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Department of Indigenous Affairs
Government of Western Australia

ENQUIRIES:

OUR REF:

YOUR REF: 7439V1

Dr Brian Gordon
Principal Research Officer
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Dr Gordon

Submission to the Inquiry into Collaborative Approaches in Government

I am pleased to provide a submission to this Inquiry on behalf of the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA). I have responded to the Terms of Reference by discussing the importance of collaborative approaches in the administration of Indigenous Affairs, DIA's role in facilitating such approaches, and some current and historical examples of our successes in this regard.

I have also provided contextual information about the collaborative structures currently in place at state, national and regional levels, along with a brief discussion of the factors influencing the success of collaborative approaches.

For further information about the Department's submission, please contact

Yours sincerely

31 March 2008
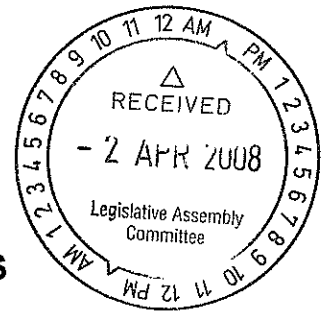
DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

SUBMISSION TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES IN GOVERNMENT

Need for collaborative approaches in Indigenous affairs

There is widespread acceptance of the principle that success in overcoming Indigenous advantage depends, in large part, on:

- collaboration and coordination between government agencies (at and between all levels of government) in planning and delivering services to Indigenous people; and
- governments working in partnership with Indigenous people to develop policies and plan service delivery that will impact on them.

Indigenous people are the most disadvantaged group in Australian society. The root causes of this disadvantage are complex and interwoven. Improving Aboriginal people's health, for example, requires not only better access to health services, delivered in culturally appropriate ways, but also improvements in the availability and standard of housing, and in community safety, levels of substance abuse, and economic engagement.

A lack of coordination and collaboration within governments and between them has led in some cases to overlap or duplication in services delivery, but more often to gaps in services to Aboriginal communities, and hence poor outcomes.

Governments need to use a 'whole-of-government' approach to address the interconnected problems facing Indigenous people. This means public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve common goals and an integrated government response to particular issues.

Whole-of-government approaches can be formal or informal, and can focus on policy development, program management and service delivery. All of the three levels of federal, state/territory and local governments in Australia have important roles to play in the improvement of service delivery to Indigenous communities.

Indigenous organisations, especially those in remote communities, have an important role in delivering services on behalf of governments. These organisations are often under-funded and lack the corporate governance capacity to manage their services and be accountable for government grants. They typically struggle with a huge administrative burden as they attempt to manage multiple contracts or funding agreements with multiple state and

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Commonwealth agencies while, at the same time, trying to secure further funding beyond the current contracts, which are often short term (yearly).

Working in partnership with Indigenous people

It has been widely acknowledged that meaningful participation by Indigenous people in the development and delivery of services intended for their benefit is crucial to the success of such services.

At present, in Western Australia, there is no formal state-wide consultative or engagement mechanism to enlist the collaboration of Indigenous people in the formulation of policy to overcome Indigenous disadvantage.

The formal mechanism for governments to engage with Aboriginal people in Western Australia finished with the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 2005.

The Western Australian Government is concerned that consultation takes place with Aboriginal leaders or community members who are truly representative of their community's interests.

Individual state government agencies have their own groups of Indigenous people with whom they consult on agency-specific issues. For example, the Western Australian Department of the Attorney General has Aboriginal consultative committees with which it consults about the development of Aboriginal Justice Plans. The Department of Indigenous Affairs consults with the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee (ACMC) for advice on Aboriginal heritage matters. Regional office staff of state government departments also consult with local Aboriginal people about local need and service delivery matters.

The Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act provides for an Aboriginal Advisory Council (AAC). However, this role was fulfilled by the ATSIC State Council (incorporating the Regional Council Chairs and Zone Commissioners) until its abolition in 2005. In the absence of a central engagement structure, the Western Australian Government Minister for Indigenous Affairs has recently decided to re-establish an AAC. The AAC will build on the current structures and processes adopted by the Government for consulting and collaborating with Aboriginal people. The membership of the proposed AAC is yet to be determined.

Collaborative structures and processes – Western Australian Government

The WA **Cabinet Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs (CSCIA)** was announced in August 2007 to provide leadership and accountability of service delivery to government in Indigenous Affairs. Its membership includes:

- The Minister for Indigenous Affairs (Chair)
- The Treasurer;
- The Minister for Child Protection;
- The Minister for Police and Emergency Services; and
- The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

The responsibilities of the Committee include:
- establishing 'whole of government' policy priorities for Indigenous Affairs to inform future investment in Indigenous programs and initiatives;
- setting key result areas, strategic outcomes and targets for overcoming Indigenous disadvantage;
- establishing accountability mechanisms to monitor outcomes; and
- monitoring and reporting on progress to Cabinet.

The **Directors General Group on Indigenous Affairs** (DGGIA) was established in June 2007 to coordinate and address immediate, medium and longer-term policy and resource issues affecting service delivery to Indigenous people in WA.

Membership includes Directors General of the following agencies (with others invited as required):
- Department of Indigenous Affairs (Chair)
- Health Department of WA
- Department of Child Protection
- Department for Communities
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Corrective Services
- Drug and Alcohol Office
- WA Police
- Department of Industry and Resources
- Department of Racing Gaming and Liquor
- Department of the Attorney General
- Department of Housing and Works
- Department of Local Government and Regional Development.

Currently the DGGIA focuses on:
- delivering on the strategic directions of the Cabinet Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs;
- implementation of the Gordon Action Plan to eliminate or reduce family violence and improve child protection in Indigenous communities;
- developing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating the "Safer Communities Safer Children" plan aimed at addressing child abuse in remote Indigenous communities. (A copy of the plan is at **Attachment 1**);

- coordinating the State Government's response to the State Coroner's report on Aboriginal deaths in the Kimberley; and
- managing the State's responsibilities in relation to the Commonwealth-State Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs.

Collaborative structures and processes in Western Australia – State/Commonwealth

The **Council of Australian Governments (COAG)** is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. COAG comprises the Prime Minister (Chair), State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). The then Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers agreed to establish COAG in May 1992, and it first met in December that year. The role of COAG is to initiate, develop and monitor the implementation of policy reforms that are of national significance and which require cooperative action by Australian governments.

At its meeting in November 2000, the Council committed itself to an approach based on partnerships and shared responsibilities with Indigenous communities, programme flexibility, and coordination between government agencies, with a focus on local communities and outcomes. The Council agreed to take a leading role in driving the necessary changes and directed Ministerial Councils to develop action plans, performance reporting strategies and benchmarks. It was noted that the Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSIA) would continue its overarching coordination and performance monitoring roles (see below).

In December 2007, the Council on Australian Governments (COAG) committed to the following targets to reduce Indigenous disadvantage:
- closing the life expectancy gap within a generation;
- halving the mortality gap for children under five within a decade;
- halving the gap in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade; and
- halving unemployment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people within a decade.

The State Government is working closely with the Commonwealth to implement the COAG agenda for Indigenous Affairs which will include a series of specific actions in health, education, affordable housing and water supply, and early childhood development strategies.

The **Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs** is a forum under COAG auspices through which Commonwealth and State and Territory Ministers with responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs can meet to discuss issues of mutual interest and to consider reports on relevant Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Government activities. MCATSIA also includes the President of the Australian Local Government

Association and the chair of the Torres Strait Regional Authority as non-voting participating members and the New Zealand Minister for Maori Development as an observer.

MCATSIA's capacity to enable inter-jurisdictional collaboration is limited to the extent to which it can influence COAG though the provision of advice on issues of national significance. A key example of where MCATSIA has been able to make such a contribution was the development of the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) framework, endorsed by COAG in 2003.

The Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) reporting framework was developed by the Productivity Commission at COAG's request to inform Australian governments about whether policy programs and interventions are achieving positive outcomes for Indigenous people. This will help guide where further work is needed. The framework is evidence-based and provides for regular reporting against key indicators which demonstrate how change is occurring over time. It has produced two reports so far in 2003 and 2007. The State Government (DIA) produced a WA-specific OID report in 2005.

The Chair of MCATSIA alternates between jurisdictions every two years. The Western Australian Minister for Indigenous Affairs is the current MCATSIA Chair. As Director General of DIA, I chair the standing committee of officials that supports MCATSIA. WA retains the Chair for the period 2008 -2010.

Collaborative processes arising from COAG

At its meeting in April 2002, COAG agreed to a trial of a whole-of-government cooperative approach in eight Indigenous communities. The aim of these "COAG trials" was to improve the way governments interact with each other and with communities to deliver more effective responses to the needs of residents. It was anticipated that the lessons learnt from these cooperative approaches would be applicable more broadly.

In June 2004, COAG agreed to a National Framework of Principles for Government Service Delivery to Indigenous Australians. The principles address sharing responsibility, harnessing the mainstream, streamlining service delivery, establishing transparency and accountability, developing a learning framework and focussing on priority areas.

The principles drew on the experience to date of the whole-of-government trials established in 2002, and were intended to provide a common framework between governments and help to build stronger partnerships with Indigenous communities. They also provided a framework to guide bilateral discussions between the Commonwealth and each State and Territory Government. Of specific relevance to the issue of collaboration were the following points under the heading "*Sharing responsibility*":

- Committing to cooperative approaches on policy and service delivery between agencies, at all levels of government and maintaining and strengthening government effort to address Indigenous disadvantage;

- Building partnerships with Indigenous communities and organisations based on shared responsibilities and mutual obligations; and

- Committing to Indigenous participation at all levels and a willingness to engage with representatives, adopting flexible approaches and providing adequate resources to support capacity at the local and regional levels.

From these principles grew the practice of Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) aimed at building strong partnerships with Indigenous communities and between levels of government. The *Shared Responsibility Shared Future* framework was first developed for the eight COAG trials and extended in 2003/2004 to a broader program of SRAs across Australia. This broader program included both SRAs and the development of Regional Partnership Agreements (RPAs).

By late 2006, 190 SRAs had been signed with 147 communities (metropolitan, regional and remote) across Australia[1], of which 33 are in WA. There have been three RPAs signed to date in WA: for Ngaanyatjarra Lands, East Kimberley, and Port Hedland. While the aims of the first focus on broad improvements to service delivery, especially in education, the latter two focus on innovative approaches involving joint action by Indigenous organisations and individuals, industry (particularly the mining industry) and governments to address unacceptably high levels of unemployment.

Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) in 30 locations across Australia have led the Commonwealth's efforts in implementing SRAs and RPAs and have driven and managed the process of development at the local level[2]. DIA has also played a key role in the development and implementation of these agreements by coordinating State Government efforts at central and local levels.

The review of SRA implementation commissioned by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) found that despite many successes, one of the intentions that has been difficult to implement is the delivery of funding. This was partly because the process of finalising the funding agreements was so slow in some cases as to be frustrating effective implementation.

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[1] *Implementation Review of Shared Responsibility Agreements: Don't let's lose another good idea.* Report for FaCSIA prepared by Morgan and Disney, July 2007.
[2] ICCs collocate the various Commonwealth Government agencies with a major role to play in assisting Indigenous communities. From mid 2004 the ICCs took on many of the functions previously undertaken by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and its funding arm, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS).

A further issue in relation to funding was that despite the SRA bringing together a number of sources of funding in flexible ways, the different agencies still required their own specific funding agreements, with the result that multiple funding agreements were attached to each SRA. Rather than reducing "red tape" the SRA process was seen to be actually increasing it.

The review noted that "This finding presents a dilemma for governments. Communities see no problem with comprehensive approaches and conceptualise their issues in this way; governments are the parties having difficulty in managing this complexity and in finding solutions which sit well for communities. A single funding agreement for pooled funding to address complex issues remains a very elusive goal; communities repeatedly asked why this is not being achieved and is so hard to do."[3]

Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs

The Prime Minister and the Premier of Western Australia signed the Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs in July 2006.

The Agreement aims to provide a framework through which the Australian and Western Australian Governments can work cooperatively, and in collaboration with other stakeholders such as local governments, the corporate sector and Indigenous communities, to address Indigenous disadvantage.

Following the abolition of ATSIC, the Australian Government sought to sign bilateral agreements with most States and Territories to help implement its new arrangements for Indigenous affairs. Bilateral agreements are underpinned by COAG's *National Framework of Principles for Government Service Delivery to Indigenous Australians* (see above).

Through this Agreement, both governments aim to improve and streamline services to Indigenous people by having one level of government primarily responsible for delivering a service and, where jurisdictions have overlapping responsibilities, for services to be delivered in accordance with an agreed, coherent approach.

DIA is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Bilateral Agreement for the State and FaHCSIA is the lead agency for the Commonwealth Government. The Governance Charter for the Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs (**Attachment 2**) provides further detail.

Six outcome areas have been identified for collaborative action: law and order and safe places for people; skills, jobs and opportunities; healthy and strong people; sustainable environmental health and infrastructure; land, sea and

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[3] Implementation Review of SRAs - Morgan Disney & Associates July 2007 (pages 36-37)

culture; and strong leadership and governance. To progress actions under each of the outcome areas, six Senior Officer Groups (SOGs) comprising representatives from relevant State and Commonwealth agencies have been established.

Overseeing these SOGs is an Intergovernmental Indigenous Affairs Group co-chaired by the Director General of Indigenous Affairs and the WA State Manager of the FaHCSIA, and comprising other high-level State and Commonwealth officials. In addition, the State and Commonwealth governments each have their own separate coordination structures for Indigenous affairs in WA. For the State, the Directors General Group on Indigenous Affairs (see above) oversees implementation of the Bilateral Agreement. The Commonwealth has a State Managers Group which performs a similar function. Mechanisms and processes for regional reporting to these coordination structures are also being established.

In some outcome areas, the State agencies involved have found that the Bilateral Agreement has helped them gain a better understanding about each other's activities, and thus to identify gaps and a few instances of potential duplication. In this sense the Bilateral structures have already been useful in coordinating effort within the WA Government. At this stage SOGs are still engaged in formulating action plans, with Commonwealth input, that will guide activity in each outcome area until 2010. This process may lead to State and Commonwealth Budget bids for additional funding.

A mid-term review of the Bilateral Agreement is planned for the second half of 2008. It will focus mainly on assessing the effectiveness of the collaborative process between the two Governments, and engagement with Indigenous people. It will also need to consider the integration of COAG reform initiatives with the work being done through the Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs.

DIA's role in whole-of-government coordination

Despite having a legislated mandate under the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* to coordinate activity in Indigenous affairs across all State Government agencies, historically DIA's authority in this regard has neither been universally recognised nor supported with sufficient resources to perform effectively. Nevertheless, the agency has succeeded in facilitating whole-of-government coordination in a number of significant instances.

When the Aboriginal Affairs Department (AAD) was created in 1995, it was charged with coordinating a whole of government effort to improve Indigenous environmental health and with devolving all service delivery functions to mainstream agencies. Key initiatives which followed include:

- Coordinating environmental health surveys of the environmental health needs of Indigenous communities in 1997 and 2004 (WA is the only State

to have done so), and facilitating a whole-of-government response to the findings of these surveys to improve service delivery for Indigenous communities;

- This included strategic program development leading to the establishment of the Remote Area Essential Services Program (RAESP), the Aboriginal Community Strategic Investment Program (ACSIP), the Town Reserves Regularisation Program, the Town Planning for Aboriginal Communities Program and the Aboriginal and Remote Communities Power Supply Program. All of these were subsequently devolved to mainstream agencies;
- Policy development to establish a framework for the normalisation of essential services to Aboriginal communities, which resulted in:
  1. the Bilateral Agreement on Essential Services (2000);
  2. development of the Statement of Planning Policy 3.2 – "Planning for Aboriginal Communities";
  3. State Government Policy on Outstations (1997);
  4. Memoranda of Understanding with the then Ministry of Housing for the ongoing management and development of the RAESP, ACSIP and town reserve programs; and
  5. a Focus Paper on the Reform of Local Government Services.

The above initiatives were coordinated through two key interagency committees, being the Environmental Health Needs Coordinating Committee and the Aboriginal Community Essential Services Steering Committee. While all initiatives have resulted from the collaborative efforts of a number of State, Commonwealth and local government agencies, DIA has taken a lead role as chair and secretariat for these forums and in driving a reform agenda mandated by the State Government through reports such as the 1994 Social Justice Taskforce and the 1995 Report of the Chief Executive Officers Working Party on Essential Services.

Since devolving direct program and funding responsibility to other State agencies such as DHW and DPI, DIA's role changed to a strategic policy, monitoring and advice role.

Local Area Coordination model

In the late 1990s a new approach was introduced to DIA based on the Local Area Coordination model that had operated successfully in Disability Services. This model mandated the establishment of numerous small offices in town and regional centres throughout the State, staffed by officers whose role it was to coordinate Government services at a local level. At the height of the local area coordination system, the Department had 23 regional offices, many of them staffed by only one person. In line with this new approach, a number of program

areas of the Department were transferred to other agencies; for example the Remote Area Essential Services Program moved to Housing and Works.

In 2001 when the current Government was elected, the then Indigenous Affairs Minister, the Hon Alan Carpenter MLA decided to move away from the local area coordination model in favour of an approach that was more strategic and targeted. It was considered that the local area coordination model had largely failed to improve coordination of service delivery in regional WA, primarily because the small and under-resourced nature of the regional offices generally meant that they operated as 'drop in centres' and staff found themselves focused on small-scale local projects rather than influencing the better provision of primary programs and services. Between 2001 and 2003, 14 regional offices were closed.

In late 2005, the Government commissioned an independent functional review of the Department led by Dr Dawn Casey[4]. Following this review, in August 2007 the Premier announced that DIA would be restructured into two specific areas. One area of the department would deal with the specific statutory roles of land, heritage and culture (including transferring the Office of Native Title to DIA, but not until early in 2009).

The other area of the department would play a lead role in developing Indigenous policy, economic development in particular, and in determining and measuring how strategic outcomes are being met. These changes were intended to "ensure that the department is well placed to drive and lead change through a coherent policy framework that is focused on economic development and social responsibility"[5]. The details of the Department's new structure and resource base are yet to be confirmed.

One of the key tasks for the restructured DIA, in close consultation with Indigenous representatives, will be to develop a comprehensive State plan for Indigenous affairs, incorporating performance measures drawn from the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage framework. Currently the Bilateral Agreement acts as a de facto strategic plan for Indigenous affairs in WA. It is envisaged that the State plan will focus on a whole-of-government collaborative approach aimed at improving social and economic outcomes for Indigenous people.

The ability to measure change in outcomes for Indigenous people relies on access to a comprehensive and up-to-date database of social and economic indicators. The WA Indicator Framework System (WAIFS), initiated and developed by DIA, is an example of effective interagency collaboration and will be an essential tool for DIA's enhanced role in whole-of-government planning, monitoring and evaluation. It is also gaining considerable interest and support

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[4] Dr Dawn Casey, *Report of the Review of the Department of Indigenous Affairs* (April 2007)
[5] Hansard, WA Legislative Assembly, 30 August 2008

nationally, from other States and at the highest level of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). WAIFS is being developed under the auspices of the State Statistical Policy Committee (SPC), chaired by the Department of Treasury and Finance and including DIA representation.

Regional Coordination in Indigenous affairs – DIA's role

DIA has a role at the regional level (in those regions where it has an official presence) in fostering collaborative relationships between State government agencies, as well as Commonwealth and local governments, to improve whole-of-government coordination locally and hence improve services to Indigenous communities. Private industry and non-government organisations may also be involved in regional coordination networks.

Implementation of this coordination role at regional level varies between regions (noting that DIA is represented in only seven of WA's regions, including the metropolitan area). In some cases DIA chairs a local "Regional Managers Forum" of agencies (and local government) with a strong interest in Indigenous affairs. In other cases the DIA representative may be an ordinary member rather than the chair. The effectiveness of these forums depends on various factors including the level of commitment, and work capacity, of individual forum members.

The *Service Mapping and Gap Analysis* (MAGA) program was developed by DIA in 2002 and has been conducted in partnership with community, Commonwealth and Local Government, private sector and non-government organizations in Kalgoorlie, Port Hedland, Wiluna, Derby, and in various smaller regional communities around the State. The objectives of the program are to:
- Identify existing and proposed services and resources allocated for Indigenous people;
- Document local issues and priorities;
- Identify strengths, shortfalls and inefficiencies in inter-agency coordination, service delivery and levels of engagement with Indigenous community;
- Provide a report to key stakeholders that will assist local decision-making and inform future service provision based on a multilateral approach;

In October 2005 DIA contracted Estill & Associates to conduct an evaluation of stakeholder satisfaction with the MAGA program. In summary, results showed:

- The MAGA process was seen by almost all respondents as useful and well done. The identification of gaps and recommendations for future actions, as well as building relationships and partnerships between agencies, were seen as the most positive aspects of MAGA.
- Government agencies generally felt that the project had been effective in encouraging agencies to identify objectives and the actions required to

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achieve these; introduced a mechanism for change; and facilitated communication and partnership between agencies.
- Government agencies felt that, as a result of MAGA, they had a much better understanding of the Indigenous issues within their department.

The Service Mapping and Gap Analysis approach is currently employed by DIA's regional offices to help define and negotiate gaps in service delivery and inter-agency coordination. MAGA projects are currently developing in the South West, the Martu lands and the Murchison–Gascoyne region.

Other specific examples of DIA's efforts in coordination at regional level include:

- Through the Kimberley Homelessness Strategy, DIA is formalising partnerships with relevant government and non-government stakeholders to address the issues of homelessness, overcrowding and lack of affordable short-term accommodation to cater for Indigenous people coming into regional centres for court hearings.
- DIA initiated and is coordinating the Broome Indigenous Visitors Strategy. The strategy is developing practical, realistic and sustainable outcomes to address the needs of Indigenous visitors in Broome. A Steering Committee has been established (chaired by DIA) consisting of Commonwealth, State and Local Governments, Yawuru/Rubibi Traditional Owners, Indigenous Corporations and Communities and not-for-profit Organisations.
- DIA co-chairs and provides the secretariat for the Pilbara Regional Managers Indigenous Forum (PRMIF). Membership includes all State Regional Manager's and representatives of the Pilbara Association of Non-Government Organisations (PANGO), the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Regional Group, and Local Government. Bilateral themes are likely to be a standing agenda item.
- DIA chairs and provides executive support to the North East Kimberley Interagency Working Group, composed of operational-level staff from State agencies, local government and NGOs.
- DIA also chairs and supports the Warmun (Suicide) Response Interagency Working Group, a collaborative arrangements developed in response to the recent spate of suicides in and around Warmun.

Success factors in effective collaboration

Effective coordination and collaboration are critical to improving outcomes for Indigenous people, but challenging to achieve in practice.

Whole-of-government approaches frequently involve groups outside government. An emerging issue for governments is moving from arrangements of contract management to include collaboration and establishing alliances with citizens and their representative groups involved in providing policy advice, assisting with

program design and also with delivery services. Involving Indigenous people in developing the policies and programs that affect them is, therefore, imperative for achieving successful outcomes.

The notion of whole-of-government action is not new. Interdepartmental committees, dedicated taskforces and other models for collaboration and coordination are a feature of the history of the public service in Australia. Typically, however, collaboration between departments is made difficult because of the phenomenon of 'departmentalism': the tendency under the Westminster system of government for government departments (or parts of Departments) to work independently of one another in 'silos'.

A number of reports have noted the factors critical in achieving successful collaboration.

The Australian Public Service Commission's report *Connecting Government* (2004) listed (on page 13) the following as "best practice" in whole-of-government collaboration:

Culture and philosophy
- Incorporating whole-of-government values into portfolio cultures
- Information sharing and cooperative knowledge management
- Effective alignment of top-down policies.

New ways of working
- Shared leadership
- Focus on expertise
- Flexible team processes and outcomes
- Cooperative resourcing.

New ways of developing policies, designing programs and delivering services
- Collegiate approach
- Focus on whole of government outcomes
- Consultation and engagement with clients and users
- Shared customer interface.

New accountabilities and incentives
- Shared outcomes and reporting
- Flexibilities around service outcomes
- Performance measures engaging collegiate behaviour
- Reward and recognition for horizontal management.

The report *Intersectoral collaboration: critical success factors* (2000)[6] prepared for the Office of Aboriginal Health in the Health Department of WA is well researched and I commend it to the Committee's consideration. A copy is attached (**Attachment** 3). It concluded that key factors were:

- Strong leadership and a skilled convenor;
- Adequate resources;
- Shared vision;
- Inclusion of relevant stakeholders;
- Issues under consideration are seen as a priority;
- Members see collaboration as in their own self-interest;
- Good relationships between members based on respect, understanding and trust; and
- Members are committed to both the goals and the process.

The review of Shared Responsibility Agreements prepared for FaHCSIA in 2007 found the following factors had contributed to successful SRAs:

- The process is driven by the community and they feel they have a say rather than having obligations imposed - i.e. passive participation is avoided;
- Communities have built strong relationships of trust primarily through ICC engagement but sometimes through line agency staff working alongside ICC staff;
- The Community Council or other community representatives have a strong representative grasp of the community's aspirations;
- ICCs have played a strong and sustained role leading the process and fostering understandings across agencies and across levels of government;
- The central participants are consulted, including women and young people;
- Community consultations are well promoted;
- Effort is directed to community capacity building;
- Achievements led to further cooperation between partners and generated interest from other communities to run similar programs;
- Training was provided in meeting practices and procedures where required; and
- Contingency plans were developed with communities for when targets are delayed or not met. [7]

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[6] Authored by Susan Eslick and Leslie Gevers of *Leslie Gevers Community Management Services*

[7] Implementation Review of SRAs - Morgan Disney & Associates (July 2007)

Based on DIA's experience over recent years, effective collaboration in Indigenous affairs requires:

- Strong leadership (aligned at political and bureaucratic levels and preferably bipartisan);
- Commitment by all participants to a shared vision / mandate;
- Dedicated resources to facilitate the process; and
- Sustained effort for long-term changes.

A culture of cooperation and collaboration needs to be driven from the top down. When collaboration is modelled at a senior level, this demonstrates Government and agency commitment that will permeate throughout and across agencies.

To assist in developing a collaborative culture across the public sector, it would be useful for "effective collaboration" skills and behaviours to be included as a standard measure of performance on Employee Performance Agreements (applying to Directors General, executive staff, relevant managers and staff).

SAFER COMMUNITIES

SAFER CHILDREN

An environment where Aboriginal children are safe within their communities without fear of abuse.

Department of Indigenous Affairs
Government of Western Australia

DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Department of Indigenous Affairs would like to acknowledge the contribution of staff from each of the following agencies:

- WA Police
- Department for Child Protection
- Department of Health
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Housing and Works
- Department of the Attorney General
- Department of Corrective Services
- Drug and Alcohol Office
- Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Legal Aid
- Department for Communities
- Department of Industry and Resources

We also want to thank the Western Australian Council for Social Services for their participation in the development of the model and for the feedback from relevant Non-Government Organisations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

This document provides a model for agreed and coordinated government action to address broad community issues arising from the disclosure of child abuse in Indigenous communities in Western Australia (WA).

Between February and July 2007 a dramatic rise in the number of disclosures occurred, and investigations in the East Kimberley commenced. The public knowledge of abuse and resulting arrests have been impacting broadly on the stability of these communities.

As sexual abuse charges fall within two categories - predatory and sexualised contact between children - alleged perpetrators may require child relevant support and management.

A collaborative approach is required to address the immediate needs resulting from disclosures and to continue to build the safety and stability of communities in the longer term. To be successful, this approach has to be grounded in a new way of working where governments and communities work together to find solutions.

This document includes the context, principles and processes for a collaborative model and articulates the mandate, roles and responsibilities of relevant agencies. It proposes engagement with community within the process.

1.2. Context

In response to the Gordon Inquiry, the Western Australian Government invested more than $71 million over four years to 2006/07 to implement its Action Plan for Addressing Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities (the *Gordon Action Plan*).

As part of the implementation of the *Gordon Action Plan*, services have been established in remote communities to respond to child abuse and family violence. The establishment of the Multifunction Police Facilities is one of the more significant initiatives. These facilities, and many of the other services provided as part of the *Gordon Action Plan,* have been successful in improving the relationships and trust between service providers and communities, thus contributing to an environment where children and community members are willing to come forward to report their concerns.

Government has released a monitoring report on the implementation of the *Gordon Action Plan*, which highlights key strategic issues requiring policy consideration by the Government. An evaluation of the *Gordon Action Plan* is nearing completion.

The challenge now is for Government to address the issues raised in the *Gordon Action Plan's* monitoring reports to further strengthen implementation and ensure that improved outcomes for Aboriginal children, families and communities are achieved and sustained into the future.

The model outlined in this document is informed by, linked to and built on the long-term commitments of the *Gordon Action Plan* in order to address the issues arising from the disclosure of child abuse in communities.

1.3. Background

There have been long held concerns regarding the incidence of sexual abuse of children within remote WA communities. However it should be noted that the incidence of child abuse is not confined to the Indigenous population, nor is it localised to remote communities.

Recently in the East Kimberley, significant numbers of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) were reported by the Department of Health (DoH) to WA Police. These reports,

and the subsequent provision of a protective behaviours program, led to an environment where disclosures of abuse emerged. The disclosure of a 13-year-old girl in Kalumburu triggered a large-scale investigation. Since April 2007, WA Police assisted by the Department for Child Protection (DCP) and other agencies have been conducting investigations, which progressed rapidly, extending from Kalumburu to Halls Creek and Balgo.

Between April and July 2007 there were 38 arrests and 148 charges with 36 victims identified to date. More arrests are expected and investigations are likely to extend beyond the Kimberley. The investigation is the largest disclosure of child abuse in an Indigenous community since the Gordon Inquiry announced its findings in 2002.

On 10 July 2007 the Acting Commissioner of Police called a meeting of Directors General in response to the rapid escalation of child sex offence disclosures and subsequent investigations in the Kimberley.

On 23 July 2007, the Cabinet Standing Committee on Law and Order gave mandate to the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) to lead coordination of a government response to the broader impacts on community as a result of the high number of disclosures.

Investigations of this scale will result in a dramatic increase in the short and long-term workload of agencies; raise community expectations, and increases demand for additional services. A Directors General Group has been established to address immediate, medium and longer-term logistical, resource and service delivery issues within Indigenous communities using a coordinated approach.

Historically, there has been considerable reluctance within Indigenous communities to disclose specific sexual offences. Victims and their families may fear retribution and feel "shame" in disclosing incidents of child sex abuse to police, health or other

government and support agencies. They observe the often unintended and harmful effect of such disclosures on the family and wider community.

The experience so far indicates that the systemic factors contributing to, and result from, sexual abuse in these communities are somewhat different to those in the metropolitan area.

- The coexistence of widespread violence and alcohol abuse is well documented;

- Older people (including parents) feel they have no control over adolescents;

- There are reports[1] of sexual favours with children being traded for goods such as alcohol or tobacco. Sexualised behaviour among young children appears to have become normalised;

- It is reported that, despite the disclosures of child abuse in their community, many community members do not want to see the perpetrators sent away to prison. The removal of community members is a "solution" which has too many negative connotations. It also does not manage the issue of offenders returning to the community at a later time; and

- It is occurring in an environment where poverty, hopelessness and despair have contributed to a general breakdown of the usual social norms. It is clear that regardless of the outcome of criminal justice proceedings, assistance is needed to undertake community healing and rebuilding, aimed at re-establishing culture, including healthy social order and authority.

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[1] Reported by agencies involved in responding in current locations where there have been high levels of disclosure.

The challenge facing government and the communities is far broader than dealing with a set of offences and subsequent legal actions. A more collaborative approach is required via:

> " The integration and continuity of separate programs that would heighten their overall effectives and enhance outcomes for families and communities requires connection of parallel projects across, government agencies and conjoint funding agreements (eg. Child and adult sexual abuse counseling, rehabilitative programs for violent men and sexual abuse treatment of perpetrators which currently range across the Department of the Attorney General, Custodial Health Services and Community Development without conjoint responsibility or collaboration)." [2]

1.4. Aboriginal Justice Agreements

The WA Aboriginal Justice Agreement 2004 is the only fully funded process to develop a partnership framework jointly between the Western Australian justice-related portfolio agencies, working with Aboriginal people at the local, regional and State level.

Aboriginal Justice Agreements can offer a structure and process for community participation in the development and implementation of actions intended to address the incidence of family violence and child abuse. In addition, the plans allow for longer-term actions to facilitate community capacity development where the Local and Regional Justice Forums identify these as priority issues.

2. INTENT OF THIS MODEL

It is the intent of this model to provide a phased approach to address issues arising from the disclosure of child abuse within Indigenous communities. This model is based on current experiences and practices. It will be further developed and informed

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[2] Ministerial Advisory Group on Child Protection – *A Plan for improving the protection of children and children's Wellbeing in Western Australia: p10.*

by operational reports from currently identified locations. It is intended that this localised approach will support safety and security of children in Indigenous communities.

The model offers an opportunity for WA State Government services to be well coordinated. It will also provide an opportunity for Non Government Organisations (NGOs) and other key organisations such as the Catholic Education Office to be included at the local level.

The model is an extension of the *Gordon Action Plan*. It represents an ongoing commitment of Government to build sustainable partnerships with Aboriginal people, doing business differently and better. Monitoring of this approach will ensure that ongoing future delivery of services is informed by identifying funding priorities and strategic directions. It is intended that initiatives that are proven to be successful will be used to develop ideas and plans in other communities where appropriate.

2.1. The Phased Approach

This coordinated approach will enable Governments and NGOs, including the Catholic Education Office, to work together. It is critical that this work is done with the full and active participation of the community.

Three main phases have been identified in recent operational responses and have been used in developing this model. Each of these phases commences at a similar time and the phases are not necessarily clearly defined in their end points. Rather, they are processes with a set of triggers that result in subsequent action.

INTENT OF THE PHASED APPROACH

- An immediate response to disclosure that deploys appropriate expertise and skills to the local level;

- Partner and support Indigenous communities in restoring safety and security for all members, particularly the young and vulnerable;

- Working with communities, to provide a phased whole of government response to address the broad impacts of the disclosure of child abuse;

- Refine and manage the approach through regular reporting to government and NGOs;

- Establish and deliver short, medium and longer term strategies to address child abuse within Indigenous communities;

- Assess and prioritise resource implications of strategies identified; and

- Ensure local level structures and processes are established and resourced to deliver the intended approach.

Phase 1 – Initial Response: The immediate and short-term response, where evidence is obtained, perpetrators are charged and case managed within the court system and victims provided with safety, support and intervention strategies. Community education is undertaken to raise awareness of relevant legal processes and their implications.

Phase 2 – Recovery: Will deliver support for the broader community to manage issues arising as a result of the allegations and arrests.

Phase 3 – Ongoing Community Building: The longer-term community building process. It is intended that agencies will work with communities to accomplish any cultural shift required to ensure the safety and security of children.

2.2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

It is the intent of this approach to be guided by the following principles:

- Flexibility and responsiveness to local needs is essential, within the associated legislative requirements;

- Aboriginal people are entitled to receive the same benefits, services and protections as the wider community;

- Trust and mutual respect are integral to working effectively with Aboriginal communities;

- Community capacity and governance should be strengthened by the approach; and

- Recognition and inclusion of the local knowledge base is the best way to refine the approach.

INITIAL RESPONSE – PHASE 1

Local Coordinator (convened by WAPOL): (contact details)

Local Coordination Group meeting: Weekly at xx am/pm at (location)

Membership: WAPOL (convener), DCP (co-convener), DoH, AMS, DIA, DET, DotAG, DCS, DAO, DFC, CLC, Legal Aid, Place Manager and others as required and/or agreed

INVESTIGATION (WAPOL Coordinator) AND CASE MANAGEMENT (DCP, Police, DoH)

Meeting time: Daily at .... am/pm at ...... (location)

Detective Superintendent Perth:

Inspector Sex Crimes

Senior Sergeant Child Protection Squad

DCP and WAPOL Spec Child Interview Unit:

DCP Coordinator /Team Leader:

Alleged Offender Court Process/Management (DotAG and DCS)

Offender Support (DCS, Legal Aid and ALS)

Other Significant Staff

COMMUNITY SUPPORT (Coordinated by DoH, with AMS)

Mental Health Group (Immediate trauma/ victim support)

Child Victim and Witness support and preparation (DotAG, DCP, DoH)

Adult Victim Support (DotAG)

Other students' support-School psychologists (DET)

Community mental health (DoH and AMS): Indigenous Mental Health clinicians

Restraining orders (WAPOL, DotAG), Family Court Proceeding assistance (Legal Aid) Public education regarding legal implications of sexual behavior (LA, ALS and CLCs)

Protective Behaviors Programs (DET)

Community education regarding related legal procedures (DoTAG, LA, ALS and relevant local partners)

OTHER FUNCTIONS OF THE LOCAL COORDINATION GROUP

- Initial notification to other agencies – WAPOL and DCP

- Media Communication

- Develop a strategy for liaison with local community - Coordinated by WAPOL (ANCOR)

- Interagency information sharing - Coordinated reporting (situation updates) to government via agency DG to the DGG on Indigenous Affairs – DIA to convene and provide Exec Support

- Interagency coordination of logistics (staff travel and accommodation in emergency response phase)

- Short-term emergency accommodation for staff and community- DHW

- Engagement of Non Government Agencies either already in the community or to be brought in

- Where there is not an existing Place Manager identify and expedite the appointment of one at the location through the DCP, with DIA

- Liaison with a Community Reference Group that is made up of existing community structures or specifically established where there are none existing.

RECOVERY RESPONSE – PHASE 2

Local Coordinator (Place Manager): (contact details)

Local Coordination Group meeting: Suggested fortnightly at xx am/pm at (location)

Membership: Place Manager (convener) DCP (Co-convener), WAPOL, DoH, AMS, DRGL, DIA, DET, DAO, DotAG, DCS, DFC, Legal Aid, CLC and others as required.

CASE MANAGEMENT	COMMUNITY HEALING (DoH and DCP)
(Usual service provision responsibilities apply)	Child victim support: (DCP visiting psychologists)
Child protection (DCP):	Community mental health (DoH visiting services) and (AMS)
Placements for children in care (DCP):	Alcohol and drug programs (DAO) and liquor control (DRGL)
Ongoing investigation and prosecutions (WAPOL):	Cultural and healing activities in partnership with existing community structures
Offender Court Process/Management (DotAG, DPP, DCS, ALS and Legal Aid)	Protective Behaviors Programs (DET)
	Alternative Dispute Resolution (DoTAG and other partners)
Child Victim and Witness Support (DoTAG):	Establish arrangements for effective engagement, through trust and communication as a foundation for future community building (DFC and DOIR)

OTHER FUNCTIONS OF THE LOCAL COORDINATION GROUP

- Interagency information sharing - Coordinated reporting (situation updates) to government via agency DG to the DGG on Indigenous Affairs – DIA to convene and provide Exec Support
- Interagency coordination of logistics (staff travel and accommodation in emergency response phase) (LCG)
- Short-term accommodation for staff and community- DHW
- Relevant media communication
- Engagement of Non Government Agencies either already in the community or to be brought in
- Training/support of local community response staff in cultural awareness and sensitivity (Agency responsibility)
- Facilitate community building activities with the Place Manager – DFC and DOIR
- Liaison with community via a Community Reference Group that is made up of existing community structures or specifically established where there are none existing
- Where there is not an existing Place Manager identify and expedite the appointment of one at the location through the DCP, with DIA

ONGOING COMMUNITY BUILDING – PHASE 3

Local Coordinator (Place Manager): (contact details)

Local Coordination Group meeting: Suggested monthly at xx am/pm at (location)

Membership: Place Manager (convener) DoH (Co-convener), AMS, WAPOL, DAO, DCP, DOIR, DHW, DRGL, DIA, DET, DotAG, DCS, CLC, Legal Aid and others as required.

COMMUNITY HEALING (DoH and AMS)	ONGOING PARTERSHIPS TO STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE FUNCTIONS (DLGRD and DFC)
Child victim support: DCP visiting psychiatrists and/or psychologists	Family support, protective behaviours training (DCP)
Community mental health (DoH visiting services)	Governance training (DOCEP, ORATSIC, DLGRD and TAFE)
Alcohol and drug programs (DAO)	Community Development (DFC)
Cultural Healing activities (in partnership with existing community networks)	Effective arrangements for engagement are identified, in consultation with Indigenous people to ensure a partnership approach in ongoing development (DFC and DOIR)
Protective Behaviours Programs (DET)	Housing and accommodation plan (DHW)
Alcohol and drug programs (DAO) and liquor control (DRGL)	Public health plan (DoH and AMS)
Judicially Based Case Management (DotAG)	Prevention Programs maintaining law and order (WAPOL, DCS, DotAG through AJAs, DIA Patrols)
	Developing local work transition programs and economic development plan (DIOR, RDCs, DLGRD, DET Participation Officers with local partners)

OTHER FUNCTIONS OF THE LOCAL COORDINATION GROUP

- Media and communication
- Liaison with a Community Reference Group that is made up of existing community networks or specifically established where there are none existing
- Interagency information sharing - Coordinated reporting (situation updates) to government via agency DG to the DGG on Indigenous Affairs – DIA to convene and provide Exec Support
- To ensure that the AJA process is used as a vehicle to identify and prioritise issues impacting on the community
- Training/support of local community response staff in cultural awareness and sensitivity (Agency responsibility)

AGENCIES	Phase 1: Initial Response	Phase 2: Recovery	Phase 3: Ongoing Community Building
WA Police	• Lead the investigative response including the deployment of qualified child interview teams and child abuse investigators • Provide coordinated, sustained and rapid deployment of personnel • Ensure communication with other members of the Local Coordination Group to enable a timely and efficient response to broader impacts on the community	• Assist in and promote restorative justice processes in local communities	• Provide sustainable policing services by increasing resources to existing police stations and MFPF • Establish new MFPF supporting high-risk Indigenous Communities • Assist in the coordination of Government services • Participate in multi-agency initiatives • Support the uptake of Police diversion services
Gordon Initiatives To Consider	▪ Video Evidentiary Unit G4 ▪ Place Family Protection Coordinators in country districts G3 ▪ Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers G46 ▪ Establish new remote policing services and co-locate with DCP G2 ▪ Increase resources for Child Abuse Investigation Unit G44		

AGENCIES	AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND SECURE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES, WITHOUT FEAR OF ABUSE		
	Phase 1: Initial Response	**Phase 2: Recovery**	**Phase 3: Ongoing Community Building**
Department for Child Protection	• *Assess, investigate and provide case management and support of children and families where there are protective issues* • *Make placements in foster care or residential care* • *As part of the investigation process and with the support of WA Police conduct family and community group meetings to provide feedback and advocacy and seek advice regarding child protection* • *Support DIA in the appointment of an appropriate Place Manager where one does not exist*	• *Provide support and therapeutic services to abused children and their families* • *DCP will contribute to the work involved in the recovery phases especially around strengthening the child protection focus within the community*	• *Train Indigenous and other child interviewers to conduct joint interviews with police* • *Promote responsible and protective parenting.*
	Gordon Initiatives To Consider ▪ *Increased Child Protection Workers G1* ▪ *Strengthen relationships between Strong Families and Indigenous Families Program G6* ▪ *Expand Stronger Families program G5* ▪ *Child Death Review Committee G64* ▪ *Expansion of Aboriginal Sexual Abuse ServiceG10* ▪ *Expand Crisis Care after hours services G7* ▪ *Actively enhance programs to support "at risk" familiesG52* ▪ *Safe Places–Safe People G15* ▪ *Recruit and support Aboriginal Support Workers G8* ▪ *Build capacity and strengths of communitiesG53* ▪ *Developmental community processG54 and Skill community members G65* ▪ *Increase capacity to provide culturally appropriate counseling and support services G14*		

AGENCIES	AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND SECURE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES, WITHOUT FEAR OF ABUSE		
	Phase 1: Initial Response	Phase 2: Recovery	Phase 3: Ongoing Community Building
Department of Health	• *Provide emergency response staff to assist in the assessment and treatment of alleged victims of child sexual assault* • *Provide mental health services for community*	• *In partnership with DCP and Non Government Organisations, provide post abuse support services for children and families*	• *Funds, in partnership with the Commonwealth Government, to provide suitably resourced health services and facilities within Indigenous communities* • *Notify WA Police concerning all incidents of STIs or other indicators of child sex abuse* • *Contribute to educational programs such as Protective Behaviours and Sexual Health programs*
	Gordon Initiatives To Consider	• *Expand Sexual Assault Referral ServicesG11* • *Aboriginal psychiatric services G67* • *Child Protection UnitG9* • *Professional development for Aboriginal staffG77* • *Aboriginal Liaison Workers in the Sexual Assault Referral CentreG78* • *Reporting of Abuse in ChildrenG80*	

AGENCIES	AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND SECURE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES, WITHOUT FEAR OF ABUSE		
	Phase 1: Initial Response	Phase 2: Recovery	Phase 3: Ongoing Community Building
Department of Indigenous Affairs	• *Provide lead agency coordination of the Operational Response through the Directors General Group on Indigenous Affairs* • *Provide a liaison role between Indigenous communities and the Operational Response DG Group through the Place Manager* • *Ensure the Place manager is informed of all decisions, meetings and minutes of meetings of the DGG overseeing the response*	• *Develop and deliver the regional level recovery response with relevant government and non-government agencies* • *Ensure that all service delivery in remote communities meets the Guiding Principles requirements and operate in the best interests of the whole community*	• *Contribute towards the development and expansion of Community Patrols in Indigenous communities*
Gordon Initiatives To Consider	• *Promote universal prevention and Early Intervention re family violence and child abuse G33* • *Develop Place Management approach in East Kimberley G27* • *Data on prevalence of sexual assault G121* • *Governance and Leadership G28 – 29 (superseded by Bilateral Agreement – role for DLGRD)*		

AGENCIES

AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND SECURE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES, WITHOUT FEAR OF ABUSE

	Phase 1: Initial Response	Phase 2: Recovery	Phase 3: Ongoing Community Building
Department of Education and Training	• *Ensure all suspicions of child abuse are reported to Police & DCP in line with established DET Child Protection procedures* • *Make arrangements that ensure that alleged perpetrators do not have access to their alleged victims on school property (issues around info sharing to implement this)*	• *Explore and develop strategies to maximise school attendance within Indigenous communities* • *Maintain a Drug and Alcohol Education Officer*	• *Contribute educational programs within Indigenous communities such as Protective Behaviours, Responsible Parenting* • *Ensure all teachers and education support staff within Indigenous communities undertake Child Protection Training* • *Provide community governance education and training* • *Liaise with universities for the provision of degree courses – eg NDU in Broome*
Gordon Initiatives To Consider	▪ *Teach Protective Behaviours G114* ▪ *Implement a state-wide management plan for school attendance including developing case management, student tracking system and school attendance officers G115* ▪ *Prevention Education G116* ▪ *Reporting and disclosure of child abuseG118*		

AGENCIES	AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND SECURE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES, WITHOUT FEAR OF ABUSE		
	Phase 1: Initial Response	Phase 2: Recovery	Phase 3: Ongoing Community Building
Department of Housing and Works	• *Build emergency accommodation identified as necessary for children at risk in Indigenous communities* • *Deliver critical housing and buildings for communities and government agencies within Indigenous communities*	• *To construct required buildings and accommodation that support government agencies deployed within or visiting Indigenous communities* • *Liaise with local government and other agencies (i.e. Horizon Power, Water Corp) to ensure the provision of essential services in the community*	• *To reduce overcrowding within Indigenous Communities through residential accommodation and infrastructure*
Gordon Initiatives To Consider	▪ *Develop strategies to increase private rental accommodation for disadvantaged tenants G105* ▪ *Management Support Program DHW G107* ▪ *Provide emergency accommodation for Aboriginal people G109*		

AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND SECURE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES WITHOUT FEAR OF ABUSE

AGENCIES	Phase 1: Initial Response	Phase 2: Recovery	Phase 3: Ongoing Community Building
Department of the Attorney General	• Bring together the judiciary and the relevant agencies involved in the delivery of justice services, to ensure sufficient court, legal and support services in order to expeditiously dispose of the increased number of child sex abuse cases • Provide culturally appropriate court preparation and support to child complainants and witnesses of child sex abuse within Indigenous communities • Provide counseling, information and support to adult victims and vulnerable witnesses. ▪ Provide assistance with applications for Violence Restraining Orders. • Provision of Interpreters • Provide Audio Visual facilities throughout courts within the Kimberley	• Provide victim and witness support to children within Indigenous communities • Support the uptake of police and court diversion services for Aboriginal people • Provide Alternative Dispute Resolution • Evaluate possibility of developing specialist Aboriginal courts and family and domestic violence courts within the region. • Through Aboriginal Justice Agreements, assist in providing forums to engage with Aboriginal communities.	• Ensure that the regional Aboriginal Justice Agreements are available to all relevant agencies for their appropriate action • Evaluate possibility of developing specialist Aboriginal courts and family and domestic violence courts within the region.
Gordon Initiatives To Consider	▪ Victim support and Child Witness ServicesG20 ▪ Unified Victim Support ServicesG83 ▪ Promote greater awareness of court systems including translating into languageG82 ▪ Increase Aboriginal volunteers in Victim Support ServicesG85 ▪ Alternative dispute resolution servicesG86 ▪ Regional based cross cultural trainingG87	Expand Family Violence CourtsG22 Aboriginal Support WorkersG8 Proactive release of informationG89 Integrated Court Management SystemG90	

AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND SECURE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES, WITHOUT FEAR OF ABUSE

AGENCIES	Phase 1: Initial Response	Phase 2: Recovery	Phase 3: Ongoing Community Building
Department of Corrective Services	• *Provide appropriate custodial care of prisoners from Indigenous communities within the justice system* • *Provide appropriate custodial transport of prisoners from Indigenous communities within the justice system* • *Manage the integration of Indigenous prisoners into the justice system considering age, cultural and family issues* • *Suicide Prevention Programs*	• *Supervise persons on bail or oversee supervision orders in the community with other relevant support staff* • *Supervise parolees in the community with other relevant support staff* • *Train and clinically supervise Aboriginal Community Corrections Officers* • *Support the uptake of police and court diversion services for Aboriginal people*	• *Contribute to streamlining core police and justice activities through extension of custodial services* • *Provide or purchase culturally secure sex offender treatment programs for adults and juveniles in and out of prison* • *Provide or purchase culturally appropriate cognitive Behaviours, Violent Offenders and alcohol and drug programs in and out of prison* • *NGO support*
	Gordon Initiatives To Consider	▪ *Community Supervision AgreementsG12* ▪ *Sex Offender ProgramsG91* ▪ *Management of released offenders G13* ▪ *Reasoning and Rehabilitation Programs G92* ▪ *Provide psychological and psychiatric services to all juveniles in detention and remand centresG98* ▪ *Aboriginal Men Perpetrators Group G102*	

AGENCIES	Phase 1: Initial Response	Phase 2: Recovery	Phase 3: Ongoing Community Building
Drug and Alcohol Office	• *Coordinate government, NGO and community based services response relating to alcohol and drug misuse.*	• *Ensure culturally secure treatment, referral and harm reduction services concerning alcohol and drug misuse are available within Indigenous communities.* • *Facilitate and or provide culturally secure training for Alcohol and Drug workers within government, non-government and community controlled organizations in relevant communities.* • *Establish effective culturally secure clinical supervision mechanisms for alcohol and drug workers.* • *Support the uptake of police and court diversion services for Aboriginal people.*	• *Ensure that Aboriginal communities have ready access to culturally secure drug and alcohol prevention and early intervention information, programs and resources.* • *Support the development of coordinated initiatives to prevent and reduce harm in relation to alcohol abuse, including expansion of the Enough is Enough alcohol program.* • *Work with the Commonwealth, other State Government agencies and local groups in the development of a petrol sniffing strategy as appropriate.* • *Support the establishment of Local Drug Action Groups.* • *Work with other agencies to develop family focused strategies to assist Aboriginal parents with alcohol and drug problems to address their alcohol and drug use and strengthen parenting skills.* • *Over time, increase the number of Aboriginal employees in AOD services*
Gordon Initiatives To Consider:	▪ *Volatile substance abuse servicesG71* ▪ *Drug and Alcohol InitiativesG73*		

AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND SECURE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES, WITHOUT FEAR OF ABUSE

AGENCIES	Phase 1: Initial Response	Phase 2: Recovery	Phase 3: Ongoing Community Building
Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor		• *Oversight liquor licensing throughout the region and regulate the sale, supply and consumption of liquor.* • *Facilitate liquor accords and community alcohol agreements in collaboration with key stakeholders.*	• *Ensure compliance with the requirements of the Liquor Control Act.* • *Develop and implement policy consistent with Government objectives.* • *Minimize harm and ill health caused to any group of people due to the use of liquor.*
	Gordon Initiatives To Consider		
Department of Premier and Cabinet	• *Coordinate media and communication strategies from a Whole-of-Government perspective.* • *Monitor and respond to unhelpful, discriminatory and incorrect information being disseminated.*	• *Coordinate the WA Government negotiating position with the Joint Commonwealth/State Strategic intervention plan to address child abuse in Indigenous communities.*	• *Provide policy support and coordination of Government services between various committees, groups and Department of Premier and Cabinet.*
	Gordon Initiatives To Consider	▪ *Regional Training Program G37* ▪ *Across Government collaboration and Co-ordination G34* ▪ *Information sharing legislation and protocols G42*	
Legal Aid	*Gordon Initiatives To Consider*	▪ *Representation of parents in Children's Court G123*	
Office of Crime Prevention	*Gordon Initiatives To Consider*	▪ *Community Safety and Crime Prevention Indigenous Partnership fund. G19*	

AGENCIES	Phase 1: Initial Response	Phase 2: Recovery	Phase 3: Ongoing Community Building
AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND SECURE WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES, WITHOUT FEAR OF ABUSE			
Department for Communities	*Gordon Initiatives To Consider*		
Department of Industry and resources	*Gordon Initiatives To Consider*	▪ *Develop local engagement with arts groups/centre for social, cultural and economic growth.*	▪ *Review, recommend and implement arts initiatives, which provide sustainable involvement in cultural, social and commercial activities.* ▪ *Developing local work transition programs and economic development plan where appropriate.*
Non-Government Agency Support	• *Incorporate where possible into interagency coordination meetings (taking account of confidential discussions).* • *Contract to provide specific immediate services unable to be provided by Government to victims, families and offenders.*	• *Develop and contract to provide specific longer-term services to victims, offenders and families.* • *Contract to provide restorative justice and reconciliation meetings to assist in community building.* • *Manage hostels and safe houses.*	• *Contract to provide longer-term family support, therapeutic services, and treatment programs.* • *Contract to provide training to and supervision of helping professionals in communities.*

3. SUMMARY

A model is proposed for agreed whole of government action to address broad community issues arising from the disclosure of child abuse in Indigenous communities in the East Kimberley.

Given the dramatic rise in disclosures and investigations of child abuse in recent months, it has become critically important to have a response model that addresses the immediate needs of victims as well as the broader issues impacting families and communities.

The proposed approach has been informed by current experiences and practices and will be further developed based on evidence of what is working well. This approach can be used to respond in other communities where appropriate.

This response model is underpinned by the *Western Australian Government's Response to the Gordon Inquiry into Family Violence and Child Abuse in Indigenous Communities* (the *Gordon Action Plan*). The *Gordon Action Plan* provides the ongoing, longer-term measures needed to reduce family violence and eliminate child abuse.

It involves working collaboratively across Governments and with non-Government organisations. It is essential that the community is fully and actively participating in the implementation of this approach.

The model will provide a phased approach consisting of:

Phase 1 – Initial Response:
Immediate and short-term response coordinated by WA Police. Involves investigation and case management; community support; and communication with communities and across agencies.

Phase 2 – Recovery:
Support for the broader community to manage issues arising as a result of the allegations and arrests. This phase involves case management,

community-healing strategies such as child victim support, counseling, mental health services and drug and alcohol interventions.

Phase 3- Ongoing Community Building:

Longer-term community building processes that brings about safety and security of children. This phase emphasises a focused approach to providing victim support and counseling, cultural healing and alcohol and drug programs. It seeks to build partnerships between communities, government and non-government agencies to strengthen governance and service functions. Family and community needs such as housing, governance training, community development, health and economic development are responded to in this phase.

The roles and responsibilities of agencies in each phase of operation have been mapped out. Relevant *Gordon Action Plan* responsibilities that each agency will need to consider in their response is also identified. This provides a clear picture of the role of each agency in undertaking this coordinated response. It will also assist in the process of assessing the status of implementation action taken by agencies in communities.

As at 21 September 2007

BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS
BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH AND WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS

GOVERNANCE CHARTER

1.   Background

The Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments, through the Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs 2006-2010 (the Agreement), have committed to work together on a range of issues central to improving social, economic and cultural outcomes for Indigenous West Australians.

This Charter sets out the governance arrangements for the Agreement, the accountabilities of the various parties and the monitoring and reporting requirements that assist with the performance management of the Agreement.

The text of the Agreement contains:
*   a Preamble that describes various benefits and efficiencies associated with the adoption of the Agreement by both Governments as a guide to their collaboration;
*   reference to the COAG-endorsed *National Framework of Principles for Delivering Services to Indigenous Australians* which underpin the Agreement;
*   a description of three priorities (consistent with the COAG Framework); and
*   a description of six key outcome areas for action under the Agreement.

The priorities and key outcome areas are described in detail below.

2.   Governance Structures

The Bilateral Agreement provides for a number of planning and administrative structures, as illustrated by the diagram at Attachment 1.

Ministerial leadership

The governments agreed that both Commonwealth and State Ministers would oversee the implementation of the Bilateral Agreement. The responsible Ministers are:
–   the Western Australian Minister for Indigenous Affairs; and
–   the Federal Minister for Families Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Intergovernmental Indigenous Affairs Group (IIAG)

The Intergovernmental Indigenous Affairs Group (IIAG) is expected to comprise senior officials from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and from Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) for the Commonwealth; and the Directors General of the Departments of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Treasury and Finance (DTF) and Indigenous Affairs (DIA) for the State of Western Australia side.

The IIAG is expected to meet twice a year to review progress on implementation of the strategies in the Bilateral Agreement, propose new areas for action, and present a report through respective departmental heads to the Secretaries' Group on Indigenous Affairs (Commonwealth) and the Directors General Group (State).

The Bilateral Agreement also allowed for a State Coordination Group (SCG), intended to meet quarterly, and with similar membership and responsibilities to the IIAG. It has since been agreed that the SCG and IIAG would be combined.

State and Commonwealth Government internal coordination mechanisms

To ensure interagency coordination among State Government Departments engaged in implementing the Agreement, the *Director Generals' Group on Indigenous Affairs (DGGIA)* was established in June 2007. Chaired by the Director General (DG) of Indigenous Affairs, its membership consists of the Directors General of all relevant Western Australian central and service delivery Departments and the Commissioner of Police. Until early October 2007 it met to review SOG progress every 6 weeks, but in future will do so quarterly.

Coordination among Commonwealth agencies is managed at State level by the *Commonwealth State Managers Group (SMG)* which meets fortnightly. At national level the *Secretaries' Group on Indigenous Affairs*, chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, provides 'whole of government' coordination.

Regional links to the Bilateral Agreement

Processes for two-way communication between the Bilateral Agreement governance structures and regional staff of both State and Commonwealth agencies are described at Attachment 2.

Senior Officer Groups (SOGs)

A Senior Officer Group (SOG) has been established to progress actions against each of the Agreement's key outcome areas. Each SOG is led by a relevant State Department. In order to be considered a 'bilateral' SOG, each must include Commonwealth representation. The Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) is a member of two SOGs that have particular relevance for local governments.

It is expected that each lead agency will present action plans for their key outcome areas to the IIAG for endorsement, and report regularly to the State DGGIA, Commonwealth SMG, and IIAG as outlined below.

3.   Performance Framework

Monitoring and Review of the Agreement (Section 4.5) makes clear that the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) framework should form the basis of an agreed set of performance indicators to assess outcomes of the four-year Agreement. This requires an assessment of the degree of alignment between the OID and the Bilateral Agreement.

The Bilateral Agreement contains three Priorities:

A. **Early childhood** – a key focus of which will be improved mental and physical health, and in particular primary health, and early educational outcomes;
B. **Safer communities** – which includes issues of authority, law and order, but necessarily also focuses on dealing with issues of governance to ensure that communities are functional and effective – and developing community capacity; and
C. **Building Indigenous wealth, employment and entrepreneurial culture** – as these are integral to boosting economic development and reducing poverty and dependence.

These align closely to the OID priority outcomes, and therefore all of the existing OID headline indicators are seen as relevant to the Bilateral Agreement. Attachment 3 (page 10) lists the relevant OID headline indicators against the three overarching Priorities. However it should be noted that significant change in relation to these indicators may not realistically be achieved within the four-year life of the Agreement. This is particularly true of those indicators marked with an asterisk (*) in the Attachment.

Flowing from the three Priorities are six **Key Outcome Areas**:

- **Law and order and safe places for people** – encompassing effective policing; fair justice system; and responses to family violence, child abuse, and substance abuse including petrol sniffing;
- **Skills, jobs and opportunities** – encompassing employment opportunities; building investment and asset ownership; and home ownership;
- **Healthy and strong people** – encompassing primary health care services; early childhood services; parent support/education; and culturally appropriate early childhood curriculum;
- **Sustainable environmental health and infrastructure** – encompassing housing; infrastructure (roads, aerodromes etc), essential services (power, water and sewerage) and municipal (local government) services;
- **Land, sea and culture** – encompassing native title issues; and art centre development; and
- **Strong leadership and governance** – encompassing governance of infrastructure; of communities in acute crisis; and engagement with Indigenous people.

Relevant OID strategic change indicators, along with other suggested indicators, have been proposed for each of the six Key Outcome Areas as shown in Attachment 3 (page 12). Each of these OID "indicators" in fact represents a grouping of several specific measures. Taken together, this would amount to approximately 200 separate measures of achievement against the proposed actions under the Agreement.

In addition, some indicators specific to the Bilateral Agreement have been proposed and are shown in *italics*. Sources for the additional indicators are shown on the last page of Attachment 3 (page 13). Some of these may require specific data-gathering efforts to be undertaken. Any such additional efforts would be relevant to the State whole-of-government framework for Indigenous affairs. Performance measures against any of the key outcome areas may also require refinement or revision during the life of the Agreement as the relevant action plans evolve.

4. Monitoring and Reporting

Section 4.5 **Monitoring and Review of the Agreement** notes:

The Governments agree to monitor and evaluate progress against agreed benchmarks and milestones (where possible building on the OID framework) and make performance information available for evaluations. These are to be determined by the Intergovernmental Indigenous Affairs Group within the first twelve months of the Agreement.

Specific plans within this Agreement will be jointly reviewed on an ongoing basis, to take account of the development of a whole of government framework for Indigenous affairs in Western Australia and any other information that becomes available.

Section 5 (page 17) includes a note that:

The term of this Agreement will be for five years and will be jointly reviewed after two years.

Quarterly Monitoring of the Progress of Actions

Implementation of each Key Outcome Area under the Agreement will be the responsibility of a Senior Officer Group with its own Action Plan (for which the template is shown at Attachment 4) including relevant Milestones and linked to the strategic change indicators in the Bilateral Agreement Performance Framework. Where appropriate, these indicators either replicate, or link to, performance measures in the OID framework.

Progress reporting in relation to the actions and commitments under each Action Plan will be provided on a quarterly basis to the State Director Generals' Group on Indigenous Affairs (DGGIA); the Commonwealth State Managers' Group (SMG); and twice yearly to the Intergovernmental Indigenous Affairs Group (IIAG).. These reports will constitute the monitoring aspect of this Framework.

Two Progress Report templates are attached (Attachments 5a and 5b) – the former for use in the early stages of SOG activity until an Action Plan is finalised; the latter for use once the Action Plan is endorsed. This process will continue throughout the life of the Agreement.

Review of Strategic Change Indicators

It is anticipated that the IIAG will meet twice a year to jointly review and report progress in implementing the Agreement, and to consider new proposals for cooperative action – subject to approval by the DGGIA and the Commonwealth SMG. It is envisaged that the second of these meetings each year will consider more in-depth reviews of effectiveness against strategic change indicators.

Mid-term Review

Progress towards achieving the aims of the Agreement, and of specific outcome areas, will be jointly reviewed by the Commonwealth and State Governments (as represented by the IIAG) some time after mid-2008. This Review will focus on:

1. **Effectiveness of the collaborative process between the two Governments and of engagement with Indigenous people**

   Intergovernmental collaboration
   While the importance of the collaborative process is not specifically highlighted in the Agreement, the Preamble states that the Agreement will:
   - improve and streamline service delivery to Indigenous Australians;
   - identify opportunities where existing expenditure can be redirected to ensure more effective and efficient investment strategies in Indigenous affairs;
   - support the implementation of a strategic, whole of government framework for Indigenous affairs in Western Australia; and
   - commit the Governments to increase effort in Indigenous affairs.

   Assessing the benefits of, and the possible pitfalls in, inter-government collaborative endeavour has arisen as a key area of interest for affected agencies in the Western Australian and Australian Governments. In particular, the intention would be to identify "lessons learned" so as to inform future exercises in bilateral cooperation. The effectiveness of collaborative processes will be assessed through examination of issues such as:

   1. Joint Planning and Administrative arrangements:
      - *Intergovernmental Indigenous Affairs Group (IIAG)*: frequency of meetings; level of representation by each government; degree of involvement in key decisions affecting Bilateral Agreement implementation;
      - *Senior Officer Groups (SOGs)*: level of representation by each government in SOGs; frequency of attendance at SOG meetings; degree of involvement by each government in development and endorsement of action plans; timely completion by agencies of actions committed to under SOG action plans; and
      - *Regional forums*: frequency of meetings; level of representation by each government.

   2. Information sharing and reporting:
      - *IIAG*: degree of cooperation in allowing adequate time by each government for comments on and consideration of meeting agenda papers;
      - *SOGs*: timely provision of information for progress reports to DGGIA and Commonwealth State Managers; timely provision of statistical information for reviews of effectiveness; extent of involvement by each government in efforts to improve the quality of information;
      - *Regional forums*: timely provision of information for progress reports to DGGIA and Commonwealth State Managers; timely escalation of emerging regional issues with significance for 'whole of government' coordination.

5

3. Dispute resolution:
- Degree to which disputes were able to be resolved at the lowest possible organisational level.
- Number of disputes referred to IIAG or Ministers for resolution.

Engagement with Indigenous people
The importance of engaging effectively with Indigenous people in an inclusive partnership approach that emphasises shared responsibility is outlined in Section 4.1 of the Agreement under the heading Shared Responsibility. It is also enshrined in the *National Framework of Principles for Delivering Services to Indigenous Australians* that forms Attachment 1 to the Agreement.

Given the absence of any high-level State-wide mechanism to engage with Aboriginal representatives, and given the very different subject matters dealt with by each SOG, each SOG should develop its own approach to consultation/engagement with Aboriginal people in the development and implementation of action plans. It will be important in developing such an approach to utilise existing structures where possible, avoid overlap between SOGs, and minimise "consultation overload" with discrete communities.

The Review will focus chiefly on these two 'process' issues, highlighting achievements and also determining any significant gaps, delays or hindrances that need to be addressed in order for work on addressing the overall aims of the Agreement to proceed satisfactorily. The Review's main source of information will be the regular progress reports provided to the key governance structures (DGGIA, SMG and IIAG) potentially supplemented by interviews with key stakeholders. It will investigate whether:

A. the structures, processes and communication protocols developed to support implementation of the Agreement have been adequate to achieve its aims, including the four dot-points above from the Preamble;

B. all parties have adhered to the National Framework of Principles in developing and implementing specific action plans; and

C. the bilateral collaboration has contributed materially to the achievement of improved planning and/or delivery of services to Indigenous people in Western Australia.

The Review should recommend any adjustments to key structures and/or processes that would be beneficial in terms of achieving the Agreement's intended outcomes.

2. Performance against the Priorities and Key Outcome Areas
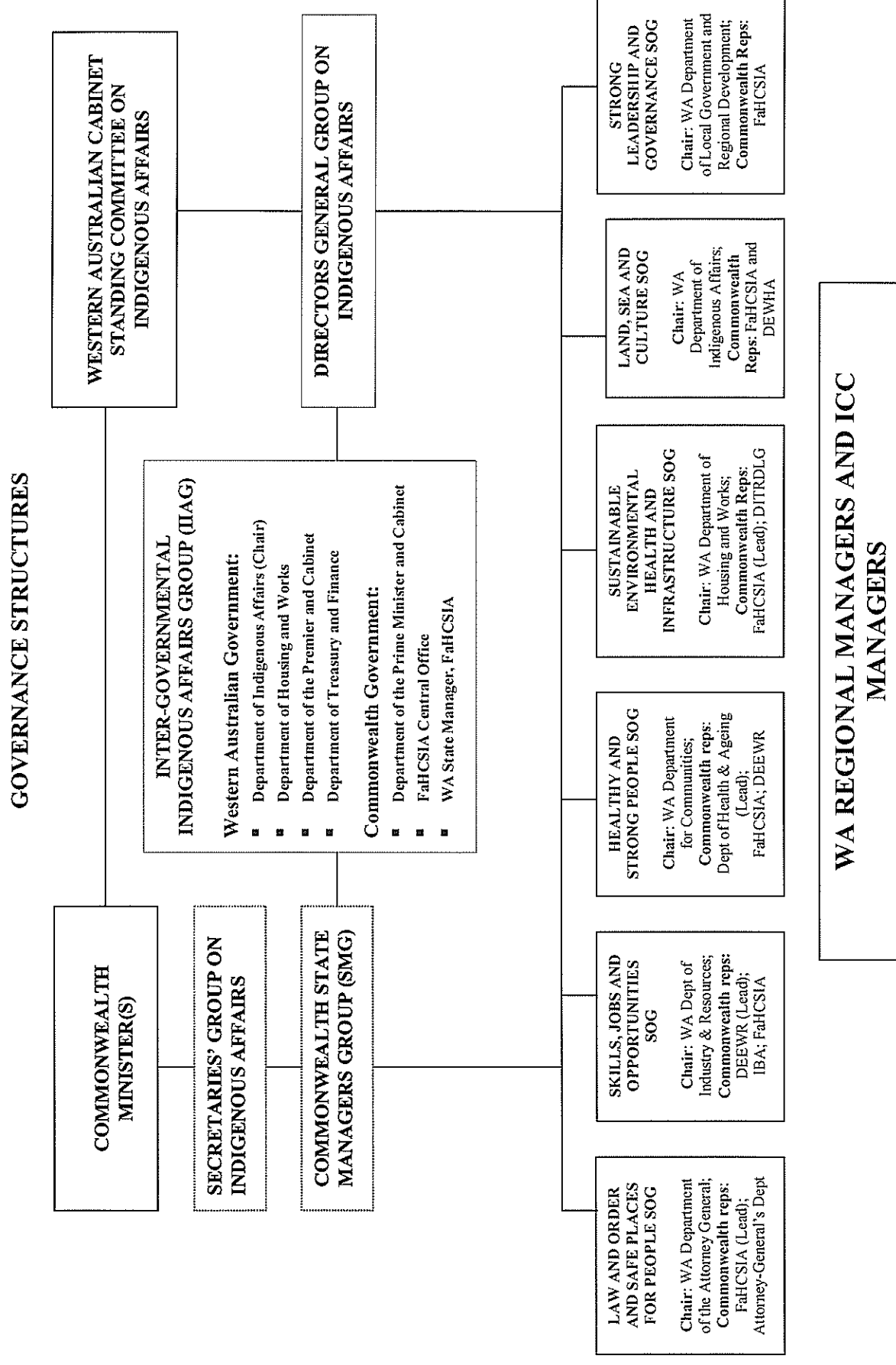The Review should consider, but not necessarily be limited to:
- whether the Key Outcome Areas were appropriate and sufficient to address the Priorities;

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- to what extent the Action Plans are clearly linked to the achievement of specific commitments against the Key Outcome Areas as well as addressing other priorities identified by each Senior Officer Group; and
- whether specific commitments outlined in the Agreement have been implemented (to date) in a timely manner, meeting agreed milestones.

3. **The progress achieved to date by each Senior Officer Group in relation to their agreed Action Plans.**

4. **Recommending any changes that might be desirable to the Action Plans, taking into account the development of a whole of government framework for Indigenous affairs in Western Australia and any other information that becomes available to the Review.**

End of Term Review

It is proposed that an end of Agreement review, focusing on issues similar to those outlined for the Mid Term Review, should take place during 2010.

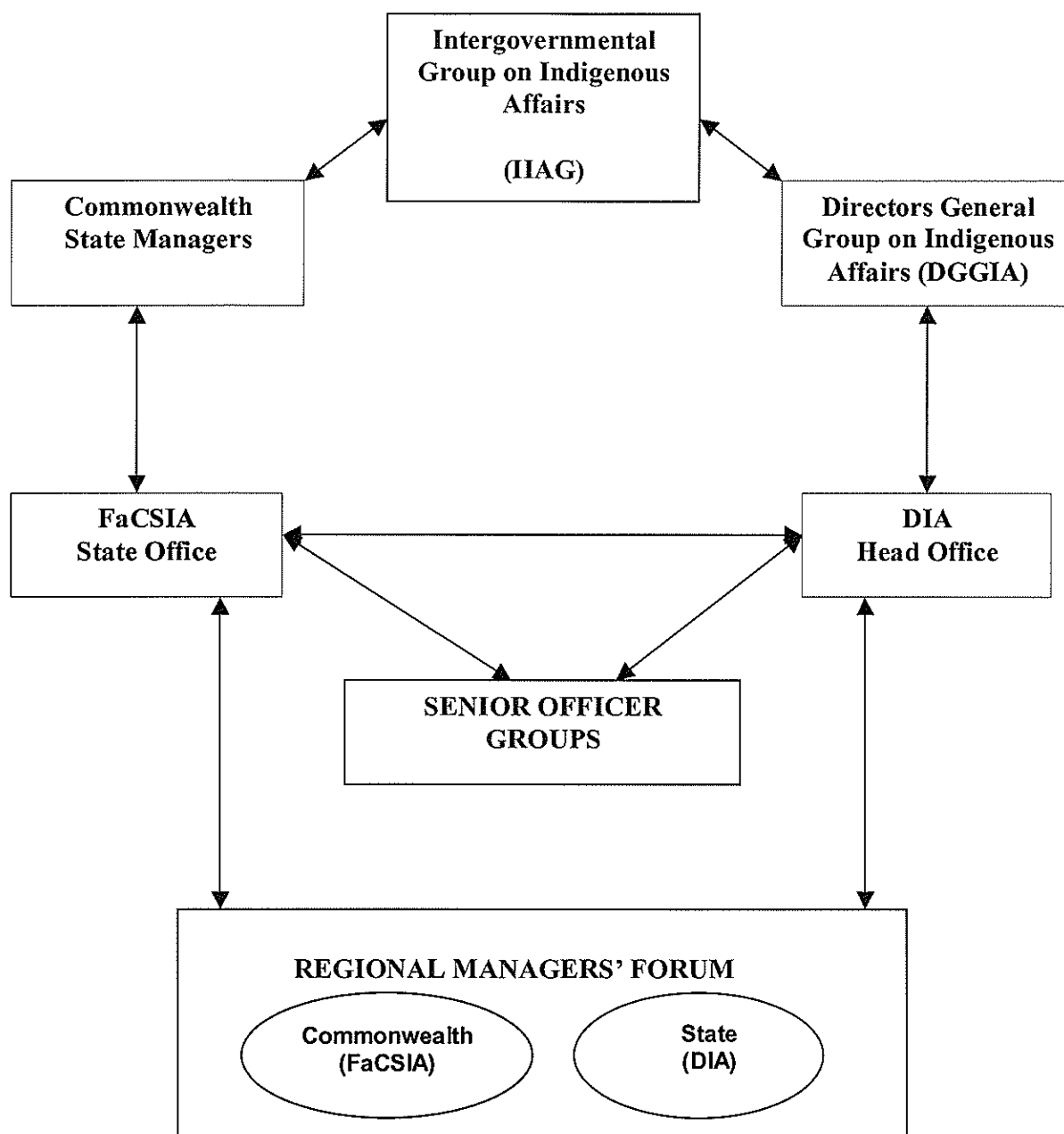# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

COMMONWEALTH MINISTER(S)

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CABINET STANDING COMMITTEE ON INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

SECRETARIES' GROUP ON INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS GROUP (IIAG)

Western Australian Government:
- Department of Indigenous Affairs (Chair)
- Department of Housing and Works
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Treasury and Finance

Commonwealth Government:
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- FaHCSIA Central Office
- WA State Manager, FaHCSIA

DIRECTORS GENERAL GROUP ON INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

COMMONWEALTH STATE MANAGERS GROUP (SMG)

LAW AND ORDER AND SAFE PLACES FOR PEOPLE SOG

Chair: WA Department of the Attorney General; Commonwealth reps: FaHCSIA (Lead); Attorney-General's Dept

SKILLS, JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES SOG

Chair: WA Dept of Industry & Resources; Commonwealth reps: DEEWR (Lead); IBA; FaHCSIA

HEALTHY AND STRONG PEOPLE SOG

Chair: WA Department for Communities; Commonwealth reps: Dept of Health & Ageing (Lead); FaHCSIA; DEEWR

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE SOG

Chair: WA Department of Housing and Works; Commonwealth Reps: FaHCSIA (Lead); DITRDLG

LAND, SEA AND CULTURE SOG

Chair: WA Department of Indigenous Affairs; Commonwealth Reps: FaHCSIA and DEWHA

STRONG LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE SOG

Chair: WA Department of Local Government and Regional Development; Commonwealth Reps: FaHCSIA

WA REGIONAL MANAGERS AND ICC MANAGERS

8

REGIONAL LINKS TO BILATERAL AGREEMENT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

- WA Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) Regional Managers and Commonwealth Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICC) Managers will receive copies of all key documents relevant to the implementation of the Bilateral Agreement, including:
  - Governance charter
  - SOG action plans
  - SOG progress reports
  - Minutes of key meetings (eg. IIAG meetings).

- Where appropriate these documents will also be made available on the DIA Internet site and/or Intranet.

- DIA Regional Managers and ICC Managers may join Senior Officer Groups (SOG) (maximum of one of each per SOG).

- Regional Forums (through DIA Regional Managers and ICC Managers) will report at quarterly intervals to the Directors General Group on Indigenous Affairs (DGGIA) and Commonwealth State Managers Group (SMG) on key issues arising in each region regarding whole of government coordination and service delivery. (For DIA Regional Managers, a template and schedule of dates for these regular reports to DGGIA will be advised in due course.)

- Between quarterly reports, the process for Regional Forums to raise issues requiring the urgent attention of the DGGIA and/or Commonwealth State Managers is as follows:

  1. The DIA Regional Manager and/or ICC Manager[1] should forward a summary of the issue to the appropriate contact in DIA Head Office and/or Families, Communities and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) State Office respectively.

  2. The relevant officers in DIA and/or FaCSIA will then either:
     - o Confer as appropriate to determine if the issue can be resolved immediately; or
     - o Refer the issue to an appropriate Senior Officer Group; or
     - o Refer the issue to the DGGIA and/or Commonwealth State Managers' Group (which may then refer it on to a SOG).

  3. If necessary, the issue may be referred to the Intergovernmental Indigenous Affairs Group (IIAG) for resolution – which may also refer it back to a SOG (via DIA Head Office and FaCSIA State Office) or may refer it to relevant Ministers.

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[1] It will be a matter of judgement for the DIA Regional Manager and ICC Manager to determine if the issue is relevant to only one or to both Governments. If the latter then two separate reports should be sent – one to DIA and one to FaCSIA in the format appropriate to each agency.

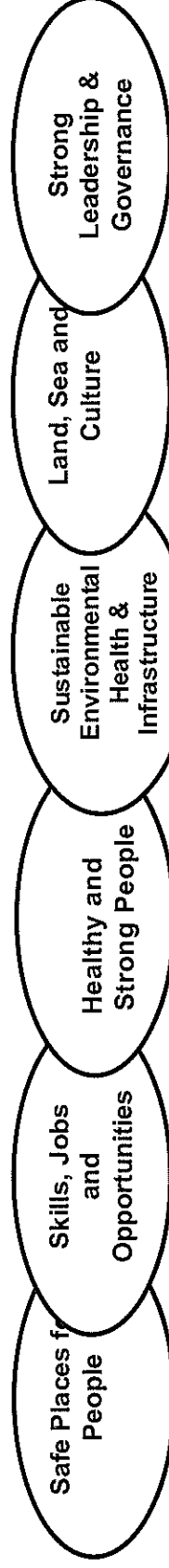## REGIONAL LINKS TO GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES (cont.)

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │   Intergovernmental  │
                    │  Group on Indigenous │
                    │       Affairs        │
                    │                      │
                    │       (IIAG)         │
                    └─────────────────────┘

  ┌──────────────────┐                      ┌──────────────────────┐
  │  Commonwealth     │                      │  Directors General    │
  │  State Managers    │                      │  Group on Indigenous  │
  │                   │                      │  Affairs (DGGIA)      │
  └──────────────────┘                      └──────────────────────┘

  ┌──────────────────┐                      ┌──────────────────────┐
  │    FaCSIA         │                      │       DIA            │
  │  State Office     │                      │   Head Office        │
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              ┌─────────────────────────┐
              │   SENIOR OFFICER         │
              │      GROUPS              │
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  │          REGIONAL MANAGERS' FORUM                         │
  │      ╭───────────────╮        ╭───────────────╮           │
  │      │ Commonwealth  │        │    State      │           │
  │      │  (FaCSIA)     │        │    (DIA)      │           │
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BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS 2006-2010
MONITORING & REVIEW FRAMEWORK

BILATERAL AGREEMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Early childhood intervention – a key focus of which will be improved mental and physical health, and in particular primary health, and early educational outcomes	**Safer communities** – which includes issues of authority, law and order, but necessarily also focuses on dealing with issues of governance to ensure that communities are functional and effective – and developing community capacity	**Building Indigenous wealth, employment and entrepreneurial culture** – as these are integral to boosting economic development and reducing poverty and dependence

HEADLINE INDICATORS
(drawn from Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage)

▪ *Life expectancy at birth* ▪ *Disability and chronic disease* ▪ *Year 10 and 12 retention and attainment* ▪ *Post secondary education, participation and attainment*	▪ *Suicide and self-harm* ▪ *Substantiated child abuse and neglect* ▪ *Deaths from homicide and hospitalizations for assault* ▪ *Family and community violence*	▪ *Imprisonment and juvenile detention rates* ▪ *Labour force participation and unemployment* ▪ *Household and individual income* ▪ *Home ownership*

* NOTE: Due to the extensive timelines (15 – 40 years) required for measuring the impact of changes in these specific areas on individuals who are now young children, or not yet born, it is likely that minimal changes will be detectable against these indicators within the relatively short life of the Bilateral Agreement (5 years).

..../cont.

Bilateral Agreement Key Outcome Areas

Safe Places for People

Skills, Jobs and Opportunities

Healthy and Strong People

Sustainable Environmental Health & Infrastructure

Land, Sea and Culture

Strong Leadership & Governance

STRATEGIC CHANGE INDICATORS **

■ Alcohol consumption and harm; ■ Drug and other substance use and harm ■ Children on care and protection orders; ■ Repeat offending ■ Juvenile diversions as a proportion of all juvenile offenders	■ Employment (full time/part time) by sector (public/private) industry and occupation (including CDEP participation); ■ Self employment and Indigenous business; ■ *Indigenous owned or controlled land (area)* ■ *School attendance* ■ *Years 5 and 7 literacy and numeracy* ■ *Year 9 retention* ■ *Transition from school to work*	■ Injury and preventable diseases ■ Infant mortality ■ Birthweight ■ Hearing impediments ■ Children with tooth decay ■ Access to primary health care ■ Mental health ■ Preschool and early learning ■ *School attendance* ■ *Year 3 literacy and numeracy* ■ *Indigenous cultural studies in school curriculum and involvement of Indigenous people in development and delivery of Indigenous studies*	■ Rates of diseases associated with poor environmental health (including water and food borne diseases, trachoma, turberculosis and rheumatic heart disease) ■ Overcrowding in housing ■ Access to clean water and functional sewerage	■ Indigenous owned or controlled land (area) ■ Proportion of Indigenous people with access to their traditional lands ■ *Number of Native Title claims resolved* ■ *Number of Native Title claims resolved by alternative settlement* ■ *Number of financially viable Indigenous art centres in operation*	■ Case studies in effective governance arrangements ■ *Number [and proportion] of Aboriginal Corporation councillors who have completed governance skills training conducted by DET or ORATSIC;* ■ *Number and proportion of communities/ corporations under administration* ■ Engagement with service delivery ■ Participation in organised sport, art or community group activities

** **NOTE:** These broad "indicators" will be reflected in a range of more specific measures, including those contained in Action Plans. All except those in *italics* are OID Key Indicators (2007 Report). Sources for the additional indicators shown in *italics* are listed on page 3 of this Attachment.

BILATERAL AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK:
DATA SOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INDICATORS

[WORK-IN-PROGRESS]

Key Outcome Area	Indicator	Source(s)
Land, sea and culture	*Number of Native Title claims resolved*	ONT
	Number of Native Title claims resolved by alternative settlement	ONT
	Number of financially viable Indigenous art centres in operation	DOCA; DOCITA
Strong leadership and Governance	*Number and proportion of Aboriginal Corporation governing body members who have completed corporate Governance skills training*	- Number of participants in governance skills training courses *(Source: DET; ORATSIC; special survey of organisations?)* - Total number of Aboriginal Corporation governing body members *(Source: ~~DoCEP;~~ ORATSIC? special survey of organisations?)*
	Number and proportion of ORATSIC-registered communities under administration	ORATSIC?
		Special survey of organisations?

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BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

[_____] SENIOR OFFICER GROUP

ENDORSEMENTS: DGGIA____/____/____   IIAG____/____/____

ACTION PLAN [*TEMPLATE*]

PART 1: OVERVIEW

Preamble

The Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments, through the Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs 2006-2010 (the Agreement), have committed to work together on a range of issues central to improving social, economic and cultural outcomes for Indigenous West Australians.

The Agreement contains three **Priorities**:

D. **Early childhood** – a key focus of which will be improved mental and physical health, and in particular primary health, and early educational outcomes;

E. **Safer communities** – which includes issues of authority, law and order, but necessarily also focuses on dealing with issues of governance to ensure that communities are functional and effective – and developing community capacity; and

F. **Building Indigenous wealth, employment and entrepreneurial culture** – as these are integral to boosting economic development and reducing poverty and dependence.

Flowing from the three Priorities are six **key outcome areas**:

- *Law and order and safe places for people* – encompassing effective policing; fair justice system; and responses to family violence, child abuse, and substance abuse including petrol sniffing;

- *Skills, jobs and opportunities* – encompassing employment opportunities; building investment and asset ownership; and home ownership;

- *Healthy and strong people* – encompassing primary health care services; early childhood services; parent support/education; and culturally appropriate early childhood curriculum;

- *Sustainable environmental health and infrastructure* – encompassing housing; infrastructure (roads, aerodromes etc), essential services (power, water and sewerage) and municipal (local government) services;

- *Land, sea and culture* – encompassing native title issues; and art centre development; and

- *Strong leadership and governance* – encompassing governance of infrastructure; of communities in acute crisis; and engagement with Indigenous people.

Implementation of each key outcome area under the Agreement is the responsibility of a senior officer group (SOG) incorporating representatives from the relevant State and Commonwealth Governments, along with Local Government where appropriate. Each SOG has its own Action Plan including relevant milestones and performance indicators. The Agreement notes that where appropriate, these indicators may either replicate, or link to, performance measures in the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) framework.

Terms of Reference

The Senior Officer Group's **objective** is:
In achieving the objective, the Group will consult and work with Indigenous people and other stakeholders, particularly the relevant senior officer groups under the Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs, to:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5. ETC

Membership

Western Australian Government
The membership of the Group will comprise senior representatives (to be nominated by respective Directors General) from the following Western Australian Government agencies:

Australian Government
Membership will comprise the State Manager or nominee from:

Local Government (if applicable)
Western Australian Local Government Association
Local Government Managers Australia

Others
The Group may also include, as required, representation from key stakeholders including:

Secretariat

Monitoring, Reporting and Accountability

Attachment 1 to this Action Plan shows the linkages between the OID headline indicators and the Agreement's priorities (page one), as well as between the OID strategic change indicators as relevant to this key outcome area of the Agreement (page two).

The SOG will report quarterly to both the State Directors General Group on Indigenous Affairs (DGGIA) and the Commonwealth State Managers Group (SMG), which are in turn responsible to their respective Ministers. **Attachment 2** to this Action Plan is the template for these quarterly reports.

Twice yearly it is anticipated that the Inter-governmental Indigenous Affairs Group (IIAG), which consists of senior representatives from key State and Commonwealth Government agencies will meet to jointly review progress, and consider new proposals for cooperative action (subject to approval by the DGGIA (State) and the Secretaries' Group on Indigenous Affairs (Commonwealth). The governance structure for the Bilateral Agreement is at **Attachment 3** to this Action Plan.

The Agreement allows for a joint mid-term review after two years of its operation, and a final review at the conclusion of the Agreement.

A lead agency is indicated in the Action Plan below as responsible for completing each required action. Other agencies/entities are shown as contributing inputs towards achievement of each action.

PART 2: ACTION PLAN

Action required	Location (Optional)	Lead Agency -	Other Agencies	Timeframe (for current financial year: mm/yyyy; for outyears: yyyy)	
				Start	End
PRIORITY AREA [drawn from Bilateral Agreement]: Objective [aligned with relevant strategic change indicator, drawn from Monitoring & Review Framework]: Strategic focus area: [optional]					
1					
1.1					
1.2					
2					
2.1					
2.2					
3					
4					
PRIORITY AREA [drawn from Bilateral Agreement]: Objective [aligned with relevant strategic change indicator, drawn from Monitoring & Review Framework]: Strategic focus area: [optional]					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
etc					

[plus Action Plan Template Attachments 1 –3 as described above under 'Monitoring, Reporting and Accountability' – to be drawn from the Bilateral Agreement Governance Charter]

BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS
PROGRESS REPORT
(Date: _____)

Outcome Area: [eg. Land, Sea and Culture]
Lead Agency: [eg. Department of Indigenous Affairs]

1. **Achievements Against Action Plan Objectives since last report (where possible linked to Key Performance Indicators for that Objective)**

2. **Key Issues arising**

3. **Actions/Inputs required – including timeframes and responsible agency**

4. **Recommendation(s) for DG Group**

BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS
SENIOR OFFICER GROUP PROGRESS REPORT (Date: dd/mm/yyyy)

OUTCOME AREA: _____

LEAD AGENCY (SOG CHAIR): _____

Part 1: Achievements against Action Plan Objectives

	ACTION	START DATE	END DATE	STATUS*	EXPLANATION [comments required for 'amber' or 'red', otherwise optional]
1	(Lead Agency)				
1.1	(Lead Agency)				
1.2	(Lead Agency)				
1.3	(Lead Agency)				
2	(Lead Agency)				

* **Status:**

⬤ = Progressing according to plan

⬤ = Issues for resolution; delays may occur

⬤ = Significant problems arising; achievement of objective will be seriously delayed or not occur.

N/A = Action is not yet due to commence

Part 2: Overview of progress and achievements [optional]

Part 3: Issues for resolution [optional]

1.
2.

Part 4: Recommendations

1.
2.

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INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION:

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Prepared for the Office of Aboriginal Health,
Health Department of Western Australia

by

Susan Eslick and Leslie Gevers

Leslie Gevers Community Management Services
September 2000

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ATTACHMENTS:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper has been developed for the Office of Aboriginal Health, Health Department of Western Australia in order to help identify recent and current intersectoral collaborative efforts, and to analyse the critical success factors of intersectoral collaboration.

Collaborative work is recognised by the Office of Aboriginal Health as an important strategy in addressing the health needs of Aboriginal people.

It is acknowledged that health issues are complex and cannot be adequately addressed without reference to the underlying causes. This is particularly true in Aboriginal health where the underlying causes relate to the disadvantage faced by Aboriginal people in a broad range of social and welfare areas including poverty, unemployment, poor housing, poor nutrition and low education levels.

The outcome objectives for a range of government and non-government human services programs will therefore contribute to health outcomes for Aboriginal people. As the issues are complex and multi-dimensional, they cannot be resolved by one agency or sector working in isolation. In the words of the UK Social Exclusion Unit, *"joined up problems require joined up solutions"*.

Over the past few years a number of intersectoral collaborative projects have been initiated at national, State and local/community levels. Whilst not all of these projects have been evaluated, it is clear that some projects have been effective in producing valuable outcomes whilst others have become 'bogged down' in process.

This paper is an attempt to identify those factors that lead to successful outcomes.

The research for this paper has included a literature search of national and international literature on collaboration in the human services and interviews with people in Western Australia who are involved in collaborative projects.

This paper discusses the factors that affect the success or otherwise of intersectoral collaboration. The paper also provides examples of collaborative projects from Western Australia and overseas. A checklist of key success factors is provided for use to enhance collaborative work.

The report concludes that there are a number of factors that are critical to the success of intersectoral collaboration. These include:

- strong leader/skilled convenor;
- adequate resources;
- shared vision;
- relevant key stakeholders are included;
- issues are a priority and members see collaboration as being in their self-interest;

- good relationships between members based on respect, understanding and trust; and

- members have a commitment to both the process and the goals.

1.

INTRODUCTION

This paper has been developed for the Office of Aboriginal Health in recognition that improving the health of Aboriginal people requires working with other sectors to address the underlying determinants of health.

The purpose of this paper is to:

- identify and summarise current and recent intersectoral collaborative efforts applicable to health in Western Australia; and

- analyse critical success factors and lessons to be learned from these efforts.

Methodology

The methodology for this project has included the following:

- a literature search of national and international materials;

- the development of a discussion paper based on the literature search;

- the identification of current intersectoral projects;

- interviews with individuals and groups involved in intersectoral projects; and

- an interagency workshop held to consider the discussion paper and identify key success factors.

The information in this paper is based on the above sources.

Background

The need to work across sectors to achieve health outcomes has been well documented by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

In the 'Health for All Strategy' by the WHO, the working group argued that collaboration or 'partnerships' must constitute a core component of the World Health Organisation Strategy.[1]

"Intersectoral cooperation for achieving health goals has been accepted as one of the guiding principles of the health strategy that was adopted at the International Conference on Primary Health Care (Alma-Ata, USSR, 1978). This strategy reordered the priorities in the health sector, made primary health care its main focus, and moved from a perspective of health that was predominantly disease-oriented and curative to one that emphasised the prevention of ill health, the removal of health risks and the promotion of health. Conceived in these terms, the improvement of health required more than the services delivered by the health sector alone; the contribution of other sectors – in particular agriculture, animal husbandry, food, industry, education, housing, public works and communications – was explicitly recognised as vital for improving the health and well-being of the population."[1]

The linkages between health and development have been demonstrated world wide, for example, health gains due to improvement in living conditions and nutrition. In spite of this

"health planning has remained a more or less self-contained exercise within the health sector, carried out principally by health professionals, in relative isolation from other development processes. This isolation is reinforced by the tendency of most sectors to perceive health as comprising mainly medical services and their output."[2]

The need for collaboration, noted by the World Health Organisation was reflected in Australia in the 1996 bilateral agreement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health between the State and Commonwealth.[3]

In this agreement, the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of Western Australia agreed to foster collaboration from a range of sectors which contribute to health and well being.[3] These include: agriculture, local government, land, animal husbandry, socio-political, cultural, food, industry, education, communications and community infrastructure such as housing and public works. Collaboration would be fostered through:

(a)   cross government processes comprising the Western Australian government departments, local government, the community and their representatives; and

(b)   exploring innovative options for better intersectoral collaboration.[3]

This agreement is currently being renegotiated, and the Commonwealth is considering the role of intersectoral collaboration in a review of the National Aboriginal Health Strategy.[4]

In a report on the progress made under the bilateral agreement, the Commonwealth reported that the partnerships approach has been successful and has produced positive results in the following areas.[5]

● development of regional planning processes;

● development of State, Territory and national level forums for policy advice and planning;

● improved access to mainstream health services;

● increased resources for Aboriginal health; and

● improved data collection and evaluation mechanisms.

The above report identifies several key areas where there is a need for further collaboration.[5] These include:

● workforce development – increasing the number of skilled health care professionals in Aboriginal health;

● the need for good quality data on the health needs of Aboriginal people; and

● community development to build the long term sustainability of community based services and programs.

Within Western Australia, the Office of Aboriginal Health has a strong commitment to intersectoral collaboration and a history of working collaboratively on a number of successful projects ranging from environmental health to road safety.

However, it is recognised that not all attempts at collaborative work achieve the same successes. The Office of Aboriginal Health has commissioned this paper to enhance collaborative work by identifying the signposts that assist collaboration and the key success factors and barriers to collaboration.

Definition

Winer (1994) defines collaboration as follows:

> *"Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organisations to achieve common goals.*
>
> *The relationship includes a commitment to:*
>
> ● *mutual relationships and goals;*
> ● *a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility;*
> ● *mutual authority and accountability for success; and*
> ● *sharing of resources and rewards."*[6]

Many people use the term collaboration interchangeably with coordination and cooperation. The three terms can be viewed on a sliding scale with collaboration at one end and cooperation at the other. **In collaboration, resources are pooled and the outcomes jointly owned.** In cooperation, information is shared as needed but the resources and outcomes are separately owned.

Benefits of collaboration

Implicit in 'successful collaboration' is the achievement of goals or outcomes that relate to the priorities of each participant.

The benefits of intersectoral collaboration can include:

- the achievement of a mutual goal that would be unattainable if each sector were working alone;

- the ability to address barriers external to the sector or organisation;

- improved capacity to address the organisation's goals;

- reduced costs and/or risks;

- the ability to take advantage of other's strengths; and

- improved access to technical information or expertise.[7]

Collaboration at different levels

Collaborative projects are often called 'partnerships'.

Partnerships occur at different levels. At a national level the focus is on setting a broad framework for collaboration with clear goals or priorities.

At a State level the broad national framework is translated into State policy and priorities and infrastructure development such as training, research and financing.

At a local level, collaboration is action orientated and involves the implementation of projects or the delivery of services.

Some projects require collaboration at all three levels for successful outcomes to be achieved.

Collaboration at the State/national level

Collaboration at a State or national level is often initiated by government. A broad framework for collaboration is set at a political or Chief Executive Officer level and passed down to senior managers to implement.

Participants at the interagency workshop held during this project reported that staff can become frustrated at the large number of interagency projects that they are required to work on without any acknowledgement of their competing demands or without any additional resources.

Often these projects appear to the community to be initiated on an ad-hoc basis rather than as part of an overall, cross-government planned approach to meeting the State or Commonwealth's overall priorities.

Collaboration at the local level

In contrast to collaboration at a State or national level, successful outcomes are often more easily achieved from collaboration at the local or 'grass roots' level. Workers at the grass roots level often already know their colleagues in other agencies and have previous experience of working together. These workers are usually focussed on doing what needs to be done to meet the needs of the clients rather than focussing on higher level corporate goals and priorities.

Such collaborative projects are usually voluntary and locally initiated.

The success of collaborative projects at the local level may require collaboration at a State or national level for the development of policy or the allocation of resources.

Mandated/voluntary collaboration

This paper is mainly, but not exclusively, focussing on mandated collaboration initiated at the State level, rather than voluntary collaboration initiated at the local level.

Mandated collaboration occurs when the decision to undertake a collaborative project is made at the political or senior level, and agencies are instructed 'from above' to work together to achieve certain outcomes.

It is useful to distinguish these two types of collaboration as different issues can arise. Whilst voluntary collaboration is often the most easy to achieve, mandated collaboration can be equally successful.

Kagan (1991) notes that collaboration under a mandate can work successfully when:

1. Sufficient resources back up the requirements.

2. Pre-established goals are broad.

3. Local capacity and will is supported.

4. Members of the collaboration can capitalise on and not be constrained by the mandate.[8]

Success factors for intersectoral collaboration

Through a literature review of State, national and international collaborative work and discussion with stakeholders in Western Australia, a number of factors have been identified. These can be grouped into the following categories:

- ➤ The Mandate for Collaboration
- ➤ The Topics Around Which We Collaborate
- ➤ The Agencies Involved
- ➤ The People Involved
- ➤ Features of the Collaborative Structure

These categories are interdependent, and successful collaboration relies on each of them being addressed. These are described in the following sections and a range of examples of collaboration included.

2.

THE MANDATE FOR COLLABORATION

Successful collaboration requires a clear mandate and strong leadership. This includes both the need for the lead agency to be recognised as having a mandate and key role in regard to the issue and the need for an individual with leadership qualities.

Mandate

Each organisation involved needs a mandate to work collaboratively on the issue. If the action is at a central policy level, the mandate may need to come from the government. If the proposed action is at a grass-roots level, the mandate may need to come from senior management. Along with this mandate there needs to be an acknowledgement of the potential shared benefits and a commitment of resources.

Leadership

Successful collaboration often depends upon strong championing of the cause by a well respected authority figure. The leader and lead agency needs to have sufficient power and authority to bring the group together, and must also have excellent team building skills. Charismatic leadership is often cited as a key success factor. However, all participants must have some leadership skills and be able to gain broad support for the issue and the collaborative strategy from within their own agency.

Acknowledgement/authority

Collaboration is more likely to succeed when the collaborative group is acknowledged as a leader in regard to the issue by the community.

Lead agency

One agency needs to take on the coordination role and be prepared to commit the necessary resources to this task. This agency must have the confidence and trust of the other players. The agency needs to identify an individual who will carry out this role (see section 5: The People Involved).

**Example of the importance of mandate and leadership.
The Social Exclusion Unit (UK) [9,10]**

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Social exclusion is a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.

In the past, governments have had policies that tried to deal with each of these problems individually, but there has been little success at tackling the complicated links between them, or preventing them from arising in the first place.

The 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen recognised that poverty and social exclusion is a global problem that cannot be addressed by one sector alone. Heads of government attending this forum made a commitment to work in partnership *"with all sectors of civil society and in the context of a multidimensional and integrated approach"* to eradicate poverty and address social exclusion.[9]

THE SOCIAL EXCLUSION UNIT

The Social Exclusion Unit was set up by the British Prime Minister in December 1997. Its purpose is to help improve government action to reduce social exclusion by producing *"joined up solutions to joined up problems"*.[9,10] Most of its work is based on specific projects, which the Prime Minister chooses following consultation with other Ministers and suggestions from interested groups. The unit is staffed by a mixture of civil servants and people seconded from external agencies. They come from a number of government departments and from organisations with experience in tackling social exclusion – for example, the probation service, housing, police, local authorities, the voluntary sector and business.

The Unit does not deal with issues which are dealt with by one government department only, or duplicate work being done elsewhere. It does devote time to participating in wider interdepartmental work that has a close bearing on social exclusion.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Unit reports directly to the Prime Minister and is located within the Cabinet Office. In preparing its reports, it draws extensively on research, external expertise, good practice and promising ideas. Members of the Unit visit and consult widely with local authorities, business, the voluntary sector and other agencies and people who have direct experience of social exclusion.

The Unit works very closely with departmental officials and Ministers. Policy decisions in the Unit's reports are cleared through the appropriate committees, and implemented by departments. Any policy changes proposed have clear follow up action, targets and evaluation plans.

THE UNIT'S FIRST TWO YEARS

During its first two years, the Social Exclusion Unit has focused on five key areas. These are:

- Truancy and School Exclusion;
- Rough Sleeping;
- Neighbourhood Renewal;
- Teenage Pregnancy; and
- Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16-18 Year Olds not in Education, Employment or Training.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

A review of the Unit after its first two years of operation commented that the strengths of the Unit included:

- it is able to be more creative because it can join up government thinking;
- the Unit is inclusive and willing to listen;
- the staff are unusually successful in working with people outside of government;
- the Unit has the strong personal support of the Prime Minister; and
- the Unit is led by someone with the intellectual ability, commitment, energy and a fresh approach.

One of the weaknesses identified was that the Unit needed to develop its partnership with departments and be more explicit in giving them credit for their work.

3.

THE TOPICS AROUND WHICH WE COLLABORATE

Collaboration around some issues is much easier than around others. Collaboration is more likely to succeed when:

Definition

The issue is carefully defined. How the issue is defined will affect the strategies that are developed to address it. It is critical to get this stage right.

Priority

The issue is a priority for all agencies/sectors involved and they acknowledge some responsibility for the issue.

For example: the Foundations for the Future program in the Northern Territory has identified six domains for action.[11] These have been identified through extensive consultation and were agreed to as priority areas across all relevant agencies.

Tangible benefit

The issue is complex and there is acknowledgement that it cannot be solved by one agency alone. Each agency perceives that there will be a tangible benefit in working together.

Good information

Good information is available on the issue (for example, information on the extent of the issue, its causes etc.). If good information is not available, this may become one of the initial tasks of the collaborative project.

A common, shared database or information source that all players have confidence in is enormously helpful for collaborative work.

Shared understanding

There needs to be a shared understanding of the issue, its causes and appropriate responses. The responses of different agencies may differ but there needs to be a shared acknowledgement of this and a respect for each response.

There is agreement between agencies on the outcomes that are aimed for and a shared vision of what 'success' looks like.

Policy on sharing information

Each agency will have individual policy about sharing information, particularly information about clients. Protocols for the sharing of information between agencies may be essential for collaboration on a particular issue.

Example of the importance of topic choice.
Aboriginal Road Safety and Awareness Project

The Aboriginal Road Safety and Awareness Project is a joint project between the Office of Aboriginal Health and the WA Police Service.

The project was initiated approximately seven years ago following a discussion between a senior representative from each department. Both agencies were concerned about the high rate of Aboriginal death and injuries from road transport crashes in the Kimberley.

Initially these two officers submitted a proposal to their respective agencies and went on a tour of the Kimberley region to assess local needs and to see if there was local 'on the ground' support for their proposal.

Additional agencies such as the Office of Road Safety were brought in over time and the project was expanded to cover the whole State.

Both agencies have their own Aboriginal Road Safety and Awareness Programs, with their own objectives, priorities and funding. These programs share a common aim of reducing road trauma.

Initiatives can be developed by either agency, or the community at a local level or at a central level. Proposed new initiatives are considered by the program manager within the relevant department. These program managers work closely together to:

- share information;

- provide feedback on initiatives from within each department; and

- provide resources for each other's initiatives (resources can include money, skills, networks and materials).

The successful implementation of projects on the ground relies on collaboration from a range of local stakeholders including:

- police;
- health services;
- schools;
- business sector;

and more importantly, the Aboriginal community themselves.

Whilst the Police and Office of Aboriginal Health are unable to directly fund initiatives of the other department, they can both fund a community organisation.

Cross agency support can also be invaluable in helping program managers to gain support for a new initiative from within their own agency.

Since the commencement of the project, a number of programs have been developed. These include:

- Women's Licensing

  A project to encourage more Aboriginal women in the Kimberley to obtain driving licenses as they are less likely to drink and drive than men.

- Fun Kart Program

  This program aims to teach Aboriginal youth in remote communities good road user skills.

- Radio Messages

  Messages targeting road safety are broadcast on Aboriginal community radio stations.

- First Aid Training

  This program includes first aid training and encouraging Aboriginal people to become ambulance drivers.

- High Speed Pursuits

  This project aims at addressing the underlying contributing health factors to Aboriginal juvenile car theft and high speed pursuits, including alcohol and other drugs.

- Interlock Program

  This program is being trialed in three communities. An interlock device is fitted to cars to prevent alcohol affected drivers from using the vehicle.

- Reach for the Dream Role Model Program

  This project is contracted to the WA Football Commission to encourage healthy lifestyles.

The Aboriginal Road Safety and Awareness Project won the inaugural 1997 and the 1999 Insurance Commission of WA Awards for Road Safety.

Whilst both the Office of Aboriginal Health and the WA Police Service have committed resources to the project, it does not receive large scale funding (approximately $250,000 pa).

A strength of the project is the ability to mobilise existing resources on the ground.

Key success factors identified by both agencies include:
- personal commitment and strong interest from all involved;
- good data is available on the issue;
- a high priority is placed on the issue by all participants;
- the project has strong support at all levels within the agencies;
- the establishment of good relationships – trust between the key players;

- a commitment from the community to participate in the programs;
- good knowledge of the resources available within government and the community;
- an understanding of the roles, responsibilities and priorities of each agency;
- strong, proactive leadership; and
- good communication between agencies and individuals.

Agencies involved identified factors that could present barriers in the future. These relate to:

- the characteristics of participants;
- people with hidden agendas, or
- having the wrong person in a key role.

4.

THE AGENCIES INVOLVED

The way an organisation is structured and managed can impact upon its ability to work collaboratively with other agencies. The following issues need to be considered:

Appropriate partners

It is important that all of the agencies who are key stakeholders for an issue are included. Examples have been cited where an agency has not been invited to participate in collaborative work because of historical differences between agencies or individuals within those agencies. Collaboration may be doomed to failure if some of the key players are excluded as the collaboration may not achieve the necessary recognition from other players and the community and the excluded agency may undermine the collaboration.

Structures/planning frameworks

It is important to look at where decisions are made. It can be difficult to work together if decisions are made at a regional level in one agency, but at a State or Commonwealth level within another agency.

Collaboration often involves joint planning. This can be difficult or even impossible to achieve if an agency has structured/inflexible planning frameworks that are not synchronised with those of other agencies. For example:

• different timeframes (e.g. three year plans);

• different consultative processes (e.g. regional planning forums); and

• different geographical boundaries.

Some successful collaboration projects have involved a lead agency taking responsibility for maintaining a central database and for disseminating information for planning purposes. This central agency may be one of the collaborative partners or may sit outside/above this structure.

Agency objectives/reporting requirements

In order for collaboration projects to be supported, each agency must be able to describe the success of the project in relation to their own objectives.

This can be an issue for collaborative partnerships involving State and Commonwealth agencies where each agency has a different agenda and priorities.

Objectives which are customer or outcome focussed rather than input or program focussed can provide a common reference point for agencies around which they can develop collaborative work. The outcomes from a range of programs may all contribute to a customer focussed objective.

At a State level there are a set of performance objectives common across all State government agencies that are negotiated with the Auditor General. However, the Financial, Administration and Audit Act requires each agency to report on its specific outputs. It can therefore be difficult for State government agencies to report on collaborative projects within the Financial, Administration and Audit Act framework. The use of impact audits may partly overcome this issue, as the focus would be on describing the impact (on the client group) of a program, rather than on quantifying outputs.

Commitment of time and resources

Participating organisations must be prepared to commit resources to the project. This includes time for staff to attend meetings and carry out the follow-up work. Organisations may also be required to provide additional resources including financial resources, specialist skills or expertise, and/or administrative support.

Culture of working across sectors

In organisations that already have a culture of working across sectors, intersectoral collaboration around a new issue is much easier to achieve. New ideas are less likely to be treated with suspicion and the potential benefits more readily accepted.

Collaboration will be more difficult to achieve if there is historical disagreement between agencies or previous ineffective attempts at working together. Organisations may need to do work on developing a culture of intersectoral collaboration.

Ideology

Differences in ideology and belief about the issue or the target group can lead to misunderstandings and inflexible approaches. It is important to reach a common understanding on these issues early on if collaboration is to succeed.

**Example of importance of shared agency agendas.
Aboriginal Health – Joint Planning Forums**

The 1996 bilateral agreement on Aboriginal health between the State and Commonwealth governments included the establishment of joint planning forums as one of the aims of the agreement. This agreement was signed by the State and Commonwealth governments and ATSIC and witnessed by the WA Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (WAACCHO).[3]

The joint planning forum did not get underway until 1998 and included two representatives each from ATSIC, Commonwealth and State health departments and one representative from each of the six WAACCHO regions. As the chair of the national body for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), resides in WA, he was also included in the forum. The joint planning forum meets quarterly.

A number of government officers or advisors (up to 10) also attend meetings and contribute to the discussion.

At a State level, this planning forum has had mixed success and for a time WAACCHO pulled out of the forum altogether. However, one of the key achievements has been the development of a State health plan and regional health plans.

Six regional planning forums were developed, each regional forum had eight members (two ATSIC, two State, two Commonwealth and two WAACCHO) but could also co-opt other key stakeholders from the region, for example, Aboriginal Affairs Department and general health managers. Each region developed their own process for producing a regional plan.

The Office of Aboriginal Health provided administrative support to this process and supplied quantitative data on health issues. Commonwealth funding of up to $50,000 per region was also available to support the process. The forums were chaired by the regional WAACCHO representative.

The regional plans have been summarised into a State health plan, however the process for the implementation of the State plan is not commonly agreed by all joint planning forum members. For example, WAACCHO would like involvement in the allocation of resources through the joint planning forum. The process has raised expectations within regions that they will be further consulted and resourced for the implementation of these plans.

There are a number of areas in this example where there does not appear to be a common agreement or understanding, and these create a barrier for collaboration. These include:

- Focus of the planning. Should plans be implemented at the regional or State level?

- Allocation of resources. What role does the joint planning forum have?

- Who should provide services (mainstream and/or Aboriginal community controlled services)?

- Corporate guidelines. What guidelines do government agencies have that place restrictions on collaborative decision making?

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

The lessons to be learned from this project include:

- the need to identify a common goal or shared agenda in the very early stages of the collaboration (the outcomes for each agency may still differ);

- the need to develop an agreed philosophical framework;

- the importance of specifying the role and responsibilities of the collaborative group and each individual member agency;

- the need for someone to take a strong leadership role;

- the importance of having a mandate for action;

- the need to keep forums small (no more than 12 members is often suggested);

- the importance of broad support from all agencies;

- a strong agreement and commitment to both the process and the goals of the project from key players;

- the need for adequate resourcing (including administrative support); and

- the need to understand the role and limitations of each agency.

5.

THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

The skills and attributes of the individual people involved in intersectoral work are critical to the success of a project. Whilst it is sectors or agencies who are collaborating, the initiative will not succeed if the wrong people are doing the work. Sometimes the individuals who have been identified as having the skills and commitment to the issue are not the people who are given the mandate to be involved. Conversely, those with the level of authority required may not have the skills or interest in the topic.

It may therefore require a considerable amount of negotiation between and within agencies to form an effective collaborative team. The following are essential:

Skills and attitudes

Good team work skills are important for all participants. These include communication and negotiation skills. Effective team-building skills are essential for the leader.

Also vital to good team work are the personal attributes of commitment, trust and respect. Many interagency groups studied in this project have cited good personal relationships and friendships between individuals as one of the keys to successful collaboration. Continuity of membership is therefore important.

A strong background, and knowledge and skills in the topic are also important attributes for the individuals involved in collaborative work.

Mandate

The worker must have a mandate to act and must have the support of the agency. The agency representative must be able and prepared to make decisions and allocate resources. The collaborative project needs to be recognised as an important aspect of the individual's work, not as an add-on to their normal workload.

Reward

The efforts and achievements of the individuals involved need to be acknowledged and rewarded by their organisation. Participation in intersectoral work may be recognised as a development opportunity for the participant.

Example of the importance of the individual's contribution.
Inter-Governmental Working Group (IGWG)
Environmental Health Needs Coordinating Committee (EHNCC)[12]

Historically, Aboriginal environmental health has been an area where a lack of coordination and cooperation between Commonwealth and State agencies responsible for program and service delivery has led to a pattern of duplication, waste and frustration for Aboriginal communities and for agency representatives.

As a consequence, Aboriginal people, particularly children, continue to suffer health problems at a rate considerably higher than the general Australian population.

The common factor in this recurring pattern of disease and early death in Aboriginal communities is poor environmental health conditions.

In 1995 the Western Australian government developed an interagency strategy to encourage cooperation and collaboration between agencies responsible for environmental health across all levels of government.

This is a three tiered structure of coordinating forums:

- the Environmental Health Needs Coordinating Committee (EHNCC);

- its associated Inter-Government Working Party (IGWG); and

- a network of Regional Coordinating Forums.

The EHNCC and IGWG share the same agency membership – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), the Aboriginal Affairs Department (AAD), Health Department of Western Australia, Health and Aged Care Services, Aboriginal Housing Directorate of Homeswest and the Western Australian Municipal Association.

There are currently four Regional Coordinating Forums at Kununurra, Derby, Broome and Port Hedland with another soon to commence at Geraldton.

A further body, the Aboriginal Affairs Coordination Committee (AACC) is established as a statutory committee representing Chief Executive Officers of State and Commonwealth agencies. This committee has a decision-making role and has endorsed IGWG to advance the goal of eliminating substandard living conditions in Aboriginal communities.

The EHNCC is chaired by the State Manager of ATSIC, and IGWG is chaired by AAD. AAD provides administrative support to IGWG. The EHNCC Secretariat is provided by ATSIC.

ACHIEVEMENTS

This strategy has shown how a coordinated, collaborative approach has succeeded in an area where agencies working in isolation of each other have had limited success.

The most outstanding achievement to date has been the Environmental Health Needs Survey undertaken in 1997. This is the most comprehensive profile yet achieved of

Western Australia's Aboriginal communities and has achieved recognition as the national benchmark.

Each department contributed a sum of $50,000 for this survey. The funds were held by the Office of Aboriginal Health in a trust account controlled by IGWG.

A further significant achievement has been the development of a Code of Practice.

The Code of Practice is based on the underlying principle of 'normalisation' and seeks to raise the basic living standard necessary to achieve long term, sustainable improvements in Aboriginal environmental health. The document seeks to regulate the design, construction and maintenance of housing and essential service infrastructure and will be enforced through the contractual conditions of funding agencies. The document was endorsed by the AACC in April 2000.

Collaboration of IGWG members has led to the resolution of complex and critical issues at a number of communities. For example, upgrading of the entire water system for an Aboriginal community in the Kimberley following the outbreak in early 1999 of the water borne virus meliodosis. Three deaths from the disease necessitated an immediate cross-agency response because the problem was too big for any one agency to handle alone.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

The key success factors of the IGWG/EHNCC strategy identified by the members are listed below under five headings.

1.   **Focus**

   - the group has clearly identified and mutually agreed goals and a shared philosophy;

   - the group works hard to maintain a sharp focus and does not allow others to divert it; and

   - IGWG is focussed on outcomes or the implementation of strategies rather than consultation.

2.   **Agencies Involved**

   - membership has been deliberately kept small and limited to agencies for which environmental health is 'core business' (six agencies are represented); and

   - all agencies have a strong commitment to working together on mutually agreed goals.

3.   **People**

   The individuals involved:

   - are strongly committed to the project;

   - are open and honest and have no vested interest or private agendas;

   - have trust and mutual respect for each other;

- have a good background and knowledge in the issues;
- have delegated authority to make decisions;
- have the strong support of their agency; and
- are motivated because the strategy helps them to do their job.

4. **Structure**

- the three tiered structure links policy decision with implementation;
- formal structures are in place around membership, meetings etc; and
- one agency has taken on the lead role.

5. **Process**

- the strategy has adequate administrative support;
- achievements are well promoted within each participating agency;
- resources are available to implement decisions; and
- there is an ability to jointly fund strategies outside the mandate or resource capacity of any one agency.

BARRIERS

- the internal policies of agencies makes it very difficult to do something like pooling funds into a shared account; and
- restructuring or internal upheavals in any one agency can impact upon the achievements of the whole group.

6.

FEATURES OF THE COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

There a number of key features that are common to successful collaborative structures and processes. These are as follows:

Communication

Good communication between collaborative partners is essential. Formal and informal communication links are required to keep each other informed of relevant issues and developments, to share factual information and relevant data, and to allow open and honest discussion on differences of opinion.

Clear roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of each player needs to be clarified and respected by all participants. There needs to be an understanding of where each agency fits in, in regards to the issue, the type of contributions they can make and their limitations.

The more players involved in a collaborative project, the greater the need to formalise procedures. Formalised procedures are important for initiatives to be sustained over time and when the individual players move on. Formalised procedures can include:

- written terms of reference;
- meeting procedures;
- membership;
- roles and responsibilities of each player; and
- decision making processes.

Equity

Whilst agencies will differ in their role and the resources that they can commit to a project, it is important that the contribution of all members is equally valued. Where inequalities are apparent, there may need to be some capacity building with a particular sector or agency in order for them to participate as an equal partner.

Sharp focus

Collaborative work needs to stay focused. The sharper the focus, the greater the chance of success. Groups who are successfully working on one issue are often asked to take on other issues. It is important that they be flexible but stay focussed on their goals.

Some examples in the literature suggest that a narrower focus may be more likely to yield results and to keep coalition members optimistic about their ability to make an impact. For example, Lewis et al. (1996) report on a U.S. community-based substance abuse coalition whose adult and youth members issued citations to supermarket, liquor store, and convenience store clerks who sold tobacco and alcohol to minors.[13] The coalition succeeded in reducing alcohol sales in the 'citizen's surveillance' neighborhood from 83% to 33% - an outcome they attributed to targeting a specific neighborhood (rather than the entire community) with higher doses of the intervention.

Limited size

It is much easier to reach agreement and stay focussed if the number of players are limited. This needs to be balanced with the range of skills, experience and ideas that can be brought to an issue by a diverse membership. A maximum membership of 12 was suggested by some participants in this project.

Autonomy

In instances when collaboration is mandated from above, it is more likely to succeed if the objectives and structure imposed on the group are broad. The group needs to have the autonomy and flexibility to define it's own outcomes and strategic plan and to develop its own ways of working.

Decision making structures

Structures need to be in place for people working together on the ground level to make recommendations when policy decisions need to be made or resources committed. Similarly, when policy decisions are made regarding collaborative work there needs to be structures and processes in place on the ground level to implement those decisions.

Promote achievements

It is important that each agency is given public recognition for the achievements of collaborative work that they are involved in. Small achievements early on will help cement the agency's commitment to the process. The work plan needs to ensure that there are stepped achievements along the way. In order to maintain support for the process, each agency will need to demonstrate that the achievements are commensurate with resources that they have put into the project.[7]

Dealing with conflict

Intersectoral collaboration is based on an understanding that differences help to create innovative solutions.[7] It is, therefore, to be expected that tensions will arise. Processes need to be in place to ensure that tension is used constructively and that any resulting conflict is dealt with appropriately.

Limited number of collaborative projects

There is a limit to the number of collaborative projects that an individual and an agency can effectively participate in.

For example: State government agencies in WA noted that there are currently a large number of cross sector projects that they are being required to work on. This is placing a strain on the resources of staff who sometimes feel that they are spending too much time attending meetings and have little time to attend to their other duties or to follow up on the actions arising from meetings.

Successful collaborative structures in other States and overseas (e.g. the Oregon Option and the U.K. Social Exclusion Unit) have a central coordinating body that works across all sectors to develop priority objectives for intersectoral action.[9,10,14,15]

Inclusive

Collaboration must include the population affected by the issue. This may be through representation on a working group or by effective consultation and feedback mechanisms that ensure that any strategies developed are appropriate and wanted.

Example of a structural solution.
The Oregon Option[14,15]

The 'Oregon Option' started in 1994 as a pilot program for providing federally funded public services within the State of Oregon, USA. The 'Oregon Option' was unique in that, rather than contracting funding according to the usual government guidelines, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between federal, State and local government agencies.

This MOU agreed on targets for improvement in a number of outcome areas. The initial agreement was for three priority areas:

● early childhood health;

● family stability; and

● workforce.

Intersectoral groups were developed to progress each priority area of this agreement.

BACKGROUND

In 1989 the Oregon Progress Board was established by legislation to oversee the implementation of the State's 20 year strategic plan. The Oregon Progress Board was a nine member independent panel chaired by the governor and made up of community leaders that reflected the diverse community.

The Progress Board established a set of benchmarks to monitor the progress of the strategic plan. These benchmarks were developed with extensive community involvement and became known as the 'Oregon Benchmarks'. The Progress Board gathers and distributes data on the benchmarks and encourages State and local government agencies and the non-government sector to use the benchmarks in their planning and reporting. These benchmarks have articulated the State's goals into one coherent plan with a set of measurable indicators, with priorities and targets to which all agencies have a commitment.

A number of intersectoral committees were established to implement different aspects of the State's strategic plan (e.g. the Commission on Children and Families).

Each committee was involved in the development of relevant benchmarks and targets and strategies for achieving these.

Over time the benchmarks have been used to guide State policy and budget development.

Over 30 State agencies use benchmark based planning, budgeting and management systems. For example, in 1992 agencies were asked to develop base budgets at 80% of projected current levels. An additional 10% could then be added for programs linked to benchmarks, and a further 10% for cross-agency efforts linked to one of 17 critical short-term benchmarks.

The use of benchmarks has been embraced by local government and the private and non-government sector who have established local benchmarks to complement the State ones.

The State worked closely with the federal government in this process and received strong support from the government at all levels. This led to federal funding for the 'Oregon Option' in 1997.

The 'Oregon Option' has become recognised internationally as a successful model for achieving measurable outcomes through a partnership approach. The achievements of the pilot program have been significant across many areas.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Factors central to the success of the intersectoral working groups implementing the 'Oregon Option' include:

- strong leadership from key government and non-government agencies and individuals;

- the agreement of benchmarks to provide commonly agreed goals and targets;

- autonomy of working groups to develop their own way;

- strong ties between federal government employees and Oregonians based on trust and personal relationships;

- strong allies within senior ranks of government;

- availability of good quality information to monitor the progress of benchmarks and measure the results of intersectoral work;

- partnerships with non-government agencies which have broken through the concept that 'the government is responsible for everything';

- enthusiasm at all three levels of government; and

- a written Memorandum of Understanding providing a framework for partnerships.

7.

THE STAGES OF COLLABORATION

Collaborative work can be described in four stages. These are as follows:

(1)   Vision
(2)   Plan
(3)   Action
(4)   Consolidation

Different skills and activities are involved at each stage. These stages are described below. Whilst the four stages are described consecutively, they are not discreet, and actions from each stage may be repeated at any time.

Stage 1: Vision

Collaboration usually starts with two or more people discussing an issue or sharing an idea.

The person or people who initiate the project are often charismatic people who are able to sell their vision to others and generate enthusiasm for and commitment to the project.

Activities at the 'visioning' stage may include:

- defining the issue;

- gathering and sharing data;

- carrying out cross agency needs based planning;

- consultation;

- analysing which agencies have a stake in the issue;

- identifying individuals within relevant agencies who are most likely to be supportive;

- identifying the threats, opportunities, potential barriers and impact of the proposed partnership;

- gathering support for the initiative from within ones own agency;

- establishing good communication channels between relevant agencies; and

- relationship building.

The configuration of coalition members is a coalition's greater asset, yet managing the tensions and conflicts among members is one of the first minefields that collaborative groups must face.[16] It is a challenge to select leaders who can validly represent their organisation and simultaneously contribute to the work of the partnership. Relationship building is important. Trying to 'leap frog' past the important phase of building trust with key stakeholders risks damaging or delaying even the best intentioned initiatives.[17]

In addition to trust issues, coalition members must also negotiate other types of conflict such as differences in agency philosophy or conflicts of interest related to funding decisions.

At some stage during the 'visioning' phase, the collaboration moves from being a collaboration between individuals to a collaboration between agencies.

At this stage a formal 'in principle' agreement to work together on the issue may be negotiated.

Critical to this stage is having:

- the right individuals;

- reliable/credible information on the issue; and

- a shared vision.
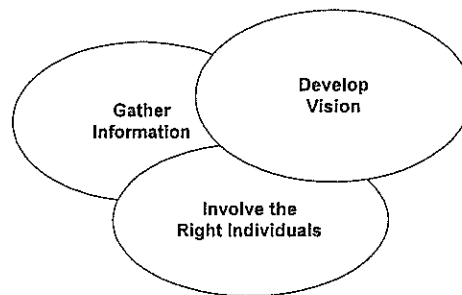
Stage 2: Plan

The second stage moves from individuals working together to identify and analyse an issue, to organisations working together to develop an interagency plan.

Collaboration that is mandated rather than voluntary may start at Stage 2. In this case it is important to check whether some of the actions in Stage 1 need to be included. For example, a group that is mandated to work on an issue may need to spend some time in building trust and personal relationships or in gaining support for the idea from within their own agency.

The planning stage may involve the following activities:

- developing shared outcome objectives;

- developing measures of success;

- developing an action plan;

- identifying what resources are required;

- consultation with the target community;

- clarifying roles and responsibilities of each agency;

- developing guidelines for the operation/management of the collaborative group;

- deciding who will lead the group;

- obtaining administrative support for the group; and

- securing a commitment from each agency to allocate the required resources, including support for the individual/s to devote the time required to the project.

Throughout these stages, the coalition must also maintain its members' satisfaction and activity levels.

Altman (1991) notes that up to half of all coalitions dissolve within their first year of operation because they cannot accomplish the basic tasks of forming a coalition.[18]

The literature provides many examples of coalitions with fatal leadership problems, conflicts of interest, disputes over resource allocation etc.[16]

Coalitions that survive these types of conflict point to the role of leaders who practice a democratic decision making style and who demonstrate strong conflict resolution, communication and administrative skills.[19]

Formal rules and procedures – such as by-laws, policy and procedure manuals, clearly defined roles and expectations for members, written goals and objectives, and memoranda of understanding among participating organisations – are associated in the literature with both successful implementation of coalition tasks and with overall survival.[16]

Stage 2 may involve a formal written agreement from each agency to commit the required resources to the project, especially if this includes a cash contribution.

Central to this stage is:

- holding the vision;

- commitment of needed resources; and

- the support of individuals and their agency.
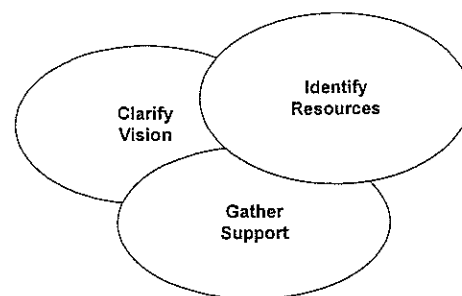
Stage 3: Action

Stage 3 involves the implementation of the action plan. This may include:

- joint management of an interagency strategy;

- implementation of strategies within individual agencies;

- mobilisation of resources within an agency;

- implementing a change in attitude or ways of working within an agency;

- monitoring results;

- communicating results back to key people in each agency;

- promoting achievements of the collaborative project;

- consultation; and

- communicating any issues and problem solving with other members of the collaborative group.

Different skills and contributions are needed as the work of the collaborative group proceeds. Whilst team building and conflict resolution skills were critical at the initial stages, the action stage requires functional skills and expertise in areas such as developing policy, fundraising and organising information.

Central to this stage of the project is:

- maintaining the shared vision;

- ensuring that the required action is followed through; and

- communicating achievements and problems.
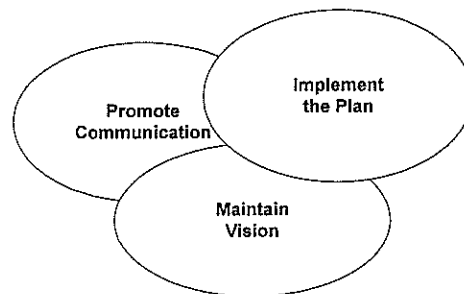
One possible explanation of why so many coalitions and collaboratives seem to 'stall' in a prolonged implementation stage is the poor quality of planning processes and their products.[16]

Stage 4: Consolidation

The fourth stage of collaboration is consolidation, or building the long term sustainability of the project. This may involve the following:

- evaluating the achievements of the project;

- reviewing the structure and processes of the group;

- reviewing the need for further collaboration at other levels (e.g. at a senior management level or regional level);

- reviewing the membership of the group;

- a review and recommitment of resources by each agency;

- reviewing the focus and objectives of the project;

- revising or developing a new action plan;

- formalising and writing down guidelines for the operation of the project; and

- consulting with the target community and each participating agency.

A number of factors make collaborative work difficult to evaluate. These include:

- the number of agencies involved;

- a broad number of strategies; and

- difficulty in attributing success to particular interventions.

Goodman and Wandersman (1994) have developed an evaluation model for collaborative work called FORECAST.[20] The FORECAST model ties evaluation tools to a coalition's developmental phases. The steps in the FORECAST process are:

- develop models for the nature of the problem and proposed programmatic action;

- develop markers that correspond with the modem of action;

- develop measures for each marker;

- develop meaning for determining how well the project is forming; and

- monitor the FORECAST process.

The key activities at the consolidation stage include:

- review the vision;

- evaluate the action; and

- renew the plans.
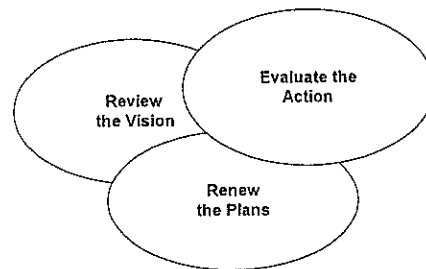
Example identifying the stages of collaboration.
'Smarter than Smoking', Health Promotion Campaign[21]

'Smarter than Smoking' is a health promotion project funded by Healthway aimed at reducing smoking amongst young people.

The project is managed by a coalition of health groups involved in tobacco control including the Health Department of WA, Healthway, Australian Council on Smoking and Health, National Heart Foundation and cancer and asthma groups.

The project initially received $1m over three years and was re-funded in 1998 for a further three years.

Healthway has used this project as a case study for coalitions in health promotion. The measures of coalition effectiveness used in the case study were as follows:

- member's satisfaction;

- member's participation/resources;

- accomplishment of objectives;

- health results/outcomes; and

- quality of action plan.

Taken together, these measures help achieve the health promotion goals of reduction in risk factors and improvement in health status.

The case study has identified three stages of coalition development:

- Stage 1 – development (formation);

- Stage 2 – stability (implementation); and

- Stage 3 – elaboration of structures (maintenance – accomplishment).

The case study also identified some lessons to be learned, in terms of key success factors. These are as follows:

- *"the need for formalised rules, roles and procedures;*

- *be aware of developmental stages;*

- *ensure small wins early;*

- *have strong, central leadership;*

- *a controversial issue may help!*

- *have a well developed action plan; and*

- *measure success in outcomes.* "[21]

8.

EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES IN INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION

The process of working collaboratively involves a commitment to both the collaborative process and the outcomes, and an ability to be a good team member in an interagency group as well as a leader in 'championing the cause' within ones own agency.

Satisfaction with the process means that the:

- individuals and agencies involved have established good relationships;

- there is a shared understanding of what is aimed for;

- issue/s being considered are a priority for all participants;

- contributions from all participants are valued; and

- agencies have made a commitment of time and resources to work together on this issue.

Satisfaction with the outcomes means that:

- each agency is given recognition for the achievements of the project;

- the achievements contribute to the agency's objectives;

- the achievements are considered to be commensurate with the resources; and

- the outcomes could not have been achieved by agencies working alone.

In Western Australia there are currently a large number of government and non-government collaborative initiatives. Some of these have been initiated by the government, and some by agencies working on the ground.

Government mandated intersectoral collaboration includes:

- Safer WA;
- Justice Coordinating Committee;
- Domestic Violence Prevention Unit, Action Plan Implementation Committee;
- Aboriginal Affairs Coordination Committee (Environmental Health);
- Joint Planning Forum for Aboriginal Health; and
- Building Blocks Program.

Typically these initiatives involve a range of collaborative forums at various levels including:

- Ministers;
- Chief Executive Officers;
- Management; and
- regional stakeholders.

They may also involve extensive consultation mechanisms with the community for needs based planning purposes.

The large number of mandated collaborative projects has led some agencies to report that they are required to attend so many interagency meetings that they have insufficient time to do their own job, or the follow-up on action that arises from the meetings. This may indicate that some mandated interagency work is not planned and properly resourced and does not necessarily address agencies' existing priorities. It is an 'add on' to existing work rather than a strategy for assisting agencies to better meet their priorities.

In contrast, the Oregon Option described in section 6: Features of the Collaborative Structure, developed a list of benchmarks and priorities through extensive consultation with all key stakeholders.[14,15] These provide common agreed priorities for all agencies to address. A limited number of priority areas were selected for intersectoral work. Similarly in the Northern Territory, the Foundations for the Future Model has identified six priority areas as common focii for government and non-government agencies.[11] The U.K. Social Exclusion Unit described in section 2: The Mandate for Collaboration, identified five key areas as a focus for its work.[9,10]

In the absence of an overall framework for selecting priorities for intersectoral work, individual projects will succeed or fail, based on:

- the strength of the mandate provided to them;

- leadership qualities;

- the topic being a priority for the work of each agency; and

- the availability of adequate resources.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE COALITIONS

Effective coalitions are often characterised by:

- a well defined, specific issue;
- agreed-upon vision and goal;
- solidarity among coalition members;
- clear, unambiguous adversary or health problem; and
- a leadership (v management) role.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FAILED COALITIONS

Failed coalitions are often characterised by:

- unclear, unrealistic, and/or vague goals;
- costs to members exceed benefits;
- responsibility without authority;
- top-down, external mandates; and
- unrealistic timeframes for success.[16]

9.

CONCLUSION: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The methodology for this project has included interviewing a number of individuals and groups who are involved in collaborative work and asking them what they considered to be the key factors that lead to the success of their group, or the key lessons to be learned.

In addition, an interagency workshop was held to discuss the success factors for collaboration, and participants were asked to list what they considered to be the six most important success factors. In all, over 30 people have been consulted.

A list of people and agencies consulted is included in attachment 1.

The key success factors most frequently mentioned by the respondents in the workshop and in individual interviews are shown in table 1 in attachment 2.

Mattessich (1992) conducted a more extensive study in the USA of over 130 pieces of 'collaborative research'.[22] The study came up with 19 factors that were believed to influence the success of collaborative efforts among organisations in the human services, government and other non-profit fields. These are shown in table 2 in attachment 2.

Whilst no direct comparison can be made of these two projects, those factors which are most frequently mentioned by both include:

- strong leader/skilled convenor;

- adequate resources;

- shared vision;

- relevant key stakeholders are included;

- issues are a priority and members see collaboration as being in their self-interest;

- good relationships between members based on respect, understanding and trust; and

- members have a commitment to both the process and the goals.

These factors were identified in the literature review and are discussed in sections 2 to 6. These factors are considered critical for the reasons outlined below.

Strong leader/skilled convenor

A strong leader and skilled convenor is essential to build a team with motivation, commitment and a common shared purpose. The leader must have the confidence and trust of all participants.

Without strong leadership the group can become fragmented, meetings can lack direction and decisions not be followed through. This leads to a lack of motivation and commitment and a drop-off in membership.

Adequate resources

Resources are needed to provide the required secretariat support to the collaborative team and to provide staff with the time to follow-up on work arising out of meetings. Financial resources may also be required to implement projects.

The lack of adequate resources can lead to poor organisation of the collaborative project, or the inability to fully implement the strategies arising from the collaboration.

Shared vision

Agencies must have a shared understanding of the issue, its causes and appropriate responses. Whilst the responses of each individual agency may differ, there should be a common understanding of what 'success' might look like.

Without a shared vision, conflict and fragmentation will occur. It is not possible to agree on how to reach a goal if there are differing views on what the goal is.

Relevant stakeholders are included

The key stakeholders that have responsibility for an issue must be involved if the collaboration is to succeed. If a good working relationship does not exist with a particular stakeholder, then this needs to be worked on rather than excluding the stakeholder from the collaborative project.

When one or more key players are excluded, the collaborative project may not achieve the necessary recognition from other players or the community. The excluded player may undermine the work of the collaborative team.

Issues are a priority and members see collaboration being in their self-interest

Collaboration is most likely to succeed around issues which are a priority for the stakeholders and where there is a recognition that an agency on its own cannot resolve the issue.

Participants need to feel that working collaboratively is helping them to do their job better and is not viewed as an 'add on' to an already full work load. If the issue is not a priority for an agency, it will not receive the necessary commitment of time and resources.

Good relationships between members based on respect, understanding and trust

Good interpersonal skills and the development of good working relationships between the individual participants is essential to successful collaboration.

Good working relationships are vital to establishing an environment where people feel comfortable to problem solve and take risks.

Having trusted colleagues and friends within another agency can also be enormously helpful in providing assistance to work through bureaucratic structures and guidelines.

Without the mutual respect and trust of others, participants will be less likely to share information and ideas, or to assist each other to complete relevant tasks.

Members have a commitment to both the process and the goals

Participants must have a commitment to the group process and must each take responsibility for undertaking relevant tasks to assist the group to reach its goals.

Group work can be frustrating and can appear to make slow progress. Without a strong commitment to the group process, participants can undermine the group by developing an alternative 'go it alone' strategy, or by not sharing their concerns or relevant information with the group.

Attachment 3 provides a Checklist of Key Success Factors for Successful Collaboration which includes the factors identified throughout this report and highlights the factors that are considered most critical to successful collaboration.

Attachments

1. People/Agencies Consulted

2. Key Success Factors

3. Checklist of Key Success Factors for Intersectoral Collaboration

4. References

5. Bibliography

People/Agencies Consulted

Organisation	Name	Interagency Group Represented
Office of Aboriginal Health	Shane Houston	
	Fred Stacey	Justice Coordination Committee
	Rafik Bourne	
	Jacquie Reid	Stolen Generation Project
	Jean Thornton	Inter-Governmental Working Party
	Dick Hallson	Joint Planning Forum
	Cliff Collard	Aboriginal Road Safety Awareness Program
	Tracey Pratt	Aboriginal Road Safety Awareness Program
	Maureen O'Mara	Domestic Violence Prevention Unit (DVPU): Action Plan Implementation Committee
	Trevor Jewell	
Health Department of WA	Annabelle May	DVPU: Action Plan Implementation Committee
Family and Children's Services	Debra Clements	
	Jenny Collard	
	Rae Markham	Safer WA
Healthway	Shirley Frizzell	Smarter Than Smoking
Ministry of Justice	Bob Fitzgerald	
	John Cox	Midland Advisory Group
WA Department of Training	Anthony Harvey	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission	Peter Mackin	Environmental Health Needs Coordination Committee
Domestic Violence Prevention Unit	Carol Kagi	Domestic Violence Prevention Unit
Ministry of Housing	Anthony Galante	InterGovernmental Working Party
WA Aboriginal Controlled Health Organisation	Margaret Colbung	Joint Planning Forum
Aboriginal Affairs Department	Trevor Tann	IGWG
	Grant Bobongie	Midland Action Group
Training & Employment	Larry Davies	
WA Police Service	Hughie Tollan	Aboriginal Road Safety Awareness Program
	John Hart	Aboriginal Road Safety Awareness Program

Key Success Factors

TABLE 1: **Key Success Factors for Intersectoral Collaboration: Responses from Consultations**

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS	NO. OF RESPONSES
Leadership:	
➤ Strong leader	14
➤ Clear mandate	11
Topic:	
➤ There is common agreement on the objectives and goals and a shared vision	10
➤ Good information is available on the topic	7
➤ Topic is a priority for all agencies	5
Agencies:	
➤ Commitment of time and resources	7
➤ Agencies have compatible structures and planning frameworks or shared planning frameworks	5
➤ All relevant key players are included	3
People:	
➤ The right individuals are involved (with relevant skills and attitudes)	10
➤ Individuals have a commitment both to the process and the goals	5
Structure/process:	
➤ There are clear roles and responsibilities	6
➤ A sharp, specific focus is maintained	5
➤ Achievements of the group are promoted	5
➤ The size of the group is limited	4
➤ The project is well planned with clear actions and indicators of success	3

TABLE 2: Factors that Influence the Success of Collaborative Efforts[12]

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS	NO. OF STUDIES
1. Factors related to the environment:	
➤ History of collaboration or cooperation in the community	6
➤ Collaborative group seen as a leader in the community	3
➤ Political/social climate favourable	3
2. Factors related to membership characteristics:	
➤ Mutual respect, understanding and trust	11
➤ Appropriate cross section of members	11
➤ Members see collaboration as in their self-interest	6
➤ Ability to compromise	3
3. Factors related to process/structure:	
➤ Members share a stake in both process and outcome	6
➤ Multiple layers of decision-making	6
➤ Flexibility	4
➤ Development of clear roles and policy guidelines	4
➤ Adaptability	3
4. Factors related to communication:	
➤ Open and frequent communication	9
➤ Established formal and informal communication links	5
5. Factors related to purpose:	
➤ Concrete, attainable goals and objectives	5
➤ Shared vision	4
➤ Unique purpose	3
6. Factors related to resources:	
➤ Sufficient funds	8
➤ Skilled convenor	7

Checklist of Key Success Factors for Intersectoral Collaboration

The following checklist provides a guide to the key success factors for working collaboratively across sectors. Whilst all of these factors are important, the highlighted ones are the ones that were found to be most critical by this study.

	Yes	No	Needs more work
LEADERSHIP			
The project has a strong leader/skilled convenor	☐	☐	☐
All agencies have a clear mandate to work together on the issue	☐	☐	☐
The community acknowledges the role of the collaborative group	☐	☐	☐
The lead agency has the confidence and trust of other players	☐	☐	☐
TOPIC			
The issue is carefully defined and well focussed	☐	☐	☐
The issue is a priority for all agencies involved	☐	☐	☐
Each agency perceives a tangible benefit in working together	☐	☐	☐
Good information is available on the issue and all parties have confidence in and agree to use the same information	☐	☐	☐
There is a shared vision and agreement on outcomes	☐	☐	☐
AGENCIES INVOLVED			
All key stakeholders are involved	☐	☐	☐
Planning frameworks and structures of different players are compatible	☐	☐	☐
The outcomes from collaborative work can be reported on within each agency's reporting structures	☐	☐	☐
Each agency has committed the necessary time and resources to the project	☐	☐	☐
The agencies involved have a culture of working collaboratively	☐	☐	☐
There is a common understanding on ideology	☐	☐	☐
Agencies have made a formal written commitment to be involved and to commit the required resources	☐	☐	☐

	Yes	No	Needs more work

PEOPLE INVOLVED

	Yes	No	Needs more work
• **Individuals have good team work skills**	☐	☐	☐
• **Individuals have expertise and experience in the topic**	☐	☐	☐
• **People have a strong relationship based on trust and respect**	☐	☐	☐
• **Individuals are committed to the process and the outcomes**	☐	☐	☐
• Participation by individuals is strongly supported by the agency	☐	☐	☐
• Participants are rewarded for their effort and achievements	☐	☐	☐
• Participants are not working on too many collaborative projects at one time	☐	☐	☐

STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

	Yes	No	Needs more work
• There are good formal and informal communication links between all partners	☐	☐	☐
• **Roles and responsibilities of each agency are clearly defined**	☐	☐	☐
• The contribution of each sector/agency is equally valued and acknowledged	☐	☐	☐
• The project maintains a sharp focus	☐	☐	☐
• The group is not too large	☐	☐	☐
• The resources needed have been identified and found	☐	☐	☐
• The group has autonomy and the flexibility to define its own outcomes and ways of working	☐	☐	☐
• Decision making structures are in place at all levels	☐	☐	☐
• Conflict is dealt with constructively	☐	☐	☐
• An action plan is developed	☐	☐	☐
• The group has adequate secretarial support	☐	☐	☐
• Written guidelines and terms of reference have been developed for the group	☐	☐	☐
• Any issues or problems are communicated to the group	☐	☐	☐
• The work of the group is periodically evaluated including the process and the outcomes	☐	☐	☐
• The timeframe is realistic	☐	☐	☐

OUTCOMES

	Yes	No	Needs more work
• The outcomes are considered commensurate with the resources committed to the project	☐	☐	☐
• **Achievements of the group are promoted**	☐	☐	☐
• Measures of success are in place	☐	☐	☐
• The achievements of the group are monitored and conveyed back to each agency	☐	☐	☐

| | ATTACHMENT 4 |

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