

Governance and Leadership

Good governance and strong, sound leadership – from all levels of government, community and private sector organisations, and within communities – are essential to meeting the challenges and realising the opportunities of closing the gaps in the life outcomes and opportunities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. This requires effective collaboration and productive partnerships across agencies and sectors, good engagement with stakeholders, and high standards of corporate capability, integrity and accountability.

Overview

The Queensland Government is committed to good governance and strong, sound leadership, demonstrating action itself as well as encouraging and supporting action in other levels of government, in councils and community organisations, and within communities.

There is no COAG target or Q2 target which directly addresses this strategic action area. However, improvements in this arena may have long-term impacts on a number of the COAG targets. For example:

- enhanced governance policies and systems may facilitate increased economic participation
- increased co-ordination of government and community-based services may improve health, educational and employment outcomes.

The measures which will be used by the Queensland Government to monitor progress are under development. The following strategies will best address governance and leadership in the communities:

- maintain and develop innovative engagement mechanisms
- develop and support community capacity and leadership
- support development of leadership for women and young people.



Key Queensland Government actions to close the gap

Government leading, engaging and partnering

The Queensland Government is committed to working hard with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, other levels of government, and other sectors, to contribute to closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. This has included in recent years:

- championing the **COAG National 'Closing the Gap' targets** and the Indigenous Reform agenda
- creating a **Strong Indigenous Communities CEOs Committee** to oversee key Indigenous policy and service reforms
- establishing the **Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships** in the Department of Communities, along with ten enhanced regional ATSIP teams
- establishing the **Indigenous Government Coordination Office**, initially in the Department of Communities, and subsequently moved to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in early 2008, and recruiting Government Coordination officers at local and regional levels (based in the Department of Communities) to drive service integration and innovation in the discrete communities
- encouraging Indigenous participation in the Australia 2020 Summit and having an Indigenous stream – attended by the Premier, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, and the Leader of the Opposition – at the **Queensland 2020 Forum**
- recognising the vital role of community leadership and agreeing to shared priorities and actions in the **Indigenous Partnership Agreement (IPA)** signed in Yarrabah in July 2007 by the (then) Premier and mayors of the discrete Aboriginal and mainland Torres Strait Island communities
- convening **Ministerial Indigenous Roundtables** to negotiate agreed commitments from all three levels of government on priorities agreed in the IPA
- facilitating **Local Indigenous Partnership Agreements (LIPA)** to drive local priorities and actions, negotiated to date with three communities – Mornington Island, Doomadgee and Napranum – with others underway
- negotiating a **Memorandum of Understanding** which was signed between the Queensland Government and the Queensland Resources Council in July 2007 to facilitate training, employment and enterprise opportunities for Aboriginal and mainland Torres Strait Islander people in the mining sector
- the **Wal Meta Unit** in the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations enabling 51 Indigenous public sector employees across 17 departments to undertake the Leadership program at Diploma level
- signing up to the **COAG Closing the Health Gap Statement of Intent** and commencing development of a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health strategy
- working jointly with **Indigenous bodies** such as the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, the Centre for Aboriginal Independence and Enterprise, the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute, the Centre for Indigenous Cultural Policy, and the Indigenous studies centres at Queensland's universities
- commencing development of a new whole-of-government **Reconciliation Action Plan**.

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In the discrete Indigenous communities, the Queensland Government has continued the **Government Champion program** started in 2002, in which CEOs or deputies of government agencies actively engage with, and advocate inside government on behalf of, a particular community. The Department of Communities also continues to convene **negotiation tables** which bring together community decision-makers with representatives of relevant government agencies and deal with issues such as barriers to employment, alcohol reform or responses to domestic violence. They are held in over 30 communities across Queensland.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders also continue to be engaged or represented in **Indigenous-specific or mainstream Ministerial or agency advisory bodies or forums** such as Community Cabinets, in order to inform Government decisions. Specialist bodies include the Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee, the QPS Indigenous Consultative Committee, the Queensland Indigenous Working Group and the Statewide Community Justice Reference Group.

In recognition of the need for a greater say for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Government, the Premier has announced the establishment of a **Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council**. The objective of the Advisory Council will be to provide the Government with high level, strategic advice on strategies and partnerships that can contribute to meeting the Closing the Gap targets and the Queensland Government's Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland ambitions. The Advisory Council will have a diverse membership of up to 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. Members will have strong community networks and be respected members of their community. The Advisory Council will be chaired by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and where possible, the Premier will participate. This will ensure a direct link between the Advisory Council and the Queensland Government.

Indigenous community capacity and leadership

The Queensland Government is also working in a number of areas to support capacity development and leadership for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations in order to meet the challenges of 'closing the gap':

- the Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation (DLGSR) distributed **\$34 million to Indigenous councils** in 2008/09 as a substantial contribution to the cost of delivering municipal services and developing capacity within councils. The funding also provides for the establishment of a Skills Bank, accessible by councils to provide high quality professional financial and human resource management expertise
- DLGSR has implemented a number of capacity-building programs under the **Community Governance Improvement Strategy** for councillors and council staff of discrete Indigenous communities. The budget for these programs in 2007–08 was \$6.1 million. In 2007, the programs included the Councillor Training Program, in which 170 councillors participated in training modules and received certificates, and Council Employees Administration Training, in which 11 council employees completed the Certificate III or Certificate IV in Local Government Administration
- the **Strengthening Indigenous Non-Government Organisations** project has provided intensive organisational development and support to Indigenous-managed organisations funded by the Department of Communities. In 2007/08, \$1.2 million was budgeted for the project, with a further \$1.1 million for 2008-2009, for regionally-based positions and initiatives such as the CD-ROM, Valuing Organisational Improvement and Community Excellence (VOICE), provided to all Queensland based Indigenous-managed organisations funded by the Department of Communities
- the Office for Women (OFW), Department of Child Safety delivers a number of **capacity building programs for Indigenous women** such as: the 'Women learning together



and sharing leadership ideas' seminars, attended in 2007/08 by 330 women in Barcaldine, Rockhampton, Brisbane and Bamaga; four Community Leadership Seminars for Indigenous women and girls delivered in 2008 in Yarrabah, Cherbourg, Mt Isa and Woorabinda with over 150 Indigenous women participating; and sponsoring four Indigenous women from Queensland to attend the annual National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Gathering (NATSIWG) in conjunction with a meeting of Ministers for Women from state and commonwealth governments and New Zealand

- the Department of Communities' Office for Youth supports the **Indigenous Youth Leadership Strategy**, co-sponsored by Xstrata Coal which comprised in 2007/08 two Young Indigenous Leaders Forums held in Brisbane and Cairns, and the Indigenous Advanced Leadership Program, which brought together 38 participants from previous Young Indigenous Leaders Forums in Brisbane.

CASE STUDY: Hoops Dreaming Project

The Project is an initiative of Cairns Basketball Incorporated, a not-for-profit organisation, and is funded by the National Community Crime Prevention Programme. The operation of the Project is conducted by a Project Coordinating Committee, chaired by Joel Khalu (Participation and Indigenous Programs Manager for Cairns Basketball and Director of the Hoops Dreaming Project) and Sione Fa'aoso (Programs Coordinator of the project).

Joel and Sione were both participants in Young Indigenous Leaders Forums in Brisbane (Joel in 2005 and Sione in 2006). After participating in the Forums, Joel and Sione applied to the National Crime Prevention Programme to seek assistance to establish the Hoops Dreaming Project. They utilised skills they developed through the Forum in project planning and completing funding applications. The funding application was successful and the Hoops Dreaming Project initiative began in 2007.

The Hoops Dreaming Project offers Indigenous young people (aged 12 to 18) a support program which assists them to improve their education, employment outlook and health. The project also provides a series of meaningful life skills initiatives that are focused on educating, enhancing and enriching the lives of Indigenous young people.

The project uses both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Youth Mentors as role-models, and the sport of basketball as a tool to deliver and reinforce a positive message of leading healthy, active and crime-free lifestyles.

The focus of the Hoops Dreaming Project is to support Indigenous young people to:

- make smart, goal-oriented choices
- build a sense of community and
- develop life-long character building traits such as integrity, honesty and self-respect.

The project has expanded to run the Midnight Basketball program in Cairns, Yarrabah and Gordonvale. The Hoops Dreaming Project recently hosted a 3-on-3 basketball competition where a Hoops Dreaming Team consisting of several highly influential sports players, including Justin Hodges of the Brisbane Broncos, competed against the Cairns Marlins.