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I am pleased to present the Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Plan 2008–2013. This Plan provides a strategic framework for improvement in health outcomes by addressing environmental health conditions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

In Queensland, the average life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is about 23 years less than that of other Queenslanders. A number of reputable reports link the burden of illness and disease suffered by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to poor environmental health conditions. This is why improving environmental health in these communities is a key priority for Queensland Health.

Queensland Health embraces a holistic approach to health and recognises that there are factors beyond the clinical setting which influence health. These factors include the provision of environmental health infrastructure such as good quality housing, sewerage and waste disposal facilities and safe water and food supply. They also include social and cultural aspects such as education, training and employment. Although many of these factors fall outside the traditional portfolio of Health, Queensland Health is committed to proactively working with other agencies to secure better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Queensland Health is also aware that another key factor for the improvement of health outcomes is the need to empower communities and to tailor health programs and services to the communities' priorities and needs.

The Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Strategy 2001–2006 was part of Queensland Health's multi-strategy approach to progressing social and health reforms in Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Strategy's multi-level approach introduced an initiative to strengthen and support 34 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in managing environmental health programs. These programs include waste recycling, animal management, mosquito management and school-based food safety education managed by the environmental health workforce from local communities.

This Plan also aligns with the agenda for the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health in addressing health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It will also support the Council of Australian Governments’ priority to achieve health gains for Indigenous Australians. I believe this plan will help provide direction to all stakeholders with a responsibility for environmental health. I look forward to your continued support.

Dr Jeannette Young
Chief Health Officer
May 2008
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Plan 2008–2013

Queensland Health acknowledges the importance of building mutual trust and respect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in order to effectively implement and achieve the outcomes envisioned in this Plan.

The following principles, which are consistent with the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2003–2013, have been developed to guide Queensland Health’s actions and decisions in the development and delivery of environmental health programs and services.

- **Cultural Respect**: Environmental health programs and services will be developed and delivered with regard and respect for the cultural diversity, rights, values and expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- **A Holistic Approach**: A holistic view of environmental health recognises that the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status includes attention to physical, mental, emotional, cultural, spiritual and social wellbeing, and community capacity and governance.

- **Working Together**: Improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health will only be achieved through partnership and collaboration of all stakeholders.

- **Resource Allocation and Coordination**: Environmental health programs and services will be delivered in a coordinated and integrated way to ensure more efficient and effective use of resources.

- **Transparency and Accountability**: Environmental health programs and services will be delivered with optimal use of resources and consideration of long-term, sustainable action in an open and transparent manner.

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**Vision**

A standard of environmental health that supports the achievement of quality health outcomes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland.

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**Principles**
The health inequalities suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can, in part, be attributed to poor environmental health conditions. Queensland Health has striven for the improvement of environmental health standards in Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through the development, implementation and support of culturally appropriate strategies and programs at a strategic and local community level.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Plan 2008–2013 identifies the key directions and priorities for Queensland Health’s environmental health function for the next five years to consolidate and enhance gains achieved since the last strategy. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health planning activities and the statewide population health strategic planning process. The Plan strongly aligns with other specific state and national plans, strategies and initiatives. These are explained in detail in Appendices 1 and 2 of this Plan.
Why is environmental health important?

Regardless of location, all people should have access to safe and healthy environments to support their health and wellbeing. Life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is estimated to be 17-19 years below that of other Australians. In Queensland, the average life expectancy is almost 23 years less than that of other Queenslanders. Evidence published in a number of key reports suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities remain burdened by illness and disease due to poor environmental health conditions at much higher rates than the non-Indigenous population.

The 2005 Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report has recommended that environmental health causes of disease need to be proactively identified and addressed so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status can be advanced.

1. 2005 Social Justice Report
2. The Health of Queenslanders 2006 – Report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland
4. In jurisdictions for which data are available, death rates from diseases associated with poor environmental health were much higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (between 112.7 and 230.4 deaths per 100 000) than for non-Indigenous people (between 25.1 and 39.6 deaths per 100 000). Source: Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Key Indicators 2007 Report
What are the challenges?

Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has a diverse geographical spread. As well as the discrete communities, most of which are located in the far north of the State and in the Torres Strait, there are significant populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in other rural and remote shires. Up to 75% of Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population reside in urban centres.

For the newly formed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments expected to provide a standard of environmental health comparable to existing local government authorities, there are some distinct difficulties. In particular, due to the nature of the land tenure on communities, these local governments are unable to charge rates on properties and therefore rely on State Government funding to maintain environmental health infrastructure. The remoteness of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities has created many challenges to providing environmental health services.

In urban and other regional areas where environmental health services may already be well established there may be different environmental health needs within the Indigenous population than those of the discrete communities. The challenge is identifying these non-discrete communities and their particular environmental health needs, and the most effective way of responding to them.

In all settings there are difficulties in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce and professional services. However, this issue affects remote localities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments to a far greater extent, particularly when critical skills required include being able to engage with community people and understand and respect cultural values together with specific technical skills. Other factors which influence the environmental health workforce include remoteness, availability of training and community understanding and appreciation of the importance of environmental health, all of which present significant challenges for the delivery and sustainability of quality environmental health services.

Another challenge is to improve partnerships across both private and public sector agencies and to have environmental health considerations embedded as a fundamental aspect of a range of services delivered to Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Queensland and Commonwealth government agencies currently share responsibility with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for meeting housing, infrastructure, health services, environmental health and other needs in Queensland. However, past experiences have indicated that lack of effective joint planning and coordination between agencies has resulted in segmentation, duplication and gains which are unsustainable at a systems level.

Many of the challenges relating to environmental health described above require innovative and long-term environmental health interventions and solutions.
What is making a difference?

The previous Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Strategy 2001–2006 has been instrumental in providing a strategic framework to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health outcomes through collaborative multi-agency actions. The implementation and subsequent evaluation of the Strategy has highlighted areas for improvement and opportunities for further collaboration across agencies and communities to improve environmental health conditions. This Strategy laid the foundations to build on existing environmental health programs to bring about better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland.

Queensland Health has concentrated its efforts on increasing the capacity of Aboriginal local governments and Island councils through the establishment of an environmental health workforce. Queensland Health made a successful funding submission in 2005 which enabled the expansion of the environmental health program to include all 34 Aboriginal local governments and Island councils. The resultant Environmental Health Worker Expansion Program has helped to create jobs for local people in their communities supported by culturally relevant environmental health training and career path opportunities.

Through their skills and understanding of environmental health issues, the environmental health workers (EHW) help reduce the risk of disease and physical injury by proactively managing environmental health programs. They oversee regular waste collection, litter and refuse tip management, food safety, water supply monitoring and treatment, surveillance of mosquito habitats and the supervision of domestic sewage disposal. Many EHWs have gained community respect for their efforts in advancing environmental health through leadership and advocacy in promoting sound environmental health practice in communities. This growing, skilled EHW workforce has been pivotal to increasing community awareness of environmental health and its relationship to prevention of illness and injury and the protection and promotion of health and well being.

In 2005 a new collaborative initiative with the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, also saw Queensland Health secure funding to assist Aboriginal local governments and Island councils to implement an animal management program in their communities. All Aboriginal local governments and island councils have since been provided with the opportunity to access funding with the aim of addressing a long-standing problem with domestic and feral animals in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Many of these local governments are now in the process of successfully implementing animal management programs.

The range of factors that influence environmental health conditions and the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Programs and service delivery arrangements across Queensland is illustrated in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 further highlights cross agency initiatives that impact on environmental health and relevant national policy and planning structures. Accomplishments under the 2001–2006 Strategy are highlighted in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 highlights the more recent 2007 achievements.

Queensland Health is strongly encouraged by the gains achieved under its recent initiatives and is committed to nurturing and building on the gains of the existing programs. It will also continue to identify new opportunities and seek to implement new initiatives through ongoing consultation, community empowerment and engagement and building of partnerships with all stakeholders.
Strategic Directions

The Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Plan 2008–2013 (the Plan) demonstrates Queensland Health’s commitment to achieving a standard of environmental health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people which is comparable to other Queenslanders.

The Plan aligns with Queensland’s commitment under the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2003–2013 and will form a key element of Queensland Health’s agenda under the proposed second Queensland Government Implementation Plan 2008–2013 for the National Strategic Framework.

In particular, the strategic directions under the Plan seek to secure long-term improvements in environmental health conditions which will positively influence health outcomes and play a strong role in the National priority for ‘closing the gap’ in health status for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The success of the Plan will be realised by implementing six strategic directions that will be instrumental in consolidating existing successful programs whilst introducing new measures to deliver solutions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health issues.

The six strategic directions of the Plan are to:

1. Develop, implement and build on successful and sustainable community based environmental health programs in both discrete and non-discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
2. Engage with community health and other services in the government and non-government sectors to strengthen the understanding and application of links between health, health services and environmental health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
3. Promote, develop and support a sustainable environmental health workforce.
4. Strengthen partnerships across government and non-government organisations to support investment in and the effective delivery of environmental health services and infrastructure critical to positive environmental health outcomes.
5. Ensure regular and effective promotion and communication of environmental health programs and achievements.
6. Develop and implement reliable reporting systems that will assist in monitoring and evaluating environmental health programs.

Particular areas of focus will be on community empowerment, stakeholder engagement, addressing workforce issues and building on existing programs.
Develop, implement and build on successful and sustainable community-based environmental health programs in both discrete and non-discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The specific needs of discrete rural and remote communities were recognised under the last 2001–2006 strategy and significant progress has been made. Further work is required however, to consolidate this work and build sustainable programs into the future.

Up to 75% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in urban and rural non-discrete settings within broader communities and their needs should be considered within this context. Experience and evidence has shown that dedicated environmental health programs designed and implemented to meet the needs of the local population have the best outcomes. The sustainability of the programs requires long-term commitment.

The Challenges

- Maintaining momentum and interest of partners in long-term programs where outcomes are not immediately realised and/or visible.
- Facilitating ongoing commitment by government, communities and individuals to bring about sustainable environmental health gains.
- Increasing the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments to manage environmental health programs at a local level.
- Providing ongoing support and technical assistance to a small and geographically dispersed workforce to enable environmental health programs to be developed, implemented and maintained.
- Identifying populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in non-discrete communities, assessing environmental health needs and implementing appropriate environmental health programs in these settings.

The Future

- Sustained capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments to effectively manage and embed environmental health programs in their communities.
- Environmental health programs implemented by all local governments to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific environmental health issues.
- Evaluation of environmental health programs demonstrates effective strategies and outcomes.

Key actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key actions</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>By when</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations across the State.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>HSD ATSIHSU WGATSIEH</td>
<td>March 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement strategies to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments to meet their obligations under the Public Health Act 2005 and the Food Act 2006.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>DLGSR LG</td>
<td>June 2010 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify funding opportunities for environmental health related projects and enhance capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments to make successful grant applications.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>HSD ATSIHSU WGATSIEH</td>
<td>January 2010 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the effectiveness of the EHW program and implement strategies to address deficiencies and to ensure sustainability of the program.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>DLGSR LG</td>
<td>June 2010 and June 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the effectiveness of the joint Queensland Health and Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Animal Management project and implement strategies to address deficiencies and to ensure sustainability of the program.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>LG DPI&amp;F QRITC</td>
<td>June 2010 and June 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement a framework to consult and engage with local governments to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health as part of their planning processes and broader programs and services.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>LG LGAQ</td>
<td>January 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement strategies to extend environmental health programs to non-discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address priority areas of need.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>LG ATSIEHGAG NIEHRF</td>
<td>June 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Engage with community health and other services in the government and non-government sectors to strengthen the understanding and application of links between health, health services and environmental health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Community health and other health related services are often in a strong position to identify health issues that can be prevented or their impact reduced through improvements in environmental health conditions.

A closer working relationship between environmental health practitioners and health care practitioners to promote the benefits of good environmental health conditions and practices at individual, family and community levels will help facilitate and deliver better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.
### The Challenges

- Increasing community health service providers’ awareness of the relationship between environmental health conditions and health outcomes and encouraging health delivery practices to promote environmental health as a key component of health.
- Influencing policies and practices of government and non-government health related organisations to appropriately incorporate environmental health promotion as part of health service delivery.
- Strengthening links and relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners and primary health care providers to promote and support the improvement of environmental health practice in a practical way at the grass roots level.

### The Future

- Primary health care providers working with environmental health practitioners in community settings to progress shared environmental health goals.
- Queensland Health working with non-government health organisations to progress a shared agenda for environmental health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Environmental health conditions and the practices of individuals, families and communities are routinely considered as an integral part of health care.
- Collaborative working arrangements are established across Queensland Health with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

### Key actions

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<th>Key actions</th>
<th>Who</th>
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<th>By when</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liaise with partners to ensure environmental health is considered in Local Indigenous Planning Agreements (LIPAs) through Negotiation Tables.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs, DoC</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>January 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage with Queensland Health service providers to identify and develop strategies to progress a shared agenda for improving health outcomes through improved environmental health conditions and practice.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>AHS ATSIHSU HSD</td>
<td>January 2009 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop resources to assist health service providers to embed environmental health considerations and strategies into primary health care practice.</td>
<td>EHU</td>
<td>AHS ATSIHSU HSD</td>
<td>December 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement strategies for environmental health practitioners to jointly work with primary health care providers to integrate environmental health considerations within existing community health services at a local level.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs ATSIHSU</td>
<td>Primary Health Care providers HSD</td>
<td>January 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Meeting Challenges, Making Choices established Negotiation Tables as the key interface for effective engagement between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
8. Principal Indigenous Health Coordinators, Regional Indigenous Operational Program Managers, General Managers, Directors - Area Health Services
Strategic Direction 3

Promote, develop and support a sustainable environmental health workforce.

The establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health workforce has been pivotal in enhancing community acceptance, engagement and capacity in linking good environmental health conditions to the health and well-being of the wider community.

It is critical that the value and contribution of this workforce is recognised by the community and partners and that they are provided with ongoing support to maintain commitment and job satisfaction.
The Challenges

- Meeting the workforce demand to provide environmental health services in discrete and non-discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Securing the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health workforce as an attractive profession by the community.
- Providing appropriate remuneration and career paths to attract future generations of environmental health practitioners and retain the experienced and established workforce.
- Providing an appropriate level of support and technical advice to the environmental health workforce to enable them to fulfil their employment obligations.

The Future

- Environmental health workforce matches the demand for environmental health services.
- Greater capacity for environmental health services to address the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in both discrete communities and non-discrete communities, including urban environments.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners have appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil the environmental health roles within local government.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners are employed in a range of careers delivering environmental health programs.
- Increased proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in environmental health functions across the state and local government sectors.

Key actions

| Conduct a needs analysis to forecast future environmental health workforce requirements. | EHU WDLU PHUs | LG LGAQ | June 2009 |
| Collaborate with partners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments to create opportunities to increase EHW workforce capacity. | EHU WDLU PHUs | LG DLGSR ATSIEHGAG | January 2010 |
| Improve recruitment, retention and career development strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners in Queensland Health and partner agencies. | EHU PHUs WDLU HSD | Industry Skills Councils DETA | December 2010 and ongoing |
| Establish formal mentoring programs for environmental health practitioners and students. | EHU PHUs | Industry Skills Councils DETA | June 2010 |
| Develop and implement measures that recognise and reward professional contributions of the environmental health workforce. | EHU PHUs WDLU | LG AIEH | June 2011 |
| Identify and promote employment incentives such as traineeships and cadetships to assist in the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners in urban and regional centres. | EHU PHUs | LG LGAQ DEIR | January 2013 and ongoing |
Strengthen partnerships across government and non-government organisations to support investment in and the effective delivery of environmental health services and infrastructure critical to positive environmental health outcomes.

Queensland Health is the lead agency for service delivery and oversight of environmental health management. As the lead agency, Queensland Health must identify, initiate and implement measures for strengthening partnerships with national, State and local government and non-government agencies which deliver programs that are critical to, and/or impact on environmental health. This includes encouraging and advising on the provision of support and resources at community level, appropriate infrastructure, and the provision of training for the environmental health workforce across sectors.
The Challenges

- Raising partners’ awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health issues.
- Increasing awareness and acceptance that environmental health is a shared responsibility which requires multi-agency commitment to be effectively addressed.
- Securing the commitment of partners to collaborate and contribute to environmental health partnerships.
- Negotiating and promoting whole-of-government strategies to address particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health issues.

The Future

- Strengthened communication, partnerships and collaborative working arrangements with partner agencies and levels of government to enable effective and efficient provision of environmental health services.
- Partner agencies considering and including environmental health issues in their respective programs.
- Environmental health input and representation in proposed programs including infrastructure programs, which can impact on environmental health standards in the community.
- More effective responses and outcomes as a result of working together.

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<tr>
<th>Key actions</th>
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<th>Partners</th>
<th>By when</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reinvigorate and position the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Government Agency Group as a key environmental health partnership coordinating group.</td>
<td>EHU</td>
<td>ATSIEHGAG</td>
<td>December 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify current and future partners (State agencies/groups, Commonwealth and community groups) and clarify roles and responsibilities.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>ATSIHSU ATSIEHGAG WGATSIEH</td>
<td>June 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactively engage with all government agencies to develop a whole-of-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health strategy that aligns with national strategies and policies.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>ATSIEHGAG WGATSIEH</td>
<td>June 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage with partner agencies with State environmental health related legislative responsibilities to better resource and assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments to undertake their program activities.</td>
<td>EHU</td>
<td>ATSIEHGAG member organisations</td>
<td>January 2010 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategic Direction 5

Ensure regular and effective promotion and communication of environmental health programs and achievements.

The range of agencies that are involved in and contribute to positive environmental health outcomes can make communication within and between agencies complex. The learnings from and achievements of past and ongoing programs need to be shared with all stakeholders so they can be used to improve practice and inform future directions. Showcasing and celebrating success stories is important to maintaining momentum and motivation.
The Challenges
- Increasing effective collaboration through improved communication with key partners and stakeholders.
- Improving engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote, regional and urban settings.
- Improving reporting and publicity of accomplishments and achievements.

The Future
- Effective communication links between the environmental health workforce and identified networks to secure support and advice.
- Significant achievements and milestones are published in appropriate journals, newsletters, agency magazines and departmental reports, community newsletters and distributed to all relevant parties.
- Reduced duplication and increased efficiency/effectiveness of services through improved, open communication between all parties.
- Securing sustained support and commitment from stakeholders to quality, evidence based reporting.
- A communication directory that includes communication protocols, group listings and other relevant details for use by EHWs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments and partner agencies.

Key actions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key actions</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>By when</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement a system to report on and publish achievements and milestones in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health in departmental reports and other relevant publications.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>Relevant agencies and stakeholders</td>
<td>June 2009 and annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote environmental health programs and achievements to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to secure stronger engagement.</td>
<td>PHUs</td>
<td>Relevant agencies and stakeholders</td>
<td>December 2008 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop environmental health promotional materials for a range of activities targeted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, in particular career markets, expos and NAIDOC celebrations.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>Relevant agencies and stakeholders</td>
<td>December 2008 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and establish regular, open communication arrangements with health related forums.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>Relevant agencies and stakeholders</td>
<td>December 2008 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a communication directory that outlines protocols and other relevant details.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>Relevant agencies and stakeholders</td>
<td>June 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Plan 2008-2013 to ensure appropriate focus and direction.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>Relevant agencies and stakeholders</td>
<td>December 2010 and January 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Develop and implement reliable reporting systems that will assist in monitoring and evaluating environmental health programs.

The identification, sharing and analysis of data, both internal and external, will provide more comprehensive information that will enhance the quality of prospective programs. Reliable evidence based data will inform environmental health practice and support effective planning and funding mechanisms for environmental health programs. Therefore the monitoring and evaluation of programs are fundamental components of an evidence-based approach to environmental health.
The Challenges

- Establishing quality baseline data in key environmental health priority areas.
- Identifying and building appropriate data sets of key indicators and mechanisms for their routine measurement/reporting and dissemination in line with ethical guidelines.
- Establishing collaborative approaches for gathering, sharing, monitoring and evaluating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health related information.

The Future

- Rigorous evidence-based performance indicators support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health programs and related outcomes.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health needs are identified and reported at a local level in epidemiological reports.
- Quality information systems inform environmental health priorities.

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<th>Who</th>
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<th>By when</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement performance indicators for environmental health programs.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>ATSIEHGAG</td>
<td>June 2009 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and implement methods for collecting relevant information not currently available such as data on animal populations/injury rates, operation and effectiveness of hardware, water supply and quality, waste management, environmental health practitioner workforce status and housing standards.</td>
<td>EHU</td>
<td>ATSIEHGAG</td>
<td>December 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and implement an appropriate information system for the collection, analysis and reporting of identified baseline environmental health data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and populations.</td>
<td>EHU PDU PHUs</td>
<td>LG HIC</td>
<td>January 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage with local governments to establish mechanisms to ensure routine reporting of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health data to Queensland Health.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>LG ATSIEHGAG</td>
<td>June 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report environmental health data to demonstrate the effectiveness of environmental health interventions and inform planning and prioritisation of environmental health programs to partners.</td>
<td>EHU PHUs</td>
<td>LG Communities Relevant State agencies</td>
<td>June 2011 and ongoing</td>
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Appendix 1

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Program delivery in Queensland

Acronym key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QH</td>
<td>Queensland Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHU</td>
<td>Population Health Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAEP</td>
<td>Aedes Albopictus Eradication Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DART</td>
<td>Dengue Action Response Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>Environmental Protection Agency</td>
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Appendix 2

Queensland and national policy and planning structures

Figure 1: Relationship of the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Plan with the statewide population health strategic planning process and departmental planning activities.
Appendix 3

What has been achieved under the Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Strategy 2001–2006

Achievements under key priority areas:

1. Community participation
2. Coordination and collaboration between agencies
3. A sustainable environmental health workforce
4. Healthy housing and infrastructure
5. Information networks
6. Optimal environmental health programs

Community participation

- **Environmental Health Worker (EHW) Expansion Program**
  
  This Program is a joint initiative between Queensland Health and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation (DLGSR). The key aim of the program has been to establish and support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health workforce for each Aboriginal Local Government and Island Council. Currently the majority of councils have at least one person appointed to the role of EHW.

  As well as helping to improve environmental health outcomes in their communities, EHWs are assisting Councils to meet their obligations as local government authorities under the Local Government Act 1993.

- **Community Aluminium Can Recycling Program – Pormpuraaw**
  
  The disposal of aluminium cans in Pormpuraaw was a significant long standing problem for the community. In 2004 it was estimated that over 70% of the total waste disposed at the landfill was aluminium cans.

  The Pormpuraaw EHW along with Queensland Health Tropical Population Health Unit staff established an aluminium can recycling program at the community canteen. This involved collection of the cans at the canteen, appropriate storage and negotiation of free transport to the Cairns recycler.

  The program has resulted in a massive reduction in waste going to landfill in Pormpuraaw, extending the life span of the landfill and making the waste facility easier to manage. Funds raised by the program are put back into community projects. This is a wonderful example of the positive effect an EHW can have on health standards and has been recognised and is well regarded by Council.

- **Public Health Act and Food Act Awareness Program**
  
  In 2005 and 2006 new legislative reforms were enacted in the Public Health Act 2005 and Food Act 2006. As part of the roll-out, Queensland Health committed to assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments to meet their obligations under the Community Governance Improvement Strategy. Part of this commitment includes providing advice, training and resources on changes to Queensland public health legislation and what this means to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments.

  Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners have undertaken intensive training on the various aspects of the new legislation. This will equip them to assist council and the EHW to understand and appropriately manage the relevant provisions of the legislation.

  Resource material has also been developed to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners deliver relevant information to their communities.
Removal of unused rain water tanks, Poruma

The removal of unwanted rain water tanks from Poruma was a significant environmental health project funded by the Island Coordinating Council through the Torres Strait Dengue Mosquito Eradication Strategy. This project was executed by the Aedes Albopictus Eradication Project team assisted by Poruma Island environmental health staff.

The tanks were cut up, washed down and then sprayed with insecticide before being removed by Seaswift to the Horn Island rubbish dump for burial. The tank sections were inspected by AQIS before removal. This project reduced the number of potential mosquito breeding sites on the island as well as extending the lifespan of the island’s landfill by removing the waste from the island.

Mister Germ

Mister Germ is an initiative of Queensland Health which aims to prevent the transmission of germs and ultimately, to improve the health of the community.

The program is aimed at Year 1, 2 and 3 school children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and is a fun way of teaching children about some simple steps that they can follow to stop the spread of disease.

By making young children aware that they can do things that help to make their household and communities healthier, it is more likely that these preventative habits will continue to be applied and will filter through to the wider community over time.

EHWs throughout Queensland have successfully implemented this program in their communities and established a rapport with the school community.

Environmental Health Worker Major Issues Reporting Tool

EHWs are provided with opportunities to network and discuss issues during community visits by Queensland Health staff and at Statewide workshops. During a workshop EHWs identified difficulties they experienced in progressing environmental health issues in their community to a higher level. The EHWs related instances where there were significant environmental health related issues which were affecting community health, yet they were unable to resolve them due to the lack of Council support, capacity or resources.

With this in mind, a reporting process and tool was developed with the EHW and their Councils to enable them to report on the issues, the steps taken to rectify it and if there were ongoing requirements for the resolution to the problem. If the problem was unable to be resolved by Council, the process enables it to be brought to the attention of the relevant State agencies via the Northern Indigenous Environmental Health Regional Forum (NIEHRF). This tool has been used by EHWs on a number of occasions to progress outcomes for various issues and seek funding for their resolution.
Coordination and collaboration between agencies

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Mapping Project
  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners in Queensland provided significant input into this project which sought to identify and describe the roles of key agencies and organisations which fund or have an active role in the provision of environmental health services to communities.

Key areas that were considered in the study were drinking water, housing, sewerage and other related infrastructure, waste management, pest control and food safety. The information gathered is intended for use by the enHealth Council to examine opportunities to coordinate activities among key agencies, organisations and communities and development of a suitable framework for action.

- Establishment of the Strategic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Coordinating Group (SATSIEHCG)
  The Strategic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Coordinating Group (SATSIEHCG) was established to coordinate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health planning within Population Health Services. This group consists of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners and their line managers in Queensland Health.

SATSIEHCG’s role is to coordinate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health planning within Population Health Services and drive the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health plans and strategies.

- Establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Implementation Team (ATSIEHIT)
  The ATSIEHIT has been the central point for the implementation of the Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Strategy 2001–2006. The role of the ATSIEHIT is to plan, coordinate and implement key environmental health initiatives. ATSIEHIT gives advice and provides environmental health information to community stakeholders, Population Health Services, SATSIEHCG and the ATSIEHGAG on implementation issues.

- Establishment of the Indigenous Environmental Health Government Agency Group (IEHGAG) (now ATSIEHGAG)
  The IEHGAG is a whole-of-government advisory group established to promote communication and collaboration processes across government agencies that influence the environmental health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout Queensland. The IEHGAG provides high level guidance and advice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health matters. Reports are regularly provided in relation to Meeting Challenges, Making Choices including the Cabinet Steering Committee, Cape York Partnerships CEOs Steering Committee meeting, the Senior Officers’ Group and others as required.

Environmental health issues that can’t be resolved regionally may be referred to IEHGAG which provides a mechanism to pass on issues for action or clear any impediments on progress.

Appendix 3

What has been achieved under the Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Strategy 2001–2006

- Establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Implementation Team (ATSIEHIT)
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Environmental health issues that can’t be resolved regionally may be referred to IEHGAG which provides a mechanism to pass on issues for action or clear any impediments on progress.
**Northern Indigenous Environmental Health Regional Forum (NIEHRF)**

The NIEHRF is a forum consisting of regional heads of government departments with interest in environmental health. This forum is organised and chaired by TPHU and includes departments such as Housing, Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation, Environmental Protection Agency, Primary Industries and Fisheries, Indigenous Coordination Centres and other invited agencies.

This forum was organised to address and progress environmental health matters at a level which is outside the control of the councils and community. Any environmental health issues which are not or cannot be progressed at a local level in a community can be raised at NIEHRF and actions by relevant stakeholders undertaken. If an issue cannot be addressed at a regional level then it can be referred to the IEHGAG for consideration and action.

The NIEHRF has proved successful at progressing solutions to high risk environmental health issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that had previously not been able to be addressed, examples of which include:

- Rectification of major sewage overflow and pump station failure repairs;
- Initiating major improvements to waste management facilities where they were causing nuisance and health impacts on the community; and
- Elevating capital work priorities in communities due to health issues associated with sewage, waste and water.

**A sustainable environmental health workforce**

**Employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Coordinators**

Three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Coordinators were appointed by Queensland Health in 1998 to strengthen capacity to develop a strategic and integrated approach to a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health issues. Since appointment, these coordinators have implemented environmental health programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and some mainstream local government urban settings and promote the work of the EHW.

Coordinators are currently based in the Tropical, Central and Southern Areas Health Services of Cairns, Rockhampton and Toowoomba and are supported by Area EHWs in Mt Isa, Weipa, Thursday Island, and Charleville. All coordinators have had a major role in implementing the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Strategy 2001–2006. Key action areas have been progressed, resulting in significant achievements under the key priorities of the Strategy.

**Environmental Health Degree**

Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in the Northern Territory has been offering a Bachelor of Applied Science Environmental Health since 2003. This has led to the enrolment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in this degree course following completion of vocational education diploma courses in Environmental Health.

The course has been designed to develop skills, provide a designated career path, and allow community development to strengthen environmental health in communities. A total of eleven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have enrolled in the undergraduate course. Six of these students are Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners.
The degree is oriented towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander needs and is offered nationally, combining block release and distance education modes. It is recognised by the Australian Institute of Environmental Health and graduates are eligible to practice as environmental health officers anywhere in Australia.

- **Environmental Health Worker Training**
  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners and Queensland Health environmental health officers continue to support the formal training components of the EHW training programs through community visits, on-the-job training and mentoring.

Since the inception of the Environmental Health Worker Program many people have attained Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma level qualifications through the Cairns College of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Education Program Aboriginal Corporation (QATSIHWEPEC). Queensland Health has supported QATSIHWEPEC by funding an EHO to deliver training. Many students have also progressed to degree studies in relevant environmental health courses.

**Healthy housing and infrastructure**

- **Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program (AACP) Projects**
  Queensland Health has provided advice on housing design and planning in specific Aboriginal communities. Communities in Queensland that have benefited from the AACP program include Palm Island and Doomadgee.

AACP is a collaborative partnership which was established between the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and the Army with input from the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) through the office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

The Army provides construction manpower and project management skills to coordinate a comprehensive Community Capacity Building program in remote Indigenous communities throughout the Top End.

One project per year is undertaken targeting housing, essential services (water, power and sewerage), other community infrastructure, health and municipal services.

- **Housing Surveys: Rural, Remote and Urban**
  It is well documented that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are, by any economic or social measure, significantly disadvantaged. This is compounded by the standards of their living environments with sub standard housing one of the key physical impediments to health.

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in houses that are either privately rented or managed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Organisations or Councils. Housing audits were undertaken to identify environmental health issues impacting on health. The issues identified included:
  - Faulty toilets;
  - Leaking showers and taps;
  - Unsafe floor boards in wet areas;
  - Missing tiles around sink and shower recess;
  - Unsafe electrical wiring/faulty power;
  - Infestation from cockroaches and rodents;
  - Poor hygiene;
  - Overgrown/untidy yards; and
  - Ponding of water in yards.

While some issues were required to be addressed by tenants, others were related to poor construction and materials used in the repair and maintenance of homes. The audit results and recommendations were forwarded to responsible organisations for further action.
Information networks

- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Conferences

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Conferences are held regularly to provide a forum for the discussion and raise the profile of environmental health issues, giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners a voice.

Following the success of the first workshop in Cairns in 1998 there was strong support to continue holding conferences over two year cycles. Conferences have since been hosted by: Western Australia (1999); Northern Territory (2000); South Australia (2002); New South Wales (2004). Queensland was selected to host the 2007 conference and Queensland Health was tasked with planning and coordinating this event.

- Environmental Health Worker Statewide workshops

The Northern Area Health Service through its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Coordinator has successfully organised, coordinated and conducted EHW training workshops. All EHWs are encouraged to attend the biannual, three day workshops which provide a forum for EHWs to share ideas, discuss common problems, attend presentations, and develop confidence in public speaking and communication in a supportive environment. Workshops also provide EHWs with the opportunity to network and discuss environmental health issues they confront within their communities.

Discussion topics at the workshops include pest control, food safety, legislation, healthy housing, vector control, waste management. These workshops are highly valued by the EHWs and are seen as imperative to their professional development. More importantly, the workshops are now facilitated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners and many innovative ideas, successful projects, and program directions have occurred as a direct result. They are a vital link to the success of the EHW program.

- Environmental Health Worker On-line Resource Manual (ehworm)

The ehworm is a web-based reference tool developed by Queensland Health to support EHWs. The website provides information on six key topics: animal management; vermin and vector control; food safety; hygiene; waste management; and safe drinking water. To help the EHW find information quickly the topics are divided into areas including:
- legislation;
- the role of local council;
- the role the Environmental Health Worker;
- the role of the community;
- community awareness campaigns;
- public policy and resources; and
- agencies that can be contacted for information or support.

The manual is located on the Queensland Health website at: www.health.qld.gov.au/ehworm

- Environmental Health Worker Video

Queensland Health has developed resources to help councils understand the role of EHWs. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing funded the production of a video promoting the role of EHWs as a new and easily accessible health professional that can help their community achieve a healthier life and well-being.

The video explains the role of the EHWs and the benefits that having a trained and qualified EHWs will have in the areas of:
- disease prevention;
- food safety;
- water quality;
- pest management;
- waste management; and
- health promotion.
Culturally appropriate environmental health resources have been produced to increase awareness of good food choices, food safety, germs and pests. These resources relate to environmental health issues/concerns within the home environment and settings. This initiative supports previous consultations with Health Workers who identified this area of need within their communities. A funding bid was approved to produce fridge magnets and stickers displaying messages related to food and pests. It is anticipated these will be displayed and used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to encourage positive behavioural change, with service providers having an increased awareness and knowledge of how environmental health issues can impact on our health and well-being.

NAIDOC celebrations are held around Australia in the first full week in July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The week brings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people together to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and build bridges.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Practitioners get involved in a range of activities, such as organising environmental health displays and helping out on food stalls. The focus is on celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and involving as many people as possible. Everyone is encouraged to participate, not only in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, but also in increasing numbers of government agencies, schools, local councils and workplaces.

Topics covered included: safe food shopping, safe food storage, preparing food, cooking and reheating, other types of contamination, pests and controlling pests and all participants received a Certificate of Attendance.
Optimal environmental health programs

- **Animal Management Project – Queensland Health and Department of Primary Industries**
  
  Animal management has long been identified as a priority area by both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and State government agencies. In 2005, Queensland Government committed funds over four years to support the implementation of animal management programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local government areas. Funding was subsequently provided to Queensland Health as the lead agency for the project and the project is being supported by DPI&F Biosecurity Queensland.

  The project aims to:
  - Integrate feral and domestic animal management;
  - Assist the establishment of an animal management workforce;
  - Assist in the development or upgrade of animal housing infrastructure; and
  - Support the implementation of the domestic and feral components of council Pest Management Plans.

  The program supports numerous government policies and strategies including:
  - Partnerships Queensland;
  - Local Jobs for Local People;
  - Looking After Country Together; and
  - Queensland Government Implementation Plan for the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

- **community Food Stall Program – Bamaga**

  The EHW at Bamaga identified a significant public health risk associated with the preparation and sale of food at the local football carnival. The food prepared and packaged in people’s homes was being sold out of the boot of cars. The lack of understanding of food safety concepts such as food storage temperatures meant that there was a real risk of food-borne illness outbreak.

  With the assistance of TPHU and the Environmental Health and Vector Control Program on Thursday Island, the Bamaga EHW organised for temporary food stalls, supplied with potable water and power, to be constructed at the football oval.

  These stalls are now used at other events such as the local rodeo. The EHW has ensured they all have appropriate equipment for food storage and washing facilities. The EHW also organised to undertake inspections of the home preparation to ensure that appropriate hygiene and storage requirements were met. This has been a significant achievement towards improved awareness of food safety and the prevention of food-borne illness in the Bamaga community.

- **South West Queensland Clean-up Project (SAPHS)**

  Late in 2004, the South West Population Health Unit secured $32,000 to conduct a “Clean-up Campaign” with one town council and three shires across south-west Queensland. The project was initiated as an adjunct to the “Clean-up Australia Campaign” to enhance existing partnerships.

  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers employed with Queensland Health and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Services were encouraged to be involved to demonstrate their support as well as promote their activities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the communities. Their involvement also enhanced existing relationships with their local council’s and increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community participation in the clean-up.

  Roma Town Council and the shires of Paroo, Murweh and Balonne each received $8,000 to conduct clean-up campaigns over a three month period. Townships involved included Roma, Cunnamulla, Charleville, Augathella, Morven, St George, Dirranbandi, Thallon and Bollon, many of which have significant Aboriginal populations.

  The clean-up campaign included a general clean-up of resident’s yards and other areas around the communities which might contribute to environmental health issues.
The project was managed by the relevant town council and shires with assistance and support from relevant organisations, services and agencies. The South West Population Health Unit and Darling Downs Population Health Unit coordinated the project and support was provided by Community Health; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers; local governments; environmental health officers; Community Development Employment Program; State and private Schools; radio Stations; Corrective Services; Legal Service; housing companies; Queensland Police Service; local bands; newspapers and numerous businesses.

It was estimated that 1100 cubic metres of household refuse and garden waste was conveyed to land fills.

- Development and Implementation of the Temporary Food Stall and Home Preparation Guidelines.

The Thursday Island Community holds numerous festivals and carnivals every year. Provision of food is a very important cultural aspect of these events. TPHU in collaboration with the Environmental Health and Vector Control Program on Thursday Island developed a guideline and inspection proforma for a home kitchen used to prepare food for sale to the public at one-off events. This guideline considers the unique cultural considerations as well as the legislative requirements and can also be used as an education tool for food preparers.

A temporary food stall guideline has also been produced which outlines the legislative requirements for temporary food stalls. The documents have been used successfully at many events including the Croc Festivals and cultural festivals on Thursday Island.

- Development of a National Indigenous Environmental Health Forum

The National Indigenous Environmental Health Forum (NIEHF) was first established under the auspices of the enHealth Council in May 2000 to identify and provide comment and policy advice to the enHealth Council.

The former NIEHF, now the Working Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (WGATSIEH) is made up of Environmental Health practitioners from each State and Territory. This group is a mechanism for environmental health practitioners to be involved in providing advice on decisions affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health matters at the national level.
Appendix 4

2007 Achievements

**Training for Disaster Management**
Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are located in areas which have a high risk for natural disasters such as cyclones, floods and fires. The local EHWs have a significant role within their respective communities in relation to disaster management, particularly in the prevention and preparedness stages.

In recognition of this, the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (School of Health, Business and Science), Northern Territory recently offered an opportunity for two Queensland Health environmental health staff to develop a Disaster Management Module for inclusion within the newly developed Public Health Certificate IV Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Worker course.

EHWs undertaking this module of study will be better able to understand their role in disaster management and take an active part in their community’s disaster management program. They will have support from the Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health practitioners who have all attended the Disaster Management for Public Health course held annually in Cairns.

**Animal Management Program – Queensland Health and Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries**
Major achievements of the project to date include:

- Employment of a Project Advisor to facilitate effective implementation of programs;
- Development of a Certificate II training course with components specifically tailored to the requirements of workers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments;
- Engagement of Queensland Rural Industry Training Council (QRITC) for the oversight and delivery of the training;
- The commitment of the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments to the establishment of animal management programs, including the employment of local animal management workers, development of animal management plans and building of animal housing/holding facilities; and
- The employment of Animal Management Workers by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments.
Training of EHW to develop mosquito management plans

The Island Coordinating Council, assisted by the Aedes Albopictus Eradication project, conducted a two day workshop at St. Pauls attended by 11 community Environmental Health Workers. The workshop was held to develop a template for mosquito management plans. This was considered a huge success and another is planned to finalise the plans. EHWs also raised other issues, such as training in mosquito control, relevant legislation and the disposal of building materials, which will be addressed in the Torres Strait Dengue Mosquito Eradication Strategy. The community mosquito management plans will help communities to have sustainable mosquito management programs and are an excellent example of effective collaboration between programs.

New National Training Competencies

The Commonwealth recently undertook a review of the Health Training package. As part of the review, a new Indigenous Environmental Health qualification has been developed. Qualifications that can be attained range from a Certificate II in Indigenous Environmental Health to a Diploma in Indigenous Environmental Health.

A working party of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Forum members and EHWs provided input into the review of the National Health Training package to ensure the new course was relevant to the needs of EHWs in the workplace. A significant contribution by the Commonwealth has resulted in the funding of the development of a resource kit consisting of training resources, learning materials and other tools. This will support Registered Training Organisations (RTO) to deliver the new training package.

6th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Conference

Queensland Health hosted the 6th National Indigenous Environmental Health Conference at the Cairns Convention Centre from 22–24 May 2007. These conferences are held regularly to raise the profile and provide a forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health issues, giving Indigenous environmental health practitioners a national voice.

Most of the 195 delegates registering were Indigenous delegates from as far afield as Western Australia, Tiwi Islands, Torres Strait, Cape York communities and New Zealand.

The conference program highlighted some of the major environmental health challenges and demonstrated how all parties responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander environmental health can work together to build healthier environments and thereby achieve better health and social outcomes.

High profile keynote speakers, including Tom Calma, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and A/Race Discrimination Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, and Senator Nigel Scullion, the Federal Minister for Community Services, were one of the main highlights of the conference.

Commissioner Calma’s key message was ‘bridging the gap’ to achieve Indigenous life expectation and health status equality within the next 25 years.

Senator Scullion launched the Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRICC) on-line manual which is designed to educate veterinary practitioners working in Indigenous communities to provide veterinarian care in a culturally sensitive manner.

A post conference workshop of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates provided a forum for open discussion of environmental health issues. A number of recommendations were put forward, including a motion to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Practitioners’ Association.
### Appendix 5

**Map of resident populations in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (mainland Queensland)**

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See enlarged detail
Appendix 6

Map of resident population in Torres Strait Island communities

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<tr>
<td>Badu Island (IC)</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>896</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boigu Island (IC)</td>
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<td>290</td>
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<td>Coconut Island (IC)</td>
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<td>36100</td>
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<td>Darnley Island (IC)</td>
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<td>Dauan Island (IC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hammond Island (IC)</td>
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<td>231</td>
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<td>Kubin (IC)</td>
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<td>Mabuiag Island (IC)</td>
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<td>34740</td>
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<td>Saibai Island (IC)</td>
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<td>36470</td>
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<td>St Pauls (IC)</td>
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<td>36480</td>
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<td>Stephen Island (IC)</td>
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<td>Sue Island</td>
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<td>37170</td>
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<td>Torres (Murray Islands) (S)</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>34970</td>
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<td>Torres balance (Thursday Island) (S)</td>
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<td>Torres Island balance (S)</td>
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<td>Yam Island (IC)</td>
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<td>342</td>
<td>33840</td>
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<td>Yorke Island (IC)</td>
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<td>Torres communities total</td>
<td>7,821</td>
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## Glossary of terms

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<th>Acronym</th>
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<td>AACAP</td>
<td>Army Aboriginal Community Assistance Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATSIEHGAG</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Government Agency Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATSIEHIT</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Implementation Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>AHMC</td>
<td>Australian Health Ministers’ Conference</td>
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<td>AHMAC</td>
<td>Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>AHS</td>
<td>Area Health Services, Queensland Health</td>
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<td>AIEH</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Environmental Health</td>
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<td>ATSIEHSGU</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Unit</td>
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<td>CDEP</td>
<td>Community Development Employment Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>COAG</td>
<td>Council of Australian Governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>DLGSR</td>
<td>Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation</td>
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<td>Department of Communities</td>
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<td>DoHA</td>
<td>Department of Health and Ageing</td>
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<td>DPI&amp;F</td>
<td>Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries</td>
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<td>EHU</td>
<td>Environmental Health Unit, Population Health Branch, Queensland Health</td>
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<td>EHWs</td>
<td>Environmental Health Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>FaHCSIA</td>
<td>Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs</td>
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<td>HSD</td>
<td>Health Service Districts, Queensland Health</td>
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<td>HIC</td>
<td>Health Information Centre, Queensland Health</td>
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<td>IEHGAG</td>
<td>Indigenous Environmental Health Government Agency Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td>Local Governments</td>
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<td>LGAQ</td>
<td>Local Government Association Queensland</td>
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<td>LIPA</td>
<td>Local Indigenous Planning Agreements</td>
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<td>NAIDOC</td>
<td>National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebrations</td>
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<td>NIEHF</td>
<td>National Indigenous Environmental Health Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIEHREF</td>
<td>Northern Indigenous Regional Environmental Health Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSFATSIEH</td>
<td>National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDU</td>
<td>Planning and Development Unit, Population Health Branch, Queensland Health</td>
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<td>PHU</td>
<td>Population Health Unit, Area Health Service, Queensland Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIHC</td>
<td>Principal Indigenous Health Coordinator</td>
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<td>QATSIEHWEPC</td>
<td>Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Education Program Aboriginal Corporation</td>
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<td>QRITC</td>
<td>Queensland Rural Industry Training Council</td>
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<td>RIOPM</td>
<td>Regional Indigenous Operational Program Managers</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTO</td>
<td>Registered Training Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SATSIEHG</td>
<td>Strategic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Coordination Group</td>
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<td>SAPH</td>
<td>Southern Area Population Health Service</td>
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<td>TPHU</td>
<td>Tropical Population Health Unit, Queensland Health</td>
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<td>WGATSIEH</td>
<td>enHealth Working Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health</td>
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<td>WDLU</td>
<td>Workforce Design and Liaison Unit, Queensland Health</td>
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