2011 Report on the Central Land Council Community Development Program

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Executive Summary

The Central Land Council Community Development Unit (CDU) partners with Aboriginal people to enable them to both maintain Aboriginal identity, language and culture and connection to country and strengthen their capacity to participate in mainstream Australia and the modern economy, by improving health, education and employment outcomes.

Utilising Aboriginal resources, the CDU works with Aboriginal people across many communities through five projects: the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust Project (WETT), the Tanami Dialysis Project, the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Rent Money Project (URM), the Granites Mine Affected Areas Aboriginal Corporation Project (GMAAAC) and the Northern Territory Parks Rent Money Project (NT Parks). This report outlines the progress of this work in 2011.

Monitoring in 2011 identified increased Aboriginal ownership of and engagement with projects, particularly those which have been operating longer, such as projects funded through WETT. More information is going back to communities about project outcomes, which has reinforced their sense of control. In this monitoring period, particular attention was given to GMAAAC-funded initiatives, in which the understanding of Aboriginal people about the project and their sense of ownership and control of decision-making processes was shown to be improving and increasing.

Community monitoring of the projects suggests that people find working with CDU through a community development process preferable to their engagement with some other agencies and organisations.

Aboriginal people are now reporting that they can identify the benefits available to them through the projects. Again, this is particularly so for well-established projects, such as those funded through GMAAAC, WETT and URM. At the same time, when people are distracted by other issues, either internal community concerns or external pressures and practices of other organisations, these can lessen the positive value the CDU projects bring. In addition, while Aboriginal people value the benefits from the projects, some external stakeholders and organisations do not understand or share their views.

The monitoring of the projects has increased, and this includes increased reporting from partner organisations. There is now an opportunity to develop the monitoring system further. Suggestions include: more regular reporting within particular projects; increasing the involvement of Aboriginal communities in data analysis and data collection; some focused independent evaluations; and more targeted attention to the way community development approaches are supporting the capacity development of Aboriginal people.

More generally, there are some examples of effective sharing of lessons learnt with government and other organisations over the past 12 months. This particularly includes interaction with FaHCSIA in Canberra and some recently produced articles that reference the CDU work.
**Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABA</td>
<td>Aboriginals Benefit Account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAT</td>
<td>Centre for Appropriate Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDS</td>
<td>Central Desert Shire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDU</td>
<td>Community Development Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLC</td>
<td>Central Land Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEEWR</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECCD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FaHCSIA</td>
<td>Department of Families, Housing, Community Service and Indigenous Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMAAAC</td>
<td>Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTDET</td>
<td>Northern Territory Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTER</td>
<td>Northern Territory Emergency Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBS</td>
<td>Special Broadcasting Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKTNP</td>
<td>Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WETT</td>
<td>Warlpiri Education and Training Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WETT AC</td>
<td>Warlpiri Education and Training Trust Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPKJ</td>
<td>Warlpiri-patu-kurlangu Jaru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WVA</td>
<td>World Vision Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WYDAC</td>
<td>Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction
The Central Land Council (CLC), a statutory authority set up under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory) 1976, is an Aboriginal organisation governed by a council of 90 elected Aboriginal members. The CLC has been operating more than 30 years, supporting Aboriginal people to achieve recognition of land and native title rights. The CLC also supports Aboriginal people to manage land and to negotiate agreements with others seeking to use their land. These agreements include payment of rent and royalties to traditional owners.

In 2005 the CLC created the Community Development Unit (CDU) in order to implement community development projects involving Aboriginal rent and royalties from land use agreements and affected area payments. The CDU utilises the CLC Community Development Framework, which articulates community development goals, principles and processes for the CLC.

The overall intention of the CLC’s community development approach is to partner with Aboriginal people in processes that enable them to set and achieve their dual objectives of:

- maintaining Aboriginal identity, language, culture and connection to country; and,
- strengthening their capacity to participate in mainstream Australia and in the modern economy by improving health, education and employment outcomes.

This report outlines the monitoring and assessment of progress for the work of the CDU with Aboriginal communities in 2011. It follows reports that examined and reported on outcomes and progress of the CDU-supported work in 2009 and 2010.

Context and CLC approach
In the report for 2010, detailed examination of the context and the approach developed by the CDU for the CLC was outlined. This discussion is attached at Annex One for information. In summary, this overview concluded that improvements in the wellbeing of people in remote Aboriginal communities will only be achieved through partnerships with those communities based on mutual respect. The CLC community development approach, which is characterised by a focus on community ownership, Aboriginal control, trust-based relationships, respect for local values and processes and an understanding of cultural differences, was developed as a process for this work with Aboriginal communities.

Drawing upon the resources provided by Aboriginal communities themselves – that is, through projects undertaken with royalty, rent and affected area money and with Aboriginal leadership and governance arrangements – the CDU works through various projects to support Aboriginal people. The overarching goal of the work is for Aboriginal people to be strong and resilient and able to live well in both the Aboriginal world and mainstream Australian society.

There are four intermediate objectives of the work. These are to:

1. Maximise opportunities for Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control, particularly in relation to the management of resources that belong to them.
2. Generate service outcomes that benefit Aboriginal people and are valued by them, including social, cultural and economic outcomes.
3. Build an evidence base for the CLC’s community development approach and its contribution to increasing Aboriginal capabilities.
4. Share lessons learned with other government and non-government agencies.

The CDU work is currently implemented through five projects, each with programs and sub-projects. The various projects have different management arrangements, decision-making models and implementation processes. However, all are characterised by the nature of the funding, which comes from Aboriginal people’s own money, and the fact that they focus on achieving outcomes sought by Aboriginal people. In addition, all the projects are governed by Aboriginal decision-making bodies. The projects and various sub-projects include the following:

- The Warlpiri Education and Training Trust Project (WETT)
  - Early Childhood Care and Development Program
  - Youth and Media Program
  - Language and Culture Support
  - Secondary School Support Program
  - Learning Community Centre Program
- The Tanami Dialysis Project
- The Uluru-Kata Tjuta Rent Money Project (URM)
- The Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation Project (GMAAAC)
- The Northern Territory Parks Rent Money Project (NT Parks)

The location of the projects is shown on the map on the following page. The objectives of each project are noted in the detailed findings available in this report.
Locations of 2011 CLC Community Development Projects

- Uluru Rent Money Community Development Project; PIYULTJARA
- Warrpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT)
- Tanami Dialysis Support Service Project
- Granites Mine Affected Areas Community Development Project
- NT Parks Rent Money Community Development Project
2. Monitoring focus for 2011

The monitoring plan for 2011 is attached at Annex Two. This plan was revised following experience in 2009 and in 2010. Data collection includes:

- monitoring of individual project areas and sub-projects;
- independent interviews within communities to explore the particular experience of people related to the CDU-supported projects and suggestions for improvement (see Annex Three for details of numbers of interviews in each location);
- interviews with other service providers in those communities to contrast and widen the perspective on the relevance and impact of the project work; and,
- reporting by the CDU staff, including reflections on outcomes and some collection of additional information from project manager reports and other research.

In 2011 particular attention was given to monitoring of projects supported through GMAAAC looking to understand what benefits Aboriginal people have identified from these projects and how well they are able to understand the underlying GMAAAC decision-making processes. Independent monitoring was undertaken in this area, together with increased focus on project reporting and monitoring. A substantial range of good quality information was made available.

Some additional attention was also given to the WETT programs. The intention was to explore, with the Advisory Committee and the traditional owners, a more long-term focus for the desired outcomes and processes funded through WETT. Some independent monitoring was undertaken in this area, but less than anticipated. However, additional information was available through project reporting, which usefully builds upon previous years’ monitoring to highlight some of the critical areas in the work funded through this project.

This range of reporting was synthesised and analysed by the author, an independent monitoring and evaluation specialist with expertise in community development. The approach undertaken was to triangulate the data, looking for substantive overlap between the different sources of data. This report presents detailed findings and analysis of those findings.
3. Summary of findings

The findings for the monitoring from 2011 can be summarised under each of the four intermediate objectives of the CDU work.

1. Maximise opportunities for Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control, particularly in relation to the management of resources that belonged to them.

The detailed findings from 2011 suggest that there is considerable ongoing achievement against this objective. While Aboriginal engagement and ownership is seen most strongly in the projects that have been operating for the longer time, such as those projects funded through WETT, these elements are emerging and improving in other project areas. In particular for this report, attention was given to projects funded through GMAAAC, in which Aboriginal understanding and sense of ownership and control of decision-making processes certainly seem to have been improving and growing over the last two years.

In the more recent projects, such as NT Parks, while people are focused on their control of resources, they did not necessarily identify that the community development process had maximised this control for them. It will be important to monitor changes in these attitudes as the project starts to engage in project implementation based upon a community development approach.

There is evidence from community consultation and project reports that when information has been provided back to communities about the outcomes of specific projects it has reinforced their sense of control and the interest in decision-making processes.

A presentation was made by the CDU to the full CLC Council in November, providing an update on the work of the Community Development Unit. Generally this was well-received, and the Council members expressed the view that the community development process was facilitating people to manage their resources well. This was mirrored in the responses from communities. As the detailed project findings below show, people in many locations readily compare their experience of working with CDU through a community development process with the approach of other agencies and organisations. People are able to identify the greater control they have over resources in CDU-facilitated processes. On the other hand, people feel disempowered by some other processes, and this sense of disempowerment in turn undermines and conflicts with their experience of the CLC’s community development approach.
It is the intention of CDU to build the capacity of Aboriginal people to direct projects and therefore to strengthen their capacities to direct their wider development. These signs of increased engagement, ownership and sense of control are good indications that such capacity development is underway. Some more attention to understanding the connections between these changes and the capacities and capabilities to determine Aboriginal people’s development would be useful in future monitoring.

**What we know**

- Strengthening the organisational capacity of both Indigenous and government organisations is critical to raising the health, wellbeing and prosperity of Indigenous Australian communities.
- Improving the governance processes of Indigenous organisations is likely to require strengthening of Indigenous and government organisational values, goals, structures and arrangements that influence employees’ behaviour and wellbeing.
- Involvement of Indigenous people in decision-making about their own development is critical.

**What works**

- Community ownership of governance improvement with organisational change led by Indigenous people using existing community capacity.
- Long-term partnerships between government and Indigenous people, with a focus on strengthening capacity.
- Collaborative developmental approaches between Indigenous people and government that aim to strengthen existing capacity through long-term partnering.
- Approaches tailored to each situation that take into account the complexities of Indigenous governance.
- Capacity-strengthening programs with clarity of purpose; that is, with a clear notion of what type of capacity is being strengthened and for whom, and how the effectiveness of the program will be measured.
- Building trust and respect between government agencies and Indigenous communities.

2. **Generate service outcomes that benefit Aboriginal people and are valued by them, including social, cultural and economic outcomes.**

There is very strong reporting coming from all projects that people are able to identify the benefits available to them. In particular, for the projects in which there have been long-standing processes of engagement with the community, such as those funded through WETT, URM and GMAAAC people are able to identify the nature of the benefit and how it is of value to them. There is minimal reporting about Aboriginal views about the dialysis project for 2011. However, it is noted that the more detailed examination of this project in 2010 suggests a similar appreciation of benefit.

Once again, for the most recent projects, such as NT Parks, there are mixed views on the benefits from Aboriginal people. This is unsurprising, given no activities had been implemented in this project by the end of 2011.

The monitoring suggests that there are two other issues that need to be considered under this objective. These are similar to those observed in 2010. They include the issue of other concerns and influences that overwhelm the value of the benefit for people in different communities. These other issues can be internal, such as intercommunity fighting or sorry business. They can also come externally, through the attitudes and practices of other organisations or, more likely, the failure by other organisations to act, leaving communities feeling frustrated and stressed by the lack of services.

The second issue continues to be the different value placed on activities and outcomes by Aboriginal people from that valued by others. While this difference was less pronounced in the monitoring this year, some external stakeholders continued to express views that suggest they fail to understand why Aboriginal people value particular cultural and family-related activities, and they do not grasp the differences in world-view that operate in the communities where they work. These failures create a gap between the approach and long-term intention of CDU work and that of some other major service providers in these Aboriginal communities.

3. **Build an evidence base for the CLC’s community development approach and the value it has the contributing to Aboriginal capabilities.**

A significant achievement in 2011 has been the increased monitoring output of CDU and of the partners in most projects. It appears that monitoring is now becoming an established part of the project management system. CDU staff provide regular reports, which include information about activities through to information about outcomes and relevant processes. Many partners now appear to be producing timely reporting that conforms to the report template developed for the monitoring system.

There continues to be work undertaken with various partners to improve the quality of the reporting. For some partners such as Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation (WYDAC—formerly referred to as Mt Theo), more detailed reporting and insight is now becoming available. However, for some others, including apparently well-resourced partners such as Government Shires, the reporting remains meagre and/or non-existent.

It now appears timely to develop the system further. There are four areas that could be considered for further development. The first of these is for the monitoring system to be more integrated with ongoing CDU project management, so that the reporting, synthesis, analysis and feedback of information happens more often than annually. It might be possible now, with additional resources,
to have six-month or three-month short reports available to the individual project areas for CLC and communities. This would need additional resources, but would see the monitoring for each of the projects more developed to the particular needs of that project.

The second area for development would be to increase the involvement of the various Aboriginal communities in analysis of the data and even in data collection. Within the current monitoring system, people are consulted, and their views form an important part of the monitoring. However, experience in working with remote populations in countries such as PNG, East Timor, Vanuatu and elsewhere indicates that it is possible for community people to undertake the task of collecting and making sense of data themselves. This strategy could potentially be used in some of the project areas. For example, the WETT Advisory Committee (as it has now been redeveloped) could be well-placed to become the group responsible for analysis of data and for suggestions and direction about how data should be collected within the various communities. Likewise, the GMAAAC Community Committees may now be better able to identify the questions they would like to see explored in their communities in order for them to make the best decisions about future resource allocation. It may be timely for the NT Parks project to invite participating communities to identify what would be important to them as outcomes or benefits and then to specifically monitor those areas as part of engaging them in a community development process.

The third area that requires more attention through monitoring and potentially evaluation is a better understanding of the way the community development approach supports and intersects with the capacity development of Aboriginal people. As outlined through the detailed principles of the CDU community development approach, capacity development is an essential part of this approach. However, it has been difficult to identify the particular elements of this capacity development work and distinguish it from existing capacities within regional communities. Monitoring to more particularly:

- understand Aboriginal capacity and capability and how the community development approach does or does not enhance this;
- further investigate what capacities Aboriginal people want to develop and what value Aboriginal people place on the capacity development focus of the CDU

would once again add to the evidence of the value of this approach for external stakeholders.

Finally, it seems timely to consider development of some focused independent evaluations. This would serve the purpose of increasing the learning and information for CDU, partner organisations and Aboriginal communities. Evaluations are an opportunity to test underlying assumptions and to stand aside from the regular monitoring of the project against its objectives to look at the overall value of the project and the community development approach. For example, it would certainly be timely to look at evaluation within some of the WYDAC work and examine the difference this work is making in communities over the long term. The work with World Vision Australia around early childhood development could lend itself to some detailed case study evaluations to track outcomes for children and families. The projects funded through Uluru rent money have now become a basis for wider community development through various inputs, and an evaluation of the particular value of the community development process in these situations, as stimulus to wider development or not, could provide some very useful learning.
In addition to providing services, indigenous organisations are often a form of local level governance and can play important roles in developing social capital. To this end, the NIRA [National Indigenous Reform Agreement] also identifies capacity development as contributing to outcomes under the building blocks of ‘governance and leadership’ and ‘economic participation’. Accordingly, developing the capacity of organisations to deliver programs and services is seen as important as both a means of achieving better outcomes, by facilitating effective service delivery, and as a policy outcome in itself.

International development experience suggests that the most successful capacity development approaches (are) systematic with a long-term outlook, flexible and suited to the circumstances or context, and address capacity at multiple levels.


4. Share lessons learned with other government and non-government agencies

There have been some examples of very effective sharing of lessons in the past 12 months. CDU staff, together with a representative from the WETT Advisory Committee, made presentations in Canberra at the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Indigenous Development Workshop and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Service and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). A presentation was also given in Alice Springs to community-based Government Business Managers employed by FaHCSIA. Significantly it appears that the Canberra presentations were more effective in gaining interest and support from FaHCSIA than relationships and ongoing negotiations at the Territory level. As a result of this and further lobbying with Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE), funding was extended for BIITE to develop and implement a WETT-initiated regional Learning Community Centre Program in partnership with CLC.

In addition to this, the CLC Community Development Framework was drawn on by the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services (2011). His report describes the need for good-quality community development approaches, drawing heavily on and referencing the CLC Community Development Framework.

Finally, a recent paper produced by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare together with the Australian Institute of Family Studies, reviews the process of strengthening organisational capacity of indigenous organisations (Tsey, K. et al 2012). The paper reviews what works and what does not
work and identifies the CLC community development approach as one of the few highly effective processes.

These various identifications of the value of the CLC community development approach are significant in themselves. They are also highly timely, given the recent Auditor General audit report on capacity development for indigenous service delivery, which recommends strongly that Australia government departments, including FaHCSIA, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA), work more effectively to develop capacity in indigenous organisations, taking a long-term and more supportive approach (Australian National Audit Officer (2011-12). There is clearly opportunity for the CLC to more actively champion and advocate its approach, given the apparent absence of understanding and experience around community development and capacity development in government departments.

Further development of the monitoring and evaluation system will provide additional material for lessons learned and communication with other government and non-government agencies, both local and national. As noted above, with some of the projects now moving to looking for long-term sustained funding, this sort of positioning and evidence-based communication of the CDU approach is timely and will be increasingly required to support the debates and counter the short-term and less informed views of some of the stakeholders.

![Photo: WYDAC WETT Youth and Media Program provides training to young Warlpiri in video-making - photo courtesy WYDAC.](image)
4. Detailed project findings

4.1 The Granites Mine Affected Areas Aboriginal Corporation Project (GMAAAC)

The purpose of GMAAAC is community benefit and development across nine communities through: helping with housing, health, education, employment and essential services; helping with employment and training; and promoting Aboriginal self-management.

There was particular emphasis given to monitoring of the GMAAAC project in 2011. The management of this project has been developing during the last three years to try to ensure better understanding and engagement by Aboriginal people in the community development process. Two years ago it was noted that a considerable amount of money was spent on vehicles and that further funds were being sought for ongoing maintenance of these vehicles. At that time there was limited evidence of understanding by communities of the notion of wider community benefit and the focus was on short-term personal or family benefit from the available funds.

In particular over the last two years, CDU has worked to increase community understanding and control of the GMAAAC process and to facilitate community attention to long-term and sustained benefits. There have been several points of engagement with communities, both through the local committees and the wider community, as indicated in the table on the following page.
### GMAAAC meetings 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Committee meeting</th>
<th>Community meeting</th>
<th>Sports Club Support mtg</th>
<th>Other meeting/trips</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yuendumu</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lajamanu</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willowra</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyirripi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Allan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balgo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billiluna</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringers Soak</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanami Downs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reports from 2011 indicated further changes, building on those identified in 2010. There are signs of increased community ownership and increased understanding of the project selection and management process. While not all individuals have been happy with the changes, there are signs in every community of some people taking the initiative to support a community benefit approach. There are also signs in every GMAAAC-supported community of benefits being achieved for Aboriginal people they consider of value to them. Finally, there are signs of people engaging with and understanding the GMAAAC project management process in a much stronger and clearer way.

The money disbursed through GMAAAC reflects the population size of communities and the number of projects funded in each.

### GMAAAC projects approved and funding, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Project Applicants</th>
<th>Funded Projects</th>
<th>Amount of money approved by each committee for sub-projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yuendumu</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>$788,141.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lajamanu</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$656,162.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willowra</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>168,932.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyirripi</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$161,172.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Allan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$193,711.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balgo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$39,763.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billiluna</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$39,763.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringers Soak</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$39,763.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanami Downs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$39,763.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>79 (57%)</td>
<td>$2,127,170.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures from previous years show that more projects are being proposed in each community over time, suggesting greater engagement and interest in GMAAAC.
Notably, compared with previous years, in 2011 there is a significant increase in the proportion of projects meeting GMAAAC requirements and thus receiving funding. These figures suggest community people are better understanding the purpose and approach of GMAAAC.

For the monitoring for this period, information was drawn from the various project reports for each of the nine communities where GMAAAC is active. This in itself is a considerable change and improvement since the beginning of the formal monitoring two years ago, and demonstrates an increased understanding by partners of the CDU monitoring process and a greater willingness to engage with the CDU community development process.

In addition, independent monitoring was undertaken in three communities to validate and explore in more depth the information coming from project reports. The independent monitoring sought the opinions of Aboriginal people and of independent service providers in the communities. Notably, people were much more able to identify GMAAAC-funded projects and the benefits from these projects. This was a considerable shift from previous years and allowed for exploration of people’s understanding of the benefits of these projects and their understanding of what process was undertaken to identify and manage the projects.

The following examples and reports from each community serve to illustrate the cumulative evidence of change across the GMAAAC locations.

**Lajamanu**
In 2010 there was one report available for the use of GMAAAC funding in this community. In 2011 there were four detailed reports available\(^1\). These included a report on the pilot accommodation and airport waiting lounge project founded in 2010. As a result of this project, operating costs have been reduced, resulting in the provision of improved goods and services to the community. There is no longer a need to pay expensive rent to the Central Desert Shire, and the operators have therefore been able to conduct more charters for local people. As a result of having permanent suitable accommodation for the pilots, they have been able to employ an extra pilot. Frail and infirm patients

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\(^1\) It should be noted that some projects go for longer than 12 months, and thus reports received annually may not match the number of projects funded for that year.
and passengers are now able to wait for an aircraft in comfort, and the community has benefited from the improved medical evacuation service.

The general manager of the Tracks Dance Company reported about the funding received for activities in 2010 and 2011. Youth performers have been invited to perform at events in Melbourne and this will provide them with experience within a professional dance world, as well as raising the profile of the community of Lajamanu.

Other reports are available from the sports club and the football team. It is notable that the newly appointed coach of the footy team visited the CDU to discuss options for transporting the team to Katherine for the competition in 2012. In the past they had use of a GMAAAC-funded vehicle, but this was misused, and under the funding agreement the football club is not eligible for further GMAAAC vehicle funding for three years. The coach was using his initiative to look at other options and to discuss options for more sustainable solutions to transport with the CDU.

One of the GMAAAC community members used the opportunity of a community meeting in another community to discuss the positive experience and benefits of being part of GMAAAC. She was able to speak not only of the positive projects that have been funded at Lajamanu, but also of the positive experience of working with a community development approach and with CLC.

In Lajamanu additional research was undertaken to explore community views on GMAAAC. Interviews were undertaken with committee members and with some service providers in the community (22 in total). Overall, most respondents saw a clear link between GMAAAC-funded projects and benefits in the community.

GMAAAC has done a lot of great things in the past and hopefully we can continue to build community up for people of Lajamanu and next generation. I have grandchildren that I worry about. I want to show them what I’ve done in my years, like helping my community, and that I can be a role model to grandchildren and other children. Hopefully they will continue what I have done to make Lajamanu a better place for everyone to live. (GMAAAC committee member)

The GMAAAC project is making a big difference to community and improving our livelihood. Like we put money aside for grass on oval, to make a better life. We also put money aside for a swimming pool. All good things that GMAAAC is doing, making a big difference to people’s lives. Really helping out. Otherwise, if it weren’t for GMAAAC funding different projects and positions, who would we go to? (GMAAAC committee member)

GMAAAC projects have made a difference. We have projects here that are great, like funding for Art Centre enables younger guys to learn skills, making furniture. The set-up is to be commended. Same towards Wulaign projects—they administer outstations, do roads and upgrading of tracks. They enable guys to go out bush. Some go out everyday hunting. WYDAC program does a great job. GMAAAC doing a great job. People are looking after things from GMAAAC a lot more—more respect and accountability for things. They didn’t look after things so well before. (Community organisation staff member)
Overall, the report from the community indicated a strong sense that people understand how GMAAAC works and are why there are particular rules.

*Sometimes meetings get out of hand. If you have strong committee members it’s better so that you can help others in the meeting place. Mainly you need to share the meeting; have people respect others and share and be able to speak through the space given them. Everyone must have respect for each other and that space. If you want to run the meeting better you need to show the rules. Start off with that – go through the rules. Always remind them about that; it’s important so they understand.* (GMAAAC committee member)

Some people were starting to identify the increased benefits from community development approach with managing the GMAAAC money.

*Even with GMAAAC money before they never used to share, but they put a stop to it and now it benefits everyone in community and not individual families. I think the way it’s going now is good.* (GMAAAC committee member)

However, some committee members saw room for further improvement both in their own behaviour and in the support and interventions by CLC.

*Meeting process: Good things first. It’s OK, but sometimes I don’t like Policy mob making policy changes without consulting community; making decisions in the office without consulting us first.* (GMAAAC committee member)
Process is all right, but certain people on committee don’t follow the rules. Conflict of Interest rule not really being followed. They should say “These are the rules; if you don’t follow them you shouldn’t be on the committee.” We should start working on Conflict of Interest.

(GMAAAC committee member)

Sometimes they have fights – I’ve seen people throw books... they have to respect each other. Give room to each other, one at a time, not talking over one another. (GMAAAC committee member)

Roland Dann pumping water from the newly installed Piccaninny Bore hand pump
Yuendumu

In 2010 there was one report available from the several projects funded in this community. In contrast, in 2011 four of the organisations that receive funding have provided detailed reports on their activities and outcomes. This included a report on the Church Bus Project, which has been operating since 2007. It also included a report from the sports club.

This latter report noted that in the past there has been inconsistent support for the sports weekend in this community, with confusion about where money was coming from and how much could be spent. The support from GMAAAC in 2010 ensured a sustainable and reliable event was able to be planned. As a result, there were 250 sporting participants during the weekend, and approximately 1500 people from Yuendumu and surrounding communities attended as spectators. The outcomes reinforced family and community connections, which in turn reinforce culture and values. It has been a source of pride for the community that they can run this traditional event. It has been a chance for the senior people in the community to work together to provide a common sense of purpose on this positive project.

The social club reported on the upgrade to their facilities. The benefits have been increased customers (including tourists) at the shop it operates, and the creation of a space that can be rented out as a meeting room. The shop workers have felt encouraged by the positive feedback received from community members on the changes. The project provided an opportunity for local men to engage with employment and skills training and contribute to the community and a shop they are now proud of.

The committee in this community is showing signs of increased capacity to manage sub-projects and use high-quality governance skills. For example, one of the committee members in this community asked the CDU to help educate the whole GMAAAC committee on conflict of interest issues. As well, after going through a planning process about how GMAAAC funds could be used over the next few years, the committee made decisions to fund projects that benefited a large number of people, while previously individuals had often pushed for their personal interests.

Willowra

There was no reporting available for this community in 2010. In 2011, monitoring of the projects funded the previous year has been undertaken. This included the funding to the Baptist Church for band equipment, the Bus Project and the landscaping projects. Reports are not detailed but indicate all the projects are on track and proceeding well.

At the December 2011 committee meeting there was discussion with the community about the decision by GMAAAC committee members to change some of the rules around allocation of money for sorry business. The committee members were able to explain these changes and reported that most in the community were happy with the change. More generally it is reported by the CDU staff that committee meetings have been positive. Despite tensions and other issues in the community, committee members seem to be able to recognise the importance of coming together to make decisions for the entire community.

Independent monitoring was undertaken in this community to explore the perceived benefits and process of GMAAAC projects. At the time of the research the community was in a fragile state related to the death of a young man in the community and long-term community conflict. While both these issues were dealt with wisely and sensitively by elders in the community, the situation
illustrates the ongoing pressures and stress that consume the time and attention of people in Willowra and other Aboriginal communities. Responses from people in this community suggest things are getting better, but that these wider concerns are very important for overall well-being in the community.

*Willowra was very good and quiet this year, except for deaths and sorry business. It’s hard, the sorry business, but you can’t stop it; it’s important for community. (GMAAAC committee member)*

*There were problems with fighting in the community before. But this year not much problems, things really good [in comparison with conflict of earlier times] because trouble is settling down. (GMAAAC committee member)*

The research responses suggest that people can generally identify projects that benefit them but for people here there is some ongoing confusion between projects funded by GMAAAC and those funded through WETT. The fact that both are supported by CLC means people are less clear about which is which. Given there are different rules for the different projects this may also be confusing for some people.

*Early this year they had young men’s ceremony. It was really good. It was really helpful for GMAAAC to help support people for ceremony and for funeral. Willowra has been really quiet this year, things were settling down and now it [the conflict] has settled down. (GMAAAC committee member)*

*Sports Bus has been a good thing—they’ve gone to different communities. The GMAAAC projects and WETT projects have helped the community by supporting the community and young fellas; and like getting the studio built. If they didn’t have these things kids would be bored, and there would be no young fellas hanging around the communities; they’d be in Alice Springs. (GMAAAC committee member)*

*School Bus is a big help with picking up kids for school—lots of kids. And kids now get lunch at school, which helps them to stay at school. It’s good for GMAAAC and WETT to give money to these projects and WYDAC project. They all help yapa. They help support elders to take young people out in the bush. They take men and women separately. I go with women, and we show kids bush medicine and food [bush tucker]. Kids are learning dancing and about their culture. They speak strong Warlpiri here at Willowra. All these projects help the community and culture. (GMAAAC committee member)*

In addition, most committee members (though not all) have been able to identify how the process works to make decisions about GMAAAC funding. They also have a very strong sense of their control of their decisions.

*Land Council mob comes here – like Alice Knight and that other woman, and they ask people and organisations for ideas and projects. Yapa decide. (GMAAAC committee member)*

*GMAAAC comes here – Alice Nampijinpa and another one, Georgie from WETT (both CD Unit officers), and they talk to us and the GMAAAC Committee. We are happy with the way it’s going. It also gives good support for sorry business, funeral and ceremony. It’s a good help for community. Really important. (GMAAAC committee member)*
We need to stand up for what we need in the community, support for what makes it strong, not what whitefellas think is community development. (GMAAAC committee member)

Nyirrpi

In the past, the reporting around Nyirrpi has been limited. 2011 saw a considerable increase in detailed reporting, with an increased focus on outcomes from GMAAAC projects. There is a report from the sports club on the 2011 football funding. This report included identification of the range of beneficiaries from the project. It also identified the wider benefits to the community. These included providing activities to keep people healthy and fit and lessen the chance they will turn to alcohol or drugs. This report from the GMAAAC funded sports weekend notes the wide-ranging interaction between a number of communities of people through the weekend and the benefits in the opportunity for people to come together.²

The local school reported on using GMAAAC funding for an excursion to Sydney. The intention of this excursion was to provide an incentive to get primary and secondary children to school. This has been successful, with attendance rising from 25% to 61%. Significantly, this level of attendance has been maintained since the excursion. Parents are pleased with the increased attendance of the children at school, and have reported this to the principal. In addition, more adults have engaged with the school as a result of supporting the excursion. Finally, the principal reports improvements in self-confidence, self-awareness, ability to share with others, ability to respect others, appropriate behaviours, ability to listen to instruction and personal hygiene among those children who attended the excursion. These benefits have been maintained since the trip.

Other reporting has been received from the church and the sports club on how funds are being used for activities and on their plans for better use of funds as a result of learning about how to access and better utilise GMAAAC money.

The GMAAAC Committee is also developing in this community. For example, a committee member in this community took time at the beginning of the GMAAAC meeting to discuss the notion of a proxy vote and why proxies are important in effective committee operations. This understanding and confidence with these processes, a further indication of increased capacity, came out of governance training provided as part of a WETT project.

Mt Allan

In 2010 there were no reports of projects from this community. In 2011, monitoring had been undertaken around the sports club, with information about the activities undertaken for both men and women. This identified considerable benefits for the people involved in playing the sport, in particular increasing their health and fitness and keeping them away from alcohol and drugs. The wider benefits included the influence on younger people and children, and the small but noticeable difference in people’s awareness of their health and the need to actively try to prevent health problems.

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² This report was produced through assistance by CDU staff. It highlights the challenge for some small organisations that do not currently have the capacity to report by themselves. The assistance from CDU officers with reporting ensures that information about these projects and the subsequent benefit to communities is identified. However, over the long term it would clearly be of benefit for organisations such as this to be able to report independently.
The GMAAAC committee members in this community have been active in managing their funds. In 2011 they made a decision to carry over part of their allocation into the next year, as they recognised that they needed to conserve some for ongoing projects. Committee members have been active in explaining funding decisions to the wider community, and why these have been important to minimise misuse of funds.

In this community, additional monitoring was undertaken by an independent researcher to explore the benefits from the GMAAAC funding and the community and committee understanding of the processes. The responses indicated that people were generally very happy with GMAAAC and were able to recognise GMAAAC-funded projects and the benefits that they bought into the community.

*I reckon projects have made a difference. When I came here ten years ago they spent it the wrong way – a crooked bloke used money for his own personal use. Ten years ago [there was] nothing; now everything. Since I have been here, the community is benefiting.* 

*GMAAAC committee member*

Significantly, committee members were able to identify the changing process of their decision-making – both how it was improving and how this was leading to better decisions and better

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3 The mining company has advised that in the coming year profits will be down due to infrastructure work at the mine which will considerably extend its life.
outcomes. There was a very strong sense of the committee taking ownership of the funds and the management of these funds on behalf of the community.

*We are getting new ideas from people; having a vote – learning and participating with each other. Everyone respects each other; it works well. Men talk with men, women with women. Then we get together and talk in big group. No problems.* (GMAAAC committee member)

*We get community members together – some people listen on the side. Sometimes we start arguing and sometimes we let it go. It’s our idea what we’re going to spend the money on. They [CLC] put on the board how much money and we talk about what we need.* (GMAAAC committee member)

*Committee is working better this year. We are sharing stories – what we need for the future. What actions are happening now.* (GMAAAC committee member)

*We just talk about what we need in the community. It’s our ideas – committee ideas. We look at good things going on in the community – like at Nyirrpi, they got the big Rec Hall and also at Lajamanu. We want something like that to happen here. And country visits – we want the old people to help the kids go out – learn culture, about country and following the Law. Old people are looking forward to that. They were asking us when it will be happening.* (GMAAAC committee member)

**Billiluna**

In 2010 there was no reporting available from this community. In 2011 a report was received from the Catholic school around funding received for an excursion. The report notes that, through the excursion, the children were able to gain experience not available in the local area. This was particularly valuable because many of these students would be going to boarding school next year, and the excursion gave them the opportunity to experience being away from home and family. Parents reported their satisfaction with the children's experience.

While this is an obvious benefit in the community, there were also indications that GMAAAC committee members attitudes are changing. One of the committee members in this community reported that she had requested an itemised invoice for work done to the sports bus from the council manager. She explained that in her job as a committee member it was important to ensure that the council is using the money it receives from GMAAAC for the right things and that the council is held accountable.

**Ringers Soak**

In 2010 there was no reporting available in this community. Project reports from this community in 2011 included one for a school nutrition project. The report notes that as a result of the project children are now less hungry, attendance rates have improved and children are more settled in class and able to concentrate.

Again, as well as these important benefits, changes are also taking place in attitudes. One of the GMAAAC committee members in this community was observed taking responsibility for management of the GMAAAC funds. As in the example above, he has been overseeing work done to the GMAAAC-funded sports bus, ensuring that funds are used appropriately, with due accountability to the community.
**Balgo**

Balgo people have continued to use GMAAAC money to support the operational costs of the Kapululangu Aboriginal Women’s Association. Following the intention identified last year, there has been an increased focus on working with male community members and introducing children to Aboriginal culture in this program.

The GMAAAC committee in this community was presented with information concerning misuse of some funds, and subsequently decided not to allocate money in the same way it did in 2011. There were discussions about allocating money to the council for next year so that accountability could be more tightly controlled. The committee also recognised that the sports bus funded through GMAAAC was causing problems in the community and made a resolution to sell it.

**Tanami Downs**

A report was received from a GMAAAC project that focused on fencing repair in this community. The money was used to pay the wages of Aboriginal workers, therefore providing employment and benefiting the whole community.

Also in this community, one of the GMAAAC committee members spoke up during the committee meeting about how money had been used in the wrong way in the past, in particular around the issue of funding for vehicles. The committee talked about how things needed to change in the future.

*GMAAAC Directors choose Elizabeth Katakarinya’s design as the new GMAAAC logo. It represents Yapa and Kardiya sitting together sharing information and ideas.*
4.2 The Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT)

The WETT project utilises Aboriginal royalties to support education and training initiatives in the Tanami region, across the four communities of Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Willowra and Nyirrpi. The project has five sub-programs.

In 2011 WETT continued to demonstrate strong governance mechanisms. Three meetings of the Warlpiri-patu-kurlangu Jaru WETT subcommittee, made up of eight Warlpiri representatives from the four communities, and the WETT Advisory Committee were held during 2011. The last of the Advisory Committee meetings, held in October, was the final meeting of the Advisory Committee process with government representatives and the first of the new Advisory Committee, in which all members of WPKJ are voting members. This represented a development in both the capacity of Warlpiri members as well as an improvement in the governance process.

As well as these meetings, two meetings of the WETT Trustee – the Kurra Aboriginal Corporation WETT Committee - were held in 2011 and made funding decisions. Two community consultations were undertaken regarding the building design for the Willowra Learning Community Centre, and workshops were held in Nyirrpi, Yuendumu and Willowra in regard to a government enquiry into language.

As noted last year, this project is one of the more mature community development projects facilitated by the CDU. In 2011 the regional WETT Learning Community Centre Program was planned and negotiated with BIITE and FaHCSIA and $1.3 million towards the implementation of the project approved by FaHCSIA. In addition, a new development phase for the WETT Youth and Media program was planned and approved for a three-year period. This development phase is in addition to the extension of funding for the diversionary aspect of the program. Finally, the Kurra WETT Committee approved almost $3 million to extend existing projects as outlined in the table below.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WETT funding approved in 2011</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 years operational funding for the Bilingual Resource Development Unit</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years operational funding to WYDAC for the Youth and Media Program</td>
<td>$2,070,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year funding for Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Nyirrpi, Willowra and Yparinya</td>
<td>$90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schools for the Country Visit and Elder Payment Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel and maintenance funds for the Lajamanu WETT Vehicle</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving, installation and fit out two ex-FaHCSIA Dongas as temporary trainer accommodation in Nyirrpi or Lajamanu</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years operational funding to BIITE for the Nyirrpi Learning Community Centre</td>
<td>$379,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years operational funding to BIITE for the Lajamanu Learning Community Centre</td>
<td>$197,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year funding for Secondary School Support Program Boarding Schools</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel and maintenance funds for the Yuendumu School WETT vehicle</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,932,686</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 The above totals $2,932,686 in resolutions approved in 2011. However as noted not all the funds will be spent solely in 2011.
The reporting on programs continues to improve. Each WETT partner completed all reporting requirements under the funding agreement/program guidelines, other than BIITE. In 2011 the following reports were received from partners:

- Four quarterly reports from World Vision Australia re WETT Early Childhood Care and Development Program
- Three quarterly reports from BIITE re Nyirrpi Learning Community Centre Program
- The final report from WYDAC re WETT Youth and Media Program (years 1-3)- no other reports were due
- A report from each of the Lajamanu, Willowra, Yuendumu and Yipirinya schools re the Country Visit and Elder Payment Program (Nyirrpi school did not invoice any funds)
- A report from each of the Lajamanu and Willowra schools re the Secondary School Support program (neither Nyirrpi nor Yuendumu invoiced for funds; Nyirrpi used GMAAAC funds and Yuendumu were unable to go on excursion because of community circumstances.)
- A report from each of Mararra, Kormilda and Worowa schools, which invoiced for funds under the Secondary School Support Boarding Schools Program

The reports from 2011 point to several achievements within the five program areas. These include: improved ability to communicate the story of the community development work undertaken through WETT; some improvement in relationships with funding bodies including senior officers of FaHCSIA, leading to increased funding for the Learning Community Centre Program; changes in the governance arrangements in the WETT Advisory Committee (as outlined above); and, indications of growing capacity and ability of the WpkJ WETT subcommittee.

*I enjoyed every bit of WETT meetings, talking with Government people. And now everyone listens to us. Everything was working out really good, proper way. They (the CLC) were not just telling, they were listening. We were listening to each other, agreeing with what was discussed.* (Lajamanu community member)

*I learnt about Government, and people from Kurra — who the members are and people who come to the meeting. People talking about secondary boarding facilities and early childhood, and governance. How to run meetings, and how the money comes to WETT from mining. The money in the big circle [pie graph shown in WETT meetings of how money is allocated] — where to spend it, and how much is left, and how decisions are made. Might be money for catering, accommodation, transport and Youth and Media.* (Willowra community member)

On the other hand, there continue to be several challenges. These include the difficulty of building an evidence base for various projects because of the limited availability of baseline data and the challenges facing partner organisations trying to collect relevant data in a consistent manner. Another is the challenge of working with external stakeholders who continue to have different objectives or interpretations about the work and intentions in the various WETT programs. There is interest in seeking external funding to extend the life of programs and enhance sustainability, but it is more difficult for the CLC and its partners to ensure the focus remains on Aboriginal control and clear benefit for Aboriginal people once these external groups become involved. This leads to a considerable amount of CDU time still being taken up with managing these external stakeholders.

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5 BIITE did not complete their fourth quarter qualitative report- however this was discussed and approved by CLC given the circumstances at the time.
and trying to ensure that contract arrangements continue to reflect community development principles.

**WETT Early Childhood Care and Development Program**

The sources of information for the ECCD program include detailed quarterly reporting from the partner managing the project, World Vision Australia (WVA), as well as an independent evaluation of the project undertaken in 2011 (Saggers et al. 2011).

The WVA reports continue to be largely activity reports, useful to demonstrate the changing patterns of engagement in the early childhood services. The evaluation report, however, provides a more useful overview of outcomes from the program. The report concludes that there is significant progress against many of the measures set by community members themselves and against those established at the beginning of the project. The report notes, however, that the overall goal of the program, which is:

*improving the health and well-being of children aged 0 to 5 years by building a foundation for children to reach the social, intellectual, spiritual and physical needs through the support of parents and carers and better early childhood services in four Warlpiri communities*

is “still a long way from being achieved”.

The report identifies what is working well. This includes the strategic partnerships with other service providers, including strong working relationships with schools. There have been a range of activities developed in each community focused around early childhood development. There is positive impact from the early childhood training being provided to individuals in each community. The report observes that World Vision is still committed to its community development approach, focusing on increasing the ability of community members to have input into and control of early childhood services in the community. There have been questions, however, as to whether the provision of services for children or the community control of those services should be the primary objective, as there have been instances where they have not been mutually attainable. The report notes progress against various issues raised in previous evaluations, including the beginning of work on both-ways childcare, which is intended to support children’s fluency in their own local language and give them exposure to English as a useful starting point for their progression into school.

The evaluation report notes that while it is difficult for the program to make use of the Australian Early Developmental Index⁶ for these very specific community locations, compared with other children in the Northern Territory the overall profile of children in this region is significantly poor. The evaluation report therefore concludes that while the ECCD Program logical framework may require some adjustments, the activities undertaken by the project are fundamentally on the right track. The report concludes that although the program is ambitious and day-to-day progress is slow, there are some emerging signs of long-term outcomes, with children who have recently moved to school being identified by teachers as better-prepared and ahead of their peers.

In 2010 independent monitoring conducted for the CLC identified very strong community support for this program. It was not the target of independent monitoring in 2011, but, while being interviewed

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⁶ This index was proposed in the project M&E framework as an independent measure of progress for children served by the project.
about other program areas, community members still chose to identify it as a positive outcome of WETT funding.

*In the morning I work at the play group with World Vision. I get paid by the Shire. It's really good for the community, getting young mothers with their babies. They learn a lot, like how to look after kids and what kind of food to eat and what things are good, even play equipment. They got play equipment from WETT money; really good.* (Community member from Lajamanu)

This suggests the program continues to enjoy community support. Given the limited information available through the monitoring process however, it may well be that some more detailed longitudinal study of the experience of individual children and families, perhaps using a case study approach, might be very valuable in helping to understand what the program is achieving.

*WETT and World Vision Australia support the Lajamanu playgroup – photo courtesy WVA.*
**WETT Youth and Media Program**

The WETT Youth and Media Program managed by WYDAC\(^7\) continues to enjoy considerable support in the three communities in which it operates.

In 2011 WETT funded a new phase of the project, which saw a clearer division between diversionary activities and developmental activities in the WYDAC approach in each community. While the development activities, which are intended to help young people re-engage with education or move into employment, are all being established in the WYDAC work, it continues to be the diversionary activities in which most young people are engaged. As noted in previous reports, these are highly valued by community members, who see them as a way of protecting children and maintaining wellbeing for them and the wider community. The reports available since the commencement of this new phase indicate an ongoing and strong connection between the various diversionary activities and the wellbeing of young people.

The independent monitoring undertaken in communities points to the ongoing community support for the projects and the identification by parents in particular of how the projects are of benefit to young people. While it is difficult to distinguish the particular activities of the WETT Youth and Media Program most valued by community members, people seem to point most often to the diversionary activities as being the aspects of WYDAC work that contribute most to young people.

The specific details are outlined for each of the communities below.

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*Warlpiri youth enjoy a range of diversionary activities supported by the WETT Youth and Media Program – photo courtesy of WYDAC.*

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\(^7\) Also known as Mt Theo
**Willowra**

According to the most recent reports, the youth centre in this community is seen as a fun and safe place where people can engage. This is a significant achievement, given some of the division and unrest in this community over the past years. Cultural activities remain a well-established part of the weekly program in this community.

Community people see value in the WETT Youth and Media Program in Willowra and see that it supports the maintenance of culture and local knowledge.

*All the projects like Mt Theo, Pre-School, help keep the kids here at Willowra so that they don’t go to Alice Springs. The Mt Theo project takes kids hunting, getting bush tucker and bush medicine, bush potatoes, coconut and bush oranges and they make videos. Sometimes me and Leah, and Lucy and Peggy go with Mt Theo mob and teach young people the way our mothers taught us out bush. I tell things straight [that is, truthfully and according to custom], naming all the trees, plants and Jukurrpa, and what things are used for. Like how to boil leaves from the Ngapirri tree to make bush medicine. We rub it on bodies when we get a bad cold. Sometimes we go to Wirntijangu with Mt Theo to get bush medicine that we use at the school. (Community member)*

A significant outcome of the program in this community has been the creation of the nightclub and the homework centre. Both have a strong focus on computers and reading. While they are still being established, the engagement in both is making it clear that there is a strong interest in the community in re-engagement in education. Three young people were employed in the community following their engagement in the development activities of the program.

**Nyirrpi**

The diversionary program is a strong basis of the work of the WETT Youth and Media Program in this community. In response to it, there has been an increase of more than 300 hours of services provided to children in the community in the past 12 months. There is a high ratio of participants above the age of 20, indicating the breadth of community engagement with the program. There has been growth in arts and craft and music programs. This has been deliberate, to ensure that the program is not simply focused on sport. Culture has been a core element, with an interest from elders in the community in showing and teaching young people about Aboriginal culture.

Nightclub has been established in this community. Three of the trainees have moved through the development program to salaried positions with other organisations such as the Shire.

**Lajamanu**

The participation levels in the WETT Youth and Media Program in this community are high. There is a special focus on sport. This is keeping young men busy and responds to the growing concern about rising alcohol consumption. Alongside the program, the local domestic violence worker has used sporting competitions as a vehicle for communicating codes of conduct and respect, on and off the field.

The youth centre remains the heart of all activity in Lajamanu. There has been a particular effort to introduce literacy into arts and crafts activities. According to the most recent report from WYDAC, the level of positive activity is helping to create a healthy youth culture of which the community is proud. Culture is an important facet of the program.
Mt Theo is good, they always take us out with school kids to country, take us hunting. They are doing good things. It’s helping community. (Community member)

Mt Theo program for kids is really good. They go on bush trips and they got computers at rec hall. (Community member)

Nightclub and the homework centre both started in the last 12 months in this community. The workers have worked hard to develop positive relationship with the school to link to these activities. Seven young people in Lajamanu have now graduated from the development program into employment in the last 12 months. This is a remarkable achievement and demonstrates the potential of the program to contribute to choice for young people.

Warlpiri Secondary School Support Program
As noted in previous reports, this program focuses on increasing the resilience of young people so they can manage in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures.

Funding was provided for school excursions in 2011. These included excursions by Lajamanu middle and secondary school students to Melbourne and Bendigo. There was also an excursion by Willowra middle and secondary school students to Canberra. Following both excursions, children reported on activities and their learning. Also under this program, there has been support for Warlpiri students at boarding colleges across Australia. This included funding for students from various schools to travel to camps and bush activities. These are opportunities for Aboriginal young people to reconnect with their culture during their time at boarding school.

As reported in previous years, school principals say that interstate excursions for bush schools funded by the Secondary School Support Program are critical to encouraging children to remain at school.

The monitoring of both of the school support programs has become more regular and more consistent in the past 12 months. This included reporting through student reports and through photographs and descriptions of activities. In order to gather some information about outcomes, it may also be useful to seek teacher and parent assessment of these activities.

Warlpiri Language and Culture Support Program
The Country Visit and Elder Payment Program provides school students with the opportunity to learn from community elders both in the classroom and on bush trips. These bush trips are seen by many community members as an essential forum for intergenerational learning between the young and the old and as vital for passing on language and cultural knowledge.

Over the past 12 months, support was provided to Lajamanu, Willowra and Yuendumu Schools for this purpose. While Lajamanu School used the funds on an extended country visit lasting four days (in partnership with the Lajamanu CLC Rangers), both Willowra and Yuendumu Schools focused on day trips, overnight excursions and ‘culture days’. Lajamanu School also purchased a range of camping equipment, including swags and sleeping bags to better facilitate regular bush trips in the future without having to rely on the Rangers.
The Learning Community Centres Program, supported through WETT funding, continues to receive considerable community support and interest.

An evaluation of the Nyirrpi centre was undertaken in September 2011 (Kelly, 2011). The evaluation suggested it had several strengths, including high-quality engagement with the community, courses that were relevant to the community, the provision of a hub for community activity and a focus around which the community could come together. The challenges included the quality of the facilities, the limited co-operation between service providers, and the difficulty in judging who was using the centre and if there was a connection between this use and the intended aims.

There were several recommendations for moving forward, and reporting from recent progress reports indicate that there is action around these recommendations.

In this community, however, poor communication around the evaluation by CLC and the managing partner over the centre’s planned summer closure led to a temporary breakdown in community trust in the process and confusion about how decisions are made. This was an unfortunate outcome, which threatened to undermine the community development process and community support for the Learning Centre. As the CDU works to address the issues with the program partner, it raises the issue of the risks involved in working with managing partners while trying to maintain a community development approach. It points to the need for CDU to manage external partners carefully and ensure its own monitoring and evaluation processes are clearly communicated.

As reported in 2010, the Learning Community Centre in Lajamanu has struggled, due to the lack of resources for coordination and management. While the local shire has been responsible for the centre, it has not had the capacity to take responsibility for the management of the resource. In response to this challenge, BIITE was recognised as a more appropriate partner to implement the Learning Community Centre Program in Lajamanu and Willowra as it does in Nyirrpi. Both the Lajamanu Learning Community Centre and the Willowra Learning Community Centre have now received funding from FaHCSIA, after a long and challenging set of negotiations undertaken by the CDU, together with WPKJ WETT subcommittee representatives and key BIITE staff.
The agreement for ongoing funding is therefore a considerable achievement, and should provide a basis for the Learning Community Centre to become a useful resource for these communities. However, while the negotiation process for the funding has led to better communication and representation of the CLC community development approach, it has been time-consuming and at times frustrating for both CDU workers and Aboriginal representatives. As reported in 2010, this has left community members disappointed and frustrated with the slow progress and the CDU team now very focused on supporting communities to make their Learning Community Centres operational.

Community interest and engagement by CDU in the planned Willowra Early Childhood and Learning Community Centre is ongoing, and the project has now gone to construction tender.

*We want support for the Learning centre – hire some people for training from learning centre and for other courses at CDU (Charles Darwin University). People need to know what is available and how they can develop [what career paths and opportunities are open]. More training and more work for young people. For the future we want Yapa Youth Workers and Yapa media workers – local, from Willowra, not Yuendumu. We want to give our kids and grandkids more opportunities and support; we want more work opportunities, as well as training. We still want support for the culture and the language. We want to do it both ways.* (Willowra community member).

WETT Advisory Committee member Maisie Kitson and CLC’s Emily Wellard with a model of the Willowra Centre

CLC Chairman Phillip Wilyuka and Tangentyere Constructions’ Neils Pederson turning the first sod
4.3 The Tanami Dialysis Project
As reported previously, this project focuses on providing health services that meet the physical needs of people as well as giving attention to the need to maintain cultural and family connections.

The Tanami Dialysis Project continues to be supported by Kurra Aboriginal Corporation and has more recently received funding from GMAAAC. It now also receives money from the Department of Health and Aging, although it is still dependent upon Kurra funding to maintain various operations.

There are currently 27 patients and their families receiving services from the project and support from the Alice Springs-based social support team. Twenty patients are from Yuendumu, five from Nyirrpi, one is from Willowra and one from Yuelamu. Review of this project in 2010 identified the strong contribution this project made to the health and wellbeing of patients and also to the wellbeing of their families and communities.

Lajamanu dialysis project
Stage one of a dialysis project has been undertaken in Lajamanu in the last 12 months. This project was supported in the initial stage with royalty money from the Kurra Aboriginal Corporation. The progress report provided in October 2011 notes that there are now 10 people located in Darwin who come from Lajamanu and two from Kalkaringi. In Katherine there are three people from Lajamanu and a further two from Kalkaringi. The service has been active in ensuring people are able to make trips home, and also that family have been brought from Lajamanu to support people located in Darwin or Katherine.

The project is looking to improve the quality of the service provided by mapping relationships of patients and their families to make sure that appropriate travel is organised. It is developing a calendar of events so that important events are identified in order to get people back to their country for these. It has a new Lajamanu-based manager for the service and has identified that one of the roles of this manager will be improving feedback from patients as part of the monitoring and reporting for the service.

Lajamanu Kidney Committee members on a study trip to the Kintore Dialysis Unit.
Significantly, it has now received funding from the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA), which will support project infrastructure and operational costs for the next three years. This will enable it to provide accommodation for nurses and for patient support as well as vehicles for transport. This support has been leveraged off the original grant from Kurra.

4.4 The Uluru-Kata Tjuta Rent Money Project (URM)

This project started in 2005 with the purpose of developing community initiatives to benefit communities and develop plans for commercial enterprises of benefit to traditional owners, including the communities of Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Docker River and Areyonga. In Mutitjulu there is a working group (MWG) established to focus on the challenges and needs of that community in particular.

The project governance was managed through two meetings of the URM in 2011 and four meetings of the MWG. In addition there was a trip to Darwin with the MWG, to undertake negotiations with the Royal Lifesaving Society of Australia (Northern Territory Branch) around their proposed operation of the Mutitjulu pool for the first five years.

In 2011 there have been various ongoing project outcomes, which have been received positively in the communities. Six outstation upgrades were undertaken in 2011, together with two regional projects ($411,589.00 in project approvals for 2011). The MWG continues with its oversight of the negotiations on the project agreements and funding application for the local swimming pool. A further application was made to the ABA for additional funds needed to build the swimming pool. Agreements were signed during 2011 with the project managers for the pool construction project, negotiations continued with the Royal Life Saving Society to operate the pool, and negotiations continued with Parks Australia North and the Director of National Parks regarding pool construction and liabilities related to future pool management. The MWG approved $1.5 million of its rent money to fund the operation of the pool in its first five years.

Various projects were completed in 2011. These included repairs and upgrades for four outstations, the completion of one community project in Imanpa and two regional projects. The Mutitjulu recreational hall upgrade was completed, and the completion of two water points was overseen.

Monitoring of the various projects supported with this money in 2010 demonstrated strong interest by people in services that contributed to their culture and identity as well as to their ability to live healthily and effectively in mainstream culture. Over the longer term, people’s experience of successful outcomes had built their sense of control of the resources and what they could achieve through those resources. This was particularly so in communities in which a large proportion of project funds had been directed over a period of time.

The notable development, however, has been the work being done by the CDU to connect communities to other supports and interested stakeholders in order to foster further development in communities. One example is the relationship established between Rotary and the community of Ulpanayli. As a result of this relationship, a connection has been developed between the community school and an external school. Equipment and art resources have been provided. The relationship is ongoing and positive, and has built on the original project development outcomes.
Good relationships are also being built with other organisations, including the resort at Watarrka, the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training and the Nyangatjatjara College.

There is a challenge to ensure that relationships with communities are maintained and that there is sufficient time to consult and explain processes to people. There are also ongoing issues of maintenance of completed projects. There is a view in some communities that because CLC helps to deliver the items it is therefore responsible for the ongoing maintenance of them.

For this project, reports had been received on specific project areas as outlined below, and independent monitoring was undertaken in one of the communities to explore the benefits of and attitudes towards the project. The outcomes of this independent monitoring are also outlined below.

**Piyultjara Outstation upgrade project**

This project included construction and installation of a toilet block, kitchen, renewable energy system and minor building repairs. While the project was managed by the Centre for Appropriate Technology, the traditional owners, along with other family members, were closely consulted on all stages. The installation of services was delayed somewhat to allow for the involvement of the CLC Kaltukatjara Rangers. Altogether, this involvement throughout the planning and construction was a positive experience for all concerned, and has left people (including the rangers) keen to be involved in possible future work.
Ara Irititja Project
This project focused on research digitisation and development of a database of photos, movies, sounds and documents as well as objects. Items were selected based on their relevance and interest to Anangu. Up until December 2011, an additional 13,100 items had been added to the database. The importance of sourcing collections and storing them is strongly supported by Aboriginal people and community workers.

I want my husband’s stories for my son remembered, for my children. They are all alive and want to see images of their father. All the family wants this. (Imanpa community member)

Many people in Imanpa are excited about having Ara Irititja in the community as it gives them an opportunity to learn, observe what others are doing and how things were done in the past. Since the computer has been in the community, people have gained a skill to use a computer, how to search for people, places and events that have happened. By doing this they are gaining lifetime skills to use in everyday lives and pass on what they learnt to others who do not know how to use a computer. (Imanpa community worker).

Independent research in Mutitjulu community
The independent research undertaken in this community suggests that, overall, community members and MWG members are positive about the things that had been achieved with the rent money. There seems to be fairly high recognition among most people that it has paid for the recreation hall upgrade and will be used for the swimming pool when it comes about. Most people were able to identify the recreation hall as a positive addition to the community.

Mutitjulu kids in the restored Recreation Hall gym on the first day of its opening
Recreation Hall. All the kids go there and hang out after school. It makes Mutitjulu a better place for the kids. (Community member)

The Rec hall has been a really good thing for the community. It’s giving kids interesting things to do, so they don’t get bored. (Community member)

The Rec Hall and basketball court and games are really good. The reason why it’s good now is because those kids are keeping busy at the Rec Hall. They show films at night, and they have disco. (Community member)

Mutitjulu has been a good place this year. People are starting to work, Anangu jobs is helping. Rec hall is good, making it good for the kids. (Community member)

At the same time, service providers, who are generally supportive of this service, point out that the hall has already experienced problems in terms of maintenance and appropriate equipment.

A range of comments suggests people mostly do understand the process of how projects are chosen and the responsibility they have in this choice.

It’s good that CLC mob come out and help. It’s good for CLC to work in open meeting and that nobody walks away not understanding. Before, they weren’t going and sharing with people, the working members, but this time the working members are letting people know what’s going on and sharing. We are happy. This year we’ve made new plans for next year for Mutitjulu Homelands. Yulara Purkka, Purrurpakarlarinja, Patji, Kurlpitjata and Katiti. We are making plans to put fruit trees and trees on outstations. Outstations are good even for weekends to take kids back and go hunting. (Community member)

We talk at the meetings and we discuss what things we can have and how much money. (Community member)

At the meetings we talk about the swimming pool. We are still waiting for it. The meetings are good. Hilary is doing a good job with the help of the interpreter. (Community member)

Service providers appear to be less clear about how decisions are made and how projects are funded, and feel that this confusion may be shared by others in the community.

I think it’s hard for people [the CDU] working at Mutitjulu – anything that people do is done from the heart and with passion, and they cop unnecessary criticism along the way. We are limited in being able to wave a magic wand to close the gap. The CDU is really showing how community development should work. They need a regular newsletter update; something that people can take home. You can have [schedule] a meeting, but people have other things to catch up on, and people are not often able to articulate what was decided at a meeting. (Service provider)

At the same time, people don’t feel that everything is perfect and were able to point to areas for improvement.

We are still waiting for the swimming pool. The playground has a shelter but the shelter is broken. The kids were playing on it and they broke it. We also do cooking at the Rec Hall, but there is no kitchen. There is a little canteen, but it’s always closed. Before, there was a
kitchen and we used to cook for the kids, but when they renovated the Rec Hall they didn’t put the stove back in. When parents play cards, the kids get hungry and we used to cook and feed the kids. (Community member)

They only put one gate in the fence surrounding the Rec Hall and now the kids have made a hole in the fence to get in from the other side. They should have put two gates in the fence. (Community member)

The feedback suggests that the Mutitjulu Working Group is generally perceived to be getting stronger and working better in the last 12 months.

Notwithstanding these generally positive comments, people’s additional remarks suggest that they continue to be overwhelmed by other issues in the community, including pressures from internal fighting. While the community has been calmer and quieter in recent times, it has been the subject of considerable public exposure, and people are now very cautious about what they say. In addition, people in this community are expected to attend multiple meetings and manage various perspectives from organisations, people and government departments. These multiple and shifting agendas of different agencies, combined with people’s previous negative experience of speaking out, is likely to have led to some reluctance to speak negatively about any projects. Therefore, in order to really understand community views on the URM project, some longer-term and more in-depth inquiry might be required.
4.5 Northern Territory Parks Rent Money Project

The purpose of this project is to implement the CLC resolution that all the rent and income money generated from 16 national parks, conservation areas, historic reserves and nature parks across the CLC region be paid only for the benefit of traditional Aboriginal owners of the land. The project aims to achieve this through establishing community development planning processes in each of the communities, to achieve broad-ranging social, cultural and economic benefit. The project commenced in 2010 and initial monitoring started in 2011.

Consultation is key to the process of this project, as traditional owners (TOs) adapt to managing the community development approach. There were 10 traditional owner meetings in 2011 to inform TOs of the 2010 Council resolution. In addition, there were three instances of TOs seeking a second meeting and one case in which a third meeting was convened. There were six traditional owner planning meetings held in 2011. There were two working group meetings subsequent to initial TO planning meetings over one particular park project; and three working group meetings with another park project.

The project is entering the implementation phase. There were four sub-projects planned in 2011, and three were approved by individual NT Parks Project traditional owner groups or their respective working groups in 2011. The amount of money approved by each working group for projects included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Titjikala church project, approved by the Chambers Pillar Historical Reserve TO group.</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Karlu Karlu on-country meeting place shelter project, approved by the Karlu Karlu / Devil’s Marbles Conservation Reserve TO group.</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Trail Ride business project, approved by the Ryder Family (from East MacDonnell Parks rent money).</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ongoing challenges in this project include the opposition by a limited number of traditional owners to the original resolution. This remains a live and ongoing issue, notwithstanding the fact that some of the opposition has been based on incorrect information. There appears to be a general recognition that community development is a good thing, and that this will have an impact in reducing inter- and intra-family disputes, but people still do not like what they perceive as a lessening of their control over their own resources. The CLC Council meeting in November 2011 reflected some of these ongoing concerns, with some delegates from two of the nine CLC regions indicating during small regional group discussions they were still unhappy with the resolution. There were also complaints from these delegates that the project was taking too long to get started. While these are challenges for the project and for CDU facilitation, it does demonstrate that people take seriously their right to control their own resources.

However, some communities themselves are now actively supporting the resolution as a way of limiting fighting. Some positive planning stories are also beginning to emerge. They suggest some communities do want to commit towards community rather than individual benefit. These include one where a family group made a decision to put their first year rent money towards a tourism enterprise to build more sustainable development in the area. In another example, the traditional owners of Chambers Pillar Historic Reserve endorsed the decision made by the sub-project committee to assist the local church, even though the benefit to themselves would be moderate. In
a similar way the traditional owners of the Ewaninga Rock Carvings Conservation Area chose to use the money for water provision to an outstation they are establishing.

Other stories are more mixed; for example, from Karlu Karlu National Park, a project for a meeting place shelter expected to benefit the whole community was proposed. While this was positive, the same group is now resigned to the fact that members will not receive individual efforts from the money. They therefore decided not to do any further planning in regard to community development projects at this time. This is an interesting reaction, suggesting that the community development process is not an intrinsic process but one which needs to be explored and tested by each community through its own experience over a period of time.

The project is being managed in a way to develop an evidence base from the outset. The first-year projects plan contains notes about each sub-project, including observation on traditional owner reactions and views. This provides a very important baseline assessment from the beginning of the project. This will be very valuable in looking at the change in attitude, capacity and commitment of traditional owners to the community development process, including the decision-making and planning processes.

The logistics and scope of the work is a challenge for one community development officer. This is contributing to the slower progress of planning and project commencement.
5. Conclusions

The project findings for 2011 indicate considerably more attention is being given to monitoring throughout the CDU work, and more evidence is therefore available about the outcomes and processes of that work.

The evidence shows that for the more developed projects, Aboriginal people are able to readily identify the value and benefit to themselves and their communities of those projects. For the newly emerging projects, particularly the NT Parks project, people still have mixed views about likely benefits.

Overall, Aboriginal people do understand the processes by which money is allocated and decisions made, although this varies with location and the experience of particular individuals. There are indications, particularly within the GMAAAC projects, that people are increasingly engaged in the process and are starting to change their attitudes towards community versus personal benefit as a valued outcome of projects.

The value of projects and the community development process is affected by other processes and events in communities. In particular, conflict and deaths in communities are a burden for Aboriginal people and distract them from development opportunities. In addition, the views and attitudes of other community-based service providers can contradict and undermine the community development approach utilised by CDU. This in turn can lead to anger and misunderstanding in the communities, limiting their interest in engaging in community development approaches.

There is now opportunity to further develop the monitoring process, including the possibility of more Aboriginal engagement in analysis of data and some focused evaluations in some projects. There also appears to be opportunity for greater sharing of information with external stakeholders, in order to promote the community development approach and influence the approach of the stakeholders. The work of the CDU seems to be positioning better for this, although there is clearly the potential to do much more.

Finally, the information for this monitoring report builds from increased reflection and learning among CDU staff and with some partners and communities. This is a good basis to enhance learning and program improvement and ought to be the basis for further development. Future monitoring and evaluation ought to serve this function.
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Annex One: Context and Approach of CDU work

Context
Aboriginal Australians, including many of the CLC’s constituents, continue to be an extremely disadvantaged group in terms of key social, economic and health indicators. Redressing the significant marginalisation and disadvantage of Central Australian Aboriginal communities has proven to be very challenging, and many socio-economic indicators appear to be either stagnating or worsening.

The chronic shortfall in government funding, combined with ineffective government policy over many years, has done little to improve this situation. During the 1990s, the so-called ‘self determination’ policy saw responsibility for many services decentralised to Aboriginal communities, but without the necessary efforts to build capability within local organisations (ACFID 2011). While there was a large increase in Aboriginal community organisations, many lacked governance capacity and the resources needed to effectively deliver services to address complex community issues.

After the self-determination era, and in the years leading up to the 2007 Federal Government’s Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER), the Government Indigenous policy framework focused on individuals’ taking responsibility for their impoverished situation, emphasising a ‘mutual obligation’ approach. Despite government rhetoric around ‘sharing responsibility’, programs and projects were generally delivered from the top down, with limited involvement of Aboriginal people in decision-making, often by under-resourced agencies to which they had been outsourced. This left government departments disengaged from communities and lacking the capacity to effectively implement initiatives. At the same time, this government policy left little room for communities to develop and implement their own solutions to complex and entrenched problems.

Since 2007, the NTER has taken the Federal Government’s top-down, interventionist approach a step further (Howard & Brough 2007). As the NTER Review found, people in the Northern Territory felt a sense that Aboriginal people and their culture were now considered responsible for problems that had arisen from decades of neglect in government service delivery (Commonwealth of Australia 2008). The NTER Review also noted that

“The Intervention diminished its own effectiveness through its failure to engage constructively with the Aboriginal people it was intended to help.”

Consequently the review concluded that sustained and sustainable improvements in the safety and wellbeing of children and families in remote communities would only be achieved through partnerships between community and government based on mutual respect. Within this context, the CLC has been developing its approach to partnerships with Aboriginal people, including a community development approach.

The CLC approach
The approach developed by the CDU for the CLC has evolved through careful analysis and recognition of the challenges and opportunities of working with Aboriginal people. The colonisation, dispossession and ongoing marginalisation of Aboriginal Australians as a minority group in a dominant culture is an experience unique to indigenous groups in wealthy western economies.

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8 As included in the 2010 monitoring report.
Development work in remote Aboriginal settings is therefore different to working with disadvantaged communities in ‘developed’ or ‘developing world’ settings.

Particular challenges include the way that routine marginalisation and long-term disempowerment inhibit people’s motivation to participate. In addition, when development workers are non-Aboriginal, the potential for Aboriginal capacity development and empowerment is limited, unless workers pay close attention to facilitating rather than directing. The CLC has the advantage of being both a statutory authority and an Aboriginal organisation. However, its staff, particularly those who are not Aboriginal, are often outsiders to communities. They need to earn the trust of people, understand and engage in community dynamics and find ways to work effectively with Aboriginal people.

Contemporary Aboriginal communities have complex social and power dynamics and internal relationships and conflicting identities. There is often an initial level of cynicism or mistrust both within communities and of outsiders, especially governments. This can make it very difficult to get people to agree on common goals. There is often confusion about who is responsible for addressing issues, either from inside Aboriginal communities or from the outside.

Finally, work in Central Australia involves travelling vast distances to work in very remote locations with Aboriginal community members who speak a range of different languages (and often little English) and who have significantly different social and cultural values and worldviews to non-Aboriginal Australians. People also often have limited education and can be in poor health.

Notwithstanding these challenges, Aboriginal people generally do want to partner with outside agencies in ways that will contribute to positive change in their lives and communities. It is the experience of the CLC that its constituents generally appear to be seeking two sets of outcomes that will enable them to live well in ‘two worlds’ – the Aboriginal world and mainstream Australia. On the one hand, Aboriginal people are seeking education for their children and opportunities for adult education so that people can get jobs; they are seeking better health outcomes; they are taking opportunities to generate income from arts and crafts and build economic activities. At the same time, they are strongly committed to maintaining their Aboriginal identity, culture, language and connection to country.

This suggests that taking a partnership approach with Aboriginal people that recognises these dual objectives may be more effective in overcoming disadvantage than simply treating Aboriginal people as disadvantaged citizens (Hunt 2005). The CLC characterises this as a community development approach.

The CLC’s community development work

The overarching goal of the CLC’s community development work is that Aboriginal people will be strong and resilient and able to live well in both the Aboriginal world and mainstream Australian society.

The CLC community development approach is utilised particularly by the Community Development Unit (CDU), which works with Aboriginal people to assist them in their utilisation of rent, royalties and affected area money. The CDU understands that in order to achieve this goal there needs to be support for the identification of self-worth and confidence of Aboriginal people through the development of skills, knowledge, capabilities and opportunities.
It is recognised that a long-term approach is necessary before significant change will be observed and there is no quick fix strategy that can be employed to redress Aboriginal disadvantage. Furthermore, the process tends to be organic and incremental rather than linear and predictable. Nevertheless, the CDU has been able to draw from wider experience and its own body of practice to identify a range of strategies that contribute to more effective outcomes. These include:

- Recognition that the community development work is being undertaken in a cross-cultural context, which requires attention to language, culture, values and other differences in all interactions with Aboriginal people.
- Respect for and recognition of Aboriginal people’s strengths and knowledge. This requires some understanding that Aboriginal people will value some things in their culture and social life differently than Western cultures would. Respect for this difference is an essential requirement of effective cross-cultural collaboration.
- Utilising Aboriginal resources to design and implement projects. (The projects undertaken with royalty and rent money involve Aboriginal people directing some of their own money to community development projects. This is a particular strength that needs to be valued and recognised).
- Strengthening Aboriginal skills, knowledge and capabilities through the use of community development and community resilience strategies so that Aboriginal people increasingly identify their self-worth and their ability to control and direct development programs.
- Drawing on Aboriginal leadership and governance arrangements, in particular to recognise and strengthen local decision making processes.
- Utilising a multi-faceted and flexible approach that is responsive to opportunities for Aboriginal people to engage in intercultural processes – in other words, taking advantage of any situation in which Aboriginal people can make choices about their priorities, take action, and learn from the experience.
- Developing partnerships and trusting relationships both between the CLC and Aboriginal community members.
- Monitoring the community development approach and sharing lessons learned both with Aboriginal participants and other service providers. This contributes to building an evidence base around the value of working in partnership with Aboriginal people in a way that respects their dual objectives.
- Advocating and negotiating with the non-Aboriginal world to represent Aboriginal perspectives in order to get buy-in from governments, including complimentary funding for initiatives that align with government policy, and to challenge inappropriate and ineffective approaches to working with Aboriginal communities.

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9 Wider experience shows that there are particular factors which need to be taken into account in work with Aboriginal people. These include:

- communities taking ownership of the problem and its solution (Hunter et al. 1999)
- the development process being genuinely Indigenous-led, and controlled from the outset (Campbell & Stojanovski 2001; Saggers 2005; Nursey-Bray et al. 2009);
- starting small and taking small steps which can build trust and confidence and gradually lead to change (Milliken et al. 2007, Tsey 2005);
- developing trusting relationships between community members and facilitators through respect for local values and processes (Voyle & Simmons 1999; Campbell et al. 2005); and
- recognising cultural differences with respect to such things as people’s perceptions of the locus of control in their lives, their ideas about individual autonomy and responsibilities to kin, preferred forms of communication, timeframes, language and worldviews (Hunt 2005).
While the work to support Aboriginal people is long-term, there are significant signs or indicators that suggest movement towards this longer-term goal. The signs include increased and sustained engagement by Aboriginal people and communities; Aboriginal people and communities showing initiative and taking action on their own behalf; and Aboriginal people being able to identify the value of services or project outcomes for their own lives and development.

In addition, wider signs of progress include increased critical awareness among Aboriginal people about how services are meeting their needs or not and why this might be so. Signs of change can also be seen in the differences in the way government and other external stakeholders work and engage with Aboriginal people and how this is changing to better accommodate the dual objectives of being able to enable Aboriginal people to live well within two worlds.

Based upon this understanding, the CDU has identified the following intermediate objectives of the work it undertakes with Aboriginal people to facilitate the use of rent and royalty money:

1. maximise opportunities for Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control, particularly in relation to the management of resources that belong to them;
2. generate service outcomes that benefit Aboriginal people and are valued by them, including social, cultural and economic outcomes;
3. build an evidence base for the CLC’s community development approach and the value it has for contributing to Aboriginal capabilities;
4. share lessons learned with other government and non-government agencies.
Annex Two: Monitoring Plan for 2011

Central Land Council Community Development Unit

Revised Monitoring Plan November 2010

Introduction

The Central Land Council (CLC) Community Development Unit (CDU) works with indigenous people to assist them in use of royalties, rents and affected area payments money. It seeks to build the participation of indigenous people in the use of their money to ensure community benefits and also to ensure that indigenous people increase their ability to control and manage their own resources.

It is acknowledged that remote Aboriginal people collectively retain cultural values that render a universal notion of benefit problematic. That said, CLC’s constituents nevertheless embrace development calls for an intercultural approach to benefit. So, for instance, consistent with the wishes and actions of key participants in CLC’s Warlpiri Education and Training Trust Project, the CDU works towards ‘two-way’ education for Warlpiri people, combining the best that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal knowledge can bring to bear for the benefit of all Warlpiri people.

With this in mind, across CLC’s community development work, the benefits sought can be grouped as economic (e.g. jobs and small business), social (e.g. education, health), cultural (cultural maintenance) and political in the broadest sense (e.g. improved governance).

In order to increase control and management of resources by indigenous people, the CDU utilises a community development approach. This approach is characterised by processes of consultation and information sharing, as well as formalised decision-making processes by indigenous people, to ensure that it leads to increased capacity, understanding and improved management of resources by indigenous people over time.

Understanding of the CDU’s work therefore involves attention to both the benefits provided for people as well as the processes used to bring these about, in particular this use of a community development approach.

The CDU community development work (also referred to as ‘the program’) is currently implemented through four major projects\(^\text{10}\), each with sub-projects. Potential new projects are being considered. The various projects have different management and decision-making models, and the implementation processes for each project vary.

The context within which these projects are implemented is quite fluid, with many other factors also influencing the quality of life for people in each location. While projects work to bring about change for the people in the communities, the value and significance of that change is often influenced by other events and opportunities.

The CDU has been able to identify changes arising from the projects since its inception in 2005. In 2009 a monitoring plan was developed for the CDU work and the systematic collection of data was

\(^{10}\) These are the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT), the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Rent Money Community Development Project, the Tanami Dialysis Support Service Project, the Granite Mines Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation Project (GMAAAC)
trialled. On the basis of this data collection, a report was produced in March 2010 covering the work of the CDU for the period June 09 to January 10.

The monitoring plan was always intended to be a live document to be revised as the program developed, and also as a better understanding of how to monitor the projects and their outcomes emerged. This document is the first revision of the original plan, and reflects the learning from the first data collection period. It is still focused on the same outcome areas, but with more development of the data collection tools and more consideration of the analysis process. Some additional thought has also been given to how to more effectively communicate the findings to others.

The Monitoring Approach

The purpose of monitoring

As noted in the first monitoring plan, there are several reasons why the CDU needs to systematically track its work. Formal tracking of outcomes is part of a good quality community development approach\(^\text{11}\). It completes the community development cycle, providing people with information about their actions and the opportunity to learn from those actions. In addition, monitoring provides accountability to stakeholders. This is particularly important for the TOs and communities who have chosen to spend their money through this community development approach, but also for wider community and government stakeholders who have an interest in seeing effective service development for indigenous communities.

Monitoring also provides a way for the CDU to be accountable to the wider CLC, explaining and documenting the results of its work (both benefits for people, and the processes that bought these about) and making these available on a regular basis to the entire organisation.

The CDU itself also needs to know what it is achieving. It is easy for active workers to lose sight of the results of their work. A regular opportunity to consider what has been achieved and why, and to share this with other colleagues, allows CDU staff to learn, celebrate achievements and improve the ongoing program.

Finally, the work of the CDU is undertaken in a highly political context. That context is not always supportive of participatory and consultative approaches to working with indigenous people. It is very important that the CDU builds an evidence base for its work to provide long-term support for its approach and as the basis for advocacy in that context.

Key principles

Good quality monitoring is based upon clear principles that match the intention of the development work under assessment. In other words, the monitoring should complement and contribute to the development work. The key principles for this monitoring plan therefore include:

- The monitoring approach should promote opportunities for indigenous people to have more information and more control.

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\(^\text{11}\) Monitoring and evaluation are listed as the final step in the community development approach adopted by the CDU.
• The monitoring should promote accountability, but also provide information for learning and program improvement.

• The monitoring information should be made available in a form that can inform and assist with decision making.

• The monitoring information should be accessible to all stakeholders.

• As far as possible, the monitoring system should utilise existing information and systems for analysis rather than creating additional systems.

What to monitor

Program Intention

As noted in the first monitoring plan, the CDU work has several intentions\textsuperscript{12}. The primary intentions are that:

1. Indigenous people will have more control and be able to undertake more informed management of resources that belong to them. The work of the CDU should therefore increase the ability of Indigenous people to understand and feel confident about their decision making.

2. The CDU work will bring about service outcomes that benefit communities. As flagged in the introduction, these benefits include social, cultural and economic outcomes. It is intended that communities themselves identify the value of the service and are willing to maintain and protect that service. The services should also be recognised by external stakeholders, including government, as of value to the community and meeting real needs.

3. Others will recognise the value of the CDU approach and choose to support it instead of other less empowering approaches to working with indigenous people.

Tracking to ensure these intentions are being realised will help to serve the particular monitoring needs of this program. During the first round of monitoring it became clearer that a primary need in each project area was for information coming from monitoring that would help the programs to improve. This included improvement of their community development approach, as well as improvement of what the particular project is able to achieve in terms of benefits and capacity development for the people involved.

In regard to the wider CDU program, it was clear that the monitoring needed to help the program gather information for its advocacy work and also to provide information for learning and better development of the program overall.

\textsuperscript{12} The CLC Community Development Framework (March 2009) identifies several goals for the work of CDU:

1. Help CLC Council members and staff think about community development and be part of this work;
2. Do community development projects, especially projects that help landowners and native title holders use their royalty/rent money to create good benefits;
3. Support Aboriginal groups and organisations to work in their communities;
4. Build relationships with other people and organisations who are doing this kind of work; and,
5. Show governments the good work we are doing and get them to support community development in Central Australia.
With these particular purposes in mind, the data collection processes were further refined as outlined below.

Data collection

For the first monitoring report, data collection revolved around the existing sources of data, supplemented by additional project monitoring and additional reflection and assessment by CDU staff. The experience of this wide-ranging data collection led to some refinement of the process, with an emphasis upon methodology that is ‘fit for purpose’: that is, the data collection should ensure information is collected in ways that meet both the purpose of the monitoring, and are also in line with program approaches. Accordingly, the data collection processes for this next period of assessment have been further developed to cover the following areas:

Project monitoring

As noted above, the most important reason for monitoring each of the project areas seems to be to enable those projects to continue to improve. While each project has to include basic accountability for resources and activities, it was considered important that broader monitoring and enquiry was undertaken in order to really understand the outcomes of each project and how the project could be further developed.

In line with this approach, it was agreed to have two types of data collection for each of the project areas. As far as possible, basic project information would be collected for every project by the managing agent and reported to CDU. The template for this basic project information reporting is attached at Annex One.

In addition to this information, each project area will undertake additional enquiry designed to increase learning about the project. The shape of this additional enquiry is also outlined in Annex One.

Monitoring for advocacy

As discussed above, it was agreed that the CDU monitoring needs to provide evidence-based information to support advocacy and wider communication about CDU projects. In light of this, the second approach to data collection will revolve around the need to understand the CDU work in context. The intention here will be to provide a more in-depth understanding of the change and also a better appreciation of the significance of the CDU-supported work in the contexts in which it takes place. Comparison with other types of interventions will be considered as a way to look at the benefits of the community development approach used by the CDU. This data collection will be through targeted case studies as outlined in Annex Two.

Monitoring for learning

The monitoring undertaken for the program needs to contribute to learning processes in the CDU and more widely across CLC. One of the areas identified as needing further attention and understanding in the CDU is the capacity development work being undertaken with traditional owners and other representative groups or committees.

The approach to this research is still unformed but some beginning steps are outlined in Annex Three.
Data analysis and reporting

As noted in the previous monitoring plan, the data collected through these various methods will need to be collated and grouped. In addition to this, it is important that analysis of the information is undertaken from more than one perspective. This should include analysis by CDU staff and, where possible, the CDU reference group, traditional owners and other indigenous groups.

The experience of the first round of monitoring was that having CDU staff write reports and provide their analysis in advance was useful but insufficient as a way of having their views included in the monitoring and analysis process. For the next round of monitoring, information will be collated and summarised and CDU analysis sought before the final report is prepared.

If possible, analysis from others will also be sought, including the reference group.

The final report will contain all relevant information. A short plain English summary will also be prepared for each project area. Some thought will be given to identifying how information might then be used more widely for advocacy and external communication purposes.

Project information

As far as possible, the following information should be the minimum sought for each of the projects. Where there are managing agents for a project, it is expected they will produce a regular report that includes at least the following information. Where the managing agent does not provide a report CDU staff will need to consider how to acquire this information on a regular basis in other ways:

1. what activities have taken place;
2. what funds have been expended for those activities (a simple financial acquittal should accompany each report);
3. how many people were served through those activities (with reference to numbers of men and women, age groups and locations, as far as possible);
4. information about the outcomes of the activities – that is, what benefits were produced, and in what way indigenous people were further enabled to control their own development as a result of these activities. In this section the views of people about the service and its value should be included;
5. what else has happened in the community which has influenced the value of these activities for people;
6. any photos or other evidence of the activity and its value.
**Semi-structured interviews**

**Focused questions for**

1. **GMAAAC projects:**

**The introduction needs to cover the following:**

a) This is for the monitoring for CLC. This information will only be used for that purpose and anything you tell us will be confidential. We will not quote you or tell anyone what you said. The report will be a general report of all the views.

b) You will get a report back from the monitoring so you know how we used the information you provided.

c) We are looking at the projects and work which CLC helps communities to provide for themselves (in this case GMAAAC) but it’s useful to understand about other things which have happened in the community so we know what else is important to you. So please talk about anything that you think is important, especially over the last 12 months.

**Questions for community members and committee members:**

**Sample group** should be as many committee members as possible and then a wide range of community members. Really useful, if possible, to get equal numbers of views from older people, middle age and young adults. Also really useful, as far as possible, to get the opinions of men and women.

1. What things have happened in this community over the past 12 months which have been good for the community?
   a. Why were these things good for the community? What difference did it make to people?
   b. Do you know who was responsible? Was it someone from outside the community, or people themselves?

2. What things have happened over the past twelve months that has not been good for the people in this community?
   a. Why?
   b. Do you know who was responsible?

3. Do you know about GMAAAC projects? [leave out this question for committee members]
   a. Can you identify any GMAAAC projects in this community?

4. How have they helped this community?
5. How could they be improved?
6. How did the community get this project?
   a. What was the process for getting the money?
   b. Do you think that process could be improved?

7. Anything else?

**Questions for service providers:**

1. What have been the significant events and changes (good and bad) in this community over the past 12 months?
   a. Why? What has been the change for people?

2. Who was responsible for that change or event? Was the community itself responsible?
3. Do you know about GMAAAC?
a. If so what projects have been funded through GMAAAC in this community?
b. How does the process work? How did these projects get funded?
c. What improvements do you suggest for GMAAAC?

4. Anything else?

1. **WETT projects**

*Introduction: we need to say:*

a) This information is being collected for the purpose of CLC M&E. Therefore anything you say will only be used for that purpose and will be confidential. The report will only have the general findings and will not identify your response.
b) You will get the report information at the end.
c) This time we want to ask about the WETT projects but we are also interested in your views about the way CLC works and about the long term plans for WETT. So we are asking some additional questions this year. But feel free to tell us anything else you think is important that makes a difference to the way WETT works.

*Questions:*

**Sample:** Initially we are asking these question of the WETT Advisory Committee and if possible of the Kurra TOs. We may extend to the communities impacted by WETT projects.

1. Over the last 12 months what have been the major achievements funded through WETT in the communities?
   a. Why have these been significant?
   b. What changes have they made for people?
2. What have been the challenges or areas where there could be improvements?
3. Now we would like to ask you a bit more about the long term changes you want to see from the WETT funded work.
   a. What do you want to see in these communities in 10 years time? What should the WETT funding be trying to change, or help people to do, over that longer time?
4. CLC tries to help with the WETT projects and with the process of making decisions about how to allocate funds and how to manage the projects.
   a. What are the good points about how CLC staff work with you?
   b. What suggestions do you have for how they could do better?
   c. Looking at other people who come to help the communities, what could they learn from the CLC (if anything) about how to best serve the community?
5. Anything else?
Annex Three: People interviewed for the 2011 report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project and location</th>
<th>Number of male community members interviewed</th>
<th>Number of female community members interviewed</th>
<th>Number of service provider representatives interviewed</th>
<th>Total interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WETT project(^{13})</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willowra</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lajamanu</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyirrpi</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Yeundumu</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mt Allen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GMAAAC project</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lajamanu</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeundumu</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>86</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{13}\) Note that for some locations people spoke about both WETT and GMAAAC projects. The people identified as being interviewed for GMAAAC projects in this table are those who serve on GMAAAC committees, but comments were received from other community members, alongside their comments about WETT projects.