

# DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGEING

## ELEMENT THREE

### 2011/12 Annual Report

#### Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership

The National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development was signed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in October 2008 as a first step to close the gap in life expectancy for Indigenous children. Under the National Partnership, clause 49 requires that the Commonwealth will provide an annual report to Parties for the preceding financial year by 31 August of each year, with regard to annual expenditure under Element 3.

Element One of the National Partnership commenced in January 2009 and Elements Two and Three of the National Partnership commenced in July 2009.

This 2011/12 Annual Report (the Report) describes progress on achievements against outputs for Element Three of the National Partnership between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2012. The Report should be considered in conjunction with the ministerially agreed Implementation Plan and includes reporting against the milestones, financials and timelines detailed in the Implementation Plans.

## Achievements against Outputs:

### Element 3:

- Increase access to, and use of, maternal and child health services by Indigenous families

## BACKGROUND

- *New Directions: An equal start to life for Indigenous children* is a 2007-08 election commitment and is a comprehensive strategy to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the early years consisting of three components:
  - Child and Maternal Health Services;
  - Early Development and Parenting Support; and
  - Literacy and Numeracy in the Early Years.
- The Child and Maternal Health Services component includes \$112 million for the following initiatives:
  - \$90.3 million over five years (2007-08 – 2011-12) for comprehensive mothers and babies services (*New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services*);
  - \$11.2 million for a Rheumatic Fever Strategy; and
  - \$10 million for an Indigenous Mothers Accommodation Fund (managed by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs).
- From 1 July 2009 *New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services* represented the Commonwealth's Own Purpose Expenditure contribution to Element 3 of the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership Agreement (IECD NPA) and is now an ongoing program with funding of over \$30 million in 2011-12.
- *New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services* (New Directions) is managed by the Department of Health and Ageing through the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH). The program provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their mothers with increased access to:
  - antenatal and postnatal care;
  - standard information about baby care;
  - practical advice and assistance with breastfeeding, nutrition and parenting;
  - monitoring of developmental milestones, immunisation status and infections; and
  - health checks and referrals to treatment for Indigenous children before starting school.

- The Department of Health and Ageing has undertaken a targeted merit based selection process to select and fund primary health care organisations to deliver services that meet the aims of the program. Each state or territory office considers Indigenous demographics, levels of funding in the regions and health care provision in the regions, with particular emphasis on the 29 priority communities identified in COAG's *National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery* (RSD NP). Consultations are held with Aboriginal Health Forums (or their equivalent) to assist in the identification of priority locations which will target areas in high need of child and maternal health services. Organisations, both large and small, within the identified priority regions are invited to apply for *New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services* funding. Applications are assessed by a panel against agreed assessment criteria and recommendations for funding are made.
- The service delivery model is determined by the primary health care organisations to ensure that services are being provided in the most appropriate way for their clients and communities.
- \$90.3 million (over five years) has been committed to *New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services*, this allocation includes both Administrative and Departmental funds for the *New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services* program as well as funding for the *Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarships Scheme*. Future funding is recurrent from 2011-12. The *Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarships Scheme* will be reported under the Department's Outcome 12 from 2012-13 onwards.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

- The Commonwealth's Implementation Plan is published on the Federal Financial Relations website ([www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au](http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au)).
- The strategies and measures detailed in the Implementation Plan to meet the aim of increasing access to and use of, child and maternal health services in priority regions across Australia through the *New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services* program have been successfully achieved.

## PROGRESS AGAINST BENCHMARKS AND DELIVERABLES

### Activities undertaken, services developed and/or Implemented in the reporting period to achieve the objectives under Element 3

#### Establish Wave 4 sites and manage funding agreements for Waves 1-4 sites.

- Ongoing management of Waves 1, 2, 3 and 4 organisations continued. Funding Agreements continued to be managed by the Department of Health and Ageing.
- Organisations undertake activities in a variety of service delivery models including home-visiting; outreach such as mobile clinics; clinic-based activities such as provision of antenatal classes and group gatherings; cooking classes to teach nutrition; education about babies' development; and child hearing checks.
- All Waves 1 and 2 sites are operational.
- Twelve of the thirteen Wave 3 services are operational. Due to difficulty in recruiting key personnel to administer the program the New Directions service at Western Arrente Health Aboriginal Centre, Hermannsburg, Northern Territory is yet to be established.
- Nineteen of the twenty Wave 4 services are operational. Mt Isa Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service is yet to be established.

#### Measures:

- (a) Funding agreements for Waves 1-4 are being managed – ACHIEVED
- (b) Waves 1 and 2 sites are operational – ACHIEVED
- (c) 12 Wave 3 sites are operational - ACHIEVED
- (d) 19 Wave 4 sites are operational - ACHIEVED

#### Select And fund Wave 5 sites

The Department of Health and Ageing undertook a revised selection process to fund appropriate Wave 5 organisations. The approach involved directly approaching suitable organisations in areas of high need, removing the requirement to identify and nominate priority regions in which to target New Directions funds. The revised selection process provided greater flexibility to ensure communities of highest need had access to New Directions funding. It also reduced potential duplication of funding between other Commonwealth Programs and state and territory government investment. The selection process included:

**Plan and scope Departmental program review.**

- Determining which primary organisations to approach by identifying and targeting areas of high need informed by Indigenous demographic data, birth and birth weight data, mothers' average age and other population profile data. An analysis of child and maternal health services and discussions with the Aboriginal Health Forums in each jurisdiction was also undertaken to identify state government and other spending in the area of child and maternal health.
- Formally inviting the selected organisations to apply for available Wave 5 funds.
- Assessment of funding applications against selection criteria by a panel of departmental assessors in each jurisdiction.

- The Department received 9 applications for Wave 5 funding. Eight new services were approved for funding and one existing under the Wave 5 round, three of which are now operational.
- 85 primary health care organisations were funded in 2011-12, to date 78 of these are operational. A list of organisations is at **Attachment A**.

\$31.3 million was allocated in 2011-12 for *New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services*, including \$537,000 for *Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme*.

**Measures:**

- (a) Suitable Wave 5 proposals were received from eligible primary health care providers - ACHIEVED
- (b) New priority services are funded – ACHIEVED

**Measure:** Program review planned and scoped

- A review of the program will be achieved through the broader IECD NPA national evaluation. A consultant was engaged in January 2012 to conduct the national evaluation with a preliminary report due in April 2013.
- In addition a consultant was engaged in June 2012 to undertake a descriptive analysis of the program. The outcomes of which will inform the development of a quality reporting framework, as recommended by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO).
- In 2011-12 consultation with stakeholders occurred through the Aboriginal Health Forums (or equivalent) in each state. Planning was undertaken to ensure that services and investment were rolled out in a coordinated and complementary way, taking into account existing services delivered by state/territory governments and the community controlled sector.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participation in the Aboriginal Health Forums varies across jurisdictions but generally consists of representatives from State/Territory Governments; the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation; Affiliates in the relevant jurisdiction; and Commonwealth Officers. In some jurisdictions membership has included: the Divisions of General Practice, through their State-based peak bodies.</li> <li>▪ The ANAO conducted an audit of the <i>New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services</i> program between July 2011 and March 2012. The report shows that overall the Department has been effective in the administration of this program. The ANAO made one recommendation pertaining to performance monitoring of the program. The Department has commenced work to address the recommendation commencing with a descriptive analysis of the program. The final audit report was tabled in Parliament on 29 May 2012.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Provide funding for additional Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarships.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <i>Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme</i> commenced in 2002 with additional funding committed under <i>New Directions Mothers and Babies Services</i> in 2008/09. In 2011-12 a funding contribution of \$537,000 from the <i>New Directions Mothers and Babies Services</i> program was provided to fund additional <i>Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarships</i>. The Scheme aims to help address the under-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in health professions and assist in increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with professional health qualifications. The scholarship provides financial assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are undertaking study in a health related discipline at an undergraduate or TAFE (Certificate IV and above) level in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker</li> <li>○ Alcohol and other drugs workers</li> <li>○ Allied health (excluding pharmacy)</li> <li>○ Dentistry/oral health</li> <li>○ Health service management</li> <li>○ Health promotion</li> <li>○ Medicine</li> <li>○ Mental health</li> <li>○ Midwifery</li> <li>○ Nursing</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Measure:</b> Full-time and part-time scholarships awarded to eligible applicants – ACHIEVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <i>Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarships Scheme</i> will be reported under the Department’s Outcome Twelve from 2012-13 onwards.</li> </ul>

## Linkages and coordination with other services provided and community Involvement

- Links with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), and State and Territory Governments were maintained and information shared on Element 3 of the IECD NP through formal and informal communication channels such as officer level discussions and information exchange.
- *A New Directions: Mothers and Babies Services* e-newsletter was published in December 2011. The e-newsletter had the theme 'Your Service, Your Story' with the aim of providing a forum for New Directions services to share their story and successes with other New Directions services (Attachment A)

## Key issues and constraints in implementing proposed activities and services

- All activities and milestones outlined in the Implementation Plan have been achieved.
- There continued to be some constraints in some funded organisations for services to be established and commence delivery within a reasonable timeframe. These are:
  - a) difficulty or delay in sourcing appropriate resources and finalising minor capital works within a reasonable timeframe due to unforeseen circumstances.
  - b) difficulty in recruiting and retaining a sufficient workforce with appropriate skills to deliver the intended child and maternal health services.

## Service Location: Urban; Regional; or Remote

- 16 organisations funded are in urban locations;
- 37 organisations funded are in regional locations; and
- 32 organisations funded are in remote locations.