



Australian Government

Indigenous Communications Program

**CLOSING THE GAP: NATIONAL
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON
REMOTE INDIGENOUS PUBLIC
INTERNET ACCESS**

**Implementation Report
2009-10**

New South Wales

1. Introduction

This report fulfils the reporting requirements of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access (NP) and the 2009-10 Implementation Plan under that Agreement.

On 11 March 2010, the New South Wales Implementation Plan for 2009-10 was agreed between the NSW Minister for Commerce and the Commonwealth Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. Following this, \$57,600 in Commonwealth funding was transferred to deliver public internet access facilities and basic computer training in 4 remote Aboriginal communities.

In implementing the Agreement in 2009-10, the New South Wales Government provided \$23,400 in administrative and staff support, and transport.

The New South Wales Implementation Plan for 2009-10 provided public internet access, training and support for the Aboriginal communities of Mallee and Warrali in Wilcannia, and Gingie and Namoi in Walgett. New South Wales has achieved all outcomes agreed under the Implementation Plan, however the delivery of training in Wilcannia was delayed and was completed in July 2010.

In summary, the plan adopted a consultative and collaborative approach to implementing public internet access facilities. Cultural and political imperatives, existing infrastructure and existing community and local government organisations were also considered and are described more fully in the next section.

Internet access facilities have been provided at various locations in Wilcannia and Walgett with the following number of computers:

Community	Location	Number of computers
Wilcannia Mallee	Wings Drop-in Centre	12
	Women's Refuge	3
Wilcannia Warrali	St Teresa School	12
Walgett Namoi	Murdi Paaki (CDEP)	10
	Youth Centre	5
Walgett Gingie	Community Centre	12
	Men's Shed	7

The organisation and project management for this NP has been undertaken by the Department of Industry & Investment - Office of Rural Affairs (ORA). ORA has also provided most of the logistical support, such as the collection of ex-government computers from NSW Government agencies and their delivery to each site.

A key aspect of the implementation of this NP has been the establishment of new Community Technology Centres (CTC) in locations determined by the community. This arrangement links the community into a broad supportive network provided by the not-for-profit Community Technology Centre Association (CTCA).

Training for the communities at Wilcannia and Walgett has been provided by the CTCA, with two different types of training being delivered. Some individuals have been trained to enable them to train other community members, and specific task oriented training has been provided to people identified by their Working Party as eligible for training. The CTCA also provides technical, filtering, management and training support through its CTC program.

As noted above, in order to lower implementation costs each site has been provided with ex-government computers collected from NSW Government agencies.

Where required, the electrical system has been upgraded to power the computers and printers. A licensed Microsoft operating system and home office software, antivirus software and online filtering are provided on each computer. Installation, network cabling, cable ties, cord protection and wall mounts have been provided at each site.

All computers provide:

- Internet Explorer
- Email
- Online life skills task-based applications and links to Federal and State Government sites through the CTCA extranet
- Training modules such as basic computer skills, video editing, photo-shop, web design, and online banking training.

A train-the-trainer program has been run at each host site with each new trainer being mentored through the first two training sessions. Training is provided to community members one-on-one and in group sessions (where appropriate).

2. Establishment

Developing a service delivery model for Wilcannia and Walgett

At the beginning of the project it was necessary to establish a service delivery model and an implementation strategy that were acceptable to all stakeholders.

In developing the model and the strategy there were two key factors:

- The implementation strategy and service delivery model would be developed by ORA in consultation with a range of stakeholders (ranging from Aboriginal Community Working Party representatives to local school teachers).
- While the over-riding objective of the plan was to provide public internet access, it was also important to engage the community and build the basis for the support and maintenance of facilities established under this NP into the future.

The key elements in the implementation of this NP were:

1. Consultation with Aboriginal Leadership

Receiving direction and endorsement of plans by the local Aboriginal Community Working Parties and key stakeholders in each location has been fundamental in ensuring the effective implementation of this NP. Consultations included the Working Parties, Aboriginal Affairs NSW (AA NSW) representatives and the Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC). Discussions and negotiations regarding the location of each site also involved the CTCA, the local council and service providers.

2. Support through Community and Organisational Integration

The successful implementation of this NP is tied to the active and informed support of existing local organisations. Such organisations have local knowledge, cultural understanding and established working relationships. For example, sites installed by the CTCA are subsequently granted CTCA membership, and supported by the CTCA. Integrating the implementation of this NP into existing networks helps to ensure that local organisations accept ownership of the operation and take pride in its ongoing success. Through these means, support is established at a local hands-on level, whilst still having online remote support available through the CTCA.

Note about Community Technology Centres (CTCs):

Community Technology Centres (CTCs) are community hubs, such as small halls or rooms in larger buildings, where there is support for the economic, educational, cultural and social life in regional, rural and remote NSW. CTCs use technology as a platform for programs and services and offer internet access points, training, venue hire, tele-work and economic and community development opportunities.

The Community Technology Centre Association (CTCA) is a member-based organisation, representing and supporting the CTCs.

The advantages of using the CTCs are that they offer:

- An already established recognised brand and a proven interface between communities and new technologies;
- A dependable distribution channel and delivery arm to regional, rural and remote communities; and
- Cost effective services for skills training and community programs using technology as a platform.

3. Integration with existing infrastructure

Due to limited funding, existing functional infrastructure has been used in the implementation of this NP including buildings that were already acceptable to the Aboriginal communities. In Wilcannia, each site identified already had physical space for computers and access to the internet. However, once the computers were delivered the electrical infrastructure and the ADSL telecommunications lines often proved inadequate to cope with the extra equipment and traffic. Upgrades to site infrastructure were delayed due to difficulties sourcing qualified trades people in these locations.

4. Catering for community user-group range and variety, and preferences

In Wilcannia, Central Darling Shire Council, Mission School, Youth Centre - Drop in Centre and the Women's Refuge groups were involved. The Women's Refuge was specifically chosen as the local women feel comfortable there and it has a secure play area for children.

5. Obtaining value for money

The implementation of this NP has relied on using existing ADSL infrastructure as well as leveraging the skills, experience and interests of local people to supplement the funding provided by the Commonwealth. The use of no-cost ex-government computers and the engagement of the CTCA (a not-for-profit organisation) has also assisted in ensuring value for money.

6. Targeted and tailored training

Training under this NP has been provided by the CTCA. The training has either been tailored for individuals who wanted to provide support for others and the operation itself (train-the-trainer training), or tailored to the individual specific interests or requirements of each user.

7. Risk mitigation approach

The approach used local knowledge and experience and proven organisations, such as local councils and the CTCA. From a cultural perspective, Aboriginal leaders (Working Party members) were consulted, and endorsed each plan. Wherever possible, existing infrastructure (buildings, power and cabling) and service providers were utilised. Also, to mitigate against unforeseeable events (such as fire) or possible rejection of an access site by certain members of the user group, each location had multiple sites where computers and associated equipment were installed. This also provided opportunities for all members of the community to feel catered for: men, women, children, and youth. As each site has its own individual character, this engenders a sense of the local and specific instead of an official, common, governmental operation. Multiple sites also ensure that if one site is closed or unavailable for some reason there are other places around town open for access or to deliver training.

Establishing sites in Wilcannia (for Mallee & Warrali Communities)

As stated above computers were installed in a number of different sites around the town to ensure that there was access where people felt comfortable. For ongoing support and sustainability all the installations came under the banner of a CTC with each host site becoming a member of the CTCA.

In Wilcannia, training has been delivered by local people. The train-the-trainer program was held at each site for members of each organisation as well as for interested community members. In Wilcannia there is also a young student doing a school-based traineeship Certificate II in Information Technology through the local council, which is supporting the program. A school teacher and a local mother have been supported to deliver the training as backups, and the CTCA is on stand-by should local issues preclude the local trainers from delivering the training. This ensures that training schedules are kept regardless of what is happening in the community.

The student has technical support from his TAFE teacher as well as online through the CTCA executive team. The CTCA executive team are available online or over the phone to help the centres across the state with technical support, project management, web content, training resources and applying for grants.

As the computers provided in the towns are ex-government with all previous data erased, the student and other local community members have installed the operating system and software on the computers. A member of the CTCA spent a week in each town connecting and networking the computers as well as delivering the train-the-trainer program.

The training modules (life skills based) are all available online through the CTCA's extranet. Access to the extranet requires a login and password. As each training session begins each site receives a different session login which can then be used to track the number of people accessing the extranet and the training provided. This minimises the amount of reporting the trainer has to undertake, helps monitor which type of training is popular and collects feedback on the courses.

Each person who successfully undertakes his or her identified task, such as downloading songs on an iPod, or mock selling on eBay, receives a Certificate of Attainment with his or

her name and the task completed. These certificates are currently available as a template online and the trainer fills them in for each person.

The Women's Place in Wilcannia has space limitations at its current site and two laptops have been provided. It is anticipated that the Women's Place will relocate to a larger building in the near future, at which time an additional eight computers will be provided. The Women's Place community is also assisting with the establishment of a Men's Shed in the town.

During the site visits, it was identified that appropriate seating was an issue as some people were using kitchen and/or folding chairs. A number of Government and commercial businesses are now selling used computer chairs directly to the host organisations for \$1. The first nine chairs from this source have been delivered to the Wings Drop-In centre.

Establishing sites in Walgett (for Gingie & Namoi Communities)

As for the previous communities, computers were installed in a number of different sites such as the Community Centre, the Men's Shed, Youth Centre and the Murdi Paaki Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) centre.

The Community Centre and the Men's Shed are operated by a not-for-profit organisation. The Youth centre and the CDEP training centre are run by Walgett Shire Council and the Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Corporation respectively. The alliance with Murdi Paaki is critical as it has building projects in Gingie and Namoi and in the future some of these buildings may have the capacity to house computers. Murdi Paaki also has building projects in the other communities where this NP is being delivered.

A number of local people have undertaken the train-the-trainer program and a CTCA trainer spent a week in Walgett connecting and networking the computers. The CTCA trainer is a young woman from Kyogle CTC (which is in the coastal hinterland) and she connected so well with the Walgett community that she has taken a job running the Community Centre. The position had been vacant for over six months and now the community has a highly skilled and qualified trainer and computer teacher. This arrangement has provided a skilled local support person for all of the sites in Walgett and the surrounding communities as the program rolls out.

The provision of support and backup is as described for Wilcannia.

3. Achievements

Outcomes under the Agreement

Computers with internet access have been set up in sites that are accessible and used by youth, women, men, parents and the community.

A number of local people have undertaken a basic train-the-trainer course and are being paid to teach and guide their community members to access the internet for information, skill development, education and to undertake everyday transactions and services online.

It appears that the information community members are seeking is generally centred on basic computer training, learner driver online training and money management, with social networking sites being popular among young people.

Links to Closing the Gap targets

Case studies

The implementation of this NP has resulted in a number of additional positive outcomes for the community. For example, a community member in Wilcannia has indicated that access to the internet provides the community with the opportunity to have a voice. For the first time the community can contribute to telling their own story. Previously it was perceived that the information available to the broader community was from parties that did not live in the town and did not have a personal investment in the community.

Another outcome has been that parents are able to look at school portals and are able to connect with the school and get an understanding of the school environment and activities, as well as see what their children have been doing at school. Parents are also able to access sites such as MySchool, which provides parents with information about the local schools and how they compare with other schools. Parents generally have been able to understand more about the internet, what it is, what the possibilities for its use are, and the online economy.

4. Conclusion

Observation

The relatively flexible stance adopted by the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE) is essential for the successful implementation of this NP. Each location has its own character and each location requires some innovative thinking and planning to tailor an appropriate approach.

This flexibility has allowed the program to provide access at sites that suit the diverse groups within each community. In these towns there was not a single site that suited everyone for access to the program. Setting up a stand-alone single site would not have allowed all sections of the community to feel comfortable participating in the program. In addition, using multiple sites in each town means that access is not dependent on each facility being open seven days a week.

Computers and the internet are perceived by many members of the Aboriginal communities as something that you have to be smart or qualified to use. This can be overcome in part by ensuring that the computers are housed in facilities where people feel comfortable. This has proven paramount in ensuring people access the program.

However, using multiple sites has added extra complexity and cost to the program. Each site's infrastructure and facilities, such as electricity and internet connection, have often needed to be upgraded to deliver the program.

In Walgett, a partnership has been developed between the community and the CDEP program host organisations. In 2010-11, it is anticipated that community members will be given the opportunity to undertake a work program where they will load and test all the computers at one location prior to shipping them to the various sites for installation. This addresses the issue identified in 2009-10, where delivering the computers directly to the sites where the computers were to be used and loading software there created delays, especially when ex-government computers had hardware damage.

Occupational Health and Safety for each site was also an issue especially wall mounting electrical and computer cords and seating. For example, providing computer chairs as part of the program, particularly those with moving parts. To overcome this government and commercial businesses have been selling used computer chairs directly to the host organisations for \$1 and ORA is paying for the delivery to the towns.

Appendix: Reporting Tables

A1. Statement of expenditure

Commonwealth funding

In 2009-10, New South Wales received \$57,600 in funding under the Agreement. This was expended in the communities listed at Item 6 of the Implementation Plan as follows:

Description (Item/Service)	Qty	Amount
Microsoft operating licenses and Microsoft home office professional to allow for expansion at each site.	100	\$4,500
Computer installation and networking, network cabling and cord ties, cable wall mounts, electrical and internet upgrade and 12 months internet cost.	7 sites	\$26,610
Antivirus software & internet filtering.	61 computers	\$4,890
Train-the-trainer program – delivery, travel and 36 hours mentoring and trainer support.	11 people	\$5,100
Training modules, online & phone technical support		\$3,700
Training 4 hr per person (including those trained in July 2010)	117 people	\$12,800
	Total	\$57,600

State/Territory contribution

ORA has collected over 70 computers from the NSW Land & Property Management Authority, NSW Treasury, and the NSW Departments of Industry and Investment and Services, Technology and Administration, from offices in Sydney, Bathurst and Orange. In addition, ORA has:

- organised delivery of computers to the sites in Wilcannia and Walgett
- coordinated the purchase and installation of software and facilitated community meetings
- negotiated access and MOUs with host organisations as well as provided ongoing support
- provided reports to Working Parties, key stakeholders and agencies to ensure ongoing updates and support is provided to the program
- committed over 280 hours collecting computers, travel and costs of site visits and coordinating and attending community meetings in Wilcannia and Walgett and ad-hoc administration costs at an estimate of \$20,600
- paid for the transport of pallets of computers which required commercial or courier collection due to the large volume of computers at over \$2,800

A2. Outputs

In 2009-10, New South Wales delivered the following outputs under the Agreement:

Output 1: Public internet access

The Agreement required that new or expanded public internet access, tailored to individual community circumstances, be provided to remote Aboriginal communities identified in the Implementation Plan. The internet access facilities included appropriate filtering of illegal and offensive material, including filtering of restricted sites so they are not accessible by minors.

In 2009-10, achievements under this output were delivered to the communities listed at item 7 of the Implementation Plan as follows:

Service	No. of communities	Filtering installed?
New public internet access	4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilcannia Mallee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Committed – 8 - 10 computers ○ Installed – 15 computers 		Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilcannia Warrali <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Committed – 8 - 10 computers ○ Installed – 12 computers 		Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walgett Namoi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Committed – 6 - 8 computers ○ Installed – 19 computers 		Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walgett Gingie <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Committed – 6 - 8 computers ○ Installed – 15 computers 		Yes
Expanded public internet access	Nil	-

To provide access to the internet and other computer applications 27 ex-government computers were supplied to Wilcannia communities and 34 to Walgett communities.

Output 2: Maintenance

Reporting on maintenance of public internet access facilities was not required for 2009-10.

Output 3: Training

The Agreement required that training sessions be tailored to individual community needs that provided Indigenous Australians with skills in:

- (a) basic computer use;
- (b) using internet applications including email and web browsers;

- (c) applied internet use, with a focus on financial management, education, health, communication, government transactions, and economic and employment opportunities;
- (d) locating and navigating internet search engines and databases, constructing effective searches, evaluating websites and accessing culturally appropriate digitised objects; and
- (e) peer support techniques that enable users with a higher skill level to provide basic assistance to other community members in using computers and the internet.

In 2009-10, achievements under this output were delivered to the communities listed at Item 8 of the Implementation Plan as follows:

	No. of trainees	Hours of training delivered	Outputs delivered *
1	<i>Train-the Trainer</i> delivered for the following communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilcannia Mallee-4 • Wilcannia Warrali-4 • Walgett Namoi-3 	80	Train-the-trainer and 36 hours mentoring support during training sessions with trainees.
2	Wilcannia Mallee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed – 25 • Delivered in 2009-10 – 12 • Delivered in July 2010 – 21 		As detailed in Output 3 above.
3	Wilcannia Warrali: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed – 15 • Delivered in July 2010 - 19 		As detailed in Output 3 above.
4	Walgett Gingie: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed – 35 • Delivered in 2009-10 – 35 		As detailed in Output 3 above.
5	Walgett Namoi: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed – 25 • Delivered in 2009-10 – 30 		As detailed in Output 3 above.

It should be noted that due to unforeseen circumstances the training was delayed for some communities. However, all the committed training was delivered in early 2010-11, as agreed with Commonwealth officials from the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy who visited Wilcannia in June 2010.

A3. Performance indicators and benchmarks

In 2009-10, New South Wales delivered the following achievements against the performance indicators and benchmarks stated at item 9 of the Implementation Plan.

Performance indicator	Benchmark	Statement of achievements*
1. A reduction in the number of remote Indigenous communities that have limited or no public internet access.	(a) New or expanded public internet access to 4 approved communities annually.	NSW provided access to the four communities nominated, namely, Wilcannia Mallee and Warrali, and Walgett Gingie and Namoi.
2. An increased number of people in remote Indigenous communities that have received training in information technology and internet use.	(a) Training in information technology and internet use to four approved communities. (b) Training received by 100 agreed participants.	NSW provided: (a) Training as agreed to the four approved communities; (b) Training was received by 77 participants in 2009-10; however, in July 2010 a further 40 participants received training. (See A4 for reasons for delays.)
3. An increase in transactions and communication between remote Indigenous communities and government agencies, businesses, communities and families.	(a) All communities receiving new or expanded public internet access have internet facilities in use.	New public internet access facilities are in use in the four communities nominated.

A4. Services and benefits

The tables at items 7 and 8 of the Implementation Plan show a summary of proposed services and benefits in each community. Provide a statement of achievements against those proposals and, where applicable, statements on services and benefits not delivered.

Public internet access

	Services/benefits delivered	Services/benefits not delivered
1	NSW agreed to provide public internet access to the four communities mentioned above. This access was provided in seven locations to provide for a diversity of locations catering for the diversity of needs in the various communities. This also provided some backup facilities within the communities.	NSW considers that it delivered all the services and benefits as agreed.

Training

	Services/benefits delivered	Services/benefits not delivered	Comments
1	NSW agreed to deliver programs to the four communities in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing and using online services • Financial management and online banking • Online shopping and selling • Economic and small business training • Social networking <p>These programs were delivered.</p>		
2	The agreement was to train the following number of trainees in the following communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilcannia Mallee – 25 • Wilcannia Warrali – 15 • Walgett Gingie – 35 • Walgett Namoi - 25 <p>There were some delays that meant some training was not delivered until July 2010. This was discussed with Commonwealth officials when they visited.</p>		The main reasons for the delay in delivering the training program as committed were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Implementation Plan was signed late, hence the funding was delayed. • As 2009-10 was the first year of this NP, it involved setting up processes for the first time. • There were unforeseen

	<p>In total, including those trained in July 2010, the following number of trainees were trained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wilcannia Mallee – 33• Wilcannia Warrali – 19• Walgett Gingie – 35• Walgett Namoi – 30		<p>difficulties such as sourcing electricians to fix problems with poor infrastructure.</p>
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