



**Two Ways Together
Regional Action Plan**

**Greater Western Sydney Region
July 2007 – June 2009**



26 June, 2007

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1 Purpose of the Plan

This Regional Action Plan focuses on actions to improve the well being of Aboriginal people and which are cross-agency (i.e. require the participation of more than one agency) or are genuinely new.

The Plan has been developed by the *Two Ways Together* Regional Engagement Group, chaired by the Regional Manager of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (the REG is a sub-committee of the Regional Coordination Management Group facilitated by the NSW Premier's Department). The Plan is a joint agreement between the key parties in the region.

The Plan identifies:

- a small number of significant goals for the region over a rolling two-year cycle, commencing 1 July, 2007 (to be reviewed and updated annually);
- the lead agency to lead the work against each goal, in collaboration with other agencies and local Aboriginal peak bodies;
- priority actions and responsible agencies to achieve progress towards the goals within the timeframe of the plan;
- the barriers to success where interagency projects or existing initiatives are not progressing as intended against the goals in the plan
- the need for new resources where there are gaps in service delivery; and
- monitoring and reporting processes to track the implementation of the priority actions and track performance against the goals. Monitoring and reporting arrangements are included in Section 7.

2 Goals

The Regional Engagement Group has identified three immediate goals for the next two years (July 2007 to June 2009):

- Stronger partnership between community and Government agencies
- Aboriginal children are ready for school
- Improved prevention and access to treatment for chronic diseases

There are two targets specifically for Aboriginal people in the NSW State Plan which must be addressed in this Regional Plan:

- *Close the gap between Aboriginal and all students in primary school numeracy and literacy rates by 2016*
- *Over 5 years, reduce by 15 per cent hospital admissions for Aboriginal people who have conditions that can be appropriately treated in the home*

These two targets are largely within the core business of the Department of Education and Training and the Sydney West and Sydney South West Area Health Services respectively. The Regional Engagement Group will be a forum for monitoring and reporting progress against these two goals and will develop any supplementary programs to support the core business activities of DET and the Area Health Service as required. Table 1 shows which goals in this Regional Action Plan link to the State Plan targets.

The State Plan goal for Aboriginal Health is to be amended and discussions are currently underway between NSW Health the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The REG will be notified when the new goal is resolved (expected to be finalised in the second half of 2007) and will be asked to review the health goals in this plan at that time.

Table 1 – Link between the State Plan targets and the Regional Plan goals

State Plan targets	Relevant goals in this Plan	Comment
<p>Close the gap between Aboriginal and all students in primary school numeracy and literacy rates by 2016</p>	<p>Aboriginal children are ready for school</p>	<p>The Regional Engagement Group identified getting Aboriginal children prepared for school as: an important precondition for making a difference to reading, writing and numeracy skills; a current weakness in the service system; and an area where a joint response across a number of agencies is required</p> <p>The workshop indicated interest in developing more goals in relation to education, particularly around: (i) supporting young people's transition from school to employment or further education and training and (ii) making schools more engaging and inviting places for Aboriginal children and families. These issues will be scoped in more detail in future REG meetings.</p>
<p>Over 5 years, reduce by 15 per cent hospital admissions for Aboriginal people who have conditions that can be appropriately treated in the home</p>	<p>Improved prevention and access to treatment for chronic diseases</p>	<p>The Regional Engagement Group identified that this target related to chronic health issues, such as cardiovascular diseases (renal & diabetes) and obesity. Action in this area will be in prevention programs to promote better nutrition, physical exercise, smoking cessation and earlier access to treatment.</p>

3 Context

The Greater Western Sydney region covers western and south-western Sydney (see map, Figure 2) and includes the Local Government Areas of Auburn, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Penrith, Bankstown, Camden, Holroyd, Wollondilly, Baulkham Hills, Campbelltown, Liverpool, Blacktown, Fairfield, and Parramatta.

There are 23,282 Aboriginal people in the region (2001 Census), almost one-fifth of the Aboriginal population in all NSW. Aboriginal people comprise 11.4% of the population in the Western Sydney sub-region, and 5.8% of the total population in the South-Western Sydney sub-region. The largest number of Aboriginal people live in the Blacktown, Penrith, Campbelltown and Liverpool Local Government Areas.

The DAA Regional Office is in Sydney, is co-located in the DAA State Office, and also serves the Central Coast.



Figure 2 – Western and South Western Sydney

Partnership Communities

The NSW Government's CEO's Group on Aboriginal Affairs has committed their agencies to work closely with Aboriginal communities in a number of locations around NSW. These locations are called Partnership Communities and they are the local level of *Two Ways Together*.

Government agencies and the community will work closely, in partnership, to identify the community's priorities, strengths and needs and jointly develop and implement an action plan. DAA will work closely with local community leadership groups and help establish groups where they don't already exist. Community leadership groups will be key partners with government agencies and jointly drive this work as it progresses.

The greater Mt Druitt area and Campbelltown/Macarthur are this region's two TWT Partnership Communities and work will start early in 2007/08. Implementation planning will be driven by the REG in the last quarter of 2006/07.

Job Compacts

Job Compacts are agreements developed within a location or industry to generate local job opportunities for Aboriginal people. In June 2006 the Premier of NSW announced that 12 Job Compacts would be developed across NSW and in April 2007 the greater Mt Druitt area and the Campbelltown/Macarthur region were announced as two Job Compact sites. DAA will lead the development of these Job Compacts in collaboration with other agencies, employers, service providers and community representatives.

4 Actions to achieve the goals

Goal 1: Stronger partnership between communities and Government agencies

Population: All Aboriginal people

Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction of community representatives with engagement processes • Participation of Aboriginal people on committees within health sector, education and other key sectors
Baselines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New indicators – baselines to be collected (will be qualitative initially) • Seeking advice from DoCS (Communities Division) about indicators of community strength
Background to the baselines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide range of structures in place to allow for representation of community views • Implications of changes over the last five years (dissolution of ATSIC; creation of ICCs; <i>Two Ways Together</i> commitments; amendments to Land Council legislation) are still being resolved within communities and Government agencies • Some of the issues are beyond the scope of the REG (e.g. if there were consideration of new representative political structures for communities), and the role of the REG in both leading some initiatives and supporting others is still evolving • Acknowledge that different parts of the region have different needs (e.g. transport and access are bigger issues for some parts of the region)
Lead	DAA
Partners and roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All peak community groups in the region – AECG; AJAC; AbSec; AH&MRC; AHO Regional Advisory Committee; Land Council • Indigenous Coordination Centre – active role in engaging with communities; links to Australian Government agencies • NSW Premier’s Department – links to NSW Government agencies • NSW DoCS Communities Division (<i>Families First</i> and <i>Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family</i> strategies)
Possible Actions	<p>1. <i>Use this REG as a forum to improve communication and relationships with communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REG to provide a forum for communicating key issues with communities. This Plan and reports and updates will be publicly available. • REG will continuously review its role to ensure it is effectively supporting existing systems and providing a lead role where appropriate • REG to review the BIALA agreement and consider how to build on it in the forward work of the REG • Community members on the REG actively link to their communities <p>Budget: None required initially – DAA to continue to provide Secretariat for the REG</p> <p>Measures: Degree of satisfaction of REG participants with the value of the group and the strength of the partnership between Government and communities</p> <p>2. <i>Improve Agency approaches to engaging with communities and individuals</i></p> <p>Agencies to explore changes to internal processes and training for staff including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mapping current agency engagement mechanisms and key stakeholders • using the mapping, identifying opportunities to increase engagement, including by leveraging cross agency opportunities and connecting with existing community groups eg key families, Elders, leaders and organisations. • Improving the ‘welcome’ for Aboriginal people – both at initial contact with the agency and front line staff • making personal contact with individual families • using strategies that unite communities – sport, arts, dance, history/yarns <p>Budget: None required initially</p> <p>Measures: Number and pattern of complaints for each Department/Agency</p> <p>3. <i>Increase Aboriginal community involvement in key forums</i></p> <p>Community representatives to be invited to attend a future RCMG meeting and to discuss ongoing involvement. RCMG to provide links to other key forums and agencies – School Principals Forums; DoCS; Health</p>

Budget: None required initially
Measures: Number and pattern of invitations to community members

4. Support two broad community events per year

DAA and ICC to jointly sponsor two community events per year. The events will provide a forum for individuals to be involved in community and cultural activities and a forum for agencies to consult broadly on relevant issues.

Budget: DAA and ICC to scope

Measures: Number of events held
Satisfaction of a sample of event participants
Number of agencies using events as a forum for consultation and information provision and agency views on the value of these opportunities

Data development

- Survey key community representatives to develop baselines

Links

- COAG trials; ICC implementation; *Two Ways Together* consultation processes.

Goal 2: Aboriginal children are ready for school

Population: Preschool aged children

Indicators	# and % of Aboriginal children attending structured activity before starting school
Baselines	No regional data currently available (DoCS and DET to provide regional data; REG to review DEST National Reports to Parliament for data on school readiness)
Background to the baseline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct cost to families limits attendance (although DET is providing some free pre-schools)• Limited knowledge in communities of the availability of pre-schools and benefits of attending• Limited range of services/options• Early childhood development is an important contributor to overall development
Lead	NSW Department of Community Services and NSW Health
Partners and roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AECG, AbSec – link to community• ICC – link to Australian Government agencies• NSW Dept of Aboriginal Affairs & NSW Premier’s Department – link to NSW agencies and coordination of cross-agency interests• NSW Dept of Education & Training – provides some pre-schools; better management of transitions from pre-schools to school• Health• DEST – funding for pre-school places and other supports• DEWR – links to programs to support working parents• NGOs - Pre-school/day care centre managers/auspices (e.g. Anglicare; Centacare; community groups)
Possible Actions	<p><i>1. Review range of current supports</i> There are many programs in the region currently targeting early years – parents as teachers; Aboriginal Child and Maternal Health; parenting classes; training for mothers. The REG could usefully be the forum for summarising current activities and identifying gaps and opportunities for collaboration. Budget: None Measures: Report on current programs complete, and opportunities identified</p> <p><i>2. Support the development of parenting skills for Aboriginal parents</i> SSWAHS has trialed the use of a parenting skills package adapted from a NZ program for Maori families – particularly looking at opportunities to use community members as trainers and mentors. SSWAHS is looking for support from NSW Health to roll-out the program; Health is negotiating a licence to use the package. REG to monitor progress and provide support to progress the initiative if required. Budget: None Measures: Package finalised and adopted for use across the region (REG to discuss)</p> <p><i>3. Support the roll-out of the Early Intervention Program</i> Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation is a key partner in the implementation of the Early Intervention Program for part of the region. Program is aimed at families who are in or at risk of joining the child protection system. There is scope for the REG to work with the implementation of this program and provide connections to agency activities (e.g. connecting EIP case workers to schools to ensure there is a transition for EIP families when children start school). REG to seek advice from EIP lead agencies on gaps and opportunities. Budget: None in addition to program budget Measures: Report from EIP lead agencies on systems (strengths and gaps) and areas where REG members can assist</p> <p><i>4. Increase opportunities for screening below school age children for Otitis media</i> Opportunities to increase screening through the early childhood service system will be identified and implemented. The REG will also review screening and follow up in the region and agencies will work together with SSWAHS to maximise the program’s success. Budget: None in addition to program budget Measures: As for State Plan Possible additional measure of % of children with ear infections who are successfully treated (REG to discuss)</p>

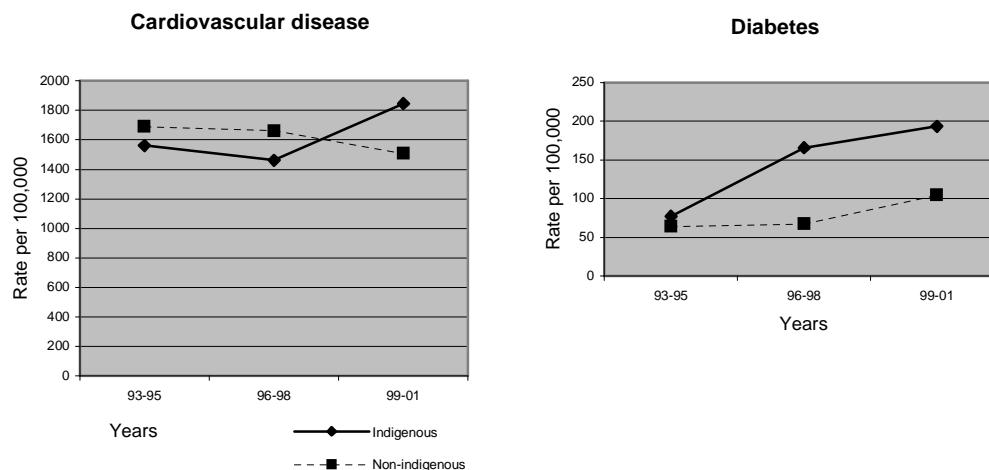
Data development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Extract ABS regional data on attendance at pre-schools or supported playgroups– DoCS and DET to provide regional data– REG to review DEST National Reports to Parliament on school readiness– NSW Population Health Survey and ABS Child Care Survey capture relevant data at a regional scale however Aboriginality is not routinely reported by either. REG has suggested that DAA investigate ability to have this reported at regional level from current OR future surveys. DoCS has data on funded children’s services (therefore not all children’s services) which includes data items about attendance, although this may not be universally reported – DOCS to explore further
Links	DoCS Early Intervention Strategy; Families First Strategy; Aboriginal Education Strategy

Goal 3: Improved prevention and access to treatment of chronic diseases

Population: Aboriginal people at risk

- Indicators**
- Rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
 - Equal treatment in care

Baselines



- Obesity, COPD, Equal treatment – no data at this stage (exploring options with Area Health Services)

Background to the baselines

- Lifestyle factors are impacting on individual health – inadequate diet and exercise are generating population level results, expressed as higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and kidney disease
- High rates of smoking in the Aboriginal population compared to the non-Aboriginal population

Lead

Western Sydney and Sydney South West Area Health Services (jointly)

Partners and roles

- ICC – link to Australian Government agencies
- AH&MRC – community link
- Australian Department of Health & Ageing
- AMS – medical services – promotion of prevention activities
- Division of GPs – promotion of prevention activities
- NSW Department of Sport & Recreation – activity programs
- Home Care – support for prevention programs

Possible Actions

1. Support the development of a targeted 'prevention' program

REG to scope opportunities for a prevention program across the region targeting Aboriginal people. Current options include:

- SSWAHS is applying for funding from DoHA under the 'Healthy for Life' program, with support from Tharawal Aboriginal Medical Service
- Connection to activity programs and funding through the Department of Sport & Recreation (Illawarra received some funding for a prevention program for Aboriginal people from Sport & Recreation which may provide one model)
- Screening for HBA1C, which is an early indicator of diabetes

Budget: Within existing program budget

Measures: Pattern and scale of programs developed
of people attending prevention activities

2. Roll out program to reduce smoking

Reducing smoking rates would directly improve the health of the population overall. AHS has commenced this work through Aboriginal Health Promotion Officers. One worker is targeting

youth and men's groups; Royal Prince Alfred Hospital is also promoting the dangers of environmental tobacco smoke to mothers and families. The REG will review the opportunities to promote the messages and provide connections for the program. Strong link to NSW Health (Chronic Disease Prevention) and NSW Cancer Council (Quit program).

Budget: Within existing program budget

Measures: Program spending in the region
Smoking rates in the region

3. Improve connection between agencies and review which programs have been effective across the region

SSWAHS indicates that there are pockets of successful programs through the Aboriginal vascular health program (e.g. outreach/home visits which are reducing chronic impacts and delivering earlier treatment; nicotine replacement therapy as part of other health activities) which will provide good examples that can be replicated across the regions. REG to scope out an approach to summarising learnings from successful programs

Budget: To be identified in the initial scope

Measures: Report complete
Opportunities for new or expanded programs identified

4. Review regional data on disparity of care

Tier 3 of the ATSI Health Performance Framework highlights the difference between the treatment received by Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people. The issues are generally about getting the right treatment and access to right specialists. There is work nationally and at the State level to collect better data around this issue. There would also be value in tracking this at a regional level, and the REG could have a role in shaping the discussion and monitoring progress.

Budget: To be identified in the initial scope

Measures: REG to identify a role in the issue

Data development

- Significant lag in data (current to 2001 only) – needs updating
- Data is for Sydney – need to disaggregate to this region only
- Review data on disparity of care by region.
- Review outputs of AIHW survey of in-patients in hospital when available – may provide more accurate Statewide and regional data

Links AMS service agreement; Families First; ATSI Health Performance Framework

5 Monitoring and Reporting

- The Regional Engagement Group (REG) Chair will maintain ongoing contact with the project manager in each lead agency to informally monitor progress and provide support
- The lead agency will provide informal progress reports to the quarterly meetings of the REG
- The lead agency will provide formal progress reports to the REG each six months (30 June and 15 December), which will form part of the overall progress report to DAA Secretariat
- The REG Chair will provide an overall formal progress report to the Regional Coordination Management Group and the DAA Secretariat each six months (mid July and mid January).

6 The Regional Engagement Group and its role

The Regional Engagement Group (REG) is chaired jointly by the Regional Manager of the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs and a community representative, and comprises:

- Manager of the Australian Government Indigenous Coordination Centre
- NSW Premier's Department Regional Coordinators (Western Sydney and South-Western Sydney)
- Chair of the Greater Western Sydney Regional Coordination Management Group
- Peak community groups:
 - AbSec (Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care Secretariat – peak community organisation which advises the NSW Government on child protection and out-of-home care issues);
 - Aboriginal Education Consultative Group;
 - Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee;
 - NSW Aboriginal Land Council;
 - Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council; and the
 - Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee of the Aboriginal Housing Office.

Other representatives will participate in the REG according to the priorities in the Regional Plan, e.g. Department of Education and Training (literacy and numeracy) and the Area Health Services (reducing preventable hospital admissions) are currently participating in the REG.

The role of the Regional Engagement Group is to:

- improve government service provision across the region through the development of Regional Action Plans
- oversight Partnership Community work in the region, including the provision of advice on the location of Partnership Communities and oversight of the development and implementation of Partnership Community Action Plans
- respond to priorities identified by the CEO Group on Aboriginal Affairs
- provide advice on regional service delivery and policy issues to the CEO Group on Aboriginal Affairs
- consolidate six monthly reports from NSW and Australian Government agencies and report to the TWGCC and CEO Group on Aboriginal Affairs.

The REG may also act as an 'expert adviser' to the Regional Coordination Management Group in scoping culturally appropriate approaches to consulting with Aboriginal communities in the region.

7 Contacts

Agency/primary address	Contact person
Department of Aboriginal Affairs Sydney Region	Kristy Masella p. 02 9219 0734 kristy.masella@daa.nsw.gov.au
Indigenous Coordination Centres	Colin Kay Manager p. 02 9288 6100 colin.kay@icc.nsw.gov.au
Goal 1: Stronger partnership between communities and Government agencies	
Department of Aboriginal Affairs	
Goal 2: Aboriginal children are ready for school	
NSW Health Department of Community Services	Professor Steven Boyages Regional Director Elaina_burgin@wsahs.nsw.gov.au 02 4734 2441 Margaret Oldfield Regional Director Margaraet.oldfield@community.nsw.gov.au 02 9354 1677
Goal 3: Improved prevention and access to treatment of chronic diseases	
Area Health Services	Vicki Wade Sydney South West Area Health Service p. 9828 6093 Vicki.wade@sswahs.nsw.gov.au Western Sydney Area Health Service (representative to be confirmed) p. 9881 1670