



# 1.0 Introduction

The Queensland Productivity Commission has been asked to examine how the resources devoted to service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities can be best used to meet the needs of those communities.

This draft report sets out key findings and recommendations for stakeholders to test and provide feedback on. The Commission will draw on that feedback to prepare a final report to the Queensland Government.

Throughout this report, the term communities refers to remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities unless otherwise stated.

## 1.1 What has the Commission been asked to do?

Around 40,100 Indigenous Queenslanders live in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2016).

Investments by government, the private sector and not-for-profit organisations significantly affect the lives of people living in these communities. The Queensland Government plays a central role, setting policies, and delivering programs and services across areas such as child and family services, health, education and training, employment, housing, community safety, native title, and land management.

Many innovative and successful programs have been implemented by, and for, these communities; but the outcomes for some programs and services are not meeting the expectations of communities, service providers, government, or the community more broadly.

In this context, the Commission has been asked to review and report on government investment in remote and discrete communities to identify what works well, and why, with a view to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The terms of reference for this inquiry ask us to identify how available resources can be best used to improve outcomes for these communities. We have been asked to investigate and report on:

- levels and patterns of government investment and how these change over time
- interactions between investments made by all levels of government, non-government organisations and third party service providers
- the range and nature of service delivery programs and whether there is duplication or a lack of coordination
- best practice approaches for evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery
- an evaluation of the design and delivery of existing government services
- investment practices and/or services and programs that are likely to be most effective in improving outcomes for remote and discrete Indigenous communities
- comparisons with other jurisdictions
- recommendations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Queensland Government investments and services in achieving social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The full terms of reference are available in Appendix A.

## 1.2 Our approach

The scope of the inquiry is broad, covering all services delivered to remote and discrete communities.

The Commission determined early in the inquiry that it was not feasible to provide an in-depth assessment of every policy or program, or replicate other reviews. The focus of this draft report is on the framework for service provision into communities, and the governance surrounding it. Particular areas of service delivery were examined to build an evidence base for what does and does not work.

The inquiry has been limited to Queensland Government policy and expenditure. The Commission has examined Australian and local government activities to the extent they interact with the investment and objectives of the Queensland Government, and for lessons learned. But the main focus has been on what the Queensland Government and Parliament can directly influence.

Within this context, the key components of the Commission's approach are to:

- estimate expenditure on services (through a top-down, aggregate level of expenditure supported by case studies of expenditure/service levels in two communities)
- identify options and the best framework for service delivery—policy, governance and funding—to support the achievement of outcomes
- identify the key directions for policy and service reform
- review impediments to economic and community development
- determine how to shift evaluation efforts beyond compliance reporting to support service delivery improvements, policy learning and accountability.

Service delivery was examined in more detail for land, housing and infrastructure, education, training and employment, community safety and health. These are core service areas in terms of expenditure and contribution to outcomes.

In undertaking any inquiry, the Commission is also guided by the principles underpinning the *Queensland Productivity Commission Act 2015*, which focus on productivity, economic growth and improving the living standards of Queenslanders. In considering factors and making assessments, we adopt a community-wide view that extends beyond the interests of particular individuals or groups.

For this inquiry, the Commission has sought to make suggestions for transformational change towards outcomes that would meet or exceed expectations of the people who reside in remote and discrete Indigenous communities and the parties that commission, fund and deliver services.

## 1.3 Conduct of the inquiry and stakeholder participation

The Commission operates a public inquiry model, underpinned by open and transparent consultation, which seeks to provide all interested parties with a range of opportunities to contribute. Consultation for this inquiry is being conducted in three phases:

- Phase 1—December 2016 to March 2017: to inform stakeholders about the inquiry, how to get involved, and include them in determining inquiry scope.
- Phase 2—April to June 2017: to identify issues and inform the findings and recommendations of the draft report.
- Phase 3—October 2017: to test the findings and recommendations of the draft report and gather further views and evidence from stakeholders.

Following the release of the consultation document on 30 March 2017, the Commission received 29 submissions, and held round tables in Cairns, Cherbourg, Mt Isa, Palm Island and Torres Strait. In addition, the Commission met directly with more than 80 community groups, non-government organisations, departments, academics, individuals and private companies. The full list of submissions and participants is included in Appendix B. A summary of the views and feedback we received is provided in the separate Consultation Summary Report.

The Commission is grateful for the effort individuals, organisations and communities have made in presenting their views and participating in the consultation process.

The recommendations in this report present a new architecture within which service delivery can be reorganised and reprioritised. The Commission has also identified service delivery improvements across several areas.

The Commission is seeking further views and feedback on these recommendations, as well as on specific areas identified in the report, to help form the final report to the Queensland Government by 22 December 2017.

## 1.4 Report structure

The report is set out as follows:

### **Part A — Background for the inquiry**

*Chapter two* outlines a short history of Queensland's remote and discrete communities and the current service delivery environment.

*Chapter three* provides an analysis of the level and pattern of Queensland Government expenditure in the communities.

*Chapter four* considers outcomes in remote and discrete communities over time and in comparison with other communities.

*Chapter five* provides an overall assessment of the performance of government policies at a broad level, and why policies fail.

### **Part B — The way forward**

*Chapter six* is an overview of the reforms, describing the nature of the proposal and key components.

*Chapter seven* outlines the structural changes to roles and responsibilities in the reform.

*Chapter eight* identifies the direction for policy reform and improvements to the service commissioning cycle.

*Chapter nine* considers the role of economic development and what can be done to facilitate employment and growth in communities.

*Chapter ten* outlines a monitoring and evaluation framework and its role in supporting the reform proposal.

### **Part C — Key service delivery issues**

*Chapter eleven* considers land tenure, use and administration issues.

*Chapter twelve* assesses issues around the ownership, construction and maintenance of the housing stock, and possible reforms.

*Chapter thirteen* outlines the role of municipal services and infrastructure, and considers possible funding models.

*Chapter fourteen* surveys education and training issues, focusing on significant issues impacting the communities.

*Chapter fifteen* considers issues related to community safety, including the relative role of prevention and reaction services, alcohol, and community involvement.

*Chapter sixteen* provides an overview of health and wellbeing in the communities, and examines some key service delivery issues influencing health outcomes.

