

ROADS TO HOME OUTCOME EVALUATION

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

July 2024



The R2H program (the program) is a community-led initiative that aims to address the issue of disparate access to infrastructure and services experienced by discrete Aboriginal communities across NSW. The program model is designed to promote inclusive decision-making and empowers Aboriginal communities to determine their own infrastructure priorities. The scope of this evaluation was limited to four R2H communities. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the program in delivering the intended outcomes. The evaluation drew upon existing program documentation, as well as conducting community visits, interviews, and a survey of R2H staff. This document summarises the key findings and recommendations.

In what ways has the program increased the number and quality of essential services in the participating communities?

Findings

- **All communities** within the scope of this evaluation are **enjoying new and improved infrastructure**, which is supporting **better service delivery**, and/or creating opportunities for better service delivery. The work of the R2H program has brought the **communities experiences closer to that experienced by the general population**.
- This has been achieved in the face of a variety of **complex challenges**, often beyond the control of the program. While efforts are being made to address the known barriers, they are likely to continue to impact the program as it is rolled out in other communities. **Coordinated government action is essential to removing systemic barriers**.

Summary of infrastructure and services delivered

What has been delivered:	Gulgambone Weilwan LALC	Gingie Walgett LALC	Namoi Walgett LALC	Cabarita Forster LALC
Development application and subdivision	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sealed road (kms)	0.92	0.42	0.692	0.63
Guttering (kms)	0.92	0.84	1.384	1.26
Households with new driveway	14	12	21	25
House boundaries fenced	14	12	21	38
Asbestos removed (tonnes)	NA (was not required)	~7000m3 planned for removal	~28,000m3 planned for removal	NA (was not required)
Other works delivered by the program	Street trees, street lighting, footpaths, welcome signage, hard rubbish removal, playground	Street trees, street lighting, footpaths, welcome signage, hard rubbish removal	Street trees, street lighting, footpaths, welcome signage, hard rubbish removal	Street trees, street lighting, footpaths, hard rubbish removal
Other works enabled by the program	NBN installation	NBN installation	NBN installation	NBN installation

Recommendations

That the Roads to Home program **reviews its forward work program** following the completion of the Discrete Aboriginal Communities Condition Assessment for infrastructure, emergency mitigation, housing, and contaminants project being carried out by NSW Aboriginal Affairs.

Capitalise on the recent NSW Machinery of Government changes that have established the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, which includes the new Aboriginal Outcomes Directorate, by:

- Leveraging opportunities to **raise awareness and understanding of planning barriers** that the program faces and how these could be addressed through more coordinated collaboration by teams within the Department.
- Establishing an internal **DPHI governance committee dedicated to the Roads to Home Program**. Consideration should be given to ensuring the program team can resource their contribution to this governance committee.
- **Expand collaboration with the NSW Aboriginal Planning Concierge** in the Planning Delivery and Integration Team from membership on Project Steering Committees to leading the development of new, or amendment of existing, planning instruments that would remove known barriers to the Roads to Home Program.

How have employment and social outcomes been improved?

Findings

- The program has **delivered important employment outcomes** for some individuals which have had important flow on effects to the broader community. There are two critical **success factors** to the achievement of these outcomes: the **selection of contractors** with a genuine commitment to cultural safety and the advancement of Aboriginal people; and the **tenacity of the program team** to ensuring contractors fulfill their obligations to train and employ community members to work on the project.
- Residents have a **renewed sense of pride** about their communities with the work fulfilling long-term desires for improved conditions for themselves and their children. This has resulted in greater effort to maintain the improved aesthetic of the community.

Summary of training and employment provided

Community	Training courses offered	# community members that completed training*	# community members that worked on R2H program in their community
Gulargambone	Asbestos remediation	Up to 10	6 (one from outside the community)
	White card	8	
	Civil construction	8	
	Traffic control	Up to 10	
Gingie	Asbestos remediation	8	9 Completed and upcoming works include asbestos remediation, roads and drainage, fencing, cultural supervision, and excavation and test pits.
	White card	10	
	Civil construction	8	
	Traffic control	Up to 10	
Namoi	Asbestos remediation	8	5
	White card	10	
	Civil construction	8	
	Traffic control	Up to 10	
Cabarita	Asbestos remediation	5	5
	White card	14	
	Civil construction	8	
	Traffic control	Up to 10	

Recommendations

- **Collaborate with NSWALC** to develop a set of LALC procurement guidelines that require tenderers to demonstrate a genuine commitment to cultural safety and the advancement of Aboriginal people.
- Investigate other Aboriginal employment programs that are active in the region of Roads to Home communities, such as the National Indigenous Skills and Employment Program, to **create referral pathways for program participants to future work opportunities.**

In what ways have LALCs financial and project management confidence and capability improved?

Findings

- **Limited improvements to LALC financial and project management confidence and capability** have been found among communities within scope of this evaluation. The program model supports self-determination and gives considerable responsibility to LALCs for delivery of the project. Noting that this has led to improvements on confidence and capability in some communities, for those in the scope of this evaluation, it has been limited.
- **Expectations** of how the program can contribute to improving LALC capability **needs to consider the realities of changes within LALCs, the baseline skills and competencies of LALCs, and the level of support** that can practically be provided by the program team.

Recommendations

Collaborate with NSWALC to:

- **understand what** tools, training and resources **already exist** that can be used **to support LALCs** dispense their responsibilities in delivering the program.
- develop resources to **address priority gaps**.

What were the unintended outcomes of the program (positive and negative)?

Two unintended outcomes emerged through the evaluation.

- Some community members had opportunities to engage in **new and unexpected life experiences**. Five community members travelled to Sydney to work on a job with a contractor. For one community member who was 50 years of age, they had only left their community four times in their life. They got to visit the beach which they had only done once as a 15-year-old.
- The program enabled the **sharing of cultural knowledge**. A contractor shared they had observed Elders passing on cultural knowledge and information about cultural sites and flora to younger people during community gatherings that happened around the program.