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Broad Terms of Reference Needed for Inquiry

A Senate inquiry into expenditure on Indigenous services in remote and rural Australia would need to be broad ranging in order to achieve real gains in closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage, Treasurer Delia Lawrie said.

“The Northern Territory would support a review undertaken by the Senate that covers the broad range of funding issues to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage,” Ms Lawrie said.

“We have to take the politics out of this debate.

“In order to achieve a lasting impact, a review by the Senate would need to consider historical funding arrangements for Indigenous services since 1978.

“It would need to assess the back-log in health, education, housing and infrastructure and determine whether Commonwealth funding support is adequate.

“The Northern Territory Labor Government invests about $1.8 billion – or 50% - of the Northern Territory budget on Indigenous services, and has committed almost an additional $300 million over five years to the Closing the Gap program.

“The Northern Territory’s second Indigenous Expenditure Review is currently being finalised and will be released in September, and the Territory is actively involved in the COAG review on Indigenous services spending across the country.

“If the Senate does conduct an additional review, it is essential its terms of reference are broad ranging to achieve real outcomes for Indigenous Australians.”

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