National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment (NTRAI)

End of Term Review

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

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National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment (NTRAI)

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ISBN 978-1-925364-99-6 National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment (NTRAI) End of Term Review (online)

Acknowledgment

The National Indigenous Australian Agency and the Northern Territory Government respectfully acknowledge the First Nations people of this country and recognise their continuing connection to their lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to their leaders' past, present and emerging.

While this review uses the term 'Aboriginal', we respectfully acknowledge that Torres Strait Islander peoples are First Nations peoples living in the Northern Territory, and 'Aboriginal' Territorians should be read to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Territorians.

Abbreviations

AAI	Alcohol Action Initiative
ACM	Asbestos containing materials
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AIS	Aboriginal Interpreter Service
ASTP	Alice Springs Transformation Plan
ATS	Aftercare Treatment Services
CEPO	Community Engagement Police Officer
Australian Government Minister	Minister for Indigenous Australians
CtG	Closing the Gap
CtG NPA	Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement
DOU	Dog Operational Units
ENT	Ear Nose and Throat
FaFT	Families as First Teachers
FSF	Family Safety Framework
HORSCEET	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
ISP	Individual Support Program
MACSCG	Multi-agency Child Safety Coordination Groups

NAAJA	North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NIAA	National Indigenous Australian Agency
NRI	National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing
NT	Northern Territory
NTER	Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007
NTPFES	Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services
the NTRAI	National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment
RAODW	Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce
RAS	Remote Australia Strategies
RFSS	Remote Family Support Service
SAID	Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk
SFNT Act	Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012
Stronger Futures NPA	National Partnership on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory

Executive Summary

Review

This Review of the *National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment* (the NTRAI or the Agreement) was undertaken by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) representing the Australian Government, in partnership with the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet which coordinated input into the Review from across the Northern Territory (NT) Government. The Review was announced by the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians, in November 2020.[1] Reviews of National Partnership Agreements are guided by *A Short Guide to Reviewing National Partnership Agreements* (Short Guide) *(*Appendix A) provided by the Council on Federal Financial Relations.

In accordance with the Short Guide, this Review assesses the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of the NTRAI. This Review builds on the Mid-Term Review findings (Appendix B) and identifies learnings to inform future opportunities to improve outcomes of Aboriginal peoples who reside in remote areas in the NT. Findings and recommendations which apply to Implementation Plans and Schedules are provided within chapters. The Executive Summary provides Agreement level findings and recommendations to inform future arrangements. While the Review provides findings and recommendations to support improvements in future arrangements, recommendations for future funding are out of scope.

Key Findings

- The NT Government delivered outputs as intended under the Agreement and received full payment on all milestones.

- A framework to measure progress toward objectives and outcomes was not an overarching feature of the NTRAI, limiting the ability to test the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of partnership activities between both governments and support the evolution of meaningful evidence.

- Officials and delivery partners were successful in identifying and overcoming barriers to implementation.

- The policy landscape has evolved since the establishment of the NTRAI with both governments now shaping the way they work to improve the coordination of effort, enter joint decision-making arrangements with Aboriginal community representatives, produce and use data more effectively, and to focus on measurable outcome level change.

Key Recommendations for Future Arrangements

Effectiveness

- Formal evaluation of arrangements between both governments should be used to measure progress on both outputs and outcomes. Development of an evaluation plan in the design stage of arrangements will support monitoring, reporting, assessment and continual improvement of activity.

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[1] The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP Minister for Indigenous Australians, "Connecting & activating the Northern Territory," (speech, Darwin), November 25, 2020, https://ministers.pmc.gov.au/wyatt/2020/connecting-activating-northern-territory.

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- Future arrangements should build on employment outcomes of Aboriginal peoples achieved under the NTRAI with continued progress on workforce development and capacity building.

Efficiency

- Future arrangements should include formal governance arrangements in the design, delivery and evaluation which involve both governments and Aboriginal representatives.

- Explore opportunities to rationalise multiple payment pathways to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting frameworks.

- Management of arrangements should include activity and agreement level oversight to encourage strategic input.

Appropriateness

- Future arrangements should provide Aboriginal representatives a role as shared decision-maker in the design, delivery and monitoring of policies and programs which are delivered to their communities.

- Both governments should coordinate efforts to plan, fund and deliver services in a more collaborative way taking into account existing strategies.

Agreement Overview

The NTRAI is an agreement between the Australian Government and the NT Government under the *Federal Financial Relations Act 2009.* The Australian Government works jointly with the NT Government on Aboriginal affairs in recognition of the high levels of disadvantage in the NT.

The NTRAI facilitated an estimated $986.1 million in Australian Government payments to the NT Government to improve the lives of Aboriginal peoples residing in remote locations in the NT. The NTRAI was represented by the Australian Government as prioritising schooling, community safety and employment.[2] With over three quarters of the NT's Aboriginal population living in either remote or very remote areas, the ability to effectively service the population requires resources to be spread over vast remote areas. This is therefore a responsibility of proportionately greater logistical complexity and a higher cost per capita than other states and territories.[3] The NTRAI provides additional support which supplements activity that is underway by both governments. The Agreement states 'It is not anticipated that the Commonwealth will provide any further funding for these activities beyond the expiry of the Agreement. Whether any further funding is provided by the Northern Territory is a matter for it to consider when framing its budget.'[4]

The NTRAI also allocated $42.6 million in funding to non-government schools. National partnerships agreements facilitate government to government or Treasury to Treasury payments. Therefore, separate agreements were required to administer the non-government schools funding. The focus of this review is on the services underpinning the government to government arrangements. An assessment of the non-government schools agreements is at Appendix F.

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[2] "Indigenous affairs: Budget Review 2015–16 Index," Parliament of Australia, accessed June 29, 2021, https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/BudgetReview201516/Indigenous.
[3] The Allen Consulting Group, *Independent Review of Policing in Remote Indigenous Communities in the Northern Territory: Policing further into remote communities*, (Melbourne, VIC, 2010), 17.
[4] Council on Federal Financial Relations, *National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment*, (Canberra, ACT, 2018), 7.

While the NTRAI is a standalone agreement, in practice it is a continuation of the investment which commenced following the *Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007* (NTER) and subsequent arrangements including the *National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory* (Stronger Futures NPA). The Stronger Futures NPA included Commonwealth Own Purpose Expense funding and had accompanying legislation.

In particular, the Agreement funds activities and services to contribute to the following outcomes of Aboriginal peoples in the NT:

- improved school readiness, attendance, educational achievement, and attainment of students in and from remote and very remote areas
- improved safety and wellbeing of individuals, children and families, and communities
- improved hearing and oral health of children
- improved housing in remote communities
- improved access to services through support from Aboriginal interpreters.

The Agreement commenced on 21 April 2016 and contains four Implementation Plans, with some plans containing multiple Schedules. While the expiry for each Implementation Plan and Schedule varies, the Agreement and remaining Implementation Plans will cease on 30 June 2022.

A copy of the NTRAI is at Appendix C.

The NT Government delivered most outputs as intended in accordance with the Agreement milestones and benchmarks and in some cases exceeded them. As a result, to date the NT Government has satisfied its reporting requirements and the Australian Government provided full payments for the NT Government's delivery on outputs. In some Implementation Plans, the NT Government was also required to report on performance benchmarks and outcome measures. The NT Government was required to report on the delivery of output milestones every 6 or 12 months.

The following headings summarise the objectives and outputs under each plan. Where outcomes were measured under the plan, a summary on outcomes is also discussed.

Community Safety Implementation Plan

Child and Family Schedule

The objective of the Child and Family Schedule was to improve safety in remote communities across the NT. It contributed funding to develop and strengthen frontline services to support the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and families in remote areas under the Implementation Plan. The NT Government delivered all output milestones in accordance with the Schedule. The NT Government delivered a range of activities, including the Remote Family Support Services (RFSS) and Women's Safe Houses (WSHs). The RFSS included practical support to assist families to keep their children safe, goal-oriented family support, multi-agency Child Safety Coordination Groups, a reporting framework within the child protection system and training for a community based, professional and para-professional workforce. The WSHs provided crisis-accommodation, wraparound services and priority referrals to the RFSS. The Schedule ended in 2020 and activity is now funded under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy until 30 June 2022 (to align with the end of the NTRAI).

Remote Policing Schedule

The objective of the Remote Policing Schedule was to improve safety in remote communities across the NT by contributing funding to support activities undertaken by the NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services as part of the Remote Policing Model. The NT Government delivered all output milestones in accordance with the Schedule. The remote police presence included sworn officers in regional and remote communities, Dog Operation Units, Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks, Community Engagement Police Officers and the building and maintenance of police facilities in regional and remote communities.

Alcohol Schedule

The objective of the Alcohol Schedule was to improve the health, safety and well-being of remote Aboriginal communities by supporting community-led initiatives in reducing alcohol-related harms and providing support and enforcement responses to

individuals and communities. To date, the NT Government has delivered all output milestones in accordance with the Schedule. The NT Government delivered Alcohol Action Initiatives, an Individual Support Program, Aftercare Treatment Services, development of a Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce and Liquor Licence Compliance actions.

Alice Springs Transformation Plan Schedule

The objective of the Alice Springs Transformation Plan (ASTP) Schedule was to improve the safety of Aboriginal communities in Alice Springs. The NT Government delivered all output milestones in accordance with the Schedule. The ASTP Schedule operated under the NTRAI for six months. It was a continuation of activities delivered for four years under the Stronger Futures NPA. The ASTP included the Integrated Response to Domestic Violence program and Youth and Community Centre program. The Integrated Response to Domestic Violence program included the Family Safety Framework, victim support and advocacy service, men's behaviour change program and community engagement. The Gap Youth Community Centre delivered a range of community programs under the Youth and Community Centre program.

Remote Australia Strategies Implementation Plan

Housing Schedule

The objective of the Housing Schedule was to improve the health and safety of remote Aboriginal communities through housing upgrades in remote locations across the NT. The NT Government delivered all output milestones in accordance with the Schedule. This Schedule was intended to complement the capital works program rolled out as part of the *National Partnership on Remote Housing*. The Schedule was extended by 12 months to 30 June 2019 because of delays beyond the control of the NT Government.

Asbestos Removal from Community Buildings Schedule

The objective of the Asbestos Removal from Community Buildings Schedule (the Asbestos Schedule) was to improve the health and safety of remote community residents through the risk management, remediation and removal of dangerous asbestos and asbestos containing material from community buildings. Examples of community buildings include churches, stores, art centres and community halls. The NT Government delivered output milestones in accordance with the Schedule. The Schedule provided one year of funding and ended in 2016.

Aboriginal Interpreter Service Schedule

The objective of the Aboriginal Interpreter Service was to increase access to interpreter services and job opportunities for adults. Activity under the Agreement includes the provision of accredited Aboriginal interpreter services. The NT Government delivered most outputs in accordance with the Schedule, with acknowledgement unmet outputs resulted from challenges beyond the control of the NT Government, such as the capacity of the national accreditation authority.

Children and Schooling Implementation Plans

There were two Children and Schooling Implementation Plans under the NTRAI, Implementation Plan 1 (2015 – 18) and Implementation Plan 2 (2018 – 21). Their objective was to improve schooling outcomes of Aboriginal children in remote areas by improving school readiness, attendance, attainment, engagement and educational achievement. The NT Government delivered a range of activities including activities focused on early learning, literacy and numeracy skills, access to secondary school pathways or employment pathways, improving school attendance and engagement, workforce development and capital works. To date, the NT Government has delivered output milestones in accordance with the Implementation Plan. Progress against outcomes was mixed. The Agreement showed success in supporting Aboriginal boarding students to remain in school and assisting Aboriginal assistant teachers to complete accredited training (noting the target for 2020 was not met). Over half of the targets for the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assessment were met. Student attendance targets for school were not met. The target for the average number of days attended per year in the Families as First Teachers (FaFT) program was met once in the 2018 – 20 period (noting attendance at FaFT is not compulsory).

Health Implementation Plan

The objective of the Health Implementation Plan was for safer and healthier remote Aboriginal communities in the NT through integrated Hearing and Oral Health Programs for Aboriginal children in remote communities. To date, the NT Government has delivered the Hearing Health output milestones in accordance with the Implementation Plan, delivering audiology services, case management, ear health checks, treatment, follow up and hearing health preventative measures. The Hearing Health Program has demonstrated an improvement in chronic ear conditions for those children reviewed through the program in accordance with the Hearing Health Outcome Measure in the Agreement. To date, the NT Government has also delivered the Oral Health Program outputs in accordance with the Implementation Plan, delivering clinical and preventative services, fluoride varnish applications and fissure sealants. The Oral Health Program has provided services to at least 75 per cent of remote communities each year and at least 50 per cent of services have been preventative services, in accordance with the Oral Health Outcome Measure in the Agreement.

Assessment

The Review acknowledges the NT Government delivered on all activity required under the NTRAI and has in some cases exceeded agreed activity. As a result, full payment has been received. A Short Guide (Appendix A) provides for a review assessment to be separate to the performance assessment. 'The main focus of reviews should be the effectiveness of the policy or program in achieving the outcomes of the National Partnership, and the extent to which the objectives have been achieved, including the performance against project milestones and /or performance benchmarks, and reasons for any underperformance.'[5] Both governments agreed key questions to inform assessments under the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness criteria.

Effectiveness

The Review was guided by the following questions to ascertain whether the NTRAI was effective:

- To what extent was the activity/outputs delivered as intended?
- To what extent did the activity contribute to the outcomes and objectives?
- To what extent have outcomes changed over the life of the Agreement?

The NT Government delivered outputs as intended under the Agreement and received full payment on all milestones. Through this activity, the Agreement was effective in facilitating more equitable access to vital services for Aboriginal peoples in remote areas. For example, the Australian Government involvement in police services, which commenced with funding remote police under NTER and continued under the Stronger Futures NPA and the NTRAI, has contributed to the continuation of policing in remote areas. The NTRAI has also facilitated greater access to early childhood education through a significant increase in FaFT sites in remote areas.

The objective of the Agreement was to provide supplementary funding to improve schooling for Aboriginal children, make remote Aboriginal communities in the NT safer and healthier, and increase access to interpreter services and job opportunities for adults. This objective mixes broad and subjective aspirations for education, safety and health outcomes with direct and specific goals on interpreters and employment. The assessment of progress on the objectives of improving schooling and making communities safer and healthier requires measurement of complex and multi layered interventions. the NTRAI reporting, outlined in Implementation Plans and Schedules, did not provide measures to allow robust assessment of the achievement of these objectives. However, this Review recognises interpreter access and job opportunities are tangible outcomes which are easily quantified. Reporting clearly establishes an increase in access to interpreter services. Around 440 jobs were created in service delivery over the life of the Agreement - around half of these were filled by Aboriginal peoples. Further jobs have also been supported through the capital works elements of Schedules and Implementation Plans.

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[5] Appendix A - Short Guide to Reviewing National Partnerships, 4.

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The Agreement contained program logics for each Implementation Plan and Schedule which outlined the rationale of why activity was being delivered, and how it contributed to achieving outcomes. The quality of the program logics varied across the Agreement. The sound program logics referenced an evidence-base or overarching policy, and their outcomes had a direct connection with the outputs. Some program logics were too far removed from the outputs, and they conflated outputs with objectives/outcomes. Outcomes and objectives often related to long-term, generational change, rather than short- and medium-term outcomes which could be achieved within the life of the Agreement.

Future arrangements between the Australian and NT Governments should consider developing an evaluation plan in the design stage of arrangements to support monitoring, reporting and assessment of activity and outcomes.

Efficiency

The Review examined whether effort under the NTRAI was commensurate with what was produced under the Agreement. The following questions determined whether the implementation of the NTRAI has been efficient:

- What were the enablers and barriers to delivery – what worked well in implementing the agreement?
- Did management of the Agreement identify where change was required, and then implemented?
- Did the reporting framework shape activity toward achievement of objectives?

The payment arrangements for National Partnership Agreements are seen as an enabler to efficient inter-governmental payments. The NTRAI had an annual reporting and payment regime, which is considered streamlined compared to other payment mechanisms. However, there were instances where the funding under the NTRAI supplemented other payment pathways which existed between the NIAA and the NT Government. This created dual payment and reporting burdens for the same program outputs. Where possible, multiple payment pathways could be rationalised to streamline monitoring and reporting requirements.

A barrier to efficiency was caused by having the varied policy elements within the Agreement managed across multiple areas of both governments. This ensured multiple reporting and payment processes were undertaken in isolation from each other. At times, this reduced strategic intervention at an all-of-agreement level. Internal management should be coordinated, with options for all-of-agreement touch points to be generated when strategic value can be gained. The NTRAI overarching agreement did not specify any governance arrangements other than a statement that both governments are jointly responsible for participating in consultations as appropriate regarding the implementation of the Agreement. Governance arrangements were developed across some Implementation Plans and Schedules but varied in structure and focus. The Mid-Term Review prompted the establishment of an overarching Joint Steering Committee to improve communication between both governments. In future arrangements, a formal governance arrangement embedded in the Agreement from the outset would support cross-government collaboration. There is also opportunity to include Aboriginal stakeholder representation to provide a holistic view on the effectiveness of programs and how they work together to achieve generational change.

Implementation Plans which aligned with existing NT and Australian Government strategies supported efficiency. By complementing and strengthening existing areas of focus, it allowed the pooling of resources towards common goals and used existing evidence bases. For example, the Children and Schooling Implementation Plans mirrored the NT Government's education strategy *A share in the future: Indigenous Education Strategy 2015 – 24* (Indigenous Education Strategy). This Review finds activity under the Agreement was generally structured to align with agreed evidence-based priorities for both governments. In this way the NTRAI delivered value to the Australian Government, by supplementing NT Government expenditure and programs, an increased level of activity and scale was possible, than if governments had invested alone.

Annual reporting has potential to be an efficient mechanism to identify whether an agreement is on track to achieving outcomes, without hindering the NT Government's autonomy and flexibility to deliver services 'in a way that it considers will most effectively and efficiently improve outcomes.'[6] While reporting requirements and timeframes varied across Implementation Plans and Schedules, they provided appropriate line of sight for an output style Agreement. Given the resources required to prepare lengthy performance reports, the design of performance reporting for any future

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[6] "The Federation Funding Agreements Framework," Council on Federal Financial Relations, accessed June 29, 2021, https://federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/federation-funding-agreements-framework.

arrangements should be streamlined to reduce administrative burden and more clearly support assessment of the quality of implementation and progress on outcomes.

While the reporting arrangements in the Agreement were appropriate for assessing performance at the individual Schedule and Implementation Plan level, the Agreement did not include a requirement to report at a holistic, whole of agreement level. Reporting at a more aggregate level for future arrangements could improve efficiency and facilitate a more strategic view of performance and alignment to government policy and community aspirations.

The willingness of both governments to make adjustments during COVID-19 demonstrated a level of flexibility within the Agreement. Under the Children and Schooling Implementation Plan, both governments sought Ministerial approval to amend the 2020 NAPLAN performance benchmark calculation. Since NAPLAN was cancelled in 2020, they agreed to use 2019 data.

Appropriateness

To determine if the NTRAI remains appropriate, the Review assessed:

- Do the Agreement objectives and their related activities align with current best practice and evidence?
- To what extent the objectives of the Agreement align with current government priorities?

The activities delivered under the NTRAI generally align with strategic frameworks, best practice and evidence. In particular, the two Children and Schooling Implementation Plans were scheduled to align with the NT Government's Indigenous Education Strategy. The strategy providing an overarching plan with which to improve schooling outcomes. With strong linkages to the strategic plan, the NTRAI Children and Schooling Implementation Plans had a coordinated approach which contributed to educational reforms.

Both governments have a mutual interest and responsibility in improving outcomes of Aboriginal peoples. Both governments recognise the need to work together to achieve those outcomes, ensuring funding goes to programs and services which are delivered to benefit Aboriginal peoples in the remote NT. Aboriginal peoples in remote NT communities continue to experience significant disadvantage in relation to schooling, community safety, health, housing, access to interpreter services and job opportunities.

Best practice has evolved since the NTRAI was designed. The role of Aboriginal representative bodies has gained greater importance in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs which directly target Aboriginal people. For example, the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* was jointly agreed by all levels of government and the Coalition of Peaks representing Aboriginal peoples.[7] The NT Government has a Local Decision-Making model involving 'a 10 year plan that will provide a pathway so that communities can have more control over their own affairs, including service delivery based on a community's aspirations and needs'.[8] Shared decision-making between governments and Aboriginal representatives is now an expectation for future arrangements. Future arrangements should build on employment outcomes achieved under the NTRAI with a continued progress on workforce development and capacity building.

The Productivity Commission's 2020 report, *Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory,* has signalled improvements required to achieve best practice in services for children and families which is directly applicable to funding to improve outcomes of Aboriginal peoples in remote areas.[9] This includes the development of a 'coordinated' funding framework between the Australian and NT Governments to plan, fund and deliver services in a more collaborative way. Under this approach regional planning is suggested to reduce duplication of effort, promote cohesion, and deliver an equitable distribution of government funds to better meet the needs of families and children. The report also highlights the importance of data at regional and community level to improve transparency on how service delivery contributes to outcomes over time. This granulation will support an understanding of improvements in remote areas.

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[7] Joint Council of Closing the Gap, *National Agreement on Closing the Gap,* (Canberra, ACT, 2020), 5.
[8] "Local Decision Making," Northern Territory Government, accessed July 28, 2021, https://ldm.nt.gov.au/.
[9] Productivity Commission, *Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory*, ISBN 978-1-74037-693-8 (Canberra, ACT, 2020), 44.

Introduction

Overview of the NTRAI

National Partnerships agreements are predominantly short-term vehicles for nationally significant reforms, service delivery initiatives and/or projects. Implementation Plans are negotiated between the Australian Government and the relevant state/territory to define specific requirements of the Agreement.[10]

The *National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment* (the NTRAI or the Agreement) commenced on 21 April 2016 and expires on 30 June 2022. It is a continuation of the investment which commenced under the *National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory* (Stronger Futures NPA). The Stronger Futures NPA, signed in 2012, was originally due to cease on 30 June 2022.[11] Funding of $988.2 million over eight years was redirected from the Stronger Futures NPA to establish in its place, with an additional $61.3 million over four years, the NTRAI. The new Agreement was represented by the Australian Government as prioritising schooling, community safety and employment. The funding also provides for the transition of responsibility for municipal and essential services (out of scope for this Review).[12]

The NTRAI Mid-Term Review was undertaken in 2018. The NTRAI states in clause 32, 'both Parties will consider the need for a further review, to be conducted no later than 12 months prior to the expiry of the Agreement'. On 24 November 2020, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians, publicly outlined his intention for an End of Term Review of the NTRAI to be undertaken, commencing early 2021.[13] The Review has been conducted by an internal team within the National Indigenous Australians Agency (Australian Government) in partnership with the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (Northern Territory (NT) Government).

The Operation of the NTRAI

The Agreement contains an overarching agreement which establishes the objectives and outcomes of the NTRAI, roles and responsibilities of each government, the estimated financial contributions of each government and governance arrangements. The following Implementation Plans and associated Schedules, sit underneath the overarching agreement:

- Community Safety Implementation Plan (2015 – 22)

  - Child and Family (2015 – 20)

  - Remote Policing (2015 – 22)

  - Alcohol (2015 – 22)

  - Alice Springs Transformation Plan (2015 – 16)

- Remote Australia Strategies Implementation Plan (2015 – 22)

  - Housing (2015 – 18)

  - Asbestos removal (2015 – 16)

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[10] "National agreements," Department of Treasury and Finance (NT), accessed February 12, 2021, https://treasury.nt.gov.au/dtf/financial-management-group/national-agreements.

[11] Council of Australian Governments, *National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory*, (Canberra, ACT, 2012), 4

[12] "Indigenous affairs: Budget Review 2015–16 Index," Parliament of Australia.

[13] Minister for Indigenous Australians, "Connecting & activating the Northern Territory".

- o   Aboriginal Interpreter Service (2015 – 22)
- Children and Schooling Implementation Plan (2015 – 18 and 2018 – 22)
- Northern Territory Health Implementation Plan (2015 – 22)

A portion of the 2015 – 16 funding includes amounts for work completed under the Stronger Futures NPA.

The Implementation Plans and Schedules set out the NT Government's strategy for delivering on the outcomes and outputs of the NTRAI. They contain program logics which map outputs to outcomes and objectives. They also detail performance, reporting and payment arrangements. In summary, the NT Government is required to deliver outputs under the Agreement, and reports on this activity either six monthly or annually. The Australian Government assesses the reports, advises the relevant Australian Government Minister if activity was delivered, and the Australian Government Minister approves an annual payment amount. The Australian Government Department of Health and the Minister for Health and Aged Care are responsible for the Health Implementation Plan. The National Indigenous Australians Agency and the Minister for Indigenous Australians are responsible for all other Implementation Plans. The Australian Government Treasury provides the approved payment amount to the NT Government Treasury.

Methodology for the Review

This Review is directed by *A Short Guide to Reviewing National Partnerships* (A Short Guide). The guide directs a collaborative approach should be taken between both governments and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the Review is completed successfully. Portfolio ministers are accountable for initiating and leading the review of agreements, in accordance with the Australian Government Budget Process Operational Rules and relevant review clauses. Where the *National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment* (the NTRAI or the Agreement) is cross-portfolio, the agency with principal responsibility for oversight, coordination, and implementation and monitoring has oversight of the Review. Consultation should include both Government's portfolio agencies as well as central agencies for each level of government. The guide also suggests a Terms of Reference should be developed and agreed between both governments.

Review Objective

The objective of this Review is to assess the degree to which the outcomes and outputs agreed under the NTRAI have been achieved and inform decisions regarding the treatment of expiring the NTRAI. The NTRAI stipulates 'reviews will be conducted with regard to progress made by Parties in respect of achieving agreed outcomes and to provide robust evidence base for future actions.' Guidance on the objectives of the Review is provided in A Short Guide.

Scope

The Review uses the areas of assessment under Review Approach to evaluate activity under the Agreement, with particular focus on the extent to which the Agreement contributes to achievement of the following outcomes of Aboriginal peoples in the Northern Territory (NT):

- improved school readiness, attendance, educational achievement, and attainment of students in and from remote and very remote areas

- improved safety and wellbeing of individuals, children and families, and communities

- improved hearing and oral health of children

- improved housing in remote communities

- improved access to services through support from Aboriginal interpreters.

In addition, the Review identifies learnings which could inform future arrangements to improve outcomes of Aboriginal peoples who reside in remote and very remote locations, in line with the findings of the Mid-Term Review.

Expired Schedules are included within the scope of the Review, but only for the time specifically funded under the Agreement. For example, on expiry of the Child and Family Schedule on 30 June 2020, funding was provided to the NT Government through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS). The review does not assess the IAS funded activity.

Review Approach

The Review examines to what extent the objectives of the Agreement have been achieved. The objective being whether schooling outcomes have improved, whether communities in remote NT have become safer and healthier, and whether there has been an increase in access to interpreter services and job opportunities for adults.

A secondary level of investigation uses outcome level and program data to determine if there has been improvement over time, and whether the change is attributable to the activity under the Agreement.

The key Review questions use tertiary levels of investigation to assess whether the program logic aligns with current policy thinking and assess implementation issues and effectiveness of monitoring and reporting processes.

Table 1. Key Review questions

Topic	Questions
Effectiveness	To what extent was the activity/outputs delivered as intended?
	To what extent did the activity contribute to the outcomes and objectives?
	To what extent have outcomes changed over the life of the Agreement?
Efficiency	What were the enablers and barriers to delivery – what worked well in implementing the agreement?
	Did management of the Agreement identify where change was required, and then implemented?
	Did the reporting framework shape activity toward achievement of objectives?
Appropriateness	Do the Agreement objectives and their related activities align with current best practice and evidence?
	To what extent the objectives of the Agreement align with current government priorities?

The Review evidence will rely on analysis across multiple key documents which have been generated through the Agreement process. These include:

- performance reporting
- performance assessments
- ministerial approvals
- published reports
- program information
- management surveys
- the Mid-Term Review.

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Assessment of the Community Safety Implementation Plan

The Community Safety Implementation Plan was developed in response to a decade of increased demand and complexity for police and emergency services from increased substance abuse, family violence and mental illness. Action to address community safety cannot be considered in isolation. There are multiple levels of intervention which reflect the interrelated and intergenerational causes of unsafe communities in the Northern Territory (NT). The elements of the Community Safety Implementation Plan were developed in correlation with the increased focus on ensuring the safety of women and children in remote communities since 2007.

The intended objective of the Community Safety Implementation Plan is to improve the safety and wellbeing of individuals, children, families and communities, by:

- strengthening the frontline services which support the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and families via the Remote Family Support Service and through Women's Safe Houses
- supporting continued improvements in community safety in remote NT communities through additional remote policing and specialist units
- supporting community led initiatives in reducing alcohol related harms and providing support and enforcement responses to individuals and communities.

The Implementation Plan contains four Schedules:

- Child and Family
- Remote Policing
- Alcohol
- Alice Springs Transformation Plan

Each Schedule contains a program logic which establishes a connection between project elements, outputs, outcomes and objectives. While the project elements, outputs and outcomes vary between Schedules, they are all designed to work towards a similar objective of improving the safety (and health for the Alcohol Schedule) of Aboriginal communities. Assessments under each Schedule provide detail on whether the program logic has been tested, and how reporting has contributed to the evidence base on what improves outcomes in remote Aboriginal communities.

Under the *National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment* (the NTRAI or the Agreement), the NT Government was required to report progress against milestones annually. The milestones mostly relate to outputs rather than outcomes. They relate to work undertaken during the establishment phase of each project element and the number or percentage of communities, places and people outputs are delivered to/in or interact with. The NT Government was also required to report on the number of employees who identify as Aboriginal. This component could be described as an outcome (although there was no target or baseline to measure against). While the milestones have a direct connection with the outputs, there are some outputs which do not require any reporting.

Schedule 1: Child and Family

The Child and Family Schedule aimed to support improved safety in remote communities across the NT by contributing funding to develop and strengthen frontline services to support the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and families in remote areas.

The Child and Family Schedule outputs were the Remote Family Support Service (RFSS) and Women's Safe Houses (WSHs). The RFSS is family support services which include case management, practical and integrated support for children at risk of entering the child protection system. WSHs offer safe and secure, temporary crisis accommodation and support services for women and their children affected by family violence.

The term of the Child and Family Schedule was from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2020 with a total estimated Australian Government financial contribution of $68.572 million. See Appendix D for payment details to date. The funding for the Child and Family Schedule was front-loaded to allow the NT Government to reshape the child and family safety support and remote family support services to the RFSS while supporting the continuation of the WSHs Program.

The Child and Family Schedule outputs funded under the NTRAI have a history of Australian Government funding dating back to the *Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007* (NTER) and continued through the *Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement* (CtG NPA), and the *National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory* (Stronger Futures NPA). The establishment of WSHs and strengthening of the child-protection and family support workforce using Aboriginal family and community workers were supported under these initiatives.[14]

The services funded under this Schedule aligned with the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 – 2020* which recognised the importance of place-based approaches to support the development and delivery of remote services to meet the needs of the community.[15] The Schedule's family violence services aligned with the integrated response approach outlined in the NT Government's *Safety is Everyone's Right Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy 2014 – 2017*.[16]

When the Child and Family Schedule ceased on 30 June 2020, the NT Government was successful in attracting further Australian Government funding for a revised and expanded Remote Child and Family Safety Program under a two-year agreement through the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS).

The pathway to achieving the Child and Family Schedule's objective is mapped out in a program logic below.

Table 2. Program logic

Project Element	Outcomes	Objectives
Remote Family Support Services	The safety and wellbeing of remote Aboriginal communities is increased through: • Protecting children from harm • Optimising outcomes for children in care, by prioritising reunification where appropriate and increasing remote foster and kinship carers • Continuous improvement to enable contemporary practice • Partnering with families, communities and other agencies • Valuing and investing in staff	Improved safety of individuals, children and families, and remote Aboriginal communities
Women's Safe Houses	The safety and wellbeing of remote Aboriginal communities is increased through: • Protecting women and children from harm • Continuous improvement to enable contemporary practice • Partnering with families, communities and other agencies	

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[14] Department of Families, Housing and Community Services (Cth), *Northern Territory Emergency Response: One Year On*, (Canberra, ACT: Attorney-General's Department, 2008), 13; Department of Families, Housing and Community Services (Cth), *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory: A ten year commitment to Aboriginal peoples in the Northern Territory*, (Canberra, ACT, 2012), 6, 8.

[15] Council of Australian Government (COAG), *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: A National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020*, (Canberra, ACT, 2009), 50–51.

[16] Australian Government and NT Government, *Safety is Everyone's Right Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy 2014–2017: Family Safety Framework Northern Territory Practice Manual*, (2014), iii.

Project Element	Outcomes	Objectives
	• Valuing and investing in staff • The Aboriginal workforce which will inform and shape an enduring service delivery model in remote communities that is responsive to women and their children who require a safe place and a safety plan post stay. The service model will ensure a consistent, quality response for clients, which integrates other service providers within the community	

There was a logical link between the outputs and most of the outcomes. However, the extent to which outputs (activities) contributed to outcomes and objectives cannot be measured. Some of the outcomes resemble outputs because they relate to activity being undertaken rather than the result of the activity. For example, 'partnering with families, communities and other agencies' and 'valuing and investing in staff' are written as actions rather than outcomes. In future, there should be greater clarity on program logic elements and outcomes should be specific and measurable.

The reporting requirements do not provide for the testing of the program logic. There was a single objective for all activity under the Schedule which was framed as a high-level aspiration. An Implementation Plan level program logic which establishes a framework for testing the collective impact of all four Schedules would provide greater insight into whether the objective has been achieved. In addition to the Child and Family Schedule outputs there are many contributors to the outcomes and the objectives. Other contributing action include a wide range of policy and programs across safety and justice portfolios.

Effectiveness

Outputs

The NT Government delivered all outputs (activities) as intended in accordance with the milestones in the Child and Family Schedule. As a result, the NT Government received the full milestone payments under the Schedule. See Appendix E for achievements against milestones completed over the operating period.

The Child and Family Schedule included two project elements, the RFSS and the WSHs. The Child and Family Schedule structure provided for the assessment of the effectiveness of outputs based on adherence to timeframes and volume of activities or services required by the Schedule.

This Review recognises the Child and Family Schedule performance reporting did not require the NT Government to report on the quality of the outputs. The RFSS reporting requirement was focused on the number of communities the service was delivered in rather than the quality of service. The WSHs reporting requirement was similarly focused on operational matters such as hours of operation, percentage of workers participating in training, and percentage of clients with a Personal Safety Plan in place. In many cases the NT Government provided information on elements relating to the quality of the activities, results of referrals, or reduced violence or interactions with the child protection system. Agreed targets and quality indicators for service characteristics could allow an assessment of quality for future arrangements.

The RFSS had three milestone activities:
• Milestone 1 — Establishment of service
  The establishment of the program under the NTRAI was scheduled from 2015 – 17, and included development of new delivery models, infrastructure and included the transition of staff from the old to new service.
• Milestone 2 — Reporting framework
  The development of a reporting framework which supported effective community-based responses was required from 2016 – 17.
• Milestone 3 — Full implementation
  Operate the RFSS in at least 12 sites for 3 years using goal-oriented family support casework in at least 5 sites. Operate multi-agency Child Safety Coordination Groups (MACSCG) in 5 sites, with staff training requirements.

The RFSS was designed to provide culturally safe family support to reduce the risk of children's re-entry into care and support for foster and kinship carers. The NT Government reshaped the family support services in remote communities to complement the child protection functions and deliver RFSS in partnership with community-based agencies. The NT Government engaged Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers in discussions about the reshaping of services via remote workshops. Elements delivered under the Stronger Futures NPA, such as Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers and the Mobile Outreach Services Plus were ceased on the transition to RFSS.

RFSS used case management to assist with early intervention and prevention with the aim of keeping vulnerable children safe by supporting the family.[17] This involved assessing a family's strengths and needs then setting goals, agreed to with the family, to strengthen the family's resources for keeping their children safe.

The intention of the MACSCG was to gather local knowledge and provide timely and coordinated responses to identified children and families in need of support.[18] Their aim was to enhance the case coordination, service delivery and support for local families. The MACSCG included representatives from local police, health clinics, schools and other authorised information sharing agencies. The forum intended to share information and knowledge on children and families to coordinate an appropriate family support plan or external support.[19]

Service Delivery Highlight: Remote Family Support Service

In 2019, the NT Government launched the formal implementation of the Signs of Safety model, which originated as an innovative, strengths-based, safety-organised approach to child protection casework and was adapted for use across the agency's portfolios. The approach focused on practices, tools and methods which make a difference to achieving positive outcomes with young people, families and communities. The model engages and empowers families in decision making.

Remote staff were trained in Signs of Safety and had opportunities to participate in mappings, family meetings and investigations in line with the model. An example of the model in practice involved the RFSS team located in Jabiru and Gunbalanya working with child protection staff and a local family to support the development of a strong reunification plan for the family. The RFSS team used newly learned skills from the Signs of Safety training to map, and problem solve worries of the family, RFSS and child protection workers. The mother had identified the RFSS team as key, trusted people she could go to for support particularly in relation to managing the issue of family 'humbug' and its negative impact on maintaining family resources for essential needs.

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[17] Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (NT), *Child and Family Schedule of National Partnership Agreement on the Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment: Annual Performance Report to the Australian Government 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018*, (Darwin, NT, 2019), 13.
[18] Ibid., 19.
[19] Ibid., 19.

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The NT Government was required to provide training for a community based, professional, and para-professional workforce to support a contemporary and enduring Aboriginal workforce. The intention of this output was to build on the different skills of staff to deliver quality services. Staff undertook a range of study and training to improve their capacity.

The Child and Family Schedule required the NT Government to report on the number of RFSS employees who identified as Aboriginal. Without benchmarks or targets, a comparative assessment cannot be undertaken to determine whether the number of Aboriginal employees over the life of the Child and Family Schedule was an achievement or an increase from previous years. Under future arrangements, baseline data and benchmarks for Aboriginal workforce development can be used to gauge community employment opportunities, workforce development and service improvement.

Project element 2 of the Child and Family Schedule required the NT Government to continue delivering WSHs services. WSHs are an element within a wider family safety support services environment. WSHs were designed as a place-based service delivering culturally safe, trauma-informed, and secure crisis accommodation to victims and survivors of family violence. WSHs were funded to provide wraparound supports to prevent and address ongoing family safety concerns. The WSHs staff role was to strengthen relationships and referrals with police, community night patrols, child protection workers, community health centres, legal services and other community service providers through a memorandum of understanding as part of the broader community safety network.

The milestones for the WSHs included:

- engaging the remote Aboriginal workforce during the development of an improved service delivery model, through three regional workshops, to ensure improved cultural safety and appropriateness of family safety support services
- development of a Personal Safety Plan framework to enable the establishment of Personal Safety Plans for individual clients which activates a system of coordinated supports for clients to access joined-up assistance from local service providers.

Performance benchmarks for the WSFs were:

- WSHs to be accessible 85 per cent of the day
- 85 per cent of staff participate in training and development
- 100 per cent of workers are local community members (local Aboriginal women)
- 90 per cent of clients have an agreed Personal Safety Plan.

Efficiency

Through the management of the Agreement both governments identified barriers to the delivery of the Child and Family Schedule outputs and implemented enablers where changes were required.

The NT Government identified high staff turnover and a lack of suitable accommodation/office infrastructure as the two main barriers to delivering effective embedded services.[20] During the delivery of the Child and Family Schedule, the NT Government worked on a range of strategies to address these issues, including securing staff accommodation in Lajamanu and Ngukurr to enable staff to be based there permanently.[21] The Productivity Commission's *Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory study report* in 2020 (the Productivity Commission's report) concluded staff retention is a major challenge for delivering family violence and child protection services in remote and regional areas.[22]

One enabler of the Child and Family Schedule was the establishment of a working group. In late 2018, a Working Group for the Child and Family Schedule was established in response to barriers the NTRAI Mid-Term Review identified. The intention of the Working Group was to improve cross-government communication, collaboration and to oversee, monitor and support the implementation of activities under the Child and Family Schedule. The Working Group consists of members from the NIAA (formerly Department of the Prime Minster and Cabinet), NT Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities and Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet. This Review finds structured governance enhances

[20] Ibid., 10.
[21] Ibid., 10.
[22] Productivity Commission, *Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory*, 44.

management of arrangements (further discussion in the Overall Findings section of this Review). In future formal governance mechanisms should be embedded in large-scale agreements.

While the Child and Family Schedule was funded by the NTRAI, the IAS funded additional programs related to the safety and well-being of children and families such as women's, men's and youth services. There may be opportunity to rationalise multiple payment pathways to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements.

Appropriateness

The Child and Family Schedule objective still aligns with both governments' priorities. Both governments are committed to the continued effort to provide appropriate family violence, child protection and family support services. Their commitment is outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, in particular outcome targets 12 and 13.[23]

The Australian Government has funded momentum in this program area since at least the NTER. This includes the building of infrastructure for safe houses, the establishment of the Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers, the Mobile Child protection teams, MACSCG, the transition to a new model of family support services and the development of the associated tools.

This Review acknowledges during the life of the Child and Family Schedule there has been an ongoing reshaping of the policy environment which has been in place since the 2003 Caring for our Children reform agenda.[24] The latest prompts for reform are in part due to the *Report of the Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Detention and Protection of Children in the Northern Territory* (the Royal Commission report), multiple Coroner's findings, and the Productivity Commission's report. The Royal Commission report concluded the need for governments to take a public health approach to child protection services with sustained, long-term support.[25] The Royal Commission report also noted the need to grow early intervention services and increase the focus on building the capacity of family and community to take care of their children.[26] The Productivity Commission recommended a need for better remote and regional level data, coordinated funding with needs prioritisation through regional planning with communities, longer term collaborative contracting of service providers and stronger supporting institutions.[27] Future arrangements should incorporate findings from these significant reports to guide ongoing improvement in child and family policy.

The NT Government is committed to reforms to better support children, young people and families experiencing vulnerability and to deliver the recommendations of the Royal Commission report. The plan to address recommendations and implement reforms is outlined in the *Safe, Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families.*

Research shows information sharing and coordinated approaches are all still considered best practice.[28] Research concludes information sharing and shared case management is an effective mechanism for timely support and preventing the re-victimisation of people.[29]

Case management is still considered a vital element of family violence, child protection and family support services.[30] Other states are implementing Intensive Family Support, including intensive case management for children and families with

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[23] Joint Council on Closing the Gap, *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, 35-36.

[24] COAG, *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: A National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020*.

[25] Royal Commission into the Detention and Protection of Children in the Northern Territory, "Volume 3A" in *Report of the Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Detention and Protection of Children in the Northern Territory*, (Canberra, ACT, 2017), 185, 198.

[26] Ibid., 195.

[27] Productivity Commission, *Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory*, 13-15.

[28] Productivity Commission, *Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory*, 51-52; Chay Brown, "Hopeful, Together, Strong: Principles of good practice to prevent violence against women in the Northern Territory" (PhD thesis, Australian National University — Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, 2019), 15.

[29] Brown, "Hopeful, Together, Strong: Principles of good practice to prevent violence against women in the Northern Territory" 15.

[30] Brown, "Hopeful, Together, Strong: Principles of good practice to prevent violence against women in the Northern Territory", 15.

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complex needs.[31] Intensive case management is community-based package of care aimed at providing longer-term, intensive care and support. Emerging literature on the importance of intensive case management and trauma aware and healing informed approaches should also guide future investment.[32]

Consulting Aboriginal staff on family violence, child protection and family support services is still considered an important approach to developing effective tools and services. However, in future it is essential engagement is broader. Research on good practice for preventing violence against women in the NT suggests frameworks for tackling family violence in remote NT Aboriginal communities would benefit from input from frontline workers as well as the broader community.[33] Engaging Aboriginal communities is particularly important as it ensures approaches are culturally appropriate and safe. Research shows including Aboriginal communities as decision-makers in service design and delivery results in better outcomes and ensures appropriate and holistic services are developed.[34] Engaging Aboriginal communities about services provides a better understanding of the situation, increases the take-up of services and addresses community needs and priorities, cultural sensitivities and incompatibilities.[35] Governments, service providers and communities should continue to work together to develop a shared understanding of issues and jointly commit to solutions, with collective ownership of outcomes.[36] Strategies are underway to build collaborative arrangements, such as the Barkly Regional Deal and the Children and Families Tripartite Forum, this is likely to continue and strengthen overtime.

Embedded services as opposed to mobile service delivery is still considered best practice.[37] Embedded services ensure trust and relationships can be developed between service providers and clients.[38] Services could be improved by increasing the number of Aboriginal service providers.[39]

Multi-agency coordination groups are still considered best practice and should include clear Aboriginal community governance and community-led decision making.[40]

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[31] Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (QLD), *Intensive Family Support: Service Model and Guidelines 2020*, (QLD, 2020), 6-8; "Intensive Family Based Services," Communities & Justice (NSW), October 22, 2019, https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/providers/aboriginal-communities/intensive-family-based-services-aboriginal; "1.2.5 Intensive Family Support," Department of Communities (WA), February 15, 2021, https://manuals.communities.wa.gov.au/CPM/SitePages/Procedure.aspx?ProcedureId=190.

[32] Professor Harry Blagg et al., *Innovative models in addressing violence against Indigenous women: Final report*, ISBN: 978-1-925372-68-7 (Sydney, NSW: Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited, 2018), 4; "An exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing programs which respond to domestic and family violence and sexual assault," Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited (ANROWS), accessed July 22, 2021, https://www.anrows.org.au/project/an-exploration-of-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-healing-programs-that-respond-to-domestic-and-family-violence-and-sexual-assault/.

[33] Brown, "Hopeful, Together, Strong: Principles of good practice to prevent violence against women in the Northern Territory", 4, 8.

[34] Royal Commission into the Detention and Protection of Children in the Northern Territory, "Volume 3A" in *Report of the Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Detention and Protection of Children in the Northern Territory*, 258–259, 261.

[35] Royal Commission into the Detention and Protection of Children in the Northern Territory, "Volume 3A" in *Report of the Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Detention and Protection of Children in the Northern Territory*, 257–258; Productivity Commission, *Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory*, 147, 176; Brown, "Hopeful, Together, Strong: Principles of good practice to prevent violence against women in the Northern Territory", 8.

[36] Productivity Commission, *Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory*, 13.

[37] Northern Territory Government (NTG), *Safe, Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families*, (Darwin, NT, 2018), 15.

[38] Blagg et al., *Innovative models in addressing violence against Indigenous women: Final report*, 19.

[39] Ibid., 60.

[40] Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory, *AMSANT MACCSTs Report*, (Darwin, NT, 2021), 10.

A trained workforce is essential for delivering effective and high-quality family violence, child protection and family support services.[41] Consideration should be given to the issues around the time it takes to train local staff and high turnover of staff.[42] Research determines crisis accommodation and support for victims and survivors are vital in the continued response to family violence in the NT.[43] Crisis accommodation provides a safe and secure place for victims and survivors of family violence to rest and recover.[44]

Recommendations from the Child and Family Schedule

- Incorporate output quality indicators which, based on strong evidence of effectiveness and sound program design, demonstrate progress toward outcomes
- Embed formal governance mechanisms in future arrangements
- Building on existing work, incorporate greater emphasis on Aboriginal-led governance, employment, workforce development and capacity building
- Both governments to co-ordinate funding effort to plan, fund and deliver services in a collaborative way

Schedule 2: Remote Policing

The objective of the Remote Policing Schedule is to improve safety of individuals, children and families, and remote Aboriginal communities across the NT. The Schedule seeks to achieve this by contributing funding to support activities undertaken by the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES) as part of the NT Government's strategy (the Remote Policing Model) for resource allocation and services in the remote areas.

The term of the Remote Policing Schedule is from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2022 with a total estimated Australian Government financial contribution of $208.317 million. Refer to Appendix D for payment details to date.

The Australian Government has provided supplementary funding to the NT Government to support police operations in remote locations since at least the NTER. The initial support contributed to NTPFES under NTER, almost doubled the number of discrete, remote communities with a permanent police presence (from 19 to 37).[45] The support has continued through the CtG NPA and the Stronger Futures NPA. Funding has contributed to police deployments and infrastructure.

The Remote Policing Schedule was implemented to address the ongoing issue the NT Government faces with expenditure on policing and harm caused by alcohol and other drugs. At the time the NT had the highest expenditure of any jurisdiction on policing and the *Illicit Drug Data Report 2015 – 16* showed the number of illicit drug arrests in the NT was increasing.[46]

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[41] Dr Kylie Cripps, *Implementation Options and Evaluation of Integrated Service Model Responses to Address Family Violence in Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities*, ISSN 1837-6223 (Canberra, ACT: Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse, 2020), 3; Department of Social Services (DSS) (Cth), *Fourth Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, ISBN-978-1-925318-91-3, (Canberra, ACT, 2019), 9.

[42] Productivity Commission, *Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory*, 27.

[43] Northern Territory Government, *Domestic, Family & Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018–2028: Safe, respected and free form violence*, (Darwin, NT, 2017), 21, 23; Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (NT), *Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018–2028 Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Action Plan 1: Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better (2018-2021)*, (Darwin, NT, 2018), 23.

[44] DSS (Cth), *Fourth Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022*, 33.

[45] James Pilkington, *Aboriginal Communities and the Police's Taskforce Themis: Case studies in remote Aboriginal community policing in the Northern Territory*, (Darwin, NT: North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency, 2009), 25.

[46] Council on Federal Financial Relations (Cth), *Community Safety Implementation Plan: National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment*, (Canberra, ACT, 2016), 2; Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, *Illicit Drug Data Report 2015-16*, ISSN 2205-1929 (Canberra, ACT, 2018), 37-38, 47, 59-60, 84-85.

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The pathway to achieving the Remote Policing Schedule's objective is mapped out in a program logic below.

Table 3. Program logic

Project Element	Outcomes	Objectives
Remote Policing	The safety of remote Aboriginal communities is increased through a reduction in: criminal activity, demand and supply of illicit substances in remote communities; and improved perceptions of police which leads to increased cooperation and reporting of crime.	Improved safety of individuals, children and families, and remote Aboriginal communities.
Remote Capital Infrastructure	The safety of remote Aboriginal communities is increased through: infrastructure which supports a policing presence in remote NT communities.	

There is a clear and logical link between the outputs and outcomes. In addition to the Remote Policing Schedule outputs there are many contributors to the outcomes and the objective. Other contributing action includes a wide range of policies and programs across the safety and justice portfolios. The Remote Policing Schedule reporting and monitoring does not provide for the testing of the program logic. There is a single objective for all activity under the Schedule which is framed as a high-level aspiration. An Implementation Plan level program logic which establishes a framework for testing the collective impact of all four Schedules would provide greater insight into whether the objective has been achieved.

Effectiveness

Outputs

To date the NT Government has delivered all outputs (activities) as intended in accordance with the milestones in the Remote Policing Schedule. As a result, to date the NT Government received full milestone payments under the Schedule each financial year. See Appendix E for achievements against milestones completed over the operating period.

The Remote Policing Schedule structure provides for the assessment of the effectiveness of outputs based on adherence to timeframes and volume of activities or services required by the Schedule. The Schedule does not include reporting requirements in order to assess the quality of the outputs which contribute to the program theory.

The Remote Policing Schedule includes two project elements, Remote Policing and Remote Capital Infrastructure. Most of the milestone targets for the Remote Policing project element remain the same for the entire period of the Schedule, except the Community Engagement Police Officers (CEPO), which were funded from 1 July 2015 until 31 December 2017.

The Remote Policing project element includes the requirements for the NT Government to maintain:

- A minimum of 300 sworn officers in regional and remote communities
- 2 Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks (SAID)
- 3 Dog Operation Units (DOU)
- At least 2 CEPOs
- 50 police facilities in regional and remote communities

Part of this milestone requires the NT Government to employ sworn officers who identify as Aboriginal. There are no set targets for the number or percentage of sworn officers who identify as Aboriginal. There are no agreed targets or baseline or historical data of sworn officers who identify as Aboriginal to measure progress against. This is a missed opportunity to highlight the efforts of the NT Government in Aboriginal employment.

The DOU and the SAID intend to improve the collection and management of intelligence and contribute to the interruption of alcohol and other drug supplies. The DOU and SAID work closely together to target illicit drugs destined for remote communities. The SAID also targets the illegal supply of alcohol into alcohol protected communities. In addition to the NTRAI funding, the Australian Government provided funding for a DOU in Groote Eylandt through the IAS (ceases on 30 June 2022).

The CEPOs assisted local police in regional and remote areas to prevent crime and promote community safety through community partnership policing.[47] CEPOs intended to promote community involvement, ownership, and leadership through community-based activities.[48] Activities include Community Safety Committees, Community Night Patrols and NT Emergency Services. The output milestones were for the number of CEPOs to be maintained, there were no quality indicators. Agreed quality indicators could drive continuous improvement of community engagement police services.

The police facilities in remote communities are maintained to host permanent or temporary operational capacity (a police facility is a police station, a police post, or Visiting Officers Quarters).

Service Delivery Highlight: Dog Operations Unit

In 2019, the Darwin Dog Operations Unit (DOU) assisted the Drug and Organised Crime Section with a search warrant in rural Darwin. This warrant was part of ongoing efforts in disrupting an organised crime operation focused on cannabis and methamphetamine manufacture and distribution in the NT including to remote communities. The DOU assisted with locating a clandestine and sophisticated hydroponic setup, 474 mature cannabis plants, methamphetamine precursors, manufacturing equipment and illegal firearms were discovered and seized.

The NT Government is required to provide statistics on:

- offences (including alcohol-related assault offences, offences against property, and public order offences)
- total reactive and proactive incidents
- number of information reports handled and illicit drug arrests and seizures
- information from CEPOs on activities and programs undertaken.

The statistics reach beyond the milestone activities. As such they provide the Australian Government with a large-scale view across the NT of police operations. This view does not necessarily inform the Australian Government on progress toward

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[47] Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services, *Annual Report 2015–16*, (Darwin, NT, 2017), 28.
[48] Ibid.

outcome improvement. Future arrangements should ensure reporting clearly shows whether activity is on track to meet outcomes.

The outputs of the Remote Capital Infrastructure project element include the construction of a police station in Wadeye, delivery of a capital works schedule and meeting the Aboriginal employment target of 10 per cent across all capital works projects.

The NT Government completed the construction of the Wadeye Police Station in August 2017 in line with the output milestone. Police facilities at Maningrida and Ngukurr are underway. Both are scheduled to be completed prior to the end of the NTRAI Agreement.

Efficiency

Through the management of the Agreement both governments identified barriers to the delivery of the Remote Policing Schedule outputs and implemented enablers where changes were required. Barriers include:

- infrastructure, especially housing, is limited in many of the NT's remote areas which makes policing costly and difficult
- the high proportion of remote communities to mainstream urban centres which need policing services
- the prevalence of alcohol, illicit drugs and substance abuse within remote communities with the resultant breakdown in social norms
- the isolation and lack of services available to police and their families in remote stations.[49]

This Review notes the original Themis Temporary Police Stations erected in 2006 are still used but are at end of life which may have potential Workplace Health and Safety implications.[50]

The NT Government implemented multiple strategies, including the Regional and Remote Policing Strategy, to increase the police presence outside of major centres. There has been a resurgence in police officers working in regional and remote areas. In 2019, the NTPFES established a Territory Relief Pool to provide surge capacity, respite, and relief in remote communities.[51]

The Maningrida and Ngukurr facilities encountered delays to construction due to challenges in securing appropriate land under an *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* lease. The construction of the Maningrida Police Station faced further delays due to COVID-19 postponing consultation with Traditional Owners and community stakeholders. The NT Police actively engaged with Traditional Owners and the Northern Land Council to resolve issues and agree on suitable sites.

In addition to the NTRAI funding, the Australian Government used other funding pathways (IAS) for the construction of the Wadeye, Ngukurr and Angurugu police stations and the upgrade of the police station at Alyangula. Opportunities could be explored to rationalise multiple payment pathways to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements.

A Remote Policing Working Group was established in 2018 in response to a finding of the Mid-Term Review of the NTRAI. It consisted of members from the NIAA (the former Department of the Prime Minster and Cabinet), NTPFES and Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet. The working group provided a shared forum for officials to make strategic linkages, build consensus on action to address barriers and support agreement on reporting and monitoring. This Review finds a structured governance enhances management of arrangements (further discussion in the Overall Findings section of this Review). In future formal governance mechanisms should be embedded in the arrangement.

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[49] The Allen Consulting Group, *Independent Review of Policing in Remote Indigenous Communities in the Northern Territory: Policing further into remote communities*, 19.

[50] Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services, *Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment Performance Report 1 January 2020–31 December 2020,* (Darwin, NT, 2021), 4.

[51] Ibid., 3.

Appropriateness

Both governments are committed to improving safety in remote communities in the NT and have strategies to support this goal. The Remote Policing Schedule objective aligns with both governments' priorities.

In 2020 the NTPFES developed the *Ten Year Strategy: Back to Basics to set our Future* to guide future operations of police in the NT. The NTPFES have committed to providing a stable, integrated, and permanent policing presence within regional and remote communities.[52] They intend to adapt the remote service model to improve the service delivery for communities.[53]

The Australian Government has invested in remote police operations and infrastructure in the NT since at least the NTER in 2007. This includes the maintenance of remote police officers since 2007 – 08, an extension to the remote police presence in discrete Aboriginal communities and the construction of demountable police facilities.[54] Ultimately policing for all citizens is primarily the responsibility of the NT Government.

This Review recognises the importance of a police presence in remote communities as expressed by the majority of community members. Communities have a higher level of support of police where the police are active and engage with community.[55] The CtG NPA required an independent review to be conducted on remote policing in the NT. The review conducted by the Allen Consulting Group in 2010 concluded 'community members and service providers want to feel safe, and many believe permanent police stations offer the best means of ensuring safer communities.'[56] Communities without a permanent presence have previously provided views about the need for greater access to police services, whether permanent or overnight facilities.[57] Through previous engagement, communities have suggested patrols from other communities may be problematic.[58] This was because response times were too slow to address incidents in the time needed or police did not use patrol time sufficiently to engage with the community in proactive or preventative policing.[59] The North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) report *Aboriginal Communities and the Police's Taskforce Themis: Case studies in remote Aboriginal community policing in the Northern Territory* found similar overall support for a police presence.[60] The support was varied across the communities surveyed.[61] NAAJA concluded remote Aboriginal communities with the lowest approval rates of police aligned with inactive policing, failures to respond to reports of crime, and failure to engage with community.[62] This Review finds the shape and quality of services of policing correlates to community approval. Monitoring and reporting of policing quality indicators could support appropriateness assessments.

Recommendations from the Remote Policing Schedule

- Incorporate output quality indicators which, based on strong evidence of effectiveness and sound program design, demonstrate progress toward outcomes

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[52] Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services, *Ten Year Strategy: Back to Basics to set out Future*, (Darwin, NT, 2019), 24.

[53] Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services, *Strategic Plan — Strategy 2023: Prevention. Integrity. Unity.* (Darwin, NT, 2019), 8.

[54] "Bills Digest no. 25, 2007–08 — Appropriation (Northern Territory National Emergency Response) Bill (No. 2) 2007–2008," Parliament of Australia, August 13, 2007, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/bd/bd0708/08bd025; Pilkington, *Aboriginal Communities and the Police's Taskforce Themis: Case studies in remote Aboriginal community policing in the Northern Territory*, 25.

[55] Pilkington, *Aboriginal Communities and the Police's Taskforce Themis: Case studies in remote Aboriginal community policing in the Northern Territory*, 50; The Allen Consulting Group, *Independent Review of Policing in Remote Indigenous Communities in the Northern Territory: Policing further into remote communities*, 43.

[56] The Allen Consulting Group, *Independent Review of Policing in Remote Indigenous Communities in the Northern Territory: Policing further into remote communities*, 43.

[57] Ibid., 44.

[58] Ibid., 44.

[59] Ibid., 44.

[60] Pilkington, *Aboriginal Communities and the Police's Taskforce Themis: Case studies in remote Aboriginal community policing in the Northern Territory*, 43.

[61] Ibid., 44-45.

[62] Ibid., 50.

- Explore opportunities to rationalise multiple payment pathways to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements
- Embed formal governance mechanisms in future arrangements
- Commit to an agreement level evaluation plan agreed at the design stage
- Building on existing work, incorporate greater emphasis on Aboriginal-led governance, employment, workforce development and capacity building

Schedule 3: Alcohol

The objective of the Alcohol Schedule is to improve the health and safety of remote Aboriginal communities in the NT through:

- Alcohol Action Initiatives (AAI) (practical, locally supported educational, diversionary, cultural and/ or recreational activities, designed to reduce alcohol-related harm)
- An AAI workforce (the workforce to develop and deliver AAIs)
- an Individual Support Program (ISP) (an outreach and referral programs for people who are homeless or visitors from remote communities who are vulnerable to alcohol misuse)
- an Aftercare Treatment Service (ATS) (in community support for up to 6 months for people exiting treatment for alcohol misuse)
- a Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce (RAODW) (a local workforce which provides health-related services to reduce alcohol and other drug-related harm)
- Liquor Licence Compliance (a risk-based compliance program to monitor whether licensed premises comply with their license conditions)

The term of the Alcohol Schedule is from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2022 with a total estimated Australian Government financial contribution of $91.588 million. Refer to Appendix D for payment details to date.

The Alcohol Schedule continues the Australian Government's investment in addressing alcohol-related harm in Aboriginal communities (particularly remote communities). Elements of Australian Government involvement in addressing alcohol-related harm can be traced back to at least the NTER in 2007 and continued under the CtG NPA, the Stronger Futures NPA and the NTRAI. [63] Australian Government involvement continued under the NTRAI because alcohol-related harm continued to have a disproportionate impact on Aboriginal peoples in the NT. Although the self-reported proportion of Aboriginal peoples who consumed excessive levels of alcohol was lower in the NT than nationally, alcohol remained a significant driver of harm.[64]

The *National Drug Strategy 2010 – 2015* was the key national strategy in existence when the Alcohol Schedule commenced. The project elements of the NTRAI included elements of this strategy. The three pillars of the *National Drug Strategy 2010 – 2015* were:

- demand reduction — preventing/delaying the uptake and preventing the misuse of alcohol and other drugs and supporting people to recover from dependence
- supply reduction — stopping or reducing the supply of illegal drugs and managing the availability of legal drugs
- harm reduction — reducing adverse economic, health and social consequences of alcohol and other drug use.[65]

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[63] Council on Federal Financial Relations (Cth), *Tackling Alcohol Abuse Implementation Plan: National Partnership on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory*, (Canberra, ACT, 2012).

[64] Council on Federal Financial Relations (Cth), *Community Safety Implementation Plan: National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment*, (Canberra, ACT, 2016).

[65] Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy (Cth), *The National Drug Strategy 2010 – 2015: A framework for action on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs,* ISBN: 978-1-74241-406-5 (Canberra, ACT, 2011), 4 – 5.

The pathway to achieving the Alcohol Schedule's objective is mapped out in the program logic below.

Table 4. Program logic

Project Element	Outcomes	Objective
Alcohol Action Initiatives	The health, safety and well-being of remote Aboriginal communities are improved through the prevention of alcohol-related harms and an increase in remote communities' capacity, local governance, and leadership in managing alcohol harms.	Improve the health and safety of remote Aboriginal communities in the NT.
Alcohol Action Initiatives workforce		
Individual Support Program	The health, safety and well-being of remote Aboriginal communities are increased through sustained behavior change away from harmful use of alcohol.	
Aftercare Treatment Services		
Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce	The health, safety and well-being of remote Aboriginal communities are increased through the treatment and rehabilitation for harmful use of alcohol for individuals from remote communities; and a workforce with increased capacity to deliver support services to address alcohol and other substance abuse.	
Liquor License Compliance	The health, safety and well-being of remote Aboriginal communities are increased through licensed establishments in regional and remote locations complying with their license conditions.	Improve the health and safety of remote Aboriginal communities in the NT.

The objective in the Alcohol Schedule is framed as a high-level aspiration. There are four outcomes which are designed to contribute to the objective. Six project elements are designed to produce the outcomes. There are many contributors to the outcomes and the objectives outlined in the Agreement, including policy and programs across health, justice and well-being portfolios. The Alcohol Schedule reporting and monitoring is confined to the project elements and outputs. It does not provide a framework for testing the program logic because it does not measure outcomes or establish a method for identifying whether the outputs correlate with the outcomes or objectives (by controlling for other influences). An Implementation Plan level program logic which establishes a framework for testing the collective impact of all four Schedules would provide greater insight into whether the objective is achieved.

Effectiveness

Outputs

To date the NT delivered all outputs (activities) as intended in accordance with the milestones in the Alcohol Schedule. As a result, the NT Government received the full milestone payments under the Implementation Plans each financial year. There is one further reporting period for 2021 – 22. See Appendix E for achievements against milestones completed over the operating period.

The Alcohol Schedule structure provides for the assessment of the effectiveness of outputs based on adherence to timeframes and volume of activities or services required by the Schedule. The Schedule does not include reporting requirements in order to assess the quality of the outputs which contribute to the program logic.

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The NT Government delivers AAIs to address alcohol related-supply, demand and harm in target communities in accordance with an agreed program of works. It is also required to develop an AAI workforce. Between 2016 and 2020, communities with AAIs increased from 23 communities to around 56 communities.[66] The NT delivered a range of AAIs including cultural activities, recreational activities, festivals, media, art, technology and educational workshops.[67]

The NT Government delivers the ISP in two regional centres. The ISP is delivered by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations in Katherine and Alice Springs.[68] ISP provides outreach, direct support and case management to people living rough and visitors from remote communities vulnerable to alcohol misuse. The ISP works with a range of health, allied health, not-for-profit, Aboriginal and Government organisations to refer people to access services including but not limited to alcohol and other drug services, housing support, and financial counselling.

The NT Government offers an ATS to all people exiting from treatment for substance misuse or Alcohol Mandatory Treatment and delivers it to all clients who consent. Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations deliver ATS. It involves in community support for up to 6 months after a person is discharged from substance misuse treatment or, in the past, alcohol mandatory treatment.[69] ATS co-ordinates a mix of therapeutic, social and cultural support, monitoring, crisis intervention and ongoing care coordination. In 2018, the NT Government moved to a continuing care model which provides 'ongoing monitoring and support provided over the longer term, until addiction can be effectively self-managed.'[70]

Service Delivery Highlight: Alcohol Action Initiative

In 2020 two thousand community members from Wugularr, Barunga, Manyallaluk, Jilkminggan, Ngukurr and Borroloola participated in 44 community events hosted by Roper Gulf Regional Council. This AAI brought family members together during alcohol free community events including a visit from 'Deadly Cuts' who provided cool haircuts to youth, disco nights and cooking classes, plus many more. The project was positively received and gave a range of local service provider's opportunities to engage constructively with community members.

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[66] Northern Territory Government (NTG), *The NTRAI 2020 Milestone Report for Alcohol Schedule* (internal document), (Darwin, NT 2021), 2.

[67] Northern Territory Government, "Attachment A: Alcohol Action Initiatives Reporting Updates" in *the NTRAI 2019 Milestone Report for Alcohol Schedule* (internal document), (Darwin, NT 2020), 11.

[68] Donna Stephens et al., *Demand Study for Alcohol Treatment Services in the Northern Territory*, (Darwin, NT: Menzies School of Health Research, 2019), 15.

[69] Ibid.

[70] NTG, *The NTRAI 2020 Milestone Report for Alcohol Schedule,* 7.

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The NT Government implements a RAODW in at least 18 communities. The RAODW operates predominantly through primary health care centres.[71] The RAODW provides clinical intervention and management of alcohol and other drug misuse in communities. It involves providing health-related services to reduce alcohol misuse such as supporting treatment, community education and working with the AAI workforce. It also involves facilitating a supported and skilled local RAODW through best-practice recruitment and professional development.

The NT Government employs licensing inspectors, implements a liquor licence compliance program and ensures 90 per cent of licensed premises inspected are compliant. The liquor licence inspectors are employed to boost education, advise and engage with liquor licensees. The liquor license compliance program follows a risk-based regulatory licensing and compliance approach.

The performance reporting milestones requires the NT Government to provide a description of the activity undertaken. It also requires the NT Government to report on the number and percentage of Aboriginal employees. The milestones provide limited targets and limited insight into the quality of activities and whether it is on track to achieving outcomes. In some cases, targets provide a useful measure of progress. The performance milestones could be strengthened by clear indicators of quality, targets around the uptake rate of activities, the employment rate and level of qualifications of Aboriginal workers.[72]

Efficiency

Through the management of the Agreement both governments identified barriers to the delivery of the Alcohol Schedule outputs and implemented enablers where changes were required.

Community involvement in the development and delivery of outputs enabled service delivery. For example, the AAI workforce held workshops with community members to identify initiatives needed to address alcohol-related harm. Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisations deliver ISP and ATS. RAODW predominantly employ staff who identify as Aboriginal. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Drug Strategy notes the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs sector is uniquely placed to ensure 'holistic, comprehensive and culturally appropriate services'.[73] Their expert understanding in community health and alcohol and other drug issues is integral.[74]

Liquor licence compliance checks provide touch points for strong engagement and improved relationships with communities and NT Police. They have identified licensed premises at risk of non-compliance which may require future inspections. Regular reporting enables the identification of seasonal or cyclical trends, allowing Licensing NT to work with local communities and NT Police to address breaches.

The requirement for the Australian Government to approve AAI program of works is unclear in its intention. It provides an opportunity for regional based Australian Government staff to work collaboratively with the NT Government regional staff in the development of AAIs. However, it has the potential to undermine community ownership and autonomy to shape and place services.

Recruitment is an ongoing concern for RAODW in remote areas, particularly during dry season as people leave work to fulfil cultural obligations. In response, the NT Government developed a film to boost recruitment and the number of staff who identify as Aboriginal. [75]

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[71] Stephens et al., *Demand Study for Alcohol Treatment Services in the Northern Territory,* (Darwin, NT: Menzies School of Health Research, 2019), 15.
[72] Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (Cth), *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Drug Strategy 2014–2019: A sub-strategy of the National Drug Strategy 2010–2015*, (Canberra, ACT, 2014), 33 – 34.
[73] Ibid., 9.
[74] Ibid., 9.
[75] NTG, *The NTRAI 2019 Milestone Report for Alcohol Schedule,* 11.

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Accessing collated wholesale consumption data to inform a risk-based approach to tackling alcohol compliance is difficult. The need to cross reference the information with Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) statistics caused delays. Dated ABS statistics make it difficult to form a current proactive approach. This is further compounded by an NT Government system which requires manual data extraction.

The Australian Government contributes to alcohol and other drug services through multiple funding pathways. The NIAA, through the IAS, and the Health portfolio supports the delivery of alcohol and other drug treatment services.[76] There may be opportunity to rationalise multiple payment pathways to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements.

Appropriateness

Reducing alcohol-related harm in Aboriginal communities continues to be a priority for both governments.

Alcohol use and alcohol-related harm is significantly higher per capita in the NT than in any other state or territory and affects both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.[77] The data is unclear on the extent to which alcohol-related harm impacts Aboriginal peoples in remote communities. This is a clear barrier to developing policy interventions which could be improved at a place-based level and linked to targets.

At a national level, the Australian Government's role is to develop national strategies and fund programs and research. The Australian Government has a long-term focus on reducing the health, social and economic harms associated with alcohol. This is evidenced by the *National Drug Strategy 2017 – 2026* which serves to identify 'nationally agreed priorities which governments will work collaboratively in coordinated, multi-agency approaches to develop and deliver jurisdictional responses that seek to prevent and minimise the harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.'[78]

The Australian Government has some additional powers in the NT under the *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012* (SFNT Act) which it does not have in any other jurisdiction. The SFNT Act gives the Australian Government Minister for Indigenous Australians the power to extend area-based alcohol bans, approve alcohol management plans, modify alcohol licenses and permits, trigger assessments of licensed premises and review alcohol legislation in the NT. The SFNT Act and the Australian Government's corresponding powers are due to sunset on 17 July 2022.

Alcohol management is primarily the NT Government's responsibility. This means the NT Government is responsible for introducing initiatives to reduce alcohol-related harm and managing liquor licenses and permits. The NT Government's recent focus has been on the NT Alcohol Policies and Legislation Reform in response to the 2017 Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review.[79] The reforms included a re-write of the NT Liquor Act, reinstating an independent liquor commission, a minimum unit price on alcohol to reduce the consumption of cheap wine products, the Banned Drinkers Register and Police Auxiliary Liquor Inspectors.[80]

The NT Alcohol Policy and legislation reform captured through the *Alcohol Harm Minimisation Action Plan 2018 – 2019* demonstrates a concerted effort by the NT Government to minimise alcohol-related harm. The four key areas of the plan were[81]:

1. strengthening community responses-healthy communities and effective and accessible treatment

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[76] Department of Health (Cth), *Preventive health-alcohol and other drugs,* (Canberra, ACT, 2021), 1–2.
[77] Nicholas Taylor et al., "The impact of a minimum unit price on wholesale alcohol supply trends in the Northern Territory, Australia," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 45, no. 1 (2021): 26; "Deaths Due to Harmful Alcohol Consumption in Australia," Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed June 30, 2021, https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/3303.0~2017~Main%20Features~Deaths%20due%20to%20harmful%20alcohol%20consumption%20in%20Australia~4.
[78] Department of Health (Cth), *National Drug Strategy 2017–2026*, (Canberra, ACT, 2017), 9.
[79] "Northern Territory Alcohol Policies and Legislation Reform: The Northern Territory Alcohol Harm Minimisation Publications," Northern Territory Government, accessed May 7, 2021, https://alcoholreform.nt.gov.au/publications.
[80] Northern Territory Government, *Northern Territory Alcohol Harm Minimisation Action Plan 2018 – 2019*,(Darwin, NT, 2018), 1,8, 10–11, 15.
[81] Ibid., 3.

2. effective liquor regulation
3. research, data and evaluation
4. comprehensive, collaborative and coordinated approach by Government.

The objectives and types of activities in the Alcohol Schedule are generally oriented with best practice. There is potential to revise the focus of some outputs to strengthen alignment with best practice and national policies.

The NT Government is undertaking an evaluation of AAIs which will provide greater insight into their alignment with evidence. The timing of the evaluation does not correspond with this Review. Reporting could support greater accountability on Aboriginal workforce capacity for AAIs, using targets related to training pathways and employment. These also provide output assessments linked to quality of service. [82]

In accordance with the current National Drug Strategy, community-based treatment services and post-treatment support programs reduce alcohol demand.[83] The 2019 Demand Study for Alcohol Treatment Services in the NT found treatment based in the community is highly valued, especially for clients with mild to moderate needs.[84] The study noted areas which require additional focus including greater treatment for mild and moderate needs, screening and brief intervention.[85] Based on data from 2016 – 17 about 30 per cent of people (2000 people) who required treatment did not receive it.[86]

According to the National Drug Strategy, the liquor license compliance activities should reduce alcohol supply through strong enforcement.[87] It should also reduce harm by promoting responsible venue operations.[88] The NT is the only state or territory where the Australian Government funds liquor license compliance.

Recommendations from the Alcohol Schedule

- Building on existing work, incorporate greater emphasis on Aboriginal-led governance, employment, workforce development and capacity building
- Incorporate output quality indicators which, based on strong evidence of effectiveness and sound program design, demonstrate progress toward outcomes
- Revise outputs to strengthen alignment with evolving evidence
- Explore opportunities to rationalise multiple payment pathways to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements

Schedule 4: Alice Springs Transformation Plan

The objective of the Alice Springs Transformation Plan (ASTP) Schedule was to improve the safety of remote Aboriginal communities through an integrated response to family violence program and the youth and community centre program.

The term of the ASTP Schedule was from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, with a total estimated Australian Government financial contribution of $1.794 million. Refer to Appendix D for payment details. The ASTP Schedule programs under the NTRAI ran for six months from 1 July 2015 until 31 December 2015.

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[82] Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (Cth), *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Drug Strategy 2014–2019: A sub-strategy of the National Drug Strategy 2010–2015*, 19.
[83] Department of Health (Cth), *National Drug Strategy 2017–2026*, 37.
[84] Stephens et al, *Demand Study for Alcohol Treatment Services in the Northern Territory*, 10.
[85] Ibid., 7, 9.
[86] Ibid., 7.
[87] Department of Health (Cth), *National Drug Strategy 2017–2026*, 39.
[88] Ibid., 42.

The ASTP was developed in response to the higher rates of family violence which were occurring in Alice Springs.[89] Police statistics from 2013 show Aboriginal woman in Alice Springs were 3.6 times more likely to be a victim of family violence compared to the national average monthly rate.[90] The ASTP complemented the NT Child Protection system, Family Intervention Framework, *NT Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy 2014 – 17*.

The ASTP Schedule was a continuation of initiatives commenced under the Stronger Futures NPA. Two programs continued under the NTRAI, the Integrated Response to Domestic Violence Program and the Youth and Community Centre Program. The University of New England conducted an evaluation of the ASTP programs delivered under the Stronger Futures NPA from April 2014 until March 2015.[91] This evaluation does not assess the six months the ASTP programs operated under the NTRAI but does give insight into the continuation of the funded elements. The evaluation concluded there are signs the ASTP has improved the service delivery of family violence services in Alice Springs.[92] The improved response to victims and perpetrators was achieved through an increase in services and collaboration between core agencies.[93]

The pathway to achieving the ASTP Schedule's objective is mapped out in a program logic below.

Table 5. Program logic

Project Element	Outcomes	Objectives
Integrated Response to Family Violence Program	Improved safety and wellbeing of individuals, children, families and communities through:	Improved safety of remote Aboriginal communities.
	Increased access to family violence casework and education services for women and children in Alice Springs town camps; and	
	Improved whole-of government coordination and delivery of family violence, police, court and victim support services across Alice Springs.	
	Increase local Aboriginal employment.	
Youth and Community Centre Program	Improved safety and wellbeing of individuals, children, families and communities through:	
	Increased access to early education and diversionary services for vulnerable families with children at risk of entering the NT child protection system; and	
	Increased local Aboriginal employment.	

There was a clear, logical link between the outputs and outcomes. In addition to the ASTP Schedule outputs there are many contributors to the outcomes and the objectives. Other contributing actions include a wide range of policy and programs across the safety and justice portfolios. The ATSP Schedule reporting and monitoring does not provide for the testing of the program logic. There was a single objective for all activity under the Schedule which was framed as a high-level aspiration. An

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[89] Judy Putt, Robyn Holder, and Gillian Shaw, *Alice Springs Integrated Response to Family and Domestic Violence project: Final evaluation report*, (Casuarina, NT: Territory Families (NT), 2017), 68.
[90] Ibid., 10.
[91] Ibid., 8.
[92] Ibid., 10.
[93] Ibid., 10.

Implementation Plan level program logic which establishes a framework for testing the collective impact of all four Schedules would provide greater insight into whether the objective has been achieved.

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Effectiveness

Outputs

The NT Government delivered all outputs (activities) as intended in accordance with the milestones in the ASTP Schedule. As a result, the NT Government received full milestone payments. See Appendix E for achievements against milestones completed over the operating period.

The ASTP Schedule structure provided for the assessment of the effectiveness of outputs based on adherence to timeframes and volume of activities or services required by the Schedule. The Schedule did not include reporting requirements in order to assess the quality of the outputs which contribute to the program logic.

Project element 1, the Integrated Response to Domestic Violence program, delivered a range of programs and included the Family Safety Framework (FSF), victim support and advocacy service, men's behaviour change program and community engagement. Collectively the programs and services provided an integrated service model, with support services, preventative programs and information sharing allowing relevant agencies to determine the best solution for children and families affected by family violence. The FSF was developed to ensure safety was at the centre of the response to family violence and to improve co-ordination amongst agencies. The FSF included an interagency referral process, information sharing protocols, a risk assessment tool, training for staff and fortnightly family safety meetings with agencies delivering family violence services. The FSF assisted agencies to work collaboratively to determine actions to reduce the risk of family violence to each individual or family referred to a family safety meeting and monitor the progress in improving safety. Victim support and advocacy services operated to support victims of family violence going through the Court of Summary Jurisdiction.

Project element 2, the Youth and Community Centre program required the NT Government to run community programs through the Gap Youth Community Centre. The NT Government ran a range of programs and activities including but not limited to Playgroup, Women's Group, Men's Music Group, Family Night, and a range of sporting, arts, and recreational activities.

Reporting on this Schedule was minimal. Reporting was on the number of services and descriptions on collaboration. This corresponds to the length of activity — the Schedule funded 6 months activity and had been previously evaluated. The Review notes the opportunity to improve the quality of reporting requirements. Inclusion of a baseline or targets and quality indicators would have provided an assessment framework for reporting on the Schedule outputs.

Efficiency

Due to the limited information available on the ASTP Schedule this Review cannot assess the efficiency of the outputs.

Appropriateness

The ASTP Schedule objective still aligns with both governments' priorities. Both governments are committed to continuing to improve the safety and wellbeing of individuals, children, families, and communities in Alice Springs. Both governments support a range of activities to achieve this objective. This includes preventative programs, support services and coordinated responses to family violence.

The Australian Government has made substantial contribution to support victims of family violence since at least 2007. The Australian Government also support preventative programs. This is evident in the Council of Australian Governments' *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022*, a long-term strategy to reduce family violence across Australia. The *Third Action Plan 2016 – 2019 of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against women and their children 2010 – 2022* includes the implementation of evidence-based and culturally appropriate men's behaviour change programs and interventions for perpetrators, in Central Australia and the Top End of the NT.

The *Northern Territory's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018 – 2028: Safe, respected and free from violence* identifies areas of action. One of the NT Government's priorities is to improve the safety, experience and outcomes for people affected by family violence by trialling a specialist approach to family violence in the Alice Springs Local

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Court.[94] This action aims to make progress on the outcome of holding perpetrators accountable and prompting them to change their behaviours and reduce violence.[95]

Family violence is a complex issue, so an integrated response is the best solution.[96] Integrated responses to family violence include systems to hold perpetrators accountable, support and protection for victims and survivors of family violence and building community knowledge and awareness of family violence.[97] Men's behaviour change programs continue to be best practice as a preventative and rehabilitative measure to reducing re-offence rates.[98] Research concludes information sharing and shared case management is an effective mechanism for preventing the re-victimisation of people.[99] Information sharing removes barriers so service providers can work together to provide timely support to victims and survivors of family violence.[100] Place-based services are best practice for family violence programs.[101]

Recommendations from the Alice Springs Transformation Strategy Schedule

- Incorporate output quality indicators which, based on strong evidence of effectiveness and sound program design, demonstrate progress toward outcomes

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[94] Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (NT), *Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018–2028 Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Action Plan 1: Changing Attitudes, Intervening Earlier and Responding Better (2018–2021)*, 12.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Cripps, *Implementation Options and Evaluation of Integrated Service Model Responses to Address Family Violence in Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities*, 2.
[97] Ibid., 3.
[98] Ibid., 2.
[99] Brown, "Hopeful, Together, Strong: Principles of good practice to prevent violence against women in the Northern Territory", 15.
[100] Kate Worden (Minister for Territory Families and Urban Housing), *Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework*, media release, June 17, 2021.
[101] NTG, *Safe, Thriving and Connected: Generational Change for Children and Families*, 15.

Assessment of the Remote Australian Strategies Implementation Plan

This Remote Australian Strategies (RAS) Implementation Plan supports the health and safety of remote communities, increased access to interpreters and job opportunities in the Northern Territory (NT) through:

- upgrades for public housing which complements the capital works schedule being rolled out under the *National Partnership on Remote Housing*
- risk management, remediation, and removal of dangerous asbestos and asbestos containing material from community buildings
- improving the quality of Aboriginal language interpreting services.

The Implementation Plan contains three Schedules:

- Housing
- Asbestos Removal from Community Buildings
- Aboriginal Interpreter Service

Each Schedule contains a program logic which establishes a connection between project elements, outputs, outcomes and objectives. Assessments under each Schedule provide detail on whether the program logic has been tested, and how reporting has contributed to the evidence base on what improves outcomes in remote Aboriginal communities.

Schedule 1: Housing

The objective of the Housing Schedule was to improve the health and safety of remote Aboriginal communities through housing upgrades in remote locations across the NT. This Schedule intended to complement the capital works program rolled out as part of the *National Partnership on Remote Housing* (NPRH).

The term of the Housing Schedule was from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2018. A variation was put in place to extend the Schedule to 30 June 2019 because of delays to the delivery of activities beyond the control of the NT Government. The total estimated Australian Government financial contribution for the Schedule was $141.641 million, refer to Appendix D for payment details.

The activity under this Schedule aligned with the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)* targets. In 2008, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to six targets for closing the gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage relating to life expectancy, child mortality, access to early childhood education, educational attainment and employment outcomes. Safe and appropriate housing was identified as a fundamental requirement for addressing these issues.

The Australian Government has investment in remote housing in the NT since at least the NTER in 2007 which includes stand-alone housing National Partnership Agreements, and elements under the *National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory* (Stronger Futures NPA). Funding continued under *National Partnership on Remote Aboriginal Investment* (the NTRAI or the Agreement) the NTRAI in recognition of the significant need and poor conditions of existing dwellings across the NT and the challenges of addressing an infrastructure deficit which existed prior to self-government.

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The pathway to achieving the Housing Schedule's objective is mapped out in a program logic below.

Table 6. Program logic

Project Element	Outcomes	Objectives
Housing	Improved housing in remote communities, through increased durability and amenity of existing houses in remote communities to optimise the useful life of the assets and ensure houses are safe and secure.	Improve the health and safety of remote Aboriginal Communities.
	Increased local Aboriginal employment.	

There is a clear and logical link between housing upgrades and improved housing, health and safety. Housing is a key social determinate of health with evidence already in place to support a direct association between poor-quality housing and poor physical and mental health.[102]

The RAS Implementation Plan outlined Aboriginal Employment targets for the Housing Schedule will be consistent with the targets set in the NPRH. Reporting and payment for achievement against these Aboriginal employment targets was administered through NPRH.

Effectiveness

Outputs

The NT Government delivered all outputs (activities) as intended in accordance with the milestones in the Housing Schedule. As a result, the NT Government received the full milestone payments under the Schedule. See Appendix E for achievement against milestones completed over the operational period.

The NT Government was required to upgrade a total of 1009 houses over the life of the Agreement in accordance with an agreed Capital Works Schedule. The Schedule also allowed for new builds and housing related infrastructure as required, within the existing level of funding available and subject to the written agreement of relevant Australian Government and NT Ministers. This provision was not used during the Agreement.

The Housing Schedule structure provided for the assessment of the effectiveness of outputs based on adherence to timeframes and volume of activities or services required by the Capital Works Schedule. The Schedule did not include reporting requirements in order to assess the quality of the outputs.

Efficiency

The NT Government faced several barriers to complete upgrades within the timeframes specified in the Schedule, resulting in a one-year extension to the Schedule. The delay in the NT Government meeting the original milestone was due to a lack of secure land tenure, seasonal impacts, and infrastructure requirements. Ministers from both governments agreed on a variation to the Schedule which included a one-year extension until 30 June 2019, formalised through a co-signed letter, providing an example of where flexibility has overcome barriers to achievement.

Having housing activity under two National Partnership Agreements creates inefficiencies in reporting and payments. However, this barrier was somewhat mitigated through the management of the Schedule. The NPRH NT Joint Steering Committee was used as the governance committee for both agreements, enabling cross-government engagement and the smooth rollout of activity under the Schedule. However, funding and reporting remained separate. This Review recognises rationalisation of multiple payment pathways would provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements.

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[102] "Social determinants of health," Institute of Health and Welfare, accessed July 30, 2021
https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/social-determinants-of-health

Appropriateness

Housing in remote Aboriginal communities is still at the forefront of both Government's current priorities. The highest levels of overcrowding in homes in Australia occur in remote NT. Aboriginal peoples make up 99 per cent of remote public housing tenancies in the NT.[103] In 2019, 54 per cent of homes in remote Aboriginal communities were considered overcrowded.[104]

Prior to expiry of the NTRAI, in March 2019, both governments entered into a new National Partnership Agreement for remote housing in the NT. Under this partnership, the Australian Government has matched the NT Government funding contribution, providing $550 million each over five years (2018–23), to help address overcrowding through the NT Government's Remote Housing Investment Package: Our Community. Our Future. The NT Government's initiative is a $1.1 billion investment over ten years (2017-2027), which 'focuses on local decision making and engagement with communities, developing the capacity of Aboriginal business enterprises, and creating sustainable Aboriginal Employment.'[105]

In December 2019, the NT Government released *A home for all Territorians Northern Territory Housing Strategy 2020 –2025* (NT Housing Strategy 2020-25), which 'aims to improve outcomes for all Territorians across the whole housing system, including social and affordable housing, provide rental and home ownership in urban, regional and remote communities' and 'provides a strategic framework for future activity and sets the direction for the housing system in the NT.'[106] This strategy acknowledges existing housing initiatives and reform directions, including the current National Partnership Agreement with the Australian Government, however, does not include reference to the current *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* as this was finalised after the NT Housing Strategy 2020-25 was developed.

The current *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* includes housing amongst its 17 key national socio-economic targets to improve life outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The housing target is based on the outcome 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need', and a target set 'By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent.'[107]

Recommendations from the Housing Schedule

- Explore opportunities to rationalise multiple payment pathways to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements

Schedule 2: Asbestos

The objective of the Asbestos Removal from Community Buildings Schedule (Asbestos Schedule) was to improve health and safety of remote community residents through asbestos and asbestos containing material (ACM) risk management, remediation and removal from community buildings. Examples of community buildings include churches, stores, art centres and community halls.

The term of the Asbestos Schedule was from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 with a total estimated Australian Government financial contribution of $4.225 million. Refer to Appendix D for payment details.

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[103] Council on Federal Financial Relations, 'Schedule E8 – Northern Territory National Housing and Homelessness Agreement', *National Housing and Homelessness Agreement*, (Canberra, ACT, 2018), 2.
[104] Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (NT), *A Home for All Territorians Northern Territory Housing Strategy 2020–2025*, (Darwin, NT, 2019), 9.
[105] "About the Program," *Our Community. Our Future. Out Homes.,* Northern Territory Government, accessed June 1, 2021, https://ourfuture.nt.gov.au/about-the-program.
[106] Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (NT), *A Home for All Territorians Northern Territory Housing Strategy 2020–2025*, (Darwin, NT, 2019), 5.
[107] Joint Council on Closing the Gap, *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, 30.

This Asbestos Schedule was a continuation of initiatives under the Stronger Futures NPA which was scheduled to finish 30 June 2016. When the NTRAI replaced the Stronger Futures NPA in May 2016, two months of delivery and one payment were included to conclude this program under the NTRAI.

The pathway to achieving the Asbestos Schedule's objective is mapped out in a program logic below.

Table 7. Program logic

Project Element	Outcomes	Objectives
Asbestos and ACM risk management, remediation and removal from other community buildings.	Improved health of individuals, children and families.	Improved health and safety of remote community residents.
Publishing a matrix to show locations of Asbestos Management Plans to assist asset owners to meet their obligations.	Improved safety and wellbeing of individuals, children and families and communities.	

The Housing and Asbestos Schedules have the same high-level objective relating to improved health and safety of remote communities. There is a clear and logical link between Asbestos and ACM risk management, remediation and removal, and improved health and safety.

Effectiveness

Outputs

The NT Government delivered all outputs (activities) as intended in accordance with the milestones in the Asbestos Schedule. As a result, the NT Government received the full milestone payments under the Schedule. See Appendix E for achievement against milestones completed over the operational period.

Efficiency

The reporting provided by the NT Government was an enabler for effective communication between both governments and identified efficiencies in the implementation of the program. The NT Government was required to provide the Australian Government with six-monthly progress reports on completions of agreed activities as set out in the Asbestos Management Plan. A 'close out and handover' report on the program was also undertaken by Coffey Project Management, on behalf of the NT Government. While not a requirement under the NTRAI or the Asbestos Schedule, the report contained a detailed breakdown of how the funding was spent, the number of staff involved in each stage of the program and the amount of asbestos removed from each community over the duration of the project. The financial reporting provided transparency in expenditure and revealed costs savings which, could support an assessment on value for money if it were an established reporting requirement.

The NT Government used remaining funds from the Agreement to produce and distribute an educational documentary aimed at promoting awareness of asbestos in remote communities and highlighting local training and employment opportunities achieved. While this was not specified in the Schedule as a deliverable, this was a key achievement in line with the objectives of the Implementation Plan and demonstrates the benefits of providing flexibility in the use of funds to achieve objectives.

Appropriateness

The NT Government is responsible for the management and removal of asbestos in the NT, including in remote communities. The funding provided through the NTRAI (and Stronger Futures NPA) was a one-off injection of funds which focused on removing 'immediate' and 'medium' risk asbestos and ACM, from community buildings. Following this one-off injection of funding, asbestos removal in NT communities continued to be the responsibly of NT Government, in line with other states and territories.

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The current *Asbestos Management Policy and Strategy for the Northern Territory Government* 'aims to ensure a safe and healthy work environment and best practice in the management of asbestos containing materials for government-controlled buildings and contaminated land.'[108] This plan was aligned with the *National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Management and Awareness 2014 – 2018*.

Recommendations from the Asbestos Schedule

Due to the truncated timeframes of delivery under the NTRAI, no recommendations have been made.

Schedule 3: Aboriginal Interpreter Service

The objective of the Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) Schedule is to increase access to interpreter services, and job opportunities for adults.

The term of the AIS Schedule is from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2022 with a total estimated Australian Government financial contribution of $25.249 million. Refer to Appendix D for payments details to date.

The NT is recognised as one of the most linguistically rich regions globally.[109] There are more than 100 Aboriginal languages spoken in the NT.[110] Roughly 60 per cent of the 58,000 Aboriginal peoples living in the NT speak an Aboriginal language as their first language at home.[111] Aboriginal peoples in the NT face a range of barriers to accessing equitable and effective services, this includes communication barriers.[112] It is agreed across governments and internationally 'equitable service delivery can only be effectively undertaken in a language in which the client is proficient.'[113] Aboriginal interpreters are vital for ensuring Aboriginal peoples can effectively engage with, receive equitable access to services and make informed decisions. [114] Often Aboriginal peoples in the NT make use of unofficial, untrained interpreters such as family or friends. This can lead to misinterpretation and privacy issues.[115]

The AIS Schedule seeks to address barriers to access and delivery of services to improve the health, safety, and economic outcomes of Aboriginal peoples. The use of interpreters does not only resolve barriers of comprehension, it can also improve the uptake of services, clinical outcomes, and satisfaction of care.[116] The use of interpreters with a formal accreditation is a priority of both governments to ensure accurate and ethical interpreting is readily available.

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[108] Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (NT), *Asbestos Management Policy and Strategy for the Northern Territory Government*, (Darwin, NT, 2019), 4.

[109] Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (NT), *Northern Territory Aboriginal Languages Services Policy 2019–2023: Connecting to Culture, Connecting to Country Connecting to Community*, (Darwin, NT, 2019), 11.

[110] "Aboriginal languages in NT*,"* Northern Territory Government, accessed May 27, 2021, https://nt.gov.au/community/interpreting-and-translating-services/aboriginal-interpreter-service/aboriginal-languages-in-nt.

[111] Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (NT), *Northern Territory Aboriginal Languages Services Policy 2019–2023,* 1.

[112] Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (NT), *Northern Territory Aboriginal Languages Services Policy 2019–2023,* 9; Vincent Mithen et al., "Aboriginal patient and interpreter perspectives on the delivery of culturally safe hospital-based care," *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* 32, no. 1 (August 2020): 2, DOI:10.1002/hpja.415.

[113] Ombudsman NT, *Strangers in their own land: use of Aboriginal Interpreters by NT public authorities*, (Darwin, NT, 2018), 2.

[114] Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (NT), *Northern Territory Aboriginal Languages Services Policy 2019–2023,* 2.

[115] Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (NT), *Northern Territory Aboriginal Languages Services Policy 2019–2023,* 7; Anna P. Ralph et al., "Low uptake of Aboriginal interpreters in healthcare: exploration of Aboriginal Medical Services," *BMC Health Services Research* 17, no. 733 (November 2017): 7.

[116] Ralph et al., "Low uptake of Aboriginal interpreters in healthcare: exploration of current use in Australia's Northern Territory," *BMC Health Services Research* 17, no. 733 (November 2017): 1; Vincent Mithen et al., "Aboriginal patient and interpreter perspectives on the delivery of culturally safe hospital-based care," *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* 32, no. 1 (August 2020): 2, DOI:10.1002/hpja.415.

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The AIS was established in the NT in 2000 and has been running for 20 years.[117] The Australian Government has contributed to the operation of the AIS for approximately 14 years.

The pathway to achieving the AIS Schedule's objective is mapped out in the program logic below.

Table 8. Program logic

Project Element	Outcomes	Objectives
Aboriginal Interpreter Service	Increased access to interpreter services and job opportunities through strengthened accessibility, availability and capability of Aboriginal language interpreting services in the majority of Aboriginal languages in the NT. Increased local Aboriginal employment across all levels of the interpreter workforce. A more self-sustaining service delivery model for Aboriginal language interpreting.	Increased access to interpreter services, and job opportunities for adults.

The program logic provides a clear, logical link between the outputs and outcomes. The outcomes are appropriate achievements for outputs. The AIS objective is measurable and has a direct link to the project element, outputs and outcomes. The AIS Schedule required 6 monthly reporting. The reporting requirements do not provide for the testing of the program logic.

Effectiveness

Outputs

To date the NT Government has delivered all outputs (activities) as intended in accordance with the milestones under the AIS Schedule. The AIS Schedule outputs include increasing the supply of qualified Aboriginal interpreters, providing AIS in the majority of language groups across the NT, increasing the AIS in communities, meeting the Aboriginal employment target of 95 per cent and providing training, accreditation, and career development opportunities for the Aboriginal interpreting workforce.

The AIS has long been a large employer of Aboriginal peoples.[118] This Review recognises to date the NT Government met the Aboriginal employment target of 95 per cent over the life of the Schedule.

The AIS Schedule structure provides for the assessment of the effectiveness of outputs based on adherence to timeframes and volume of activities or services required by the Schedule. The Schedule does not include reporting requirements in order to assess the quality of the outputs which contribute to the program logic.

Output reporting relates to one milestone. The milestone is to deliver services for the operational period, with no targets or quality measures. Further reporting under the Schedule provides information on the characteristics of the service being delivered. There is an absence of agreed targets, requirements, or financial incentives to shape or improve the characteristics. Agreed targets and quality indicators for service characteristics would drive continuous improvement of services.

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[117] Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (NT), *Northern Territory Aboriginal Languages Services Policy 2019–2023,* 11.
[118] Ibid.

Outcomes

Outcome reporting relates to one performance benchmark. The outcome focuses on strengthened accessibility, availability, and capability of Aboriginal language interpreting services in the majority of Aboriginal languages in the NT. The performance benchmark measures the capability element of the outcome by trying to increase the proportion of services provided by qualified interpreters. The performance benchmark requires an incremental increase in the percentage of interpreting hours provided by an accredited/qualified interpreter. The NT Government met most of the performance benchmarks. Performance benchmarks were not met in the second reporting cycle for 2018 or the reporting cycle for 2019. The Australian Government Minister for Indigenous Australians and the NT Chief Minister agreed this was due to external factors, and payment was made to the NT Government for those reporting periods. To date all payments have been made. See Appendix E for achievements against milestones completed over the operating period.

This Review recognises over the life of the Schedule the percentage of interpreting hours provided by accredited/qualified interpreters has risen from 49 per cent in 2015 to nearly 82 per cent in 2020 (see Appendix E). This Review notes the significant increase is partially due to changes to the required accreditation level for interpreters during the life of the AIS Schedule.

The performance benchmark reporting would be strengthened with additional measures and targets on accessibility and availability. This Review notes the further reporting (noted above) relates to accessibility and availability however in the absence of targets there is no framework to assess the contribution toward outcomes.

Over time outcome measures could evolve so the impact of interpreter services on individual engagements with services and systems could be assessed.

Efficiency

Through the management of the Agreement both governments identified barriers to the delivery of the AIS Schedule outputs and implemented enablers where changes were required.

In 2019 the NT Government identified barriers which restricted interpreters from obtaining accreditation due to reduced training and assessment availability. This limited the NT Government's ability to meet the milestones of the AIS Schedule. On 17 June 2020, the Australian Government Minister for Indigenous Australians and the NT Chief Minister agreed to change the definition of qualified interpreter from a diploma to a level 3 accreditation requirement. Level 3 attainment is consistent with the qualification and training level required by NT justice, health and welfare systems. This enabled the continuation of the delivery of AIS outputs.

The barriers restraining interpreters from obtaining accreditation as per the Schedule requirements were temporary. In future, consideration should be given to whether strengthened pathways to accreditation are required to meet the service quality expectations.

Appropriateness

The AIS Schedule objective to improve the accessibility of AIS is still a priority for both governments. Ultimately, the provision of interpreter services for citizens is a jurisdictional responsibility.

In addition to the NTRAI, the Australian Government provides funding for AIS through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, to support the delivery of:

- legal interpreter services (30 November 2018 to 30 June 2022), and
- cross-border interpreter services (1 July 2018 to 30 June 2023).

There may be opportunity to rationalise multiple payment pathways to streamline monitoring and reporting requirements.

Currently, the NT Government has a range of strategies which require the continuation and improvement of the AIS. In *Everyone Together: Aboriginal Affairs Strategy 2019 – 29* the NT Government set a measure to increase the number of

qualified Aboriginal interpreters employed on a full-time basis.[119] The NT Government's *Connecting to Culture, Connecting to Country, Connecting to Community — the Northern Territory Aboriginal Languages Services Policy 2019 – 2023* aims to:

- ensure all speakers of Aboriginal languages are afforded the right to communicate with government through their languages by using a qualified interpreter
- ensure there is equal support for all Aboriginal languages across the NT
- demonstrate all Aboriginal languages are valued
- celebrate and promote the vitality and maintenance of all Aboriginal languages by supporting language work.[120]

The provision of Aboriginal interpreters is still considered the best approach to ensuring people who speak an Aboriginal language as their primary language receive equitable services.[121]

The NT Government is undertaking a review of the AIS to explore future service delivery models which take into consideration current demand and future growth of the service, including enhancing career paths and options for Aboriginal interpreters. It is anticipated the review will be completed in late 2021 for consideration and implementation.

The *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* represents an ongoing shared commitment between the Australian Government, states and territories and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to culture and language. As part of Priority Reform One - Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making, parties to the agreement are committed to establishing a joined-up approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.[122] These commitments are complemented by socio-economic target 16 under the agreement: 'By 2031, there is sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken'.[123] This target also includes a data development action item to measure the number of people employed as translators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

Recommendations from the Aboriginal Interpreter Service Schedule

- Incorporate output quality indicators which, based on strong evidence of effectiveness and sound program design, demonstrate progress toward outcomes
- Consider whether strengthened pathways to accreditation are required to meet the service quality expectations
- Explore opportunities to rationalise multiple payment pathways to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements

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[119] Office of Aboriginal Affairs (NT), *Everyone Together: Aboriginal Affairs Strategy 2019–2029*, (Darwin, NT, 2020), 12.
[120] Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (NT), *Northern Territory Aboriginal Languages Services Policy 2019–2023,* 3.
[121] Ibid., 2.
[122] Joint Council on Closing the Gap, *National Agreement on Closing the Gap,* 5 – 7.
[123] Ibid., 40.

Assessment of the Children and Schooling Implementation Plans

There have been two Children and Schooling Implementation Plans, Implementation Plan 1 (2015 – 18) and Implementation Plan 2 (2018 – 21). They were both designed to contribute to the NTRAI outcomes of improved school readiness, attendance, educational achievement and attainment, engagement and educational achievement through the following activities:

- Foundations activities including Families as First Teachers (an early learning and family support program for Aboriginal families), an early years developmental assessment tool and an adult literacy program
- Essentials activities including literacy and numeracy assessments and programs
- Pathways activities including a transition support unit to support remote Aboriginal students into secondary school pathways and a post primary on-site continuing education program
- Engagement activities including community engagement efforts, positive behaviour and well-being programs and case management
- Workforce activities including workforce capability development efforts, mentoring and accredited training for Aboriginal assistant teachers
- Capital works to improve accommodation for teachers.

The total estimated financial contribution by the Australian Government was $235.545 million.[124] See Appendix D for payments to date, noting there is one reporting period remaining.

The Implementation Plans were consistent with the education targets in the previous Closing the Gap framework related to early childhood education enrolment, school attendance, reading, writing and numeracy results and year 12 attainment.[125]

The Implementation Plans also align with the Northern Territory (NT) Government's *A share in the future: Indigenous Education Strategy 2015- 2024* (NT Indigenous Education Strategy). The NT Indigenous Education Strategy was developed in response to a review of Indigenous education in the NT which reported on a continued decline in outcomes for many Aboriginal students in the NT.[126] Implementation Plan 1 aligns with Stage 1 of the NT Indigenous Education Strategy. Implementation 2 aligns with Stage 2 of the NT Indigenous Education Strategy which was informed by an external evaluation of Stage 1.[127]

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[124] The original total estimated financial contribution was $244.463 million for the entire NTRAI period. It reduced to $235.545 million when Implementation Plan 2 was introduced.
[125] Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM &C) (Cth), *Closing the Gap Report 2020*, ISBN 978-1-925364-30-9 (Darwin, NT, 2020), 23, 33, 45.
[126] Department of Education (NT), *A share in the future: Indigenous Education Strategy 2015 – 2024,* (Darwin, NT, 2014), 3.
[127] "Indigenous Education Strategy," Northern Territory Government, accessed 4 October, 2021, https://education.nt.gov.au/statistics-research-and-strategies/indigenous-education-strategy.

The pathway to achieving the Children and Schooling Implementation Plans' objective is mapped out in the program logic below.

Table 9. Program logic

Activity	Outcomes	Objective (Implementation Plan 1)	Objective (Implementation Plan 2)
Foundations	Aboriginal children entering primary school have the skills and attributes they need to succeed in their education.	Enhance the delivery of early childhood education to remote and very remote children through: • expansion of successful programs and • supporting the transitions of children and families prior to and post preschool.	Provide access to secondary education for very remote students that meets the academic and vocational aspirations of students and families. To improve the completion of secondary education of students from very remote communities in the NT.
Essentials	Aboriginal students achieve aged benchmarks in literacy and numeracy in their primary years of schooling, and plan for their secondary education with confidence.	Implement evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs in remote and very remote schools, including direct instruction in selected sites. Implement NT wide age literacy and numeracy benchmarks in remote and very remote schools. Implement policy to clarify the resources and skills required to teach first language Aboriginal students who have English as a second language.	Not applicable - fully funded by the NT.
Pathways	Aboriginal students complete schooling well-equipped to take up employment, training, and higher education opportunities.	Establishing secondary education provision in remote and provincial sites that meets the academic and vocational needs of students from very remote communities. Provide residential facilities and transition support for remote and very remote students and their families accessing secondary education in regional and urban centres. Implement options for on-site continuing education with an employment focus, including work readiness, in approved remote and very remote schools.	Provide access to secondary education for very remote students that meets the academic and vocational aspirations of students and families. To improve the completion of secondary education of students from very remote communities in the NT.
Engagement	Aboriginal children at all stages of schooling attend school regularly and are supported in the education by their families and community.	Increase enrolment and attendance of remote and very remote students through alignment of efforts (Commonwealth and NT) to improve school attendance.	Increase community engagement, including with relevant cultural authorities and governance in remote schools with a specific focus on improving: a) literacy and numeracy and

Activity	Outcomes	Objective (Implementation Plan 1)	Objective (Implementation Plan 2)
			b) students attending primary school four days per week or more.
			Increase enrolment and attendance of remote and very remote students through alignment of efforts (Commonwealth and NT) to improve school attendance.
Workforce	Aboriginal student outcomes are improved by a consistent, system wide approach to providing highly skilled and motivated educators and leaders in our schools.	Support and develop a highly skilled and motivated education workforce through: • comprehensive workforce planning • strengthened professional development and training, and • improve teacher housing (refurbishment and construction).	Support and develop a highly skilled and motivated education workforce through: • comprehensive staff induction and preparation, and • strengthened professional development and training.
Workforce capital	Improved teacher housing will contribute to attracting and retaining a skilled and motivated teacher workforce.	Not applicable - workforce capital was captured under workforce in Implementation Plan 1.	Support and develop a highly skilled and motivated education workforce through improved teacher housing (refurbishment and construction).

There are individual objectives for all activities under the Implementation Plan which summarise the purpose of the activities and establish high level aspirations. The objectives between Implementation Plan 1 and Implementation 2 vary to reflect the different outputs (see 'Outputs' below). There are six outcomes which reflect and sometimes duplicate the objectives. In addition to the activities in the program logic, there are many contributors to the outcomes and the objectives outlined in the *National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment* (the NTRAI or the Agreement), including other education initiatives and contextual factors such as transport, employment in the community and cultural obligations. The contributory factors to the outcomes and objectives would require measuring to establish the impact of the elements. The reporting and monitoring for the Children and Schooling Implementation Plans monitors the volume and reach of outputs under each activity. It tracks data which relates to some but not all outcomes. It does not provide a robust mechanism for testing the program logic.

Effectiveness

Outputs

The NT Government delivered most outputs (activities) as intended in accordance with the milestones in the Children and Schooling Implementation Plan. As a result, the NT Government received the full milestone payments under the Implementation Plans each financial year.[128] See Appendix E for achievements against milestones completed over the operating period.

The Children and Schooling Implementation Plans structure provides for the assessment of the effectiveness of outputs based on adherence to timeframes and volume of activities or services required by the Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plans do not include reporting in order to assess the quality of the outputs which contribute to the program logic.

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[128] The NT Government had difficulty completing all of the annual Capital Works Schedules due to timing issues and logistical challenges. However, full payments were made.

The activities are grouped into six categories. The Foundations, Essentials, Pathways and Engagement activities mirror the NT Indigenous Education Strategy. There are also Capital Works activities.

The Foundations activities are designed to ensure 'Aboriginal children entering primary school have the skills and attributes they need to succeed in their education.'[129] Under Implementation Plan 1, this involved delivering Families as First Teachers (FaFT), an early learning and family support program for Aboriginal families. It also involved developing and implementing an early year's developmental assessment tool. Under Implementation Plan 2, the focus on FaFT continued, with the addition of an adult literacy program targeted at young male and female parents.

Service Delivery Highlight: Families as First Teachers

Ntaria FaFT currently has 54 children enrolled in the program. The Family Educator and Family Liaison Officer actively engages children and families in ASQ-TRAK (a culturally appropriate, developmental screening tool).

The ASQ-TRAK developmental screening tool implementation process promotes several positive outcomes and including collecting data about children's growth and development in line with developmental milestones, an opportunity to celebrate children's strengths and identify areas where support is needed. In Term 3, 2019, Ntaria FaFT participated in a four-week Early Childhood Development Sprint to deepen families' understanding of early childhood development.

'Sprints' are an approach used in FaFT to intensively target an area identified for improvement. Ntaria FaFT staff and families participated in workshops unpacking the ASQ-TRAK developmental domains - communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving and personal (social). The workshops also explored how early childhood development information can be used to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The Family Educator and Family Liaison Officer used information from the developmental screening to co-plan individual learning plans with families and select appropriate Abecedarian LearningGames® to target developmental domains.

The FaFT team developed a deeper understanding of child development, a greater understanding of the importance of ASQ-TRAK developmental screening, and greater confidence in implementing the screening tool.

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[129] Department of Education (NT), *A share in the future: Indigenous Education Strategy 2015 – 2024*, (Darwin, NT, 2014), 6 – 10.

The Essentials activities are designed to support Aboriginal students to 'achieve age benchmarks in literacy and numeracy in their primary years of schooling, and plan for their secondary education with confidence.'[130] Under Implementation Plan 1, this involved implementing a literacy and numeracy age benchmark assessment system and a mandatory literacy and numeracy program across schools. The Essentials activities were not funded by the Australian Government under Implementation Plan 2. The NT Government funds these activities in full.

The Pathways activities are designed to support Aboriginal students to 'complete schooling well equipped to take up employment, training and higher education opportunities'.[131] Under Implementation Plan 1 this involved establishing a Transition Support Unit to support remote Aboriginal students and their families into secondary school pathways, including boarding school. It also involved a post-primary employment pathways program to support options for on-site continuing education in up to 10 communities. Under Implementation Plan 2 the Transition Support Unit is the sole focus.

The Engagement activities are designed to support 'Aboriginal children at all stages of schooling attend school regularly and be supported in their education by their families and community'.[132] Under Implementation Plan 1, this involved improving student and community engagement through a community engagement charter or service guarantee and implementing a school-wide positive behaviour program and well-being approach across remote communities. Under Implementation Plan 2 the focus is on developing new initiatives to support student access, engagement and achievement at school. There is an ongoing focus on communities and family engagement. There is also a focus on supporting Senior Attendance Truancy Officers (later transitioned to Engagement Officers) to work with students, families, other agencies and the Remote School Attendance Strategy team to improve student engagement.

The workforce activities were designed to improve Aboriginal student outcomes 'through a consistent system wide approach to providing highly skilled and motivated educators and leaders in NT schools'.[133] Under Implementation Plan 1, this involved developing a workforce plan to promote high quality teaching, induction and cultural training for staff and a mentoring program for school leaders. Under Implementation Plan 2, the sole focus is on providing accredited training for Aboriginal assistant teachers.

The capital works activities involve improving accommodation for teachers in accordance with an annual capital works schedule agreed to by the Australian Government. It includes constructing new dwellings, refurbishments and security upgrades. The NT Government is required to maintain an Aboriginal employment rate of at least 25 per cent in capital works from 2018 – 21. The NT Government had mixed results in achieving agreed capital works outputs due to timing issues and logistical challenges.

The performance reporting requires the NT Government to increase the volume and reach of activities across schools and communities incrementally each year. There were clear targets relating to the number of sites, schools, students, teachers or participants for each activity. The performance reporting structure could be strengthened by indicators which assess the quality of activities in addition to volume or reach.

The prescriptive nature of some outputs limits flexibility for place-based, community led solutions. For example, requiring the NT Government to deliver FaFT, limits the opportunity to trial other models of early childhood education to better meet community requirements. Greater flexibility under activities would allow community input into place-based design.

Outcomes

Outcome measures are described as performance benchmarks in the Children and Schooling Implementation Plans. Results against the performance benchmarks have been mixed. To date, school attendance targets were not met. The target for the average number of days attended per year in FaFT was met once in the 2018 – 20 period (noting attendance at FaFT is not compulsory). The targets for the retention rate of Aboriginal boarding students through the Transition Support Unit were met. The targets for Aboriginal assistant teachers completing accredited training were met in 2018 – 19 but the target was

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[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.

not met in 2020. The percentage of Aboriginal students achieving the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) targets were mixed.

There are complex barriers which could explain why some performance benchmarks were not achieved. The Implementation Plans acknowledge 'some issues affecting educational outcomes are outside the control of schools and the education system, such as health and development of the community and limited economic opportunity in many remote communities.'[134] In addition, the duration of the Agreement and length of time between completing performance milestones and measuring performance benchmarks may not have been long enough to reasonably expect the performance benchmarks to be achieved.

The results are represented in the graphs below (see also Appendix E).

Performance measure: Increase in the attendance rate of Aboriginal students in the NT toward a Council of Australian Governments benchmark of 90 per cent

Attendance rates of Aboriginal students in the NT

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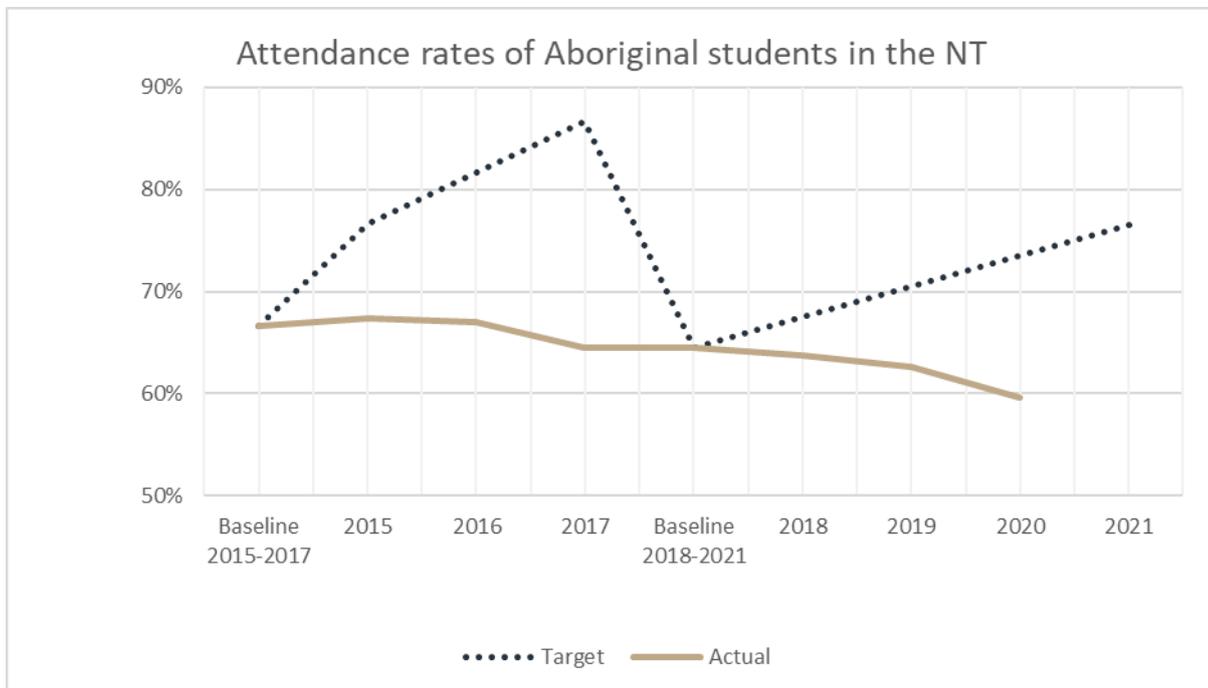
[134] Council on Federal Financial Relations, *Children and Schooling Implementation Plan: National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment*, (Canberra, ACT, 2018), 2.

Performance measure: Increase in the proportion of remote and very remote Aboriginal students attending at least four days per week or more
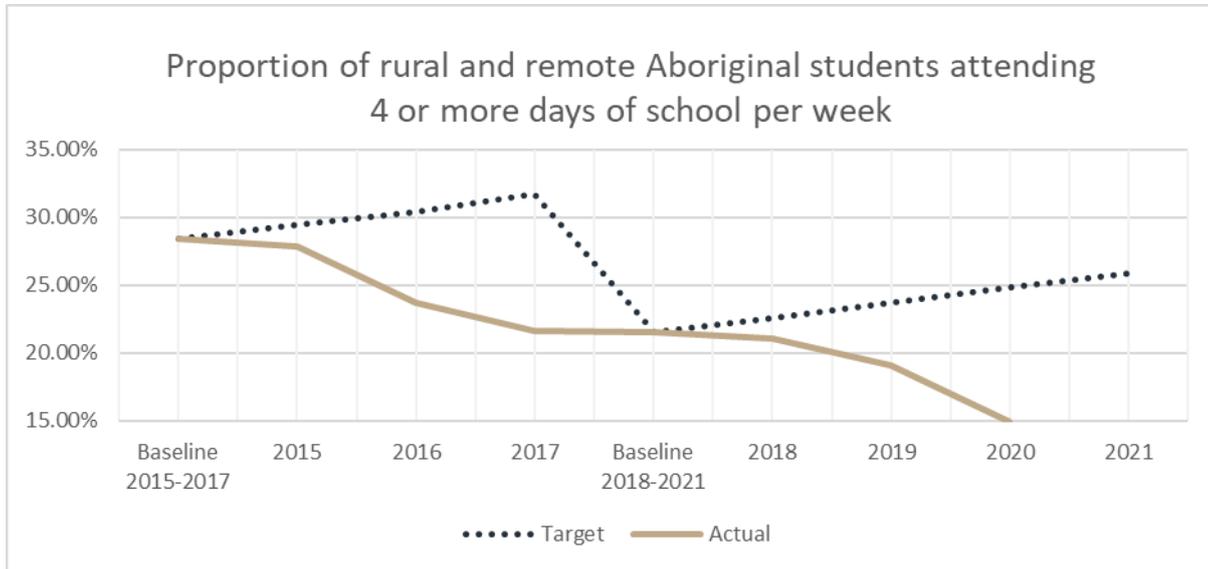
Performance measure: 10 per cent per year increase in the average number of days a child participates
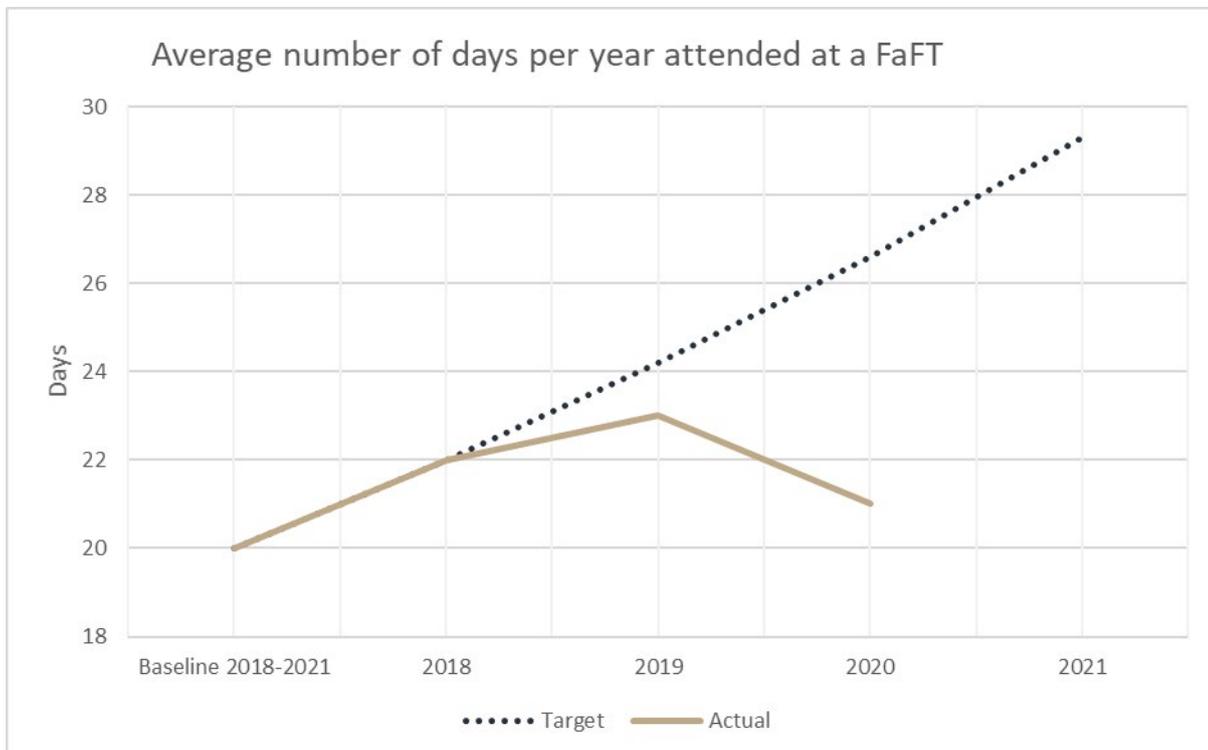
Performance measure: Retention rate of year seven boarding students case managed by the Transition Support Unit
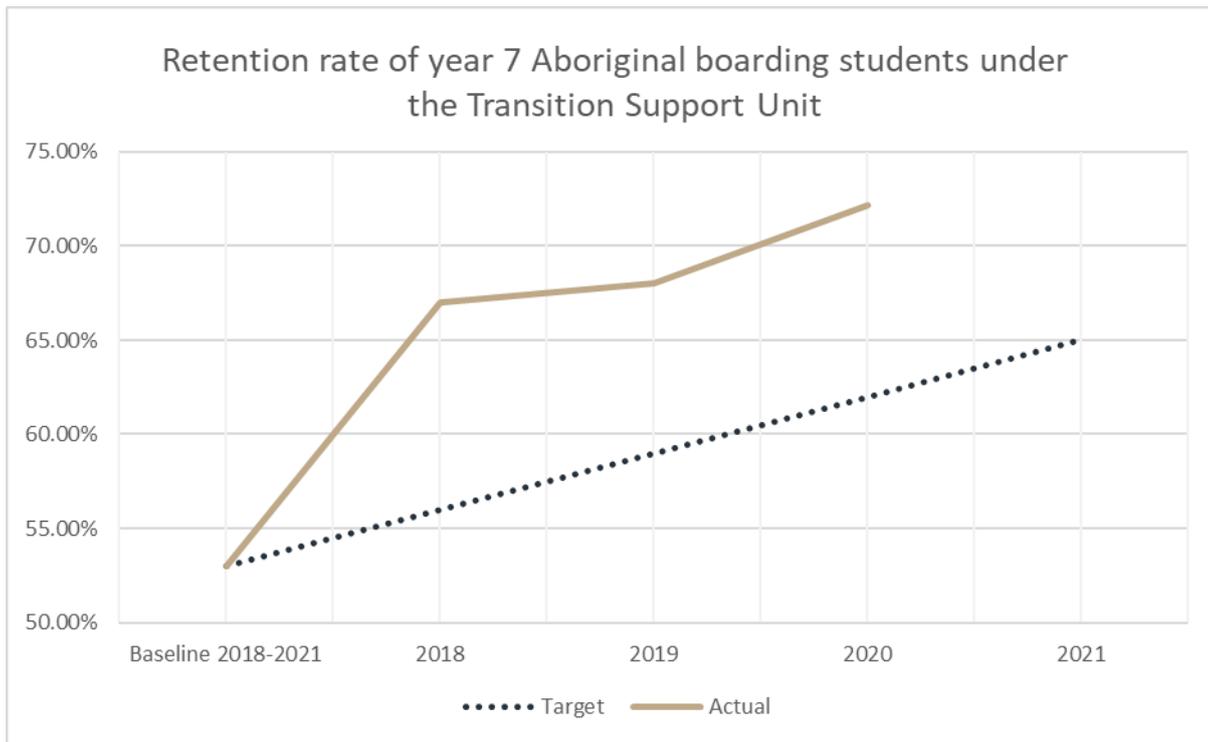
Performance measure: Completion rate of enrolled Aboriginal Assistant Teachers in accredited training
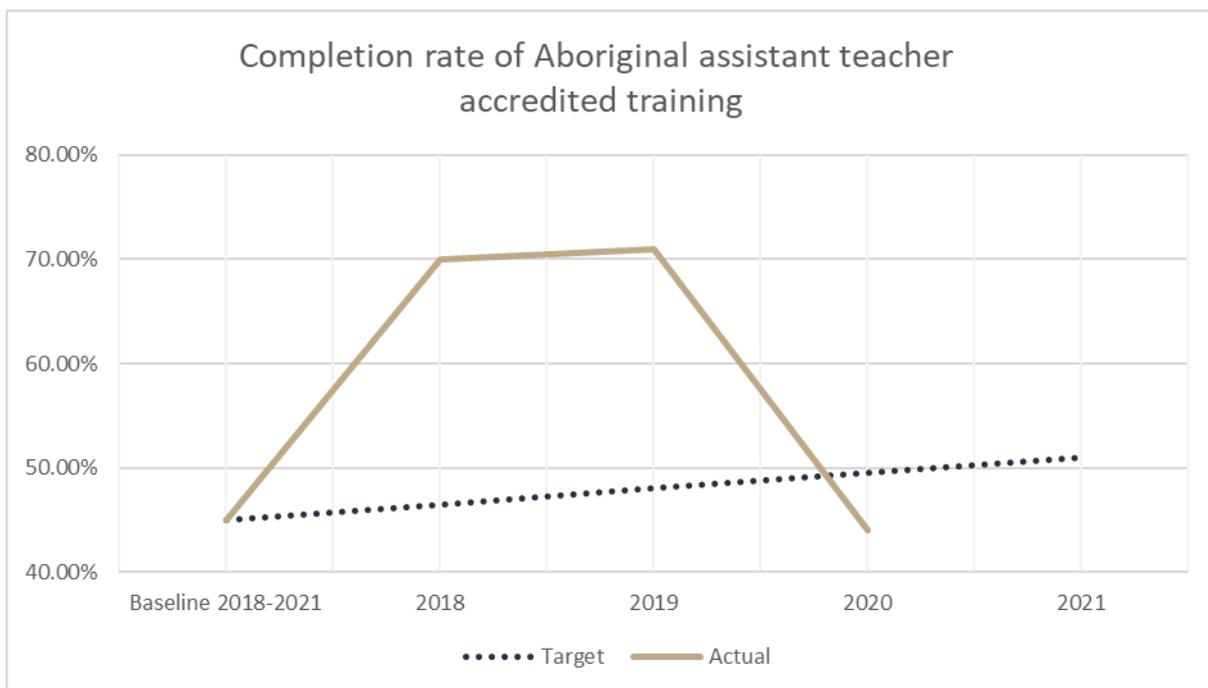
Performance measure: Increase in the proportion of remote and very remote Aboriginal students achieving at or above national minimum standard in NAPLAN reading and numeracy (note – NAPLAN was not undertaken in 2020 due to COVID-19).

Percentage of Aborginal students in remote areas achieving the NAPLAN National Minimum Standard
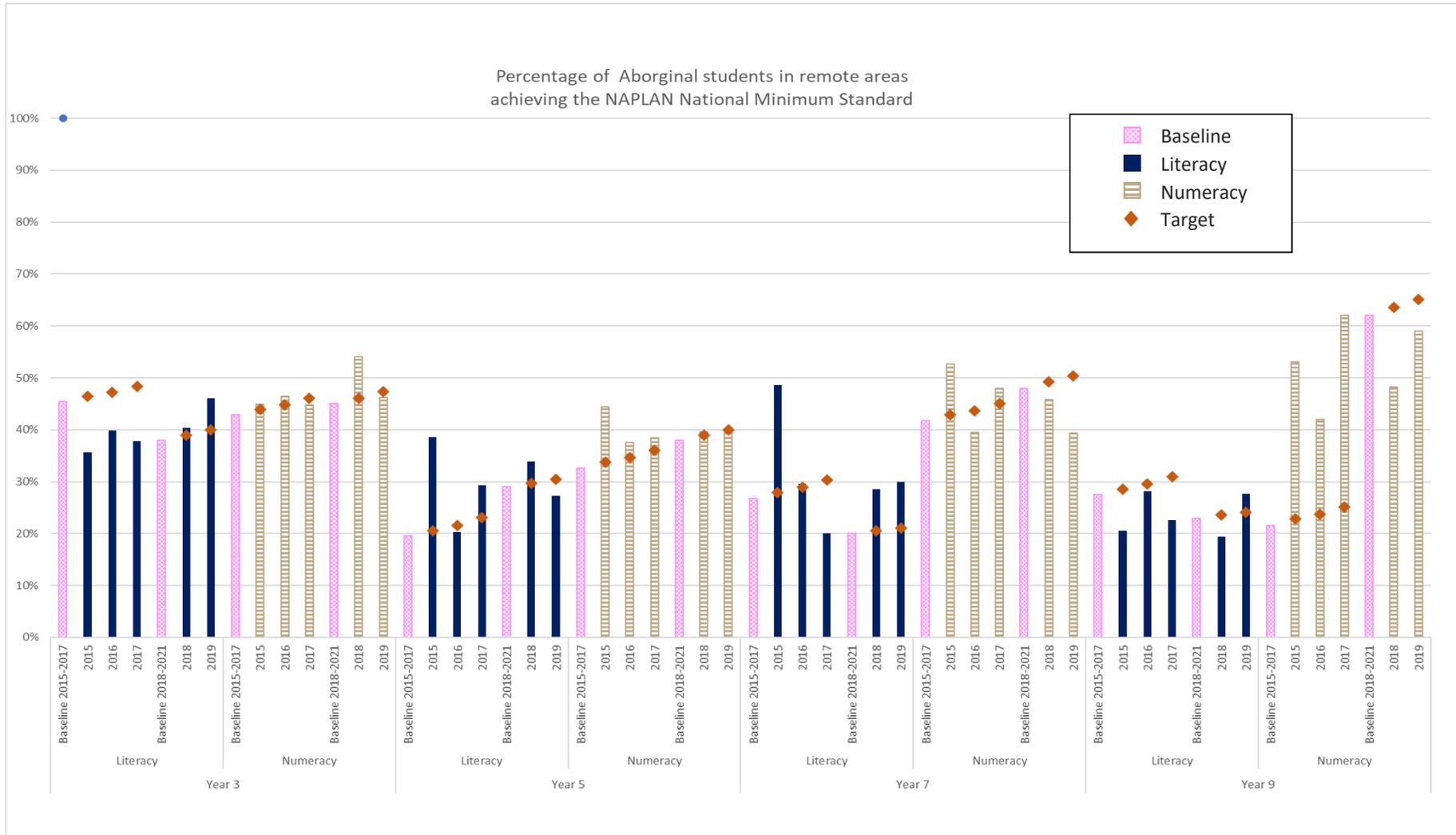
In principle, performance benchmarks form a framework to measure whether outputs are contributing as designed by the program logic. There should be a reasonable evidence base and agreement the outputs will directly contribute to the outcome. Under the Children and Schooling Implementation Plans, the outputs and performance benchmarks are too far removed from each other as there are additional, compounding barriers to educational engagement which are not addressed through the Children and Schooling Implementation Plans. This produces evidence which does not appropriately test the program logic. Future arrangements could include short-term or intermediate outcomes more closely related to the outputs.

It is not possible to identify direct attribution between the NTRAI outputs and performance benchmarks achieved because the Agreement does not provide for an evaluation or contribution analysis to test attribution. The outputs were part of a suite of education initiatives which are likely to have contributed to the outcomes (or results against the performance benchmarks). For example, there were additional initiatives under the NT Indigenous Education Strategy not captured in the Implementation Plans, such as a girl's engagement program and school based Aboriginal language and culture programs.[135]

An evaluation plan established during the design phase would:

- ensure strong alignment between outputs and outcomes
- control for external contributing factors
- set quality measures
- identify trials
- establish place-based targets which contribute to outcome achievement
- test and revise the program logic.

The Children and Schooling Implementation Plans differ from other the NTRAI Schedules in that the payment framework is linked to the achievement of performance benchmarks in order to incentivise the achievement of outcomes. The proportion of performance benchmark payments available compared to the total Australian Government funding under the Children and Schooling Implementation Plans, gradually increased from 5 per cent to 18 per cent over the course of the two Implementation Plans. This gradual increase in the weighting of performance benchmarks should continue, provided the outcomes are realistic, reflect the time require to achieve outcomes and are closely linked to the outputs. Although there is a risk withholding payments could hinder the NT Government's ability to improve their activities and meet future outcomes, a gradual increase in the weighting of outcome payments should mitigate this risk.

Efficiency

There were a combination of enablers and barriers to the effective implementation of the Agreement.

The alignment of the Implementation Plans with the NT Indigenous Education Strategy 2015 – 2024 enabled a unified approach. It ensured the general activities under the NTRAI were consistent with the NT Government's existing policies. However, the specific output milestones and performance benchmarks were drafted specifically for the NTRAI and did not necessarily align with the NT Government's approach. Stronger alignment would strengthen the efficiency of the Agreement.

A governance mechanism was established under the Children and Schooling Implementation Plans to facilitate inter-governmental communication on strategic and operational matters. Health Checks generally took place twice a year and provided an opportunity to discuss concerns as they arose, implementation and performance reporting.

Introducing a new Implementation Plan in 2018 provided the opportunity to revise the performance benchmarks to ensure they were realistic and supported ongoing improvement. It gave the Agreement flexibility to adapt based on policy priorities, past performance and lessons learned from the evaluation of Stage 1 of the NT Indigenous Education Strategy.

A significant barrier to effective implementation was the ongoing decline in student attendance as attendance strongly correlates with educational achievement.[136] There are a number of contextual barriers which impact engagement with education. These include high degrees of mobility of NT populations, the impact of cultural obligations on schooling and a lack of employment in remote communities. The NT Government attempted to address these issues through cross-sector approaches, a

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[135] Department of Education (NT), *Indigenous Education Strategy 2015–2024: Implementation Plan 2018–2020*, (Darwin, NT), 1.

[136] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (Cth), *Australia's Children*, cat. no. CWS 69 (Canberra, ACT, 2020), 206.

whole of government approach and strategies to increase student's connectedness to the school community.[137] Despite these efforts, attendance continues to decline.

There were also barriers to undertaking the Capital Works program. Capital Works schedules were prepared by the NT and approved by the Australian Government on a financial year basis but reports and payments were processed on a school/calendar year basis which caused timing issues. These issues together with logistical challenges presented by weather and availability of contractors to deliver works in remote NT, meant delays were experienced with capital works.

In 2020, COVID-19 caused disruptions to service delivery and outcomes.[138] There was a sharp decline in school attendance, the Education Ministers cancelled NAPLAN, inter-state boarding students returned to their communities, access to training was impacted and capital works projects were delayed. There was also increased mobility between communities when bio-security restrictions were lifted. Both governments worked together to respond to these issues.[139] For example, they introduced a cross-sector mobility project to engage students travelling between communities when biosecurity restrictions lifted. The Australian Government also enabled the NT Department of Education to access ABSTUDY records to identify intra-state and inter-state boarding students. The NT Government undertook new engagement projects and assisted boarding students who returned to their communities to continue their education. Both governments agreed on a method for performance benchmark payments impacted by COVID-19.

Appropriateness

Improving educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in remote communities continues to be a priority for both governments.

There remain challenges to education delivery and student achievement in the NT. Further targeted effort is required to accelerate student outcomes in remote NT. The results of the 2020 Closing the Gap Report, indicate significant improvement is required in early childhood education enrolment, school attendance and reading and numeracy outcomes.[140] The report acknowledged outcomes tend to decline in remote areas. This has a disproportionate impact in the NT because around three in five Aboriginal children live in very remote areas.[141] In 2018, the Australian Early Development Census found the NT had 23.4 per cent of children developmentally vulnerable across two or more domains in their first year of school.[142]

The *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* represents an ongoing shared commitment between the Australian Government, states and territories and Aboriginal peoples to improving educational outcomes. The educational targets are listed below and indicate an emphasis on early childhood and tertiary education:[143]

- Target 3: by 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent
- Target 4: by 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent
- Target 5: by 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20 – 24) attaining year 12 or an equivalent qualification to 96 per cent
- Target 6: by 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 – 34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent

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[137] Department of Education (NT), *National Partnership Agreement on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment Children and Schooling Implementation Plan: Annual Report 2017*, (Darwin, NT, 2018), 39–40.
[138] Department of Education (NT), *Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment Children and Schooling Implementation Plan: Annual Report 2020*, (Darwin, NT, 2021), 6 – 7.
[139] Ibid.
[140] PM&C (Cth), *Closing the Gap Report 2020*, 27, 38, 49.
[141] Ibid., 29, 38, 41, 50.
[142] *"Australian Early Development Census,"* Australian Government, accessed June 10, 2021, https://www.aedc.gov.au/data/data-explorer.
[143] Joint Council on Closing the Gap, *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, 24 – 28.

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- Target 7: by 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15 – 24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67 per cent.

The NT Government is primarily responsible for administering public education in the NT. In 2020 the Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission investigated the key strategies, approaches and actions required to support economic growth and a higher standard of living in the NT. It found 'a life cycle approach to continuous skills development-through early childhood, school, higher education, locational training and on the job — is key to enabling participation and growth.'[144] As part of this approach, it acknowledged improvements to remote Aboriginal education must continue.[145]

The NT Government is currently undertaking broad consultation with community regarding a new Engagement Strategy. Engagement is seen as the cornerstone for improving educational outcomes of students through ensuring education system delivery is high quality, relevant and will promote regular student attendance and achievement. A strong theme emerging from consultation is solutions need to be locally driven and place-based.

The Australian Government provides funding to all states and territories through the Quality Schools Package and the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS). The Quality Schools Package is tied to the *National School Reform Agreement* between the Australian Government, states and territories, to lift student outcomes across government and non-government schools.[146] The IAS provides grant funding to improve attendance and educational outcomes.[147] There is potential for duplication between IAS programs and the NTRAI. For example, the Remote School Attendance Strategy funded under IAS has similar objectives to the Engagement activities under the NTRAI. Future arrangements should be complimentary and avoid duplication.

The NT Government has commissioned evaluations which will contribute to the evidence base on improving outcomes in remote NT. The Australian Institute of Family Studies will work in collaboration with the NT Department of Education, providers and community members to develop an evaluation framework for FaFT.[148] An evaluation into the Indigenous Education Strategy is scheduled for 2024. The NT Government is also developing an Engagement Strategy to engage all children and young people (from birth to year 12) in learning.[149]

Research indicates the types of activities under the Implementation Plans continue to generally align with best practice. A report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training on *Education in remote and complex environments* (the HORSCEET report) made a number of findings in support of the broad nature of activities delivered under the Foundations activities. It found early childhood education can be linked to long-term education, health and employment outcomes.[150]Although the Menzies School of Health Research report on *Early Pathways to School Learning* acknowledges the importance of reinforcing the benefits of early childhood education through regular attendance and engagement with school in the early primary school years in order to contribute to longer term educational outcomes.[151] The HORSCEET report found the benefits of early childhood education are greater for children in low-income families and isolated areas.[152] It noted support for providing 'early childhood education as part of holistic family support services' and a need for

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[144] Territory Economic Reconstruction Committee (NT), *A Step Change to Win Investment and Create Jobs*, (Darwin, NT, 2020), 113.

[145] Ibid.

[146] "What is the Quality Schools package and what does it mean for my school," Department of Education, Skills and Employment (Cth), accessed June 11, 2021, https://www.dese.gov.au/quality-schools-package/fact-sheets/what-quality-schools-package-and-what-does-it-mean-my-school.

[147] National Indigenous Australians Agency (Cth), *Indigenous Advancement Strategy Grant Guidelines*, (Canberra, ACT, 2019), 36.

[148] "Co-design of an Evaluation Framework for the Families as First Teachers Program," Australian Institute of Family Studies (Cth), accessed June 21, 2021, https://aifs.gov.au/projects/co-design-evaluation-framework-families-first-teachers-program.

[149] "Education Engagement Strategy," Northern Territory Government, accessed July 6, 2021, https://haveyoursay.nt.gov.au/education-engagement-strategy.

[150] House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, *Education in remote and complex environments*, (Canberra, ACT, 2020), 48.

[151] Sven Silburn et al., *Early Pathways to School Learning: Lessons from the NT data linkage study - Summary Findings*, (Darwin, NT: Menzies School of Health Research, 2018), 7.

[152] House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, *Education in remote and complex environments*, (Canberra, ACT, 2020), 49.

greater access to developmental assessments and screening to support early intervention in remote areas.[153] It also noted support for adult literacy programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities due to the strong links between adult literacy and children's educational attainment.[154] Although the foundation activities appear to generally align with best practice, further investigation is required to understand why participation at FaFT is decreasing.

The HORSCEET report acknowledged the importance of the Transition Support Unit, in helping students in the NT to enrol in secondary schools away from their local communities.[155] It noted the importance of providing a range of support to help students overcome the barriers to attending boarding schools and living away from home.[156]

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports attendance at school is related to both educational attainment as well as social and emotional skills.[157] A report commissioned by the Western Australian Government titled *Best practice approaches to sustainably increase student attendance*, (Nous Group report) emphasised the importance of the following approaches which are consistent with the Engagement activities — a whole school approach, effective leadership, a positive school climate, productive school-student-family connections, partnerships between schools, service providers and communities.[158] Although the Engagement activities in the Implementation Plan appear to generally align with best practice, further investigation is required to understand why school attendance has declined.

The Nous Group report found investing in leadership is crucial as school principals set the school's vision and have a strong influence on student attendance and school success.[159] The HORSCEET report discusses the positive benefits of an Aboriginal education workforce including support staff and teachers.[160] It also notes support for addressing workforce issues, including improving the cultural competency of teachers and number of Aboriginal teachers.[161] There is opportunity to build on existing work and incorporate greater emphasis on Aboriginal led governance, employment, workforce development and capacity building to improve outcomes.

Capital works to improve the amenity, security and provide additional accommodation for teachers continues to be an important way to attract and retain a skilled and motivated education workforce.[162]

Recommendations from the Children and Schooling Implementation Plans

- Incorporate output quality indicators which, based on strong evidence of effectiveness and sound program design, demonstrate progress toward outcomes
- Frame outputs to enable and encourage community-led, place-based design
- Continue to increase the weighting of performance benchmark or outcome-based payments over time
- Ensure payment pathways are complimentary and avoid duplication
- Commit to an agreement level evaluation plan agreed at the design stage
- Building on existing work, incorporate greater emphasis on Aboriginal led governance, employment, workforce development and capacity building

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[153] Ibid., 21, 58.
[154] Ibid., 80.
[155] Ibid., 93.
[156] Ibid., 121.
[157] AIHW (Cth), *Australia's Children*, 206.
[158] Nous Group, *Best practice approaches to sustainably increase student attendance,* (WA: Department of Education (Cth), 2019), 2, 12.
[159] Ibid., 7.
[160] House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, *Education in remote and complex environments*, 104 – 105.
[161] Ibid., 122.
[162] Department of Education (NT), *Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment Children and Schooling Implementation Plan: Annual Report 2020*, (Darwin, NT, 2021), 28.

Assessment of the Health Implementation Plan

The outcomes to be achieved under the Health Implementation Plan include improved health and wellbeing of Aboriginal children through:

- an integrated hearing health program that involves audiology and specialist services, case management by Clinical Nurse Specialists in hearing health and a preventative, education program.
- an integrated oral health program that involves preventative oral health services, a training package for remote primary health care staff and clinical oral health care.

Both programs were designed to complement existing programs, healthcare, hospital and specialist services.

The term of the Health Implementation Plan is from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2022 with a total estimated Australian Government financial contribution of $45.313 million. Refer to Appendix D for payment details to date.

The Child Health Check Initiative introduced under the *Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007* (NTER) is the origin of both services.[163] Both programs continued under the *Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement* (2009 to 2012 for hearing health and 2007 to 2012 for oral health) and the *National Partnership on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory* (2012 – 15).[164]

Health initiatives continued under *National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment* (the NTRAI or the Agreement) as the need remained high.[165] In 2012 – 13, 55 per cent of Aboriginal children who received a relevant clinical service had some form of hearing loss and 41 per cent were treated for tooth decay.[166]

The pathway to achieving the Health Implementation Plan's objective is mapped out in the program logic below.

Table 10. Program logic

Activity	Outcomes	Objective
Hearing Health Program	Improved health of individuals, children and families, through: • reducing the prevalence and incidence of ear disease among Aboriginal children in the NT • reducing the severity and impact of ear disease on the health and well-being (particularly improving the hearing health status) of Aboriginal children in the NT	

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[163] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (Cth), *Hearing health outreach services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Northern Territory: July 2012 to December 2019*, cat no. IHW 228 (Canberra, ACT, 2020), 3; AIWH (Cth), *Oral health outreach services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Northern Territory: July 2012 to December 2019*, cat. no. IHW 235 (Canberra, ACT, 2021), 3.
[164] AIHW(Cth), *Hearing health outreach services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Northern Territory: July 2012 to December 2019*, 3.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Council on Federal Financial Relations (Cth), *Northern Territory Health Implementation Plan: National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment*, (Canberra, ACT, 2016), 2.

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Activity	Outcomes	Objective
	• Improving hearing of children who are in a treatment pathway	Safer and healthier remote Aboriginal communities in the NT
Oral health program	Improved health of individuals, children and families, through: • reducing the prevalence and incidence of oral health problems among Aboriginal children in the NT • reducing the severity and impact of oral health problems in the health and well-being of Aboriginal children in the NT	

The objective in the Health Implementation Plan is framed as a high-level aspiration. There are multiple factors which influence the safety and health of remote Aboriginal communities. To understand the extent to which hearing and oral health services influence the objective, an evaluation which controls for other influences would be required. The program logic lists five outcomes which directly correspond with the two activities (the Hearing Health Program and the Oral Health Program). Although other factors may influence the outcomes related to improving hearing and oral health (such as housing and nutrition), there is a direct and measurable relationship between the activities and outcomes. The reporting and monitoring for the Health Implementation Plan relates to the volume of outputs. It monitors outcomes for the Hearing Health Program but not the Oral Health Program.

Effectiveness

Outputs

The Northern Territory (NT) Government has delivered all outputs (activities) to date, as intended in accordance with the performance indicators in the Health Implementation Plan. As a result, to date the NT Government received full payment under the Implementation Plan each financial year. See Appendix E for achievements against performance indicators completed over the operating period.

The Health Implementation Plan structure provides for the assessment of the effectiveness of outputs based on adherence to timeframes and volume of activities or services required by the Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan does not include reporting requirements in order to assess the quality of the outputs which contribute to the program logic.

The Hearing Health Program working in collaboration with Primary Health Care Services, delivers audiology and ear checks to Aboriginal children. Clinical Nurse Specialists in hearing health provide case management to children with a prioritised need for ear and hearing health care. The Hearing Health Program also delivered a hearing health prevention program which included education for families on how to prevent and manage ear disease.

Under the Oral Health Program, the NT Government delivers general clinical and preventative oral health services to children. Preventative services included fluoride varnish applications and fissure sealants to prevent tooth decay. The Healthy Smiles Oral Health program delivers preventative oral health training to remote primary health care sector staff across the NT.

The output reporting requirements consisted of clear targets on the number of children and communities to receive hearing and oral health services and training each year. There is also an Aboriginal employment target for the Hearing Health Program. The output targets were an efficient method to track the volume of services delivered under the Agreement, through clear targets and a consistent framework for reporting data to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (the AIHW publishes annual reports on the progress of both programs). The outputs could be strengthened by additional targets which highlight the quality, efficiency and cultural competency of service delivery.

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Outcomes

Health outcomes in this Implementation Plan are measured every three years (July 2012 – June 2015, July 2015 – December 2018 and January 2019 – June 2021). All outcomes in the first two periods were met. The third report is due on 1 May 2022.

All Hearing Health Outcomes were achieved between 2016 – 18:

- 7.96 per cent of children tested were found to have moderate or severe conductive hearing impairment (the target was 10 per cent or less to December 2018)
- on average, 10.9 per cent of children aged 0 – 5 years old, who received an audiology check or hearing health co-ordination service were found to have Chronic Suppurative Otitis Media (the target was 14 per cent or less to December 2018)
- on average, 9.9 per cent of children aged 6 – 15 years old, who received an audiology check or hearing health co-ordination service were found to have Chronic Suppurative Otitis Media (the target was 11 per cent or less to December 2018)
- on average, 7.6 per cent of children aged 0 – 5 years old who received an audiology check or hearing health co-ordination service were found to have dry perforation (the target was 8 per cent or less to December 2018)
- on average, 14.97 per cent of children aged 6 – 15 years old who received an audiology check or hearing health co-ordination service were found to have dry perforation (the target was 17 per cent or less to December 2018)

It is not possible to assess the extent to which the outputs are attributable to the outcomes and objectives under the Health Implementation Plan because there was a range of other interventions initiated by both governments which impact hearing health in remote locations. For example, the Australian Government funds the Hearing Health Program to deliver the Healthy Ears, Better Hearing, Better Listening program which delivers various activities, including employment of Clinical Nurse Co-ordinators to provide case coordination through the Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Teleotology model of care.

All Oral Health Outcomes were achieved by 2018:

- 82 – 90 per cent of all communities across the NT (excluding the major centres: Darwin, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Alice Springs) received a dental service within each calendar year- this exceeded the target of 75 per cent
- 82 per cent of total items of service were preventive services - this exceeded the target of 50 per cent

It is likely the Oral Health Program contributed to these outcomes as there are few other programs providing oral health services to children living in remote NT. Oral Health Program outcomes do not identify whether oral health in Aboriginal children is improving. Instead, they focus on the extent and reach of service delivery which may be better described as outputs. Outcomes should be revised to ensure they drive improvement in children's oral health. An agreement level evaluation plan could direct this revision.

Efficiency

Through the management of the Agreement both governments identified barriers to the delivery of the Health Implementation Plan outputs and implemented enablers where changes were required.

The funding provided through the Health Implementation Plan is intended to complement funding for other programs supported by the Australian Government to maximise service delivery for Aboriginal children. The NT Government holds regular meetings with hearing health providers, consults with other service providers visiting communities and works with other agencies to co-ordinate services, reduce duplication and ensure consistent hearing health awareness messaging. The NT Government also collaborates with health services, the Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and the NT Department of Education to co-ordinate oral health services. On a clinical level, multidisciplinary healthcare teams work together to deliver the Oral Health Program. Coordination between services enabled efficient implementation.

There are several barriers which impact the delivery of the Hearing Health Program:

- The inability to offer permanent employment opportunities due to the time limited nature of the agreement results in high staff turnover and short-term contracts. This restricts the program from building a sustainable workforce.

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Continuing recruitment processes reduce capacity of the team to spend time developing and implementing preventative measures and initiatives.

- The high number of different visiting services in communities make it hard to secure accommodation and transport in remote communities.
- The high level of acute care in remote communities hinders the capacity of the remote area staff to assist with outreach service delivery.
- Cultural responsibilities impact on the number of clients in community during hearing health visits.
- COVID-19 biosecurity measures limited access to remote communities during 2020 and disrupted hearing health services.

Distance, transport costs, weather extremes, accommodation availability and cost are barriers to the effective and efficient delivery of the Oral Health Program.[167] The NT addressed these barriers by using mobile dental trucks to reach many remote communities in Central Australia for one to three weeks at a time.[168] In the Top End, dental service teams provide services from remote community health centres.[169] Other barriers include:

- The design of the Oral Health Program was limited by a lack of strong connection with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.
- Limited resourcing for data capture and reporting leads to issues with data quality.
- COVID-19 biosecurity measure limited access to remote communities during 2020 disrupted oral health services.

In 2019 reporting targets for the Oral Health Program were revised to reflect operational delays. The revision required ministerial approval. This Review finds this is the appropriate level of delegation with which to shape the Agreement objectives.

Appropriateness

Both governments are committed to improving hearing health in Aboriginal children in the NT.

Across Australia, hearing loss is more prevalent among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples than among non-Indigenous Australians with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children reported to have 2.9 times the rate of ear and hearing problems.[170] There is still a high demand for ear and hearing services in the NT.[171]

The Roadmap for Hearing Health, developed by the Hearing Health Sector Committee in 2019 and approved by the former Council of Australian Governments, prioritises closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ear and hearing health.[172] While it acknowledges there have been gains, it also notes there is more to do in order to address the 'catastrophic levels of ear disease amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians'.[173]

Both governments are implementing a number of initiatives to address hearing health in the NT for Aboriginal children. There may be opportunity to rationalise multiple payment pathways to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements. The following list summarises national Australian Government initiatives. Many initiatives have a focus on rural and remote locations:

- The Hearing Assessment Program – Early Ears provides free diagnostic hearing assessment and follow-up assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across metro, regional and remote Australia in the years before they

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[167] AIHW (Cth), *Oral health outreach services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Northern Territory: July 2012 to December 2019*, 15.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (Cth), *Northern Territory Outreach Hearing Program: July 2012 to December 2017*, cat no. IHW 203 (Canberra, ACT, 2018), 1.
[171] AIHW (Cth), *Hearing health outreach services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Northern Territory: July 2012 to December 2019*, 3, 28.
[172] Department of Health (Cth), *Roadmap for Hearing Health: Hearing Health Sector Committee*, (Canberra, ACT, 2019), 4.
[173] Ibid.

start school.[174] It also provides ongoing advice to parents or carers and support to primary health providers to undertake initial hearing screenings.[175]

- The Healthy Ears, Better Hearing, Better Listening Program provides funding for multidisciplinary ENT Teleotology (tertiary) outreach services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in regional, rural and remote areas.
- Care for Kids' Ears Resources provides a range of free ear health resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, health professionals, teachers, parents and other carers to increase awareness of ear disease. The Otitis Media Resource Kit for Health Professionals includes a range of guides and tools for speaking with children and parents about ear and hearing health. Evidence-based questionnaires, the Parent-evaluated Listening and Understanding Measure and Hear and Talk Scale reveal early signs of hearing difficulty and hindered language development while providing the foundation for early intervention. [176]
- Free training modules on how to identify, manage and treat ear disease and hearing loss for health professionals who provide services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NT Government initiatives include:

- The Now Hear Continuum supports students with hearing loss caused by otitis media through a student support plan with teaching and learning strategies. [177]
- Specialist Outreach NT is a coordination vehicle which supports remote health visits.[178]
- Hearing services are providing at medical centres in remote and regional locations.

There appears to be a gap in ear and hearing health pathways for adults.

The Australian Government, the NT Government and the Balnaves Foundation jointly fund the Hearing for Learning initiative.[179] The program aims to employ 40 ear health facilitators to conduct screening of 5,000 children aged 0 to 16 across 20 regional, rural and urban communities in the NT.[180] The program also provides training and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members as Ear Health Project Officers.

This Review considers activities under the Hearing Health Program to generally align with best practice although there are opportunities for stronger alignment. Providing ear and hearing health education programs to inform Aboriginal peoples of the symptoms, consequences and the impacts of unaddressed ear infections is still a vital mechanism for early identification and treatment.[181] Improvements could be made by strengthening data collection and analysis. Data on the impact of awareness and the related behavioural responses would be useful for assessing the impact of education programs.[182] Research indicates case management, audiology and specialist services continue to be an integral service for identifying and managing ear and hearing

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[174] "HAPEE Ears for Early Years," Hearing Australia, accessed June 23, 2021, https://www.hearing.com.au/Hearing-loss/HAPEE.
[175] "HAPEE Ears for Early Years," Hearing Australia, accessed June 23, 2021, https://www.hearing.com.au/Hearing-loss/HAPEE.
[176] "Related Resources for health professionals," Department of Health (Cth), accessed June 23, 2021, http://www.careforkidsears.health.gov.au/internet/cfke/publishing.nsf/Content/professionals-related-resource; The Hon Minister Greg Hunt for the Minister of Health and Aged Care, "PLUMS and HATS helping to save Indigenous kids hearing," Media Release, *Department of Health,* October 23, 2020, https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-greg-hunt-mp/media/plum-and-hats-helping-to-save-indigenous-kids-hearing.
[177] "Hearing Services," Northern Territory Government, October 14, 2019, https://nt.gov.au/learning/special-education/hearing-services.
[178] "Specialist Outreach NT (SONT)," Northern Territory Government, December 15, 2016, https://health.nt.gov.au/professionals/specialist-outreach-nt-sont.
[179] "Hearing for Learning Initiative: Funders," Menzies School of Health Research, accessed June 25, 2021, https://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Research/Centres_initiatives_and_projects/Hearing_for_Learning_Initiative/.
[180] "Hearing for Learning Initiative: About," Menzies School of Health Research, accessed June 25, 2021, https://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Research/Centres_initiatives_and_projects/Hearing_for_Learning_Initiative/.
[181] Department of Health (Cth), *Roadmap for Hearing Health: Hearing Health Sector Committee*, (Canberra, ACT, 2019), 13.
[182] Department of Health (Cth), *Roadmap for Hearing Health: Hearing Health Sector Committee*, (Canberra, ACT, 2019), 10.

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health issues.[183] There is a need to identify the gaps in the provision of audiology and ENT services in remote and regional areas.[184] This work will be vital for improving the quality and comprehensiveness of ear and hearing services.

Both governments are committed to ensuring children have access to oral health care.

Evidence suggests the proportion of children with tooth decay has decreased since around the time the Australian Government started providing funding for oral health services during the NTER.[185] Despite this, children in the NT continue to experience higher rates of tooth decay than children in other states and territories. Aboriginal children have twice as much tooth decay in comparison to non-Aboriginal children.[186] Factors which contribute to poor oral health outcomes of Aboriginal children include[187]:

- poverty and social disadvantage
- lack of access to an appropriate diet
- lower use of fluoride toothpaste
- lack of fluoridated water
- limited access to dental services in rural and remote areas.

The national strategic direction for oral health is captured in the *Healthy Mouths, Healthy Lives: Australia's National Oral Health Plan 2015 – 24* (National Oral Health Plan). The six foundation areas in the plan include oral health promotion, access, systems alignment and integration, safety and quality, workforce, research and evaluation. The report also recognises additional strategies are required to address the inequalities in oral health care experienced by priority populations including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people living in regional and remote areas.[188]

The NT Government provides free public dental services, including emergency and general services to people under 18 years old in the NT.[189] The Australian Government provides additional assistance through the Child Dental Benefits Schedule. The Child Dental Benefits Schedule provides up to $1,000 in basic dental services over two years, for children across Australia aged 2 – 17 years, in families receiving a relevant payment from Services Australia.[190]

Further development of an evidence base on the effectiveness of oral health interventions for Aboriginal children in remote NT communities is required. An agreement level evaluation plan could contribute to this evidence base.

Providing clinical and preventative services continues to be an appropriate area of focus. The National Oral Health Plan emphasises the importance of regular access to preventative oral health care, to reduce the high rates of oral disease.[191] Services should be affordable, available and approachable.[192] The National Oral Health Plan indicates water fluoridation is an important protective strategy for improving oral health and should 'be extended to as many people as possible living in non-fluoridated areas.'[193] It notes the importance of considering extending water fluoridation to smaller communities where

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[183] Department of Health (Cth), *Roadmap for Hearing Health: Hearing Health Sector Committee*, (Canberra, ACT, 2019), 9-10; Siggins Miller, *Examine Australian Government Indigenous Ear and Hearing Health Initiatives: final report*, SON2647271-24 (Canberra, ACT: Department of Health (Cth), 2017), 37, 46.

[184] Department of Health (Cth), *Roadmap for Hearing Health: Hearing Health Sector Committee*, (Canberra, ACT, 2019), 10, 15.

[185] AIHW (Cth), *Oral health outreach services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Northern Territory: July 2012 to December 2019*, cat. no. IHW 235 (Canberra, ACT, 2021), 22 – 23.

[186] Ibid., 2.

[187] Ibid., 2 – 3.

[188] COAG Health Council (Cth), *Healthy Mouths, Healthy Lives: Australia's National Oral Health Plan 2015 – 2024*, ISBN 978-0-646-94487-6 (Adelaide, SA, 2015), xi.

[189] "Dental Services," Northern Territory Government, accessed June 23, 2021, https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/hospitals-health-services/dental-services.

[190] "Child Dental Benefits Schedule," Services Australia (Cth), accessed June 23, 2021, https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/child-dental-benefits-schedule.

[191] COAG Health Council (Cth), *Healthy Mouths, Healthy Lives: Australia's National Oral Health Plan 2015 – 2024*, ISBN 978-0-646-94487-6 (Adelaide, SA, 2015), 28.

[192] Ibid.

[193] Ibid., 23.

oral health inequality exists.[194] However, in the absence of water fluoridation, it is important to provide access to fluoride in other forms such as varnish programs and affordable toothpaste or other oral hygiene products.[195] The National Oral Health Plan does not specifically refer to fissure sealants, however, the AIHW recognises fissure sealants as the main prevention service for children alongside fluoride.[196]

Recommendations from the Health Implementation Plan

- Incorporate output quality indicators which, based on strong evidence of effectiveness and sound program design, demonstrate progress toward outcomes
- Explore opportunities to rationalise multiple payment pathways to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements
- Commit to an agreement level evaluation plan agreed at the design stage

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[194] Ibid., 23.
[195] Ibid., 23.
[196] "Oral health and dental care in Australia," Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (Cth), March 23, 2021, https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/dental-oral-health/oral-health-and-dental-care-in-australia/contents/preventative-strategies.

Agreement Structure and Governance Management and Governance

Governance

The *National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment* (the NTRAI or the Agreement) noted joint responsibility between both governments to consult on implementation, however it did not create a formal governance and monitoring mechanism.[197] The only parts of the Agreement to embed formal governing bodies in the Agreement were the Children and Schooling Implementation Plan and the Housing Schedule. Bespoke governance arrangements emerged during the life of the Agreement as a need for oversight and formal engagement became apparent. These arrangements had mixed success.

The NTRAI Mid-Term Review in 2018 identified a need for greater communication between both governments and oversight of the Agreement.[198] A the NTRAI Joint Steering Committee was subsequently established to provide whole of Agreement strategic oversight, improve communication and transparency, support outcomes through collaboration and communication and explore opportunities to identify lessons learned for future arrangements. The Joint Steering Committee was effective in capturing lessons learned, facilitating whole of Agreement discussions, responding to issues as they arose and facilitating communication. However, it last met in August 2020, and it did not develop standardised performance reporting as intended. The Joint Steering Committee has been in abeyance, partly as a reflection of the significant resource redistribution required by the NT Government to respond to COVID-19. As the term of the NTRAI is drawing to an end, the strategic oversight and high-level engagement is focused on the end of term review.

Joint governance arrangements were formed for some Implementation Plans and Schedules. The Joint Steering Committee under the Children and Schooling Implementation Plans, and the Groote Eylandt Project Control Group under the Community Safety Implementation Plan were formed early in the Agreement term. The Mid-Term Review found these groups facilitated improvements including 'sharing of on-the-ground intelligence, positive performance reporting through timely delivery of reports, and shared understanding of operational contexts.'[199] Following the Mid-Term Review additional working groups were also formed under the Community Safety Implementation Plan (the Child and Family Working Group and the NT Remote Policing Working Group). Working groups were useful in capturing lessons learned, responding to issues as they arose and facilitating communication. However, they were often consumed with discussing funding and reporting requirements, including which information to report on and how to present it.

In the absence of governance mechanisms embedded in the agreement and Implementation Plans, successful engagement between both governments is dependent on arrangements being developed outside the Agreement. Future arrangements should establish a formal governance mechanism for the full-term of the Agreement. Governance arrangements should facilitate consistent stakeholder engagement and oversee, monitor and support implementation at a strategic level. There is opportunity to include Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations, to provide a whole of program perspective and facilitate shared decision making. The frequency of meetings should be based on risk level.

Reporting

Performance Reporting

National Partnerships are designed to focus on the achievement of mutually agreed objectives and outcomes, and enhanced accountability through simpler and more transparent performance reporting.[200] In contrast, the NTRAI agreed reporting

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[197] Council on Federal Financial Relations, *National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment,* 4.

[198] Australian Government and Northern Territory Government, *National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment (the NTRAI): Mid-Term Review Final Report,* (Darwin, NT, 2018), 3.

[199] Ibid., 8, 23.

[200] Council of Australian Governments, *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations,* (Canberra, ACT), 5–6.

requirements were predominately output focused (except for the Aboriginal Interpreter Schedule, Children and Schooling Implementation Plans and the Health Implementation Plan).

There were issues with the efficiency of the reporting process. The absence of streamlined reporting templates and targets led to inconsistent reporting between years. The NT Government invested resources in developing performance reports however feedback from the Australian Government was often delayed or not provided. Streamlined reporting in future arrangements would ensure continuity of data and efficiency of process.

The output reporting requirements often lacked quality indicators to assess progress against, even though improving the quality and efficiency of Government service delivery is a principle of the Federal Financial Relations Framework.[201] Without this, it was difficult to draw meaning from the data and descriptions of activity provided through performance reporting. To supplement output reporting and at the request of the Australian Government, the NT Government provided anecdotal information and some quantitative data to highlight the local impact of programs in the performance reporting. A more systematic, evidence-based framework for assessing the quality of activities and services overtime could provide insight into whether the Agreement is on track to achieving outcomes. Quality indicators should be designed to avoid unintentionally prescribing rigid outputs.

The performance reporting process led to improvements in service delivery. Under the Alcohol Schedule, the NT Government found the regular reporting provided an opportunity to identify trends in liquor license compliance issues. Under the Health Implementation Plan, working with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to report based on age groupings, supported more streamlined service delivery.

Agreement Design

Delivery Focus

The reporting and funding arrangements for the Agreement were predominately output focused. This provided the NT Government with funding certainty and the Australian Government with oversight and involvement in implementation. The timeframes and volume of activity were prescribed in the Agreement. In some cases, this may have limited the NT Government's ability to adapt activities if it meant departing from the prescriptive milestones in the Agreement. However, there was an agreement from the outset to revise the Children and Schooling Implementation Plan after three years. This provided flexibility to adapt outputs in response to lessons learned in the implementation evaluation of *A share in the future: Indigenous Education Strategy 2015 – 24*. Future arrangements could introduce points to review whether outputs require adapting in response to new learnings. A limitation of this style of agreement is it does not provide for robust measurement of high-level change which could contribute to expanding the evidence base.

An outcome focus arrangement could address the limitations of an output style agreement, while recognising the different structure shapes the roles and responsibilities under the agreement. This style of arrangement allows both governments to work together in developing strategic elements such as outcome measures, program logic, evaluation and funding arrangements while providing the NT Government with autonomy and flexibility to determine which activities will achieve outcomes. This approach provides flexibility and a financial incentive to continually learn, adapt and innovate to achieve outcomes.

Streamlined Funding Pathways

This Review identified dual payment pathways for similar activity across several Implementation Plans, including services under the Health Implementation Plan, Housing Schedule, the Aboriginal Interpreter Service Schedule and the Child and Family Schedule. The Productivity Commission's study report *Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory* found the Australian Government and NT Government tend to make funding decisions in isolation leading to fragmentation and inefficiencies.[202] For

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[201] Ibid.

[202] Productivity Commission, *Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory*, 2.

example, the housing outputs in the NT were funded under both the *National Partnership on Remote Housing* and the NTRAI. The Australian Government funds initiatives, which support the hearing health for Aboriginal peoples in remote locations, under multiple payment mechanisms. The Aboriginal Interpreters Services is funded by the Australian Government through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) and the NTRAI. While the Child and Family Schedule was funded by the NTRAI, the IAS funded additional programs related to the safety and well-being of children and families. The multiple payment mechanism contributes to greater burdens of monitoring and reporting requirements. Future arrangement should explore the opportunity to rationalise payment pathways where multiple exist to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements.

Evidence Base

Historical patterns of funding have informed the NTRAI activity. The activities funded under the NTRAI can be found threaded from the *Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007*, the *Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement*, the *National Partnership on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory*, and now the NTRAI. Although all the agreements provided for various reporting and data collection spanning across 15 years, there is no mechanism in place to collate and evaluate data across agreements over time. The Review acknowledges the NT Government has evaluated or is planning evaluations of activity that relate to some aspects of the NTRAI. However, the absence of a mechanism within the Agreement to identify what interventions under the NTRAI work or do not work is a significant shortcoming of the NTRAI and previous agreements.

The Review examines the ongoing appropriateness of outputs under the Agreement in accordance with best practices for the general population or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In most cases it remains unclear whether the current evidence-base is applicable to remote Aboriginal communities in the NT. This confirms the need for large-scale agreements to contribute evidence for future use. In the absence of direct evidence, it is reasonable to innovate, test, and contribute to evidence. The *National Drug Strategy 2017 – 26* highlights this point —

> '*Funding, resource allocation and implementation of strategies should be informed by evidence based practice …. Supporting research and building and sharing evidence is a key mechanism that allows a national approach to leverage better outcomes from local implementation. Where evidence is not available or limited, effective policy may still be implemented, if it is considered to have strong potential to achieve the desired outcomes and can be used to expand the knowledge base'.*[203]

To support improved decision making on activities, an agreement level evaluation plan agreed at the design stage would potentially take into account previous effort, identify appropriate measures of success across the agreement, prioritise data collection and evaluation activities, and collate findings at least 12 months prior to the end of the agreement. There is an onus on governments to expand the knowledge base by building common datasets, systems, evaluation, research and real-time trials into their design with a view to learning from success and failure.

Future Steps

- Embed formal governance mechanisms in future arrangements
- Streamline reporting to ensure continuity of data and efficiency of process
- Ensure greater public accountability for the achievement of outcomes
- Explore opportunities to rationalise multiple payment pathways to provide a streamlining of monitoring and reporting requirements
- Embed agreement level evaluation into the design of future arrangement

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[203] Department of Health (Cth), *National Drug Strategy 2017–2026*, 18.

Appendix A - Short Guide to Reviewing National Partnerships

A SHORT GUIDE TO REVIEWING NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

This Short Guide provides advice to Commonwealth agencies on the requirements and arrangements for conducting final reviews of National Partnerships under the [Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations](#) (Intergovernmental Agreement).

General guidance on developing National Partnerships is provided in [Federal Finances Circular 2015/01, Developing National Partnerships under the federal financial relations framework](#). Section VII of the Circular deals with review processes for National Partnerships.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR REVIEWS?

Clause E23 of the Intergovernmental Agreement states that National Partnerships are generally expected to have limited time horizons and should either lead to termination or a decision as to whether ongoing funding is needed and if so, in what form. Final (as opposed to mid-term) reviews provide a means of assessing whether policy objectives and outcomes and/or outputs of the National Partnership have been achieved and inform decisions regarding the treatment of expiring National Partnerships.

Federal Finances Circular 2015/01 specifies that "to assist consideration of the appropriate treatment of expiring National Partnerships, provision for a review of the National Partnership should be incorporated in the agreement"[1].

National Partnerships generally include a standard review clause that the National Partnership will be reviewed by a specific time prior to the expiry of the agreement with regard to progress made by the parties in achieving the agreed outcomes.

WHEN SHOULD REVIEWS BE SCHEDULED?

Depending on the complexity of National Partnerships and timing of their expiry, final reviews should be scheduled to be completed no later than six to 12 months prior to the expiry of the agreement, with the exact timing depending on the complexity of the National Partnership and when it expires. Where possible future policy and budget consideration is likely to be required, the timing of annual budget processes should be considered in determining the timing of reviews.

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[1] Federal Finances Circular No 2015/01, p. 25.

Final reviews may be supplemented by mid-term reviews where the National Partnership is of sufficient duration. Mid-term reviews provide a means of identifying whether the agreed outcomes and/or outputs are being delivered within agreed timeframes, and whether any remedial action is required to ensure that agreed outcomes and/or outputs are achieved by the time the agreement expires. Provision for, and the scope of, any mid-term reviews should be articulated in the National Partnership, if it is agreed that they are required. Generally, mid-term reviews should not create reporting requirements additional to those agreed through the National Partnership.

Fixed review dates should be avoided as far as possible, to enable the timing of the review to take account of the experience in implementing the agreement, and to provide a means of responding to any emerging challenges which may make a fixed review date impractical. For example, data required for the review may not be available in time to meet the specific deadline in the National Partnership. Instead of scheduling reviews for specific dates, reviews should be considered in terms of timeframes, taking into consideration the implications for National Partnerships of short duration.

As far as practicable, reviews should allow sufficient time for any policy or budget decisions, and further time to allow for the possible need to negotiate an extended or new agreement, prior to the expiry of the agreement. For example, if a National Partnership is due to expire on 30 June 2014, the review should ideally report by no later than the end of October 2013, so that its conclusions and recommendations can inform consideration of any future policy and funding arrangements, including as part of the Commonwealth Budget, for the 2014-15 financial year.

Particular attention should be given to National Partnerships that deal with large, sensitive or complex issues, or involve significant financial risk, to ensure that they are reviewed no later than 12 months prior to expiry. For omnibus National Partnerships[2] that are comprised of different elements, a review should be undertaken only where appropriate and after all elements are approaching their conclusion, or where individual elements are significant enough in financial and policy terms to warrant separate consideration. Commonwealth portfolio agencies should refer to the Budget Process Operational Rules for further guidance on the requirements for reviews.

Reviews of National Partnerships and their timeframes are separate from any independent assessment of performance under National Agreements and National Partnerships (to the extent to which the National Partnership supports the objectives of a related National Agreement),or assessing whether jurisdictions have achieved pre-determined performance benchmarks and/or milestones before reward payments are made.

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[2] There are only three omnibus National Partnerships: Health Infrastructure, Health Services and Water for the Future.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONDUCTING THE REVIEW?

Portfolio ministers are accountable for the negotiation, policy, implementation and review of National Partnerships[3]. Commonwealth portfolio ministers are also responsible for initiating and leading the review of agreements at an appropriate time before their expiry,[4] in accordance with the Commonwealth Budget Process Operational Rules and any review clauses in relevant agreements.

• Reviews of measures that are large, sensitive, complex or involve significant financial risk require separate, formal consideration in the Commonwealth Budget context.

• Other measures are reviewed as part of the portfolio agency's program evaluation framework.

• Where National Partnerships are cross-portfolio (i.e. the joint responsibility of two or more portfolios), the agency with principal responsibility for oversight, coordination, and implementation and monitoring should also have oversight of the review, including liaison with central agencies.

• A collaborative approach between the Commonwealth, the States and Territories (the States) and other relevant stakeholders is necessary to ensure that the review is completed successfully.

  – Review mechanisms should include consultation between Commonwealth portfolio and central agencies, as well as between Commonwealth and State portfolio agencies.

  – Generally, Commonwealth portfolio agencies should consult with their central agencies in early discussions concerning the design of reviews (including the Terms of Reference and review methodology) to ensure consistency with the requirements of the federal financial relations framework.

  – State portfolio agencies are responsible for advising their central agencies of their participation in the review and consulting with their central agencies during the course of the review.

Before a review process commences, a Terms of Reference should be developed and agreed to between the Commonwealth and relevant States to guide the scope and direction of the review and establish appropriate governance arrangements. Commonwealth central agencies should be consulted as part of this process.

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[3] Short Guide to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations and the Federal Financial Relations Framework, Appendix 2.

[4] See 'When should reviews be scheduled?' for more information.

Reviews should be conducted independently of, or jointly by, the parties to the agreement[5]. As such, the review will generally be either undertaken by an external consultant or jointly by the Commonwealth and the States involved.

Where the review is undertaken by an external consultant, any shared funding arrangements will need to be agreed to between the Commonwealth and the States. Appropriate authority will also need to be sought for the Commonwealth's contribution to funding the review.

Portfolio ministers should consider publishing reviews on departmental websites, consistent with the public accountability and transparency objectives of the Intergovernmental Agreement.

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD REVIEWS ADDRESS?

The main focus of reviews should be the effectiveness of the policy or program in achieving the outcomes of the National Partnership, and the extent to which the objectives have been achieved, including through the assessment of performance against project milestones and/or performance benchmarks, and reasons for any underperformance. Reviews may also assess implementation arrangements to inform future implementation strategies.

Mid-term reviews and progress reports should also identify any remedial action that is required to ensure that the objectives will be achieved by the time the National Partnership expires. Remedial action may require the relevant National Partnership and/or Implementation Plan to be amended by the written agreement of the parties.

Figure 1 outlines three basic questions that reviews should address: effectiveness; efficiency; and appropriateness. Commonwealth portfolio agencies should also refer to the Budget Process Operational Rules for further guidance on Expenditure Review Principles. A consultation process involving relevant stakeholders will be essential to obtain the information required to answer these questions.

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[5] Federal Finances Circular No 2015/01, page 25.

Figure 1 - Three basic questions for a review

> • **Effectiveness**: Have the stated policy objectives and the agreed outcomes and/or outputs, including where they support the delivery of reform, service delivery improvement or projects, been achieved? Have the requirements (i.e. outcomes and outputs) in the National Partnership been the most appropriate in terms of whether they have assisted or hindered the achievement of the objective of the agreement?
>
> • **Efficiency**: Have outputs been produced commensurate with the financial and non-financial contributions that are outlined in the agreement? Has 'value for money' in delivering the objectives of the agreement been achieved? Have there been barriers to implementation or delays? If so, how has this been managed and how will this affect any future policy design or funding?
>
> • **Appropriateness**: Does the policy or program remain appropriate? Is there still a need or priority for Commonwealth and State Government activity and/or collaboration in this policy area and, if so, should the existing approach be maintained?

Effectiveness

The question of effectiveness is intended to address whether the National Partnership's objectives and the agreed outcomes and/or outputs, including where they support the delivery of reform, service delivery improvement or projects, have been achieved. Sometimes a National Partnership will have specified objectives and outcomes that define general, longer term and higher level goals, such as a 'higher quality healthcare system'. As it is often difficult to measure these objectives and outcomes quantitatively, a review would be better suited to measuring progress against more specific shorter term outcomes and/or outputs that support the longer term objectives. Where the objective of an agreement is the delivery of an output, such as the delivery of a project, it would be worthwhile to gauge not only the effectiveness of delivering the output, but also the adoption, use and benefits of that output. Other questions could include:

- the extent to which the performance monitoring and reporting aspects of the agreement supported the assessment of whether the objective of the agreement had been met;

- the extent to which implementation arrangements, including governance, financial arrangements and performance reporting arrangements of the agreement assisted or hindered the achievement of its objective; and

- findings on how the agreement could have been more effective in contributing to its objectives and outcomes.

In assessing the effectiveness of the National Partnership, stakeholders may express their views on whether the scope of the agreement's objective was appropriate and whether the implementation arrangements were conducive to the delivery of the outcomes and/or outputs.

Efficiency

Measurements of efficiency are best facilitated when performance measures, such as performance benchmarks and/or milestones are specifically provided for in the agreement, allowing for 'value for money' assessments. For example, how many services were delivered or what increase in services was achieved in return for the financial and non-financial contributions outlined in the agreement? In addressing whether outcomes and/or outputs have been maximised for the investment, a review may consider:

• the extent to which the parties to the agreement fulfilled their agreed roles and responsibilities;

• evaluation of tracked progress against performance benchmarks;

• the adequacy of the performance indicators and benchmarks for assessing whether objectives have been met;

• the extent to which the actual benefits of the agreement are commensurate with the funding provided; and

• how outcomes, such as defined beneficial impacts of implementation, have been distinguished from how efficient the delivery of outputs have been, recognising that in some cases, changes in outcomes may not be measurable within the life of the agreement.

Appropriateness

The review should consider whether there is a continued need for Commonwealth Government involvement in the policy area, for example, whether there is a need for the initiative to continue or if there is a need to pursue further reform or service delivery improvement. Commonwealth involvement may be desirable if there is a need for intergovernmental cooperation to deliver further national reform or service delivery improvement or to maintain improved service levels. The review should also consider the principles which guide Commonwealth support for a national reform or service delivery improvement in areas of State or Territory responsibility[6], and whether the funding mechanisms in the National Partnership are appropriate for achieving its objectives.

Figure 2 sets out a suggested outline for what a National Partnership review should cover.

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[6] Intergovernmental Agreement, clause E21.

Figure 2: Suggested outline for a National Partnership review

Executive Summary

Background
- Policy context;
- General information about the National Partnership;
- Method of implementation of outcomes and/or outputs;
- Performance monitoring and reporting arrangements;
- Governance arrangements; and
- Other relevant background information.

Methodology for the Review
- Terms of Reference;
- Research approach; and
- Research process and outcomes.

Review of performance and feedback from consultation
- Quantitative information to support assessment of effectiveness against performance benchmarks and/or milestones;
- Appropriateness of the National Partnership's scope;
- Effectiveness of governance and accountability arrangements (including role of ministerial councils, advisory groups and organisations, where applicable);
- Achievement of outcomes and/or outputs;
- Analysis of risk outcomes, including what identified and unidentified risks materialised, how they were managed and how they affected the success or otherwise of the National Partnership in meeting its policy objective and outcomes/outputs; and
- Ongoing need for the National Partnership.

Overall findings
- Effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness;
- Progress by parties in carrying out their roles and responsibilities; and
- Ongoing appropriateness of the National Partnership (whether Commonwealth activity is still desirable).

Future steps
- If appropriate, consideration of any further activity and its possible nature and scope, noting the requirement for Commonwealth policy and Budget authority for any future activity.

National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

In 2011, COAG endorsed the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020*, a ten-year national policy framework to improve the lives of people with disability, promote participation, and create a more inclusive society. As part of the Strategy, COAG committed to use the review points of National Agreements and related National Partnerships to consider the inclusion of strategies and performance indicators to ensure they address the needs of people with disability.

WHAT HAPPENS FOLLOWING THE REVIEW?

Any proposal to provide further funding under a new agreement after the expiry of the original agreement represents a New Policy Proposal (NPP) under the Commonwealth's Budget Process Operational Rules. Commonwealth portfolio ministers are required to bring forward all NPPs in Portfolio Budget Submissions, including with offsetting savings, for consideration in the budget context.

The outcomes of review processes, to which States contribute, inform Commonwealth ministers' Portfolio Budget Submissions. Following completion of the review, any further considerations within the Commonwealth in the Budget context are Budget-in-Confidence and the Commonwealth is not at liberty to consult further with the States on future funding and possible funding mechanisms until decisions on those matters have been made and are released publicly.

The Intergovernmental Agreement gives the Council on Federal Financial Relations (CFFR), which is comprised of the Commonwealth Treasurer and all State treasurers, a role in influencing funding mechanisms should ongoing funding for activities involving payments to the States be approved in the Commonwealth Budget context. Options and criteria for the treatment of expiring agreements have been developed by Heads of Treasuries and endorsed by COAG, to inform consideration of the form of any further funding beyond the expiry of an agreement. As part of this, State treasurers may formally advise the Commonwealth Treasurer of their views regarding expiring agreements. State treasurers may advise whether funding should continue and if so, in what form, for consideration in Commonwealth budget processes. However, like other ministerial councils, the CFFR does not have the authority to make funding decisions: its role is purely advisory.

With regard to reviews, while the CFFR may consider the funding implications for expiring agreements, it does not consider reviews of individual agreements, although it may note the outcomes of particular reviews, or that particular agreements are subject to review and the timing of that review relative to the timing of budget processes.

Once the review has been completed, a copy of the final report from the review should be forwarded to State central agencies. Reviews can inform the development of the State and Territory Treasurers' annual report on expiring agreements, as well as Commonwealth ministers' Portfolio Budget Submissions.

A Short Guide to Reviewing National Partnerships

Once Commonwealth Budget decisions are public and decisions have been made on the provision of further funding and the form of the ongoing funding arrangements, work can start on establishing new funding arrangements (if applicable), including the objectives and outcomes of the new agreement, and the related performance measures.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Council on Federal Financial Relations

- The website of the Council on Federal Financial Relations provides useful information on the Intergovernmental Agreement, including the Short Guide to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations and the federal financial relations framework. The Short Guide includes an overview of accountabilities under the federal financial relations framework (Appendix 2). http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/guidelines/Short-Guide- Intergovernmental-Agreement.pdf

- The Short Guide to payments that fall within the federal financial relations framework provides advice on the types of payments that are within scope of the federal financial relations framework, and the payment classification process undertaken by the Commonwealth Department of Finance. http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/guidelines/Short-Guide- Payments.pdf

National Disability Strategy
- The *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020* outlines a ten-year national policy framework to improve the lives of people with disability, promote participation, and create a more inclusive society. The Strategy guides public policy across all levels of government and aims to bring about change in all mainstream and specialist programs and services, as well as community infrastructure, to ensure they are accessible and responsive to the needs of people with disability
- https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program- services/government-international/national-disability-strategy

Budget timetable and Budget Process Operational Rules

- Commonwealth portfolio agencies should refer to the relevant Estimates Memorandum on the Budget timetable and Budget Process Operational Rules. The Estimates Memorandum is issued by the Department of Finance and updated annually.

Australian Public Service Commission (APSC)
- The APSC's learning and development evaluation guide provides comprehensive material to guide practitioners through an evaluation process. http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/archive/publications- archive/evaluating-learning

Appendix B – Mid-Term Review Findings

The Mid-Term review was conducted in May 2018 and completed as a partnership between the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) (then the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet) and the Northern Territory Government. As outlined in the National Partnership Agreement, the mid-term review was established to "assess the degree to which the agreed objectives and outcomes and/or outputs have been achieved and inform decisions regarding the appropriate treatment following its expiry".[204]

The Mid-Term Review identified two sets of key findings.[205] "The first is in line with the objective and scope of the Review set out in the NTRAI Review Guide. These findings should inform decisions around the management of the NTRAI for the remaining term. The second set of findings is outside the scope of this Mid-Term Review but should be taken into consideration for future arrangements or negotiations of National Partnership Agreements."

Findings for the Mid-Term Review

1.   All NTRAI outputs and project milestones have been successfully achieved

The Mid-Term Review has found that all the milestones outlined in NTRAI have been successfully delivered by the Northern Territory and performance is deemed to be on track. The Review has also identified examples of good practice in the management of a number of Implementation Plans and Schedules. As a result, the Review found that no remedial actions are required within the current structure of NTRAI.

Notwithstanding this, this Mid-Term Review process identified a number of areas for enhancement. Further details are provided in the recommendations in the Findings by Implementation Plan section of this document.

2.   The Performance Reporting framework is satisfactory

The Mid-Term Review has found that for the purpose of reporting against agreed milestones and outputs, the current Performance Reporting framework is adequate. The data and information required to report on performance has in the majority of cases been provided on time. The Review also found that having established communication channels supports timely and effective reporting outcomes and identified areas where current communication arrangements could be strengthened to facilitate on time payment releases.

Further details are provided in relation to the Child and Family Schedule in the Community Safety Implementation Plan section.

3.   Joint governance and coordination mechanisms deliver better outcomes

The Mid-Term Review has found that better outcomes are achieved where there are formal governance mechanisms in place that complement performance reporting arrangements. Examples of these mechanisms include the Joint Steering Committee under the Children and Schooling Implementation Plan, and the Groote Eylandt Project Control Group under the Community Safety Implementation Plan, Remote Policing Schedule.

These formal governance arrangements establish strong cross-government relationships, provide for clarity of roles, responsibilities and requirements, and facilitate proactive service delivery and better alignment and understanding of policy objectives between both governments.

Further details are provided in relation to the Children and Schooling Implementation Plan and also the Policing Schedule under the Community Safety Implementation Plan.

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[204] NP NTRAI
[205] Mid Term Review

Findings to inform future Agreements

1. **Future Agreements to consider arrangements to enable both the Australian and Northern Territory Governments to respond flexibly to emerging priorities.**

Service delivery for remote Aboriginal Territorians is a complex and dynamic space with multiple funding sources, programs, and initiatives. Additionally, both the Australian and Northern Territory Governments are required to respond to emerging priorities. Some of the recent priorities have included:

- Australian Government's Closing the Gap Refresh
- Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory
- Northern Territory Government's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018-2028
- Northern Territory Government's Early Childhood Plan
- Northern Territory Government's Aboriginal Education Strategy
- Northern Territory Government's Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review (Riley Review)
- Northern Territory Government's Local Decision-making Framework.

Ongoing service delivery needs to be responsive to changes in policy and community needs. While there is flexibility within the current NTRAI arrangement to redirect funding from within an Implementation Plan or Schedule, future agreements may consider other ways to support both governments to respond to emerging priorities. Some of these options may include redirecting funds between different Schedules and/or Implementation Plans.

2. **There is recognition that an outcomes-based reporting framework would allow for better measurement of outcomes and impact of investment under future arrangements.**

One of the key challenges in assessing the achievement of higher-level outcomes is the difficulty in establishing causality between outputs and outcomes. While the current requirement of the NTRAI is to report against performance benchmarks and milestones, there is also real benefit in measuring achievements and progress against outcomes. An outcomes-based approach would assist in providing a narrative around NTRAI outcomes and commitments to inform future investment, including:

- Improvement in schooling, community safety, health, housing and providing access to interpreter services and job opportunities for adults.
- Providing economic development and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people
- Promoting Indigenous business enterprises.

It is beyond the scope of this Mid-Term Review to make significant changes to the reporting framework of NTRAI or create additional reporting requirements. However, the Review has found interest from both governments in identifying new data sources and investigating data sharing arrangements that could improve the capacity to measure progress and report on outcomes in future agreements.

Appendix C - National Partnership Agreement and Implementation Plans

A copy of the *National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment* (the NTRAI or the Agreement) and Implementation Plans are available on the Federal Financial Relations website.

Direct links to the NTRAI and Implementation Plans are below:

Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment [PDF]

Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment [Word]

Remote Aboriginal Investment - Community Safety Implementation Plan [PDF]

NT Remote Aboriginal Investment - Community Safety Implementation Plan [Word]

NT Remote Aboriginal Investment - Remote Australia Strategies Implementation Plan [PDF]

NT Remote Aboriginal Investment - Remote Australia Strategies Implementation Plan [Word]

NT Remote Aboriginal Investment - Children and Schooling Implementation Plan [PDF]

NT Remote Aboriginal Investment - Children and Schooling Implementation Plan [Word]

NT Remote Aboriginal Investment - Health Implementation Plan [PDF]

NT Remote Aboriginal Investment - Health Implementation Plan [Word]

Appendix D – NTRAI Actual Payments

Sum of Allocation ($ '000)		Actuals						Forward Estimates	
	Wage Cost Index	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Grand Total 2015-16 to 2021-22
Community Safety Implementation Plan (SPP695)									
Children and Family Schedule									
Women's Safe Houses (WSH)	WCI 3	5,030	5,124	5,200	5,287	5,308	0	0	25,949
Remote Family Support Services (RFSS)	N/A	13,421	11,780	7,340	5,740	4,230	0	0	42,511
Children and Family Total		18,451	16,904	12,540	11,027	9,538	0	0	68,460
Remote Policing Schedule									0
Remote Policing	WCI 3	24,040	22,938	23,485	23,110	22,757	23,757	24,712	164,799
Construction of Police Complexes	WCI 3	12,178	12,154	12,094	6,028	0	0	0	42,454
Remote Policing Total		36,218	35,092	35,579	29,138	22,757	23,757	24,712	207,253
Alcohol Schedule	N/A	13,795	15,396	14,888	13,505	12,060	10,872	11,072	91,588
Alice Springs Transformation Plan	N/A	1,794	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,794
Community Safety Total		**70,258**	**67,392**	**63,007**	**53,670**	**44,355**	**34,629**	**35,784**	**369,095**
Remote Australia Strategies Implementation Plan									0
Housing Schedule (SPP 696)	N/A	48,024	46,196	23,710	23,711	0	0	0	141,641
Asbestos Schedule (SPP 696)	N/A	4,225	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,225
Aboriginal Interpreters Services (SPP 588)	WCI 3	3,704	3,489	3,482	3,539	3,536	3,651	3,706	25,106
Remote Australia Strategies Total		**55,953**	**49,685**	**27,192**	**27,250**	**3,536**	**3,651**	**3,706**	**170,972**
Children and Schooling									
Children and Schooling (SPP 697)	N/A	36,895	30,155	28,898	25,406	26,147	20,110	21,841	189,452
Capital Component (SPP 597)	N/A	4,467	5,724	5,867	3,809	3,800	3,800	3,800	31,267
Non-Government Schools	N/A	8,648	7,647	7,762	6,536	4,779	3,609	3,635	42,616
Children and Schooling Total		**50,010**	**43,526**	**42,527**	**35,751**	**34,726**	**27,519**	**29,276**	**263,355**
Health Implementation Plan (SPP 720)	N/A	**5,649**	**5,905**	**6,171**	**6,448**	**6,739**	**7,042**	**7,359**	**45,313**
SFNT - Municipal and Essential Services (SPP590)	N/A	**154,821**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**154,821**
Grand Total		**336,961**	**166,508**	**138,897**	**123,119**	**89,356**	**72,841**	**76,125**	**1,003,536**

Appendix E - Achievement Tables

Community Safety Implementation Plan

Children and family Schedule

Activity	Outputs									
	2015		**2016**		**2017**		**2018**		**2019**	
	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment
Remote Family Support Services (RFSS) Transition	In 2015-16, complete the transition of existing workforce and services to the RFSS, including: • The development of new delivery model and related infrastructure. • Employee relocations where necessary. • Staff training on the new model. • Provision of supervisory and support pathways. • Integration with local services; and • Ongoing provision of support for existing clients. In each of 2015 and 2016, conduct at least 3 regional workshops each year with the remote aboriginal workforce regarding keeping children safe and working with child protection. (held in workshops in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs)	**Milestone achieved** Development of model and workshops held to consult and plan on new service model for place-based planning support. Workshops for staff were held in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine in October 2015.	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** Transition to new RFSS model including transition of staff, new policies and procedures and establishment of family support case work. Workshops for RAFCW and WSH staff were held in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine in November 2016.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Deliver support to families in at least 12 communities through remote aboriginal family and community workers and deliver support to families on a referral basis through mobile outreach service plus.	**Milestone exceeded** Delivered to 17 communities. Mobile Outreach Service Plus provided 334 case related services.	Establish community based RFSS in at least five sites by 31 December 2016, including established family support casework teams. Data provided to the Australian Government on the number and percentage of RFSS staff employed who identify as Aboriginal.	**Milestone exceeded** Established in 6 sites. 85% of RFSS workers identify as Aboriginal.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
RFSS Reporting Framework	N/A	N/A	Develop an RFSS reporting framework to support effective community-based responses, including development of: • Information systems to integrate RFSS	**Milestone achieved** RFSS Reporting Framework developed.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Activity	Outputs									
	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment
			client information and reporting with child protection information in the Northern Territory. • Policy and procedures developed to support casework. • A workforce model with induction, supervision and professional development structures. • An activity and outcome reporting framework; and • Protocols for Multi Agency Child Safety Coordination Group							
RFSS Full Implementation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Ensure that community based RFSS operate in at least twelve sites in each of the three years. Data provided to the commonwealth on the number and percentage of community based RFSS staff employed who are aboriginal and/or local community members.	**Milestone exceeded** RFSS operated in 15 sites. 23 (82.1%) of RFSS staff identify as Aboriginal.	Same as 2017	**Milestone exceeded** RFSS operated in 14 sites. 27 (67.5%) of RFSS staff identify as Aboriginal.	Same as 2017	**Milestone exceeded** RFSS operated in 16 sites. 20 (74%) of RFSS staff identify as Aboriginal.
RFSS Goal-oriented Family Support	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Deliver goal-oriented family support casework in at least five larger sites in each of the three years, including: • Practical support. • Capability and capacity building; and • Tailored referred interventions for families.	**Milestone exceeded** Delivered at 6 sites.	Same as 2017	**Milestone exceeded** Delivered at 6 sites.	Same as 2017	**Milestone exceeded** Delivered at 15 sites.
RFSS Multi Agency Child Safety Coordination Groups	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Ensure that Multi Agency Child Safety Coordination Groups operate in at least five sites in each of the three years.	**Milestone exceeded** Operated at 6 sites (66 meetings convened).	Same as 2017	**Milestone exceeded** Operated at 9 sites (63 meetings convened).	Same as 2017	**Milestone exceeded** Operated at 12 sites (51 meetings convened).
RFSS Workforce	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Ensure that at least 90% percent of the RFSS workforce in the 5 larger sites participate in training and professional development that	**Milestone exceeded** 100% of RFSS workforce participated in training.	Same as 2017	**Milestone exceeded** 100% of RFSS workforce participated in training.	Same as 2017	**Milestone exceeded** 100% of RFSS workforce participated.

Activity	Outputs									
	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment
					supports a contemporary and enduring aboriginal workforce.					
Woman's Safehouse (WSH) Transition	Engage the Aboriginal workforce in the development of an improved service delivery model including design, implementation, review and evaluation, through: • Conducting 3 regional workshops with the remote Aboriginal workforce regarding keeping children safe and working with child protection.	**Milestone achieved** Workshops for staff were held in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine in October 2015.	Develop a Personal Safety Plan framework which activates a system of supports for clients when they leave the Women's Safehouses, and includes assessments, coordination of integrated services, and development of integrated and accessible systems and appropriate training.	**Milestone achieved** Personal Safety Plan Framework developed.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Women's Safehouses accessibility	Ensure that Women's Safehouses are accessible for at least 85% of each day, including locations of each operational Women's Safehouse over the reporting period.	**Milestone exceeded** 95% accessible.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 95% accessible.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 93% accessible.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 97% accessible.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 89% accessible.
Women's Safehouses Workforce	Ensure that at least 85% of Women's Safehouses workers are participating in training and professional development that supports a contemporary and enduring Aboriginal workforce.	**Milestone exceeded** 97.4% WSH workers participated in training.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 100% WSH workers participated in training.	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** 85% WSH workers participated in training.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 100% WSH workers participated in training.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 100% WSH workers participated in training.
	Ensure that 100% of Women's Safehouses workers are local community members.	**Milestone achieved** 100% are local community members (39 staff).	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** 100% are local community members (36 staff).	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** 100% are local community members (32 staff).	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** 100% are local community members (34 staff).	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** 100% are local community members (31 staff).
Women's Safehouses clients Personal Safety Plans	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Ensure that at least 90% of Women's Safehouses clients have an agreed Personal Safety Plan (PSP).	**Milestone exceeded** 100% have agreed PSPs.	Same as 2017	**Milestone exceeded** 97% have agreed PSPs.	Same as 2017	**Milestone exceeded** 94% have agreed PSPs.
Payments ($ million)	**Total Payments made for 2015-16** $8.098 m (Stronger Futures legacy payments) $10.353 m (NTRAI) **Total - $18.451 m** (Full amount available under Child and Family Schedule)		**Total Payments made for 2016-17** **$16.904 m** (Full amount available under Child and Family schedule)		**Total payments made for 2017 – 18** **$12.540 m** (Full amount available under Child and Family Schedule)		**Total payments made for 2018 – 19** **$11.027 m** (Full amount available under Child and Family Schedule)		**Total payments made for 2019 – 20** **$9.538 m** (Full amount available under Child and Family Schedule)	

Remote Policing Schedule

Activity	Outputs											
		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020
		Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment

Activity		Milestone 2015	Assessment 2015	Milestone 2016	Assessment 2016	Milestone 2017	Assessment 2017	Milestone 2018	Assessment 2018	Milestone 2019	Assessment 2019	Milestone 2020	Assessment 2020
Sworn in Officers		NTPFES continues to carry out remote service delivery as part of the overall policing response across the northern territory, including reactive and proactive policing with a minimum of 300 sworn police officers operating outside the greater Darwin area servicing regional and remote areas.	**Milestone exceeded** 448 FTE	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 527 FTE	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 527 FTE	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 572.35 FTE	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 556.99 FTE	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 661.49 FTE
Substance Abuse Intelligence Desk		Maintain 2 operational Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks.	**Milestone achieved**	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved**	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved**	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved**	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved**	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved**
Dog Operation Units		Maintain 3 Dog Operational Units to service remote communities.	**Milestone achieved**	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved**	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved**	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved**	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved**	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved**
Community Engagement Police Officers		Maintain at least 2 Community Engagement police officers (CEPOs) who support general duties police.	**Milestone exceeded** 8 CEPOs	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 8 CEPOs	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 9 CEPO	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Police Facilities		Maintain a police facility in 50 remote communities for hosting permanent or temporary operational capability* (*a police facility is a police station, a police post or visiting officers' quarters).	**Milestone exceeded** 59 facilities	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 59 facilities	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 59 facilities	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 60 facilities	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 59 facilities	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 60 facilities

Construction of Police Complexes	Delivery of works agreed under the annual capital works schedule, including: • Wadeye police station: design completed, and stage 1 of demolition completed. • Wadeye police station: completion of station construction and visiting officers' quarters; commencement of housing construction. • Wadeye police station: completion of remaining demolition; completion of remaining housing; Certificate of Occupancy received for all buildings. • Other works as agreed	**Milestone to be completed** • The Commonwealth Minister for Indigenous Australians agreed to locations as per the capital works schedule in 2017 • Wadeye Police Station completed • Robinson River Post completed (Funded under Stronger Futures NPA, however completed and reported in NTRAI) • It is noted that while funding for police complexes has been released in previous years, there are two remaining police stations yet to be delivered. These are in Ngukurr and Maningrida. Delays in both Projects have been due to issues in securing appropriate land. They are both included on the NT Government's capital works program for 2020-2021.
	Delivery of works agreed under the annual capital works schedule including report on Aboriginal employment target of 10% across the capital works program.	**Milestone achieved on all capital works to date**

Payments ($ million)	Total Payments made for 2015-16 $11.781 m (Stronger Futures legacy payments) $24.437 m (NTRAI) **Total - $36.218 m**	Total Payments made for 2016-17 **$35.092 m** (Full amount available under Remote Policing Schedule)	Total payments made for 2017 – 18 **$35.579 m** (Full amount available under Remote Policing Schedule)	Total payments made for 2018 – 19 **$29.138 m** (Full amount available under Remote Policing Schedule)	Total payments made for 2019 – 20 **$22.757 m** (Full amount available under Remote Policing Schedule)	Total payments made for 2019 – 20 **$23.757 m** (Full amount available under Remote Policing Schedule)

Activity	Outputs											
	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment
	(Full amount available under Remote Policing Schedule)											

Alcohol Schedule

Activity	Outputs											
	2015		**2016**		**2017**		**2018**		**2019**		**2020**	
	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment
Alcohol action initiatives (AAIs)	AAI Program of works (PoW) agreed and service agreements or contracts issued to approved providers. Work commenced with organisations and providers to secure delivery arrangements for an additional five initiatives under the program of works.	**Milestone exceeded** 2016 Program of Works provided and agreed in principle. 6 AAIs have an agreement in place	At least 80% of AAIs in the agreed annual program of works have either: a signed service agreement or contract in place or have been completed. An update on progress in delivery of previously funded AAIs provided to the Commonwealth	**Milestone exceeded** 95% of the 41 AAIs from the 2016 PoW have an agreement in place or have been completed. Adequate update on delivery previously funded AAIs (41 in total).	Same as 2016	**Milestone exceeded** 82% of the 81 AAIs from the 2017 PoW have an agreement in place or are fully completed. Adequate update on delivery of previously funded AAIs (124 in total).	Same as 2016	**Milestone exceeded** 80.7% of the 78 AAIs from 2018 PoW have an agreement in place or are fully completed. Adequate update on delivery of previously funded AAIs (202 in total).	Same as 2016	**Milestone exceeded** 88% of the 83 AAIs from 2019 PoW have an agreement in place or are fully completed. Adequate update on delivery of previously funded AAIs (285 in total).	Same as 2016	**Milestone exceeded** 100% of the 47 AAIs from 2020 PoW have an agreement in place or are fully completed. Adequate update on delivery of previously funded AAIs (330 in total). **Note:** Some activities were rescheduled for 2021 due to COVID restrictions between March – June 2020.
Alcohol Action Initiatives Workforce	The AAI Workforce supports a target number of communities to develop, implement and monitor AAIs **Targets: 2015 (Baseline):** 23 Communities **2016:** 25 Communities **2017:** 25 Communities **2018:** 30 Communities **2019:** 30 Communities **2020:** 30 Communities **2021:** 30 Communities Data provided to the Commonwealth on the number and percentage of people employed in the AAI Workforce who identify as Aboriginal A list of the communities with an AAI Workforce presence	**Milestone exceeded** Reporting provided for development and implementation of AMP activities (under previous NPA). Reporting provided identifies development of AAIs in 24 identified communities (exceeds baseline target of 23 communities). 42 AAIs identified for delivery as a result of this work. Nil AAI workforce members who identify as Aboriginal. List of communities with an AAI presence provided. List reflects the priority communities in the Schedule.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 29 communities have AAIs implemented, exceeding the target of 25 7.6 Full time equivalent (FTE) employed as Principal Action Officers. Nil AAI workforce members who identify as Aboriginal List of communities with an AAI presence provided	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 41 communities have AAIs implemented, exceeding the target of 25. 7.6 FTE employed as Principal Action Officers. Of these, 1 (13.2%) identifies as Aboriginal. List of communities with an AAI presence provided.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 39 communities have AAIs implemented, exceeding the target of 30. 7 FTE staff employed as Principal Alcohol Action Officers. Of these, 2 (28.5%) identified as Aboriginal. List of communities with an AAI presence provided.	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** 47 communities have AAIs implemented, exceeding the target of 30. 7 FTE staff employed as Principal Alcohol Action Officers. Of these, 2 (28.5%) identified as Aboriginal. List of communities with an AAI presence provided.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 56 communities have AAIs implemented, exceeding the target of 30. 7 FTE staff employed as Principal Alcohol Action Officers. Of these, 3 (42.8%) identified as Aboriginal. List of communities with an AAI presence provided.
Individual Support Program (ISP)	Commencement of service delivery proposal for Individual Support Program model in one regional centre.	**Milestone achieved** Service delivery proposal for ISP has commenced.	ISP delivered in one regional centre and update provided on number of clients supported. Contract delivered for a second regional centre, and commencement of delivery. Data provided on number and percentage of ISP workers who identify as Aboriginal.	**Milestone partially achieved** ISP commenced in Alice Springs and supported 160 primary clients and 72 secondary clients. Contract awarded for capital ISP in Katherine. Negotiation timeframes delayed service delivery. An agreed adjusted timeframe.	ISP delivered in two regional centres and an update on the number of clients supported at each centre. Data provided on the number and percentage of ISP workers who identify as Aboriginal.	**Milestone achieved** ISP delivery in Katherine was delayed. However, delays flagged with PM&C in advance and ISP started soon after deadline. Katherine ISP has 16 clients. Alice Springs ISP has 73 active clients. Katherine ISP employs 10 program staff. Of these 8 (80%)	Same as 2017	**Milestone achieved** Katherine ISP supported 135 clients. Alice Springs ISP supported 72 clients. Katherine ISP employs 6 program staff. Of these 2 (33.3%) identify as Aboriginal. Alice Springs ISP employs 10 program staff. Of these, 6 (60%) identify as Aboriginal.	Same as 2017	**Milestone achieved** Katherine ISP supported 120 clients. Alice Springs ISP supported 141 clients. Katherine ISP employs 4 program staff. Of these, 1 (25%) identifies as Aboriginal. Alice Springs ISP employs 8 program staff. Of these 3 (37.5%) identify as Aboriginal.	Same as 2017	**Milestone achieved** Katherine ISP supported 120 clients. Alice Springs ISP supported 148 clients. Katherine ISP employs 5 program staff. Of these 2 (40%) identify as Aboriginal. Alice Springs ISP employs 4 program staff. Of these 1 (25%) identifies as Aboriginal.

Activity	Outputs											
	2015		**2016**		**2017**		**2018**		**2019**		**2020**	
	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment
				Katherine employs 2 program staff. (Nil Aboriginal) Alice Springs employs 3 program staff. Of these, 2 (66%) identify as Aboriginal.		identify as Aboriginal. Alice Springs ISP employs 8 program staff. Of these, 4 (50%) identify as Aboriginal.						
Aftercare treatment services	Aftercare Treatment Service designed, implementation planned, and processes in development.	**Milestone achieved** Reporting outlines the Aftercare Treatment Service (ATS) model.	ATS offered to all people exiting a voluntary rehabilitation or Alcohol Mandatory Treatment (AMT) program. ATS delivered to clients who consent. Data provided on the number / percentage of clients exiting rehabilitation treatment received ATS treatment and ATS workers who identify as Aboriginal	**Milestone achieved** ATS offered to all people exiting treatment (82 clients). ATS delivered to 68 (83%) clients who consented. Total workforce that identifies as Aboriginal – 2 FTE	Same as 2016	**Milestone achieved** ATS offered to all people exiting treatment (1189 clients). ATS delivered to 171 (14%) clients who consented. Total workforce that identifies as Aboriginal – 17 FTE	Same as 2016	**Milestone achieved** ATS offered to all people exiting treatment (986 clients). ATS delivered to 260 (26%) people who consented. Total workforce that identifies as Aboriginal – 19.5 FTE	Same as 2016	**Milestone achieved** ATS offered to all people exiting treatment (964 clients). ATS delivered to 149 (16%) people who consented. Total workforce that identifies as Aboriginal – 19 FTE	Same as 2016	**Milestone achieved** ATS offered to all people exiting treatment (1,208 clients). ATS delivered to 256 (21%) people who consented. Total workforce that identifies as Aboriginal – 17.7 FTE
Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce (RAODW)	Remote Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce (RAODW) operating in at least 18 communities where an RAODW has been identified as a priority. Data provided on the number and percentage of RAODW who identify as Aboriginal.	**Milestone achieved** RAODW operational in 25 communities. 70% of people employed in Department of Health positions and 85% of people employed in Aboriginal Medical Service positions identified as Aboriginal.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** RAODW operational in 25 communities. 22 (68.75%) of the RAODW identify as Aboriginal.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** RAODW operating in 34 communities. 23 (96%) of RAODW who identify as Aboriginal.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** RAODW was operational in 51 communities. 31 (86%) of RAODW workers identify as Aboriginal.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** RAODW was operational in 34 communities. 23 (82%) of RAODW workers identify as Aboriginal.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** RAODW was operational in 39 communities. 24 (88%) of the RAODW workers identify as Aboriginal.
Liquor licence compliance	90% of licensed premises servicing remote areas are compliant at inspection or following intervention. Information provided on types of corrective action taken in relation to initial liquor license non-compliance. Data provided on the number and percentage of Licensing Inspectors employed who identify as Aboriginal.	**Milestone achieved** 90% of licensed premises were compliant at the time of the inspection or following intervention (noting that this percentage is based on previous NPA reporting, and an adjusted pool of venues) 203 individual inspections occurred. Types of corrective action identified 1 licensing inspector was employed who identifies as Aboriginal.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 94% of licensed premises were compliant at the time of the inspection or following intervention. 33 licensed premises required corrective action. 482 individual inspections occurred across 86 licensed premises. Types of corrective action identified. 1 (0.18%) of Licensing inspectors identified as Aboriginal (One	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 98% of licensed premises were compliant at the time of the inspection or following intervention. 47 licensed premises required corrective action. 1,416 individual inspections occurred across 104 licensed premises. Types of corrective action identified.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 99% of licensed premises were compliant at the time of the inspection or following intervention. 37 licensed premises required corrective action. 1,815 individual inspections occurred across 105 licensed premises. Types of corrective action identified. 2 (6%) of licencing inspectors identify as	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 99% of licensed premises were compliant at the time of the inspection or following intervention. 69 licensed premises required corrective action. 1,903 individual inspections occurred across 111 licensed premises. Types of corrective action identified. 2 (6%) of licensing inspectors identified as Aboriginal.	Same as 2015	**Milestone exceeded** 99% of licensed premises inspected were compliant either at the time of the inspection or following intervention. 50 licensed premises required corrective action. 1,417 individual inspections occurred across 109. Types of corrective action identified. 3 (10%) of licensing inspectors identify as Aboriginal.

Activity	Outputs											
	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment
			licensing inspector who identified as aboriginal was employed for three months).			3 (11%) of licencing inspectors identify as Aboriginal.		Aboriginal.				
Payments ($ million)	Total Payments made for 2015-16 $1.787 m (Stronger Futures legacy payments) $12.008 m (NTRAI) **Total - $13.795 m** (Full amount available under Alcohol Schedule)		Total Payments made for 2016-17 **$15.396 m** (Full amount available under Alcohol Schedule)		Total payments made for 2017 – 18 **$14.888 m** (Full amount available under Alcohol Schedule)		Total payments made for 2018 – 19 **$13.505 m** (Full amount available under Alcohol Schedule)		Total payments made for 2019 – 20 **$12.060 m** (Full amount available under Alcohol Schedule)		Total payments made for 2020 – 21 **$10.872 m** (Full amount available under Alcohol Schedule)	

Alice Springs Transformation Schedule

Activity	Outputs	
	2015	
	Milestone	Assessment
Integrated Response to Family Violence Program (30 June to 31 December 2015)	Provision of service and programs for the Integrated Response to Family Violence, demonstrated by: • details of collaborative and integrated service delivery models used; • number of Aboriginal people accessing programs and services in each of the activities; • number and types of service interventions provided to Aboriginal families and children; • number and types of referrals to other services provided to Aboriginal clients; and • percentage of people employed who identify as Aboriginal	**Milestone achieved** Evidence/data provided for delivery of the following program elements against the Integrated Response to Domestic violence milestone: • Family safety framework (FSF) • Victim support and advocacy service • Men's behaviour change program • Community Engagement
Youth and Community Centre Program (30 June to 31 December 2015)	Provision of service and programs for the Youth and Community Centre Program, demonstrated by: • details of collaborative and integrated service delivery models used; • number of Aboriginal people accessing programs and services in each of the activities; • number and types of service interventions provided to Aboriginal families and children; • number and types of referrals to other services provided to Aboriginal clients; and • percentage of people employed who identify as Aboriginal.	**Milestone achieved** Evidence/data provided for delivery of the following services at the GAP Youth and Community Centre: • Playgroup • Women's Group • Men's Music Group • Family Nights • Sport, Art Recreation activities in school holiday periods • 3 on 3 Basketball • "Friday Sesh" including sessions with AFL NT, Alice Springs Basketball and Baseball NT. • Regular Saturday events including "Splash Parties and Discos
Payment ($ million)	**Total Payments made for 2015-16** $0.900 m (Stronger Futures legacy payments) $0.894 m (NTRAI) **Total - $1.794 m** (Full amount available under Alice Springs Transformation Schedule)	

Remote Australia Strategy Implementation Plan

Housing Schedule

Activity	Outputs							
	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment
Housing Upgrades 1 July 2015 – 31 March 2016	At Least 171 housing upgrades underway. Works are to be completed in accordance with the agreed 2015-16 capital works schedule, and data provided to the Commonwealth including lot level reporting on capital works that includes community name, lot number, commencement and completion dates.	**Milestone exceeded** 171 upgrades underway with 30 of these completed in line with the agreed 2015-16 capital works schedule. The Lot Level Report provided by the NT Government to the Commonwealth met the milestone reporting requirements.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Housing Upgrades 1 April 2016 - 30 September 2016	N/A	N/A	• 422 housing upgrades underway; and • of these, at least 171 housing upgrades complete. Works are to be completed in accordance with the agreed 2016-18 capital works schedule, and data provided to the Commonwealth including lot level reporting on capital works that includes community name, lot number, commencement and completion dates.	**Milestone exceeded** 447 upgrades underway with 243 of these completed in line with the agreed 2016-18 capital works schedule. The Lot Level Report provided by the NT Government to the Commonwealth met the milestone reporting requirements.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Housing Upgrades 1 October 2016 – 31 March 2017	N/A	N/A	• 627 housing upgrades underway; and • Of these, at least 422 housing upgrades complete Works are to be completed in accordance with the agreed 2016-18 capital works schedule, and data provided to the Commonwealth including lot level reporting on capital works that includes community name, lot number, commencement and completion dates.	**Milestone exceeded** 700 upgrades underway with 453 of these completed in line with the agreed 2016-18 capital works schedule. The Lot Level Report provided by the NT Government to the Commonwealth met the milestone reporting requirements.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Housing Upgrades 1 April 2017 - 30 September 2017	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	• 811 housing upgrades underway; and • Of these, at least 672 housing upgrades Works are to be completed in accordance with the agreed 2016-18 capital works schedule, and data provided to the Commonwealth including lot level reporting on capital	**Milestone exceeded** 1039 upgrades underway with 819 of these completed in line with the agreed 2016-18 capital works schedule. The Lot Level Report provided by the NT Government met the	N/A	N/A

Activity	Outputs							
	2015-16		**2016-17**		**2017-18**		**2018-19**	
	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment
					works that includes community name, lot number, commencement and completion dates.	milestone reporting requirements.		
Housing Upgrades 1 October 2017 – 31 March 2018*[206]	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	• At least 1009 housing upgrades complete or scheduled to be completed by 30 June 2018. Works are to be completed in accordance with the agreed 2016-18 capital works schedule, and data provided to the Commonwealth including lot level reporting on capital works that includes community name, lot number, commencement and completion dates.	**Milestone exceeded** 1,011 upgrades completed on 13 June 2019 (2 additional houses). The Lot Level Report provided by the NT Government to the Commonwealth met the milestone reporting requirements.
Payment ($ million)	**Total Payments made for 2015-16** $48.024 m (Full amount available under Housing Schedule)		**Total Payments made for 2016-17** $49.196 m (Full amount available under Housing Schedule)		**Total payments made for 2017 – 18** $23.710 m (Full amount available under Housing Schedule)		**Total payments made for 2018-19** $23.711 m (Full amount available under Housing Schedule)	

Asbestos Schedule

Activity	Outputs	
	2015	
	Milestone	Assessment
Asbestos Removal from Community Buildings (1 July to 31 December 2015)	• Completion of agreed activities set out in the Asbestos Management Plan, as evidenced in the six-monthly report for the period.	**Milestone achieved** The NT Joint Steering Committee approved Asbestos Management Plan. The Asbestos Removal in Remote Indigenous Communities report demonstrates completion of the agreed activities set out in the Asbestos Management Plan
Asbestos Removal from Community Buildings (1 January to 30 June 2016)	• Completion of Asbestos and ACM removal accordance with the package delivery status summary schedule in 16 communities. Complete is defined as 'close out report and handover' being completed.	**Milestone exceeded** The Asbestos Removal in Remote Indigenous Communities Report and the Asbestos Removal Program May 2016 Monthly Report demonstrates completion of agreed activities with ACM removed from 43 communities.
Payments ($ million)	**Total Payments made for 2015-16** $2.119 (Stronger Futures legacy payments) $2.106 m (NTRAI) **Total - $4.225 m** (Full amount available under Asbestos Schedule)	

[206] A variation was agreed by NT and Australian Government to extend date to 30 June 2019.

Aboriginal Interpreter Services (AIS) Schedule

Activity	Outputs										
	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment	Milestone	Assessment
Aboriginal Interpreter Services	Provision of services and programs for interpreter services in the six-month period (1 January to 30 June)	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report
	Provision of services and programs for interpreter services in the six-month period (1 July to 31 December)	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report	Same as 2015	**Milestone achieved** Evidenced by six-monthly report

Performance Benchmarks												
	Target	Assessment	Target	Assessment	Target	Assessment	Target	Assessment	Target	Assessment	Target	Assessment
Percentage of interpreting hours provided by accredited/qualified interpreters [207] (1 January to 30 June period)	44%	**Target exceeded** 49%	47%	**Target exceeded** 57%	50%	**Target achieved** 50%	53%	**Target exceeded** 57%	56%	**Target exceeded** 85% Greater increase is largely due to the change in accreditation requirements	62%	**Target exceeded** 82% Greater increase is largely due to the change in accreditation requirements
Percentage of interpreting hours provided by accredited/qualified interpreters (1 July to 31 December period)	44%	**Target exceeded** 57%	47%	**Target exceeded** 48%	50%	**Target exceeded** 57%	53%	**Target not met** 50% Discrepancy due to large number of Interpreters taking leave over Christmas period. Full payment made on agreement by Ministers	59%	**Target exceeded** 91% Greater increase is largely due to the change in accreditation requirements	62%	**Target exceeded** 79% Greater increase is largely due to the change in accreditation requirements

| **Payments $million)** | **Total Payments made for 2015-16** $1.857 m (Stronger Futures legacy payments) $1.847m (NTRAI) **Total - $3.704 m** (Full amount available under AIS Schedule) | | **Total Payments made for 2016-17** **$3.489 m** (Full amount available under AIS Schedule) | | **Total payments made for 2017 – 18** **$3.482 m** (Full amount available under AIS Schedule) | | **Total payments made for 2018 – 19** **$3.539 m** (Full amount available under AIS Schedule) | | **Total payments made for 2019 – 20** **$3.536 m** (Full amount available under AIS Schedule) | | **Total payments made for 2019 – 20** **$3.651 m** (Full amount available under AIS Schedule) | |

[207] At the execution of the Remote Australia Strategy Implementation Plan the definition was "Accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) or completed the Diploma of Interpreting." The definition was changed as per an agreement between the NT and Australian Governments on 17 June 2020 to "Accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) or achieved Level 3 as per the Aboriginal Language Interpreters – Casual Employment Determination"

Children and Schooling Implementation Plan

2015 – 2018 Implementation Plan

Activity	Outputs					
	2015		**2016**		**2017**	
	Milestone	**Assessment**	**Milestone**	**Assessment**	**Milestone**	**Assessment**
Foundations	Operation of FaFT at 21 sites. Appropriate early years developmental assessment tool is designed.	**Milestone achieved** FaFT operated at 22 sites (1 of these did not commence until Term 4). Appropriate early years development tool designed.	FaFT operated at 24-26 sites. Early years developmental assessment tool trialled in 4 sites.	**Milestone exceeded** FaFT delivered in 27 sites. 2 early years development tools were trialled in 4 FaFT sites.	FaFT operated at 30 to 32 sites. Early years developmental assessment tool implemented in at least 70% of FaFT sites.	**Milestone exceeded** FaFT operated at 33 sites. Early years developmental assessment tool implemented in at least 70% of FaFT sites (with training and coaching delivered in all sites).
Essentials	Mandated literacy and numeracy program developed. NT wide licensing for literacy and numeracy age benchmark assessment system procured.	**Milestone achieved** Mandated literacy and numeracy program developed. Three assessment tools procured.	Mandated literacy and numeracy program implemented in at least 20% of remote and very remote schools. Literacy and numeracy age benchmarks trialled, including the delivery of training and data capture systems.	**Milestone exceeded** Mandated literacy and numeracy program implemented in 33% of remote and very remote schools. Literacy and numeracy age benchmark tests were implemented and trialled in all schools.	Mandated literacy and numeracy program implemented in at least 70% of schools. Literacy and numeracy age benchmarks implemented in at least 70 % of remote and very remote schools.	**Milestone exceeded** Mandated literacy and numeracy program implemented in 71% of remote and very remote schools. Literacy and numeracy age benchmarks were administered in all NT Government schools. In addition, there were also trials for additional benchmarks in remote and very remote schools.
Pathways	Transition support unit established. Employment pathways program curriculum and learning resources developed.	**Milestone achieved** Transition support unit established. Employment pathways program curriculum and learning resources developed.	Transition support provided to 50% of schools of remote and very remote schools. Employment Pathways program and learning resources trialled.	**Milestones exceeded** Transition support provided to 52% of remote or very remote schools. Employment pathways program curriculum and learning resources trialled in 6 schools.	Transition support provided to at least 70 % of remote or very remote school. Employment pathways Program delivered to 10 sites.	**Milestone exceeded** Transition support provided to 91% of remote or very remote schools. 32 schools adopted the Employment Pathways Program by the end of 2017.
Engagement	Community Education charter developed. School wide positive behaviour program & wellbeing approach developed.	**Milestone achieved** Community Education Charter developed. Positive behaviour program & wellbeing approach developed.	School wide positive behaviour program and wellbeing approach trialled.	**Milestone achieved** School wide positive behaviour program trialled in 18 remote and very remote schools.	School wide positive behaviour program, and wellbeing approach delivered in at least 70 % of schools.	**Milestone exceeded** School wide positive behaviour program delivered in 73% of schools.
Workforce	Remote workforce plan developed. Induction training program established. Mentoring program developed for very remote school leaders.	**Milestone achieved** Remote workforce plan developed. Induction training program established. Mentoring program developed.	Mentoring program delivered to 20 very remote school leaders.	**Milestone exceeded** Mentoring delivered to 21 new or aspiring principals.	Mentoring program delivered to 20 % of school leaders.	**Milestone achieved** 95 remote and very remote school leaders engaged in mentoring and coaching program. 20% of remote and very remote principals had mentors.
Capital works	Delivery of works agreed under the annual capital works schedule.	**Milestone achieved** Construction of 1 new dwelling. 16 refurbished houses completed.	Delivery of works agreed.	**Milestone achieved** Construction of 3 new dwellings. 46 refurbished houses completed.	Delivery of works agreed under the annual capital works schedule.	**Milestone achieved** Construction on 11 of 13 new dwellings completed. 61 of 99 refurbishments completed.

Performance Benchmarks	Outcomes					
	2015		2016		2017	
	Target	Assessment	Target	Assessment	Target	Assessment
Increase Indigenous student attendance rate toward 90% (baseline 66.6%)	76.6%	**Baseline exceeded. Target not met.** 67.4%	81.6%	**Baseline exceeded. Target not met.** 67%	86.6%	**Baseline not met.** 64.5%
Indigenous students attending at least four days per week (Baseline: 28.4%)	29.5%	**Baseline exceeded.** 27.9%	30.4%	**Baseline not met.** 23.7%	31.7%	**Baseline not met.** 21.6%
Increase in the proportion of remote and very remote indigenous students achieving at or above national minimum standard in NAPLAN reading and numeracy						
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Literacy Year 3 (baseline 45.4%)	46.4%	**Baseline not met** 35.7%	47.2%	**Baseline not met** 39.9%	48.4%	**Baseline not met.** 37.8%
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Literacy Year 5 (baseline: 19.5%)	20.6%	**Target exceeded** 38.6%	21.6%	**Baseline exceeded. Target not met.** 20.3%	23.1%	**Target exceeded** 29.3%
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Literacy Year 7 (baseline: 26.8%)	27.9%	**Target exceeded** 48.6%	28.9%	**Target exceeded** 29.5%	30.3%	**Baseline not met.** 20.1%
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Literacy Year 9 (baseline: 27.5%)	28.6%	**Baseline not met** 20.6%	29.6%	**Baseline exceeded. Target not met.** 28.2%	31%	**Baseline not met.** 22.6%
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Numeracy Year 3 (baseline: 42.9%)	43.9%	**Target exceeded** 44.9%	44.8%	**Target exceeded** 46.5%	46.1%	**Baseline exceeded. Target not met** 44.8%
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Numeracy Year 5 (Baseline: 32.6%)	33.7%	**Target exceeded** 44.4%	34.6%	**Target exceeded** 37.5%	36.0%	**Target exceeded** 38.5%
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Numeracy Year 7 (baseline: 41.8%)	42.9%	**Target exceeded** 52.6%	43.7%	**Baseline not met** 39.4%	45.0%	**Target exceeded** 48.0%
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Numeracy Year 9 (Baseline: 21.6%)	22.8%	**Target exceeded** 53%	23.7%	**Target exceeded** 42%	25.1%	**Target exceeded** 62.0%
Payments ($million)	**Total Payments made for 2015-16** $40.438 m (milestones) $0.924 m (performance benchmarks) **Total – $41.362 m** Performance benchmarks payment withheld - $1.106 m		**Total Payments made for 2016-17** $34.604 m (milestones) $1.275 m (performance benchmarks) **Total – $35.879 m** Performance benchmarks payment withheld - $2.422 m		**Total Payments made for 2017-18** $32.985 m (milestones) $1.780 (performance benchmarks) **Total – $34.765 m** Performance benchmarks payment withheld - $4.040 m	

2018 – 2021 Implementation Plan

Activity	Outputs					
	2018		**2019**		**2020**	
	Milestones	**Assessment**	**Milestones**	**Assessment**	**Milestones**	**Assessments**
Foundations	Operation of FaFT at 32 sites, at least 3 days per week, 1400 children supported by their families are enrolled. Development of an adult literacy program in 4 sites, reported by gender.	**Milestone exceeded** FaFT operated at 33 sites and delivered 4 days per week on average, 1832 children participating. Adult literacy programs developed in 4 sites.	FaFT delivered 32 sites, at least 3 days per week, 1500 children supported by their families are enrolled. Expansion of an adult literacy program delivered to 40 parents/guardians in 4 sites, reported by gender.	**Milestone exceeded** FaFT operated at 37 sites and delivered 4 days per week on average, 1876 children participating. Adult literacy programs in 4 sites, 44 parents (34 females, 10 males).	Operation of FaFT at 32 sites, at least 3 days per week, 1600 children supported by their families are enrolled. Expansion of an adult literacy program delivered to 60 parents/guardians in 4 sites, reported by gender.	**Milestone exceeded** FaFT operated at 36 sites and delivered 4 days per week on average, 1900 children participating. Adult literacy programs in 4 sites, 64 parents (35 females, 29 males).
Pathways	Transition support provided to at least 56 government schools that do not offer NT Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET)	**Milestone exceeded** Transition support provided to 88 schools.	Transition support provided to at least 60 government schools that do not offer NTCET.	**Milestone exceeded** Transition support provided in 70 schools.	Transition support provided to at least 63 government that do not offer NTCET.	**Milestone exceeded** Transition support provided in 70 schools.
Engagement	Transition 11 Senior Attendance and Truancy Officers (SATOs) into case workers to support disengaged students/families Establish an engagement framework that targets families Establish a community engagement and local decision-making framework	**Milestone achieved** 11 SATOs elected to become engagement officers and have commenced work to support chronically disengaged students and their families. Student engagement team developed a new engagement framework to improve school attendance. A Community Engagement and local decision-making unit was created with all staff Indigenous.	11 case workers supporting chronically disengaged students. Increase to 750 families engaged to improve attendance. Community engagement and local decision-making unit engaging with 30% of schools.	**Milestone exceeded** 22 case workers supporting chronically disengaged students. 954 Students (and their families) were engaged. Community engagement and local decision-making unit engaged 63 (58%) remote communities, including 31 Local Engagement and Decision Committees established.	11 case workers supporting chronically disengaged students. Increase to 850 families engaged to improve attendance. Community engagement and local decision-making unit engaging with 50% of remote and very remote schools.	**Milestone exceeded** 36 case workers. 2886 students (and their families) engaged. Community engagement and local decision-making unit engaged 82 (75%) remote communities, including 31 Local Engagement and Decision Committees established.
Workforce	150 Indigenous assistant teachers enrolled in further accredited training, reported by gender.	**Milestone exceeded** 188 Indigenous assistant teachers enrolled (147 females, 41 males).	170 Indigenous assistant teachers enrolled in further accredited training, reported by gender.	**Milestone exceeded** 214 Indigenous assistant teachers enrolled (183 females, 31 males).	190 Indigenous assistant teachers enrolled in further accredited training, reported by gender.	**Milestone exceeded** 212 Indigenous assistant teachers enrolled (172 females, 40 males).
Capital works	Deliver as per agreed schedule - min 25% Indigenous employmen.t	**Milestone achieved** Construction of 2 new dwellings. 18 refurbished houses completed. Indigenous employment target exceeded.	Delivery of works agreed under the annual capital works schedule - min 25% Indigenous employment.	**Milestone achieved** Construction of 2 new dwelling. 38 refurbished houses completed. Indigenous employment target exceeded.	Delivery of works agreed under the annual capital works schedule – min 25% Indigenous employment.	**Milestone achieved (full payment made as disruptions were due to COVID-19)** Indigenous staff – 22.7% The capital works program for 2020 remains a work in progress, impacted by COVID-19 and is expected to be finalised by 30 June 2021.

Performance Benchmarks	Outcomes					
	2018		**2019**		**2020**	
	Target	**Assessment**	**Target**	**Assessment**	**Target**	**Assessment**
Transition support unit case management retention rate: retention rate of year seven boarding students case managed by the Transition Support Unit (baseline 53%)	56.0%	**Target exceeded** 67.0%	59%	**Target exceeded** 68.0%	62.0%	**Target exceeded** 72.2%
Completion rate of enrolled Indigenous assistant teachers in accredited training (baseline: 45%)	46.5%	**Target exceeded** 70%	48%	**Target exceeded** 68%	49.5%	**Pro rata payment based on previous performance above the baseline.**
Increase Indigenous student attendance rate toward 90% (baseline 64.5%)	67.5%	**Baseline not met** 63.8%	70.5%	**Baseline not met** 62.6%	73.5%	**Baseline not met** 59.6%
Indigenous students attending at least four days per week (Baseline: 21.5%)	22.6%	**Target exceeded** 21.1%	23.7%	**Baseline not met** 19.1%	24.8%	**Baseline not met** 14.9%
Increase in the proportion of remote and very remote indigenous students achieving at or above national minimum standard in NAPLAN reading and numeracy						
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Literacy Year 3 (baseline 38%)	38.95%	**Target achieved** 40.3%	39.92%	**Target exceeded** 46%	40.92%	**NAPLAN was not administered – payment based on 2019 results against 2020 target**
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Literacy Year 5 (baseline: 29%)	29.72%	**Target achieved** 33.9%	30.46%	**Target not met** 27.3%	31.23%	**NAPLAN was not administered – payment based on 2019 results against 2020 target**
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Literacy Year 7 (baseline: 20%)	20.5%	**Target achieved** 28.6%	21.01%	**Target exceeded** 29.9%	21.53%	**NAPLAN was not administered – payment based on 2019 results against 2020 target**
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Literacy Year 9 (baseline: 23%)	23.57%	**Target not met** 19.4%	24.16%	**Target exceeded** 27.7%	24.76%	**NAPLAN was not administered – payment based on 2019 results against 2020 target**
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Numeracy Year 3 (baseline: 45%)	46.12%	**Target achieved** 54.1%	47.27%	**Target partially met** 46.2%	48.46%	**NAPLAN was not administered – payment based on 2019 results against 2020 target**
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Numeracy Year 5 (Baseline: 38%)	38.95%	**Target achieved** 39.6%	39.92%	**Target partially met** 39.4%	40.92%	**NAPLAN was not administered – payment based on 2019 results against 2020 target**
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Numeracy Year 7 (baseline: 48%)	49.2%	**Baseline not met** 45.8%	50.40%	**Target not met** 39.3%	51.69%	**NAPLAN was not administered – payment based on 2019 results against 2020 target**
Performance Benchmark: NAPLAN Numeracy Year 9 (Baseline: 62%)	63.55%	**Target not met** 48.2%	65.13%	**Target not met** 59%	66.76%	**NAPLAN was not administered – payment based on 2019 results against 2020 target**
Payment ($ million)	**Total Payments made for 2018-19** $27.212 m (milestones) $2.003 m (performance benchmarks) **Total – $29.215 m** Performance benchmarks payment withheld - $1.707 m		**Total Payments made for 2019-20** $27.984 m (milestones) $1.963 m (performance benchmarks) **Total – $29.942 m** Performance benchmarks payment withheld - $2.593m		**Total Payments made for 2020-21** $22.363 m (milestones) $1.547 m (performance benchmarks) **Total – $23.910 m** Performance benchmarks payment withheld - $2.712 m	

Health Implementation Plan

Indicator	Baseline	Benchmark	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Hearing Health Performance Measure 1 Occasions of audiology service per annum by locational spread of services.	1,1481 services in 2010 -11	1,700 audiology checks per annum including by community and identifying the spread across urban, remote and very remote communities across the Northern Territory.	**Target exceeded** 2,313 audiology checks	**Target exceeded** 2,143 audiology checks	**Target exceeded** 1870 audiology checks	**Target exceeded** 1,753 audiology checks	**Target exceeded** 1,974 audiology checks	**Target exceeded** 1,859 audiology checks
Hearing Health Performance Measure 2 Number of children receiving complex case management services from Clinical Nurse Specialists Hearing Health working with primary health care services.	Comparable data non available	Coordination services for 700 children per annum provided by Clinical Nurse Specialists Hearing Health.	**Target exceeded** 747 children	**Target exceeded** 1,075 children	**Target exceeded** 811 children	**Target exceeded** 905 children	**Target exceeded** 1,008 children	**Target exceeded** 926 children
Hearing Health Performance Measure 3 Delivery of hearing health preventative program, including hearing health promotion/training, community-based Hearing Health Prevention Program, and employment of Indigenous staff.	2014 data: 1) 48 hearing health promotion or training services activities 2) 1 community receiving a community-based Health Hearing prevention program (in partnership with Community organisations) 3) 1 full time equivalent (FTE) Indigenous staff member employed	**2015** 1) 50 preventative hearing health promotion or training services/activities. 2) 3 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs. 3) 2 FTE Indigenous staff employed. **2016** 1) 55 preventative hearing health promotion or training services/activities. 2) 6 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs. 3) 7 FTE Indigenous staff employed. **2017** 1) 60 preventative hearing health promotion or training services/activities. 2) 10 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs. 3) 8 FTE Indigenous staff employed. **2018** 1) 60 preventative hearing health promotion or training services/activities. 2) 12 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs. 3) 9 FTE Indigenous staff employed. **2019-2021** 1) 60 preventative hearing health promotion or training services/activities. 2) 16 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs. 3) 10 FTE Indigenous staff employed. **2022** 1) 15 preventative hearing health promotion or training services/activities. 2) 4 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs. 3) 2 FTE Indigenous staff employed. The Northern Territory will also provide a plan for the delivery of the balance of services to 30 June 2022 with this reporting.	**1) Target exceeded** 75 hearing health promotion or training services/activities **2) Target achieved** 3 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs. **3) Target exceeded** 3 FTE	**1) Target exceeded** 70 hearing health promotion or training services/activities **2) Target exceeded** 27 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs **3) Target exceeded** 8 FTE	**1) Target exceeded** 62 hearing health promotion or training services/activities **2) Target exceeded** 30 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs. **3) Target achieved** 8 FTE	**1) Target exceeded** 128 hearing health promotion or training services/activities **2) Target exceeded** 30 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs. **3) Target achieved** 9 FTE	**1) Target exceeded** 98 hearing health promotion or training services/activities **2) Target exceeded** 24 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs. **3) Target exceeded** 16 FTE	**1) Target exceeded** 67 hearing health promotion or training services/activities **2) Target exceeded** 20 communities receiving community-based Hearing Health prevention programs. **3) Target achieved** 10 FTE
Hearing Health Outcome Measure 1 The proportion of children tested who are found to have moderate or severe conductive hearing impairment.	11 % of children tested in the period 2007-2011	**Progress Report 1:** Less than 11% of all children tested between July 2012 and June 2015 **Progress Report 2:** Less than 10% of all children tested between July 2015 and December 2018 **Progress Report 3:** Less than 7.5% of all children tested between January 2019 and December 2021	**Progress Report 1 :2012-2015** Average: 9.36% 2013: 10.1% **Target exceeded** 2014: 9.4% **Target exceeded** 2015: 8.6% **Target exceeded**	N/A	N/A	**Progress report 2: 2015-2018** Average: 8.74% 2016: 9.79% **Target exceeded** 2017: 8.48% **Target exceeded**	N/A	N/A

Indicator	Baseline	Benchmark	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
						2018: 7.96% **Target exceeded**		
Hearing Health Outcome Measure 2 The proportion of children aged 0-5 and 6-15 years that have received an audiology check or CHHC service who are found to have Chronic Suppurative Otitis Media (CSOM).	1)14% of children (0-5-year olds) tested in period 2007-2011 2)11% 0f children (6-15-year olds) tested in the period 2007-2011	1) **Progress Report 1:** 15% or less of 0-5-year-old children tested between July 2012 and June 2015 **Progress Report 2:** 14% or less of 0-5-year-old children tested between July 2015 and December 2018 **Progress Report 3** 7% or less of 0-5-year-old children tested between January 2019 and December 2021 2) **Progress Report 1:** 12% or less for 6-15-year-old children tested between July 2012 and June 2015 **Progress Report 2:** 11% or less for 6-15-year-old children tested between July 2015 and December 2018 **Progress Report 3:** 7% or less of 6-15-year-old children tested between January 2019 and December 2021	**Progress Report 1 :2012-2015** **Children (0–5)** Average: 5.3 % 2013: 5.9 % **Target exceeded** 2014: 5.3% **Target exceeded** 2015: 4.7% **Target exceeded** **Children (6-15)** Average: 7.5% 2013: 7.4% **Target exceeded** 2014: 9.0% **Target achieved** 2015: 6.1% **Target exceeded**	N/A	N/A	**Progress report 2: 2015-2018** **Children (0–5)** Average: 10.9% 2016: 12.8% **Target exceeded** 2017: 10.9% **Target exceeded** 2018: 9.0% **Target exceeded** **Children (6-15)** Average - 9.9% 2016: 9.4% **Target exceeded** 2017: 10.1% **Target exceeded** 2018: 10.4% **Target exceeded**	N/A	N/A
Hearing Health Outcome Measure 3 The proportion of children aged 0-5 and 6-15 years that have received an audiology check or CHHC service who are found to have dry perforation.		1) **Progress Report 1:** 9% or less of 0-5-year-old children tested between July 2012 and June 2015 **Progress Report 2:** 8% or less of 0-5-year-old children tested between July 2015 and December 2018 **Progress Report 3:** 5% or less of 0-5-year-old children tested between January 2019 and December 2021 2) **Progress Report 1:** 18% or less of 6-15-year-old children tested between July 2012 and June 2015 **Progress Report 2:** 17% or less of 6-15-year-old children tested between July 2015 and December 2018 **Progress Report 3:** 9% or less of 6-15-year-old children tested between January 2019 and December 2021	**Progress Report 1 : 2012-2015** **Children (0–5)** Average: 3.3 % 2013: 3.5% **Target exceeded** 2014: 2.9% **Target exceeded** 2015: 3.6 % **Target exceeded** **Children (6-15)** Average: 8.5 % 2013: 8.5% **Target exceeded** 2014: 8.1% **Target exceeded** 2015: 8.9% **Target exceeded**	N/A	N/A	**Progress report 2: 2015-2018** **Children (0–5)** Average: 7.6% 2016: 8.8% **Target not met** 2017: 6.6% **Target exceeded** 2018: 7.5% **Target exceeded** **Children (6–15)** Average - 14.97% 2016: 12.9% **Target exceeded** 2017: 15.5% **Target exceeded** 2018: 16.5% **Target exceeded**	N/A	N/A
Hearing Health Outcome Measure 4 The rate of improvement in hearing for children who are in a treatment pathway.	1) 46% of children (0-4 years) in a treatment pathway had improved hearing in the period 2007-2011 2) 55% of children (5-15 years) in a treatment pathway had improved hearing in the period 2007-2011	1) **Progress Report 1:** at least 46% of children who are tested between July 2012 and June 2015. 2) **Progress Report 1:** at least 55% of children who are tested between July 2012 and June 2015.	**Progress Report 1 : 2012-2015** **Children (0–5)** Average – 45.1 % 2013 – 40.4% **Target not met** 2014 – 45.3% **Target not met** 2015 – 49.7% **Target exceeded** **Children (6–15)** Average: 58.4 % 2013: 58.1% **Target exceeded** 2014: 58.5% **Target exceeded** 2015: 58.6% **Target exceeded**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hearing Health Outcome Measure 5 Equitable service delivery across HSDAs and by remoteness	Comparable data not available	1)Coverage by regions (number of outreach trips) between June 2012 and June 2015, including an overview of the integrated program scheduling principles that support equitable service delivery. 2)Demand for audiology services by region at 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2015, including qualitative detail on methodologies: a. targeting Child Hearing Coordination (Case Management) and audiology services to the highest need; and b. determining demand for audiology service by region at 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2015.	**Milestone achieved** Table showing coverage across Regions provided. Overview of principles that support service delivery provided. Information on demand for services provided, including qualitative detail on methodologies.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Indicator	Baseline	Benchmark	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Oral Health Performance Measure 1 Occasions of service per annum by clinical and preventative service types and locational spread of services.	3,609 services in 2010-2011	3,800 occasions of clinical service per annum by community identifying the spread across urban, remote and very remote communities across the Northern Territory. Fluoride varnish applications will be counted separately.	**Target exceeded** 3,804 services	**Target exceeded** 4,001 services	**Target exceeded** 4,200 services	**Target exceeded** 3,891 services	**Target exceeded** 4,424 services	**Target exceeded** 4,500 services
Oral Health Performance Measure 2 Number of fluoride varnish applications per annum.	Comparable data not available	Fluoride varnish applications (percentage of target population). **2014:** 4,190 (25%) **2015:** 4,525 (27%) **2016:** 5,028 (30%) **2017:** 5,531 (33%)) **2018:** 6,369 (38%) **2019:** ~~7,206 (43%)~~ 6,908* **2020:** ~~8,380 (50%)~~ 5,485* **2021:** 9,553 (57%) **2022 (to 31 March):** 1,383 (8%) The Northern Territory will also provide a plan for the delivery of the balance of services to 30 June 2022 with this reporting. By 2021 57% of the target Aboriginal population aged greater than 18 months and less than 16 years of age will receive at least once yearly application of fluoride varnish with a second application within the year being applied where possible. The population target is 80% to take into account the population of Aboriginal children who are not engaged with health services. *There was an agreement between the Australian Minister for Health and NT Minister for Health to vary the target for 2019 and 2020	**Target exceeded** 4,857 fluoride varnish applications	**Target exceeded** 5,266 fluoride varnish applications	**Target exceeded** 5,627 fluoride varnish applications	**Target exceeded** 6,431 fluoride varnish applications	**Target achieved** 6,908 fluoride varnish applications	**Target achieved** 5,485 fluoride varnish applications
Oral Health Performance Measure 3 Number of fissure sealants per annum.	Comparable data not available	Fissure sealant applications Calendar Year: Number of fissure sealants **2014:** 7,000 **2015:** 6,547 **2016:** 5,000 **2017:** 4,500 **2018:** 4,000 **2019:** 3,500 **2020:** 3,000 **2021:** 2,500 **2022 (to 31 March):** 250 The Northern Territory will also provide a plan for the delivery of the balance of to 30 June 2022 with this reporting. The declining number of fissure sealants is due to the one-time only application of fissure sealants per tooth as well as clinicians determining the most appropriate clinical treatment.	**Target exceeded** 9,769 fissure sealant applications	**Target exceeded** 8,476 fissure sealant applications	**Target exceeded** 4,695 fissure sealant applications	**Target exceeded** 6,927 fissure sealant applications	**Target exceeded** 6,500 fissure sealant applications	**Target exceeded** 4,187 fissure sealant applications
Oral Health Performance Measure 4 Healthy Smiles Program Participants	Comparable data not available	Healthy Smiles Oral health training package, a preventive oral health program, will be held across the Northern Territory for remote primary health care sector staff. **2015:** 66 participants **2016:** 72 participants	**Target exceeded** 73 participants	**Target exceeded** 74 participants	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oral Health Outcome Measure 1 Percentage of communities receiving a dental service.	Number of communities receiving dental service in 2015.	75% of all communities across Northern Territory (excluding the major centres: Darwin, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Alice Springs) receive a dental service within each calendar year as **demonstrated through the schedule for delivery of services provided to the Commonwealth by 1 March each year**. This will detail the communities anticipated to be visited in the current and previous calendar years.	N/A	**Milestone achieved** Between 74-100% from 2012 to 2015.	N/A	**Target exceeded** Between 82-90% from 2016 to 2018	N/A	N/A
Oral Health Outcome Measure 2	Proportion of preventative services delivered within	At least 50% of total items of service are preventive services.	**Target achieved**	**Target achieved**	N/A	**Target exceeded**	N/A	N/A

Indicator	Baseline	Benchmark	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Prioritisation of preventive services.	total occasions of service for 2015.		Over 50% of total items of service are preventive services.	Over 50% of total items of service are preventive services		82% of total items of service are preventive services.		
Oral Health Outcome Measure 3 Equitable service delivery across HSDAs and by remoteness.	Comparable data not available	1) Coverage by regions (number of outreach trips) between July 2012 and June 2015, including an overview of the integrated program scheduling principles that support equitable service delivery. 2) Demand for service by region at 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2015.	**Milestone achieved** Table showing coverage across Regions provided. Overview of principles that support service delivery provided. Information on demand for services provided.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Payment ($ million)			**Total Payments made for 2015-16** **$5.649 m** (Full amount available under Health IP)	**Total Payments made for 2016-17** **$5.905 m** (Full amount available under Health IP)	**Total Payments made for 2017-18** **$6.171 m** (Full amount available under Health IP)	**Total Payments made for 2018-19** **$6.448 m** (Full amount available under Health IP)	**Total Payments made for 2019-20** **$6.739 m** (Full amount available under Health IP)	**Total Payments made for 2020-21** **$7.042 m** (Full amount available under Health IP)

Appendix F - Assessment of the Children and Schooling, Non-Government Agreements

The National Partnership on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment (the NTRAI) provided funding for 12 remote and very remote non-government schools. The Australian Government executed funding agreements with the Northern Territory Block Grant Authority (NTBGA) who manage financial and performance reporting on behalf of the 12 non-government schools covered by the agreements. These schools are a combination of Independent, Christian and Catholic schools.

The objective of the non-government component of the NTRAI is to increase Aboriginal student attendance, engagement and educational achievement and to improve the recruitment and retention of high-quality teaching staff. There have been rolling non-government school agreements (NTBGA agreements) between the Australian Government and the NTBGA over the 2015 – 21 period providing funding for student support activities, and improvements to teacher housing stocks at the 12 remote and very remote schools and communities. The activities implemented by the schools sought to:

- improve education outcomes
- maximise student enrolment and attendance
- improve literacy and numeracy outcomes
- support students with learning and diverse support needs
- equip students for making the transition from school to work or further study
- build a skilled and sustainable Aboriginal and remote education workforce.

The total estimated financial contribution by the Australian Government to the non-government schools under the NTRAI was $42.6 million.

The NTBGA agreements were funded under a National Partnership Agreement, however they were managed though the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) structure. In accordance with the IAS structure, the NTBGA was required to provide a performance report every six months and an audited annual expenditure report. Payments were made on a six monthly basis, based on submission of a satisfactory performance report and the Australian Government being satisfied with performance against agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which relate to both outputs and outcomes.

Effectiveness

Outputs

The non-government schools delivered activities and received full payments in accordance with the NTBGA agreements. They were required to tailor and deliver activities in each of the 12 schools across contracted years.

In 2015, the NTRAI replaced the National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory (SFNT NPA). Early funded activities under the SFNT NPA and the NTRAI, contained significant flexibility for the supported non-government schools to shape their activity delivery provided they target the outcomes in the agreements. The activities targeted employment of 30 full-

time equivalent teachers and engagement officers. Some activities also targeted the provision of teacher supports, strategies that encouraged enrolment, attendance and engagement, partnerships with further education agencies and workforce mapping and training. The School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM) was designed to support enrolment and attendance and worked to support families to engage and work with Senior Attendance and Truancy Officers (SATOs).[208] Early funded activities also assisted with data sharing with government agencies to enable comparative analysis. In addition to student support activities, funding was targeted at increasing the supply of teacher and engagement officer housing, to sustain the remote education workforce.

The activities funded in later years under the NTRAI agreements were more prescriptive. They were designed around five main objectives.

The first objective was to improve education achievement and outcomes. This involved ensuring all Aboriginal students with learning and diverse support needs had a personalised learning plan or education adjustment plan. It also involved activities to increase attendance, improve literacy and numeracy results and achievement of the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) or the Vocational Education and Training in schools (VETis) Certificate II and above.

The second objective was to maximise student enrolment and school attendance, this involved participation in SEAM (which ceased in 2017). In the early NTBGA agreements, SEAM involved activities to collaborate and integrate efforts with Remote School Attendance Strategy teams, collaboration with SATOs and increasing the use of attendance data in formulating strategy.

The third objective was to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes and support students with learning and diverse support needs. This involved using a range of assessment practices to determine current literacy and numeracy achievement levels to inform teaching strategies and individualised learning programs. There was also efforts to consult with the NT Government schools sector to develop an age benchmark assessment and explore means of supporting highly mobile remote student populations.

The fourth objective was to equip students for making the transition from school to work or further study. The activities involved supporting students and their families to find post-secondary pathways into work or study. It also involved creating links with Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers and local employers to supports students living in remote communities to undertake VET studies that could be accredited towards achieving their NTCET or VETis Certificate III and above.

The fifth objective was to build the workforce. The focus was on building opportunities for local Aboriginal people within the school workforce. This included supporting Aboriginal staff to participate in vocational and higher educational training and providing mentoring for Aboriginal teachers and assistant teachers to build expertise as potential school leaders. There was also a focus on reviewing workforce development plans to improve the capacity of all teachers and support staff. The plans included professional development and training, cultural competency programs, succession planning and strategies to increase the proportion of the Aboriginal workforce across a range of positions.

The NTBGA agreements also included capital works components designed to improve the recruitment and retention of teaching staff by improving the supply, quality and security of teacher

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[208] SEAM ceased in 2017 as it did not achieve intended objectives.

housing. It involved the construction of new houses and refurbishment of existing houses. All capital works funding was finalised by 2018 for all 12 schools.

Performance reports varied across the NTBGA agreements. While they were initially a descriptive report of activity, they evolved into a brief summary of activity with a stronger outcome focus. To reduce red tape and reporting burdens, the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) agreed to use publicly available information on attendance from the My School and The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority websites. In future arrangements, the performance reporting structure could be better targeted and consistently applied over the period to ensure utility of data trends that focus on outcomes (see discussion below).

Outcomes

The KPIs tracked changes to student attendance and Aboriginal workforce outcomes. Payments were made to enable the delivery of targeted activities but were not linked to the achievement of specific outcomes. Results against the KPIs have been mixed. The student attendance target was achieved in 2015, however it was not achieved from 2016 – 20. The target for Aboriginal employment was achieved from 2015 – 17, however it was not achieved in 2018 – 2020.

The results are represented in the graphs below (see also Achievement Table below). The rolling agreements introduced different targets and methods of measuring each topic. Therefore in most cases, the data is not comparable across agreements and there are individual graphs for each agreement period.

KPI: 2016 – 19 - Increase Aboriginal student attendance above the 2015 benchmark levels
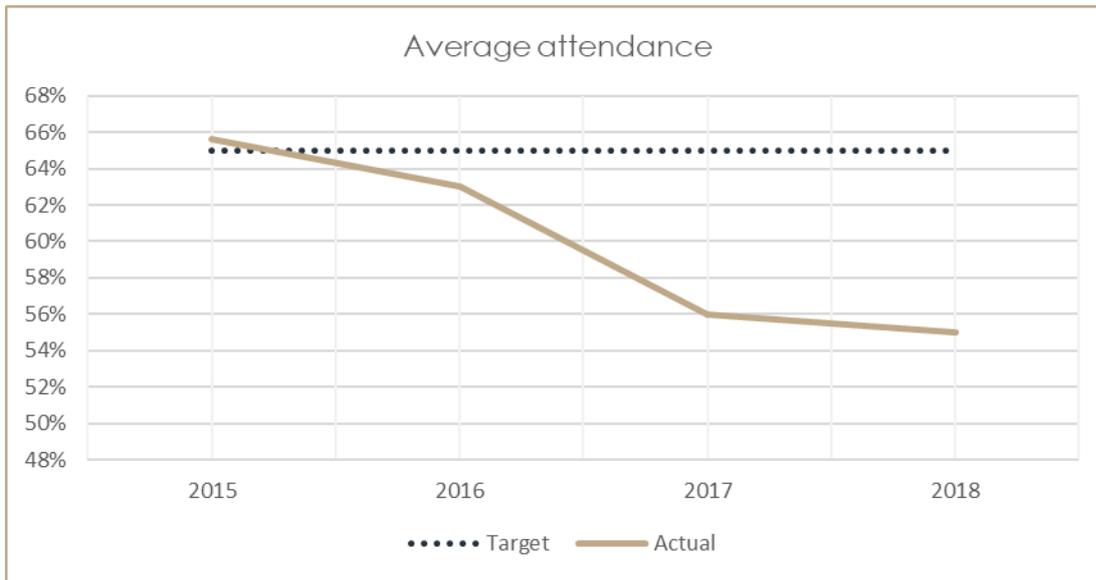

KPI: 2016 – 19 - Increase proportion of student attendance at least four days per week
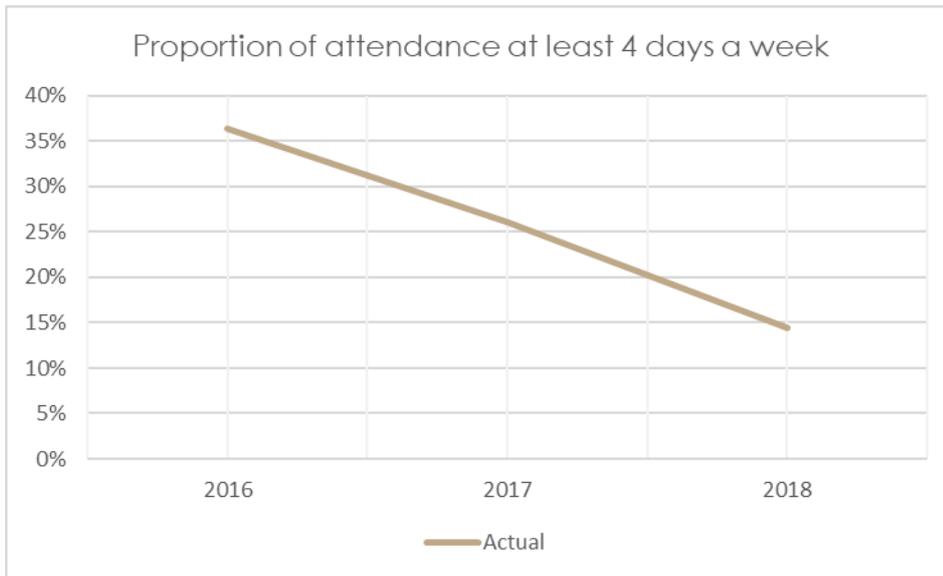
KPI: 2019 − 22 - At least 40 per cent of serviced students have attended school for 90 per cent of possible school days
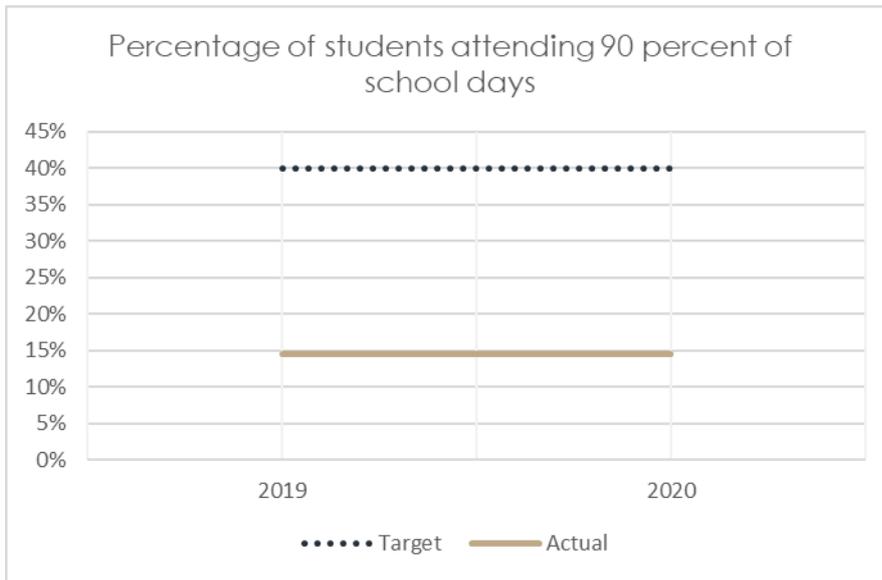
KPI: Increase / maintain the level of Indigenous staff employed at schools covered by the agreement
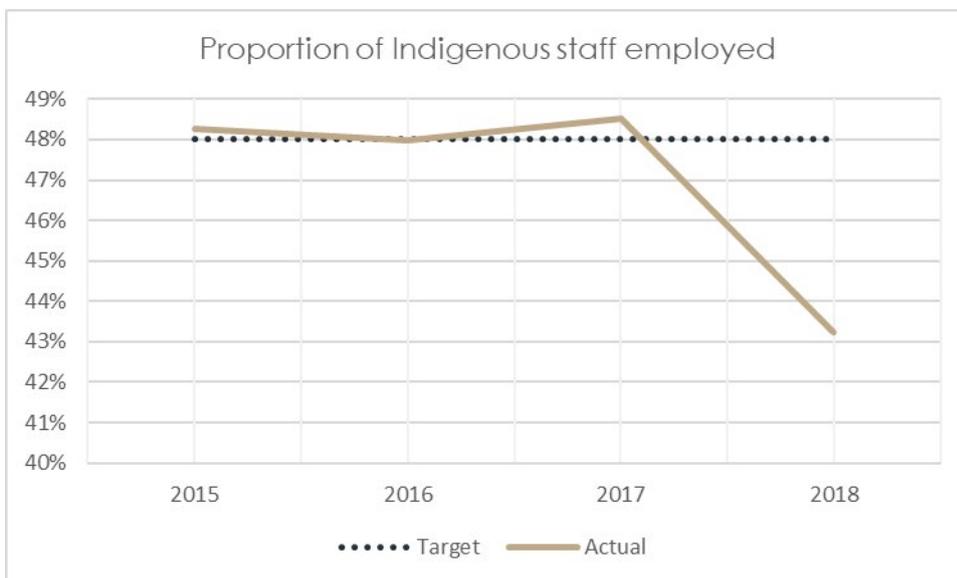
KPI: 52 per cent of hours worked are worked by an Indigenous person
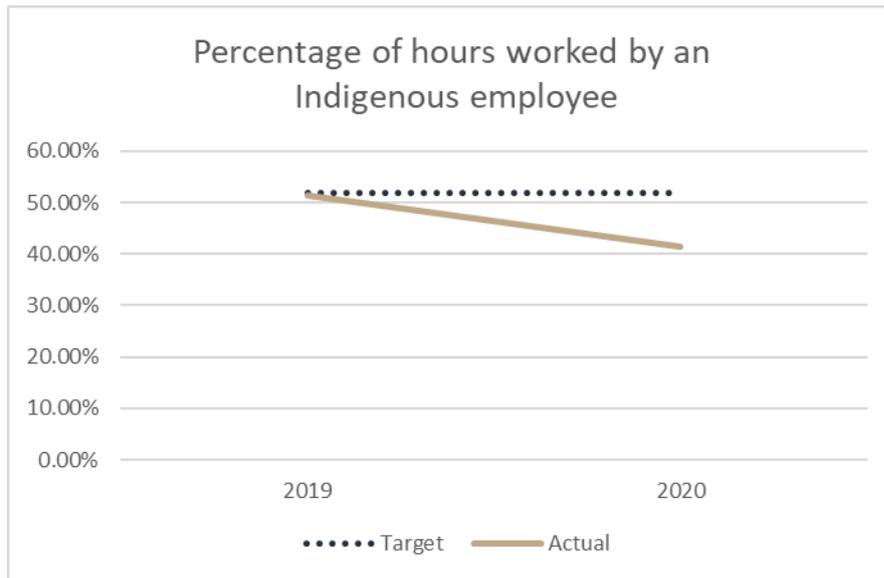
The variation in results across years could have been influenced by the transient population of some schools.

There are a number of factors which could explain why the attendance targets were not achieved. The causes of non-attendance are complex and includes a variety of student, school, family and community influences.[209] The targets were ambitious. Attendance targets were flat targets across years and substantially higher than the actual attendance rates. A gradual, incremental increase in attainable attendance targets should be considered for future arrangements. The target changed in 2019 from an average attendance rate target, to requiring at least 40 per cent of students to attend school for 90 per cent of possible school days. This raised the threshold by requiring individual students to demonstrate consistent attendance.

Future arrangements could be strengthened through greater accountability for outcome achievement. Greater accountability could be achieved through one or more of the following methods:

Expanding KPIs: The outcome KPIs relate to two out of the five objectives in the NTBGA agreements. There is opportunity to develop outcomes related to educational achievement, the transition from school to work or further study and workforce development.

Evaluation: Even if the outcomes were achieved, it would not be possible to identify direct attribution between the outputs and outcome KPIs under the NTBGA agreements because they do not provide for an evaluation or contribution analysis to test attribution. An evaluation plan would establish a program logic with a strong alignment between outputs and outcomes. It would also test and revise the program logic.

Outcome based payments: Outcome payments could start as a small weighting of the overall payment to non-government schools and gradually increase over time. A gradual

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[209] Nous Group, *Best practice approaches to sustainably increase student attendance,* (WA: Department of Education (Cth), 2019), 4.

increase in outcome payments will ensure non-government schools have sufficient certainty in funding to plan and focus their activities to meet future outcomes.

Efficiency

There are a combination of enablers and barriers to the effective implementation of the NTBGA agreements.

Executing the NTBGA agreements with a single entity, the NTBGA, rather than individual schools or schooling sectors supported efficiency. It allowed for effective and efficient receipt, disbursement and accounting of funding to the non-government sector. Further, it allowed for efficient reporting of activity.

A governance mechanism was established to facilitate communication between the NIAA and the NTBGA on strategic and operational matters. Health Checks generally took place twice a year and provided an opportunity to discuss concerns, highlights, implementation matters and performance reporting.

New agreements were introduced at two points during the funding period, providing the opportunity to revise the project descriptions and KPIs to ensure they supported ongoing improvement. For example, the NTBGA agreements moved from a flexible to prescriptive approach to output delivery. The early NTBGA agreements contained flexibility for the non-government schools to shape their activity delivery provided they target the outcomes in the agreements. In contrast, the latter NTBGA agreements specified which activities the non-government schools were required to deliver. The student attendance and Aboriginal workforce targets were also reshaped and increased to drive improvement.

Although there were logistical challenges to undertaking the capital works program, such as weather and availability of contractors, all capital works were concluded by the end of 2018. The NTBGA constructed 28 houses, exceeding its target of 21 (noting the capital works were co-funded by the participant schools and school systems).

National Partnership agreements are between the Australian Government and state or territory governments. Therefore, in order to execute the NTBGA agreements directly with the NTBGA, the NIAA used the structure of the IAS, even though it was not an IAS funded program. This created a dichotomy whereby the NTBGA agreements had features of both National Partnerships and grant funding. For example, the NTBGA was required to provide an annual expenditure report (audited) and six monthly performance reports, whereas the NT Government was required to provide an annual performance report and no expenditure reports under NTRAI. While the NTBGA agreements provided greater transparency, they also generated an administrative burden for the NTBGA.

In some ways, the performance reporting structure evolved over the contracted period to become more in line with the focus of National Partnerships on simpler and more transparent performance reporting.[210] The reporting requirements transitioned from a detailed breakdown of activities undertaken in each individual schooling system in the early years of the NTBGA agreements, to a brief overview of activity supported by outcome data in the latter years. A more robust measure of outcomes through an evaluation plan would ensure stronger alignment with the purpose of National

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[210] Council of Australian Governments, *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations*, (Canberra, ACT), 5–6.

Partnerships to enhance accountability for the achievement of mutually agreed objectives and outcomes.

Appropriateness

Improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal children and young people in remote communities continues to be a priority for governments at the local and federal level. The National Agreement on Closing the Gap represents an ongoing shared commitment between the Australian Government, states and territories and Aboriginal peoples to improve educational outcomes.[211] The NT is behind their Closing the Gap targets in educational outcomes and this has a disproportionate impact on people living in remote areas.[212]

Non-Government schools are registered by the NT Government. Both governments contribute funding to non-government schools.[213] The Australian Government provides the majority of public funding through the Quality Schools Package.[214] There is also additional IAS funding available for non-government schools to improve attendance and educational outcomes.[215] The NTBGA agreements are designed to complement rather than duplicate existing IAS programs. Future arrangements should continue to be complementary rather than duplicating existing efforts.

The types of activities under the NTBGA agreements continue to generally align with best practice. For example, building the capacity of the Aboriginal education workforce has positive benefits for students.[216] Improving teaching housing is an important method to attract and retain quality teachers. Activities to improve attendance have educational, as well as social and emotional benefits.[217] The emphasis on succession planning and strategies to increase the proportion of the Aboriginal workforce across a range of positions is a positive step towards increasing Aboriginal led governance and leadership in non-government schools. The focus on providing personalised learning plans or education adjustment plans for students with learning and diverse support needs aligns with the Australian Curriculum 'Steps to personalise learning'. This involves taking 'into account the range of students' abilities, current levels of learning, strengths, goals and interests' and responding by personalising content and responding to individual learning goals.[218]

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[211] Joint Council of Australian Governments, *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, (Canberra, ACT, 2020), 24 – 28.

[212] Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (Cth), *Closing the Gap Report 2020*, ISBN 978-1-925364-30-9 (Darwin, NT, 2020), 27, 29, 38, 41, 50.

[213] "How are schools funded in Australia?" Department of Education, Skills and Employment, accessed 12 October, 2021, https://www.dese.gov.au/quality-schools-package/fact-sheets/how-much-australian-government-funding-provided-schools-each-state-and-territory.

[214] "How much Australian Government funding is provided to schools in each state and territory?" Department of Education, Skills and Employment, accessed 21 September, 2021, https://www.dese.gov.au/quality-schools-package/fact-sheets/how-much-australian-government-funding-provided-schools-each-state-and-territory.

[215] National Indigenous Australians Agency (Cth), *Indigenous Advancement Strategy Grant Guidelines*, (Canberra, ACT, 2019), 36.

[216] House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, *Education in remote and complex environments*, (Canberra, ACT, 2020), 104 – 105.

[217] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (Cth), *Australia's Children*, cat. no. CWS 69 (Canberra, ACT, 2020), 206;

[218] "Steps to personalise learning: CASE" Australian CURRICULUM, accessed 26 October, 2021, https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/student-diversity/planning-for-student-diversity/steps-to-personalise-learning-case/.

Further and broader investigation would be required to understand why the non-government schools were unable to achieve their attendance and some of their Aboriginal workforce targets.

Recommendations from the non-government school agreements

- Incorporate output quality indicators which, based on strong evidence of effectiveness and sound program design, demonstrate progress toward outcomes
- Ensure payment pathways are complementary and avoid duplication

Achievement Table - Children and Schooling Implementation Plan – Non-government schools

Activity	Outputs										
	2015		**2016**		**2017**		**2018**		**2019**		**2020**
	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Assessment	Key Performance Indicator	Assessment	Key Performance Indicator	Key Performance Indicators	Key Performance Indicator	Assessment	Key Performance Indicator	Assessment	Key Performance Indicator	Assessment
Additional teachers	Maintain 30 full-time equivalent teacher and engagement officer (people who work with students to engage curriculum) positions.	KPI assessed as satisfactory	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Quality Teaching Imitative	Effectively teach English as an additional language or dialect Effectively teach students with learning difficulties Cultivate and support flexible pathways for students Capacity building for Aboriginal education employees Literacy and numeracy outcomes in remote schools Aboriginal Year 12 attainment in remote schools	All KPIs assessed as satisfactory										
Service delivery	N/A	N/A	Compliance with Project Agreement terms and conditions	KPI assessed as satisfactory	Compliance with Project Agreement terms and conditions	KPI assessed as satisfactory	Compliance with Project Agreement terms and conditions	KPI assessed as satisfactory	Core activities/service being delivered meet or exceed requirements	KPI assessed as satisfactory	Core activities/service being delivered meet or exceed requirements	KPI assessed as satisfactory
Indigenous student attendance	Increase the average student attendance figures against 2014 outcome data 2014 Baseline: 62.89% April 2016 Aspirational Benchmark - 65.75%	KPI assesses as satisfactory 65.66%	Increase Indigenous student attendance above the 2015 benchmark level (65%) Increase the proportion of attendance at least 4 days per week	KPI assessed as needs to improve Average attendance rate: 63% 36.40 % students attended for at least 4 days per week	Increase Indigenous student attendance above the 2015 benchmark level (65%) Increase the proportion of attendance at least 4 days were week	KPI assessed as needs to improve Average attendance rate: 56% 26.12% students attended for at least 4 days per week	Increase Indigenous student attendance above the 2015 benchmark level (65%) Increase the proportion of attendance at least 4 days per week	KPI assessed as needs to improve Average attendance rate: 55% 14.42% attended for at least 4 days per week	At least 40 % of services students have attended school for 90% of school days	KPI assessed as needs to improve 14.42% students attended for 90% of school days Average attendance rate: 52%	At least 40 % of services students have attended school for 90% of school days **Note:** KPI data was recorded the same as 2019. The 2020 attendance data has not been published as the data was severely affected by COVID 19.	KPI assesses as needs to improve 14.42% students attended for 90% of school days Average attendance rate: 52%
Indigenous Workforce	Increase the proportion of Indigenous staff employed against 2014 outcome data	KPI assessed as satisfactory 48.28%	Maintain the 2015 level of Indigenous staff employed at schools covered	KPI assessed as satisfactory 47.98%	Maintain the 2015 level of Indigenous staff employed at schools covered	KPI assessed as satisfactory 48.51%	Maintain the 2015 level of Indigenous staff employed at schools covered by the agreement (48%)	KPI assessed as needs to improve 43.24%	52% of hours works are worked by and Indigenous person	KPI assesses as satisfactory 51.36%	52% of hours works are worked by and Indigenous person	KPI assessed as needs to improve 41.42%

Activity	Outputs											
	2015		**2016**		**2017**		**2018**		**2019**		**2020**	
	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Assessment	Key Performance Indicator	Assessment	Key Performance Indicator	Key Performance Indicators	Key Performance Indicator	Assessment	Key Performance Indicator	Assessment	Key Performance Indicator	Assessment
	2014 Baseline – 47.77%		by the agreement (48%)		by the agreement (48%)							
Capital works – Teacher Housing	- 9 new constructions and 1 renovation underway At least 20% FTE local Indigenous Employment	**Construction of houses on target**	- 15 new constructions and 2 renovations underway - Of these, at least 10 are complete	**Construction of houses on target**	- 17 new constructions and 3 renovations underway - Of these, at least 10 are complete At least 20% FTE local Indigenous Employment	**Construction of houses on target**	- 21 new constructions and four renovations At least 20% FTE local Indigenous Employment	**Target exceeded** Total of 28 new additional residences Note: During the agreement a number of participant schools/systems have co-contributed approximately $3.75m to Teacher Housing work under NTRAI	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Payments ($ million)	**Total Payments made for 2015-16 $8.648m (Includes Capital funding of $1.655m)** (Paid full amount available under the NTRAI Implementation Plan)		**Total Payments made for 2016-17 $7.647m (Includes Capital funding of $1.717m)** (Paid full amount available under the NTRAI Implementation Plan)		**Total payments made for 2017 – 18 $7.762m (Includes Capital funding of $1.760m)** (Paid full amount available under the NTRAI Implementation Plan)		**Total payments made for 2018 – 19 $6.536m (Includes Capital funding of $1.804m)** (Paid full amount available under the NTRAI Implementation Plan)		**Total payments made for 2019 – 20 $4.779m** (Paid full amount available under the NTRAI Implementation Plan)		**Total payments made for 2020 – 21 $3.609m** (Paid full amount available under the NTRAI Implementation Plan)	