

MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

OVERVIEW

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Budget 2005-06 \$m</i>	<i>Budget 2006-07 \$m</i>	<i>Variation %</i>
Department of Aboriginal Affairs			
Total Expenses	56.3	49.5	-12.1
Capital Expenditure
Total, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs			
Total Expenses	56.3	49.5	-12.1
Capital Expenditure

DEPARTMENT OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs, through the partnership between the Government and the Aboriginal people of New South Wales, is the lead agency for positive change and achievements in Aboriginal affairs and for facilitating co-ordination of Aboriginal programs.

RESULTS AND SERVICES

The Department achieves and facilitates co-ordination of Aboriginal programs by working towards the following results:

- ◆ Achieving social, economic and cultural independence for Aboriginal people in New South Wales by working cooperatively with NSW Government service delivery agencies.
- ◆ Becoming more responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people, increasing the understanding of Aboriginal issues by NSW Government agencies and increased agency cooperation on Aboriginal issues.
- ◆ Developing and implementing policies and programs and working with other government departments in a way that involves Aboriginal people and communities as equal partners.

Key services provided by the Department include:

- ◆ influencing NSW government agencies in their development of policies and delivery of services to overcome Aboriginal disadvantage;
- ◆ facilitating the NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs Plan 2003-2012 - *Two Ways Together* which achieves a collaborative approach by relevant agencies in addressing Aboriginal issues;
- ◆ providing clear and appropriate policy advice to the Minister on the impact of Government programs, services and decisions on Aboriginal people;
- ◆ promoting and advocating Aboriginal culture through administration of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*, support for local projects and events and maintenance of Aboriginal family records database;
- ◆ supporting Aboriginal participation in decision making through processes such as the formation of Regional Engagement Groups, Community Working Parties, and register of Aboriginal Owners; and
- ◆ co-ordinating the work of agencies addressing access for Aboriginal communities to satisfactory environmental health infrastructure through the Aboriginal Communities Development Program.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Aboriginal Communities Development Program (ACDP) is a \$240 million capital construction and infrastructure upgrade program for better wellbeing in Aboriginal Communities across New South Wales.

The program is aimed at raising the health and living standards of 22 priority Aboriginal communities by providing environmental, health and essential infrastructure targeting a high level of identified need in housing, water, sewerage, roads, services, recreational and cultural facilities. The Department works closely with the Aboriginal Housing Office in determining the housing strategy within this program.

In 2005-06, the Department focused on the delivery of services and programs under *Two Ways Together* and utilised its greater regional focus to enhance the delivery of these services to Aboriginal communities across New South Wales. The Department continued researching applications under the Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme (ATFRS), established to repay Aboriginal people 'stolen wages'.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Department has an ongoing commitment to key initiatives for achieving social, economic and cultural independence for Aboriginal People in New South Wales. These include the continued development of the Aboriginal Affairs Plan *Two Ways Together*, a whole-of-government approach to achieving improved outcomes for Aboriginal people across a range of priority areas.

The *Two Ways Together Package*, which commenced in 2004-05, is a four-year, \$10 million per annum multi-agency response to the Aboriginal Affairs Plan priorities.

The Ministerial Task Force review of the operation of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* presented the Minister with issue papers providing recommendations and options to provide for a more efficient and effective land council system. The Department subsequently conducted community consultation workshops across New South Wales to get community feedback on the Task Force proposals.

Following the abolition of ATSIC by the Commonwealth, New South Wales entered into a bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth on future arrangements for service delivery to Aboriginal people in New South Wales.

The agreement between the two Governments forms the basis for joint planning and investment to fill service gaps and eliminate duplication. The agreement outlines how the Governments will work together (through the establishment of a state-level Steering Committee and involvement of Commonwealth agencies in *Two Ways Together*).

2006-07 BUDGET

Total Expenses

Estimated total expenses for 2006-07 are \$49.5 million. As the Aboriginal Communities Development Program has been implemented, the expenditure has gradually risen each year. This has reflected the increased capacity of the program to provide housing and infrastructure improvements in Aboriginal communities. The previous two financial years have been the peak years of actual expenditure. As the program draws to a conclusion and the program meets its identified outcomes, annual expenditure will decline. Noting this, total agency estimated expenditure is \$6.8 million less than in 2005-06.

A number of projects under the ACDP program that were anticipated to commence in 2005-06 have been rescheduled over the next two financial years due to project refinement issues.

Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure is budgeted at \$39,000 for 2006-07 for minor improvements and upgrading of computer and office equipment.