

# **The Northern Peninsula Area Demonstration Project Presentation**

## **Slide 1**

### **Welcome and Introductions**

#### **Introduction to Demo Project**

The Northern Peninsula Area Demonstration Project is an initiative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing, in the Queensland Department of Housing.

The proposal for a Demonstration Project emerged from Housing Ministers' concerns in 1996 that "overall provision of housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was unacceptable".

At that time the poor state of housing in Indigenous communities was the subject of reports by organisations such as the Human Rights Commission, the World Council of Churches and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Housing ministers requested that a model be developed to show a workable methodology, which integrates housing and infrastructure development with training, employment creation and business development in rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia.

ATSIH developed the model which was endorsed by the Commonwealth State Working Group, Indigenous Housing and presented it to Housing ministers in 1997. Housing Ministers also endorsed the Demonstration Project model and agreed that each state and territory would test the model.

The Demonstration Project was to be delivered under best practice standards as prescribed by COAG and RCIADIC.

In Queensland, the Northern Peninsula Area communities of Bamaga, Seisia, Umagico, Injinoo, and New Mapoon, were selected and endorsed as the participating communities for the Project.

At that time, 37% of housing in the 5 NPA communities was sub-standard and in contravention of the Residential Tenancies Act.

The Demo Project was to address the identified major barriers to improving housing outcomes for Indigenous peoples. Which were

- Overlap and duplication between programs;
- Lack of effective co-ordination between housing and infrastructure programs;
- The need to provide support and training to Indigenous community housing providers;
- Quantum and effectiveness of state and commonwealth funding

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### EXPLAIN THE CYCLE OF NEGLECT (SEE SLIDE)

By 1997 it became obvious that a major injection of capital over a sustained period of time was necessary to provide and upgrade basic infrastructure, address the repairs and maintenance backlogs and reduce overcrowding in each community.

As well, an injection of funding over a sustained period towards development of tenancy and asset management capacity would be required.

This would bring community housing standards on DOGIT communities to a standard level to that enjoyed by the majority of Australians.

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### EXPLAIN THE MODEL (refer to slide)

## Slide 4

### Commonwealth level

The requirements of the Ministers were essentially:

To show the most effective way to deliver major improvements in housing, health and infrastructure services in rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The model addressed this by emphasising co-ordination of housing and infrastructure initiatives being planned by a number of State Government Departments, ATSIC, TSRS and other relevant agencies (ACC, ICC etc.) and a co-ordinated approach which concentrated on "whole of community development".

## State Level

ATSIH provided the initial injection of capital for the Health Safety and Amenity Upgrade Project. \$8.27 million was provided to upgrade basic housing health hardware in all houses. This included electrical system, food storage areas, water and sewerage. Kitchen, bathroom, laundries and toilets were targeted for upgrades.

Also, backlog repairs and maintenance works were carried out to upgrade sub-standard housing to bring housing in the communities up to the same functional standard as new housing.

This injection of capital provided the impetus for other government departments to commit their resources in the area.

- The ATSIH funds supplemented ATSIK housing and infrastructure funding.
- The Department of Main Roads carried out major arterial and internal community road works. These roads are now sealed, curb and channelling has been added and road drainage is improved.
- The Department of Natural Resources contributed by carrying out major works to water treatment and storage plants and sewerage systems.

**Strong management and leadership were provided by ATSIH to ensure the co-ordination of services was maintained and to manage timing and co-ordination of works on the ground.**

ATSIH devised a three tiered management structure.

Two teams within ATSIH were involved in ensuring the Project was developed and delivered under the intended framework, and monitored the employment, training and business development aspects of the Project.

1. The Central Office, based Community Housing Strategy developed the initiative into an operational project and provided funds for projects aimed at assisting Councils with their tenancy and asset management responsibilities.
2. The Cairns based Northern Construction Unit implemented the Project in a multi-staged approach in order to address housing and infrastructure works in order of priority. This included local co-ordination with other agencies and overall management of the project at community level.
3. Gutteridge, Hasking and Davey, a private Engineering Consulting Company also provided on site management of the Health Safety and Amenity upgrade project. Due to the quantity, variety and indeterminate extent of the work involved, this company provided on site and independent assessment and direction as works was planned and completed.

### **At Local Council level**

311 Council owned community houses across the 5 communities were upgraded to Environmental Health Standards.

Councils were involved at all stages of the Project. Councils were consulted in the initial stages, and they were responsible for all project management decisions.

An added advantage was that the project delivery method was flexible enough so as to integrate with other government projects in the area and to accommodate changes in the original scope as required to meet local needs. For example, this flexibility allowed for the provision of security and insect screens following concerns about Japanese Encephalitis in the area.

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### **Transfer of Skills**

Significant training took place during the project. Council tradespeople, apprentices and labourers worked along side a variety of experienced tradespeople and with the supervision of ATSIH and GH&D.

Work was carried out to ATSIH minimus standards for quality in materials and construction methodologies. Both ATSIH and GH&D were able to provide problem-solving assistance to Councils as issues of timing of works, availability of materials and other issues arose.

If the standards set in this project are maintained, ongoing maintenance works will be done to a high standard and completed more efficiently. This is evident from the experiences with the work crews in the initial stages of the project, where there was an increase in productivity as the project progressed and the individual workers gained improved skills through their experiences and the lengthy duration of employment which was provided.

### **Proven working methodologies**

The activities associated with provision of housing and infrastructure created sustainable employment in the housing industry, the building industry and related manufacturing industries in the communities.

Increased income resulted from access to these employment opportunities and contributed to the buoyancy of the local economies.

Council workers conducted associated building works such as carpentry and joinery, screen manufacturing and the road works on site.

Each Council undertook to specialise in one of the associated manufacturing industries.

The % communities now have a range of housing related industries accessible locally.

Councils have avoided duplication of industries in the region as each Council has concentrated on a particular aspect of works.

The Five Year Capital Works Plan for Deed of Grant in Trust Communities, released by the Minister for Housing in February 1999, consolidates this achievement by committing funds to address the total outstanding need on these communities over the next five years. This commitment will provide sustainable training and employment opportunities in these communities.

### **Community Housing Management Strategy**

ATSIH will continue to provide assistance with tenancy and asset management, the establishment of housing offices and developing and implementing housing management policies and procedures through its Community Housing Management Strategy.

## **Slide 6**

Talk to the dot points re CHMS

## **Slide 7**

**Show the video.**