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## Media release



Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships  
The Honourable Curtis Pitt

### **Key initiatives aim to deliver better outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders**

The creation of a Stolen Wages Reparations Fund and additional funding for a major welfare reform program are two key Budget initiatives aimed at delivering better outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders.

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Curtis Pitt said the Government was upholding its election commitment with \$21 million over three years to establish a Stolen Wages Reparations Fund.

The move would address the long-standing need for reparation for the wages and savings stolen from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders by the government of the time.

A special taskforce will be established to develop criteria for the allocation of funds as well as assessing applications.

Mr Pitt said new funding of \$28.6 million over four years had been provided under the Welfare Reform initiative, enabling the continuation of programs aimed at strengthening Queensland's discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

"This funding will support the Family Responsibilities Commission to build on gains achieved to date," Mr Pitt said.

"The welfare reforms are designed to increase local empowerment and ensure better planning and delivery of ongoing reforms in the areas of economic participation, home ownership and educational achievement.

"Initially these reforms are being introduced in five communities – Coen, Mossman Gorge, Aurukun, Doomadgee and Hope Vale – but will be expanded to other communities in due course."

In a separate initiative, almost \$40 million over four years has been provided to secure the ongoing operations of Queensland's 10 Children and Family Centres.

The centres facilitate an integrated early childhood education experience for Indigenous children and families.

Mr Pitt said the Budget provided \$2.4 million in 2015-16 to support the expansion and integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family support and child protection services.

"The Government has also reinstated cheaper flights for Far North Queensland residents

under a new look Local Fare Scheme with \$5.6 million in funding.

“Under the scheme, locals will be able to save up to \$400 per return flight for travel within Cape York and the Torres Strait as well as the Gulf communities of Doomadgee and Mornington Island,” he said.

Mr Pitt said the Budget provided \$7.3 million over four years for the continued employment of 15 Indigenous rangers who worked on national parks and other protected areas to ensure these were adequately managed and maintained.

“We will also provide \$4 million this financial year for upgrades to 14 tuckshops and amenities in some of Queensland’s rural and remote Indigenous communities,” he said.

Mr Pitt said the priorities of the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships in 2015-16 included:

- brokering employment and career opportunities for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly Year 12 school leavers
- helping aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander home owners to move closer towards home ownership
- supporting communities to identify their preferred ways to reduce alcohol-related violence
- establishing a fund to address the needs for reparations for the government control of wages and savings
- supporting communities in restoring social norms, re-establishing local authority and maximising local decision-making through the delivery of programs including Welfare Reform
- leading the implementation of a whole-of-government Cultural Capability Framework.

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