11. HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE (RECOMMENDATIONS 73-76)

1. Introduction

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (‘RCIADIC’) found that the poor living conditions of Indigenous people, particularly in remote communities, has a significant impact on custodial rates and the health of individuals within Indigenous communities. The RCIADIC specifically noted that the "provision of housing and infrastructural support services to Aboriginal people has been identified as a major underlying cause of diminished opportunity and well-being, particularly in rural and remote communities".\(^1\) A considerable portion of Chapter 18 of the RCIADIC Report is focused on the connection between the need for housing and the Indigenous "desire for land expressed through the land rights movement".\(^2\) Chapter 18 of the RCIADIC further notes that the historical context in which Indigenous communities have traditionally conceptualised ‘land’ and ‘housing’ has contributed to serious deficiencies in living conditions for these Indigenous communities.

Chapter 18 of the RCIADIC Report deals primarily with the loss of control by Indigenous communities over "location, design and functions of their living spaces", and the relationship between poor housing and poor health as a contributing factor to the over-representation of Indigenous people in custody.\(^3\)

The Recommendations made by the RCIADIC in relation to housing and infrastructure (Recommendations 73-76) centred principally around the need for increased consideration of cultural perceptions in the design and location of housing and infrastructure, and increased control being afforded to individuals in Indigenous communities.

1.1 Overview of our findings

This Chapter examines the extent to which governments have implemented the Recommendations.

Many of the Recommendations relating to the improvement in housing and infrastructure available to Indigenous communities are not considered to be appropriate for implementation by way of legislation, however, there are numerous examples of programs and initiatives implemented by the various Federal, State and Territory governments which seek to address underlying concerns with deficiencies in the provision of adequate housing, infrastructure and essential services.

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\(^1\) Royal Commission into Indigenous Deaths in Custody, National Report, 1991, Chapter 18, paragraph 18.1.7.

\(^2\) Ibid, paragraph 18.2.5.

\(^3\) Ibid, Introduction.
This Report identifies that the Recommendations relating to housing and infrastructure that were appropriate for implementation through legislation or policy have been implemented to some extent, by relevant State, Territory and Commonwealth Government bodies. This Report also identifies that the majority of Recommendations in this area have been implemented by way of agreements and policies entered into between the Commonwealth Government and each of the State and Territory Governments.

2. Cultural Perceptions (Recommendation 73)

Recommendation 73: That the provision of housing and infrastructure to Aboriginal people in remote and discrete communities, including the design and location of houses, take account of their cultural perceptions of the use of living space, and that budgetary allocations include provision for appropriate architectural and town planning advice to, and consultation with, the serviced community.4

The RCIADIC identified the provision of housing to Indigenous communities as a key cause of diminished well-being in those communities.5 It noted that “forms of Aboriginal social organisation find frequent expression in the apportioning and use of space”, including the “siting of dwellings and shelters”, and that Indigenous conceptions as to the use of space differ significantly from those of non-Indigenous persons.6 The RCIADIC also noted that the “close settlement of different groups of Aboriginal people in ‘communities’” may give rise to conflict that was not envisaged or contemplated by those responsible for the development of housing and infrastructure for these communities.

This Report indicates that only the New South Wales and Queensland Governments have implemented legislation in support of this Recommendation.7 The Housing Act 2003 (Qld) and the Aboriginal Housing Act 1998 (NSW) both seek to ensure that Indigenous persons have access to appropriate and quality housing, taking into account their social and cultural requirements.6 To a lesser extent, other State and Territory Governments have taken steps to implement this Recommendation by addressing significant overcrowding in remote Indigenous communities though various policies. However, many of the policies and programs implemented do not appear to consider communities’ cultural perceptions of the use of living space, or provide budgetary allocations for the provision of appropriate architectural and town planning advice to these communities.

2.1 Overcrowding in remote Indigenous Communities

In 2009, the Commonwealth Government and all State and Territories Governments entered into the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (‘NPARIH’). The NPARIH replaced the former Community Housing and Infrastructure Program which existed prior to 2007, and the Australian Remote Indigenous Accommodation Program, which has since been subsumed under the NPARIH. The NPARIH is designed to address issues of overcrowding, homelessness, poor

4 Ibid, Recommendation 73.
5 Ibid, paragraph 18.1.3.
6 Ibid, paragraphs 18.1.3-181.5, 18.3.1.
7 Housing Act 2003 (Qld); Aboriginal Housing Act 1998 (NSW).
8 Aboriginal Housing Act 1998 (NSW) s 3; Housing Act 2003 (Qld), s 3.

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housing conditions and the severe housing shortage in remote Indigenous communities through the implementation of activities aimed at reforming land tenure arrangements, standardising property management arrangements and increasing local Indigenous employment in the construction and maintenance of houses. Under this partnership, the Council of Australian Governments has agreed that State and Territory Governments are primarily responsible for the provision of housing, while the Commonwealth Government is responsible for the provision of funding. The Commonwealth Government is committed to funding $5.5 billion over ten years to 2018 under the NPARIH.

To the extent that a particular Indigenous community falls within local Government boundaries, local Governments are responsible for the delivery of municipal services and road maintenance. As at March 2013:

- In Tasmania, 8 new houses had been completed with 2 further houses in construction, and 51 houses had been refurbished with a further 6 underway under the NPARIH.
- In Western Australia, 295 new houses had been completed and 884 houses had been refurbished in Western Australia.
- In Victoria, 75 refurbishments have been completed in Victoria.
- In the Northern Territory, 821 new houses had been completed and 2,693 houses had been refurbished under the NPARIH.

Nationally, the number of refurbished homes significantly exceeded the refurbishment target for 2013.

In the Northern Territory, the National Indigenous Housing Guide, which applies to houses under the NPARIH, addresses cultural perceptions at the design and construction stage through incorporating input from Indigenous community housing managers and board members of Indigenous housing authorities.

While the NPARIH program addresses overcrowding, it appears that with the exception of the Northern Territory, it does not take into account cultural perceptions of living space.

A second key partnership, the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery (‘NPARSD’), was entered into in 2009 between each of the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Northern Territory Governments. This Partnership was designed to implement a new model...
for service delivery to Indigenous Australians living in remote communities, and to close the gap in life outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In its Evaluation Report for 2013, it was noted that half of the community members in the 29 Remote Service Delivery communities considered that their community (50%) and their own lives (52%) were improving. However, in the Prime Minister's Report for 2015 it was noted that of the original six targets only two were making sufficient progress to meet the 2018 targets. Of relevance, the target of ensuring all Indigenous four-year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education by 2013 was not met, with 85% of Indigenous four-year olds in remote communities enrolled in 2013.

2.2 Consultation with local communities in town planning

At the State and Territory level, the only Governments which appear to provide for consultation with Indigenous communities in town planning and housing designs are the Northern Territory and the Queensland Governments. The Northern Territory Office of Aboriginal Development has noted that all Indigenous communities are consulted on town planning issues, and that communities are encouraged to determine their individual housing and infrastructure priorities. The Indigenous Land Planning Unit in the Northern Territory holds responsibility for land use plans and provision of advice for Indigenous communities with respect to land use. Moreover, the Northern Territory Government has established Housing Reference Groups (‘HRGs’) to facilitate discussions with community in relation to housing needs, land use and housing design. The HRGs provide advice to the government on cultural and family related matters that may impact housing decisions.

In Queensland, while there is no specific provision for consultation with local communities, the Housing Act 2003 (Qld) includes consideration of cultural perspectives. The purpose of this Act is to improve access to safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing within Queensland. Under the Act, the implementation of housing services, such as public housing, are to be provided with appropriate regard to cultural diversity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions and customs. This Act also notes that housing services should offer appropriate choice of housing types and tenures for individuals provided with housing under the Act.

2.3 Provision of budgetary allocation

This Report identifies that the budgetary allocation by State and Territory Governments to housing and infrastructure in remote Indigenous communities has been limited.

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16 Housing Act 2003 (Queensland), s 4.
17 Ibid, s 6.

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In New South Wales, the Government has implemented the "Build and Grow Aboriginal Community Housing Strategy", which seeks to improve the stability and financial viability of Indigenous community housing providers, and support Indigenous people in improving living standards in their communities.

While the Australian Capital Territory is not a party to either the NPARIH or the NPARSD, the Government has implemented a number of other initiatives to address the Recommendation. The Australian Capital Territory is a party to "A Place to Call Home" which is a joint initiative between the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to construct homes across the country and to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness. A Social Housing Register has been established in connection with this initiative, with the Australian Capital Territory Government committing 50% of public housing properties to be allocated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. As at March 2013, 21 properties have been constructed through the initiative, of which 11 have been provided to Indigenous families. The United Ngunnawal Elders Council is also involved in advising the Australian Capital Territory Chief Minister on issues, policies and programs related to the Ngunnawal people. While not directly addressing the Recommendation, these initiatives seek to address the underlying issues of inadequate housing which were noted by the RCIADIC as a key issue in the welfare and custodial rates of Indigenous people.

While many of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments have implemented initiatives and partnerships to address overcrowding in remote Indigenous communities, the Recommendations requiring consideration of Aboriginal communities’ cultural perceptions of the use of living space, and the provision of budgetary allocations for appropriate architectural and town planning advice to the serviced community have not been widely implemented.

3. Encouragement and Support of Infrastructure and Technological Innovations for Remote Communities (Recommendation 74)

Recommendation 74: That the work of the Centre for Appropriate Technology in Alice Springs in the design of items specifically for infrastructural and technological innovations appropriate to remote communities, and that of similar research units, be appropriately encouraged and supported.

The RCIADIC noted that local Governments, as the entities responsible for distribution of resources, often implement the assumptions underlying housing policies for Indigenous communities.18 The RCIADIC also noted that the lack of adequate housing in remote communities is often accompanied by reduced access to infrastructure, such as water and electricity.19 The Centre for Appropriate Technology in Alice Springs has played an integral role in the development of infrastructure and technology for remote communities across the Northern Territory. For example, the Centre designed a national design-based technical training curriculum for Indigenous workers to assist the resolution of recurring technical

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19 Ibid, paragraph 18.6.21.

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issues in communities.\textsuperscript{20} To encourage further research into policies and development of infrastructure for remote Indigenous communities, the RCIADIC recommended that the work of the Centre for Appropriate Technology and other similar organisations in the design of infrastructural and technological innovations that are tailored to remote communities, be supported.\textsuperscript{21}

The Report's findings as to implementation of this Recommendation have revealed that this is largely an area in which further research is required, and that the provision of assistance to remote communities will follow as a result of further research. While numerous policies and administrative arrangements have been entered into at each of the Commonwealth, State and Territory levels to support this Recommendation, no legislative measures have been introduced.

At the Commonwealth level, the Commonwealth Government currently provides assistance by way of financial grants to the Centre for Appropriate Technology to undertake research into the provision of tailored infrastructure and technology to remote communities. In 2013-14, approximately 72% of the Centre's income came from grant funding.\textsuperscript{22} In its 2014 Annual Report, the Centre for Appropriate Technology outlined a number of achievements it made for the year, including the restoration of three Homelands which house up to 25 people, that had been abandoned due to broken water supplies, the completion of housing, water management planning and household energy efficiency planning programs at Utopia, and achieving housing 'make safe' in 167 houses across 32 Homelands.\textsuperscript{23} While progress is being made in implementing this Recommendation, in its 2014 Annual Report, the Centre for Appropriate Technology also outlined key difficulties facing the organisation, including lack of certainty in relation to government funding.\textsuperscript{24}

At the State and Territory level, the Council of Australian Governments have agreed upon a national, integrated Closing the Gap Strategy which is associated with broader reforms in connection with Commonwealth-State financial relationships. These strategies have a focus on overcoming Indigenous disadvantage and are directed at education, housing and health. One such strategy is the National Healthcare Agreement, entered into in 2012 between the Commonwealth and each of the State and Territory Governments. The National Healthcare Agreement seeks to reduce gaps in health outcomes arising from disparities in socio-economic status, and to improve health services for rural communities in Australia.\textsuperscript{25} The Council of Australian Governments has also committed an additional $4.6 billion investment in partnerships aimed specifically at Indigenous programs. The Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has


\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.


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collaborated with the Centre for Appropriate Technology and other organisations to develop the National Indigenous Infrastructure Guide, which seeks to collate existing research, codes and standards on community infrastructure. The overarching purpose of the National Indigenous Infrastructure Guide is to provide users with an awareness of issues that may arise and should be considered when working with various aspects of infrastructure.

Outside the National Healthcare Agreement, this Recommendation has been implemented in States and Territories to a limited extent. In New South Wales, NSW Health established the Aboriginal Community Water and Sewerage Working Group (‘the Working Group’) in 2004, which seeks to improve access to clean drinking water and safe disposal of waste water in discrete Indigenous communities across New South Wales. The Working Group seeks to do so through the development of a co-ordinated strategy for the investigation of water quality monitoring, and sewerage infrastructure needs. The Working Group released an Issues Paper in 2007, noting that water and sewerage services in many Indigenous communities fail to meet basic standards expected by the wider Australian population. The New South Wales Department of Commerce also undertook a survey of water and sewerage supply in selected Indigenous communities for the period between December 2007 to February 2008, considering existing infrastructure, operational procedures and levels of servicing and maintenance. Funding for these programs is managed by the New South Wales Office of Water, which also provides for ongoing operation and maintenance of water supply in Indigenous communities in New South Wales. While this is an area which requires further support, these programs appear to implement the Recommendation in supporting and encouraging infrastructure design specific to remote Indigenous communities.

In Queensland, the Implementation Report prepared by the State Government identified the provision and maintenance of water-related infrastructure as a priority to Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander community councils. One such example is the establishment of the Indigenous Environmental Health Infrastructure Program, which seeks to improve the health of Indigenous communities through the provision of improved environmental health infrastructure. This program includes improving water supply schemes and the sewerage system as well as stormwater drainage infrastructure.

While this Recommendation is largely not considered to be appropriate for implementation by way of legislation or policy, various initiatives demonstrate the ongoing implementation of this Recommendation.

4. **Equitable Access to Ongoing Expenditure by Governments be provided to Indigenous Communities (Recommendation 75)**

**Recommendation 75**: That Aboriginal communities be given equitable access to ongoing expenditure by the Commonwealth, State and Territory, and local authorities on roads. In addition, where new roads or changes to existing roads are proposed, it is recommended that no development should take place until the impact on Aboriginal land and the possible impact on Aboriginal communities that public access may have are established in consultation with those communities likely to be affected by the development proposal.

The RCIADIC acknowledged the impact that transport and communication in Indigenous communities has on the economic and social well-being of Indigenous people.\(^{31}\) It noted that the improvement of roads to enable access to Indigenous communities would require one of the most significant expenditures in relation to infrastructural enhancements.

The RCIADIC recommended that:

1. equitable access to expenditure by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments be provided to Indigenous communities; and
2. where new roads or changes to existing roads are proposed, any such development should consider the potential impact on Indigenous communities and no development should occur until there has been consultation between the relevant authority and the communities likely to be affected.\(^{32}\)

This Report identifies that the Recommendations have not been fully implemented by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments. Many existing legislative regimes contain certain protections in relation to Indigenous heritage sites, however, no further Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation or policy has been implemented in response to the Recommendation.

4.1 **Equitable access to expenditure**

This Report identifies that the implementation of the Recommendation has been minimal. The only Government to implement this Recommendation has been the Queensland Government. The Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads have implemented the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme, contributing approximately $8.2 million annually, to provide all-weather transport

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\(^{32}\) Ibid, Recommendation 75.
services to rural and remote communities.\textsuperscript{33} As at August 2014, over 25% of the access roads to Queensland Indigenous communities are bitumen sealed.

Local road funding is also provided in the Northern Territory through the Northern Territory Local Governments Grants Commission. The submission of the Department of Local Government for the Northern Territory to the Financial Assistance Grants Review, however, showed that equitable access to expenditure has not been implemented effectively in the Northern Territory. Their submission noted that current methodology for distribution of grants failed to take into account relative needs of certain jurisdictions. The Report's findings suggest that this is an area that requires further funding for remote communities and that implementation in this respect is ongoing. The Working Future Policy has been implemented in the Northern Territory to target remote Indigenous communities with the aim of developing these communities into proper towns with quality infrastructure services and facilities. For example, a high quality road network and all year access will be a key enabler for the development of these communities by improving access and mobility.

In Western Australia, the Kimberley Regional Planning and Infrastructure Framework seeks to ensure sufficient utility infrastructure, including water supply and waste management across the Kimberley area.\textsuperscript{34}

It does not appear that this Recommendation has been implemented in other States or Territories, or at the Commonwealth level.

4.2 Consultation with Indigenous communities

The Report's findings show that the requirement for consultation has been implemented to some extent at all government levels, notably with respect to land use generally.

The \textit{Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976} (Cth) prohibits the construction of a road on Indigenous land unless consent of the Land Council for the area is obtained. This, however, does not apply to certain land, including where a mining interest is authorised by a law of the Northern Territory. There is also special provision for involvement of Indigenous people in the planning process for management of reserves in the Kakadu, Uluru and Jervis Bay territories pursuant to the \textit{Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999} (Cth).

In Victoria, the \textit{Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006} (Vic) makes provision for the involvement of registered Indigenous groups in decision making processes related to cultural heritage and establishes various management plans and permit processes to ensure activities that may harm Indigenous heritage are monitored. A cultural heritage management plan must also be developed where a "high impact activity" is proposed in an area which is of great cultural sensitivity, and must be approved by local Indigenous parties registered under the Act before the plan is implemented. Similar legislation has been enacted in the Australian Capital Territory, New South


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Wales and Queensland, which seeks to protect "Aboriginal places", and provides for community consultation with respect to certain development proposals. Many of these legislative provisions are not specific to the development of roads and apply broadly to Indigenous sites.

In the Northern Territory, the Northern Territory Government's 10 Year Road Strategy, as implemented in 2011, seeks to upgrade road networks in order to improve access to remote communities. The strategy also seeks to promote key stakeholder involvement and feedback, through the provision of mechanisms for formal consultation and contribution by stakeholders. In particular, stakeholder and user engagement will assist in prioritising the upgrades of capital works and the implementation of new infrastructure. In accordance with the Territory's Working Future's Policy (noted above), the strategy prioritises access to and development of infrastructure for the Territory's largest remote Indigenous communities. This strategy is largely funded by the Australian Government, which provided $419 million in the period 2009-10 to 2013-14. Unfortunately, it appears that no progress or performance reports have been released in relation to the implementation of this strategy.

In Tasmania, Western Australia and South Australia, existing legislation prohibits damage or access to Indigenous sites without prior approval. It appears that no further measures have been taken to implement this Recommendation in these States. The legislation in South Australia requires identification and protection of Indigenous sites, objects and remains, prior to development. However, this legislation does not specifically address the impact of roads or public access to Indigenous land. Similar legislation in Western Australia, along with the requirement to consult with the Aboriginal Advisory Council, indicates that the impact of development on Indigenous communities is recognised and a factor to be taken into consideration in planning matters.

5. Integrated Analysis of Infrastructure, Housing, Essential Services and Health as a Model of Study (Recommendation 76)

Recommendation 76: That the integrated analysis of infrastructure, housing, essential services and health as illustrated by the Nganampa Health Council's UPK Report be considered as a model worthy of study and adaptation for the development of community planning processes in other States and areas.

The RCIADIC recommended that the integrated analysis of infrastructure, housing, essential services and health adopted by the Nganampa Health Council's UPK

35 Heritage Act 2004 (ACT), s 26; Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW), s 118; National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW), s 5; Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 (Qld).
38 Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA), s 18; Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA), s 23; Aboriginal Relics Act 1975 (Tas), s 9.
40 Aboriginal Relics Act 1975 (Tas), ss 3-5.
Report should be adapted in other States in the development of community planning.\textsuperscript{41} The

5.1 \textbf{Nganampa Health Council}

Nganampa Health Council is a community-controlled organisation providing health care services to residents of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankuntjatjara Lands in South Australia. The Nganampa Heath Council's UPK report reviewed environmental inadequacies and developed a list of practices considered to be essential to health and well-being in remote communities.\textsuperscript{42} The UPK Report made nine recommendations to promote healthy Indigenous communities, which included improving hygiene, clothes and bedding, removing waste, improving nutrition, reducing crowding, separation of dogs and children, controlling dust, temperature control and reducing trauma.\textsuperscript{43} It was found that this integrated review was essential in identifying issues which are necessarily interconnected, and enabled management of specific areas of concern. In reviewing the model of study, the RCIADC found that "\textit{inadequate provision of essential infrastructural services and equipment to support Aboriginal lifestyles}" was a significant difficulty facing Indigenous communities.\textsuperscript{44}

While this Recommendation is largely not considered to be appropriate for implementation by way of legislation or policy, the Council of Australian Governments has agreed upon a national, integrated "Closing the Gap" strategy, which is associated with broader reforms in connection with Commonwealth-State financial relationships. These strategies have a focus on overcoming Indigenous disadvantage and are directed at education, housing and health. The Council of Australian Governments has also committed an additional $4.6 billion investment in partnerships aimed specifically at Indigenous programs.

5.2 \textbf{Western Australia}

In Western Australia, policies seek to implement the land use planning system to facilitate and contribute to regional wealth, conservation and enhancement of the local environment, and the creation of stable communities. The amendment of State Planning Policy 3.2 Aboriginal Settlements in 2011 was informed by the RCIADC Recommendation and the principles of the State Planning Strategy, and seeks to improve coordination of services and infrastructure to Indigenous settlements through the use of local planning schemes and strategies. The Western Australia Government has also implemented Indigenous community controlled health services which are committed to ensuring the full participation of Indigenous people and their representative bodies across all aspects of addressing their health needs. Such initiatives include the Aboriginal Maternity Services Support Unit which seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children through increasing access to antenatal care and maternal health services.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{41} Royal Commission into Indigenous Deaths in Custody, National Report, 1991, Chapter 18, Recommendation 76.
  \item \textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{44} Royal Commission into Indigenous Deaths in Custody, National Report, 1991, Chapter 18, paragraph 18.8.1.
\end{itemize}

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5.3 Northern Territory

In the Northern Territory, the Nganampa Health Council has established offices in Alice Springs and runs numerous initiatives in the Northern Territory. The Government has commissioned the development of Environmental Health Standards for Remote Communities in the Northern Territory, in conjunction with the Indigenous Housing Authority. The program was established to assist Indigenous communities to develop and maintain standards in respect of health and hygiene in order to reduce the spread of infectious diseases. Under the Nganampa Health Council, it was reported that in 2013, 94% of children aged seven years or younger were fully immunised. The Government has also implemented the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory - Health initiative, which seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of Indigenous persons in the Northern Territory. The Australian Government is committed to providing $206.4 million over 10 years to support the delivery of municipal services under this initiative. Between July 2012 and June 2013, the Remote Health Centres established under this initiative provided 254,237 episodes of care and 3,224 occasions of dental health service, including 103 occasions of surgery under general anaesthetic. The implementation of this Recommendation in the Northern Territory is seen as an ongoing process.

5.4 Queensland

In Queensland, the Recommendation has been implemented to some extent, with the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Plan 2008-2013 and the Making Tracks toward Closing the Gap in Health Outcomes by 2033 Framework. The Making Tracks Framework is aimed making sustained improvements to health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders. Each implementation plan will target specific government initiatives to focus upon environmental health and housing initiatives, and efforts to improve community and personal safety to achieve the close the gap targets and to maximise sustainable health gains for Indigenous persons. As at 2014, the gap in access to antenatal care for Indigenous mothers has been reduced by 41% since 2008.

5.5 Victoria

In Victoria, the Koolin Balit: Victorian Government Strategic Directions for Aboriginal Health 2012-2022 has been implemented to provide an integrated, holistic framework aimed at making measurable improvements to the length and quality of the lives of Indigenous Victorians.

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5.6 South Australia

In 2010, the South Australian Government implemented the Aboriginal Health Care Plan 2010-2016 to reduce Indigenous ill-health and develop a culturally-responsive health system. The health plan implements comprehensive primary health care facilities in remote areas and introduces health promotion and education programs. This program has also incorporated a mobile dialysis unit for Indigenous persons in remote areas.

5.7 New South Wales

In New South Wales, the NSW Department of Health, in partnership with the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs, has implemented Housing for Health projects in Aboriginal communities across NSW. The projects provide repairs and maintenance to Indigenous community housing with a focus on improving safety and health standards for Indigenous persons. By 2009, the program had reached over 9,500 people. As at 2009, Indigenous persons who received Housing for Health intervention had a significantly reduced rate of hospital admissions for infectious diseases. Further, by 2009 the number of homes with laundry services and the ability to safely wash people had increased markedly (43% and 30% respectively) since the program's inception in 1999.

5.8 Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania

It does not appear that the ACT or Tasmania have implemented programs which integrate infrastructure, housing, essential services and health care.

5.9 Commonwealth

At the Commonwealth level, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2012-2023 is aimed at achieving equality of health status and life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians by 2031. In achieving this, the Health Plan recognises the important connection between education, employment, community safety and health.


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