Australian Government

Closing the Gap.

Indigenous Economic Development Strategy 2011-2018

Terminology

The term 'Indigenous' as used in this strategy refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

This original artwork was produced by Gilimbaa.

Gilimbaa is an Indigenous creative agency accredited by the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council.

With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and where otherwise noted all material presented in this document is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/) licence.

The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website (accessible using the links provided) as is the full legal code for the CC BY 3.0 AU licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/legalcode).

The document must be attributed as Indigenous Economic Development Strategy 2011-2018.

ISBN	PRINT	978-1-921975-12-7
	PDF	978-1-921975-11-0
	HTML	978-1-921975-16-5

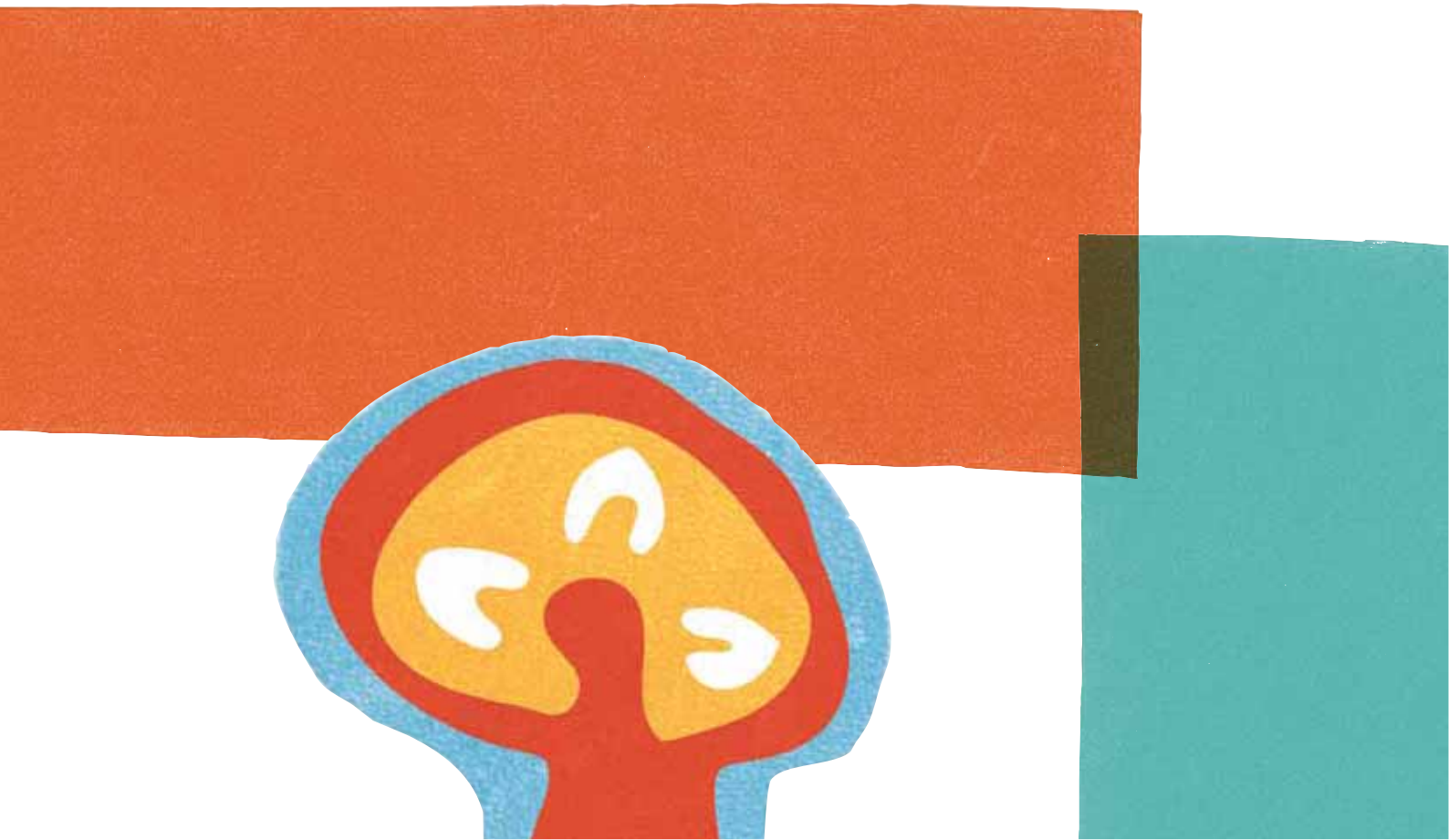
FAHCSIA11738

Photography by Lorrie Graham, 2010 and Kerry Trapnell, 2007.

Courtesy of the Department of Families Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

Please be aware that this strategy may contain the images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have passed away.

For more information, please visit **www.indigenous.gov.au**.



Contents

Ministers' foreword 2

Overview 5

Why do we need an Indigenous Economic Development Strategy? 6

- Indigenous economic development matters 6
- Building on progress towards closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage 6
- Ongoing investment 7
- A combined effort 9
- The challenge 10

Diversity and strengths 14

- Unique assets and culture 14
- The importance of location 14
- The opportunity 17

Setting priorities and taking action 18

- Guiding principles 18
- Ongoing engagement 19
- Measuring progress 19

Priorities

- Strengthening Foundations 20
- Education 32
- Skills Development and Jobs 40
- Business and Entrepreneurship 50
- Financial Security and Independence 58

Appendices

- Significant Australian Government initiatives supporting Indigenous economic development 65
- Indigenous Economic Development Framework 73

Ministers' foreword

The Australian Government wants all Australians to share in the opportunities of Australia's strong economy and to enjoy the financial and social benefits of work.

The Indigenous Economic Development Strategy will help provide a pathway for Indigenous Australians to have the same opportunities as all Australians – to get an education, find a job or start their own business, own their own home and provide for their families.

It focuses on five key areas for improving the prosperity of Indigenous Australians: strengthening foundations to create an environment that supports economic development; education; skills development and jobs; supporting business development and entrepreneurship; and helping people achieve financial security and independence.

This Strategy is the result of extensive consultation with Indigenous Australians and communities, job service providers, employers, peak bodies, non-government organisations and state, territory and local governments. We would like to thank everyone who took part in the consultations that helped to shape this Strategy. The Australian Government recognises we cannot close the gap alone. Closing the Gap requires a genuine partnership with Indigenous Australians at all levels and the Government is committed to a relationship based on trust and mutual respect.

Closing the Gap also requires us to work in partnership with the state and territory governments, businesses, not for profit organisations, Indigenous Australians and the wider community. Importantly, individuals must also take responsibility for getting and keeping a job. This Strategy provides a framework for us to work in partnership to improve the economic situation of Indigenous Australians.

As part of the Government's ongoing commitment to Closing the Gap, we are already working to increase Indigenous Australians' economic participation. Over the past two years we have made more than 80,000 placements into employment for Indigenous job seekers through the Job Services Australia system.

The Indigenous Economic Development Strategy will ensure we continue to create job opportunities and connect Indigenous Australians with jobs, by supporting job readiness, skills development, strengthening links between training and jobs, improving employment services and driving demand for Indigenous employment.

We have invested in areas where Indigenous Australians bring unique skills and assets. For example, the Indigenous Ranger Cadetships program in selected regional and remote schools will give Indigenous students the chance to learn skills and gain the knowledge necessary to become a ranger.

We are helping more young Indigenous Australians stay at school and get the skills they need to get a job through the $50.7 million Indigenous

Youth Careers Pathways program, which provides school-based traineeships in targeted high schools across the country.

Through the Indigenous Opportunities Policy the Government is using its purchasing power to increase the use of Indigenous businesses in Australian Government funded contracts.

Our unprecedented investment is beginning to make a difference, but the Government recognises that this work will take time and continued effort.

This Strategy provides a long-term policy framework for the Australian Government and identifies priority areas and policy objectives to 2018. In order to respond to changing circumstances, the Strategy also contains a range of actions to 2013 that will be updated so that the Strategy continues to drive real and sustainable progress. Importantly it also continues to allow us to work in partnership with Indigenous Australians, communities, business and other groups.

Jenny Macklin

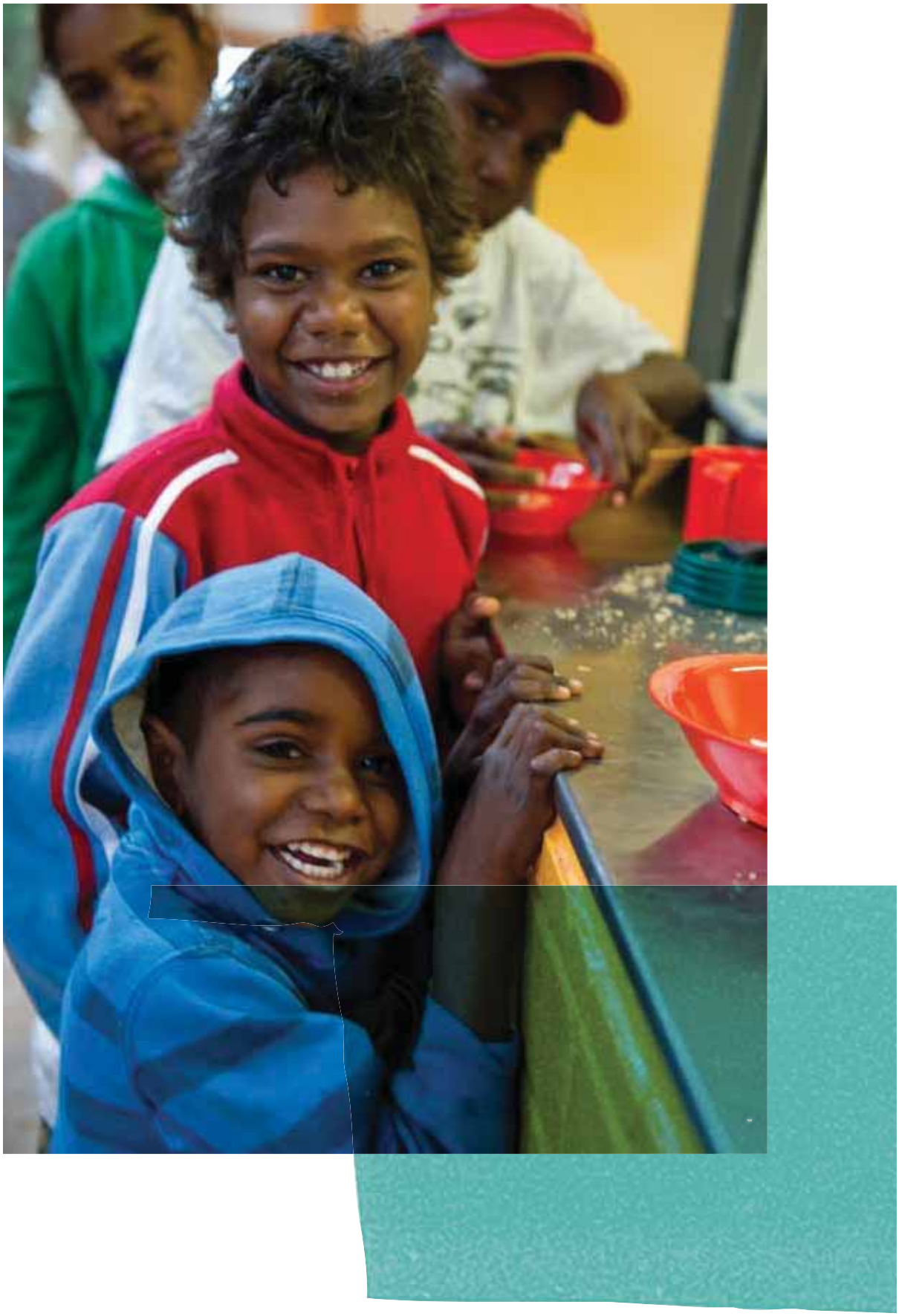
Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Mark Arbib

Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development

Chris Evans

Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations



Overview

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that Indigenous Australians have the same opportunities as non-Indigenous Australians to share in the prosperity of our nation. Providing Indigenous Australians with the education, skills and support to find and keep meaningful work, and to build financial self-reliance, is a crucial part of the Australian Government's long-term vision for closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

The aim of the Indigenous Economic Development Strategy 2011-2018 is to support increased personal and economic wellbeing of Indigenous Australians through greater participation in the economy. Economic independence and security are necessary foundations for good health, functional families and successful communities.

Despite some positive developments, Indigenous Australians continue to face significant economic disadvantage. Indigenous Australians are still less likely to finish school, have a job, own a home or run a business than non-Indigenous Australians. The Australian Government is committed to overcoming this situation.

The Indigenous Economic Development Strategy 2011-2018 sets out a long-term agenda for Indigenous economic participation that will guide government decision-making and program development through to 2018. The Strategy also details a program of specific initiatives and reforms that translate the Australian Government's priorities into action. These actions will be assessed and updated every three years to ensure that the Strategy responds to changing circumstances and continues to drive real and sustainable progress.

The Australian Government recognises that tangible and lasting improvements in the economic situation of Indigenous Australians cannot be achieved by government alone.

This Strategy supports Indigenous Australians to take responsibility for their own economic wellbeing and to lead independent and productive working lives.

The Strategy also emphasises the vital roles that partnerships play in this endeavour, across the private sector, the not-for-profit sector, all levels of government and the community.

The five priorities of the Strategy are to:

1. **strengthen foundations** to create an environment that supports economic development
2. invest in **education**
3. encourage participation and improve access to **skills development and jobs**
4. support the growth of Indigenous **business and entrepreneurship**
5. assist individuals and communities to achieve **financial security and independence** by increasing their ability to identify, build and make the most of economic assets.

Why do we need an Indigenous Economic Development Strategy?

Indigenous economic development matters

Australia has a strong economy, with one of the lowest unemployment rates among countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. It is a priority of the Australian Government to make sure that Indigenous Australians have the opportunity to contribute to a stronger economy and achieve greater economic independence and security for themselves, their families and their communities.

Supporting the participation of Indigenous Australians in the economy benefits all Australians. Greater participation in the workforce and business will help to close the gap in employment and address income disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Increased economic participation will also contribute to strengthening the national economy and help to meet labour shortages in key industries.

Building on progress towards closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage

Increasing Indigenous participation in the economy is vital to achieving the Australian Government's broader vision of closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in health, education, employment and life expectancy.

The agenda to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage is driven by three important imperatives:

- to overcome decades of under-investment in services and infrastructure
- to encourage and support personal responsibility as the foundation for healthy, functional families and communities
- to build new understanding and respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

In 2008, the Australian Government launched the Closing the Gap agenda in partnership with state and territory governments. Closing the Gap is an ambitious plan to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians. Following the National Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples, the Council of Australian Governments agreed on six key targets.

Closing the Gap seeks to:

- close the life expectancy gap by 2031
- halve the gap in child mortality rates by 2018
- provide universal access to quality early childhood education for all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities by 2013
- halve the gap in educational achievement for children in reading, writing, and numeracy by 2018
- halve the gap in young people's (20–24 year olds) Year 12 or equivalent attainment by 2020
- halve the gap in employment outcomes by 2018.

The Australian Government is investing more than $5.75 billion over three years from 2011-12 to help achieve these targets. In addition, a further $526.6 million over five years was provided in the 2011-12 Budget to boost our efforts to Close the Gap. Economic participation is one of the key building blocks of this historic agenda.

A good education, safe housing, healthy individuals, supportive families and communities, local leadership and strong governance provide the foundations for economic development. The Australian Government recognises the importance of these factors and this Strategy focuses on the way that education, health, safety and community governance affect the economic wellbeing of Indigenous Australians.

Ongoing investment

The Australian Government commits substantial resources to mainstream services and programs that support the development of individual capacity and economic opportunity, which are available to all Australians. The education system, health, financial management and employment services all contribute to building economic participation for all Australians, including Indigenous Australians. These programs directly support the priorities outlined in the Strategy.

In addition to the significant amount of investment in ongoing mainstream programs and the targeted investment under the Closing the Gap agenda, the Australian Government has numerous ongoing Indigenous-specific initiatives and two statutory authorities that contribute to economic participation and development.

"Supporting the participation of Indigenous Australians in the economy benefits all Australians"

The Australian Government is investing in a number of key Indigenous-specific initiatives that support the Strategy:

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–14 which is making substantial and ongoing investments in Indigenous education and training. This includes investment in the priorities of:
  - > readiness for school
  - > engagement and connections
  - > attendance
  - > literacy and numeracy
  - > leadership, quality teaching and workforce development
  - > pathways to real post-school options.
- The Indigenous Employment Program which aims to increase economic outcomes and participation by encouraging employers to provide sustainable employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians and supporting Indigenous Australians to develop skills and businesses.
- The Community Development Employment Projects program which supports Indigenous Australians in remote areas through community development and participation opportunities that develop skills, improve capacity, work readiness and employability.
  - > The Australian Government is conducting a review of remote participation and employment services to ensure job service providers are best meeting the needs of Indigenous and other remote job seekers.
- The Working on Country Indigenous Ranger Program which delivers significant environmental outcomes across remote and regional Australia, including improved management of fire, feral animals, invasive weeds, threatened species and coastal and marine systems.
- The Indigenous Opportunities Policy (IOP) which was fully implemented on 1 July 2011. Under the IOP, suppliers to the Australian Government who win contracts valued over $5 million ($6 million for construction) for activity in regions with a significant Indigenous population are required to develop and implement an Indigenous Training, Employment and Supplier plan. The plans include strategies for using Indigenous businesses in the supply chain.
  - > A complementary Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (CPG) exemption was introduced on 19 May 2011 to reduce obstacles for Commonwealth Government agencies to contract directly with Indigenous small-to-medium businesses. This will make it easier for Indigenous businesses to compete for government contracts, as the procurement process is simpler and administrative costs are reduced.

"Support the development of individual capacity and economic opportunity"

Some of the most important investments that the Australian Government has made over a number of years are through the two key statutory authorities responsible for supporting Indigenous economic development, the Indigenous Land Corporation and Indigenous Business Australia.

- Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) works to increase economic independence for Indigenous Australians by providing home and business loans and joint venture investment partnerships. Through these initiatives Indigenous Australians increase their capacity to work with and benefit from the private sector to pursue business opportunities and own their own homes. IBA has an asset base of approximately $1.02 billion.
- The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) works to achieve economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits for Indigenous Australians by purchasing and managing land. Through these activities Indigenous Australians are provided with training for jobs and better access to education. These initiatives lead to sustainable management of land and contribute to the protection of cultural and environmental values. The ILC has an asset base of approximately $681 million.

The Strategy identifies a range of specific actions, both mainstream and Indigenous-specific, which are underpinned by or build on these key initiatives and investments. A summary of a range of Australian Government initiatives and programs that support Indigenous economic development and participation is also provided as an Appendix.

A combined effort

Australian Government investment is, however, only one part of the solution. The private sector, non-government organisations, other levels of government and Indigenous Australians all play essential roles in improving Indigenous economic development.

The role of the private sector is particularly significant. Businesses are the most critical part of a strong and developing economy. Private-sector engagement is fundamental to improving economic development opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

There are examples where real change is occurring in this area. In the mining industry there is significant engagement between mining companies and Indigenous communities and employees. This is making a real difference to the rates of Indigenous employment in the mining industry and generating opportunities for Indigenous businesses. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian Government and the Minerals Council of Australia demonstrates both the level of opportunity that exists in this sector and the commitment by both government and the mining industry to maximise economic benefits for Indigenous Australians.

The Australian Employment Covenant is another example of how industry has taken a lead role in partnering with governments and Indigenous Australians to help close the gap in employment and employment opportunities. Since it was first announced in 2008, the Australian Employment Covenant has secured commitments from employers across Australia to place over 50,000 Indigenous Australians into employment.

The non-government sector also plays a key role not only in the provision of support services, but also in providing opportunities for employment of Indigenous Australians.

Government and the private sector can assist in creating opportunities and building individual skills and capacity. However, the commitment of Indigenous Australians to increase their rate of economic participation is essential to sharing the benefits of economic growth. In resetting the relationship between Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians, the Australian Government is working with Indigenous groups to identify opportunities and develop local solutions. Leadership is essential to making the most of these opportunities.

The challenge

Despite ongoing effort by all partners, significant challenges remain. Indigenous Australians are just over half as likely to finish Year 12 when compared to non-Indigenous Australians. Young Indigenous Australians aged 15–19 are less likely to be enrolled in school than their non-Indigenous counterparts (37.9 per cent compared to 51.7 per cent) and those aged 20–24 attend university at about one-fifth the rate of their non-Indigenous peers[1]. Although Indigenous Australians are participating in vocational education and training, the level of qualification and the rates of completion tend to be low and the levels of participation are not adequately reflected in employment outcomes.

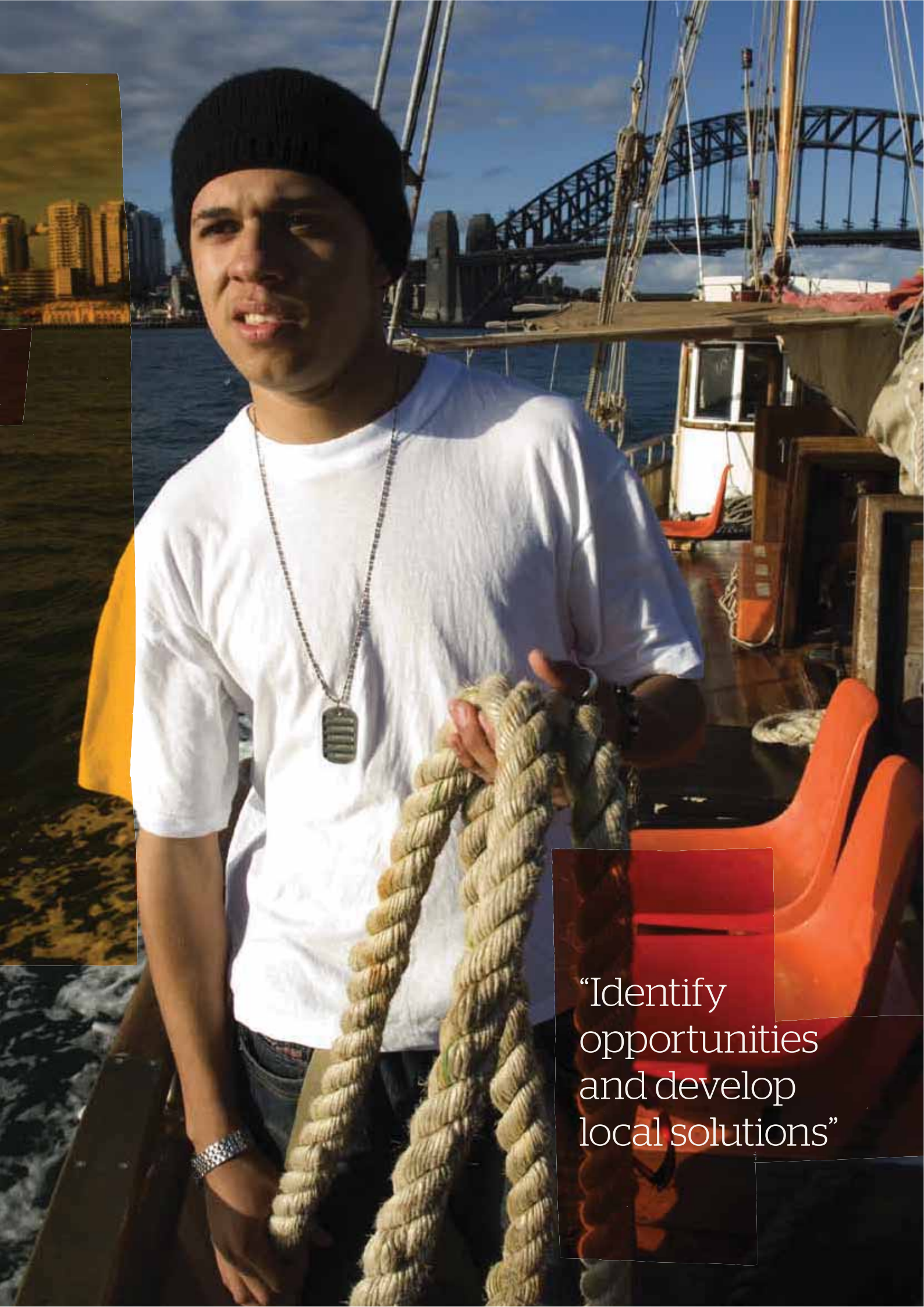
In all states and territories, across cities, regions and remote areas, the rate of Indigenous labour force participation is lower, and the unemployment rate higher, than for non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians are nearly four times more likely to be unemployed. Indigenous Australians tend to remain unemployed for longer, are more likely to be employed part-time and a greater proportion are not in the labour force (35.5 per cent of working age Indigenous Australians compared to 21.7 per cent of the non-Indigenous working age population)[2]. Indigenous Australians are less likely to be self-employed than non-Indigenous Australians and are under-represented in professional, managerial, technical and trades-based occupations.

This situation is reflected in income levels and financial security. On average Indigenous Australians earn just over half as much as non-Indigenous Australians (median income of $400 per week compared to median income of $608 per week). Only 29 per cent of Indigenous Australians own their own home, compared to 65 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians[3].

1 Productivity Commission, 2009 Report on Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

2 Productivity Commission, 2011, Report on Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

3 Productivity Commission, 2011 Report on Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage



"Identify opportunities and develop local solutions"

The Indigenous population is very young – almost half of all Indigenous Australians are aged 19 years and under – and growing fast. In 2006 there were 517,000 Indigenous Australians and the ABS projects that by 2021 the Indigenous population will increase to more than 720,000[4]. This means that while the nation overall adapts to an ageing population, Indigenous Australia will have particular needs relating to growing numbers of school-aged children and young job seekers. Based on population benchmarks for the ABS 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), at least 135,000 Indigenous Australians aged 4-14 years in 2008 will be of working age by 2018. These trends present great opportunities for young Indigenous Australians, as the gaps in the workforce created by the ageing of the non-Indigenous population need to be filled. Schooling and employment are the keys to ensuring we make the most of these opportunities and to ensure Indigenous Australians achieve a greater level of financial independence. Figure 1. provides a snapshot of these indicators and the economic differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

4 ABS 3238.0 Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021

FIGURE 1: DIFFERENCES IN ECONOMIC INDICATORS BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS.

	Indigenous Outcomes	Non-Indigenous Outcomes
Strengthening Foundations	**Living in state or community housing = 39.5%** **Relying primarily on income support = around 40%** (among the 18-64 year old population)	**Living in state or community housing = 3.2%** **Relying primarily on income support = around 14%** (among the 18-64 year old population)
Education	**Year 12 attainment = 47.4%** (among the 20-24 year old population)	**Year 12 attainment = 83.8%** (among the 20-24 year old population)
Jobs	Persons 15-64 years **Total per cent employed = 53.8%** **Unemployed rate = 16.6%** **Not in the labour force = 35.5%**	Persons 15-64 years **Total per cent employed = 75.0%** **Unemployed rate = 4.2%** **Not in the labour force = 21.7%**
Business and Entrepreneurship	Persons 18-64 years in non-remote areas **Self employed = 6.7%**	Persons 18-64 years in non-remote areas **Self employed = 10.9%**
Financial Security and Independence	**Median weekly income = $400** **Home ownership = 29.0%**	**Median weekly income = $608** **Home ownership = 65.2%**

Source: Productivity Commission, 2011 Report on Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

Diversity and strengths

The Australian Government recognises and values the diverse circumstances and experience of Indigenous Australians. To be effective, government actions must take into account a diversity of cultural identities, family connections and responsibilities, as well as the location and demographic profile of communities. Access to jobs and commercial opportunities can be very different in cities, towns and remote areas across the country.

Unique assets and culture

Indigenous Australians have unique and important assets and skills to bring to the broader economy. This includes strong social networks and community identity, and a rich traditional and cultural knowledge that can be valuable economic assets. Indigenous culture and its practice can support economic participation, development and financial independence.

Indigenous Australians own or control approximately 20 per cent of land in Australia and the resources associated with that land, including access to minerals, water and areas of high biodiversity value.

Alongside an increase in the number of Indigenous Australians working in sectors in which Indigenous Australians have traditionally been involved such as land management, literature, the arts, the resources sector and primary industry, many Indigenous Australians are making a growing contribution to the broader economy in areas such as retail, consultancy, the public sector and business and entrepreneurship, to name a few. Indigenous Australians have made these contributions while maintaining and benefiting from a strong cultural identity within individuals, families and communities.

The importance of location

When it comes to economic development, place matters. Access to employment opportunities, markets, services, infrastructure, education and therefore the ability to participate in the broader economy is influenced by where Indigenous Australians live. Three-quarters of Indigenous Australians live in urban and regional centres. While only 25 per cent live in remote Australia, the level of economic disadvantage of Indigenous Australians in these areas is acute.

Because opportunities and challenges for Indigenous economic development differ across urban, regional and remote areas, there is a need for flexible development opportunities that can adapt to place and local context.

Cities and larger regional centres

In cities and larger regional centres, Indigenous economic development means helping Indigenous Australians tap into the diversity of existing economic activity, for example:

- the greater availability and accessibility of education and vocational training targeted at job opportunities and career progression
- opportunities for business development, home ownership and wealth creation are greater in these locations.

Smaller regional and rural areas

In these areas the focus is on building individual capabilities and ensuring that welfare systems do not discourage economic participation. Education is of the utmost importance.

- Vocational training should be focused on local employment opportunities and areas where there are identified skills shortages.
- Improved support for business development will assist more people in regional areas to achieve financial independence. Through programs such as Connecting People with Jobs, the Australian Government is supporting Indigenous Australians where they choose to move to access education and jobs in locations with increased opportunities.
- Innovative solutions which aim to increase economic participation in particular locations, such as a fly-in fly-out mobile workforce, should be explored.
- Access to infrastructure is important. Government has a role in ensuring that infrastructure is available and that people are in a position to make the most of new technologies that can boost economic participation.

Remote locations

In remote and very remote locations education levels can be low, jobs scarce and infrastructure undeveloped. Increasing Indigenous economic participation in these areas is about:

- identifying new opportunities and maximising Indigenous employment in the existing labour market
- removing barriers to genuine commercial ventures, which is crucial to ensure that private-sector opportunities grow in remote locations to complement public-sector services and jobs.

Long-term reliance on income support can undermine other capabilities and further entrench disadvantage. In remote areas, the focus for governments and individuals needs to be on:

- building individual capabilities, including foundation skills
- improving employment services to better meet the needs of remote locations
- creating meaningful participation activities – this means making sure that Indigenous Australians are encouraged to take the jobs that are available and that appropriate job search requirements are enforced.

"Success depends on working in partnership"

The opportunity

While it is encouraging that there has been an increase in involvement in sectors of the economy with traditionally higher Indigenous participation, the Australian Government – and the business community – needs to work with Indigenous Australians to look more broadly and consider opportunities in a wide range of established and emerging sectors.

A number of sectors, including mining, health care, social assistance and trades, are experiencing shortages of skilled workers. Shortages are evident in the engineering professions, health diagnosis, treatment and nursing professions, automotive, engineering and food trades and child care. To assist Indigenous Australians to gain the skills they need to contribute to the labour market in these occupations, the Australian Government has in place a range of initiatives, including scholarships and incentives for study at university and through the vocational education and training system.

Employers also experience difficulty recruiting workers in the retail, transport and hospitality sectors. These offer entry-level positions to the labour market, and may provide sound opportunities for new job seekers. Job Services Australia plays a key role in connecting unemployed people to employers in these and other sectors.

New positions are expected to significantly increase across a range of industries over the next five years, offering new opportunities at the entry level and for qualified applicants. Over the five years to 2015-16, significant employment growth is expected in areas such as health care, construction and mining. Additionally, employment in the food services industry is projected to increase. These sectors provide opportunities for employment across all states and territories.

There are a number of sectors experiencing skills shortages, such as mining, health and community services, food services and construction, creating a wide range of employment prospects.

As investment in clean energy sources such as solar, gas and wind increases, the growth of the clean energy sector will also provide many new opportunities for jobs and businesses and initiatives. Through the Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund under the Carbon Farming Initiative, the Australian Government will support Indigenous Australians to take up opportunities in carbon abatement activities. This may include savanna fire management, feral camel management and environmental planting.

Indigenous-held land provides real economic opportunity. Land use agreements should incorporate strategies that encourage economic participation, like business and home ownership. Agreements between Indigenous communities and mining companies are providing jobs and allowing Indigenous Australians to share in wealth creation. Indigenous Protected Areas, while delivering significant environmental benefits, will also support economic endeavours such as ecotourism.

There are a growing number of native title agreements. In addition to payments, these agreements often include practical benefits such as:

- training and employment
- title to land
- business, cultural heritage and conservation opportunities.

It is critical that these agreements provide sustainable and intergenerational outcomes for native title groups.

There is a need to recognise the valuable contribution Indigenous Australians are making to the economy and to work together to turn opportunities into jobs and businesses.

Setting priorities and taking action

Just as the Closing the Gap framework provides a clear set of shared goals to address Indigenous disadvantage, the Indigenous Economic Development Strategy 2011–2018 provides a vision for government, business and Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and outlines actions for improving Indigenous economic development.

The Strategy sets out a long-term policy framework for Indigenous economic development that will guide government decision-making and program development through to 2018, which aligns with the timeframe of the Closing the Gap agenda. It sets priorities and objectives and describes the initial actions the Australian Government will take in the priority areas.

The priority areas and actions in the Strategy reflect the input provided through public submissions and discussions with the private sector, the not-for-profit sector, all levels of government and the community. In addition to the actions already identified, the Strategy provides a basis for the Australian Government and stakeholders to work together to develop new policies and actions in these areas.

This Strategy will be implemented through the actions embedded in the Strategy. The actions identify the work the Australian Government is doing to achieve each of the objectives identified in the Strategy.

The actions contained in the Strategy will be updated every three years, as the Strategy drives the development of new policies and initiatives to support Indigenous economic development.

Government cannot act alone. Success depends on working in partnership with Indigenous leaders, communities and individuals and with businesses, industry peak bodies and non-government organisations.

By monitoring, progressing and developing the actions under this Strategy we expect to see:

- a better skilled and motivated Indigenous workforce capable of finding and keeping jobs, starting businesses and building assets
- a stronger and more viable Indigenous business sector
- an economic environment that supports greater use and recognition of Indigenous skills, assets and opportunities.

Guiding principles

The success of this Strategy relies on the commitment and actions of all partners including governments, the private sector and Indigenous Australians. All actions developed under this Strategy will be guided by the following principles:

- Indigenous Australians can make a unique contribution to our economy.
- Closing the Gap requires a genuine partnership with Indigenous Australians at all levels and the Government is committed to a relationship based on trust and mutual respect.
- Lasting Indigenous economic wellbeing relies on Indigenous Australians having the opportunities and taking responsibility for their individual and family wellbeing, education and economic independence.
- Indigenous leadership is essential to leading and shaping sustainable improvements in Indigenous economic wellbeing.
- Real, sustainable change cannot be achieved by government alone. It relies on Indigenous Australians, the private sector, the not-for-profit sector and all levels of government.
- Action is most effective when it supports the goal of greater Indigenous economic self-reliance.
- Effective action targets both existing and future needs. A long-term perspective is essential to building greater economic independence and prosperity for Indigenous Australians.

Ongoing engagement

Genuine engagement with Indigenous Australians is fundamental to the Australian Government's efforts to increase personal and economic wellbeing and close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.

The successful implementation of this Strategy relies on the active involvement of Indigenous Australians, government and the community. This includes volunteers, businesses, industry peak bodies and non-government organisations.

It will be essential for the Australian Government to maintain this engagement as it develops, designs and implements the range of programs and actions that will respond to the key economic priorities and actions articulated in the Strategy.

The Australian Government will continue to work in partnership with Indigenous Australians. This will include working with a range of individuals, bodies and groups that offer specific expertise and knowledge on particular areas in the continued development of the Strategy over time. This will include, for example, the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, Native Title Representative Bodies and Land Councils and the newly established Indigenous Business Policy Advisory Group.

Measuring progress

This Strategy provides a high-level policy framework and describes the major actions the Australian Government is taking to achieve its goal of improved economic development for Indigenous Australians. Specific targets and reporting arrangements are built into each of the programs and initiatives identified in the Strategy to track progress. The Strategy will not duplicate existing reporting processes, rather it will be used to monitor broader progress and develop future actions.

Key indicators of economic development are already captured in the Australian Government's reporting against Closing the Gap targets (such as education and employment) and the Productivity Commission's reporting on Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (such as household and individual income). The Prime Minister's annual Closing the Gap statement to Parliament reports on these indicators and the progress that is being made in these important areas.

Priority 1: Strengthening Foundations

Individuals are more likely to engage in the broader economy when they are healthy, live in safe, well-run communities and when welfare and taxation policies are designed to support participation.

An environment that encourages people to develop the skills they need to get a job or establish a business is crucial to improving the long-term prosperity and economic independence of Indigenous Australians. Settings that best support economic development are those where people have access to basic services and infrastructure such as health care, live in safe, resilient communities and have stable and secure accommodation. Strong, local governance is also required to provide a strong community, where local leadership sets an inspiring example of success and wellbeing. Where these factors are present, people are better able to access and benefit from the education and vocational skills development opportunities that will create pathways to economic participation.

The Australian Government's unprecedented investment in these foundations of economic wellbeing is already making a real difference to Indigenous Australians' lives. Government also has an important role in ensuring that the legal, taxation and welfare systems encourage economic participation and do not create disincentives that impede successful participation in the economy.

Strengthening Foundations

Objective 1.1 Increase access to safe and affordable housing

Affordable housing gives people the chance to raise families in the safety and security of their own homes. In a safe and stable home, Indigenous Australians are better able to develop the skills needed to find and keep jobs and have successful working lives.

The Australian Government provides mainstream housing assistance to low-to-medium income households through Commonwealth Rent Assistance, as well as funding under the National Affordable Housing Agreement which supports state and territory government social housing initiatives. With Indigenous Australians earning, on average, about two-thirds as much as non-Indigenous Australians, access to safe and affordable housing is critical. Under the Social Housing Initiative more than 19,600 new social housing dwellings are being built and around 80,000 existing homes repaired and upgraded. Indigenous Australians make up around 8 per cent of Australia's public housing residents, totalling 2,500 Indigenous households supported under the Social Housing Initiative.

Like most Australians, the majority of Indigenous Australians (75 per cent) live in urban and regional areas where they have access to a range of housing services and opportunities. The Australian Government is committed to working with state and territory governments and services to increase the supply of safe and affordable housing. Indigenous Australians are benefiting from the significant new investment the Australian Government has undertaken in response to decades of under-investment in safe and affordable housing. The benefits of this investment are considerable, particularly in areas where Indigenous Australians make up a significant proportion of social housing residents. To ensure the benefits of this investment are sustained into the future Indigenous Australians must be encouraged to take responsibility for homes.

The Australian Government has committed an unprecedented $5.5 billion over ten years from 2008–09 through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. Under the National Partnership jurisdictions have committed to 20 per cent Indigenous employment over the life of the program.

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing is a joint partnership between the Australian, state and Northern Territory Governments. The Agreement was renegotiated in late 2009 to provide greater incentives for performance, resulting in better than expected delivery.

Under the revised arrangement up to 25 per cent of a jurisdiction's capital works funding allocation can be reallocated if agreed targets are not met.

The renegotiation has resulted in a new sense of drive and urgency, with New South Wales, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory all exceeding their new housing targets during the 2010–11 financial year.

Overall since the commencement of the National Partnership on 1 January 2009 until 30 June 2011, more than 800 new houses have been completed and 3,100 houses have been rebuilt and refurbished nationally.

Private ownership plays a significant part in providing Australians with access to secure housing. Historically however Indigenous Australians have not enjoyed the same rates of home ownership as other Australians. While the rate of Indigenous home ownership is increasing it is still only slightly over half of the national rate. As Indigenous economic wellbeing improves, income levels and the rate of home ownership are expected to rise. In addition to working closely with financial institutions and state and territory governments to address this issue the Australian Government also funds direct assistance through Indigenous Business Australia's home loan programs (Home Ownership Program and Home Ownership on Indigenous Land Program).

Home ownership is also recognised in Priority 5 as an important element of Financial Security and Independence.

STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONS
Objective 1.1 Increase access to safe and affordable housing

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Increase the supply of safe and affordable housing	Work with state and territory governments and private providers to continue to increase the supply of public and community housing under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing and the National Affordable Housing Agreement and work with private providers to increase the supply of affordable housing.
Encourage responsibility for homes	Continue to work with the state and territory governments to ensure that robust tenancy management arrangements in community and public housing are in place, and promote greater care and responsibility for homes under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing and the National Affordable Housing Agreement.
Support the transition from tenancy to home ownership	Work with state and territory governments to expand access to affordable home ownership through mortgage assistance, matched savings accounts and shared equity schemes.
Note that a full list of actions supporting this Strategy is provided under Objective 5.1	Continue to provide access to affordable home loans to eligible Indigenous Australians through Indigenous Business Australia (providing an average of $103.9 million per annum in home loans over three years).

Strengthening Foundations

Objective 1.2 Ensure infrastructure investments support economic development

Economic activity and growth rely on quality infrastructure. The Australian Government is making record investments to modernise, improve and increase Australia's economic infrastructure. In many regional and remote areas Indigenous communities face infrastructure challenges that require specific attention. In these locations, new infrastructure that can drive economic development must be a priority for government.

Investment in new information technology is essential to increasing access to markets in regional and remote locations. In particular, the National Broadband Network will be a critical enabler as it is rolled out. This investment can boost productivity, drive innovation and lift economic output. It will help give children access to world-class education resources, provide access to better health care and enable local businesses to reach new markets.

It also has the potential to create new employment and enterprise opportunities in Indigenous communities, particularly in regional and remote locations. Ensuring these potential benefits are maximised is a priority for the Australian Government.

STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONS
Objective 1.2 Ensure infrastructure investments support economic development

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Increase access to new information technology	Continue to roll out the National Broadband Network nationally.
	Improve access to basic telephone services and public internet facilities in remote communities through the Indigenous Communications Program ($31 million over four years from 2009–10).
Improve essential infrastructure	Implement the Remote Indigenous Energy Program to help remote Indigenous communities access clean, affordable and reliable 24-hour power supplies through installing renewable energy generation systems such as solar panels and wind turbines in around 50 remote Indigenous communities across Australia ($40 million over 5 years from 2011–12).
	Provide critical safety upgrades to remote and isolated airstrips across Australia, including in remote Indigenous communities through the Regional Aviation Access Program ($33.5 million over two years from 2011–12) which includes $12.1 million over three years from 2010–11 for safety upgrades to airstrips at Indigenous communities.
	With the state and territory governments, ensure new housing constructed under the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing have access to essential service infrastructure (power, water, sewerage, roads) in priority remote communities and town camps. This includes funding, jointly with the Northern Territory Government, of over $150 million over five years from May 2009 for the Alice Springs Transformation Plan which will transform town camps into fully serviced suburbs like any other in the town.
	Work with state and territory governments to implement revised roles and responsibilities for funding and delivery of municipal and essential services and related infrastructure in remote communities, as committed to by the Council of Australian Governments under the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing.
	Provide new purpose-built or refurbished community stores and store manager accommodation across the Northern Territory to help ensure healthy and affordable food is readily available ($50 million between 2011 and 2015).
	Complete projects to upgrade water supply and wastewater infrastructure such as treatment facilities, water storage capacity and pipe networks in remote communities, and support these communities in the overall management of their water supply systems ($51.7 million over four years from 2011).

Strengthening Foundations

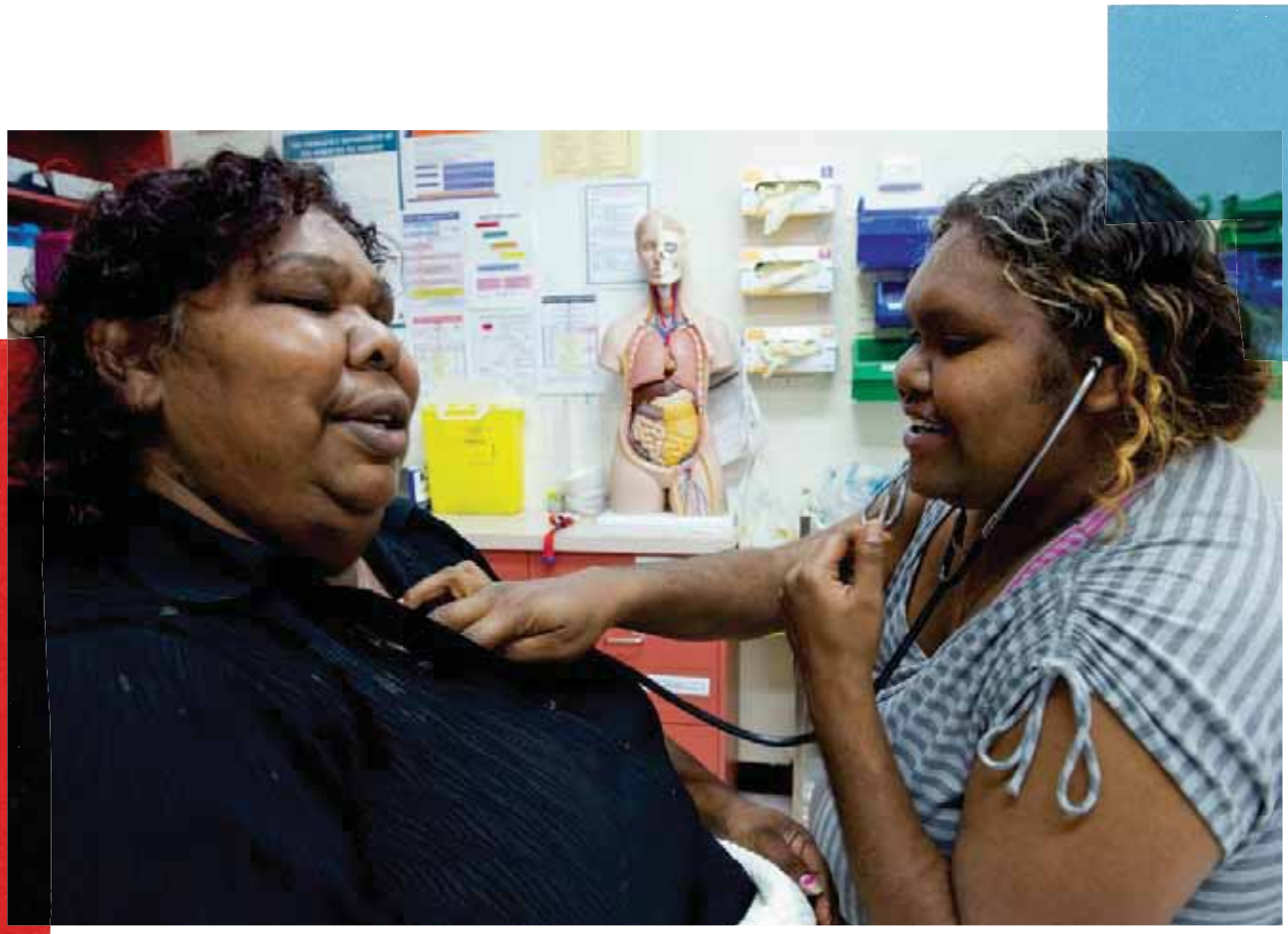
Objective 1.3 Increase access to health services

Poor health can have a significant impact on a person's capacity to participate in the economy. Healthy people develop their capabilities through education and training and grasp opportunities to work or start businesses. Indigenous Australians experience significantly lower health outcomes than other Australians and improving Indigenous health will result in significant benefits impacting both directly and indirectly on their ability to participate in the economy.

Ready access to quality health services is crucial to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians, as it is to all Australians. Indigenous Australians are more likely than non-Indigenous Australians to be hospitalised for most diseases and conditions, experience disability and reduced quality of life due to ill health and die at a younger age than other Australians.

In an effort to address decades of under-investment in health services in Indigenous communities, the Australian Government has increased its annual specific Indigenous health expenditure by 87 per cent since 2007–08. This includes the $1.6 billion National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes.

The Australian Government is committed to increasing access to health services for Indigenous Australians through investing in health infrastructure, providing better coordinated care, assisting with the cost of medicines and improving access to follow-up health care. Another priority is the expansion of the Indigenous health workforce to ensure the provision of effective, culturally-sensitive health services.



STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONS

Objective 1.3 Increase access to health services

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Improve health infrastructure	Invest to improve access to health services by providing 15 new or expanded Indigenous health clinics and 40 new renal dialysis chairs through the Health and Hospitals Fund - Regional Priority Round ($113.4 million over five years from 2011–12).
	Improve the quality and safety of health services delivered to Indigenous Australians by assisting Indigenous health organisations to achieve clinical accreditation through the Establishing Quality Health Standards program ($35 million over four years from 2011–12).
Support an expanding Indigenous health workforce	Under the Indigenous Chronic Disease package ($805.5 million over four years from 2009–10), fund a total of 698 new positions nationally, with many positions focusing on employment and training of Indigenous Australians. This includes: • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Workers • practice managers • Project Officers in Divisions of General Practice and NACCHO and State Affiliates • additional health professionals in Indigenous health services • Regional Tobacco Coordinators • Tobacco Action Workers • Healthy Lifestyle Workers • a flexible pool of funding to recruit Care Coordinators based on local needs.
Increase access to mental health services	Expand the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) program to deliver culturally appropriate suicide prevention and mental health services to around an additional 18,000 Indigenous Australians ($36.5 million over five years from 2011–12).
	Address child–abuse related trauma of Indigenous children, families and their communities in the remote Northern Territory by funding Mobile Outreach Service Plus and related services ($15.6 million over four years from 2008–09).
Improve access to primary health care	Establish 62 Medicare Locals as part of the National Health Reform agenda including in regional locations with significant Indigenous populations such as Northern Territory, Far North Queensland and Kimberley-Pilbara Medicare Locals. Medicare Locals will be primary health care organisations established to coordinate primary health care delivery and tackle local health care needs and service gaps. They will drive improvements in primary health care and ensure that services are better tailored to meet the needs of local communities ($493 million over four years from 2011–12).
	Under the Commonwealth's Indigenous Chronic Disease package ($805.5 million over four years from 2009–10): • tackle chronic disease risk factors including smoking, poor nutrition and lack of exercise and deliver community education initiatives to reduce the number of Indigenous Australians with these risk factors • improve chronic disease management and follow-up care in primary care by providing incentives and support for accredited general practices and Indigenous health services to detect, treat and manage chronic disease more effectively, supporting Indigenous Australians to participate in their own healthcare and by increasing access to affordable specialist, allied health care and medicines for Indigenous Australians with a chronic disease • increase the capacity of the primary care workforce to deliver effective health care to Indigenous Australians by funding more than 160 new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Workers, 75 additional health professionals and practice managers in Indigenous health services, and a range of workforce training and professional development activities. Implement and evaluate pilot projects providing mobile dental equipment and services to rural and regional Indigenous communities ($11 million over four years from 2009–10).
	Provide dental follow-up services to children living in the prescribed areas of the Northern Territory with a referral from a Child Health Check or from a subsequent follow-up service such as a primary health care consultation ($10.7 million over three years from 2009–10 as part of the $131.1 million Closing the Gap – Northern Territory – Indigenous Health and Related Services measure).

Strengthening Foundations

Objective 1.4 Support safe communities

All Australians have the right to live in safe communities, free from violence, abuse and fear. For too many Indigenous Australians, communities are not the safe places they should be.

While state and territory governments have primary responsibility for ensuring that Indigenous Australians enjoy the same level of safety as other Australians, the Australian Government also has a part to play. People need to feel safe in their homes and streets before investment in education and housing can make a real difference.

Safe and stable communities promote social engagement, achieve better educational outcomes and are more likely to attract investment by lowering risk for business.

Every individual and family has a role to play in rebuilding and enforcing the social norms that underpin successful communities. Positive social norms encourage people to take responsibility for choices that lead to healthier lives. The Australian Government recognises that by providing positive role models and setting high expectations, strong Indigenous leaders can make a vital contribution to the security and wellbeing of their communities.

STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONS
Objective 1.4 Support safe communities

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Improve community safety	Reduce family violence by implementing the Indigenous Family Safety Program ($64.4 million over four years from 2010–11) which will: • address alcohol abuse, with an urgent focus on reducing the supply of alcohol • provide more effective police protection to reduce incidents of violence • work with strong local leaders to strengthen social norms against violence by changing attitudes and fostering respectful relationships • coordinate support services to aid the recovery of people who experience violence, including children who experience or witness violence.
	Support Indigenous communities to develop local solutions for promoting community safety through fostering women's leadership, building community capacity and improving access to services under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children and the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.
	Reduce petrol sniffing in remote communities by expanding the rollout of Opal fuel from 110 sites to 150 sites nationally under the Petrol Sniffing Strategy ($38.5 million over four years from 2010–11).
	Increase the police presence in remote communities in the Northern Territory with five new permanent police stations ($47.8 million in 2011–12) and eight sworn community police engagement officers ($1.7 million in 2011–12).
	Reduce offending and reoffending through focused initiatives under the Indigenous Justice Program ($11.4 million in 2011–12) including provision of holistic through-care programs for people exiting prison.
	Support new community solutions for fighting alcohol and substance abuse in Indigenous communities, including development of alcohol and substance abuse management programs through the Breaking the Cycle initiative ($20.0 million over three years from 2011–12).
	Encourage safe Indigenous communities by improving the capacity of Australian justice systems to deliver on the needs of Indigenous Australians, reducing Indigenous overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, addressing substance abuse, and strengthening partnerships between communities, governments and stakeholders under the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework.

Strengthening Foundations

Objective 1.5 Support strong leadership

For economic opportunities to be fully realised, individuals and communities need to be able to see a future where prosperity is achievable.

Role models that Indigenous Australians can identify with, together with a supportive community and family environment, help to set high aspirations for economic independence and the skills necessary to achieve it. To make aspirations a reality, there is a need to focus on strengthening the capacity of Indigenous Australians and communities to identify, build and make the most of economic assets to generate economic wellbeing for themselves, their families and their communities.

STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONS
Objective 1.5 Support strong leadership

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Strengthen capacity of Indigenous leaders	Establish and continue to support the Indigenous representative body National Congress of Australia's First Peoples. The Congress will provide national leadership that will work in partnership with governments and the corporate and community sectors. It will provide effective and well-developed policy advice which reflects the views of its members ($29.2 million over four years until December 2013).
	Encourage Indigenous Australians in their chosen field of excellence through supporting the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence and provide ongoing support for the Indigenous National Leadership Program and Indigenous Women's Leadership Program.

Strengthening Foundations

Objective 1.6 Ensure tax and welfare systems support economic development and participation

Indigenous economic development must be supported by maximum participation in the economy by Indigenous Australians. It is essential that the tax and welfare systems support economic participation and create economic development opportunities.

Thirty-six per cent of working age Indigenous Australians are not participating in the labour force . Indigenous Australians are more likely to be unemployed than non-Indigenous Australians and are one-and-a-half times more likely to remain unemployed for longer periods of time. Long-term unemployment among families is a significant social and economic problem facing Indigenous Australians, sometimes over several generations. Joblessness is associated with higher rates of poverty, poorer health outcomes and lower education attainment for parents and their children. The Australian Government is committed to reforming welfare payments for all Australians to remove disincentives and encourage and support increased participation in the economy.

STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONS

Objective 1.6 Ensure tax and welfare systems support economic development and participation

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Increase participation through welfare reform	Address entrenched disadvantage through place-based participation measures for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians under the Building Australia's Future Workforce Package in 10 locations: • Provide more help to teenage parents who have not finished Year 12 or equivalent and are receiving Parenting Payment, by ensuring they meet a customised participation plan designed to help them finish their education ($47.1 million over four years from 1 January 2012). • Provide more help to jobless families by ensuring parents who have been in receipt of income support for more than two years and who are not working or studying, or who are under 23 years of age, meet regularly with Centrelink to plan for their return to work ($71.1 million over four years from 1 July 2012). • Provide additional Communities for Children services to support teenage parents from 1 January 2012 and jobless families from 1 July 2012 as part of the new participation requirements under the Building Australia's Future Workforce package. Disadvantaged families will receive the support they need to effectively participate in the workforce and develop their children's skills ready for a successful education ($23.4 million is being invested over four years from 2011–12 for new or existing providers in the 10 disadvantaged locations, as part of a wider $42.5 million Communities for Children package). • Extend the Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JETCCFA) program from 26 weeks to 52 weeks for eligible parents in jobless families engaged in employment activities who reside in one of 10 disadvantaged communities. This will support these families with their child care costs ($15.9 million over four years from July 2012). • Introduce a non-discriminatory, targeted model of income management to five of these sites, to help people stabilise their financial situations, care for their children, and enter or return to the workforce ($117.5 million over five years from 1 July 2012).
Remove disincentives in the tax and welfare systems	Under the mainstream Building Australia's Future Workforce package ($3 billion over six years from 2011–12) which will impact Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians: • change tax arrangements to increase the proportion of the low income tax offset that is delivered through workers' week-to-week pay packets from 50 per cent to 70 per cent • raise income support payment thresholds for eligible students and single parents to encourage and reward increased hours of work • improve participation by increasing the number of hours someone on a disability support pension can work to up to 30 hours a week • increase access and better target income support for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly in relation to higher education, by implementing the recommendations from the review into the 2010 student income support reforms by 1 January 2012.
	In partnership with the Queensland Government, regional organisations and local Indigenous communities, extend the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial to build on the gains already made in education, social responsibility and home ownership ($16.1 million until December 2012).

Strengthening Foundations

Objective 1.7 Support good governance and increase coordinated government

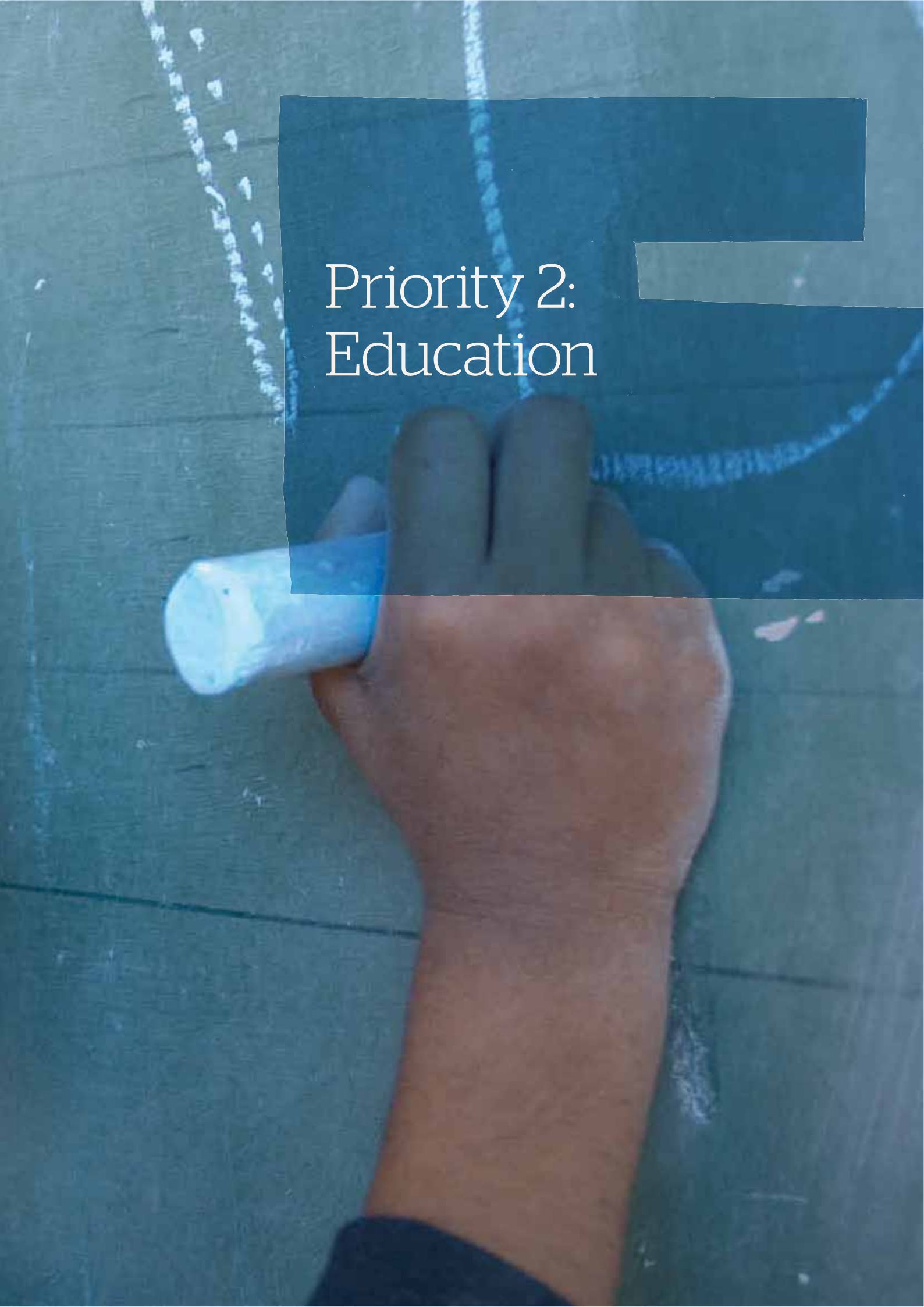
Sound community governance supports economic development by helping communities to deal effectively with social issues such as crime, violence and substance abuse. Clear governance structures promote responsibility and underpin the rule of law.

To engage effectively with Indigenous Australians and communities, all levels of government must work together, each with clear roles and responsibilities. A coordinated approach enables governments to identify agreed priorities, eliminate the duplication of services, reduce red tape and respond efficiently to the different needs of individual communities. It is also important that all community organisations delivering government services meet the requirements of relevant legislation and are accountable to their communities and funding bodies.

Indigenous Australians are key partners in the effort to strengthen governance. The Australian Government understands that open and respectful engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is essential to real and sustainable change.

STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONS
Objective 1.7 Support good governance and increase coordinated government

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Support good corporate governance	Promote and support high standards of corporate governance through corporate governance and management training provided by the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations.
	Review the role and statutory functions of Native Title Representative Bodies to ensure they meet the changing needs of the native title system, particularly the needs of native title holders after claims have been resolved.
Increase place based partnerships	Work with state and territory government partners to improve communication and delivery of services in the 29 priority communities through implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery and actions agreed in Local Implementation Plans.
	Increase the focus on Indigenous economic development in targeted regional areas through mechanisms such as Regional Development Australia and Regional Partnership Agreements.
	Work with state and territory governments through the National Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy for Indigenous Australians to ensure that services delivered in urban and regional areas are effective, accessible and culturally appropriate for Indigenous Australians.
Reduce red tape	Work in partnership across governments to reduce the reporting requirements for Indigenous organisations including through consistent reporting requirements and reporting dates.
Increase availability of accessible and reliable information	Work with states and territories to improve the accessibility and quality of information on education, jobs and the Indigenous business sector to inform policy, investment and purchasing arrangements.



Priority 2: Education

Economic development relies on people's ability to participate in the economy. All Australians must have access to high quality education and opportunities for training.

People with a quality education generally have greater job opportunities, higher incomes, better health and a longer life expectancy. Literacy and numeracy are essential skills. Prioritising investment in education will not only close the gap in educational attainment, it will also equip young Indigenous Australians with the skills they need to thrive in the workplace.

The Australian Government is driving unprecedented reforms in education. Integral to these reforms are genuine collaboration and consultation between Indigenous Australians, families, carers, communities, students, schools and education providers.

Regular school attendance is vital to closing the gap in education. Family expectations have a powerful influence on children's attendance and attitudes to school. It is also important that governments invest in high-quality teaching and school services to maximise the engagement of Indigenous students from the pre-school years onwards. This will be a priority for governments over the life of the Strategy, particularly in remote communities where attendance rates for Indigenous children are generally lower.

Families and communities play a big role in ensuring that children go to school regularly and make progress. Leaders and role models can have major positive influence on all aspects of young peoples' lives, including attitudes to learning. Increased motivation can help a young person to move from social exclusion to active and optimistic participation in school and then in work or business.

A five year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014 has been agreed by all Australian education ministers and the Council of Australian Governments as part of a national reform agenda. This comprehensive national plan explains how education providers will accelerate improvements for Indigenous children and young people. It sets out the actions at national, state and local levels that will close the gap between the educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The six priority areas are:

- readiness for school
- engagement and connections
- attendance
- literacy and numeracy
- leadership, quality teaching and workforce development
- pathways to real post-school options.

The actions contained within this Strategy complement and are in addition to the actions contained within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014.

Education

Objective 2.1 Improve school readiness, school attendance and educational outcomes

Education is the basis of a fulfilling and independent life. Engagement in quality education, from early childhood through to higher education, gives individuals the chance to reach their potential, expands choices in work and life and strengthens self-reliance.

Current levels of Indigenous school participation and educational achievement are unacceptable. Changing this situation is an urgent priority for the Australian Government.

If Indigenous Australians are to benefit fully from the opportunities that exist in the Australian economy, consistent school attendance is essential. The Australian Government supports the efforts of Indigenous families and communities to take more responsibility for getting their children to school every day.

It is important that regular school attendance is complemented by ensuring that students are engaged and taught by high-quality teachers in schools led by effective and supportive principals. These principals should in turn be supported by a world-class curriculum. Many teachers, however, feel under-equipped to meet the particular needs of some Indigenous students, particularly in their first years of teaching. The 2007 Staff in Australia's Schools survey found 31 per cent of primary teachers and 40 per cent of secondary teachers in their early parts of their careers felt their university education was of no help in preparing them to teach Indigenous students. For that reason, the Australian Government continues to invest in proven leadership and teacher-quality programs for educators right across the country.

Over 74,000 Indigenous students are attending schools that participate in the Smarter Schools National Partnership for Low Socio-economic Status School Communities. This represents approximately 48 per cent of Indigenous students across Australia.

Increasing the number of Indigenous educators is also a key factor in deepening Indigenous students' engagement with schools. Evidence demonstrates that Indigenous students require greater support from teachers and their communities at critical stages in their school lives, particularly when moving from pre-school to primary school, from primary to secondary, and then from Year 10 to senior high school.

EDUCATION

Objective 2.1 Improve school readiness, school attendance and educational outcomes

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Improve access to early childhood education	Ensure that all children will have access to a quality early childhood education program by 2013, delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in the year before formal schooling, under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education ($970 million over five years from November 2008).
Improve school attendance levels	Continue the School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM) in several trial locations across the Northern Territory and Queensland for an extra year until 30 June 2012.
	Keep building the evidence base of what works in improving Indigenous students' school attendance.
Improve Indigenous literacy and numeracy outcomes	Share information about successful methods to improve Indigenous literacy and numeracy outcomes across education providers.
	Regularly review National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests to ensure that they are not culturally biased against Indigenous students.
	Work with education providers to support access to family literacy and numeracy programs including multilingual family programs for Indigenous Australians and intensive support playgroups and other family support services.
Improve Indigenous educational outcomes	Work with education providers to support wider and more effective use of Personalised Learning Plans for Indigenous students.
Improve teacher quality	Support initiatives such as Stronger Smarter, What Works and Dare to Lead to improve leadership, teaching quality and workforce development for teachers and principals.
	Recognise and reward the very best teachers through the Rewards for Great Teachers initiative. This will apply across Australia and will benefit Indigenous students ($425 million over four years from 2011–12).
Encourage Indigenous families and communities to be involved in their children's education	Help more than 42,000 parents of Indigenous children to engage with, and support, their children's education through the Parental and Community Engagement (PACE) Program ($43.2 million over two years from 2011–12).
Improve access to high quality secondary schooling for people in regional and remote areas	Implement the Supporting Remote Schools – Additional Teachers measure for an additional 200 teachers in Northern Territory remote schools by the end of 2012 (a total of $107.8 million over five years to 2012–13).
	Construct four boarding facilities for secondary school students from remote Indigenous communities.
	Support the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation in providing over 230 six-year boarding school scholarships for Indigenous students to attend leading schools in the country that provide high expectations and world-class education ($20 million over three years from 2009–10).
	Provide students, staff and researchers in regional Australia, including in areas with high Indigenous populations, with access to world-class teaching, training and research facilities through the Education Investment Fund ($500 million over five years from mid-2011).
	Strengthen regional higher education by helping to overcome the higher costs of regional campuses. Funding will be targeted to the campuses that need the most support and will be provided through a transparent process that responds to student demand (an additional $109.9 million over four years from 2011–12, increasing total funding to $249.4 million).
	Support Indigenous students who take up school or training opportunities away from their home communities by providing scholarships through the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program ($69.9 million over four years from 2011–12) and the Indigenous Youth Mobility Program ($60.0 million over four years from 2011–12).

Education

Objective 2.2 Support successful transitions from school to work

A smooth transition from school to employment gives young Indigenous Australians the best possible start to their working lives. That transition is most likely to be successful when young people develop the skills needed for life beyond school.

The path to meaningful employment begins at school. Indigenous students may need support to build their aspirations for a successful working life. Providing opportunities for work experience and mentoring in the final years of school will help Indigenous students to finish their schooling and then move confidently into employment.

For many young Indigenous Australians the transition from school to work will include obtaining vocational education and training qualifications. For others, success at university will help them in this transition. Higher education can provide more choice and a greater chance of progressing in a given field. Higher education is discussed in detail later in this Strategy.

The Australian Government has focussed its efforts on giving students the chance to acquire recognised vocational skills as part of the senior secondary certificate. This provides credit towards a nationally recognised vocational education or training qualification within the Australian Qualifications Framework. Students can participate in training that is geared to specific industry competency standards and is delivered by a Registered Training Organisation, in some cases in partnership with a school.

EDUCATION
Objective 2.2 Support successful transitions from school to work

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Encourage and support students to build their aspirations for life after school	Work with the private sector and non-Government organisations to build the aspirations of young Indigenous Australians for economic participation beyond school through initiatives like 'Learn. Earn. Legend!' to ensure that they complete their education and connect to the economy.
	Explore opportunities to further expand the Learn. Earn. Legend! Year 12 Destinations Project in Queensland which is currently funded over two years from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2012. The Project provides wrap around support services for 2300 Indigenous Year 12 students across Queensland and monitors their progress in school and post school. So far the Destinations initiative has assisted in placing 80 per cent of school students into part-time or full-time employment, study or further training.
Provide opportunities for work, scholarships, cadetships and mentoring	Give Indigenous students the chance to learn skills and knowledge necessary to become a ranger. Cadetships in natural resource management, heritage related activities and cultural studies will become a nationally recognised qualification at the Certificate II level ($4.1 million over four years from 2011–12).
Provide opportunities for students to access school based vocational education and training	Introduce the Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways Program which will focus on providing school-based traineeships to Years 11 and 12 and, in some cases, Year 10 Indigenous students in targeted high schools across the country to assist them in making the transition from school to vocational education ($50.7 million over four years from 2011–12).

Education

Objective 2.3 Improve access to higher education

For many Australians, higher education is the key to success in employment, one that provides more choice and a greater chance of progressing in a given field.

The Australian Government supports the aspirations of Indigenous Australians to pursue higher education and to undertake vocational training in specialised careers. Australia is experiencing skills shortages in critical areas, such as the health sector, so a larger Indigenous workforce will help contribute to Australia's economic growth by boosting the available labour supply, which may help meet the needs of industry.

Indigenous students must be encouraged to see higher education as a real and worthwhile option. Better access to higher education will enable more Indigenous students to enter fields with private sector employment opportunities such as engineering and commerce.

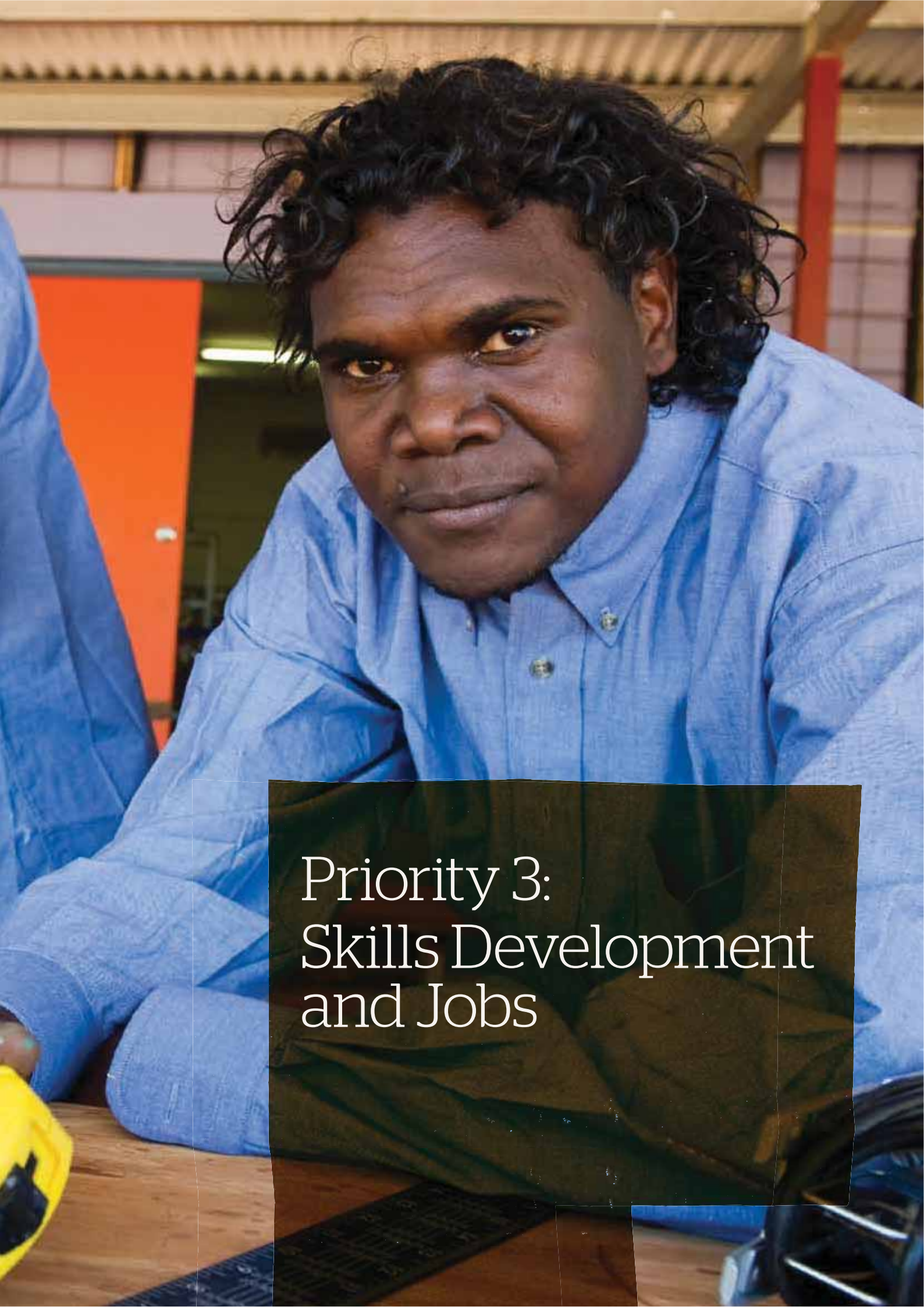
Increasing the number of Indigenous Australians with university qualifications will result in greater numbers of Indigenous professionals and strengthen the leadership of tomorrow. The Australian Government recognises the crucial role of Indigenous leaders who set high expectations, and encourage participation in the national economy.

EDUCATION

Objective 2.3 Improve access to higher education

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Support success in higher education	Provide more Commonwealth supported places at public universities (an additional $1.2 billion from 2011–12 bringing the total to $3.97 billion additional funding since 2008).
	Implement the Regional Priorities Round of funding from the Education Investment Fund. This will provide infrastructure funding which will support the construction of state-of-the-art education facilities for universities and vocational training and education centres across regional Australia, including in locations with high Indigenous populations ($500 million over five years from 2011–12).
	Assist eligible higher education providers to meet the special needs of Indigenous students and advance the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy through the Indigenous Support Program ($150.3 million over four calendar years from 2010).
	Improve access to, and participation in, higher education for Indigenous students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds and regional and remote areas with accommodation and education costs associated with higher education through the Commonwealth Scholarships Program ($222 million over five calendar years from 2010).
	Promote excellence in university teaching for all Australians through the Promotion of Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education program ($50.1 million over four years from 2011–12).
	Finalise a Government Review of Funding for Schooling to build a transparent, fair, financially sustainable and effective school funding system for all Australian students for long-term improvement in education outcomes beyond 2013.
Attract and retain Indigenous students in higher education	Undertake a review of measures to improve higher education access and outcomes for Indigenous Australians in consultation with the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council.
	Increase the access and participation of people from a low socioeconomic status background, including Indigenous Australians, in higher education ($702 million over five calendar years from 2010).
	Work with the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council to develop and promote a National Best Practice Framework for integrating Indigenous cultural competency throughout university activities.
Encourage students to view higher education as a real option	Promote the importance of young Indigenous Australians getting a good education so they can reach their career goals through initiatives like 'Learn. Earn. Legend!' and other mentoring and role-modelling initiatives.
Increase representation of Indigenous Australians in the higher education workforce	Provide support to the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) in the promotion and implementation of IHEAC's National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy.

STANLEY
8m/26'



Priority 3: Skills Development and Jobs

Jobs are the pathway to greater economic participation, financial security and independence.

For most Australians, engagement with the economy begins with paid employment. Having a strong education, a job and an income helps people to improve their standard of living, allows for a stable home life and builds assets for long-term financial security. The Government wants to see more young Indigenous Australians fulfilling their potential by staying in school and moving into work, rather than onto welfare.

A collaborative approach between employers, governments, service providers and Indigenous Australians and their communities is needed to build Indigenous employment and encourage success for Indigenous Australians in the workplace. Communities play a critical role in promoting social norms that reinforce the value of work. The private sector must be prepared to employ and train local Indigenous employees and take responsibility for their work skills as they would for any Australian. Employment services need to support Indigenous participation in the economy and provide sufficient and effective incentives for employers to attract and retain Indigenous employees.

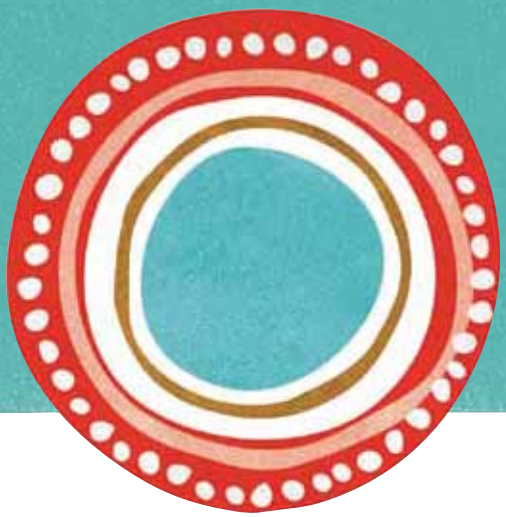
An understanding of culture also plays an important role. Employers, workplaces and service providers with an understanding of how culture and work obligations interact can contribute to better job outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Workplaces with cultural awareness, competency and mentoring programs will benefit from more satisfied, responsive and productive employees.

The Government is further improving support for Indigenous Australians to help them find work and keep work. Through the Building Australia's Future Workforce package, announced in the 2011-12 Budget, the Australian Government is investing $3 billion over six years in skills and training initiatives that will help meet the challenges of the twenty-first century by building an educated and skilled workforce and ensuring there are opportunities for all Australians to experience the benefits of work. While this package aims to assist all Australians, it will make a major contribution to developing the skills of Indigenous Australians, including the newly established Indigenous Youth Careers Pathway Program and a review of options to improve current employment and participation services for Indigenous Australians living in remote areas.

The Building Australia's Future Workforce is a package of measures that:

- rewards work through improved incentives in the tax and transfer system
- provides new opportunities to get people into work through training, education, and improved childcare and employment services
- introduces new participation requirements for the very long-term unemployed, Disability Support Pensioners, teenage parents, jobless families and young people
- takes new approaches to addressing entrenched disadvantage in targeted locations.

The new measures continue the Government's commitment to closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.



Skills Development and Jobs

Objective 3.1 Support job readiness

Helping more Indigenous adults gain the skills and confidence they need to be ready for work is an important task. Australia is experiencing skills shortages in many industries and employers are struggling to find the workers they need. The impact of these skills shortages are greater in regional areas where there are smaller numbers of workers to draw from.

Vocational education and training that builds on a sound education is the main way for individuals to develop their skills and in turn is the most direct path to employment. The Australian Government is reforming the vocational education and training system and improving apprenticeship programs. Changes to the vocational education and training and apprenticeship systems will improve the match between the skills gained through training and the skills that employers need, and so will stronger connections between employers and the education system. These reforms will help more Indigenous Australians acquire valuable skills.

Finding the right person for the job can start with finding the right person to train. Apprenticeship mentoring helps apprentice candidates choose the right trade for them and supports them throughout their apprenticeship. Tailored solutions that connect training with local jobs can also help to increase the successful completion rates of trainees. Industry partnerships that support innovative training and employment projects can create effective links between potential employees and job opportunities.

In today's jobs market, literacy and numeracy are essential skills. The Australian Government believes that disadvantaged Australians who lack those basic skills must be supported to acquire them. Changes to the vocational education and training system will also help more people to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and other essential skills to help them get and keep a job.

A national, collaborative effort is required to address skills shortages and to build the success of Indigenous Australians in the workplace. This vital endeavour requires all partners, including employers, Indigenous Australians, social enterprises, the community sector and governments to work together to give Indigenous Australians a chance to find meaningful jobs, keep them and share in the opportunities of Australia's strong economy.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND JOBS

Objective 3.1 Support job readiness

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Improve vocational education and training to deliver skilled workers	Work with states and territories to renegotiate the $1.46 billion National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development, and introduce a National Partnership to reform the vocational education and training system for all Australians. Additional funding will be made available for states and territories on the basis of the level of reform they undertake. This will help drive a new, modern national training system. Reform the vocational education and training system focusing on: • delivering better quality, higher level training that meets the needs of employers and students, supports competitive industries, and is better matched to future jobs growth • greater transparency, so it is clear government funds are being properly targeted at skills needs, and employers and students can identify the training organisations that perform well and best meet their needs • efficient investments in skills that deliver the right skills to the economy at the right time • supporting equity through increased participation by groups not currently fully engaged in work and build existing workers' skills so they can stay in work as skills requirements change.
Provide support to industries and regions experiencing skills shortages	Support the training and workforce development in areas of current and future skills need, particularly for those in regional areas, through the National Workforce Development Fund ($558 million over four years from 2011–12).
	Implement the national 'Health Heroes' campaign to attract more Indigenous Australians to the workforce, including targeted media advertising and secondary school visits ($4.3 million over three years from 2011).
Provide more support to disadvantaged Australians to get skills	Promote greater participation in the economy for all Australians by providing comprehensive skills and training, from foundation skills training through to specialised work qualifications. Support for skills training will include improving access to the Language Literacy and Numeracy Program (additional $143.1 million over four years from 2011–12), expanding the Workplace English Language and Literacy Program (additional $20 million over four years from 2011–12) and providing training to support the return to work of single and teenage parents ($80 million over four years from 2011–12).
Increase assistance to Australian apprentices	Support reform to the Australian Apprenticeships system, in response to the findings of the Apprenticeships for the 21st Century Expert Panel. Reforms will include a focus on improved support for Australian Apprentices, including through implementation of the Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring package. The mentoring package will assist potential apprenticeship candidates in choosing the right trade and provide eligible Australian Apprentices with targeted mentoring, particularly in the first 12 months of their Australian Apprenticeship, to support successful completions. The mentoring component of the package has a focus on supporting those Australian Apprentices who face additional barriers to participation, such as Indigenous Australian Apprentices ($101 million from 2011–12).
Provide Indigenous Australians with the training needed to take up local jobs	Provide training and other support to child care workers in remote communities to help them gain qualifications to deliver government child care services.
	Support the Indigenous Land Corporation to ensure 200 Indigenous Australians are employed at the Ayers Rock Resort by 2015, increasing to 350 or more than 50 per cent of total employees by the end of 2018.

Skills Development and Jobs

Objective 3.2 Improve employment services to increase participation

Employment services help job seekers find and keep work. They also help employers find the right employees. Improved employment services that provide more support for Indigenous Australians to find and keep a job will help to close the employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. So will stronger partnerships between those services and employers and Indigenous Australians themselves.

Nearly a fifth of very long-term unemployed job seekers are Indigenous. It is important that these Australians get the additional training and assistance they need to enter the workforce. Reforms to employment services are benefiting long-term unemployed Indigenous Australians by providing access to additional wage subsidies and job training.

The Australian Government believes that more attention needs to be paid to vulnerable job seekers who have become disengaged from employment services. Providing greater support and mentoring and getting the incentives right for vulnerable job seekers will help as many Australians as possible have the chance to enjoy the dignity of work.

There are some locations in Australia where particularly acute levels of unemployment and disadvantage mean that many people live on income support for extended periods. In some households, unemployment is a way of life. Circumstances like these can give rise to complex and inter-related barriers to education, training and employment, as well as participation in other crucial aspects of life and society. It is important that disadvantaged regions are provided with additional assistance to help break down these barriers so that all of Australia can contribute to and share in a growing national economy.

People who can work should have the opportunity to experience the social and financial benefits that come with employment. To achieve this, governments need to provide the right support and incentives. The Australian Government wants to draw on the knowledge and expertise of local bodies, state and territory governments, business, not-for-profits and community services to develop innovative and locally driven solutions to get people into work.

In remote areas, there are often complex barriers to employment. There may be limited employment opportunities or meaningful participation activities. Low levels of literacy and numeracy also act as a particular barrier to employment and participation. Government assistance in remote areas needs to take this into account and employment services need to be attuned to the varied and complex needs of remote areas.

The Australian Government is reforming remote employment services to better meet the needs and circumstances of remote job seekers. New remote participation and employment services arrangements will be in place by 1 July 2013 and should be simpler, more integrated and more flexible than existing arrangements.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND JOBS

Objective 3.2 Improve employment services to increase participation

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Increase assistance and training for disadvantaged job seekers	Provide additional wage subsidies and support participation in job training, Work for the Dole and other activities geared to helping the very long term unemployed, including Indigenous job seekers, find work ($227.9 million over four years from 2011–12).
Provide Indigenous job seekers with mentoring support when starting work	Trial the provision of culturally appropriate mentoring support for Indigenous job seekers when they start work to help them stay in jobs ($6.1 million over four years from 2011–12).
	Create 30 new positions for Indigenous employment and workforce mentors within Northern Territory shire councils to address the ongoing challenge of retaining Indigenous employees by supporting the Shires Indigenous Workforce package ($4.8 million over three years from 2011-12).
Ensure participation and employment services are tailored to remote circumstances	Conduct consultations on a new participation and employment servicing model for remote areas to support improved employment outcomes.
	Provide incentives for Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Service providers to get people in remote areas into jobs, even when that employment is seasonal or variable.
	Continue to require Job Services Australia providers to refer Indigenous job seekers to CDEP vacancies if they are not otherwise engaged in an activity and a suitable place is available.
	Pilot joint interviews by Centrelink and employment service providers with job seekers in nine communities.
Trial place-based initiatives in areas of significant disadvantage	Implement a trial of place-based initiatives to target areas of significant disadvantage ($304 million over four years from 2011–12) that will: • extend the Priority Employment Area initiative in 20 of Australia's most vulnerable regions until 30 June 2013 and implement local employment plans to help disadvantaged job seekers get a foothold in the labour market • boost engagement and workforce participation in 10 disadvantaged Australian communities through the Local Solutions Fund • deliver a minimum of 40 Jobs and Skills Expos across Australia to help connect job seekers with employment and training opportunities • pilot 20 programs for Job Services Australia service providers that will model potential enhancements to services for highly disadvantaged job seekers • provide more help for teenage parents – from 1 January 2012, teenage parents living in 10 disadvantaged communities who have not finished Year 12 or equivalent and are receiving Parenting Payment from the Australian Government will need to meet an individually crafted participation plan • provide more help for jobless families – from 1 July 2012, parents on income support for more than two years who are not working or studying or who are under 23 years of age and not working or studying and live in one of 10 disadvantaged locations will be required to meet regularly with Centrelink to plan for their return to work • extend the targeted income management to five of the 10 trial communities • continue the School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM) in several trial locations across the Northern Territory and Queensland for an extra year until 30 June 2012.
	Deploy 34 Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators to engage in local regional planning activities, building on the priorities identified by Regional Development Australia committees. These plans will allow direct engagement between the Australian Government and regional communities to improve access to education, skills and jobs ($19.1 million over three years from 2011–12).
Apply tougher rules to job seekers	Implement measures that better identify job seekers who are persistently failing to meet their job-search responsibilities, and who are at risk of disengaging from assistance that helps them improve their employment prospects ($49.8 million over four years from 2011–12). This includes improving communication and coordination between Centrelink and employment services providers, improving the operation of Comprehensive Compliance Assessments, and applying penalties as necessary.

Skills Development and Jobs

Objective 3.3 Assist more Indigenous Australians to secure and retain a job

Improving employment outcomes is essential to Indigenous economic development. Stronger partnerships between employers, Indigenous Australians and local employment service providers, and creating inclusive and culturally aware workplaces will help ensure that Indigenous Australians find and retain meaningful jobs. These strong partnerships will help provide clear pathways to employment in specific growth industries. It is also important to recognise the efforts of employers that are achieving success in Indigenous employment and retention and to learn from their practices.

In some remote communities where there are few employment prospects, people may choose to move to pursue better opportunities for training and work. Relocation assistance and the provision of suitable and affordable accommodation assist people who move from remote communities to take up training and employment opportunities elsewhere.

The Australian Government is laying the foundations for increased Indigenous employment through improvements to the vocational education and training system and employment services. But government also has a part to play as an employer. It is important that more Indigenous Australians are employed across the public sector where they can bring cultural diversity and different perspectives to their workplaces.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND JOBS

Objective 3.3 Assist more Indigenous Australians to secure and retain a job

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Encourage employers to develop strong partnerships with Indigenous Australians and local employment service providers	Build partnerships between employers and government to provide labour market intelligence on industry-specific approaches to training that can match employment supply with demand in sectors experiencing skill shortages.
	Develop region and industry-specific Indigenous workforce development plans in the Pilbara and Rockhampton that build on the objectives of the memorandum of understanding between the Minerals Council of Australia and the Australian Government.
	Develop industry-specific agreements for Indigenous employment (including formal memorandums of understanding) and secure commitments for Indigenous employment with individual employers.
Support inclusive and culturally aware Australian workplaces	Work with the private sector to build inclusive workplaces and culturally aware recruitment and retention practices to increase Indigenous recruitment and retention, including through the development of Reconciliation Action Plans.
Promote best practice in Indigenous employment and retention	Facilitate the sharing of best practice in Indigenous recruitment and retention among employers, to build more successful human resources models.
Support people moving from remote Indigenous communities to pursue training and employment opportunities	In partnership with the state and the Northern Territory governments provide support for Indigenous Australians seeking to relocate from remote Indigenous communities to pursue work and training opportunities including the provision of accommodation for this purpose under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (more than $200 million over 10 years from 2008–09).
	Assist job seekers to relocate from regions with high unemployment to areas with strong labour markets to take up a job through the Connecting People with Jobs measure ($14.6 million over two years from 2011–12).
Increase public sector employment of Indigenous Australians	Make progress towards the goal of 2.6 per cent of Indigenous employee representation across the public sector nationally by 2015, including through facilitation of best practice information sharing, traineeships, work experience programs and graduate recruitment.

Skills Development and Jobs

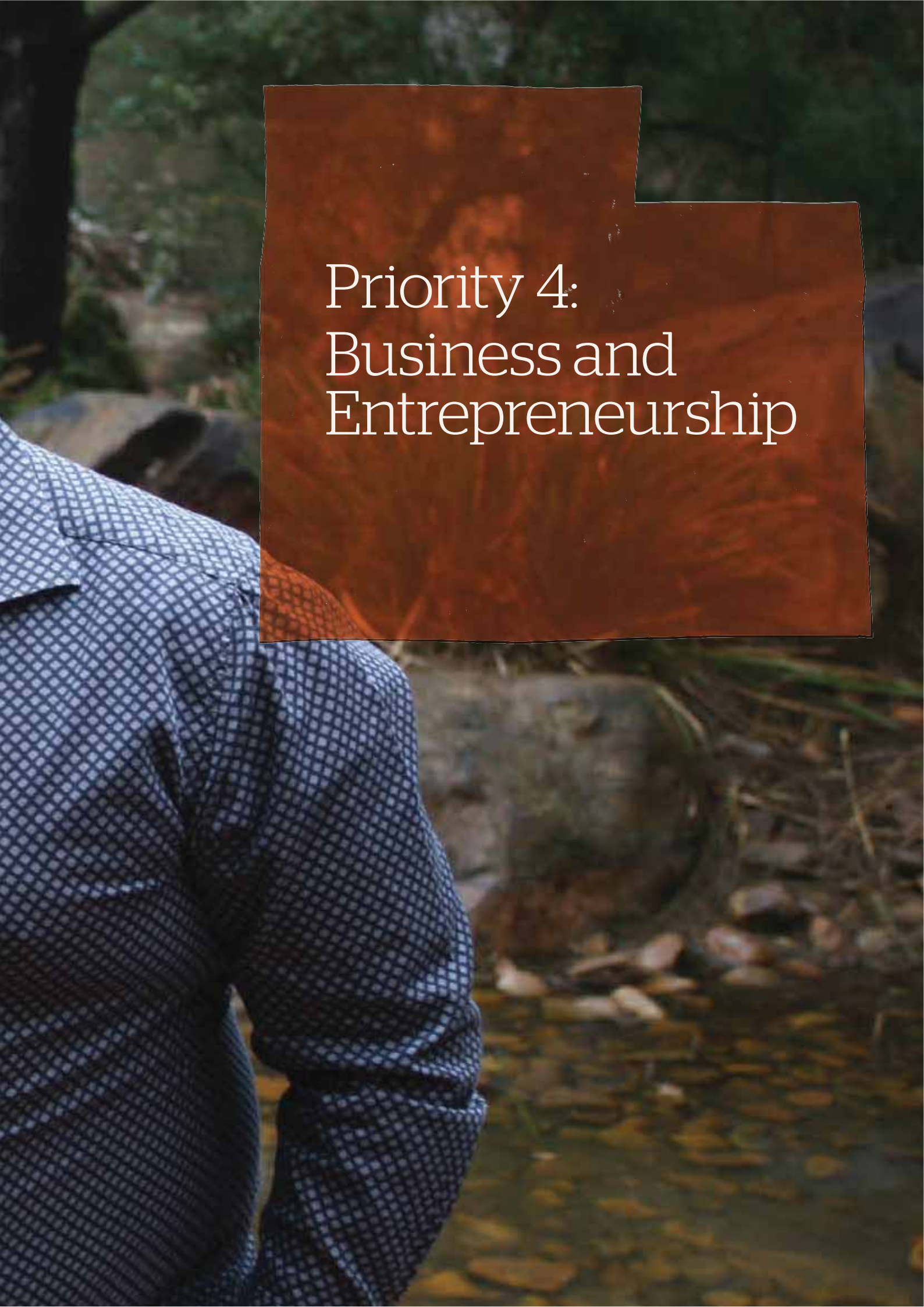
Objective 3.4 Improve Indigenous employment outcomes through government procurement and service delivery

Governments are major purchasers of goods and services right across the country. Procurement policies can influence the level of opportunity that government purchases create for Indigenous workers.

The provision of essential government services such as health, welfare, housing, environmental land management, utilities and municipal services provides employment to many thousands of Australians. Here governments can play an important role by encouraging tenderers to employ Indigenous Australians in the delivery of publically funded programs and projects. Indigenous Australians employed in government service delivery benefit from secure employment that contributes to the wellbeing of the wider community.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND JOBS
Objective 3.4 Improve Indigenous employment outcomes through government procurement and service delivery

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Reform government procurement to improve Indigenous employment outcomes from government investment	Apply the Indigenous Opportunities Policy to major Australian Government procurement activities from 1 July 2011, which will increase Indigenous employment in Australian Government funded contracts.
	Explore opportunities to more effectively leverage government procurement across local, state and federal levels to achieve better Indigenous employment outcomes.



Priority 4: Business and Entrepreneurship

Business is the backbone of the economy. Self-employment allows direct participation in markets and can offer opportunities for wealth creation.

Building and growing a successful business enterprise is an aspiration for many Indigenous Australians, just as it is for many Australians.

Owning a business is one way Australians can participate in the economy. Successful Indigenous enterprises can provide a range of benefits. Business ownership provides an important foothold in the Australian economy which can create a flow-on of wealth to others, contributing to intergenerational asset accumulation in Indigenous communities. Indigenous entrepreneurs are often leading employers of Indigenous Australians, and can be influential role models for other Indigenous Australians.

The Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council, which links certified Indigenous businesses with public and private sector purchasers, conducted a survey of its members in 2010 and found that 72 per cent [6] of its Indigenous suppliers' employees were also Indigenous.

Business ownership also develops high levels of independence and personal responsibility, enabling Indigenous entrepreneurs to become influential role models for other Indigenous Australians.

The Indigenous private sector is a growing part of the Australian economy. Increasingly, Indigenous businesses provide essential goods and services to other businesses, consumers and governments in the broader economy. Indigenous enterprises are in a unique position to capitalise on business opportunities arising from native title settlements and resource-related royalty payments under native title agreements. They are well-placed to invest in new cultural enterprises where they have a comparative advantage in areas such as tourism, arts and natural resource management.

6 Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council Annual Report 2009-10

Business and Entrepreneurship

Objective 4.1 Support the growth of the Indigenous business sector

Successful Indigenous enterprises are vital to Indigenous economic development. When Indigenous enterprises thrive they create real and lasting benefits for their owners, employees, families and communities.

Indigenous leaders can show others how Indigenous culture can be part of economic success and are an invaluable resource as mentors and role models. The leadership provided by national, state and regional Indigenous business networks, including the Indigenous Business Council of Australia, the Australian Indigenous Chamber of Commerce and regional chambers of commerce, is critical to the growth of the Indigenous business sector.

Business is a high-risk undertaking with a high failure rate. Even in major cities, where there are generally more opportunities to start and run independent businesses, the rate of Indigenous self-employment is comparatively low. This suggests that Indigenous entrepreneurs in major cities and towns do not always benefit from the opportunities in their regions.

Entrepreneurs in regional, remote and very remote areas can face additional barriers to success such as lack of business experience and expert advice, limited access to financial services and service providers, limited infrastructure and smaller, widely dispersed local markets.

The Australian Government will continue to work in partnership with Indigenous businesspeople, the private sector and peak bodies to support the growth and success of the Indigenous business sector.

BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Objective 4.1 Support the growth of the Indigenous business sector

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Seek advice from key stakeholders on strategies for the sector	Establish an Indigenous Business Policy Advisory Group to provide ongoing expert advice on the provision of business support and policies needed to support growth in the sector.
Improve support and advisory services for Indigenous enterprises	Support national, state and regional Indigenous business networks to provide leadership, advice and networking opportunities for Indigenous businesses.
Encourage skills development	Promote participation in business administration and business management training through vocational and tertiary education courses.
	Support critical skills training and capacity development including business financial literacy, business planning and marketing planning for Indigenous entrepreneurs.
Build our knowledge base of the Indigenous business sector	Work with the Australian Bureau of Statistics to design better ways to capture data on the size, diversity, location growth and success factors of the Indigenous private sector.

Business and Entrepreneurship

Objective 4.2 Improve access to finance and business support

Indigenous Australians, like anyone else, may need financial support to go into business. For most Australian entrepreneurs, business is built with capital, equity and assets that can be leveraged and used as security by financial lenders. Many Indigenous Australians and communities do not have such assets and where there are collective assets, such as valuable land, there may be restrictions on using them as loan security.

Support for Indigenous businesses must cater to both start-ups and business growth to develop sustainable and successful enterprises. Business support programs, including programs specifically targeted at Indigenous businesses, must be flexible enough to meet the needs of Indigenous businesses and potential entrepreneurs. Their processes must minimise red tape and have fast turnaround times.

Streamlining government programs and processes that provide support to Indigenous businesses, including access to financial services, is another priority.

BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Objective 4.2 Improve access to finance and business support

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Ensure government support to Indigenous business owners meets their needs	Realign Indigenous business support programs so that they are more client-centred and service business development from start-up to growth, starting with Australian Government Indigenous specific business support programs, including the Indigenous Capital Assistance Scheme.
	Ensure mainstream business support programs are accessible to Indigenous clients and business networks.
	Assist eligible Indigenous Australians to establish, acquire and grow small-to-medium businesses by providing business support services and business finance through Indigenous Business Australia's Business Development and Assistance Program (on average providing $6.6 million per annum in business support and $12.2 million per annum in new business loans over three years).
Remove barriers to accessing finance	Work with business leaders, the financial sector and Indigenous entrepreneurs to improve access to finance for small and medium Indigenous enterprises.

Business and Entrepreneurship

Objective 4.3 Encourage private-sector partnership

The private sector needs to take a lead role in shaping the future of Indigenous business engagement by partnering with Indigenous enterprises in ways that help to bring them into the mainstream economy.

Business-to-business activity and support needs to be encouraged, along with coaching and mentoring that directly transfers commercial expertise to Indigenous businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs. Joint ventures and enterprise partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses can help capitalise on areas of competitive advantage.

Incorporating Indigenous enterprises into corporate supply chains will help embed trade with Indigenous suppliers as ordinary good business practice.

The Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council (AIMSC) is an example of government and industry working together to support Indigenous-owned businesses to grow their enterprises. AIMSC is a not-for-profit company which provides a direct business-to-business purchasing link between corporate Australia, government agencies and Indigenous-owned businesses. AIMSC aims to contribute to the creation of a sustainable, vibrant and prosperous Indigenous enterprise sector in Australia.
In June 2011, AIMSC had 114 corporate and government members and 93 certified Indigenous suppliers. It has generated over $21.7 million in contracts and about $6.4 million in transactions between its members and the AIMSC certified Indigenous suppliers. In June 2011, AIMSC certified suppliers employed about 260 Indigenous full-time equivalent staff.

BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Objective 4.3 Encourage private-sector partnership

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Increase private-sector commercial engagement with the Indigenous business sector	Encourage the private sector to include Indigenous businesses in their supply chains.
	Explore new sector-specific initiatives and industry opportunities to promote sustainable Indigenous business growth.
	Promote and support the Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council.
	Trial ways to integrate small-to-medium sized Indigenous contracting businesses into major project supply chains, initially in the Pilbara.
	Provide seed and growth funding for social enterprises through the Social Enterprise Development and Investment Funds initiative, in partnership with a range of individual and corporate investors. As part of this initiative, Indigenous social enterprises will have greater access to loan finance and education and mentoring to support sustainable economic activity that creates employment opportunities and provides other social benefits to Indigenous communities.
Support private-sector partnerships	Support partnerships between Indigenous communities, the mining industry and regional communities that encourage joint action for improved Indigenous economic outcomes.
	Continue to support wealth-creating joint venture investment partnerships through Indigenous Business Australia (maintaining an asset portfolio with an average value of $174 million over three years).
	Facilitate partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses in the tourism sector to allow skills transfer and overall business development and growth under the 2009 National Long Term Tourism Strategy.

Business and Entrepreneurship

Objective 4.4 Increase economic outcomes from government investment

Helping Indigenous enterprises to get a competitive edge in procurement processes such as tenders can increase their exposure to big business. It can also help already successful Indigenous businesses gain valuable experience, particularly in service delivery. In turn, this can create new jobs for Indigenous Australians, since Indigenous-owned businesses tend to have more Indigenous employees.

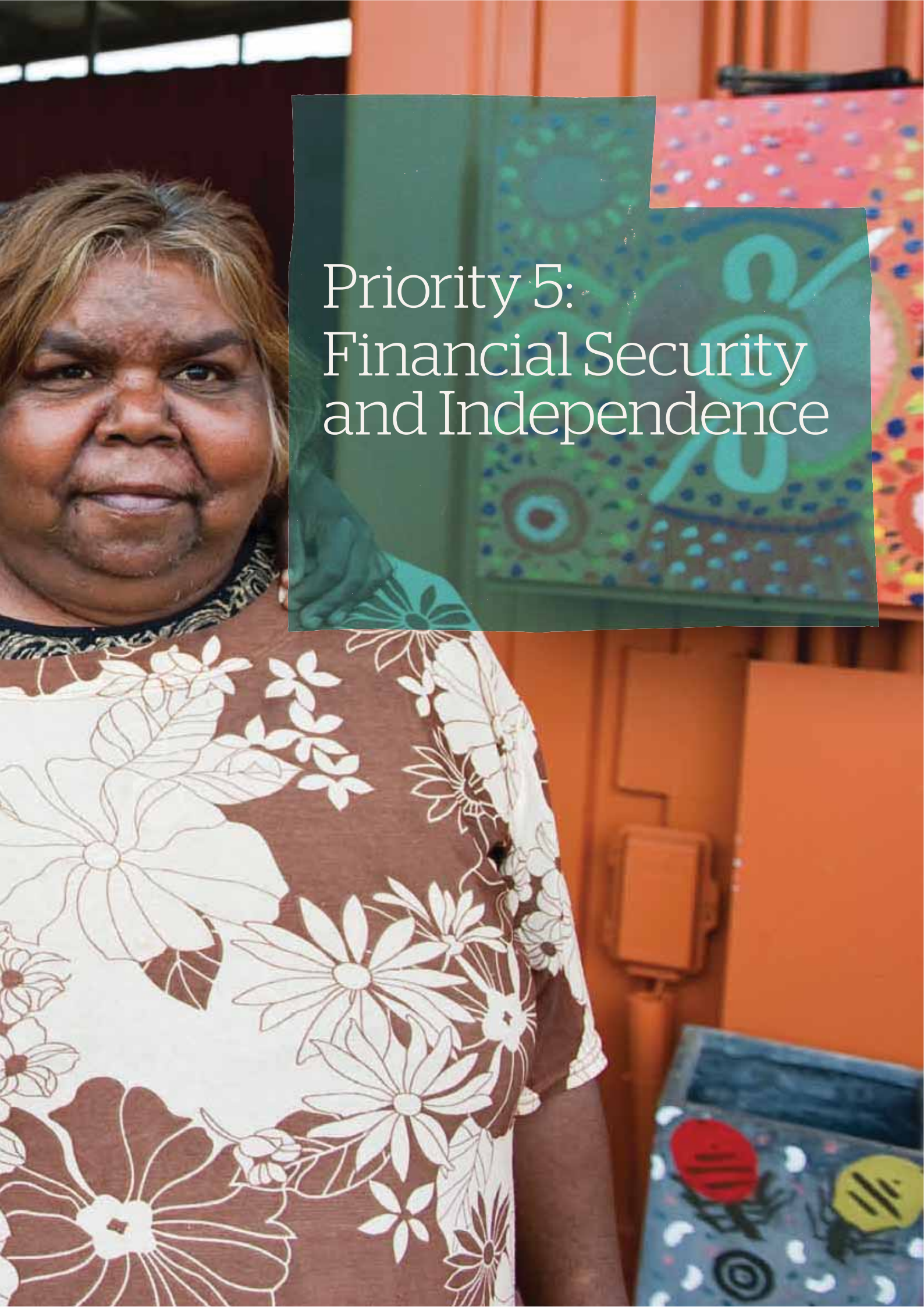
Government is the largest purchaser of goods and services in the Australian economy. By ensuring that Indigenous businesses have access to commercial opportunities arising from public expenditure and procurement, government can support the growth of Indigenous businesses and the benefits that will flow from this.

There are opportunities for Indigenous businesses to deliver government services, particularly in regional and remote areas with high Indigenous populations. Governments have a role to play in supporting Indigenous businesses in building their capacity to tender for government contracts.

BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Objective 4.4 Increase economic outcomes from government investment

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Increase the use of Indigenous businesses through government procurement	Apply the Indigenous Opportunities Policy to major Australian Government procurement activities from 1 July 2011 to increase Indigenous business in Australian Government funded contracts.
	Support the use of the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines exemption for agencies contracting with Indigenous businesses.

Australian
Eucalypt Collection
Native Art

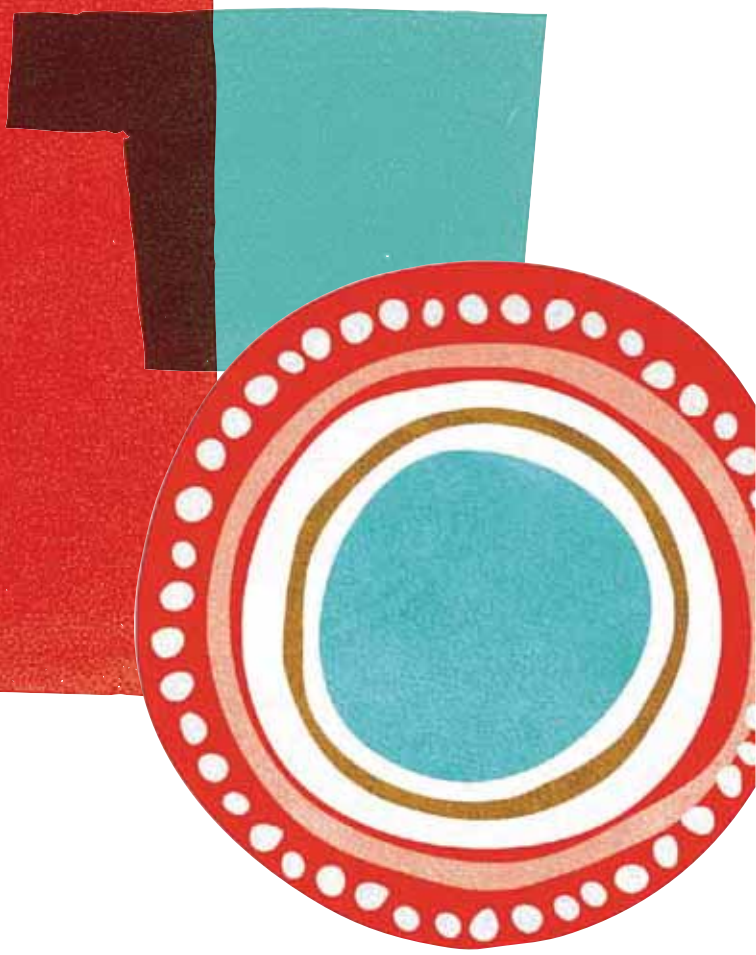


Priority 5: Financial Security and Independence

Financial security gives people choices and provides the stability individuals and their families need to plan for the future.

With a steady and well-managed income, Indigenous Australians can build assets that can be used to generate greater wealth for their families and communities. Such assets can be passed on to future generations, creating economic self-reliance and helping to break the cycle of welfare dependency.

Income from a job, business or investments, combined with the skills to manage that income, leads to financial independence. Poor financial management skills make it harder for people to improve their own and their families' circumstances.



Financial Security and Independence

Objective 5.1 Increase home ownership to build financial security, personal and family wealth

Home ownership can be an important step towards financial security. A house or apartment can build wealth to pass on to the next generation as well as being an asset base that can be used to start or grow a business. Saving for a deposit and repaying a loan encourage saving, and home owners can benefit from capital appreciation over time.

People have varying aspirations about home ownership. There are many Indigenous Australians, particularly those living in remote communities, who do not currently have the stable income and financial literacy skills necessary to take on the responsibilities of home ownership. In remote areas of Australia, aspiring home-owners may face additional challenges, such as unavailability of individual land titles, lack of property for sale, poor land administration, and high building costs. The Australian Government wants to ensure that Indigenous Australians who have the skills, desire and capacity to own their own home have the same opportunity as other Australians.

The Australian Government supports Indigenous home ownership through two key programs providing concessional loans and other support. The Home Ownership Program (HOP) has assisted more than 14,000 Indigenous families and individuals to purchase homes in urban and regional areas over the past two decades and there is still a high demand for this program from those unable to obtain finance from mainstream institutions.

The Home Ownership on Indigenous Land (HOIL) program was established to assist Indigenous Australians in remote communities to purchase their homes. Take up of this program has been slower than anticipated while the issues above are addressed. The Australian Government is considering reforms to policy and programs supporting Indigenous home ownership in urban, regional and remote parts of Australia, having considered submissions on the Australian Government's Home Ownership Issues Paper and the experience to date in delivering the HOP and HOIL programs.

FINANCIAL SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE
Objective 5.1 Increase home ownership to build financial security, personal and family wealth

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Support the transition from tenancy to home ownership	Work with states and territories to expand access to affordable home loans including mortgage assistance, matched savings accounts and shared equity schemes and to review sale of social housing policies.
	Continue to provide access to affordable home loans to eligible Indigenous Australians through Indigenous Business Australia (on average providing $103.9 million per annum in home loans over three years).
	Consider reforms to Australian Government policies and programs supporting home ownership.
	Broaden the scope of the Home Ownership on Indigenous Land program to include communities on mixed tenure, rather than restricting it to Indigenous lands.
	Incorporate lessons from the early implementation of the Home Ownership on Indigenous Land program into ongoing program delivery, including by providing additional support to negotiate building contracts, funding project management and legal advice to ensure contractual compliance.
	Continue work with states and territories to remove barriers to home ownership, including by improving land administration laws and practices and implementing effective building regulation and consumer protection measures in remote areas. The contribution of $500,000 to the Queensland Government for the establishment of a Home Ownership Team to help Indigenous Councils establish effective land administration systems is an example of this type of initiative.
	Australian Government support of initiatives on home ownership, such as work with Cape York regional organisations to trial a home ownership project with Australian Government funding of $2.14 million.
	Encourage innovative land and resource agreements that make provision for home ownership economic development on traditional lands. The recent settlement of the Kenbi Land Claim is an example of such an agreement, providing substantial freehold land for home ownership and economic pursuits.
	Work with traditional owners and land councils to develop innovative solutions to provide secure land title for home ownership and economic development.
Improve access to mainstream financial services for home loans	Engage with mainstream financial institutions to explore options to better tailor products to the needs of Indigenous home buyers.

Financial Security and Independence

Objective 5.2 Increase savings and financial management skills

Intergenerational wealth accumulates through savings, investment and superannuation. Poor health, high unemployment rates and lower life expectancy affect Indigenous Australians' ability to save and plan for their long-term financial futures. Achieving the Council of Australian Governments targets of halving the gap in employment outcomes and closing the life expectancy gap within a generation will increase the prosperity and financial self-reliance of Indigenous Australians.

Indigenous Australians require access to financial products and services that can support economic participation. The Australian Government is working with the finance and banking sector to improve Indigenous Australians' access to mainstream financial and banking products.

Financial management support provides vulnerable individuals and families with access to a range of support services, including financial counselling, information and education, crisis assistance and asset-building incentives such as matched savings and low-interest loans that help improve financial resilience.

FINANCIAL SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE
Objective 5.2 Increase savings and financial management skills

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Improve access to money management and financial counselling support	Continue the national trial of innovative Indigenous financial capability and inclusion projects to boost the financial capability of Indigenous Australians ($6 million over four years from 2011–12).
	Work with the financial and community sectors to expand financial planning and money management programs that have a proven track record of increasing the financial literacy and numeracy of Indigenous Australians.
	Provide funding for Commonwealth Financial Counselling to help people in financial difficulty address their financial problems and make informed choices ($29.3 million over two years from 2011–12).
	Provide funding for Money Management Services ($43.7 million over two years from 2011–12) which includes MoneyMob Talkabout, a mobile service predominantly operating in remote communities in the Northern Territory.
Provide incentives for savings	Encourage and assist Indigenous Australians to build capital assets through access to matched savings and no or low interest loans.
Improve access to fair and affordable credit	Support two Indigenous-specific pilot projects designed to enhance appropriate access to credit for groups underserved by mainstream financial services, with an emphasis on matching consumer and microenterprise credit with financial literacy and business support through the Financial Management Program, Community Development Financial Institution project.
Improve access to mainstream financial services and banking products	Work with the finance and banking sector through the Indigenous Financial Services Network Forum to implement the recommendations of the National Indigenous Money Management Agenda report 'Banking for the Future'. Develop options for delivering appropriate financial and banking products to Indigenous Australians.

Financial Security and Independence

Objective 5.3 Support Indigenous Australians to get the most out of their assets

Indigenous Australians have a wealth of cultural knowledge and heritage, significant land assets and extensive experience in land and environmental management. Putting these assets to work can greatly enhance the prosperity of Indigenous communities now and into the future.

Long-term, secure land tenure, as well as effective planning and leasing arrangements on Indigenous land, is critical for providing a stable and attractive environment for investment. Secure tenure reduces transaction costs and provides the commercial certainty that allows a land asset to be used in different ways, whether as security for financing, as a site for business establishment or as a resource to be developed. Secure land tenure also facilitates investment in housing.

Indigenous Australians own or have rights over a significant amount of land in Australia. Better management of income generated from agreements on the use of this land will strengthen the independence of Indigenous communities and will also stimulate local economic growth. In regional and remote areas, income from land can provide vital capital for Indigenous commercial enterprise, which can in turn deliver employment opportunities.

Carbon farming offers Indigenous Australians the opportunity to participate in the emerging clean energy industry. Funding for specialists to work with Indigenous communities to develop local carbon farming projects and tools for carbon abatement activities such as fire management will boost Indigenous participation. The Carbon Farming Initiative will also give farmers, forest growers and landholders access to domestic and international carbon markets. This will begin to unlock carbon reduction opportunities in the land sector.

The diverse region of northern Australia faces particular challenges. The Northern Australia Ministerial Forum provides Commonwealth and state and territory government agencies with the means to build a broad-based economic development strategy for northern Australia. The Forum focuses on Indigenous employment and skills shortages, infrastructure priorities, opportunities to improve service delivery, water and energy. It will explore regional infrastructure priorities and opportunities for employment including the expansion of the regional beef industry.

FINANCIAL SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE

Objective 5.3 Support Indigenous Australians to get the most out of their assets

Strategies to 2018	Actions to 2013
Support effective native title settlements	Continue to work with the Federal Court, state and territory governments, and other respondent parties, the National Native Title Tribunal and Native Title Representative Bodies to help resolve outstanding native title claims in a more flexible and timely manner.
Ensure land and native title payments benefit future generations	Promote and support high standards of corporate governance, financial management, transparency and accountability in Indigenous native title asset holding bodies.
	Review the role and statutory functions of Native Title Representative Bodies to ensure they meet the changing needs of the native title system, particularly the needs of native title holders after claims have been resolved.
Ensure leasing, access and planning arrangements support economic development	Develop arrangements that ensure Indigenous-owned land can be better used as security for financing by working in partnership with traditional owners, the banking sector, Indigenous Land Corporation, Native Title Representative Bodies and land councils.
Support Indigenous Australians to identify and develop economic opportunities	Support Indigenous Australians who are interested in participating in the Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) through the Indigenous Carbon Farming Fund ($22.3 million over five years from 2012). Funding will be delivered through two streams: • The Research and Development stream ($5.2 million over five years) will provide funding for research and reporting tools for CFI methodologies, particularly low-cost methodologies likely to have high Indigenous participation. • The Capacity Building and Business Support stream ($17.1 million over five years) is intended to provide start-up assistance and support directly to Indigenous organisations for establishing offset projects.
	Continue to acquire and grant land to Indigenous corporations that demonstrate capacity to sustainably manage properties and achieve continuing benefits including training and employment through the Indigenous Land Corporation (on average $14 million per annum over three years).
	Continue to fund land management projects that provide ongoing economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits through the Indigenous Land Corporation (on average $15 million per annum over three years).
	Explore the potential for a market-based approach to environmental and land management services, identifying possible opportunities for Indigenous enterprise and employment in the sector.
	Continue to support arts, culture and languages projects across Australia ($47.1 million in 2011–12). These include: • the Indigenous Culture Support program which helps to maintain Indigenous culture • the Indigenous Employment initiative which provides funding to support real jobs in the arts and culture sector • the Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records program • the National Arts and Crafts Industry Support program which provides funding for Indigenous art centres and art support organisations.
	Establish a forum for Indigenous leaders and industry experts in northern Australia to consider how to increase Indigenous community engagement in regional development.
Improve the protection of Indigenous Australians' intellectual property rights	Implement the Solid Arts Project. The project aims to raise awareness of the need to protect Indigenous intellectual property.
	Implement the Dream Shield Project. The project aims to raise awareness of how Indigenous Australians can protect their intellectual property.

Appendices

Significant Australian Government initiatives supporting Indigenous economic development

Economic development lies at the centre of the Australian Government's efforts to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians. This appendix provides a summary of recent and existing major Australian Government initiatives that support the five priorities for Indigenous economic development. Some of the existing initiatives listed in this appendix have also been listed as actions in the Strategy.

Strengthening Foundations

Housing

- $5.6 billion Social Housing Initiative under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan.
  - > Construction of around 19,600 new dwellings. At 30 June 2011, over 11,000 dwellings have been tenanted including over 1,600 dwellings for Indigenous Australians.
  - > The Repairs and Maintenance element included repairs to over 80,000 dwellings.
- $5.5 billion National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) over ten years (2009–18).
- Delivery of 4,200 new houses, with more than 800 completed at 30 June 2011.
  - > Delivery of rebuilds or refurbishments of 4,800 homes, with more than 3,100 completed as at 30 June 2011.
  - > The National Partnership program in the Northern Territory – now incorporating the $672 million Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) – has allocated $1.7 billion for housing in the NT.
  - > At 30 June 2011, the NPARIH in the NT has delivered 324 new houses and more than 1,590 refurbishments and rebuilds to existing housing since commencement of the program.

Infrastructure

- $60 million over four years from 2009 through the National Partnership Agreement on the Digital Regions Initiative. Under this agreement, innovative projects that use digital technology to improve the delivery of education, health and emergency services in regional, rural and remote Australian communities are co-funded with state, territory and local governments. Projects include:
  - > Health eTowns, providing video, audio and data-sharing facilities to assist doctors and health professions with monitoring, consultation and treatment of predominantly Indigenous populations in 17 remote communities in the Northern Territory.
  - > South Australian Digital Telehealth Network, improving access to health services at over 100 facilities across South Australia, including medical consultations via broadband videoconferencing, a 24/7 emergency triage system, specialist outreach services and Indigenous mental health services.
  - > Chronic Disease Management for Regional and Rural Communities – Hunter New England, improving the healthcare system's ability to care for the growing number of chronic disease sufferers across a large regional and rural area through the innovative use of broadband.

> Education Our New England (EduONE), trialling high quality vocational and adult education services in National Broadband Network early release sites, which will support learning outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

- $31 million Indigenous Communications Program.

> Providing fixed community telephones and mobile satellite handsets.

> $6.97 million over four years from 2009 for the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access. Since the inception of the program on 1 July 2009, 63 communities have received public internet access facilities and almost 1,700 Indigenous Australians have received training.

> Annual state and territory implementation plans detailing how Commonwealth funding will be used to deliver public internet access and training to nominated remote Indigenous communities.

- Initial rollout of the National Broadband Network to six communities, with consumer trials to soon begin in a further two sites.
- Remote and regional infrastructure investment.

> $195 million under the East Kimberley Development Package National Partnership Agreement to upgrade health, education and training, housing, transport and community infrastructure.

> $150 million, jointly with the Northern Territory Government, for the Alice Springs Transformation Plan to support new housing and effective services in Alice Springs town camps.

> $37 billion under the Nation Building Program to improve the performance of land transport infrastructure to assist national, regional economic and social development.

> Establishment of the Indigenous Task Group of Infrastructure Australia to focus on targeted reforms to help close the gap in essential infrastructure, and develop a strategic policy framework for infrastructure provision in remote communities.

> Upgrades to main roads in the Northern Territory to help the significant Indigenous population connect with the economic centres in the north and south.

> $6 billion Regional Infrastructure Fund to address urgent infrastructure needs and promote development and job creation in mining communities often close to Indigenous communities.

Health services

- $1.6 billion National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes, including $805.5 million over four years for primary health services.

> $23.9 million provided to 176 Indigenous health organisations as part of the A Better Future for Indigenous Australians – Establishing Quality Health Standards measure, with a further $35 million provided in the 2011–12 Budget.

> 422 health professionals being placed in remote Northern Territory communities under the Remote Area Health Corps program. Includes 52 general practitioners, 203 registered nurses, 43 allied health professionals and 124 dental workers.

- Under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development:

> $107 million over five years from 2009–10 to increase access to antenatal care and support, teenage sexual and reproductive health and child and maternal health services

> $90.3 million over five years from 2007–08 to fund the New Directions Mothers and Babies Services program.

- Under the Northern Territory Emergency Response Child Health Check Initiative:

> Over 4,000 dental services provided to over 3,000 children and over 3,000 ear, nose and throat specialist consultations and surgeries to over 1,900 children living in prescribed Northern Territory Emergency Response communities.

- $50 million from the Aboriginals Benefit Account under the Community Stores Infrastructure Project to enable access to affordable, healthy food.
- $2.2 billion investment over five years in the National Mental Health Reform package, including $1.5 billion in new initiatives building on existing investment in suicide prevention, the expansion of services such as 'headspace' for young people, and more mental health nurses.
- $284.8 million investment over five years until 2011 in the Personal Helpers and Mentors Initiative.

> Enables 900 full-time equivalent personal helpers and mentors to support people affected by severe mental illness.

Strong leadership

- $50 million to establish the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence to support Indigenous Australians in their chosen field.
- Encouraging community leadership by supporting NAIDOC Week celebrations.

Safe communities

- Under the Indigenous Family Safety Agenda:

> $12.5 million in 2010-11 under the Indigenous Family Safety Program to deliver 42 Indigenous family safety programs.

> Over 500 visits made to 86 communities by the Mobile Outreach Service Plus program, which addresses child-abuse related trauma in Indigenous children and their communities.

> $47.8 million in 2011-12 for increased police presence in remote communities in the Northern Territory.

- Protecting children from abuse and neglect through implementing the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-20.
- $22.5 million to provide three permanent police stations and additional housing for extra police and child protection workers in Mimili, Amata and Pukatja in South Australia.

Tax and welfare

- Increase participation through rewards, opportunities and responsibilities under the Building Australia's Future Workforce Reforms, including:

> Increasing the amount of the Low Income Tax Offset (LITO) in people's take home pay from week to week means more immediate and direct returns to work for over 6.5 million taxpayers who receive the LITO.

> Increasing Family Tax Benefit Part A (at a cost of $772 million) to support the families of around 650,000 children over the next five years to stay in full time school or training.

> Extending the 'Earn or Learn' requirements and eligibility for Youth Allowance (other) to unemployed youth aged 21 and increasing their rewards to work.

> Providing $68 million for improved support services for young Australians.

> Introducing a more generous income test for single parents on Newstart Allowance with school age children, which better supports part time work for 50,000 recipients.

> Offering incentives for employers that provide new opportunities for around 35,000 very long term unemployed people.

> Introducing stronger participation requirements in activities to provide skills and experience to find work.

- $16.1 million to extend the current trial of welfare reform in Cape York until 31 December 2012.

Good governance

- Providing corporate governance training for Indigenous organisations through the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations. Around 703 people received corporate governance training during 2010.
- Participation of over 400 Indigenous Australians in the Indigenous Leadership Program since July 2010.

Education

Schooling

- Investment of a record estimated $65.1 billion in Australian schools from 2009-2012.
- $16.2 billion invested over four years from 2008-09 in Building the Education Revolution, of which $89 million has been approved for schools in the 29 Remote Service Delivery (RSD) communities.
- Release of The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014 in June 2011, endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments, which commits all governments in Australia to a unified approach to closing the gap in education outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.
- $955 million provided to states and territories over five years towards achieving universal access to early childhood education.
- Operating 69 Supported Playgroups across Australia that target Indigenous families, with more than 6,159 children and parents meeting regularly.
- $293 million invested to roll out a network of 38 Children and Family Centres tailoring services for children and families including child care, early learning, parent and family support.
- $15.4 million invested over four years to improve early childhood and education outcomes for Indigenous children and young people.
- $564 million provided over six years from 2009 under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development:

> around 142 early childhood centres will benefit from improvements to the physical environment, level of staff qualifications, and governance and administration.

- $84.3 million provided for four years from 2009-2012 under the Parental and Community Engagement program. As of 3 May 2011, 553 projects worth $62.2 million have been approved to build strong Indigenous leadership and strengthen engagement between families, students and schools.
- $24.8 million provided under the Improving School Enrolment and Attendance through Welfare Reform Measure to encourage parents and carers to ensure that children are enrolled in and attending school regularly.
- Expanded the Sporting Chance Program to a total funding pool

of $43.4 million between 2009 and 2012. In 2011, 22 providers are delivering 68 projects including 63 school-based sports academies and five education engagement strategies for up to 11,000 primary and secondary students.

- Funding of around $2.6 billion over seven years from 2008–09 is being invested in three Smarter Schools National Partnerships, including $540 million over four years from 2008–09 for the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.
  - > Investing $1.5 billion over seven years (2008–09 to 2014–15) to support education reform activities in approximately 1,700 low Socio-economic Status school communities around the country.
  - > Investing $550 million through the Teacher Quality National Partnership to provide support for teachers.
- Supporting more than 3,500 Indigenous young people at risk of not attaining a Year 12 or equivalent qualification through individual case management support under the Youth Connections Program.
- $20 million funding over three years from 2009–10 for the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation to provide secondary school scholarships for Indigenous students. The scholarships will be available over a 20 year period.
- $107.8 million provided through the Supporting Remote Schools – Additional Teachers measure to the government and non-government sectors for the recruitment of an additional 200 teachers in Northern Territory remote schools by the end of 2012. Progress is on track to achieve the target by the end of 2012.
- Construction of a 120-bed facility in Weipa, Queensland, by the Indigenous Land Corporation has begun following a gift of land from Rio Tinto and Australian Government funding. The first stage of construction is scheduled for completion in December 2011.

School to work transitions

- $2.5 billion provided over 10 years from 2008 for the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program to enable all secondary students to access vocational education through Trade Training Centres.
- $15.7 million additional funding invested over four years in the Workplace English Language and Literacy program. This will provide an additional 9,500 places over four years, and give thousands of people access to intensive, vocationally oriented assistance.
- $62.4 million invested between 2009 and 2012 in the Indigenous Youth Mobility Program to provide greater access to quality education and training options for Indigenous Australians.

Higher education

- $4.15 billion committed from the Education Infrastructure Fund (EIF) for infrastructure to support higher education, research and vocational education and training.
- Supported 362 secondary students in 2010 through scholarships available for Indigenous students, especially those from remote and very remote areas, under the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program. Around 120 students will receive a tertiary scholarship in 2011, growing to around 180 in 2012.
- Implemented the Governor-General's Indigenous Student Teacher Scholarship program in 2010 to help Indigenous university students obtain teaching degrees and work as teachers in their communities.
- Commitment to review Indigenous higher education access, to ensure Indigenous Australians can share equally in the life and career opportunities that a quality higher education system can provide. The review panel will report its findings to the Australian Government within 12 months of its appointment.

Skills Development and Jobs

Job readiness

- $3.02 billion investment announced in the 2011–12 Budget, provided over six years through the Building Australia's Future Workforce package. The package will facilitate a new approach to deliver the skilled workers the economy needs and ensure more Australians have the opportunity to share in the nation's prosperity.
- Established the Jobs Fund to provide support to families and communities most affected by the global economic recession. Eleven Indigenous organisations were successful in the first round in securing funding for projects that will result in 323 jobs, 59 traineeships and 28 work experience places. In the second round, one Indigenous organisation was successful for a project expected to create 21 jobs, six traineeships and six work experience places.
- The ILC's Training to Employment Initiative on pastoral and tourism businesses aims to employ 281 Indigenous Australians and host 240 Indigenous trainees in 2011–12.

Employment services

- Reformed the Indigenous Employment Program (IEP). The reformed IEP is designed to be more flexible and responsive and can support a broader range of activities than the previous program, from aspiration building through to employee retention. From 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2011, the Indigenous Employment

Program exceeded its target by four per cent, delivering almost 54,300 commencements into employment, training and other assistance, of which over 25,300 were employment placements.

- Jobs Services Australia is the Australian Government's national employment services system. Job Services Australia provides opportunities for training, skills development, work experience and tailored assistance and aims to meet the needs of both job seekers and employers. At 30 June 2011 there were approximately 91,500 Indigenous job seekers on the Active Caseload of Job Services Australia providers. From 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2011, over 80,300 placements were made by Job Services Australia providers for Indigenous job seekers. Job Services Australia also achieved more than 28,600 13-week anchored job outcomes and over 15,600 26-week anchored job outcomes for Indigenous job seekers.
- The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program helps strengthen Indigenous Communities and support Indigenous Australians in remote areas through community development and participation opportunities that develop skills, improve capacity, work readiness and employability and link with local priorities. In 2010–11, 2,057 CDEP participants were placed into off-CDEP employment.
- Supporting over 600 jobs in the arts and culture sector for Indigenous Australians in regional and remote areas as a result of reforms to the CDEP program.

Recruitment and retention

- Targeting initiatives to recruit, train and provide ongoing support for Indigenous Australians across the health professions where they will deliver programs and services to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage.
- Administering the Breakthrough: Emerging Indigenous Contemporary Musicians Recording Initiative, a pilot program funded by the Cultural Ministers Council which aims to take Indigenous contemporary music to a wider listening audience.
- $1.6 million investment in 2010–11 to increase Indigenous employment across the regions by funding initiatives to increase Indigenous employment across Commonwealth agencies that are not part of the Australian Public Service.

Government investment

- The Council of Australian Governments' National Partnership Agreement for Indigenous Economic Participation was signed in February 2009 to contribute towards halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It involves complementary investment and effort by the Commonwealth, states and territory governments to significantly improve opportunities for Indigenous Australians to engage in private and public sector jobs. This included the creation of over 1,500 jobs in government service delivery for former CDEP participants at 30 June 2010.
- Full implementation of the Indigenous Opportunities Policy (IOP) on 1 July 2011. Under the IOP, suppliers to the Australian Government who win a contract valued at over $5 million ($6 million for construction) for activity in regions with a significant Indigenous population are required to develop and implement an Indigenous Training, Employment and Supplier plan. The plans include strategies for using Indigenous businesses in the supply chain.
- $6 million investment over three years from 2009–10 to support the Australian Public Service Employment and Capability Strategy which has already recruited over 430 Indigenous cadets, graduates and trainees since 2006.
- Funding Working on Country as part of an overall Australian Government commitment of $243.1 million to create up to 680 Indigenous ranger positions to provide environmental services to the Australian Government. Currently there are over 630 Indigenous rangers contracted to deliver these services, including numerous protected areas.
- Created 1,538 positions in government service delivery through the National Partnership on Indigenous Economic Participation.

Business and Entrepreneurship

Growth of the business sector

- Supported 14 horticulture, pastoral and tourism businesses operating as commercial enterprises in 2009–10 through the Indigenous Land Corporation. These businesses employed 391 Indigenous Australians and hosted 207 trainees.
- Implementation of the 2009 National Long Term Tourism Strategy through the Indigenous Tourism Development Working Group. A key element of this group is the facilitation of partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses to allow skills transfer and overall business development and growth.
- $3 million investment over three years to establish the

Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council (AIMSC), which directly links AIMSC certified Indigenous businesses with purchasing members in the private and public sectors. At the end of June 2011, AIMSC signed their 100th member organisation.

Finance and business support

- Provided 81 business development loans totalling $13.6 million, provided business support totalling $7.8 million and supported 56 economic development initiatives (totalling $2 million) through Indigenous Business Australia.
- $10 million investment to open the Remote Enterprise Centre which links remote small and medium enterprises in the Northern Territory and remote areas of Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland to new ideas, technologies and markets, through highly skilled business advisers.
- $17 million of increased funding to the Indigenous visual arts sector. This includes $2 million over four years from 2009–10 to support professional development in the sector, including a national training package that will provide workforce skills to Indigenous visual arts workers.
- Approximately $10.7 million per annum to provide funding to over 80 Indigenous-owned art centres, mostly in remote and very remote locations, and a number of allied industry support organisations.

Private-sector partnership

- $500,000 funding per year for the Working in Partnership initiative. This initiative supports cultural change and encourages joint action for improved Indigenous, economic and community outcomes by facilitating the establishment of working partnerships between Indigenous communities, the mining industry and regional communities.
- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Minerals Council of Australia on Indigenous Employment and Enterprise Development, renewing their commitment to build long-term partnerships between the minerals industry, Indigenous communities, and government and community service providers.
- $3 million committed over four years to implement a Business Action Agenda. An Ambassador for Business Action (the Ambassador) was appointed in February 2010 to encourage Australian business to contribute to the economic development of Indigenous communities.

Financial Security and Independence

Home ownership

- Assisting Indigenous families into home ownership and facilitating the approval of home loans through the Home Ownership Program (HOP).
  - > $56 million in unused loan capital transferred from the Home Ownership on Indigenous Land (HOIL) program to HOP in 2010–11, assisting an additional 228 families into home ownership.
- Providing home loans for Indigenous Australians living on community-titled land through the HOIL.
  - > Loan capital for potential HOIL clients is assured by ongoing capital allocations to the HOIL program and repayment of principal and interest from HOP loans.

Savings and financial management skills

- Financial Management Program:
  - > $60.9 million funding in 2011–12 and $60.5 million in 2012–13 for Emergency Relief to deliver practical financial literacy skills for Indigenous clients through approximately 1,330 outlets Australia wide.
  - > $15.3 million funding in 2011–12 and $14 million in 2012–13 for Commonwealth Financial Counselling to deliver advice and information, advocacy and referral services to over 200 outlets around Australia, to help people in financial difficulty address their financial problems and make informed choices.
  - > $22.2 million provided in 2011–12 and $21.5 million in 2012–13 for Money Management Services in remote locations with high Indigenous populations.
  - > $14 million provided in 2011–12 and $14.4 million in 2012–13 for microfinance programs such as low-interest and no-interest loans and matched savings. This includes $7.5 million for the two year Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) project to provide microfinance and microenterprise loans and financial literacy services to marginalised Australians unable to access mainstream financial services.
- $1.5 million for the introduction of the MoneyMob Talkabout mobile education unit in remote communities in the Northern Territory.
- $6.5 million provided from 2009–11 to trial national Indigenous financial capability and inclusion projects.
  - > $6 million to continue the trial from 2011–15.
- Through the Indigenous Financial Services Network Forum, developing options for delivering

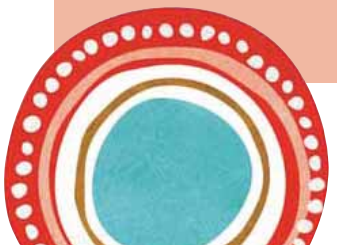
financial literacy services and banking products to Indigenous Australians.

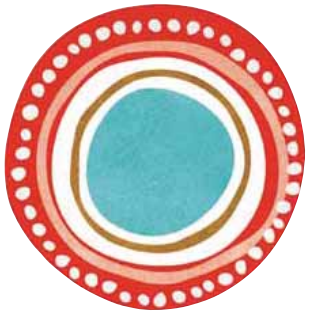
Leveraging assets

- $62 million additional funding over four years to support the operations of Native Title Representative Bodies, bringing the total Australian Government funding over this period to approximately $309 million.
- Implementation of the Indigenous Australian Art Commercial Code of Conduct, an industry-led voluntary initiative, that aims to ensure fair trade between Indigenous Australian visual artists and art market professionals by identifying a set of standards for commercial dealings with Indigenous visual artists and providing a benchmark for ethical behaviour.
- Implementation of the Resale Royalty Right for Visual Artists Act 2009.
  - > Artists receive five per cent of the sale price when their original works are resold through the art market for $1,000 or more.
- $300 million provided through the Indigenous Land Corporation to purchase the Ayers Rock Resort.

Indigenous Economic Development Framework

	Strengthening Foundations	Education	Skills Development and Jobs	Business and Entrepreneurship	Financial Security and Independence
Why is this important?	**Individuals are more likely to engage in the broader economy when they are healthy, live in safe, well-run communities and when welfare and taxation policies are designed to support participation.**	**Economic development relies on people's ability to participate in the economy. All Australians must have access to high quality education and opportunities for training.**	**Jobs are the pathway to greater economic participation, financial security and independence.**	**Business is the backbone of the economy. Self-employment allows direct participation in markets and can offer opportunities for wealth creation.**	**Financial security gives people choices and provides the stability individuals and their families need to plan for the future.**
Objectives and Strategies to 2018	**Increase access to safe and affordable housing** • Increase the supply of safe and affordable housing • Encourage responsibility for homes • Support the transition from tenancy to home ownership **Ensure infrastructure investments support economic development** • Increase access to new information technology • Improve essential infrastructure **Increase access to health services** • Improve health infrastructure • Support an expanding Indigenous health workforce • Increase access to mental health services • Improve access to primary health care **Support safe communities** • Improve community safety **Support strong leadership** • Strengthen capacity of Indigenous leaders **Ensure tax and welfare systems support economic development and participation** • Increase participation through welfare reform • Remove disincentives in the tax and welfare systems **Support good governance and increase coordinated government** • Support good corporate governance • Increase place based partnerships • Reduce red tape • Increase availability of accessible and reliable information	**Improve school readiness, school attendance and educational outcomes** • Improve access to early childhood education • Improve school attendance levels • Improve Indigenous literacy and numeracy outcomes • Improve Indigenous educational outcomes • Improve teacher quality • Encourage Indigenous families and communities to be involved in their children's education • Improve access to high quality secondary schooling for people in regional and remote areas **Support successful transitions from school to work** • Encourage and support students to build their aspirations for life after school • Provide opportunities for work, scholarships, cadetships and mentoring • Provide opportunities for students to access school based vocational education and training **Improve access to higher education** • Support success in higher education • Attract and retain Indigenous students in higher education • Encourage students to view higher education as a real option • Increase representation of Indigenous Australians in the higher education workforce	**Support job readiness** • Improve vocational education and training to deliver skilled workers • Provide support to industries and regions experiencing skills shortages • Provide more support to disadvantaged Australians to get skills • Increase assistance to Australian apprentices • Provide Indigenous Australians with the training needed to take up local jobs **Improve employment services to increase participation** • Increase assistance and training for disadvantaged job seekers • Provide Indigenous job seekers with mentoring support when starting work • Ensure participation and employment services are tailored to remote circumstances • Trial place-based initiatives in areas of significant disadvantage • Apply tougher rules to job seekers **Assist more Indigenous Australians to secure and retain a job** • Encourage employers to develop strong partnerships with Indigenous Australians and local employment service providers • Support inclusive and culturally aware Australian workplaces • Promote best practice in Indigenous employment and retention • Support people moving from remote Indigenous communities to pursue training and employment opportunities • Increase public sector employment of Indigenous Australians **Improve Indigenous employment outcomes through government procurement and service delivery** • Reform government procurement to improve Indigenous employment outcomes from government investment	**Support the growth of the Indigenous business sector** • Seek advice from key stakeholders on strategies for the sector • Improve support and advisory services for Indigenous enterprises • Encourage skills development • Build our knowledge base of the Indigenous business sector **Improve access to finance and business support** • Ensure government support to Indigenous business owners meets their needs • Remove barriers to accessing finance **Encourage private-sector partnership** • Increase private-sector commercial engagement with the Indigenous business sector • Support private-sector partnerships **Increase economic outcomes from government investment** • Increase the use of Indigenous businesses through government procurement	**Increase home ownership to build financial security, personal and family wealth** • Support the transition from tenancy to home ownership • Improve access to mainstream financial services for home loans **Increase savings and financial management skills** • Improve access to money management and financial counselling support • Provide incentives for savings • Improve access to fair and affordable credit • Improve access to mainstream financial services and banking products **Support Indigenous Australians to get the most out of their assets** • Support effective native title settlements • Ensure land and native title payments benefit future generations • Ensure leasing, access and planning arrangements support economic development • Support Indigenous Australians to identify and develop economic opportunities • Improve the protection of Indigenous Australians' intellectual property rights





Australian Government

Closing the Gap.