

The Central Land Council Community Development Program and the Matched Funds Initiative

INDEPENDENT MONITORING FOR THE CENTRAL LAND
COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
JULY 2020 – DECEMBER 2022

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LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY

Published by the Central Land Council
27 Stuart Hwy, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, 0870,
April 2023

Also published on <http://www.clc.org.au>

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Photo courtesy of Children's Ground

Back cover photo: Jinkaji TOs, who sell carbon credits for managing their land, discussing how MFI will help them to build a campground that will serve as an operational base.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Central Land Council's (CLC) Community Development (CD) Program aims to support Aboriginal people to control the development of their communities and homelands and build a strong future. The CD program works through Aboriginal governance mechanisms to deliver projects that benefit Aboriginal communities. Primarily, these governance groups fund projects with Aboriginal income from land use agreements. The Matched Funds initiative (MFI) is designed to align with the aim and approach of the CD program and support progress in specific areas. In particular, the initiative is designed to increase the allocation of Aboriginal income from land use agreements to community benefit projects, support the CD program to increase the impact of projects, and address income disparity between regions. This monitoring report provides an assessment of the CD program and the MFI over a 2.5 year period from July 2020 to December 2022.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection and analysis was supported by a mixed methods and participatory approach guided by the CD program Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Strategy. This included a focus on three case studies to elicit the views of Aboriginal people and explore the application of the CD strategies. The case studies were analysed together with project partner reports, CD staff reflections and quantitative data. Initiative wide analysis included project partner reports, CD staff reflections and quantitative data sources. A draft analysis was presented to the CD Unit for sense-making and further analysis. This report presents the authors' final analysis, findings and recommendations.

FINDINGS

- There is evidence of progress towards the CD program objectives using MFI income:
 - Aboriginal people experience high levels of ownership and control over MFI income, which is likely to be contributing to them having more ownership and control over the development of their communities, homelands and futures; and,
 - MFI income is being allocated to projects that Aboriginal people prioritise and value and the outcomes they are achieving are making a meaningful difference to people, however it is difficult to assess sustainability at this stage.
- The CD team has effectively implemented its evidence-based process and approach particularly its first two strategies of governance support and planning and project management, as evident in the case study locations. The strategies of lobbying and advocacy and partnerships and networks are also being implemented but to a lesser extent, in locations where group strategy and local context provides the right setting.
- The MFI has successfully incentivised Aboriginal groups to allocate income to community benefit projects with a significant increase in Aboriginal groups joining CD and allocating funds for community benefit.

- The initiative has increased the funds available to Aboriginal groups providing an opportunity for groups to fund longer term or bigger projects where these are prioritised by the group. There are clear examples of groups funding projects of higher dollar value under the initiative compared to what they funded before the initiative.
- The increase in funds available to groups combined with increased operational funding provided to the CLC to increase its staff base, also led to increased engagement by CD staff with these groups, with the effective application of CD strategies leading to increased impact.
- When several important elements align, bigger projects or greater impact can be delivered. These elements include an increase in project funds available, improved governance capacity, such as the ability for groups to establish agreement on priority projects and strategies, and effective application of the CD program strategies.
- The MFI has helped address the disparity in income across regions, with most funds directed to the lower income regions of the East and West. However, income disparity across regions continues to exist given the considerably higher income received in the Tanami linked to the large gold mine in that region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given the solid progress that has been made across the MFI objectives during this period, it is recommended that the MFI is continued. The initiative should be continued in time for the approaching round of section 19 lease money instructions, this round being an opportunity to further increase allocations to community benefit.
- Continuing the MFI is likely to lead to greater impact in the future as groups continue to build governance capacity and gain confidence in the CD process, which are important elements in funding larger projects and driving more meaningful and sustained change.
- The CD program should continue to oversee an approach that directs matched funds to low-income locations while considering strategies to further increase the amount of funds made available to these locations. This could include increasing the cap on the amount of matched funds available to each location and applying an increased focus on leveraging for these locations. Greater funds and engagement time should enable Aboriginal groups to achieve greater impact.
- The CD program should consider strategies to increase progress in Aboriginal employment under the MFI. While Aboriginal employment is incorporated into project plans where possible, further work can be done in regard to strategies that support results being realised at the stage of project delivery.
- A further increase in operational funds to resource more strategic CD staff work, such as a specialised Partnerships and Lobbying position within the CD team, will support the CLC to implement its full set of strategies.
- If the MFI is continued more comprehensive processes and systems for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, particularly in relation to the relevant objectives, should be introduced.

ACRONYMS

ABA	Aboriginals Benefit Account
ATSIC	Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Commission
CD Program	Community Development Program
CLA	Community Living Area
CLC	Central Land Council
CLM	Community Lease Money
COP	Community of Practice
EPU	Economic Participation Unit
GMAAAC	Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation
IHSSC	Institute of Human Security and Social Change, La Trobe University
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MFI	Matched Funds Initiative
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NGO	Non- Government Organisation
NT PARKS	Northern Territory Parks
NTER	Northern Territory Emergency Response
TO	Traditional owners
WETT	Warlpiri Education and Training Trust

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Central Land Council (CLC) has engaged the Institute for Human Security and Social Change at La Trobe University to monitor the Community Development (CD) program and the Matched Funds Initiative (MFI). This includes assessing progress towards the objectives of the CD program and the MFI. The monitoring examines the impact of the CD program's work over the period of July 2020 to December 2022.

This is the first independent monitoring of the MFI. It provides an opportunity to strengthen the evidence base and deepen the understanding on what progress the MFI and the CD program is making, and how they are contributing to change. This monitoring and the lessons learned can inform future programming and funding decisions, including how the CD program can progress further under its objectives and how the resourcing and design of the MFI could further support this if it is continued.

The report begins with an overview of the MFI, the CD Program Framework and the context in which it works before outlining the evaluation questions and methodology. It then provides a summary of progress under Matched Funds at an initiative wide level before presenting three case studies with lessons learned explored in the discussion. The final section of the report provides an overall assessment in the discussion section, recommendations and a conclusion.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

The Northern Territory has a large Aboriginal population that continues to be strong in culture, language and connection to country. The Aboriginal community maintains strong leadership, particularly by elders and increasingly with responsibilities being shared with younger Aboriginal people. 45% of land in the Northern Territory is owned by Aboriginal traditional owners, providing development opportunities as demonstrated by the CLC's CD program. There continue to be development challenges with overall Aboriginal employment being low, and a gap in Aboriginal health, housing and education outcomes compared to mainstream Australia (SCRGSP 2020).

Aboriginal people have experienced ongoing processes of colonisation and marginalisation with significant policy changes in the last two decades dismantling structures of Aboriginal self-determination and creating an increasingly disempowering environment. This includes the abolishment of The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 2005, legislating the Northern Territory Emergency Response in 2007, as well as replacing Aboriginal elected community councils with 'super shires' or regional councils in 2008 (Roche and Ensor 2014). This significant policy shift has eroded Aboriginal voice in remote communities and created gaps and barriers for Aboriginal people governing their communities and managing their own affairs. Very recently, there have been some positive changes in the Closing the Gap Partnership Agreement through the introduction of a range of priority reforms. Overall, essential services and development initiatives overseen by government have been fragmented, characterised by changing policy and stop-start funding administered by multiple departments without effective coordination mechanisms (M. McCulloch et al 2022).

The disempowering and fragmented policy environment produces a challenge for the CD program, particularly because the CD approach is based on processes of local Aboriginal governance for planning and decision making and partnering with local organisations for project implementation. However, while this interplay poses a challenge for the program, it also underpins the important role the CD program has played in addressing the governance and service gaps created by government policy. The remote context of many Aboriginal communities is challenging in relation to partnering with local service providers because there is a low number of organisations with the expertise and capacity to deliver projects or services. This can decrease variety of contracting options available to groups

and create an over reliance on a small number of contractors leading to the overloading of under resourced and low-capacity organisations. This dynamic can impact on results in tangible ways, such as reducing the ability of local organisations to support local Aboriginal employment outcomes.

Given this challenging context, the CLC recognizes 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 (CD Framework, p.15).

OVERVIEW OF THE MATCHED FUNDS INITIATIVE AND THE CD PROGRAM

The MFI provides complimentary funding for Aboriginal groups that have new income from land use agreements which they allocate to community benefit projects through the CLC's community development program. This report provides independent monitoring of the initiative from July 2020 – December 2022 by the Institute of Human Security and Social Change (IHSSC), La Trobe University.

The CLC and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) started the three-year Matched Funds initiative in 2020, with the potential to extend if successful. It provided up to \$9 million Aboriginals Benefit Account funding (ABA) to Aboriginal groups by matching their investments dollar-for-dollar (up to a capped amount). Funding for this initiative also included three years of CLC operating costs, including to employ additional CD officers.

All communities with new section 19 income and traditional owner groups with new land use income of more than \$50,000 are eligible for matched funds. Communities and traditional owner groups are matched dollar for dollar for between \$50,000 and \$150,000.¹ The CLC's Executive, mindful of the disparity of income from land use agreements across the CLC region and with commitment to promoting equity, endorsed a program design that allocates a significant amount of matched funds to regions with lower income. The Executive also resolved that three communities (Apatula, Canteen Creek and Mutitjulu) that received no section 19 income due to their land tenure would be eligible for matched funds. Finally, the Executive decided that two communities (Utju and Lajamanu), whose traditional owners do not reside in these community, would also be eligible.

The three main objectives of the MFI are to:

1. Incentivise groups to allocate income to undertake community benefit projects;
2. Increase the impact of community benefit projects through the increase in available funds by enabling the funding of longer-term or bigger projects; and
3. Tackle the disparity between the amounts of income from land use agreements available for community development projects across the regions.

The MFI is designed to contribute to the CLC CD Program, which seeks to drive transformational development. CLC understands transformational development as "changing economic, social and political rules and systems in ways which enable meaningful and lasting improvements in Aboriginal people's lives" (CD Framework, p.15). Transformational development "goes beyond incremental change by enabling innovation and bringing in different stakeholders who can help create new possible futures" (CD Framework, p.15). This involves working with local Aboriginal people to identify the best starting points to employ strategies that work across a variety of scales; from remote outstations to national policy.

¹ Accordingly, if a group allocates \$50,000 of its own money each year for three years, it is matched with a total of \$150,000 over three years, while a group allocating \$150,000 per year is matched with a total of \$450,000 over three years.

The CD program goal is that “Aboriginal people are controlling the development of our communities and homelands and building a strong future for everyone” (CD Framework 2021, p. 20). The CD Program objectives are to:

1. “Increase Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control over the development of our communities, homelands and futures”; and
2. “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”. (CD Framework 2021, p. 21)

The CD program applies an evidence-based approach of community development principles, processes and four key strategies to work towards achieving its goal and objectives.

The program principles are:

- Aboriginal leadership: Aboriginal people in control of planning, decision-making and development with access to clear and relevant information;
- Supporting everyone in the group: Listening to different voices and thinking about the needs of everyone in the group, especially younger people and women;
- Respectful relationships: Building equal relationships based on a two-way approach and teamwork between everyone involved;
- New ideas and learning: Trying new ideas, checking things are on track and learning together as we go; and
- Co-operation: Working well together based on mutual respect of diverse cultures and contributions. (CD Framework 2021)

The program strategies are:

- **Governance support** - support good governance processes that prioritise participant knowledge and engagement and strengthen governance capacity;
- **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;
- **Partnerships and networks** - support Aboriginal groups to collaborate with other organisations and leaders to address shared challenges and achieve development goals; and
- **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. (CD Framework 2021)

The first two strategies are relatively well developed and have long been applied by the CD program. The CLC is committed to further developing and deepening its governance support and project planning and delivery strategies, while also further applying and refining its two newer strategies in some instances – partnerships and networks, and lobbying and advocacy - to support more transformational development.

There are six major CD income streams under the CD program, the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT), the Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC), the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, The Northern Territory Parks Rent Money, The Community Lease Money and the Tanami Dialysis. Other Projects is an emerging CD income stream consisting of a number of smaller income streams. Relevant to this report are the Community Lease Money and Other Projects. The Community Lease Money includes income paid by third parties to traditional owners for leases over land under section 19 of the NT Aboriginal Land Rights Act. Other Project income refers to new and limited income from land use agreements.

2. METHODOLOGY

The standard monitoring period for the CD Program is 12-months, however, this report provides monitoring on the Matched Funds initiative for 2.5 years from July 2020 to December 2022. This allows for a timely assessment of progress before the three year trial is complete, while also working with existing annual monitoring processes to enable independent reporting of the initiative by the Institute for Human Security and Social Change (IHSSC). Progress of the initiative is assessed against the objectives of the CD program, as well as the specific objectives of the MFI.

The monitoring approach includes three detailed community case studies together with an initiative wide assessment of overall progress. Data sources include interviews with CD participants and community members in three locations, reflection sessions conducted with CD staff members, project reports provided by project partners, quantitative data provided by CLC, such as information on funding allocations and project completions, and a sense-making workshop with CD staff on the draft findings facilitated by IHSSC.

Each case study draws on qualitative data gathered from interviews with CD working group members and community members, supplemented by CD staff reflections, project partner reports, and quantitative financial and activity data. The case study locations chosen under the MFI were Titjikala, Urremerne and Papunya. These communities were selected based on having an adequate level of engagement with the MFI, while also offering a variety of contexts such as community size, geographic location, and funding stream. Titjikala is a smaller community living area (approx. 200ppl) in the East working with section 19 lease money, Papunya is a larger community (approx. 400ppl) in the West using section 19 lease money, and Urremerne is a homeland of seven dwellings that involves a traditional owner group in the East that initially allocated NT Parks income to CD, followed by various new income streams.

The CLC developed a list of key informants to be approached for interviews based on their involvement in the program, such as being a working group member or senior traditional owner. This was supplemented with a broader sample of community members who were invited to participate in an interview during the community visits. Key themes explored in interviews included: the types of projects, who has benefited; how the decision-making processes is going and how it could be improved; the benefits of the matched funds initiative and how it could help further in the future; and, the role of the CLC and how it could be improved. This approach of enquiry allows for both monitoring and learning. The questions were designed to elicit views on the CD program and MFI in each location, which included matched funds and other income streams.² Respondents were free to speak about the projects they had funded across these income streams.

Due to resource limitations and logistical challenges, interview data was gathered by different practitioners in different locations to balance gathering sufficient levels of data while maintaining an adequate level of research independence. The majority of Titjikala interviews were conducted by an external research consultant, supplemented by a small number of interviews conducted by the CD Unit's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Coordinator. All Urremerne interviews were conducted by an external consultant. All Papunya interviews were conducted by the CD MEL Coordinator.

² Different project funding approaches practiced across these locations resulted in some projects being co-funded with multiple income streams, and others funded with individual income streams. For example, some groups co-funded projects with multiple incomes including Matched Funds where it was beneficial to do so (such as co-funding a project at greater value than one income stream amount held), where other groups funded projects entirely with separate incomes where it was more straightforward.

Overall, 36 respondents were interviewed across the three case studies, 17 men and 17 women. Both governance groups members and community members were interviewed. The Titjikala case study draws on 12 interviews, a relatively even number of male and female informants participated (five men and seven women). The Urremerne case study draws on seven interviews. More men than women were interviewed (five men and two women). The Papunya case study draws on 17 interviews.³ A relatively even number of men and women were interviewed (seven men and eight women).

The data were analysed by researchers at IHSSC and presented to CD staff at a March 2023 workshop for further analysis and to discuss and further develop recommendations.

There were several limitations of the methodology:

- Standard CD monitoring and data collection processes are designed around the CD objectives not the objectives of the MFI. This limited the amount of data available in relation to Matched Funds objectives.⁴
- Comparative to the size of the CD Program and MFI, relatively limited funding is available for monitoring, evaluation and learning. This limited both the number of case study locations and the number of Aboriginal people interviewed in each location. The sample of three communities is very small relative to the total number of Aboriginal groups and communities involved in the initiative. Further, the total of 36 Aboriginal people interviewed across these three sites is also limited.
- Given the diversity of local community context, community history with CD, and community project priorities and income levels, only including three case study locations provided limited insight into how certain CD strategies were being applied.



Photo: Troy Ratara doing some planning around matched funds income at a Ntaria community development working group meeting

³ It should be noted that some of the Papunya interviews were shorter due to a comparatively higher number of community members participating in interviews, these respondents had less knowledge than working group members about the CD program and Matched Funds initiative.

⁴ Despite an intention of seeking a greater number of key respondents in the case study communities, approximately 12 respondents were unavailable due to competing priorities such as attending board meetings, medical appointments and being away on Christmas travel.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. MATCHED FUNDS INITIATIVE-WIDE DATA

July 2020 – December 2022 (2.5 years)



During the 2.5-year period the CD team conducted extensive community and stakeholder engagements under the Matched Funds initiative, a total of 454 community engagements were held. Engagement purposes included: presenting the opportunity to eligible Aboriginal groups; establishing governance arrangements with new groups that opted-in; facilitating meetings with Aboriginal governance groups to support priority setting; project planning, project funding and project management; and engaging with stakeholders to plan and implement projects.

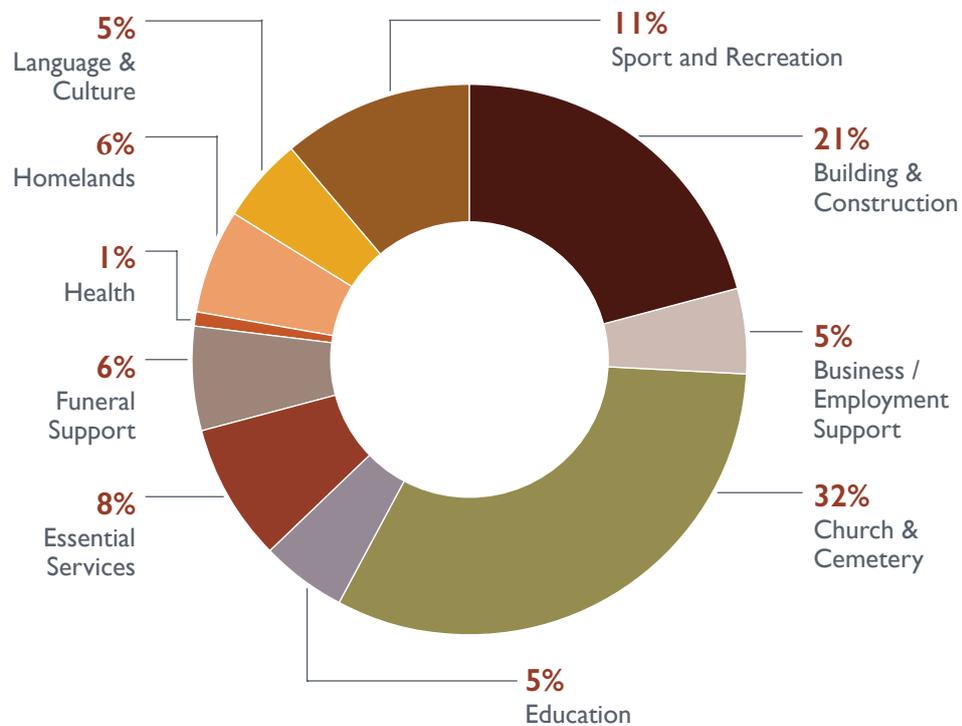
47 Aboriginal groups joined the MFI. This resulted in \$9,495,605 of the total \$9.9 million available funds being matched to Aboriginal group income. Aboriginal led planning and decision making supported 100 projects being prioritised, planned and funded at a total value of \$3,524,258.⁵

⁵ All figures in this report are inclusive of GST.

Projects

Aboriginal people funded 100 projects across many different priority areas. Figure 1 below displays the types of projects funded by percentage.

Figure 1: MFI allocations by project type July 2020 – December 2022



Church and Cemetery projects represent the largest project type funded (32%), followed by building and construction (21%), and sport and recreation (11%).

Of the 100 projects planned and funded, 23 projects have been successfully completed, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: MFI projects completed and reported

Community/ TO Group	Project Name	Project Type
Atitjere Community	Atitjere Music Project	Sport and Recreation
Pmara Jutunta Community	Ti Tree Roosters AFL Licence Fee 2021	Sport and Recreation
Nturiya Community	Music Equipment for Church Project	Church and Cemetery
Titjikala Community	Titjikala AFL Football Fees Project	Sport and Recreation
Wilora Community	Wilora Bus Shelter Project	Building & Construction
Urremerne Group	Urremerne Stage 1 Landscaping Project	Homelands
Kintore Community	Kintore Church Music Project	Church and Cemetery
Alekarenge Community	Alekarenge Wi-Fi Hotspot Project	Essential Services

Community/ TO Group	Project Name	Project Type
Alekarenge Community	2022 Alekarenge CAFL Footy Fees Project	Sport and Recreation
Wirntiku Group	Kumunu Outstation Scoping site visit Project	Homelands
Walpeyangkere Group	Walpeyangkere Outstation Clean Up Project	Homelands
Santa Teresa Community	Santa Teresa Basketball Court Lighting Project	Sport and Recreation
Tara Community	Tara Music Equipment Repair and Replace	Sport and Recreation
Titjikala Community	Titjikala Community Shed Signage Project	Sport and Recreation
Purrurtu - Plummer Family	Plummer family sports equipment project	Sport and Recreation
Laramba Community	Laramba Aircon Servicing Project	Essential Services
Aputula Community	Aputula Sports weekend project	Sport and Recreation
Aputula Community	Aputula Music Equipment project	Sport and Recreation
Mt Peake - Amakweng	Mt Peake - Amakweng Funeral Travel Project	Funeral Support
Mt Peake - Amakweng	Amakweng - Music Equipment Project	Sport and Recreation
Purrurtu - Plummer Family	Plummer Family sports Equipment #2 project	Sport and Recreation
Titjikala Community	Titjikala Community Shed Air conditioner & Satellite TV Box Project	Sport and Recreation
Atitjere Community	Atitjere Shade Structure Project	Sport and Recreation

The completed Urremerne and Titjikala projects shown in Table 1 are discussed in the case studies below, Papunya does not have any completed projects yet. Papunya projects that are in progress are detailed in the case study.

Aboriginal Employment

Employment outcomes under the MFI are currently low, with three Aboriginal people employed for a collective total of 93 hours. However, it is expected that employment outcomes will grow as funded projects reach completion stage given the way the CD program and Aboriginal groups prioritise Aboriginal employment outcomes in their planning. For example, building and construction projects make up 21% of project types funded under the MFI and often provide Aboriginal employment outcomes. Out of the 10 projects funded under this type, only four have been completed to date.⁶ While many of these projects have Aboriginal employment objectives, it must be acknowledged that projects and partners do not always achieve these outcomes. An ongoing challenge of the remote context is the limited number

⁶ This is according to standard CD project type categories which are more likely to categorise by project outputs such as "building and construction", than project outcomes such as "Sport and Recreation". This is a different project category than shown in Table 1.

of partner organisations and low capacity of many partners. There are also many barriers to employment under certain project types, such as construction where there are legal requirements for participants. The CD program has made solid progress in Aboriginal employment across the program, particularly given these challenges. It has been working closely with the Economic Participation Unit (EPU) to identify and support employment of local Aboriginal people in the early planning of projects.⁷ In relation to the MFI specifically, more progress could be made. The CD program should consider strategies particularly during project delivery stage to increase progress.

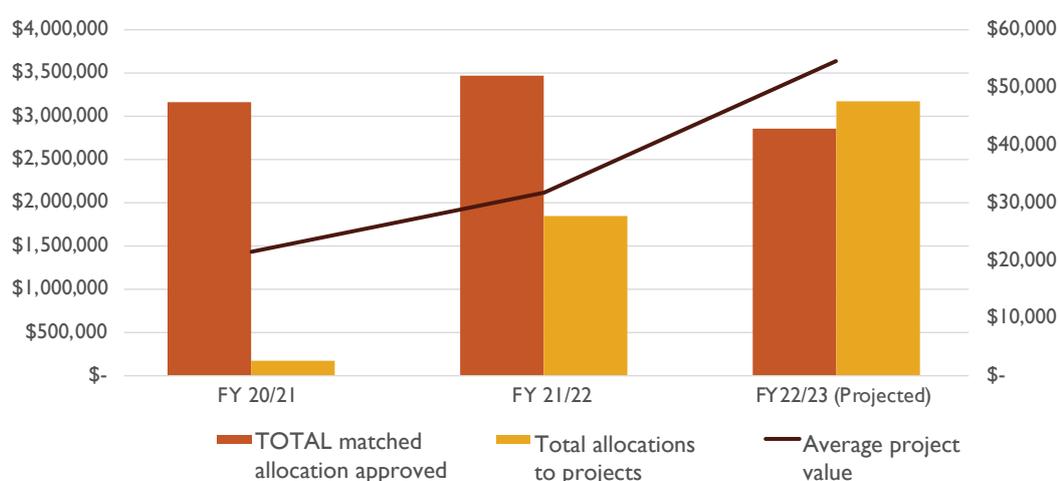
Progress over periods 1, 2 and 3

The MFI gained momentum and increased its progress over the 2.5-year period. These gains are apparent when the period is broken into two 12-month blocks (2020-2021 financial year; and 2021-2022 financial year) and one 6-month block (July-December 2022).⁸

The graphs presented below generally show continued increases in the following areas per period:

- the total number of engagements conducted;
- the amount of CD allocations approved to be matched;
- the total amount of funds allocated to projects;
- the average dollar value of projects funded;
- total number of projects completed; and,
- total number of projects under management.

Figure 2: Actual and projected funding allocations to the CD program and CD projects



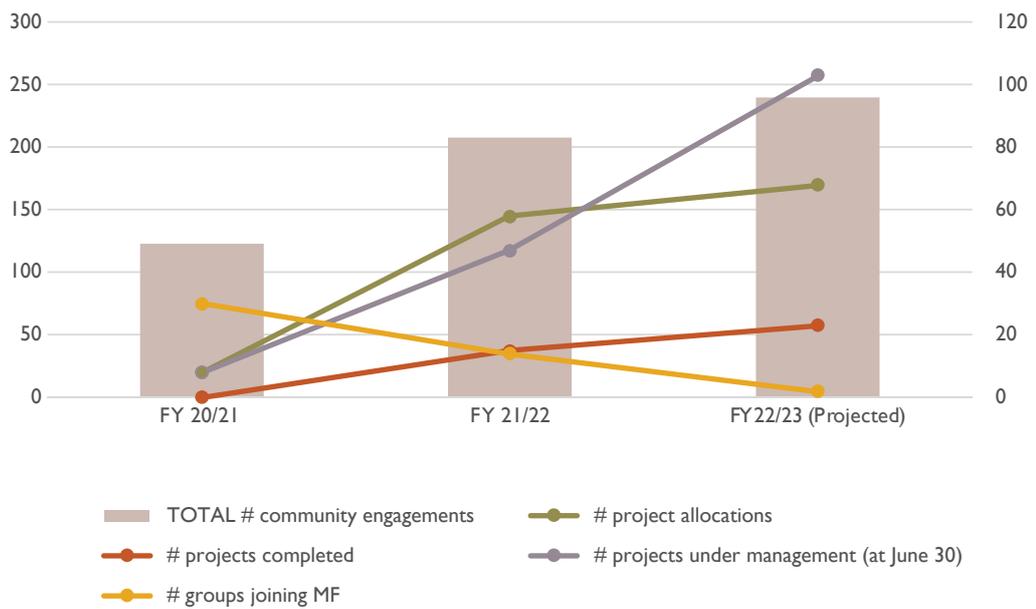
The above graph shows funding allocations increasing in the first two years, with projections made for the third period, which reaches the ceiling for MFI income allocatable. The average project value increased, reflecting larger dollar value projects being funded. However, it should be noted that the average project values are relatively small, with an average project value in 2021/22 of \$31,800, projected to reach approximately \$54,656 by the end of the trial.⁹

⁷ The Economic Participation Unit is a branch of the CLC that supports economic inclusion for Aboriginal people such as Aboriginal employment.

⁸ Projections have been made for the third period in graphs are used to show change over time, given the shorter timeframe monitored for the third period.

⁹ Projections are made on assumptions of continued progress over time and adjusted according to corporate knowledge about specific categories. Actuals are outlined in the narrative below.

Figure 3: Actual and projected progress across engagements and projects



This graph shows an initial spike in groups joining MFI followed by increases in community engagements and projects under management, while project completions are expected to plateau. It should be noted that assessing results of the MFI by looking at project completions during the trial may be misleading. Projects completed in a short time period, such as a small music equipment purchase, may not generate as much benefit as for example a construction project that includes a repairs and maintenance schedule in the design and so may not be reported and completed for four or five years. It is for this reason that looking at the number of projects under management, which increased over the first 2.5 years and is projected to increase further in the final six months, also helps assess progress. In light of this, progress is explained per period below.

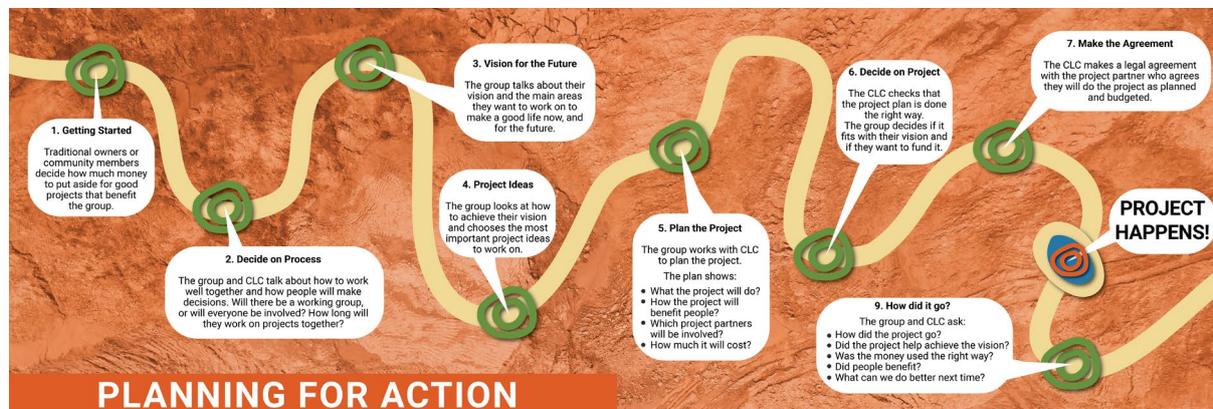
After a very high uptake of groups joining MFI in the first period, with many groups joining the initiative in the first year allocating three years of s19 income, there was a natural, steady decrease over the following periods as the focus shifted to planning with these groups. In 2020/21 30 Aboriginal groups (six traditional owner groups and 24 communities) joined the initiative and were allocated \$3,163,778 of MFI income. While planning work was in the early stages with most of these 30 groups, collectively \$171,950 incl GST was allocated to eight projects. The average value of funded projects was \$21,493. In 2021/22 15 more groups joined the initiative, bringing the total number of active groups to 45 with \$3,471,449 of MFI income approved for use by these groups. These 45 groups made significant progress in planning over this period with \$1,844,393 allocated to 58 projects. This was a significant increase in the combined dollar value and number of projects funded. The average project value also increased by \$10,306 to \$31,800 in the period. The total number of projects under management grew to 47, while the first round of project management cycles reached their end with 15 projects completed.

In the third and final period (July – December 2022) of monitoring, the number of active groups rose by two to 47 with \$2,600,799 of MFI income approved to groups, this brought the total amount to be matched close to the \$9.9 million ceiling. A total of \$1,507,914 incl GST was allocated to 34 projects. The average project value funded increased by a further \$12,550 to \$44,350. 18 projects were completed and total projects under management steeply increased from 47 to 74. These results demonstrate strong progress being made, especially in light of the period observed being six months shorter than the previous two periods.

The high number of governance groups joining in the first period, followed by increases in planning

and project completions in subsequent periods can be explained by the comprehensive and locally led CD process. The community designed *Planning for Action* visual (planning river) displayed below sets out the steps in the process that moves from allocation of funds to CD and governance establishment, to project planning, project allocations and project completions.

Figure 4: Planning River



Initiative-wide data against matched funds objectives

1. Incentivise Aboriginal groups to allocate income for community benefit

Incentivisation is evident in the overall picture of groups joining the initiative and allocating funds to the CD program. It is also evident in the number of new groups joining the CD program under Other Projects, as well as in groups reallocating s19 lease money to the program under the Community Lease Money Project.¹⁰

14 new groups joined the CD program for the first time, with 10 of these allocating other land use income and joining the Other Projects category specifically. 10 new groups joining Other Projects under the course of the MFI is a substantial increase on the 13 groups that had joined Other Projects throughout the course of the CD program. Growth from 13 groups to 23 groups in a 2.5 year period under this category shows demonstrates that significant incentivisation occurred.

In several locations traditional owners re-allocated funds to the CD program under the initiative (having returned to distributing their s19 lease income for individual benefit prior to initiative). The locations of Ntaria, Mt Liebig, Papunya and Amoonguna provide clear examples of incentivization occurring:

- Ntaria traditional owners allocated the full amount matched of \$150,000 per year to CD for the three years of the MF initiative (total \$450,000), after having allocated all of its s19 money to individual distribution in the years before the trial.
- Mt Liebig traditional owners allocated all of their s19 money to the CD program during the course of the Matched Funds initiative, after allocating all of their income to individual distribution in the years preceding the initiative.
- Papunya traditional owners allocated the majority of their s19 money to CD during the Matched Funds initiative, after allocating the majority to individual distribution in the years prior to the initiative.
- Amoonguna community re-joined the program in 2022 after not working with CD for five years, allocating all s19 money in 2022 to CD.

¹⁰ While there are 6 major CD projects under the CD program, the Matched Funds initiative is designed to match income under The Community Lease Money Project and Other Projects.

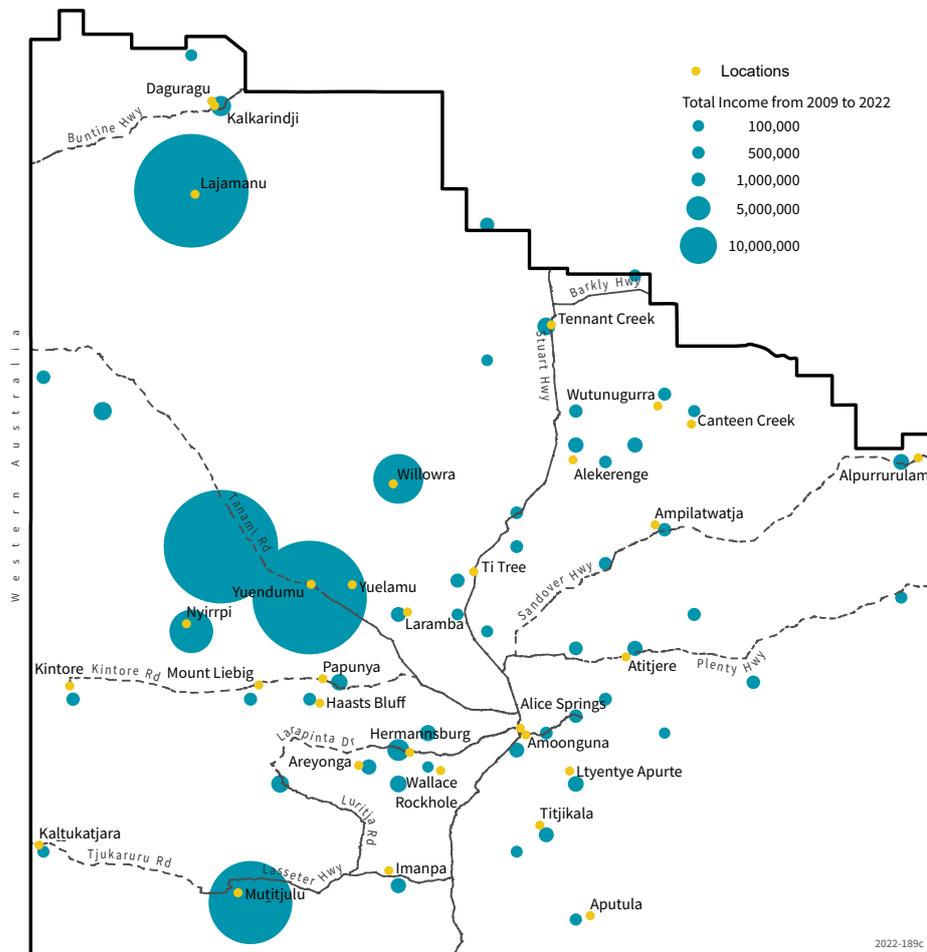
2. Enabling the funding of longer-term or bigger projects

CLC monitoring systems have not produced quantitative data at an initiative wide level in relation to this objective. There are also some challenges in assessing this objective without an agreed definition of what constitutes 'longer' or 'bigger' projects and the basis on which this should be assessed. Staff reflections and discussions at the analysis workshop indicate staff feel there has been some progress on this objective across the initiative and identified specific locations where it is occurring to a greater degree. Examples include Santa Teresa, Arlparra and Imangara. The case studies in the next section provide evidence of longer-term and bigger projects being funded in two of the three locations, as a result of the MFI.

3. Increasing equity across the regions

The MFI has helped address the disparity between the amount of income across the three CD program regions, with the majority of funds directed to lower income regions of the East and the South West, and a minority of funds directed to the higher income region of the Tanami. Figure 5 and Figure 6 demonstrate this progress.

Figure 5: Community Development income since 2009 per location



This map includes all CD income managed from 2009 to July 2022, including MFI income, per location.

3.2. MATCHED FUNDS CASE STUDIES

This section presents three community case studies where matched funds have been utilised. Case studies were conducted for Titjikala, Urremerne and Papunya communities. The data is presented around the CD program's two primary objectives; how the CLC program has supported the work, as well as the benefits of the MFI. Interviews from Aboriginal respondents at the case study locations is the primary source of data to assess progress on the community development objectives. Analysed interview data is presented for each case study location, the implications are then explored further in the discussion section of the report. Case studies were conducted for Titjikala, Urremerne and Papunya communities.

3.2.1 Case Study 1: Titjikala

Titjikala is a Community Living Area in the East region with a population of 200 people. Traditional owners have been working with the CD program since 2012. Titjikala traditional owners allocated \$231,782 of section 19 community lease money to the CD program, which was matched with \$231,782 providing a total of \$463,564 for community benefit. A total of \$202,965 was allocated to projects. There were eight community engagements with Titjikala throughout the monitoring period, with planning leading to the funding of the projects in table 2 below using matched funds income. ¹¹ Titjikala's average project value before MFI was \$46,302, under MFI the project value decreased to \$28,907.

The primary reason for the decrease in average project value is the timing of the initiative in relation to project planning approaches and project funding cycles.

For example, Titjikala funded the high priority and higher value Community Shed Project before the MFI commenced, while during the initiative the group funded several smaller projects for the community shed, such as equipment, signage and repairs and maintenance projects. These projects improve the management and sustainability of the shed, as well as its amenities, and add to the overall dollar value allocated to this priority project. However, they are categorised as separate projects in CLC systems. Another important factor is that Titjikala have been in an exploration and planning phase for other priority projects during the MFI, such as the Community Orchard Project. For this project the group funded an initial scoping report project.

This project is indicative of a comprehensive and strategic planning process that does not contribute to a high average project value.

However, based on the results of the scoping report, if the group decide to progress with the priority project, the scoping report may lead to a higher average project value in the future. This can be a result of the more comprehensive planning process that assists informed and coordinated planning and the leveraging of funds, for example. In the broader context, the scoping report is a strategic investment, also because it is ascertaining the capacity of the bore to provide water to two sites, the orchard and the sports ground, the sports ground being another priority project.



Photo: CLC staff member Luke Everingham and the working group discuss the Community Fencing Project

¹¹ Other projects that have been funded directly with lease money are not included in the table below but are included in the interview analysis.

Table 2: Titjikala projects funded with MFI income

Community	Project name	Project status
Titjikala	Titjikala CAFL Football Fees Project	Complete
Titjikala	Titjikala Community Shed Signage Project	Complete
Titjikala	Titjikala Community Shed air conditioner & Satellite TV Box Project	Complete
Titjikala	Titjikala Shed R&M Project	In progress
Titjikala	Titjikala CAFL Football Fees 2022 Project	In progress
Titjikala	2023 Titjikala Orchard Scoping Project	In progress
Titjikala	Community Fencing Project	In progress

This table shows the status of projects funded with MFI income. There were three separate community shed projects funded, the Shed Signage Project and the air conditioner & Satellite TV Box Project. These projects further equipped the shed that was funded with s19 lease money. The Shed R&M projects is a designed as a multiyear project to provide repairs and maintenance services when needed.

Progress on Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control over the development of their communities, homelands and futures

The majority of respondents spoke highly of the governance and planning processes that underpin the CD program, particularly for enabling Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control. Many respondents described being very engaged in the program and in control of project prioritisation and final decision making.

Everyone comes up with ideas. Some community members come along to listen. Everyone gets together, they work well together, listening and sharing ideas. It's a real good one—self-determination—we are making decisions for our own community. We go through Land Council, and they help us with it. (Male, working group member)

We talk to CD mob and they ask us questions about what we want to do with the money. We come up with ideas. The working group makes the decisions for things we need in the community. (Female, working group member)

Most respondents identified important planning and governance elements they value, such as reflective practices for practical learning and improvement.

It's good that we are making decisions for our community, seeing things happening. Working group members decide on a project. Sometimes TOs come and talk at the meetings. Everyone in the community can come to meetings. (Male, working group member)

It's been good [process]. We work together and listen to one another to do this and that. We ask questions of one another and ideas. (Male, working group member)

While valuing their engagement and control in and over planning and decision making, some respondents also found the length of time it could take for projects to be collectively planned and then implemented a drawback. A small proportion of respondents also found collectively establishing and following meeting protocol and community strategy challenging, such as putting rules around a community bus project.

Working group works well together. The members get together and talk to CLC. They listen well. I'm happy with the way it is going. The hard bit is when things take too long. Working group is good and people in the community understand it a little bit. I'm a TO and support it. (Female, working group member)

If we work together towards one idea we can make it happen. Everyone works on the WG together well. We think together. Sometimes things take a long time. Working group makes rules—it's a really hard thing for us explaining the rules. Some people listen and understand, some people don't listen. We had a bus before but young people wanted to go to town all the time. (Male, working group)

While some respondents outlined specific challenges they have faced, levels of ownership of the process, such as rule making and following, are evident. Respondents who are not involved in the working group, including younger people, also spoke positively about Aboriginal control and ownership.

I never go to working group meetings. But I think it's good that there is a working group with members of the community and they make the decisions about what community needs. The working group discuss with the community what people need. (Female, community member)

Progress on delivering meaningful and sustained development outcomes prioritised and valued by Aboriginal people

Most respondents were very positive about the MFI in Titjikala, the types of projects funded and completed, and the benefits the community are experiencing as a result. The Community Shed Project has been a highlight, particularly due to it providing local employment during the building process. Since becoming operational and being used for a range of purposes it is valued for contributing to a range of benefits across different sections of the community.

The shed construction—[project partner] employed local people. That was good and that's what we need more of. (Male, working group member)

The community shed—this is already built; it's good. We have community meetings. I go and sit there and listen to what people say. It's comfortable—we can make a cup of tea. It's a good community space. (Female, working group member)

...we use the shed for different things, like if someone got problems they can go and talk there. Or choir, if they want to sing they can go there. And it's a good place to have a meeting there... Also we have CLC meetings there and footy meetings there... Sometimes we have kids programs and they sit down and paint there. (Male, working group member)

Many respondents reflected positively on this project and the CD process more broadly, and some respondents described it in the context of self-determination.

We've got a place. We've got the key, we get to use it. Before we couldn't have a place for meetings. Just having ownership. (Female, working group member)

The School Excursion Project is also highly valued by most respondents, with the working group planning to fund it again in the future.

School kids went on excursion to Adelaide—that was really good. They went to a lot of different places—that was good for their learning. It's good for them to go out of Central Australia and learn about other places and things; better than staying in one place all the time. Makes kids happy and not bored. (Female, working group member)

The kids school excursion to Adelaide was really good. Kids came back and said "we had good fun", they were excited... We need to put more money towards more excursions in the future... (Male, working group member)

Titjikala have other projects in the pipeline, such as the community orchard.

Me and other ladies decided to get the orchard up and running. We want a community garden with our own plots... And we are planning to grow fruit trees, vegetables and bush plants that we can get out bush. (Female, community member)

Respondents spoke to the intended broader benefits of the community orchard project, which extend beyond providing local food to creating meaningful activities and employment for young people that can link in with local programs. This signals a commitment to making meaningful and sustainable community change.

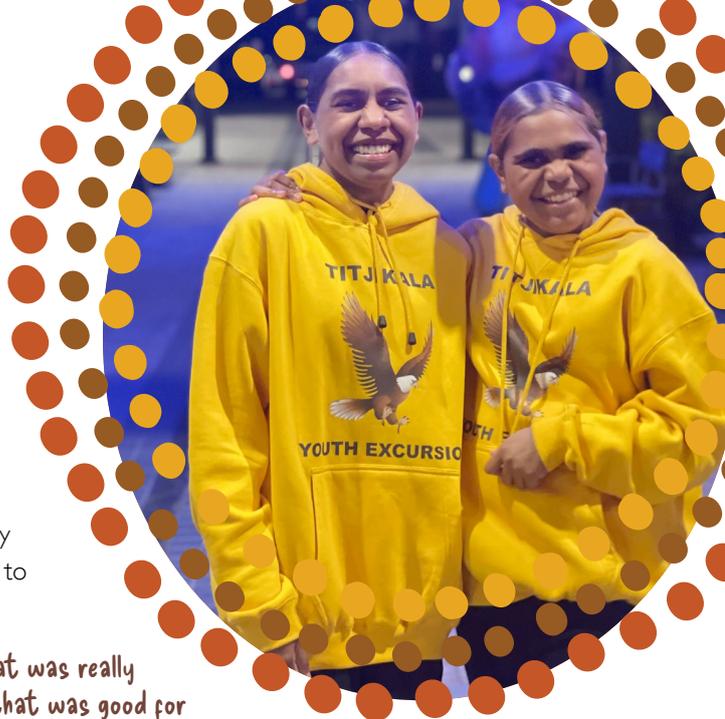
We want to fix that bore at the orchard so young people can work there. We want to try to start something for our community. That's the point, they [CDP workers] might get bored doing something here, they can go over to the orchard and work there. We need them to enjoy what they are doing. (Female, working group member)

Feedback on the role of the CLC and the CD approach

Most respondents identified the beneficial role CD staff play in facilitating the process and enabling Aboriginal control and ownership over planning projects that people value. This included the role of CD staff in convening meetings, providing project updates, facilitating a clear project planning process, and, importantly providing space and time for discussion and decision making.

CLC put up signs on Shire office and let us know about the meetings. We do things step by step; first things first. CLC person says last meeting we did this; we go over it and then talk about the next step—what's got to be done and how much it will cost. I'm happy with the WG and how things are going. (Female, working group member)

We have to have a partner for the projects. CLC help us get partners. [project partner] built the shed, and [project partner] help bus out with everything. (Male, working group member)





Land Council are proper good one in the work for the working group. Oh, they've been proper good to work with... When they come and we have the WG meeting they go over what's happened and where we are up to and tell us what's happening. It's really good the way land Council staff work with us. (Male, former working group member)

Overall, it is clear that the role of CD staff is highly valued. Nonetheless, feedback from a minority of respondents suggests that some CD staff could improve communication in relation to project management timeframes and funding processes.

CLC is doing a good job. They hold meetings with us and listen to our ideas and find partners and how much things will cost. Sometimes things take a long time. We were also talking about fencing for the community—we are still waiting for that. (Female, working group member)

CD staff needs to understand that's our money. He said it takes time for money to process—but it's already in the bank. (Male, working group member)

Views on the benefits of the Matched Funds initiative

In contrast to the other case study communities, Titjikala respondents generally had limited knowledge of the MFI. The different funding context for Community Living Area's applying lease money to community benefit is likely to have had an impact on this.¹² When the MFI was explained as part of the interview, respondents overwhelmingly supported the initiative and identified some large, high priority community projects they would progress if the initiative was extended.

Matched funds is a good idea; it means we can do more. Government should continue for more than 3 years. (Female working group member)

We need more activities for young people run by [project partner]. We need our young kids to be here not in Alice. We put forward ideas to [CD staff member] to look for a person to train kids here. There's more humbug if they go to town to do training. We need training in community. (Male working group member)

Government should think about helping us along, so that we can put up gate [and fence] for football oval and get water for the orchard and other things. (Female working group member)

Photo: A CD working group meeting in the Titjikala community shed

¹² Due to the deed of agency between the CLC and CLA's in the region, CLA's automatically allocate their income to CD. This is not the case for ALRA groups that meet more regularly to consider the information and options relevant at the time, and so engage in more detail with initiatives like the Matched Funds initiative.

3.2.2 Case Study 2: Urremerne

Urremerne is a homeland located in the East region. The homeland belongs to a traditional owner family group and consists of seven dwellings. The number of family group members far exceeds the housing and facilities provided on the homeland and the group have long term aspirations of improving and increasing the housing provided. Occupancy levels on the homeland fluctuate due to many factors, including work, school and health. Traditional owners have been working with the CD program since 2010, using NT Parks rent money and other income. Urremerne traditional owners allocated \$335,500 of Other Project income to the CD program, which was matched with \$165,000 of Matched Funds. There have been eight engagements with Urremerne, resulting in the funding of the projects in table 3 below. A total value of \$165,000 has been allocated to projects using matched funds.¹³ Urremerne average project value before the initiative was \$37,605 under the initiative the average increased to \$250,454. This significant increase is mostly due to the group funding a high value priority project, the Urremerne Solar Power Project. This project was co-funded with \$159,092 of matched funds income, \$115,908 of NT Parks income and \$220,000 Economic Participation Unit funds at a total project value of \$495,000. Aboriginal respondents attribute the MFI to making this project possible, with further funds leveraged by the CD program.¹⁴

Table 3: Urremerne projects funded with MFI income

Community	Project name	Project status
Urremerne	Urremerne Stage I Landscaping Project	Complete
Urremerne	Urremerne Solar Power Project	Practically complete

This table shows the status of projects funded with matched funds. The solar power project has been signed off as practically complete through a site inspection and it is delivering power to the community.¹⁵

Progress on Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control over the development of their communities, homelands and futures

The Urremerne group were highly engaged in the planning and decision-making processes over the application of their resources to community development projects at Urremerne homeland. Most respondents expressed a detailed understanding and ownership of project planning and governance processes such as meeting protocols, strategy development and implementation. Some respondents reflected proudly on their collective decision-making ability, including being in command of setting a clear strategy early and implementing it successfully for their own benefit.

The process is good—everyone working together and working out ideas, listening to each other. My family, my nephews and others all talk up strong. We get together in the working group to plan things, what people want. What helps is that everyone is agreed on making the homeland together—working for the one thing. (Female, working group member)

CD is a good process. We tell them our ideas—we are in charge of decisions about getting things that we want. (Male, community member)

I was at the solar handover... I was taught how to turn on the electricity if clouds come... It's good to be in control of things and know how they work. (Female, community member)

¹³ Projects that have been funded with other money are not included in the table below but are included in the interview analysis where Aboriginal respondents chose to comment on them.

¹⁴ The Economic Participation Unit is a branch of CLC that supports economic inclusion for Aboriginal people and manages a grant process for projects supporting Aboriginal employment.

¹⁵ The project will be marked complete when the project partner submits a satisfactory report to the CLC.

There are signs of Aboriginal people valuing the process and looking to continually increase their ownership and control in the process, including planning for the future by engaging the next generation in it. Similarly, some younger people are also looking to increase their role in planning and decision-making by joining the working group.

I'm getting old and want to put young fellas on the working group like my son. I always say "Don't come and see me all the time." Pass the responsibility to some of the young people. We'd like young ones like my son and daughters on the group. (Male, working group member)

I'm not on the working group but I'd like to be on it for Urremerne. It would be good to have more young people like me on it. (Female, community member)

Progress on delivering meaningful and sustainable development outcomes prioritised and valued by Aboriginal people

Feedback from all respondents on project benefits was positive. Some respondents described how the approach of the CD program aligned with their groups aspiration to apply their royalties to homeland infrastructure for long term benefit. They explained in detail how the CD approach is an empowering and cost-effective way to drive the change they seek, instead of pursuing change individually.

It's a great idea to use money for infrastructure projects. Better than wasting it on 2nd hand cars that break down. The working group got together and thought "why can't we use the money to build infrastructure?" As long as we have shelters to live in we can go there. I said straight away we need solar to stop spending money on diesel. (Male, former working group member)

All respondents expressed positive views on the projects funded. Most described how the Solar Power Project has improved homeland living conditions, provided health benefits for all through improving food safety, and enabled financial savings and independence from low-capacity service providers. Importantly, some respondents described how unwell family members benefit most from the improved conditions.

The generator was really noisy too. It's quiet and peaceful now that there is solar. It was wasting my food. You'd switch the generator off at night and the meat would go bad, milk went rotten, and bread would go mouldy. Now I'm saving money on food and better for health. Food going off was unhealthy—especially when you are on dialysis. (Female, working group member)

It's a big benefit also not having to get the diesel and pay for it. And of course having electricity on tap is terrific. It means we can leave fridges on all day and night and plan food. I used to have to do shopping everyday. (Male, community member)

It's made it more comfortable for aunties and uncles with diabetes. Like for Auntie [community member], who can now sit in the cool. Before if you put air cooler on using generator it would chew up the diesel. And you couldn't have too much on at the same time as the generator would trip out. (Male, community member)

Some respondents spoke highly about how other homeland upgrades have

Photo: Urremerne
Community Development
Working Group



benefited the community. The Urremerne Water Supply Project made an essential service less burdensome to access and reduced the community's reliance on organisations struggling to maintain the system.

It's been a big improvement—especially getting water on. We used to have to cart our own water. (Male, former working group member)

Water tanks ... and pipeline to the tanks made it better—better than having to go down and get water. [Service provider] used to go out there to fill up tank when it ran out, but we'd have to wait for them; now we have our own water. (Male, working group member)

The Solar Light Project has increased safety and livability on the homeland.

Lights are good to see at night... They help us see so we can walk to the shower and toilets at night. Lights come on at 6.30 pm automatically. We can see who is coming at night with the lights. (Male, working group member)

Solar lights work really well and a big improvement over using torches and candles to see in the night. You can turn them to 70% at night to keep power all night. I put my solar light in my pit toilet to see at night and avoid snakes. (Male, community member)

The group have also planned and funded a landscaping plan so the country can be managed more sustainably for environmental and health benefits.

With climate change its now raining three to five days constantly and the land is more prone to erosion. It took quite a lot of soil after it rained. I've been living there for three years now and see what's happening and the changes. The planning we did ties it all together. Doing the landscaping plan—it's got a lot to do with people's health. Family want trees everywhere and landscaping so there are more pleasant spaces. (Male, working group member)

Overall, feedback on project value was overwhelmingly positive, given the extent of work conducted, very few issues were raised. The main issues raised by a small number of respondents include identifying an experience of differing quality of client engagement across contractors, a small number of older houses having existing electrical issues the new system brought attention to, and light installation issues for resolution.

A few of the projects—the people who do them, the contractors, don't always consult with us properly once they've started. But at the end of the day if its finished and they do it well we are happy with it. [Project partner] who did the solar were really good talking with us. (Male, working group member)

Solar street lights are good, but mine doesn't really work. (Female, community member)

With the solar upgrade some of the old houses are having issues with electrical. (Male, working group member)

According to most respondents, development work at Urremerne has significantly improved comfort and safety standards, which have increased the amount of time family are able to spend on their homeland. Most respondents describe the broader outcomes that this change has enabled,

Photo: Project partner Photon Solar providing training for residents on how to manage their solar system



such as improving quality of life, increasing self-determination and enabling connection to country and culture. Furthermore, they describe how they have created a partial alternative to the costly, disruptive and overcrowded conditions of remote communities, with a comfortable homeland that facilitates emotional and physical healing.

The family have got control of their land. They feel that [in] Amoonguna government has a lot of say, but at Urremerne they are in charge... As soon as I go down the block I feel alive: the smell of the country and the wind in the trees—I feel so well straight away soon as I get there. (Male, former working group member)

We decided to use money like this so we could have our own homeland. And have something for the next generation, and for our grandchildren and our kids.... The projects are good for the families but some have missed out. We want more housing... It's good for us to go to the homeland because houses in Santa Teresa are overcrowded. (Male, working group member)

Every night we speak to spirits of country; we can hear them talking and we talk back to them. I feel healthier in myself when I'm out there I feel free. When I come back I feel squashed down. Like here I am trying to rest [at Amoonguna] and people are coming in and out of the door all the time. I want to be able to lay back and relax after dialysis with nothing to worry about. (Female, working group member)

Feedback on the role of the CLC and the CD approach

The CD program is valued by most respondents for providing a respectful, organized and productive environment for the community to meet, plan and make decisions that lead to action. Some respondents spoke positively about their ability to tailor meeting processes to their context, and bring a diverse group of decision makers together on an equal basis. Some respondents also valued the way CD facilitated clear planning processes while respecting the decision-making control of traditional owners.

CLC CDU run the meetings really well; they are organised with rules. The meetings are really good. I think we've had only one meeting that didn't have a quorum. Everyone agrees and generally we make a decision. Most of the time it goes along well. The important thing is we've seen action. It was really good to see the solar project finished; at the handover we felt that we've achieved something big. (Male, working group member)

Overall, the working group discussions and projects have gone well. It works because family set rules early in the piece. At the meeting people have to be respectful; no drunks. Kids have to go to school—they can't come to meetings. It's also a rule to let people have their say. Working group meetings don't always involve the same people, but everyone is always on the same page on the ground. (Male, working group member)

It is apparent that Aboriginal people have taken ownership of the CD process, such as through rule setting and establishing strategy, attributing this to the group as well valuing the approach of the CD team. Most respondents described the beneficial role CD staff played, such as supporting rule development, sourcing quotes, managing contractors and overseeing project implementation.

Photo: Urremerne traditional owners and residents working with Arid Edge Environmental Services on the landscaping plans for their homeland





[CD staff member] is always available. People are always contacting her even when no meeting. She supports working group and families to make rules. At the start we said the majority of money has to go to infrastructure projects. That has worked well for us. ... The best thing we did was make the rule—all money to be used for infrastructure. (Male, community member)

[CD staff member] has helped us a lot. Organising meetings with working group, sharing ideas, following up contractors and getting quotes through CLC. We don't want money just to sit there. We couldn't do it without CDU and CLC. CDU is good one, good way to use money. Money in pocket just goes to waste. Some people get money and have nothing at the end of the day. I'm happy with CDU and the way they listen and work with us. (Male, former working group member)

Views on the Matched Funds initiative

Respondents consistently demonstrated knowledge of the MFI. The initiative was described by many respondents as essential to enabling The Solar Project to occur which is contributing to significant change at Urremerne homeland. With the high level of need across the community, and multiple projects earmarked for the future if funds allow, the community hope the matched funds initiative is continued. Several respondents expressed an intention to extend the benefit across generations, which suggests a commitment to meaningful and sustained development outcomes.

I know about matched funds; it's a really good idea. If we didn't have that money we couldn't get solar project and other things done. Good to have funds to match ours to help make this happen. There is still a lot of things coming up—what we got to talk about. I want to say to government "keep putting money in to keep on helping us, match the money we put so we can have better lives". If we didn't have it we couldn't do it all. (Male, former working group member)

Matched funds are a terrific thing. We couldn't have done solar without it. They need to keep that project going. Things are getting better at Urremerne and so family will spend more time there. Everyone was out there the week it was finished. This is great, people felt, they were proud of what they'd done. We are lucky to have royalties—a lot of other people don't. With matched funds we can get a lot more done; bigger projects. Couldn't do solar and can't do landscaping without it. (Male, community member)

It's important to have more support with matched funds to make the homeland better. We think about the future—our next generation; our grandchildren and their children. We want things to be better for them when we pass on. I'm 54 and on dialysis. (Female, working group)

Photo: Some of the Urremerne residents and Mark from Photon Solar at the handover of their Solar Power Project in December 2022

3.2.3 Case Study 3: Papunya

Papunya is a Community in the West region with a population of approximately 515 people. Papunya traditional owners allocated \$458,550 s19 lease money to the CD program, which was matched with \$458,550 Matched Funds, making a total of \$917,101 available for projects. There have been 35 community engagements with Papunya, leading to the planning and funding of projects in the below table at a total value of \$285,457.

The much higher number of engagements with Papunya community in comparison to the other locations is due to the need for further planning of the Papunya Sorry Camp, Shower & Toilet Block Project and the Papunya Picnic Area Project. A significant planning challenge was related to the means of providing power and water and long-term provision and management of services given it is a community space. This challenge created a need for further engagements with community members, stakeholders and the working group.

Papunya's average project value before the MFI was \$64,952, under the initiative the average increased significantly to \$186,216, including leveraged funds. This is due to the group funding two priority projects during the initiative with Matched Funds.

Figure 7: Papunya projects funded with MFI income

Community	Project name	Project status
Papunya	Papunya Sorry Camp, Shower & Toilet Block	In progress
Papunya	Papunya Picnic Area Project	In progress

This table shows the two projects funded using MFI income that are in progress. At the time of interviews, contractors had not commenced works.

Progress on Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control over the development of their communities, homelands and futures

Many respondents described decision making control being held by Aboriginal people that were selected onto the working group on behalf of the community. Notably, some respondents reflected on how power is now being exercised more equally amongst working group members, compared to in the past.

The working group are the boss and we don't go to that meeting but we happy with the projects. (Female, community member)

The community actually being more open-minded and listening to others... Now there is not just one person speaking. It's a collective. There are a lot more people thinking that will be a good idea or that won't be a good idea. You get more discussions. (Female, working group member)

While most respondents value the CD program overall, particularly for delivering priorities and plans in line with community need, some respondents referred to the slow pace of delivery as a drawback.

Palya we talk about everything we want but sometimes it's really slow but palya, that's ok. Once we put words [resolution] it can't happen so quickly so we need to wait. (Female, working group member)

Progress on delivering meaningful and sustainable development outcomes prioritised and valued by Aboriginal people

Most respondents valued the projects they have funded because they are informed by community values and address priority community needs.

They help for all the community stuff like they are building sorry camp, kids playground and all that stuff. Community projects, fix them up. (Male, community member)

It's good to have all these things fixed for next year, it's making things better like for the community. This sorry camp, you can sit down at the sorry camp have toilets and drink water. Some visitors come to stay with Papunya people, they can use it. (Male, community member)

For example, the Papunya Sorry Camp Shower and Toilet Block Project is valued for respecting cultural protocols and relieving pressure on already strained housing and environmental resources.

I think it will benefit the whole community to put the showers and toilets there. Because sometimes when sorry comes up they can go there. It's for the whole community and they can use it when they are mourning there. When visitors come we can show them we have a shower block for them. (Female, working group member)

Sometimes they go in the bush but now they can use that not someone's house or the bush. (Female, working group member)

Most respondents saw value in the intended benefits of the Papunya Picnic Area Project, providing more equal access to shade across the community, and enabling families to come together in different locations over food.

That's a really good one, we need more shades like this one as it's gonna be hot all the time, when people come from the East side there is no shade. The areas need water everyday. (Male, community member)

It's good, they can buy something and sit down and cook it. (Female, working group member)

Yeah, you can have one family in each one, one family here, one family there. (Female, working group)

A picnic area for everyone, like even people that are travelling through, so they have actually got somewhere to sit and take a breath before they move on again...projects that are something that the community values. (Female, working group member)

Photo: Local artwork in Papunya



In reference to the implementation phase of these projects in 2023, one respondent referred to the working group's priority of achieving employment outcomes for young people, which has been built into project design.

For these projects we need to have young people working, they need a good job. This is very important for our money for next year. (Female, working group member).

Feedback on the role of the CLC and the CD approach

Most respondents generally spoke positively about the CD approach and how the CD team conduct their work, such as making sure decision making is a collective process and providing out of meeting project updates to working group members.

I think for me it's working for us. Instead of one person it's everybody making decisions. When somebody comes up with a good idea [CD staff members] don't just go and do it straight away they always asking and checking everyone's opinion. (Female, working group member)

I think what is working is everyone like [CD staff member] is going around and sitting down and talking to people, it's a follow up thing, it's good, I can't hide. (Female working group member)

It's a good way, Palya. (Female, working group member)

One working group member who is unable to participate in CD processes at times due to their health recommends more detailed planning processes with greater use of visuals, as well as more regular updates from CD staff.

I was going for a simple one for the toilet and shower, we should have had that one. I think drawing it gives a lot of explanation. Because I was thinking of a more open one. More planning and more drawing and more designing. Then we can go around and talk to people on the working group and show family the picture [designs]. (Female, working group member)

Photo: Papunya residents take pride in their community





Views on the Matched Funds initiative

In Papunya, many respondents were aware of and supportive of the MFI. Some respondents described the initiative as incentivising the community to allocate funds for community benefit, and reflected on greater project scope and potential being enabled through the provision of extra funds.

There was a diagram and [CD staff member] explained it. I think it's good from the government to give us that money...because in our case it's a lot of money... we got it yearly for three years. (Female, working group member)

I know about the lease money. Palya (good) the government is still supporting us and some money goes in as lease money and we put it for projects. We talked about this [Matched Funds] and I heard about it for lease money. I think that's a good idea the matching one. (Female, working group member)

Getting the Matched Funds, it means it gives us more options for projects and more projects to see happening for community. When people [the community] talk about projects it wouldn't have happened without this money. Community knows what they want after designing. (Female, working group)

One respondent also spoke to the changes he hopes to see in the community in the future through CD.

I'd like to see a lot of changes with this community. I have been a ranger here since 2010. I was the first one to put my hand up back then. I'd like to see opportunities with tourism [and] fixing up our outstation so we can create employment for our young people. (Male, working group member)

Photo: Papunya CD working group members Punata Stockman, Dalton McDonald, Sammy Butcher Isobel Gorey, Josephine Kutungka, Linda Allen, and Terence Abbott and CLC staff member Bec Osei-Agyemen

4. DISCUSSION

The MFI objectives are designed to align with the CLC CD Program goal and objectives supported by the CD approach. This section discusses progress towards the two CD program objectives and the extent to which the CD approach and strategies have supported this. It then discusses overall progress towards the three specific MFI objectives. Recommendations are provided throughout the discussion and presented together before the conclusion.

4.1. CONTRIBUTION TO CD PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Aboriginal people's feedback from the case study locations, combined with other program data, provide evidence of the CD program progressing its objectives, and the MFI contributing to this. Monitoring has found that Aboriginal people are very engaged and have ownership and control of the development process, this lays the foundation for broader Aboriginal ownership and control of their homelands, communities and futures. In terms of supporting ownership and control at this broader community or homeland level, the case studies suggest that most progress was made at Urremerne. While multiple factors are likely to contribute to this, it may be partly due to Aboriginal homelands, with their smaller and possibly more cohesive populations, being contexts better suited to local control than larger and more complex communities. To further strengthen Aboriginal ownership and control, particularly in large and complex communities, the CLC will increasingly need to apply its partnerships and networks and lobbying and advocacy strategies. Doing so has the potential to extend Aboriginal control beyond the resources of the group and funds leveraged into transforming local, regional and national systems. The CLC is committed to strategically applying these strategies with Aboriginal groups that are committed to doing this additional work, further application of these strategies will strengthen progress in this objective area.

Aboriginal people highly value the projects that have been prioritised and funded under the MFI. Further, of the projects that are under management or completed, it is also clear that Aboriginal people value the development outcomes being delivered. Given the consistent application of the CD process across locations, it is expected that as funded projects continue to reach the end of the project management cycle development outcomes prioritised and valued by Aboriginal people will continue to be delivered. The extent to which these projects have or will lead to meaningful and sustainable outcomes is more difficult to assess and differs in location and depends on context. For example, the Titjikala Community Shed Project is providing a range of benefits across the community and the Solar Power Project in Urremerne is providing tangible benefits to homeland residents. Planning and project management approaches that support sustainability are evident in these projects, such as resident training in the operation of technical equipment and repairs and maintenance schedules. Broader sustainability will depend on continued application of the CD process, and successful application of the partnerships and networks and lobbying and advocacy strategies. For example, addressing gaps and barriers in the system by influencing how other organisations operate, such as homeland service providers and government agencies.

In their own terms, Aboriginal respondents consistently describe the program approach, particularly the strategies of governance support and planning and project management, as key contributing factors to progress under these objectives. There was less evidence of the strategies of partnerships and networks and lobbying and advocacy being applied in the case study locations. However, other data sources indicate that these strategies are being applied effectively in some other locations under

the MFI, such as with Atitjere, Wirtiku and Imangara groups.¹⁶ It is important to acknowledge that the local context unique to each community affects the degree to which these strategies can be usefully applied, as well as the CLC being adequately resourced to do this additional work. At a program level, the roll out of the MFI demonstrates strong progress made by the CD program in transformational development as a result of the ongoing application of the lobbying and advocacy strategy. Under this initiative a significant amount of external funding has been effectively directed to Aboriginal controlled governance groups and allocated to community benefit projects prioritised and valued by Aboriginal people.

Given the challenging context of community development in remote Aboriginal communities, the progress the CD program continues to make in delivering development outcomes with Aboriginal groups remains significant. However, the CD program could be more impactful in supporting transformational development if it is resourced to strategically and systematically apply its strategies of partnerships and networks, and lobbying and advocacy.

Recommendations:

- In order to consolidate and increase progress in each objective area and contribute to the program goal, the matched funds initiative should be extended.
- The CLC should continue to work towards strategically and systematically applying its comprehensive approach, including all four program strategies.
- To deliver on its overall goal, the CD program needs to further operationalise its transformational agenda, which requires additional operational resourcing. This may be most effectively supported through the creation of a specialised position within the CD team. Particularly a position focused on supporting strategic partnerships and networks and lobbying and advocacy work across the program.

¹⁶ For example, Atitjere's identified priority of providing dialysis services in their community at a cost greater than their funding led to the application of these strategies, with CD staff supporting the group to write letters to a minister, engage with key stakeholders and leverage funds.

Photo: Santa Teresa
Basketball Court Lighting
Project



4.2. PROGRESS ON MATCHED FUNDS INITIATIVE OBJECTIVES

The CLC has applied significant resources to the MFI, with more community engagements occurring for this initiative than for any other CD income stream during this monitoring period. Analysis over the 2.5-year period demonstrates substantial progress; from the many Aboriginal groups joining the initiative, to establishing governance groups, developing meeting protocols and group strategy, followed by completing detailed project planning, and, overseeing projects to completion. This section outlines progress on the MFI objectives.

1. Incentivise groups to allocate income to undertake community benefit projects

Strong progress has been made on this objective with both an increase in new Aboriginal groups joining the CD program and in groups re-allocating funds to CD after several years of allocating funds to individual distribution. This has increased the allocation of s19 lease money and other land use income to undertake community benefit projects. Given this progress in incentivisation in relation to s19 lease money, if the initiative is continued it would be opportunistic to be able to offer matched funds before the MFI open before the approaching round of section 19 lease money instructions.

The significant increase in uptake of groups and allocation of funds to CD has been supported by multiple key factors, including the incentive of government financially matching group allocations, concerted engagement effort by the CD program to present the option to potential groups, and the CD program being known and trusted by many Aboriginal people after 18 years of operation.

Given the complexity of the context and the comprehensive and ongoing approach that is needed to support meaningful and sustainable change within this context, adequate community engagement and time is needed to support increased governance capacity and CD confidence, particularly for new groups. Continuing to work with the Aboriginal groups that joined the CD program under this initiative will enable the CLC to build on the progress made to date. This will help extend Aboriginal control and ownership and support development outcomes to be more meaningful and sustainable.

Recommendations:

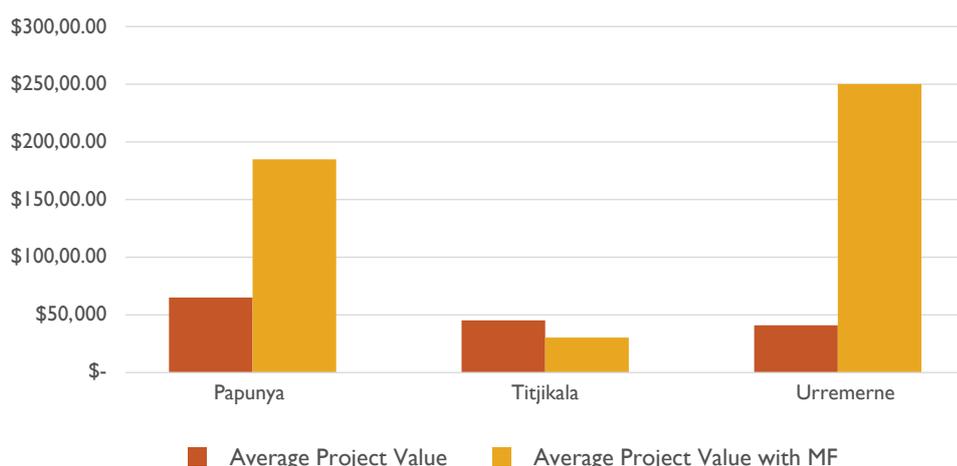
- Amend the parameters of the initiative to enable the CD program to engage with groups that joined under this phase of the initiative for extended periods of time and at deeper levels. Adequate project funds and staff resourcing would be needed.
- Continue the initiative in a timely manner so that the MFI is open to groups for the approaching round of section 19 lease money instructions.

2. Increase the impact of community benefit projects through the increase in available funds by enabling the funding of longer-term or bigger projects

Progress on this objective is more difficult to assess, largely because CLC project management and monitoring systems are not set up to efficiently capture and generate data on the dollar value and duration of funded projects. However, there is some evidence that the increase in funds available to Aboriginal groups has made the funding of longer term or bigger projects possible under the MFI in some cases. Staff reflections and discussions at the analysis workshop suggest that this has occurred in certain locations such as Santa Teresa, Arlparra and Imangara.

Quantitative data was provided by the CLC for the case study locations in the form of change in average project value before and during the initiative in each location.

Figure 7: Average project values (\$) at the case study locations (including leveraged funds)



There is evidence of higher value projects being funded in two of the three locations with the average project value for both Papunya and Urremerne increasing significantly. However, the decrease in average project value seen at Titjikala demonstrates that average project value is influenced by multiple factors and not just income levels, such as group priorities and project planning cycles as described in the Titjikala case study. While average project value is one useful way to assess this objective, the development process is complex with multiple factors contributing to results.

Triangulating the data, the significant increase in average project value at Urremerne is a result of increased project funds being available to the group, the groups ability to establish agreement on a priority project, and effective application of CD strategies by the program including leveraging funds for the project. It is the alignment of these elements that lead to significant results in terms of this objective. Most of these elements were found to be in alignment at Papunya, which also showed a significant increase in average project value.

The degree to which this objective enabled change may have been limited by its parameters, such as the cap on total amount of funds matched. For many groups, the total available funds may still be insufficient to manage multiple community priorities while also funding bigger projects. Indeed, many groups have had to manage their aspirations and have earmarked projects in the case they are eligible for matched funds in the future. There are many examples of this in the case studies, Urremerne have further plans for infrastructure development and Titjikala endeavour to operate a community orchard and provide training programs for young people.

While the MFI contributed to results in terms of this objective, it should be noted that the CD programs ability to successfully leverage funds also increased the total budget available for groups to enable the funding of bigger projects. In relation to factors other than the amount of income that influence projects funded, improvements in group strategy setting and project design skills can lead to the funding of bigger projects. Capacity development in this area can be made by engagement with the CD program. Over time, groups often build trust and confidence in the program, enabling them



Photo: Michael Julama Price, Mark Corbett and Michael Jabiard at the new Wilora bus shelter.

to set their targets of change higher and fund bigger projects. For this reason, the time period of the initiative is a limitation particularly for new groups that joined the program.

Another important factor that influences the funding of bigger projects, is the capacity of CD staff to effectively apply the CD strategies of governance support, planning and project management, partnerships and networks and lobbying and advocacy. There is evidence in staff reflection sessions and the three case studies that the strategies of governance support and planning and project management have been effectively applied. However, thinking beyond project size to impact more broadly, as already stated, there is room for the CD team to further apply its strategies of partnerships and networks and lobbying and advocacy to progress further in transformational change. There are good examples of these strategies already being used, such as in leveraging funds, however the CD program can further extend impact by addressing the barriers and limitations, or creating new opportunities, in the system.

Resourcing for CD staff is insufficient in the context of elevating impact, such as funding bigger projects and progressing systems change. Deep planning and governance work is required to support strategy and project design elevation at the group level, and further work is required to build new partnerships and networks and conduct lobbying and advocacy more strategically at the system level.

Recommendations:

- The MFI should be continued and the parameters amended to focus on providing more time for Aboriginal groups who have joined the program to increase their CD capacity and plan towards funding bigger projects over time. This would be supported by an increase in funds available to active groups.
- Resourcing of the CD program should be increased, with the resourcing of a specialised Partnerships and Advocacy Officer prioritised.
- Increased resourcing for more comprehensive processes and systems for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, is recommended, including a CD program database.

3. Income disparity

The MFI has helped address the disparity between the amount of income across regions, with the majority of funds directed to lower income regions of the East and the West, and a minority of funds directed to the higher income region of the Tanami.

While matched funds have effectively been directed to lower income regions, the income disparity across regions continues to exist as the income gap is greater than the amount of matched funds provided. This in no way diminishes the important contribution that the MFI has made in the context of specific locations, particularly for very low-income locations that have been incentivised to join the CD program and been able to double their community development budgets over a three-year period. It is also important to note that the CD program's ability to leverage funds from other sources to support groups with low income to fund projects of higher value further addressed income limitations.

Recommendations:

- The CD program should continue to oversee an approach that directs matched funds to low-income locations and seek to increase the amount of funds made available for these locations. This could include increasing the amount of matched funds available to each location and an increased focus on leveraging funds.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The MFI should be continued given the substantial progress made in this period on MFI and CD program objectives, and the strong foundation this has laid for further development impact in the future. It should be continued in a timely manner so that the MFI is open to groups for the approaching round of section 19 lease money instructions.
- To achieve more in each CD objective area and contribute to the broader goal of the program the MFI should be extended with a focus on continuing to apply the CLC's comprehensive CD approach, including strategic and systematic application of the four CD strategies.
- The parameters of the initiative should be amended to enable the CD program to engage with new groups for extended periods of time and at deeper levels. This would enable new groups to increase their CD capacity and fund bigger projects over time. This would be supported by an increase in funds available to active groups and an increase in staff resourcing.
- The CD program should continue to oversee an approach that directs matched funds to low-income locations while considering strategies to further increase the amount of funds made available to these locations. This could include increasing the amount of matched funds made available to each location and applying an increased focus on leveraging funds for these locations.
- The CD program should consider strategies to increase results in the area of Aboriginal employment under the MFI, particularly strategies that support results being realised at the stage of project delivery.
- Additional operational funding should be secured for the CD program to further operationalise its transformational agenda. This may be most effectively supported through the creation of a specialised CD position in partnerships and networks, lobbying and advocacy to work across the team and add value in select locations.
- If the MFI is continued more comprehensive processes and systems for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, should be resourced and implemented, including a CD program database.

Photo: Women from Atitjere and Mt Eaglebreak collect bush medicine on a country visit



6. CONCLUSION

The CD program has made substantial progress through the MFI considering the challenging context in which it is operating and the short time frame of the initiative so far. The MFI was effectively designed to align with the CD program, increasing the impact of the CD program in low-income regions.

The MFI has incentivised groups to join the CD program and allocate funds for community benefit. The CLC has effectively directed matched funds to regions with lower incomes to start to address the disparity in income between regions. The increase in funds available has enabled some groups to fund bigger projects in some cases and where they have chosen to do so. However, there are multiple elements, such as group governance capacity and the effective application of CD strategies, that contribute to bigger projects being funded or greater impact being delivered. The more these elements are enabled and aligned the more likely the CD program is to deliver greater impact.

Given the MFI has proven effective, and is generating benefits for Aboriginal people, it is recommended that it is continued and in a timely manner so that the initiative is open for the upcoming round of section 19 lease money instructions. This monitoring suggests that the design for the next phase of the MFI is amended informed by the lessons learned to date. This may include increasing the amount of funds made available to existing groups and increasing operational resourcing including diversifying CLC staff roles to support more strategic partnerships and advocacy work. If this occurs, greater transformational development is more likely to be achieved in regions with less income.

Photo: Papunya

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