

PAUL HENDERSON
Chief Minister
Minister for Education and Training

ALISON ANDERSON
Minister for Indigenous Policy

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Budget 2009 Closing the Gap of Indigenous Disadvantage

The Northern Territory Government will continue its commitment to closing the gap of Indigenous disadvantage by boosting remote service delivery in Budget 2009.

Chief Minister, Paul Henderson and Minister for Indigenous Policy, Alison Anderson, said Budget 2009 provides practical measures to improve infrastructure and services for Territorians living in remote areas.

“Budget 2009 delivers more housing, health, education and child protection services in remote areas.” Mr Henderson said.

“Tackling Indigenous disadvantage is a key focus of the Northern Territory Government and \$63.5 million delivered as part of Budget 2009 is part of our five-year \$286 million closing the gap package.

“More than half of all Northern Territory government spending is targeted towards improving the lives of Indigenous Territorians and closing the gap of Indigenous disadvantage and we will continue this commitment in Budget 2009.”

EDUCATION

Budget 2009 continues to focus on improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous students in remote areas. This includes school infrastructure upgrades of:

- \$2 million for homeland learning centres across the Territory;
- \$1.25 million each for schools at Angurungu, Gapuwiyak, Gunbalanya, Lajamanu and Numbulwar; and
- \$400,000 for additional office space for student counsellors at Gunbalanya and Nhulunbuy.

Schools in remote communities will also be supported to increase education opportunities for children through:

- \$2.6 million to enhance family participation in early learning and development through the Families as First Teacher program;

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- \$2.4 million for more teachers;
- \$2 million for five new mobile preschools, servicing 25 remote communities;
- \$1.7 million for the Stakeholders Partnership Program to improve student engagement and community involvement; and
- \$700,000 for a child protection unit to provide specialist support to schools, including six counsellors.

The Territory and Commonwealth Governments are working to Close the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage with:

- \$17.25 million over the next three years to establish four Indigenous Community and Family Centres in remote communities to link child care, early learning, health and family support services;
- \$19.2 million for intensive operational support for remote and regional schools; and
- \$1.5 million for better preschool services, particularly for children in remote communities and town camps.

HEALTH

Improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Territorians is a key priority of the Territory Government. Budget 2009 delivers:

- \$3.6 million for child protection, therapeutic and residential care unit workers across the Territory under Closing the Gap;
- \$2 million to employ teams of midwives and Aboriginal health workers in Darwin and Alice Springs to support Aboriginal women leaving remote communities to give birth; and
- \$1.3 million to expand programs targeting chronic disease.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Budget 2009 continues initiatives to improve the safety of Territorians in remote communities under Closing the Gap:

- \$6.2 million for the Child Abuse Taskforce and \$2.3 million for extra police in remote areas;
- \$7.33 million for a range of support and prevention services focused on child protection, sexual assault and community and family violence;
- \$2.11 million for offender rehabilitation programs;
- \$1.92 million for alcohol management and treatment initiatives; and
- \$1.89 million for courts, corrections officers and witness assistance services.

EMPLOYMENT

Budget 2009 continues the Territory Government's efforts to increase Indigenous employment with:

- The Northern Territory Public Sector Indigenous employment and Career Development Strategy 2009-12 and the Remote Workforce Strategy;
 - Scholarships to support Indigenous people to gain professional qualifications;
 - \$1.04 million for Indigenous apprentices and rangers in remote areas.
- Budget 2009 also focuses on Indigenous employment and participation in industry and businesses through;
- \$2 million to match vocational education and training to identified job opportunities in remote communities;
 - \$1.6 million to support Indigenous businesses and jobs in the tourism industry;
 - \$600,000 to support the start-up or expansion of small Indigenous businesses.

INDIGENOUS HOUSING

The joint Territory and Commonwealth 5-year \$672 million Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program to improve housing and infrastructure in 73 remote communities will continue to roll out, with Budget 2009 providing:

- \$98.16 million to build up to 100 new houses and land servicing and associated infrastructure;
- \$78.5 million to refurbish more than 700 existing homes; and
- Delivery of remote housing reform for better tenancy and property management.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Territory Government recognises electronic service delivery is important to enhance services to remote communities. Budget 2009 provides:

- \$2.8 million to complete the Territory's total commitment of \$11.8 million for the fibre optic telecommunications link between Jabiru and Nhulunbuy and nine Arnhem Land communities;
- \$2 million to continue implementing e-Health initiatives; and
- \$600,000 to expand information technology capability in remote schools.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Budget 2009 includes \$67 million to improve power, water and sewerage services in remote Indigenous communities. This funding includes \$18.9 million for infrastructure:

- \$9.35 million of minor new works;
- \$2.4 million for a new grid connection to Yuendumu power station to replace Yuelamu power station;
- \$1.6 million for a new power station at Alpururulam; and
- \$1 million each for upgraded water storage in Palumpa and Warruwi.

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