

A WAY FORWARD : A Response to the Shepparton Trial Evaluation by the Steering Group

The Shepparton COAG Trial has been an important learning experience for all of the partners. There have been some valuable achievements - in the education strategy for Indigenous students, in the strong focus on the future for young people and in the establishment of a Policy and Planning Unit as a key resource to the community.

These achievements are noted in this Evaluation. The high level of commitment and energy that all of the partners have shown towards the Trial over the course of its two and a half years have been emphasised through the Evaluation as a strong aspect of this Trial.

The journey into a new way of working has been challenging at times, with varying agendas and expectations about what could be achieved and the best way to proceed. We have had to modify our understanding of the timeframe that is necessary for tackling and achieving what is effectively generational change.

All of the partners agree that the Evaluation is a useful tool for reflection and review to identify where we need to be working differently and to find ways to best achieve our common goals.

All partners believe we are well placed to design the way forward in a **Partnership of Community and Governments** with fresh momentum and with a refined set of goals.

The Partnership has agreed on six priority areas for the coming year:

- **Strengthening governance** at the community level and between community and governments, including building capacity in order to realise community visions;
- **Developing an evaluation framework** to effectively monitor progress of outcomes for the community;
- **Mapping the service system** to better understand the availability, quality and accessibility of services for Aboriginal people in Greater Shepparton with the goal of improving delivery where required;
- **Building connectedness**, understanding, respect for and celebration of Aboriginal people and their culture and heritage across the Greater Shepparton community;
- **Keeping a focus on education** and building on the work that has already been undertaken to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people;
- **Improving participation of Aboriginal people in the local economy** through improved employment, training and opportunities for economic development.

All partners are committed to developing new ways of working with each other which respect Aboriginal cultural values and build strong cross-cultural partnerships. We continue to share a vision that Aboriginal people will have social, economic and cultural equality.