

Outcome 8

## Indigenous Health

**Improved access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to effective primary health care and substance use services and population health programs**

Outcome | 08

### OUTCOME SUMMARY

Outcome 8 is focused on ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to essential care, services and programs, to improve the health and life expectancy rates of Indigenous Australians. The Government is committed to achieving this outcome by working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations. The Government also collaborates with the states and territories.

Outcome 8 is primarily the responsibility of the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health within the Department. However, all programs within the Department are managed to ensure effective and accessible health care for Indigenous Australians.

### The Year Ahead

In 2007-08, the Australian Government will continue to focus on enhancing the Indigenous-specific health and substance misuse services available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Government will also work towards improving Indigenous Australians' access to mainstream health programs and services, and strengthening the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.

In addition, the Government will continue to collaborate with Indigenous Australians to improve child and maternal health, and social and emotional well-being outcomes. Preventing and treating substance misuse and chronic disease will also be priorities.

The whole-of-government *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2003-2013* guides much of this effort.

### Key Strategic Directions for 2007-08

During 2007-08, the Australian Government will:

- improve access to, and the responsiveness of, mainstream health systems;
- improve access to, and the quality of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific health and substance use services; and
- work with other governments and the health sector to improve service delivery and health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## **Major Activities**

### **Access to and Responsiveness of Mainstream Health Systems**

In 2007-08, the Government will work to improve Indigenous Australians' access to mainstream health systems by implementing a range of Council of Australian Governments (COAG) reforms. These include promoting the Medicare Indigenous child health check, particularly in remote areas, and improving access to mental health and social and emotional well-being services (funded under Outcomes 8 and 11).

The Government will work in collaboration with the states and territories to implement COAG reforms aimed at providing better health services for rural and remote communities (funded under Outcomes 6 and 8). Focus will also be on improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's access to national population health strategies such as immunisation (funded under Outcomes 1 and 8).

In 2007-08, the Department will implement the key findings of a joint review with Medicare Australia which examined the barriers Indigenous Australians face nationally, when accessing the Medicare Benefits and Pharmaceutical Benefits Schemes and non-Medicare health financing programs. Furthermore, it will commission research to explore Indigenous Australians' hospital experiences.

The Department will also expand the number of new brokerage services in urban areas to link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to mainstream primary and allied health care providers.

During the year, the Government will continue to make mainstream health systems more responsive by integrating and recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues in mainstream workforce training and supply programs. The Australian Government will also work with key stakeholders, including State and Territory governments, to implement and review the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce National Strategic Framework 2002-2007.

The Government will also focus on ensuring that medical sciences curricula include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. In addition, it will fund strategies to recruit and retain more Indigenous Australians in the health sector, as well as health professionals working in the Indigenous-specific health sector.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Substance Use Services**

In 2007-08, the Australian Government will provide additional funding for new and existing Indigenous-specific health services to deliver primary health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Funding decisions will be informed by regional planning based on health need, current population and funding distribution, and the capacity of local organisations to effectively use funds to achieve positive health outcomes. The Department will implement a National Planning Framework in 2007-08 to ensure a consistent, evidence-based, national approach to funding allocation and program delivery.

The Government will commence the implementation of a new measure to deliver family-centred primary health care services for Indigenous families and communities in rural and remote areas.

Another focus for the Government in 2007-08 will be the implementation of new and expanded Indigenous-specific drug and alcohol services under the COAG initiative:

Addressing Violence in Indigenous Communities – Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Rehabilitation Services for Indigenous Australians in Remote and Regional Areas. This activity will contribute to the Government’s broader efforts to address fundamental law, order and safety issues for people in regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – particularly women and children.

The Government will commence implementation of the Health@Home Plus initiative to deliver nurse-led home visiting services to Indigenous children in targeted areas, from birth to two years of age. The initiative will also provide home-based child and family health support for high need Indigenous children aged two to eight years.

The Government will work to improve the quality of child and maternal health services, and chronic disease care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, through the Healthy for Life initiative.

In 2007-08, the Department will work to embed continuous quality improvement into health service delivery. It will also manage funding for capital works projects to construct, upgrade and maintain health clinics, substance use facilities and staff housing, particularly in rural and remote areas.

In addition, the Department will respond to the findings of an Urbis Keys Young evaluation of all social health programs funded under Outcome 8, to help strengthen the Indigenous health sector’s capacity to deliver better social and emotional well-being services. The Department will do this in consultation with key stakeholders.

#### **Collaboration Across Governments**

During 2007-08, the Australian Government will continue to work with the State and Territory governments in the on-going implementation of the Petrol Sniffing Prevention Program. This year will see an expanded roll-out of non-sniffable fuel (Opal) in existing and new regions, including East Kimberley and the central desert zone. The Department will produce and distribute related communication material, and monitor the implementation of treatment and rehabilitation services delivered by State and Territory governments.

The Department, on behalf of the Australian Government, will contribute to Indigenous policy and service coordination at the national level, and collaborate with other government agencies to improve the responsiveness and capacity of the health workforce to address Indigenous Australians’ needs.

The Department will engage with Indigenous Coordination Centres at a regional level – for example, by participating in Shared Responsibility Agreements, Regional Partnership Agreements and strategic interventions. It will also focus on developing and improving services in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands.

The Department will collaborate with State and Territory governments and other Australian Government agencies to monitor progress on the next implementation plan for the *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2003-2013*. In addition, it will deliver initiatives that contribute to, and align with, whole-of-government priorities for early childhood and safer communities.

## Outcome 8 Resourcing

Table 3.1.8 shows how the 2007-08 Budget appropriations translate to total resourcing for Outcome 8, including administered expenses, revenue from government (appropriation), revenue from other sources, and the total price of outputs.

**Table 3.1.8: Total Resources for Outcome 8**

	Estimated actual 2006-07 \$'000	Budget estimate 2007-08 \$'000
<b>Administered appropriations</b>		
<b>Program 8.1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health</b>		
Appropriation Bill 1	383,689	447,232
	<b>383,689</b>	<b>447,232</b>
<b>Total Administered Appropriations</b>	<b>383,689</b>	<b>447,232</b>
<b>Departmental appropriations</b>		
<i>Health and Ageing</i>		
Output Group 1 - Policy Advice	18,891	20,648
Output Group 2 - Program Management	33,292	36,390
<b>Total price of departmental outputs</b> <i>(Total revenue from government and from other sources)</i>	52,183	57,038
Total revenue from government (appropriations) contributing to price of departmental outputs	50,651	55,566
Total revenue from other sources	1,532	1,472
<b>Total price of departmental outputs</b> <i>(Total revenue from government and from other sources)</i>	52,183	57,038
<b>Total Price of Outputs for Outcome 8</b> <i>(Total Revenue from Government and from other sources)</i>	52,183	57,038
<b>Total estimated resourcing for Outcome 8</b> <i>(Total price of outputs and administered appropriations)</i>	<b>435,872</b>	<b>504,270</b>
	2006-07	2007-08
<b>Average Staffing Level (number)</b>		
Department	417	439

## Measures Affecting Outcome 8

A summary of measures affecting this outcome is provided at Table 2.2, Section 2. Measure descriptions are published in full in *Budget Paper No. 2, Budget Measures 2007-08*, available on the Australian Government website at: <[www.budget.gov.au](http://www.budget.gov.au)>.

## Contribution of Administered Programs to Outcome 8

### Program 8.1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health program provides funding for high quality, coordinated primary health care, substance misuse, social and emotional well-being and population health activities. The contribution to this outcome is measured by the level of health service provision available. Success is also measured by increased access to, and

continued improvements in, effective health care and substance misuse services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### Contribution of Departmental Outputs to Outcome 8

The Department describes its core activities in terms of two output groups: policy advice and program management. Outcome 8 reports on both output groups. Refer to Section 3.1 for more information on output groups.

### Performance Information for Outcome 8

Performance information for administered programs, individual outputs and output groups relating to Outcome 8 are summarised in Table 3.2.8.

**Table 3.2.8: Key Performance Information for Outcome 8**

#### Performance Information for Administered Programs

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
<b>Administered Funding – Indigenous Health Programs</b>		
Increased episodes of primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	Number of episodes of primary health care provided.	At least 1.6 million episodes of primary health care provided.
Demonstrated access to culturally appropriate social and emotional well-being and mental health services.	Number of client contacts.	At least 90,000 client contacts with social and emotional well being staff.
Purchase/construction/ refurbishment of clinics for the provision of primary health care services to Indigenous communities, including remote areas.	Purchase/construction/ refurbishment of clinics through the capital works program, including remote areas.	At least 18 clinics purchased/constructed/ refurbished.
Provision of accommodation for health professionals providing primary health care services to Indigenous communities, including remote areas.	Purchase/construction/ refurbishment of housing for health professionals through the capital works program, including remote areas.	At least 10 houses purchased/constructed/ refurbished.
Increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people studying in health-related disciplines.	Scholarships awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through the Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme.	At least 70 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students receive scholarships.

Budget Statements – Department of Health and Ageing

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
<b>Administered Funding – Indigenous Health Programs</b>		
Uptake of the Healthy for Life initiative.	Number of Healthy for Life sites established.	At least 80 Healthy for Life services established through over 50 sites by the end of 2007-08.
Increased number of communities being supplied with Opal fuel.	The number of new communities supplied.	At least 75 communities using Opal fuel by the end of 2007-08.
<b>Cost: \$447.232m</b>		

**Performance Information for Departmental Outputs**

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
<b>Output Group 1 – Policy Advice</b>		
Quality, relevant and timely advice for Australian Government decision-making.	Ministerial satisfaction.	Maintain or increase from previous year.
Relevant and timely evidence-based policy research.	Production of relevant and timely evidence-based policy research.	Relevant evidence-based policy research produced in a timely manner.
<b>Price: \$20.648m</b>		

Indicator	Measured by	Reference Point or Target
<b>Output Group 2 – Program Management</b>		
Administered budget predictions are met and actual expenses vary less than 0.5% from budgeted expenses.	Percentage that actual expenses vary from budgeted expenses.	0.5% variance from budgeted expenses.
Stakeholders to participate in program development.	Opportunities for stakeholder participation through a range of avenues, such as surveys, conferences and meetings.	Stakeholders participated in program development through consultative bodies and processes including the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council and all jurisdictional Health Forums.
<b>Price: \$36.390m</b>		

### **Evaluations**

The Department will undertake an evaluation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce National Strategic Framework 2002-2007, to be completed by July 2008. The evaluation will be guided by a reference group and will involve extensive consultations with peak bodies, State and Territory government representatives and Indigenous organisations. The evaluation will help set the future directions and strategies for the future Australian Government contribution to advance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce priorities.

### **Major Reviews**

The Department does not plan to undertake any major reviews under Outcome 8 in 2007-08.

### **Other Performance Improvement Initiatives**

#### **Quality of Care in Indigenous Health Services**

The Department will commence implementation of the Quality of Care in Indigenous Health Services initiative, to support all Australian Government-funded Indigenous health services to meet best practice and quality standards through accreditation processes.

The Department will work closely with Indigenous health services to improve service delivery and organisational management, and to ensure that the quality standards of health care in the mainstream health system are applied to the Indigenous health sector.

#### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework**

The Department developed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework to measure the impact of the *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2003-2013* and to inform policy analysis, planning and program implementation. The Department released a report against the Health Performance Framework in November 2006. The report commented on 64 of 70 measures. The remaining six measures will be reported in 2008. In addition, all measures included in the 2006 report will be reviewed and updated as required in 2007-08.