

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 for 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 stakeholder engagement, and high standards of corporate capability, integrity and accountability.

Overview

The Queensland Government supports Indigenous Shire Councils that have responsibilities equal to that of other local governments. 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.

Queensland's commitment under COAG

Under the COAG reform agenda the Queensland Government has been actively participating in the delivery and implementation of strategies under various National Partnership Agreements associated with community capacity, infrastructure and leadership.

The Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy endorsed by all state governments in July 2009 is a whole-of-government initiative focused on coordinating investment in services, identifying specific locations to improve service delivery and building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and community ownership to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

In partnership with the Australian Government, the **Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement** has identified the priority communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale, Mossman Gorge, Mornington Island and Doomadgee. Under this agreement, a single government interface will be established to allow access to government services, including early childhood, health, housing and welfare services.

The **National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation** outlines the joint responsibility for the Queensland and Australian governments to create properly paid positions for the delivery of municipal services which have previously relied on Community Development

Employment Program (CDEP) subsidies.

The Queensland Government will provide an additional \$1.44 million per annum to Aboriginal Shire Councils and the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council over the life of the **National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation** for the creation of sustainable municipal service jobs. This funding, combined with increased Commonwealth Municipal Services funds, will enable councils to create approximately 80 jobs.

The **National Partnership Agreement for Remote Indigenous Housing** outlines the shared responsibilities for the Australian and Queensland governments to develop clearer roles, responsibilities and funding with respect to municipal services and ongoing maintenance of infrastructure and essential services in remote areas. In addition, a joint steering committee will be established to facilitate intergovernmental collaboration on key policy and operational issues related to the Indigenous housing reform agenda.

Please note that there are currently no NIRA performance measures under this building block.

Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

Government leading, engaging and partnering

The Queensland Government partners with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to strengthen leadership and build capacity within their local governments. Funding

Governance and Leadership

and programs support Indigenous councils to provide leadership and deliver the same services as other remote Shire Councils in Queensland.

The Queensland Government's **Reconciliation Action Plan 2009–2012** was launched on 23 June 2009. It was developed in consultation with Queensland Government agencies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous peoples, Reconciliation Queensland Incorporated, Reconciliation Australia and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council. The Reconciliation Action Plan is the first whole-of-government Reconciliation Action Plan in Australia and has been fully endorsed by Reconciliation Queensland Incorporated and Reconciliation Australia. All agencies are required to report on the progress of their reconciliation activities in their annual reports.

The **Young Indigenous Leaders' Forum** is a key component of the Reconciliation Action Plan. This year the forum was held from 24 to 27 May 2009 in Brisbane during Reconciliation Week, with 19 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and three mentors from around the state attending. The Young Indigenous Leaders' Forum provided an opportunity for young people to gain skills, learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors, network, share issues and solutions with their peers.

Providing a key engagement mechanism between relevant state ministers, the Australian Government and mayors of Queensland's discrete Indigenous communities are **Ministerial Indigenous Roundtables**. Six roundtables have been held (to July 2009), considering issues such as alcohol reforms, child and family wellbeing, economic participation and development, COAG's Indigenous reform agenda, housing and infrastructure, and related land administration and tenure issues.

In February 2009, the **Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council** held its inaugural meeting. The idea for the Council arose from discussions between the Premier and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates to the Queensland 2020 Forum in early 2008. The Council's role is to provide all Queensland Government ministers with high level, strategic advice on policies, programs, services and

partnerships that can contribute to meeting COAG's Closing the Gap targets as well as current and emerging issues.

The Council played a key role in finalising the Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan and worked closely with the Queensland Parliament's Law, Justice and Safety Committee on the development of a **preamble for the Queensland Constitution** recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

In addition, the Queensland Government continues to support:

- the **Queensland Government Champions** Program, which commenced in 2002. Champions are the most senior officers in the Queensland Public Sector. Currently there are 23 Government Champions appointed to communities with a significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. There is also a senior government advisor to the Torres Strait region. This year a Government Champion was appointed to Cunnamulla – the first community outside of remote Queensland to receive such an appointment. Communities with significant Indigenous populations such as Cunnamulla, experience disadvantage as well. The Queensland Government recognises that in order to close the gap throughout Queensland, support and services need to be provided to regional and urban centres.
- **Negotiation Tables**, which bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders and organisations, and representatives from local, state and Australian government agencies. Negotiation Tables are held in over 30 communities. During 2008/09, Negotiation Tables were involved in such projects as the development and coordination of the Cherbourg Safe Haven project, the Kowanyama cultural centre, and the Aurukun Local Partnerships Project.



Indigenous community capacity and leadership

The Queensland Government provided significant funding in 2008/09 for programs and directly to Indigenous Shire Councils to improve community capacity and leadership. This included:

- the distribution of \$30.6 million to **Indigenous Shire Councils** to help with delivering municipal services
- the development of the **Indigenous Councils' Capacity Building and Resourcing Strategy 2009–2012** to build capability and strengthen governance of Indigenous councils
- the implementation of capacity-building programs under the **Community Governance Improvement Strategy** for councillors and council staff of discrete Indigenous communities
- the **Land Trust Capacity Development Program** pilot, which provides governance training and support to land trusts created under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991*.

In addition, **Community Leadership Programs** are being delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls in Queensland. Over the last twelve months, seminars have been delivered in Cherbourg, Yarrabah, Mount Isa, Woorabinda and Ipswich. Seminars have been followed up with an accredited two day mentoring workshop in each of these locations as well as in Rockhampton (where a seminar was held in 2006), where participants received a Certificate IV in Governance (mentoring). The response to these seminars has been overwhelmingly positive.

Finally, in 2009 Queensland hosted the annual **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Gathering** (NATSIWG), a key mechanism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to raise issues with, and make recommendations to, ministers at the Ministerial Conference on the Status of Women. The Queensland Government supported four delegates to attend and represent Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The Queensland Government will once again support delegates to attend NATSIWG in 2010.