

MEDIA RELEASE

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT **Two Ways Together – The 2003–2012 Aboriginal Affairs Plan**

The Auditor-General, Mr Peter Achterstraat, today released his report on the implementation of the Two Ways Together Plan.

Many Aboriginal people in NSW are disadvantaged in comparison with the rest of the population on a wide range of measures in health, education, employment and justice. When the Two Ways Together Plan was developed in 2003 this disadvantage was clear. This Plan was to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal people and to develop committed partnerships between Aboriginal people of NSW and Government.

The Two Ways Together Plan has raised public awareness of the need to address Aboriginal disadvantage. It has also provided an opportunity for Government agencies to work together at a regional level to deliver better services. In some areas there are positive developments. The number of Aboriginal students enrolled in TAFE certificate courses has grown, as has the percentage of Aboriginal students in TAFE.

However Mr Achterstraat said, "Despite the best of intentions, to date the Plan has not delivered the improvement in overall outcomes for Aboriginal people that were intended."

"The disadvantage still experienced by some of the estimated 160,000 Aboriginal people in NSW is substantial. For example, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people is at least three times higher than the rate for all NSW residents, and hospital admissions for diabetes are also around three times higher," he added.

NSW spends approximately \$240 million annually on specific services for Aboriginal people. The Plan aimed to ensure that best value was obtained from this money and that agencies were held responsible for results and for achieving specific outcomes for Aboriginal people. But the Auditor-General found accountability was unclear.

"I am recommending that agencies be more publicly accountable. If agencies are given money, they must be able to show at the end of the year how they spent it and how it has improved the wellbeing of Aboriginal people," Mr Achterstraat said.

"Agencies have also struggled to establish, in a practical sense, how Government should partner with Aboriginal people. This has resulted in poor levels of engagement between agencies and Aboriginal people locally," added Mr Achterstraat.

The local community is best placed to understand its own needs and be responsible for its own future. In this respect, the Two Ways Together Partnership Community Program is a promising development. The community governance bodies established under this program can bridge the gap between people who need services and those who deliver the services.

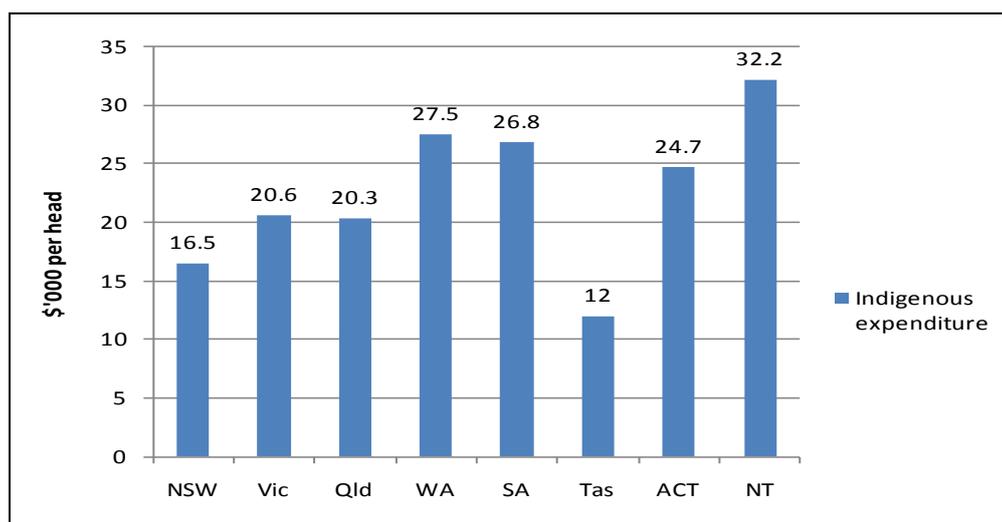
"I recommend that the community governance bodies be given extra support. I believe there is a need to appoint an independent advisor to be a strong voice on issues that are fundamental to improving the lives of Aboriginal people," stated Mr Achterstraat.

"We know that addressing entrenched disadvantage takes time. A foundation has been established by Two Ways Together. It is important that we don't lose the gains that have been made by going back to the drawing board. Now it is time to deliver on the promises," said Mr Achterstraat.

Further information

A full copy of the report on *Two Ways Together* is on the Audit Office's [website](#).
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Estimated general government Indigenous expenditure by jurisdiction 2008-09



The 2010 Productivity Commission Indigenous Expenditure Report estimated that in 2008-09 the NSW Government spent approximately \$2.65 billion on services for Aboriginal people in NSW, of which about \$240 million was spent on Aboriginal specific services.

Results on Two Ways Together Indicators		
	Indicators when Two Ways Together started	2009 Report on Indicators
Incarceration rates have significantly worsened, although family violence rates have reduced.	2003 Adult imprisonment per 100,000 Aboriginal males - 2,857 All NSW males - 235 Aboriginal females - 263 All NSW females - 15	2009 sentenced adults in prison rate per 100,000 Aboriginal males - 3,551 Non-Aboriginal males - 215.3* Aboriginal females - 379.2 Non-Aboriginal females - 14*
	2002 Domestic violence assault rate per 100,000 Aboriginal females - 3,685 All NSW female - 596	2008 Domestic violence assault rate per 100,000 Aboriginal females - 3,035 Non Aboriginal females - 495*
Literacy and numeracy rates remain poor, but school retention rates have improved slightly.	2001 - Achieving national benchmark in numeracy Year 3 Indigenous students - 86.9% All students - 95%	2008 NAPLAN Year 3 numeracy at or above national minimum standards Aboriginal students - 88.6%* Non-Aboriginal - 97.3%*
	2002 Apparent retention rates years 7-12 Indigenous students - 30% All students - 65%	2008 full time apparent retention for years 10-12 Aboriginal students - 43%* All students - 72.35%*
Aboriginal unemployment rate has grown but more Aboriginal students are enrolling in management and governance courses at TAFE.	2002 Unemployment rate Aboriginal people - 18.3% All NSW people - 6%	2007 Unemployment rate Aboriginal people - 20% All NSW people - 4.8%
	2004 Aboriginal students enrolled in management or governance courses at TAFE Aboriginal students - 537	2008 - Aboriginal students enrolled in management or governance courses at TAFE - 720

These indicators are extracted from the 2005, 2007 and 2009 Reports on Indicators. Those results marked with * are not directly comparable.