

Closing the Gap

The Northern Territory Government has invested \$286 million in the most comprehensive program to tackle Indigenous disadvantage in the history of the Territory. Budget 2008 continues to build on this important investment, introducing a range of initiatives to deliver the Government's commitment.

Protecting Territory Children

Budget 2008 will focus on tackling child sexual abuse:

- \$5.96 million for expansion of the Child Abuse Taskforce
- \$0.39 million for additional high level prosecutorial resources to pursue convictions in child sex abuse cases
- \$1.3 million to deliver Aboriginal child protection and care services
- \$1 million to expand sexual assault referral centres and services
- \$1.5 million to establish a residential care unit and therapeutic services for traumatised young people
- \$1.3 million for a Child Protection Unit to support schools, including additional school counsellors for remote communities
- \$0.85 million to establish the Children's Commissioner's office and extend services targeting child abuse
- \$0.3 million to implement a Screening Authority for Employment (SAFE NT) for people working with children

Law and Order

The Territory Government is increasing police and justice resources in remote areas through:

- an additional 24 police resources for the Child Abuse Taskforce
- \$2.3 million for increased policing in remote communities
- \$0.42 million to establish ten Community Courts
- \$0.98 million for additional community corrections officers and court clinicians

Budget 2008 also introduces measures to address offender rehabilitation, including:

- \$1.2 million for rehabilitation and basic education programs for offenders
- \$0.8 million to expand the Indigenous Family Violence Offender Program
- \$0.2 million to expand the Elders Visiting Program

Alcohol Initiatives

The Government will tackle alcohol and substance abuse with:

- \$0.52 million to implement an identification system in public takeaway liquor outlets
- \$1.58 million to develop and implement regional alcohol management plans and raise awareness of alcohol related harm issues

Closing the Gap

Remote Housing

The Territory Government has committed \$100 million over five years to improve remote housing. This is in addition to the Commonwealth's \$693 million remote housing initiative. The total \$793 million program will include:

- a Strategic Indigenous Housing Infrastructure Program (SIHIP)
- implementation of a new housing management framework for remote communities and town camps

Budget 2008 specifically includes:

- \$48.3 million for capital works and \$20 million for capital grants for SIHIP
- \$40.3 million for capital grants for other Indigenous housing
- \$15 million to house extra staff for Closing the Gap initiatives
- \$11 million for land servicing and to replace and upgrade other housing in remote localities for staff already in the bush

A Better Way of Doing Business

The Territory Government continues to improve its communication and interaction with Indigenous Territorians. Budget 2008 includes:

- \$0.1 million to establish the Chief Minister's Indigenous Affairs Advisory Council to oversee implementation of Closing the Gap
- \$0.32 million to improve Government communication with remote communities and Indigenous Territorians
- an additional \$0.21 million to expand the Aboriginal Interpreter Service
- development of cross-cultural training programs for all NTPS employees

Better Schooling

The Territory Government is committed to improving Indigenous education outcomes as a key element of Closing the Gap.

Budget 2008 initiatives include:

- \$1.5 million for development of integrated early childhood education, family and child care services including antenatal care
- \$0.65 million for a school attendance team and a campaign on the value of schooling
- \$2.6 million for 10 additional teachers and 16 additional assistant teachers
- \$1.5 million for new mobile preschools servicing remote communities
- \$10.2 million to upgrade school facilities at seven remote communities
- \$1.2 million for the development of partnership programs to improve student engagement and community involvement

Indigenous Jobs and Training

The Territory Government is working to increase Indigenous employment participation to boost the Territory economy. Budget 2008 includes:

- \$0.6 million additional for the Indigenous Business Development Grant Program
- \$0.83 million for Indigenous ranger programs, including the Marine Ranger Program
- \$1.92 million to continue and expand Indigenous participation in pastoral, horticultural and tourism industries
- development of a new NTPS Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy 2008-12