



# Julia Gillard and Labor

Let's move Australia forward



# Closing the gap

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ELECTION 2010

## Overview

On 13 February 2008, as a new government, Federal Labor's first order of business was the National Apology on behalf of the Australian Parliament to Australia's Indigenous peoples, and particularly to the Stolen Generations.

Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd knew that without acknowledging the injustices and great hurt and suffering of the past, we could not start moving forward. The National Apology was a necessary first step for change and an important turning point for us as a nation.

Since then, Federal Labor has been driving a national effort to close the gap in life expectancy and life opportunities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Our agenda is three-fold: addressing under-investment, rewarding personal responsibility, and re-setting Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships.

Federal Labor has been determined to cut through to find solutions to the deep-seated problems that have frustrated successive governments.

We will keep pressing forward with reform to close the gap and expand opportunities for all Indigenous Australians.

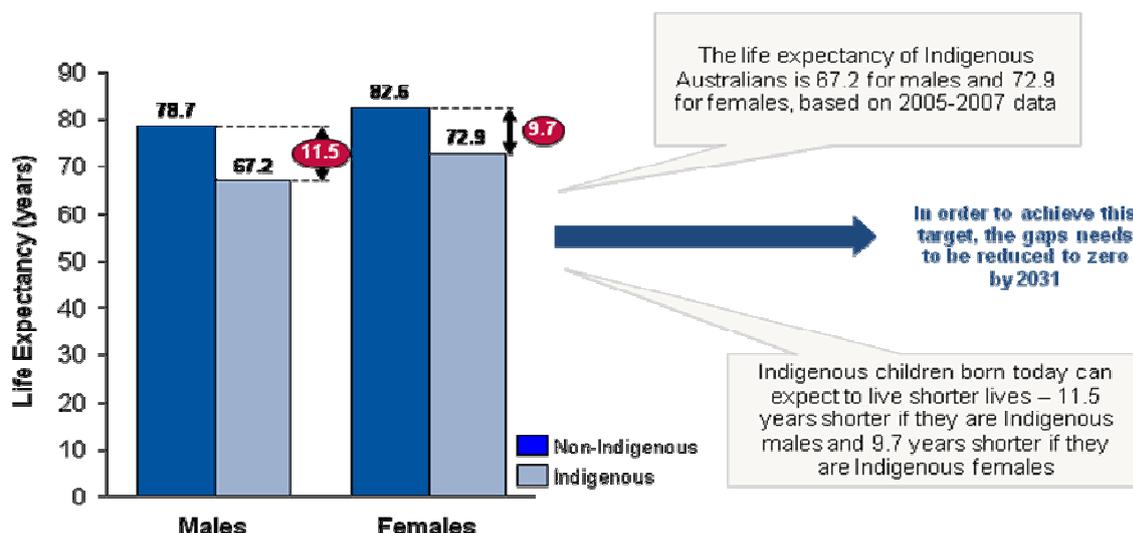
## What the Labor Government has achieved so far

Our determination to close the gap is driven by important policy imperatives.

***1. We are addressing decades of under-investment by successive governments in services, infrastructure and governance.***

We recognise the failure of successive governments to adequately invest in Indigenous communities.

Prior to the last election, we laid out ambitious targets to make desperately needed in-roads to close the gap in life expectancy, opportunity and aspirations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.



Source: ABS 3302.0 Deaths, 2008

When we came to government, the scale of the challenge was clear.

We found that governance, measurement and transparency arrangements were not adequate to ensure that progress could be made or measured.

We determined to put in place the fundamentals for long term change. We have made a start, but we know there is much more to be done.

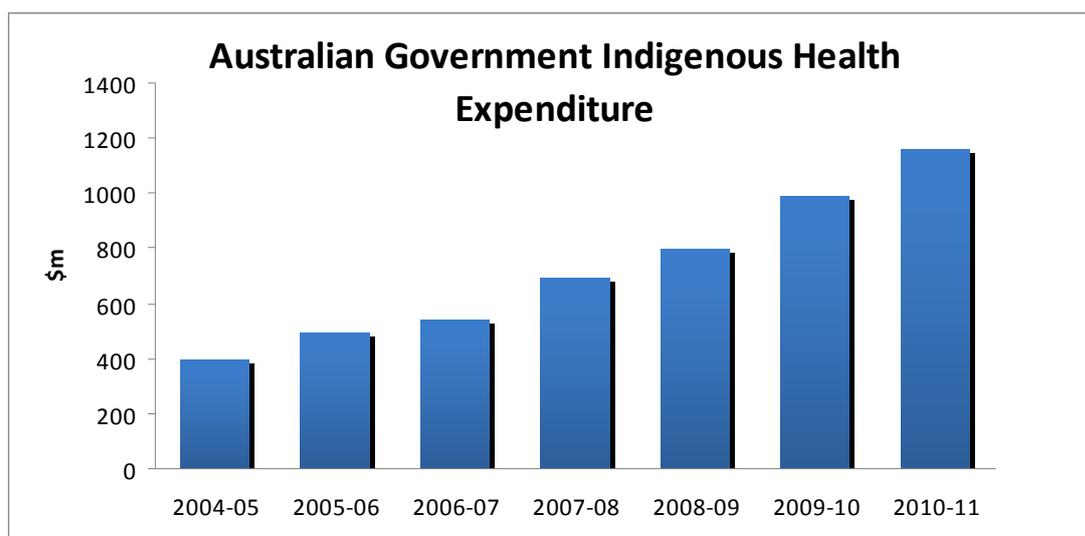
*Accelerating government investment in closing the gap and putting in place fundamental government structures.*

- Under the leadership of Federal Labor, the Council of Australian Governments is delivering unprecedented investment to close the gap. This includes \$5.5 billion for remote Indigenous housing over 10 years; \$1.57 billion for Indigenous health over four years; \$564.4 million for early childhood development over six years; \$228.9 million for Indigenous economic development over five years; and \$291.2 million to improve remote service delivery over six years.
- We have also committed \$1.2 billion since 2007 to continue the Northern Territory Emergency Response and a further \$1.5 billion since 2007 to other Indigenous specific measures.
- Federal Labor has reformed the funding of remote Indigenous housing to the States and the Northern Territory. Now, if jurisdictions under-perform, they may lose funding. If jurisdictions perform well, they may attract more funding. The States and Territories latest reports on remote Indigenous housing show that jurisdictions' combined performance is close to the national target for new houses and is exceeding the national target for refurbishments.

- We have established the new position of Coordinator-General for Remote Indigenous Services. The Coordinator General has the power to 'name and shame' governments or agencies that are not fulfilling their commitments to deliver basic services and amenities.
- Lack of accurate and appropriate data is a central challenge to tracking progress and we have provided additional funding to improve the collection and reporting of data by national agencies. We have launched a Closing the Gap Clearing House to provide a central source of information on what closing the gap measures are getting demonstrable results.

#### *Improving health outcomes for Indigenous Australians*

- Under Federal Labor, annual expenditure on Indigenous specific health programs has increased to almost \$1.2 billion since 2007-08, an increase of 87 per cent.
- The Gillard Labor Government is investing \$805.5 million to tackle chronic disease factors such as smoking, poor nutrition and lack of exercise, to improve chronic disease management and follow up primary care as well as to increase the capacity of the primary care workforce to deliver effective care to Indigenous Australians with chronic diseases.
- A shocking 94 per cent of vision loss associated with eye disease in Indigenous communities is preventable or treatable. The prevalence of ear disease is three times higher for Indigenous children than non-Indigenous children. To address these gaps we have allocated \$58.3 million over four years to deliver a major increase in services to address trachoma, an expansion of the Visiting Optometrist Scheme to provide optometrist visits to an additional 115 remote and very remote communities and investments in hearing medical equipment.
- In the Northern Territory, 237 primary health care staff have been employed in health services in remote communities and 478 urban-based health professionals have completed short term placements at more than 70 clinics and primary health care services in remote Indigenous communities since 2008. Between July 2008 and June 2010, children in remote Northern Territory communities and town camps received 7,938 dental services, 4,638 audiology services and 3,072 ear, nose and throat services.
- The Gillard Labor Government is providing \$191.1 million over three years for continued reform of remote Indigenous primary health care services in the Northern Territory, with a focus on children's health. We are continuing the Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) and completing follow up services for dental and ear, nose and throat conditions identified through the Northern Territory Emergency Response child health checks.
- Under Federal Labor, funding for Indigenous substance use initiatives through COAG was doubled in late 2007 to \$98.6 million. Funding has been provided across all jurisdictions to build new or update existing residential rehabilitation centres, enhance treatment and prevention services and employ additional substance use workers.
- Labor has provided \$11 million over four years to deliver dental treatment and preventative services to Indigenous people in rural and regional areas.



Source: *Portfolio Budget Statements 2010-11, Health and Ageing Portfolio, 2005-06 to 2010-11.*

### *Improving education outcomes for Indigenous Australians*

- Federal Labor has dramatically increased funding for schools after 11 years of neglect under the Coalition Government. Federal Labor is providing \$2.6 billion through the Smarter Schools National Partnerships (SSNPs). Over one quarter of all schools are receiving additional support through the \$1.5 billion Low Socio-economic Status National Partnership and the \$540 million Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.
- Starting with a foundation of transparency through the My School website, Federal Labor will work to target new resources through National Partnerships and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan to lift the outcomes of Indigenous students.
- The new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan focuses the Government's efforts on the six key areas that we know will make a difference in Closing the Gap:
  - Readiness for school
  - Engagement and connections
  - Attendance
  - Literacy and numeracy
  - Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development
  - Pathways to real post-school options.
- The Gillard Labor Government is already making investments in these areas, with funding for intensive literacy and numeracy programs and individual learning plans for Indigenous

students; scholarship programs and funding successful projects like Clontarf Sporting Academies that help engage students in school.

In addition:

- We have recruited and deployed 140 additional full time equivalent teachers in remote Northern Territory communities.
- Dr Chris Sarra's Stronger Smarter Learning Communities received \$16.4 million Australian Government funding in September 2009 to support an initial 12 schools and communities in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia to become hub schools, high performing schools which support and develop other schools in their region. This is anticipated to grow to 60 hub schools supporting 180 to 240 affiliated schools over the next 4 years.
- The Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF) will receive \$20 million in support from the Australian Government over three years and has funded 45 scholarships for Indigenous secondary school students to attend high performing boarding schools in regional and urban areas. This is expected to increase to more than 100 scholarships in 2010.
- Working with Noel Pearson, the Australian Government is providing almost \$1 million to support the operation of the Cape York Aboriginal Australia Academy, in Coen and Aurukun, which is trialling a new educational approach to boost academic achievement.
- Around \$84 million has been approved under the Building the Education Revolution for school projects including new classrooms, school halls and libraries in the 29 Remote Service Delivery communities. This includes Yirrkala CEC, Doomadgee State School and Halls Creek District High School.
- In 2007, Labor committed to building three school boarding facilities in the NT based on a funding commitment of \$28.9m over four years, together with a \$15 million capital contribution by the Indigenous Land Corporation. Consultations have been progressing with local communities, and announcements have recently been made regarding the locations of the facilities: in Wadeye, at Garthlala in East Arnhem, and at a site in the Warlpiri triangle north-west of Alice Springs.

The Gillard Labor Government believes in the transformative power of a decent education.

#### *Tackling Indigenous housing and infrastructure shortfalls*

- We are delivering a record \$5.5 billion over ten years to help address the major backlog of need for housing in remote Australia. With this funding we are delivering new and refurbished housing, improved property and tenancy management, increased funding for maintenance and employment related accommodation across remote Australia.
- We are implementing major reforms to underpin long term housing investments, including obtaining secure tenure. Secure tenure is necessary to protect assets and to make sure repairs and maintenance are carried out. It underpins the responsibility of residents to pay the rent and maintain and care for their homes.

- Indigenous communities have agreed to whole of township leases for Wurrumiyanga (formerly Nguiu) in the Tiwi Islands, for Angurugu, Umbakumba and Milyakburra on Groote Eylandt. Housing leases have been signed for 14 communities in the Northern Territory as well as on the APY Lands in South Australia. As at July 2010, seven Queensland Councils have signed leases and the remaining seven set to receive housing have indicated a willingness to grant a lease. Leases have also been signed for 17 Alice Springs Town Camps.
- States and Territories are for the first time being held accountable to the remote Indigenous housing targets. Following the Australian Government's reforms, the States and the NT delivered 316 new houses and 828 substantial refurbishments in remote Indigenous communities across Australia in 2009-10. This was an additional 241 refurbishments above the targets. Refurbishments bring homes to a functional standard, making kitchens and bathrooms useable again.
- We have taken action to improve the delivery of remote Indigenous housing in the Northern Territory including taking a more hands-on leadership role, reducing red tape and program costs, simplified program structures and new quality checks. As of July 2010, 67 new houses and 344 refurbishments have been completed across the Northern Territory and a further 53 new houses and 81 refurbishments are underway. Many previously unusable kitchens and bathrooms are now functional.
- The Labor Government has provided the largest ever investment to build new social housing in Australia's history. Across our programs more than 21,000 new social housing homes will be built and 70,000 homes repaired including more than 10,000 that would no longer have been able to be used. By June 2010, more than 16,000 new dwellings had commenced construction and over 2,600 had been completed. Indigenous people will benefit from this additional social housing as they comprise a substantial and above pro-rata proportion of social housing clients in urban and regional Australia.
- The Gillard Labor Government is determined to increase opportunities for home ownership for those Indigenous people who aspire to owning their own home. In May 2010, we released a discussion paper on increasing home ownership for Indigenous Australians which outlines existing support and services to assist with home ownership and encourages wider discussion on this issue.
- Township leases in the Northern Territory in Wurrumiyanga (formerly Nguiu) and on Groote Eylandt are providing opportunities for home ownership on Indigenous land. New tenure arrangements are being developed at Ilpeye Ilpeye in Alice Springs to provide options for home ownership.
- In the most recent Budget, we announced a temporary transfer of \$56 million in unutilised capital from the Home Ownership on Indigenous Land program into the Home Ownership Program operated by Indigenous Business Australia while further land tenure reform takes place on Indigenous land in remote communities. This will enable more people to access the oversubscribed Home Ownership Program, bringing the total number of Indigenous families assisted into home ownership to a record 15,000 by the end of the financial year, helping to close the gap on home ownership participation rates across Australia, particularly in urban and regional areas.

***Strengthening Indigenous community safety***

- Across Australia, Indigenous communities are taking action to make families and children safer. Communities like Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Doomadgee, and Groote Eylandt have implemented alcohol restrictions resulting in falls in the numbers of arrests and incidents of injury and violence. The Gillard Labor Government supports their determination and leadership.
- Previous governments turned a blind eye or walked away from the unsafe conditions of families and children living in the Alice Springs Town Camps. Under the Gillard Labor Government, a \$150 million Alice Springs Transformation plan is now underway to transform the camps, improve services and give residents a better chance at a safe, healthy life. A clean up and the 'fix and make safe' program is completed, and residents have moved into the first new and refurbished houses.
- Through the Northern Territory Emergency Response, Federal Labor has delivered 22 safe houses for women and men; over 60 additional police to communities that previously had little or no police presence; additional Remote Aboriginal Family and Community Workers and a Mobile Child Protection Team. We have also delivered over \$28 million in youth diversion activities in local communities to tackle the overrepresentation of Indigenous juveniles in detention.
- We have committed over \$19 million to build three new police stations and accommodation for extra police and child protection workers on the APY Lands in South Australia. These stations are now operational.
- To stop the trafficking of drugs, alcohol and other illicit substances, the Government has also provided funding for three Substance Abuse Intelligence Desks (SAID) in Marla, Alice Springs and Katherine targeting drug trafficking, including petrol and kava. We have also funded the Australian Crime Commission to continue the work of the National Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse Intelligence Taskforce in gathering a national picture of serious crime across remote Indigenous Australia, including drug trafficking, fraud, violence and child abuse.
- The Gillard Labor Government has launched a \$64 million Indigenous Family Safety Program and a supporting Agenda to help reduce family violence. A key aim of this Agenda is to tackle alcohol abuse – the primary risk factor in Indigenous family violence – by working with communities to stem the supply of alcohol where it leads to high-levels of family and community violence. Other priorities under the Agenda are to strengthen police protection in remote communities, support community led initiatives that heal trauma and change attitudes, and improve coordination of services to victims, especially children.
- The Gillard Government has led the development of a National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework with the States and Territories aimed at reducing over-representation of Indigenous peoples and ensuring adequate justice and protection to Indigenous families.

*Improving early children's services*

- The Gillard Labor Government is delivering on its commitment to provide Universal Access to preschool, to all children in the year before school by 2013. A total of \$970 million is being invested to make this a reality. A key focus is improving access for Indigenous children, who often miss out on this vital early learning. Early progress has been made, with enrolment rates for Indigenous children in New South Wales increasing from 79.6% to 88.2% in one year.
- The Gillard Government is investing \$59.4 million to improve the quality of 140 early childhood services, including around 100 Indigenous services. Children will benefit from improvements to the physical environment of the service, improved qualifications of staff, and stronger governance and administrative capacity of the services. The Remote Service Delivery priority communities that have budget base funded early childhood services will be in the first phase of implementation.
- In December 2009, Federal Labor commenced construction on a 24 bed facility in Cairns under the Indigenous Mothers' Accommodation Fund. In addition, extensions to an existing 10 bed facility in Katherine are underway and construction of a 10-15 bed facility in Darwin has been approved.
- The Gillard Labor Government has invested \$1 million in the first prevalence study of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in an Australian Indigenous community. The study will be led by the Fitzroy Valley Indigenous community.
- The Gillard Labor Government has also led the development with the States and Territories of the first National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children with more than 70 actions to drive best practice in early intervention and prevention, information sharing between agencies and stronger accountability, including a focus on Indigenous children.

We are also delivering:

- 36 Children and Family Centres across Australia. The first Centres will be operational by the end of 2010.
- 50 new Indigenous Parenting Support Services across Australia by the end of June 2011.
- Expanded Playgroups for Indigenous Families and mobile playgroups.
- New and expanded Maternal and Child Health services and more access to antenatal care, pre-pregnancy and teenage sexual and reproductive health for Indigenous families.
- Crèches in remote communities in the Northern Territory that previously had little or no access to early childhood programs for children under five years of age.

*Improving food security*

- Federal Labor has implemented major upgrades to the regulation and licensing of remote community stores, and is in the process of rolling out a major program of store infrastructure upgrades in the NT. In the NT, licence requirements ensure that stores carry a wide range of nutritious food, and have strong governance arrangements. Nationally,

through the National Strategy for Food Security in Remote Indigenous Communities, a series of 11 pilots are focussing on exploring options for improved access to nutritious and affordable food for remote community stores.

#### *Improving economic opportunities*

- Federal Labor has released a consultation draft of the Government's Indigenous Economic Development Strategy which canvasses options for promoting the vital role of Indigenous economic development to expand opportunity through employment and economic activity, to promote responsibility through jobs and access to financial literacy; and to forge new commercial relationships and new business opportunities.
- We have introduced a new Indigenous procurement policy for all Australian Government contracts over \$5 million and \$6 million for construction where there is a significant Indigenous population – using our dollars to promote Indigenous jobs and business. We have also led a national partnership with State and Territory Governments to ensure they also have Indigenous procurement policies.
- New employment targets on major government infrastructure programs means more local Indigenous people are getting training and work experience. Indigenous people currently comprise around 37 per cent of the workforce for the Northern Territory remote housing program, well above the 20 per cent target. Indigenous employment under the program has reached over 50 per cent in the Tiwi Islands.
- The Australian Indigenous Minority Supplier Council was launched in September 2009. Since then, \$4.0 million in contracts have been signed between Indigenous suppliers and corporate businesses and government agencies.
- Corporate and community sectors are increasingly engaged in closing the gap, under the leadership of Reconciliation Australia. At least 165 Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) are in place across Australia's workplaces creating an estimated 6500 jobs for Indigenous people, with 3000 filled to date. Federal Labor has committed \$10.8 million to Reconciliation Australia to allow them to continue their work over a further three years.
- Federal Labor has driven major reforms to employment programs so that more Indigenous people can develop the skills needed to get and keep a job. Since the new employment services started on 1 July 2009, more than 28,750 Indigenous Australians have been placed into employment by Job Services Australia. For the same period there have been almost 19,000 employment and training commencements under the Indigenous Employment Program - double the average of commencements achieved over the eight years from 1999 to 2006-07.
- We have reformed the Community Employment Development Program (CDEP) converting over 1,500 CDEP positions to properly paid jobs delivering government services across jurisdictions with superannuation and standard entitlements.
- One of our major reforms to the CDEP program included an increased emphasis on participants having the opportunity to undertake work experience with local employers. To date around 2000 participants have had the opportunity to take up work experience placements in diverse industries such as tourism, horticulture, pastoral, construction, media and administration.

- Around 630 Indigenous rangers are working on 66 Working on Country projects across Australia, up from 124 ranger positions in 2007.

#### *Improving native title*

- The Gillard Labor Government has invested an additional \$50 million to build a more efficient native title system and provided the Federal Court with powers to manage native title claims from start to finish to allow opportunities for negotiated settlements to be more effectively identified and progressed.
- Federal Labor has issued a consultation paper on a package of reforms to promote leading practice in native title agreements and the governance of native title payments. We are also consulting on ways to provide greater clarity and increased certainty for native title holders on how the tax system and native title interact. The aim is to make sure native title agreements are working effectively to harness the potential of native title payments to create employment and economic benefits over the long-term, including for future generations of native title holders.

#### *Legal aid funding*

- We are providing an additional \$34.9 million over four years for the Indigenous legal aid services program to provide additional funding for legal assistance services to improve access to justice in the community. These services are delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services across Australia and the additional funding will assist in meeting increasing demand for these services and improve access to justice for Indigenous Australians across Australia.

#### *Reforming remote service delivery*

- We've taken up the challenge created by decades of neglect and under-investment by successive governments in remote Indigenous towns and communities. Families living in remote Indigenous communities should be able to access the same level of services and amenities that other Australians enjoy in communities of a similar size and location. This upgrade of services and amenities is now happening across 29 priority remote locations in the first instance and a Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services with independent powers is working to hold all governments to account.

### ***2. We are working to rebuild the positive social and economic norms that are necessary for strong communities and healthy families; and empowering Indigenous communities to drive solutions***

More dollars are not enough. We came to office determined to reform the way dollars are used and determined to leverage spending for long-term outcomes.

Federal Labor has sought new ways of delivering our extra investment. Ways that will transform individuals, families and communities by rebuilding the positive social and economic norms that underpin daily life – like going to work and paying the rent. And ways that empower Indigenous people to drive solutions.

Now, when we build infrastructure and houses, we do it in ways that give local people the skills to get and keep a job.

When people are provided with housing, we expect them to be responsible tenants - to pay rent, be good neighbours and report maintenance problems.

Pivotal to our reform agenda is finding ways for Indigenous people to be economically independent and play a greater role in the economic life of the nation. This usually starts with getting an education so they can get a job which is why it is so important to get all kids to school. We have reformed employment services and other government programs to give more Indigenous people the job-ready skills and training required for participation in 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia.

Protecting vulnerable children from neglect or abuse is one of the most critical responsibilities a government has.

That's why we have strengthened the Northern Territory Emergency Response, investing an additional \$1.2 billion in measures including more police, night patrols and safe houses.

We are implementing major welfare reforms to fight passive welfare, promote personal responsibility and protect vulnerable Australians, especially children.

We are supporting Indigenous people to be responsible parents through measures like income management, financial planning and financial literacy. And we are bolstering community-led solutions in areas like alcohol and drug controls and developing local action plans for closing the gap.

#### *Jobs and economic development*

- Under the new Learn or Earn program which commenced in July 2010, all Youth Allowance recipients who haven't completed year 12 or the vocational equivalent are now required to undertake a minimum of 25 hours of training to remain eligible for payment. The purpose is to encourage young people to remain in study or training until they complete a basic educational or training qualification.
- The reformed program provides increased and new incentives for providers to maximise the support for CDEP participants including outcome payments for training, employment and work experience placements.

#### *Welfare reform*

- The Gillard Labor Government is driving major reforms to promote responsible behaviour. A non-discriminatory model of income management will commence in the NT in 2010 that is clearly linked to promoting responsible behaviour so that parents always do their best to get children to school, young people are encouraged to either learn or earn, and child protection authorities have another early intervention tool for families in crisis. Our reforms will ensure that a minimum of 50 per cent of welfare payments is spent on life essentials like food, clothes and rent. We have allocated \$53 million for improved financial literacy in the NT linked to these welfare reforms.
- We have trialled different income management models around the country to assess what is effective. In the Northern Territory, the number of people being supported and protected

through income management has reached 17,000 – up from 1,400 in November 2007. In Western Australia, we have introduced income management as another early intervention tool for families in crisis or doing it tough.

- We are supporting the Cape York Welfare Reform Trials, a partnership between the Australian Government, Queensland Government, the Cape York Institute and the Queensland communities of Coen, Aurukun, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge, which is yielding positive results with funding of \$48.8 million from the Australian Government.
- School attendance has increased in Aurukun from an average attendance rate of 37 per cent 12 months ago to an average rate of 63 per cent today. The community-led Family Responsibilities Commission has delivered 252 school attendance notices to parents, some of which have resulted in their income being managed.
- After a comprehensive evaluation towards the end of 2011 of these different models of income management, we will roll out welfare reform to other disadvantaged regions in Australia.

#### *Housing reform*

- We have implemented new tenancy agreements that make clear the respective responsibilities of tenants and governments. For the first time, thousands of households across remote Australia will have the same normal protections and responsibilities as other Australians. For example, over 1100 tenancies in seven Queensland communities (Aurukun, Lockhart River, Naprannum, Hope Vale, Doomadgee, Palm Island and Wujal Wujal) have been transitioned to standard tenancy arrangements.
- The Gillard Labor Government is increasing the opportunities for home ownership for Indigenous Australians. Over 14,000 Indigenous families in urban and regional areas have now bought their homes through Indigenous Business Australia's home loan program since 1975.

### ***3. We are re-setting and strengthening the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians***

We came to government knowing that change was needed on emotional as well as practical levels.

Indigenous Australians are custodians of the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

To improve relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians we have to heal the wounds of the past.

That is why Federal Labor's first official business in coming to government was to deliver the National Apology to Indigenous people for the loss and suffering inflicted on Australia's Indigenous peoples, in particular the Stolen Generations.

*Through leadership by Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*

- Federal Labor has supported the establishment of a National Congress of Australia's First Peoples to give Indigenous people a voice in public life. The Congress is expected to become fully operational in January 2011.
- We are supporting Indigenous leaders in determining priorities for the future development of their communities as part of the Government's Remote Service Delivery Strategy through the design of Local Implementation Plans.
- We have provided \$600 000 for the establishment of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance, giving Indigenous women a way to bring forward issues of importance in their own words, with their own solutions.
- We have supported around 900 Indigenous men and women to participate in the Government's Indigenous Leadership Program – helping them to set ambitious future goals and strategies for achieving them.
- We nominated Megan Davis, a human rights scholar to the United Nations (UN) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues – and she was successfully elected. Ms Davis is the first Aboriginal woman to be elected to a UN body, and this is the first time an Australian Government has ever nominated an Aboriginal person to a UN body. Ms Davis will serve as an independent expert.

*Through respect and understanding*

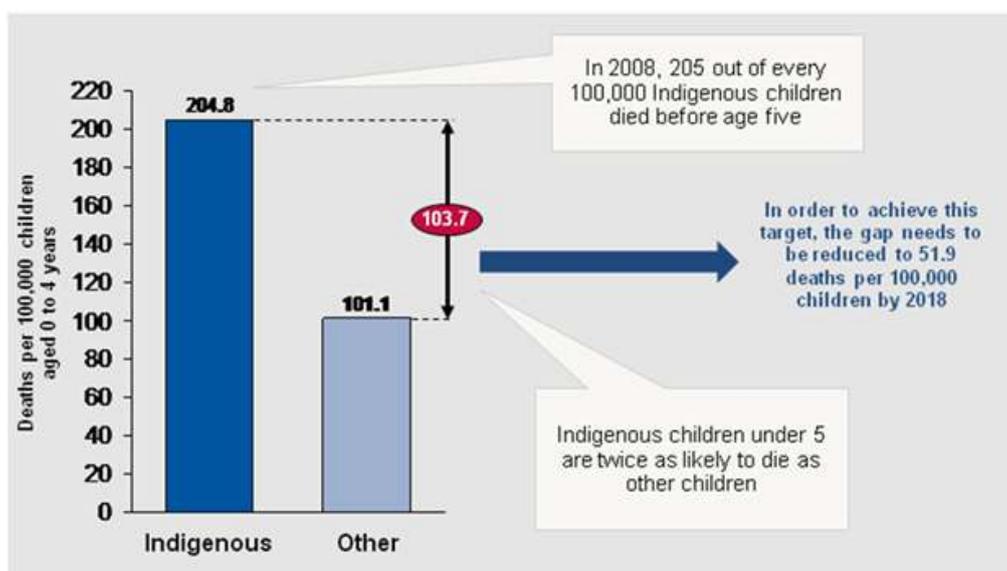
- Federal Labor has changed the Parliamentary standing orders so after every federal election, the Parliament will be officially welcomed to country.
- Federal Labor introduced legislation to lift the former Government's suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act in relation to its application to the Northern Territory Emergency Response. The Parliament passed this legislation in June 2010.
- We reversed the former Government's position and pledged Australia's support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, joining with the international community in affirming the aspirations of all Indigenous peoples.
- We have provided \$26 million to supporting a Healing Foundation to work on the ground in communities to restore cultural pride and help families to break the cycle of trauma and grief, with a strong focus on the needs and aspirations of Stolen Generations members.
- We have increased funding to \$25 million per year for family reunion services for Stolen Generations' members and Bringing Them Home Counsellors (a funding increase of 50 per cent between 2007-08 and 2009-10). We have invested in oral histories, professional development for Stolen Generation leaders and through the Stolen Generations Working Partnership agreed to priority areas for action.
- We are overhauling the process of the repatriation of Australian Indigenous remains from overseas to make sure they are more inclusive of Indigenous aspirations. Since coming to Government, in partnership with traditional owners we have successfully negotiated the return of 140 sets of remains from 11 institutions in 6 countries.

- As part of our Education Revolution, we are supporting the development of a new Australian curriculum that includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

*Through supporting Indigenous culture, heritage and connection to country*

- The Gillard Government is working to preserve the 145 Indigenous languages still spoken in Australia through a new National Indigenous Languages Action Plan supported by \$9.3 million in 2009-10 for community-based language maintenance and revival projects across the country.
- We are supporting Indigenous art centres with funding of \$10.7 million in 2009-10, recognising their major contribution to Indigenous employment, education and cultural and social wellbeing, particularly in remote communities.
- We are supporting 115 Indigenous community broadcasting projects in metropolitan, regional and remote Australia with \$14.6 million in 2009-10. We also provided additional funding of \$15.2 million to continue National Indigenous Television's broadcast and satellite delivery arrangements for 2010-11.
- We have also commissioned an independent review into investment in Indigenous broadcasting which will inform future funding and policy for the sector to ensure that the Indigenous broadcasting sector is supported in the most effective way.
- Since Federal Labor came to office, 14 Indigenous Protected Areas covering 3,021,089 ha have been added to the National Reserve System, Australia's network of protected areas conserving our unique biodiversity.

## Future Challenges



Source: ABS (unpublished)

In our second term, Federal Labor will continue to sustain the focus on closing the gap driven by the ongoing policy priorities of addressing underinvestment, rebuilding positive norms and strengthening Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations.

We will continue to implement our reforms including in housing, employment, health, welfare, community safety, early childhood and remote service delivery.

We will not resile from driving improvements where needed and ensuring all governments meet their obligations to Indigenous Australian citizens.

And we will continue to give strong priority to the needs of vulnerable people, especially children.

As we move forward, we will be focusing on the different needs of remote communities as well as the urban and regional communities which comprise the majority of Australia's Indigenous population.

## **POLICY**

### **What the Government is doing next**

We will continue to deliver our record investments in housing, health, early childhood, economic participation and remote service delivery and to track the efficacy of these investments against achieving our closing the gap targets.

We will support hard working families, to support the mums and dads who are doing it tough to provide for their kids and get them a good education. Where social norms have broken down, we will work with communities to build stronger families and lift expectations and aspirations.

Rewarding personal responsibility will continue to be a core aim of our programs, recognising those quiet achievers in our community who demonstrate, day in and day out, the value of hard work, team work and spirit.

We will continue to put the welfare of children at the centre of our efforts, and tackle alcohol abuse, and family violence through the actions outlined in our Indigenous Family Safety Agenda.

#### **Breaking the cycle of substance abuse**

**A Gillard Labor Government will provide \$20 million over four years to reduce abuse of alcohol and drugs in Indigenous communities.**

**We will implement a National Framework through the Council of Australian Governments to deal with the cycle of alcohol and substance abuse in Indigenous communities.**

**Indigenous Australians are nine times more likely to die from alcohol related causes than non-Indigenous Australians.**

**Between 70 and 90 percent of family assaults in Aboriginal communities are committed while the perpetrator is under the influence of alcohol or drugs<sup>1</sup>.**

**The prevalence of foetal alcohol syndrome was estimated in one academic study to be 138 times the rate for the whole Australian community<sup>2</sup>.**

**Federal Labor will provide new support for community-led solutions for fighting abuse in Indigenous communities. We will support community and NGO local actions to fight alcohol and substance abuse including the development of community-led Alcohol Management Plans, and targeted programs to prevent the normalisation of substance abuse amongst young Indigenous people.**

We will continue to support Indigenous families, communities and businesses to participate in the broader economy through maximising their participation in employment, in attracting government contracts and maximising benefits received from their land holdings.

An important focus will be the implementation of the Indigenous Economic Development Strategy. A draft of the Strategy was recently released for consultation. We are also committed to increasing the levels of home ownership among Indigenous Australians across urban, regional and remote areas of the country.

We will maintain our efforts to streamline the complex legal processes for native title claims, and to ensure that the benefits derived from native title agreements are substantially directed to sustainable and inter-generational benefits for native title holders.

Recognising the importance of land and culture to Indigenous peoples, we will continue our efforts to ensure they play a central role in land related industries including the protection of the environment, land management, and emerging industries linked to the carbon economy.

Federal Labor will build on the momentum of the National Apology to acknowledge the place of the First Australians at the centre of our nation's identity.

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<sup>1</sup> Atkinson, J, (1998) "Making Sense of the Senseless Feeling Bad, Being Mad, Getting Charged Up!, Having it Both Ways: Dual Diagnosis, Alcohol, Drugs and Mental Illness ,Conference Proceedings, Melbourne University, 1998, p5, cited in Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission "Social Justice Report 2003", [http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social\\_justice/sj\\_report/sjreport03/index.html](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/sj_report/sjreport03/index.html).

<sup>2</sup> Bower, C; Silva, D; Henderson, TR et al (2000) "Ascertainment of birth defects: the effect on completeness of adding a new source of data", *Journal of Paediatric Child Health*, 36: 574-6, cited in Burns, L; Black, E; and Elliot E (2009) "Monograph of the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs Working Party on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: An update*", August 2009.

### **Indigenous constitutional recognition**

**We will pursue bipartisan support for taking the steps needed to progress the recognition of Indigenous Australians in the Constitution.**

**Indigenous people generously share their culture and traditions with those who have come here after them.**

**Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples would be an important step in strengthening the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and building trust.**

**A Gillard Labor Government will establish an Expert Panel on Indigenous Constitutional Recognition comprising Indigenous leaders, representatives from across the Federal Parliament, constitutional law experts and members of the broader Australian community.**

**The expert panel would be charged with broad consultation on recognition of Indigenous people in the constitution, providing options on the form of the amendment and guidance on the information needed for public discussion.**

A Gillard Labor Government will continue to strengthen Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations through organisations such as the newly established Healing Foundation, the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance as well as local community organisations.

We will continue to work closely with existing national organisations, like the National Native Title Council, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care.

And we will drive action with the Stolen Generations on priorities outlined in our Stolen Generations Working Partnership.

## **Overcoming challenges**

For decades, successive governments have been thwarted by overwhelming challenges when it comes to tackling Indigenous disadvantage.

We are determined to keep cutting through with solutions to the complex problems that have frustrated successive governments.

Our first step was to deliver a national apology to Indigenous Australia, especially Stolen Generations.

We have built on the goodwill and momentum generated by this significant act with a comprehensive program of reform.

We must keep moving forward. Under a Gillard Labor Government, closing gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians will continue to be a national priority.

## Major Indigenous commitments over the next three years\*

Improve remote housing through new and refurbished housing	\$1.59 billion
Tackle chronic disease and improve the health of Indigenous Australians	\$967 million
Deliver on our commitment to provide a quality learning environment for all Indigenous children in those vital early years	\$176 million
Provide additional targeted assistance to Indigenous kids at school	\$467 million
Provide employment assistance and opportunities for Indigenous Australians, including working on country programs	\$1.95 billion
Improve services to priority remote communities	\$98 million
Improve community safety and close the gap in the Northern Territory. Most of this funding is for extra teachers, school nutrition programs, quality teaching and extra police, Working on Country programs, youth services and family support workers.	\$438 million
Reduce family violence and alcohol abuse in Indigenous communities	\$62 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5.75 billion</b>

\*This Table outlines the Labor Government's financial commitments in the major building block areas, but does not attempt to list every specific commitment, and in particular, does not include the Labor Government's investments in mainstream services including education, housing and health that will also directly benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly in urban and regional locations.