

# The Central Land Council Community Development Program

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MONITORING REPORT  
JULY 2023 – JUNE 2024

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Cover photo: Mervyn Johnson (left) and Orazio Johnson (right) playing at Lajamanu Water Park.

Back cover photo: The *Making Yuendumu Beautiful Project* team celebrate together at the murals community launch event.

# Central Land Council Community Development (CD) Program Report 2023/24

## Key Messages

**\$31.2 million**

approved for projects

**226**

new community benefit projects  
funded

**191**

projects successfully completed

**733**

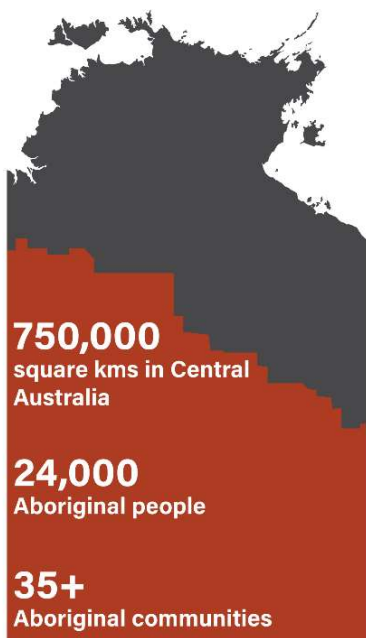
community engagements supporting local  
decision making

**102**

Aboriginal Governance Groups



Fiona, Millie and Marie enjoy the GMAAAC funded Yuendumu swimming pool



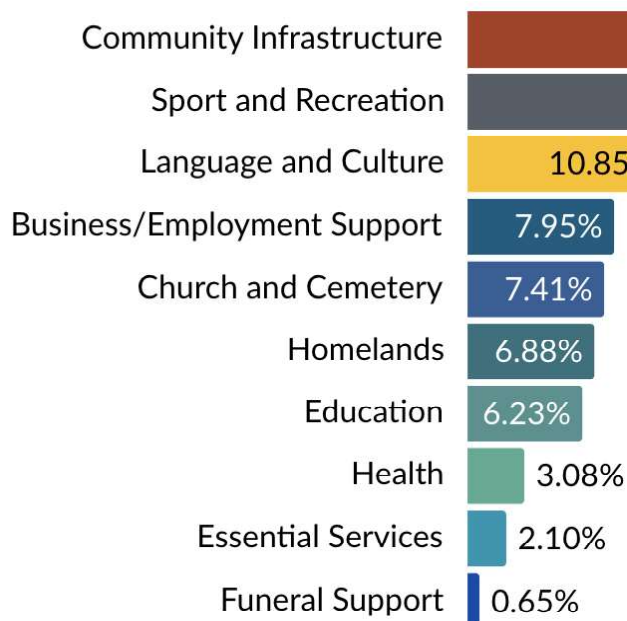
"I like seeing us working together, young and old, so we can pass on to young people, so they can carry on. We tell the community about what's happening, and they agree. We're getting young people to come and sit with us and learn from us, they're welcome to come and sit and hear what's going on in meetings."

- Aboriginal participant, Alekarenge

## THE CD PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To increase Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control over the development of our communities, homelands and futures.
- To deliver development outcomes that are prioritised and valued by Aboriginal people and that make a meaningful and sustained difference in our lives, communities, homelands and futures.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDING ALLOCATION BY PROJECT OBJECTIVE



"I think it's really good to help. Without no funds they wouldn't change the community, for the community, for the next generation, the little ones."

– Aboriginal participant, Imangara

"We use that money for what we need in this community. The working group makes things change in this community, makes things happen."

– Aboriginal participant, Alekarenge

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESULTS

- **Community infrastructure continues to be prioritised** by communities, with 39% of all funding allocations, an 18% increase from 2022/23
- Community engagements relating to the Matched Funds Initiative income stream almost doubled in 2023/24 to 414, rising from 163 in 2022/23, with **50 Aboriginal governance groups** now participating in the initiative
- Investment in service-delivery projects run by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations has contributed to delivery of a total of **70,444 hours for Aboriginal people, a 200% increase** in the employment hours from the previous year
- **Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) opened its outdoor skate park**, planned and funded by the community development working group using Matched Funds and other leveraged income.



The Ltyentye Apurte community skate park in action

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The Central Land Council's Community Development (CD) program began in 2005 and supports Aboriginal groups to work together to identify and address their development priorities and needs, largely through designing and funding projects. This report describes the performance of the program over the 2023-24 financial year through an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and explores trends over time in relation to key indicators such as community engagements and Aboriginal employment. The majority of qualitative data is presented through case studies of two communities participating in the CD program, including interviews and focus group discussions with community members and partner representatives. Particular attention is paid in the case study sites to the application of CD Strategy 3: Partnerships and Networks and Strategy 4: Lobbying and Advocacy, the two newer strategies introduced to the CD Framework 2021-2026 with the aim of enhancing the impact of the CD program.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE 2023-2024

Across the CD program as a whole there was a slight decrease in both the number of projects (6%) and overall value of allocations (7%) in 2023/24 compared to the previous year. Trends within income streams varied with some income streams experiencing significant growth in projects and allocations (e.g. CLM) and others experiencing drops, due to factors such as groups saving up to invest in larger projects (e.g. URM). The Tanami region continued to receive the most funding, with GMAAAC being the highest income stream across the CD program. As per the previous period, community infrastructure was the highest funded objective with over 39% of all funding allocations.

The CD program facilitated a total 733 community engagements, 66% of which were primarily related to Governance Support. Almost 20% of engagements were primarily focused on Strategies 3 and 4. Aboriginal employment increased in both number of employees and cumulative hours, with the latter increasing 200% compared to the previous year.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

There is clear evidence that the CD program is continuing to make progress towards the program's two objectives and is employing all four strategies to do so. The two case studies explore the impact of the Matched Funds Income (MFI) stream both in terms of increased funding for CD projects and greater opportunities for engagement in partnerships, networks, lobbying and advocacy. In both communities, CD staff played a facilitating role in representing the needs and priorities of communities to external stakeholders, including advocating for the upholding of rights and provision of services. Enablers of success across the CD program include the dedication of significant efforts towards Strategies 3 and 4, collaboration between departments within the CLC and the culturally respectful ways of working by CD staff. Barriers to change include ongoing gaps in government service provision, a limited partner pool for CD projects and the broadening role and increased workload of CD Officers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Engage CD working groups in discussion about options to enhance communication with the broader community in support of CD activities. Include a focus on communicating with young people and other Aboriginal governance groups. Consider implementation of recommendations identified.
2. Community infrastructure project planning should continue to include budgets, plans and responsibilities for the defects liability period and ongoing asset management to promote sustainability of project benefits.
3. Continue and build on existing examples of effective collaboration between key departments within CLC, including the Policy and Legal teams. Develop standard operating procedures to guide consistent processes for collaboration, including delegating roles and responsibilities.
4. Secure ongoing support of technical specialist(s) (such as an additional architect or engineer) to advise CD Officers to expedite and improve the quality of surveying and quotation processes for increasingly complex infrastructure projects.
5. Consider further investment in CD Officer skill and capacity to undertake lobbying and advocacy and navigate complex stakeholder and partner negotiations in collaboration with Aboriginal governance group members. This may include dedicated training opportunities to build upon CD Officers' existing strengths including culturally aware relationship building, management and communication skills, and local knowledge.
6. Collaborate with the CLC Policy team to document and escalate concerns relating to the lack of government service delivery in remote communities and barriers to accessing available services. Ensure opportunities for working group members to participate in advocacy opportunities that emerge.
7. Dedicate time and resources for wider partner scoping to increase the partner pool and pro-actively assess potential partner quality, timelines and costs.
8. Consider alternative structures of the CD team to reduce the number of governance groups per CD Officer with the intent to allow more time for delivering the CD strategies of governance, partnerships and advocacy in each location. This could include, for example, division of the East region into two teams, and recruitment of additional CDOs and a new Regional Coordinator, and/or the recruitment and training of Assistant CD Engagement Officers at the local level.
9. Establish guidelines for CD staff to inform decisions about the depth of the CD process in each site and assist in managing expanding workloads.
10. For future monitoring, CLC could explore the differences in how lobbying and advocacy and partnership and networks activities are applied in communities with different sizes and CD profiles and enhance tracking of group governance capacity.

# ACRONYMS

CD	Community Development
CDP	Community Development Program (Commonwealth Government)
CHSSC	Centre for Human Security and Social Change
CLC	Central Land Council
CLM	Community Lease Money
EPU	Economic Participation Unit
GMAAAC	Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MFI	Matched Funds Initiative
MFx	Matched Funds Extension
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NT	Northern Territory
NP	National Park
PBCESU	Prescribed Body Corporate Economic Support Unit
TMAAAC	Tanami Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation
URM	Uluru Kata Tjuta Rent Money Community Development Project
WETT	Warlpiri Education and Training Trust
YWPP	Yitakimaninjaku, warriminjaku, payirninjaku manu pina-jarrinjaku (Tracking and learning)

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# INTRODUCTION

The Central Land Council (CLC), a Commonwealth corporate entity originally established under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory) 1976, is an Aboriginal organisation governed by a council of 90 elected Aboriginal members. Working with Aboriginal people, the CLC aims to achieve recognition of land and native title rights, to manage land and negotiate agreements with others seeking to use their land, and to apply land use payments for sustainable community benefit.

The CLC's Community Development (CD) program began in 2005 and supports Aboriginal groups to work together to identify and address their development priorities and needs, largely through designing and funding projects. The *CLC Community Development Framework 2021-2026*<sup>1</sup> articulates the CLC's community development goals, principles and strategies which guide the program.

The Centre for Human Security and Social Change (CHSSC) and CLC have been working in partnership for many years to track the impact the CD program is having on communities. This monitoring report (the fourteenth developed under the CLC and CHSSC partnership) aggregates and analyses data collected from community-based monitoring, CLC staff reflections and project reporting during the period July 2023-June 2024 (2023/24). It builds on previous monitoring reports to explore and understand how the CD program continues to evolve and captures lessons from implementation to inform the programs' support for self-determined development in remote communities.

This fourteenth monitoring report focuses on the CD program strategies of i) lobbying and advocacy; and ii) partnerships and networks. It is primarily informed by feedback from Aboriginal people in two select case study locations. The focus on these two strategies enables investigation of how they are practically applied and what progress has been made. This will provide insight into the level of change the program is facilitating and whether pre-conditions for changes in policies, practices and relationships are created. It is timely to monitor these strategies and to use learnings to understand impacts and prompt refinement of strategies.



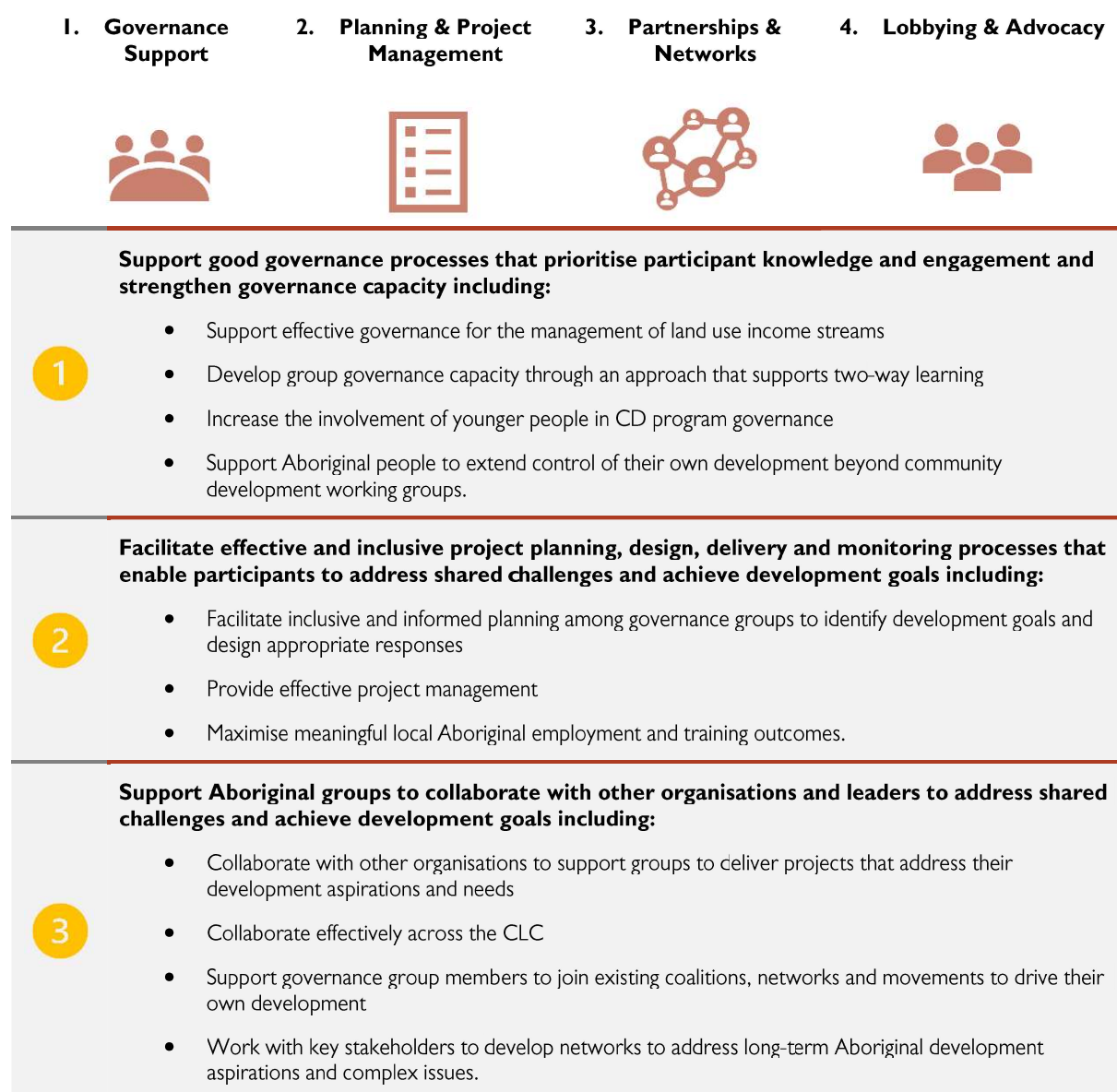
*Mulladad family members at the newly built Utyerrkiwe Outstation*

# THE CLC APPROACH TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The CLC CD program aims to support Aboriginal people to drive positive social change that transforms their lives and lasts into the future. It supports communities to decide how to spend their land income on agreed social, cultural and economic development priorities. The program builds on progress to date, continually learning, adapting and evolving its ways of working, with the aim of deepening community impact and creating the preconditions for transformational development and self-determination.

Reviews of the earlier years of the CD program found that while it had increased Aboriginal communities' engagement, ownership and control in the CD process, these gains had not extended to other aspects of people's lives and community governance. Therefore, this latest iteration of the CD Framework (2021-2026) aims to support the CD program to focus on improving how it works with Aboriginal groups to support transformational development goals. The CLC defines transformational social change as meaning changing economic, social and political rules and systems in ways which enable meaningful and lasting improvements in Aboriginal people's lives. In order to achieve this, the CD framework defines four program strategies:

**Figure 1: CLC Community Development Program Strategies 2021-2026**



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

## REPORT METHODOLOGY

This report provides monitoring on the CLC's CD program for the financial year 2023/24. Progress of the program is assessed against the objectives of the CD program and analysis and recommendations presented regarding enablers and barriers to achievement of the objectives.

The monitoring approach includes a review of program wide quantitative data, reflection sessions conducted with CD staff, and two detailed case studies. The case studies presented in this report have been informed by interviews with CD participants and community members in two locations, interviews with three project partners, reflection sessions conducted with CD staff members, project reports provided by project partners, researcher observation of one CD meeting and quantitative financial and activity data provided by CLC. Analysis and findings of the monitoring report have been refined through a sense-making workshop with CD staff on the draft findings facilitated by staff from the Centre for Human Security and Social Change (CHSSC).

The case study locations chosen for the monitoring period were Alekarenge and neighbouring community Imangara. These communities were selected to investigate the differing impact of Matched Funds in two communities with differing historic income profiles and approaches to implementing CD Strategies 3 (Partnerships and networks) and 4 (Lobbying and advocacy). Alekarenge is a medium-sized community that has been a long-term recipient of CD funds from multiple income streams and has had significant opportunity to invest across a diverse number of projects. Imangara is a small community that has received very minimal CD income in the past and participating in the Matched Funds Initiative has created a unique opportunity for this community to engage in the CD program for the first time.

CD participant and community member interviews were held in the two case study locations. A total of 22 people participated across 15 interviews and one focus group. 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 they could be strengthened; 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 Matched Funds Initiative in each location, which included matched funds and other income streams. Respondents were free to speak about the projects they had funded across these income streams. The data was analysed by researchers at CHSSC and findings identified and documented in this report.

## LIMITATIONS

The analysis of quantitative program data relies on self-reported project data which is collected by CLC and reported to CHSSC. The analysis has been supplemented by discussions with CLC staff members in a workshop, which sought to delve into the story behind some key data trends. The CD program progress data focuses on workload data, such as number of consultations, and dollar values of projects, therefore findings are input and output focused and little can be concluded about outcomes from this data alone.

The analysis of qualitative data focuses primarily on the two case study communities that have been recipients of matched funds. A limitation of this approach is that it has the potential to overlook the breadth and depth of the full CLC CD program portfolio in all its diverse income streams, governance groups and projects. With this in mind, qualitative highlights from each income stream have been presented and notes from CLC staff reflections incorporated into the discussion section.



*Camp participants and Kings  
Narrative staff with traditional*

## THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

There are seven 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 Matched Funds Initiative (MFI). Other Projects is an income stream consisting of several smaller incomes, including Tanami Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (TMAAAC). These income streams are summarised below. Each income stream has tailored management arrangements, decision-making models and implementation processes. However, all income streams, are funded and/or leveraged with Aboriginal peoples' own money, governed by Aboriginal decision-making bodies, and focused on achieving outcomes sought by Aboriginal people.

**Table 1: Community Development Program Income Streams 2023-2024**

Income Stream	Purpose
<b>Community Lease Money (CLM)</b>	Uses rent paid for community leases to 31 communities for a diverse range of community benefit projects
<b>Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC)</b>	Uses affected area monies from the Commonwealth Government to support nine communities in the Tanami to apply those monies to broad community benefit activities
<b>Matched Funds Initiative (MFI)</b>	Provides complementary funding for groups that have new income from land use agreements that is allocated to community benefit projects
<b>Northern Territory (NT) Parks Rent Money</b>	Uses rent paid to traditional owners of national parks, conservation and nature reserves for a range of sustainable initiatives
<b>Other income streams</b>	Uses mainly new and smaller payments linked to mining and exploration for a variety of community benefit projects. These include TMAAAC, and Matched Funds Extension (MFX)
<b>Tanami Dialysis Support Service (Kurra Aboriginal Corporation)</b>	Uses interest earned on mining royalties of The Granites gold mine to support dialysis facilities and patient support services in remote communities in the Southern Tanami
<b>Uluru Kata Tjuta Rent Money Community Development Project (URM)</b>	Uses rent paid to traditional owners of the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park for a range of sustainable initiatives
<b>Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT)</b>	Uses mining royalties of The Granites gold mine for sustainable education, training and employment benefits

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PROGRESS

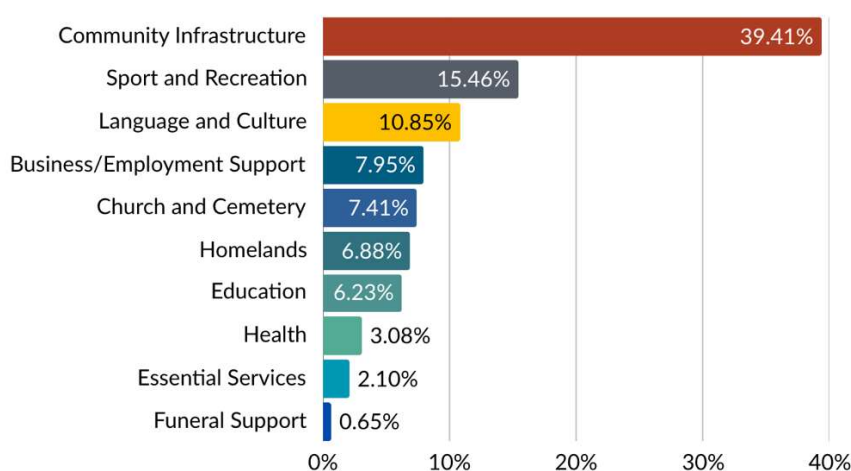
## PROJECT ALLOCATIONS AND EXPENDITURE

In 2023/24, the CLC CD program allocated **over \$31.2 million to 226 projects** (please see Table 2). Noting that allocation values change from year to year and several allocations span multiple financial years, there was a slight decrease in the total approved allocations for 2023/24, compared to 2022/23. In 2022/23, the CLC CD program allocated \$33.8 million to 240 projects, representing a seven percent (7%) decrease in allocations and a six percent (6%) decrease in projects between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Consistent with previous years, the Tanami region received the most funding, with significant allocations from GMAAAC (over \$20.6m for 117 projects) and WETT (\$2.7m for 10 projects). In 2023/24, the mean project value decreased for most income streams, including a 63 percent decrease for URM, a 44 percent decrease for WETT and 19 percent decrease for CLM. In the case of CLM and WETT, decisions to withhold allocations were made by governance groups seeking to save up their income for investment in larger, more meaningful projects in the future or supporting multi-year service delivery projects. In this way, small year on year fluctuations in project allocations align with enhanced governance capacity as the CD program matures. The MFI, NT Parks Rent Money, and 'Other' income streams mean project values increased by 46 percent, 68 percent and .8 percent respectively.

Community infrastructure continues to be the most common objective of CD projects, with 39 percent of all funding allocations (see Figure 1), an 18 percent increase from 2022/23, where 33 percent of all funding was allocated to the newly introduced objective. Variation between objective allocations continued in 2023/24, with education and homelands allocations decreasing, and sport and recreation allocations increasing. Projects prioritising health received three percent of all funding allocations.

**Figure 2: Community Development funding allocations by project objective 2023-2024**





Nampijinpa Henwood shows Nyrripi school students the cultural practice of grinding seeds as part of the language and schools program

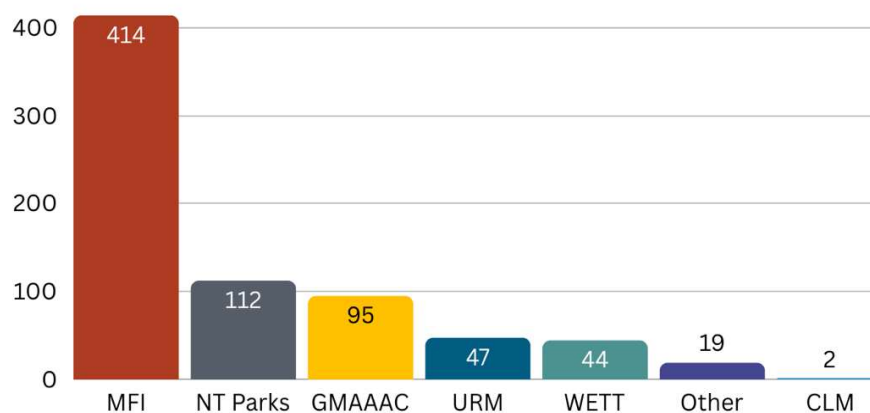
**Table 2: Community Development funding allocation and expenditure by income stream 2023/24**

Income Stream	# of projects	Allocated funds \$	% of total 23/24 allocation	% of total 22/23 allocation	Change in % allocation	Mean project value \$	Expenditure \$
<b>CLM</b>	12	1,215,083	4	2	↑ 100	101,257	986,917.31
<b>GMAAAC</b>	117	20,667,839	66	51	↑ 29	176,648	6,760,508.95
<b>MFI</b>	51	2,578,617	8	7	↑ 14	50,561	1,780,505.43
<b>NT Parks Rent Money</b>	11	802,286	2	5	↓ 60	72,935	924,537.02
<b>Other income streams</b>	21	2,721,685	9	7	↑ 28	129,604	1,249,925.85
<b>URM</b>	4	574,317	2	8	↓ 75	143,579	1,340,489.98
<b>WETT</b>	10	2,736,543	9	20	↓ 55	273,654	4,315,879.88
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>31,296,370</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>17,358,764.42</b>

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY CD STAFF

The CD unit facilitated a total of 733 community engagements involving community members in 2023/24, a 3% increase from the preceding period.<sup>2</sup> Engagements recorded in this category include a wide variety of engagement types including governance meetings, phone calls, community research including the WETT-funded Yitakimaninjaku, warririnjaku, payirninjaku manu pina-jarrinjaku (YWPP) program, community visits and conference attendance. The CD engagement tracking system allows for only one designated income stream per entry, and preference is given to recording against MFI in the case of an engagement being related to more than one income stream. This is likely to explain why engagements related to MFI are so much higher than all other funding sources, with engagements relating to the MFI income stream almost doubling in 2023/24 to 414, rising from 263 in 2022/23. Engagements in almost all other income streams declined.

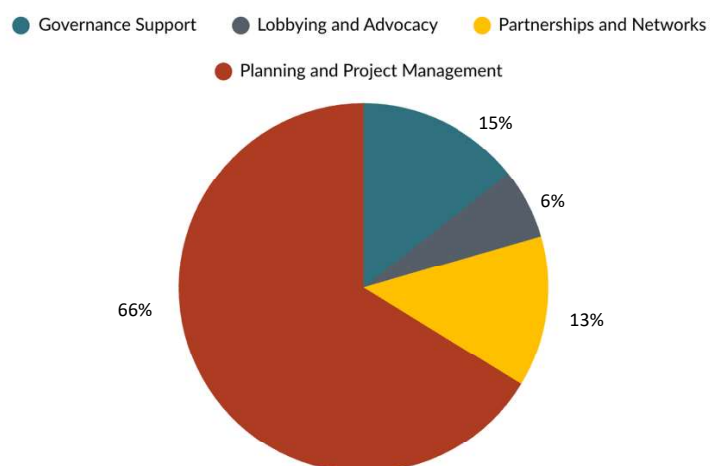
**Figure 3: Number of meetings and consultations with community members per income stream 2023-2024**



For engagements involving communities and/or other stakeholders, which also include phone consults and face to face meetings with project partners or other stakeholders that are critical to project delivery, the majority were primarily focused on planning and project management (66%), followed by governance support (15%). Of note, this means that almost 20% of meetings or consultations were primarily related to advocacy and lobbying (6%) or partnerships and networks (13%).

Of these, the most common consultation types were consults with stakeholders only, which suggests that further focus is needed

**Figure 4: Percent of total engagements per strategy 2023/24**

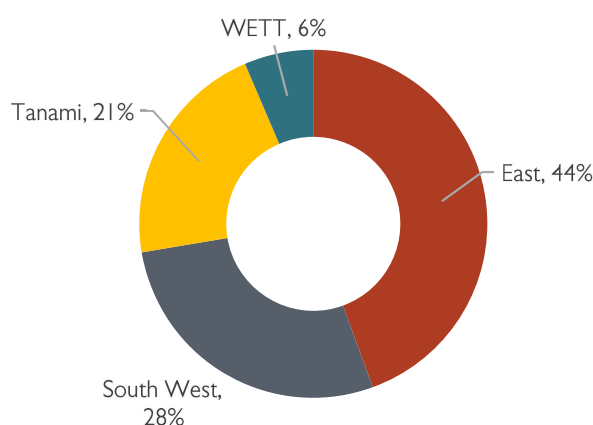


<sup>2</sup> Note, this total refers to engagements that were with communities alone, or communities and stakeholders together. This does not include engagements solely with other stakeholders.

to engage community members in partnership and advocacy activities to deliver on Strategy I of the CD Framework.

At the regional level, the East CD team carried out almost 44% of all meetings and consultations across the CD program. The number of engagements related to both lobbying and advocacy and governance support were more than three times higher in the East than in any other region. This can largely be explained by the concentration of communities accessing MFI income in the East region versus the other three CD regions, particularly in relation to governance support for communities that were new to MFI and the CD process more broadly. The opportunity to access CD support as a result of eligibility for MFI for smaller and more remote communities has seen the CD Officers increasingly engaged in advocacy and lobbying efforts for these communities who have otherwise been underserved. An example of this is illustrated in the Imangara case study later in this report. An important caveat is that due to the breadth of consultation types included in this data set, length and intensity of engagements vary widely and can include a 3-day governance group meeting, a 3-hour governance group meeting and a 3-minute phone call. As such, while this data set indicates a rapidly increasing engagement workload for the East region, impacted largely by the MFI, it does not, on its own reliably compare intensity of workload across the regions and further analysis of engagement types would be required to support this.

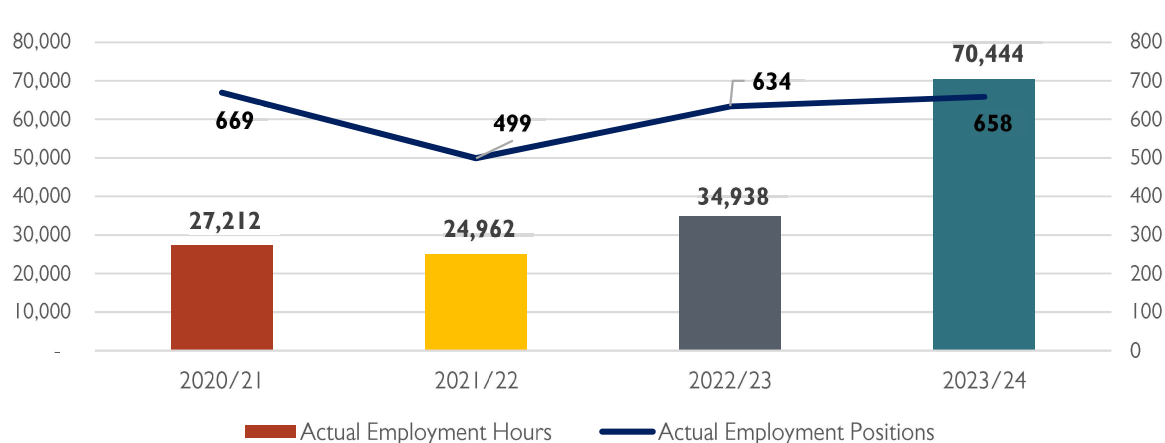
**Figure 5: Percent of total engagements per region 2023-2024**



## ABORIGINAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

During the reporting period, a total of 657 employment positions were filled with Aboriginal community members on CD projects. Cumulatively, they involved 70,444 hours of work. This represents a 200% increase in the employment hours compared to 2022-23 driven largely by service-delivery projects. The number of employment positions remained steady, contributing to an increase in the average number of hours worked in each employment position (107 hours). These outcomes are likely significant given the limited employment opportunities in communities and the employment challenges Aboriginal people face.

**Figure 6: Aboriginal employment hours and positions 2020-2024**



**Table 3: Aboriginal employment by income stream 2023-2024**

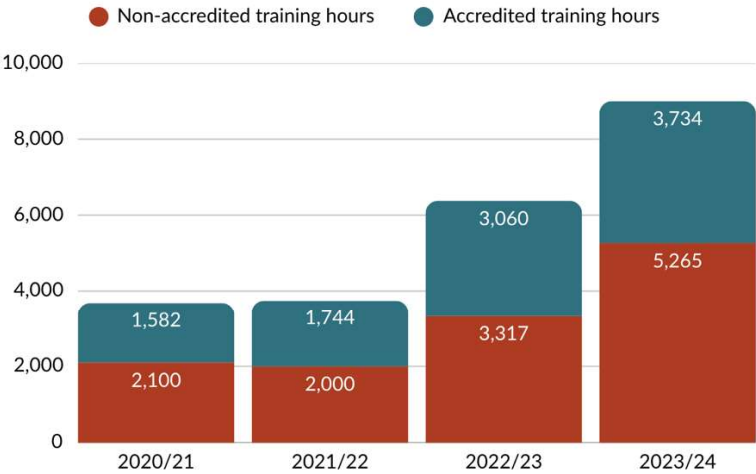
Income Stream	Actual Employment Hours	Actual Employment Positions
GMAAAC	38,672	269
TMAAAC	15,195	84
WETT	11,565	148
URM	2,448	10
Other income streams	1,229	69
MFI	716	68
CLM	316	5
NT Parks Rent Money	300	4
<b>TOTALS*</b>	<b>70,441</b>	<b>657</b>

\* Does not include projects managed through economic stimulus (EPU)

Projects approved through GMAAAC generated by far the most employment hours and opportunities with 269 employees and a total of 38,672 employment hours. This was a significant increase of 73% on employment hours in 2022-23. The next highest employment-generating income stream was TMAAAC which generated 15,195 hours of employment across 84 employment positions. The third highest employment-generating income stream was WETT with 148 employees completing 11,565 employment hours. This was a significant increase of 103% of hours from 2022-23. Significantly, a large driver of employment outcomes across each of these income streams is the funding of service delivery projects. Examples include the night patrol service funded by TMAAAC, the community research and other education services funded by WETT and the dance camp and Yuendumu pool, which reopened in the monitoring period after a period of closure, funded by GMAAAC.

There were 515 instances of training provided to Aboriginal people through CD projects in 2023-24. This amounted to a total of 3,734 hours of accredited training and 5,265 hours of non-accredited training. This continues a growth trend in training outcomes from CD projects, with a 41% increase in total training hours from 2022-23 and 51% increase in training opportunities taken up.

Figure 7: Training hours 2020-2024

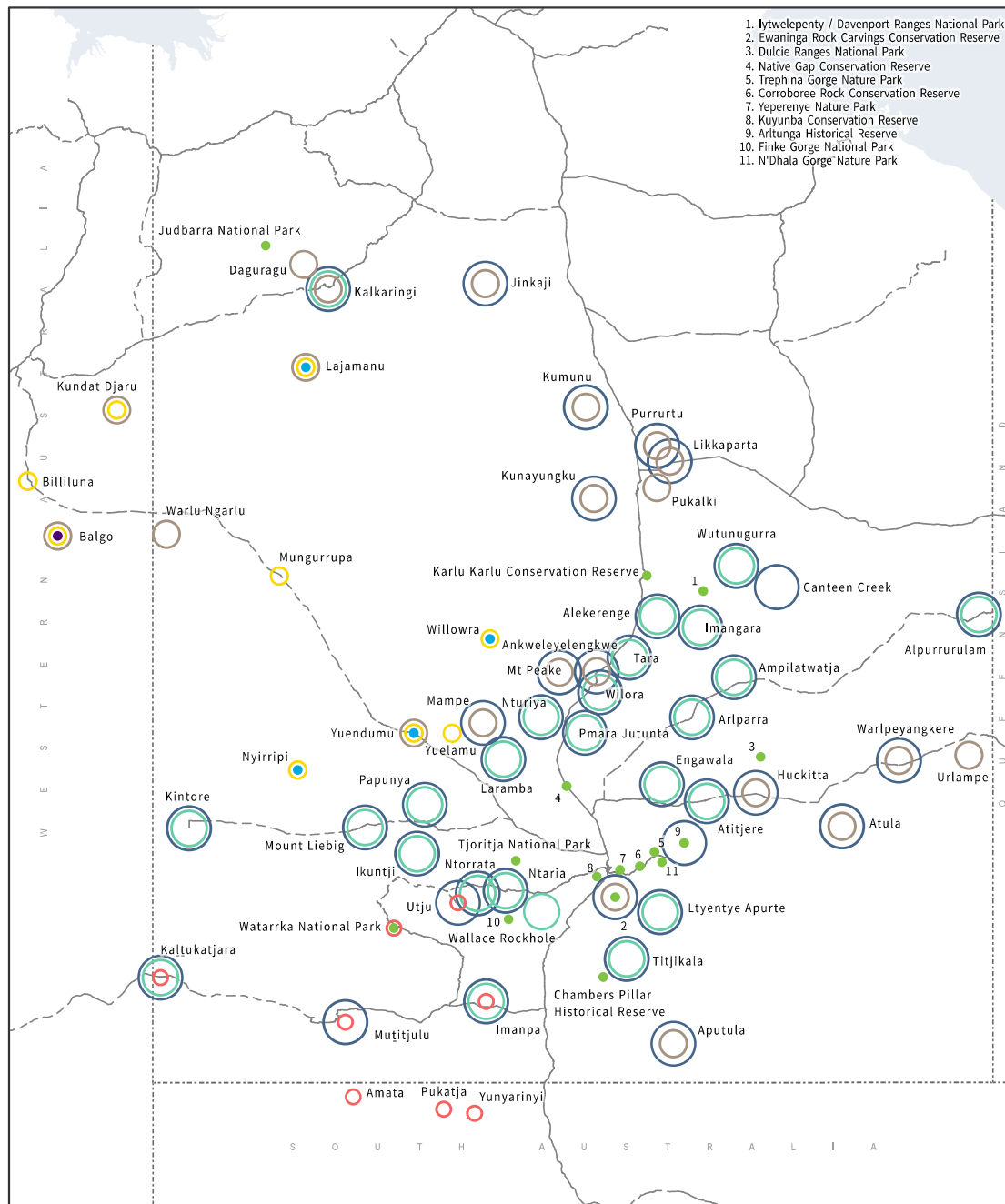


Yuendumu Pool lifeguards  
Jordan Granites and  
Selina Hunter

Below, top: Malcolm Hayes  
and Randy Wallace building  
the new fence

Below, bottom: Ranger Works  
building Papunya Picnic



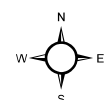


## Locations of 2023-24 CLC Community Development Unit Projects

### Projects

- NT Parks Rent Money
- Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT)
- Tanami Dialysis Support Service Project
- Uluru Rent Money
- Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation
- Other Community Development Funding
- Community Lease Money
- Matched Funds

- Major Road
- - Major Road (Unsealed)
- .... State Border



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# PROGRESS OF INDIVIDUAL INCOME STREAMS

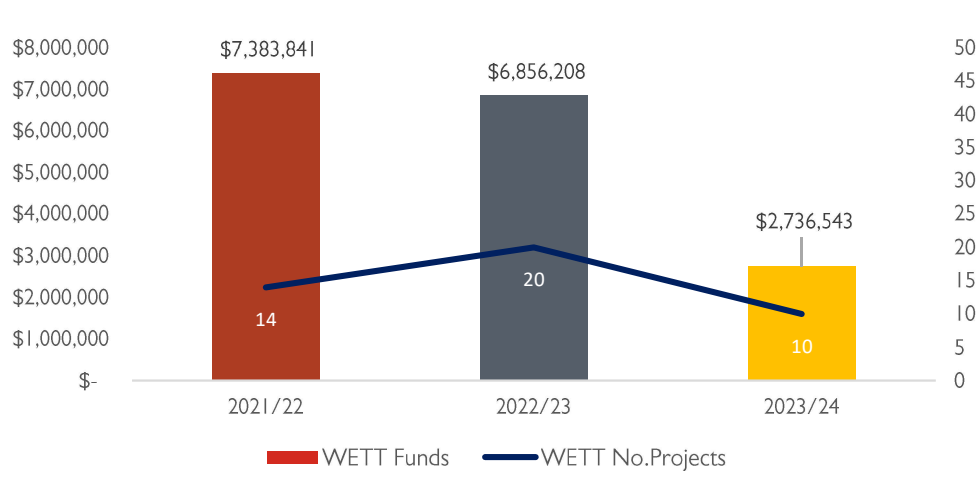
## THE WARLPIRI EDUCATION AND TRAINING TRUST

The Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT) projects use gold mining royalties to support Warlpiri education and training initiatives in the Tanami communities of Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Willowra and Nyirrpji. WETT is governed by traditional owners through the Kurra Aboriginal Corporation, with advice from the WETT Advisory Committee. WETT's focus areas are: children and families, language and culture in schools, secondary school support, youth development, and community learning centres.



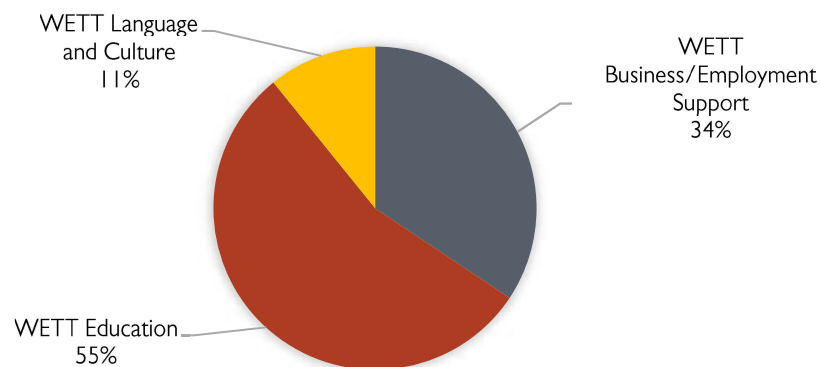
Both the amount of funding and number of projects funded by WETT decreased substantially from 2022/23 – 2023/24. During the reporting period, WETT funding allocations were less than half that of the previous year, and under 40% of 2021/22. Explanations for this dip include the re-funding of the multi-year Learning Centres project in the preceding financial year (therefore no additional allocation in 2023/24), as well as ongoing planning and assessment processes.

**Figure 9: WETT funding allocations 2021/22 to 2023/24**



More than half of all WETT funding went to education projects, with over one third going to business/employment support (including WETT's YWPP program) and the remaining 11% to language and culture projects.

**Figure 10: WETT funding allocations by objective 2023-2024**



## HIGHLIGHTS

In early July 2024 WETT was announced as the winners of the prestigious 2024 National NAIDOC award in the education category. The award recognised the trust's significant impact on Yapa communities and honours its commitment to future generations. Two WETT Advisory Committee members attended the ceremony in Adelaide. *"To go to the national award as a finalist was ngurrju (good), but to hear that WETT won ... I felt so overwhelmed, so proud"* said one of the representatives.

WETT has continued supporting extracurricular activities for children in upper primary and high school students to promote attendance and positive attitudes towards education. School students from Nyirрпи, Willowra, and Lajamanu participated in educational excursions to the Gold Coast, Melbourne and Cairns to see the sights, learn about life in the cities and catch up with other former students now participating in boarding school programs.

WETT also supported elders in Nyirрпи, Willowra and Yuendumu to take groups of young people aged five to 19 on bush trips for fun activities and cultural learning. One trip took the group to Walyka, an emu dreaming site, where they listened to stories and played language games with Nyirрпи residents. On another trip, eleven Willowra elders took family groups to Smokey Bore, the Wirliajarrayi (Lander) River and Eight Mile, where they looked for yarla (bush potatoes), bush tomatoes, yakuntjirri (bush sultanas) and native lemongrass. *"In the community they just walk around and go to the oval and do the same things but out bush its better. They can learn and see the bush plants and foods and tracks. It's good for them to learn about our country"*, said Michaeline Gallagher, a Nyirрпи resident.

Nyirрпи students were invited by the Melbourne Football Club onto the ground at the MCG



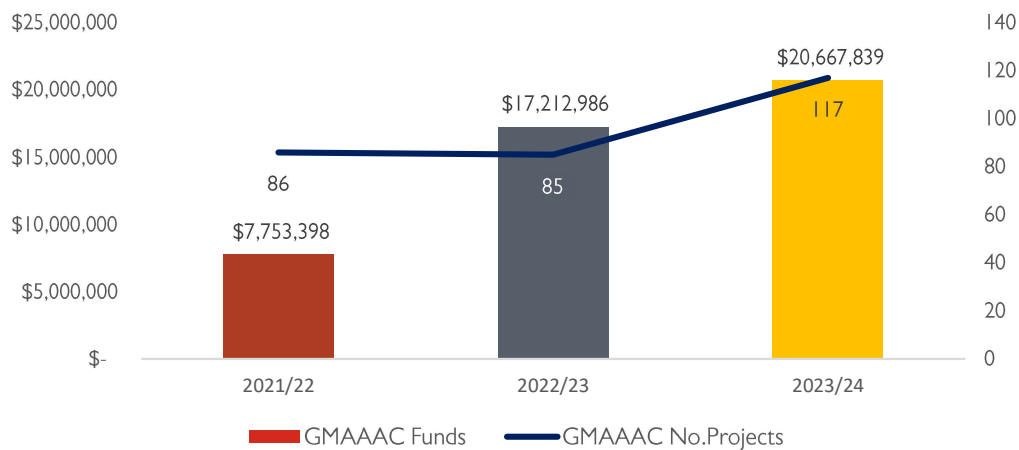
## THE GRANITES MINE AFFECTED AREA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

The Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC) is the largest income stream administered by the CD program. Half of its compensation income benefits community projects in the nine Tanami communities affected by the mine. The other half is invested to ensure the communities continue to benefit after the mine closes. GMAAAC projects aim to benefit nine communities in the Tanami region affected by the granites mine through projects that focus on: health, education, employment and essential services; developing employment and training opportunities; and promoting Aboriginal self-management.



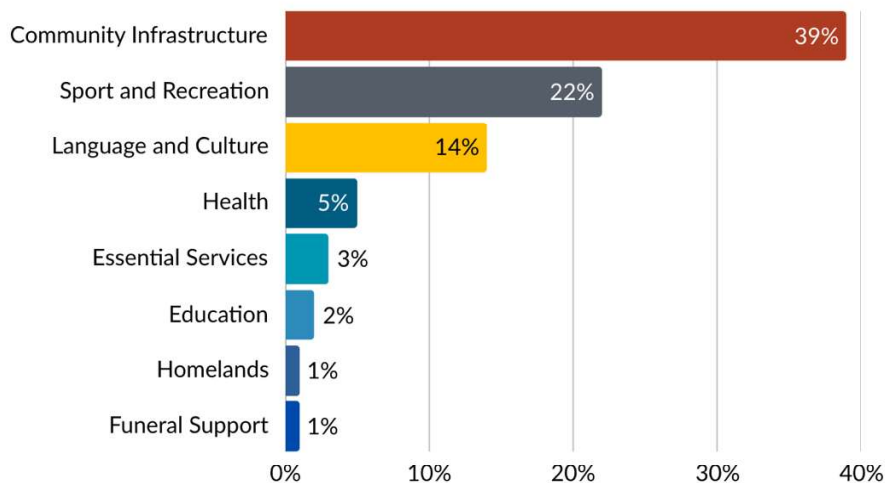
GMAAAC funding allocations increased by over \$3.4 million in 2023/24, continuing a trend of year-on-year growth. The number of projects also increased from 85 to 117.

**Figure 11: GMAAAC funding allocations 2021/22 to 2023/24**



As per the previous year, community infrastructure was the highest funded objective during the reporting period however its share of overall funding reduced from almost 60% in 2022/23 to just under 40% in 2023/24. Sport and recreation was the second highest funded objective at 22%, followed by language and culture at 14%.

Figure 12: GMAAAC funding allocations by objective 2023/24



Below: Lajamanu and Kalkarindji schools competing at Michael Long Regional Carnival in Katherine

Bottom left: Jason Woods paints the Pintubi Anmatyere Warlpiri Media & Communications (PAW) mural

HIGHLIGHTS

GMAAAC continues to fund a wide range of projects that support different groups in the community. Some highlights include:

Lajamanu’s GMAAAC committee has allocated more than \$762,000 to continue to support the Australian Football League Northern Territory until 2028. Support to AFL has included the funding of both women and men’s teams as well as camps for primary-age children with the goal of getting more young people fit and healthy through sport. The GMAAAC-funded initiatives also aim to create jobs and train locals in coaching and umpiring.



Community buildings in Yuendumu, including the women’s safe house, Pintubi Anmatyerr Warlpiri Media, the police station, the big shop and the pool, are now decorated with colourful murals thanks to Yapa and visiting artists. Renowned Australian street artists mentored five Yapa artists who designed and painted the murals as part of the Ngurrju Mani-njaku Ngurra (making Yuendumu beautiful) project, funded by Yuendumu’s GMAAAC committee. Groups of young people ranging from pre-school age to young adults were involved in the project through both contributing designs and painting the murals, and the project was overseen by the Marlpa Jungu Jintangka Aboriginal governance group at the Yuendumu Child and Family Centre. A further highlight involved a delegation of three community members from Yuendumu traveling to the AIATSIS Summit conference (3-7 June 2024) to present on the project.



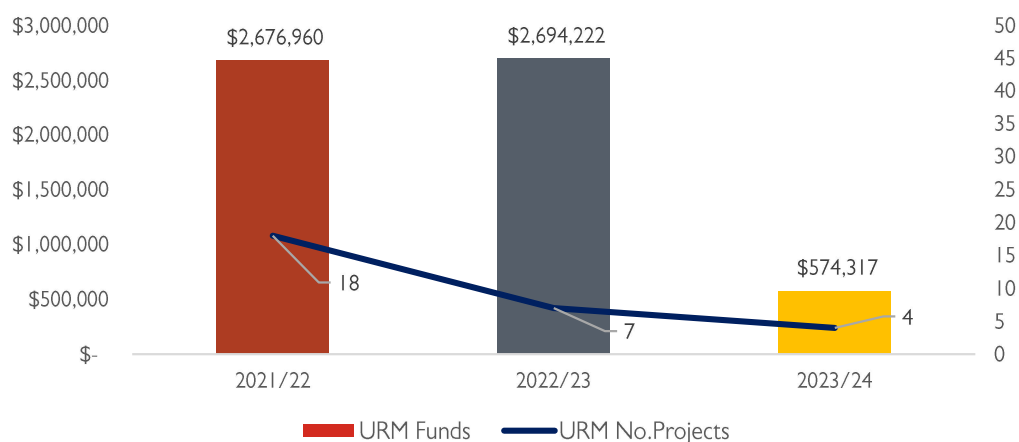
- In Yuelamu, six residents took part in a four-day study tour to Alice Springs to find solutions for growing vegetables using minimal water. The group learned about different types of garden beds, composting, worm farms and how to filter Yuelamu's hard water. With support from a project partner, the group finalised a home food garden unit design featuring a wicking bed, shade structure and animal-proof screens which will be used as a trial. If the trial is successful, the approach will be rolled out to 10 households in 2025.

## THE ULURU KATA TJUTA RENT MONEY

The Uluru Kata Tjuta Rent Money (URM) initiative was started in 2005 and with the purpose of developing projects and planning for business enterprises to benefit the traditional owners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (UKTNP) and the communities where they live. This includes communities in the South-West of the Northern Territory and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands of South Australia. Mutitjulu receives a portion of project funding each year and considerable project effort through its own planning process as many UKTNP traditional owners live there.



**Figure 13: URM funding allocations 2021/22 to 2023/24**

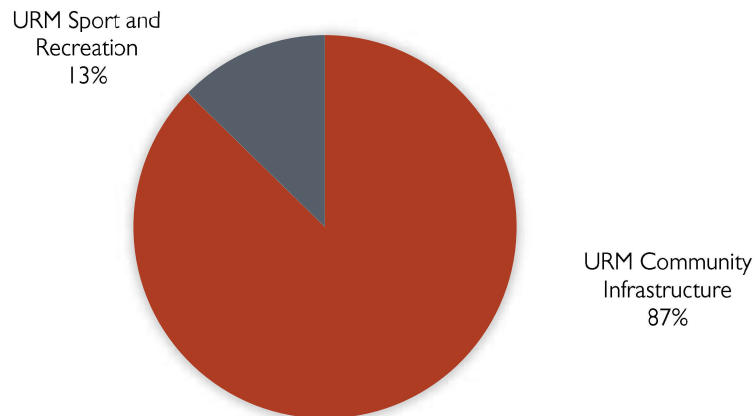


Funding allocations through URM dropped significantly in 2023/24, the total being only approximately 20% of allocations made in the preceding period. The number of projects also dropped, although much less significantly. This can be explained by several high-value projects being either ongoing or completed, such as

the Mutitjulu Shaded Walkway project, as well as the use of the period to focus on future planning for new priorities. The traditional owners also resolved in 2023 to change the way they fund regional projects. Instead of annual funding decisions, they changed to funding of regional projects every 2 years to allow the income to build up. Therefore, the regional group did not hold a funding meeting in 2024.

As illustrated in the below graph, the majority of allocations went towards the objective of community infrastructure focused on fencing and repairs, with the remaining portion allocated for sport and recreation.

**Figure 14: URM funding allocations by objective 2023/24**



*Leonard Kunari shares a story with Frank Dixon*

## HIGHLIGHTS

Utju elders led cultural camps at four different sites near Utju, teaching younger men about tool-making, cultural stories, songlines and hunting. The UKTNP traditional owners funded the project with URM money for younger men to learn from their elders, feel proud of their culture and heal through ‘trouble stories’. The elders taught the younger men to make hunting spears and found a wanari tree that gave them bush medicine, food and tools. “I told the stories to those young fellas. The story about travelling, dreamtime stories, everything. Tjuta inmaku – that’s cultural stories, Aboriginal stories. We told them strong stories,” reported one of the elders.

Traditional owners of UKTNP have continued to collaborate with the Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation and Parks Australia to jointly fund care services for cats and dogs in the area. Implemented by Aboriginal Community





Mutitjulu kids with healthy puppies

Veterinary Services (ACVS), the four-year project was initiated in 2022 and aims to improve animal health and reduce the number of unwanted litters through the administering of flea and tick sprays, vaccinations, de-sexing surgeries and treatments for mange and worms. In its first year, the ACVS team treated around 85 per cent of Mutitjulu's dogs, and the animals remain in overall good health. The team is also educating the community on how to care for their pets.

The Mutitjulu working group continued to fund the Mutitjulu pool's operations. Four local Aboriginal people were employed for a total of 389 hours during the swimming season. Two local people gained their lifeguard qualifications and continue to work at the pool. Pool staff reported higher attendance by elders during the reporting period and increased intergenerational mixing at the pool. School attendance in Mutitjulu was reported to have increased as a result of the 'Yes School, Yes Pool' program run by the school.

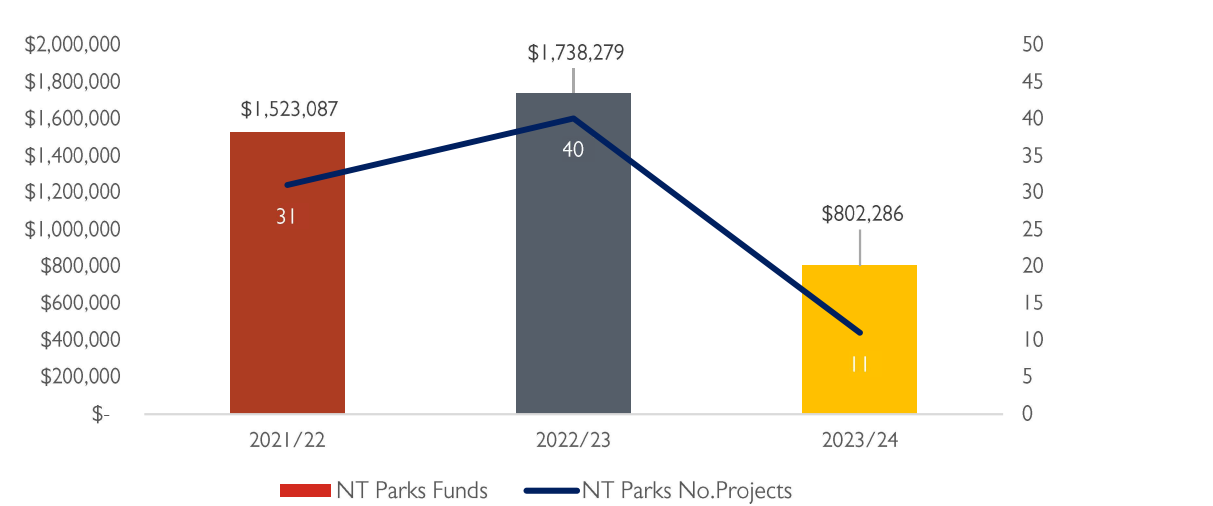
## NORTHERN TERRITORY PARKS RENT MONEY

The NTP projects work with the traditional owners of 16 national parks, conservation areas, historic reserves and nature parks across the CLC region. Since 2010, all NTP rent, camping fees and other income generated from the parks has been allocated for projects that benefit the community. It aims to achieve broad ranging social, cultural and economic benefits by working with each of the 29 Aboriginal governance groups.



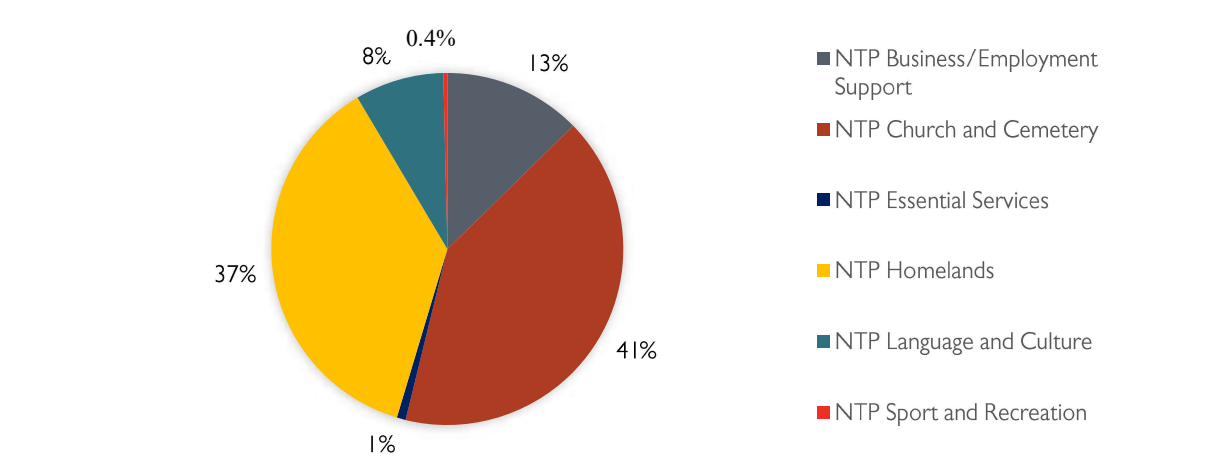
In 2023-24 total income for NTP projects was \$802,286, less than half of that in 2022-23 and a substantial reduction from the preceding two years. The number of projects funded was also much lower, dropping from 40 funded in 2022/23 to 11 in 2023/24. This reduction can be attributed to a number of factors, some of these being a greater focus on capitalising on external funding sources such as Match Funds given limited staff numbers, a backlog of construction projects that were funded in previous years, and other strategic work in the region.

Figure 15: NTP funding allocations 2021/22 to 2023/24



Church and cemetery was the main category of projects funded with NTP income (41%), followed by Homelands projects (37%) and business/employment support (14%), with the sport & recreation category receiving the smallest allocations (0.2%). This represents a significant change from the previous year where Homelands projects were the overwhelming majority (74%), and church and cemetery was a low priority (4%).

Figure 16: NTP funding allocations by objective 2023/24



## HIGHLIGHTS

Since 2016, CLC CD has been supporting Yalka Ratara Aboriginal Corporation to establish and operate a cultural tourism business at Yalka Camp (the old Palm Valley Ranger Station). Starting with the upgrading of the old ranger station, current support to the business includes annual rent payments on the sub-lease, repairs and maintenance to the cultural tourism business building, payment of building, public liability and workers compensations insurances for the cultural tours, and an annual Yalka Camp event to host other partners and stakeholders to promote the business. Proceeds from the business will have community benefits for the Palm Paddock Working Group.

NT Parks income has also been used to construct new outstation accommodation buildings and enable the return to homelands for traditional owners. In Utyerrikwe in the East, a new outstation three-bedroom house was built to provide housing to traditional owners. The completely off-grid house makes country more accessible for both older and young people and is planned to be used to take grandchildren to for Christmas and school holidays. Already the house has been used as the hosting site for a trip for a group of traditional owners from nearby areas along with CLC staff members. The Elitja Outstation, located 30km southwest of Alice Springs, also increased homeland accommodation with the construction of a new housing block consisting of two bedrooms and an outdoor living area. The new building includes split systems for heating and cooling, as well as ceiling fans and security lights. The project was prioritised by the Tjoritja Central community development working group in 2022 and was completed by an Aboriginal-owned business in 2024.

*The completed shelter – Elitja Outstation (Armstrong Block)*



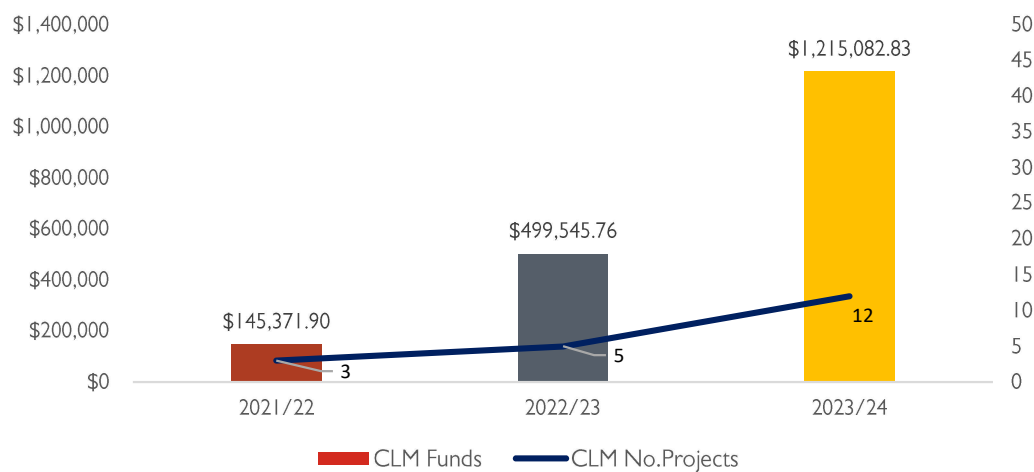
## THE COMMUNITY LEASE MONEY

The Community Lease Money (CLM) Project works with money paid by third parties to traditional owners for leases over community land under section 19 of the NT Aboriginal Land Rights Act. It involves ongoing section 19 lease money and the remainder of the one-off five-year lease money paid by the Australian Government which followed the 2007-12 Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER).

*\*Note: the majority of community engagements for each community have been classified under alternate funding streams (e.g. Matched Funds).*



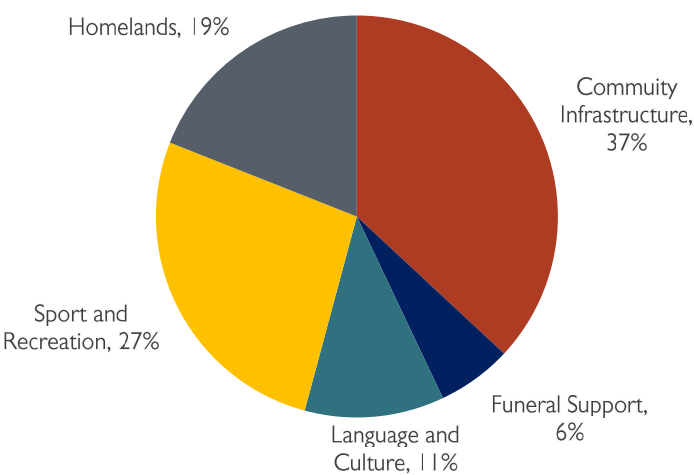
**Figure 17: CLM funding allocations 2021/22 to 2023/24**



CLM allocations more than doubled between 2022/23 and 2023/24. A key reason for this was the prior use of CLM in conjunction with matched funds allocations. As the majority of CLM funding was previously assigned to leverage matched funding, the matched fund allocations in many cases have now been maximised, meaning that communities have now allocated additional CLM funding directly to projects. Of the \$1.2million of CLM funding, just over \$400,000 was allocated to projects solely funded by CLM, while the rest was allocated to projects co-funded by other income streams.

There were 12 projects that were fully funded by CLM and an additional 32 funded by multiple sources, including CLM, during the reporting period. Of the 12 fully funded by CLM alone, five had the objective of sports and recreation, three for community infrastructure and two for language and culture. The remaining two projects had the objectives of homelands and funeral support. As illustrated in the below chart, Community Infrastructure was the highest funded objective.

**Figure 18: CLM funding allocations by objective 2023/24**



## HIGHLIGHTS

In 2024, traditional owners from Ltyentye Apurte, located southeast of Alice Springs, allocated community lease money funds to upgrading one of the houses at the nearby Phillipson's Bore outstation. The works were done a few months later, and included an additional laundry to the house and installing insulation on the walls and roof, tiles throughout and a new solar tube, as well as all necessary plumbing and electrical works associated with the improvements. The project increases the tenability of the house, making it more functional and comfortable in various weather conditions. The project supports the traditional owners' aspirations of living at the outstation full time and enabling family to visit more frequently and spend more time on country.

The Kintore CLM working group have continued working towards their vision for a campground in Kintore to help protect local cultural sites by providing tourists a place to camp near the community. Phase 1 of the project to develop the campground concept plan wrapped up in the reporting period and Phase 2 kicked off to progress detailed designs for the campground. Community consultations on draft campground designs have also been taking place. Four participants from the Kintore working group attended a Camping with Custodians field trip in August to meet with traditional owners in WA who are successfully running campgrounds. The trip was planned and supported in kind by the CD program and included working group members from other regions and income streams. The project has led to an increase in engagement by

younger people in the working group and project consultations and older community members have identified this as a valuable opportunity to support intergenerational cultural knowledge transfer. CD staff have continued to engage with a wide range of stakeholders to support this project including the CLC's Prescribed Body Corporate Economic Support Unit (PBCESU) and Tourism WA. To date, funding for project activities has been provided by the CLC's PBCESU and the CLM working group have dedicated all their income towards the construction phase of the project. As their income is only enough to cover approximately 50% of the construction costs, they are hoping they will be able to attract grant funding to cover the remaining costs, demonstrating the need for ongoing advocacy and partnership support by the CD program to attract these funds and support successful realisation of the project.

In Ntaria, the CLM working group identified the return of the School Nutrition Program, formally delivered by Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre, as a priority project. While this project is eligible for NIAA funding, the CD Officers have been liaising with the school, MacDonnell Regional Council and NIAA to advocate for its return in community alongside planning and allocations of its CLM income.



*Roscoe Loy and Antonio Long from Arlparra, official AFL umpires for their sports weekend*

## MATCHED FUNDS INITIATIVE

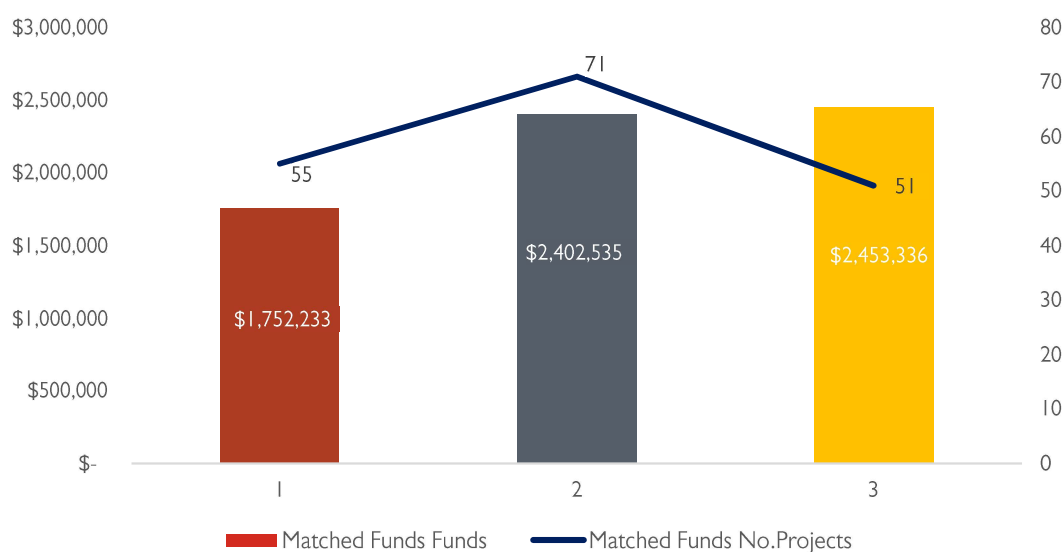
The Matched Funds Initiative (MFI) matches dollar-for-dollar funding allocations of between \$50,000 and \$150,000 made to community development by traditional owner groups and communities. The MFI aims to incentivise groups to prioritise community development, increase impact by enabling longer-term and bigger projects, and address income disparity between regions. Since its inception in July 2020, has enabled 51 traditional owner groups and communities to access MFI income.



*\*Note: this total figure may differ from annual reporting slightly due to administrative changes in allocation of income streams*

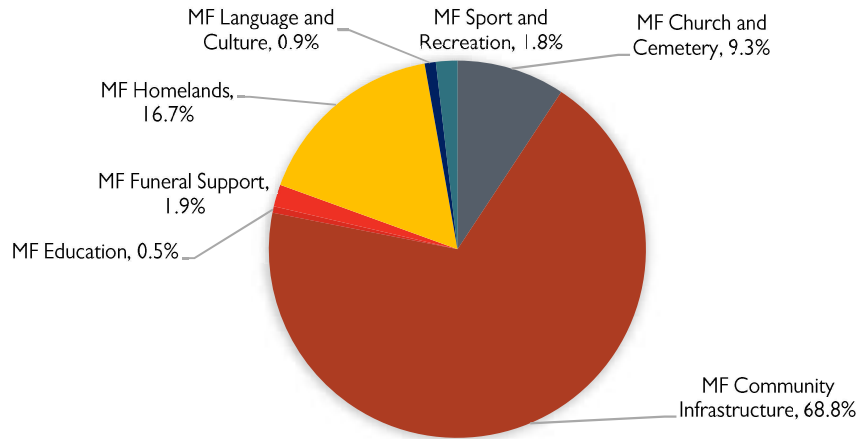
In 2023/24 total project allocations from the MFI came to \$2.45m. This is a small decrease only \$30,744 from 2022/23, suggesting that project allocations may be plateauing at this annual level. Over the reporting period the average value of projects has increased with the average project value growing to \$51,461 in 2023/24 (from 51 projects) from \$32,467 in 2022/23 (from 71 projects).

**Figure 19: MFI allocations and numbers of projects 2021/22 to 2023/24**



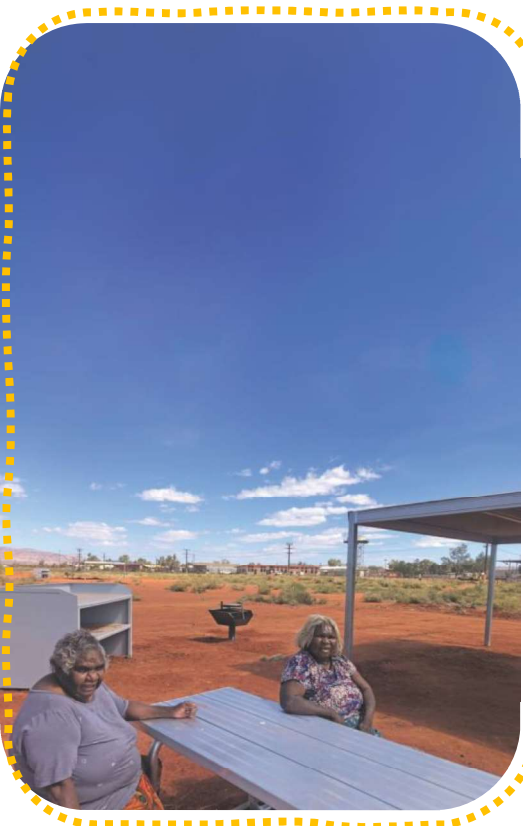
Community infrastructure projects represent the highest amount of funding per project type to be funded through the MFI with almost 70% of funding, followed by homelands projects and church and cemetery projects.

**Figure 20: MFI funding allocations by objective 2023/24**



## HIGHLIGHTS

The MFI has allowed the design and implementation of many high value projects – both in terms of monetary value and intrinsic value to the communities. Many high-budget projects, particularly those in the sector of community infrastructure, are co-funded by other funding sources and are presented here in recognition of the enabling effect of MFI contributions.



Above: Linda Allen and Punata Stockman are happy with the new picnic facilities

Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa) in the South East region opened its very own outdoor skate park, planned and funded by the community development working group using Matched Funds and other leveraged income. The skate park is the first of its kind to be funded by a remote Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory and provides an outdoor space for children and youth to have fun and be active in a safe environment. Local kids were able to make the park their own by painting parts of the concrete park with their own designs, complementing the prominently featured Aboriginal flag design. The Ltyentye Apurte working group also used Matched Funds to fund a consultation and design project for a Language and Culture centre they see as important for future generations.

A new picnic area was completed in Papunya including three shaded areas for tables, benches, bbqs and spaces for food preparation. The project was prioritised and planned by the community development working group in 2022 and was completed in 2023, utilising their matched funds. The new community area was designed to be used for community gatherings, sing-alongs, Christmas events, sports weekends and sorry business. Three local rangers helped build the project, which was seen as inspiring to younger children in the community. The community has also funded a masterplan project and will be working with remote planning experts to design four

proposed playgrounds, outdoor gym and investigate community greening and water harvesting options.

More detailed information on the impact of MFI can be found in the below case studies of Alekarenge and Imangara communities.

## OTHER PROJECTS

Other Projects refers to a range of additional distinct funding sources which tend to include groups that have new or limited funds. The two major income streams categorised under Other Projects are:

**The Tanami Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (TMAAAC)**, established by the Central Land Council in 2003 to receive affected area income generated from the (now closed) Tanami Mine.

**Matched Funds Extension (MFX)**, an income stream endorsed by CLC Executive in 2022 after the successful implementation of the Matched Funds Initiative. MFX matches income for communities dollar for dollar as per the MFI guidelines.



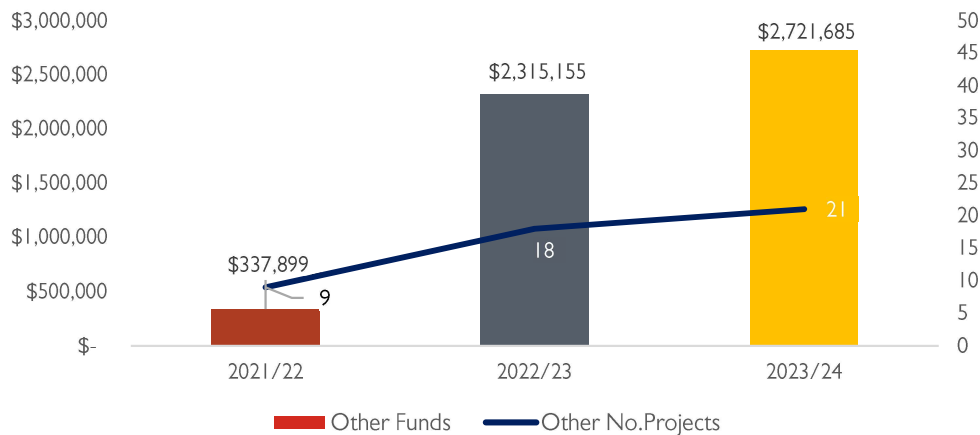
The Other Projects income stream increased in 2023/24 both in terms of dollar value of funding and number of projects. The largest contributor was the MFX with \$1,920,820, followed by TMAAAC with \$756,315.

**Table 4: Other Projects income sources 2023/24**

Funding Source	Funding Allocated	Projects Approved	Projects Completed
MFX	\$1,920,820	15	3
TMAAC	\$756,315	4	4
EPU <sup>3</sup>	-	-	2
Other	\$44,550	2	6

<sup>3</sup> The Economic Participation Unit (EPU) is now the Prescribed Body Corporate Economic Support Unit (PBCESU), a unit within the Central Land Council that supports Aboriginal employment and enterprises, including managing a grant funding process.

Figure 21: Other Projects income streams funding allocations 2021/22 to 2023/24



Louanna Williams on day shift with Madeleine Dixon – STKIC patrols

HIGHLIGHTS

Other Projects achieved some of the highest statistics in Aboriginal employment across the whole CD portfolio, with TMAAC alone enabling 15,195 employment hours across 84 employees and 117 trainees. A large contributor to this achievement was the Southern Tanami Kurdiji Indigenous Corporation’s (STKIC) patrol team. In Yuendumu, the number of community patrol officers was doubled to keep residents safe beyond the operational hours of existing evening and night patrols. The project employed nearly 40 local officers and reduced the need to involve police in minor incidents by offering first response, referral to services and even family mediation services. Variety in shift times helped create employment opportunities for a variety of community members, including mothers with young children, and formalised training opportunities, such as Certificate III in Community Safety Services, offer additional incentivisation to join the team. The project covers all costs of the additional patrols, including wages and superannuation, uniforms, equipment, vehicle, fuel and insurances.



Solar panels have been installed on the outstation at Nguyarramini, providing electricity to the church and the community ablution block for the first time. Five years in the making, the project allows residents to spend more time on the homeland, increases both comfort and safety by making it easier to use the shower and toilet at night, and offers better amenities for visitors. The use of solar panels helps save the money that used to be spent on diesel for the generator, and also has a positive impact for the environment. The new power supply at the church can be used for lighting and cooling, as well as for Christmas lights and music. The Nguyarramini solar project was funded by EPU, with funding decisions made by the Davenport Ranges NT Parks group.

# OTHER INITIATIVES

## LAJAMANU NGURRJU KIRRI PALKAKURLU

Lajamanu Ngurrju Kirri Palkakurlu, or the Lajamanu Good Community Life for Yapa<sup>4</sup> project is a CD-initiated Aboriginal community-led longitudinal research project taking place in Lajamanu, a community with multiple CD income streams. 2023/24 marked the fourth year of this research project and the second year of longitudinal data collection to track changes in community wellbeing outcomes and identify learnings for the CLC, including its CD program.

Emerging findings and lessons for the CD program generated from the 2023 and 2024 data analysis include:

- Projects funded through the CD program are having a positive impact on:
  - Warlpiri culture, country and language
  - supporting kids and young people in Lajamanu and on Warlpiri country
  - Yapa employment opportunities in Lajamanu
- There are limited opportunities for the CD program to assist the community to address the priority need for more and better housing, which is a major community concern.
- Yapa would like to see CLC deepen its engagement with young people, particularly in the priority cohort of 14–18-year-olds. The CD unit can further assist the goal of better supporting young people by sharing more information about youth programs being funded in community and working strategically to enhance the number of projects and collaboration between different stakeholders including rangers, the school and youth program.
- Yapa see a role for CLC to work alongside them to assist in simplifying the complex governance and leadership arrangements in Lajamanu that has been created through the increase in community organisations and independent governance structures.
- The CD program can support enhanced Yapa to Yapa engagement including through building more Yapa-Yapa discussion and reflection time in language into CD meeting processes and supporting verbal Yapa feedback processes and participation in project implementation
- Yapa would like to see CLC enhance its collaboration and partnership role across the community
- There is a need to enhance the visibility of CLC's work in community

Findings from the research study could be used by CD working groups in Lajamanu to inform planning and funding decisions, alongside broader community action planning processes.

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<sup>4</sup> Yapa is a Warlpiri word that indicates Aboriginal person

# CASE STUDY | ALEKARENGE

## BACKGROUND

Alekarenge (also known as Ali Curung) is located 170km south east of Tennant Creek on the Warrabri Aboriginal Land Trust. Alekarenge has a population of over 450 people and offers a range of services including a community store, health centre, art centre and Council Service Centre operated by Barkly Regional Council.

The community has been working with CD since 2012 and has completed a wide range of projects, including those in the areas of youth activities, local employment and funeral support. Legal decisions regarding the division of s19 lease income between community development and individual distribution are made by a traditional owner group, while allocation of community development funding to specific projects and the ongoing management of these projects is decided by a Community Development Working Group consisting of 10 members – six male and four female. In 2018 the Alekarenge Community Development Working Group was one of three in the national Reconciliation Australia Governance Awards in the unincorporated category for their dedication to controlling their own resources and investing them in projects that help their community. In May 2024 the Alekarenge Working Group updated their membership to ensure that members were predominantly residing in the community and were able and willing to commit to the CD process.

Respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the role of the working group and the ability it gave for community members to identify their own priorities on behalf of the community.

*"We use that money for what we need in this community. The working group makes things change in this community, makes things happen." – Female community member*

The introduction of the Matched Funds Initiative in 2021 was a clear factor in the decision made by Alekarenge Traditional Owners to commit \$50,000 of s19 lease income per year for a period of at least five years towards CD. Since 2021, Traditional Owners have contributed \$250,000 from s19 lease money to community development which has been matched with \$250,000 of Matched Funds between 2021 and 2024<sup>5</sup>. Alekarenge has allocated their Matched Funds to 11 projects to date with an average project value of \$31,447. The highest value project is the Training Centre Renovation Project Top Up (\$234,554) and the lowest was the Wi-Fi Hotspot Project (\$4,238).

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<sup>5</sup> Alekarenge have also allocated \$50,000 per year of s19 lease money in future years 2024/25 and 2025/26 to be matched through the MFI

# KEY CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CD PROGRAM

There were five active community development projects in Alekarenge during the monitoring period, as listed in the below table.

**Table 5: Alekarenge projects active in 2023/24**

Project Name	Project Status	Funding Stream/s
Alekarenge Training Centre Renovation Project	In progress	MFI MFX CLM
2024 Alekarenge Sports Uniforms and Gate Fees Project	In progress	MFI
Alekarenge Dance Festival 2024	In progress	MFI
Alekarenge Footy Oval Lights Scoping Project	In progress	MFX

Interviews with community and Working Group members clearly showed the thought process and meaning behind the prioritisation of CD funding allocations. There is a consistent focus on ensuring projects provide opportunities for children and young people to engage in activities that promote culture and connection, including through sport, art and skill development. Matched Funds have been used to finance the last two editions of the Artali Arts/Dance Festival, which brings locals and visitors together to celebrate the traditions of the Kaytetye, Alyawarr, Waramungu and Warlpiri language groups.

*"Every year we put lease money in the Arts Festival. For children to see and join in the fun. They can dance with their families. It's very important. Other communities come too... The Arts Festival is really important for all our future." – Male Working Group member and Traditional Owner*

*"The festival lets us share our culture with everyone— white people and other Indigenous people. Everyone is welcome" – Female Working Group member*

*Jimmy Friday (far right) leads a traditional dance at the Alekarenge Arts Festival*



*"It's clear that [the Arts Festival is] important to the community" – CLC CD staff member*

Respondents emphasised the importance of supporting sports activities, such as the footy fees and sports uniforms projects, to engage children and youth, encourage positive social behaviour and to connect them with other communities. These two projects funded by Matched Funds complement a larger CD scoping project funded from other sources that will assess the feasibility of the installation of lights at the Alekareng footy oval to allow for training at night and night games with visiting teams.

*"[We need] sports for young people, because they're losing culture... We talk about what we want for the community... Young boys are missing out on initiation – they're not interested.. [they] just want to be on their phones. In my time we were sports people, very different from what it is now." – Male Working Group member*

*"[Kids are] bored and walk around but if they have games – footy and soccer and softball – they'd play and get tired. Other sports as well as footy." – Female Working Group member*

*"We'll be able to have home and away games. It'll be good to have the lights. We usually have games during the day but with the lights we can play night and day – in summer it will be cooler. There are girls and boys footy teams at Alekareng. – Male Working Group member*

The Training Centre Renovation project is a community priority due to its potential to be used for a wide range of purposes and to include the whole community. The renovation is also seen as being a community asset that could draw family members back to Alekareng.

*"My children and grandchildren are at Ampilawitja. Renovate it to make it better... Make it better for them. I want my grandchildren to come back, something for them." – Male Traditional Owner*

*"Good for kids to play some games with their mothers there [at the training centre]. It's been empty for a long time, want to renovate it back. To do it for kids and for young fellas. Maybe for playing music, studio." – Female Working Group member*

*"[The training centre] will be good for community meetings, activities, school holidays and Xmas. Invite kids for activities which we'd run by ourselves. We haven't been able to use it for ten or 15 years." – Male Working Group member*

Several respondents commented on the important achievement of engaging young people in the CD Working Group, to share knowledge and prepare them for future roles as decision-makers in the community. One young person interviewed commented on the motivation to follow in the footsteps of her father, an experienced and long-time working group member, and the need to take it slow and learn as a new member on the working group.

*"I like seeing us working together, young and old, so we can pass on to young people, so they can carry on. We tell the community about what's happening and they agree. We're getting young people to come and sit with us and learn from us, they're welcome to come and sit and hear what's going on in meetings." – Female Working Group member*

"I love working with the Working Group, I like being a role model for young people, get them involved." - Female Working Group member

## THE IMPACT OF MATCHED FUNDS

Respondents who were aware of the Matched Funds initiative expressed their appreciation for the approach of matching community contributions and described how important it has been for community development in Alekarenge.

"We'd be struggling without it. Also it's good because we're showing them that we are putting in money, not just asking for money. We give half the lease money for TOs, half for community projects and then it's matched." - Male Traditional Owner

"I think Matched Funds are good. Lease money - TOs are going to get a bit of money and the rest going into the community. If we didn't have Matched Funds we wouldn't have much money for community projects" - Female Working Group member

The Training Centre Renovation Project represents both physical and symbolic progress for the community. The existing building Alekarenge earmarked for the new training centre had been under lease to the Barkly Regional Council and not used by the community for around 15 years. Having the ability to identify funding and make a plan for renovation of the building, and to decide what it is used for, is a significant step for Alekarenge in regaining control of their own community assets and signifying their self-determination. Without Matched Funds, this would not have been possible. Working Group members plan for the training centre to be used for a wide range of activities, for all community members.

"It's been empty for a long time, want to renovate it back. To do it for kids and for young fellas" - Female Working Group member

It'll be useful for holding meetings, taking kids there. I want to have a fathers' day - for fathers and grandfathers to bring young boys there because young boys are usually with their mothers. It's a big space and they are going to expand it by taking the fence off around the back. Also have drink driving courses there, also for workers at the farm who are driving the tractors. - Male Working Group member

## STRATEGIES 3 AND 4

Specific to the strategies of 'Partnerships and Networks' and 'Advocacy and Lobbying', respondents in Alekarenge appreciated the connecting role that CD has played with partners to get projects happening, as well as the advocate role CD has filled to campaign for access to services for the community.

"We wouldn't know where we'd be if we had no one talking on behalf of the community" - Female Working Group member

A valued advocacy effort by CD for the community has been the proposed establishment of a renal dialysis unit in Alekarenge to allow those requiring dialysis to remain on country and with their families while receiving treatment. Many respondents commented on the key role that CD played in approaching service providers, writing letters to government bodies and progressing conversations. With dialysis services available in the community, families would no longer have to be separated and/or risk children missing school for long periods to travel with their parents. Community-based dialysis services will also provide local employment and training opportunities.

*"I want that to happen here instead of them going into town... If we have dialysis here that would keep the families here and the kids could go to school. People say 'we'll just go for a week' (to town) and then they stay too long when they take their families." – Male Working Group member*



*Getting painted up for the Alekarenge Festival*

A partner representative for the proposed dialysis project explained the positive impact of CD engagement in the advocacy process in direct relation to a community that does not have CD engagement.

*"The Alekarenge [dialysis] project wouldn't have started without [CD] approaching us initially to see if we could help... It's a marked difference between [another community] where the request hasn't come from CD and Alekarenge where the request came through CD to us.. We have had a bit of advocacy from Barkly (Regional Council) but there are a lot of different people and they are all over the place. CD hold their meetings in the Art Centre where people feel comfortable, good facilities." – Representative of Purple House, partner organisation for the dialysis project*

In 2023 a letter was written from the Alekarenge Community to the NT Minister for Health, with the assistance of the CD team at CLC, requesting support for the expansion of the dialysis services in the community. In late 2024 Alekarenge was granted funding through the "Better Renal Services for First Nations Peoples" investment, with a press release from the government specifying that one of the selection criteria for successful communities was "strong community support for a local service". This would not have been possible without the support of the CD program. The partner representative confirmed that the community will not need to allocate lease money towards the establishment and running of the dialysis clinic as it will be largely funded by Medicare. The CD team and CLC's legal team worked with the partner organisation to secure leases for vacant community buildings for nurses accommodation in support of the dialysis clinic.

A major challenge for the community is the reported dysfunction of the Barkly Regional Council and the resultant lack of communication and service provision. An example of this was seen in the case of the training centre project. The CLC legal team has supported Alekarenge in following up on lease arrangements for the building identified to be renovated as part of the training centre project, however the Barkly Regional Council have renewed their lease over the building, posing challenges to the future of the project and requiring CLC and the Working Group to consider an advocacy response. According to CLC CD team members, at the forefront of the training centre project is the desire of the community to have control over their own assets.

"Barkly Shire is a big issue. We don't know what's happening to sports and rec [centre] – they knocked it down middle or early last year, big lease money put aside for it but nothing's happened" – Female Working Group member

"The Barkly Regional Council are supposed to be there to help us out but sometimes they don't want to help us. We are still waiting for our youth centre to be built here." – Male Working Group member

## Feedback on the CD Approach

Respondents from the Working Group and partner organisations were largely positive about the interactions they have had with CD staff and the CD approach. Many respondents praised the respectful two-way relationship and the way the CLC and the community support each other. Several partner organisation representatives also described CLC as being reliable and easy to work with.

"CD work well with the Working Group – we help each other out. We're happy with how CD is working." – Male Working Group member

"I'm happy with them, very happy with them. Whatever they want I help them because they help me" – Male Traditional Owner

"With consistent staffing and membership of the group the CD Unit acts as reliable, culturally safe leadership – the glue!" – Female partner staff member

One respondent suggested that there could be stronger information sharing between the working group and the community, specifically with young people, to ensure they understand that the working group is the place for free sharing of ideas for projects within the community.

"There has to be a balance between letting people know that's somewhere where people could get money for projects... Part of the problem is that young people aren't maybe aware of the Working Group being the place to go." – Male partner representative

# CASE STUDY | IMANGARA

## BACKGROUND

Imangara is a Community Living Area (CLA) within the Murray Downs pastoral property with a population of approximately 79 people. Located 207km south of Tennant Creek, the community is located in the Barkly Regional Council region and has very limited community infrastructure and minimal community service provision.

Imangara has only one s19 lease and their income is therefore extremely small. The CLC CD program has been working with Imangara intermittently since 2012, however due to their low leasing income they found it difficult to get significant projects off the ground. Since the MFI trial began the CLC was able to dedicate staff resources and significant guaranteed income to the Imangara community in achieving their priority goals. Given the small population of the community, Imangara does not have a dedicated CD Working Group. Instead, all community members are welcome to attend meetings and participate in discussions and decision making. Despite the lack of formalised roles and responsibilities, the Imangara CD meetings are consistently well-attended, usually attracting 8-10 participants.

As of July 2024, Imangara had received a total of \$734,280 of funding for community development projects, including \$55,917 from 5-year lease money, \$66,119 from CLM, \$212,244 from Davenport Ranges National Park, \$250,000 from the Matched Funds Initiative and \$150,000 from other projects.

## KEY CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CD PROGRAM

At the time of project inception, the community agreed to prioritise the construction of a church using most of the combined funds, which included all matched funding up until that point (\$150,000). The Imangara community worked with CLC staff to plan and scope the church project, investing the majority of their available funds from land use income and the Matched Funds, nominating a contractor they trusted and including a local employment budget. Planning of the church project began in September 2021 and the building was completed in March 2024. The initial 'church design project' was subsequently cancelled as the contractor for the project was able to offer design and build services in a single quotation. The total cost of the church project was \$515,904.

**Table 6: Imangara projects active in 2023-24**

Project Name	Project Status	Funding Stream
Church Design Project	Cancelled	MFI
Imangara Church project	Completed	MFI MF Extension CLM

The church project has been long-awaited by Imangara community members and its completion marked a meaningful milestone for residents. As well as being used for funerals, it has also provided a community space for children, youth and adults alike for events including sing-alongs, Sunday school and band practice.

*"The church is important to the community. Whenever we have a funeral we would just use the little shed and we'd borrow equipment from other communities. The Matched Funds has helped us to have our own. Now we have funerals here – band equipment and singing. Community Development have helped us – after the church we've moved onto the next project, the workshop. In ten years there's only been money for one project – the church." – Female community member*

*"The old people and grandmothers always wanted the church they were fighting for, and now it's happened for us." – Female community member*

Three local workers were employed through the project, including over 100 hours of Aboriginal employment.

*"Three young fellas worked on it, that was good". – Male community member*

While it was hoped that the project may provide more extensive employment opportunities, the project encountered a series of barriers that stifled engagement. At the time of project implementation only three community members were in possession of valid 'NT white cards' signifying completion of NT General Construction Induction Training and therefore eligibility to work on a construction site. The need for training for additional community members was identified during the project planning stage, however access to training remained an unresolved issue throughout the duration of the project.

The local Commonwealth Community Development Program (CDP) provider was identified as the key agency responsible for organising White Card training in Imangara however they reported budget and resource limitations and lack of registered training organisation availability as barriers to delivering the training. A lack of support for community members to register and participate in trainings – such as transport, phone/email communication, identification and paperwork – further hindered progress in this area and CD Officers report stepping in to fill these gaps to try and support community members to complete the necessary paperwork to enrol in training.

CLC CD recognised that this issue goes beyond the scope of the church project, the community and the broader CD program as the CDP and remote training programs are administered via the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). CD staff engaged with the CLC Policy team to further advocate to NIAA, with whom they have existing collaborative relationships, for support around training provision and enabling Aboriginal employment.

The project did however give the community the impetus to check validity of other people's white cards and to continue the process of engaging with service providers to ensure training opportunities are available to increase the number of people in the community who would be eligible for future work of this kind.



*Local employee Nathan Campbell working on the construction of the Imangara church.*

The completion of the church in Imangara has inspired the community to now focus on other related projects to further improve the building and surrounds, including paving the external patio area and building a fence for the cemetery.

## THE IMPACT OF MATCHED FUNDS

Several respondents were not aware of the Matched Funds initiative and the role it played in the funding of the church. In most cases this was due to individuals having not attending CD meetings regularly, or not residing in the community full-time. Those who were aware of Matched Funds were overwhelmingly supportive of the initiative as the funding of the church project allowed them to realise a goal their community had held for a long time.

"Everybody's happy with the church... We wanted the church for a long time – some of our grandmothers wanted it... If we didn't have Matched Funds we wouldn't have been able to build the church." – Female community member

"[Without Matched Funds] we wouldn't have nothing to do actually, it would be empty, people would be doing nothing." – Female community member

## STRATEGIES 3 AND 4

Prior to the engagement with CD and the commencement of the church project, Imangara faced challenges in finding support for the community, including for basic community services that should be provided by local authorities.

"There is nobody there to hear the community member's voice [in Imangara]. They are so deeply disempowered and disenfranchised... [and] the disfunction of Barkly Regional Council contributes to this disempowerment." – CLC CD staff member

Respondents from Imangara described how the CD project has helped the community in not only accessing funding, but also in understanding processes and approaches that will support Imangara achieve their goals.

[CD staff member], she's really good and the other lady [CD staff member], they both was good for us, help us to live in the community, help building the things we need. We need better changes in this community.... We like to work with them [CLC CD] so we understand and do things right. We've been doing that with them". – Male community member

The partner organisation for the church project also commented on the sense of ownership the community has and the feeling of being welcomed into the community for that reason.

"The community is always pleased to see us because they have ownership of the project – there's been consultation, thought and action taken – [it] gives people pride. It's not just a white fella telling them what they need." – Project partner

Specific to the strategies of 'Partnerships and Networks' and 'Advocacy and Lobbying', CLC CD has been instrumental in raising issues with Barkly Regional Council related to lack of provision of community services and payment of lease money.

"We see things going ahead when we talk to her (CLC CD staff member)... She's been helping us fight for the leasing thing with the Shire." – Female community member

"Sometimes she just helps and lets them know what we need out here." – Female community member

"I've been asking the Barkly mob to come and remove the old cars... Council used to come here before about jobs and things but they've got lazy and they don't come any more." – Male community member

CLC's legal staff have supported Imangara to understand their options in response to proposed back payment of lease money from the BRC for the use of a lot for Night Patrol services. This has included community meetings to explain the definitions and rules about leases and the powers of the Imangara Aboriginal Corporation to make decisions. CD has also encouraged community members to represent their own interests at BRC meetings directly, along with their local authority representative. This illustrates one way in which the CD program is implementing the strategy of supporting Aboriginal people to extend control of development beyond community working groups.

"Land Council has been helping by telling them they need to pay. We need backpay and then to start paying rent. They haven't agreed yet. The Land Council lawyer has been following up. If they don't agree at the meeting at the end of the year we'll have more meetings. Land Council helps with that." – Female community member

## FEEDBACK ON THE CD APPROACH

Regarding the CD program more broadly, respondents clearly acknowledged the need for and impact of this type of funding.

"I think it's really good to help. Without no funds they wouldn't change the community, for the community, for the next generation, the little ones." – Male community member

Most respondents identified the positive role CD staff have had in the community since the start of the project and the desire to continue this positive relationship in the future.

"[CD staff member] is always being helpful from the start and we're looking forward to more [help] from [her] next year." – Female community member

Feedback from both the community and partners expressed praise for the patience and communication style used by the CD staff members, including the way they spoke slowly to ensure everyone understood the key messages, felt comfortable to ask for clarification and trusted that concrete actions agreed on in meetings would be followed through. A representative from a partner organisation for community infrastructure also reported that CD procedures have been steadily improving.

"CLC CD are very good at communicating with the community – they excel at the cultural engagement side. However, they don't come from the construction side... in my experience in the last three years their procedures have really improved." – Project partner



*Community members and CLC Community Development Program staff stand outside the newly completed church project in Imangara.*

# DISCUSSION

## PROGRESS TOWARDS OBJECTIVE 1

### Increase Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control over the development of our communities, homelands and futures

Quantitative data shows that community and stakeholder engagements are increasing year on year, and the two case studies indicate that this engagement is translating to an increase in ownership of development processes and projects by Aboriginal communities. The case study of Imangara provides a strong example of progress in this area. Despite not having a formal CD Working Group, Imangara's CD meetings are regularly well attended and have provided a forum for community members to not only discuss decisions and updates regarding the specific CD-funded projects, but also to raise broader issues and concerns that by all accounts would otherwise go unheard and un-actioned. The ways in which the CD program have supported the community to address these broader issues broader in both case study sites illustrates the way the program is maturing to seek improved Aboriginal ownership and control of development beyond their own resources<sup>6</sup>. These efforts are having mixed effect, with some initiatives leading to success (e.g. Alekarenge dialysis clinic) while others remain stalled due to intractable issues with the capacity and willingness of other agencies to respond to community priorities (e.g. Alekarenge Training Centre, CDP white card training in Imangara).

Community members have emphasised the learning journey they have been on through working with the CD team. The MFI has clearly enabled the CD program to support additional communities, particularly communities that are more remote or otherwise have restricted income opportunities such as Imangara, and is enabling additional community & stakeholder engagement activities. Almost half of all engagements were conducted by the East region team, a direct correlation to the concentration of MFI allocations in the East.

Evidence suggests that the CD program is making progress towards increasing the involvement of younger people in CD program governance, however more work is needed in this area. According to qualitative data from staff reflection sessions, during the reporting period there were several communities in which the CD program saw the emergence of new and younger leaders. In Kintore in the South West, for example, young people stepped up to fill the gaps left by the sad loss of several community leaders, while the case study of Alekarenge also demonstrated the addition of younger members to the working group, and the ways in which older members value the opportunity to pass on knowledge to younger members. The Lajamanu Good Community Life Project findings have also highlighted the community's desire for the CD program to better engage youth aged 14-18. In the Tanami, WETT has highlighted the need to work on succession planning due to ill health and the multiple kinship and community roles and responsibilities of key governance group members. Elections for WETT to fill committee vacancies are scheduled for 2025, offering a concrete opportunity for the engagement of more youth representatives. The CD Unit can further support this through enhancing communication efforts between working groups and the community, including sharing information about CD activities and opportunities to contribute, with a focus on sharing information with young people.

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<sup>6</sup> This corresponds with the shift in the objectives of the CD Framework 2021-2026

Emerging findings from the Lajamanu Good Community Life project show that Yapa in Lajamanu see local governance and leadership arrangements becoming increasingly complex and confusing and suggest CLC could play a role in helping simplify this. The CD Unit will need to pay attention to this dynamic in the larger communities it operates in to ensure that CD governance groups do not add to confusion or duplication of local governance functions, and that effective communication channels are maintained between different Aboriginal governance groups in each location.



Laramba Community Lease  
Money Working Group

## PROGRESS TOWARDS OBJECTIVE 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*

Evidence shows that many of the projects funded across income sources are highly valued by the Aboriginal communities in which they are implemented and are designed to make a sustained difference. The most common project type over the 2023-2024 period was infrastructure, providing the opportunity for project benefits to the community to be sustained through ongoing use. This was demonstrated in both case study sites, where communities prioritised allocations to multi-use community spaces including the Imangara church and Alekarenge training centre.

The continuation of MFI and its commitment to predictable, multi-year funding has enabled communities receiving matched funds, the majority of which are concentrated in the East, to dedicate time and resources to the implementation of scoping studies ahead of potential larger and higher cost projects such as the Alekarenge Footy Oval Lights Scoping Project. The uptake of scoping projects in the East region demonstrates the lessons learnt through earlier experiences of the CD program in the Tanami region where increasing income from the Granites gold mine led to a proliferation of larger, more complex infrastructure projects being funded through CD. Scoping projects enable communities and project partners to understand the feasibility, cost and best approach to implementation for complicated or high-value initiatives, increasing the chances of project success and sustainability. The extent to which these projects will contribute to sustained difference in practice however will be determined by a number of factors unique to the context of each community, including budget and personnel for maintenance and upkeep, community ownership and security measures, and satisfaction with the delivered project result. These factors should continue to be considered in the planning stages to promote sustainability.

Monitoring reports, CD staff reflections and interviews emphasise the importance placed on projects that will directly benefit children and youth and foster a sense of culture, community and connection. In Alekarenge, projects have focused on the role of sport and arts to promote positive engagement of youth both within and beyond the community for both males and females. In Imangara the church project delivered a meaningful outcome that was prioritised by both current community members and their predecessors that at the same time functions as a symbolic achievement, inspiring the Imangara community to pursue further development opportunities. Homelands projects, such as that in Utyerrikwe funded by NT Parks income stream, are also designed to enable the return to homelands for traditional owners and their families, with particular emphasis

on visits to country with grandchildren. The sense of community and pride cultivated through these projects have strong potential to make a sustained difference to the community if appropriate ongoing maintenance support is provided.

## ENABLERS OF SUCCESS

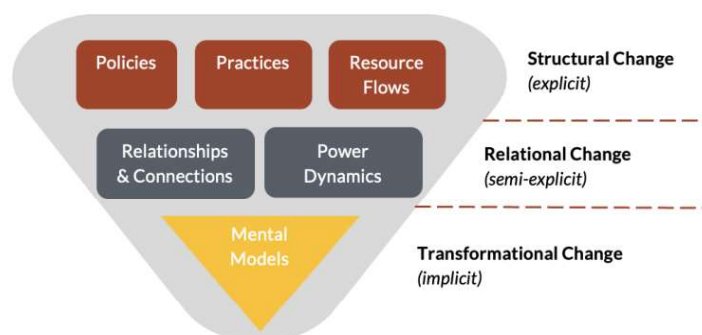
### Increased support for Partnerships, Networking, Lobbying and Advocacy

The CD team is dedicating significant effort toward partnerships, advocacy and lobbying. According to quantitative data, 1 in 5 engagements with communities and/or stakeholders during the reporting period were primarily focused on Strategies 3 and 4, indicating that these two areas are being given substantial focus by the CD unit and communities, with activities towards Strategy 3 most often dedicated to partnership building activities, rather than networking. This was demonstrated in the two case study communities, with support including the identification and contracting of appropriate partners for CD projects, negotiating land use payments, organising training opportunities for white cards and licences, and liaising with Barkly Regional Council to advocate on behalf of communities for timely service delivery. In the case of larger projects, especially those involving land and water, CD officers have emphasised the high number of stakeholders that CD officers are required to interact with prior to even engaging a project partner. Such projects demand skilful negotiation and advocacy efforts. Continuing to invest in staff skill to effectively navigate these growing roles will be critical to future transformational development outcomes of the CD program.

### ■ Empowering relational change

On the journey to transformational change, relational change is a key condition that requires the development of quality connections and communication between all relevant actors in the system. Relational change also requires the re-distribution of decision-making power, authority, and both formal and informal influence among individuals and organisations. The case studies in this report demonstrate ways in which the CD team is playing an enabling role to support community members to engage and build relationships with stakeholders in support of community development goals.

**Figure 22: Six conditions of change<sup>7</sup>**



<sup>7</sup> The Water of Systems Change, John Kania, Mark Kramer, Peter Senge, June 2018, The-Water-of-Systems-Change-FSG-2018.pdf (ncfp.org)

One example from the case study showed the role the CD team played in supporting the Alekarenge Working Group to build a relationship with Purple House and the Northern Territory Minister for Health to enable the construction of a dialysis clinic in Alekarenge. This was noteworthy as a project that in the end did not require CD funding to progress, yet was championed by the CD staff working in Alekarenge. Through this process working group members are also learning about advocacy, such as through their participation in writing a letter to the NT Minister for Health.

As previous monitoring reports have highlighted, the CD program has been most effective at supporting structural change, and we are now seeing increasing examples of CD groups that are beginning to work in ways that support semi-explicit relational change. Alekarenge appears to be ahead of Imangara in terms of fostering relational change, which suggests that higher levels of resourcing, formality CD governance structures and duration of engagement with the CD program are enablers of achieving increasingly transformational change in CD locations.

### ■ Cross-departmental collaboration within CLC

Collaboration across departments within CLC has been shown to be an enabling factor for success in both Alekarenge and Imangara. In both cases, issues that were raised with the CD team through working group meetings were subsequently shared with the Policy and Legal teams for additional support and expertise. In Alekarenge, a representative from the Legal team was present at a working group meeting and provided ongoing support to ensure clarity in information provided and allow for questions from community members. In the case of Imangara, inclusion of Policy colleagues from CLC was necessary to push forward the issue of white card training provision and advocate for the community in relation to training and employment opportunities which was outside of the CD team's area of influence and expertise. The Policy team within CLC has the potential to leverage existing relationships with a wide range of stakeholders for advocacy purposes, while the CD team maintains the community-level relationships and contextual knowledge required to ground policy in practice and foster community-led advocacy. It will continue to be important to maintain strong relationships and open pathways between the CD, Policy and Legal teams and establishing clear and structured processes to do so could be beneficial for the CD program.

### ■ Technical capacity within the CD team

CD staff and partners reported that the availability of an infrastructure technical specialist to support the CD team in 2023/24 further aided the team's capacity and enabled smoother project planning and implementation. Almost 40% of all CD funding during the reporting period was allocated towards community infrastructure projects, many of which were relatively large and complex compared to previous periods. The technical specialist position supported the development of infrastructure packages, advised on compliance to Australian building standards, carried out defects liability inspections and supported scoping and quoting processes. The recruitment and retention of this position also has benefits in terms of partnerships as the ability of the CD team to now provide technical specifications reduced the amount of back-and-forth with project partners and contributed to smoother and faster planning processes. This position should be established as an ongoing resource available to the CD Unit.

### ■ Culturally respectful ways of working

Findings from the two case studies indicate that the CD team's ways of working which prioritise respectful relationships and cooperation contribute to ownership and pride in projects as community voices, opinions and concerns are heard and responded to throughout the planning and implementation process. Community members have emphasised the ways in which this enhances their own knowledge and governance capacity, or how to "do things right". This has also been identified and appreciated by project partners who choose to continue to work with the CD program because of their strong community and partner engagement and cultural awareness.



*Willowra students visit  
Kuranda Historic Railway*

## BARRIERS TO CHANGE

### ■ *Gaps in government service provision*

The failure of government-funded services to deliver on their roles continues to be a barrier to success for many CD communities, including Alekarenge and Imangara. The continued effort to access training opportunities for Imangara residents without result not only prevented community members from accessing employment, but also took significant time and effort from the CD team. Long-term lack of service provision and slow lobbying processes just to get a government response have led to communities preferring to spend their own money to get a result, rather than waiting for government to act. While the outcome is positive in that the CD process is working effectively and communities are able to take ownership and determine their own priorities, the converse result is that local authorities are abdicating their responsibilities without consequence.

Tension between guaranteeing service provision and holding local authorities accountable is experienced across the CD portfolio. In the cases of Imangara and Alekarenge, both communities were left frustrated by inadequate service provision by Barkly Regional Council and other responsible service providers. In Yuendumu, both the GMAAAC governance committee and CD staff are concerned about what the repercussions might be of accepting government funding for the public pool operations. Accepting government funding is predicted to result in loss of control over decisions regarding the pool, for example when it should be closed for cultural reasons. This lack of government accountability is a barrier to achieving transformational change as it limits communities' belief that broader change is possible. Continued collaboration across departments within CLC will likely be required to address and/or bridge these ongoing challenges at a systemic level, and in some cases elevation to the CLC Council or Executive for consideration.

### ■ *Bureaucratic administrative processes*

The case study of Imangara showed that increasingly bureaucratic and administrative processes are also acting as a barrier for full participation. These processes have required CD to take on a resource-intensive role to support employment outcomes, including supporting transport, applying for formal identification and establishing communication channels. Administrative and logistical barriers to accessing training opportunities for Aboriginal people included training days only being advertised on a website, the need to have a phone or email address, lack of transportation options to in-person training courses and requirement for a Unique Student Identifier (USI). This suggests that there continues to be an important advocacy role for the CLC to play in holding government agencies accountable for service delivery in remote communities, and for making

government services (such as training) more accessible to remote constituents. Given the national reach of this issue collaboration between the CD team and CLC Policy would be appropriate here.

### ■ Limited partner pool

There are limited partner organisations with expertise operating in the remote central Australian context, and the increasing demand for projects generated through the CD program is one of several factors that at times places pressure on organisations that are already stretched by the complexities of their operating environment. It can be challenging to find appropriate local partners with capacity to lead on larger projects, and at times CD Officers need to look further afield for appropriate expertise. The time it takes to establish contracts for larger projects, including navigating factors beyond the control of the CD unit, can lead to delayed engagement of partners, resulting in frustration from project partners, response to quotations after the validity period and higher costs to CD budgets due to market changes. CD has faced the loss of partners, specifically from Tennant Creek, due to companies withdrawing from the process or closing business, resulting in the need to identify alternative partners from an already limited pool. Evidence collected in the case studies demonstrated how the CD Unit has been continuously improving in project and contract management, and it is critical the unit continue refining its approach to project and partner management to ensure sustainable benefits are maximised. Given the challenges with partners and the time spent by CD staff to identify, negotiate with and contract new partners, as well as re-do quotes, negotiate with funding bodies and keep traditional owners informed, it would also be beneficial for the CD program to continue investing in the skills and capabilities of CD Officers to effectively navigate the complexities of partner negotiation effectively.

### ■ Expanded scope and scale of CD Officer role

Growing staff workloads are limiting the capacity of the CD unit to work equitably across all CD sites. The case study of Imangara provides an example of the expanded role of the CD team members. According to staff reflection workshops, CD staff acknowledge that their roles now encompass a much broader scope and are on a much bigger scale than when the CD program was in its development stages. This is particularly evident in the increasing number of engagements being undertaken by the East team as a result of the Matched Funds Income leading to new communities engaging with the CD program that had not previously had the opportunity. While the inclusion of more communities is positive, the increased workload for CD staff, particularly in establishing and supporting new governance groups and supporting advocacy and lobbying efforts, has the result of not allowing time for meaningful engagement with all governance groups. In many cases support to communities has focused on project-related outcomes due to timeline and delivery requirements around the allocation and expenditure of matched funds, rather than building governance capability and exploring community desires for transformational change. The quantitative data is positive in that it shows significant time dedication to strategies 3 and 4, however this workload may be unsustainable for individual CD Officers. Though appreciated by communities, this level of support requires significant time input from various members of the CD Unit (including legal and policy). Additional staffing would likely further increase the support CLC could provide through these strategies, and the transformational impact of the CD program. In lieu of additional staffing, guidance for CD staff on how to manage expanding workloads including when to apply a deeper focus in a community governance setting and invest additional time in strategies 1, 3 and 4 and when to maintain a more limited project focus would be helpful in navigating the extent of development outcomes to be supported in each site.

*Visiting artist Bronte Naylor and local artist Selina Hunter collaborate on a mural*



## RECOMMENDATIONS

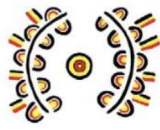
1. Engage CD working groups in discussion about options to enhance communication with the broader community in support of CD activities. Include a focus on communicating with young people and other Aboriginal governance groups. Consider implementation of recommendations identified.
2. Community infrastructure project planning should continue to include budgets, plans and responsibilities for the defects liability period and ongoing asset management to promote sustainability of project benefits.
3. Continue and build on existing examples of effective collaboration between key departments within CLC, including the Policy and Legal teams. Develop standard operating procedures to guide consistent processes for collaboration, including delegating roles and responsibilities.
4. Secure ongoing support of technical specialist(s) (such as an additional architect or engineer) to advise CD Officers to expedite and improve the quality of surveying and quotation processes for increasingly complex infrastructure projects.
5. Consider further investment in CD Officer skill and capacity to undertake lobbying and advocacy and navigate complex stakeholder and partner negotiations in collaboration with Aboriginal governance group members. This may include dedicated training opportunities to build upon CD Officers' existing strengths including culturally aware relationship building, management and communication skills, and local knowledge.
6. Collaborate with the CLC Policy team to document and escalate concerns relating to the lack of government service delivery in remote communities and barriers to accessing available services. Ensure opportunities for working group members to participate in advocacy opportunities that emerge.

7. Dedicate time and resources for wider partner scoping to increase the partner pool and pro-actively assess potential partner quality, timelines and costs.
8. Consider alternative structures of the CD team to reduce the number of governance groups per CD Officer with the intent to allow more time for delivering the CD strategies of governance, partnerships and advocacy in each location. This could include, for example, division of the East region into two teams, and recruitment of additional CDOs and a new Regional Coordinator, and/or the recruitment and training of Assistant CD Engagement Officers at the local level.
9. Establish guidelines for CD staff to inform decisions about the depth of the CD process in each site and assist in managing expanding workloads.
10. For future monitoring, CLC could explore the differences in how lobbying and advocacy and partnership and networks activities are applied in communities with different sizes and CD profiles and enhance tracking of group governance capacity.

## CONCLUSION

The CD program has continued to make progress towards its two objectives and has demonstrated significant achievements in empowering and advocating for the rights and interests of Aboriginal communities. Efforts in Strategies 3 and 4 are clearly valued by communities with which the CD program works, particularly those that are small, more remote or have otherwise limited engagement with external stakeholders. The CLC's approach to community development continues to enable Aboriginal people to make decisions and drive positive social change in their communities, with some examples demonstrating increasing scope of influence beyond the group's own resources. Notwithstanding these positive examples of change, systemic barriers continue to limit the scope for transformational change in some instances. The CLC's flexible ways of working, the continued commitment of its staff in finding solutions that benefit communities and increasing willingness to invest time in partnership development and advocacy strategies are enabling factors for meaningful change in the face of these contextual barriers.





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