in 2007/08, and $2.3 million in 2008/09, to develop and deliver community environmental health programs. This program, which is run jointly with Queensland Health, provides funds to employ an Environmental Health Worker and associated expenses such as training and equipment. Thirty out of 34 communities now employ an Indigenous Environmental Health Worker.

To ensure affordable access to energy supply, the Queensland Government pays a monthly subsidy through the Department of Mines and Energy to **Ergon Energy Queensland** to support the **uniform tariff policy**. This Community Service Obligation compensates customers for the difference between the standard notified tariff and the actual cost of supplying electricity in regional Queensland. This is especially significant in 34 isolated networks, many associated with the remote Aboriginal or Torres Strait communities, which have significantly higher costs than the main state electricity system.

The Department of Main Roads provides **road and transport infrastructure** of an appropriate standard which increases the ability of residents in the state’s remote Indigenous...
communities to travel for work and other needs and enables tourism in those areas. This supports a number of economic benefits from increased tourism to reduced freight costs. Funding of $13 million for 2007/08 was allocated under the Indigenous community component of the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme to seal town streets in the Torres Strait Islands and assist Cape York communities with flood damage restoration works.

Queensland Transport is providing funds of $6.2 million for a jetty and barge ramp and $1.7 million for channel dredging on Palm Island, providing a safe means for passengers to board the ferry. The jetty and barge ramp are completed, with the channel dredging to be completed in early 2009. Boat ramps are also being provided in Seisia (work in progress), Mapoon (materials fabricated) and Claudie River at Lockhart River (completed) at a total cost of approximately $770,000.

In 2007/08, under the Supporting Animal Management in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Local Governments action plan, Queensland Health provided $2.1 million to support the care and management of domestic and feral animals in 25 communities to reduce animal-related health risks.
CASE STUDY: Housing improvement program, Kowanyama

Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council was allocated funding for four additional houses in 2007/08 and a further $5 million in 2008/09 to respond to high levels of overcrowding in the community. Based on identified community need, funds were directed to factory-built housing to deliver housing quickly into the community. Each house will include concrete paths, carport and paved driveway, washing lines and fencing, and will be designed to ensure access for tenants with physical mobility difficulties.

Kowanyama has also been selected as one of the communities to participate in the Fixing Houses for Better Health (FHBH) initiative, funded by the Australian Government. The first stage housing survey component of the FHBH resulted in 350 immediate repairs and 3,317 work orders being issued for electrical, plumbing, general maintenance and gas works. This stage of the project employed 15 local Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) workers.

The second stage was completed in coordination with the Queensland Department of Housing’s maintenance program to deliver specific health and safety improvements including smoke detectors, residual currency devices and gas compliance. Twenty-six local CDEP participants and one Newstart participant gained full-time employment for stage 2 of the project.

In stages 1 and 2, $348,000 was spent repairing or replacing taps and shower fixtures, unblocking drains, sinks and toilets, reporting on all solar hot water systems and installing isolation valves to residences where none were present. Further funding was spent on electrical work.
Safe and Supportive Communities

All people have the right to live in safety, particularly in their own homes and communities. Safety from harm to themselves and their property is a fundamental right and an important precondition for maintaining health, participating in education and contributing to economic development. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are more likely to be victims and perpetrators of crime; more likely to be the subject of child protection intervention; and more likely to be incarcerated as adults and juveniles.

Liveable communities also rely on people participating in community affairs and volunteering to support other vulnerable people, care for country, protect heritage, practise culture, educate or mentor young people, and participate in community events and activities. Active communities are also safer communities.

Overview

Addressing the problem of violence in Indigenous families and communities, reducing the harms of alcohol and other substance use, preventing and dealing with criminal and other anti-social behaviours, protecting children from neglect and abuse, and supporting volunteering by Indigenous people, are priorities for the Queensland Government.

The measures which will be used by the Queensland Government to monitor progress, as well as the strategies which it believes will best address violence, substance misuse, offending and child protection in the communities are presented below.

There is no COAG target which directly addresses the action area of Safe and Supportive Communities. However, improvements in this arena may have long-term impacts on a number of the COAG targets. For example:

- A number of personal stressors, such as violent abuse and crime, may lead to long-term health conditions
- High levels of alcohol consumption are a significant risk factor for a number of serious health conditions, such as liver disease, pancreatitis and diabetes
- Family violence may have a damaging effect on the emotional, behavioural and cognitive development of children
- Pregnant women are more vulnerable to abuse and violence, which may lead to adverse health outcomes for babies.
Protection from violence, abuse and neglect

The Evidence

Child safety

An investigation and assessment carried out by the Department of Child Safety will result in a ‘substantiated child protection notification’ when it is assessed that harm has been experienced by the child and/or there are identifiable risk factors that a child may be harmed in the future.

In 2007/08, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were four times more likely to be the subject of a substantiated child protection notification than non-Indigenous children (23.9 per 1,000 children compared with 6.0 per 1,000 children): see Figure 6.1. The rate (12 months to September 2008) for the 19 discrete Indigenous communities was 40.3 per 1,000 children (Note the rate for the discrete Indigenous communities — which does not include Coen and Mossman Gorge — is not directly comparable with the Queensland rate).1

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1 At the time of publication it is not possible to provide data separated by remoteness areas.
Over the period 2003/04 to 2007/08, the number of intakes recorded by the Department (calls from members of the community about concerns of harm or risk of harm to a child) increased by 61.1 per cent, from 44,631 in 2003/04 to 71,885 in 2007/08.

This increase in demand means that today, approximately 1 in 7 children, and 1 in 4.5 Indigenous children in Queensland have had some form of contact with the Department.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented at all stages of the child protection system. Indigenous children and young people represent 6.6 per cent of all young people in Queensland, yet account for:

- 19.2 per cent of children notified (4,294 of 22,333)
- 22.1 per cent of children substantiated (1,622 of 7,331)
- 31.5 per cent of children subject to child protection orders (2,185 of 6,942)
- 31.9 per cent of children living away from home (2,274 of 7,134).

As at 30 June 2008, 56.7 per cent of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care were placed with a kinship or Indigenous carer, or an Indigenous residential care service. This is a decrease of 1.8 percentage points since 30 June 2007 (58.5%).

The proportion of children placed with kinship or Indigenous carers has continued to fall, from 63.4 per cent at 30 June 2004 to 56.7 per cent at 30 June 2008. This may reflect that demand for placements for Indigenous children is exceeding the supply of Indigenous carers – from 30 June 2004 to 30 June 2008 the number of Indigenous children placed with an approved carer family or residential care service rose by 117.6 per cent. Over the same period, the number of Indigenous approved carer families increased by 47.6 per cent.
Domestic Violence Protection Order applications

In 2006/07 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aggrieved persons were almost eight times more likely than non-Indigenous persons to have a domestic violence order imposed by the Court (46.8 per 1,000 persons compared with 6.1 per 1,000 persons): see Figure 6.2.

Rates for issue of domestic violence orders for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples increased with remoteness (rates ranged from 26.6 per 1,000 persons in major cities to 64.8 per 1,000 persons in remote and very remote areas). The rate in the discrete communities was around 13 times the rate for all non-Indigenous Queenslanders (83.2 compared with 6.1 per 1,000 persons): see Figure 6.2.

As remoteness increased, the police, rather than the aggrieved, were more likely to make a domestic violence protection order (57% were made by police in major cities compared with 91% in remote and very remote areas). In both the Indigenous discrete communities aggregated and the Torres Strait region, 97 per cent of applications for domestic violence protection orders were made by police.

The number of domestic violence orders issued by the Court is greater where the Indigenous status of the accused is taken into account rather than the Indigenous status of the victim (3,975 compared with 3,862 in 2006/07).

In 2006/07, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons aged 17 or older were about eight times as likely to be the subject of a domestic violence order as their non-Indigenous peers (48.2 compared with 6.1 per 1,000 persons).

Figure 6.2 Rate of domestic violence orders issued, by Indigenous status of the aggrieved, per 1,000 persons (17 years and older), 2006/07.

These data represent only protection orders and temporary orders issued and do not include orders varied or revoked or transferred from jurisdictions outside Queensland. These data are geographically coded by the locality of the court house where the order was imposed not by the usual residence of the aggrieved. The 17 year plus population was used as the denominator to calculate these rates. A juvenile victim will be included on an order between adults, but the adult is taken as the primary aggrieved.

Source: Queensland Wide Interlinked Courts (QWIC) system, Dept. of Justice and Attorney-General.

These data have been compiled by the Indigenous status of the aggrieved (victim) and location of the Court.
Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

**Protecting children**

Following the Crime and Misconduct Commission Protecting Children report in 2004, the Queensland Government overhauled the child protection system in Queensland. This has included increased investment in prevention and early intervention, as well as creation of a new Department of Child Safety and increased investment in child protection services of $551.3 million in 2007/08 and $586.6 million for 2008/09.

A number of prevention and early intervention initiatives have been implemented in recent years to endeavour to reduce the incidence of harm to children from abuse and neglect. Ten **Referal for Active Intervention (RAI)** services have been established by the Department of Communities at Toowoomba, Ipswich, Caboolture, Beenleigh, Cairns, Rockhampton, Kingaroy, Inala, Townsville and South Gold Coast, with $22.8 million over 3 years (late 2006 to 2009). These services have assisted 1,117 families between late 2006 and the end of May 2008, approximately 24 per cent being Indigenous.

Key initiatives being implemented by the Department of Child Safety (DChS) and the Department of Communities (DoC) to reduce harm and improve services to Indigenous children and families include:

- **investment by DChS in the establishment of community residential facilities – Safe Houses** – in the communities of Aurukun, Kowanyama, Weipa/Napranum, Pormpuraaw, Doomadgee and Palm Island, each supported by a Family Intervention Service. In 2007/08, capital funding of $5 million and $15.7 million recurrent over four years was committed; and in 2008/09, a further $7.6 million capital funding and $7 million in recurrent funding over four years provided for safe houses in Eastern Cape York, Northern Peninsula Area (Bamaga, Seisia, New Mapoon, Umagico, and Injinoo), Torres Strait, and Mornington Island. Five of the ten safe houses will be built by mid 2009, with the others anticipated to be completed by late 2009/10. DoC is also funding residential care services for children and young people at risk of harm in Yarrabah, Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Atherton Tablelands, Logan, Toowoomba and the Western Cape.

- **the Safe Haven Initiative** of DoC provides a culturally appropriate service in Indigenous communities to respond to the safety needs of children, young people and their families witnessing family and domestic violence. In July 2007, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships endorsed $1.3 million to three service providers to deliver Safe Haven services for a period of two years in the communities of Cherbourg, Mornington Island and Coen. A temporary service is operational in Palm Island. Employment opportunities for local residents have occurred as a result of the services.

- **a Foster and Kinship Carer Support strategy** to provide better support to the DChS’s pool of foster and kinship carers through: the development of a carer handbook; establishment of a carers’ support line; allocation of $200,000 to support carer learning and participation; an extensive foster and kinship carer recruitment campaign; increased payment to carers and annual indexation of carer allowance to the consumer price index from January 2008; full reimbursement of relevant mileage; and expansion of the suite of learning and development resources for carers.

- **funding to Recognised Entities**, independent Indigenous organisations which actively participate in significant decisions made by DChS in relation to Aboriginal and Torres
 Strait Islander children who have come into contact with the child protection system. As at June 2008, there were 28 grant-funded recognised entities providing services for all of the Department’s child safety service centres

- mandatory training in Indigenous engagement – **Foundation Studies in Culture** — a two day mandatory program being delivered to all DChS staff across the state. The training is designed to develop a skilled workforce proficient in delivering culturally relevant, responsive and accessible child safety services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families

- referral of child safety matters where there is evidence of alcohol-related issues to the ‘child safety stream’ of the **Queensland Indigenous Alcohol Diversion Program**.

The Government has also strengthened the role and resourcing of the **Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian**, which plays a vital role in monitoring outcomes for children within the child protection system and the justice system through the Child Guardian function, in particular, through its Community Visitor, Complaints and Investigations programs. The Commission has an active program of visits to Indigenous communities and organisations. Through ‘**Views of Children and Young People Reports**’ it provides an opportunity for the concerns, views and wishes of young people in alternative care to be given a voice. The views of Indigenous children in care or detention are given particular attention.

In June 2008, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Minister for Child Safety, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, co-convened with the Mayors of the discrete communities a **Ministerial Indigenous Roundtable on Child and Family Wellbeing**. The Roundtable agreed on a suite of actions for governments at all levels, and for community members, to enable families and communities to be safe and supportive for children.

**Strong Community Life** is a community education program, supported by Queensland Government funding of $750,000 until December 2009. It celebrates the strengths in each community in a positive and challenging way and includes a series of locally produced radio programs, community events and billboards that provide each community with the opportunity to talk about alcohol issues with strong and positive messages from community leaders, service providers, young people and Indigenous heroes. Participation by Queensland Government Champions and Indigenous sports stars and entertainers are key components in the program. This program will support making communities safer for children and other vulnerable residents.

**Improving policing**

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) is committed to serving the people of Queensland by protecting life and property, preserving the peace, maintaining personal and community safety, preventing crime and upholding the law with due regard to the public good and the rights of the individual. The QPS operating budget in 2007/08 consisted of $1.44 billion. The QPS capital budget for 2007/08 was $258 million. Recent QPS actions to address levels of violence and abuse, and to provide safe custody of people, have included:

- boosting the **number of police officers in discrete communities**, with 29 additional positions in 2007/08. Queensland Government funding of $3 million and Australian Government funding of $12 million in 2007/08 will provide housing for the additional police in Aurukun, Hope Vale, Lockhart River, Pormpuraaw, Woorabinda and Doomadgee

- acquiring an additional **aircraft to enhance the provision of justice services throughout the Torres Strait**, allowing police to respond quickly to incidents occurring anywhere in the Torres Strait, as well as providing a significant search and rescue capability

- installing and/or upgrading closed circuit cameras in all public space areas of watchhouses in Indigenous communities at a total cost of $6.4 million.

The Government has also requested a review by the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) into Policing Indigenous Communities. The CMC’s report is expected in late 2008/early 2009.
Alcohol management

In recent years, the Queensland Government has taken wide-ranging steps across the state to restrict the supply of alcohol and reduce harms associated with alcohol use, such as new licensing laws, tighter regulation of premises, and tougher penalties for supply to minors. The Government has taken further actions to address alcohol use and harm in the discrete communities.

After the Cape York Justice Study, Alcohol Management Plans (AMPs) were implemented in 19 discrete Indigenous communities between 2002 and 2006, where levels of harm from alcohol use were high. This included alcohol restrictions to limit the amount and/or type of alcohol which a person can have in the communities.

A review in 2007 found some improvement post AMPs but still unacceptably high levels of alcohol-related harm, as demonstrated in Quarterly Reports. In February 2008, at a Ministerial Indigenous Roundtable on Alcohol, the Premier announced that communities would be encouraged to “go as ‘dry’ as possible” and that legislative provisions would be tightened to make alcohol restrictions more effective. Over $100 million over four years ($66 million from Queensland and $43 million from the Commonwealth) has been committed for additional alcohol-related health treatment services, sport and recreation, and diversionary services.

In July 2008, legislative amendments came into effect, which included: preventing Councils from holding general liquor licences; private houses being covered by the restrictions; banning public drinking as is the case in the rest of Queensland; and making it an offence to attempt to bring illicit alcohol into a community. Tenants and owner-occupiers were also provided with a simple way to have their home declared a dry place to manage alcohol availability and use in the home.

State and Commonwealth teams visited the discrete Indigenous communities in April and August 2008 for discussions about the alcohol restrictions and enhanced delivery of services that can support reduced demand and alcohol-related harms. Community-specific packages of revised restrictions (to take effect from 2 January 2009) and service and supports were announced in November 2008.

Cape York Welfare Reform Trial

The Queensland Government has also demonstrated a preparedness to explore ways of dealing with high levels of harm and dysfunction in Indigenous communities. In late 2007, the Premier made a commitment to participate in the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, a collaboration between the four Cape York communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge and the Queensland Government, the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership and the Australian Government.

The trial will run for four years and aims to restore positive social norms, re-establish local Indigenous authority, and support community and individual engagement in the real economy through the removal of the disincentives that cause dependency cycles. Benefits include increasing community control and ownership of services, improved social capital, enhanced leadership and, over time, a decreased role for government – and overall a safer and more supportive community. The trial will be fully operational by late 2008 and its progress will be monitored closely.

The Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) is a key part of the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial. It is an independent statutory body based in Cairns, with a legally qualified Commissioner and Local Commissioners who are respected members of the community in each of the welfare reform community sites. Legislation establishing the FRC was passed by the Queensland Parliament in March 2008 and The Commission commenced operation on 1 July 2008.

Four types of behaviour are targeted for intervention by the FRC: children not attending school; children being abused or neglected; adults committing offences or perpetrating family violence; and adults breaking their tenancy conditions. Where this occurs, a person can be referred to the FRC, which then holds a conference in the community where the person lives. For each conference it conducts, the FRC consists of
the Commissioner and two Local Commissioners from the relevant community. It is able to recommend or compel people to attend any services relevant to the issues they need to address under a case management plan. Community members may also access services voluntarily.

The FRC’s ultimate sanction is to order that a person’s welfare payment be subject to ‘conditional income management’, to ensure that the priority needs of that person, their partner and their children are met if there is no other way to ensure a person meets their obligations. As at the end of October 2008, 137 conferences had been convened by the FRC.

The FRC is supported by local co-ordinating groups and a range of additional support services, including enhanced drug, alcohol and mental health responses, parenting programs, family violence responses, counselling services, and Family Income Management (a voluntary budgetary support service).

The Queensland and Australian Governments and the Cape York Institute are collaborating to develop effective shared service delivery models for the new services. The Queensland Government has committed $40 million to the trial (in addition to a portion of the funds provided for alcohol reform) and $48 million has been allocated by the Australian Government (along with a once-off payment of $3.5 million for FRC establishment).

The Evidence

Offences against the person (offenders)

For the period 2007/08:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders were eight times more likely to be charged by police with offences against the person than non-Indigenous offenders (3,047 compared with 378 per 100,000): see Figure 6.3.

- there was no difference in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offending rates between major cities and inner regional areas, however, rates increased significantly with remoteness beyond these areas (from 2,096 in major cities to 4,383 per 100,000 in remote/very remote areas). A similar pattern was evident among non-Indigenous offending rates, however, on a much lower scale (354 compared with 512 per 100,000).

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offending rates (for these offence types) in the discrete Indigenous communities were around three times as high as those in the balance of Queensland (7,909 compared with 2,456 per 100,000). It is likely that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification of offenders in remote areas is significantly higher than in urban areas, hence, it is likely that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offending rates in urban areas may actually be higher than reported.3

- age specific rates show a similar pattern across age groups for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous offenders. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders in the discrete Indigenous communities were significantly more likely to be charged by police than offenders elsewhere across all age groups from 10 to 55 years.

3 It is also important to note that these data are grouped geographically by where the offence occurred rather than where the offender usually resided.
Reported violence by and against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons is likely to underestimate the true prevalence of violence for a variety of reasons, including under-reporting by victims of violence, legal and administrative issues and under-identification of both victims and offenders in administrative data: see Figure 6.3.

Youth detention

The main reason for remanding individuals in custody is the need to ensure that they will attend court as required to answer the charges made against them. A person may also be remanded in custody after being found guilty but before they are sentenced. Factors which influence a decision to remand someone in custody are complex, but can include the characteristics of the offender or offence, the likelihood that the offender will abscond or interfere with witnesses.

For the period 2006/07:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth made up 60.8 per cent of the 622 distinct young people who were detained either on remand or sentence.
• of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth who were detained, 70 per cent were on remand

• the rate at which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth were detained on remand was 9.3 per 1,000 compared with 0.5 per 1,000 for non-Indigenous youth. There was a similar disparity for those who were sentenced and in detention (3.9 per 1,000 compared with 0.1 per 1,000): see Figure 6.4.

• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth were most likely to have as their most serious offence, an offence against property (48% compared with 28% for non-Indigenous youth). Compared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, a greater proportion of non-Indigenous youth had as their most serious offence, an offence against the person (51% compared with 34% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth).

Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

The Queensland Government is committed to addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system. Since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) reported in 1991, and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement in 2000, major reforms have been underway to strengthen the effectiveness, fairness and cultural responsiveness of the criminal justice system and to divert Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples away from incarceration.

Two hundred and ninety of the 339 RCIADIC recommendations were accepted as relevant by the then Queensland Government, with ongoing assessment of progress. The last 32 recommendations to be addressed are now regarded as implemented. However, the RCIADIC recommendations will continue to inform Queensland Government policies, practice and service delivery, particularly in the criminal justice system.

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement (the Justice Agreement) was signed in December 2000 between the Queensland Government and representatives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Queensland. The long-term aim of the Justice Agreement is to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples coming into contact with the Queensland criminal justice system.

The Justice Agreement was independently evaluated in 2005 and the Queensland Government responded in 2006, recommitting to the goals of the Justice Agreement and setting out its strategies to address the over-representation of Indigenous people in the justice system.

Figure 6.4: Distinct young people in Queensland Youth Detention Centres, by legal status, 2006/07

Note: The data include only persons with a known residential address in Queensland.
Justice agencies continue to build on successful programs and try new approaches as the data indicate that over-representation remains unacceptably high. Over the next three years, a greater focus will be placed on integrated service delivery across justice-related programs, and community involvement through bodies such as the recently formed state-wide Community Justice Group Network.

As many commentators acknowledge, socio-economic factors are relevant to involvement with the criminal justice system. It is anticipated that progress towards the Closing the Gap and Q2 targets – especially in fields of education and employment – will be crucial in diminishing over-representation in the longer term.

A number of initiatives are underway (in addition to those such as Alcohol and Welfare reforms previously mentioned) to prevent crime and divert Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the justice system and incarceration, including:

- the **Queensland Indigenous Alcohol Diversion Program** (QIADP) is a three year pilot program involving a range of government agencies working in partnership with communities to develop an innovative treatment program to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders who have alcohol issues and who have come into contact with the justice system in Cairns (including Yarrabah), Townsville (including Palm Island) and Rockhampton (including Woorabinda). $36.6 million has been provided by the Queensland Government for the program. There are currently 77 people participating in the program while 483 referrals have been made for full assessment processes to determine suitability. An independent evaluation of the first year has found that the program is helping clients to reconnect to family, community and culture.

- the Department of Communities investment of $8.1 million in 2007/08 to fund services aimed at reducing the risk of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in police custody, specifically in relation to public intoxication. **Diversion Centres** provide a safe and monitored environment for clients to sober-up as an alternative to being held in police custody. **Cell Visitor Services** provide support to Indigenous people in police custody with the aim of reducing the incidence of suicide, self injury and health impacts related to intoxication. **Community Patrols** provide support, transport and referral to intoxicated and homeless people in identified ‘hot-spots’

- the **Queensland Murri Court** has evolved into a unique partnership between the Magistrates Court and Indigenous community Elders to address the needs of Indigenous Queenslanders appearing before the courts. In the last 18 months the number of Murri Courts has increased from five to 14, giving Queensland the most Indigenous courts in any Australian state. The Queensland Government has allocated a $5.2 million package for 2007/2009

- funding of $5.6 million in 2007/08, including $3.5 million in grants, has enabled the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to support 51 **Community Justice Groups** to engage and build the capacity of Indigenous people to resolve their local justice-related issues. The members support Indigenous victims and offenders at all stages of the legal process, encourage diversionary processes and develop networks with other agencies.

- the Department of Communities has developed an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Justice Strategy** to provide an integrated response to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous young people in the justice system and increase their representation in diversionary processes. In 2008/09 the strategy will focus on reducing the risk of further offending, enhancing existing diversionary programs and bail processes, and strengthening family engagement.

- Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) has an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy** in place. As part of the strategy permanent Probation and Parole Offices were established in the remote communities of Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Normanton and Thursday Island in 2006. In 2007/08, permanent offices were opened in...
Weipa and Aurukun. A permanent reporting office has also been established in the Indigenous community of Woorabinda in a shared service hub. These offices have allowed courts to more effectively consider community-based supervision as an alternative to imprisonment for offenders in these communities. QCS ensures that offenders on community based orders in these communities are supervised effectively. Further, by diverting offenders from custody to community supervision orders, QCS has prevented separation of families, allowed people to keep working, and allowed community reparation to occur. In 2008/09 the Queensland Government has committed a further $1.2 million to continue rolling-out permanent Probation and Parole offices in Indigenous communities in Far North Queensland.

Emergency responses

The Department of Emergency Services (DES) delivers services, working in conjunction with community volunteers and supporters, to enhance the safety and resilience of communities in preparing for and responding to natural disasters and emergencies across Queensland. DES has been actively implementing a national strategy Keeping Our Mob Safe to develop the capacity and resilience of Indigenous communities. DES has contributed:

- over $1.5 million to employ ambulance staff in Indigenous communities to provide pre-hospital care and ambulance services which improves primary response for serious ailments and injuries
- over $200,000 to run the Indigenous Auxiliary Firefighters Project in Mt Isa which resulted in seven qualified Indigenous auxiliaries with nationally accredited qualifications, part-time firefighter employment and enhanced general employment options
- over $2.2 million to the Palm Island Joint Emergency Service Facility which will result in enhanced ambulance, fire and emergency management service delivery for Palm Island contributing to safe and supportive communities
- over $215,000 for nine refurbished Toyota Troop Carrier ambulances through the Emergency Ground Transport Torres Strait Islands initiative
- $130,000 over two years through the Fire and Sustainable Communities in North-West Queensland initiative to work with the communities of Mornington Island, Doomadgee and Normanton on improving fire and emergency management
- $65,000 over 2006/07-2007/08 for the Disaster Resilience Community Infrastructure Project to better prepare 11 Cape York and Torres Strait communities for emergencies and disasters. Additionally $130,000 was allocated to fund 400 Disaster Resilience Emergency Kits
- through the Woorabinda Community Safety project, hard-wired smoke alarms installed in all homes in Woorabinda and an intensive First Aid training program implemented within the community

Auxiliary Fire Services provide services such as the containment of structural and environmental fires, motor vehicle entrapment and chemical spills, as well as providing public education on fire prevention. The Indigenous Auxiliary Firefighters Project implemented in Ingham and Mount Isa over 2006/07 and 2007/08 was awarded a commendation for delivering 14 Indigenous auxiliary firefighters enhanced general employment prospects.
Governance and Leadership

Good governance and strong, sound leadership – from all levels of government, community and private sector organisations, and within communities – are essential to meeting the challenges and realising the opportunities of closing the gaps in the life outcomes and opportunities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. This requires effective collaboration and productive partnerships across agencies and sectors, good engagement with stakeholders, and high standards of corporate capability, integrity and accountability.

Overview

The Queensland Government is committed to good governance and strong, sound leadership, demonstrating action itself as well as encouraging and supporting action in other levels of government, in councils and community organisations, and within communities.

There is no COAG target or Q2 target which directly addresses this strategic action area. However, improvements in this arena may have long-term impacts on a number of the COAG targets. For example:

- enhanced governance policies and systems may facilitate increased economic participation
- increased co-ordination of government and community-based services may improve health, educational and employment outcomes.

The measures which will be used by the Queensland Government to monitor progress are under development. The following strategies will best address governance and leadership in the communities:

- maintain and develop innovative engagement mechanisms
- develop and support community capacity and leadership
- support development of leadership for women and young people.
Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

**Government leading, engaging and partnering**

The Queensland Government is committed to working hard with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, other levels of government, and other sectors, to contribute to closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. This has included in recent years:

- championing the **COAG National ‘Closing the Gap’ targets** and the Indigenous Reform agenda
- creating a **Strong Indigenous Communities CEOs Committee** to oversee key Indigenous policy and service reforms
- establishing the **Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships** in the Department of Communities, along with ten enhanced regional ATSIP teams
- establishing the **Indigenous Government Coordination Office**, initially in the Department of Communities, and subsequently moved to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in early 2008, and recruiting Government Coordination officers at local and regional levels (based in the Department of Communities) to drive service integration and innovation in the discrete communities
- encouraging Indigenous participation in the Australia 2020 Summit and having an Indigenous stream – attended by the Premier, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, and the Leader of the Opposition – at the **Queensland 2020 Forum**
- recognising the vital role of community leadership and agreeing to shared priorities and actions in the **Indigenous Partnership Agreement** (IPA) signed in Yarrabah in July 2007 by the (then) Premier and mayors of the discrete Aboriginal and mainland Torres Strait Island communities
- convening **Ministerial Indigenous Roundtables** to negotiate agreed commitments from all three levels of government on priorities agreed in the IPA
- facilitating **Local Indigenous Partnership Agreements** (LIPA) to drive local priorities and actions, negotiated to date with three communities – Mornington Island, Doomadgee and Napranum – with others underway
- negotiating a **Memorandum of Understanding** which was signed between the Queensland Government and the Queensland Resources Council in July 2007 to facilitate training, employment and enterprise opportunities for Aboriginal and mainland Torres Strait Islander people in the mining sector
- the **Wal Meta Unit** in the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations enabling 51 Indigenous public sector employees across 17 departments to undertake the Leadership program at Diploma level
- signing up to the **COAG Closing the Health Gap Statement of Intent** and commencing development of a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy
- working jointly with **Indigenous bodies** such as the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, the Centre for Aboriginal Independence and Enterprise, the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute, the Centre for Indigenous Cultural Policy, and the Indigenous studies centres at Queensland’s universities
- commencing development of a new whole-of-government **Reconciliation Action Plan**.
In the discrete Indigenous communities, the Queensland Government has continued the Government Champion program started in 2002, in which CEOs or deputies of government agencies actively engage with, and advocate inside government on behalf of, a particular community. The Department of Communities also continues to convene negotiation tables which bring together community decision-makers with representatives of relevant government agencies and deal with issues such as barriers to employment, alcohol reform or responses to domestic violence. They are held in over 30 communities across Queensland.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders also continue to be engaged or represented in Indigenous–specific or mainstream Ministerial or agency advisory bodies or forums such as Community Cabinets, in order to inform Government decisions. Specialist bodies include the Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee, the QPS Indigenous Consultative Committee, the Queensland Indigenous Working Group and the Statewide Community Justice Reference Group.

In recognition of the need for a greater say for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Government, the Premier has announced the establishment of a Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council. The objective of the Advisory Council will be to provide the Government with high level, strategic advice on strategies and partnerships that can contribute to meeting the Closing the Gap targets and the Queensland Government’s Toward Q2: Tomorrow’s Queensland ambitions. The Advisory Council will have a diverse membership of up to 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. Members will have strong community networks and be respected members of their community. The Advisory Council will be chaired by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and where possible, the Premier will participate. This will ensure a direct link between the Advisory Council and the Queensland Government.

**Indigenous community capacity and leadership**

The Queensland Government is also working in a number of areas to support capacity development and leadership for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations in order to meet the challenges of ‘closing the gap’:

- the Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation (DLGSR) distributed $34 million to Indigenous councils in 2008/09 as a substantial contribution to the cost of delivering municipal services and developing capacity within councils. The funding also provides for the establishment of a Skills Bank, accessible by councils to provide high quality professional financial and human resource management expertise.

- DLGSR has implemented a number of capacity-building programs under the Community Governance Improvement Strategy for councillors and council staff of discrete Indigenous communities. The budget for these programs in 2007–08 was $6.1 million. In 2007, the programs included the Councillor Training Program, in which 170 councillors participated in training modules and received certificates, and Council Employees Administration Training, in which 11 council employees completed the Certificate III or Certificate IV in Local Government Administration.

- the Strengthening Indigenous Non-Government Organisations project has provided intensive organisational development and support to Indigenous-managed organisations funded by the Department of Communities. In 2007/08, $1.2 million was budgeted for the project, with a further $1.1 million for 2008-2009, for regionally-based positions and initiatives such as the CD-ROM, Valuing Organisational Improvement and Community Excellence (VOICE), provided to all Queensland based Indigenous-managed organisations funded by the Department of Communities.

- the Office for Women (OFW), Department of Child Safety delivers a number of capacity building programs for Indigenous women such as: the ‘Women learning together...
CASE STUDY: Hoops Dreaming Project

The Project is an initiative of Cairns Basketball Incorporated, a not-for-profit organisation, and is funded by the National Community Crime Prevention Programme. The operation of the Project is conducted by a Project Coordinating Committee, chaired by Joel Khalu (Participation and Indigenous Programs Manager for Cairns Basketball and Director of the Hoops Dreaming Project) and Sione Fa’aoso (Programs Coordinator of the project).

Joel and Sione were both participants in Young Indigenous Leaders Forums in Brisbane (Joel in 2005 and Sione in 2006). After participating in the Forums, Joel and Sione applied to the National Crime Prevention Programme to seek assistance to establish the Hoops Dreaming Project. They utilised skills they developed through the Forum in project planning and completing funding applications. The funding application was successful and the Hoops Dreaming Project initiative began in 2007.

The Hoops Dreaming Project offers Indigenous young people (aged 12 to 18) a support program which assists them to improve their education, employment outlook and health. The project also provides a series of meaningful life skills initiatives that are focused on educating, enhancing and enriching the lives of Indigenous young people.

The project uses both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Youth Mentors as role-models, and the sport of basketball as a tool to deliver and reinforce a positive message of leading healthy, active and crime-free lifestyles.

The focus of the Hoops Dreaming Project is to support Indigenous young people to:

• make smart, goal-oriented choices
• build a sense of community and
• develop life-long character building traits such as integrity, honesty and self-respect.

The project has expanded to run the Midnight Basketball program in Cairns, Yarrabah and Gordonvale. The Hoops Dreaming Project recently hosted a 3-on-3 basketball competition where a Hoops Dreaming Team consisting of several highly influential sports players, including Justin Hodges of the Brisbane Broncos, competed against the Cairns Marlins.
Land and Culture

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have, as first peoples, long histories of strong kinship, strength and pride in culture, and a special relationship with place, land, waters and sea which has endured for thousands of years. These continue to be important features in the everyday lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. They are widely regarded as central to the positive maintenance of all aspects of health and wellbeing.

Overview

The Queensland Government acknowledges that to ‘Close the Gap’ in Indigenous life outcomes, recognition of the importance of land, culture and history must inform the other areas of action dealt with in this report.

To this end, the Queensland Government endeavours to promote and affirm Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, create access to and management of land and sea as a base for wellbeing and cultural affirmation, and encourage stronger involvement in and influence on natural resource management planning and policy.

While there is no COAG target or Q2 target which is directly addressed by this strategic action area, improvements in service delivery in this arena will have long-term impacts on a number of the COAG targets. For example:

- increased acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land and sea use and care practices may lead to employment opportunities
- increased opportunities in the arts may result in enhanced employment opportunities, personal income earning potential and greater community sustainability.

The measures which will be used by the Queensland Government to monitor progress are under development. The following are strategies which will best support the importance of land and culture in ‘closing the gap’:

- promote and affirm Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, culture and language
- support access to, and management of, land and sea
- support and enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to protect and strengthen their cultures and to record and manage their cultural heritage and language.
Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

Promotion and affirmation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures

The Queensland Government has an ongoing commitment to promoting and affirming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

A range of initiatives are underway to support and promote cultural production through the arts. The Department of Education, Training and the Arts:

- provides support to arts organisations such as the Aboriginal Centre for Performing Arts (ACPA), which is dedicated to the development and training of Indigenous performing artists. It is the only Indigenous registered training authority in Australia delivering a curriculum that spans acting, dance, music and voice and boasts one of the highest retention rates for an Indigenous training institution. ACPA provides a nurturing environment that celebrates artistic excellence in contemporary performing arts practice and training, and gives a ‘voice’ to the next generation of Indigenous Australian performing artists. The Centre is a Government-owned, not-for-profit company based in Brisbane, taking students from across Australia.

- promotes internationally quality Queensland Indigenous art through the Queensland Indigenous Art Marketing and Export Authority (QIAMEA)

- provides support at a community level through programs such as the Indigenous Regional Arts Fund and Backing Indigenous Arts (BIA). With a budget of $10.7 million over four years (from 2007 to 2011) the BIA program recognises that arts play a pivotal role in building and sustaining communities through preserving and promoting culture and creating opportunities for communities to shape their own future. It provides places and tools for creating art, as well as skills development opportunities, and helps artists to secure broader public recognition and an economic return for their work. The program consists of four initiatives:
  - the Indigenous Art Centre Network. $1.2 million was allocated in 2007 to nine art centres and art hubs across Far North Queensland, including the Torres Strait, which are cultural focal points in remote communities.
  - the Cairns Printmaking Centre which recognises the success and supports the work of Indigenous artists such as Alick Tipoti, Billy Missi, Dennis Nona and Brian Robinson, who are pioneering an exciting new movement in fine art printmaking. When operational in 2009, the centre will enable local artists to have larger print runs of their work and more opportunities to make an income.
  - Building Skills and Opportunities initiatives, with $806,000 in 2007/08 across 25 projects, developed the skills of artists, engaged young people in making arts, and kept cultural traditions alive through artist-in-residence and mentoring programs, the expansion of arts opportunities for children and young people, Indigenous dance and music projects including festivals, touring and showcasing opportunities, digital story-telling and writing initiatives.
  - the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair is to be held in August 2009 and will provide a significant opportunity to celebrate and profile Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists from Far North Queensland and
introduce their unique work to new audiences both at home and internationally. A symposium on Indigenous issues and a performing arts festival will complement the Fair.

The State’s main cultural institutions are also actively pursuing opportunities to promote and protect Indigenous cultures. For example:

- the State Library of Queensland allocates over $1.8 million per annum to Indigenous Library Services, and has since 2002 supported Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) in remote communities without library services. Services are also provided in Brisbane through the Kuril Dhagan centre within the new State Library building. IKCs have been established in 17 communities on Cape York Peninsula, in the Torres Strait and at Cherbourg. These Centres complement traditional library services with services based on the oral and visual traditions of Indigenous culture. They also provide literacy and technology training programs, help to preserve culture and act as community meeting places.

- the State Library of Queensland is continuing to explore ways to work with Indigenous communities to document, record, access and promote their languages through the Queensland Indigenous Languages project funded by the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, and to engage with communities to support the online sharing and preservation of cultural heritage material through the Keeping Culture Strong project. Footprints before Me, a joint project with the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Community and Personal Histories Unit, has enabled Indigenous people to access a comprehensive website for family history and community research.

- the Queensland Museum is committed to affirming respect for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders and their cultures. The Museum maintains a culturally appropriate and comprehensive program of returning Ancestral Remains and Secret or Sacred Objects to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities and Torres Strait Islander communities. Where Traditional Owners are unable to repatriate remains and objects – due to Native Title Claims, lack of facilities (i.e. keeping places) or lack of access to traditional country, the Museum transfers ‘ownership’ to Traditional Owners and continues to care for cultural property until such time as communities are ready to receive their property. Groups are encouraged to visit remains and objects whenever they wish. Assistance in the way of advice is provided to communities establishing small museums and keeping places. Further work is underway with the Centre for Indigenous Cultural Policy on cultural heritage and repatriation protocols.

- the Queensland Museum’s Dandiri Maiwar Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures Centre and Binangar Language Centre, provide programs for schools (preschool to adult learners) and general visitors that showcase the diversity, histories, cultures and perspectives of Queensland Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. Through its Cultures and Histories Program, the Museum encourages visits from Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders to view and research objects in the collection that relate to their groups. This has been significant for groups participating in cultural retrieval and revival projects for their people.

**Land and sea country**

The Queensland Government is supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders’ access to, and management of, land and sea country as a foundation for wellbeing and cultural affirmation. The Government is also encouraging Indigenous peoples’ stronger involvement in, and influence on, natural resource management planning policy.

The Department of Natural Resources and Water (DNRW) administers key legislation that recognises Indigenous interests in land including: the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Cultural Heritage Acts 2003; the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Land Acts; the Native Title Act 1993; and the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007. This legislation is supported by a number of initiatives, including:
• the Capacity Development Officer Program which provides funding to Native Title Representative Bodies to assist and support Traditional Owner groups in meeting their obligations in relation to mineral exploration activities on their traditional country. Since the Program’s introduction in 2004 the Department has provided approximately $2 million and, in collaboration with Native Title Representative Bodies, has delivered over 120 information workshops across the state

• the Looking After Country Together strategy, a three year state-wide program to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to traditional land and sea country, support stronger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in the management of traditional land and sea country, and encourage stronger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in and influence on broader natural resource planning and policy development

• the Wild River Rangers program under which twenty Indigenous Rangers have been appointed with a further 80 positions being negotiated. The rangers provide environmental services to Queensland by looking after the cultural and natural values of the pristine river systems in their traditional country. An evaluation of the program is currently underway

• development of access to country protocols and natural resource management jobs to facilitate the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007

• the Cultural Heritage Body Grants Program which supports registered Cultural Heritage Bodies in Queensland to help them fulfil their legislative role under the Cultural Heritage Acts to preserve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage sites and areas in Queensland

• introduction of a new leasing regime to enable the trustees of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land to issue long-term leases (up to 99 years) for residential, public housing, commercial development and community infrastructure purposes. Long-term leases provide security of tenure for home owners, business people and government and confidence to invest in Indigenous communities

• the Improved Future Land Practices (Palm Island) Project, a pilot for reforming tenure and improving land management in Deeds of Grant in Trust communities throughout Queensland. The Project, with a budget of $2.3 million over three years aims to deliver an effective system for granting tenure appropriate to the land use needs of the Palm Island community, Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, the Manbarra People and the Queensland Government

• the Delbessie Agreement (State Rural Leasehold Land Strategy), which came into effect in January 2008, which provides incentives for leaseholders who negotiate Indigenous access and use agreements. Such agreements will allow certain traditional activities, defined as camping, fishing, gathering and hunting, performing rites or ceremonies, and visiting sites of significance, to be carried out on country.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has allocated $11 million over the next four years to implement their responsibilities under the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007. The objective of the funding is to deliver enhanced natural and cultural heritage protection, and improve social and economic opportunities through Traditional Owners’ ownership, management and presentation of existing and future national park estates. The EPA will facilitate the inclusion of the existing national park estate on Cape York Peninsula and future national parks within a joint management framework. To achieve these objectives, the EPA has entered into Indigenous Management Agreements and Indigenous Land Use Agreements that provide, among other things, employment of additional Indigenous Rangers and the establishment of contracts with Individual Land Trusts to support their involvement with national park management.

Since the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007 was introduced almost 293,000 hectares have been transferred as either Aboriginal freehold grants or national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land). In August 2008, the Queensland Government handed back land to the Kulla Land Trust on Cape York Peninsula and signed historic agreements establishing the second national park on Aboriginal land in Queensland –
KULLA (McIlwraith Range) National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land). The Government also handed other areas of land in the Coen area to the Toolka, Kulla and Muluna Land Trusts. Each of the three land trusts signed conservation agreements for nature refuges on these lands.

The Cape York Peninsula Regional Advisory Committee has been established, with 50 per cent of the members being Indigenous, and has held its first meeting. This Committee will advise Ministers on matters relating to the declaration of Areas of International Conservation Significance and Indigenous Community Use Areas, and other matters such as land management.

To ensure that the cultural heritage values of intended building development sites for government projects are not compromised by development, the Department of Public Works administers the cultural heritage management program. This involves liaising and consulting with Traditional Owners and other interested parties on behalf of the client agencies undertaking the development. This program has the effect of meeting the requirements of legislation relating to native title and cultural heritage.

Agreements have been negotiated and signed in relation to a range of regional land and sea management opportunities on mainland Queensland and in the Torres Strait. The agreements restore the capacity of Traditional Owners to influence the management of traditional country and meet their custodial responsibilities. They apply in the Wet Tropics Region and the Cape York Peninsula and Savannah of Far North Queensland, and in the Northern Queensland Marine Region.

As at November 2008, the Environmental Protection Agency had 67 identified Indigenous employees across the State; principally in North Queensland, working directly in protected area management and environmental protection. This enables Traditional Owners to influence management of traditional country and meet their custodial responsibilities.
Part C – End Notes

- Demographic Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders
- Glossary
- Technical Notes
- Appendix A
- Appendix B
Demographic Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders

The following summary and maps provide an overview of key demographic data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland.

Resident population

In 2006, Queensland had the second largest Indigenous population after New South Wales. More than half (61.0%) of Australia’s Torres Strait Islander population and a quarter (25.7%) of the Aboriginal population lived in Queensland.

Based on the 2006 Census, it is estimated that the resident Indigenous population in Queensland at 30 June 2006 was 146,400 – or 3.6 per cent of all people in Queensland.

Indigenous status

According to the 2006 Census, the majority of Indigenous Queenslanders identified as Aboriginal (98,700 or 77.4%). A further 18,400 (14.4%) identified as being Torres Strait Islander and 10,500 (8.2%) as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Between the 2001 and 2006 Censuses, the number of people counted as being Indigenous increased by 15,000 or 13.3 per cent. The increase in the non-Indigenous population over the same time was 8.4 per cent. The growth in the Indigenous population over time reflects not only natural population increase, but also other factors including improvement in data collection methods and people newly identifying their Indigenous origin in the Census.

Regional distribution

Indigenous Queenslanders are dispersed across the state with an estimated 21.9 per cent living in major cities, 51.6 per cent living in regional areas and 26.5 per cent living in remote and very remote areas of the state. Around half of those living in remote and very remote areas (14.2% of all Indigenous residents) live in the discrete Indigenous communities (See Map 2).

Age and sex

The Queensland Indigenous population has a very young age structure, reflecting higher birth rates and shorter life expectancy. In 2006, the median age of Indigenous persons was 20 years, considerably lower than the median age of 36 years for Queensland’s non-Indigenous population.

According to the 2006 census, 38.9 per cent of Indigenous persons were aged less than 15 years, compared with 20.0 per cent of the non-Indigenous population. Only 3.0 per cent of the Indigenous population was aged 65 years and over, compared with 12.5 per cent of the non-Indigenous population.

Mobility

Map 1 shows the proportion of the population which is Indigenous by local government areas. There are relatively high proportions of Indigenous people living in the west and north of the state, as well as in the central south region, compared to non-Indigenous people.

Map 2 shows where the greatest numbers of Indigenous people live, irrespective of the non-Indigenous population. Most Indigenous people live in major urban and regional centres.

These maps give an indication of population at one point in time. They are unable to show the patterns of movement of Indigenous people from one area to another. Understanding mobility patterns is important when developing policy and programs. Research tells us that:

- the mobility of Indigenous people is subject to seasonal variations. During the wet season travelling is much more difficult in remote areas, and thus mobility is less frequent than in the dry season
- mobility is especially high amongst the Indigenous youth population in the Cape York Peninsula. Indigenous people often move to and from urban and regional centres which may offer social and medical services that are unavailable in a rural or remote community.

Maps of Queensland

1. Indigenous People as a Proportion of the Population by Local Government Area – 2006

LEGEND
- Indigenous population
  - 20% or more
  - 10% to less than 20%
  - 5% to less than 10%
  - 2% to less than 5%
  - Less than 2%

Note: Data are based on local government areas.

Note: Data are based on 2006 local government areas. Graduated symbols are sized in direct proportion to the magnitude of the Indigenous population in each local government area.

3. Queensland by Remoteness of Area – 2006

Categories are based on the ABS Australian Standard Geographical Classification Remoteness Structure which uses the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA). ARIA measures the remoteness of a point based on the physical road distance to the nearest Urban Centre.

Source: Office of Economic and Statistical Research.
### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age standardised rates (Direct method)</strong></td>
<td>The direct method of age standardising rates calculates the overall rate that would have prevailed in the standard population if it had experienced at each age the rates of the population under study. This method is a useful technique to compare two or more populations with differing age structures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Birthweight (low and very low)** | Baby weight measured at time of birth:  
- Low – 1500 grams to less than 2500 grams  
- Very low – less than 1500 grams |
| **Canadian National Occupancy Standard** | Specifies the number of bedrooms required in a dwelling based on the number, age, sex and relationships of household members. Households that require one more bedroom to meet the standard are considered to experience 'a moderate degree of overcrowding', whereas households requiring two or more bedrooms are said to experience a 'high degree of overcrowding'.  
The Canadian National Occupancy Standard states that:  
- No more than two people shall share a bedroom  
- Parents or couples may share a bedroom  
- Children under five years, either of the same sex or opposite sex may share a bedroom  
- Children under 18 years of the same sex may share a bedroom  
- A child aged 5 to 17 years should not share a bedroom with a child under five of the opposite sex  
- Single adults 18 years and over and any unpaired children require a separate bedroom. |
| **Cause of death** | The cause of death is the disease or injury which initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to the death. For example, a death certificate may report Ischaemic Heart Disease as the cause and Diabetes mellitus, Atherosclerosis and Obesity as other conditions that contributed to the death. |
| **Child protection order** | A child protection order is as defined under Chapter 2, Part 4 of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, including:  
- an order extending, varying or revoking a child protection order; and  
- an interim order under Section 67 in relation to a proceeding for a child protection order. |
| CDEP | The Commonwealth Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme enables participants (usually members of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities) to exchange unemployment benefits for opportunities to undertake work and training in activities, which are managed by a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community organisation. For the purposes of this publication, participants in the program have been classified as unemployed. |
| Discrete communities | Encompasses the 19 communities of Aurukun, Bamaga, Cherbourg, Doomadgee, Hope Vale, Injinoo, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mornington Island, Mapoon, Napranum, New Mapoon, Palm Island, Pormpuraaw, Seisia, Umagico, Woorabinda, Wujal Wujal and Yarrabah. Note that, unless otherwise stated, the discrete communities refer to these communities irrespective of the 2008 Local Government Reform process. This process affected council administration arrangements only, not the nature or status of individual Indigenous communities. Other data presented by Local Government Areas is based on the LGAs prior to the 2008 Local Government Reform process. |
| Employment rate | The number of employed to working age population (15 years and over) ratio. |
| Hospital separation | A hospital separation is an episode of care that can be total hospital stay (from admission to discharge, transfer or death), or a proportion of hospital stay ending in change of status (e.g. from acute care to rehabilitation). |
**Glossary**

| Indigenous identification | The following definition, commonly known as ‘The Commonwealth Definition’, was given in a High Court judgement in the case of *Commonwealth v Tasmania* (1983) 46 ALR 625:

> ‘An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.’

There are three components to the Commonwealth definition:

- descent
- self-identification
- community acceptance.

In practice, it is not feasible to collect information on the community acceptance part of this definition in general purpose statistical and administrative collections and therefore standard questions on Indigenous status relate to descent and self-identification only.

There is likely to be considerable variability between the data collections in the willingness of the client to provide, and of the service provider to collect, information on Indigenous status; the quality of the information provided by the client; and the perceived relevance of the information by both the client and the service provider. Under-identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is a problem for most administrative data collections. Additionally, the way identification is collected can vary considerably between data sets:

- Census and many administrative collections – self-identification.
- Perinatal data collection – the Indigenous status of the baby is derived from the Indigenous status of the mother. This under-identifies babies with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander father and a non-Indigenous mother (estimated to be approximately 30 per cent of Indigenous babies).
- Birth registration data – derives Indigenous status from the Indigenous status recorded for either parent (where available).
- Deaths registration data – uses Indigenous status as recorded by the death certificate (usually provided by family or friends).

| Infant death | An infant death is where a live born baby dies within one year of birth.

| Labour force | Persons aged 15 years and over who are:

- Employed (people who have worked for at least one hour in the reference week).
- Unemployed (people who are without work, but are actively looking for work and available to start work within four weeks). For the purposes of this publication, unemployed includes those who have participated in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National literacy and numeracy tests</td>
<td>Tests conducted in Years 3, 5 and 7 to assess a students’ performance and skills relative to their national school year cohort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offences against the person</td>
<td>The offence division of Offences Against the Person includes the following offence sub-divisions: Homicide (Murder), Other Homicide; Assault; Sexual Offences; Robbery; Extortion; Kidnapping, Abduction and Deprivation of Liberty; and Other Offences Against the Person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rate</td>
<td>Employed and unemployed persons as a percentage of the total population aged 15 years and over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perinatal death</td>
<td>A perinatal death is either a still born baby of at least 20 weeks gestation or weighing at least 400 grams, or a live born baby dying within 28 days of birth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remoteness area</td>
<td>This publication uses the categories, Major Cities, Inner Regional, Outer Regional, Remote and Very Remote to describe remoteness. These categories are based on the ABS Australian Standard Geographical Classification Remoteness Structure which uses the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA). ARIA measures the remoteness of a point based on the physical road distance to the nearest Urban Centre. Due to small numbers, data for Remote and Very Remote have been aggregated for most indicators however some health indicators remain disaggregated for comparative purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantiated child protection notification</td>
<td>The outcome of an investigation and assessment process by the Department of Child Safety, where it is assessed that the child or young person has experienced significant harm and/or there are identifiable risk factors that suggest that the child may be harmed in the future. Harm is ‘any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect, or sexual abuse or exploitation.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>Persons aged 15 years and over who are not employed and are actively looking for work, as a proportion of the total labour force.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Technical Notes

Caution should be exercised when using either numbers or rates alone to measure outcomes in specific and different areas. Rates, for example, are sensitive to small populations. Both numbers and rates of reported outcomes have particular uses and should be presented together to give a clear and balanced picture of the level of the outcomes of interest. Percentage changes are another type of rate that requires caution when interpreting. Small numbers of specific events can result in large percentage changes.

Mortality

Perinatal mortality

1. A perinatal death is either a still born baby of at least 20 weeks gestation or weighing at least 400 grams, or a live born baby dying within 28 days of birth.
2. These data are extracted by year of death, and represent perinatal deaths of babies of usual residents of Queensland.
3. Indigenous status shown is that of the mother, not the baby or baby’s father.
4. Births and deaths where Indigenous status was not stated were aggregated with non-Indigenous births and deaths respectively.

Median age at death

1. These data are extracted by year of registration, not by year of death and represent deaths of usual residents of Queensland.
2. Deaths that are not yet registered are not included in these data.
3. Deaths where Indigenous status was not stated are aggregated with non-Indigenous deaths.
4. Two years data, 2005 and 2006 have been aggregated to provide sufficient counts for geographic areas with small populations.

The ABS estimates that the implied coverage of Indigenous deaths in Queensland is approximately 51 per cent over the period 2002-2006 (Deaths, Australia, 2006, ABS cat no. 3302.0).

Causes of death

1. These data are extracted by year of registration, not by year of death and represent deaths of usual residents of Queensland.
2. Deaths that are not yet registered are not included in these data.
3. Deaths where Indigenous status is not stated are aggregated with non-Indigenous deaths.
4. Excludes deaths where cause was not recorded.

The ABS estimates that the implied coverage of Indigenous deaths in Queensland is approximately 51 per cent over 2002-2006 (Deaths, Australia, 2006, ABS cat no. 3302.0). It is likely that the rates and ratios stated in this report underestimate the true rates and ratios; however, it is not appropriate to apply an adjustment factor to cause of death categories as it is probable that there are variations in the likelihood of death registration between categories.

Health

Hospital separations

In this report, hospital separations are referred to as hospital admissions for ease of understanding.

1. These data are for hospital separations for usual residents of Queensland only and only count separations from Queensland hospitals.
2. These data do not represent prevalence of each condition in each area, rather the number of hospital admissions for each condition. As such, they are not a count of unique individuals. Some patients will have several hospitalisations for the same disease or injury episode.
3. Hospital transfers are excluded where possible to prevent double counting.

4. Admitted patients who receive same day procedures are included in these data, unless otherwise stated.

5. Where a patient’s Indigenous status was not stated, they were aggregated with non-Indigenous patients.

It is likely that these data under-represent the actual level of Indigenous admissions. An audit of hospital separation data in 2007 showed that 88 per cent of Indigenous hospital inpatients were recorded as such in hospital records. There was considerable variation in estimated capture levels by remoteness area with lower rates in urban areas.

Specific condition codes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes used for identifying potentially preventable hospitalisations presented in hospitals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source: Australian Hospital Statistics 2004/05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ICD-10-AM codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>E10–E14.9 as principal diagnoses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease</td>
<td>J20, J41, J42, J43, J44, J47 as principal diagnosis only, J20 only with additional diagnoses of J41, J42, J43, J44, J47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulatory disease</td>
<td>I00 to I99 as principal diagnosis only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyelonephritis</td>
<td>N10, N11, N12, N13.6, N39.0 as principal diagnosis only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellulitis</td>
<td>L03, L04, L08, L88, L98.0, L98.3 as principal diagnosis only, exclude cases with any procedure except those in blocks 1820 to 2016 or if procedure is 30216-02, 30676-00, 30223-02, 30064-00, 34527-01, 34527-00, 90661-00 and this is the only listed procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renal dialysis</td>
<td>Z49 as principal diagnosis only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>X85 – Y09 and Y871 as principal diagnosis only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Technical Notes

Quarterly Report Hospital Separations Data

6. While every effort has been made to exclude cases where a patient was transferred to prevent double counting, it is likely that due to variations in data entry, not all patient transfers have been excluded, hence the burden of injury may be over-estimated by hospital admissions.

7. These data are based on place of usual residence of the admitted patient and thus may not reflect the actual number of admissions for assault occurring in any particular community.

8. Data show counts of admission to hospital and not counts of actual assault incidents. It is possible that one assault incident could require more than one admission to hospital.

9. An admission for assault in a particular period does not necessarily mean that an assault occurred in that period.

10. Variations in admissions may also occur as a result of variations in local behaviours and admission practices, for example, not all assaults result in admission to hospital.

11. In communities with a small population or where there are only a small number of hospital admissions, the reliability of rates may be low.

12. Given the above, comparisons across communities and between periods must be made with care.

13. Expected quarterly counts for each community are based on the 2006/07 Queensland rate.

Low birthweight

1. A low birthweight baby weighs less than 2,500 grams at birth.

2. These data are live born singleton births only (i.e. multiple births are excluded due to their increased propensity for lower birthweights).

3. These data are extracted by year of birth, and represent births of babies to women who were usual residents of Queensland.

4. Indigenous status shown is that of the mother, not the baby or baby’s father.

5. Births to women whose Indigenous status was not stated are aggregated with non-Indigenous births.

Education

Quarterly Report average student attendance

1. Attendance Rate = (Total Attendance (FTE) / Total Possible Number of Enrolment Days) * 100

2. Data may only be used to indicate broad trends.

3. Includes full and part day absences.

4. Includes full-time students only.

5. Includes all year levels.

6. Information for Bamaga provides an integrated summary which includes students residing at Bamaga, Injino, New Mapoon, Seisia and Umagico since all students attend Northern Peninsula Area State College (previously Bamaga State School).

7. Data for the ‘Average student attendance rate by community, semester 2, 2007 and semester 1, 2008’ includes all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

8. Mossman Gorge Community represents attendance of all students at Mossman State School and Mossman State High School who have Mossman Gorge Community as their home or mailing address.

National benchmarks in reading, writing and numeracy

1. Exempted student numbers are included in the ‘below benchmark’ category.

2. Absent students are excluded from the calculation of benchmark attainment.

3. Geographic locations reported in this report do not match the geographic locations used for national reporting purposes, thus are not comparable.
4. State-wide benchmarks statistics were sourced from the National Report on Schooling (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs).

5. Data reported by remoteness location were sourced directly from the Queensland Studies Authority and were reported by school location. Statistical calculations were based directly on raw counts.

6. From 2008, the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) will replace the former State and Territory Literacy and Numeracy Testing program. NAPLAN encompasses Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 and reports student performance across ten achievement bands spanning these year levels. Six achievement bands apply to any one year level with a national minimum standard established on each scale.

**Employment**

**Labour force status**

1. Employed persons exclude CDEP participants.
2. Unemployment rate includes CDEP participants.
3. In the standard reporting from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, CDEP participants were counted as employed persons.
4. Where Indigenous status is not stated, persons are aggregated with non-Indigenous persons.

**Healthy homes**

**Overcrowding**

1. Overcrowding is defined using the Canadian National Occupancy Standard. Please refer to the Glossary for a definition.

**Safe communities**

**Youth justice**

1. These data include youth having committed or allegedly committed an offence:
an offender charged with motor vehicle theft, unlawful entry, assault and other theft would be included four times in any offender breakdown by age and sex.

2. Only persons aged ten years and over are deemed to be offenders. Under Queensland law, children under ten years of age are not held criminally responsible, although they may be involved in the commission of an offence. Juvenile offenders are those aged between and including ten and sixteen years.

3. Offenders have not been included if their age and sex are not specified in QPS records. Approximately 0.3 per cent of offenders have been excluded for this reason.

**Offence counting**

1. Reported offences refer to all established offences reported to or becoming known to the police within the relevant reference period.

2. The counting rules used by the QPS in the collection and collation of crime statistics are based on the guidelines published in the National Crime Statistics Manual (ABS) and as amended from time to time by the National Crime Statistics Advisory Group.

3. The national counting rule is that for each victim within a distinct criminal incident, the Most Serious Offence (MSO) per ANCO subdivision is counted. The national data set does not include ‘victimless’ offences such as those detailed in the QPS division of Other Offences.

4. The QPS counting rule for Other Offences is to count each distinct criminal act per criminal incident.

5. Where the victim based rule applies, the description of a victim varies according to the type of offence. A victim may be an individual person, an organisation, a place/premise, or a motor vehicle. The application of the MSO rule has major implications for the recording of crime statistics. By applying the MSO rule a single criminal incident may result in a number of offences being recorded. For incidents where the same victim is subjected to multiple offences belonging to different subdivisions, one offence, the most serious, is counted within each subdivision. For example, if a person is kidnapped and then raped by two offenders, one kidnapping/abduction/deprivation of liberty and one rape would be counted.

**Exceptions to counting rules**

The offence subdivision of Sexual Offences (which includes Rape and Attempted Rape and Other Sexual Offences) is an exception to the national counting rule. The counting rule applied by the QPS in respect of this group of offences is that for each victim the MSO per ANCO subdivision is counted on the basis of time and place.

**Interpreting the Queensland Police Service offence data**

Comparisons of crime rates over different areas should be interpreted with great caution due to the many factors which differ from community to community. The level of crime in any community is affected by the number and composition of its population, with particular reference to age, sex, ethnicity and employment. The climate and geographical features of the community are important as is the economic structure including the local industry and the level and distribution of income. The attitude of the public toward crime can also impact upon local crime levels. Crime statistics for low volume offence categories tend to fluctuate randomly and dramatically from one year to the next. This can cause difficulties in the identification of trends and patterns in the levels of offences. It is, therefore, important to approach these low volume offence categories with caution when looking at trends and even when making comparisons across geographical areas.

Moreover, while monitoring trends in Queensland Police offence data is a useful indicator of changes occurring in the discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with the implementation of the Alcohol Management Plans, there are several factors to be considered when interpreting the information. The following factors may impact adversely on offence trend numbers:
there is an increased number of available offence types with the implementation of Alcohol Management Plans in many communities, for example, alcohol carriage offences

• increased police presence in the communities

• special police operations e.g. drug squad operating in a community in a particular month

• there may be an increased propensity to report some types of offences if normative values of community members changes, for example, breaches of domestic violence orders

• the relatively small number of offences for an individual community may display considerable volatility, e.g. one or a few individuals may be charged with many different types of offences leading to elevated numbers for a particular month

• the reported offences against the person encompass a broad range of offences and for this reason may not indicate the level of alcohol related harm.

Quarterly report offences against the person data

1. Offences against the person describes the number of reported personal offences to police, such as homicide, assaults, sexual assaults etc. They do not count the number of victims or the number of offenders. Many things including where and when the offence occurred, the availability of police officers and the relationship between the offender and the victim, can impact the number of reported offences at any point in time. For example, offences may be reported many months after they have occurred. Offences that are ‘not substantiated’ or ‘cancelled’ are not counted/included in the offence count.

2. These data are not official Police Service data as they provide detail not normally published in official Service documents. Because these data are produced for small areas, caution should be used in their interpretation.

3. The data were provided by the Queensland Police Service.

Court appearances

1. The definition of a ‘person’ is based on the defendant records having the same surname, first name and date of birth. The data have been manually aggregated, small variances have been assessed and where applicable have resulted in the defendant records being aggregated.

2. People convicted of breaching alcohol carriage restrictions have been counted in the location where they have been convicted of committing the offence.

The ‘Number of persons convicted’ and ‘Number of charges resulting in a conviction’ include charges finalised where an order is made that no conviction be recorded on the defendant’s criminal history.

For the 12 months to September 2008, the rate per 1,000 population was calculated using the average number of people convicted each year as the numerator and the 2007 Estimated Resident Population (10 years and older) as the denominator.
Proportion (%) of students above Year 3, 5 and 7 benchmarks for Reading, Writing and Numeracy, by Indigenous status, Queensland, 2007 (with 95% confidence interval).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum area</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indigenous status</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>95% confidence interval</th>
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</table>
Statistics in this report

Sources of data

The statistics in this report were compiled by the Office of Economic and Statistical Research (OESR), using government agency administrative data and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data.

Rates

Where appropriate, data are presented as a number per 1,000 or 100,000 population (i.e. as a rate) or as a proportion of a population. Rates enable the comparison of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and they enable comparisons to be made across geographic regions.

Data for causes of death, and hospital admissions for selected conditions are presented as age standardised rates. The Queensland Indigenous population is considerably younger than the non-Indigenous population and there is a close relationship between age and health-related issues. Age standardisation of rates enables a ‘true’ comparison by minimising the effects of differences in age composition.

Estimated Resident Population and Census population counts from the ABS are used to calculate rates in this report.

Statistical boundaries

This publication uses the categories: Major Cities, Inner Regional, Outer Regional and Remote to describe remoteness. These categories are based on the ABS Australian Standard Geographical Classification Remoteness Structure which uses the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA). Due to small numbers, data for Remote and Very Remote have been aggregated for most indicators.

The geographic category ‘discrete communities’ refers to the Indigenous communities of: Aurukun, Bamaga, Cherbourg, Doomadgee, Hope Vale, Injinoo, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Mornington Island, Napranum, New Mapoon, Palm Island, Pompuraaw, Seisia, Umagico, Woorabinda, Wujal Wujal and Yarrabah. These communities are commonly referred to as DOGITs (Deed of Grant in Trust communities).

The Torres Region refers to the communities within the Torres Strait Regional Council, and the Torres Shire.

Reliability

Each data source has strengths and weaknesses:

- the Census of Population and Housing is conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics every five years with the latest conducted in 2006. The Census is a rich source of information suited to detailed disaggregation
- administrative data are usually collected more frequently than the Census, but the completeness of Indigenous identification can vary considerably between and within collections.

In all data sources there is likely to be an under-identification of Indigenous people. The accuracy of data describing Indigenous people depends on both their willingness and the opportunities provided to identify themselves as Indigenous. This can vary both within and between data collections. Consequently, rates and numbers indicating levels of Indigenous disadvantage may be under-estimates.

Rates are considered to be estimates falling within a range. Confidence intervals show the rate range within which the actual rate is likely to lie. Confidence intervals, at 95% probability, are presented in the graphs for perinatal mortality, infant mortality, low birthweight, causes of death, hospital admissions, education benchmarks, and youth detention data.

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4 Age standardised rates in this report are calculated using the direct method. For more information refer to Glossary.
