

APPENDIX H

PROGRESS REPORTS ON IMPROVEMENTS
IN SERVICE PROVISION
TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

State lead agencies and Local Government Associations have provided the following reports on service provision to Indigenous communities.

New South Wales

Department of Local Government

Local Government Aboriginal Network

The New South Wales Department of Local Government has in past years supported Aboriginal Network Conferences with the host council taking responsibility for organising and running the individual conference. The department has, however, been gradually reducing its participation while maintaining a role in supporting each conference through publicity and by providing assistance and advice to the host councils. In 2001–02 there were two conferences, one hosted by Great Lakes Council in October 2001 and the other hosted by Greater Taree City Council in March 2002.

Reconciliation

The Department of Local Government supports the principles of reconciliation through the Local Government Aboriginal Network conferences. These conferences provide an invaluable

opportunity for networking, raising cultural awareness and sharing ideas. They also provide a forum for discussing Local Government-related issues.

Aboriginal Mentoring Programme

This programme provides an opportunity for Aboriginal community members to gain a greater insight into Local Government and to encourage more people to run for office at local council elections.

An evaluation of the programme began in March 1999 and data collection was completed by December 1999. The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the programme, identify factors affecting its effectiveness and improve its operation.

All New South Wales councils were provided with a report on findings from the evaluation, to encourage more councils to participate. The report is available on the Department of Local Government website at www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/dlg_home.asp

Local government advisory committees

Establishing Local Government advisory committees in councils has provided a mechanism crucial to free and open communication between Aboriginal communities and local councils. The function of these committees is to improve communication, understanding and trust between Aboriginal people and Local Government. These committees, in many Local Government areas, have proved to be the key to resolving issues such as provision of water and sewerage services. As at 30 June 2001, 63 councils had established advisory consultative committees. This programme will continue to be supported through joint arrangements with Lgov NSW (formerly the Local Government and Shires Associations of New South Wales).

Local government – agreements with Aboriginal communities

The Department of Local Government in partnership with the Lgov NSW has worked to develop local agreements between councils and Aboriginal communities about infrastructure needs and maintenance and provision of council services.

In 2000, agreement was reached to establish a single position of Aboriginal Policy Officer with the Associations, supported by funding from the Department of Local Government, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Premiers Department. One of the principal functions of this position will be to further develop agreements with Aboriginal communities and councils.

Social plans

Under the Local Government Act all councils in NSW are required to develop a social/community plan at least every five years. A social/community plan examines the needs of the local community including groups which may be disadvantaged in some way, and formulates strategies which

council and/or other agencies could implement to address identified needs. The social plan identifies specific policies and action plans for seven mandatory target groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Through this process, councils may identify issues and services they should be addressing in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

A review of the first council social/community plans in 1999 found that 93 per cent identified and addressed the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Councils that did not do this were advised accordingly by the department.

Councils are expected to report in their annual reports about activities designed to target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in accordance with identified needs. Reviews of councils' annual reports in 1999–00 and 2000–01 found that about 90 per cent of reports included information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activities. Detailed information on how councils service their Aboriginal communities through their social plans can be obtained directly from local councils.

Lgov New South Wales*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities*

Following the decision of the 2000 Annual Conference to invite Aboriginal Land Councils to become members, the State Land Councils were fully represented at the 2001 Conference of the Local Government Association of NSW. The Aboriginal Land Councils are now full members of the Local Government Association of NSW. This is a first for the Local Government Association to include the NSW Aboriginal Land Councils as recognised Local Governments.

Victoria

Department of Infrastructure

The Victorian Local Government sector now has a valuable resource document, *Toomnangi*, which reports on Local Government relationships and initiatives pertaining to Indigenous communities in Victoria, based on a study which involved all 78 Victorian Local Governments. *Toomnangi* is the result of the sector-wide survey undertaken in 2001 by the inter-agency coordinating committee established jointly by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the Municipal Association of Victoria (see the Association's report below). The Department of Infrastructure (DOI) is a significant member of this standing committee, and DOI's Local Government Division contributed to data collection and reporting, the publication and the launch of the report.

Toomnangi, which means 'to pass on information', provides Local Government with case studies, examples, statistics and ideas on initiatives that can strengthen community relationships and can help advance the reconciliation process.

The study identified factors that influence the nature of relationships between Local Government and Indigenous communities, such as the availability of Local Government resources and the dispersed populations of Indigenous communities in Victoria. The report identified a number of areas that need more attention from the sector as a whole, such as the need for a champion in council to promote and encourage Indigenous issues and involvement.

This report is available at
www.mav.asn.au/Toomnangi.pdf

Municipal Association of Victoria

Compared with other States and Territories, there is a relatively small Indigenous population in

Victoria – an average of 0.5 per cent in each municipality. However, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has continued to support and encourage councils to advance Indigenous issues through supporting the Local Government Indigenous Network.

In 2002, the MAV completed its funding agreement with the Victorian Department of Justice to assist the establishment of the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees (RAJAC), a core initiative of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement. Under the agreement, the MAV provided free administration and employed six Aboriginal executive officers to support the committees. The MAV also held and disbursed funds on behalf of the Department of Justice for the Community Initiatives Programme to assist in the commissioning of research and development of projects that met the objectives of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement.

The MAV coordinated a sector-wide survey culminating in the publication of *Toomnangi: Indigenous Communities and Local Government* in 2002. *Toomnangi* provides valuable information about Indigenous issues and activities by councils throughout Victoria and is the first major initiative of the Indigenous Inter-Agency Coordination Committee for Local Government. The Committee was formed to improve agencies' governance responsibilities towards Indigenous Australians.

Queensland

Department of Local Government and Planning

In Queensland, the Department of Local Government and Planning, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, and the Queensland State Library have all made significant contributions to improving service provision to Indigenous communities.

Initiatives

Smaller Communities Assistance Programme

The Smaller Communities Assistance Programme (SCAP) has a budget of \$150 million over ten years to 2005–06. Its aim is to assist local governing bodies to provide reliable water supply and sewerage services of an acceptable standard and cost to communities with populations fewer than 5000 persons. The current methodology used to determine the level of SCAP assistance to councils is to assess each council's capacity to meet the costs from its internal sources and then provide top-up funding.

Although largely targeted at Local Governments, the programme can also be accessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils that meet the guidelines which, in the past have been difficult for most due to a requirement to commit to ongoing operation, maintenance and asset replacement.

In six previous SCAP rounds of funding allocations the following communities with significant Indigenous populations were successful in obtaining assistance:

Councils/Communities funded	Funding
Aurukun Shire Council	\$100 000
Burke Shire Council	
• Burketown	\$4 297 336
• Gregory	\$1 143 000
Torres Shire Council	
• Prince of Wales Island	\$240 000
• Thursday Island	\$1 800 000
Cook Shire Council	
• Cooktown	\$9 500 000
• Coen/Laura	\$4 196 993
Hopevale	\$2 600 000
Stage 2 of the Major Infrastructure Programme on Torres Strait Islands	\$13 025 000

Rural Living Infrastructure Programme

Under the Rural Living Infrastructure Programme, \$16 million is available to local governing bodies over four years for promoting:

- new or upgraded community infrastructure in rural communities
- enhanced economic and tourism development opportunities
- greater incentives for people to live in rural towns.

Funding available through the programme is directed to local governing bodies with populations of fewer than 15 000. This requirement makes Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils eligible for assistance. In recent rounds of allocations, the following Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils or communities with significant Indigenous populations were successful in obtaining assistance:

Councils/communities funded	Funding
Badu Island Council	\$33 000
Bamaga Island Council	\$150 000
Burke Shire Council (Burketown)	\$65 000
Cherbourg Aboriginal Council	\$41 935
Hammond Island Council	\$7 934
Hopevale Aboriginal Council	\$45 000
Mapoon Aboriginal Council	\$60 000
Napranum Aboriginal Council	\$65 000
New Mapoon Aboriginal Council	\$47 000
Palm Island Aboriginal Council	\$97 500
St Paul's Island Council	\$100 000
Stephen Island Council	\$90 000
Torres Shire Council	\$50 000
Yarrabah Aboriginal Council	\$90 126

Security Improvement Programme

Under the Security Improvement Programme, \$2 million a year is available to provide up to 60 per cent subsidy to local governing bodies for expenditure on security measures, such as surveillance equipment, lighting, emergency telephones and modifications to public facilities, in existing places. In recent allocations Napranum Community Council successfully obtained funding of \$33 000.

*The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy initiatives**Community governance*

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (DATSIP) administers the *Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984* and the *Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984*, which provide for the system of Local Government for 32 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland.

There are 15 Aboriginal councils and 17 Torres Strait Islander councils established under the respective Acts. Each of these councils has Local Government jurisdiction for the area for which they are established including the ability to make by-laws about various matters. These councils also undertake a range of additional functions including housing, community policing, various enterprises and Commonwealth and State Government funded programmes.

State Government Financial Aid Programme

Funding of \$18.5 million is provided annually to Aboriginal and Island councils under the State Government Financial Aid Programme as a financial contribution (in lieu of rates) to meeting costs associated with Local Government operations, financial administration, essential services and community police.

Financial Accountability Improvement Programme

Funding of \$1.9 million was provided in 2001–02 under the Financial Accountability Improvement Programme to assist Aboriginal and Island councils to meet their financial accountability obligations and to improve systems of financial management. This included funding for internal audit services, accounting support, professional development for council employees and the appointment of financial controllers for two councils.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Infrastructure Programme

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Infrastructure Programme provides financial assistance for significant upgrading of environmental health infrastructure for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The majority of this funding has been used to improve basic water and waste disposal arrangements in the 32 communities established under the Community Services Acts. In the 2001–02 financial year \$10.3 million was provided under this programme.

Council Chambers Capital Works Programme

Funding of \$5.8 million was secured in the 1999–00 State Budget for the construction of new council chambers at the Bamaga Island community and the Aboriginal communities of Lockhart River, Mapoon and Woorabinda over the 1999–2000 and 2000–01 financial years. An additional \$1 million was provided in the 2001–02 financial year to complete the New Mapoon Council Chambers. All projects were completed in 2001–02.

Motor Vehicle and Heavy Equipment Programme

The Motor Vehicle and Heavy Equipment Programme provides grants to Aboriginal councils to acquire or make capital repairs to motor vehicles and heavy equipment used to maintain

and develop infrastructure and to deliver essential Local Government services. The programme also supports the operation of the Torres Strait Heavy Equipment Management and Training Project. In a joint arrangement, DATSIP, the Torres Strait Regional Authority, the Island Co-ordinating Council and the Department of Main Roads contributes to the funding, co-ordination and training of the project. The project operates a pool of heavy equipment, which is deployed on a rotational basis to Island councils and provides training in the operation of plant and equipment for community members. The total funding for 2001–02 was \$1.3 million.

State Library of Queensland initiatives

In 2001–02, the State Library developed the Indigenous Library Services Strategy, which aims to:

- establish Indigenous Knowledge Centres in DOGIT communities in the Cape York and Torres Strait;
- improve library service delivery to Indigenous peoples in public libraries throughout Queensland;
- increase employment and training opportunities;
- include services to Indigenous people through the Millennium Library Project; and
- ensure Indigenous collections and culture are represented appropriately in library spaces.

Indigenous Knowledge Centres will provide traditional library services as well as services based on the oral and visual traditions of Indigenous culture. Indigenous Knowledge Centres will use multi media technologies to facilitate information access, content creation, creative learning programs and skills development. The State Library is working in partnership with Aboriginal Coordinating Councils, Island Coordinating Councils, and other government agencies to establish the Centres.

Western Australia

Department of Local Government and Regional Development

Local government delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia needs to be seen within the context of national initiatives and more recent developments at Western Australian Government level, including Machinery of Government structural changes to the State public sector and specific agreements in relation to Indigenous matters.

Western Australian Government Statement of Commitment

On 10 October 2001, the Premier, Dr Geoff Gallop, and Mr Ian Trust, chairperson of the ATSIC State Council, signed the Statement of Commitment, formalising a new partnership between the State Government and the Aboriginal community of Western Australia as a basis for reconciliation.

It is intended that the partnership framework will establish State-wide policies and administrative arrangements to support negotiations and agreements at the regional and local level and to support Aboriginal people in negotiating regional and local agreements according to the priorities of Aboriginal people, in partnership with other stakeholders. The framework will incorporate:

- a whole of government/community approach on negotiated policy benchmarks and targets
- regional negotiated agreements incorporating integrated planning which involves ATSIC, community organisations and State and Local Government
- agreed processes for the audit and evaluation of negotiations and outcomes
- reform of government and Aboriginal organisational infrastructure where required

to ensure implementation of the partnership agreement.

Indigenous Affairs Advisory Committee

At the time the Statement of Commitment was announced, the Premier also advised of the establishment of the Indigenous Affairs Advisory Committee (IAAC). One of the committee's aims is a better use of resources and it will identify priorities and work with all agencies to achieve outcomes. The IAAC is the conduit to the State Cabinet Standing Committee on Social Policy and the vehicle through which agreed policy affecting Indigenous people and communities will be implemented.

The committee has subsequently determined six areas where it will focus its attention. These are as follows:

- the Tjurabalan project (associated with Native Title arrangements)
- the Martu project (also associated with Native Title arrangements)
- the Northbridge project
- child abuse in Indigenous communities
- improving retention and academic achievement of Indigenous children through sports and recreation
- the development of agreed Indigenous benchmarks.

Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Agreement

Nationally, the COAG agreement of 3 November 2000 involves a framework to advance reconciliation with Australia's Indigenous peoples and the direction of the Council that 'all Ministerial Councils develop action plans, performance reporting strategies and benchmarks'. In this context, the department has contributed to the development and implementation of the national Local Government Ministers' Conference (LGMC)

Reconciliation Action Plan. It was expected that the State Government response to COAG would propose actions to progress the projects already determined by the Indigenous Affairs Coordinating Committee.

DLGRD principal outcome and main activities

On 1 July 2001, as an outcome of Machinery of Government restructuring of Western Australian Government agencies, the Department of Local Government and Regional Development commenced operations. The department's principal outcome is 'Enhancing the development and capacity of communities through good governance, economic growth and social well-being'.

In achieving this outcome, its major activities relate to:

- providing support and advice to organisations involved in the development of Western Australia and in building stronger communities
- working with Local Governments to achieve the standards required by legislation
- providing assistance, including funding, to enhance the development of the regions and Local Governments
- implementing effective legislation in relevant areas and supporting its operation
- supporting individual and community capacity building, with particular emphasis on leadership and governance
- encouraging devolution of decision-making and service delivery to a regional and local level
- working towards equity of access to services across Western Australia.

The department also has a key role to play in assisting the Government to meet its strategic objectives of:

- a growing and diversified economy

- safe, healthy and supportive communities
- strong and vibrant regions
- honest, accountable and inclusive government.

DLGRD strategic approach to working with Indigenous people and communities

Within the broader scope of the department's role and functions, a high priority is being given to working with Indigenous people and communities. Early in 2002, the department prepared a draft strategic approach document outlining the approach to be taken to its work with Indigenous people and communities. It was circulated to main agencies and organisations in May 2002. Consultation on the approach was also initiated with the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) and Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA). The document will be forwarded to all Local Governments in the latter half of 2002 as a basis for the development of industry-wide and individual Local Government strategies and activities with Indigenous people and communities.

Integral to this work will be the 1995 Local Government Ministers' Conference resolution to improve Local Government service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

To support this work, a senior Indigenous Communities Development Officer position was established within the department as a joint initiative with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, the Department of Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Housing and Works. The main focus of the position is to work with Indigenous communities and Local Governments, providing information, advice and assistance and facilitating the provision of Local Government services in Indigenous communities. It is expected that the position will be filled and operational towards the end of 2002. In addition, a new Indigenous project

officer position will enhance the department's overall capacity in its work with Indigenous people and communities.

The strategic approach of the department has four main areas of focus and, for consistency, these are the same as those contained in the LGMC draft Reconciliation Action Plan.

They are as follows:

- the fostering of community leadership and governance
- facilitation of the provision and maintenance of local services
- the fostering of partnerships and linkages
- the fostering of economic development and independence.

Within each of these areas, there are a number of projects and initiatives which will be carried out over a three-year period. Each of these will involve Local Governments in some way.

Examples include:

- develop/contribute to the provision of leadership training appropriate to Indigenous communities
- work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the Department of Indigenous Affairs to determine effective ways to enhance the governance capacity within Indigenous communities
- undertake initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of Indigenous people in Local Government elections, including provision of information and a workshop for existing Indigenous councillors
- plan and conduct workshops across the State, bringing Local Government and Indigenous people together in a culturally appropriate way, to discuss and determine approaches to address matters of common concern
- support the development of a framework which facilitates linkages between planning

processes of Local Governments and ATSIC regional councils

- develop and implement, in conjunction with relevant Indigenous bodies and Regional Development Councils, a regional-specific cultural awareness strategy for Local Governments and regional organisations
- increase access of remote communities to telecommunication infrastructure and services through joint work by the Telecentre Support Service, ATSIC, ATSIC Regional Councils and Regional Development Commissions.

In working with Indigenous people and communities, the Department recognises all the principles underpinning the Western Australian Government's Statement of Commitment and, in particular, has undertaken to maintain the following principles in its own work:

- regional and local approaches to address issues which impact on Indigenous communities, families and individuals
- a commitment to improved governance, capacity building and economic independence
- recognition and acceptance of the importance of involving Indigenous people and communities in the determination of needs and appropriate responses to service provision and in the management of services and programmes
- the value of, and success to be achieved by, taking a partnership approach to service provision, including provision of appropriate supports for practical, sustainable and viable service delivery
- the need for service provision and agreements to reflect Indigenous values, decision-making processes and culture, including language, place, identity and land ownership and use as well as knowledge and skills
- the encouragement of, and support for, self-management, self-determination and

independence for Indigenous people and communities.

Interagency Indigenous Coordinating Group

With the change from the Department of Local Government to the Department of Local Government and Regional Development, the scope of the Ministerial Coordinating Group on Aboriginal Issues was widened and the group re-named the Interagency Indigenous Coordinating Group. The role of group is to provide a forum for the coordination by relevant agencies of activities and initiatives relating to Aboriginal people and communities within the context of the role of the Department of Local Government and Regional Development and the Local Government and regional development portfolio.

The overall aim of the Group is to improve Aboriginal participation in Local Government and regional development. To achieve this, the Group will work to the following terms of reference:

- To improve Local Government services to Aboriginal communities through:
 - the development of strategies to improve Aboriginal participation and involvement in Local Government
 - awareness raising with Aboriginal communities on the role of Local Government
 - promotion of increased awareness within Local Governments of Aboriginal issues and culture
 - the development of strategies and options to overcome constitutional, legislative, administrative, financial, cultural or other barriers to the effective delivery of Local Government services to Aboriginal communities
 - the development of a set of principles for the normalisation of Local Government

- services to Aboriginal communities consistent with the equitable delivery of those services
- the initiation and support of interagency pilot projects with the aim of normalising Local Government services to selected town based and large remote communities
- the consideration or coordination of related initiatives and programmes.
- To facilitate initiatives which will enhance the capacity and independence of Aboriginal people in decision-making and community governance.
- To enhance the development and capacity of Aboriginal people and communities through good governance, economic growth and social wellbeing.
- To facilitate interagency consideration of partnerships, joint working arrangements and agreements with Aboriginal communities relevant to the Local Government and regional development portfolio.

During 2001–02, the Group finalised the policy paper *Paying for services in Aboriginal communities*. This was submitted to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development for consideration and endorsement.

Other initiatives

During the year, the increasing involvement of Local Governments with Indigenous people and communities in their district was apparent. Examples follow.

- As part of the town reserves regularisation initiative, two formal agreements were signed between four town-based Aboriginal communities at Halls Creek, the Departments of Indigenous Affairs and Housing and Works, the Shire of Halls Creek and the Ngoonjuwah Council Aboriginal Corporation.
- At the City of Gosnells, the Indigenous Communities Liaison Officer Service

continued to provide a community intervention and mediation service. The City worked in partnership with a community group to provide the Southside Ngoongar Programmes for older children to orientate them to youth programmes and there was further development of the Aboriginal Collection in City's library. The Indigenous Youth Officer was involved in a number of projects, including the Banksia Hill Detention Centre Sports Mentoring Programme and family and youth camps, NAIDOC week activities, an Aboriginal sports carnival, an Indigenous Youth Forum and a Chill With Culture Family Day. Plans were also made in partnership with the community-based organisation Boolurlarri Community House to provide youth services, commencing 2002–03.

- In the Shire of Kojonup, 'Kodja Place', located in Kojonup and a tripartite initiative between the Shire of Kojonup, the Kojonup Aboriginal Corporation and local tourism operators, came to fruition. The initiative has been developed with full community involvement. The new building and surrounds that constitute Kodja Place house, the Tourist Bureau and the Aboriginal Cultural Interpretive Centre are an eco-museum for the whole community. An interpretive rose garden maze comprises over 2000 Australian-bred roses depicting story lines of three fictitious women of Australian, Aboriginal and Italian heritage, outlining their experiences since foundation to the present day. The Centre incorporates the history of the whole district from pre-history times to the present day and is providing employment opportunities for people in the community, including Aboriginal people. The 'kodja' is an axe used by Aboriginal people for their daily activities and is made from the local stone. Through the Local Government, the community has been able to access a kodja from the Western

Australian museum and the return of the axe to Kodja Place has been of great significance.

- In the Shire of Gnowangerup, the Stirling Ranges trail and Visitors Centre was initiated between the Aboriginal community, the then Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Great Southern Development Commission, with strong support from the Gnowangerup Shire Council.

South Australia

Department for Transport, Urban Planning and the Arts

In South Australia new strategic directions were pursued with the release of the report titled *Local councils belong to Aboriginal people 2*, August 2000. The report includes a series of recommendations to be progressively advanced over three years beginning 2000–01.

Recommendations relate to nine programme areas. During the 2001–02 reporting period progress has been made in the following programme areas.

Programme area: Coordination and Integration

Inter-Governmental Local Government/Aboriginal Network

Established in May 2001, the State Office of Local Government convenes the Inter-Governmental Local Government/Aboriginal Network. The Inter-Governmental Network provides a structured framework to promote shared strategic directions and effective working relationships between the three spheres of government. It operates at officer level. Among other matters, the network representatives have:

- met eight times and in line with advancing the report's recommendations, the meetings have provided the opportunity to invite representatives of the Aboriginal Lands Trust, PlanningSA, Office of Employment and Youth

and Social Inclusion Unit to canvas ideas, discuss issues and forward directions

- in November 2001 initiated discussions with ATSIC State Executive on opportunities for possible forward planning linkages (refer Local and Regional Planning below)
- participated in an April 2002 meeting with the ATSIC Nulla Wimila Kutju Regional Council (Port Augusta)
- participated in a Workshop convened by the ATSIC Wangka Wilurrara Regional Council and District Council of Ceduna on 19 April. The workshop, involving 60 people, facilitated discussions on the potential development of an agreement between the Regional Council and Ceduna Council
- scanned councils' annual reports 2000–01 for specific programmes developed by councils to meet the particular circumstances of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within their areas.

Scanning councils' annual reports revealed a wide number of locally responsive initiatives, such as:

- giving Aboriginal place names to parks (City of Adelaide)
- an acknowledgment of the traditional owners of the land at the opening of Council meetings (Kurna people and City of Adelaide)
- establishing advisory committees to council (eg City of Salisbury Aboriginal Advisory Sub Committee, City of Port Augusta)
- involvement in significant community projects (eg City of Marion's Warriparinga joint initiative with the Kurna people)
- Indigenous Awards Programme (City of Port Adelaide Enfield)
- flying the Aboriginal flag (City of Tea Tree Gully)
- development of Statement of Reconciliation (City of Unley)

- arts and cultural celebrations (City of West Torrens)
- Indigenous employment strategies (District Council of Ceduna, City of Salisbury)
- liaison on developments and native title (District Council of Yorke Peninsula and the Narungga community on the Port Vincent Marina)
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study (City of Onkaparinga).

LGA's Aboriginal Policy Officers Network

Established in September 2000, the Local Government Association of SA convenes the Aboriginal Policy Officers Network. The network provides a consultation link between South Australian councils employing Aboriginal Policy Officers. Last year's report identified the eight councils employing APOs. Most recently, a new position with the City of Port Augusta has been created. Two nominees of the APO network are represented on the Inter-Governmental Network.

Programme area: Intergovernmental Relations

Framework for Governance project

From August to December 2001, the Framework for Governance project explored the nature of 'Local Government-type services', the principles of good governance and relevant cultural issues. It picked up on the Local Government legislative provisions as they relate to governance as much as possible and dealt with Local Government-type services resulting in a 'generic' framework. The report specifically applied the 'generic' Framework for Governance to the Nepabunna Community Council, building on its existing Constitution, and provides Council with a Governance Statement and a practical Governance Framework. On the latter, a short booklet has been produced. Funded by the Office of Local Government, the working group to this project comprised representatives of the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs (Chair),

Office of Local Government, SA Local Government Grants Commission, Nepabunna Community Council, ATSIC Nulla Wimila Kutju Regional Council (Port Augusta), ATSIC State Policy Office, and the Local Government Association of SA.

Local Government Association membership

Anangu Pitjantjatjara Inc became a member of the Local Government Association of SA in April 1995. In April 2001 Nepabunna Community Council (near Leigh Creek) became an associate member and in May 2002 Gerard Community Reserve (near Berri) joined as an associate member. Two other local governing prescribed authorities in SA (Maralinga Tjarutja and Yalata Community Council) are eligible to join and have been approached by the LGA.

Programme area: Participation in Local Government

Partnership Local Government/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander – Elections and Voting Project

This project seeks to produce material to support councils in developing and instituting their promotional, marketing or educational initiatives about Local Government, and to foster interest in nominating for councils amongst the Aboriginal public within their Local Government area. This partnership project began in March 2002 with funding contributions from the Commonwealth Government's Local Government Incentives Programme 2001–02 and the State Office of Local Government. Managed by the Local Government Association, the project reference group comprised representatives of LGA, OLG, State Electoral Office, DOSAA, ATSIC State Policy Office and the Aboriginal Policy Officers Network as well as consultation with a past Local Government Councillor. Local Government general elections in SA are to be held in May 2003 and the project is nearing completion.

*Programme area: Local and Regional Planning**Involvement in planning processes*

The Inter-Governmental Local Government/Aboriginal Network initiated discussions with ATSIC State Executive Committee on 20 November 2001 on opportunities for possible forward planning linkages between Local Government Councils and ATSIC Regional Councils. Section 94 of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission Act 1989* gives ATSIC Regional Councils the function to formulate, review and update regional plans and to assist, advise and cooperate with State and Local Government bodies in the implementation of the regional plan. Moreover, section 122 of the Local Government Act provides for Local Government councils to develop and adopt strategic management plans. With the support of the ATSIC State Executive Committee at the November meeting, the Inter-Governmental Network approached each of the three South Australian ATSIC Regional Councils to establish overarching dialogue.

Integrated Governance project

Throughout 2001 the LGA supported councils as they went about developing their strategic management plans as required under the *Local Government Act 1999*. The LGA held a strategic planning workshop involving council-elected members and senior staff on 20 and 21 September 2001, highlighting a broad range of issues and providing the opportunity for key State agencies to present and discuss core policy documents. The Department of State Aboriginal Affairs was invited to participate.

*Programme area: Native Title**Workshops for councils*

In November 2001 the Local Government Association of SA, in conjunction with the Australian Local Government Association, hosted

a series of ALGA Native Title Workshops for councils. Workshops comprised two modules and each module was well attended by councils. The ALGA, ATSIC and National Native Title Tribunal Guide for Local Government entitled *Working with Native Title* was used throughout the day.

Indigenous land use agreements

The District Council of Yorke Peninsula, its three adjacent councils and the Narrunga Nations Native Title Management Committee have taken a leading position in relation to negotiation of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) involving Local Government. The SA Government, Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, the LGA and Commonwealth Legal Aid are all assisting the process, which is still in its early stages.

National NT Practitioner's Panel

The Local Government Association invited potential facilitators to undertake the Native Title course and seek listing on National Native Title Practitioner's Panel so as to have a range of people equipped with skills to be available for councils (that is, expand the resource base of the panel). A number of facilitators attended a half-day course in November 2001.

Tasmania

Department of Premier and Cabinet

The Tasmanian Government is well advanced on a programme to negotiate partnership agreements with individual and regional groupings of Local Government across the State. As part of the negotiation of some agreements, the State Government seeks to promote links between Local Government and the Aboriginal community when there is some real interest from the parties. The aim is to identify key issues that affect Aboriginal people in the Local Government

area and develop strategies to address these. Broadly, the topics covered include:

- strategies to improve the level of participation of Aboriginal people in Local Government
- promoting understanding of Aboriginal issues in the wider community
- sustaining the reconciliation process by encouraging public support and participation
- taking joint action to reduce social disadvantage in the Aboriginal community
- measures to enhance economic development and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

One example of a council re-examining how it relates to its Indigenous community is the Hobart City Council in developing its Aboriginal Strategy. This strategy is based on:

- improving the level of aboriginal participation in Local Government
- improving the level of understanding about Aboriginal community culture and heritage
- improving the level of Local Government services to the Aboriginal people
- economic and employment development
- management and protection of sites of Indigenous cultural significance.

Northern Territory

Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs

One of the problems faced in the remote communities of the Northern Territory is isolation and poor access to information. Councils also suffer from an 'image' problem, in that the bulk of the information circulating concentrates on problems and negative aspects of remote area Local Government.

The Northern Territory's Best Practice Programme began in 1997, funded by an early

grant from the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services, and has been ongoing. The objective of the programme was to overcome difficulties associated with remoteness and to increase the awareness of practices in other communities leading to improved Local Government service delivery.

The pressure to achieve effective delivery of services in rural and remote areas is increased by the continuing cost of failure to achieve necessary outcomes and the failure of strategies that achieve success in other places. The tyranny of distance, coupled with small population centres, provides challenges that must be continually re-addressed.

In the previous year a study into service delivery generally was completed by the then Department of Local Government. The primary conclusion of that study was that a new and more productive partnership between the Northern Territory Government and Local Government councils was needed. It was envisaged that the proposed partnership agreements would enunciate the roles and responsibilities of each party in the delivery of either a group or services or a specific service with outcomes being articulated and performance criteria clearly settled. This year a strategy emphasising the negotiated principles that would apply to specific partnership agreements, or memoranda of understanding, was developed to implement the proposal and a period of negotiation commenced.

Australian Capital Territory

Department of Urban Services

The ACT Government has established a working group of chief executives and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives to develop a set of proposals to better coordinate and manage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service delivery and policy advice mechanisms across ACT government.

Investing in community leadership initiatives

In August 2001, the ACT Government established the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board. The board consists of five Aboriginal and five non-Aboriginal members.

The board provides advice to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna on the preparation of the draft plan of management for Namadgi National Park and on consent decisions made by the Conservator. During the year the board has focused on the preparation of a discussion paper for the preparation of a new plan of management for Namadgi National Park and on providing enhanced employment opportunities for Indigenous people.

In May 2002, the ACT Government hosted the inaugural Ngunnawal Gathering. From this has emerged a Ngunnawal Elders Council. This Elders Council will be the primary consultation mechanism for ACT Government on Ngunnawal-specific issues such as land and heritage issues in the ACT.

Programmes that deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people

The draft Territory Records Bill 2002 establishes a framework for agencies to manage and allow access to records. This includes records containing information that may allow people to establish links with their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. The Records Task Force of the Journey of Healing Network provided input into the development of the legislation.

A survey is under way to identify records in the custody of the ACT Government that may allow people to establish links with their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage.

Employment initiatives

The Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs is coordinating a Structured Training and Employment Programme (STEP) and cadetship programme under its whole-of-government employment policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Environment ACT – draft Indigenous employment strategy

The draft strategy was developed in January 2002 in response to the whole-of-government Indigenous Employment Framework. The draft strategy is being considered as a model for the Department of Urban Services. The strategy will provide opportunities for Indigenous employees, trainees and volunteers to work with Environment ACT.

The draft strategy aims to address the under-representation of Indigenous people within the Department of Urban Services and to fulfil commitments implicit in the COAG Communiqué on Reconciliation and an agreement between the Territory and ACT Native Title Claim Groups.

Community Renewal Programme

The Community Renewal Programme aims to assist local communities to define issues that are important to them, and to provide a vehicle for these communities to actively engage in the development and implementation of programmes to address these issues. This programme provides an important mechanism for responding to community issues and working with the local communities to develop local solutions.

During 2001–02 the programme funded a number of specific Indigenous-funded projects, and other projects that involved members of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities.