



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK 2021 - 2026







Cover page: (Top) Lajamanu GMAAAC Committee.  
(Bottom) Derek Davis and Gerrard Davis working on the Yeperenye trail project.  
Inside cover page: Women dancing at the improved inma ground on the anniversary celebration of the handback of Uluṟu-Kata Tjuṯa. Photo courtesy of Maruku Arts

# CONTENTS

1.	Overview .....	3
2.	Context .....	6
3.	Our Community Development Approach .....	12
4.	The CLC Community Development Program .....	20
5.	Community Development Program Strategies .....	23
6.	Planning for Action .....	28
7.	References .....	31





***“The money is not just for traditional owners but for whole community, and it is helping our kids and education.”***

***(Community member, 2019)***





# OVERVIEW

Vince Shadforth working on the Mutitjulu pool manager's House Project. Photo courtesy of Ingkerreke Commercial.

## THE CLC

The Central Land Council (CLC) represents the traditional owners of Central Australia. The CLC is a statutory authority under the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976 and a Native Title Representative Body under the Native Title Act 1993.

The CLC is committed to Aboriginal self-determination and control over the future of our communities and outstations, and supports Aboriginal groups to translate our land and native title rights into development outcomes (CLC 2021, p.8, 11).



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AT CLC

Since 2005, the CLC has developed a Community Development program to support social, cultural and economic development. A growing body of evidence shows that the CLC's community development approach delivers significant and sustained benefits for Aboriginal people (see references).

One of the strongest signs of this is the rapid growth of the Community Development program as people increasingly choose to participate in the program to pursue development projects. In 2020 the strength of the program was also recognised by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) in allocating \$9 million over three years to match Aboriginal people's investment in community development.

This is the third edition of the Community Development framework. It has been developed to support the program build on its achievements and introduce new ways of working to ensure the program deepens its impact as it matures.



Marika Davis from Amoonguna Community working on the trail from Emily to Jessie Gap. Photo courtesy of Tricky Tracks





Robbie Robertson with the Xtra Mile bus in Yuendumu. Photo courtesy of PAW media

***“When I started on the working group my uncle used to ask me to come and just sit down and listen to learn what it was all about. I think that’s a good idea, to get older people to encourage younger people to come and sit and listen and find out and learn what it’s about.”  
(Community member, 2020)***





CLC staff member Nick Raymond facilitates a GMAAAC community meeting in Nyirpi. Photo courtesy of PAW media

# CONTEXT



# CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Aboriginal people in our region continue to meet unique social, economic and health challenges.

As a group, Aboriginal people are more likely to be homeless and unemployed, more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and more likely to suffer poor health than any other Australians.

The Indigenous policy frameworks of the Commonwealth and Northern Territory (NT) Governments over the last two decades have added to these challenges by seriously eroding the power and control of Aboriginal people over important community matters (Roche and Ensor 2014, p.105; Maddison 2019).

Many government initiatives continue to be delivered from the top down, often by under-resourced agencies to which they have been outsourced, leaving governments disengaged from our communities and lacking implementation capacity.



Peter Braun and Terence Clyne working on the Ulpanyali fence project funded by NT parks rent money. Photo courtesy of Hardy Fencing





Founding members of the Warlpiri Education Training Trust (WETT). Valerie Patterson, Barbara Martin, Fiona Gibson, Helen Morton, Maisie Kitson and Yamurna Oldfield

***“I’ve learned a lot from WETT, I was a founding member. It’s given me skills and experience being on the WETT committee.”  
(WETT Advisory Committee member, 2019)***



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK IN ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA

Over the past 45 years community development approaches have been applied in Aboriginal communities in Australia with varied success (Morley 2015). Often initiatives are established using rhetoric of empowering disadvantaged communities to address their issues, but decision-making remains centralised. As a result communities are not empowered and outcomes are not sustained (Kenny 1996; Petersen 1994; Mowbray 1995; Wass 2000). Even serious attempts to apply community development approaches are not always successful due to particular complexities in remote Aboriginal settings. Some of these challenges are:

- routine marginalisation and disempowerment which can reduce motivation to participate (Hunt 2005);
- the recent establishment of many remote 'communities', which are often characterised by competing interest and conflicts, and in which individual autonomy is highly valued and responsibility to kin critically important (Hunt 2005); and
- the complex, highly institutional and legal context, together with the sheer number of government and other agencies operating in Aboriginal communities.

In addition, entrenched power inequalities can make it difficult for non-Aboriginal community development workers to play a facilitative rather than directive role (Campbell et al., 2005). The CLC's experience is that while these challenges are evident, it is possible to apply a community development approach successfully in this region.







## SUCCESS FACTORS OF THE CD PROGRAM

Research undertaken on the CLC Community Development program has identified the following key factors which have contributed to its success (Hunt and Campbell 2016; Campbell and Kelly 2020):

- Strong Aboriginal leadership of the program both by the CLC itself as an Aboriginal governed organisation and by local people willing to drive change.
- Development and refinement of locally appropriate governance structures that are culturally legitimate, effective in contemporary circumstances and incorporate regional and local decision-making.
- Appropriate planning processes that are a good fit and can be adapted and deepened over time.

***“We are proud of how we spend our money. If it went in our pockets, we’d have nothing. We wouldn’t have a footy oval that looks really deadly.”  
(Community development working group member, 2018)***

Christopher Dixon working at the Muṭitjulu swimming pool. Photo courtesy of CASA Leisure



- Effective facilitation of governance groups by capable outsiders who can act as change agents to facilitate informed and inclusive planning and decision-making, engage appropriate partner organisations to deliver on Aboriginal development aspirations, and develop communication tools to feedback to the broader community.
- An overarching commitment to action, reflection and adaptation based on negotiation between the Aboriginal participants and community development staff facilitating the approach.
- Respectful relationships between Aboriginal participants and community development staff based on equality, two-way learning and staff listening to and respecting Aboriginal people and their decisions.



Students from Lajamanu take a sunrise camel ride on a WETT funded school excursion.  
Photo courtesy of Lajamanu school





***“The government could learn from the way we work. We are living here; we know the life, day and night.”  
(Community member, 2020)***

# OUR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Ngoi Ngoi Donald has worked with the Community Development program for many years. Photo courtesy of Purple House



# OUR DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

For the CLC 'community development' is a way of working that involves a set of principles and a process that builds Aboriginal ownership and control, and strengthens groups or communities through the achievement of their own social, cultural and economic objectives. 'Community' refers to a group of people who have a common connection through shared identity, concerns, or geographical location, but may include differing power, status, and a diversity of interests. Community development focuses on genuine, inclusive decision-making and a planning process that promotes the inclusion of the less powerful and the disadvantaged.

The CLC understands community development as being a way to support Aboriginal people to drive positive social change that transforms lives now, and lasts into the future. The organisation is clear that it is not simply about community engagement, project management, building infrastructure, or the effective administration of Aboriginal people's income. While these may be elements or results of a community development approach, the fundamental focus is on the empowerment and development of Aboriginal people and groups. Ultimately it is about transformational development and self-determination.



Peggy Granites, Hamilton Morris and Ross Rockman at Tanami Downs. Photo courtesy of PAW





Utju school students participating in cultural activities.





# TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Evidence from the program demonstrates that while increased engagement, ownership and control has occurred within the context of community development processes, it has not extended into other aspects of people's lives and community governance. Furthermore, while the Community Development program delivers social, cultural and economic benefits valued by Aboriginal people, they are often short-term and not sustained or sufficient enough to make a lasting improvement in people's lives. In light of this, the CLC recognises that it needs to continue developing the processes and strategies it uses to overcome the systemic constraints on Aboriginal-led development and shift its impact from incremental to transformational social change.

From 2021 to 2026 the CLC Community Development program will focus on improving the way it already works with Aboriginal groups to support good governance and project planning and delivery, while also doing extra work in some cases to support transformational development goals.

## Our understanding of transformational development

We understand that to bring about transformational social change means changing economic, social and political rules and systems in ways which enable meaningful and lasting improvements in Aboriginal people's lives. Transformational development goes beyond incremental change by enabling innovation and bringing in different stakeholders who can help create new possible futures. To ensure we are working towards transformational development CLC will need to commit to multiple strategies that work across a variety of scales: from remote outstations to national policy (Madvig and Roche 2016). We also recognise the importance of working with local Aboriginal people to identify the best starting points for these strategies.





Trail workers Ricky Lechleitner, Brandon Hayes, Andrew Alice, Willie Oliver, Derek Hayes, Henry Oliver, Paul Williams and Wade Conway at the Yeperenye Trail opening ceremony

## BENEFITS OF THE CLC'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Monitoring and evaluation of the CLC Community Development program which draws on insights shared by Aboriginal participants has identified the following benefits of the community development approach:

### *Stronger remote communities, homelands and futures*

Locally designed and funded projects are making remote communities and homelands better places to live and delivering highly valued outcomes across education, culture, employment and more. In particular, projects are supporting young people and building a better future for the next generation.



### ***Control, ownership and pride***

The community development approach ensures Aboriginal people have control and ownership over the development process. This in turn has created a sense of pride in people's achievements. Working collectively also helps give more people a say in how money is spent and increases the benefit for women and children.

### ***Learning and capacity development***

Aboriginal people involved in community development processes are building knowledge, skills and confidence. Learning is embedded through participation in the process, peer-to-peer learning among governance group members, bringing in younger people to governance groups and knowledge sharing with community development staff who broker in appropriate expertise as needed.

### ***Reducing harm and conflict***

Community development processes can assist people to manage conflict within groups, for example by redirecting land use income to community development projects and setting up governance groups along family lines.









***“I think the  
Community Development  
program is helping make people  
stronger – it makes us stronger.  
It makes us happy to be doing more  
projects. We are in control of the process.”  
(Community member, 2019)***

Maria Ross from Atitjere with bush medicine collected on their country visits project. Photo courtesy of Children's Ground





## VISION\*

Aboriginal self-determination: promoting and supporting our rights to country, culture and economy delivering a promising future.

\*The CD program works towards the shared vision of the CLC

## GOAL

Aboriginal people are controlling the development of our communities and homelands and building a strong future for everyone.

# THE CLC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Chris Ryder working on a project at the Alyarpere outstation. Photo courtesy of Tangentyere Constructions.





Lajamanu GMAAAC committee meeting 2021. Photo courtesy of PAW Media

## OBJECTIVES

To increase Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control over the development of our communities, homelands and futures.

To deliver development outcomes that are prioritised and valued by Aboriginal people and that make a meaningful and sustained difference in our lives, communities, homelands and futures.





***“The working group is giving more power to Aboriginal people to be in control of their lives.”***

***(Community member, 2020)***

David Cooley, Clem Taylor and Christopher Dixon do CPR training at Mutitjulu pool. Photo courtesy of CASA Leisure



The CLC Community Development program will use the following four strategies to work towards achieving our goals and objectives.



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STRATEGIES

Janie Williams, an early childhood educator, at the Willowra Playgroup. Photo courtesy of World Vision Australia





Uluṟu-KataTjuṯa National Park traditional owners with CLC staff member Katie Allen.

## 1. GOVERNANCE SUPPORT

Support good governance processes that prioritise participant knowledge and engagement and strengthen governance capacity including:

- Support effective governance for the management of land use income streams;
- Develop group governance capacity through an approach that supports two-way learning;
- Increase the involvement of younger people in Community Development program governance; and
- Support Aboriginal people to extend control of our own development beyond community development working groups.



## 2. PLANNING AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Facilitate effective and inclusive project planning, design, delivery and monitoring processes that enable participants to address shared challenges and achieve development goals including:

- Facilitate inclusive and informed planning among governance groups to identify development goals and design appropriate responses;
- Provide effective project management; and
- Maximise meaningful local Aboriginal employment and training outcomes.



Lajamanu waterpark construction 2022. Photo Courtesy of Ekistica



### 3. PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Support Aboriginal groups to collaborate with other organisations and leaders to address shared challenges and achieve development goals including:

- Collaborate with other organisations to support groups to deliver projects that address their development aspirations and needs;
- Collaborate effectively across the CLC;
- Support governance group members to join existing coalitions, networks and movements to drive their own development; and
- Work with key stakeholders to develop networks to address long-term Aboriginal development aspirations and complex issues.



Tjilirra Men's Movement, Kintore July 2019. Photo courtesy of CASSE



## 4. LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY

Influence other stakeholders to support and enable Aboriginal controlled development at all levels from project planning to program delivery to government policy including:

- Share lessons learnt from the Community Development program on effective community development; and
- Undertake focused lobbying and advocacy work.



Kalkarindji multicourt 2019. Photo courtesy of Nicole Zicchino





### 1. Getting Started

Traditional owners or community members decide how much money to put aside for good projects that benefit the group.

### 2. Decide on Process

The group and CLC talk about how to work well together and how people will make decisions. Will there be a working group, or will everyone be involved? How long will they work on projects together?

### 3. Vision for the Future

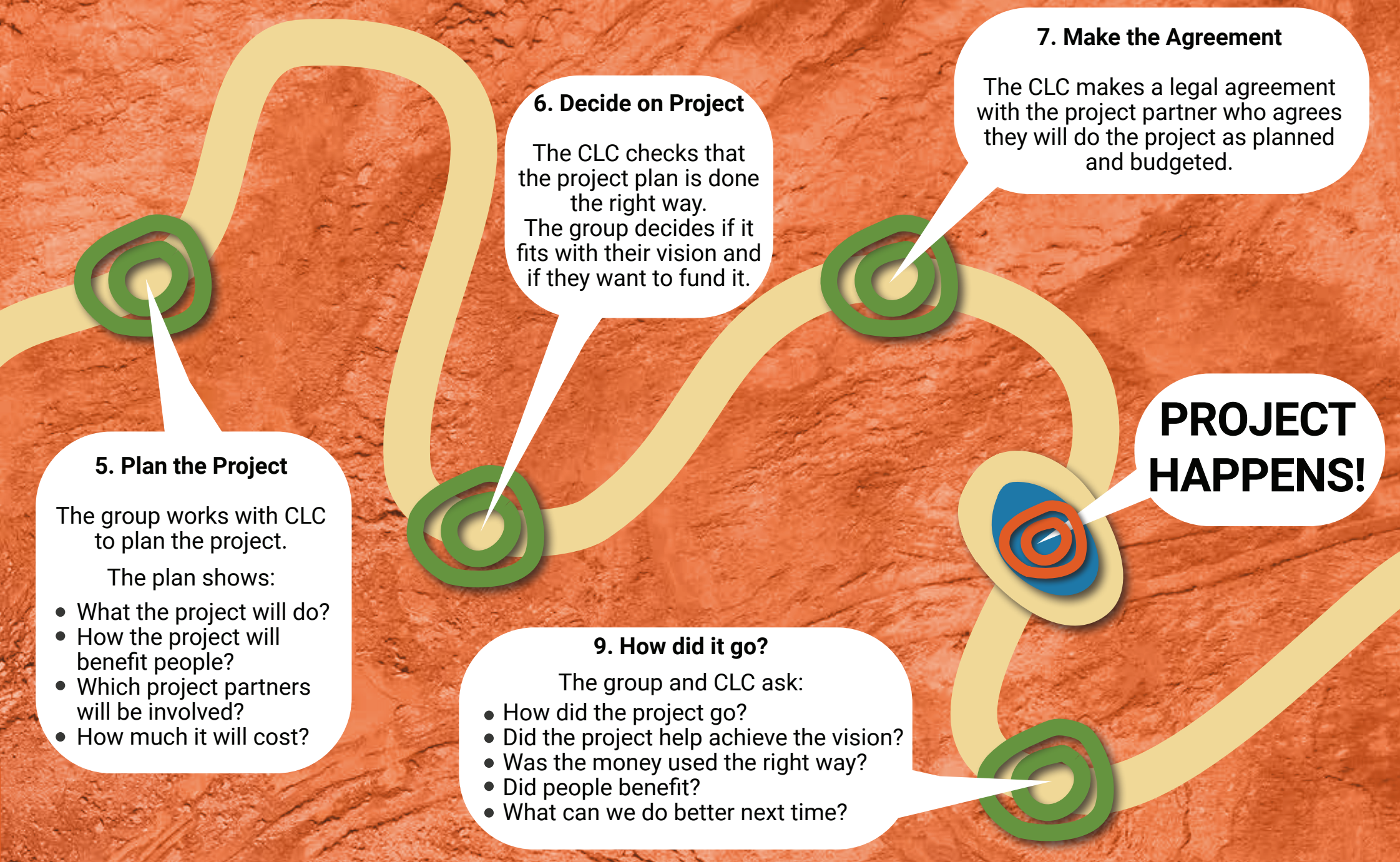
The group talks about their vision and the main areas they want to work on to make a good life now, and for the future.

### 4. Project Ideas

The group looks at how to achieve their vision and chooses the most important project ideas to work on.

# PLANNING FOR ACTION







***“It’s a two-way thing, we are all learning together to understand what is needed and how to do it; to reach a goal ..... We are working together, sharing understanding on both sides”***

***(Community member, 2020)***



Boys from Utju community participate in cultural activities on a country visit.



## REFERENCES

- Campbell, D., Wunungmurra, P. and Nyomba, H. (2007). Starting where the people are: Lessons on community development from a remote Aboriginal Australian setting. *Community Development Journal*, 42(2), 151-166.
- Campbell, D. and Hunt, J. (2015). Making use of payments: a community development model. In: Brennan S, Davis M, Edgeworth B & Terrill L (eds), *Native title from Mabo to Akiba: a vehicle for change and empowerment?*, The Federation Press, Sydney.
- Campbell, D. and Gyles, A. (2021). Central Land Council Community Development Program Monitoring Report 2019-20, Central Land Council, Alice Springs.
- Campbell, D. and Kelly, L. (2020). Central Land Council Community Development Program Monitoring Report 2018-19, Central Land Council, Alice Springs
- Central Land Council (2021) Central land Council Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025, Central Land Council, Alice Springs .
- Geels, F.W. and Kemp, R. (2007). Dynamics in Socio-Technical Systems: Typology of Change Processes and Contrasting Case Studies, *Technology in Society* 29(4): 441-455.
- Hunt, J. (2005). Capacity Development in the International Development Context: Implications for Indigenous Australia, CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 278, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- Hunt, J. and Campbell, D. (2016). Translating Aboriginal land rights into development outcomes: factors contributing to a successful program in Central Australia, Working Paper No. 107/2016, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, Canberra.
- Kelly, L. (2012). 2011 Report on the Central Land Council Community Development Program, Central Land Council, Alice Springs.
- Kelly, L. (2013). 2012 Report on the Central Land Council Community Development Program, Central Land Council, Alice Springs.
- Kelly, L. (2014). 2013 Report on the Central Land Council Community Development Program, Central Land Council, Alice Springs.
- Kelly, L. (2015). 2014 Report on the Central Land Council Community Development Program, Central Land Council, Alice Springs.
- Kelly, L. (2016). Central Land Council Community Development Program Monitoring Report 2015/16, Central Land Council, Alice Springs.
- Kelly, L. (2018). Central Land Council Community Development Program Monitoring Report 2016/17, Central Land Council, Alice Springs.
- Kelly, L. (2019). Central Land Council Community Development Program Monitoring Report 2017/18, Central Land Council, Alice Springs.
- Kenny, S. (1996). Contestations of Community Development in Australia. *Community Development Journal*, 31(2): 104-113.
- Kenny, S. (2011). *Developing communities for the future* (4th edn.) Cengage Learning, Melbourne.
- Lawson, J. and Close, G. (1994). New public health approaches among isolated rural Aboriginal communities in New South Wales. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information Bulletin*. 19, 25-35.
- Maddison, S. (2019). *The Colonial Fantasy : Why White Australia Can't Solve Black Problems*, Allen & Unwin ,Crows Nest.
- Madvig, A. and Roche, C. (2016). *Working towards Transformational Development and the Sustainable Development Goals*, La Trobe University.
- Morley, S. (2015) What works in effective Indigenous community-managed programs and organisations, CFCA Paper, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.
- Mowbray, M. (1994). Colonization, Local Government and Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory. *Community Development Journal*, 29(1), 21-28.
- Petersen, A. R. (1994). Community development in health promotion: empowerment or regulation?" *Australian Journal of Public Health* 18(2), 213- 217.
- Roche, C. and Ensor, J. (2014). Independent evaluation of the Central Land Council's community development and governance programmes, Central Land Council, Alice Springs.
- Walsh, F. and Mitchell, P. (2002) *Planning for Country: Cross-cultural approaches to decision-making on Aboriginal lands*. Jukurrpa Books, Alice Springs
- Walsh, A. (2000) *Promoting Health: the primary health care approach*. Harcourt, Marrickville





Ringer Soak GMAAAC committee Dwayne Jack, Lillian Sampi and Kylie McDonald discuss an office scoping and design project.



***“Community Development is a good way of helping our community to thrive and to try and look at ways to actually develop our community by having a say in what goes where.”***

***(Community development working group member, 2021)***



**750,000**

**square kms in Central Australia**

**24,000**

**Aboriginal people**

**35+**

**Aboriginal communities**





**CENTRAL  
LAND  
COUNCIL**

For more information contact CLC on (08) 8951 6367 or go to [www.clc.org.au](http://www.clc.org.au)