

NTER Review Board Recommendations	Australian Government Response	Northern Territory Government View
Overarching		
1. The Australian and Northern Territory Governments recognise as a matter of urgent national significance the continuing need to address the unacceptably high level of disadvantage and social dislocation being experienced by Aboriginal Australians living in remote communities throughout the Northern Territory.	Supported	Supported
2. In addressing these needs both governments acknowledge the requirement to reset their relationship with Aboriginal people based on genuine consultation, engagement and partnership.	Supported	Supported
3. Government actions affecting Aboriginal communities respect Australia's human rights obligations and conform with the <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i> (RDA).	Supported	Supported
Welfare Reform and Employment		
Income Management		
4. The current blanket application of compulsory income management in the Northern Territory cease.	Not supported Following consultation with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, the Australian Government will develop compulsory income management arrangements which conform with the <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i> . The Government will announce details of the consultation process shortly. Amending legislation to remove the exemption for the RDA for the NTER legislation will be introduced in the 2009 spring sittings.	Not supported The Australian Government's decision to continue current arrangements while the income management regime is redesigned is supported. The Territory Government will assist the Australian Government to develop new arrangements.
5. Income management be available on a voluntary basis to community members who choose to have some of their income quarantined for specific purposes, as determined by them.	Refer response to Recommendation 4.	Refer response to Recommendation 4.
6. Compulsory income management should only apply on the basis of child protection, school enrolment and attendance and other relevant behavioural triggers. These provisions should apply across the Northern Territory.	Refer response to Recommendation 4.	Refer response to Recommendation 4.
7. All welfare recipients to have access to external merits review.	Supported Amendments to the relevant legislation were introduced in March 2009.	Supported
8. Centrelink conduct field interviews with individuals to explain changes to income management to ensure that those who wish to remain on income management can do so with administrative ease.	Supported	Supported
Community Stores		
9. The system for licensing community stores be continued with a requirement for there to be an audit of each licensed store every six months to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high standards of governance and financial integrity; - good quality and range of products; - appropriate health standards; and - local employment strategy to increase the number of Aboriginal employees in community stores. 	Supported Stores will be formally assessed/reviewed for licensing purposes once every 12 months and will be monitored at least every six months to ensure they can meet standards. Stores are assessed against the requirements set out in the <i>NTNER Act 2007</i> .	Supported

10. The Australian Government examine ways to address the unacceptably high prices that continue to be found in community stores notwithstanding the licensing arrangements.	Supported	Supported
Employment		
11. The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program be reformed in tandem with an overhaul of training provided in Aboriginal communities so that CDEP participants must undergo literacy, numeracy and on-the-job training designed to improve non-CDEP employment opportunities.	Partially supported, given that literacy or numeracy training is not necessarily compulsory. However, it is strongly encouraged for those people who would benefit.	Supported
12. Community Employment Brokers (CEBs) should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - focus on mentoring, case management and training support, particularly with CDEP participants; - undertake workplace assessment; and - coordinate activities between education and training providers and Job Network Providers. 	CEBs will cease on 30 June 2009.	Noted
Law and Order		
Alcohol, Drugs and Pornography		
13. The NTER laws prohibiting the possession and transportation of alcohol on prescribed lands be maintained.	Supported The current restrictions will be retained and redeveloped to conform with the RDA.	Supported
14. Alcohol supply, demand and harm reduction strategies be implemented urgently to ensure the sustainability and long-term success of the alcohol restriction measures.	Supported	Supported
15. Comprehensive alcohol management plans be finalised in all relevant communities.	Supported	Supported
16. Strengthened measures to be put in place as a matter of urgency to address illicit drug use in remote Aboriginal communities and associated mental health issues.	Supported	Supported
17. Current signage advising about alcohol and pornography restrictions should be modified in consultation with communities to determine appropriate location, design and wording where this has not already occurred.	Supported	Supported
Police		
18. The overall number of police in the Northern Territory Aboriginal communities be significantly increased and put on a more secure footing through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the existing 18 THEMIS police stations being made permanent; - similar police stations being established in other Aboriginal communities with substantial populations; and - an emphasis on recruiting more female police officers. 	Supported, noting policing is a responsibility of the Northern Territory Government. See separate supplementary material for more details of the Australian Government's response.	Supported
19. The Australian and Northern Territory Governments agree, as soon as possible, a standard for policing levels in remote communities which delivers effective and equitable police numbers, is transparent and provides certainty for Aboriginal people. The governments further agree to work towards achieving the standard over an agreed timeframe.	Supported	Supported
20. In parallel with increased police numbers, there be an emphasis on quality community policing with police officers receiving relevant training and development before deployment to an Aboriginal community.	Supported	Supported

Additional Legal Services for Indigenous Australians		
21. The Australian and Northern Territory Governments assess the impact of additional police and other law enforcement measures on the Northern Territory justice system, and ensure there are sufficient resources to handle any increased pressure, including reasonable access to courthouses and other essential legal services.	Supported	Supported
Aboriginal Interpreter Services		
22. Australian and Northern Territory Government agencies encourage their staff to use interpreter services as a priority, on a fee for service basis.	Supported	Supported
23. A local employment strategy be developed to increase the number of Aboriginal people employed as interpreters.	Supported	Supported
24. The Northern Territory Government to consider transferring responsibility for the Aboriginal Interpreter Service to the Department of the Chief Minister signalling the importance of this issue.	This is a matter for the Territory Government.	Not supported. It is not clear what efficiencies or benefits would be gained from this.
Enhancing Education		
25. The Australian and Northern Territory Governments acknowledge and move urgently in a sustained way to address the serious crisis in education in Northern Territory remote Aboriginal Communities.	Supported The 2009–10 Budget contains specific measures to improve educational opportunity for Indigenous students in the Northern Territory. This is additional to significant funding provided through COAG and the Government's 'Building the Education Revolution'.	Supported
Supporting Families		
26. The Northern Territory Government engage immediately with Aboriginal communities to strengthen child protection arrangements and deal with reported cases of abuse.	Supported See separate supplementary material for more details of the Australian Government's response.	Supported
27. Funding priority be given to enable Aboriginal communities to build community integration and ownership of a child and family safety system that has the capacity to interface effectively with government agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to be implemented through community safety plans which link police, child protection, teachers, health staff, GBMs and other key service providers, with relevant community organisations such as night patrols, safe houses and women's groups; - the community safety plans should ensure that programs and services directed at child safety and wellbeing are appropriate and relevant to the community and have a high level of visibility and transparency; and - the community safety plans become a core element of the place-based arrangements. 	Supported	Supported
28. Where safe houses have been installed, the Northern Territory Government, the relevant service provider and each community agree about their management, duty of care, liability and integration with associated services before they become operational, and as further safe houses are installed there be consultation with the relevant community on these issues.	Supported	Supported
29. A comprehensive strategy be developed and implemented for youth development services addressing both capital infrastructure and recurrent funding, linked to a wider community development framework.	Supported	Supported

Improving Child and Family Health		
30. The intergovernmental funding agreement – Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative – be made a permanent feature of health funding to the Northern Territory and integrated into the tripartite collaboration arrangement involving Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the Northern Territory (AMSANT), the Australian Government and the Northern Territory Government.	Supported The Australian Government will continue with a tripartite approach to the planning and implementation of expanded health service delivery.	Supported
31. The Expanding Health Service Delivery Initiative be expanded to include Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) and mental health funding.	Supported-in-principle The Australian Government will continue to plan for the range of complementary and allied health services.	Supported
32. Urgent priority be given to the ongoing treatment of children with health issues identified in the Child Health Checks with a particular focus on dental treatment.	Supported The Australian Government has made available a further three years funding for the ongoing treatment of children with health issues identified over the last two years, following child health checks. This includes dental care and completion of specialist Ear Nose and Throat follow up.	Supported
Housing and Land Reform		
Five Year Leases		
33. The Australian Government ensure the expeditious payment of just terms compensation to Aboriginal landowners for the acquisition and use of their property without consent from the date of the original acquisition.	Supported The Australian Government has initiated the statutory process. The Northern Territory Valuer-General has been requested to determine a reasonable amount of rent in accordance with section 62 of the <i>NTNER Act 2007</i> . Once this determination is made, the legislation requires that Government pay that amount to land owners.	Supported
34. The Australian Government pay rent to the Aboriginal land owners of the land subject to the five-year leases.	Supported – as above	Supported
Permits		
35. The permit system under the <i>Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976</i> be reinstated to control general public access to the townships on Aboriginal land and that the provisions be effectively policed. This requirement be embedded as one element of a community safety plan.	Supported Legislation to implement this measure was rejected by the Senate in November 2008.	Supported The permit management system should achieve the right balance between access and protection.
Coordination		
36. An Operations Centre continue under civilian management with the necessary authority and delegation from the Prime Minister and Chief Minister to drive and coordinate implementation across both Australian and Northern Territory Government agencies delivery of services to Aboriginal communities.	Supported	Supported
37. The senior government official at the community level to report directly and be accountable to the Operations Centre.	Supported	Supported
38. The title of the community-based senior government official be changed from Government Business Manager (GBM) to Community Development Manager.	Not supported The Australian Government considers that the primary role of Government Business Managers in individual communities is to coordinate whole-of-government activity and this should be reflected in	Noted

	their name. However, under the reformed CDEP there will be support for Community Development Officers and Community Mentors who can engage in community development.	
Re-engagement		
39. The Australian and Northern Territory Governments endorse the need to reset the relationship with Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory and move in partnership to develop and maintain a community development framework within which a genuine engagement with communities can develop and be maintained.	Supported The Australian Government has committed substantial resources to improve engagement and reset the relationship. In addition, the new Remote Service Delivery National Partnership agreement will provide the structure for new collaborative partnerships to be established in the priority communities between all stakeholders.	Supported
40. Both governments commit to the reform of the machinery and culture of government to enable a more effective whole-of-government approach to be delivered on the ground and to support professional development for their key personnel located in Aboriginal communities.	Supported. The Remote Service Delivery National Partnership recognises the need for Government staff to be appropriately trained and will fund cross-cultural training for workers.	Supported
Funding Arrangements		
41. Unmet service needs and infrastructure backlogs in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory be quantified and addressed as a matter of urgency.	Supported. The Australian Government has agreed with jurisdictions to undertake a national audit of municipal and essential services in relevant Indigenous communities in 2009. The audit will inform clearer roles and responsibilities and funding for services and ongoing maintenance, with new arrangements between the Australian, the States and the Northern Territory to be in place from 1 July 2012.	Supported
42. The Australian Government Indigenous-specific expenditure to the Northern Territory for this purpose be excluded from the Commonwealth Grants Commission's assessment of the distribution of GST revenues required to achieve fiscal equalisation.	The Australian Government has agreed to support the Northern Territory Government's request for funding under the NTER National Partnership agreement to be excluded from the Commission's formula, subject to the Northern Territory Government meeting agreed conditions.	Supported

43. Local government financial assistance from the Australian Government be reformed, instituting a new formula that assesses actual funding assistance needs in remote areas and accounting for the absence of rateable land in many Aboriginal communities.	The new federal financial relations framework has established a forum for examining these issues.	The Northern Territory Government is committed to working with the Australian Government in support of agreed methodologies that provide long-term funding certainty to our remote towns and communities.
44. To maximise service delivery outcomes from the new regional and local partnership agreements, pooled funding arrangements between the Australian Government and the states (and within each government) be adopted when multiple agencies are involved with accountability for expenditure against the outcomes specified in the agreements.	Supported in principle. The new local plans to be developed in the Remote Service Delivery Priority communities will provide opportunity for more flexible use of funds to better meet local priorities and reduce red tape.	Supported in principle, but subject to further bilateral discussion.
45. Any pooled arrangements have clear outcome targets and timeframes across all elements with a pool manager responsible for the achievement of the targets and coordination of initiatives on the ground.	See above.	Supported in principle, but subject to further bilateral discussion.
46. The Australian and Northern Territory Governments work in partnership to develop, in consultation with Aboriginal communities, supporting programs and structure to enhance Aboriginal governance bodies at local and regional levels that will enable communities to achieve their cultural, political, economic and social development goals.	Supported in principle.	Supported in principle.
Governance, Agreement Making and Capacity Building		
47. Priority be given to capacity building for Aboriginal leadership and Aboriginal governance at the local community level.	Supported	Supported
48. Governments should not impose requirements concerning particular models of governance on communities, other than that they must be capable of getting things done effectively and of holding decision makers accountable.	Supported as a general principle, noting that there are often valid reasons for requiring governance arrangements to be of a particular structure.	Supported as a general principle, noting that there are often valid reasons for requiring governance arrangements to be of a particular structure.
49. Local and regional partnership agreements, negotiated equitably between the communities and governments, should be the basis for determining and organising the delivery of services, housing and essential infrastructure to remote communities.	The new Remote Service Delivery local planning processes should address these issues.	Supported as a general principle.
50. The agreements be developed through a process which engages communities in culturally appropriate ways and made subject to the informed consent of the relevant communities.	Supported	Supported
51. To enable there to be a manageable number of partnership agreements negotiated and implemented, it may be preferable to allow a mixed system of regional agreements and local community agreements.	Supported	Supported
Data and Evaluation		
52. Governments establish an authoritative database as a single integrated information system that enable regular measurement of outcomes of all government agency programs and services that target Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.	Supported	Supported where practical.