



The Central Land Council (CLC) is a Statutory Authority which operates under the Commonwealth Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) 1976 and the Native Title Act 1993. The CLC is located in the southern portion of the Northern Territory and covers an area of 775,963 square kilometres – 381,792 square kilometres is Aboriginal land. The CLC is directed by its Council, which consists of 90 Aboriginal people elected from communities. The CLC represents approximately 24,000 Aboriginal people resident in the southern half of the Northern Territory. Indigenous communities located within the CLC area are diverse and include small family outstations, large remote communities and town camps located within the larger regional service centres of Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

SUBMISSION TO NT GOVERNMENT

OUTSTATION POLICY DISCUSSION PAPER

December 2008

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SUMMARY

The Central Land Council position is based on our experience of the significant value that outstations contribute to the social and emotional well-being of Aboriginal people. We draw on our past research in formulating this policy submission, including an earlier report investigating the funding for outstations (Alexander 1989), a 2006 audit of all Community Living Areas in CLC region, and recent case study work in 2008. We also draw on the perceptions and experiences of our constituents and staff that live and work in outstations throughout the NT. The CLC strongly supports the notion that in many cases outstations provide a better quality of life for Aboriginal people, particularly in terms of well-being (Central Land Council 2006, Smith and Claudie 2003), business and livelihood opportunities, maintenance of culture, kinship and connection to country (Alexander 1989), supporting caring country and land management initiatives (Altman et al. 2007; Central Land Council 2006), and improved health outcomes (Rowley et al., 2008).

The current NT government outstation policy process does not take account of the complex context of outstations and their servicing. At present, outstation service levels are highly variable and many outstations lack basic service standards for power, water, telecommunications and housing. Many outstations also lack effective access to health and education. To address deficiencies Aboriginal landowners are negotiating practical service delivery and using their own resources to improve services, for example a new water tank at Warrayarna, a solar pump and shed at Ngalyipipanta, and a new solar power system at Ulpanyali (see Appendices A-C). At the same time, a raft of recent policy changes across the Northern Territory Emergency Response, the transition to Shires and the remote housing program have confused community governance structures and service delivery systems. For the most part the new programs have not provided any additional assistance to outstations.

The discussion paper does not come to grips with these complexities. In particular, the paper does take account of the resourcefulness of residents and the diversity of outstation livelihoods. Many outstations support, amongst other things, land management activities (see Appendix D), tourism enterprises (see Appendix E) and are places where traditional knowledge and identity are practised and strengthened. Instead of engaging these complexities, the discussion paper makes blunt propositions such as ‘not funding outstations that are not occupied’ or ‘no funding for new outstations’.

Perhaps the largest shortcoming is that the purpose of the process is not clear. No overarching direction or alternative ideas are put forward. If any direction or way forward is evident, it appears to be a business as usual approach and underlining concern that the process is mainstreaming people into larger centres, without considering the consequences of such a policy. The CLC believes the process should be about making government services more effective, improving Indigenous well-being and developing self reliance and economies in small communities. These themes are not evident in the discussion paper.

The propositions in the discussion paper are insufficient and underdeveloped. With respect to eligibility for support, the CLC recommends all occupied outstations ought to

receive some level of support. Support for outstations used primarily for cultural purposes should also be considered. Support for outstations should be considered on a case by case basis, in the context of larger mobility regions. This will allow the complexity and diversity of individual circumstances to be considered with the residents themselves. All residents, Resource Agencies and Shires should understand the service arrangements, commitments and levels to each outstation.

With respect to the definition of ‘outstations’, the CLC recommends a typology that acknowledges diversity in communities rather than a single definition. A single definition will not help in defining service levels for individual outstations.

With respect to a ‘hub and spoke’ model for service delivery, the CLC believes such a delivery model is not new and the real issue is whether hubs have the capacity, resources, and sufficient understanding of the needs to deliver services effectively. If this model is maintained, the CLC recommends acknowledging the resourcefulness of outstation residents and seeking to build that capacity and self reliance at every opportunity.

Finally, with respect to a service delivery level framework, the CLC believes service levels and types are best negotiated at a regional level with participation from outstation residents. Such negotiations need to incorporate sound planning and realistic aspirations. For example, residents need to be realistic about the trade offs associated with remoteness. The discussion paper notes the Commonwealth commitment of \$20 million each year for three years for outstation services. However, given Census estimates of 10,000 outstation residents and Commonwealth Grants Commission allocations which take account of both outstation residents and their remoteness in calculating amounts, the NT Government needs to make its own contribution. This will contribute to a fairer level of support which is sustainable over time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The CLC recommends the NT Government recognise the overlap of all government policy and programs effecting outstations and their residents in their outstation policy development and allow for a more thorough consultation process that engages outstation residents.
2. The CLC recommends the NT Government partner and engage with outstation residents to draw on successes and practises occurring already at outstations and build the capacity of residents.
3. The CLC recommends that as a minimum support should be provided to all occupied outstations. Funding programs should also consider how to support outstations that are used primarily for cultural purposes, including ceremonies or handing down cultural knowledge.
4. The CLC recommends that the NT Government consider a service delivery model that works on delivering services within mobility regions.
5. The CLC recommends that funding and support for new outstations should be considered on a case by case basis.
6. The CLC recommends that new Community Living Areas on National Parks could be serviced through an agreement with the residents, NT Government and NT Parks that is sustainable, equitable and conducive for all partners.
7. The CLC recommends that any proposals for private ownership utilise existing leasing arrangements provided for in the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.
8. The CLC recommends that the NT Government amend the legislative framework providing for Community Living Areas to allow for a leasing model similar to the Land Rights Act.
9. The CLC recommends that water supplies in all communities in NT should be subject to similar measures and guidelines.
10. The CLC recommends that investment and resources be provided to developing water management plans in outstations that build the capacity of outstation residents.
11. The CLC recommends the NT Government look towards clarifying the acceptable distances that outstations can be from various services, major service centres and service agencies in determining service levels.
12. The CLC recommends that factors of remoteness be used to determine funding levels to various outstations.

13. The CLC recommends that the NT Government policy needs to maximise transparency and accountability by ensuring that outstation residents understand the service arrangements, commitments and levels applying to their outstation.
14. The CLC recommends that the NT Government consider the use of community/settlement typology.
15. The CLC recommends that NT Government consider the use of mobility regions in the planning of hub and spoke service delivery model.
16. The CLC recommends the NT Government needs to facilitate a proper process of community planning based on realistic support levels.
17. The CLC recommends that the NT Government needs to engage Aboriginal people on outstations in ways that builds their capacity and self-reliance.
18. The CLC recommends the use of a needs based service delivery process which gives outstation residents an opportunity to participant in informed decision-making and risk management on their land.
19. The CLC recommends the NT Government contribute its own funds towards outstation services, consistent with Commonwealth Grants Commission allocations which take account of outstation residents.

INTRODUCTION

Central Land Council welcomes the opportunity to provide comment towards developing the NT Government Outstation Policy. The CLC is concerned that without real engagement with outstation residents, the outstations will be no better off and potentially, worse off. The diversity of servicing arrangements within outstations, their service levels, the resident's aspiration, the reliance and use of Resource Agency and/or Shires, needs to be brought forward in formulating this policy. The CLC encourages the Government to engage outstation residents by visiting many of the outstations and seeking informed decisions on a regional basis with outstations residents regarding future service levels. Only through this process will government be better able to understand the aspirations of residents, their current service levels and consider their suggestions on policy decisions.

At present, many outstations have inadequate basic services: poor water supply, inefficient or unreliable power supply, no telecommunications and degraded housing. Many outstations are not effectively serviced in terms of health and education. Although, in many outstations residents have sought to respond to the deficiency in services themselves: seeking transport services for school children, organising 6 weekly visits from health organisations, setting up School of Air services, fixing water pipes, servicing the generator or getting a local pastoralist to grade their road. The resourcefulness and capacity of outstation residents to respond to service vulnerabilities is important. The NT Government in formulating this policy needs to direct resources towards building capacity of outstation residents, as well as defining the allocation of resources to service agencies.

The CLC strongly supports the notion that in many cases outstations provide a better quality of life for Aboriginal people, particularly in terms of well-being (Central Land Council 2006, Smith and Claudie 2003), business and livelihood opportunities, maintenance of culture, kinship and connection to country (Central Land Council 2006; Alexander 1989), supporting caring country and land management initiatives (Altman et al. 2007; Smith and Claudie 2003), and improved health outcomes (Rowley et al., 2008). However, there is also some critical analysis required of the anecdotal evidence that suggests that young people are moving into larger communities and the ideas that outstations may further entrench disadvantage because of the distance from adequate school and health services. The anecdotal accounts provide little evidence base without further analysis.

The clear gap in the outstation discussion paper is a clarification of the overall objective or rationale for the policy making – surely, it is not just about efficiently spending 20 million dollars? The CLC is concerned that without the overarching intention made explicit, the paper does little to provide a way forward for people or offer a new way for doing business. Clearly there are a number of potential policies that could underpin future directions for resourcing outstations, including:

- Mainstreaming: Is the overall objective to move people into towns and shut down small outstations?

- Closing the Gap: Is the overall objective to reduce gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people? If so, the evidence of Utopia outstation should be drawn on.
- Building Economies: Is the overall objective to make small remote communities more self sufficient, so that private ownership models can be appropriately applied?
- Improving Indigenous Well-being: Is overall objective to improve social, economic and cultural well-being of Aboriginal people through maintaining connections with country?

Further, the NT Government paper does not move beyond a ‘business as usual’ approach to servicing of outstations. Hub and spokes models are essentially ‘business as usual’. Resource Agencies and Councils could have previously been classed as ‘hubs’. The issue is not whether hubs and spokes model is appropriate but that a hub has the capacity, resources, and sufficient understanding of the needs to deliver services. The CLC is concerned that without some real engagement with outstation residents and their service agencies on issues of servicing and appropriate service levels, this policy process will only pay lip service to these complex issues. Further, the issues for outstations, whilst heavily reliant on resources and appropriate services, are much more complex than the short discussion paper gives weight too.

This submission attempts to do two things. Firstly, the submission presents some context and background on outstations in the CLC region. Secondly, it will draw out some of the complexity in setting policy for outstations, their funding and service levels. It does this whilst responding to the four propositions provided in the paper. In doing so, the submission highlights linkages with other policy initiatives and presents ideas for moving forward to address the outstation policy issue.

CONTEXT

The reform to service delivery and funding models for outstations is occurring alongside significant other changes within NT communities.

The Northern Territory Emergency Response resulted in a raft of changes to key areas of social policy including pornography, alcohol, welfare, land tenure, CDEP and housing. The Australian Government gained powers over welfare spending of Aboriginal people. People living outstations were subject to these measures. Importantly despite being subject to the measure, outstation residents did not receive any house maintenance funds unlike allocations provided to 73 prescribed communities, nor were they recipients of any additional funding provisions.

Following the NTER, in July 2007 the NT Local Government reform dissolved existing Community Government Councils into Shires. Outstations previously serviced by Community Government Councils are now serviced by the Shires. Outstations under Resource Agencies are not, but residents of the area have the right to stand for elections and to vote. This has caused confusion in service delivery systems and governance

structures across the NT. In addition, NT allocated Commonwealth Grants Commission funding now goes to Shires on a per capita basis, yet those living on outstations under Resource Agencies are unlikely to see the results from such funding in their living areas.

Furthermore, the Commonwealth and NT governments are embarking on reform to the remote housing system, including negotiating long term leases. The SIHIP program for new housing does not include outstations, despite a number of outstation residents still residing in tin sheds. In addition, the associated SIHIP training to deliver housing in communities will need to engage with residents of outstations.

Finally and most recently, are proposed changes to native title payments and land reform. The combination of policy agendas has displaced existing governance structures, sidelined community based organisations and leaders and caused confusion in service delivery system. In the main, outstations have missed out on any extra resource allocations and Aboriginal landowners are calling out for a rebalancing of the policy agendas:

When is the government going to sit down with us and sort out the mess that they created? They created to help Aboriginal people, but we are going backwards. If they government was really concerned for Aboriginal people they would know how important country is to us. They would recognise our connection to land. Our culture. They would recognise the work we do on our land. Government are really mixed up at the moment – this new government that we voted for. They said sorry, but nothing has changed. (Mbelwarre resident, personal comm.)

The government is grappling with previous government's policy agendas whilst Aboriginal aspirations, governance structures and voice are being swept under the carpet. The outstation policy is another chapter in this story and needs to be considered within this context.

CLC position

1. The CLC recommends the NT Government recognise the overlap of all government policy and programs effecting outstations and their residents in their outstation policy development and allow for a more thorough consultation process that engages outstation residents.

OUTSTATIONS IN CLC REGION

There are over 400 outstation/homelands within the Central Land Council region. Many of these are or have in the past been recipients of the Government funding allocations through their Resource Agency or Shires. Some outstations continue to miss out on support – the self made humpies, constructed tin sheds or 10L water containers are the only infrastructure relied upon. The service levels, governance practises, occupancy levels, reliance on agencies and practises in outstations in the Central Land Council are

extremely variable and diverse. An understanding of the situation is critical if new policy is to create better outcomes for Aboriginal residents.

The Central Land Council has supported, advocated and fought on behalf of Aboriginal people for the continued association of Aboriginal landowners to their traditional country. Outstations are a creation of the strong ties that Aboriginal people of central Australia have with their authority lines and traditional affiliations with country. Outstations are as much about people, as they are about the place. Infrastructure and services, whilst critically important, are secondary priorities compared with retaining the connection and deep ties that Aboriginal people have with land. Many Aboriginal people living on outstations understand the sacrifices and trade offs they make in terms of expenses, service delivery and infrastructure in order to live or visit these places. In this light, outstations facilitate Aboriginal well-being: social, cultural and economic. In doing so, they return values to wider Australian society and economies. This is because outstation/homelands are places where:

- Land management activities are carried out (see Appendix D), e.g. burning of country and caring for sacred sites
- Tourism enterprises are developed (see Appendix E)
- Aboriginal people's health and mental well-being is strengthened (Utopia:: ref)
- Young Aboriginal people can escape pressures of community living (Mt Theo)
- The world market of Indigenous Arts is developed and painted
- Indigenous pastoral activities are developed (Munglawurru and Mungkarta)
- Social cohesion and community safety is facilitated, many Aboriginal people feel more safe and secure on the outstation than in larger communities
- Traditional knowledge and dreaming are passed on to young people
- Aboriginal aspirations are realised
- Aboriginal identity is formed, reformed and strengthened
- Traditional authorities are respected and given an importance

Due to the importance of these places, Aboriginal landowners are willing and able to play a role in facilitating their own development and to negotiate practical service delivery arrangements that consider the realities of limited funding budgets. One example of this is the use of royalty, rent and other discretionary money which Aboriginal people choose to spend on improving or facilitating services to their outstations (see examples in appendix A-C). Rather than setting down the outstations agenda, the NT government needs to look to partner with Aboriginal people and in doing so, enable Aboriginal people opportunity to engage in meaningful discussion on these issues.

A decade of observing and accounting the problems, the disadvantage, the marginalisation of Aboriginal people and the particular responses designed to counteract this social disparities have restricted engagement, partnerships, enterprise and positive development policies. Service provision based on filling gaps or catching up might be desirable or equitable from a national perspective, but it should be driven by an overwhelming philosophy of enhancing Aboriginal well-being through investment rather than reduction (Walker et al. 2008).

The NT Government discussion pays lip service to the importance of outstations, stating “we value the social, economic and cultural role that outstations...” In the same breath, the policy discussion paper states there will be no new houses for outstations and there may be a reduced level of service for some outstations in future. Over the past 2 weeks, the NT Government embarked on an ambitious consultation process on their discussion paper. The result was really a ‘listening tour’; there was little engagement with outstation residents on the real issues of servicing. The few outstation residents who were able to attend walked away more confused and less certain about the future. The process undertaken in this first round of consultation is acknowledgement of the lack of concern given by Governments to engage in effective consultations with Aboriginal people and to consider the complexity on the ground. CLC seeks to address some of the complex issues that require deeper considerations in policy formulations in the following section.

CLC position

2. The CLC recommends the NT Government partner and engage with outstation residents to draw on successes and practises occurring already at outstations and build the capacity of residents.

COMPLEXITY IN OUTSTATIONS

PROPOSITION A: ELIGIBILITY FOR SUPPORT

The Government has sought to address the ‘considered’ shortage of funding by defining some basic criteria of receiving funding. The criteria pays little recognition to the rights of Aboriginal people to obtain basic needs and requires a level of interpretation to be meaningfully applied. One interpretation of the overall objective of the support is that the Government intends on reducing the number of outstations, by slowly drip feeding outstations and reducing service levels, so that most are not serviced over time. The aim being to encourage people to move in larger communities or towns.

The CLC contends that such a move would have disastrous implications on social and cultural well-being of people. It would limit people’s opportunities to do something with their country and increase social problems already prominent in many communities. For most people, being on country offers a home relatively free of social stresses, substance abuse and domestic violence associated with living in larger communities and towns. Many residents also suggest that such a move would have severe consequences on their health. This is an interesting point, because it suggests that proximity from health clinic is not necessarily a precursor to better health.

Critics, including ministers (Minister Roxon), have argued that employment outcomes can only be met if people come into townships. In remote Australia, the primary industries are mining, tourism (see Appendix E), pastoral, land management (see Appendix D), art and horticulture. The employment opportunities stemming from these

industries do not rely on proximity to town. Outstation residents across remote, central Australia are engaging in these activities, negotiating their terms, initiating their own enterprise development and developing their own localised livelihood strategies. The work is frequently seasonal, temporary, and casual or part-time, which facilitates people moving back and forth from their outstation to work sites/locations.

Whether you are eligible or not for outstation funding, the residents of outstations need to be engaged in determining the criteria for their funding. As a minimum, support should be provided to occupied outstations, but funding programs should also acknowledge and consider how to support outstations that are used for cultural or ceremonial purposes and visitations for handing down cultural and traditional knowledge.

CLC position

3. The CLC recommends that as a minimum support should be provided to all occupied outstations. Funding programs should also consider how to support outstations that are used primarily for cultural purposes, including ceremonies or handing down cultural knowledge.

Sole residence

Living in remote and/or small communities entails with it considerable travel time to access services, shopping and to visit family. It is well known and documented that lives of Aboriginal people in rural and remote Australia are characterised by marked inter community mobility and travel to regional centres, which includes travel across outstations, larger communities and towns (Memmott et al., 2006).

Herein presents an issue with the application of 'sole residency'. For example, extended families in central Australia may occupy a public house or town camp house in Alice Springs, in addition to residing at an outstation. Family members may move between residencies depending on circumstances that are negotiated within the family. The mobility of Aboriginal people is multidimensional and associated with their interest in country and kin, to access services, for employment, to attend meetings, for sorry business and negotiate service delivery arrangements with their Resource Agencies/Shire.

The policy response may therefore be better aimed at addressing how to deliver services that support people's mobility rather than defining it as an inherent problem. Memmott et al. (2006) suggest that it is worthwhile considering mobility regions for service delivery and in doing so, consider the balance between local and regional provision of services.

CLC position

4. The CLC recommends that the NT Government consider a service delivery model that works on delivering services within mobility regions.

Land tenure

Outstations in the Central Land Council region are on either Aboriginal Land Trusts under Aboriginal Land Rights (Cth) Act or Community Living Areas under NT Pastoral Act. The CLC is not aware of any outstations in our region without secure land tenure.

The NT Government suggests that there are around 500 outstations that have been funded in the past. The CLC argues that there are many more places that are considered outstation or homelands by Aboriginal people in our region. Generally, these places have missed out on funding for housing or water supply. A number are equipped with caravans, tin sheds or humpies and cart their water supply or have formed relationships with nearby station owners who have equipped them with an old bore.

We are also aware of potential new outstations that may arise from negotiations for Community Living Areas under Joint Management Arrangement with Parks NT. Moreover, a CLC audit (2006: 6) found that there are more than 130 outstanding Community Living Areas (CLAs) applications. The policy paper suggests that these communities will not be eligible for funding of essential and municipal services. The CLC recommends that a better approach would be to consider new outstations on a case by case basis, rather than complete dismissal. In the case of CLAs within National Parks, there is the potential for the NT Government and NT Parks to consider a servicing agreement with residents of CLAs on the National Parks that is conducive to all partners. In the words of Minister Alison Anderson (2008):

Joint management and title for Traditional Owners will be a catalyst to get people back on country, encourage the transfer of knowledge to the young, and energise local economies.

As Minister Anderson correctly accounts, there are also synergies with employment in ranger programs or joint management roles through Aboriginal landowners living within the park.

The issue of land tenure also needs considering when discussing a form of private home ownership or public housing/leasing models. Aboriginal Land Trusts are communal ownership which recognises the rights and responsibilities of traditional landowners. Service models or options which may alter the current application of traditional land rights are viewed with scepticism by many Aboriginal landowners.

CLC position

5. The CLC recommends that funding and support for new outstations should be considered on a case by case basis.

6. The CLC recommends that new CLAs on National Parks could be serviced through an agreement with the residents, NT Government and NT Parks that is sustainable, equitable and conducive for all partners.

7. The CLC recommends that any proposals for private ownership utilise existing leasing arrangements provided for in the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

8. The CLC recommends that the NT Government amend the legislative framework providing for CLAs to allow for a leasing model similar to the Land Rights Act.

Adequate water supply

Adequate water supplies need to be defined through addressing quality and quantity issues. Outstations have consistently missed out on good quality water supply systems because they do not fall under the responsibilities of the Power and Water Corporation and because of the limited capacity of Resource Agencies to deal with issues. Water supplies in all communities in the NT should be subject to similar measures.

The Power and Water Corporation in some outstations has provided community water supply through bulk from a community boundary or bore site with one communal meter, the responsibility resides with Resource Agency and Shires. Whilst many services agencies have attempted to maintain water supply quantity, issues of quality are not well incorporated into management plans. Resource Agencies are constantly providing reactionary services to fixing up exposed pipes, backflow issues, substandard reticulation and poor flow rates. Little acknowledgement is given within management plans to build capacity of community members to manage risk to their supplies, despite willingness and skills in many outstation residents (Grey-Gardner 2008).

CLC position

9. The CLC recommends that water supplies in all communities in NT should be subject to similar measures and guidelines.

10. The CLC recommends that investment and resources be provided to developing water management plans in outstations that build the capacity of outstation residents.

Adequate access

Of all the criteria presented in the paper, this is perhaps the most ambiguous. Does adequate access imply a well serviced road? Does adequate access equate to public transport access? Does adequate access mean the outstation has access to education, health and other services? Does adequate access mean residents have access all year round despite seasonality or weather conditions? Does adequate access mean that there is reliable telecommunications available to all outstation residents? Perhaps adequate access means all these things, but if this is the case then the following needs consideration:

- Who is responsible for delivering **road services**? There is still very little clarity over responsibilities between delivering road services between Shires and NT Government. Aboriginal people often apply coping strategies to dealing with poor road bases, such as getting neighbouring pastoral station managers to grade their roads.
- **Public Transport** is not available for most outstations, even those outstations that are relatively close to large communities or service centres. Some outstations have arranged school bus services to transport children to school (e.g. Irrelirre), whereas others have missed out. There is no commitment by NT DEET to deliver bus services to Aboriginal outstations despite that fact that free bus services are provided to rural areas of Alice Springs (Ilparpa) and Darwin.
- The issue of access to **education** (such as bus services) needs further consideration. Many outstations have strategies for dealing with getting children to education services, including decentralised school services, Homeland Learning Centres and School of the air services. Given the appalling school attendance rates of schools in larger communities, being close to a school is not necessary the only conducive factor for receiving an education. Homelands Schools or Small Remote School often have better attendance rates than larger schools.
- Decentralised **health** services, such as Utopia Health Service, offer a unique and alternative service delivery method for outstation residents. Significantly, the Utopia outstation model has proved that there significant benefits to health through living on outstations (see....)
- In small and remote communities **telecommunication services** are unavailable or inadequate. Many communities do not have access to a basic telephone service. The Australian Government, through the community phone project, is working to address the problem but progress is slow and disrupted by government relationships with services providers. Almost all outstations in Central Australia do not have broadband access and are unlikely to be covered in National Broadband Network.
- **Weather conditions and seasonality** influence the occupation of outstations. In top end outstations, residents frequently leave their outstations in the wet season because the community may be cut off at the road. In central Australia, occupation can also be determined by weather conditions but this is generally not seasonally based. Flood, drought or severe storms result in people leaving outstations for a period of time.

Perhaps just as important in considering access, is the need to clarify the acceptable distance an outstation can be from a major service centre or its Resource Agency to obtain effective service and maintenance levels. Is it reasonable to assume that outstation can be adequately serviced if it is 200km from its Resource Centre or major service centre? In the same light, not all outstations are remote. The Iwupataka Land Trust, west of Alice Springs, is home to 15-20 different family outstations. All of the outstations in this land trust are within 15-40 kilometres from Alice Springs. They have main water and electricity supply, but they are not serviced by a school bus, except for those resident's whose children attend Yiprinya Primary School. Deciding on the distance from service centres or a hub needs to account for contextual situations of remote area. The CLC recommends that factors of remoteness will help to determine the funding base in delivering services.

CLC position

11. The CLC recommends the NT Government look towards clarifying the acceptable distances that outstations can be from various services, major service centres and service agencies in determining service levels.
12. The CLC recommends that factors of remoteness be used to determine funding levels to various outstations.

Relationship with Resource Centre or Shire

This criterion suggests that an imperative to receiving funding for outstations relies on a relationship with Resource Centre or Shire – good, bad or indifferent. Who determines the basis of the relationship? This criterion may mean that those communities which have fallen through the gap for service delivery previously or have estranged themselves from Resource Centres because of lack of services/poor service delivery may not receive any funds under the new policy arrangements.

Significantly, the relationship with service providers has become a critical precursor for the delivery of services without any effective evaluation methods or check and balances on service delivery agencies. Moreover, resource centres and previous Councils funded to provide services have operated in an environment that has no prescribed service levels or standards. This environment may have created flexibility to attend to outstations residents needs, but in many cases it has also created a haphazard and messy service environment and caused confusion between residents and the service providers. This quote from an Iwupataka Land Trust (personal communication) resident exemplifies the confusion:

We don't really understand all the services we are suppose to receive and how much funding goes to this little place. My husband rings up when something is broken, like the pipes or tap and we just wait. Sometimes they come straight away to fix it and other problems have never been fixed. We never signed an agreement with Resource Centre but we pay them money. We know they get

funding for our place, but it really hard for us living out here to understand the system and whether we are getting a good service or not.

In the past, this has meant that the service delivery arrangements are often conditional on having a good relationship with resource agency, knowing when to ask for services and what to expect from resource agency. Further, the better off communities are frequently those where service is easy to provide. The further away and more difficult to reach outstations have in the past tended to miss out. As one resident from Munglawarra outstation argues (personal comm.):

We always miss out on services from Burumana. They visit the ones closer to town more regularly. We don't even know what they are supposed to provide for us. We'd like to see them out here more and talking with people about services and what they do.

This policy needs to develop a practise that ensures people on the ground and those working with Resource Agency and Shires are fully aware of commitments, service arrangements and levels on an outstation by outstation basis.

Since local government reform, the Shires have taken responsibility for delivering services to outstations previously under Community Government Council. The reform has caused considerable disruption in service delivery to many outstations. During a visit to an outstation in McDonnell Shires residents (personal communication) complained:

The Shire has never even come out to this place. We haven't seen one employee. They don't sit down with us and go through what they will do and how they will provide it. We lost our CDEP under intervention last year. We had CDEP workers out here. Now CDEP has come back, but under the Shire we don't get any CDEP workers out here. We don't know why?

No doubt, the Shire will focus on delivery of local government services to outstations in the future. However, will Shires continue to support outstations with CDEP places and CDEP materials? Moreover, the same outstation residents spoke of receiving help from the previous Tapatjaka Community Council with their tourism enterprise developments. Will shires help outstation to negotiate funding with Government Agency, apply for ABA funds or other support/partnership services?

CLC position

13. The CLC recommends that the NT Government policy needs to maximise transparency and accountability by ensuring that outstation residents understand the service arrangements, commitments and levels applying to their outstation.

PROPOSITION B: DEFINING OUTSTATIONS

Importantly, since the homeland movement was initiated, there have been major misconceptions about what a homeland/outstation is and what it can provide. These misconceptions have in part helped to foster the candid and pointed statements made on outstations viability. The viability argument is not sufficient and needs to be replaced with meaningful dialogue on outstation service levels (see below). The issue of definition appears to have arisen in the discussion as a way of defining who is funded and who is not funded. Outstations vary in population size, living arrangements and service delivery arrangements, among a range of other things.

For example, if we consider the communities of Wutungurra (Epenarra) and Mt Eaglebeak we can identify a number of contrasting features. Epenarra is a community that supports 200-250 people. It has approximately 20 houses, a school, store and a one nurse health clinic. It is situated on Epenarra station on a Community Living Area. Mt Eaglebeak in comparison is a small family outstation, permanently occupied by at least 5-12 residents and is situated on Aboriginal Land Trust. It has 3 houses, no clinic and no school. Both settlements are funded under government funding allocations and classified as outstations. That is, the Resource Agencies receive around \$2400 per house for essential and municipal services. Would a definition help to sort out funding disparities between these two places? Will the definition help to give meaning to service levels and types of services?

Unfortunately, a definition would do little to resolve the complexities and diversity within outstations. Such complexity and diversity within the current communities listed as outstations needs much more than a couple of lines of definition. CLC recommends that use of a typology to help with reclassifying communities. Work by Desert Knowledge CRC (Newman et al. 2008) and Memmott and Moran (2001) might assist in helping to shape a useful typology. As a minimum consideration on population, service availability, occupation, along with other factors should be used in determining the typology. The important next step of this work is validating such typology with community residents and to look at how the typology might help to assist in formulating service level recommendations.

CLC position

14. The CLC recommends that the NT Government consider the use of community/settlement typology.

PROPOSITION C: HUB AND SPOKE MODEL

Generally, the management of essential and municipal services at outstations in the NT has been characterised by technical approaches where knowledge, decision-making

processes and responsibilities are held by organisations and agencies outside of the outstation. Grey-Gardner (2008) showed that this conventional approach has been a disincentive to active involvement of residents in managing hazards and risks associated with these services. This is despite in many cases the presence of knowledge, skills and capacity in the outstation residents. Whilst, the hub and spoke service delivery model proposed by the NT Government is not fully explained, CLC argues that adoption of this model by NT Government continues to ignore the capacity and resourcefulness of outstation residents. Localised capacity building and development needs to be directed towards outstation members. There are clearly levels of capacities and capabilities at the local level that can deal with risks or hazards associated services, an outstation policy needs to look towards building on this capacity particularly if it intends on investigating private ownership and other initiatives.

There is very little that is new in the delivery of hub and spoke models for outstation services, as Hunt and Smith have described (2006: 87). Many existing Outstation Resource Agencies have built a service delivery model upon the principles of hub and spoke. However, the models remain a simplistic representation of function of Outstation Resource Agencies. There are complexities in each Resource Agency, and as necessary Resource Agencies have centralised and decentralised services according to local skill base and capacity. If a hub and spoke model is to provide a system for classifying service delivery systems then it is necessary to identify the communities/locations considered 'hubs' and those considered 'spokes'. Clearly, if such a model is endorsed in the outstation policy, an evidence base needs to be collected that defines the acceptable distance that an outstation (spokes) can be from their 'hub' community and still receive necessary essential services and provisions.

Moreover, it will remain necessary to address the capacity and level of resource required at hub level to support and resource the spokes. What decision making will be decentralised to spokes and what will be maintained at the hub? The issues of capacity and decision making are inherent problems in the current Resource Agency/Shire models and service delivery systems. In the past, this coupled with insufficient resources provided to Resource Agencies and previous Community Councils has created a backlog of infrastructure and maintenance problems for small communities. Governments have underspent on small, remote communities for years.

An extension to the model might be to consider the delivery of services with mobility regions. Memmott et al. (2006) discussed the concept of mobility regions, in which Aboriginal people moved within defined regions as a basis for maintaining kin relationships, connection to culture and access to services. The CLC recommends a way of planning hub and spoke models that the NT Government consider is mobility regions. In considering mobility regions, the service delivery systems could accommodate centralisation and decentralisation of services through negotiation with residents. While some services may only be sustainable if they are operated from a regional centre there may be others, or elements of services, that could be decentralised, or that will be most effective if they remain decentralised. There is a need to balance the local provision of services to outlying communities and rationalizing the appropriate aspects of service provision in the regional centre.

CLC position

15. The CLC recommends that NT Government consider the use of mobility regions in the planning of hub and spoke service delivery model.

PROPOSITION D: OUTSTATION SERVICE LEVELS

The notion of viability testing has been floated in various political discussions. The CLC believes that such a notion is not particularly helpful for Governments or communities, alike. A more workable method is the engagement of outstation residents and Government in a realistic discussion of the trade-offs between remoteness and self-reliance in determining service levels. Government needs to facilitate a process of proper community planning based on realistic support levels with outstation/homeland residents. At the same time, communities should acknowledge the trade offs associated with remoteness. Such discussion and work needs to build self-reliance and capacity of Aboriginal people and at the same time, assure communities that risks beyond resident's capacity will not go ignored by Governments and service agencies.

Needs based service delivery is therefore a process of informed decision making and risk management. In such a case, it is not about brokering the cheapest deal for Government nor is about developing unrealistic wish lists in communities. It is about considering the balances between service levels and negotiating a realistic and sustainable investment for these services. If such a process was initiated and followed through, than perhaps the NT Government's position "that there be sufficient resources to meet the complex service demands" might be reconsidered.

Moreover, it is difficult to understand the integrity of the NT Government's stance, given their very limited analysis of funding arrangements that outstation service agencies draw on to deliver services. The discussion paper does not analyse nor discuss all the funding available to outstations, how these overlap and any considerations of duplication. The NT Government may only have received \$20 million directly for outstations municipal and essential services, but what about their own spending? Or the other buckets of money that over years contributed to outstation services? For example: the Commonwealth Grants Commission funding (as described above) is provided per capita basis to support local government service delivery; the Aboriginal Benefits Account (ABA) over the past decade supported numerous outstation projects with money for essential service infrastructure to enterprise development; finally, Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) has been a cornerstone the actual delivery of most municipal and essential services to outstations by using locally based employees. What will happen after 3 years of \$20 million? The outstation policy needs to be long term and draw together the wide ranging funding avenues if it is to have an impact on sustainable service delivery outcomes.

The discussion paper notes that \$20m will be provided by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs each year for three years for outstation services. However, the NT Government has not offered any of its own money for outstations despite Census estimates of 10,000 Territory outstation residents and Commonwealth Grants Commission allocations which take account of both outstation residents and their remoteness in calculating amounts. This position is not acceptable and we refer to our submission to the Inquiry into Government Expenditure on Indigenous Affairs and Social Services in the Northern Territory which highlights the underfunding of remote populations. The NT Government needs to make a contribution and there needs to be proper security of funding support into the future.

Greater analysis of the funding story needs to be drawn out so that needs based service delivery is co-ordinated and effectively established. The area of funding is complex. CLC provides examples within the appendices (A, B, C) that show the agency of Aboriginal people in building and maintaining their own outstations with use of royalty and rent money.

CLC position

16. The CLC recommends the NT Government needs to facilitate a proper process of community planning based on realistic support levels.

17. The CLC recommends that the NT Government needs to engage Aboriginal people on outstations in ways that builds their capacity and self-reliance.

18. The CLC recommends the use of a needs based service delivery process which gives outstation residents an opportunity to participate in informed decision-making and risk management on their land.

19. The CLC recommends the NT Government contribute its own funds towards outstation services, consistent with Commonwealth Grants Commission allocations which take account of outstation residents.

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APPENDIX A

GRANITE MINES AFFECTED AREAS CORPORATION (GMAAAC) FUNDING FOR LAJAMANU OUTSTATIONS 2009

GMAAAC is an Aboriginal corporation which handles affected areas money that comes through the ABA and is linked to royalties paid by the Newmont Mines. The Federal Government pays an amount to the ABA that is equivalent to the royalties paid to the Northern Territory Government by the Newmont Granites mine. The affected areas include seven Warlpiri communities in the Tanami region.

\$204,496.00 will be provided to Wulain Outstation Resource Centre to support services to Lajamanu outstation. In many cases, the money is providing for the provisioning of essential service delivery, including water and power supply.

Outstation	Project	Total Cost
Talbot Well	New water tank New generator Replace door	43 000
Warrayarna	New water tank New shed	33 600
Mirridi	New water tank Replace door Replace batteries on solar pump Grade road to outstation	31 000
Pinja	New pipes and fittings Replace gate to generator shed Grade road to outstation	24 500
Duck Ponds	Replace door New header tank Grade access road	20000
Granites	New generator Lockable shed	18 896

APPENDIX B

RAILWAY COMPENSATION

Communities affected by the construction of the railway line from Alice Springs to Darwin were compensated. The CLC provided support in project support and management to the communities and outstations in developing and implementing their project ideas.

Outstation	Project	Total Cost
Adelaide Bore	Water supply infrastructure Plumbing Electrical fittings	30 000
Black Tank	Power upgrade Shed	60 354
Burt Creek	Equip bore and supply pipeline Install new fence around solar pump	64 628
Bluebush	Loading ramp Cattle yard panels	22680
Ellerwerre	Water supply infrastructure including fixing bore and windmill	30 000
Harry Creek West	Shed	47 000
Harry Creek East	Shed	47 000
Gillen Bore	Power upgrade	13 354
Greenwood	House upgrade Upgrade solar bore	21 599
Karlinjarrangi	Upgrade generator Install austar dish Fence community	4864
Karliwampa	Community fence	4664
Karlumpurlpa	Upgrade shed Bore repairs Solar panel repairs 2 poly tanks installed Power upgrade	26 378
Kumunu	Equip solar bore Shipping container	20 993
Mungkarta	Shed	30 000
Mungalawurru	Dam and rubbish pit Fence	28 985
Ngalyipipanta	Solar pump Shed	8728
Ngappakuwinpa	Shed Fencing	33 765

Nguyarramini	Fencing Housing upgrades	20289
Snake Well	Telstra extension network fee Fence around excision	11 540
Wakurlpu	Water tanks TV reception Solar street lights	17 493
16 Mile	Telstra extension network fee	1540

APPENDIX C

ULURU KATA TJUTA NATIONAL PARK RENT MONEY PROJECTS IN OUTSTATIONS 2006-07, 2007-08

Traditional landowners of Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park contribute half of the rent money received from park visitors to community development projects. The CLC works to support landowners to make decisions on community projects. The table below provides examples of some of this money which has been spent on outstation projects.

Outstation	Project	Total Cost
Kwale Kwale	Workshop for art room, church meeting space, band room and toilet block Training.	128 120
Ukaka	Improve and upgrade power supply Set up and fit out laundry and workshop Security fences	146 272
Upanyali	Power supply Art room School room Workshop/garage	131 770
Umbeara	Road grading Water supply Security fencing/gates.	68 200
Young's Well	Upgrade power supply Retro-fit art room	67 000
Yunyarinyi	Establishment of food co-op Staff training	145 454

APPENDIX D: EXAMPLES OF LAND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES ON OUTSTATIONS

Camel proof fencing around a waterhole in Petermann Ranges

Strategic fuel reduction burning undertaken to reduce wildfire threats to biodiversity hot spots

Threatened species monitoring

Natural Heritage Trust project to implement a recovery plan for endangered lizard, Slater's Skink (*Egerni slateri*), in collaboration with NT Parks and Wildlife

Survey of the Marsupial Mole (*Notoryctes Typhlops*) in the Ntaria region

Survey of feral animals, including pigs, foxes and horses

Weed treatment for Parkinsonia and Rubber Bush infestations at various sites in NT

Monitoring and mechanical control of prickly pear infestations at various sites in NT

Development of Regional Fire Management Plans

APPENDIX E: OUTSTATIONS PURSUING TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN CLC REGION

The CLC supports landowners to take advantage of commercial tourism opportunities on Aboriginal land and to develop long-term sustainable Aboriginal tourism enterprises. The CLC has sought to support Aboriginal people develop their infrastructure, business plans and capacities to undertake tourism activities. Below is a table of outstation that CLC are currently working with on tourism activities.

Outstation	Activity	Joint Venture
Lilla	Campground + cultural tours	Draft with Hinterland Tours
Akanta	Akanta campground	
Ulpanyali	Kings Canyon interpretive rim walk	
Roddna	Campground + cultural tours	
Town Bore	Campground + tours	
Thakeperte	Campgrounds + tours	Trek Larapinta and Discovery EcoTours – negotiations pending
Harry Creek	Accommodation Bed and Breakfast, Campground	
Jay Creek	Eco-Caravan park	Trek Larapinta - negotiations pending