

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF**

***MAINLY URBAN - REPORT OF THE
INQUIRY INTO THE NEEDS OF URBAN
DWELLING ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE***

**A REPORT BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS**

PREFACE

The focus of the Inquiry on urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is long overdue. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in urban areas have remained largely outside the scope of previous Parliamentary Committee reports which have focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in remote areas.

The *Mainly Urban* report notes that two thirds of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population live in cities and towns having a population of 1,000 or more. The Committee found that for a range of reasons, including historical and cultural factors, urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are reluctant to access mainstream government services. While a range of mainstream services and special programs are available they may be difficult to access or culturally inappropriate. In many instances, discrimination deters or excludes the use of services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ATSIC acknowledges that the *Mainly Urban* report goes some way towards recognising and drawing attention to the problems facing urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples.

From ATSIC's perspective the recommendations of this report must be followed up by a commitment at both State and Federal levels of government and appropriate support and recognition of the problems at the local level to achieve positive change.

The Committee notes the importance of raising public awareness of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society and some of the recommendations are directed at dispelling the myth that "real" Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples live only in remote areas. ATSIC recognises that urban Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders have distinct needs and problems.

The definition of urban used by the Committee is very broad and incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in a wide range of urban environments. In ATSIC's view the recommendations are correspondingly broad and may not address the problems facing a proportion of urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Different strategies may be required to deal with problems facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in urban metropolitan areas as opposed to those living in rural urban areas.

There was also little recognition by the Committee of the different needs of certain groups within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society, in particular the needs of women.

However, comments from Government Departments and agencies were largely supportive of the recommendations. The response to *Mainly Urban* indicates where current or new programs and policies are relevant to the recommendations and where consideration should be given to amending these policies and programs. The recommendations outline areas which ATSIC, and other agencies, have already targeted.

**DRAFT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF
MAINLY URBAN - Report of the Inquiry into the needs of urban dwelling
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

Recommendation 1

In Commonwealth, State and Territory Government programs aimed at assisting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, the relevant demographic data should be disaggregated to allow more precise policy formulation and program delivery.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) - Supported

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET) - Supported with qualifications

Public Service Commission (PSC) - Supported-in-principle

Comment

ABS

The Standing Committee's first recommendation identifies a need for disaggregated demographic data for use in policy formulation and program delivery. Preliminary small area counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from the 1991 census were released a year ago, and detailed community profile tables are being prepared for release shortly.

ATSIC

Statistical data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and is supplemented by data from other sources such as, the Australian Institute of Criminology and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

The statistical data provided by the ABS is derived from the *National Census of Population and Housing*. Census data can be disaggregated by State, by ATSIC regional boundary, by community profile (where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander population is greater than 80) or by any other area larger than a census district.

The ABS is also able to provide statistical data by the categories 'major urban', 'urban', 'rural' and 'other rural' where the total population is > 100,000, 1,000, 200 and less than 200 respectively.

ATSIC Regional Councils and Offices are responsible for program delivery and generally require demographic data by ATSIC region. However, in the context of policy and planning ATSIC supports the Committee's recommendation that demographic data should be disaggregated in a variety of other ways.

DAS

The Department of Administrative Services believes that this recommendation, as well as recommendations 4, 39, 41, 43 and 49, will facilitate the implementation of new contracting policies which have been developed by DAS in response to Recommendations 307 and 326 of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. These policies aim to: -

- maximise employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through Commonwealth contracting; and
- increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the award of Commonwealth contracts for goods and services to be used specifically in their communities.

DEET

In general, only information relevant to the administration of programs is stored on DEET's Management Information Systems.

The systems can report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. The geographic information collected is already wide ranging, including CES office of registration, State, Area, Region, postcode and Federal Electorate.

However, the disaggregation into urban and non-urban populations is more problematic. To date, information on whether clients reside in urban or non-urban areas has not been identified. A special field would need to be created on the systems. This would have substantial workload implications and would not be of immediate relevance to the administration of the programs. The value of such a task would have to be systematically assessed against competing demands.

A rough estimation of the breakdown between urban and non-urban areas could be provided if postcodes or CES Offices were classified as urban or non-urban. As this is not a standard reporting requirement, some notice would be needed to enable tailored reporting programs to be written for each database.

PSC

Data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the Australian Public Service (APS) is collected and monitored for the purpose of evaluating the progress of APS agencies in relation to the appointment and advancement of members of equal employment opportunity (EEO) groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

EEO data is held by all APS agencies, and on the Continuous Record of Personnel (CRP) maintained by the Department of Finance. Disaggregated EEO statistics are published in section 5 of the Department of Finance's annual *APS Statistical Bulletin*. These statistics cover permanent staff, both full and part time, but not temporary staff.

The PSC analyses EEO data for publication in its annual report, as part of an overview report on EEO across the APS. In addition, the PSC will be publishing an *EEO Profile of the APS* in 1993 which will analyse overall EEO data and trends in greater detail, and publish a specific APS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Profile, as part of its contribution to the International Year of the World's Indigenous People.

The available information on the numbers and levels of staff in EEO groups helps to identify areas where further initiatives may be needed to improve employment prospects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as members of other EEO groups.

Currently, some 70 per cent of all permanent staff have provided EEO data. A number of actions are in train to improve EEO data held on the CRP. The Department of Finance and the PSC have initiated action to redress problems with the quality of data, including increasing awareness among both departments and public service staff of the need to provide EEO data, for example by encouraging departments to update EEO data on the CRP via the Department of Finance pay system.

Recommendation 2

In the 1993-94 national statistical survey, the Census population categories (major urban, other urban, rural local and other rural) should be included.

Position

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) - Supported

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported

Comment

ABS

The ABS has responsibility for conducting the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS) in 1994. Statistical output from the NATSIS will be available for the categories 'major urban', 'other urban', 'rural locality' and 'other rural'.

The sample frame to be adopted by the ABS will reflect the fact that the majority of Australia's indigenous people live in urban areas. This means that, although the NATSIS will provide reliable information for people in the above four categories, the majority of households selected for inclusion in the NATSIS will be in urban centres and will result in more accurate survey estimates for urban areas.

ATSIC

ATSIC has fully supported the NATSIS and, along with other relevant agencies, is represented on the NATSIS Advisory Committee.

Recommendation 3

The Ministers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Local Government in cooperation with relevant State and Territory ministers, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the Australian Local Government Association establish a task force to determine sound rating practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community land within mainstream local government areas. These practices should clearly indicate the entitlements of all residents to specified services.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services
(DHHLG & CS) - Not Supported

Comment

ATSIC

ATSIC recognises that there is a need for unequivocal findings in relation to the payment of rates and the provision of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community land and, on this basis, supports the formation of a task force to address these issues.

The success of this approach will depend on all levels of government making a financial commitment to implement any recommendations formulated by the taskforce and a commitment from local governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve the situation.

ATSIC considers that it should be represented on the taskforce and involved in the formulation of the terms of reference. The National Reference Group on the relationship between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (the Reference Group), which was formed under the auspices of the Australian Local Government Association in 1992, should also be involved in considering this issue.

DHHLG & CS

The DHHLG & CS recognises the importance of resolving the rating issue to improve relations between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and for the more equitable provision of services to these communities. However, DHHLG & CS does not support the establishment of a task force to determine sound rating practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community land, because of a range of initiatives already in place.

Over the past five years there has been a significant amount of research into the issue of rate debt, particularly in New South Wales and Western Australia, providing a framework from which a number of initiatives are being undertaken.

The Reference Group is the most appropriate forum to address this issue. The Reference Group was established following the Townsville "Let's Work Together" conference and is the successor to the Task Force on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Local Government issues, established in 1986. At its November meeting, the Reference Group agreed that this issue was in need of further investigation.

Initiatives funded by ATSIC and the Office of Local Government in Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales are currently reviewing roles and responsibilities and legislative issues which militate against the provision of equitable Local Government services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The outcomes of these initiatives will be monitored by the Reference Group. Preliminary reports were tabled at the April 1993 meeting of the group.

Recommendation 4

The Minister for Local Government in cooperation with State and Territory Ministers and the Australian Local Government Association encourage the formation of consultative committees to improve communication between local governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported with qualifications

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG & CS) - Supported

NSW Government - Supported

Comment

ATSIC

In ATSIC's view, Regional Councils should be the principal point of contact for consultation and liaison between local governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, this should not preclude the establishment of local consultative committees.

Although ATSIC operates at a regional level ATSIC Regional Councillors should be invited to participate in any consultative committee established at the local level.

DAS

See DAS comment in relation to recommendation 1.

DHHLG & CS

The DHHLG & CS supports the formulation of consultative committees between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. However, it is noted that much work has already commenced in this area. Some councils, independently, have made their own consultative arrangement; others, such as the Darwin City Council, have been funded by the Office of Local Government (OLG) under the Local Government Development Program and the Local Government Community Relations Program to establish consultative committees.

A number of consultative arrangements have been developed through the Local Government Community Relations Program. These range from local arrangements to State Association convened committees.

The OLG is currently evaluating the Local Government Community Relations Program and will be investigating the possibility of preparing a "best practices" manual which will highlight the range of consultative mechanisms developed as a consequence of this program.

The National Reference Group on the relationship between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people referred to in Recommendation 3 has been oversighting, with the Australian Local Government Association and State and Territory Local Government Associations, the development of regional workshops (funded by ATSIC and the Office of Local Government) involving Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and New South Wales. These workshops aim to establish local consultative arrangements in order to address the need for improved communication and coordination of the delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The OLG and ATSIC will consider the funding of workshops in the remaining states, once the current workshops have been implemented and evaluated.

NSW

The NSW Department of Local Government commented that about 14 Aboriginal Advisory Committees have already been formed around this State with the intention of promoting communication between local government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Recommendations 5, 6 and 7

The Commonwealth Ministers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Local Government and Administrative Services in conjunction with State and Territory Governments and the Australian Local Government Association ensure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Electoral Information Service of the Australian Electoral Commission

- 5. - extends its electoral awareness and education programs into urban areas;**
- 6. - includes information in these programs on the functions, services and electoral systems of local government, State or Territory Government and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission;**
- 7. - further encourages urban Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders to enrol on both State or Territory and federal electoral rolls.**

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported

Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) - Supported

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG & CS) - Supported

Comment

AEC

The AEC has already incorporated recommendation 5, 6 and 7 into the objectives and activities of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Electoral Information Service (ATSIEIS). ATSIEIS now operates in all urban areas nationally, except for Adelaide, which will be included by the end of 1993. Information on State/Territory governments and ATSIC is already included in ATSIEIS educational materials with local government materials to be added shortly.

ATSIC

ATSIC has had preliminary discussions with the AEC on the concept of developing an enrolment and electoral participation campaign for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples during the run-up to the 1993 ATSIC elections. It is possible for ATSIC and the AEC to jointly fund an enrolment campaign, aimed not only at the forthcoming ATSIC elections but also for local, State and Federal government elections. This will be discussed between the two agencies soon.

DHHLG & CS

The DHHLG & CS commented that a significant recommendation stemming from the Local Government Community Relations Program evaluation has stressed the need for campaigns to ensure greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in Local Government elections. The need to consider practical strategies to address this issue is also being considered in the context of the National Reference Group on the relationship between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (as referred to in recommendation 3).

Recommendation 8

The Commonwealth Minister for Local Government in cooperation with State and Territory ministers and the Australian Local Government Association further encourage the conduct of awareness and training campaigns for potential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates for local government elections, particularly where such campaigns have not been conducted.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services
(DHHLG & CS) - Supported

NSW Government - Supported

Comment

ATSIC

ATSIC is aware of the positive impact of the awareness and training campaign conducted in NSW and supports the continuation and extension of such campaigns to all other States.

DHHLG & CS

The South Australian Department of Aboriginal Affairs was funded under the 1990-91 Local Government Development Program of the Office of Local Government for a project to develop advisory committees comprising Local Government and Aboriginal people. These committees were responsible for organising seminars to raise the awareness of Local Government among Aboriginals, develop an information kit to raise the awareness of elected members and provide ongoing support to newly-elected Aboriginal members.

NSW

In 1991, the New South Wales Department of Local Government and Co-operatives implemented a project to enhance the understanding of local government by Aboriginal people. The project addressed such issues as the importance of being on the electoral roll, access to council decision making processes, how people are elected to Council and the role of an elected member.

An independent assessment, by the Centre for Australian Community Organisations and Management at the Sydney University of Technology, of the impact of this project was favourable and suggested that the model might be drafted for national use.

Recommendations 9 and 10

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Local Government in cooperation with State and Territory ministers and the Australian Local Government Association:

9. - encourage the further establishment of local government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks to provide network support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elected councillors and liaison officers;

10. - develop further programs to raise the awareness of non-indigenous councillors to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to sensitise them to cultural differences;

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services
(DHHLG & CS) - Supported

Comment

ATSIC

ATSIC believes that such networks not only encourage greater Aboriginal participation in local government but provide vital support for elected Aboriginal councillors.

DHHLG & CS

Efforts are already being made to provide State/Territory based support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elected councillors and liaison officers. A National Aboriginal Policy Officer has been appointed to the Australian Local Government Association. Furthermore, Ministerial approval has been given for the establishment of two Aboriginal Policy Officers in the Northern Territory Local Government Association and the Municipal Association of Victoria in 1992-93.

Improving awareness and understanding in Local Government of issues of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be a core Commonwealth objective in the duty statements of the Aboriginal Policy Officers.

Cross-cultural awareness programs should, however, form only part of the overall strategy to improve the relationship between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These programs should not be implemented in isolation, but should instead form a component of an overall strategy directed at removing structural impediments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in Local Government decision making processes.

Recommendation 11

There should be greater co-ordination between the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, and Training, the Commonwealth Department of Health, Housing and Community Services and the relevant State and Territory agencies in the administration and funding of pre-school Aboriginal education.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services
(DHHLG & CS) - Supported

NSW Government - Supported

Comment

ATSIC

ATSIC supports this recommendation and will endeavour to improve the co-ordination between Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies through the establishment of the Aboriginal Education Co-ordination Group. The Co-ordination Group is to be established shortly and will advise on Commonwealth policy and program matters. It is comprised of representatives from DEET and ATSIC and will be chaired by an ATSIC Commissioner.

DHHLG & CS

In relation to the administration and funding of pre-school Aboriginal education, the Departments of Employment, Education and Training (DEET); Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG & CS) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission together are working to ensure that planning for the allocation of new pre-school places including the review that is to be undertaken by DEET, take account of the location and activities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services funded under the Children's Services Program.

There is co-ordination between DHHLG & CS and State and Territory agencies in matters relating to children's services and pre-schools, particularly through the Commonwealth/State planning committees which advise the Minister on the location of high need areas.

DEET

In addition to the established Commonwealth/State forums, which include heads of Government and Ministers for Vocational Education, Employment and Training (MOVEET) and which have the capacity to consider these issues, the Commonwealth itself has consultative mechanisms in place.

DEET meets periodically with the DHHLG & CS and ATSIC in order to improve Commonwealth coordination in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-schooling. This process is part of DEET's examination of pre-school funding under the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program (AESIP).

NSW

The NSW Department of Community Services (DCS) notes that it had difficulties in co-ordinating the implementation of its *National Child Care Strategy 1989-1992*. This strategy is a cost sharing agreement between the Commonwealth and the NSW Government.

DCS points out that there is no formal or regular structure for negotiation between the relevant State and Commonwealth departments apart from correspondence and/or officer meetings regarding specific issues. Administration and funding of pre-school education is usually dealt with in the wider context of needs based planning in negotiations on joint programs and consequently could well lose special emphasis and attention.

Recommendation 12

Funds for pre-school education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children should reflect population distribution so that urban areas with relatively large concentrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are provided with a share of facilities and funds that reflect population size.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

NSW Government - Supported in principle

Victorian Government - Supported

Comment**DEET**

DEET recognises that there is a need for a closer alignment between population size and the provision of funds.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preschool review has begun. The review has two main purposes: to make recommendations to the Minister regarding the 600 additional preschool places in 1994; and to provide information for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (NATSIEP) review on preschool funding and delivery options.

There is no mainstream Commonwealth pre-school funding program. Bids are received from education providers for funding under the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program according to their needs.

NSW

In NSW, Department of Community Services (DCS) provides economic subsidies to pre-schools for children from families with incomes below the poverty line. While this subsidy may increase access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to existing child care facilities, it falls short of providing specific centres catering for the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

A recent review of NSW DCS funding mechanisms addressed the inadequacy of culturally appropriate educational services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. However, the review report and recommendations have not been finalised as yet.

VICTORIA

One of the key goals of the operation of the National Aboriginal Education Policy in Victoria is to ensure that Aboriginal children have the same rate of access to pre-school education as other children.

Recommendation 13

The Commonwealth Government should promote the training of increased numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as early childhood education teachers.

Position

NSW Government

- Supported

Comment

The Aboriginal Development Division of the NSW TAFE has also identified this area of need and plans to target potential applicants for early childhood studies and negotiate expanded avenues of access for applicants.

Recommendation 14

A scheme be introduced under which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders training to be early childhood teachers may choose to be paid a training salary during the period of their training. Students who so choose will be required to teach for a fixed number of years in a designated early childhood education program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported with qualifications (DEET)

Comment

Existing provisions for training such as ATSIC's Community Training Program and the Aboriginal Professional Study Awards Scheme may be accessed by independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preschools to secure teaching qualifications for staff.

DEET's Training for Aboriginals Program may be used to provide preparatory or skills training for employment in preschools where this is appropriate to the individual jobseeker's needs and where training will result in ongoing employment.

It should be noted that most of these schemes have a requirement for continuing employment where possible but not a formal 'bond'.

It should also be noted that many State Education Systems support a system of block release training. This training structure enables trainee teachers to remain on salary and, depending on the level of salary, obtain Abstudy supplementation.

Recommendation 15

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, State Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups pay special attention to the promotion of the advantages of pre-school education to urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

Comment**ATSIC**

ATSIC supports this recommendation and will endeavour to improve the promotion of the advantages of pre-school education to urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents through the establishment of the Aboriginal Education Co-ordination Group (see comment in relation to recommendation 11).

DEET

The Aboriginal Education Branch has produced a video for national distribution, that promotes preschool education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents. In the 1993-95 triennium, the Government has funded an increase of 600 preschool places from 1994 at a total cost of \$10 million.

Recommendation 16

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments make provision, where necessary, for transport to be available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to attend pre-schools.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

NSW Government

- Not Supported

Comment**DEET**

Some education providers are currently funded under the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program to provide assistance with transport. There is also scope for both State/Territory Governments and ATSIC to assist with these services. In some cases such services can be developed as an enterprise by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

NSW

The NSW Department of School Education considers that the provision of transport for pre-school age children is too specialised as children of this age need to be supervised. Any transport would normally be provided by the pre-school.

Recommendation 17

The Department of Employment, Education and Training extend the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Program scheme to pre-schools to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not culturally isolated and receive every support from their own community.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported-in-principle
(DEET)

Comment

This recommendation is supported-in-principle but has budgetary implications which need to be considered along with other competing priorities. The extension of the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness scheme into preschools was suggested in the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody Report, but priority was given to increasing the number of preschool places.

Recommendation 18

The Committee follows the report of the 1985 Select Committee on Aboriginal Education in recommending that:

-State and Territory education departments and pre-school organisations co-operate to develop transition programs for Aboriginal children moving from pre-school into junior primary school.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

NSW Government

- Supported

Comment**DEET**

This recommendation is supported. However, its implementation would be a matter for consideration by education providers. If the relevant education providers were to include such programs in their proposals for the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program, funds could be provided under that program for such initiatives, within approved funding levels.

NSW

A Department of School Education (DSE) supported pilot transition program has been developed and implemented in an independent Aboriginal pre-school. The DSE will consider the outcomes of this pilot program when developing policies and implementing strategies for pre-school education.

Recommendation 19

The vigorous promotion by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training of homework centres with facilities for the doing of homework and the conduct of tutorials.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

NSW Government

- Supported

Comment**DEET**

Homework centres are being promoted by DEET. In 1993, more emphasis is being placed on supervised study groups. The centres are being referred to as homework or study centres and group tutoring rather than individual tutoring is being emphasised.

NSW

The NSW Department of School Education (DSE) has been involved in promoting homework centres since this program began. The DSE policy on Community Use of School Facilities supports the conduct of homework centres and tutorials. The concept is further promoted and implemented in schools which have an operational Aboriginal Students Support and Parent Awareness Program Committee.

Recommendation 20

That maximum use is made of tutorials to ensure that Aboriginal students do not leave primary school without those literacy and numeracy skills so essential for success in secondary school.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported-in-principle
(DEET)

Comment

DEET agrees with this recommendation. The provision of primary school education is primarily a State/Territory responsibility but to ensure that maximum benefit is obtained from available funding, current policy is to direct students to homework centres in the first instance. Direct tutorial assistance is available for those whose needs are not able to be met by participation in homework centres.

Recommendation 21

At the triennial negotiations for the Aboriginal Education Policy, Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and tertiary education institutions should give consideration to matching the numbers of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders being trained as teachers with likely vacancies in the profession.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported with qualifications (DEET)

NSW Government

- Supported

Comment**DEET**

It is important to note that the output of education graduates each year is not determined by the Commonwealth, but rather by the higher education institutions. It is widely acknowledged that the manpower planning approach to educational planning, where output is matched to demand, does have its limitations and DEET would be against attempts which would seek to impose rigid quotas on Aboriginal student intakes in teacher education. However, DEET will take up with teacher training institutions and the main employers of teachers the desirability of achieving a better balance between supply and anticipated demand.

NSW

In NSW, graduates of the Aboriginal Rural Education Program are offered priority employment as teachers in the DSE. In addition, those graduates of the NSW TAFE Aboriginal Development Division are also guaranteed employment within the TAFE teaching system.

Recommendation 22

A scheme be introduced under which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student teachers may choose to be paid a training salary during the period of their training. Students who choose this option will be required to teach for a fixed number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Not Supported
(DEET)

Comment

Most State governments had 'bonding' schemes for their teacher trainees in the 1960s. Although bonding had some success, it is acknowledged that there were problems associated with this type of scheme and all bonding schemes have now been discontinued. Bonding is generally not an attractive option to prospective trainees because it limits career choices and restricts mobility and there are always problems with what is a fair and reasonable school posting for graduates. The major problem for authorities is dealing with defaulters of the scheme. Presumably the proposed salary of teacher trainees, if such a scheme were adopted, would be met by State/Territory authorities.

DEET notes that many of the major employers of teachers in the States would support the view that, in future, special incentives will be required to ensure adequate staffing for 'hard-to-staff' schools.

Recommendation 23

Every effort should be made by State and Territory Governments to ensure that Aboriginal teachers who wish to return to their communities to teach, be given the opportunity to do so.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

NSW Government

- Supported in principle

Comment**DEET**

DEET supports this recommendation. It is noted that the matter requires the consideration of State/Territory Governments.

NSW

In NSW, Aboriginal teachers have the same entitlements as other Department of School Education staff. Should they wish to teach in their home community they are encouraged to apply for transfer to that community and will get priority consideration if a vacancy occurs.

Recommendation 24

In urban areas where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are in a minority, local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Program Committees, in association with school principals, should make every effort to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and students in consultative and decision making processes.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

Comment**DEET**

DEET supports this recommendation. This is one of the long term goals of the National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (NATSIEP). One of the main objectives of the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Program is to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander parents in education processes.

Recommendation 25

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and tertiary education institutions should endeavour to make Aboriginal studies mandatory in all teacher training courses.

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported-in-principle (DEET)

NSW Government

- Supported

Comment**DEET**

This recommendation is supported as it is consistent with the aims of the National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (NATSIEP) and in the spirit of reconciliation.

However, it is primarily a matter for consideration by employers and teachers. DEET is not able to dictate to the higher education institutions on matters of course content. DEET will pursue and encourage such matters with the States/Territories through forums such as the Joint Planning Committee and the Australian Education Council.

DEET already provides some additional finance through the National Priority (Reserve) Fund over and above normal allocations to enable Aboriginal culture and heritage to be taught as part of the teacher training programs. Specifically, a project at the University of NSW was provided with funding in 1991 to develop an Aboriginal studies course which would be mandatory for primary student teachers in NSW. DEET is considering the UNSW application to extend the project to trial resource materials with a view to making the course available nation-wide.

On 15 January 1993, the Minister for Employment, Education and Training released a Ministerial Statement entitled 'Teaching Counts' in which he announced that the Federal Government would provide up to \$130 million over the next three years to upgrade teachers' skills. This includes a program of educational faculties renewal which will look at flexible approaches to the renewal of educational faculties and staffing profiles.

Attention should also be paid to the role of universities in providing in-service education in Aboriginal studies, as well as pre-service education.

The Commonwealth is also currently funding a further Project of National Significance in South Australia relating to this issue. The project, *'Teacher Education Program - Preparing Teachers for Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students'*, is being undertaken by the Aboriginal Research Institute of the University of South Australia. The project will culminate in a nationally agreed philosophy and set of guidelines which would be available to teacher educators to use as a framework for developing subjects, units or other learning experiences to assist student teachers to

understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewpoints, not only on educational but on social, cultural and historical matters as well. The anticipated completion date is 30 June 1993.

NSW

In NSW, mandatory Aboriginal Studies courses are already being considered by a number of tertiary institutions offering teacher education.

Recommendation 26

Commonwealth, State and Territory public sector recruitment strategies should not only aim at a total target figure, but a target for Aboriginal employment across geographical areas and at all levels of the public sector.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported

Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET) - Supported

Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) - Supported

Public Service Commission (PSC) - Supported

Victorian Government - Supported-in-principle

Comment**ATSIC**

Goals 1 - 3 of ATSIC's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Strategy seek to increase the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across all levels, and within all areas, of ATSIC. The strategy provides professional and career development which will overcome, in time, the factors which lead Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be less well represented in the more specialised work areas of State and Central Office.

Targets for the five year strategy are as follows:

- an increase in overall representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from 43.6% as at March 1992, to 60% by 1997; and
- an increase in the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Central Office (26%) and State Office (29%) to the level of Regional Office representation (60%).

DEET

All existing Commonwealth and State public sector employment strategies target not only overall numbers of recruits but also particular occupations and levels in the organisation, according to the organisation's staffing profile. Training and other assistance is provided to promote career advancement opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

The strategies also aim to increase the geographical spread of employment, particularly in areas where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live.

DIR

The Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987 (the EEO Act) applies to Commonwealth authorities and Government business enterprises not covered by the Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 1986 or by Section 22B of the Public Service Act 1922, and which employ 40 or more staff. The EEO Act requires Commonwealth authorities to develop their own Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) programs and report annually on the implementation and development of their programs.

The EEO Act prescribes the strategy for implementation and on-going review of EEO programs in an authority. The provisions include:

- consideration of policies and examination of practices in the relevant authority to eliminate discrimination against persons in the designated groups in employment matters; and
- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the program and assessing the achievement of those objectives.

The Department of Industrial Relations is currently undertaking an evaluation of the effectiveness of EEO programs in statutory authorities and business enterprises covered by the EEO Act as a result of the recommendations made in two Parliamentary reports:

- the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legislative and Constitutional Affairs *Report of the Inquiry into EEO and Equal Status for Women: 'Half Way to Equal'* (the Lavarch Report); and
- Report 315 - Joint Committee of Public Accounts '*Social Responsibilities of Commonwealth Statutory Authorities and Government Business Enterprises*'.

The evaluation will also address recruitment strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in these authorities in response to recommendations 26, 27 and 28.

PSC

The Federal Government has a long standing commitment to equal employment opportunity (EEO) in the workplace - including for its own employees in the Australian Public Service (APS). and other Commonwealth authorities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are one of 4 EEO groups specified in EEO legislation covering Commonwealth Government departments and authorities. Section 22B of the Public Service Act, added by the *Public Service Reform Act 1984*, covers APS agencies, and the *Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987* covers non-APS Commonwealth authorities. The legislation recognises that these groups have, over a long period, been subject to unjustified discrimination in employment matters.

For APS agencies, the Public Service Commissioner approves the plans of departments and APS agencies. The PSC, through its EEO Policy and Programs Unit, provides policy advice, produces guidelines, monitors the performance of agencies and service wide outcomes for the EEO groups and advises the Government on the operation of legislation.

For non-APS agencies, the Department of Industrial Relations is reviewing the expectations of the EEO (Commonwealth Authorities) Act.

The Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP) provides for the development of a range of policies and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As part of the AEDP, the Government announced the APS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Strategy in December 1991.

Under the strategy, all APS departments and agencies are required to have their own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Plans approved by the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET). These plans are being closely co-ordinated by agencies with their EEO programs, and provide a vehicle to achieve an overall increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the APS. The strategy confirms the overall broad target of between 1 and 2 percent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the APS by the year 2000, which was first set by the AEDP in 1987.

Departments and APS agencies prepare and implement their own EEO programs, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Strategies (ATSIRCDS), which are closely co-ordinated.

Both are reported on in Annual Reports. Implementation reports on EEO programs are required to be provided to Ministers and to the PSC. Implementation reports on ATSIRCDS are required to be provided to DEET.

While the broad target of between 1 and 2 per cent of the APS being made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has already been achieved, numbers are largely concentrated in agencies delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It is expected that with the implementation of the ATSIRCDS, and of the EEO Strategic Plan, numbers will continue to increase, with wider distribution throughout the APS.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the APS has gradually increased since data was first available in 1986, and now at 1.2% meets the Government's target under the AEDP of between 1% and 2%. With the commencement of the Government's APS ATSIRCDS, there should be continued improvements in these data.

The table below indicates the comparative position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across the Administrative, Professional, General Service, Technical, Information Technology, Nurses and Medical Officer classification structures of the APS at June 1998 and June 1992.

CLASSIFICATION STRUCTURE	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE	
	1988	1992
Clerical/Administrative	1225 1.2%	1600 1.5%
General Service Officer	52 0.6%	36 0.5%
Professional Officer	8 0.1%	21 0.3%
Technical Officer	29 0.3%	17 0.3%
Information Technology Officer	3 0.1%	8 0.2%
Nurses	N/A N/A	7 0.4%
Medical Officers	1 0.4%	0 0.0%
All Permanent Staff	1389 1.0%	1760 1.2%

Source: Continuous Record of Personnel, PSC Annual Report 1991-92.

The following table compares the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the APS with: the Australian population, the labour force and people employed in APS equivalent occupations.

	TOTAL -1992	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE - 1989/90	
		Number	%
Australian Population (15 yrs & over)	1362540	133 500	1.0
Labour Force	8 648 600	80 400	1.0
Employed in APS Equivalent Occupations	7 650 900	61 200	0.8
APS all Permanent Staff - 1988	146 600	1 400	1.0
APS all Permanent Staff - 1992	142 200	1 700	1.0

Source: EEO Strategic Plan for the APS for the 1990's

The purpose of the above table is to provide some general points of reference from which judgements can be made on the EEO performance of the APS in providing opportunities for employment to members of EEO groups. This information is the most recent available in May 1993 in terms of survey timing and EEO group coverage.

The figures on the number "employed in APS equivalent occupations" are based on the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people employed in those occupations in the Australian labour force which broadly correspond to the occupational groups in the APS. Given Government policies and programs, APS managers are expected to (and generally do), achieve somewhat higher than the APS equivalent outcomes, achieving outcomes closer to the general labour force and population figures.

APS equivalent occupations are those identified in the Australian Standard Occupation Classifications as broadly correlating with occupations undertaken by APS staff.

People in the labour force are all those employed, including part time, or actively seeking work. Data for the total population are supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics based on data collected from the Monthly Population Surveys.

In March 1992, the Government announced its response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. This included acceptance of an emphasis on public sector recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels and in all areas, not only in areas of service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This would be expected to lead to an overall increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the public sector.

In light of this, the *PSC's Equal Employment Opportunity: A Strategic Plan for the Australian Public Service for the 1990's*, which was launched on 18 May 1993 by the Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Public Service Matters, Mr Laurie Brereton, sets a performance indicator of 2% for APS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment by the year 2000.

Each APS department and agency is encouraged to use this performance indicator for general guidance, in conjunction with data on their own current level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait employment, in the development of their EEO programs. This should include consideration of demographic issues such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment across geographical areas.

VICTORIA

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy for the Victorian Public Service has a target of 0.5% employment of Aboriginal people within the State public service. All public authorities are included in this strategy.

Recommendation 27

Targets should be extended to the whole public sector including statutory authorities and government owned businesses.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) - Supported-in-principle

NSW Government - Supported with qualifications

Comment**ATSIC**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Strategy is a national strategy under the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy.

In response to the recent initiative entitled "A New Strategy to boost Aboriginal Employment in the Australian Public Service", all public sector agencies are required to develop a strategy and specific targets for the recruitment and career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

DEET

To build on the range of existing strategies in the public sector, a number of Federal and State statutory authorities and government business enterprises are being targeted through the Major Employment Strategies element of the Training for Aboriginals Program. For instance, agreements exist with the Pipeline Authority, the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority, the Australian Sports Commission, Qantas, Telecom Australia and Australia Post.

In addition, some State and Territory Government Recruitment and Career Development Strategies have been extended to include employment in statutory authorities, for example the Victorian and South Australian strategies.

DIR

As stated in recommendation 26, the DIR is currently undertaking an evaluation of the effectiveness of EEO programs in statutory authorities and business enterprises covered by the EEO Act. This evaluation will address recruitment strategies in these authorities in response to this recommendation.

NSW

In NSW, changes are proposed to the Public Sector Management Amendment Act which will reduce the imposition of public sector wide conditions and practices. Some non-negotiable government policies will be imposed, although it is likely that these will be kept to a minimum.

The NSW government comments that caution should be used in pursuing targets in the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples due to the problems associated with "tokenism" when recruitment occurs without consideration of merit. It is considered that measures such as those provided by the State Public Sector Aboriginal Strategy are more appropriate.

Recommendation 28

There is close monitoring and evaluation of those strategies in progress.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) - Supported

Public Service Commission (PSC) - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

ATSIC has established a Strategy Support Unit to implement and monitor the Strategy. This unit is in the process of developing a specific monitoring and evaluation plan against program objectives and performance indicators.

ATSIC is also required to report performance against targets and expenditure to DEET on a regular basis.

DEET

The monitoring of strategies is a requirement which is included in all strategy agreements. It is the responsibility of a Steering Committee which comprises representatives of DEET and the employer organisation.

Steering Committees meet at least quarterly to:

- review the progress of the strategy;
- recommend changes to the strategy;
- endorse any claims for payment submitted by the organisation;
- endorse progress reports submitted to the organisation and the Department;
- resolve issues relating to the implementation of the strategy;
- make recommendations on the annual forward recruitment targets and a strategic plan; and
- report quarterly and annually to DEET and the organisation on the operation of the strategy.

Under new guidelines, all strategies are to be evaluated under the direction of the Steering Committee within six months of the completion of the strategy period. For the larger strategies, where appropriate, evaluations will be conducted by external consultants.

DIR

The Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987 (the EEO Act) prescribes the strategy for implementation and on-going review of EEO programs in an authority. The provisions include:-

- consideration of policies and examination of practices in the relevant authority to eliminate discrimination against persons in the designated groups in employment matters; and
- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the program and assessing the achievement of those objectives.

For further comments by the Department of Industrial Relations see recommendations 26 and 27.

PSC

See comment in relation to recommendation 28.

Recommendations 29, 30 and 31

The Minister for Local Government seek the co-operation of State and Territory Ministers and The Australian Local Government Association to ensure that Equal Employment Opportunity provisions are observed by local governments through Australia, particularly in relation to:

- 29. -removing barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander permanent employment by local governments;**
- 30. - each local government workplace including permanent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in at least the same proportion as they occur in the workforce of the local government area;**
- 31. - providing training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to gain local government professional qualifications.**

Position

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services
(DHHLG & CS) - Supported

Comment

DEET

DEET supports recommendation 29. Equal Employment Opportunity is being steadily expanded in Local Government and should continue to be supported. DEET contributes to the promotion of EEO by seeking to develop Major Employment Strategies with Local Government Associations and by participating in the National Reference Group on the Relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Local Government (the Reference Group). The Reference Group, which involves ATSIC, the Australian Local Government Association and the Commonwealth Office of Local Government (OLG), is examining a range of Aboriginal and Local Government issues, including the need to improve employment opportunities.

Recommendation 30 is supported by DEET. It is a requirement that is integral to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Strategies being negotiated with local government authorities.

Currently DEET, in conjunction with ATSIC, OLG and the Australian Local Government Association, is carrying out negotiations aimed at establishing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy/Liaison Officers in each State/Territory Local Government Association. One of the principle tasks of these officers will be to promote employment equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the local government sector.

Recommendation 31 is also supported. DEET is working towards the establishment of a local government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy in every State and Territory. These strategies will provide improved employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and may include training to acquire professional qualifications where this is appropriate to the needs of employers and recruits.

DEET may also provide training for employment in the local government sector through mainstream labour market programs. These programs provide preparatory skills training to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access higher level accredited vocational training.

DHHLG & CS

The DHHLG & CS supports the underlying principles of the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy, particularly the development of strategic recruitment and career development plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Local Government.

However, strategies for permanent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment should not be developed in isolation from other programs (as highlighted by Recommendation 3-10, 48, 53 and 59), which address some of the core institutional barriers (including racism) between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Because of the importance of EEO in Local Government, the Local Government Joint Officers Group (LOGJOG) agreed to the establishment of a working group in 1988 to be known as the EEO Sub-Committee of LOGJOG. The main purposes of this group are to discuss developments in EEO in Local Government. A Strategic Plan (1991-94) has been developed and endorsed by LOGJOG to focus on the implementation of EEO in management practices.

Recommendation 32

Affirmative action legislation be put in place to require all firms employing over 100 employees to report on steps being taken to promote the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Position

Department of Employment, Education and Training - See comment (DEET)

Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) - Supported with qualifications

NSW Government - Not Supported

Comment

DEET

This recommendation is noted by DEET. Carriage for action in relation to this recommendation, however, rests with DIR.

DIR

The DIR recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have special needs which should be addressed through special measures. DIR considers that affirmative action legislation as canvassed in the recommendation is only one possible measure for addressing the particular barriers to employment identified in the Report.

The special factors which operate in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples suggest that different alternatives to affirmative action legislation should be explored, such as the setting of employment targets or forward estimates similar to those adopted in the public sector; alternatively, quotas based on representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples might need to be considered to achieve results. Given the severe economic and social disadvantages faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in any given geographical centre making it difficult for most to compete on conventional definitions of merit.

A third approach would be to specifically target and provide financial incentives for voluntary initiatives in regions where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are concentrated. Requiring all companies to report on employment initiatives may not be as effective as specifically targeting initiatives which could concentrate on issues of particular relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, such as entry points, training and support mechanisms.

In respect of a legislative approach, DIR considers that new legislation directed specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples would be necessary - rather than amendment to existing affirmative action legislation i.e. the Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 1986 (AA Act). The

objectives of the AA Act pertain to women and implicit in the recommendations of the *Mainly Urban* report is the coverage of men. Moreover, the requirements under the AA Act for each employer to develop an eight step program with appropriate recruitment targets are probably not suited to these groups in view of their smaller overall numbers, uneven geographical distribution, and particular locational, educational, cultural and linguistic barriers to employment.

DIR would therefore, support the exploration of a number of alternative approaches which have not been canvassed in the Report. DIR considers that the initial task should be to consider the available options in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in order to determine the most effective response to issues identified in the Report.

NSW

The NSW government has indicated that it believes affirmative action legislation is inappropriate for small groups within the community as such groups only make up a small proportion of job applicants. It believes that tailored programs addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are more appropriate.

Recommendation 33

Every consideration should be given by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and Aboriginal communities to the utilisation of the Community Development Employment Projects scheme for housing construction and maintenance.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported

Comment

ATSIC considers that there are no general impediments to CDEP's undertaking housing construction and maintenance. However, determining work projects undertaken by CDEPs is a matter for the grantee organisations. There may be specific local difficulties, such as a lack of skilled and qualified supervision and training, or legal and commercial difficulties arising when housing stock is not owned by the organisation operating the CDEP, which may need to be addressed at a local level.

Recommendation 34

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission give consideration to a substantial expansion of Community Development Employment Projects, particularly in urban areas;

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

NSW Government - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

The Government has approved significant expansion of the CDEP over the next two years. The Board of Commissioners consideration of bids by communities for commencement of new CDEPs includes consideration of the competing demands of remote and town based communities. 18 of the 31 new CDEPs approved for 1992-93 are in urban or town-based communities.

NSW

NSW supports this recommendation, although noting that CDEPs should not be organised purely on a project basis in urban areas. The use of such an avenue should be additional to, and complementary to, community based organisations.

Recommendation 35

Where a Community Development Employment Projects scheme is operating as a labour market program, a sunset clause should be inserted.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Not Supported

Comment

ATSIC considers that it is not yet in a position to determine whether "sunset clauses" should be applied to individual CDEPs.

An evaluation of the CDEP scheme currently being undertaken as part of the review of the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy is considering the need to revise program arrangements to reflect divergent objectives and operations of CDEP projects, including the operation of CDEP as a labour market program.

Depending on the findings of this evaluation, consideration may need to be given to differences between enterprise and labour market operations of CDEPs. The RCIADIC suggested that "sunset clauses" should be applied to CDEPs which have an enterprise focus. It may be inappropriate to apply "sunset clauses" to CDEPs which operate as labour market programs, in that the function of the CDEP is to act as a means for individual participants to access training and work experience and eventually mainstream labour market opportunities. As individuals leave a CDEP they may be replaced by others needing to access similar opportunities.

The development and application of a time frame for the cessation of individual CDEPs would involve the reorientation of the operation of a large and growing number of CDEP projects. Introduction of a "sunset clause" for individual CDEP projects would need to be considered on a project by project basis, requiring considerable consultation with current CDEP participants and communities. Depending on communities and participants goals, effectively focussing CDEP projects as labour market programs may require considerable reorientation, and replanning of individual CDEPs.

As well, there may be difficulties in determining which projects, or components of projects, operate as labour market programs. In some cases, these may not be limited to urban or town-based projects. Conversely, not all urban/rural CDEPs may be oriented to mainstream labour markets. Some CDEPs may combine foci on labour market access and community development and maintenance.

Recommendation 36

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission should ensure that the model of a project-based Community Development Employment Projects scheme is actively promoted in metropolitan and other urban areas, appropriate, as part of its Community Development Employment Projects approval process.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported

Comment

Current program guidelines facilitate the development of project based CDEPs in town based settings.

Community interest in commencing CDEP's remains high in metropolitan and other urban areas, as indicated by the predominance of town based projects approved for commencement in 1992-93.

Recommendation 37

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission take into account when evaluating Community Development Employment Project applications, that training should not be for its own sake, but directly related to general labour market employment or enterprise development both in the public and the private sectors or to community development.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported

Comment

Training needs of CDEPs can be considerable and varied, including extensive training for CDEP project managers and administrators. The Community Training Program (CTP) is designed specifically to meet the skills and knowledge needs for management, service delivery and the achievement of development objectives of Aboriginal communities and organisations and training proposals are assessed in terms of identified training needs.

Under CTP guidelines, CDEPs themselves are able to identify their training needs when applying for CTP support.

Recommendation 38

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in conjunction with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and State and Territory Ministers develop a strategy with appropriate funding to address the backlog of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing needs over the next 10 years as a matter of high priority.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services
(DHHLG & CS) - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

The ATSIC *National Housing and Community Infrastructure Needs Survey* is due to be completed in 1993 and it is envisaged that the results will provide a clear picture of the expected amount required to meet housing needs.

ATSIC and the DHHLG & CS have started the negotiation process with State/Territory Governments on the channelling of the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program funds of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) through ATSIC. The funding will also encompass the co-ordination of the funding and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing.

ATSIC also suggests that its Home Ownership Program may be used to address some of the housing needs backlog.

DAS

Australian Construction Services (ACS), a Division of DAS, is the Commonwealth Governments agent for the planning, design, supervision and contract administration of new building and engineering facilities. Recently, the ACS through its management of the ATSIC *National Housing and Community Infrastructure Needs Survey* has acquired intimate knowledge of the dimension of housing and related infrastructure needs across Australia. With specialised national resources in both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander development issues and in program and project management, ACS has the capacity and expertise to contribute significantly to implementation of this recommendation, in addition to recommendations 39, 41, 42, 43, 48 and 50.

DHHLG & CS

The Government acknowledges the need to address as a high priority the significant disadvantage suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in terms of their access to housing.

The Government will continue to provide an identified component of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) (currently \$91 million per year) as grants to States/Territories to enable them to accelerate the provision of housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In addition, the ATSIC has guaranteed \$50 million for housing provision in 1993-94, a significant increase on the current funding allocation for housing through ATSIC.

Under the National Aboriginal Health Strategy the Government is committed to provide \$232 million over five years, subject to a broadly matching effort from the States/Territories. A major component of this expenditure is to be directed to improving environmental health conditions (ie housing and infrastructure) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Council of Australian Governments in December 1992 endorsed the "National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Programs and Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders".

The National Commitment flows from earlier considerations by the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council (AAAC) and sets a framework for achieving greater coordination in the delivery of programs and services by all levels of government to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Within the context of the National Commitment, work has commenced on the development of new and more efficient arrangements for the planning and delivery of Aboriginal housing, which will also ensure more effective coordination with related infrastructure services.

The broad aim is to integrate the current programs delivered by the States/Territories using CSHA and State/Territory funds, with housing programs currently funded by ATSIC, into a single Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing program administered by each State or Territory under a bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth. The implementation of these new arrangements is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- New program arrangements must provide significantly enhanced opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self determination and self management through significant involvement in planning and decision making and the management of housing;

- New planning and delivery mechanisms must result in better co-ordination with infrastructure and related services, and effective links with mainstream housing; and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing policy, including allocation of resources, must be seen within the context of national housing policy.

The "Mainly Urban" Report identifies a number of key factors which must be addressed in an integrated and strategic way in order to improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These are consistent with the findings of the National Housing Strategy.

Such factors include increased funding, effective consultation with clients about their housing needs, appropriate housing design and construction technology, and effective community based housing management strategies, including related training, skills development and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Government expects that the new program arrangements, currently being developed in consultation with the States/Territories, ATSIC, and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, will provide an holistic planning and service delivery framework which gives appropriate recognition to all of these factors.

Recommendation 39

The Ministers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Health, Housing and Community Services in conjunction with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and State and Territory housing authorities:

- ensure that prior to the construction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing, negotiations take place with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants as to local needs in design and to determine the number of people likely to share a house;

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG & CS) - Supported

NSW Government - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

ATSIC provides grant funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing organisations for housing construction. These organisations are responsible for engaging technical and building consultants and ensuring that consultation takes place within their communities as to the design and location of houses. ATSIC also has a set of guidelines for consultants which include the provision that consultants are expected to consult with the families to be housed regarding the design of their housing, in particular any special design features that may be required to accommodate the special needs of the family.

ATSIC is in the process of reviewing the operations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing organisations. This review includes the examination of the consultative mechanisms and design processes that are undertaken by housing organisations prior to the development of housing projects.

DAS

See DAS comment in relation to recommendations 1 and 38.

DHHLG & CS

The DHHLG & CS acknowledges that effective consultation between housing providers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients is a key to the planning and delivery of effective housing services. The new program arrangements which are currently being developed will seek to establish such mechanisms.

NSW

The NSW Department of Housing has a policy of consultation with the community recipients of all housing programs and has developed a range of designs for its current housing programs on Aboriginal Land Council land which are appropriate to the needs of Aboriginal families.

Recommendation 40

The Ministers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Health, Housing and Community Services in conjunction with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and State and Territory housing authorities:

- ensure that until sufficient housing can be provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, multiple family occupancy of housing is not penalised by additional rent charges.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services
(DHHLG & CS) - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

The rental guidelines issued to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing organisations require these organisations to collect rents to enable them to pay rates and insurance, to maintain houses in a good state of repair and to meet their administrative expenses.

The guidelines suggest that rent should be charged at the current rate charged by the State Housing Authority for houses of similar conditions in the area, or 20 per cent of the combined income of the main income earner and his/her spouse, whichever is the lesser. If the housing is not of similar standard to housing provided by the State or Territory Housing Authority, the rental charged by the organisations should relate to the standard of housing. This will ensure that rent is set according to the condition of the house, or the income of the main earner and his/her spouse, and not according to the number of people living in the house.

In the case of public housing made available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement funds, rental is determined by the State and Territory Governments. ATSIC is in the process of negotiating with State and Territory Governments to ensure better co-ordination in the delivery of housing services.

DHHLG & CS

The DHHLG & CS believes that rental policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing should recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and values, and should be developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenant representatives.

Recommendation 41

The Commonwealth through the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission ensure that adequate quality control is exercised over Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing built with Commonwealth or Commonwealth State Housing Agreement funds.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services
(DHHLG & CS) - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

Under the terms and conditions of grants, ATSIC requires housing organisations receiving grant funds to engage technical consultants to ensure that construction standards are met and to assist organisations in choosing a reliable building contractor. However, it should be noted that the decision in relation to the acceptance of tenders for the construction of houses is the responsibility of individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing organisations provided correct tendering procedures are followed.

ATSIC is aware of the difficulties that can be caused by poor workmanship. It regularly urges organisations to ensure effective quality control.

DAS

See DAS comment in relation to recommendations 1 and 38.

DHHLG & CS

The effectiveness and long term viability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing is closely related to the appropriateness of the designs, construction techniques and building materials employed, and the repairs and maintenance strategies established to maintain such housing.

Where the housing is owned and managed by State Housing Authorities, the State or Territory concerned is responsible for its upkeep; conversely, in the case of community managed housing, the community organisations concerned have this responsibility.

Commonwealth officers from DHHLG & CS and ATSIC currently participate along with State government and community representatives on planning and advisory committees for the Aboriginal housing component of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. Through these processes, issues such as the priority accorded various construction and repairs and maintenance tasks can be addressed.

These recommendations will be referred to the States and Territories for attention, noting the focus which the Committee has given them. The new program planning and delivery arrangements which are currently being developed bilaterally with the States and Territories will aim to establish a more holistic approach to the planning and management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing, which will see these issues addressed more effectively.

Recommendation 42

The Commonwealth ensure that adequate quality control is exercised over repairs and maintenance, including timeliness, to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing provided by the Commonwealth or under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported in principle

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG&CS) - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

ATSIC does not have primary responsibility for repairs and maintenance of housing stock belonging to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. It is the responsibility of individual organisations to maintain their own housing stock.

As stated under Recommendation 40, the Commission expects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations administering housing to collect rents to enable them to pay rates and insurance, to maintain houses in a good state of repair and to meet their administrative expenses. Where necessary, ATSIC provides supplementary funding through the Community Housing and Infrastructure Program to enable housing organisations to maintain their housing stocks in an appropriate condition.

Housing stock funded through the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement is under the control of the State and Territory Governments who are responsible for their repairs and maintenance. The control and responsibility for this stock of housing are also the subject of negotiation between ATSIC and State and Territory Governments.

DAS

See recommendation 38 for comment by DAS.

DHHLG & CS

See recommendation 41 for comment by DHHLG & CS.

Recommendation 43

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs ensures that: relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander training institutions and Aboriginal Housing organisations in conjunction with the Department of Employment, Education and Training and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission develop and implement training programs specifically directed at training Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to build and maintain community housing and infrastructure.

Position

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Education, Employment and Training - See comment (DEET)

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG & CS) - Supported

Victorian Government - Supported

Comment**DAS**

See DAS comment in relation to recommendations 1 and 38.

DEET

This recommendation has been noted by DEET. Carriage for action in relation to this recommendation rests with ATSIC following the implementation of the recommendations of the Johnston Review of the Training for Aboriginals Program.

DHHLG & CS

The DHHLG & CS is committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self management. In respect of housing, the development of appropriate training programs in housing management and building construction and maintenance is already a priority activity. Other initiatives in this area include preferential tendering for housing contracts to firms employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

VICTORIA

Through Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, the Victorian Government has supported the development of a number of Aboriginal building teams in areas such as Ballarat, Shepparton and Swan Hill.

Recommendation 44

The Ministers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Health, Housing and Community Services in cooperation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and relevant State and Territory ministers ensure that where appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing programs include provisions for funding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups to establish and maintain homemaker schemes, including the training of staff.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services
(DHHLG & CS) - Supported

NSW Government - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

ATSIC has established a Homemaker Service Scheme as part of the Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP). The Scheme provides the funding for training and advice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Under CHIP, Homemaker Services are provided through recurrent funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Organisations.

DHHLG & CS

The DHHLG & CS agrees that Homemaker schemes, like programs to develop repair and maintenance and other housing management skills, are recognised as important initiatives for the long term viability of housing provided for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

NSW

The NSW Department of Housing is preparing a community development package to address the issue raised in this recommendation.

Recommendation 45

The Minister for Health, Housing and Community Services in cooperation with State and Territory housing ministers ensure that pre and post tenancy inspections are implemented in public rental housing policy. Tenancy inspections should be carried out with both parties being present ie. the tenant and/or agent and housing authority officer. Where tenants lack suitable experience a third party should be present to assist them.

Position

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services
(DHHLG & CS) - See comment

Comment

This recommendation will be referred to the States and Territories for action, as the responsibility for administrative practices associated with the management of public rental housing rests with State/Territory Housing Authorities.

Recommendation 46

The Minister for Social Security ensure that his Department makes provision for housing rental payments to be deducted from social security benefits on the request of the recipient and paid to the landlord.

Position

Department of Social Security (DSS)

-Supported-in-principle

NSW Government

- Supported

Comment**DSS**

Negotiations between DSS and all eight State/Territory authorities have been proceeding for some time with a view to introducing a Rent Deduction Scheme along the lines suggested in this recommendation. Under the proposed scheme, DSS pensioners will be able to choose to have their rent deducted from their pensions and paid direct to housing authorities.

The scheme will be completely voluntary and pensioners will be able to withdraw at any time. There will be limited exchange of information between DSS and housing authorities and the Privacy Commission has been, and will continue to be, consulted to ensure the scheme complies with privacy principles.

The scheme will be administered by DSS on a full cost recovery basis.

Negotiations have now reached the stage where it is expected the scheme will commence operations in some States by the end of June 1993. For the first 12 months of its operations, the scheme will be available only to DSS pensioners. Within that time, it is to be evaluated and such issues as extending it to include other DSS clients such as Job Search and Newstart Allowees will be considered as part of the evaluation. The possibility of including other DSS clients who are renters in the scheme will be considered after the evaluation is completed.

NSW

The NSW Department of Housing would support such a system of rental payment but considers that there should be flexibility to optimise choices for tenants.

Recommendation 47

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander component of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement be transferred to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission for distribution to the State and Territory Governments.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services
(DHHLG & CS) - Supported with qualifications

Comment**ATSIC**

The Commonwealth Government agreed to the channelling of the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement through ATSIC in November 1991. The framework for the channelling has been put in place through the *National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Programs and Services for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders*, endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments in December 1992.

ATSIC and DHHLG & CS have started the negotiation process with the State and Territory Governments on specific arrangements.

DHHLG & CS

As indicated above, the Government is responding to the initiatives recommended by the Australian Aboriginal Affairs Council, and is proceeding towards negotiation of new housing program arrangements with the States and Territories within the framework provided by the National Commitment. A key objective of these new arrangements will be to clarify responsibilities and minimise overlap between the Commonwealth and States/Territories, and also to streamline Commonwealth involvement in the delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing.

Subject to the negotiation of satisfactory agreements with the States/Territories the Government will consider vesting in ATSIC the Commonwealth responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing program delivery.

Recommendation 48

The Ministers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Local Government, in conjunction with State and Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander government agencies and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, implement programs to address the basic needs of fringe dwellers which include water reticulation, basic shelter, toilets, washing facilities and garbage collection;

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported

Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) - Supported in principle

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG & CS) - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

ATSIC, through CHIP, provides funding for housing and infrastructure to all communities, including fringe dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, who either own their own land or who have obtained long term leases on the land they occupy.

Regional Councils determine priorities on projects to be funded in accordance with their Regional planning process which takes into account the Community plans of communities within their respective regions.

AHL

AHL agrees with the comments made by the Committee in relation to the special and varied needs of fringe dwellers. AHL provides one camp style hostel in Camooweal, Queensland for fringe dwellers and funds another in Kalgoorlie.

AHL notes that there is limited scope for it to expand its assistance for fringe dwellers as in most locations the needs are irregular and potential users are unwilling to pay to use accommodation. The confining of funds under the Town Campers Housing and Infrastructure Program to only the Northern Territory has further restricted AHL's abilities to meet the needs of fringe dwellers in other States.

DAS

See DAS comment in relation to recommendation 38.

DHHLG & CS

The DHHLG & CS believes that these issues are being addressed at least in part through the initiatives outlined in the responses to Recommendations 3-10.

Some councils have demonstrated a positive and constructive approach to addressing these issues. Again, the Government believes the National Reference Group on the relationship between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will play a crucial role in monitoring progress on action resulting from strategies developed in these areas.

Recommendation 49

The Ministers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Local Government, in conjunction with State and Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander government agencies and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, implement programs to address the basic needs of fringe dwellers which include water reticulation, basic shelter, toilets, washing facilities and garbage collection;

-that any programs or assistance provided should be in consultation with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG & CS) - Supported

Victorian Government - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

See ATSIC comment relating to recommendation 48.

DAS

See DAS comment in relation to recommendation 1.

DHHLG & CS

The DHHLG & CS is of the view that the National Reference Group on the relationship between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the funding of workshops (see response to Recommendation 3) are playing a major role in this area. The appointment of Aboriginal Policy Officers (see response to Recommendation 9) will also promote consultation on a range of issues between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

VICTORIA

Aboriginal Affairs policy in Victoria is determined through consultation with Aboriginal community organisations and members of the Aboriginal community. In areas such as health, housing, education and community services, incorporated statewide Aboriginal organisations advise the Government on policy and program directions.

Recommendation 50

The Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, Aboriginal Hostels Limited and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, in association with relevant local Aboriginal organisations, should, as a matter of priority, consult to develop innovative strategies for meeting the short term accommodation needs of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in urban areas;

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)	- Supported
Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL)	- Supported
Department of Administrative Services (DAS)	- Supported
Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services DHHLG & CS	- Supported-in-principle
NSW Government	- Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

As part of the development of the Community Housing and Infrastructure policy, ATSIC is examining the extent of the problems relating to short term accommodation and the resources and services currently available to alleviate this problem. The extent of the needs for itinerant and transient accommodation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will also be considered during this exercise.

AHL

AHL comments that it is already acting to improve its co-ordination with ATSIC and DHHLG & CS using several methods. AHL is willing to co-ordinate an inter-agency committee to facilitate the development of strategies to address the short term accommodation needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

DAS

See DAS comment in relation to recommendation 38.

DHHLG & CS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are homeless and in crisis are a major target group of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), the Youth Social Justice Strategy (YSJS) and the Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP), which fund supported transitional accommodation and related support

services for people who are homeless and in crisis. The aim of these programs is to assist homeless people move towards independent living, where appropriate, or other alternatives like long term supported housing.

Homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people currently form some 7% of the homeless people assisted by these three programs which, on any night, accommodate up to 11,000 people including women and children.

SAAP/CAP Ministerial Advisory Committees have been established in each State and Territory to provide advice to the Commonwealth and State Governments on levels of unmet need and priorities areas for action. These committees are comprised largely of non government members, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives.

SAAP has progressively developed a number of models for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. For example, there are outreach and information services in Western New South Wales, safe house schemes for Aboriginal women and children in the North-Western region of Western Australia, special services for young women in Brisbane, co-ordinated youth services in Mt Isa, together with a range of shelters and transitional supported accommodation services in all States and Territories.

The needs of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders has been given a special focus in the current national evaluation of SAAP.

In addition to consultations, there are special research projects and data collections focusing on the needs of this group. The information coming from this national evaluation will be used to shape the program beyond 30 June 1994.

NSW

The NSW Department of Housing supports this recommendation and has indicated that there is an identified need for short term accommodation and that a range of strategies will need to be developed, including siting accommodation near larger specialist hospitals, major correctional institutions and juvenile justice centres.

Recommendation 51

The Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, Aboriginal Hostels Limited and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, in association with relevant local Aboriginal organisations, should, as a matter of priority, consult to develop innovative strategies for meeting the short term accommodation needs of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in urban areas;

- funding be provided to allow Aboriginal Hostels or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups to provide accommodation for medical transient Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in the larger urban centres.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported

Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) - Supported

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG & CS) - Supported-in-principle

NSW Government - Supported

Comment

ATSIC

See ATSIC comment relating to recommendation 50.

AHL

AHL believes that it is the best placed and most appropriate organisation to properly co-ordinate, fund and effectively deliver medical transient accommodation services on a national basis.

AHL supports the recognition of transients and homeless people as two distinct groups, as suggested in *Mainly Urban*, and currently caters for these two groups separately. AHL also point out that, in their view, medical transients are a distinct third group as they often need extra support and more specialised accommodation.

AHL have recently introduced a separate hostel category, called "Medical Care" hostels for medical transients. To date AHL funds four of these hostels and it is seeking funds to develop two more in 1993-94. AHL is also conducting research in Alice Springs and Darwin in 1993 to determine needs for Medical Care hostels in those cities.

DHHLG & CS

See DHHLG & CS comment in relation to recommendation 50.

NSW

The NSW response notes that this issue is wider than purely accommodation needs and that responsibility for achieving a solution will require input from several State/Commonwealth agencies and that such agencies should meet to resolve any difficulties arising from the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 52

The Ministers for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in cooperation with State and Territory Governments, the Australian Local Government Association and national sporting associations:

- initiate pilot programs in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to mainstream urban recreational and cultural activities;

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Environment, Sport and Territories (DEST) - Supported

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG & CS) - Supported

NSW Government - Supported with qualifications

Victorian Government - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

The general thrust of this recommendation is supported by ATSIC. This specific recommendation has been taken up in a broader context as the issue of access and equity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to mainstream recreation and cultural services has been evident for a considerable time. The final report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) also focused, inter alia, on the benefits of recreation and sport in the context of youth issues.

As a result of the Commonwealth Government's response to the RCIADIC, ATSIC has developed a new national program called the Young Persons Sport and Recreation Development Program to improve access and equity. This program will provide financial support to State/Territory sport and recreation departments to employ additional staff to enhance recreation and sport initiatives, and activities at the community level, as well as improving access to mainstream services.

The Australian Sports Commission is involved in the implementation of this program and will place in excess of thirty development officers in State and Territory sport and recreation networks. All States and Territories are moving towards the appointment of these development officers and it is expected that many positions will be filled by June 1993.

The development officers will assist in training community based recreation officers, encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth to participate in sport and recreation and improve information available on recreation to young people. The program will be reviewed at the end of its second year to measure outcomes.

Although the main focus of the program will be young people it is clearly recognised that to succeed and have any lasting benefit, a family approach will be necessary.

A number of positive outcomes of the program are evident already and include:

- an emerging awareness of the issue of, and opportunities for discussions on, the role of sport and recreation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life;
- a progressive creation of networks between individuals and agencies involved in this area, leading to a conference on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recreation to be held in May 1993.

DAS

Advice and assistance will be provided, where possible, by DAS to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on the cultural aspects of recommendations 52, 53, 58 and 61.

The Australian Film Commission (AFC) has established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program to help it ascertain and assist in better meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people active in, or aspiring to, the film and video industry. The primary role of the Program is to oversee and advise on access to and use of AFC program funds by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and for projects meeting the definition of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander project.

The Program is responsible for liaison with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to effect the two way transfer of information and views. Of equal importance, is the provision of advice to the AFC Executive on ways of addressing the views and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a manner consistent with AFC objectives and functions.

The program has responsibility for providing advice on how the AFC can best achieve the following objectives: -

Review and develop policies, guidelines and strategies to provide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to AFC funding:

- further develop film production and related skills among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;

- facilitate effective participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all areas of the Australian and international film industries;
- promote the quality and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander films to maintain or improve competitive standards; and
- assist in the development of wider audiences for films which are written, directed, or produced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

While the primary responsibility for safeguarding the screen and recorded sound heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples lies with the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, the National Film and Sound Archives will continue to refine and develop its national collection in order to provide access to some material of special cultural interest to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The National Science and Technology Centre, which is within the DAS portfolio, is in the early stages of developing a program to take appropriate hands-on science and technology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. It is intended that this program will involve targeting, then working with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop a strategy for hands on science and technology education. The main thrust of this program will be for remote communities, urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will also be included.

DHHLG & CS

The DHHLG & CS supports these recommendations and believes that the National Reference Group on the Relationship between Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People will play a crucial role in monitoring progress on action resulting from strategies developed in these areas.

NSW

The NSW Department of Sport, Recreation and Racing (DSR & R) has mainstream programs which it believes are accessible to the Aboriginal community. Consultation with Aboriginal people on these programs has ensured that their content and structure is appropriate to the needs of Aboriginal people.

However, in light of this recommendation, the DSR & R will prepare a discussion paper on the utility of initiating such pilot programs with a view to having these matters discussed at the next meeting of the Sport and Recreation Ministers Council.

VICTORIA

The Victorian Government, in conjunction with the Office of Youth Affairs and DEST, has been working with Aboriginal community organisations to develop sport and recreation needs analyses. These analyses will identify available services and provide Aboriginal communities with information which can be used to develop sport and recreation programs.

Recommendation 53

The Ministers for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in co-operation with State and Territory Governments, the Australian Local Government Association and national sporting associations:

- improve the coordination of recreation and cultural services and support provisions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and their members.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Environment, Sport and Territories (DEST) - Supported

Department of Health, Housing, Local Government and Community Services (DHHLG & CS) - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

See ATSIC comments provided in relation to the Young Persons Sport and Recreation Development Program in recommendation 52. In addition to funds provided for the new national program, ATSIC provides financial support directly to community organisations to support local sporting and recreation activities and, in a number of cases, also financially supports State-wide co-ordination organisations.

Other than a small reserve of funds held in Central Office to support national activities, the level of funds allocated to sport and recreation activities is determined by ATSIC's elected arm.

ATSIC, in consultation with the Australian Sports Commission, liaises with and supports a number of, peak sporting bodies in their endeavours to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation.

DEST

See DEST comments in relation to recommendation 52. Wherever possible, DEST aims to promote the provision of co-ordinated recreation services in all communities. Through the Community Cultural, Recreation and Sporting Facilities Program, the Government has addressed high priority facility needs within communities, and consequent inequities in access to recreation opportunities.

See also DAS and DHHLG & CS comments in relation to recommendation 52.

Recommendation 54

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in conjunction with State and Territory governments ensure that:

- greater use is made of trained recreation officers by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations by recognising these positions for funding purposes;

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Noted, see comment
(DEET)

Department of Environment, Sport and Territories - Supported
(DEST)

NSW Government - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

The response to recommendation 52 also refers.

Financial support for community based recreation officers could be considered by State/Territory governments while additional financial support might be considered by ATSIC Regional Councils as part of determining overall local priorities. It is also possible to support the allocation of recreation officer duties as part of the development or refinement of a CDEP project by a particular community.

DEET

See comments relating to Recommendation 55 below.

DEST

DEST does not provide direct financial assistance for the employment of community recreation officers. However, it has produced a video "Getting Together", designed to promote sensitivity to the special recreation needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and aims to promote the development of comprehensive recreational programs within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

NSW

The general thrust of this recommendation is supported by the NSW Department of Sport, Recreation & Racing. Whilst this department is not in a position to directly fund recreation officer positions it may offer training courses to assist voluntary and paid officers in the areas of Sports administration and Sports coaching. Should other specific areas of training be required in this area, then training courses will be developed in consultation with the Aboriginal community.

Recommendation 55

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in conjunction with State and Territory governments ensure that:

- further training courses are provided at a regional level to improve access to pre-service and in-service training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recreation officers;

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Education, Employment and Training - See comment
(DEET)

Department of Environment, Sport and Territories - Supported
(DEST)

NSW Government - Supported-in-principle

Comment**ATSIC**

One of the roles of the development officers mentioned in the response to recommendation 52, will be to provide a training role for community based recreation officers.

Training for State or Commonwealth funded positions is available through specific workshops and seminars arranged by the Institute of Sport. The Northern Territory government and ATSIC have recently joint funded a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sport and recreation conference to further enhance skill and knowledge transfer.

In recent years a number of TAFE's have developed local courses targeting recreation officers and potential recreation officers. The advantage of these courses are that they are often locally developed or modified to meet identified needs and that students can access the courses on a regional basis.

DEET

These recommendations are noted by DEET. However, action in relation to Recommendations 54 and 55 rests with ATSIC following the implementation of the recommendations of the Johnston Review of the Training for Aboriginals Program.

DEST

The Australian Sports Commission has initiated some action in this area as outlined in the above responses and will ensure that this recommendation is referred to the next meeting of the Sport and Recreation Ministers Council.

NSW

The NSW Department of Sport, Recreation & Racing conducts a variety of training programs in the areas of sport and recreation development. All of these programs are available at the regional and local level to Aboriginal communities.

Recommendation 56

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in conjunction with State and Territory governments ensure that:

- State and Territory governments appoint an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recreation officer to liaise with, and act as consultant to recreation officers within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and liaise with major sporting and recreational associations.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Environment, Sport and Territories - Supported
(DEST)

NSW Government - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

See ATSIC comments in response to recommendation 52 which details a new program to provide financial support to State/Territory sport and recreation departments to assist those departments in improving service delivery.

Under this new program, one of the national co-ordinating positions will be placed within the Australian Sports Commission. The role of the national co-ordinating position will include the promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests within national sporting associations.

DEST

See DEST comments in relation to recommendation 52. DEST also intends to refer this recommendation to the next meeting of the Sport and Recreation Ministers Council.

NSW

The NSW Department of Sport, Recreation & Racing has employed an Aboriginal Liaison Officer for the past five years and found a significant improvement in the level of contact with the Aboriginal community and in the appropriateness of services provided.

Recommendation 57

The Minister for Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories, in conjunction with State and Territory ministers, seek the assistance of umbrella sporting associations to raise the awareness of their members to the obstacles facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sports participants and to encourage participation in sports in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are underrepresented.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Environment, Sport and Territories - Supported
(DEST)

NSW Government - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

Recent media reports continue to highlight the difficulties which may be faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the sporting environment.

DEST

The Australian Sports Commission has written to the key sporting umbrella groups, the Confederation of Australian Sport, the Australian Olympic Committee and the Australian Commonwealth Games Association requesting their support to raise awareness of their members to the obstacles facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. This recommendation will also be listed for consideration at the next meeting of the Sport and Recreation Ministers Council.

NSW

The NSW State Sporting Associations are keen to assist in removing obstacles preventing full participation by Aboriginal people in sporting activities. It is considered that an overall national approach to this matter would ensure a co-ordinated effort by both the national and state level sporting associations.

Recommendation 58

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, in consultation with State and Territory ministers, ensure that funding is made available so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural centres can be established in metropolitan and regional areas. Such centres should be owned and managed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations wherever possible.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) - Supported

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Environment, Sport and Territories (DEST) - Supported

NSW Government - Supported

Victorian Government - Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

ATSIC has a relatively small program, the Heritage Protection Program, assisting with the acquisition, preservation and safe keeping of cultural property. This program was initially directed towards small community managed keeping places in traditional areas to hold secret/sacred material and cultural museums in less traditional areas. The primary focus of this program is on the protection and return of cultural objects and information which are significant in accordance with Aboriginal tradition and, therefore, the provision of keeping places is emphasised.

ATSIC Regional Councils are responsible for determining regional priorities and may be able to respond, within their financial constraints, to any increase in demand by urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to give a higher priority to the establishment and operation of cultural centres.

DAS

See DAS comment in relation to recommendation 52.

DEST

Community cultural facilities have been eligible for Commonwealth financial assistance through the Community Cultural, Recreation and Sporting Facilities Program. At this stage, all available funding has been allocated but should this Program be extended, special arrangements will be put in place to fully inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to facilitate their access to any new funds.

NSW

The NSW Government supports the establishment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural centres in NSW metropolitan and regional centres wherever possible and comments that the provision of Commonwealth funds would undoubtedly assist their establishment.

VICTORIA

Funding has been made available, through the Capital Projects Program of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, to a number of Aboriginal community organisations to assist in the development of cultural centres. A number of centres have already been established and all of these are owned and managed by Aboriginal community organisations. In addition, the Cultural Heritage Program of this department provides funds for the salaries of 20 Cultural Officers employed by Aboriginal community organisations.

Recommendation 60

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission undertake a review to determine the extent to which family structures provide an appropriate base for service delivery to urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported-in-principle
(ATSIC)

Comment

This recommendation is supported by ATSIC. ATSIC recognises that an investigation, along the lines suggested in this recommendation, may be one way to improve service delivery to urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ATSIC is prepared to undertake such an investigation, within time and budgetary constraints, on whether service delivery would be better effected by dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families direct via individual business and housing loans, as opposed to providing grants to Aboriginal community organisations.

Recommendation 61

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in conjunction with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the Aboriginal Reconciliation Council undertake an awareness raising campaign so that the wider community has a better understanding of contemporary Aboriginality particularly in the urban context.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - Supported

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet - Supported
(PM & C)

Comment**ATSIC**

ATSIC, through the Office of Public Affairs, has a number of programs designed to assist in bringing about a better understanding by the wider community of the effects of past dispossession and to try to bring about attitudinal change.

These include an ongoing public affairs program which includes pro-active media liaison, the production and distribution of a regular television program which promotes indigenous achievement and a Public Awareness Program which enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and groups to promote their own culture to the wider community.

ATSIC supports the view that greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in the mainstream media would assist in further developing cross cultural awareness and is also considering ways of bringing about better relations between the media - particularly at the local level - and Aboriginal communities and organisations.

DAS

See DAS comments in relation to recommendation 52.

DEET

This recommendation is supported. This objective would mainly be pursued through general education systems so State/Territory Governments would have a major role to play in undertaking such an awareness raising campaign.

However, DEET also has an important role. As discussed in the response to recommendation 25, the Commonwealth is currently funding a Project of National Significance related to this issue: The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Curriculum Studies Project. The Project will produce a publication: *'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies - a guide for Australian Schools'*. This publication will document nationally recognised, exemplary strategies and materials, selected against nationally agreed criteria and will include a list of publications and a directory of their availability.

The project team, which consists of coordinators of Aboriginal education from the ACT, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia, is also making significant contributions to the Australian Education Council national collaborative curriculum framework by securing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the eight key learning areas for schools.

PM & C

Under its legislation, an essential function of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation is to "promote by leadership, education and discussion, a deeper understanding by all Australians of the history, cultures, past dispossession and continuing disadvantage of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and of the need to redress that disadvantage".

A range of community education activities are underway or being produced, including the launch of a Friends of Reconciliation network later in 1993, backed by information kits; a program of Study Circles is being produced which will allow people to learn more about Aboriginal culture and society; a series of 110 TV spots on indigenous issues is currently screening on Channel 9; a poster and collector card series will appear in May in a major metropolitan newspaper; and 12 one-hour programs on indigenous issues for the public broadcasting network.

Recommendations 62, 63 and 64

The Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in cooperation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and State and Territory ministers for education:

62. - review Aboriginal studies curricula to ensure sufficient weight is given to contemporary Aboriginality;

63. - ensure that all students undertake Aboriginal studies units;

64. - investigate the feasibility of non-Aboriginal students being able to study an Aboriginal language and the culture associated with it.

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Education, Employment and Training - Supported
(DEET)

Victorian Government - Supported

Comment

ATSIC

ATSIC comments that it will monitor all levels of government to ensure that these recommendations are implemented.

DEET

DEET supports recommendations 63. Goal 21 of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, 'To provide all Australian students with an understanding of, and respect for, Aboriginal traditional and contemporary cultures', is addressed through the Strategic and Operational Plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education by all States and Territories and school systems.

However, the recommendation is primarily a matter for consideration by State and Territory education systems.

In addition to the various initiatives proposed by education authorities to address this issue, the Aboriginal Education coordinators, through the Curriculum Assessment Committee (CURASS) of the Australian Education Council are securing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the eight key learning areas for Australian schools.

Recommendation 64 is also supported. However, it is primarily the responsibility of State and Territory education authorities. Commonwealth funding is available under

the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program for such initiatives should Government and non-Government school systems submit a bid for funding.

VICTORIA

Through implementation of the National Aboriginal Education Policy in Victoria, schools with Aboriginal students are being asked to develop Aboriginal studies programs in consultation with local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups.

Recommendation 67

In preparing the budget allocation for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission the Government allocates additional funding to cover increased salaries and resources for Commissioners. (paragraph 10.5)

Position

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission - Not Supported
(ATSIC)

Department of Finance (DOF) - Not Supported

Comment**ATSIC**

The provision for full time Commissioners is part of a package of proposals, including a reduction in the number of Regional Councils, which is currently before the Parliament. It is envisaged that any additional costs associated with the full time employment of Commissioners will be met from ATSIC's global allocation.

DOF

The Department of Finance noted that, although they could not comment on the applicability of employing ATSIC Commissioners full time, any increase in Commissioners' remuneration will need to be met from within the indexed global allocation.



