

TWO WAYS TOGETHER

**Partnerships: A New Way of Doing
Business with Aboriginal People**

**NEW SOUTH WALES
ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS PLAN**

2003 – 2012

FOREWORD

Two Ways Together is a new way forward for Aboriginal people and Government to work through partnership. The NSW Government will work with Aboriginal people to lessen and remove social disadvantage, and to ensure that all citizens of NSW share in the benefits that the state has to offer.

The NSW Government recognises that Aboriginal people know best the needs of their community. The new Aboriginal Affairs Plan establishes ways to make sure that Aboriginal people have a strong voice in planning and deciding how their needs and aspirations are met. The NSW Government will negotiate with Aboriginal people how government services will be delivered at local and regional level.

Two Ways Together is new because, for the first time, all government agencies are working in a coordinated way to do business with Aboriginal people. This will cut duplication, and result in less wastage and fewer gaps in services.

It is also new because the areas for business were negotiated between Aboriginal people and Government. Extensive community discussion and consultation identified seven priority areas for action. Also, at a national level, all governments have agreed to a range of indicators on Aboriginal disadvantage and will be measured against these. These indicators correspond strongly to the seven priority areas for action.

The NSW Government will do business with Aboriginal people in culturally appropriate ways. This Plan establishes ways to do this.

Much good work has been done and continues to be done by government agencies, and the key features of *Two Ways Together* are not new concepts.

However the difference will be that:

- this is a 10 year plan
- it will be a government requirement that the processes and agreed strategies will be followed by all agencies
- government agencies will work in a coordinated approach
- there will be targets and a monitoring system to ensure agencies are held accountable for actions and results
- CEOs of government agencies will be held accountable through their performance agreements

The Plan builds on the *NSW Government Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal People of 1997* and the *2002 Service Delivery Partnership Agreement* negotiated with ATSIC and NSW Aboriginal Land Council. Other specific policies which exist at agency level are identified as important strategies through which the objectives of this Plan can be achieved. For example, the NSW Aboriginal Justice Plan, the Circle Sentencing Trial and Community Justice Groups are key strategies in the Justice Priority Area. Additionally the NSW Aboriginal Health Impact Statement, the NSW Aboriginal Health Partnerships and the NSW Health Aboriginal Workforce Issues Strategic Plan are three of many strategies in place in the Health Priority Area.

This Government is proud to establish this Plan as part of its continuing commitment to Aboriginal people.

The Hon R J Carr MP
Premier
Minister for the Arts
Minister for Citizenship

The Hon. Dr Andrew Refshauge, MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education and Training
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

INTRODUCTION

VISION

Aboriginal people, the NSW Government and government agencies work together, and are jointly responsible, to plan and deliver solutions that meet community needs.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of the Plan are to:

- develop committed partnerships between Aboriginal people and Government
- improve the social, economic and cultural and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people in New South Wales

To achieve this will require:

- changing the way Government works with Aboriginal people
- enhancing the skills and capacity of Aboriginal communities and individuals
- achieving real and measurable improvements for Aboriginal people in health, education, economic development, justice, housing and infrastructure, families and young people
- supporting and affirming Aboriginal peoples' culture and heritage

Two Ways Together reinforces the commitment of the New South Wales Government to Aboriginal self-determination, and expresses respect for the diverse cultures of Aboriginal peoples in NSW. The Plan builds on the *NSW Government Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal People of 1997* and operates within the principles entailed in the 2002 *Service Delivery Partnership Agreement* between the Government, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC).

FRAMEWORK FOR MAKING THE PLAN WORK

The Plan has two core elements:

Making Services Work which establish **what** business needs to be done

New Ways of Doing Business with Aboriginal People which establishes **how** business will be done

Making Services Work

Through negotiation, Aboriginal communities and government agencies agreed that the 7 priority areas for action in New South Wales are

- Health
- Education
- Economic Development
- Justice
- Families and Young People
- Culture and Heritage
- Housing and Infrastructure

A cluster group of key government agencies and Aboriginal peak bodies has been formed for each of the priority areas, and is led by a **lead agency**. The cluster groups have set goals, targets and action plans for NSW consistent with national indicators. The Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs will approve action plans and monitor the progress of each cluster group.

Because government is complex, a coordinated approach is needed. At a state level the cluster groups will provide coordination; however, mechanisms may need to be established at regional and local level that build on existing structures such as Regional Coordination Management Groups and Community Working Parties.

Action in each priority area will be driven by the aim of improving specific socio-outcome indicators to reduce and ultimately eliminate the gap between Aboriginal people and the wider population.

The contracts of CEOs of NSW agencies will include **performance indicators** to show that their agency provides the services and takes action as agreed.

New Ways of Doing Business with Aboriginal People

This section of the Plan is aimed at changing the way that Government works with Aboriginal people to ensure:

- an effective whole of government approach
- greater sensitivity, flexibility and responsiveness within agencies in the way they work with and deliver services to Aboriginal people.

The following five areas have been identified as the focus of action in developing new ways for Government when doing business with Aboriginal people:

1. Agency capacity to work with Aboriginal people, through:
 - policies, procedures, and protocols recognising Aboriginal culture, needs and aspirations
 - partnerships between agencies

- improving the cultural competence of staff so that they can be more responsive to Aboriginal culture, needs and aspirations
 - recognising Aboriginal service delivery is part of the core business of agencies
2. Government's role in enhancing the capacity of communities, through support of:
 - leadership development and strengthening the ability of individuals and organisations to do business with Government
 - individual skill development (technical, management)
 - organisational capacity and governance
 3. Local planning and decision making processes that:
 - assist communities to be informed
 - facilitate true negotiation between communities and Government
 - ensure a strong community voice in determining government services
 - enable different solutions to be implemented at the local and regional level
 4. Accountability processes to ensure the Plan is implemented at local, regional and state levels and includes:
 - monitoring, reviewing, and reporting processes for services and outcomes
 - assignment of responsibility for services and outputs
 5. Whole of Government capacity that involves:
 - the review and strengthening of a centralised whole of government governance and coordination strategy

Good Practice Guidelines will be developed for agencies doing business with Aboriginal people.

Implementation

Clusters have developed indicators relevant to the NSW goals. In addition they will report on the national indicators developed by the Council of Australian Governments for the Framework for Reporting on Indigenous Disadvantage.

Monitoring and reporting will be simplified and coordinated at a state and national level.

Cluster Group's action plans will identify specific agency inputs and CEOs will be held accountable for agreed actions through their performance agreements. Cluster groups will coordinate and monitor actions at a state, regional and local level.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Annually, an audit report will be published of Government success in delivering the undertakings contained in this Plan. The reporting framework will align the Plan with the draft Aboriginal Justice Plan (AJP) and the NSW Service Delivery Agreement (SDPA).

The Plan, the draft AJP and the SDPA have set goals, actions and targets for agencies to report on annually. Lead agencies will collect and integrate data from all partner agencies for reporting against targets and indicators of the priority areas. CEOs will report to their Ministers and to the Premier's Department on the success against the performance indicators in their contracts. CEO's performance against the performance indicators will be evaluated to ensure agreed targets have been met.

To ensure that the views of Aboriginal communities are heard, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs will also coordinate input from Aboriginal communities and peak bodies on the perceived success in making a difference where it counts - on the ground.

Alignment of the three reports eliminates duplication of reporting and provides an opportunity for assessment of the integrated whole of government approach to service delivery to Aboriginal people.

Explanation of Terms

AECG	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
MCATSIA	Ministerial Council of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
SCRCSSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision
SCATSIA	Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs