



**Australian Government**

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**Indigenous Communications Program**

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

**Implementation Report  
2009-10**

**South Australia**

# 1. Introduction

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

On 29 October 2009, the South Australian implementation plan for 2009-10 was agreed between the Premier of South Australia and the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE). Following this, \$42,000 in Commonwealth funding was transferred to deliver public internet access facilities and basic computer training in one remote Indigenous community, the Dunjiba Community in Oodnadatta.

The Implementation Plan described a partnership model and the Oodnadatta Community Internet centre (the Centre) was established in the Oodnadatta Aboriginal School, and supported by the school and Dunjiba communities. The Centre is staffed by a trainee coordinator who is responsible for administration, monitoring and support of the Centre.

A peer support model provides training and support for registered clients, with community members also having access to Outback Connect, a statewide Information and Communications Technology (ICT) program delivered on-line.

In implementing the Agreement in 2009-10, the South Australian Government also provided \$91,545 in administrative and staff support.

## 2. Establishment

### Developing a service delivery model

**In developing a service delivery model, the following issues were identified -**

- Extreme remoteness and distance from project implementation staff. Isolation is exacerbated by limited and unreliable public transport and communications, poor roads frequently closed by weather conditions, and extreme climate conditions
- Community uncertainty and tension in the face of governance, financial management and community changes, and the impact of severe social problems. These community changes increase the difficulty of developing a true understanding of the culture and circumstances of remote Aboriginal communities, particularly from the perspective of Adelaide or Canberra.
- Lack of existing internet access infrastructure in South Australian Aboriginal communities. Currently there is no access to reliable and fast broadband internet speeds or mobile phone coverage. More significantly there are no community learning or information centres such as libraries or telecentres, from which on site management, security, support and advocacy could be leveraged.
- Focus of Closing the Gap programs on basic needs of housing, health, and safety has meant that integration of a digital economy program was often not seen as a priority. Although digital economy and digital literacy are increasingly identified as core drivers of social and economic well-being in our society, this is not equally recognised or implemented in remote and often dysfunctional communities.
- With no existing community digital economy programs in the target communities, an intensive and exhaustive engagement process is constantly required with all communities and service providers whose support is critical to achieving successful outcomes.
- Factors such as low levels of literacy, language barriers, and limited options for employment outcomes, mean that participants need high levels of support and it is necessary to build trust and confidence with the community. It is often difficult to identify, and then meet with, key community stakeholders, who may frequently be absent on community business or unsure about the matters that are being addressed.
- The very limited timeframe and logistical challenges of this Agreement, as indicated above, necessitate extraordinary commitment of Department of Further Education Employment Science and Technology (DFEEST) staff and resources to develop community participation and ownership and to manage the project implementation, particularly as this project is additional to core programs of the Directorate.

**In addition to these factors, practical considerations dictated significant changes to the proposed implementation model -**

- The request to defer implementation in the COAG priority communities of Amata and Mimili was based on consideration of the above issues which were present to a high degree in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands communities. Oodnadatta, on the other hand, was a relatively stable community with higher levels of employment, better housing and community services and generally higher levels of literacy in the population. This provided an opportunity to develop and test a model in an environment with fewer risks and barriers, which could then be adapted to roll out in other communities.
- The indicative funding of the National Partnership guidelines provided very inadequate resources to establish an entirely new facility in a remote community. In addition there was no provision for a salary to employ a person to administer such a centre. However, this is a critical success factor, providing support and assistance for centre clients, and mentoring clients with complex education, literacy, social and cultural barriers. Community support also assists those whose preferred method of learning is through peer support and oral and non-literary learning.

Although following similar guidelines to previous funding programs such as Backing Indigenous Ability, this program recognises these issues and incorporates a greater degree of flexibility in designing community specific service delivery solutions.

Accordingly, the Agreement was negotiated to limit the number of communities in South Australia, to be serviced through this agreement, and to increase the quantum of funding per community to enable a more realistic implementation in “green field” locations. The Agreement also included funding to employ an on-site coordinator, although it should also be recognised that the funding is still inadequate for a full time award wage, but covers a part-time traineeship position.

The implementation timeline was very short, providing little more than five months for establishing the Centre and creating training programs, after the signing of the Agreement and also allowing for the traditionally long Christmas break in desert communities. Consequently, development of a training program has been deferred by agreement, and procedures and evaluation processes are still being refined.

## **Consultation**

### **Agencies**

Exhaustive consultations were initiated, and are continuing with South Australia’s Cabinet Office, Department of Premier and Cabinet Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (AARD), the National Partnership Agreement for Remote Service Delivery (RSD), and the Office of the Commissioner for Aboriginal Affairs.

In addition, discussions are continuing with agencies such as Department of Families and Communities (DFC), DFEEST Aboriginal Employment, TAFE Regional, Outback Communities Authority, Department of Families Community Services Housing and Indigenous Affairs (FACSHIA) Regional Operations Centre (ROC), seeking opportunities to work collaboratively and to leverage from current programs where possible.

### **Other programs**

Discussions have been held with agencies managing this program in other states, particularly regarding the development of a digital literacy program.

### **Communities**

The critical success factor for this program is engagement with the community to ensure that any program is appropriate to the needs and wishes of that community. The community needs to be assured that there will be positive outcomes for community members, recognise the benefits which would accrue from this program and be confident that cultural and community traditions and strengths are recognised and incorporated into the implementation of this program.

Initial consultations were held with the Dunjiba Community, through phone links, discussions with the Executive Officer and a presentation at a Council meeting. The Oodnadatta Progress Association was also consulted extensively, through the Outback Communities Authority, individual members and with a presentation to a Council meeting. Discussions were also held with TAFE SA Regional Coober Pedy and the Aboriginal Access Centre at Oodnadatta.

## **Partnerships and collaboration**

Through this consultation process, the Oodnadatta Aboriginal School was identified as a location for the implementation of the Agreement. Already engaged in establishing a community library, public internet access would complement this facility. The location at the school offered a secure environment, a neutral location, space for more than one computer and a host who could assist in the supervision and security of a coordinator and promotion to the community.

The School Principal was a strong advocate for this program and facilitated the implementation process, providing access to school facilities and providing in-kind assistance of staff time, and access to the school. The school was able to provide a secure space, data points and desks and chairs for the centre.

A partnership was also formed with the Dunjiba Community Council, who applied for assistance under the National Broadband Guarantee

A Reference Group was established, an informal group tasked with providing input to the program and promoting it within their own networks. Members include representatives from the school, the Community Council, TAFE SA Regional and community members.

*See*

*Attachment 1 – Reference Group Guidelines*

## **Background - Developing a Service Delivery Model**

### **Implementation**

With the local school partnered in the program and active support of the Dunjiba Community Council the next stage of the implementation was to coordinate the logistics for the centre.

### **Location**

The school was able to provide a secure space, data points and tables and chairs for the centre. All other aspects of the centre needed to be coordinated, procured and or established, and included;

- Computers, printer, hardware and software
- Server
- Maintenance
- Satellite Connection
- Signage
- Recruitment, induction and training of Centre Coordinator
- Registration forms for users
- Systems and procedures for operation of the centre
- Uniforms
- Promotion of centre
- Training options and programs

The goal was to have the centre operational by the start of the first school term for 2010, so there would be minimal disruption to the school during the set up and so the centre would be open when community members returned to Oodnadatta from the summer break.

### **Centre Coordinator**

The Centre Coordinator was recruited during the December 2010 site visit to Oodnadatta. Prior to this a Job and Person Specification had been written so potential trainees were able to understand more about the role

*See*

*Attachment 2 – Position description*

Three candidates expressed their interest in the role, and they were assisted in writing their resumes and applications for the position. Each candidate was interviewed for the role. The successful candidate was found to have appropriate personal skills, previous experience, maturity and enthusiasm, as well as strong family support in the school and the community.

### **Hardware and Support**

The computers, satellite installation and connection were the next key components to be coordinated. Following a documented procurement process for the computer installation, a small firm experienced in providing hardware solutions for remote Aboriginal communities was selected. They provided a comprehensive solution that included Dell computers with a 5 year warranty, a proxy server to reduce data consumption and enable remote access and routine maintenance and support as well as delivery and installation.

*See*

*Attachment 3 – Oodnadatta IT Solution Overview*

### **Internet access**

The Satellite installation was the final component and took significant coordination with the Internet Service Provider, DBCDE and the Local Dunjiba Community Council to have the installation recognised under the Australian Broadband Guarantee which resulted in savings of approximately \$5,000. The satellite installation resulted in the Dunjiba Community Council becoming active stakeholders as the internet account is managed through the Council.

The outcome of the three key components of the computers, coordinator and satellite was the centre being operational by the beginning of February 2010. To complement and support the centre, operational and reporting processes were established with the Coordinator and the school, including rules of use, registration forms, log-on procedures for clients.

The Trainee Coordinator has commenced working towards a qualification in Business Administration, which incorporates training in information technology, supported by TAFESA Regional.

A communications plan was developed, which included supplying identifying clothing, signage and promotion of the centre. A community party was held to promote the Centre in the community and to thank the school and other community members for their support. With delays resulting from distance, weather and poor road conditions and school holidays, this was held in June 2010.

*See*

*Attachment 4 – Oodnadatta Internet Centre Communications Plan*

## 3. Achievements

### Outcomes under the Agreement

As documented in the Appendix, the implementation of the Agreement in Oodnadatta has generally achieved the required outcomes, in the five months since the facility was first established.

This community had already demonstrated a degree of engagement with the digital economy, and benchmarking surveys identified popular uses of the internet to include e-banking, buying on line, and social networking. However, home internet access was not widespread, and public internet limited to paid kiosks designed for tourists. Training in IT was also very limited, although assistance with basic skills was available for TAFE students through the Aboriginal Access Centre.

With 32 clients registered to use the Centre at the end of 2010, from an indigenous population estimated at 100, this program has increased

- public access to online resources
- awareness of the benefits of online resources and services
- computer literacy
- information literacy
- access to online transactions and services.

It must be recognised that the largest proportion of clients are women, and that language literacy is a major inhibitor of more widespread on-line participation.

However, future program development will include

- a targeted communications program to engage more people with the Centre
- a training program designed to meet specific needs and interests of the community
- liaison with local agencies, health centre and the police, to explore opportunities for on-line information provision related to their business eg Diabetes prevention and management
- exploring other needs and interests of the community which may be assisted by internet access

In a community such as Oodnadatta, opportunities for home based access to the internet will also be explored.

The most significant achievement of this Agreement is the employment and training of a local community member in managing the business of the Centre and in mentoring the clients who access this facility. This is a skilled position and provides a model for other young people in the community. This has only been achieved though, with an intensive support network through DFEEST, TAFE SA Regional and the school administration.

## Links to Closing the Gap targets

The six key targets that form the Closing the Gap objective relate to addressing :

1. the life expectancy gap
2. mortality rates for Indigenous children under five
3. access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four years olds in remote communities
4. the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children
5. the gap for Indigenous students in year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates
6. the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

In addition, the following principles are enshrined in this policy -

- To achieve lasting progress, the Government will work in partnership with Indigenous Australians to address patterns of individual and community behaviour that may contribute to entrenched disadvantage.
- In urban and regional Australia, the Government will work to ensure that services are accessible to and meet the needs of Indigenous Australians. In remote Australia, services will be targeted on a regional basis.

On the surface, promoting digital literacy and internet access may not be a priority in the face of extreme disadvantage, destabilisation and social problems. As reflected in the report of South Australian Thinker in Residence, Genevieve Bell, for Aboriginal decision makers, given "... the ongoing challenges, struggles and opportunities in Aboriginal South Australia ... the adoption and use of new information and communication technologies were not the highest priority .." (Getting Connected, Staying Connected: Exploring South Australia's Digital Futures p27)

However, it is increasingly recognised that the digital economy is pivotal to economic development and social well-being today. To deny whole communities and populations from participation on-line is to condemn those people to on-going and increasing disadvantage and marginalisation. The development of the ICT industry, the profusion of on-line content and services and the role of ICT in driving innovation are significant factors in economic productivity and growth, nationally and internationally. The opportunities of the on-line world are transforming our community and creating new sources of power and wealth in our society.

The Agreement on Indigenous Public Internet Access, signed by the Council of Australian Governments, seeks to:

- (a) enhance social inclusion and community well being in remote Indigenous communities by improving links between people, information and technology;
- (b) improve access for Indigenous Australians in remote Indigenous communities to basic information and communication services required for participation in contemporary Australian economic, political and social life;
- (c) reduce barriers to the use of information and communication technology in remote Indigenous communities; and
- (d) better understanding of the benefits of the effective use of the internet and associated hardware and software in remote Indigenous communities.

**This Agreement is one part of the process to work in partnership with Indigenous communities to make digital engagement accessible and to establish the internet as a vehicle for service delivery and a means of overcoming isolation and distance from support.**

This program may not directly improve the life expectancy gap, but it may provide access to on-line healthy living information and support. This program may not halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five, but it may provide support and additional communication channels for young parents in a highly mobile society.

This program in South Australia is also contributing to employment outcomes in communities, built on the foundation of community consultation and access to employment and training opportunities.

The evaluation of these Closing the Gap outcomes will be conducted as part of the ongoing program in the target communities.

## Case studies

### Case study 1

For one older male in this community, the opportunity to access the internet was initially strongly avoided. Resisting all efforts to engage him in the process, he did however, maintain a watching brief. At a time when his capitulation could not be observed by others, he asked the Coordinator for assistance in learning how to use this technology. He is now a regular client of the Centre, and significantly, has engaged a friend to also get on-line. Since using the Centre facility, his friend has now invested in his own satellite connection at home and is a strong advocate of the benefits of the internet.

### Case study 2

The Centre Coordinator has developed skills and confidence to a high degree, since assuming the responsibility for the running of the centre. She is working through her study at a fast rate and becoming a community expert in IT, frequently called on to trouble shoot and provide advice. She demonstrates initiative and understanding in complex technical matters, liaising independently with the remote technical support service.

The Oodnadatta Community Internet Centre has been successfully established to provide the Dunjiba Community with free internet access and support.

Within the limited timeframe, the Centre is meeting the benchmarks of the Agreement and establishing a foundation on which more specific outcomes may be built.

A peer support training model has been implemented and will be enhanced as the skills and knowledge of the coordinator increase. In addition, future implementation plans will incorporate community training plans and encourage access to existing training programs.

## Key success Factors

In meeting the challenges outlined above, the key success factors in Oodnadatta were

- a local champion in the School Principal who was always supportive, committed to the concept of digital literacy and community development and open to finding solutions when problems occurred
- sharing a common goal, “serendipity” as the development of the community library coincided with the roll out of this NPA
- the school is a natural hub for community, incorporating a child care centre and is a major employer in this community
- consultation and involvement of key local community organisations
- providing a local employment and training opportunity, creating a position as coordinator of the Centre
- undertaking extensive relationship building to gain community support
- a receptive and relatively stable community

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# Appendix: Reporting Tables

## A1. Statement of expenditure

### Commonwealth funding

In 2009-10, South Australia received \$42,000 in funding under the Agreement. This was expended in Oodnadatta as listed at Item 6 of the Implementation Plan as follows:

	Description (Item/Service)	Comment	Amount
1	Salary		\$6970
2	Computer hardware and software		\$22,381
3	Internet service provision		\$353
4	Advertising and promotion		\$4137
5	Travel and accommodation		\$255
6	Other		\$104
7	Staff development and training	\$2000 allocated for Train the trainer deferred	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$34,200</b>
...			

The Implementation plan budget was underspent due to the following factors –

1. Trainee Salary estimates are problematic as salary cannot be determined until the status of the successful candidate has been assessed by Traineeship and Apprenticeship Services (TAS), so estimates necessarily must allow for the highest potential wage rate.
2. A successful application to the Australian Broadband Guarantee saved \$5000 allocated for internet installation
3. \$2000 allocated for a Train the Trainer program was deferred to aggregate this program when additional trainees are appointed in the second round

An application has been lodged in South Australia, for carryover of unspent grant funds.

## State/Territory contribution

	Description (Item/Service)	Comment	Amount
1	Salary: project development, implementation, administration, management	In kind – assessed proportion of time committed by three DFEEST staff	\$77,890
2	Travel and accommodation	Funds for travel were not available in the budget submitted for Round 1 implementation	\$10,355
3	Partner contribution: furniture		\$3300
4	Partner contribution: salary of library and reception staff in support, floor space, utilities, insurance	In kind – this has not been calculated but needs to be acknowledged as a real expense for this facility.	
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$91,545</b>

## A2. Outputs

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

### Output 1: Public internet access

The Agreement requires that new or expanded public internet access, tailored to individual community circumstances, be provided to remote Indigenous communities identified in the Implementation Plan. Internet access facilities must include 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	1	Endian Firewall Community (See Attachment 5 <a href="#">Content Filtering at Oodnadatta Community Library and Internet Centre</a> )
Expanded public internet access	Nil in 2009 -10	

### Output 2: Maintenance

Reporting on maintenance of public internet access facilities is not required in 2009-10.

### Output 3: Training

The Agreement requires 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 in Oodnadatta listed at item 8 of the Implementation Plan as follows:

	<b>No. of trainees</b>	<b>Hours of training delivered</b>	<b>Outputs delivered *</b>
1	<i>32 registered clients, Oodnadatta Internet Centre</i>	<i>Clients accessed an average of 3.35 hours each week.</i>	<i>Peer support training in the following topics was provided (e) – Basic computer familiarisation (a) Word Processing (a) Using social networking (Facebook) (b) Using email (b) Buying and selling on-line (E-Bay and on-line catalogues) (c) E-banking and using Paypal (c) Multi-media – accessing music and video files (c) Internet searching (d)</i>

Note: Centre clients demonstrated clear preferences in the way they wished to access the digital world.

Training was through peer support to develop confidence in the use of the facility and basic access skills and in assisting with specific uses. 20 support sessions have been recorded.

The short time that the centre has been opened has mitigated against more intensive training. Access to Outback Connect will require the development of culturally focused pathways and content and this is planned for future implementation.

### A3. Performance indicators and benchmarks

In 2009-10, South Australia 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 one approved community in 2009 – 10	<i>A new facility was established at Oodnadatta (the Dunjiba Community) and integrated into the Oodnadatta Aboriginal School. Previous attempts to set up telecentre facilities in Oodnadatta had not been successful. The Centre, consisting of four computers linked through a server to a satellite internet link and to a remote monitoring and maintenance service, is accessible to the whole community at flexible times.</i>
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 one approved community in 2009 - 10. (b) Training received by 20 agreed participants annually.	<i>32 community members have registered and used the community internet facility, 15.5% of whom are male.</i>
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.	<i>Average weekly use of the Community Internet facility is 3.35 hours per registered client, with major uses being email, social networking, on-line shopping and e-banking. Many clients indicated an interest in gathering information and in using the computers and internet for entertainment.</i>

## 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	A suite of four computers networked to a server and printer will be available in a secure community library facility installed at the Oodnadatta Aboriginal School. A satellite internet connection will be procured and filtering, security and Office software installed. The computer and internet functions will be monitored monthly and service provided by remote access by a contracted provider. Secure individual access will be provided for all community members who wish to use the computers and internet provision	<i>Completed</i>
2	A trainee will be employed, under the supervision of the School Principal, to receive training in IT and business administration. The trainee will gain work readiness, IT and training skills which will provide a basis for future employment opportunities. The trainee will coordinate the opening of the centre, including after school hours, to maximise community use of the facility and to provide basic support in computer and internet access. It is planned that this will generate a peer-support environment and a culturally appropriate learning culture which will maximise the sustainability of this facility and encourage the community to effectively engage with the digital environment.	<i>Completed</i>

## Training

	Services/benefits delivered	Services/benefits not delivered	Comments
1	A training program will be developed which addresses the identified needs of the community, which may include knowledge of basic computer and software applications, applied Internet use including financial transactions, searching the internet.	<p>Peer – to peer support is provided to assist clients in developing their digital literacy skills, enabling access to computer functions and web sites and effective use of on-line technology to meet their personal and community needs.</p> <p>The Coordinator is undertaking study in Business Administration Certificate 3, including ICT modules, to improve her skill in administering the Centre and to enhance her future employment options.</p> <p>A “Train – the –trainer” program to enhance the skills of the Coordinator is planned but a carry over of funds to the next year has been requested when this training can be expanded to include new coordinators employed through the 2010 – 11 implementation.</p>	<i>Development of a specific and culturally appropriate training program is in discussion with South Australian service providers and information sharing with other jurisdictions.</i>
2	As a further development opportunity, the community will be encouraged to access DFEEST’s Outback Connect (OCX) program which provides basic computer and internet training via a virtual classroom for all people in regional South Australia.	The Outback Connect (OCX) program is available to clients at the Community Internet Centre and the Coordinator has been trained in it use.	<i>See above. It is anticipated that this targeted training program will be delivered via the Outback Connect virtual classroom, which will encourage access to the broader OCX program.</i>