



**CENTRAL
LAND
COUNCIL**

2010 Report on the Central Land Council Community Development Program



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Central Land Council.**

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Executive Summary

The Central Land Council (CLC) is an Aboriginal organisation governed by Aboriginal people. In 2005 Central Land Council created the Community Development Unit (CDU) primarily to implement community development projects involving Aboriginal rent and royalties from land use agreements and affected area payments.

The CLC's community development approach works in partnership with Aboriginal people to enable them to both maintain their Aboriginal identity, language, culture and connection to country *and* strengthen their capacity to participate in mainstream Australia through improving health, education and employment outcomes.

The community development approach is characterised by opportunities for Aboriginal people to own and control resources, particularly those that belong to them, and to direct those resources towards projects and activities which generate outcomes they value. This includes tangible outcomes such as improvements in health and employment, as well as intangible benefits that support their culture and sense of identity and self worth.

In 2010 four Aboriginal owned projects which are supported by the CDU were monitored, building upon a monitoring and evaluation approach developed and first implemented in 2009. The monitoring considered reports on the project and feedback from other service providers. It also sought the views of Aboriginal people from some communities.

The monitoring found that in most of the projects there was strong and increasing engagement of Aboriginal people and an increasing sense of their control and ownership of the projects. Aboriginal people were able to identify the benefits of projects and increasingly were focused on enlarging benefits for the whole community not just for individual gain. In many of the projects external stakeholders were also able to point to tangible and intangible project benefits.

The monitoring found that Aboriginal people's capacities and capabilities were being increased through the community development approach. However there are also suggestions that the way services were provided by other organisations may undermine some of the benefits of this approach.

The CDU was found to be working effectively against its major objectives. Some challenges still remain around creating a further evidence base for the community development approach and communicating the value of this to external audiences.

Finally there was some emerging evidence of the increased critical capacity of Aboriginal people to distinguish between services which are of value to them versus those which they find of less value and indeed which may be damaging their overall wellbeing. Providing a voice for Aboriginal people to make assessment of services in this way may be an important part of communicating about the community development approach.

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Acronyms

ABA	Aboriginals Benefit Account
ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
CAT	Centre for Appropriate Technology
CDS	Central Desert Shire
CDU	Community Development Unit
CLC	Central Land Council
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DET	Department of Education and Training
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development Program
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Service and Indigenous Affairs
GMAAAC	Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation
ICC	Indigenous Coordination Centre
ITEC	Information Technology Education Centre
NT	Northern Territory
NTDET	Northern Territory Department of Education
NTER	Northern Territory Emergency Response
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
UKTNP	Uluru – Kata Tjuta National Park
WETT	Warlpiri Education and Training Trust
WETT AC	Warlpiri Education and Training Trust Advisory Committee
Wpkj	Warlpiri-patu-kurlangu-Jaru
WVA	World Vision Australia
WYDAC	Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation
YWC	Yuendumu Women’s Centre

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 for over 30 years, working with Aboriginal people to support them 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, which includes payment of rent and royalties to traditional owners.

In 2005 the CLC created the Community Development Unit (CDU) largely 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, through improving health, education and employment outcomes.

This report outlines the context, objectives, project descriptions and assessment of progress for the work of the CDU with Aboriginal communities in 2010. It is based upon community consultations, project reporting and broader research undertaken in 2010 and early 2011.

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.

Post 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 which 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 will only be achieved through partnerships between community and government based on mutual respect. Within this context 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 that is unique to indigenous groups in wealthy western economies. 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 where 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, either from inside Aboriginal communities or from the outside, for addressing issues.

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 their 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.



Kurra Wett Director's Meeting in Lajamanu, 2010

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 CDU which works with Aboriginal people to assist them in their utilisation of rent, royalty 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. Further the process tends to be organic and incremental rather than linear and predictable. Nevertheless the CDU has been able to draw from wider experience¹ and its own body of practice to identify a range of strategies which 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 which are not the same as Western values. 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 where Aboriginal people are able to 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

¹ 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; Siggers 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).

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 complementary funding for initiatives that align with government policy, and to challenge inappropriate and ineffective approaches to working with Aboriginal communities.

While the work to support Aboriginal people is long-term, there are significant signs or indicators which 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 by 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 CDU identify the following intermediate objectives of the work which they undertake 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 which 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.

Project work

The CDU work is currently implemented through five projects each with sub programs and projects. The various projects have different management, decision-making models and implementation processes, designed to fit the various locations and opportunities. They also utilise different resources, with different amounts of money and support available to each project. However, all the projects are characterised by the nature of the funding, which comes from Aboriginal people's own money and the fact that they focus on achieving the outcomes sought by Aboriginal people. In addition all the projects are governed by Aboriginal decision-making bodies.

Each of the projects is described in detail in the following section. While the service outcomes achieved vary across the projects, each demonstrates in different ways the application of a community development approach to working with Aboriginal people and the way in which this contributes to supporting Aboriginal people to be strong and resilient so that they can live well in two worlds.

The Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT) Project

The WETT project started in 2005. This project utilises Aboriginal royalties to support education and training initiatives in the Tanami region, across the four communities of Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Willowra and Nyirripi. The WETT project is ultimately governed by the Kurra Aboriginal Corporation. The Kurra WETT Committee meets twice a year to determine the application of WETT funds based on recommendations from the WETT Advisory Committee (AC) which includes a subcommittee of the peak indigenous education organisation in the area, Warlpiri-patu-kurlangu-Jaru (WpkJ). Approximately \$1.2 million per year is allocated to the Trust.

This project has four subprojects:

i. WETT Early Childhood Care and Development Program

The WETT Early Childhood Care and Development Program (ECCD) is managed by World Vision Australia (WVA) and focuses on early childhood education activities and supporting and involving parents². The program works on two levels. It provides educational and developmental opportunities for young children so that they are better prepared to move into primary school. It also provides support and development of parents so that they in turn can work more effectively with their children to support them move into mainstream education. An additional benefit is that local people are employed as childcare workers and have the opportunity to undertake training and career development.

ii. WETT Youth and Media Program

The Warlpiri Youth and Media Program is a three year program³ being managed by the Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation (WYDAC - also known as the Mt Theo Program). The three year initiative aims to support young people to develop their “sense of self, family and culture”, initially through a diversionary program with a special emphasis upon media.

This WETT funded program has enabled WYDAC to roll out their successful Yuendumu based youth program in the three communities of Lajamanu, Willowra and Nyirripi. Activities operated through the program in these three communities attract high numbers of young people from the ages of four up to 25 years. Activities are wide ranging and include arts and crafts, sport, multimedia, music, bush excursions and culture and a range of workshops. In recent years activities have been broadened and where possible given a developmental focus.

iii. Warlpiri Language and Culture Support - Elder payments and country visits

iv. Warlpiri Secondary Student Support Program - Schools excursions

These two projects see WETT funds provided to community schools and boarding schools where young Warlpiri attend secondary schooling. The first project includes Aboriginal elders visiting schools and accompanying children on country visits. Under the second project there are interstate and other excursions organised for the students. The projects provide support

² In October 2010 the WETT Trustee approved a further three years of funding for this Program.

³ In April 2011 the WETT Trustee approved a further three years of funding for this Program.

for young people to appreciate and learn about their own culture as well learning how to operate within the mainstream culture. They provide an important example of how to support young people developing their capabilities in bridging both worlds.

v. Learning Community Centre Program

The Learning Community Centre program utilises funding from WETT to provide a learning hub where people can engage in a range of formal and informal learning opportunities, can access libraries and computers and explore their culture through language, cultural and history projects. In some cases education and training offered at the Learning Centres leads to employment opportunities. In addition the Learning Centres contribute to community cohesion, provide social opportunities for people and simply make accessible practical resources such as access to Internet banking.

Currently there are two Centres open and operational, in Lajamanu and Nyirrpi. A third Centre is due to open in Willowra in 2012.

The Tanami Dialysis Project

This program provides for a dialysis support program in Yuendumu, Lajamanu and Alice Springs. The project is funded by the Kurra Aboriginal Corporation with royalties separate to those paid into WETT and has now attracted significant government funding contributions towards the operation of a dialysis unit in Yuendumu. The intention of this program is to provide an accessible dialysis service, one that enables people to continue to connect to their family and home country.

The Yuendumu program is currently underway with a renal facility established in Yuendumu and an Alice Springs-based patient support program and return to country travel program.

The Uluru-Kata Tjuta Rent Money Community Development Project

The Uluru Project started in 2005 with the purpose of:

- *Developing community initiatives that will benefit the communities in which numbers of traditional landowners live, including Mutitjulu, Imanpa, Docker River and Areyonga.*
- *Developing plans for commercial enterprises of benefit to traditional landowners, and/or the above communities.*

Each year between \$700,000 and \$1 million (depending on tourist numbers) from the rent due to traditional owners is spent on regional, community and outstation projects.

From 2006 onwards the traditional owners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park have determined three communities or outstations that will be eligible to receive rent money and develop projects in any given year.

The Granite Mines Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC) Project

The purpose of GMAAAC is for:

Community benefit and development across nine communities through:

- *Helping with housing, health, education, employment and essential services,*
- *Helping with employment and training,*
- *Promoting Aboriginal self-management.*

The money to be allocated to each community is established by the GMAAAC Directors and the process for the distribution of this money is set out in the GMAAAC rules. The steps include community committees working (through the CDU GMAAAC Project Officer/s) with eligible community organisations to establish project plans. Money is then allocated by the committees across communities between these organisations. The committees must allocate money only for community purposes and not to individuals for private benefit and they are required to report to the CLC on the use of GMAAAC money in their community.

Northern Territory Parks Rent Money Project⁴

The purpose of the NT Parks Rent Money Project is:

to implement the Central Land Council resolution that all rent and income monies generated from the 15 identified National Parks, Conservation Areas, Historical Reserves and Nature Parks across the Central Land Council region be paid only for the benefit of the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land.

The Project seeks to achieve this aim by applying established community development planning processes to develop and implement projects that benefit regions, communities, and outstations in which National Park traditional owners live, as determined by each traditional owner group.

Each traditional owner group will be supported to develop a five year plan which sets out priority sub-projects that will be implemented with accumulated rent money.

⁴ The NT Parks Rent Money Project commenced in late 2010 and was therefore not monitored in this year. Monitoring of this project will commence in 2011



Prime Minister Gillard handing back the title to Finke Gorge National Park to traditional owner Baydon Williams

Monitoring of the CDU work

Since 2009 regular monitoring of the CDU work has been undertaken for the purpose of accountability (to CLC, Aboriginal people and other stakeholders) and to provide information to improve the work.

The monitoring is designed to specifically enquire about the progress of the CDU work in meeting its four objectives across the five project areas. In 2010 the monitoring was managed by an independent consultant⁵. Data were collected from various sources including project activity reporting, CDU staff reports, interviews with stakeholders and service providers and semi structured interviews with community members. Details of the data collection are provided in Annex One.

The focus for 2010 monitoring was threefold. Attention was given to the way in which projects were contributing to the overall goal of the CDU work, that is the degree to which they were able to develop the capabilities and resilience of Aboriginal people to live well across two cultures. Secondly, the monitoring assessed progress under the first objective of the CDU work, that is the extent to which Aboriginal people are able to engage, own and control their own development (particularly development work which is funded by their own resources). Finally, particular attention was given to the second objective of the CDU work, that is how well the projects were generating service outcomes that are identified as of value by Aboriginal people.

⁵ Dr Linda Kelly, Praxis Consultants.

Information was also gathered around the third and fourth objective of the CDU work however these are given less focus in the overall monitoring for 2010.

The following section details the findings for each project area from the monitoring. The implications of these findings are discussed at the conclusion of each project overview. Overall conclusions and discussion of these are included in the final section of the report.

Results of the monitoring

The Warlpiri Education and Training Trust Project

This project is one of the more mature community development projects facilitated by the CDU. The project is in line with the goal of the CDU work. The monitoring from both 2009 and 2010 indicates that the various subprojects each contribute in different ways to building resilience and capabilities among Aboriginal people, as discussed below. The project also seems to be making strong progress towards the two first objectives of the CDU. People are able to identify benefits in each of the subprojects and the value that these benefits bring for their lives.

*“ At first people didn't understand about WETT; thought it was taking our money away but is now people know what it is for and what it is doing for the community.”
(Community member)*

“WETT services are really benefiting the community, kids and elders and with jobs. It does really help everyone. They are using WETT money in a really good way, like Mt Theo doing a really good job of what's been asked of them.”(Community member)

The project is governed by Aboriginal people and strongly owned by the WETT WpkJ subcommittee.

We are the ones with a passion. We are the ones who know WETT. (WpkJ committee member)

Community respondents consistently identified services funded through WETT as owned by the community.

“Money comes through Kurra really – GMAAAC and WETT. Yapa doing it for yapa using yapa money. It's all right, good. (Community member)

“WETT money is community doing things for itself.” (Community member)

The individual subprojects demonstrate varying strengths and challenges in progress towards the goals and objectives as discussed below.

WETT Early Childhood Care and Development Program

After two years of operation there are now a range of significant outcomes in the ECCD program. Playgroups have been established in four communities. Training has been undertaken for early childhood workers and there are now 12 people who have graduated with a Certificate Two in Children's Services. These graduates are continuing on to do further

training and have recently presented with confidence at a mainstream ECCD conference, demonstrating their ability to speak from their Aboriginal experience within a mainstream cultural situation. The positive progress has been verified both by community assessment and through an independent review by the National Drug Research Institute.

Capacity development has been provided to enable Warlpiri to manage the program. There is increasing confidence among the parents in their parenting role. These elements of ownership and control need further development, but respondents from all of the four communities identified the ECCD program as a service run with WETT funds and therefore a service that belongs to them.

“This playgroup WETT program is doing really well. We want to keep it going. You can see all the toys at this playgroup are from WETT and my program. We all work together in this program. These kids start from this playgroup then go to pre-school. It’s like a school for little kids. What these kids are doing is sharing and playing. The way we run the playgroup—some parents support us and some don’t, but we keep talking to them. We show them a book about what we do at playgroup. Some parents say it’s really good.” (Warlpiri Playgroup worker)

The program is valued by Aboriginal people. Respondents identified that the childcare program as good for children and parents and a good stepping stone for children into formal school education.

“Childcare is good for community for young mothers. Hungry kids get fed properly and it teaches young mothers about early motherhood. Like young girls with first baby, they like learning. Some don’t know how to breastfeed properly and when to give the baby solids. They are learning. The kids are also counting and learning how to put things away, how to clean up.” (Community member)

“Childcare, kurdu-kurdu-kurlangu (place belonging to the little kids), people are happy with that one because it looks after all the little kids. They get lunch, and are learning how to count and do alphabet.” (Community member)

“Mothers and grandmothers are learning how to take care of kids, how to use spoons, how to wash hair, how to ride bikes. Mothers learn to clean pants and put a new nappy on, put them in shower and clean them. (Community member)

“Sometimes old people take kids out to country and show them how to catch goanna. Kids love eating kangaroo tail. Childcare takes kangaroo tail out for lunch for kids. Mt Theo are with them and help them, grandmothers and aunties. They have a good time. It’s better now at Nyirрпи [that] they have childcare.” (Community member)

WETT Youth and Media Program

The Warlpiri Youth and Media Program provides young people in three communities (Lajamanu, Nyirрпи and Willowra) with activities, focused on developing their sense of identity and self worth. The monitoring undertaken in 2009 and 2010 show increasing numbers of young people are using the programs; with similar numbers of young men and young women

in each location. The statistics show that the numbers utilising the programs are significant in each location.⁶

Significantly the young people seem to value the opportunity to move between both cultures in the activities they undertake, with popular activities including sports and media training as well as bush excursions and cultural activities. For many of the young people the project is an important contribution to their personal development. They engage with the activities, initially because they are fun and relevant to their life experience, they are then able to take up opportunities through the project for training and move into employment and in some cases to supporting other young people. The young people talk about seeing a way forward for themselves as a result of the project experience, seeing a 'pathway' for themselves.

"Mt Theo Program hasn't caused any problems. Things are better now than without programs because there is a lot of stuff for kids to do. I'm excited about learning. I want to do an education course through Batchelor. I'd like to work in video program."
(Mt Theo casual worker)

Respondents identified that this program is funded with WETT funds and therefore a service that they 'owned'. However, community direction and control of the program still appears to require some further strengthening. There are community committees in each location who are responsible for assisting with supporting and directing the program. The committee is particularly strong in Nyirripi, with strong youth representation and feedback suggesting that this committee has enhanced community ownership of and commitment to the program. In other communities the intention is to further strengthen the role of these committees and increase youth representation.

The benefits of the program were identified by respondents in all locations. Community members in all three communities identified the program as a major reason why crime and other negative behavior among young people is decreasing.

"Mt Theo [program] is good—discos, music—and they take all the kids to rock holes, to Rurrarrki—there is water running there. Proper good one, Mt Theo, because they are there all the time, right up from 3.00 to 9.00—at night they come back late. They do dancing and all. Otherwise they [kids] just sit down bored in the school making trouble, or at the tin house. No petrol sniffing here now—only at one time before." (Community member)

"Mt Theo program is good for the community. On school holidays they take kids and old people out hunting and help the community. They open the Rec. Hall and let kids do painting, sewing, music, and teach them how to burn CDs. Kids would be bored, just

⁶ For example in Lajamanu which has a population of 1200 people and a school enrolment of 171 young people with an attendance rate of 49%, 128 young people between the ages of four and 25 attend the WETT program on average at least once each week. In Nyirripi, with a population of 320 people, where 40 children are enrolled at school, with an attendance rate of 47%, 42 young people attend the youth programme at least once every week. Finally in Willowra, with a population of 300 people, where 50 children are enrolled in school with an attendance rate of 50%, 43 young people attend the programme at least once every week (*Statistics on school attendance taken from the MySchool website*).

*wandering around and breaking into things if they didn't have those programs.”
(Community member)*

“That's why young people don't go to grog; it's really quiet now, no trouble, nothing, because we are teaching them the ceremony. We teaching them how to do it [the correct way of operating] not to jump over to another person's country [claim country that's not your own].” (Community member)

Warlpiri Language and Culture Support - Elder payments and country visits

Warlpiri Secondary Student Support Program - Schools excursions

These two projects focus on enabling young people to develop their skills and capabilities across both cultures. On one hand the projects increase the exposure of young people to mainstream culture and provide opportunities to learn to live confidently within that culture. For example in 2010 school excursions were undertaken from the schools at Nyirрпи, Lajamanu and Yuendumu to Melbourne and the snowfields, with children visiting sporting and educational sites as well as learning how to manage within big city environments.



Nyirрпи students visit Rosebud Secondary College and participate in a science class

Teachers worked with students on their oral English before the excursions. By the end it was reported that young people were confidently using their English skills.

“It was something most students wouldn't do or ever go on a plane or interstate and to the snow. An opportunity they normally wouldn't have—they had a great time. It does have a flow on effect to the school – to things we can improve... This year we are having one long interstate excursion and smaller ones. We want to do it in a way we

can stick to. Organising smaller trips. For example, a senior teacher is taking a group of men into AFL match this afternoon. It is not WETT funded. There are women—young mothers—back at school with babies, they can't do interstate trip so we plan to organise smaller.....WETT excursion is awesome, really useful, we are just trying to work out how to do it the best.” (Comments by school principal)

At the same time young people are also given the opportunity to explore and value their own culture through contact with community elders and through bush excursions. This contributes to their sense of identity and self worth. Community members value the opportunities provided for the children through the secondary school programs and identify positive outcomes for their children through this cultural exposure.

“Elder payments — that is happening. Last year they took a group of kids out. Country visit happened last year—it was really good. It benefits everybody. It teaches cultural things to kids about the land, where to find water, what you use it for—all the things kids should learn yapa way, like who belongs to which area.” (Community member)

“Country visits—we’ve been doing it really three years. They are really good. We are trying to see warlalja (family) with country visits—but we got more family among Gurindji these days and we want to learn about Walk Off and Freedom Rides. WETT can make it possible: it’s about enlarging people.” (Community member)

Finally the evidence suggests that enabling young people to learn to manage across both cultures supports them continuing at school.

“Secondary school support - if kids don't get support they get homesick in college and come home, and then do nothing in community.” (School principal)

WETT Learning Community Centre Program

The Learning Community Centre program provides a mix of formal and informal education and training opportunities for Aboriginal people. Where the centers are functioning well there is evidence that they are of value to Aboriginal people.

In Nyirrpi the Centre opened during 2010 and reports show that there is now a regular flow of people through the building⁷. Women in particular are making good use of this service. Already seven Nyirrpi men and women have commenced their Certificate Two in Construction, Occupational, Health and Safety, gaining industry White Cards for their efforts. The association with the Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) has led to an enthusiastic response to both the arts courses and the literacy work that is offered. The lecturers suggest that with more resources and time, considerably more could be developed in this area.

⁷ The population of Nyirrpi is approximately 320 people. The figures for the Learning Centre show that in the last quarter of 2010, 34 people were enrolled in accredited training courses, a further 34 were engaged in non-accredited training (including 10 young people studying maths subjects), and 15 people were making regular use of the Centre for informal contacts and training.



Kummantjayi Gibson supervises Nyirrpi boys in a dance at the opening of the Nyirrpi Learning Centre

The community themselves describe the Learning Centre as a happy place where there are good resources and where people feel welcome.

“Batchelor Learning Centre, that’s a good place. Sometimes I go and work there—do painting, videos. It’s a happy place. Full up with old people and young people. It’s good way—people are happy for that—they were having a concert too.” (Community member)

“Learning Centre—that’s [a] good place to come and learn. Old people make baskets, pictures and materials like bush tucker, and there’s computers to use and typing. Next week we might do sewing. When Batchelor courses are on I come and do courses. I will work at Childcare until 12.00 then come in the afternoon [to Learning Centre].” (Community member)

Significantly, there is a strong sense of control and ownership felt by the community for this Centre compared to other services provided in the area.

The Learning Centre at Lajamanu has been open for a longer time, but has struggled due to a lack of resources for coordination and management. The local Shire is responsible for this Learning Centre and they identify the difficulties in engaging people in the service, which is not a core Shire responsibility.

“Learning Centre has been stop and go, trying to get someone for Co-ordinator’s position.....It’s not really happening at the Learning Centre yet.... It does get used for lots of community meetings. There is a lack of implementation — people have ideas but we have lack of people wanting to turn up.”(Shire representative)

Significantly it was identified some years ago by the community that there needed to be a skilled mentor to work alongside the local coordinator. Unfortunately despite repeated efforts by the CDU to pursue government funding for such a position, there has been no money made available for this additional support.⁸ Respondents from Lajamanu community express their interest in opportunities for further learning and for creating a space that belonged to them at the Learning Centre. Most were disappointed with the limited progress in developing the service and the current management arrangements.

The Learning Centre at Willowra is not constructed as yet. There was comment from community members about its imminent opening and people’s considerable interest in having the Learning Centre in the community. Notably however, as outlined in Case Study 1, the process for development of the service has engaged the CDU for many years working on behalf of Aboriginal people and using Aboriginal funding, still without anything actually in place. The contrast between the successful Learning Centre in Nyirrpi and the long-term struggle to develop services in Lajamanu and Willowra seems to indicate that external service providers do not necessarily understand the value that Aboriginal people in place on opportunities to undertake formal and informal education and training in locations which are comfortable and accessible to them.



Warlpiri students (left to right) Jordan Marshall, Gregwyn Gibson, Mitchy Williwams (in background), Herman Morris and Bianca Turner complete training modules towards Certificate Two in Construction

⁸ Lajamanu is both a Regional Service Delivery site and a Northern Territory Growth Town and therefore should be well positioned to attract government funding particularly for projects that are consistent with core government policies such as the Learning Centre which aims to support Aboriginal training and employment.

Case Study 1: The CDU community development approach: negotiating with the non-Aboriginal world

The Willowra Learning Centre

In 2004 community members identified the need for an education centre in Willowra (population approximately 300) as a place where cultural knowledge and language could be passed on to younger people and broader life skills and adult education and training could be provided. In 2007 WETT considered the idea to be compatible with the WETT Learning Centre Program and funded the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) to undertake a planning report. From the outset WETT's intention was to support the establishment of a sustainable Centre taking into account WETT's finite resources and life-span. The aim therefore was to work in partnership with governments to develop the concept and attract government funding.

At a forum convened by the CLC to discuss the CAT report government representatives recommended a business plan be completed and the WETT Trustee approved \$600,000 towards the Centre conditional on feasibility being demonstrated in this plan. In 2008, a consultant approved by the WETT Advisory Committee (WETT AC), which included NT and Commonwealth representatives, carried out community consultations at Willowra and completed a training survey and business plan with the community in accordance with Terms of Reference developed by the WETT AC. The completed WETT-funded business plan was subsequently viewed by both levels of government as being inadequate in demonstrating the Centre's feasibility.

In mid 2008 the CDU convened another meeting with the community to try to rescue the Learning Centre idea. After exploration of various alternatives the CDU suggested that an early childhood centre – another of the community's priorities for WETT funding and a high priority for Commonwealth Closing the Gap agenda - might be included with the Learning Centre and the community accepted this idea.

A range of departmental staff at both the Commonwealth and Territory level expressed their support for the idea of a combined centre but identified that it needed a feasibility study, which was then funded by DEEWR. The CDU managed the appointment of consultants approved by DEEWR to complete this feasibility study. By the time this study was completed in late 2008 the policy environment had changed significantly, with an increased focus on large communities, and many of the government funding programs identified for potential funding were no longer available.

Numerous meetings were held between CLC, DEEWR, FaHCSIA and NT DET in an effort to identify alternative government funding options. When this was unsuccessful the community was consulted and they directed the CLC to write jointly with project partners World Vision Australia and the Central Desert Shire to the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs seeking support and funding for their community initiative. This letter was unsuccessful. Subsequently DEEWR representatives suggested to CLC that if additional funding for infrastructure was procured on top of the \$600,000 from WETT then it would strengthen the case for government funding towards operational costs. The CLC then applied to the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) on behalf of the community to get \$2.6 million for a building, staff accommodation and vehicle.

Minister Macklin approved this ABA application in October 2009. It then took 14 months to finalise the funding agreement with the ABA. One of the requirements of the funding agreement is that a lease be assigned to a service provider, in this case the Central Desert Shire. CLC lawyers worked on the lease with the community, the CDS and FaHCSIA and negotiations were still underway by the end of 2010.

During 2010 the CDU, WVA, the CDS and the community also continued to work on future operational funding for the Centre, including reassessing early childhood program funding options. Under government reform to the childcare sector in late 2009, flexible budget based funding was capped and fully subscribed. Case based funding was being introduced and would require the Willowra early childhood facility to be open from the outset eight hours per day, five days per week for 48 weeks per year and to attract enough children consistently to generate operational income and attract government rebates and subsidies. Comparatively, other community early childhood facilities will be supported by the NT Government to transition to this new funding arrangement over a five year period. As such, project partners considered case based funding unviable for a new service in a small to medium sized remote community. The CDU therefore undertook further community consultations and the community decided to proceed with the Learning Centre plan with the inclusion of a more modest crèche facility and early childhood play area.

The process has been underway for five years. The \$2.6 million made available by the government to date has been through the ABA for the buildings and vehicle and through DEEWR for the feasibility study. \$600,000 in WETT funds has been set aside and significant WETT operational resources expended. Rather than facilitate this community initiative, the changing government policies and focus has undermined and impeded outcomes. The CDU has been active in maintaining community engagement and in facilitating the ongoing battle for the rights of people to identify the way in which their own money can be spent and to seek complementary government funding for initiatives such as this that are consistent with core government policy. In this case, the Willowra Learning Centre objectives of working with young children and their families to support their healthy development and help get them get pre-school and school-ready and providing education and training to adults in order to generate employment outcomes would appear to be in line with the Commonwealth Government's commitment to 'closing the gap'.

The challenge for the CDU and government departments in the future - as this Centre is built and starts operating (expected to be in late 2012) – is to find ways to work together effectively to support the implementation of this and other community-driven education and training initiatives.

Discussion of the findings

The WETT funded subprojects provide considerable resources into the communities in which they are located. They tend to be identified in people's responses as a 'package' of services which are funded with Aboriginal money and which bring various benefits to communities.

Each of these subprojects contributes in some way to building capacities and capabilities of Aboriginal people. The youth and media work probably demonstrates most strongly the way in which people can be supported to develop capacities to operate across two cultural realities. However, each of the other programs also demonstrates contribution towards this goal.

All of the WETT subprojects demonstrate engagement and ownership by Aboriginal people. However the struggles for funding around the Learning Centre program have tended to undermine people's engagement and sense of control over that service in some locations. Significantly in Lajamanu where people feel they do not have control over the service, there seems to be disengagement by community members.

In each of the subprojects people can identify the benefits and the value for their development and that of their community. Significantly people took the opportunity to compare the services provided with WETT funding to services provided through other organisations. People identified that other services did not operate in the same way and were of less value to them.

The challenge for the WETT funded subprojects seems to be in negotiating with government and other service providers to ensure that complementary funds and service provision matches and supports the control and capacity development of Aboriginal people. Clearly considerable CDU time is engaged in trying to bridge this understanding with some other services.

The Tanami Dialysis Project

This project focuses on providing a health service which meets the physical needs of people as well as giving attention to their need to maintain cultural and family connections. Kurra made the decision to utilise royalty money for this new project following their learning about what could be achieved with their own money from the example of the WETT subprojects.

In the six months of operation up to March 2011, 27 clients have used the service either in Alice Springs or Yuendumu. People identified that being able to return home to Yuendumu was a benefit for them.

“It is better to have dialysis in Yuendumu I sit down here three months and after that I go back to town for check-up and sit down there for one week. I feel more comfortable and well here. It’s good. I go every morning, seven days, for breakfast at Old People’s on my motor scooter. I have bread, egg, meat. Good lady there. Not only me [goes] but old people that I meet early fella [in the morning]; men and women. I’m going around happy all the time. I bin good, visiting everyone. I was really happy [when] this building [Dialysis unit] been set up.”(Service user)

Apart from dialysis, people also make significant use of the Alice Springs-based support service, the Purple House, for a range of supports. The qualitative data is very consistent. It shows that the support provided from the Purple House helps people in a variety of ways but is primarily helpful because it is very welcoming and flexible and able to assist people with their practical and immediate needs in a way that respects their values and culture.

“I like Purple House because they help me with everything. I come to Purple House a lot. I can speak to nurse. They do shopping for me and help me get [second hand] clothes. I got to ask Sarah [the manager] for a walking stick. We are welcome here. Everyone comes here. If I want things—anything— they’ll bring [it] and help me. I have showers here because my shower is blocked up [at the house]. ...We can talk anyway [discuss anything] here; we don’t get shame.” (Service user)

The service facilitates visits back to country and community through a variety of means including fuel vouchers, and bus tickets or provision of a car and driver. The service is consistently described as proactive and welcoming and a place where people feel comfortable and able to be helped.



Queenie Stewart and Corey Patterson in Yuendumu

The families and other community members who were interviewed consistently said that people looked better and were healthier when they are able to come home for the dialysis. In addition there was a consistent view that older people coming home was good for the family.

“G...was here for two weeks. It was good that he was here. He hadn’t seen two of his youngest grandchildren. He was asking their names. They had heard people saying they looked like him but didn’t know who he was. They really needed to get to know him. It’s important for younger generation to know the older ones—he’s never seen some of them who live elsewhere. It’s really good to have dialysis here for these reasons. He had a good visit here. He went everyday shaking hands for family members. They said ‘wiyarrpa—which is like, poor thing, long time no see. Dear thing that you came back—good to see you again.’ It makes him feel better. He was really happy. He was telling stories about how and where he used to live with his parents when he was young—near the airstrip. Early days stories. He was getting to know his grandchildren.”(Family member)

There was strong support for the approach taken by the service. People made the point that while the dialysis service itself was the same, the Purple House was different because it offered more services and treated them in a more welcoming and approachable way.

“It’s good help. Flynn Drive only put us for renal [i.e. dialysis]—they don’t help us like the Purple House. They are doing good job.”(Service user)

Associated with this was the way the service enabled Aboriginal people to stay connected to what they valued. This difference was clear even to external stakeholders.

It is very important for people to go back home. People with no Purple House help risk their lives to do it and have to be air evacuated to Alice. They rate the family high—health comes second. They’ll miss five dialysis sessions and have to be air vac’d. If they miss two then they think they might as well miss more because if they turn up after two they’ll be sent to Alice straight away.”(Service provider from another organisation)

Two respondents identified that the service was provided with Aboriginal money.

“Everyone in community is happy for dialysis here, for people to be in their country. Yapa people fought to get dialysis here. There should be more machines. They want GMAAAC to put in more funding. Good use of money--and Kurra put money in.” (Family member)

“I’m really happy for dialysis here. We’ve been fighting for many years. We talked to directors of Kurra and we told them it was really important so our family can come back and sit down.” (Family member)

Discussion of the findings

The results from the interviews indicates that the Tanami Dialysis Project provides a health service which supports people being able to manage in both worlds. That is it allows people to make use of western health services while also staying connected to their family and to their community.

The service, both the Yuendumu based dialysis service and the Purple House support in Alice Springs, is valued by Aboriginal people. They make active use of these services in preference to other available dialysis services.

There is less sense that Aboriginal people feel in control of the service. Many use the service proactively, feeling welcome and at home there. But unlike the WETT projects, only a very small number of the respondents talked about the service being supported with Aboriginal money or belonging to Aboriginal people.

The Uluru-Kata Tjuta Rent Money Community Development Project

Each year between \$700,000 and \$1 million in rent money from the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is used to fund regional, community and outstation projects. The project is owned by Aboriginal people, with significant numbers of traditional owners that are representative of this large group travelling from communities up to 200 km away in order to participate in the Uluru Rent Money Project meetings. Traditional owners are committed to managing the project for community benefit.

“Years ago traditional owners from Uluru-Kata Tjuta, they came up with the idea to start a community development project, and it’s a good one. Because it’s good to help other communities, small outstations and so on.” (Traditional owner)



Getting the new tank up at Piyultjara

This focus on community benefit is increasing as people identify what they can achieve with their own resources. At the November 2010 project meeting, some members of the Traditional Owner group suggested that more rent should be made available for community development projects rather than distribution to ‘family heads’. External stakeholders are now also identifying the way this local control is leading to benefits for the community.

“The rent and get money for admission to the Uluru-Kata Tjuta national park is worth about \$4.5 million a year. The traditional owners get a quarter of that and are using it to address urgent community needs. These projects are giving Aboriginal people their first real opportunity to take control and improve their living standards, and they’re getting results.” (SBS media report)

To date 19 projects have been completed and of these more than half have focused on upgrading existing outstations. Several communities can identify the benefits of those projects for their people, including the opportunity to maintain their outstation as part of maintaining their cultural base. After the outstation upgrade at New Well (see Case Study 2) the senior Traditional Owner has now been able to move back and live on country. His children and extended family have made it their base and from there have been empowered to take up further opportunities for development for themselves and their children.

Case Study 2: The community development approach: Utilising Aboriginal resources to design and implement projects

The New Well outstation upgrade

Under the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Rent Money Community Development Project, money was allocated to an outstation upgrade at New Well in Ernabella. Funding was granted for solar power and upgrading of the infrastructure of the outstation.

The extended family were happy with this allocation and worked with the CDU to decide what should be done and how they would make use of and manage and maintain the upgraded services. They then relied upon the CDU to contract a project manager and to manage that project manager through to completion of the task. The family was consulted on a regular basis and engaged in all decision making about the project.

The CDU understand themselves as working for and with people to ensure that their money is spent appropriately and to a good standard. The CDU are accountable to Aboriginal people for this. This means that when things go wrong the CDU will consult with the Aboriginal people about what should happen.

At Titjikala people value the opportunity to capture their identity and history using modern means.

“Titjikala community has been part of the Ara Irititja project since 2009. The whole community enjoys using our Ara Irititja computer. There are thousands of photos that people at Titjikala like looking at as well as movies and sounds. We are really looking forward to seeing Lena Campbell’s collection of 400 photos when they are put on to Ara Irititja this year.” (Report from 11 community members to the Traditional Owner Uluru Rent Money project meeting)

Examples of projects also include a community store at Imanpa, the installation of solar power system in Ulpanyali (see Case Study 3 below), and the development of a convenience store and training people in store management at Yunyarinyi. In all cases people were able to acknowledge the benefits of the projects and to identify the changes that occurred in the community as a result of the projects.

“The store has been good. There’s more food and it’s good not having book up any more just using money. Before it was no good (with book up) and now more people are staying and Imanpa is settling down now. People are coming from other communities to come to the store and staying for the weekend.” (Community member)

“The store has been good for community relationships. The community is very proud of their store and it has become a real meeting place for the community. Four Anangu are employed part time as it is hard to get people to work full time so this works. We have had to work hard on the corned beef and flour mindset and emphasise nutrition. We only have fried foods on the odd occasion, not as a standard practice. We offer a good range of products from Outback [Stores] but we can order other stuff. We would like to make it even better and get tables and chairs out the front to make it nicer for people.”(Service provider)

“All of these things makes us proud. You go to (one community) and it’s worse there. You have a good feeling coming into Imanpa. People are starting to look after the community, starting to take responsibility”. (Community member)

Case Study 3: The community development approach: Utilising a multi-faceted and flexible approach that is responsive to opportunities for Aboriginal people to engage in intercultural processes

The Ulpanyali Bushlight solar system

Under the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Rent Money Community Development Project, money was allocated to the community in Ulpanyali to repair the power supply. Following negotiations with the community and extensive project management, funds made available were able to install a Bushlight solar system.

The Aboriginal people were very happy with this outcome and report that the system, installed by the Centre for Appropriate Technology, has changed things for them. Their life is now much more comfortable with the ability to utilise washing machines and fridges and have regular lighting and power. People are returning to the community.

Following this the community was selected for further funding by the traditional owner group and received money to upgrade existing sheds to create a workshop and an art shed. As a result of having this resource people have been travelling to Batchelor College for training to be able to establish their own artwork and also to establish a repair workshop. The art studio is now being well used and people are developing skills and starting to sell their artwork. The community is now looking for further development opportunities including the re-establishment of their market garden.

The CDU stays connected with these people, encouraging them to take up these opportunities and to look for other resources to contribute to their development. The Aboriginal people report that they trust people from CLC; the organisation has legitimacy as an agent and actor for Aboriginal people. But in addition the people here have a personal relationship with the worker from the CDU, established over time and are therefore prepared to trust and rely upon her.

The way in which these projects build the capacity and capabilities of Aboriginal people is evidenced most clearly in the project operations at Mutitjulu. A substantial number of Uluru traditional owners live in this community and therefore a large proportion of projects funds are directed there. This has enabled the community to work on bigger and longer term projects. These have included renovation of the recreation hall and basketball court and the planned construction of a swimming pool. These have been thoughtful decisions by the traditional owners and come from their clarity about what they want for their community.

*“Traditional owners decided to put their money in because they want to put their money where it is needed. Just for basic stuff - health and wellbeing of young people”
(Traditional owner)*

A working group has been established in this community to oversee the projects. The working group members have a strong sense of ownership of the projects and intend to oversee the

operation of the new pool. *"We should. We are the people that have done all the work for this project."* (Working group member)

The wider community in Mutitjulu have now recognised the benefit of people managing their own resources towards their own development.

"Working towards the outcomes of the repaired recreational hall and the swimming pool [funded through the Uluru rent money] that will commence this winter are examples of the community being strong and progressive." (Report from 2011 Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation AGM)

Discussion of the findings

The outcomes from the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Rent Money Community Development Project once again suggest that people value services which contribute to their culture and identity as well as to their ability to live healthily and effectively in mainstream culture. Over the longer term, experience with successful outcomes builds people's sense of control of the resources and what they can achieve through those resources.

At the same time it is important to acknowledge the regular facilitation and support required from the CDU to enable these projects to go forward. It is clear in the responses about this project that the approach of the CDU and their interaction with communities, has been essential to project outcomes and to the ongoing experience of communities learning what they can do by controlling their own resources.



Bessie Liddle and Itjiltjari traditional owners' family group at on site consultation

Granite Mines Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC) Project

The GMAAAC project focuses on supporting the nine local GMAAAC Community Committees to plan and fund projects that address priority community issues.

Many of the projects funded under the GMAAAC Project are focused on short-term and tangible outcomes such as landscaping, restoration work, painting, and provision of resources. These projects are practical and valued by community members. This project however is probably best understood by comparing the changes in its management and focus over time.

Prior to 2008 the majority of GMAAAC funds were spent on vehicles for unincorporated entities. It is not clear that people had a sense that they could control these resources for their own or for the community's long-term benefit. In 2010 the monitoring shows that less than 10% of the total funding was allocated to vehicle purchase or maintenance. In addition more of the activities and projects under local control are starting to focus on developmental outcomes and increasingly communities are directing money towards maintaining and strengthening culture, such as the Milpirri Festival Project which encourages the interaction between Warlpiri and non-Aboriginal culture.

"GMAAAC money is for community projects, things that people need. It's good to use Yapa money for Yapa things" (GMAAAC Committee member)

The following examples provide examples of this new focus across several of the communities funded for 2010.

Yuendumu

Last year some of the funds were provided to the Yuendumu Women's Centre (YWC) for renovation work. Ostensibly this included replacement of the sewer and installation of transportable dongas. As a result they report,

"... YWC can now run from a culturally appropriate site, with having the resources and room to provide programs to the wider community which we could not previously offer due to no power, working toilet/sewerage and taps..... YWC is now able to run the community laundry, as well as training/program that will be set up with computers and sewing machines to enable members of the community to improve their numeracy and literacy skills alongside with other outcomes.... This now functioning space will be the future meeting place for all women young and old within Yuendumu, this lot has the space to support and facilitate numerous women's cultural events as well as community services."

Lajamanu

In Lajamanu the report from the school indicates that the funding provided for gardening and landscaping was undertaken in a way that recognises the authority and responsibility of the four 'skin groups'. The principal reports,

"... The students are learning in our hands on manner and are gaining knowledge of plant structures and their needs. Students and staff can see tangible results of the work as plants grow over time. Cultural learning is in evidence with community elders and locally employed staff working alongside the students. It has been noted that improved

attendance of both students and locally employed staff has been a positive outcome of this initiative. Students have even been coming to school on student free days to see how their work is progressing.”



Planning GMAAAC Projects at Lajamanu

Nyirrpi

The youth and media project funded in Nyirrpi received GMAAAC funds to construct a new music studio. As result of this construction there is now a considerable increase in the youth program and in the community interest in the activities of young people.

Balgo

In Balgo the GMAAAC money has been used to support the operational costs of the Kapulungu Aboriginal Women's Association. The grant to this organisation recognises the necessity of having somewhere for cultural activities and support services in this small community. The service is relevant and useful to people with participation increasing steadily among young, middle-aged and older women throughout the year. Significantly the participation of men has also increased and non-Aboriginal residents of the community are now also being included.

Yuelumu

In Yuelumu, funds have been granted to the Northern Territory Government Department of Health and Community Services for the local health centre. The money was used to purchase diagnostic and treatment equipment. Included in this was the purchase of a digital camera and printer in order to email patients' conditions to medical practitioners to support diagnostic consultations.

Discussion of the findings

There is emerging evidence that people are starting to feel more in control of the resources and take initiative around the use of those resources. For example, the reason people have wanted funding for motor vehicles in the past is because there is no sustainable community transport system in the Tanami. After a discussion about this issue, one GMAAAC committee member has identified a possible solution which includes making GMAAAC funds available to hire buses rather than numerous small organisations having to own and maintain their own vehicles (which as noted has been a huge cost to GMAAAC in past project allocations). This committee member has developed a draft proposal which he intends to present at his community's next committee meeting.

"GMAAAC is the only money they can get to spend on things like sport and Arts Centre... I'm happy for GMAAAC — everything is going good" (GMAAAC Committee member)

There is also emerging evidence that projects are contributing to long-term benefits for communities which builds their capabilities to manage in Aboriginal and mainstream Australian worlds. For example in Lajamanu, the community owned Warnayaka Art Centre has begun to deliver real local benefits, largely thanks to input from GMAAAC. The Art Centre received \$88,000 GMAAAC to contribute to their operational and staffing costs and help the Centre get itself into a good position.

According to the Art Centre manager, the key value of the GMAAAC funding was that

"it took a lot of financial stress out of the business and gave confidence to the members and board because they knew they were using Warlpiri Money, as opposed to being entirely reliant on government funding.....this helped to instill a sense of pride, inner strength and confidence in the community members working and painting at the Centre."

Through the Art Centre project, eight local people are now employed in either a full-time or part-time capacity, sales are up 98 per cent from the year before and local artists now have the support to enter national art exhibitions and competitions like the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards.

In addition the Art Centre has become a place where people can comfortably and safely get together, socialise and engage with their culture. This has meant that senior men and women are also now able to support the transfer of culture and knowledge to young people.

The women are creating dances which convey important cultural lessons to the younger generations, while the elder men are passing on valuable lessons about the traditional way of crafting boomerangs and clap sticks.

The GMAAAC project has been a challenging project, starting from a base that saw community members generally perceive the resources as being for individual and family benefits with people focused on what they could gain immediately and in response to the current needs. The development of the project that now sees greater emphasis on community benefit and long-term development outcomes has come about through the community development

approach practiced by the CDU which is focused on engaging people in assessing the value of project outcomes and identifying their rights to control resources for their own development.

The project has seen an increasing move towards activities which include both cultural and practical benefits for people. The project is now better understood by community members. At the same time the practical needs Aboriginal people in remote locations have for transport, communication and income are real and the project funds cannot address all of these. While other services remain poor and under resourced, the funds available from GMAAAC will be limited in what they can achieve.



Artifacts made by the Lajamanu women using materials funded by GMAAAC

Discussion and conclusions

Overall findings

The evidence from the four projects monitored in 2010 suggests that the community development approach utilised by CDU is making a contribution to increasing capabilities and capacities of Aboriginal people to be able to live well in both the Aboriginal and Western cultural worlds.

“Warlpiri triangle—that kind of thing is really good. We need to keep our language strong and culture. WETT is running a good program to keep language strong. Country visits really help to support culture and everything.”(Community member)

“WETT programs make it better for community. I am happy with school—because they take kids hunting and on trips.” (Parent)

“Country visits—we’ve been doing it really three years. They are really good.WETT can make it possible: it’s about enlarging people.”(Community member)

The degree to which any of the projects is able to make this contribution is tempered by the resources available and the way in which other services and stakeholders support and further enable these capacities or not.

This difference between the approach taken by the CDU and other service providers is evident in assessment of progress around the specific CDU objectives. In all of the CDU projects there was evidence of increased community engagement, that is more people are using the services in 2010 than previously. There is also evidence that Aboriginal people feel more in control of the services which are funded with their own money. In most of the projects Aboriginal people are engaged in the decision-making and in some, particularly the projects funded over the longer term through WETT, they are actively engaged in assessing the way services are delivered and the outcomes achieved.

When asked to compare this approach with that of other service providers, Aboriginal people were very clear about the differences in approaches.

“CLC is very different to the way that Government works. We don’t really know what Government want to do. Government doesn’t always work with Yapa. CLC has a very good relationship. They—Government—don’t have workshops and ask our ideas. With CLC they are very strong and make people feel strong. They respect Aboriginal culture. We really feel comfortable working with them. With CLC relationship is already there—we are just growing with them together.” (Community member)

“CLC still help us out with WETT meetings. They get involved and help us. They are different to Government mob. Government mob have new faces all the time. We know Land Council, some of them have been there a long time.” (Community member)

Aboriginal people are able to identify the value and benefits from the projects that are funded with their money. Increasingly they describe benefit in terms of the value for the whole community.

“It’s all good for the community—because there is no other money. GMAAAC is the only spending that can be scattered on so many things that people want spent. It’s not for personal things—the whole community benefits.” (GMAAAC committee member)

“GMAAAC projects help all the community. Help support things that are important to Yapa.” (Community member)

“Well I reckon it’s good because it’s for the community. I’m happy with this part here[shows me excel spread sheet of GMAAAC activities], how they explain how money is allocated. They do a good job. Money helps groups like Mt Theo but is good for things in the community. Things are better now than before GMAAAC. More things happening to support Yapa.” (GMAAAC committee member)

“WETT services are really benefiting the community, kids and elders and with jobs. It does really help everyone. They are using WETT money in a really good way, like Mt Theo doing a really good job of what’s been asked of them.” (Community member)

“WETT money is community doing things for itself.” (Community member)

In regard to the additional two objectives for the CDU work, the CDU has now established a monitoring and evaluation framework and is readily collecting information about the projects. As outlined in this report, this particularly includes attention to the views and assessments of Aboriginal people and also the assessments of other service providers in the communities. This is contributing to the building of an evidence base for the value of the community development approach.

Dissemination and communication of the information has proved more challenging. The research undertaken for this report suggests that it is difficult for many external stakeholders particularly those working for large bureaucracies, to understand the goal and range of strategies of the CDU community development approach. The CDU is working with communities to produce videos and short reports about projects and a communication strategy has been developed to further engage external groups.

Ongoing challenges

The evidence collected during the monitoring suggests that significant challenges remain for the CDU in its community development work. As noted above while Aboriginal people clearly value the outcomes from the projects including intangible benefits related to culture and personal self worth and identity, this value is not necessarily shared by other service providers and stakeholders. In addition, respondents suggested that some of these other service providers use approaches which undermine Aboriginal control and sense of empowerment.

“Government is too much of a barrier—too much manipulation of everything. They’ll say, ‘we’ll give you this but on our terms’ — there is no reciprocity.” (Community member)

For some Aboriginal people it appeared that this disempowerment can at times overshadow the benefits of the CLC’s community development approach.

There are also challenges for the CDU in having sufficient resources to undertake the negotiations and mediation role between Aboriginal aspirations for and control of resources, and the practical project implementation. As the experience from the Learning Centres project indicates, considerable time and effort as well as Aboriginal money, can be wasted on trying to deal with inefficient and disorganised bureaucracies.

Finally there is a challenge for the CDU in the degree to which it can document and disseminate information about the approach that it uses. While this is important to influence other stakeholders and also to engage government and others in supporting a community development approach, resources for monitoring and evaluation are limited and need to be utilised for project learning and improvement as well as for communication to other groups. CDU needs to carefully target its communication activities to gain maximum benefit in influencing others.

Conclusions

The monitoring for 2010 suggests that CLC should continue to support the community development approach utilised by the CDU as a way to work in partnership with Aboriginal people. The approach is contributing to increased capacities and capabilities of Aboriginal people to live well in two worlds. While this varies in different projects, there is evidence in all projects of increased Aboriginal control and engagement and outcomes which people value.

Finally there is emerging evidence that Aboriginal people are gaining more understanding of the different approaches used by service providers and others and are increasing in their ability to identify the way they want to engage with mainstream Australian culture.

Come more inside to Yapa (Warlpiri) ways and for Yapa to teach CLC in our own community and at CLC. Learning more angles of Yapa ways. Not only inside Kardiya (non-Aboriginal).

Perhaps as CLC and the CDU consider how best to further communicate the value of a community development approach, it is this Aboriginal voice and judgment which needs to be heard.

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Annex One – Review Methodology

Data collection

Features of the 2010 data collection process include the following:

1. Questions from traditional owners

In line with the community development approach, the monitoring for 2010 sought to get the views of traditional owners about what they would like to see monitored. What were the important questions for them about the projects to which their money was directed?

This was a challenging process. It was clear that traditional owners were not used to being consulted about monitoring and evaluation questions. In the end sample questions were provided and people agreed with these questions.

It is clear that it will be important to continue to report back to the traditional owners from the monitoring and to encourage their further engagement in development of the monitoring process so that the information is useful for their decision making and greater ownership and control over the projects.

2. Project monitoring

As for 2009, each of the projects and the subprojects collected data about activities, funds, target groups (with some attention to disaggregated data around men and women, age groups and locations as far as possible), outcomes, and any other significant influences. (Ongoing collection of this sort of data allows for some comparison from year to year about what the projects actually do and how they might be changing over time).

3. Understanding the projects in context

In order to better understand issues around significance and sustainability of benefits and the influence from external factors on decision-making and ownership of projects, a series of semi structured interviews were undertaken with community members and local community-based organisations in several projects locations.⁹

Data collection was undertaken by researchers independent of CDU, with experience in researching Aboriginal communities. The semi structured interviews were guided by interview schedules. The range of people included in these interviews is outlined in the following table.

⁹ These included exploration of people's experience of WETT projects in the four communities of Willowra, Lajamanu, Nyirripi and Yuendumu, the GMAAAC projects in Willowra and Yuendumu and the UKT rent money projects at Imanpa, Ulpanyali and Kenmore Park. It also included interviews with service users, families and service providers of the Dialysis Support Service Project.

Project and location	Number of male service users interviewed	Number of female service users interviewed	Number of family members of service users interviewed	Number of service providers interviewed	Total interviews
WETT Project					
Willowra,	1	12		3	16
Lajamanu	3	3		5	11
Nyirrpi	2	11		5	19
Yuendumu		1		4	5
GMAAAC Project					
Willowra,	2	5			7
Lajamanu	3	1			4
Yuendumu	2	4		1	7
Uluru Rent Money Project					
Imanpa	6	15		4	25
Ulpanyali	0	8		2	10
Kenmore Park	1	4		2	7
Dialysis Support Service Project	2	7	11	4	24

As the availability of people in communities was variable, the information gathered represents the views of those available rather than a fully representative sample. At the same time, 135 interviews represent a wide ranging reflection, especially given the depth of many of these interviews. This information provided a useful counterpoint to the data collected through the project monitoring.

Data analysis

Data was initially collated and then subject to a general analysis of trends and key findings by the external consultant. This first analysis was reviewed by the CDU staff and by the CLC CDU Reference Group. This additional analysis was reviewed by the external consultant.

Two reports were produced. One was an internal technical report looking in detail at project management and activities for the purpose of improved project information by CLC staff. The second was the production of this public report explaining the approach and key findings of the monitoring of 2010.



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