



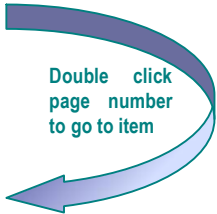
NORTHERN TERRITORY EMERGENCY RESPONSE (NTER)

MONITORING REPORT

Measuring progress of NTER activities

PART 2

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Indicator Data by Measure

This monitoring report brings together performance information for each measure under the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER).

The report has two parts:

Part 1

- **Background** – information on the NTER and the data provided for this report.
- **Executive summary** – summary of key findings of the performance information for the first year of the NTER.
- **Overview of monitoring data** – overview of the analysis of indicators by measure.

Part 2

Indicator analysis by sub measure – more detailed analysis of the progress and associated issues in relation to each identified performance indicator, including necessary caveats. All Australian Government information was provided by the agencies responsible for the relevant sub measure. This report also contains data from the Northern Territory Government (NTG) and results from the July 2008 Government Business Managers (GBM) survey.

Analysis provides:

- summaries of achievements and progress
- reasons for the non-achievement of milestones or targets
- any 'lessons learned' or impacts
- any changes in policy direction
- linkages with other measures or data, i.e. dependencies such as housing to infrastructure
- data limitations and the actions in place to rectify.

Indicator data by measure – tables of indicator data by measure are at Appendix 1. These tables should be used in conjunction with the Indicator analysis by sub-measure. Baseline data except where otherwise stated refers to 2006-07.

1. Improving Child and Family Health

A healthy start in life is clearly an essential building block for achieving successful early childhood development. Child health checks identify and treat conditions to help children thrive and learn.

Overview

This section provides a small amount of summary indicator data on the three sub-components of the child and family health measure:

- Child Health Checks and follow-up service delivery
- Child Special Services
- Drug and Alcohol response

Data development

The quality and quantity of data available to support program monitoring varies across these sub-components and is related to the type of work undertaken, the resources involved and the extent to which these sub-sectors have pre-existing tools and methods for data collection. It should be noted that the availability of quantitative data are not, of itself, an indicator of the quality or effectiveness of a program, or its implementation.

Data for the Child Health Check Initiative is the most complete and an extensive report is available at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/nterchciProgressReport>.

The data reported here on follow-up services is limited, however, more detailed data will become available in the next quarter.

Quantitative data collection relating to the Child Special Services element is still in development. Quantitative data on the Drug and Alcohol response has required more extensive development because the measure has involved a number of new service arrangements which required new data collections to be developed, agreed and established. There is also a long lead time in processing hospital data.

Context and achievements

Child health checks were progressively rolled out from July 2007 to June 2008 and by the end of that period at least 55% of the eligible population had participated across every region of the Northern Territory (NT). Follow-up service delivery has now commenced in all regions through existing service providers. Both child health checks and follow-up services will continue during 2008-09. The major impediments to the roll-out of the child health checks and follow-up services were local infrastructure to support an increased workforce, particularly accommodation for clinical work and staff housing, and workforce availability. These were targeted for action in 2008-09 and will continue to be a focus of attention for the next two years under the Expanding Health Service Delivery measure.

The Child Special Services implementation proceeded following analysis of existing service delivery and extensive consultation with NTG and non-government stakeholders. The development and delivery of the new Sexual Assault Referral Centre Mobile Outreach Service (MOS) from April 2008, together with funding secured for a further four years, is a major increment to service availability of this type.

The Drug and Alcohol Response commenced with the provision of two dedicated hospital beds for detoxification at both Katherine District and Tennant Creek Hospitals from September 2007, the rapid deployment of specialist Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) teams to support these beds for an initial six weeks, as well as increased support for selected residential rehabilitation services in the five regional centres of the NT. The second phase of the response has involved a wide range of measures to support expanded service delivery and workforce capacity including the deployment of 28 outreach workers in primary care and substance use services in the NT. These developments will be built on in 2008-09.

1.1 Child Health Check Initiative (CHCI)

Participation in CHCI

Child Health Checks (CHCs) commenced on 10 July 2007. As of 30 June 2008, 9,428 children had received a CHC as part of the NTER CHCI, representing 55% of eligible children¹.

The most intense period of CHCs was in the six months between 1 August 2007 and 31 January 2008. In the period February to June 2008, CHCs continued while separately funded follow-up services were implemented.

Some health checks were also provided through the Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS) to children who were eligible for NTER funded checks. When MBS data is incorporated, the coverage is estimated to increase by up to as much as 10%².

Prior to the NTER commencing, 1,335 MBS Item 708 health checks were undertaken through Medicare in the NTER communities in 2006-07. This means that approximately seven times more children received a health check under the NTER compared to the previous financial year.

The following data only relates to children who received an NTER-funded CHC (i.e. 9,428 children). Of these children, data has been analysed in terms of health conditions and referrals for 8,516 children.

¹ Note these figures are subject to change as more data pertaining to 2007-08 may be received. These figures were current as of 12 September 2008.

² A precise coverage figure for both NTER funded CHCs and MBS checks cannot be provided at the time of reporting as the Department of Health and Ageing is revising the method for adding MBS checks to the NTER checks (where there is a degree of double counting between the two data sources and children can now legitimately receive another annual health check).

Targets/Milestones

Targets were not established for the CHCI. The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) undertook analysis of comparable programs to estimate the expected uptake for service planning purposes. While there are no programs which are directly comparable with the NTER CHCI, other MBS funded health checks and the BreastScreen Australia programs have some comparable features.

The MBS Older Persons Health Checks (OPHC) are offered to all Australians over the age of 75 years. In 2006-07, the participation rate in the OPHC for the target population of people 75 years and over was 21%.

The MBS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adult Health Check is offered to Indigenous people aged 15 to 54 years of age. In 2006-07, the participation rate for Indigenous adults in the NT (not limited to NTER communities) was 8.5%.

In 2003-04, 55.6% of women in the target age group participated in the BreastScreen Australia program. Participation among Indigenous women was lower at 35.3%.

The delivery of 9,428 CHCs to the target population, representing 55% of eligible children, compares favourably with participation in each of the MBS OPHC and BreastScreen Australia programs.

Referrals

Just over two-thirds (69%) of children who received a CHC were referred for further services. The most common service need was for additional primary health care (39% of all referrals) and dental services (34%).

Follow-up Services

Follow-up services are delivered through usual health service providers (NT Department of Health and Families (DHF) and Aboriginal Medical Services) rather than by teams deployed by the Commonwealth.

DoHA's funding for service delivery includes funding for capital works to provide both clinic and housing accommodation. The main factor limiting the roll out of follow up services has been the time required to establish accommodation and source the workforce.

Follow-up Data Collection

Follow-up services commenced in March 2008. As of 30 June 2008, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) had received data for 2,836 follow-up assessments (some of these will be for the same child; follow up data will be produced per child once available). DoHA expect that data from this follow-up collection will be available from early October 2008.

Separate follow-up data collections have been established for audiology and dental services. Audiology and/or dental services have been offered to all children regardless of whether they had a CHC.

Audiology Services Data

Of children who received audiology follow-up services, nearly half (43%) had not received a MBS Item 708 health check in the previous nine months.

Dental Services Data

The dental data collection has not yet come to fruition with data expected to be available from October 2008.³

1.2 Child Special Services

Three Child Special Services projects proceeded in the NT during 2007-08:

- NT DHF were funded to develop and deliver a new Mobile Outreach Service (MOS) in a range of remote communities where the Sexual Assault Referral Centre had not previously been able to reach. Casework services, community liaison and education activities are being provided by professional counsellors as well as Aboriginal sexual assault workers. These services commenced operation in April 2008.
- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (Congress) were funded to manage the scoping phase of a *Healing Model of Adolescent Sex Offenders* project. Community education and engagement in a Central Australian community has commenced to establish whether the community wishes to proceed with implementation of the service.
- Congress were also funded to deliver the recent *Taking care of our children* Male Health Summit, from 30 June - 3 July 2008 at the Ross River Resort in Central Australia. The Summit was attended by over 400 Aboriginal men who gathered to discuss the health of themselves, their children, families and communities.

1.3 Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Rehabilitation Services

The Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) data provided for this report mainly covers the period from 1 January to 30 June 2008, but some earlier data from October 2007 are also included. Preliminary data are only available at this time. Two additional hospital beds for detoxification were provided at both Katherine District and Tennant Creek Hospitals.

Twenty-eight additional AOD outreach workers and community support workers were employed in selected primary care and substance use services. The workers are providing comprehensive treatment, rehabilitation and support services within host agencies and local Indigenous communities. Funding for twenty-six additional beds and 13 additional AOD support workers have been provided in residential rehabilitation services across the NT.

³ Approximately 700 dental data collection forms have been completed to date. However, as the majority of these have not yet been sent to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare we are unable to determine how many of these relate to services in 2007-08.

Funding has been provided to a range of services across the Territory for the delivery of workforce training, clinical resources and community education. Fourteen workforce training and 31 community education activities have been funded. Quantitative data collection for outreach workers is still in development and analysis of residential rehabilitation data has commenced.

The implementation of the AOD sub-measure was planned and coordinated in partnership with the NTG and Aboriginal community controlled primary health care services.

A major achievement has been the development of new service models involving primary health care services which enable increased access and flexibility in AOD service delivery.

1.4 Northern Territory hospitalisation data

Scope of NTG hospitalisation data ⁴

For all indicators, total inpatient episodes were sourced for Indigenous people in the NTER communities. For each of the NTER communities, locality code(s) were matched or grouped from the inpatient universe.

Table 1.4.1 suggests children aged 0-5 years may have had fewer hospital separations in 2007-08, than in 2006-07, across most categories. Whether or not these represent real declines cannot be determined until statistical tests are conducted on hospital separation rates. The top three reasons for hospitalisation of children remained the same – infectious diseases (1109 cases in 2006-07, 833 cases in 2007-08), diseases of the respiratory system (644 cases in 2006-07, 506 cases in 2007-08), and diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue (287 cases in 2006-07, 224 cases in 2007-08).

⁴ Some data is only available to January 2008 due to coding lags. Data will be resubmitted when available. Rates will be calculated when population denominator data are available. For all indicators total inpatient episodes were sourced for Indigenous people in the NTER communities. Unless where otherwise stated all data is for the 2007-08 financial year.

Please note that patients may have multiple ICD codes within a category and between categories. To avoid double counting the "Total" is calculated by counting all unique episode numbers within the identified ICD codes. The total provided in Table 1.4.1 excludes multiple admissions of the same patient for the same condition and so does not equal the sum of separations by condition (which do include multiple admissions for the same patient for the same condition).

Table 1.4.1. Number of Hospital Separations of People from the NTER Communities with a Preventable Injury or Disease or Ear, Eye, Dental and Environmental Health Conditions

Primary diagnosis	Total separations 2006-07	Separations for children Aged 0-5 2006-07	Total separations 2007-08	Separations for children Aged 0-5 2007-08
Certain infectious and parasitic diseases	3,004	1,109	2,242	833
Nutritional anaemia's	502	255	272	134
Malnutrition	148	107	121	98
Diseases of the ear and mastoid process	466	265	439	199
Diseases of the respiratory system	2,049	644	1,612	506
Diseases of oral cavity salivary glands and jaws	193	68	216	52
Diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue	1,011	287	811	224
Injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	3,017	212	2,474	182
Transport accidents	81	*	91	*
Other external causes of accidental injury	623	99	541	97
Intentional self-poisoning and exposure to alcohol	*			
Assault	645	14	548	16
Complications of medical and surgical care	461	31	308	19
Total Unique Separations	4883	1249	4048	980

Source: NTG data, August 2008

* Number hidden to protect confidentiality

Across all age groups, the data suggests there may have been a decrease in the two main causes of hospitalisation for diseases associated with poor environmental health. However, this has not yet been statistically tested. As shown in Table 1.4.2, the number of hospitalisations for intestinal infectious diseases decreased by 24% between 2006-07 and 2007-08 (from 286 to 216 cases), while hospitalisations for influenza and pneumonia decreased by 27% (from 412 to 300 cases).

Table 1.4.2. Number of Hospital Separations of People from the NTER Communities with Diseases Associated with Poor Environment – Primary Diagnosis

Diagnosis	2006-07	2007-08
Intestinal infectious diseases	286	216
Tuberculosis	6	14
Bacterial disease	76	80
Trachoma	0	0
Acute hepatitis A	*	0
Acute hepatitis B	*	0
Scabies	51	32
Acute rheumatic fever	25	36
Chronic rheumatic heart diseases	20	13
Acute upper respiratory infections	71	56
Influenza and pneumonia	412	300
Total Unique Separations	949	747

Source: NTG data, August 2008

* Number hidden to protect confidentiality

2. Enhancing Education

Parents of Indigenous children need to be involved in ensuring their children get a complete education. Children need to be encouraged to expand their expectations of themselves. Children of all ages will face learning difficulties if they are tired or hungry, both of which make them unable to fully concentrate on the tasks set by teachers. Regular school attendance is clearly essential for learning.

2.1 School Attendance

Enrolment and Attendance Rates

In June 2006, the NTG announced its three-year plan to implement the Middle Years in Government schools across the Territory. Middle Years is central to the NTGs plan to reform secondary education and improve the engagement, retention and outcomes of all NT students. Secondary education in the NT now comprises:

- The Middle Years – Years 7 to 9
- The Senior Years – Years 10 to 12

From 2007, Year 10 was included with Years 11 and 12 in the Senior Years of schooling. From 2008, students in Years 7 to 9 began attending dedicated Middle Years schools or sub-schools, delivering tailored Middle Years programs designed to meet their learning and developmental needs.

As a result of this policy change, Year 7 enrolments move from Primary to Secondary for the purpose of recording data. This has resulted in a significant shift between the baseline and third-quarter data for Primary and Secondary enrolment and attendance rates.

The NTG publishes data on school attendance for every government school in the NT. Given seasonal fluctuations, it is important to focus on the same period in each year. In June 2008, the school attendance rate for Indigenous students in very remote areas of the NT was 62%, down from 64% in June 2007.

While there has been little variation in the rate of attendance between each of the reporting periods, it should be noted the overall enrolment rate has improved. Based on school enrolment data (Appendix 1, Table B), enrolments in Catholic and Government schools within the NTER communities increased from a baseline of 7,992 enrolled in June 2007, to 8,575 enrolled in June 2008, an overall increase of 6.8%.

It is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from the data on enrolments. It may be that increases in enrolment have occurred in conjunction with the NTER and increased enrolments may have lowered attendance rates, as children who have not been attending school may attend at a less intensive rate than other students when they do start attending.

There were initial plans to link income management to school attendance however these were not activated. Many of the NTER measures, particularly the school nutrition programs and income management, are likely to be of assistance in increasing school attendance rates, but they are indirect and it may take time for them to have positive impacts.

Finally, it is worth noting that there is significant variation across communities – not all communities have low attendance rates. GBMs' perceptions of school attendance support this. In approximately two-thirds of communities (65%), GBMs are aware of children who do not go to school at all. GBMs report that children are significantly more likely to truant in the afternoon as they are in the morning. In about one in ten communities, the GBM is not aware of any truancy.

Where increases in school attendance have occurred, a number of GBMs report that has resulted from increased parental support for attendance, police involvement in schools and sport and the SNP.

2.2 Enhancing Education – Nutrition Programs

School Nutrition Program

All NTER communities and town camps have now been scoped for the program. In most communities, the School Nutrition Program (SNP) will be operating from the commencement of income management in that community. At 30 June 2008, there were SNPs established in 55 communities and 8 town camp areas, with programs scheduled to commence in six communities and one town camp from the beginning of Term 3.

Parents and carers are expected to contribute to the cost of food for each child they support. Participation in the SNP is voluntary, though people on income management with school-aged children are encouraged to participate.

For SNP providers, it was difficult to identify which children's parents were not paying for meals, which has meant the Australian Government has been underwriting the costs of some of the meals.

A Communication Strategy is being explored for 2008-09 to increase the parent participation base, including enlisting support from Community Employment Brokers (CEB) to increase participation by parents on CDEP.

The SNP also aims to provide employment opportunities for local Indigenous people. It is doing this by working closely with local Indigenous communities, to identify and build local people's skills, and supporting them to take up positions in delivering the program. Based on a telephone survey of available SNP providers at 21 June 2008, 69 employment outcomes had been achieved for the SNP; 59 Indigenous workers and 10 non-Indigenous workers.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is exploring a range of options for the future of the SNP.

In the 2008 GBM Survey, GBMs were asked about the school nutrition program as well as the parents' level of involvement within that program. Those GBMs that responded reported that in those communities with a SNP, 40% of all parents are involved in the program.

2.3 Parental Involvement with Schooling

In the 2008 GBM Survey, GBMs reported an increase in parental involvement for 11% of communities, a decrease for 6% and 'no change' for 51%. Involvement fluctuated for 13% of communities.

GBMs reported that the increase in parental support for school attendance is mainly related to the community's greater awareness and support for education.

One GBM states "because of NTER there is more awareness of why it is parents' responsibility to send their children", and another similarly reported the positive impact of "community meetings led by the Indigenous school principal to encourage parents to take responsibility".

There are varying reasons for active parental engagement including: parents volunteering in the Red Cross project, better community engagement and awareness and involvement regarding education. A GBM stated that in the community there is now "more awareness of the need to look after their children and that education is a major part of their children's future".

In contrast, some GBMs report that in some communities there is some prevalence of a general apathy in terms of parental engagement with schooling.

One GBM felt that while parental support for school attendance is high, parental enforcement of attendance is not.

GBMs report the lack of parental support for school attendance may be due to:

- Many people are reluctant to discipline their own children.
- Cultural factors relating to mixed genders and ages in schools.
- Bullying and disruption by other children.

3. Supporting Families

Families and communities are the building blocks of our society. For a community to thrive, the family unit must feel safe and protected from harm. Children need to be supported in functional and resilient families that are healthy, free of violence and culturally vibrant.

Strengthening parenting skills in families and communities can help build their resilience and their support networks. Child care facilities and services support early childhood development and growth and promoting early school engagement.

Positive youth diversionary activities have the potential to contribute, either directly or indirectly, to broader social goals by reducing substance abuse, increasing school attendance and creating social cohesion. They can assist in building youth leadership, confidence and self-esteem.

3.1 Safe Houses

Family Support Package

The Family Support Package allocated \$12.3m in 2007-08 to supporting families and children in the NT via:

- establishing or expanding 22 safe houses in 16 remote communities and expanding safe houses in Darwin and Alice Springs (\$11.83m);
- establishing a Mobile Child Protection Team (\$0.15m); and
- recruiting Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers (RAFCWs) to be placed in remote communities (\$0.32m).

From the 2008-09 Budget, FaHCSIA has \$9.5m in administered funds to contribute to the project. Negotiations are continuing with the NTG to determine specific usage, but it is intended to support the operation of the safe houses, mobile child protection team and the RAFCWs.

In the period November 2007 to 31 January 2008, one refurbishment of an existing building was completed at Peppimenarti, however sea containers still need to be added to the complex and fitted out before the complex is fully functional.

Between February and 30 June 2008, ten safe houses were constructed from shipping containers in eight communities. These are not yet occupied – Apatula (Finke), Angurugu, Hermannsburg, Nguui (2), Pmara Jutunta, Ramingining (x2), Ti Tree and Yuendumu. This leaves safe houses to be completed in eight communities plus refurbishments in Darwin and Alice Springs.

Sea containers were chosen as the preferred option to deliver the safe house model as they represented the most efficient and effective way of addressing an immediate need in communities to protect women and children and help break the cycle of violence. Containers were considered to offer a higher level of building security than demountables, are cyclone coded, quick to construct and are less expensive to retrofit.

These are not the same containers originally found to have harmful fumes. FaHCSIA advised the NTG to suspend rollout to allow testing to ensure the containers were safe. Initial testing indicated there may be air quality issues. The NTG decided to recommence the rollout, but safe houses will not be occupied until comprehensive testing shows them to be safe.

3.2 Child Protection

Mobile Child Protection Team (MCPT)

The NTG has established a team of ten Child Protection Practitioners to deliver a mobile child protection service. The team works closely with local support services, the Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers (RAFCWs) and police, etc, to support families and communities and investigates reports of child maltreatment and neglect.

Initial recruitment and development of training packages was undertaken between August 2007 and 31 January 2008.

At 30 June 2008, eight child protection workers, one coordinator and one administration assistant had been recruited. All have commenced employment and have commenced undertaking investigations.

3.3 Supporting Families

Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers (RAFCWs)

Funding has been allocated for the NTG to recruit 13 RAFCWs to provide a link and liaison between families, local services and regional services, particularly the child protection system.

Initial recruitment and development of training packages was undertaken between August 2007 and 31 January 2008.

Between February and 30 June 2008, the NTG recruited 10 RAFCWs and two coordinators. One coordinator has recently left, however the NTG expect to fill the position shortly.

3.4 Parenting

Children's Services and Family Support

The NTER included funding for five new facilitated playgroups and an expansion of several existing Australian Government funded early childhood services in the NT.

The playgroup funding is for two mobile Intensive Support Playgroups (ISPs) based in Tennant Creek and Katherine and for three Locational Supported Playgroups (LSPs) in Numbulwar, Milingimbi and Yuendumu.

Between February and June 2008, site selection and approval was progressed. Funding Agreements have been signed with service providers for the Tennant Creek and Katherine playgroups.

The Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services Inc (CAAPS) has been provided funding to expand their existing Indigenous Children Programme to support families. The funding agreement commenced in January 2008 and the Jubudah program, which teaches children about their feelings and how to deal with them, was purchased.

Training of staff to deliver the Jubudah program was completed in February and the program has been incorporated into the CAAPS Indigenous Children's Program. Between February and 30 June 2008, 21 children 0-8 yrs and 15 parents/caregivers were assisted by the program.

Funding was provided in January 2008 for the expansion of three 'Invest to Grow' projects. Progress includes:

- *Child Nutrition Program*: NPY Women's Council. Intensive family support, advocacy, coordination and case management and nutrition rehabilitation for 11 children and their families (existing clients) and new referrals for 10 more children at risk. Also 18 nutrition education sessions provided to 75 participants
- *Core of Life*: Menzies Inc. Health education program providing information about pregnancy, breastfeeding and early parenting. Five community forums and needs analysis conducted in Wadeye, Groote Eylandt, Darwin, Alice Springs and Tiwi Islands. Facilitator training conducted in Groote for 12 participants, with facilitator training scheduled for Tiwi Islands, Darwin, Mutitjulu, Alice Springs and Wadeye between May and July 2008. Training resources are being developed for each community involving local images and artwork to increase local ownership. Challenges: *Core of Life* uses multidisciplinary teams and the time constraints of service providers in some communities and wet weather led to a delay in delivering some training sessions.
- *Let's Start*: Charles Darwin University. This project aims to develop a preschool program in communities to support parents; enhance parenting practices; strengthen family units; develop children's social skills and reduce problematic behaviour. *Let's Start* has been laying ground work and developing contacts with target communities in preparation for running programs.

Crèches

The first of eight new crèches opened on 11 August 2008 in Lajamanu. Work is continuing to establish an additional seven new crèches with contracts in place for construction due for completion by March 2009. Upgrading work to address urgent health and safety issues has been finalised in three communities. A further six crèche upgrades have contracts in place and are expected to be completed by February 2009.

To support the new crèches, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Education (in conjunction with Charles Darwin University) has been contracted to implement a workforce training measure during 2008-09.

Analysis

Playgroups have a long lead time for site selection and approval, selection of service providers and community and family engagement. Where performance indicators (PIs) refer only to participation, progress against those PIs will reflect that lead time. Other considerations are:

- Early childhood programs tend to have a parenting component as well
- The lead time required to purchase the licence for the Jubudah program and train staff.

3.5 Youth Diversion

In total, across the three elements of the Youth Diversion Measure 95 projects were funded for a total of \$8.5 million. Evaluation reports were due in late July 2008.

Over the period August to 31 October 2007, the Youth (Alcohol) Diversion sub-measure was developed and funding of \$7.6 million was allocated. During early project planning stages, it was realised that shortages of youth workers and the absence of accommodation and recreational infrastructure in remote communities would make implementation of the original proposal extremely difficult.

In November 2007, consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including service providers, led to the development of a strategy to deliver youth alcohol diversionary activities under the NTER. The three-part Strategy included:

- Establishment of an NT Regional Youth Development Network. The Youth Network was to establish a range of regional and community specific youth diversionary activities, increase regional coordination and activity networks (eg by developing regional competitions and events); increase use of available resources such as pools, school resources, recreations centres, ovals etc; draw on existing relationships and activities with bodies such as the ADF Cadets; and increase pathways and linkages for training and employment. NGOs were to be funded to provide the activities and participate in the network.
- Alice Springs Town Camp Youth Diversion Project and Central Australian School Holiday Program. An NGO was to be funded to provide a project team to provide activities. However, in January 2008 a prominent youth service provider in Alice Springs closed, severely impacting on the capacity of the local youth sector to deliver any additional activities. Funds allocated to the Alice Springs Town Camp element of the measure were rolled into the Flexible Funding component (see below), with priority to be given to activities in Central Australia.

- An NT Indigenous Youth Flexible Funding Component. This component would fund youth diversionary projects and activities that target young indigenous people in NTER designated communities. Funded projects were to offer safe and healthy activities as an alternative to drinking and substance abuse.

Implementation

In February 2008, Red Cross was auspiced as the provider for the Youth Development Network in the Arnhem Land and Daly River regions. It brought together non-government organisations with a history of delivering focussed youth activities and programs, in order to bring about a coordinated approach to youth service delivery.

- Seven communities participated in the committee and assessment process. They were Warruwi, Oenpelli, Daly River, Maningrida, Minjilang, Wadeye, and Jabiru.
- 20 activities were approved and funded across 15 NGO providers, for a total of \$1.79 million across the Arnhem Land and Daly River regions.

Providers were secured for the school holiday programs. These school holiday programs were delivered in 10 communities over the Christmas, Easter (April 2008) and mid-year (June/July 2008) school holidays.

The first round of Youth Diversion Flexible Funding Proposals were sought in early January 2008. On 29 January 2008, the Minister announced 30 youth activity projects aimed at young people living in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, to a value of \$2.6 million. This included 20 sport/recreational infrastructure builds or upgrades (basketball courts, recreation halls, ovals, storage sheds, etc), sport and recreation materials and equipment grants, one project involving the employment of a youth worker in a community, and five event or ongoing organised activity projects (3-day youth gatherings, a series of dance clinics etc).

On March 2008, a further \$2.75 million of Youth Diversion Flexible Funding Projects was announced for 26 youth diversion activity projects, again across a range of equipment, infrastructure and activities projects.

4. Promoting Law and Order

Fundamental to functional and resilient individuals and families is an environment safe from violence and abuse.

Personal safety in local communities and respect for law and order builds trust between individual members. It is the interrelationships between people in a local community that helps foster a commitment to change their circumstances and work with all governments to achieve outcomes for each other.

The consequences of substance misuse for an individual can be devastating, such as poor parenting, neglect of children, violence and sexual abuse and imprisonment.

4.1 Police ⁵

The NTER was principally addressed to the safety and well-being of children. It is particularly difficult to collect and report outcomes for this objective, however, some data are available and are reported below. Of course, the short-term impact of the NTER may be to increase reported crime and it is important to 'see through' such a short-term effect. If people in the NTER areas are more able to report crimes, then in the long run this is likely to have a positive effect as perpetrators will be more likely to be apprehended.

While data on assault and violent crime largely reflects crimes committed against adults, a general normalisation of violence is not good for children or adults and creates an environment in which crimes against children are more likely to occur. There is significant evidence that violence is normalised in many remote Indigenous communities⁶. Much violence remains unreported in official data and this needs to be kept in mind in interpreting the data provided below.

Fifty-one additional police have been deployed since the NTER was announced in June 2007; 33 Australian Federal Police (AFP) and interstate police and 18 NT police. At 13 June 2008, there was new police presence in the 18 Operation THEMIS communities (some of these communities did not have a police presence prior to the NTER). The additional police presence meant that the recording of all incidents across all categories rose, particularly in the 18 communities where Operation THEMIS is in place.

⁵ All police data provided by the Northern Territory Government. The data range is based on financial years, and THEMIS data is based on 1 July 07 – 30 June 08.

⁶ ABSTRACT Address by the CEO of the Australian Crime Commission, Alastair Milroy, to the 2008 Bennelong Society Conference - 20 June 2008

Police data - NTER communities

The tables in this section show the high number of incidents⁷ (incidents may not be prosecuted) reported to police for the NTER communities, particularly for person-related domestic violence (total domestic violence includes alcohol-related domestic violence).

Indigenous Australians are over-represented in crime data in the NT. For example, Indigenous Australians accounted for 83.5 % cent of assault lodgements filed in court for hearings in 2007-08, despite only accounting for around 32% of the NT population. Most of these matters relate to Indigenous Australians living in major population centres of the NT and not the NTER communities.

Alcohol incidents

There was a significant increase in the number of alcohol-related incidents reported to the police across the NTER communities, from 1,458 in 2006-07 to 2,287 in 2007-08 (Table 4.1.1 below). This may reflect the imposition of the alcohol bans, as alcohol-related incidents are now more likely to be recorded as the possession and consumption of alcohol is now illegal across the NTER areas. It is worth noting that 39% of the increase in the number of alcohol-related incidents reported to police over this period was accounted for by the Themis communities.

Alcohol-related hospital admissions remained relatively stable between July 2006 and January 2007.

There has been a significant increase in the reporting of alcohol-related domestic violence across the NTER communities, from 585 incidents in 2006-07 to 756 incidents in 2007-08. This may be a function of increased police numbers and the alcohol bans. In the Themis communities, the number of alcohol-related domestic violence incidents rose from 51 to 98 over the same period. In other words, around 27% of the overall increase in reported domestic violence incidents related to alcohol across the NTER communities was accounted for by the Themis communities.

Table 4.1.1. Alcohol, Drug, Domestic Violence and Substances Related Investigations – NTER Communities

	Alcohol related	DV & Alcohol related	Drug related	DV related	Substance Abuse related
2006-07	1458	585	57	971	193
2007-08	2287	756	131	986	234

Source: NT Police Submission to the NTER Review Board, August 2008

⁷ A confirmed incident is one which after police investigation is determined by the NT police to be an actual incident. Of course whether these incidents result in a prosecution will depend on whether charges are pressed and the level of evidence.

GBMs report 'no change' in alcohol use for 58% of communities⁸ and a decrease in alcohol consumption for one-quarter (24%) of communities. The relatively large number of communities reporting no change in alcohol consumption is also influenced by community members continuing to drink near the community. GBMs report that in 54% of communities, people are drinking near the community but outside the NTER areas. In communities where GBMs report drinking outside the community, GBMs report that this type of alcohol consumption has increased in 37% of these communities

Domestic violence

The level of domestic violence reported to police across the NTER communities appears to have remained broadly unchanged at a high level (1556 incidents in 2006-07 and 1742 in 2007-08). In the 18 Themis communities, the level of reported domestic violence incidents increased significantly, from 161 in 2006-07 to 352 in 2007-08, a 119% increase.

Confirmed breaches of Domestic Violence Orders remained the same between 2006-07 and 2007-08.

Table 4.1.2. Confirmed Breaches of Domestic Violence Orders – NTER Communities

Confirmed	2006-07	2007-08
Breach - DVO	135	135
Breach - other order/s	36	37
Total	171	172

Source: NT Police Submission to the NTER Review Board, August 2008

NT Department of Justice data records 86 actual convictions for breach of a restraining order in 2006-07 and 88 convictions in 2007-08 across the NTER communities.

Assault and personal harm

Excluding assaults related to or against children, and assaults that are domestic violence-related, the number of assault incidents reported to police across the NTER communities rose, from 112 in 2006-07 to 154 in 2007-08 (Table 4.1.3). The number of aggravated assaults fell from 246 to 234 over the same period.

There are significant increases in almost all categories.

Points to note are:

- The significant increase in reports of self harm and mental illness
- The significant increase in reports of deaths⁹

⁸ It is worth noting that some communities had alcohol management plans in place prior to the NTER.

⁹ This is not indicative of an increase in actual deaths, rather the presence of police in communities means matters where a death certificate is signed are now coming to the attention of Police.

Table 4.1.3. Personal Harm reported to police – NTER Communities

Personal Harm reports	2006-07	2007-08
Armed Person	71	99
Assault	112	154
Assault – Aggravated	246	234
Assault – Indecent	13	31
Assault - Sexual	54	57
Attempt Suicide / Self Harm	109	165
Behaviour - Indecent	3	13
Death	11	94
Death - Human Remains - Non Suspicious	72	
Mentally Ill Person	69	106
Missing Person	32	40
Grand Total	792	993

Source: NT Police Submission to the NTER Review Board, August 2008

Interestingly, it appears that there were fewer hospital separations for assault in 2007-08 than in 2006-07 for all injury categories considered as resulting from assault or interpersonal violence (Table 4.1.4 below).

Table 4.1.4. Number of Hospital Separations for People for Injury Resulting from Assault or Interpersonal Violence and who are Residents of a Prescribed Area or Community¹⁰

Diagnosis	2006-07	2007-08
Intentional self-harm	71	51
Assault	645	548
Event of undetermined intent	8	5
Total Unique Separations	634	532

Source: NTG data, August 2008

The number of assaults across the NTER communities that were lodged in court for hearing fell, from 547 in 2006-07 to 455 in 2007-08. This is a lagging indicator as it takes some time for matters to go to court.

It is difficult to reach definitive conclusions on the incidence of violence in communities based on police data as the level of reporting has probably increased, particularly in the Themis communities. All these increases may be as a result of the increased number of police in these communities and the imposition of alcohol bans, rather than a rise in actual rates of incidence particularly in the case of domestic violence.

¹⁰ Count of inpatient separations where ICD 10 code is:

X60-X84 Intentional self-harm

X85-Y09 Assault

Y10-Y34 Event of undetermined intent

For a large proportion of communities (45%), GBMs believe that the level of violence has remained unchanged since their arrival in the community. On the other hand, for 39% of communities, GBMs perceive a decrease in violence. An increase in violence has been reported by GBMs in 7% of communities. Where GBMs perceive a decrease in violence they attribute this to increased police presence and reduced access to alcohol.

4.2 Reduction of child abuse

Child protection data are not available for the NTER communities. However, data are available for Indigenous children across the whole NT.

In 2006-07, Indigenous children in the NT were four times as likely as other children to be the subject of a substantiation of a notification of child abuse or neglect. In addition, the rate of substantiation of a notification for Indigenous children aged 0-16 in the NT rose from 13.7 per 1000 children in 2004-5, to 16.8 per 1000 children in 2006-07. Substantiations for Indigenous children in the NT were most likely to reflect physical and emotional abuse (both 30.1% in 2006-07), followed by neglect (29.9%). Sexual abuse accounted for 9.9% of substantiations for Indigenous children in the NT in 2006-07.

The number of notifications, investigations and substantiations of child abuse and neglect in the NT for 2007-08 are not currently available by Indigenous status.

Sexual assault

Indigenous Australians are over-represented in the NT data on sexual assault. They account for 61% of all lodgements in court for hearing in 2007-08 (69% in 2006-07) regarding sexual assaults despite only accounting for around 32% of the NT population. Most of these alleged offences are committed by Indigenous Australians living in the major population centres of the NT and not in the NTER communities

NT police data shows the number of sexual offences detected in 2006-07 and 2007-08 across the NTER communities. There were 155 offences recorded in 2006-07 but only 91 in 2007-08 (Table 4.2.1 below). Without further analysis it is not possible to explain this change.

In 2006-07, there were 34 lodgements in court for hearing for sexual assault which occurred in NTER communities. This number fell to 20 in 2007-08.

The number of sexual offences committed against children in the NTER communities fell, from 60 in 2006-07 to 34 in 2007-08. The number of people arrested or summonsed for sexual abuse offences committed against Indigenous children across the NTER communities fell from 39 in 2006-07 to 26 in 2007-08.

Across the NTER communities, there were nine convictions for child sexual abuse in 2006-07 and eight in 2007-08. These data are likely to understate the actual level of abuse and as a result, it would be misleading to view these data in isolation¹¹.

Table 4.2.1 Total offences – NTER Communities

Offence	2006-07		2007-08	
	Non Indigenous	Indigenous	Non Indigenous	Indigenous
Assault A Person Indecently	1	2	1	3
Sexual Intercourse Without Consent		86	1	54
Commit Act Of Gross Indecency				2
Attempt Sexual Intercourse With A Person		6		1
Maintain Sexual Relationship With Child		6		1
Sexual Intercourse Mentally Ill Person		1		
Assault - Indecent Child U/16		1		1
Adult Attempt Sex Intercourse Child U/16				2
Adult Attempt Sex Intercourse Child U/16				1
Unlawful Sexual Intercourse Female U/16		1		
Maintain Sexual Relationship With Child		6		1
Indecent Dealings With Child Under 16yo		11		1
Expose Child To Indecent Act		10		
Expose A Child To Indecent Material		2		
Attempt Procure Child U/16 For Sex		1		2
Agg Sex/Relationship With Child U/16		1		
Agg Sex/Relationship Child U/16		1		
Sex Intercourse - Close Family Member				6
Indecent Dealing With Child Under 10				3
Gross Indecent Act On Male Under 14			3	
Commit Indecent Act On Child U/16				1
Act Of Gross Indecency - Female 14				1
Sexual Intercourse With Child U/16		25		12
Commit Act Gross Indecency Child U/16		1		
Total	1	155	5	91

Source: NT Police Submission to the NTER Review Board, August 2008

Note: Shaded areas represent adults, non-shaded represent children.

¹¹ pg6 ACSSA Briefing No 4 September 2004, Australian Institute for Family Studies

The incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in children under 12 has sometimes been used as an indicator of the extent of child abuse in the population. Where STIs are present in children under-12 this may be symptomatic of sexual abuse¹². Across the NTER communities, there were 12 notifications of STIs in children under-12 in 2006-07 and 13 in 2007-08. It is not possible from these data alone to draw any conclusions about changes in the incidence of child sexual abuse as most child sexual abuse does not involve the transmission of STIs. In addition, the numbers are affected by the prevalence of STIs in the population which in turn is associated with things like access to primary health care services. The Little Children are Sacred Report looked at changes in the number of STIs diagnosed in Aboriginals aged under 12 from 2000 to 2005 across the NT as a whole. The report noted that that no real trend in increased notifications was evident over that period.

There are many more incidents for of STIs for older children but care is required in interpreting these data, as the transmission of STIs for older children may be reflective of consensual sexual activity between children.

Child abuse

Issues of child welfare go well beyond sexual abuse, indeed, sexual abuse is a subset of behaviours that can have a lasting negative effect on children's future. It has been argued that neglect is a particularly damaging type of child maltreatment. There is evidence that child neglect is a more common issue¹³ than sexual assault in the NTER communities. This is confirmed by NT police data.

The data below should be treated with some caution as they are based on the assessment of police – child protection authorities may reach a different conclusion. Having said that, the increase in the incidence of reported child abuse may be a function of additional police under the NTER.

There has been a significant increase in the number of reports collectively referred to as 'child abuse' made to police from across the NTER communities since the NTER commenced. Most relate to concerns for child welfare, from 69 in 2006-07 to 210 in 2007-08. There has been a significant increase in the reported incidence of abuse relating to child welfare in 2007-08. The category child welfare relates to issues that would be generally be considered to be child neglect.

The outcome of police investigations into child abuse reports/complaints are detailed in Table 4.2.2 below. In 2007-08, 96% or 192 of the 210 matters referred to police were verified.

¹² ACSSA Briefing No 4 September 2004, Australian Institute for Family Studies. It is widely accepted that sexual assault and child abuse are under-reported crimes. Research by the Australian Institute of Criminology provides varied reasons why victims do not report to police (Australian Institute of Criminology, Women's experience of male violence: findings from Australian component of Violence against women survey, IVAWS, Canberra, <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/56/index.html>). These difficulties are compounded for Aboriginal people because of factors such as complex extended family and community networks; geographic isolation and community wide mistrust of the service system (NSW Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce, 2006). It is therefore considered that the incidence of under-reporting in Aboriginal communities is likely to than in non-Aboriginal communities

¹³ Nettie Flaherty and Chris Goddard, Child neglect and the Little Children are Sacred Report, Children Australia, Volume 33, Number 1, 2008

The total number of confirmed incidences of child abuse¹⁴ in the NTER communities rose, from 66 in 2006-07 to 192 in 2007-08. The 18 Themis communities accounted for around 35% of the increase in the number of child abuse reports made to police from 2006-07 to 2007-08.

The vast bulk of these confirmed reports across the NTER communities were accounted for by the category 'child welfare' (80% in 2007-08). The category 'child welfare' relates to issues that would generally be considered to be child neglect. There has been a significant increase in the confirmed incidence of abuse relating to child welfare across the NTER communities, from 63 confirmed incidents in 2006-07 to 154 in 2007-08.

Table 4.2.2 Outcomes of Police Investigations – NTER Communities

Outcome of investigation	2006-07	2007-08
Child Abuse Material	2	
Child Welfare	63	154
Child Welfare - Pregnancy	1	10
Child Welfare - STI		20
Prohibited Material (Prescribed Area)		7
Unclassified Adult Material		1
Total	66	192

Source: NT Police Submission to the NTER Review Board, August 2008

4.3 Night Patrols

Attorney General's Department (AGD) received funding in 2007-08 to extend existing NT night patrol services already funded through the Prevention, Diversion, Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice (PDRR) Program into the 50 new Indigenous communities identified by the NTER. AGD applied a regional administration approach to match the proposed NT local government areas expected to commence on 1 July 2008.

To implement this measure, AGD funded organisations to establish the services in communities within their local government region. The funded organisations are responsible for community consultation, night patrol staff recruitment and training and establishment and operation of each night patrol.

Recruitment and retention of 200 staff (ie 4 in each of the 50 new communities) in remote and rural Australia is challenging. AGD identified this risk in the new policy proposal and in the implementation strategy endorsed by the NTER Operations Centre. AGD has been working with the service providers delivering night patrol services to mitigate this risk and maximise night patrol staff recruitment.

¹⁴ This includes, child abuse material, child welfare, child welfare – pregnancy, child welfare STI prohibited material, and unclassified adult material

AGD continues to monitor the status of night patrols across the NT, and reports the status weekly in the NTER Situation Report (collated by FaHCSIA). The following is a summary of the progress in establishing night patrols in the 73 NTER communities. The Department is on track to have all night patrols active by October 2008, assuming all vehicles are delivered by September 2008 and recruitment/training continues as expected:

- By mid - March 2008 - all funding agreements with service providers signed.
- By end June 2008 - 31 active night patrols / 42 communities in consultation phase - recruitment and training continuing - vehicles on order but many not expected to be delivered until Sept 2008
- By end July 2008 - 45 active night patrols / 28 communities in consultation phase
- By 22 August 2008 - 51 active night patrols / 22 communities in consultation phase

Detailed data against performance indicators are at Appendix 1, Table D.

On 25 October 2007, the NTER Operations Centre endorsed the AGD implementation strategy for the implementation of night patrols in the NTER communities. Negotiations with the NTG to develop funding agreements commenced immediately after the Ops Centre endorsed the approach.

Funding agreements with MacDonnell Shire and Central Desert Shire were signed prior to the end of December 2007. This resulted in AGD funding night patrols in 40 of the 73 NTER communities. Of these 23 were funded prior to the NTER and 17 were newly funded.

Funding agreements with remaining Shires were expected to be signed by mid-March 2008. The highest priority was given to a funding agreement with Victoria Daly Shire Council, this was signed on 24 January 2008.

AGD met all NTER Project Implementation Plan milestones either on, or ahead of schedule.

GBMs report that night patrols are now present in 58% of the communities they service. In 54% of these communities (where a night patrol operates), GBMs note that patrols operate 7 nights per week, in 34% of communities night patrols operate for part of the week and in 10% of these communities the patrol was yet to commence operation. GBMs feel that the service is adequate in 61% of the communities with a night patrol, i.e. it is sufficiently resourced relative to the size of the community and works well with the community, police and state imposed restrictions. Where the service is considered inadequate, GBMs cite limitations in staff numbers, training, management, authority and accountability. Having senior and well respected members of the community on the night patrol is also seen as an effective measure.

4.4 Legal Services

Matters Handled By AGD Funded Legal Service Providers

During the August to 31 October 2007 period, AGD held discussions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS), and Community Legal Centres (CLCs) in the NT and the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission (NTLAC) on the expected impact of demand for legal services as a result of the NTER. Services identified an expected increase in demand for advice and assistance in child protection, criminal law prosecutions, family law related services and welfare and consumer rights issues.

The Attorney-General's Department received additional funding of \$2 million for services to provide assistance in these matters. The first funds were released to services in October 2007.

Between November 2007 and 31 January 2008, services were heavily involved in the process of filling the additional staff positions.

The anticipated increase in prosecution of child sex offences has not occurred. In the later months of 2007-08, services report increases in prosecutions of teenagers for under-age consensual sex and increased prosecutions by police of traffic offence matters.

Alcohol management issues have been a significant area of demand for additional services. ATSILS have put significant resources into explaining to clients how the laws in regard to alcohol management have changed and that the police have additional powers which are not open to being challenged.

Services have reported increasing demand for legal assistance in the area of welfare rights issues as a result of the new income management arrangements.

4.5 Pornography Restrictions

The possession of pornography within prescribed areas, and for supplying pornography in and to those areas became an offence on 14 September 2007. These offences were introduced through changes to the Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 (the Classification Act) contained in the Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation Amendment (Northern Territory Emergency Response and Other Measures) Act 2007. The NT police enforce the measures.

AGD received additional funding of \$15k in 2007-08 from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHSCIA) to fund the production of education materials and travel by AGD staff to support a 'pornography' education campaign. AGD provided a 'train the trainer' package on the new laws to the NT Police College.

During October 2007, and at the request of the NT Government, an officer from Community Liaison Scheme run by AGD visited 44 locations including roadhouses, petrol stations, video stores and restricted premises (ie. adult shops) in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Darwin and Nhulunbuy to assess compliance with classification laws. Meetings were also held with the NT Police and Australian Crime Commission National Intelligence Task Force (NITF).

In February 2008, Community Liaison Scheme officers from AGD delivered three presentations (in Alice Springs and Darwin) to NT Police, the Australian Crime Commission, FaHCSIA and the AFP on the National Classification Scheme including the NTER laws. In February 2008, AGD drafted a seizure notice for NT Police to use in seizing material under section 107 of the Classification Act.

Following the workshops held in August 2007, AGD provided information and participated in the development of an education campaign. The campaign was launched in Darwin on 3 March 2008.

The Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation Amendments (Emergency Response Consolidation) Bill 2008 proposes to introduce new provisions to allow prohibited material to be transported through prescribed areas.

4.6 Alcohol Restrictions

From the enactment of the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007, a clear aim has been to stop the flow of alcohol into those areas prescribed under the legislation, to assist in providing a safer environment for children.

Performance indicators currently incorporated in the plan are indicators relevant to NTG responsibilities (Appendix 1, Table D). In relation to FaHCSIA's role, specific indicators are being developed for reporting in 2008-09.

The responsibility for the installation of signage detailing the restrictions associated with prescribed areas (alcohol and pornography) and the penalties that applied is currently with FaHCSIA Northern Territory State Office (NTSO). This has required obtaining expert mapping services, liaising with the contractor and sub-contractors, providing expert Global Positioning System (GPS) training to ensure the installation requirements were met. Consultation with community and town camp members has led to amendments in the wording and size of signs. Signage has been erected throughout the prescribed areas, including town camps in the NT, though not all installations were completed by 30 June 2008.

Ongoing policy advice and information was provided to Australian and NT government agencies and tourism representative bodies to assist with monitoring and enforcement of the alcohol provisions of the NTNER Act and its alignment with the NT Liquor Act. A MoU was signed with the NT Government for the ongoing employment of the new Licensing Inspectors and maintenance of prescribed area signage.

Information was disseminated in NTER communities and to tourism and liquor licensees in the form of flyers and brochures, outlining the general alcohol restrictions, penalties and offences, and the restrictions in relation to takeaway sales.

Radio advertisements, in English and language, were broadcast on radio stations across the NT (including indigenous stations) outlining the alcohol and pornography provisions under the Act.

Over the period November to 31 January 2008, several applications for declarations in relation to alcohol (including event-specific requests) were progressed to the Minister for decision.

Liaison occurred with liquor permit committees and other stakeholders in prescribed areas, following completion of the Review of Liquor Permits Licensed Premises in Prescribed Areas that was undertaken by the NTG.

Three key demonstration projects were funded and managed by FaHCSIA to assist with the implementation of the alcohol measures. One project, for research relating to alcohol issues, potential solutions and solution leaders was completed in three Barkly communities. This research will provide evidence to inform future policy development in relation to alcohol and alcohol management. The other projects focused on strengthening working relations between the NT Police and Licensing Inspectors on monitoring and enforcing liquor licenses operating in and around the NTER communities.

GBM survey

GBMs report 'no change' in alcohol use for 58% of communities, a decrease in consumption for one-quarter (24%) of communities and an increase in consumption for 14%. The main reason given for reduced consumption was the new licensing provisions.

Alcohol Management Plans

Data for this section was provided by the Northern Territory Government

Alcohol Management Plans that are based on supply reduction measures in the form of an alcohol permit system are in place in Groote Eylandt (implemented in July 2005) and Nhulunbuy (implemented in April 2008).

Alcohol Management Plans that are based on 'harm minimisation' strategies are being implemented in: Alice Springs (implemented in October 2006), Tennant Creek (implemented in August 2008), Palmerston (implemented in February 2008) and Katherine (implemented in April 2007). The principle 'harm minimisation' includes demand reduction, supply reduction and harm reduction strategies.

Alcohol Management Plans that are currently being developed, and are also based on the principle of harm minimisation, include:

- Jabiru
- Darwin
- Borroloola
- Timber Creek

One GBM specifically mentioned that the Community Alcohol Management Plan, commenced earlier in 2008, has been an effective measure against excessive takeaway alcohol sales and related violence, stating: “Accident and Emergency admissions related to alcohol have fallen 50%, and cell nights have fallen 90%. It is fantastic! People are sleeping too.”

4.7 Audit of Publicly Funded Computers

The first audit of publicly funded computers in the Northern Territory took place on 2 June 2008. 264 organisations were contacted in relation to the 2 June 2008 audit.

These organisations were required to complete the audit, or provide a declaration that the computers referred to are not ordinarily situated within a NTER area. The responses were due within 14 days, however due to the remote location of many organisations there were delays in many cases.

Thirty-six reports were returned by 30 June 2008. As at the reporting date, responses were still being received and collated.

Issues have been identified related to: compliance costs to organisations and the unique factors impacting on organisations in remote locations, the wide range and versions of computer operating systems, varied computer environments and the varying levels of computer literacy within affected remote communities.

5. Housing and Land Reform

Safe and healthy living conditions are dependant on adequate housing as an essential building block for improved living standards for Indigenous children. This includes better and more flexible housing options, potable water, and the safe removal of sewerage waste products.

Land tenure reform has been pursued to facilitate individual home ownership, business development and effective management of public housing in remote areas. The many different forms of land tenure, including communal ownership, can affect the ability of Indigenous people to leverage their land assets, or buy their own home.

The acquisition of leases (known as five-year leases) over major communities continue until five years from the commencement of the NTNER Act, regardless of the date on which they commence. All 64 leases over specified communities are now in force. Twenty-six of the leases commenced on 18 August 2007 while the balance of 38 leases commenced on 17 February 2008.

The leases were acquired to facilitate security of tenure and access for the repair of buildings and infrastructure. This provides a platform to support implementation of other measures and initiatives.

The boundaries of the leases were initially set by the legislation using mechanisms including aerial photography and larger areas than necessary were acquired.

Cadastral (boundary) surveys of five-year leased communities have been conducted and are expected to lead to reductions in the lease boundaries so that they more closely match the actual area of the township.

5.1 Housing and Land

New Houses and Major Upgrades

The NTER did not include measures for new housing. The following housing projects fall outside the scope of the NTER, but have been included in this report.

Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP)

The Australian Government, in partnership with the NT Government, is delivering a substantial investment in capital works in the 73 NTER communities and urban living areas throughout the NT.

This program will provide:

- around 750 new houses including new subdivisions
- over 250 new houses to replace houses to be demolished
- over 2,500 housing upgrades
- essential infrastructure to support new houses
- improvements to living conditions in town camps

The Program is currently in the final stages of procurement for contractors to undertake the capital works, and initial works are expected to commence in some communities from October 2008.

Wudapuli / Nama

Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) has been contracted to service new blocks and deliver 20 houses at Wudapuli and Nama. As a result of the significant increase in housing, there has also been a need to upgrade essential services, including power, sewerage, water supplies, roads and stormwater management systems. A MoU has been signed with the NTG to deliver the infrastructure upgrades.

The new houses and infrastructure works were scheduled for completion in August 2008.

Nguiu

The Australian Government is building 25 new houses at Nguiu under the 99 year Nguiu Township lease agreement signed in August 2007. Thirteen houses will be provided by IBA and twelve houses will be built by Sitzler, who were awarded the work following a competitive tender process. Block servicing and site preparation has commenced and house construction was scheduled to commence in July 2008.

All 25 houses are currently scheduled for completion by January 2009.

Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP)

Through an existing bilateral agreement between the Australian and NT Governments, construction was completed on 77 new houses in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory between August 2007 and June 2008.

Territory Housing

The NTG has provided new indicators for Indigenous housing for this monitoring report. At this time, there is limited data against each indicator as the Australian and NTG are in the final stages of a partnership approach to housing in the NT. Data will be collected as the new housing model is implemented from October 2008. Finalisation of the Remote Tenancy Management Operational plan will see this data permanently collected.

The new indicators are detailed in Appendix 1, Table E. Data will be collected during the implementation of the new housing framework and may include:

- Increased percentage in the number of community houses per community
 - In 2006-07 the number of community houses was 3955. In 2007-08 the number increased by 1% to 3991. The figures provided are pre NTER period and based on reports from Indigenous Community Housing Organisations.
 - Community housing numbers will be confirmed during the 'roll-out' of Remote Housing Tenancy Models and implementation of the SIHIP will see an increase of community houses.
- Average rent per dwelling, per community
 - Figures against this indicator are not NTER specific and cover rent collection overall from the organisation responsible for the NTER community. Specific NTER rent data are not available at this stage.
 - Actual average rent per dwelling to be confirmed and finalised during finalisation of the Tenancy Management Operational Plan and Remote Public Housing Management Framework.
- Total funding provided for Remote Management Services.
 - There was no change in the funding provided for Housing Management Grant Funding or Housing Maintenance Grant Funding between 2006-07 and 2007-08.
 - Expenditure levels for Remote Management Services in 2008-09 will be increased.

5.2 Property and Tenancy Management

In the period to 30 June 2008, the Australian Government negotiated with Territory Housing on the implementation of new property and tenancy management arrangements. Territory Housing has agreed in principle to deliver property and tenancy management services to Indigenous communities on behalf of the Australian Government.

As part of the new arrangement, Territory Housing will adapt its mainstream public housing model to ensure that houses in remote communities are managed in a similar way to other public housing properties. This will include policies to ensure that:

- waiting lists are based on need
- there are effective maintenance and upkeep procedures
- there are tenancy support services to ensure that tenants understand their rights and responsibilities and are supported to meet their obligations, including paying rent and maintaining their home.

Considerable effort has gone into ensuring that there has been adequate community consultation to ease the transition to the new arrangements. This has included the delivery of a community consultation and engagement campaign that started in January 2008 and resulted in community engagement visits to 61 communities by 30 June 2008.

There was no consistent performance indicator data available for tenancy management at 30 June 2008, as the new arrangements did not take effect until 1 July 2008. However, it is anticipated that data will become available from 1 October 2008 as the new arrangements are implemented. See also the comments under Section 5.1.

5.3 Community Clean Up (CCU)

In the period to 30 June 2008, the CCU Program has been implemented in 68 remote communities. 'Make safe' and minor vital repairs have been completed, subject to independent audit results currently being finalised.

The CCU Program is divided in to five components:

- Component 1 Make Safe Works for Community Areas and Houses;
- Component 2 Rubbish Removal, Cleaning and Painting of Houses (jointly managed with DEEWR);
- Component 3 Detailed Property Assessment;
- Component 4 Property Repair Works; and
- Component 5 Completion Report including consolidated Property Condition Reports.

Components 1 and 3 were jointly implemented at the first visit. The property condition assessments and 'make safe' repairs were completed by members of the FaHCSIA Project Management Panel and Trade Contractor Panel. If there were dangerous electrical and plumbing/gas fitting situations where the work could not be fixed quickly, the electrician and plumber/gas-fitter used a lock out / tag out process to prevent use of that system until the Trade Contractor House Repair Team was mobilised.

Minor vital repairs were derived from the National Indigenous Housing Guide under 'Ensure' items and involve repairs are up to \$5000 in labour and \$5000 in materials per property. Repairs undertaken as part of the CCU Program relate to:

- Building - Fumigation
- Building – Dwelling Security (External Doors, Locks & Windows)
- Building – Dwelling Structure (including Roof)
- Building – Ceiling
- Electrical - Switches & Lights
- Plumbing – Water Storage & Waste Water Drainage/Removal
- Plumbing - Taps
- Plumbing – Internal Sanitary

Component 2 was jointly managed between DEEWR and FaHCSIA. FaHCSIA provided the painting supervisors and DEEWR provided the participants and materials. The participants came from Work for the Dole (WfD) and STEPERS programs. 920 participants were involved with the painting of the properties.

Community properties were also assessed for materials that contain asbestos which will assist the SIHIP Program with future major works.

Job opportunities, skills development and training are central to the Government's commitment to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The CCU Program has been able to deliver this on a number of levels:

- employment of an Indigenous person as part of the CCU team
- Opening up apprenticeship opportunities through contracted trade teams
- CCU contractors have been encouraged to hire indigenous apprentices as part of their trade teams. CCU contractors have responded well to this, understanding the need for local employment.

In summary:

- 3,046 properties have been surveyed and have had 'make safe' repairs completed; of which, 2,995 properties required minor vital repairs and have been completed
- Asbestos surveys of community properties have concluded in 67 communities.
- Thirty-five Indigenous people were employed as part of a CCU team. To date, seven trade apprentices have been given the opportunity to receive formal trade qualifications.

Most GBMs report that the community is involved in the general clean up at various levels. Specific types of clean-up activities mentioned by GBMs include: rubbish removal, cleaning and painting of houses, building fencing, water blasting, removing dirt piles, painting rocks, improving gardens and keeping yards clean, repairing public facilities (basketball courts and football fields), planting trees, tidying public gathering points and painting public buildings.

6. Welfare Reform and Employment

Income management (IM) is central to improving the situation of Indigenous families and children in the NT by ensuring people's welfare payments are directed to individual and families' priority needs. IM funds cannot be used to purchase alcohol, tobacco, pornography or gambling products. In parallel with income management, better food supply is being supported through the licensing of community stores to improve communities' access to fresh and affordable food.

Increasing levels of employment, self-employment and business development helps Indigenous Australians gain and manage assets and participate in the broader economy. Having a job or running a small business can empower an individual and build their local community.

The number of income support recipients in NTER communities (including town camps and outstations) rose from 18,692 on 21 June 2007 to 20,370 on 27 June 2008. Income support payments include Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment, Partner Allowance, Widow Allowance, Mature Age Allowance and Sickness Allowance (Table 6.1 below). The number of Newstart recipients rose from 6,735 to 7,654 over this period. In other words the rise in the number of Newstart recipients accounted for around 55% of the overall increase. Much of the increase in the number of income support recipients over this period reflects the transition of former CDEP participants onto income support.

Table 6.1. Income support recipients

Payment type	June 2007	June 2008
Newstart Allowance	6735	7654
Parenting Payment Partnered	2253	2456
Parenting Payment Single	2487	2398
Widow Allowance	76	78
Youth Allowance (other)	931	1188
Youth Allowance (student)	92	89
Age Pension	2477	2561
Carer Payment	227	329
Disability Support Pension	2843	3477
Other ¹⁵	571	140
Total	18692	20370

Source: DEEWR data, August 2008

¹⁵ Other includes: ABSTUDY, Austudy, Mature Age Allowance, Partner Allowance, Sickness Allowance, Youth Allowance (Apprentice), Bereavement Allowance, Special benefit, Wife Pension (Age) and Wife Pension (DSP)

6.1 Income Management

Income Management (IM) is a central measure in the NTER. It directs half or whole of certain income support and family assistance payments, towards priority needs and helps ensure that welfare payments that are intended to help children, do in fact benefit children. Income management directs welfare payments away from substance abuse and other antisocial behaviours and increases the financial security of people raising children, or who have difficulties managing their personal budget.

Every community member who receives a relevant welfare payment, receives half of their payment in the usual way, while the other half is reserved to pay for priority needs, such as food, clothing, housing, transport and utilities. Certain payments, such as the Baby Bonus, are 100 per cent income managed. Each person's, family's or house's priority needs are identified during face-to-face interviews conducted by Centrelink staff in each community prior to the commencement of IM.

At 30 June 2008, IM was in place in 53 communities and associated outstations, and eight town camp regions with a total of 13,305 people on IM. It is expected that IM will be implemented in the remaining NTER communities by mid-October 2008.

Analysis

Detailed data against performance indicators are at Appendix 1, Table F.

The number of communities participating in IM has more than doubled, from 25 communities at 31 January 2008, to 52 communities and seven town camp regions at 18 June 2008¹⁶. From 31 January 2008 to 13 June 2008, over 7400 Centrelink customers living in the NTER communities commenced IM, increasing the total number to 13,305.

Auto-income managed customers are customers who have not yet met with Centrelink staff, or contacted Centrelink's Indigenous Call Centre, to discuss their priority needs and establish regular deductions to meet these needs, e.g. a customer may choose to have the bulk of their IM funds allocated to the community store on a fortnightly basis. At 18 July 2008, only 6% of all IM customers were auto-income managed. This is a significant improvement from the 13% of auto-income managed customers on 25 January 2008, noting that the number of auto-income managed customers peaks in the period immediately after IM commences in a community, but decreases fairly rapidly as people engage with Centrelink in the weeks following IM commencement.

¹⁶ Different date reported for community, associated outstations and town camp numbers to customer numbers is due to differences in reporting timeframes.

During the previous reporting period, the most common income support payments received by IM customers were Newstart Allowance (48%) and Parenting Payments (20%). Little has changed in the current reporting period with Newstart Allowance (46%) and Parenting Payments (25%) still the most common income support payments received by IM customers. The portion of IM customers receiving Family Tax Benefit in addition to income support increased, from 30% in the first reporting period to 37% during the latest reporting period.

As at 13 June 2008, the majority of income managed funds were spent on food (74 per cent). Housing expenses and clothing purchases accounted for most of the remainder. One percent of income managed funds was disbursed to customers who received exemptions from income management. The remaining funds were yet to be allocated, though it is emerging as common practice for customers to keep a small amount of their IM funds unallocated to save for one-off purchases such as furniture and whitegoods.

At 13 June 2008, there was \$2.9 million of unallocated IM funds. This is a decrease, as a proportion of all income managed funds, from 20.2% at 31 January 2008, to 9.8% at 13 June 2008.

While the perceptions of GBMs may not match those of the communities themselves, GBMs report that 53% of communities have a positive attitude to IM, while 38% of communities are believed to hold mixed views. In contrast, GBMs report that 9% of communities have a negative attitude to IM.

6.2 Enhanced food security

The operation of community stores and the quality of food they provide is critical to the Australian Government's efforts to improve the lives of Indigenous people in remote communities of the NT.

There are long-standing concerns about the management of stores and the quality of food available in some remote stores. The community stores licensing process addresses these concerns by setting standards for the quality and quantity of groceries and consumer items, and store governance and practices. Community stores are those that are primarily concerned with the provision of grocery items and drinks. Stores that are solely takeaway food shops or fast food shops are not licensed in this process.

There were a total of 62 licensed stores and an additional three communities that have access to 'Bush Order' packages at 30 June 2008¹⁷. The Bush Order service provides food order deliveries to individuals in communities where there is no store or alternative for food security.

¹⁷ The 'Bush Orders' concept was developed where food security for a community was identified as an urgent priority and particularly where it was assessed that there was limited capacity to operate, or license, an effectively functioning community store. The concepts were developed as a temporary measure until local food security can be provided.

It is necessary to note that not all communities have a licensed store and some communities have multiple stores. While there is always a food security option at the time IM commences, additional food security options may subsequently become available in that community, e.g. stores may request to be assessed for a license after IM commencement. Additionally, some stores may be licensed in communities where IM has not yet commenced.

It is anticipated that all currently suitable food outlets will have been assessed under the stores licensing regime by the end of September 2008.

Licences are issued¹⁸ to community store operators who:

- have a reasonable quality, quantity and range¹⁹ of groceries and consumer items, including healthy food and drinks, available and promoted at the store;
- can demonstrate the capacity to participate in the requirements of the income management regime; and
- have sound²⁰ financial structures, retail and governance practices.

Stores that do not meet acceptable standards are either not licensed until changes are made, or are issued with limited licences that require them to make improvements within a specified time period.

According to GBMs, most food groups/ staples appear to be commonly available in community stores (fresh produce and over-the-counter medications available less often). In 68% of communities, GBMs report that frozen vegetables, frozen meat and poultry, and baby food are always available in community stores. GBMs stated that fresh fruit and vegetables are available at least several days per week in 83% of communities, with fresh vegetables being always available in 45% of communities.

For a large majority of communities, GBMs agree that children have sufficient food to eat, however, in 14% of communities GBMs perceive that this is not the case. GBMs report that this is due to a range of contributory factors including the cost of food. A number of GBMs cited the SNP and income management as having a positive impact on children.

6.3 Community Development Employment Program (CDEP)

The decision to transition CDEP providers and their participants was announced on 23 July 2007. CDEP providers were transitioned on a community by community basis in-line with the schedule for the introduction of IM. The removal of RAEs was a pre-cursor to the transition, see Sections 6.5 and 6.6 for further detail.

18 Store licences are issued as a store specific licence; a store specific licence with management under an Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) Consultancy Agreement; or as operating under corporate licences issued to Outback Stores or ALPA.

19 Reasonable quality, quantity and range is such that all food (perishable and non-perishable) is well inside the before used by date; store maintains recommended 200 food items across the full range of food groups (at a minimum); and the stocks are sufficient to keep the community in food until well after the next delivery.

20 Sound may be defined as having clear accounting practices and systems, including visibility of expenses and income and no potential evidence of fraud and/ or bad governance practices.

On 23 July 2007, there were approximately 8,000 CDEP participants²¹ in the NT.

On 10 December 2007, the Government announced a moratorium on the transitioning of CDEP providers and their participants²². By this time, 16 CDEP providers and over 2,000 participants had been transitioned. Around 62% of these individuals were on income support on 27 June 2008. Most of this group had moved onto Newstart (64%). It is important to note, however, that while most CDEP participants in the transition group live in the NTER communities, some of them may not.

Participants were moved into jobs, other employment services, or transition activities after transition day. To maintain continuity of service provision, transition activities included activities in the community previously delivered by the CDEP Provider, such as rubbish collection and road maintenance. During the year, the number of participants that were undertaking transition activities decreased as the funding for real jobs was made available and employment service programs were established or expanded.

On 30 April 2008, the Government announced that from 1 July 2008, CDEP would be reintroduced into the previously transitioned communities²³. As at 30 June 2008, there were approximately 5,500 CDEP participants in the NT, including 242 transition participants.

As at 30 June 2008, 63% of the CDEP participants that were active with a transitioned provider between 23 July 2007 and that providers transition day, exited from the CDEP Manager system for: routine normal program reasons (for example; voluntary departure, ineligibility, unapproved absences); 23% exited for employment reasons; 5% exited to other programs; and 9% remained on transition activities (Appendix 1, Table F).

According to the GBM Survey, feedback in relation to the abolition of CDEP is predominantly negative. GBMs report that, as well as having negative effects on the individuals who were working under the CDEP, the abolition has negatively affected the community overall.

6.4 Business Development

CDEP transition to viable businesses

Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) was tasked to assist NT Indigenous organisations which manage CDEP projects to examine the scope to turn CDEP projects into viable businesses.

21 The CDEP measure was for the whole of the Northern Territory as the providers covered both prescribed and non-prescribed areas

22 The last scheduled transition day before the moratorium surrounding further CDEP transitions of 10 December 2007, was 16 November 2007. Since that date there have been no more providers transitioned

23 The CDEP program operates with exits and commencements, so a provider can exit individuals, thereby maintaining a core base of participants against an allocated number of places. Transition Providers could not commence people after their transition day until May 2008 (after the 30 April announcement of re-instatement, and the non actually did), and therefore as individuals exited, they could not be replaced and therefore contributed to the overall decline in NT numbers.

IBA visited 49 NT CDEP Providers to identify activities that had the potential to become stand alone viable businesses.

The work undertaken through this program also identified some common issues that impact on business development in each community to varying degrees. These barriers include:

- Poor literacy and numeracy
- Lack of understanding of business operations
- Economic participation disincentives due to income received by community members from land use royalties
- Local government uncertainties; difficult or uncertain land tenure processes
- Concerns about private ownership of community services or resources
- Difficulty adopting appropriate hours of business and obtaining or affording appropriate assets.

These barriers will require the engagement of a range of government organisations to identify both short term and sustainable long term solutions.

Program Outcomes

Forty-nine CDEP Providers across the NTER communities were visited between September and November 2007 by project teams consisting of IBA employees and representatives of IBA's service provider organisations. Subsequent analysis of the reports produced from these visits was undertaken to identify the "high potential" activities for transition to commercially viable businesses

Some 330 existing activities were rigorously assessed across the 73 communities, and of these, 53 existing activities and 21 opportunities (activities which were not already underway but which could be created in those communities) were identified as having high potential as viable, standalone businesses, potentially resulting in full time employment of 221 individuals.

The most promising businesses included market gardens, vehicle repair workshops, road construction and repair, house repair and maintenance, and tourism related businesses. Business support was subsequently provided to either transition these activities to small businesses, or to further investigate the feasibility of the identified opportunities.

Over the course of 2007-08, 27 communities were provided with assistance to start one or more businesses under this measure, 68 separate activities were assisted to become standalone, viable businesses, and by 30 June 2008, one Indigenous business had commenced.

Given the intensive nature of the support needed to develop new viable small businesses in remote communities, it was ultimately not possible to achieve a higher number of operating businesses by 30 June 2008. However, IBA will continue to offer business support to many of the potential new businesses through IBA's normal enterprise development operations, and it is likely that more Indigenous businesses will successfully commence in future months.

6.5 Increase Participation for Income Support Recipients

Background

DEEWR's main aims during the first year of the NTER included moving job seekers from CDEP into jobs, increasing job seeker participation and provision of work-ready skills (including literacy and numeracy).

As at 30 June 2007, job seekers in 61 of the 73 NTER communities in NTER were deemed under the Social Security Act 1991 to have a Remote Area Exemption (RAE) as it was considered that these job seekers did not have access to a local labour market, or labour market services. Job seekers with an RAE were not required to satisfy participation requirements. RAEs were removed from job seekers in NTER communities between 30 June 2007 and 12 November 2007. More detail on the removal of RAEs is contained in Section 6.6.

As part of the RAE removal process, job seekers were assessed by Centrelink, placed on the correct income support payment, assessed by a Job Capacity Assessor (JCA) where applicable and referred to the appropriate employment services. CDEP participants who transitioned to income support were similarly assessed.

Working Age Payments

The numbers of recipients of working age payments increased between June 2007 and January 2008. There was a slight decrease between February and June 2008. These changes can be attributed to seasonal factors.

The net effect can be attributed to:

- Commencement on income support.
- Transition from CDEP to income support with the closure of the CDEP program in some locations.
- Movement off income support due to employment or for other reasons.
- Commencement in CDEP where CDEP continued to operate.
- Change of income support type, including as a result of interviews with Centrelink associated with lifting of RAEs.
- Relocation from NTER community.

Analysis of Indicator

The same suite of employment services that are available in urban and regional locations are now being delivered in NTER communities. These services are delivered under both mainstream and bundled service contracts.

Solid progress has been made towards increasing the participation of job seekers, in light of the limited abilities and experience of many job seekers and practicalities associated with the delivery of mainstream employment services and programs in very remote areas. Key outcomes (as at 30 June 2008) include:

- RAEs removed from job seekers in 86 communities (including all NTER communities) and 654 associated outstations in the NT;

- 1,300 jobs supporting the delivery of government services have been funded from the NT Jobs Package, with the majority filled and more to come in 2008-09
- in addition, there has been 982 placements brokered with the assistance of Job Network providers;
- there have been 261 Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEP) and 924 Structured Training and Employment Projects Employment and Related Services (STEP ERS) commencements – both programs help to assist employers to provide ongoing employment for Indigenous Australians, particularly in the private sector;
- there are 8,119 job seekers receiving Job Network services;
- there has been 80 Work for the Dole (WfD) activities delivered across the NTER. Of these, 55 have been delivered to 42 of the NTER communities, 23 to town camps and two to outstations;
- There have been a total of 1,373 WfD commencements;
- there has been 1,189 job seekers engaged in specialist programs including Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), Personal Support Program (PSP), Disability Employment Network (DEN) and Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET);
- there has been 809 referrals to Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP); and
- 138 people have commenced in Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL).

6.6 Accelerated removal of Remote Area Exemptions (RAEs)

Analysis

Job Capacity Assessment (JCA) providers in the NTER teams undertook 5,830 JCAs in remote Indigenous communities (commencing 19 July 2007 and finishing 23 November 2007) to support the removal of RAEs.

Forty-seven Job Capacity Assessors from three government JCA provider organisations (Centrelink, CRS Australia, HSA Group) and two private JCA provider organisations (Advanced Personnel Management, and MAXNetWork Pty Ltd) undertook JCAs as part of the NTER teams.

Eighty-six per cent of JCAs recommended a referral to a DEEWR funded employment service. Of the JCAs that recommended a referral, 48.3% were to Job Network, 7.5% to the Disability Employment Network (DEN), 10.2% to Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), 30.6% to the Personal Support Program (PSP), and 3.5% to Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) services. Detailed data against performance indicators are at Appendix 1, Table F.

While the overall rate of recommend referrals was similar to the national figures for the JCA program (86% versus 83.4%), the proportions going to DEN and VRS were about half the national figure, and the proportions going to PSP and JPET were almost double the national figure. Recommended referrals to Job Network was about 10 percentage points higher than the national figure for 2007-08.

Referrals to Job Capacity Account services were much lower than estimated. It was estimated that there would be 108 referrals to Job Capacity Account services whereas only 14 referrals were made overall.

2,310 JCAs were completed during the period 19 July to 31 October 2007. This was greater than the total number estimated by DEEWR for the entire sub-measure.

The original estimate had been that 1,080 people in indigenous communities subject to the accelerated removal of their RAE would require a JCA, i.e. 20% of 5,400.

1,769 JCAs were completed during the period November 2007 to January 2008.

JCAs that had been triggered by the removal of RAEs in remote Indigenous communities continued February to 30 June 2008. 1,751 JCAs were completed for people living in the relevant indigenous communities.

A large number of JCAs were conducted using only Centrelink file papers ("file assessments").

The large number of file assessments (approximately 40%) undertaken during the NTER reflected the difficulties that Centrelink had in locating and/or contacting customers.

Just over half (53%) of GBMs answered that the community has been affected by the removal of remote area exemptions. The affect of the removal of remote area exemptions on the community largely relates to the on-flow of changes this brings to the administration of welfare payments and eligibility. GBMs report a wide range of effects on the community caused by these changes.

6.7 Work for the Dole (WfD)

Background and Achievements

Participants in Work for the Dole (WfD) in the NTER are required to attend continually during their period of unemployment, rather than six months out of 12 months for non-NTER job seekers. Participants on WfD tend to enter and exit the program throughout the duration of an activity, for example due to medical exemptions, cultural and sorry business, short-term employment or education and training.

As at 21 June 2007, there were a total of seven activities being delivered to NTER communities, town camps and outstations. There were a total of 98 commencements across these activities.

Since the NTER commenced, there have been a total of 80 activities delivered across the NTER. Of these, 55 have been delivered to 42 of the NTER communities, 23 to town camps, and two to outstations. There have been a total of 1,373 commencements against these activities.

In April 2008, there were up to 51 activities being delivered in the NTER communities, related outstations and town camps.

The maximum number of WfD activities running concurrently in the NTER communities, related outstations and town camps was 52. The initial focus of the WfD activities was to assist with community cleanup and repair. Activities currently being developed focus on providing quality work experience and enhancing local communities.

Adjustments Made to Increase Performance

The increased cost of delivering WfD remote communities under the NTER, particularly the increased costs associated with engaging supervisors; developing provider infrastructure, and the cost of delivering services and materials to remote communities, significantly impacted on the delivery of the program. To address this, DEEWR used two key measures to recompense providers; the allocation of additional places which provided an increase in service fees and total Work Experience Funding provided; and additional funding for reasonable unexpected costs arising out of the provision of Community Work Coordinator (CWC) services in NTER locations.

Contract Managers are monitoring provider performance and emphasising that, particularly now that funding for ancillary payments and additional places has been approved, the volume and range of WfD activities must increase. Community Employment Brokers (CEB) are assisting in identifying new WfD activities and encouraging job seekers to attend activities.

Training programs to recruit and train local Indigenous job seekers as WfD supervisors are also being undertaken and expanded.

Policy changes with an impact on achievement

Under the NTER framework, CDEP, as an alternate employment program, was phased out and job seekers with an Activity Test Requirement were referred to a range of employment programs with WfD being the default program. The moratorium on CDEP ceased the phasing out of the program and had a direct impact on the intended delivery of WfD.

The Community Clean-Up (CCU) program initially relied on WfD as a major delivery mechanism. This changed with Structured Training and Employment Projects Employment and Related Services (STEP ERS) identified as a more appropriate employment program to support the CCU. WfD activities may still include clean up elements.

Other issues with an impact on performance

Service providers experienced difficulties in their capacity to deliver with short lead up times to set up activities, increased workloads and costs of delivering WfD activities under the NTER. This was due to a significantly increased expectation placed upon them to roll out services quickly to geographically disparate remote areas. A lack of accommodation for providers and their staff presented a significant hurdle to servicing job seekers in many communities for several months.

Lack of participation by job seekers has been an ongoing issue. Attendance rates for WfD activities delivered under the NTER are around 30%. Nationally, attendance is around 60%. Work for the Dole providers and CEBs continue to work with individual job seekers and communities to encourage greater participation in activities.

Attendance is also encouraged by making activities more attractive to participants and relevant to their communities as well as through the compliance system. Community consultation on the nature of the activity is important in creating community ownership and can be seen in those communities where attendance has been comparatively high. There is anecdotal evidence to indicate that compliance action has had little impact as an incentive to ongoing participation in employment programs in the NT.

6.8 Non-Payment Periods (NPP)

What is a NPP?

Under the current compliance arrangements, an eight week non-payment period (NPP) is applied by Centrelink in instances where a job seeker has committed three participation failures within a 12 month period or has committed a serious failure, without a reasonable excuse. Participation failures include: failure to attend Centrelink or employment service provider appointments, failure to attend job interviews or failure to participate in an employment related activity or program e.g. WfD.

Serious failures include: refusing an offer of suitable employment, becoming voluntarily unemployed and then claiming income support payment, and failure to commence, participate in or complete Full-Time WfD.

Job seekers are regularly made aware of their activity test or participation requirements and the consequences of failing to meet those requirements, including the potential of a NPP resulting from repeated participation failures or a serious failure. This message is reinforced by employment service providers and Centrelink, both prior to submitting a Participation Report (PR) and in the course of investigating the alleged non-compliance.

This data only consists of PRs raised by employment service providers – it does not include Centrelink-initiated failures. Work is progressing to develop a standardised data source which will include both provider and Centrelink-initiated failures.

Analysis of indicator

Between 1 August 2007 and 27 June 2008, 99 eight-week Non-Payment Periods (NPPs) have been applied to 91 job seekers. The job seekers represented in this data were residing in one of the NTER communities, outstations and town camps at the time the NPP was applied.

The number of NPPs in reporting period has decreased proportionately as the year has progressed. The proportion of NPPs as a percentage of applied NTER Participation Reports (PRs) has also decreased over time. The analysis also identified that the proportion of NPPs as a percentage of all applied PRs is lower for NTER communities than nationally. For example during the period 1 November 2007 to 31 January 2008, 10% of PRs applied nationally resulted in a NPP, whereas it was only 4% for NTER communities.

The number of PRs raised by employment service providers for job seekers living in NTER communities increased steadily until April 2008. A slight decline in the number of PRs raised in recent months may be attributed to a general shift in the way in which the compliance framework is applied, particularly in relation to vulnerable job seekers or job seekers with multiple barriers to participation. This shift echoes the Government's commitment to ensuring that compliance penalties are not imposed in instances where the job seeker had a reasonable excuse, or where the job seeker's capacity to comply with their activity test or participation requirements is in doubt.

It is important to note that the electronic records of all job seekers in NTER communities who have had a RAEs lifted within the past 12 months have been flagged with a Vulnerability Indicator to recognise the changing expectations and obligations placed upon job seekers living in remote areas as they transition to the new active participation arrangements. As these job seekers deal with the lifting of their RAEs and the changes that entails, they may also be grappling with IM and a low level of functioning ability in relation to written or spoken English.

The application of the Vulnerability Indicator ensures that employment service providers and Centrelink carefully consider the job seeker's individual circumstances, including any barriers the job seeker may have which have impacted on their capacity to comply with their obligations, before deciding whether to submit a PR, or apply a participation failure or serious failure.

6.9 Jobs Package

Analysis of indicator

The Northern Territory Jobs package provided funding for 1,670 jobs in Australian Government-funded service delivery and around 400 jobs in local government service delivery across the Northern Territory. These figures were based on initial agency estimates about the number of sustainable jobs that could be created out of CDEP. The target date for creating jobs was 30 June 2008, however, jobs across all tiers have continued to be created past June 2008 as government agencies negotiated funding arrangements with the new shire councils.

The policy objective of the NT Jobs Package was to create non-CDEP jobs for CDEP participants who had been engaged in activities supporting the delivery of services for government. In many cases, CDEP participants were on hosted employment arrangements with a service provider. Once jobs were funded, many participants were automatically appointed to the jobs. In other cases, there were more CDEP participants engaged in activities than jobs funded and in these situations a recruitment process may have been initiated by the service provider to fill jobs.

The NT Jobs Package provided funding of more than \$90 million (net) over three years to create jobs in Australian Government service delivery. Within this funding, there is a matched funding arrangement of up to \$10 million per year over three years between the Federal and Northern Territory Governments to create jobs in local government service delivery.

Now that job audits have been completed, it is clear that there were over-estimates in some sectors (municipal services) and under-estimates in other (education, community care). It is now expected that 1,536 service delivery jobs will be created. Of those 1,536 positions, 1,119 were expected to be in place by 30 June 2008. This expectation was exceeded as 1,300 jobs were funded by 30 June 2008. This figure is made up of 1,147 jobs supporting Federal Government service delivery and 153 jobs supporting NT and local government service delivery. Funded jobs are to be filled by Indigenous Australians who were previously supporting government service delivery through the CDEP program.

6.10 Job Placements

Data notes

The data for job placements in NTER communities, outstations and town camps is a measure of job positions filled by Job Network members, some of which may be CDEP transitioned jobs.

The data are measures of successful job placements made by Job Network members for job seekers (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) who resided in an NTER community at the time of the job referral. It is not a complete measure of job placements that have occurred in these communities, nor does it capture all placements into positions that have been created as part of the NT Jobs Package - only those where a Job Network member has played a role in the job brokerage process.

DEEWR's administrative dataset does not record whether a job placement is part of the NT Jobs Package. However, by looking at other recorded information such as employer name and job description, an assessment has been made whether a job placement made by Job Network is also likely to be part of the Jobs Package.

The data using the derived Jobs Package indicator shows:

- First quarter job placement activity averaged 67 placements per month.
- A spike in October and November is primarily due to Job Package positions being filled.
- December and January reflect usual seasonal lows over Christmas and New Year break.
- Job Placements have continued to increase from February onwards, despite the declining number of Job Package positions being filled.

The June 2008 data are incomplete as Job Network providers have up to 28 days to record a successful job placement in the system.

Excluding June, performance for 'Non Job Package' placements has increased by 57% in the last quarter of this financial year over the first.

6.11 Off-Benefit Outcomes

Data Notes

The analysis of trends in 'off benefit outcomes' uses longitudinal data to examine changes in income support receipt for people who have been in receipt of the main activity tested allowances, Newstart Allowance (NSA) and Youth Allowance – other (YAL), at some time during each of the four periods. An exit from income support occurs when a recipient advises they no longer require income support, they transfer to another benefit, or have their benefit cancelled due to a failure to meet allowance eligibility requirements.

For the purpose of this analysis, a maximum of one exit is counted for an allowee in an analysis period. As allowees who have an exit may subsequently return to income support, the analysis is based on the first exit reason in the period. Allowees can be on NSA or YAL and participating in CDEP. Not all exits will be due to the closure of CDEP. The closure of CDEP did not automatically result in job seeker's exit from income support (NSA/YAL). Some job seekers would have moved from CDEP wages to a "real job" and others would have commenced on income support as a result of the closure of CDEP. It should also be noted that not all recipients were in communities where CDEP was transitioned (only 36% of exits were in transitioned communities).

As this analysis is based on the allowee's community at either the start of the period or at the start of receipt of an allowance, whichever is later, the exit from income support may have occurred at another community.

As comparative data are not available for similar periods in 2006-07 and earlier, it is not possible to determine any seasonal changes in exit rates that usually occur across these periods. As such, care needs to be exercised in attributing the changes in number of exits to the NTER initiatives.

Analysis of indicator

Examination of exits over the period 1 August 2007 - 30 June 2008 shows that over a third of allowees (3,915) had at least one exit from income support in that period. Summing exits across the first three periods suggests that over 4,379 allowees had an exit, however as the analysis only allows for one exit per person in the period, at least 450 people have had multiple exits. Counting multiple exits would have overstated the effectiveness of the program as the analysis does not allow for multiple periods of income support or consider the duration of exits from income support.

It should be noted that, overall, communities which had been transitioned from CDEP showed a significant increase in exits (from 14% to 20% of allowees) between the first and second periods while for other communities the exit rate remained relatively stable (11% and 10%). Overall, 44% of allowees from transitioned communities had an exit from income support compared with 31% of those from non-transitioned communities.

Just over 3% (160) of exits from NSA/YAL were to employment.

As more than 70% of exits are for unspecified reasons it is not possible to make a reliable assessment of the impact of the NTER initiatives on employment outcomes.

Although the exits to employment increased between the first and second periods, they fell slightly in the third period, particularly, in transitioned communities. Overall, for transitioned communities 6% of exits were to employment compared with 1% for non-transitioned communities. The exits to employment are likely to be understated, as many allowees fail to notify Centrelink when they no longer require income support (this generally accounts for over half of all exits reported). Previous research has shown that for job seekers, in general, up to 75% of such exits result from commencing employment. It is not possible to estimate the equivalent figure for these communities at this time.

The number of transfers to other benefit types e.g. NSA to DSP or NSA to Age pension also increased in the period in non-transitioned communities suggesting that allowees may have been re-assessed and moved on to more appropriate forms of income support in those communities.

6.12 Increase Literacy and Numeracy

Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP)

Funding was provided to the LLNP in 2007–08 financial year for an additional 600 training places as part of the NTER. Take up of LLNP services in the NT was slower than expected though. For both performance indicators, year to date referrals to the LLNP have exceeded the 600 training places provided for.

As at 27 June 2008, a total of 21 clients are in training in the NT Top End where the roll-out has been more promising. In Central Australia, the program experienced very high 'no show' rates (over 60%) – that is clients failing to attend pre-training assessments – and poor attendance at scheduled classes. The Provider has therefore decided not to extend its contract for Central Desert delivery in 2008-09. Alternate service provision is being pursued. Factors contributing to the above difficulties include:

- the logistics of co-ordinating all relevant stakeholders including referral agencies, LLNP Provider and the community;
- the logistics of delivering training in remote communities;
- difficulties in recruiting suitable teachers/trainers;
- the multiple disadvantages experienced by the client group;
- the lack of understanding of the potential benefits associated with undertaking this type of training; and
- the lack of competition in the training market in this specific and specialised market segment.

DEEWR has worked proactively and extensively with Providers to improve outcomes and to address the above issues including:

- revising the messaging to clients that LLNP assists them with employment opportunities and also improves life skills;
- running a number of workshops in NT with Contract Managers and CEBs to ensure all Providers fully understand the importance of LLNP and the referral and participation processes each is expected to apply; and

- revisiting the training and assessment delivery options.

Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL)

The majority of NTER WELL projects have been operating for only a few months and as a result it is only possible to report on commencements. Ongoing participation and completions will be reportable on receipt of six and 12 month reports.

Analysis of indicator & achievements to date

138 Indigenous people in NTER communities have commenced workplace literacy and numeracy training under NTER WELL projects. This is just short of the target of 161. A contract for an additional project is about to be signed. This project would have meant DEEWR achieved the target stipulated but it was not finalised before the end of the 2007-08 financial year.

Three Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are delivering training for 5 employers across the following industry areas: business; mechanics; building and construction; forestry; land and sea management; hospitality and tourism; mining; and the entertainment industry.

Funded projects are located in the following NTER communities:

- Maxwells Creek (Participants are from Pirlangimpi, Nguiu, and Milikapiti on the Tiwi Islands)
- Ramingining, Galiwinku, Minyerri, Borroloola and Nhulunbuy

Several other projects still in negotiation have arisen due to raised awareness of the WELL program as a result of promotional visits undertaken as part of the NTER. These will be funded under the mainstream WELL program in 2008/09.

Progress

To date, three projects have reached the 3-month reporting stage and one report has been received. Conversations with providers of the other two projects indicate that projects are running on time, excluding minor delays that have occurred due to the weather, sorry business, transport availability and other external factors.

Other issues with an impact on performance

Given the additional activity in NTER communities, it is often difficult for RTOs to find appropriate accommodation and facilities for training delivery. This has not precluded training but has hindered the options for training delivery.

Additional training activity in the NT, as well as the requirement for RTOs to undertake remote training delivery, has meant that there are limited choices of RTO available to prospective employers.

Other factors contributing to delayed project commencements included:

- the identification of eligible individuals began slowly as it took some time for Indigenous clients coming off CDEP to be placed in employment (an eligibility criterion for WELL);

- WELL is conducted on a project basis and there was some delay until a 'critical mass' of potential clients in specific geographic areas was achieved thereby allowing targeting of project negotiations with employers;
- WELL projects require considerable lead time while negotiations with RTOs, employers, and project management bodies; and preparation of proposals and review/acceptance by the Territory Advisory Committee are undertaken; and
- There is a shortage of literacy and numeracy training providers in the NT and there was a substantial lead time in securing an organisation to conduct the training.

Policy changes and program direction

As a result of the policy change to extend eligibility for WELL participation to Australian Apprentices, 15 Australian Apprentices in an NTER community are now participating in WELL training.

Delivery of WELL training has overlapped, and been conducted concurrently, with STEP in at least one project.

6.13 Childcare

During 2007-08, 176 indigenous people have been placed in employment in child care positions converted under the NT Jobs Package.

Work has also progressed to establish eight new crèches funded under Year 1 of the NTER. The first of these crèches opened on 11 August 2008 at Lajamanu. Three upgrades to existing crèches have been completed with a further six upgrades under development. To support the new crèches, a workforce training measure will be implemented during 2008-09 through the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Education (in conjunction with Charles Darwin University). It is envisaged that up to 30 staff may be employed when the new crèches open during the 2008-2009 year.

Barriers affecting the establishment of new crèches included: access to communities, wet season, community business, lack of construction and building expertise of departmental child care program management staff, and lack of opportunity for consultation with communities. Also encouraging was the interest and engagement by the NT Department of Education. Several crèches are being established close to school grounds.

Government Business Managers have been supportive of early childhood services in most communities and provide a point of entry when discussions were held in communities, or contractors visited to finalise quotations for works.

6.14 Community Employment Brokers (CEBs)

Analysis of Indicator

Improved recruitment procedures, coupled with a dedicated DEEWR National Office team, saw the number of CEBs more than double in the period December 2007 to April 2008. On 7 December 2007, there were 16 operational CEBs. As at 8 May 2008, there were 45 operational CEBs (an increase of more than double).

Despite recruitment of CEBs proving more difficult than expected (as a direct result of the broader labour market conditions affecting the country and specifically the NT), DEEWR was on track to meet its milestone of 60 by June 2008. Labour market conditions that most likely affect GBM recruitment also affects CEBs.

There are many job opportunities across the country which can make it difficult to attract and/or retain good workers in isolated areas of the NT. In addition, no secure funding agreement leading up to the May 2008 Budget announcement provided a disincentive to prospective applicants.

Budget 2008-09 provides for 31 CEBs post 1-July 2008. DEEWR anticipates that there will be 33 in the field from this date. Ongoing recruitment activity will be conducted by the DEEWR NT Office to maintain numbers. The Department does not foresee any immediate threat to achieving this goal.

7. Coordination

7.1 Government Business Managers (GBMs) survey

Coordination of Commonwealth agencies

The aspects of the whole of government approach which are reported as working primarily relate to improvements in the level of communication between agencies, and the coordination of services.

Specifically, GBMs report that communication between the GBM and the ICC, the CEO, Centrelink, and the CEB are working well. Other aspects highlighted as working include activities under the petrol sniffing strategy, youth programs, income management and the community store, community housing, health checks and night patrols.

GBMs in the community can allow a process to build trust and relationships with locals and through that they are able to explain the Governments aim and purpose.

GBMs report that government visits place a burden on 90% of communities (mild burden - 21%; moderate – 39%; and heavy – 30%). Some GBMs feel this burden can't be reduced; others believe coordination could be improved.

While GBMs indicated that better coordination of visits, and less visits by officials overall is needed, they frequently highlight the Visitor Officer Notification system as one aspect of the whole of government approach which is working well when utilised.

Those aspects of the whole of government coordination of services that are reportedly not working relate to barriers to communication and information sharing by some agencies with other agencies and the GBMs. Better communication and information sharing could potentially assist effectiveness of service provision.

Governance within community

GBMs report some level of community involvement in community management for the majority of communities. Community members are considered to be highly involved in around 17% of communities.

Those GBMs who answered that the community has a high level involvement in their own management refer to a number of characteristics evident in both community leaders and the community as a whole.

These characteristics include:

- strong leadership
- leaders are educated and well informed
- leaders who display good governance
- the involvement of women in leadership roles
- leaders with a high degree of literacy and numeracy
- being in a smaller community was also mentioned as facilitating community management.
- There are a number of GBMs who state a concern about the effect that changes to the Local Government arrangements will have on community involvement, particularly in regards to the community becoming less engaged in local decision making, feeling they will have little say in what goes on.

Community understanding of the measures

GBMs rate community understanding of the NTER aims and why the NTER was launched as good or excellent in a large majority of communities (more than 70%). This includes understanding of alcohol bans, community safety, income management, child health checks, clean ups and pornography bans.

7.2 Community Engagement

Community engagement workshops

The Indigenous Leadership and Engagement Group (ILEG) in FaHCSIA developed and delivered a community engagement approach for the NTER resulting in engagement with and support for development of 300 Indigenous people from targeted communities. The approach was to use a series of workshops for key people from the NT communities to promote understanding of the NTER and the implementation process and encourage communities to engage effectively with government representatives. ILEG was able to establish contact with key community stakeholders through its network of past leadership development course participants, and so set up regional workshops to cover the original 73 identified communities.

The community engagement workshops were successful in promoting understanding of Government plans and their implementation among Indigenous communities, and in encouraging communities to engage effectively in the implementation (for example, by articulating their communities' priorities across the measures to be available via the NTER). Workshop facilitators conducted a qualitative assessment of success in achieving the community engagement aims.

The community engagement workshops were most effective when discussions took place before NTER measures were implemented in communities. ILEG consequently developed and delivered the workshops to 170 people, covering the 73 NTER communities between July and November 2007. A further six cluster workshops which included a leadership training component were delivered to another 130 participants between January and June 2008.

The community engagement approach, as assessed by the workshop organisers/facilitators, was that all stakeholders gained a better understanding of what was planned by the Government and how it could affect them. The reaction to the workshops was generally positive, although a few participants remained pessimistic. The value of engaging actively with Government was well understood.

Analysis

Ideal sequencing would have seen the engagement workshop as the first phase of roll-out for each community.

The approach of the current Government is a greater emphasis in consultation with Indigenous people.

No formal evaluation process was possible.

7.3 Commonwealth Ombudsman Support for the NTER

The Ombudsman was provided funding in 2007 to investigate complaints arising from the NTER and provide an objective channel of communication for Indigenous communities. As at 30 June, the Ombudsman's office had received 489 complaints, of those, 340 are/have been investigated.

The trend analyses of complaints by reporting period were:

August to 31 October 2007

- Lack of understanding and information regarding the rollout of income management (IM)
- Service delivery
- Not enough information in language
- Lack of understanding of the allocations and the difference between IM funds and discretionary funds
- CDEP transition payments

November to 31 January 2008

- Not enough information in language
- Lack of understanding of the allocations and the difference between IM funds and discretionary funds
- CDEP transition payments
- Community Stores, unsure of how to use money allocated to the store, balances not being given
- No prices on goods at the stores
- Store licensing

February to 30 June 2008

- GBM's - communities unsure of the GBM's role and what powers they have. Complaints received that GBM's do not introduce themselves and don't explain their role.

By 30 June 2008 the Commonwealth Ombudsman had visited 39 communities and town camps investigating complaints related to the NTER and held complaint clinics in Alice Springs and Wadeye.

Target

The target is to visit 73 NTER communities after the commencement of IM.