Queensland Government Submission

Queensland Productivity Commission Inquiry
into service delivery in remote and discrete
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

June 2017
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1 Key messages

- The Queensland Government is committed to working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to reduce Indigenous disadvantage by 'Closing the Gap' between life expectancy, health, education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

- Remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are complex and represent challenging service delivery environments. These communities often have small and dispersed populations, with a range of entrenched disadvantages, which increases the cost and may reduce the timeliness and effectiveness of services. Many remote and discrete communities have limited economies and commercial opportunities which impacts on social and economic participation.

- The Queensland Government funds, delivers and regulates service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. More effective, efficient and responsive service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can contribute to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

- To achieve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing, the Queensland Government is investing in innovative strategies by partnering with communities to improve engagement, improve the design, delivery and evaluation of services through community participation and integration, and improve local opportunities for economic participation.

- Progress towards achieving the goals of major government programs, including reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child safety system, addressing high rates of domestic and family violence and reducing incarceration rates, is more likely to be achieved through a re-orientation of government approaches to ensure that government works in closer partnership with communities.

- The Queensland Government is implementing community inclusive and place-based approaches that draw on the skills and experience of local community members, support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled service organisations, and utilises local networks to integrate service delivery. Through these initiatives, the Queensland Government is increasing community voice in service design and delivery and delivering opportunities for economic participation.

- The Queensland Government's Cultural Capability Framework is supporting agencies to provide efficient, effective and responsive services by embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people perspectives.

- The Queensland Government acknowledges the importance of streamlined and coordinated funding arrangements that provide financial sustainability and flexibility in funding to enable service delivery bodies to respond to community needs in remote and discrete communities.

- The Queensland Government is committed to implementing funding arrangements and investments that are transparent and demonstrate value for money. This will be achieved by improving the effective collection and reporting of relevant data, and implementing place-based and real time evaluations that engage with local communities.

- The benefits of, or opportunities from, evaluation of investments include improved transparency and accountability. This supports decision makers across government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make more informed and strategic investment decisions that are supported by evidence of what works.
2 About this submission

This submission responds to the key themes and issues raised in the consultation paper to support the Queensland Productivity Commission (QPC) Inquiry. The Queensland Government submission is not exhaustive of all Queensland Government interactions with remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The submission highlights examples where service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities has been shaped by community engagement, initiatives that are outcomes focused, trials of new approaches, and emerging initiatives that seek to embed good investment practice across government.

This submission focuses mainly on service delivery to the 19 remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within an Indigenous Local Government area. These communities have near 100 per cent Indigenous populations within each Indigenous council area. While the Queensland Government also provides services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in other remote communities, these services tend to be more broadly available.

3 The challenges of service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Around 20 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities but these communities are the most economically and socially disadvantaged communities in Queensland. They make up seven of the top ten most disadvantaged locations in Australia (Census 2011).

As noted in the QPC’s Consultation paper to support the Inquiry, there are a range of historically based structural barriers that have hindered the full social and economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote and discrete Indigenous communities. Many remote and discrete communities are former missions that were established on gazetted land with no real connection to any local economic drivers. Missions were overcrowded and underfunded, with limited opportunities for education or work. Participation in cultural activities and the recognition of heritage was actively discouraged. Access to freehold title land, which enables land to be sold, leased or borrowed against, was limited until as recently as January 2015.

These structural barriers and other experiences of disadvantage in equal access to opportunities and service delivery have translated into ongoing levels of disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote and discrete Indigenous communities, where they experience (relative to outcomes for non-Indigenous Queenslanders) very high rates of unemployment, low rates of school attendance, lower rates of home ownership and poorer health outcomes.

The population of remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is young, relative to other communities, with more than one in every three people living in community being 14 years or younger (compared with one in every 5 people for the rest of Queensland). Nearly one in every two (42%) of dependent children in remote and discrete communities is growing up in a jobless household (compared with 11.7% of dependent children in non-Indigenous families). At Census 2011, unemployment rates for working age people (15 to 64 years old) in discrete communities were 23.2% which was higher than the unemployment rate for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland (18.1%) and significantly higher than the unemployment rate for non-Indigenous Queenslanders (5.9%). Young people in communities are particularly disadvantaged with a youth (15
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to 24 year old) unemployment rate nearing 40% in communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are significantly less likely have the skills or training to participate in the workforce, with only one in every two 20 to 24 years (49.1%) having attained a year 12 (or equivalent) education, compared with nearly two-thirds (62.5%) of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and more than four out of every 5 (85.7%) non-Indigenous Queenslanders in the age cohort.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in communities experience wellbeing outcomes significantly below those of non-Indigenous Queenslanders in the areas of justice, child protection and domestic and family violence.

Alcohol-related harm remains unacceptably high across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland. One of the key harm indicators is reported offences against the person. In the broader Queensland community, rates of reported offences against the person were six per 1,000. Across the 19 discrete communities with alcohol restrictions in place, rates of reported offences against the person ranged from around five to 23 times the state-wide rate. The published rates of children who were the subject of a substantiated notification of harm were almost all at least twice as high as the Statewide rate (5.3) and rates of children who were admitted to finalised child protection orders were at least 1.6 times the Statewide rate (2.9).\(^1\)

However, the outlook for remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is changing. Mayors of Indigenous councils and local leaders, including elders, are forward looking and seeking the empowerment to take responsibility for economic and social participation outcomes for their communities. A range of initiatives, noted in this submission will facilitate these outcomes. The Queensland Government is working in partnership with communities to respond to these challenges to ensure that Indigenous communities are vibrant, safe places to live that offer opportunities for local people to participate in Queensland’s rich economic, social and cultural life.

For example, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Honourable Mark Furner MP, has identified the finalisation of the Alcohol Management Plan Review as a priority for the Government with this issue canvassed most recently in a Closing the Gap Roundtable in Cairns between the Minister and Mayors of discrete communities. Alcohol management is just one part of a wider strategy aimed at improving the safety, wellbeing and prosperity of community members. Critical to this is reducing domestic and family violence, supporting children and young people to attend and achieve at school and creating employment opportunities for people living in remote and regional areas. However, remoteness still implies challenges for service delivery.

The discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have relatively small populations with complex needs. Transport challenges mean people in these communities are not always able to easily access regional service centres for specialist health, housing, and other social services. To overcome this, some health, housing and social services are provided on a fly-in fly-out basis. Services can be perceived as being unresponsive, coming in only when a family (or a community) is in crisis, instead of working with and supporting families (and communities) to be more resilient and to overcome challenges before they become entrenched. Queensland Health offers many specialist services via telehealth. Telehealth provides timely access to specialist doctors and other health professionals. Access to telehealth can prevent health issues from escalating, and for some types of services replace the need to travel to a hospital. Communities do miss out on the economic development opportunities that come from local service provision. The geographic isolation also creates a barrier to further

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\(^1\) DATSIP, Annual Bulletin for Queensland’s Discrete Indigenous Communities, 2014-15

\(^2\) Griffiths, D, Disability in Indigenous Communities; addressing the disadvantage, Ramp Up, 20 April 2012 website: <http://www.abc.net.au/rampup/articles/2012/04/20/3481394.htm>.
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education, training and employment pathways. Patients accessing telehealth are often supported by a local health worker, and telehealth often provides an upskilling opportunity for local health staff. Many remote and discrete communities have very limited economies and commercial opportunities. This in turn limits the employment opportunities available to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This creates an imperative to maximise employment opportunities through local jobs in local services such as local government, housing, health, and education. It also demonstrates the need for innovation to overcome these market failures, such as using technology to design financial and banking services to meet the needs of people in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Housing presents a particular challenge in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Many of these communities are located on Indigenous owned land where the market is dominated by social housing and private rental or individual home ownership is generally not available. As a result, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders in these communities have more limited access to housing than for other Queenslanders and are more susceptible to housing stress. Relatively low incomes, higher rates of unemployment, higher levels of financial exclusion and policy and funding uncertainty, further contribute to housing stress.

Remote and discrete communities, by virtue of remoteness, can often have stronger links with culture, land and heritage as a particular strength, but for some services this can also present a challenge. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have significantly higher rates of disability than non-Indigenous Australians, and remoteness can impact on how their needs are met. Additionally, conversations about disability in Indigenous remote and discrete communities can be a new concept due to cultural perspectives and geographical issues. Consequently, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities in remote communities do not identify as having a disability and some may not receive the services they need.²

Issues such as those raised above are better addressed by local people working within the community to build on community strengths, identify priorities and to provide culturally capable services to address these issues and the underlying social causes at the local level.

4 Service delivery

Efficient and effective service delivery can close the gap in existing disadvantage, and improve community wellbeing outcomes. This part of the Queensland Government submission identifies current action to overcome the key challenges associated with remote service delivery in remote and discrete communities. Further, it seeks to demonstrate the continuing challenges of remote service delivery.

Community participation and engagement, that increases the real influence that people have in decision-making about local service delivery, has been shown to enhance the effectiveness of Government investment.³ Recent studies also show that successful community engagement in the design and delivery of public services strengthens community capacity and results in services that are

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² Griffiths, D. Disability in Indigenous Communities; addressing the disadvantage, Ramp Up, 20 April 2012 website: <http://www.abc.net.au/rampup/articles/2012/04/20/3481394.htm>
³ Holmes, B. ‘Citizens’ engagement in policymaking and the design of public services’, Department of Parliamentary Services, Research Paper no. 1, July 2011, p. 22.
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more efficient, effective and sustainable. The evidence suggests savings of up to six times the investment made in new approaches.4

Increased on the ground coordination of service delivery also increases effectiveness and efficiency, and there is a growing role for community to partner in service delivery in key areas such as health, community safety and community services. Greater input and coordination on the ground can overcome complex, longer term barriers to the effective implementation of programs.

The Australian Productivity Commission (APC) report into whether the efficiency and effectiveness of human services could be increased by introducing contestability found that greater responsiveness to community needs through user choice, place-based service models or greater community engagement could improve outcomes. The APC also found that more stable policy settings and clearer lines of responsibility, could increase governments' accountability for improving service outcomes for Indigenous Australians living in remote communities.6

Some example of work underway, which are reflective of these approaches, are outlined below.

4.1 Investment strategies to achieve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander well-being

Children and Family Centres (CFCs) provide integrated early childhood, parenting and family support, and child and maternal health services which target Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children aged up to eight years of age and their families. A focus on early childhood is a foundation for closing the gap. DET provides funding and program support to 10 CFCs across Queensland located in Cairns, Doomadgee, Ipswich, Logan, Mackay, Mareeba, Mornington Island, Mount Isa, Palm Island and Rockhampton. In the 2015 State Budget, the Queensland Government committed $41.8 million over four years for the 10 CFCs.

Enhancing the CFC services in Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Mount Isa and Palm Island is the Ready Together: Remote Early Years Transition project (funded by and delivered on behalf of the Australian Government). This community-focused approach supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s transition from home to early years services and then on to school. In addition, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Years Services (Remote Services) are located in remote areas of Queensland (in Cape York, Northern Peninsula and the Torres Strait Islands).

The roll-out of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Well-being Services to communities throughout the State is intended to make it easier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in communities across Queensland to access culturally responsive support to improve their social, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing, and build their capacity to safely care for and protect their children. It is intended that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations lead the design and delivery of these services.

The Queensland Government has launched Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017-2037, a new 20 year strategy to improve the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children, including addressing their disproportionate representation in the child protection system. Our Way has been developed in partnership with Family Matters and with the community sector organisations. Our Way represents a

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fundamental shift in how child protection, family support and other services work with, and for, Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Changing Tracks: An action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families is the first three year action plan created to contribute to achieving the Our Way strategy. These actions include specific initiatives to improve support to Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families at risk of entering or in contact with the child protection system. Some key actions include:

- investing $150 million for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services to be delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations;
- establishing the Queensland First Children and Families Board to guide the Our Way strategy and its implementation, and to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with opportunities to participate in decision making;
- engaging discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in service reform initiatives;
- trialling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family-led decision-making models;
- commencing the First 1000 Days program in Queensland to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children get the best start in life;
- commencing initiatives to improve participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in early childhood education and care;
- working with Family Matters Queensland and other jurisdictions to make the disproportionate numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection systems a national priority.

Education is a key area of action for closing the gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage. Improving educational outcomes sets a platform for future life success and provides the foundation for increased economic participation later in life. The Queensland Government, through the Department of Education and Training, make a significant investment in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

DET released a draft Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan for public consultation to improve outcomes across the spectrum of education from early childhood education and care, state schooling, training and skills and transition between each stage of education. The Action Plan takes an empowerment approach, recognising and building on the unique strengths, knowledge and skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, Elders, families and communities. It aims to embrace and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities, languages, histories and traditions in learning environments so that they are positive places of belonging and empowerment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

There are 35 designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where approved pre-Prep programs are being provided in Queensland. Pre-Prep is available to children 3½ to 4½ years of age for 15 hours per week providing early childhood education and care to children prior to attending formal schooling.

Language for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children can be a barrier to better school outcomes and DET is focused on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are learning Standard Australian English as an additional language or Dialect (EAL/D). Master Teachers (EAL/D) work as part of the remote schools’ leadership team to provide professional development, curriculum guidance and feedback to support Indigenous EAL/D (IEAL/D) learners. A Principal Coach has been appointed to work collaboratively with Assistant Regional Directors, regional staff and school leadership teams in Far North Queensland and North Queensland. In 2016, Principal Education Advisors (IEAL/D) were established in each region to support teachers and school leadership teams by: building capability of schools to address the language learning needs of
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IEAL/D students; developing awareness and understanding of language backgrounds and varieties, learning and teaching, and literacy foundations; and supporting schools to ensure all IEAL/D students meet the national minimum standards for Year 3 NAPLAN Reading in 2017. The program is supported by an Indigenous Language Perspectives team that provides training and mentoring support for the Principal Education Advisors IEAL/D and school staff to develop their capability in catering for the needs of IEAL/D students; and supports the development of programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional languages in schools and documents contact languages which are used by IEAL/D students.

Community based Child and Youth Mental Health Service in Aurukun

From 1 July 2016, Queensland Health has invested $1.2 million over three years in Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service to increase access to child and youth mental health services in Aurukun. The service supports children and young people who are ‘at risk of developing’, or have a diagnosed mental illness. It is located within the community and offers a five day a week service from Monday to Friday, employing two additional mental health clinicians and a community liaison officer to serve as an interface between the service and community.

Since the expanded service commenced, 38 families have been referred for assessment and support. This has resulted in 488 occasions of service delivered and 28 care plans in place between 1 July and 31 December 2016. These figures reflect a positive uptake of mental health services among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth in Aurukun.

Community Service organisations can be well placed to deliver services in remote areas. Many Community Service organisations have a deep understanding of the needs of local communities and/or specific population groups. This presents an opportunity for smaller community-led and place-based providers to gain a competitive advantage by leveraging established insights and carving out niche markets. These niche markets may be oriented around service category, geography, or both. Organisations delivering services in remote areas have specific workforce challenges, including attracting and retaining people with the skills and experience needed to deliver complex services, connectivity and access to training. For example the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Queensland should provide new opportunities for local service provision. Early transition sites for the rollout of the NDIS in Queensland included Palm Island as a trial of service disability services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients of the NDIS. The trial also provided the opportunity to focus on the need for support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability service providers to the NDIS and to identify the workforce requirements and opportunities for service providers working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The lessons learnt from that rollout are being incorporated into transition planning for the next regions.
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Complexities in meeting the needs of children and families are increased by geographical remoteness, reduced access to universal and secondary services and greater disadvantage due to reduced opportunities for socio-economic participation. Over recent years, the Government has increased its investment in community-based services to better support children and their families and make the family support and child protection system more culturally capable. Similarly, the Cherbourg domestic and family violence integrated service response trial will provide an opportunity to co-design and develop a culturally-specific integrated response to domestic and family violence that is tailored to the needs of discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Youth Justice supports an approach that recognises the importance that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities play in reshaping service delivery for their communities and in owning responses that deal with young offenders. Young persons of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background should be able to access targeted, place based programs and services that involve their community. Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) is committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders to reconnect offenders with their local communities and provide specific intervention and support needs to ensure they remain crime free. Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) operates permanent Probation and Parole reporting centres in Mornington Island, Doomadgee, Weipa, Cooktown, Palm Island and Woorabinda, and a District Office on Thursday Island.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General is implementing an innovative Justice Reinvestment trial in Cherbourg in a co-design process with the community that aims to improve public safety and reduce related criminal justice spending to reinvest savings in strategies that can reduce crime and strengthen communities.

**Discussions with Indigenous Mayors on Service delivery in their Communities**

On 19 May 2017, the Mayors of Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils met with the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Honourable Mark Furner MP to discuss a renewed approach to Closing the Gap in their communities.

Mayors welcomed the consideration of an engagement mechanism to partner with Government to drive actions to close the gap and monitor and report on progress. Increasing engagement will ensure that Indigenous voices from remote and discrete communities are heard and acted upon to improve outcomes.

Mayors want to be empowered to develop economic and social policies for their communities, which will also include higher levels of community control. Increasing community control of service delivery could deliver real change to protect the interests of and benefit the people of their communities.

Benefits may include increased value for money, as well as jobs for local people. It can promote accountability for service delivery and provide local jobs for local people. Community control enables cultural capacity of service provision and continuous improvement of service through on-the-ground monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.
Commitment to community health control in Far North Queensland

The Making Tracks Towards Closing the Gap in health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders by 2033 Investment Strategy 2015-18 (the Strategy) strategically directs investment to government and non-government run health services to provide culturally and clinically effective healthcare that is well planned and integrated within the health system. These services focus on preventing ill-health, improving diagnosis and early intervention, and better management and treatment of illness. The Strategy commits to progressing the transition of Queensland Health delivered primary healthcare services in at least two Cape York communities to community control arrangements by 30 June 2018.

Yarrabah was the first community in Queensland to transition its primary healthcare services to a community control arrangement. In 2014 this saw the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Service, Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service, become the lead provider of all primary healthcare services in the community, with the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service (HHS) continuing to offer emergency services in the community.

In January 2017, the Boards of the Torres and Cape HHS and the regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled organisation, Apunipima Cape York Health Council, jointly agreed to a Transition Action Plan for Cape York. The Transition Action Plan sees services progressively transitioning in Aurukun from 1 July 2017, with further work to continue around the opportunity for transition in up to four other communities in the future. Once in place, the new arrangements will enable a single comprehensive and integrated primary healthcare model of care in each community, with Apunipima as the lead provider of primary healthcare services.

4.2 Innovation in service delivery

The geographic remoteness of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities contributes to challenges in providing efficient, effective service delivery. Innovative approaches are required to address this gap.

The Queensland Government is taking steps to increase digital inclusion, recognising that online service delivery can address the challenges of remoteness. This includes addressing the level of digital inclusion in the community and the accessible digital infrastructure in these geographically remote locations. The Department of Science, Information Technology and Information is developing initiatives to develop and deliver digital mentoring programs to disadvantaged and/or under-represented groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. DSITI’s Advance Queensland Community Digital Champions Program celebrates Queenslanders from all demographics and diverse cultural backgrounds undertaking activities to help their respective communities (i.e. business, industry, regional or social) benefit from the global digital economy by improving digital innovation, digital literacy, digital adoption and online participation. Currently, the program has six Indigenous Champions and other remote and regionally based Champions who undertake activities to close the ‘digital’ gap.
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DSITI develops innovative digitally enabled and integrated government services that are simpler and faster for the community to access online or through phone and counter channels. An example of how innovation is used to improve service delivery is the continuation of the One-Stop Shop activities, which is currently focused on improvements to service delivery. During the past three years the One-Stop Shop has increased the number of services available online from 3% to 33%, that is from 42 to over 400 of routine transactions. Available data indicates that around 60% of customers are choosing to access these online services (over phone, counter and mail) and 45% of customers are now accessing these services online. In addition, the DSITI Queensland Government Agent Program (QGAP) One-Stop Shop Government service counters are located in around 80 mostly regional and remote communities including Murgon, Normanton, Weipa, Yarrabah and Yeppoon.

The One-Stop Shop Strategy and Implementation Office (OSSSIO) is currently partnering with social research specialists and a number of agencies to inform targeted joined up service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The program will continue to offer support to develop culturally appropriate and innovative place based service delivery that is co-designed with the community to ensure practical and local solutions.

High speed 4GX connectivity for mobile phones and other Internet-enabled devices was a transformative experience for residents of Aurukun. Community members and service providers now have a reliable, fast and efficient method to make contact. Government agencies have reported a range of significant benefits, including community members and service providers now have fast and efficient communication capacity. The social and emotional well-being of residents and service providers has improved because of access to information, news and employment information, and to social sites, such as Facebook and Skype. Service provider employees are now able to access fast and reliable Internet to undertake compulsory professional development and other personal studies. Increased access to mobile applications and other technology provides training and potential employment pathways for community members.

Online service delivery also includes the delivery of educational services through the English as an Additional Language/ Dialect Hub (EAL/D Hub) to support teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are learning Standard Australian English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D). As part of the Advancing Education Action Plan videoconferencing facilities in all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community schools will facilitate greater information sharing and communication.

The Department of Education and Training is also tailoring solutions to address the needs of students with a disability in Cape York communities. DET recognises the importance of clinical and professional reasoning in assessment practices to take into consideration linguistic and cultural diversity. The Department has conducted extensive assessment and verification work with students in Cape York in recent years, and continues to do so. In 2016, the Department engaged LifeStyle Therapies and Training Solutions allied health services to provide comprehensive psychology, occupational therapy, and speech therapy support, tailored to meet the complex needs of these isolated communities.

The Deadly Kids, Deadly Futures 2016-2026 policy framework provides a multi-sector response to address middle ear disease and associated hearing loss among Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It aims to improve the health, early childhood and education outcomes of these children. The Department of Education and Training is implementing the framework in partnership with Queensland Health.
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In the 2016-17 Budget, the Queensland Government allocated $1.3 million for a pilot From Jails to Jobs initiative to transition 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders from prison into ongoing employment within the resource sector. Under this initiative, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships is working with the community sector and private sector employers to reduce recidivism among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners by providing job training and readiness skills and linking offenders with industry partners to secure skilled jobs. Stable employment is a well-established key factor in closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and this initiative will deliver life changing opportunities and aims to ‘break the cycle’ of reoffending by connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners with training to provide them with new skills and employment.

4.3 Increasing economic participation through service delivery

In September 2016 the Queensland Government launched Moving Ahead, a whole of Government strategy to increase the economic participation of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders through training, skill development and business development and growth. However, increasing economic participation in discrete and remote communities is inherently more challenging. Remoteness contributes to thin labour markets that rely on a single employer or government employment.

Service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can provide opportunities to increase economic participation, through local jobs for local people, and increasing the focus on local organisations delivering services to local people which address the needs and priorities of communities. The Queensland Government is supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members in discrete communities to access the necessary training and develop job skills to engage in meaningful employment in their communities.

The new Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027 responds to the significant challenges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face in owning their own home and their increased reliance on social housing. It commits to delivering an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan, noting that housing is a foundational issue in closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. Housing stability provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families with the opportunity to pursue other social or economic goals including providing greater support to younger generations to pursue further education, training, employment and other economic opportunities while also sustaining strong connections to community and culture. The Department of Housing and Public Works will make a significant investment of $75 million over five years to complete maintenance works on social housing in discrete communities where residents have an existing right to ownership (conferred by a Land Holding Act lease or lease entitlement) to facilitate the transfer of dwellings to private ownership. The commitment contributes to commitments made in the Queensland Government Response to the Reparations Taskforce Report (May 2016).

Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) within the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP), in collaboration with Palm Island and Yarrabah Councils, has facilitated and is delivering regional liveability strategies in these communities. The development of the strategies involved Palm Island and Yarrabah Councils identifying a range of proposed projects intended to generate employment opportunities, economic and community development and enhance liveability in these communities. These projects will deliver tangible outcomes in support of Council’s tourism and economic development strategy.
Local jobs for local people

The Infrastructure and Coordination group of Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP) is increasing the economic opportunities available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through the resolution of land administration matters and strengthened coordination of capital works projects. The role of the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office in DATSIP will be expanded over the next four years to provide a one-stop shop in addressing land administration issues and coordinating all infrastructure projects, including capital and minor works, within 34 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These actions provide pathways to develop local business, and housing and home ownership, and resolve housing legacy issues.

This program is a key action under the whole of Queensland Government Moving Ahead Strategy to increase economic participation through increasing training, skilling and employment, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, and encouraging business growth and development.

Investing in infrastructure in Indigenous Councils

In late 2016 on-site condition assessments of water, wastewater and solid waste assets in 16 Indigenous Councils were completed by suitably qualified engineering consultants and the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP) working across the Queensland Government. The Review found consistent issues of concern across all communities arising from the lack of regular and appropriate operations and maintenance practices, reducing the anticipated lifespan of assets and creating potential health issues.

In the State Budget 2017-18 the Queensland Government announced $120 million over 4 years for the Indigenous Councils Critical Infrastructure Program, which will provide fit for purpose, fit for place infrastructure. The program will ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote and discrete communities have access to good quality water, provide long term water security, and the ability to manage waste water and solid waste. Indigenous Councils will be able to meet environmental, compliance and regulatory issues that will enable healthy communities. Local jobs and business opportunities will be a priority outcome for the program.
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Skills and training

In 2015-16, the Queensland Government, through the Department of Education and Training (DET) invested approximately $10.4 million to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in discrete communities to access VET and complete formal qualifications. These key investments included:

- support to 1910 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the discrete communities to gain qualifications through the Certificate 3 Guarantee and Higher Level Skills programs;
- support to 278 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprentices and trainees from discrete Indigenous communities to complete qualifications while learning skills at work; and
- supported training places and pathways to employment for 750 participants in 17 Indigenous Councils (plus five councils with high Indigenous populations) under the Indigenous VET Partnership initiative for the Local Government Association of Queensland.

In addition, since its reinstatement in 2015, a total of 10 projects worth $962,200 have been approved under Skilling Queenslanders for Work across the listed discrete communities, to provide training, skills development and paid traineeship opportunities to 199 Indigenous Queenslanders. Under the SQW First Start program, Indigenous Councils have been awarded $625,000 to employ 50 young people or disadvantaged jobseekers into a 12 month traineeship.

4.4 Future directions

The Queensland Government is exploring innovative new ways of working together with communities to close the gap, reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the child safety system to reduce rates of domestic and family violence and to improve the access of community members with disability to disability services and supports and to improve wellbeing outcomes in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The initiatives noted here provide examples of where the Government has sought to increase community participation in service delivery, focus on effective on-the-ground coordination, increase community control, focus on innovation and identify the opportunities for increased economic participation in service delivery. Place-based approaches recognise that people and places are interrelated; that people contribute to, and are affected by, the place in which they live. They are designed to be highly flexible and adaptable to local conditions and are most simply described as stakeholders engaging in collaborative processes to address complex issues. The complexity of the human service environment, and the continuing policy and funding uncertainty, continues to be a challenge to remote service delivery and sustained improvements towards closing the gap in wellbeing outcomes.
5 Governance

How the Queensland Government delivers services (and who we partner with) is as important as what services are delivered. Building culturally capable government agencies and funded organisations will achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples by providing efficient and responsive services. Culturally capable agencies and organisations ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are an inherent part of their core business.

The Queensland Government is committed to increasing the capability of government to deliver innovative, efficient, effective and integrated services for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people across Queensland, particularly to those who live in remote and discrete Indigenous communities. This means partnering with other governments and non-government organisations in service delivery and partnering with the community for better outcomes. It also means increasing cultural leadership, capacity building and cultural capability of how we deliver services.

Remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait island communities are complex and challenging service environments. All three levels of government fund service provision in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland. They provide services directly, and they fund non-government organisations to provide services on their behalf. They also provide grants to support organisations that are providing services or outcomes that are aligned to government priorities and policy objectives. All three levels of government also control and influence the operating environment through regulations, obligations and compliance. There is a clear need for greater cultural capability, collaboration and coordination across all levels of government to improve the effectiveness of community engagement processes, as well as building stronger partnerships with community, and service providers.

5.1 Increasing the capacity of local Indigenous councils

The Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning is responsible for administering the governance framework under which remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils operate. DILGP also allocates funding to these local governments which supports their service delivery. The governance framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments empowers the local community, via their elected council representatives, to make their own decisions about the delivery of local government services. DILGP delivers a range of capacity building services as part of its Local Government Capacity Building Program to facilitate sustainable outcomes. It provides targeted training programs, development of online resources and brokering the delivery of training and professional development programs by other providers. Examples include:

- specialist expertise to build the capacity of Indigenous communities to manage and maintain essential services infrastructure.
- targeted capacity building to elected officials to improve governance and build confidence in the system of local government in Indigenous communities.
- strategic and practical advice to these local governments to assist in building own source revenue.
- targeted funding to assist these local governments to develop and implement asset management plans.
- targeted funding to assist local governments to develop evidence based, full cost pricing models for use in the application of essential services charges.
5.2 Improving coordination to improve outcomes

The Queensland Government's June 2016 four-point plan for Aurukun focuses on building a safe community, children accessing education, strengthening community resilience, and harnessing jobs and economic opportunities. A Senior Government Coordinator was established to facilitate engagement and partnership with the community; and to link government and community efforts. The Senior Government Coordinator provides leadership and direction to local, state and Commonwealth agencies, non-government organisations and the community in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of government services to Aurukun, to address the problems of disengaged young people and unemployment; to improve community wellbeing and restore community safety. The role works closely with senior government officers and Directors-General, with a whole-of-government focus. The Senior Government Coordinator also supports the Mayor and liaises closely with the Government Champion to help facilitate the partnership between the community and government.

The Aurukun Justice Reintegration Plan has been developed and implemented to guide specific pre- and post-release processes to support Aurukun residents on their return to the community from prison or youth justice facilities. The targeted integration planning process is distinct from other standard forms of risk-based re-entry planning managed by Queensland Corrective Services (QCS). Services have been delivered since June 2016. A formal protocol was approved by the Directors-General of DJAG, DET, DATSIP and DPC in October 2016. Action under the plan commences when an individual enters police custody, continues during their incarceration and after their release and return home to Aurukun. The overall package for adults and youth includes:

- a dedicated DJAG coordinator to work with local integration managers who provide individual support and coordinate services for those returning from custody. The Local Integration Managers are drawn from local service providers;
- a dedicated Youth Justice (YJ) case manager will work with young people returning from detention.
- a dedicated QCS re-entry advisor position is in place at Mareeba Probation and Patrol to coordinate pre-release support for prisoners from Aurukun, most of whom are located in Louts Glen Correctional Centre.
- a dedicated QCS senior case position, based in the Weipa Reporting Centre, to provide statutory probation and parole support for all prisoners returning from Aurukun.
- QCS is procuring a dedicated NGO re-entry service to help adults and young people plan their release and connect to the right community supports. Some examples might be health, housing/accommodation, employment and drug and alcohol issues.
5.3 Partnering with community for better outcomes

The Community Justice Group (CJG) Program provides funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations dedicated to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have come into contact with the criminal justice system. The program supports these groups to work with their local community to develop strategies for dealing with justice-related issues, and reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the justice system.

The Queensland Police Service initiative, Speak Up (Be Strong Be Heard) promotes awareness of child abuse in the community and provides an ongoing response to matters of this nature within Indigenous communities. The program promotes partnerships with Education Queensland, Queensland Health, Apunipima Cape York Health Council, Community Justice Groups and local sporting organisations. The program involves educational sessions with local community police, teachers and medical professionals in relation to identifying child abuse indicators, as well as reporting obligations and procedures. The program also involves the provision of training for local police and resources to conduct ongoing awareness sessions with children and the community about child abuse.

The Department of Housing and Public Works partners with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to provide quality housing outcomes. The 14 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils and the two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Regional Councils in Queensland are the conduit for the delivery of appropriate services at the local level. The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring improved engagement with Councils throughout all phases of the housing program (i.e. capital works program development; planning and design; implementation; and monitoring and reviewing). To this end, the Queensland Government has local engagement through technical working groups to ensure Councils are engaged and consulted to achieve well-coordinated local housing programs and service delivery. DHPW partners with Local Government Association Queensland every six months to discuss and resolve developing issues and to ensure open and transparent reporting and monitoring of funding and programs. LGAQ also facilitates Mayor and CEO engagement through an annual meeting.

Communities are also having a greater say in the delivery of education. The Torres Strait Islanders’ Regional Education Council is an incorporated community organisation established to provide representation and advocacy on behalf of the Torres Strait community in all matters to do with education, vocational education, training and employment. TSIREC provides a community driven mechanism to progress innovation, responses to and the development of education services throughout the Torres Strait, across the areas of departmental responsibility. The Northern Peninsula Area Ngurpái Ikama Ikya Council (NPANIIC) supports the delivery of activities to improve educational and community outcomes in the Northern Peninsula Area, including culture-based education across local school curriculums. Workshops and forums are held with community members, elders, parents, students, staff, educators, and social services to inform planning processes and priorities.
Ministerial and Government Champions program

The Government Champion program implements partnerships between CEOs of departments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It provides an opportunity for Chief Executives of Queensland Government agencies to work together with specific communities towards improving life outcomes for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, in a collaborative partnership.

In a complementary program, Queensland Ministers act as individual champions for discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Under the Ministerial Champion’s program, ministers work closely with mayors and community leaders and the Government Champion from their partner community to engage more effectively on the opportunities and challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Champions programs have been instrumental in addressing ongoing issues in some remote and discrete communities. For example, in Lockhart River, solar power will be installed on government buildings in the township and will send power directly into the local grid. The solar power will reduce the amount of diesel fuel required to power the township, and savings will be shared with public housing tenants. Public housing tenants in Lockhart River can expect to reduce their electricity costs by $100 per year. The Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council was selected as the remote trial because of its suitable community make-up, network characteristics and energy load.

Regional and rural Queenslanders are subsidised for the additional costs involved in supplying electricity outside South East Queensland, through government payments to Ergon Energy – the Community Service Obligation (CSO) payment. By reducing the diesel costs required to power the township, the trial will also reduce the cost of the CSO for Lockhart River. The reduced diesel usage is also good for the local environment.

Regular reporting on the programs is also designed to identify strategic issues and promote whole of Government coordination to address consistent issues across the communities.

5.4 Increasing cultural leadership and cultural capability of service delivery

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships’ work to develop a robust Cultural Capability Framework underpins all Queensland Government actions aimed at ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders enjoy the same opportunities as non-Indigenous Queenslanders. Each Queensland Government department has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Action Plan. The action plans are living documents and as such, will continue to evolve as departments learn from one another and become more culturally skilled.

Cultural capability is the integration of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices and attitudes to produce better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Cultural capability is demonstrated through knowledge, skills and behaviours; and includes learning more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; understanding the historical and contemporary issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and recognising, respecting and valuing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It
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also includes sustained, respectful and participatory engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander peoples when developing policies, programs and services and implementing work practices
to support a culturally diverse workforce.

Increasing the cultural capability of government service delivery increases the benefits of service
delivery. Culturally capable service delivery and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
people, including through outreach services, can match services to need and mitigate against the
need for higher levels of crisis intervention.

Cultural capability of health services

The Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework 2010 -
2033 (the Framework) sets the foundation for the way Queensland Health develops and provides
services for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. The framework reflects
four guiding principles (cultural respect and recognition; communication; capacity building; and
relationships and partnerships), and includes specific strategies to support Queensland Health
employees to provide culturally appropriate health services. These strategies include improvements
to governance, policy, planning, infrastructure, funding, information systems, human resource
management, quality improvement, education, training and health service delivery. Queensland
Health has a strong record in cultural capability and is working with all stakeholders to develop
effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes in relation to improving health outcomes for
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. The Framework assists in the process by acting
as a valuable reference point for all employees, and reflects that cultural capability is an ongoing
journey of continuous individual learning and organisational improvement.

Cultural capability of Queensland Police Services

The QPS Recruit Training Program is designed to provide police officers stationed in divisions with a
high Indigenous population (or specified remote community) with a basic understanding of the political
and social diversity that may exist in these communities and the policing challenges they pose,
including some culturally appropriate strategies to effectively address selected policing challenges
that may arise. The QPS also employ Police Liaison Officers to establish and maintain a positive
rapport between culturally specific communities and the QPS. The role of Police Liaison Officers is to
promote trust and understanding through their liaison role by assisting the community and police to
reduce and prevent crime, divert people from the criminal justice system, advise and educate police
officers on culture and cultural issues and improve community knowledge of law and order issues and
policing services. Police Liaison Officers are located in most communities across Queensland
including remote and discrete communities.

Cultural lens in youth justice

Successful service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can only be achieved
through application of a cultural lens to all aspects of service design, delivery, governance and
evaluation. The Youth Justice Cultural Unit has developed a Cultural Lens Tool to ensure that
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders have the opportunity for meaningful influence,
authority and/or responsibility over policy options and decisions.
5.5 Future directions

The 2017 year will see celebrations of significant anniversaries, including, the 50th anniversary of the Australian 1967 Referendum, and the 25th anniversary of the landmark High Court Mabo case. This provides unique opportunities to garner broader community support and opportunities to further reconciliation through recognition, respect for, and acknowledgement of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians. The Queensland Government is committed to developing a whole-of-Government Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to strengthen Queensland’s social cohesion, create new connections within and between our communities, protect and promote a greater understanding of our cultural diversity and of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values and cultural heritage, and will contribute to greater economic participation by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples through improved access to housing, health, education and training opportunities.

6 Funding

The Queensland Government acknowledges the importance of financial sustainability and flexibility in funding to enable service providers to respond to community needs in remote and discrete communities. Streamlined and coordinated funding arrangements that support local service providers and Local Governments can enhance levels of community engagement, community control and support place-based service models. Certainty from long term funding initiatives can lead to better community outcomes by allowing programs time to get traction within the community and for returns on investment to be realised, and improving opportunities for local employment.

6.1 Current funding arrangements for remote and discrete communities

The majority of state government funding provided by DILGP to Indigenous local governments is provided under the State Government Financial Aid (SGFA) program. The funds provided under the SGFA are untied general purpose funding which allows these local governments to expend the funds according to their own priorities. The SGFA is provided annually to all 16 Indigenous local governments. As this funding is untied general purpose funding, there are no conditions placed on this funding and no state level evaluation of how the funds are used by these local governments.

DILGP also provides administrative support to the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission which makes recommendations for the allocation of the Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grant (FAG). This funding is provided to local governments as untied general purpose funding. The Consultation Paper on page 31 notes: “it is possible that the way in which the distribution of assistance to councils through the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission processes creates disincentives for Indigenous councils to raise own-source revenues, minimise the costs of service delivery or improve economic development”. DILGP notes that the FAG is distributed on an ‘effort neutral’ basis, which means that irrespective of any council’s revenue raising effort or actual expenditure levels, that council’s FAG outcome is not impacted and therefore there is no disincentive to own-source revenue. This is a National Principal of the FAG program that is set at a Commonwealth level and must be adhered to by all states and territories in Australia.
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Although Indigenous local governments are heavily reliant on grant funding provided by the state and commonwealth governments, under the LGA they have the ability to levy utility charges for water, sewerage and waste services. The government is also investigating amending the LGA to provide Indigenous local governments with the ability to levy general rates.

Consistent with the Partners in Government Agreement between the State Government and the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), both levels of government have agreed to work together to reform current state-local government grant funding. In the State Infrastructure Plan (SIP), the Queensland Government made a commitment to review its fragmented infrastructure grant funding arrangements to local government. The SIP consultation highlighted that local governments have difficulty in strategically planning and funding infrastructure as a result of the varying programs, practices and funding arrangements that are currently in place. The review will consider current grant funding arrangements to establish the context of current Queensland government grants funding, analyse key trends in funding arrangements, identify the direct and indirect costs of running grants programs and analyse capacity and capability of local government to meet funding requirements and State Government to manage grant programs and deliver on policy objectives.

In terms of education, schools receive core funding for all students, and supplementary funding for a range of programs and services that target specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Indigenous Education appropriations are also provided to all schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, using a methodology based on enrolments and the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA).

Under Investing for Success (I4S), an additional funding is provided of around $300 per Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolled in Years Prep – 12. State schools use I4S funding to support students, particularly those most in need, to achieve improved outcomes at all levels of schooling. This enables schools to identify the aspects of their students’ achievement requiring the most support and direct resource use so it makes the most positive difference across the school.

6.2 Funding partnerships with other governments and providers

All levels of government, private and community sectors provide services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland and that this has the potential for duplication, cost inefficiencies and poor service coordination/integration and increased red-tape for service providers. The Queensland Productivity Commission has indicated that it will consider Commonwealth activities only to the extent that they interact with Queensland Government investments and objectives.

One such interaction is the Commonwealth Government review of the National Partnership on Remote Housing (NPRH) funding arrangements as part of its process to consider future ongoing funding post 30 June 2018. Housing is one of the building blocks under the COAG ‘Closing the Gap’ framework and therefore the continued funding of NPRH is a crucial issue. Reduced funding for Queensland under NPRH would impact on the provision of housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote and discrete communities and could put at risk the gains and achievements made over the past decade.
6.3 Future directions

DATSIP will pilot social reinvestment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to trial a new approach to community engagement. This pilot will focus on building stronger partnerships between communities and government, and encouraging community led, innovative, and strength based approaches. The pilot contains the following elements:

- An incentive scheme which rewards communities on achieving mutually agreed performance milestones and indicators which lead to improved outcomes;
- Identifying an income stream for communities, represented by the bringing-forward of future savings in government expenditure when improved and sustained outcomes are achieved; and
- Linking this income stream to the delivery of local priorities.

The learnings from the pilot will be used to strengthen Queensland’s investment practice through the integration of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices and attitudes to produce better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Queensland Government is developing a funding model to guide future investment in the domestic and family violence service system, including how it addresses service delivery issues in rural and remote communities to improve service delivery, expand technology to support victims of domestic and family violence and link rural and remote services into a broader network of domestic and family violence service providers. These issues are reflected in the Queensland Government Domestic and Family Violence Investment Guidelines (2016).

The Queensland Government also recognises that there is a need for investment in the programs that work well for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young offenders, and in the locations where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live. There is also a need for a more balanced investment profile, with a greater focus on prevention and early intervention services. Youth Justice in the Department of Justice and Attorney-General is considering:

- Introducing new investments specifically targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people at risk of involvement or ongoing involvement in the criminal justice system, and their families.
- Reshaping existing services to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their families.
- Identifying youth justice young people as a very high priority within existing service systems, in recognition of the trajectory impacts for future generations.
- Investing in programs in locations that are poorly serviced.
7 Evaluation

The Government supports a shift towards more place-based, collaborative, real time evaluation approaches in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Evaluation approaches should also be increasingly based on a greater understanding of what success looks like in the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing. Evaluation, including the collection and reporting of relevant data, should be built into the design and delivery of services (co-design includes the approach to evaluation). However, remote and discrete communities, with small dispersed populations, present challenges for data collection, and evaluation. This means measuring the impact of individual programs can be difficult and resource intensive and this can contribute to a more limited evidence base of what works, and under what circumstances it works in. Consideration also needs to be given to the burden placed on service providers, community and program recipients when designing and implementing program evaluations in small communities.

Nevertheless, evaluation enables the delivery of programs and services in a coordinated way that can improve Government’s engagement with individuals, service providers and communities. Through the findings from evaluations, the Queensland Government can work more collaboratively with other governments, service providers and the private sector, and respond more effectively to emerging issues and crises. Evaluations also form feedback loops between service delivery and the policy process to unlock the lessons learnt in service delivery. Fundamentally, evaluations provide a platform for building engagement, participatory development, co-design and evaluation into the design, costing and implementation of services to remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

7.1 Approaches to evaluation

The Queensland Government Program Evaluation Guidelines provide a framework to guide agencies in the development, design and implementation of measureable programs, interventions, initiatives, services or trials.

The guidelines assist agencies to:

- improve their ability to achieve government priorities and policy outcomes
- improve resource allocation, planning and decision making
- assess and improve the performance and impact of service delivery
- demonstrate outcomes to key stakeholders.

The guidelines complement any subject-specific guidelines already available for agencies, as well as key government frameworks and guidelines related to various elements of program development and evaluation, including the government’s Contestability Framework, Performance Management Framework, Project Assurance Framework, and Project, Program and Portfolio Management Methodologies.

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) designs and commissions the evaluation of key programs in a way that acknowledges and responds to the diverse needs of remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The principles below are drawn from the DCCSDS' Respectfully Journey Together – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Action Plan. The DCCSDS aims to:
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- Apply Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability – Valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ knowledge lens to the planning, design and management of the evaluation
- Prioritise partnering with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned and managed evaluation services, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander evaluators
- Utilise ethics committees such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Research Ethics Committee to ensure the integrity of evaluation approaches; and
- Include a review of the implementation learnings as well as short and/or medium term outcomes (when designing an evaluation for a new trial or reform program).

Arts Queensland continually reviews all of its funding programs including Backing Indigenous Arts. A full evaluation of the first iteration of Backing Indigenous Arts (2011) can be accessed on the Arts Queensland website. Continued and ongoing reviews of the initiative’s programs have identified outcomes including growth in the number of skilled artists, diversification of supply, cultural retention, increase in employment and income streams, and development of new markets.⁶

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people represent 55 per cent of the youth justice cohort. Youth Justice has a strong focus on evaluation and the development of evidence-based policies and programs. Youth Justice Queensland is the first place outside of the United States to implement the Standardised Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP)⁷. This is a continuous assessment and improvement process for both locally developed and “brand name” programs, based on research into more than 700 youth justice programs. The SPEP will help us translate research into effective intervention and will gradually ensure our young people and families have access to the most effective intervention we can deliver. SPEP will be applied to all Youth Justice programs in the future. Youth Justice seeks to apply best practice principles that are broadly consistent with DCCSDS when undertaking all evaluations.

Youth Justice conducted a Supply Analysis project in 2016 to analyse its provision of directly funded services and use of services funded by other local, State and Commonwealth government agencies. The Supply Analysis identified that Youth Justice does not have sufficient available funding to build a service system that reaches young people and families in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander discrete communities, and therefore relies on other agencies’ investments to deliver youth justice outcomes. The Supply Analysis project found that there are large gaps in investment in the programs that work well for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system, and in the locations where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander live. DJAG is now working in partnership with other agencies to address these gaps.

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⁶ Included in reviews are case studies such as the 2015–16 IRADF stories published on the AQ website: <http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/case-studies>.
⁷ Details of SPEP are available at website: <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/spep>.
Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP)

In 2015, RATEP celebrated 25 years of supporting greater access to higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Queensland schools. RATEP has achieved significant success during this period, with over 167 students graduating through James Cook University and over 1000 VET qualifications in education completed.

To build on this work and strengthen RATEP's position in the current landscape, the Department of Education and Training sought advice from PricewaterhouseCoopers – Indigenous Consulting (PwC) through a detailed review that proposed future directions for RATEP. The RATEP model is unique in its early thinking around how to improve access, retention and completion of tertiary studies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from remote communities. According to PwC, this has resulted in significant economic benefits to communities and Queensland – with initial estimates placing this value at over $100 million since 1990.

All state schools receive a review at least once every four years from DET's independent School Improvement Unit. The reviews identify where schools need additional support in order to improve student outcomes. Each review involves an analysis of school performance data and the collection of additional information through school-based field work including discussions with school leaders, teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders. More than 800 reviews have been undertaken since the Unit was established including, for example, in Bwgcolman Community School, Tagai State College, Kowanyama State School and Pompuraaw State School.

7.2 Supporting evaluation through improved data collection, access and use

The Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) is building upon the Queensland Government's Open Data initiative by releasing the next wave of high value Queensland Government datasets to stimulate opportunities for start-ups, entrepreneurs, researchers, local business and community organisations in the digital economy. DSITI aims to strengthen the Queensland Government's approach to open data and boost the availability of high value data sets. DSITI also works across government to support transformation of Queensland Government service delivery to provide simple and easy access to connected personalised government services that put the customer at the heart of service design.
7.3 Future directions

The Government supports a shift towards more place-based, real time evaluation approaches in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Evaluation approaches should also be increasingly based on a greater understanding of what success looks like in the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing. DATSIP is working in partnership with the Queensland Government Statistician’s Office to develop new frameworks for evaluating and monitoring outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

While the National Productivity Commission Inquiry into Human Services has been cited as a reference in the Queensland Productivity Commission’s Consultation Paper, the Queensland Productivity Commission should consider the recommendations of this inquiry in making its assessment of Queensland Government service delivery in remote and discrete Indigenous communities.
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Queensland Government departments
Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC)
Queensland Treasury (QT)
Legislative Assembly of Queensland (LAQ)
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP)
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)
Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS)
Department of Education and Training (DET)
Department of Energy and Water Supply (DEWS)
Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP)
Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW)
Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP)
Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG)
Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (DNPSR)
Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNRM)
Queensland Health (QH)
Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QPS, QFES)
Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI)
Department of State Development (DSD)
Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTESB)
Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR)