Organising for Success: Policy Report

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES IN INDIGENOUS ORGANISATIONS

WARNING

In some Aboriginal communities mortuary restrictions apply on the
naming and display of photographs of deceased individuals.
Please exercise caution when displaying the contents of this book,
particularly in the Northern Territory and northwest Australia.

ORGANISING FOR SUCCESS

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES IN INDIGENOUS ORGANISATIONS

POLICY REPORT

AUSTRALIAN COLLABORATION

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
& TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

ORGANISING FOR SUCCESS

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES IN
INDIGENOUS ORGANISATIONS

POLICY REPORT

The Australian Collaboration and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies are very grateful for the support of the following bodies without whose help the research could not have been undertaken:

> Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Services, Australian Government
> Department for Victorian Communities, Victorian Government
> Department of Human Services, Victorian Government
> The Myer Foundation
> New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council
> The Poola Foundation (Tom Kantor Fund)
> Reconciliation Australia

The Australian Collaboration is a consortium of seven leading national community organisations:

> Australian Council of Social Service
> Australian Conservation Foundation
> Australian Council for International Development
> Choice (Australian Consumers Association)
> Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
> National Council of Churches in Australia
> Trust for Young Australians

Thanks to all the Indigenous organisations, community groups and other agencies that have contributed to the case studies on which this report is based.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

> AIATSIS Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
> ACOSS   Australian Council of Social Service
> AICD   Australian Institute of Company Directors
> AMS   Aboriginal Medical Service
> ATSIC   Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
> BNNAC   Bama Ngappi Ngappi Aboriginal Corporation
> CDEP   Community Development Employment Project
> CEO   Chief Executive Officer
> CFO   Chief Financial Officer
> DEWR   Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
> IEC   Indigenous Employment Centre
> IPA   Indigenous Protected Area
> IT   Information Technology
> MPREC   Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Corporation
> NGO   Non-government organisation
> ORAC   Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations
> SWAMS   South West Aboriginal Medical Service
> TBLAC   Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council
> UTS   University of Technology Sydney
> VACCA   Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

The completed research included studies of sixteen Indigenous organisations and Indigenous partnerships in protected area management. The Steering Committee believes that these case studies cover a wide geographic spread across the continent of Australia and a variety of tasks and responsibilities. Of course, there are many other successful Indigenous organisations which are not included in the sample.

Longer accounts of each organisation and their key success factors are at the back of this book, pages 55–89.

PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Awabakal Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd (Awabakal)
Wickham (Newcastle), New South Wales

The Co-operative provides a range of community services including: Aboriginal Medical Service, Elders and Disability Services, Preschool and Day Care Centre.

Bama Ngappi Ngappi Aboriginal Corporation (Bama Ngappi Ngappi)
Yarrabah (near Cairns), North Queensland

The Corporation provides employment services under the trading name EmployNET at Yarrabah, Cairns, Townsville, Atherton and Mt Isa. It also runs CDEP at Yarrabah.

Booderee National Park (Booderee)
Jervis Bay Territory, southeastern Australia

A joint management arrangement for a National Park and Botanic Gardens. The land is owned by Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council and leased to the Directorate of National Parks. The management area includes both terrestrial and marine areas.

Brambuk Aboriginal Cultural Centre (Brambuk)
Halls Gap (Grampians-Gariwerd National Park), Victoria

The Centre runs educational and cultural tourism activities and a backpacker hostel.

Dhimurru Land Management Aboriginal Corporation (Dhimurru)
Northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Dhimurru is responsible for the management of the Dhimurru Indigenous Protected Area, which includes both terrestrial and marine areas.

Durri Medical Service (Durri)
Kempsey, New South Wales

The Service provides medical and health services for the Indigenous population of the region.

Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Corporation Ltd (Murdi Paaki)
Coonamble, New South Wales

The Corporation manages CDEPs across central and western NSW, and runs employment, training and business development initiatives.

Nitmiluk National Park (Nitmiluk)
Katherine Gorge, Northern Territory

A joint management arrangement for a National Park. The land is owned by Traditional Owners, and has been leased to the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission.

Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd (Papunya Tula)
Alice Springs, Northern Territory

The Company runs a commercial art enterprise owned and directed by artists of the Western Desert.

Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd (Rumbalara)
Mooroopna (near Shepparton), Victoria

The Co-operative provides a range of community services including: Health Services, Aged Care and Disability Services, Housing and Family Services.

South West Aboriginal Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation (SWAMS)
Bunbury, southwest Western Australia

An Aboriginal Medical Service for residents of southwest WA.

Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council (Tweed Byron)
Chinderah (Tweed region), northeast New South Wales

A land council responsible for representing members within the shires of Byron and Tweed under the *(NSW) Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* and providing land management services and housing.

Victorian Aboriginal Childcare Agency Co-operative Ltd (VACCA)
Melbourne, Victoria

The Co-operative is a state-wide lead agency representing Aboriginal interests in all policy, program and services associated with the welfare of Aboriginal children and families.

Wangka Maya Language Centre (Wangka Maya)
Pilbara, Western Australia

The Centre provides language services, translation and studies regional languages.

Worn Gundidj Co-operative (Worn Gundidj)
Warrnambool, southwest Victoria

The Co-operative runs a CDEP and cultural tourism enterprise.

Wunan Foundation Incorporated (Wunan)
Kununurra (East Kimberley), Western Australia

An economic development foundation providing employment and training related services and business and corporate services. It is also involved with running tourism services and a hostel.

The description of the organisations and their services provided reflect conditions that were true at the time the study was conducted (between October 2005 to October 2006). Recent changes in the Australian government's framework and program funding, including the withdrawal of CDEP funding, may mean major changes in service delivery for some case study organisations.

INTENT OF THE STUDY

The Australian Collaboration, a consortium of seven leading national community organisations, proposed that a national study be carried out into initiatives in local Indigenous organisations that have helped to promote community wellbeing or to overcome disadvantage. The aim of the study was to identify the lessons that might be learnt from these successes.

The Australian Collaboration invited the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to carry out the research. A Steering Committee was formed with representation from these two organisations and funding bodies. Professor Larissa Behrendt, Professor of Law and Indigenous Studies, University of Technology Sydney, was invited to chair the committee.

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STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

An essential requirement for the study was that its findings should be of practical use to Indigenous communities as a source of ideas and an inspiration for adoption and adaptation.

THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The Australian Collaboration and Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies agreed that, while the symptoms of Indigenous disadvantage have been widely reported, inadequate attention had been given to examples of Indigenous creativity and leadership in tackling problems and that a report focusing on such successes would be of considerable value to Indigenous people and Indigenous policy makers and find a ready audience.

The partner organisations agreed that the study must be scholarly and persuasive in its analysis and arguments and make a serious contribution to the body of research on Indigenous circumstances. At the same time, an essential requirement for the study was that its findings should be of practical use to Indigenous communities as a source of ideas and an inspiration for adoption and adaptation. The study should also be a guide to best practice for government and non-government organisations and for philanthropic, corporate and public sector engagement. It should draw out succinct lessons and suggest ways of communicating and discussing the findings of the study.

To meet these objectives a number of reports have been prepared. This report is designed for policy makers. A handbook for Aboriginal organisations, *Maps to Success*, has also been published. At a later date, a document on organisational success designed for academic audiences will be produced. Two other documents *Indigenous Partnerships in Protected Area Management in Australia: Three Case Studies* and a related policy briefing paper have been prepared to specifically address the case studies focused upon joint management of Aboriginal lands.

WHY THE RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT

It is valuable to know what has worked well in Aboriginal organisations, what has not, what are the reasons for the successes and what can be learnt from them that can be applied in other organisations. It is also likely that policy makers, Aboriginal leaders and local communities will learn more from success than from failure.

There is too much emphasis on failure in the reporting of Indigenous circumstances. This has three significant adverse effects:

> Continuous reference to failure masks important successes;

> Reiteration of failure is dispiriting to Aboriginal people;

> The persistent reporting of failure reinforces stereotypical views of Indigenous people in the general population.

Success can mean quite different things to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Since successes of both kinds are important, we need to know how they can best be achieved.

The study of Indigenous organisations is significant because some researchers feel that Indigenous organisations (and government agencies) have the greatest potential to offer individuals the opportunity for participation and engagement and thus for capacity building.

There is evidence from Canadian research that the presence of successful organisations or groups in an Indigenous community helps Indigenous people to find pride in their own culture and achievements and to mitigate feelings of 'total discouragement'.

Currently, most of the policy assumptions about success are drawn from overseas literature, especially from the Harvard Project in the US. Indigenous circumstances in Australia and the US are not, however, identical (e.g. culture, sovereignty, service delivery arrangements and funding). There is therefore a need for studies of success in an Australian Indigenous context that can be compared with the findings of the major overseas studies. The intercultural psychological literature is full of references to the mistakes made when there is a failure to recognise the differences between cultures and settings.

APPROACH TO THE STUDY

The Australian Collaboration proposed that the study should be carried out in two stages, Stage 1 being a scoping study and Stage 2 the full study. The Collaboration believed that a two-stage model was needed because it was essential to investigate what other work of a similar kind had been carried out, to review the literature on the characteristics of success in Indigenous communities and to ensure that the methodology for the study had been carefully considered before the main study was set in

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train. The need for a two-stage study was fully endorsed by the partner organisations. It was also agreed that it would be valuable to carry out two case studies of successes in local communities during the first stage to test the proposed methodology and to use the findings for the planning of the main study.

STAGE 1: THE PILOT STUDY

The outcomes of first stage were described in two reports published as *Success in Aboriginal Communities: A pilot study* (Volumes 1 and 2). They included:

> A literature review;

> A discussion of the approach to 'success';

> The findings of two sample case studies, one the Wangka Maya Language Centre in the Pilbara, Western Australia and the other the Durri Medical Service at Kempsey, New South Wales;

> A recommended methodology for the main study; and

> The proposed approach to the main study.

STAGE 2: THE PRINCIPAL STUDY

A key issue for Stage 2 was the choice of the alternative of an indepth study of a restricted number of organisations or of a more superficial examination of a larger number of case study examples. The Steering Committee, supported by the advice of the lead researcher for the study and the Deputy Principal Research at AIATSIS, concluded that indepth studies were preferable to more superficial studies.

The partner organisations involved in the study have agreed that the project should as best as possible be nationally representative of Indigenous circumstance. Project staff have worked with the Steering Committee to ensure that the case studies chosen typify the national scene and reflect the complexity of locational, cultural, historical, and economic differences among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups. The Committee agreed that, in order to provide a sufficient spread of examples, a minimum of twelve studies should be carried out in Stage 2 over twelve months.

The research has been carried out according to the ethical standards published by AIATSIS in its *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies.* The guidelines seek to foster best ethical practice among Australian researchers.

JOINT MANAGEMENT OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION VALUE—SUBSIDIARY STUDY

A subsidiary study focusing on success in the joint management of lands of conservation value was also carried out as part of the project. Three case studies were investigated. The lessons from these case studies have been included in this report.

Two separate reports have also been prepared on issues related to joint management of lands of conservation value.

THE RESEARCH TEAM

The research was carried out under the overall direction of Dr Luke Taylor, Deputy Principal—Research, and Dr Peter Veth, former Director of Research, AIATSIS. In the drafting stage of this report there was significant assistance from Dr Patrick Sullivan, Visiting Research Fellow, AIATSIS.

The principal researcher for the main part of the study was Dr Julie Finlayson. She was assisted by Ms Joanna Lunzer.

The researchers for the subsidiary part of the study on the joint management of lands of conservation value were Dr Dermot Smyth and Toni Bauman.

The Steering Committee wishes to thank Luke, Peter, Patrick, Julie, Joanna, Dermot and Toni warmly for their work on the project.

Larissa Behrendt
Chair, Steering Committee
Professor and Director ACOSS
& former Board member AIATSIS

David Yencken AO
Deputy Chair, Steering Committee
Professor Emeritus and
Chair, Australian Collaboration

2 THE RESEARCH

CONDUCT OF THE RESEARCH

A pilot study, *Success in Aboriginal Communities* was published in 2004. At the conclusion of the pilot study field evidence suggested that generic principles underpin successful organisations. However, the study sample was small. Consequently, in Stage 2 a broader sample of fourteen diverse organisations—varying in size, location, structure, and purpose—tested the proposition.

Of the fourteen case studies the majority are government funded, increasingly through contracts in a purchaser-provider model, and to a lesser extent grant funds continue for a suite of programs administered through the service provider. Most are community service providers: in health, aged care, youth services, employment, land management, and cultural tourism. A minority participate in commercial activities such as retail of Aboriginal art. Another provides commercially costed administrative and financial services on a fee-for-service basis to regional Indigenous organisations.

Stage 2 provided an opportunity to explore how far success in Indigenous organisations is attributable to generic principles; common traits critical in building success in any form of organisation (see Finlayson 2004).

From the pilot, six key elements of successful organisations stood out:

> A capacity to deliver an appropriate client-based service;

> Recognition of successful service delivery by external and internal criteria;

> Congruence between Board, staff and consumers around quality in service delivery;

> Longevity of the service through application of planning, monitoring and review for continuous improvement;

> Focus on core business;

> Excellent working relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff.

For Stage 2, there were additional questions for the research; in particular questions about how to balance Indigenous values and cultural imperatives with mainstream practices for effective, efficient service delivery and performance.

The policy framework and administration of Indigenous affairs in 2005/06 differed radically from that when the pilot studies were conducted in 2003. Organisations now found that funding decisions were part of an instrumental and highly directive approach to reshape the socio-economic options available to Indigenous people. The force of program and implementation changes observed 'on the ground' meant looking at the impact that factors outside an organisation's control have on successful practice.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The researchers for the main study visited all the organisations and attempted to answer the following questions in the individual case studies:

> What are the key characteristics of the organisation?

> In what way has the organisation been successful and in what way unsuccessful?

> What are the reasons for the success and failures?

> What is the geographic, social, cultural, environmental and economic context in which the organisation operates?

> In what way has this context influenced the activities and success of the organisation?

> Has the organisation had particular advantages or disadvantages not typically shared by other organisations?

> What are the perceptions of the organisation from Indigenous and non-Indigenous people inside the organisation and Indigenous and non-indigenous people outside the organisation?

> How is the organisation related to the Aboriginal community in which it is located or which it serves?

> What can be learnt from each case study that is applicable to other Aboriginal organisations:
- To all or most organisations?
- To some organisations sharing common characteristics?

> In what way does success or failure replicate or contradict evidence from comparable research (e.g. research carried out by the Harvard project on Native American economic development)?

A summary of each case study organisation is included on pp.55–89.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER RESEARCH

An original purpose of the study was to see whether the results of the Harvard Project on Indian Economic Development were replicable in Australia.[1] The Harvard studies had identified three key principles for economic development: sovereignty over land, cultural match between the Indigenous group and its institutions, and good corporate governance.[2] Our study concludes that the situation in Australia is so different from North America that these principles are not applicable to the organisations visited except in the modified form described below.

Sovereignty over land may be an aspiration for some of the organisations in this study, but it is not an essential prerequisite for success. Sovereignty is more contentious in Australia than in north America. Dodson and Smith's adaptation of the Harvard approach refers to 'political jurisdiction' which is more applicable here.[3] Their paper was produced as part of the Indigenous Community Governance Project, based in the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy research at the Australian National University. That research project deals with communities, regions and the broad policy environment, in contrast to our own which has studied organisations. Nevertheless, the conclusions of both studies complement each other.[4]

> **Sovereignty over land may be an aspiration for some of the organisations in this study, but it is not an essential prerequisite for success. Sovereignty is more contentious in Australia than in north America.**

Having jurisdiction, broadly defined, is an important element of success in Australian Aboriginal organisations. It means that they have effective control over their area of operation, and that the effects of the decisions of the Board or management impact on the organisation, so that there is room for learning from experience. However, all of the organisations operated in a mixed environment of partnership with government agencies and non-Indigenous interests, and all were to some extent (usually to a great extent) affected by government policy and regulation. The Harvard studies, which aim to encourage good governance so as to reduce risk for commercial enterprises in Native American communities[5] are not always applicable in this environment.

Cultural match is also a difficult concept to apply in Australia. In some of the Harvard examples, traditional cultural processes contradict liberal democratic principles of fairness. They are also silent on the how to deal with cases where the culture is clearly out of synch with the needs of a modern service organisation,

1 See http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/ hpaied/overview.htm. The project is also associated with the Native Nations Institute, Udall Centre, University of Arizona. See http:// www.nni.arizona.edu/whoweare/ collaborators.php

2 This formulation of the results first appeared in Jorgensen and Taylor 2000:2–3. It has been reiterated in several papers to the present, see Sullivan 2006:4.

3 Dodson and Smith 2003:9

4 Hunt and Smith, 2007:50–54.

5 Cornell and Kalt 1992:26

6 Martin 2003:8.

7 Finlayson and Martin 1996.

8 Hubbard, Heaps and Cocks 2002.

9 Parker 2002

10 See Edwards and Clough 2005:14.

and on how culture is to be built into organisations. In Australia, Martin points out that there are aspects of Aboriginal culture that pose problems for policies focused on economic and social integration into mainstream Australia.[6] In later work the Harvard study authors modify cultural match to a principle of legitimacy, which includes both cultural norms and ideas of fairness and efficiency. Our studies did find that successful organisations had legitimacy among their clients because of effective service delivery, as well as by being sensitive to local community values. Successful organisations pay as much attention to 'internal accountability' (i.e. to the community they serve) as to 'external accountability' to governments.[7] However, the operation of cultural match within the organisations is something that most of those in our study felt needed to be managed. Intense loyalty to close kin, for example, which is usually a positive aspect of Aboriginal culture, was not felt to be appropriate in the workplace.

Sound corporate governance was the third aspect of the Harvard studies that they proposed would lead to economic development. There is some debate in the mainstream literature about whether sound management principles are universal and in this sense scientific,[8] or whether they mask inequitable social relations of class, gender and ethnicity.[9] While fiscal responsibility was always taken seriously by the organisations in our study, other management principles were more flexible. These organisations took a 'what works' attitude to management. Often a relaxed and flexible work environment was found to be more motivating for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff since staff had accepted reduced conditions to work in a field to which they had a personal commitment. The relationship of the Board, or governing committee, to the management of the organisation was also not as clear as management theory would normally prescribe.[10] In close-knit community settings Board members often have the local knowledge and experience to be quite 'hands on' with the organisation's operations. They are often seen as a significant resource by the organisation's management team.

Our studies did find that successful organisations had legitimacy among their clients because of effective service delivery, as well as by being sensitive to local community values.

2 KEY FINDINGS

Success is a journey which is never completed.

Our project starting point is that successful organisations must first build foundations for sound management and robust corporate governance. They also pay attention to governance of service delivery. In program terms a 'successful organisation' delivers efficient, effective services providing value for money. Successful organisations have internal characteristics which may be discerned through research although external performance indicators such as meeting service targets, providing effective professional service delivery and robust corporate governance are key success indicators. These aspects are critical, not least because public funds are provided for delivery of public services. However, in the community service sector attention to governance of service delivery is equally important and an indicator to success.

Our study focused on Indigenous organisations successful on the evidence available at the time of the field visit. Organisations are, however, dynamic. What some senior managers described as 'the alignment of the planets' when explaining why they were successful, involves a delicate balance between internal and external factors; a balance sometimes temporal and fragile.

In broad terms success is, as one senior manager said, 'a journey which is never completed'. Other views defined success in aspirational terms. All used assessment tools measuring their progress incrementally under strategic plans, through performance indicators, mechanisms for monitoring service, and reporting on key achievements. Many received and sought feedback from clients and external stakeholders.

Outlined below are the features of successful Indigenous organisations observed across sixteen case study organisations (from the Pilot and Stage 2). It should be noted that the case studies in protected area management (Booderee, Dhimurru and Nitmiluk) were of partnerships between organisations.

The Board and senior management at Rumbalara undertake tertiary business management studies to increase specific skills and develop the ability to think creatively.

GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Successful Indigenous organisations understand the imperative for good governance and take steps to avoid the risk of poor governance. Governance training was embraced by all successful organisations, however different strategies and approaches were observed. Most commonly, Board members participated in courses sponsored by regulators, such as the Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations (ORAC), through the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), and also through local registered training organisations.

Rumbalara uses an innovative approach to educating potential Board members prior to an election. They hold an information session, open to all members during which the CEO, chair and Board members explain the responsibilities, expectations and skills required of their roles, and answer questions from members. Open and informal discussion is encouraged. The aim is to inform potential Board members of the job's entailments, to provide community education on corporate governance, and to encourage community members to stand for office.
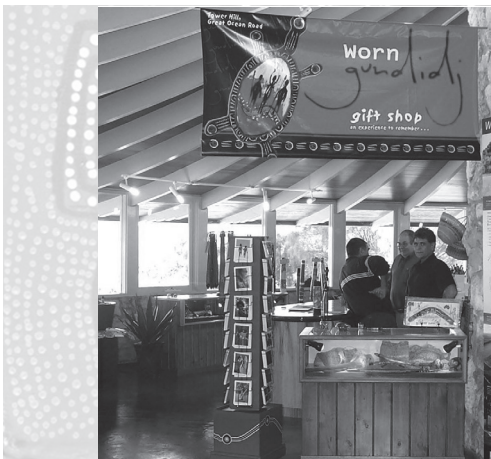
Worn Gundidj giftshop

Joanne Atkinson, director, Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative

Rumbalara recently completed a new BBQ area at their Mooroopna site, which is open to community members. It has been named the Galyan Lotjpa area, meaning 'good place to talk'

The more effective Boards were representative of both the community and/or region they serve and representative of relevant areas of expertise.

Our empirical findings show that it is important for governance to be appropriate and tailored to the specifics of the operating circumstances. Similarly, governance 'training' does not have to be formal or didactic. Participating in wider community governance roles also brings benefits.

Worn Gundidj's chief financial officer (CFO) was invited to act as a Board member of a local government organisation. Her participation in this non-Indigenous forum broadened her governance experience and enabled her to bring new knowledge and skills into her own workplace.

Similarly, the chair of Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council sits on the Aboriginal Advisory Committee of the Tweed Shire Council and previously participated in a mentoring program with a senior council member. These experiences have added to the chair's governance skills and understanding of council processes and administration.

Sound governance not only requires a skilled and technically competent Board; it also requires leadership establishing and affirming the separation of powers between Board and administration.

Most organisations displayed a clear separation of powers between the Board and administration.

Our research indicates that the Boards of successful Indigenous organisations are both representative of their community, and possess the skills and expertise required to provide strategic leadership for the effective operation of the organisation. These two critical elements are not mutually exclusive; rather, successful Boards are both representative and highly skilled in corporate governance.

There is often a dilemma about the mix between strong community representation and having some 'expert' voices on the Board. Non-Indigenous governance principles often emphasise the need for a Board to stay at arms length from the operations of a corporation and to provide general oversight only. In Indigenous settings smaller groups, limited available expertise, and the importance of local knowledge often mean that Board members are necessarily more intimately involved
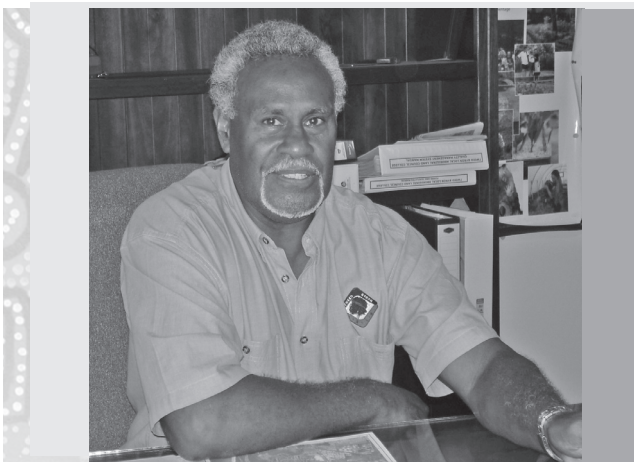
Clarence Phillips,
coordinator,
Tweed Byron
Land Council

with the operation of the corporation. A range of governance structures were observed varying from an entirely Indigenous Board elected from the local community through to appointed Boards with members representing different interests and with different expertise. The more effective Boards were representative of both the community and/or region they serve and representative of relevant areas of expertise.

EFFICIENT RESPONSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Successful organisations appreciate that the management of service delivery is of equal importance to corporate governance, and therefore carefully consider how service delivery is managed, monitored, made accessible and accountable. These organisations have procedures for ensuring they are responsive and accountable to clients.

Strategies observed were: client surveys, informing clients of complaint processes for poor service, and training front line staff in quality control techniques. SWAMS is an organisation rebuilding its credibility. Senior staff conduct 'spot checks' on delivery quality to assess client satisfaction and consistency in service standards. The organisation approaches service accountability proactively, and for the first time, has introduced clients to a widely publicised complaints process. SWAMS provides copies of the policy and complaint forms with their service delivery.

Some organisations are using tools to evaluate the impact of service delivery beyond 'outputs' and 'outcomes' to thinking about the impact their service delivery is having on clients' lives.

Serious about service, SWAMS engaged Oxfam Australia to educate field staff on the importance of service quality and assessment tools they could apply. SWAMS adopted the 'Most Significant Change' technique for gauging service quality. With data from this process, SWAMS lobbies government for continued funding by demonstrating the tangible difference access to their services has for Indigenous people; the positive impact of their services.

Glenda Humes, CEO, SWAMS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engaging community members and providing information on the activities of the organisation, is seen as an important means for ensuring accountability to members and community.

Wangka Maya has a monthly spot on local Aboriginal community radio that reaches many clients who have poor literacy levels.

Murdi Paaki has regular communication with clients, stakeholders and partners through monthly newsletters, media releases, and a website. The tone of the newsletters is celebratory, valuing the achievements of project participants in communities, and staff working for the organisation.

At Awabakal, a monthly newsletter, *Healthy Vibes* is developed in partnership with Hunter-New England Health and is made available to all members. The publication covers program updates, an events calendar, recipes, updates on community groups such as sporting teams, contact details for programs mentioned, an Awabakal member profile, and other features such as an Aboriginal history section.

Meetings, functions, classes and information activities are venues for community involvement and interaction.

Rumbalara holds regular community meetings and sponsors important celebrations such as NAIDOC, Sorry Day and its own anniversaries. They have a newly completed barbecue area to host social events.

Using local knowledge and expertise taps into community resources.

The 'Bringing Them Home' coordinator from Awabakal established a reference group of survivors from the Stolen Generation, mental health workers and community elders to provide program guidance and ensure appropriate service delivery.
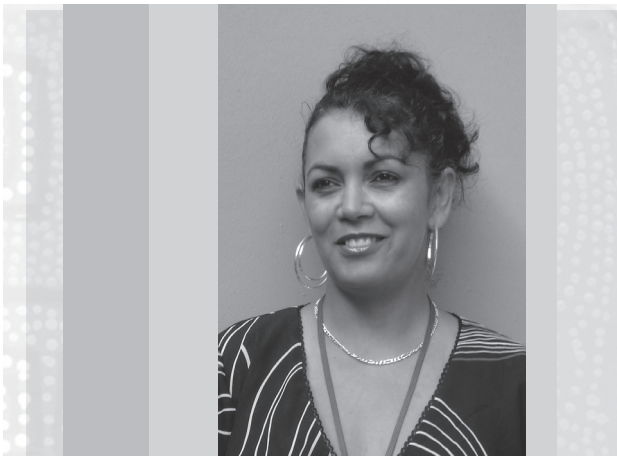
Kate Williams,
Bringing Them Home
program coordinator,
Awabakal

Successful organisations acknowledge that empowerment comes from a position of internal strength.

INTERNAL STRENGTH

Successful organisations acknowledge that empowerment comes from a position of internal strength. Organisations displaying 'internal strength' possessed the following features:

> Clear and transparent vision and objectives for the organisation, with regular corporate and business planning;

> Strong compliance performance in funding use and acquittal;

> Close ongoing monitoring of program budgets;

> Business orientation in financial management;

> Collection of data on service provision for internal and external monitoring of performance.

Rumbalara's Board and senior staff negotiate for government funding from a considered position. They do not take any or all funded programs on offer. Instead they consider the resource impost, funding timeframes, and do a cost-benefit analysis. In former times, they ran programs 'on the smell of an oily rag'. Now they appreciate the need to strike a good deal, not simply accept programs for the sake of it. This shows strategic thinking. However, Board members also knew that 'community organisations cannot be in this position (to effectively negotiate with government) if they are not financially viable'.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO FUNDING BODIES

Successful organisations demonstrate robust administrative and accountability systems for achieving financial competency, viability and accountability to funding bodies, as well as to clients.

STRONG LEADERSHIP

Successful organisations have strong leadership. Effective CEOs encourage connections to their Indigenous communities and clients, and develop wider relationships with industry associations, government, NGOs and local or regionally based mainstream providers. Successful organisations participate in advocacy forums during government inquiries and promote policy exchange and consultations with all stakeholders in their service sector.

Felicia Dean, CEO,
Rumbalara Aboriginal
Co-operative

[11] See R.A. Heifetz, 2000. *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

VACCA is an example of a proactive organisation in this regard. They employ a policy officer and an in-house research officer. The policy officer works with the CEO to ensure VACCA contributes to policy and legislative forums relevant to Indigenous families and children.

Good leadership requires CEOs to look outwards, comparing service standards with industry-wide benchmarks.

At SWAMS and Worn Gundidj, the CEOs attend meetings of industry-wide organisations to give them perspective on how others are faring in similar enterprises, both for benchmarking and for fresh ideas.

Strong leadership must be supported by personal values and professional integrity. Codes of conduct act as reminders of these values and their role in decision-making and organisational practice.

A CEO emphasised this by suggesting that good governance is 'doing the right thing when nobody is looking'.

'Leadership from behind' is a management term that means that all members of staff take responsibility for best practice in their workplace.[11] It can also apply to development of a strong team of senior staff supporting the implementation work of a CEO; a practice observed in a number of successful organisations.

At Awabakal, program coordinators are passionate, committed, and highly qualified, bringing significant experience in their particular field to their roles. They display initiative, leadership and careful consideration in developing programs and delivering services. Coordinators are aware of the strengths and limitations of their staff and consciously draw on these strengths to enhance and expand staff capacities.

The following qualities were also observed as important features of leadership in Indigenous organisations:

> Flexibility and willingness to innovate and embrace change;

> Openness to challenge;

> Vision and passion;

> Effective communication with communities and stakeholders alike.

Awabakal's Main Building —formerly Wickham Infants School

Successful organisations recognise that skilled, competent staff are crucial building blocks for a strong organisation. They value and appreciate their staff.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Successful organisations are staffed by people passionate about their work. Management supports staff ensuring workplaces are physically and emotionally safe and conducive to productive, harmonious work relations. For many staff positive workplaces were 'like family' where people were valued and respected.

Successful organisations recognise that skilled, competent staff are crucial building blocks for a strong organisation. They value and appreciate their staff.

At Worn Gundidj, management recognise small personal victories as being as important as organisational success indicators. Rewards take varied forms: a Christmas bonus, staff barbecues, the development of workplace facilities such cooking facilities in lunchrooms or an on-site gym.

Attractive employment packages and benefits can aid recruitment and overcome difficulties with not having comparable wage levels or housing availability as in some 'mainstream' employment. These can include loan schemes for housing and salary packaging arrangements.

Bama Ngappi Ngappi encourages staff to take advantage of salary sacrifice and a staff-lending discount through its bank to provide incentives.

Brambuk purchased housing in the local community for staff, so they wouldn't have to travel long distances to get to work.

Staff development is emphasised by: leading by example, mentoring, formal training, skills transfer, on-the-job instruction, secondments and involvement in wider settings.

At Booderee, having a dedicated training officer position is supported by the joint management arrangement, and gives the impetus for training activities. Booderee's long-term goal is Aboriginal sole management rather than joint management. Having a training officer provides a powerful catalyst for the capacity of the community and individuals to play a greater role in the complex task of managing a protected area.

Jacklyn Wicker, Client Manager, EmployNet Townsville (Bama Ngappi Ngappi Aboriginal Corporation)

Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council members have always positioned themselves as neutral in community politics.

Regular formal and informal communication between staff and management, particularly during periods of organisational change, is valued by strong organisations.

At the Bama Ngappi Ngappi Townsville EmployNET office, staff have an informal meeting at 8.30am each day to discuss day-to-day issues.

At SWAMS, an organisation undergoing organisational change, the CEO committed to a monthly Broadsheet outlining the work of the Executive and outcomes of the Governing Committee meetings. This formalised feedback ensures transparency and helps prevent gossip and misunderstandings.

Successful organisations have established strong policies and procedures that are consistently referred to and regularly reviewed and updated, creating a common understanding of organisational goals and how to achieve them.

Rumbalara staff and Board have developed a document of policies and procedures for organisational practice and governance over a long period. The process of its development is almost as important as the end result. It is a 'common ground policy' and a living document, and staff refer to it on a day-to-day basis, and use it as a check to see they're on the right track and to avoid errors. It is reviewed and updated regularly and covers the full range of procedures such as leave provisions, working hours and potentially contentious areas such as vehicle use or drug and alcohol abuse.

MPREC has developed a Business Management System, an operations manual that ensures administrative, financial and operational systems are being correctly applied by supervisors and managers and provides support for all employees.

Neutrality in community conflict is seen as important for engaging all community members. Community politics is not allowed to continue in the workplace.

Building leadership in the community: SWAMS hosted a leadership workshop for Nyoongar women

Successful organisations have established strong policies and procedures that are consistently referred to and regularly reviewed and updated.

Induction processes ensure suitability for positions and minimise the negative impact of a high staff turnover.

Papunya Tula has a policy of a three-month trial period for all staff, and new field workers will not work independently until this induction period is finished. By this time, it is usually clear to both the trial staff member, and to the artists and management, whether or not they are suitable for the job. In some cases, when a suitably experienced field worker may not be available, the manager will spend time out bush with new workers to ensure consistency.

ABILITY TO RESPOND TO CHANGE

Successful Indigenous organisations are flexible. They recognise that external changes often require internal change to ensure a continuing fit between organisational structure and the operating context. They accept change as a 'natural' part of the dynamic interactive cycle of internal and external relations with clients, stakeholders and the operating environment. Nevertheless, successful organisations maintain a strong cultural identity while negotiating change.

'Learning organisations' are able to effectively engage with change and seek innovation.

At Worn Gundidj, the senior management is lateral thinking and has what is called in the management literature 'a learning organisational culture'. Management engages with change, seeks innovation and is not afraid to experiment.

Anticipating policy change is a valuable skill in the constantly changing environment of Indigenous affairs. Successful organisations create a space to manoeuvre between the requirements of government policy and the aims of the organisations.

Bama Ngappi Ngappi's CEO brought a wealth of skills from the corporate finance sector with a keen sense for decoding policy: what he termed 'reading the policy tea leaves'. This is especially difficult in times of dynamic change where policy is developing and shifting constantly.

Vanessa Patterson, field worker for Papunya Tula Artists, preparing completed artworks for transportation from Kintore to their Alice Springs gallery

Bama Ngappi Ngappi accepted new parameters, particularly for Job Network related schemes. It then worked to identify the discretionary space within the new regulatory framework to achieve its aims.

Coping with change is a major challenge for all of the organisations studied as government policies and programs change, new circumstances arise and the enterprise develops.

SWAMS had to undergo rapid 'top-down' change management to convince the funding body that it could embrace reform. The executive managed the situation while keeping the organisation afloat in a process described as 'unfreezing, shaking up and refreezing'.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT IN PARTNERSHIPS

Strong organisations are strategic in establishing and nurturing partnerships, carefully considering where partnerships can contribute to the achievement of their objectives and vision.

The majority of the organisations in our study have entered some form of partnership with external bodies. Funding partnerships are the most readily identified; although the nature of the partnership might be arguable given it is a contractual relationship with little of the features we generally associate with partnerships as joint or collaborative activities. Different forms of partnership were observed as were qualitative differences in the content of the relationship.

For funding partnerships, a robust negotiating style is necessary so that contracts are realistic for the organisations. Showing an understanding of the language and philosophy of government partners is important.

Strong organisations insist on maintaining cultural identity and organisational integrity while engaging in partnerships.

Successful organisations have found partnerships with local government agencies, businesses and other community groups (both formal and informal) to be beneficial in both enhancing local relationships and increasing opportunities for collaboration.

Tweed Byron workers teaming up with the NSW Fire Department and Tweed Shire Council

Strategic planning is fundamental to ensuring the sustainability of an organisation.

Murdi Paaki works in partnership with local government developing social capital and physical infrastructure in rural towns across central Western NSW. Similarly, Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council works collaboratively with Tweed Shire Council on local conservation projects.

Informal meetings between Indigenous organisations and other local organisations and government agencies were commonly observed as was the delivery of cultural awareness training to local groups by Indigenous organisations. Sporting activities such as with local police provide opportunities for social interaction. Working with local government and businesses on issues such as community safety or employment opportunities can have practical outcomes and build relationships.

External partnerships were particularly important for the three environmental conservation and management organisations surveyed in the study, outlined in the next section.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Strategic planning is fundamental to ensuring the sustainability of an organisation. However, flexibility in the detail of implementing strategic plans is equally important.

Different planning processes were observed across organisations such as planning retreats for management and the Board, and the use of planning consultants.

Successful enterprises plan for the future by engaging the young people of their communities.

At Tweed Byron, hiring a 21-year-old administrative assistant (through CDEP) has increased participation by young people in meetings.

At Nitmiluk, children often attend Board meetings with their parents, and go on briefing and discussion sessions with their families on boats in the Park. At Booderee, there is a Junior Ranger Program for primary students introducing them to environmental and Indigenous issues and the Park.

(L to R) Geoff O'Connor, Janelle Whitehead and Megan Callinan of Murdi Paaki with Frank Zaknich, Broken Hill City Council general manager in December 2006, signing a new partnership between Murdi Paaki and Broken Hill City Council to create six new Indigenous Community Services Traineeship positions

FOCUS ON CORE BUSINESS

Common understanding and acceptance of organisational vision, aims and objectives across the Board, staff and community is essential for success. Clear aims also serve as benchmarks for expanding services.

Wangka Maya has a clear vision and set of objectives. Their strategic plan guides the development and implementation of their vision and objectives. When diversifying programs, the Board is careful to ensure that these do not deflect from its core business, and is prepared to refuse additional funds if a new project does not support their core objectives.

In order to focus on core business some organisations outsource non-core activities.

Bama Ngappi Ngappi has outsourced human resources and payroll, information technology, and vehicle fleet management, to allow the organisation to concentrate on core business.

Some organisations create a 'hub and spoke' structure so that each element can concentrate on core business and minimise risk to the whole.

Wunan and Brambuk use a 'hub and spoke' operations model where separate parts of the organisation operate with the central support, but whose commercial operations are run and accounted for separately. This can minimise risk to the whole enterprise if one section is failing.

INTERCULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

'Intercultural organisations' (Martin 2005) work effectively with the co-existence of difference and are therefore more likely to achieve their aims.

In selecting, merging, and combining values from the wider society with those from the Indigenous domain, intercultural organisations such as VACCA confront and contest assumptions about the composition of what makes a 'culturally appropriate' service. They do not operate as if isolated in a cocoon of

Derek Smith, Manager of Wunan House at Kununurra, Wunan Foundation

Indigenous values and practices disconnected from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds.

Workplace diversity is effectively managed by intercultural organisations. Good working relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff are vital.

Durri's management seeks to work with workplace diversity rather than against it. Management expects non-Indigenous staff to mentor Indigenous staff in a process of skill transference and role modelling, and workplace discrimination is not tolerated.

Organisations have established clear policies and guidelines for effective management of workplace diversity and intercultural relationships.

At VACCA, non-Aboriginal staff are aware that they cannot 'speak for culture' and must 'never assume knowledge of the cultural background' of situations.

Maintaining neutrality and 'working across families' can be a challenge.

At SWAMS, the CEO effectively deals with this challenge by carefully managing kinship relationships to avoid their intrusion into the workplace. If clients refer to her as 'Aunty' in the workplace, she draws the distinction that she is 'Glenda at work and Aunty outside of work'.

### EXTERNAL FACTORS

External factors are important in providing the conditions for strong organisations. Good local infrastructure, and attractive location, housing and reliable sources of funding all improve the ability of an Indigenous organisation to function well.

Chrissie Warren, training manager, VACCA

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4 OTHER FINDINGS:
SUCCESSFUL NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS
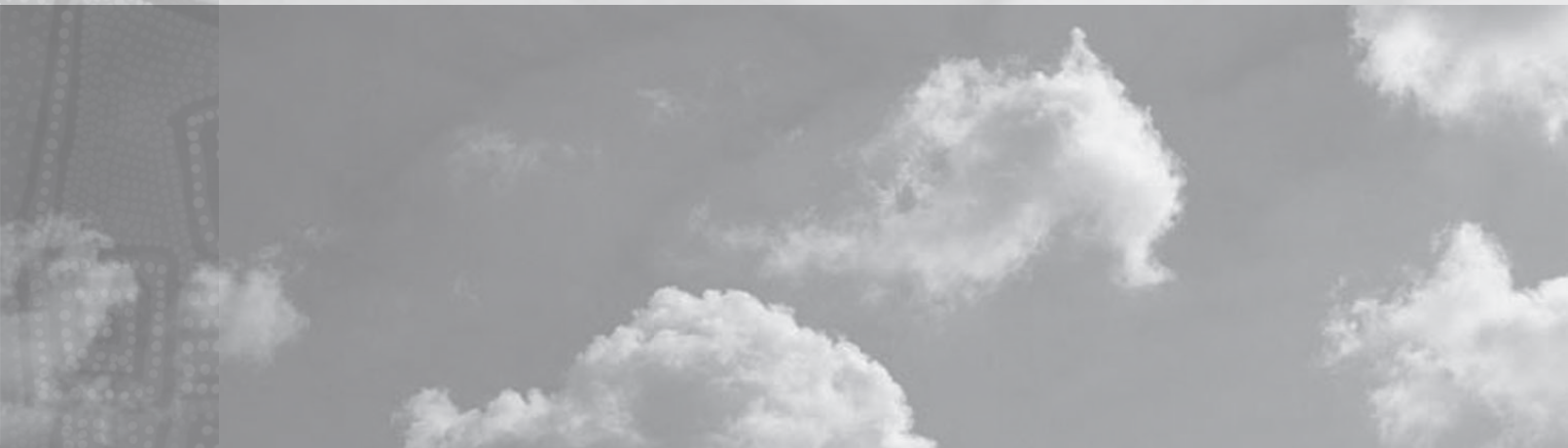
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Collaborative partnerships on Country led to shared knowledge through mentoring, skills transfer and cross-cultural experiences.

Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community member and Booderee National Park employee, trainee horticulturalist, Kain Ardler

SUCCESSFUL NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS

The three case studies of natural resource management organisations were conducted separately from the main studies by Dr Dermot Smyth and Ms Toni Bauman. There were many common features with the organisations surveyed in the pilot and main studies, and these are noted in the previous section. Factors specific to natural resource management are outlined here.

Successful case studies of natural resource management demonstrate that partnerships between community and government are not only possible in different contexts, but benefit Indigenous people in a variety of ways. Environmental protection including biodiversity conservation has been achieved through leaseback arrangements (of Aboriginal land to a government conservation agency, as occurs at Nitmiluk and Booderee) and under voluntary partnerships (such as those at Dhimurru to manage Indigenous Protected Areas).

The common elements in all three case studies were:

> The commitment of Indigenous people to utilise the opportunities presented by the establishment of protected areas as a means to care for their Country and all its associated cultural and natural values, and as a means for community and individual development;

> The importance of a diversity of partnerships to achieve the mix of personnel, resources, expertise and commitment to achieve the goals of protected area management, whether or not Indigenous people have sole responsibility for management or are part of mandated joint management arrangements;

> The necessity of good working relationships and mutual respect between the individuals involved in protected area partnerships;

> The pivotal importance of Indigenous land ownership as the foundation on which to build protected area partnerships;

> The necessity of having secure, annual core funding with which to develop robust work programs, deliver minimum standards of management and with which to leverage additional funding and support to further enhance conservation and community outcomes;

Phillip Runyu, ranger, and Patrick Carmody, wildlife ranger, removing a saltwater crocodile from the Katherine River in 2005

Dhimurru ranger monitoring turtles on Dhimurru Indigenous Protected Area

> The importance of allocating sufficient resources and planning to participatory community development approaches which involve transparent decision-making and dispute management processes that are aimed at outcomes which are owned by Traditional Owners;

> The dependence of the success of joint management upon the competent governance procedures and capacities of each of the partners involved, and the overall governance of joint management;

> The need to balance Indigenous holistic community development approaches to management of protected areas with the fact that joint management cannot be a panacea for all problems;

> The management of protected areas as one of progressive and incremental improvement involving the serial capacity building of all involved across a range of areas.

Leadership and the authority of Traditional Owners is preserved under joint management arrangements by seconding a government officer (NT Parks and Wildlife ranger) to work collaboratively and in a mentoring role with Dhimurru on day-to-day management issues.

A key element of Dhimurru's success is the capacity to negotiate and sustain diverse research, management, advisory and financial partnerships. The network of partnerships and alliances has provided substantial income and resources resulting in an operating annual budget similar to that of Nitmiluk National Park. This is an important lesson as it demonstrates the value of successful partnerships. Dhimurru has a greater diversity of partnerships than any other protected area.

Booderee demonstrates the capacity of an Aboriginal-owned commercial enterprise undertaking park management tasks under service contracts, with potential for Indigenous employment in mainstream government conservation agencies.

From the Nitmiluk case study we see the importance of balancing commercial, environmental, social and cultural

imperatives. At Nitmiluk the joint management structure has led to commercial tourism and economic opportunities for community members.

The different partnership structures are supported by a strong training focus with different learning between partners occurring in different contexts. Collaborative partnerships on Country led to shared knowledge through mentoring, skills transfer and cross-cultural experiences. Another form of knowledge and skills were learnt in formal decision-making relationships such as membership of Boards of management and other corporate governance structures.

At Nitmiluk, essential elements for good governance were identified as:

> Short, medium and long-term strategic and operational planning involving all parties;

> Built-in planning, evaluation and accountability measures which are matched against resources, the rights, and interests of all parties and their emotional, procedural and substantive needs;

> Sufficient time and resources to affirm Indigenous on-Country relationships and other Indigenous cultural needs, and for cultural awareness training for non-Indigenous participants;

> The guarantee of sufficient long-term resources to ensure the good governance of all parties involved and their ability to implement plans;

> The consolidation of partnerships before entering into new ones, recognising that too many partnerships can be a management and resource issue;

> Building the capacity of all parties through shared understanding, by identifying existing talents and ways of building new skills;

> The skilled facilitative processes in ensuring: free, prior and informed consent, that decisions are owned and sustainable, that decision-making processes
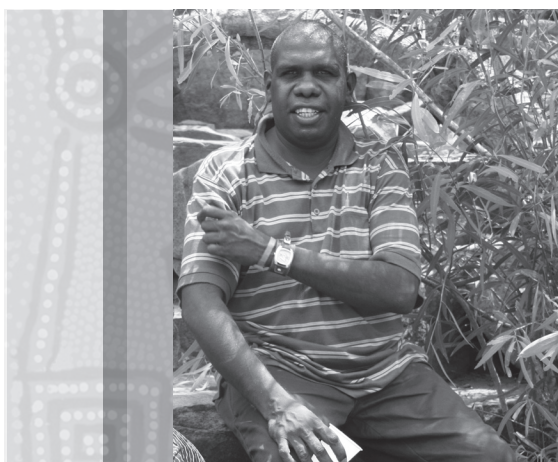
Deputy Chair Nitmiluk Board, Ryan Barraway at a Board pre-meeting in Nitmiluk National Park

Though these elements of good governance were developed at Nitmiluk in a natural resource management context, they are more widely applicable across any organisation.

are inclusive of relevant interest groups, and that processes and outcomes are tailored to existing local capacity, needs and interests; and in designing effective relationship building exercises;

> Employing the 'right' people, leadership, and having succession plans in place;

> A strong focus on Indigenous youth and on the development of flexible alternative vocational pathways for Indigenous employment in the Park;

> A dedicated full-time capacity-development, training position and a dedicated full-time cultural awareness, engagement and community education position.

Though these elements of good governance were developed in a natural resource management context, they are more widely applicable across any organisation.

Different features of the case examples also show:

> The impact of the partnership on effective management including the degree of choice involved in entering a partnership;

> That different understandings exist of Indigenous 'sole management' and 'joint management' of protected areas and how this can lead to misunderstandings;

> That partnerships may involve 'trade offs'; do the benefits of Indigenous participation in protected area partnerships outweigh the loss of traditional economic and other opportunities on their land? and

> The pressing challenge for Indigenous partnerships is managing the marine components of protected areas where recognition of Indigenous rights and interests in the sea is limited.

David Lindner, Nitmiluk ranger, and Terrence Runyu, CDEP trainee, with Leichhardt's Grasshoppers
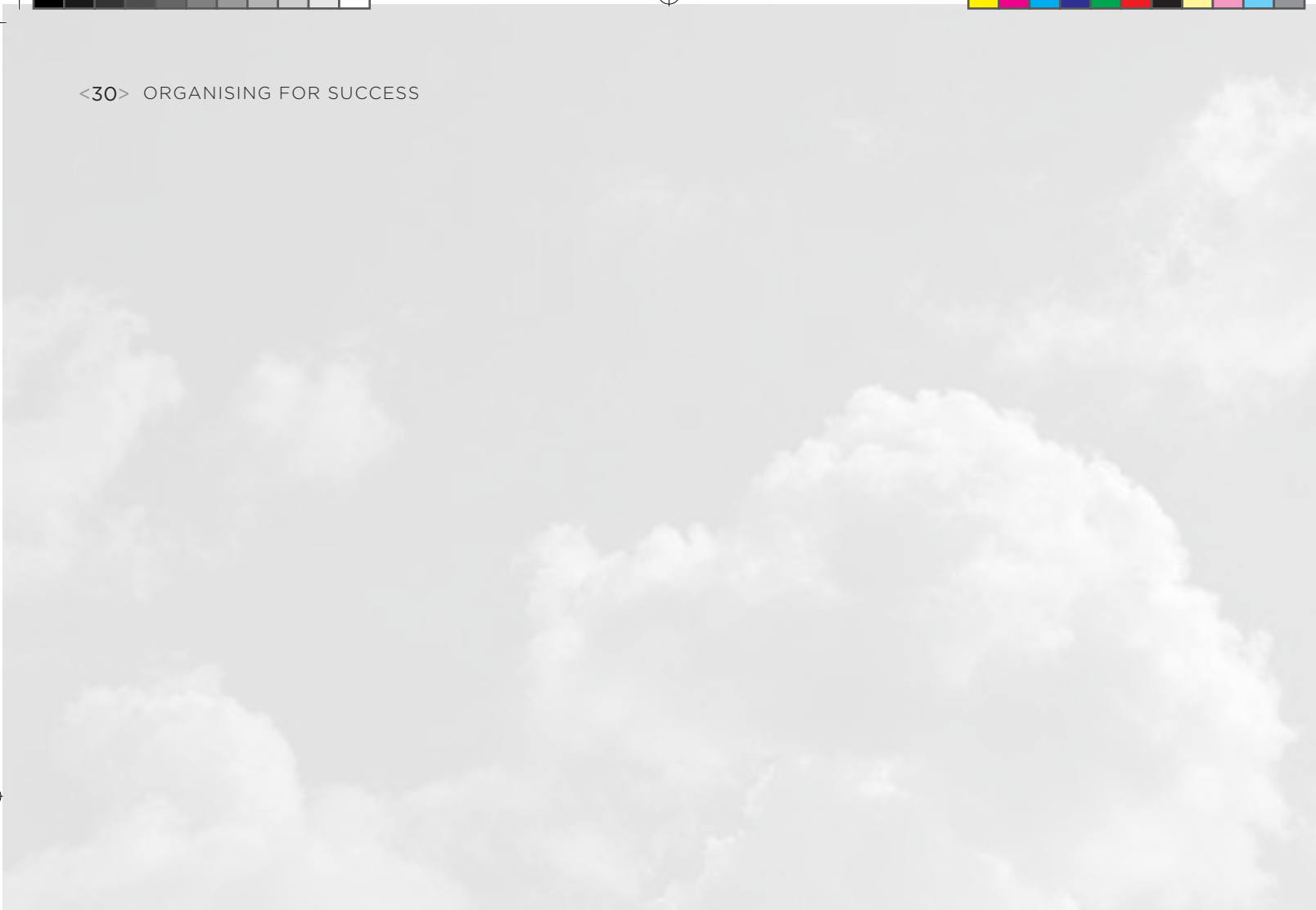
5
UNIVERSAL
PRINCIPLES OF
MANAGEMENT
AND INDIGENOUS-
SPECIFIC FACTORS

Successful Indigenous organisations operate effectively with a blend of Indigenous culture and mainstream management practices and governance principles.

The pilot study demonstrated that success in Indigenous organisations shares factors in common with non-Indigenous organisations. The two case study organisations for the scoping project measured well against generic criteria (listed by Hubbard, Heaps and Cocks 2002). Stage 2 research provided further demonstration that generic indicators of successful organisations are observable in successful Indigenous organisations. Successful Indigenous organisations operate effectively with a blend of Indigenous culture and mainstream management practices and governance principles.

Critics of Indigenous organisations argue that Indigenous cultural practices make it difficult for organisations to operate effectively with non-Indigenous management practices and governance principles. However, Indigenous organisations successfully operated with a blend of practices. No one denied the centrality and importance of good governance.

Indigenous specific perspectives are an advantage to service delivery and a cross-cultural perspective is valued by staff and clients.

Non-Indigenous staff at Durri Medical Service preferred working there to employment with mainstream providers citing their reasons as the family friendly atmosphere, client appreciation and higher levels of job satisfaction.

The sense of making a difference to the Indigenous communities can foster a higher motivation among all staff, which can compensate for other disadvantages in the Indigenous sector (such as poorer resourcing and salary levels).

Successful Indigenous organisations have a greater capacity for effectively managing workplace diversity than non-Indigenous organisations, as they understand how the co-existence of difference can be an advantage.

VACCA has an all-Indigenous Board, an Indigenous CEO, and a majority of Indigenous staff. Some senior managers are Indigenous; others are non-Indigenous. The CEO insists on professional standards of conduct in administrative practice and daily delivery of services. At one level she
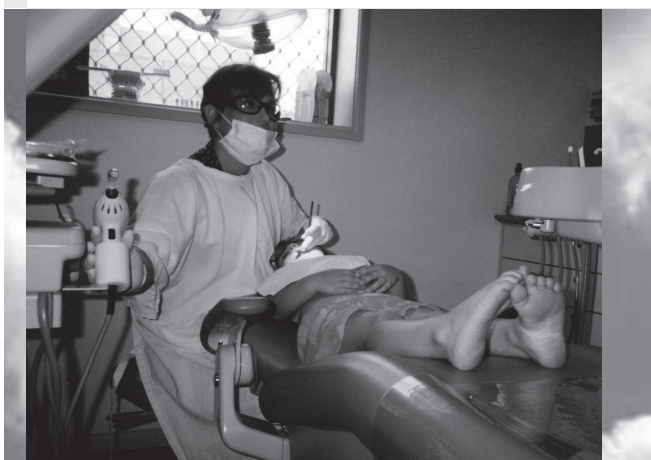
Jonine Gilmour, dental program manager working in the Dental Therapy Unit at Durri

openly challenges assumptions that an Indigenous organisation should differ in its operations and practices from a mainstream organisation. Still, VACCA's Board and management insist that service delivery reflect Aboriginal cultural values drawing especially on Aboriginal knowledge of family and kinship. The CEO and senior managers support this. These values shape how client services operate, while the administration of service delivery, the adoption of service standards, and attention to client satisfaction mirrors mainstream professional practices and behaviours. In this respect VACCA understands the importance of acknowledging the expectations of the two cultural systems in which it operates.

Service delivery must be relevant and appropriate to engage with particular client needs. Successful Indigenous organisations share organisational principles common in successful mainstream organisations, as well as an understanding that some organisational practices and processes need to accommodate the specific needs of the client group.

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**6
BARRIERS TO
SUCCESS IN
INDIGENOUS
ORGANISATIONS**

Most service providers identified a significant funding gap in respect to their service demand.

Almost all organisations identified recruitment and retention of staff as a key challenge.

Management skills are often under-emphasised and frequently an unrecognised need.

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

The study identified the following factors that limit the ability of Indigenous organisations to be successful:

Funding levels cannot support verified demand for services.

Most service providers identified a significant funding gap in respect to their service demand. They adopted a variety of strategies to bridge the gaps, but strategies must be carefully chosen to avoid conflict with management principles. Frequently small organisations in the study relied on CDEP labour to bridge the difference between demand and available resources, including funding. One organisation decided not to go to the expense of an Annual Report since it was not required by the regulator. Others cut into their operational funds for savings to cover periods of funding shortfall. Others rely on in-kind support from the front-line workers of government agencies, an inherently problematic and fragile relationship.

Added to the difficulty of providing services with inadequate funding many organisations pointed to constant change in policy objectives, program funding guidelines and program implementation reforms. Reforms and revisions increased the difficulty of long-term planning and assuring clients of continuity of service. The capacity for long-term planning by the service provider also suffered.

Recruiting and retaining staff is difficult for Indigenous organisations when facing the impact of competition with mainstream agencies able to offer better pay and conditions.

Almost all organisations identified recruitment and retention of staff as a key challenge. Many CEOs of Indigenous organisations complain that mainstream agencies pay better and inevitably this lures their staff away. On the other hand, many Indigenous staff said they saw their work as important to their community and derived satisfaction from the opportunity to work for the betterment of their community.
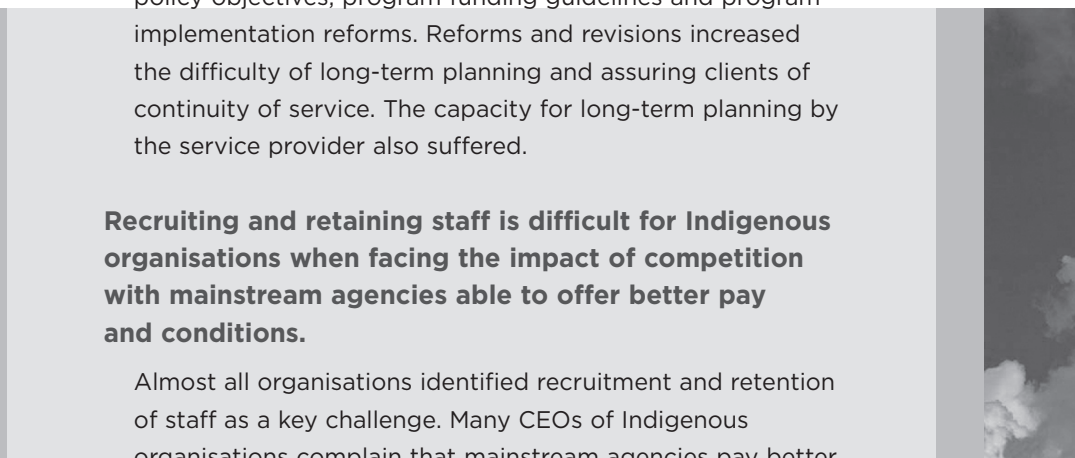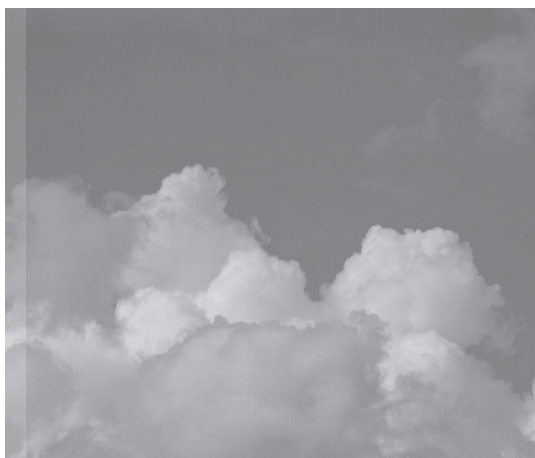
Failure by non-Indigenous partners to understand the multi-dimensional nature of Indigenous welfare issues results in pressure on organisations to conform to inappropriate organisational models and administrative procedures that ignore the fact that services are multi-funded.

In conditions of short-term funding security of tenure and conditions of work can attract good staff away from an organisation, particularly for those in skilled positions where mainstream employment offers a professional career path. Most Indigenous organisations have difficulty attracting experienced managers with skill, vision and expertise in their particular industry sectors. Where organisations want only Indigenous CEOs this decision can limit their pool of potential senior staff.

Staff training in management and reporting skills is lacking.

Until very recently the current emphasis on governance training for Indigenous organisations paid limited attention to the importance of ancillary skills, such as financial literacy. Financial competency to manage complex service contracts is increasingly necessary. Knowledge of the policy process and control of appropriate policy language is another skill set often under-emphasised and frequently an unrecognised need. Training in high-level written skills for successful submission writing, matched with the capacity to development strong relationships with government officials for the preparation and facilitation of contract relationships are new skills yet to be widely acknowledged.

Non-Indigenous partners often lack a nuanced understanding of the complex holistic nature of Indigenous client service needs.

Failure to understand the multi-dimensional nature of Indigenous welfare issues results in pressure on organisations to conform to inappropriate organisational models and administrative procedures that ignore the fact that services are multi-funded.

In some cases barriers to success are a result of government misunderstanding an organisation's role in holistic service delivery. While many mainstream organisations are moving to a broader understanding of their social roles by adopting an emphasis on the 'triple bottom line' (financial, social and environmental accountabilities) Indigenous organisations, in contrast, experience increasing pressure from governments to restrict services to core services.

Indigenous community organisations 'case manage' their clients by facilitating access to a range of services. The necessity for integrated, holistic services is based on practical knowledge of Indigenous lifestyles and how best to meet client needs.

Staff burnout

It may be difficult for staff to separate their identity as members of the community from their work role. Effectively, they are never 'off duty' and can be approached about work matters out-of-hours. Achieving a balance between private and work life is hard to achieve and 'burn out' can be a problem.

Marketing and commercial imperatives

While service-oriented organisations often have excellent feedback mechanisms about service delivery, customer focus and client satisfaction need constant attention and evaluation in commercial or marketing operations. While this is rarely a problem in the organisations studied, which had strong customer focus, in competitive markets such as tourism the marketing and delivery of products needs training and experience.

ALL ORGANISATIONS SURVEYED REPORTED THAT CURRENT FUNDING AND ACQUITTAL PRACTICES OF GOVERNMENT ARE ADMINISTRATIVELY BURDENSOME, AND THAT THE WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH HAS FAILED TO RATIONALISE COMPLIANCE PROCESSES.

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7 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

THE IMPACT OF CURRENT POLICY ON INDIGENOUS ORGANISATIONS

A key feature of the changes observed in Commonwealth Indigenous affairs is a policy emphasis on all sectors of society accepting responsibility for addressing welfare needs. The Australian government has borrowed ideas from 'third way' welfare reforms in the UK for more inclusive government, the development of civil society and the role of moral imperatives (responsibility, obligations and mutualism) in relationships between government and individuals. In Indigenous affairs, Government's role is less of a provider, and more of an enabler. The policy goal is providing Indigenous access to opportunities and services enjoyed by the wider society either through Indigenous-specific measures or through culturally inclusive mainstream services.

The terms for service delivery of Indigenous welfare programs have changed under policy shifts. Some nationally-delivered services are no longer grant-funded programs but now subject to competitive tendering under contract funding. Indigenous welfare reforms encourage cross-sector partnerships and Australian Government policy initiatives support this through whole-of-government frameworks for coordinated responses accommodating all levels of government, the Indigenous community and, where relevant, industry involvement.

Many of these challenges are new to Indigenous service delivery organisations. The rapidly changing Indigenous policy environment following the close of ATSIC has demanded new responses of Indigenous organisations. One of those responses is internal organisational reform and new ways of working, including partnerships and alliances with non-Indigenous groups. For these reasons, this research asks how well community-based organisations have dealt with the new challenges, and in what aspects have their organisational and corporate practices adopted mainstream principles and where have they maintained Indigenous-specific orientations, and why? Both the questions and the focus establish new areas of research for which there is little empirical data currently published.

> IN INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS, GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IS LESS OF A PROVIDER, AND MORE OF AN ENABLER.

RESPONSE TO THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS IN INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Between 2004 and 2005 Commonwealth changes in the administration of Indigenous programs led to the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). Program-based changes followed including the incorporation of Indigenous specific programs in mainstream agencies. The Coalition's reform agenda in Indigenous affairs links the new administrative architecture with new policy objectives. Better quality in service delivery standards is a critical lever in the change agenda premised on the principle, outlined in the 2006 Indigenous affairs policy Blueprint, that Indigenous Australians should not be treated differently from other Australians in terms of access to opportunities.

Strategies to instrumentally shape governance and accountability practices in Indigenous organisations are:

> A revised and amended Commonwealth incorporation statute for Indigenous organisations;

> Changes to the composition of CDEP Boards prescribing specific skill sets of directors and standard corporate activities such as strategic planning, and Board training for directors;

> Reorienting welfare assistance programs like CDEP to emphasise Indigenous employment policies based on employer demands rather than the 'work creation' model of CDEP;

> Raising accountability standards in program funding agreements/contracts to levels which exceed the regulator's requirements. Many indicators are directed at improving governance and ensuring that different standards of service quality and delivery disappear and Indigenous people receive the same quality of attention as do other Australians;

> The Australian Government has the benefit of additional mechanisms to drive a whole-of-government approach, such as bi-lateral funding agreements with state and territory governments, matched funding, and in-kind resourcing. Many key issues of Indigenous conditions and service access are jurisdictional matters of state and territories. Consequently, cross-government mechanisms are essential for linkage and management of joint roles;

> Key elements of the new Indigenous policy framework are: an integrated 'whole-of-government' approach to program development and implementation, the introduction of 'shared responsibility' as a policy objective of government/community partnerships and mainstreaming of Indigenous-specific programs to close service gaps and unnecessary distinctions;

> Some Indigenous organisations were ambivalent about the changes. They found the new language and focus disorientating and queried the appropriateness of contestability and competitive tendering for delivery of welfare services. These organisations struggle with their community objectives under the changed regime. By contrast, other organisations demonstrated their capacity to meet new service objectives and overcome initial challenges to their comfort zones.

INCREASED REPORTING DEMANDS AND COMPLIANCE COSTS

Many participating organisations are funded under contestable service contracts. Reducing high transactional costs in the community service sector through market forces may seem an attractive policy. However, the organisations in this study argue that market mechanisms are flawed since the funding agencies do not take into account the high resource costs of servicing compliance and conforming to multiple reporting regimes. Indigenous organisations observed that agency compliance standards often exceed those of their corporate regulator (such as the Australian Securities and Investments Commission or Consumer Affairs Victoria) effectively yielding the regulation of the organisation to the funding agencies.

A mix of Commonwealth, state/territory, and private sources fund the programs delivered by organisations in this study. There are no common compliance standards between the different departments and different levels of government. A range of disparate administrative, accountability and financial reporting pervades all Indigenous programs, and all levels of government. Many organisations also operate with a mix of grants and fee-for-service contracts. This is confusing since the different funding structures often have contradictory policy objectives.

Mike Hill, chair of SWAMS, and Gloria Khan, SWAMS director and chair of Aboriginal Health Council of WA

Universally, organisations report that current funding and acquittals practices are administratively burdensome, and pay little attention to the grant term or amount of money involved. Not all organisations were aware that the Australian Government now works with a standard contract template under which a number of different and separately funded activity schedules can sit.

Organisations argue that grant/contract compliance drains organisational capacity, including prioritising compliance ahead of service. Few grant-funded programs cover administrative costs. The administrative burden is exacerbated by red tape where different departments of state and territory governments have yet to standardise reporting, compliance and acquittal processes. Multi-funded organisations report time-consuming administrative processes that increasingly, require servicing by a designated staff member with extensive corporate financial competency.

The extent of the compliance and reporting impost on Indigenous organisations was remarkable. In one remote regional location, it has been reported that the Aboriginal community council had to acquit funding from '48 separate grants from sixteen state and federal government agencies and six non-government organisations' (Queensland Audit Office 2004 quoted in Limerick 2006: 38).

The organisations argue that program reporting and detailed acquittals negatively impact on actual service delivery and organisational success. Contract funding agreements allow external agencies to interfere with internal governance processes if risk assessments indicate possible failure of service delivery. Performance measures can create tensions between government imperatives for value for money from contract providers and a community view of community-controlled service providers. New terms and conditions for Indigenous service delivery challenge those comfortable with the previous processes.

Competitive tendering for service contracts require staff and Boards of Indigenous providers to demonstrate skill sets commonly found in commercial organisations, for instance, a capacity to operate competitively and ensure value for money, technical skills to aggressively negotiate funding terms with

Market mechanisms are flawed since the funding agencies do not take into account the high resource costs of servicing compliance and conforming to multiple reporting regimes.

government agencies, a high standard of literacy for complex legal and administrative contracts, access to experienced qualified financial advisers, and political competence to navigate the policy environment anticipating the direction of future change. Acquiring new skills demands flexibility and this was more likely when the following preconditions exist:

> A CEO with the capacity to 'look outwards' recognising the existence of industry-wide benchmarks in his/her service sector and the importance of reviewing, revising and reforming service delivery as necessary;

> An organisation that embraces change, seeking innovation. Such organisations are termed 'learning organisations'. Some of the study organisations proactively initiated partnerships and alliances to create synergies with mainstream providers. They welcomed collaborative arrangements as an additional resource and in some cases, they arranged to share corporate infrastructure and mutual responsibility for services. This pattern was especially evident in the health field;

> Positive relationships between Indigenous organisations and government agencies frequently developed out of a proven track record of robust governance and performance of service by the organisation. In these circumstances, the government agency was often willing to meet the organisation's need;

> The organisation had wide local and regional support from stakeholders and clients. The organisation enjoyed broad community participation and engagement, support not confined to the Indigenous community alone;

> Policy 'savvy' includes a network of relationships with key agencies at local and state government levels, and access and support from the private sector;

> Managing to ensure that the important social role of an Indigenous community-based organisation is not lost in meeting the mandatory performance indicators of contract funding.

Nitmiluk Board pre-meeting for Jawoyn Board members in the meeting room at Ranger Headquarters, Nitmiluk

PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT

Most organisations in the study partnered with government agencies. As a minimum the relationship was one of contracted service provider. Government plays several partnership roles. It is well known as a funding provider, and as corporate regulator, but it also acts as an enabler (sometimes as a dominant partner with veto powers, others times as a crucial implementer). A wide range of partnership roles were recorded in the project:

> A legally binding funding contract (fee-for-service and purchaser-provider arrangements). This might also cover grant funding through an application process;

> Agreements to common action under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or heads of agreement;

> Informal agreements to sharing risks and resources in the pursuit of a common objective; and less frequently observed;

> Collaborative relationships based on full consultation, codes of conduct, definition of roles, and appropriate resourcing levels for the activity involved.

Effective partnerships bring mutual advantages: increased communication and understanding of 'the other', funding options, opportunities for government to make informed policy decisions, and joint involvement in planning and implementing pilot projects.

Some of the study organisations were critical of the idea of partnerships with government. They were distrustful of government's role in Indigenous affairs arguing that the mechanics to beneficial partnerships were opaque.

A number of experienced senior managers and Board members interviewed said that the outcomes in relationships with government were unpredictable, often a matter of good luck, not design. This view was expressed as the 'alignment of the planets'. The planets were aligned when a relationship of mutual engagement or like-mindedness occurred between key individuals, including at officer levels, in the Indigenous organisation and those in the government agency. There needs to be an alliance between influential people of similar temperament and aims in the government agency and in the community service provider.

Wunan's New Apprenticeships Access Program graduation in April 2006, a Commonwealth program providing job seekers with pre-vocational training to improve job-readiness

Based on the findings of this research, the recent abolition of CDEP has serious potential consequences for many successful Aboriginal organisations.

THE CHALLENGE OF CDEP REFORM

Policy reform has impacted particularly heavily on organisations running Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP). Changes in service delivery terms and conditions were noted during the project. The expectation of increased value for money and efficient, effective service delivery led to competitive tendering by the Department of Employemnt and Workplace Relations of Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), Indigenous Employment Centres and Job Network providers.

In Queensland, Bama Ngappi Ngappi Aboriginal Corporation, a CDEP provider and an Indigenous Employment Centre, was visited shortly after Department of Employment and Workplace Relations introduced the first tranche of CDEP reforms in the 2006/07 financial year. The reforms revised the timeframes within which participants were eligible for CDEP work, introduced organisational performance assessments linked directly to contract renewal, specified new governance arrangements, and required organisations to adopt generic management practices such as strategic planning, risk assessment, skill audits and training plans, to strengthen Board and management capacity.

Award-winning Dhimurru staff with a Parks and Wiildlife ranger have received multiple high-profile environmental management and conservation awards from both the Australian and Northern Territory governments.

The challenge for the CDEP provider organisations in our study was their competitiveness in the market testing exercise. The new arrangements prescribe new skill sets for managers and Boards. In the past community-based organisations like CDEPs draw Board and staff members from the community sector. Board members are frequently older community members who are elected, but unpaid, 'officers' of the corporation. Their skills derive from a lifetime of community involvement and experience with Indigenous service delivery; unfortunately, these skills are not always competitive with the expertise of mainstream corporations attuned to the purchaser/provider model. Equally, mainstream providers are likely to struggle trying to match local knowledge of community members, community dynamics and Indigenous service needs.

Many of the organisations studied used CDEP labour extensively to support their operations. Based on the findings of this research, the impact of the recent abolition of CDEP has

serious potential consequences. For many successful Aboriginal organisations with only a few staff in non-CDEP positions, like Tweed Byron, the impact is likely to be significant.

THE IMPORTANCE OF
PLACE-BASED MANAGEMENT POLICIES

The Australian Government's Indigenous Affairs Blueprint emphasises partnerships with Indigenous 'individuals and families'. However, the state and territory governments embraced aspects of 'Third Way' political theory by implementing partnerships and networks to encourage social capital and community capacity building for all socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, not only Indigenous people. At state and territory levels this approach has worked well since it is supportive of organisations that have always worked within a community-responsive framework.

Partnerships and networked relationships have been linked to Place Management approaches to redressing social disadvantage. Place theory is a method for identifying the relationship between identified populations and specific geographic locations of endemic poverty. Through such linkage governments can target remedial initiatives. In Victoria, social as well as material measurement of outcomes are included. Victoria's 'Outcomes Framework' lists three outcomes; improved services, improved community connectedness, and improved community strength. Each outcome is then linked to specific strategies to implement and measure performance.

In WA, the state government uses Place Management as a strategy for coordinating resources to especially disadvantaged communities. Particular attention is given to remote communities.

The Australian Government is interested in shaping Indigenous policy and service delivery by delineating the distinct needs of remote, rural and urban communities. In this respect, the Australian Government places an emphasis on the broad differences of geographic location paying less attention to a specific disadvantaged place.

The COAG Trial sites run by lead agencies of the Australian Government have a place-based focus. Reviews of the trial sites

L to R: Sean Phillips, Travis McDermott and Thomas Byrnes, bush regeneration workers, Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council

suggest that remediation of community ills has the best chance of success when community-based organisations are involved and have the resources and human capacities to drive solutions and reach outcomes. The capacity for governments to work collaboratively and coordinate programs was equally important. However, community organisations also have to manage the competing agendas of different government players.

Murdi Paaki Aboriginal Enterprise Corporation operates in a COAG trial site and is an outstanding example of a successful Indigenous organisation managing across different levels of government under strategic partnerships and alliances. Their ability to achieve outcomes is enhanced by working with an integrated service delivery model developed by the Corporation specifically for engaging with government.

L to R: Ron Barassi, John Collyer, CEO of Worn Gundidji, John Pandazopoulos, Victorian Minister for Tourism, and children's author Maxine Philp-Wright, at the launch of her Aboriginal storybook featuring Wornee G, the Worn Gundidj logo

Janelle Whitehead, CEO, Murdi Paaki and Frank Zaknich, Broken Hill City Council general manager

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8
FACILITATING SUCCESS IN INDIGENOUS ORGANISATIONS:
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Overcoming the day-to-day difficulties of running or working in a successful Indigenous organisation requires enormous personal commitment and energy. Reciprocity is important from government and its agencies.

ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Reduce red tape by government in compliance and acquittals to facilitate improved capacity for service provision.

2. Adoption of a whole–of-government approach to financial accountability by all levels of government in service agreements.

3. Attempt to coordinate reporting cycles between state, federal and private partners to reduce compliance and acquittal costs.

4. Use incentives as change agents as well as punitive measures. Government needs to work with a balance.

5. Examination of the effect of service agreements and funding contracts as instrumental tools moulding and shaping organisations' internal operating processes and governance practices. The organisations need to meet governments as equal partners from a position of strength.

FUNDING

1. Where possible, grant periods should be longer term, e.g. triennial, to allow for better planning and implementation of programs. In health service delivery, a number of organisations argue for access to a global budget allowing them to target a health issue, develop three-year planning and avoid funding cycles based on short lead times and annual re-application. Most service organisations experienced the disappointment of initiating a newly-funded program where the funding stream petered out at the end of a 12- or 24-month perod leaving client expectations dashed.

2. Adopt a policy of sustained funding as opposed to ad hoc or one-off allocations. This is not simply to avoid under-servicing but to avoid under-capitalisation. Programs need to be consistently funded over longer time periods if they are to seriously address endemic problems. Indigenous organisations supplying health, housing and dental services needed certainty for their clients.

OVERCOMING THE DAY-TO-DAY DIFFICULTIES OF RUNNING OR WORKING IN A SUCCESSFUL INDIGENOUS ORGANISATION REQUIRES ENORMOUS PERSONAL COMMITMENT AND ENERGY.

STAFFING

1. Support for recruitment and retention of specialist professional staff through assured continuous funding. Dentists, for example, are very difficult to recruit, even in regional cities such as Newcastle. Yet access for dental services for Indigenous people is crucial given the proven link between dental health and heart disease. Uncertain funding reduces the capacity to attract professional staff and affects the quality of the infrastructure they must operate with.

2. Encourage time allowances in staffing for more on-the-job training and secondment to other related organisations. Experiential learning has proved to be the best way to help community organisation staff to absorb new knowledge. It may also be the same for the public and private sectors.

3. Ensure time allowances in staffing for participation by staff, especially CEOs, in appropriate industry-wide meetings, conferences and umbrella organisations. This provides opportunity for better benchmarking and sharing of ideas and innovation.

4. Provide more formal training opportunities, particularly in the areas of financial analysis, customer service and marketing.

5. Develop a system for exchange of recruitment information for potential staff with appropriate experience, and a register of staff available for relieving work.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Facilitate the exchange of information between organisations through an existing agency. Circulation of material such as policies and procedures manuals, while locally applicable, can provide helpful models to other enterprises.

2. Explain and make explicit government policies at a state and federal level so that organisations can respond to them in a rational and coherent manner, rather than having to divine policy through 'reading the policy tea leaves'.

3. Establish feedback mechanisms so that the voices of 'consumers' of services can be heard by governments, providers and community groups. Market research tends to focus on commercial activities rather than social issues.

**RECIPROCITY IS IMPORTANT FROM GOVERNMENT AND ITS AGENCIES.**

MORALE

1. Recognition of the innovation and creativity in Indigenous organisations is important because it demonstrates best practice. The strategies of successful organisations are role models and exemplars and are proof-tested.

2. Retain existing awards and prizes which apply to Indigenous organisations and encourage the development of new awards. It is a great morale booster to be shortlisted for or win industry awards.

3. Encourage deposit of historical records with reputable libraries (such as AIATSIS) and displays on organisations and their history and operation. The National Museum of Australia has already mounted several displays along these lines.

ALLIANCES

1. Encourage private sector and non-government organisation assistance and partnerships through incentives (e.g. for employment and secondment).

2. Support from government for the engagement of Indigenous organisations with the wider community. Indigenous organisations value their cultural distinctiveness but need to learn to work effectively and collaboratively with mainstream organisations, assisting them to be culturally-inclusive and work effectively with diversity.
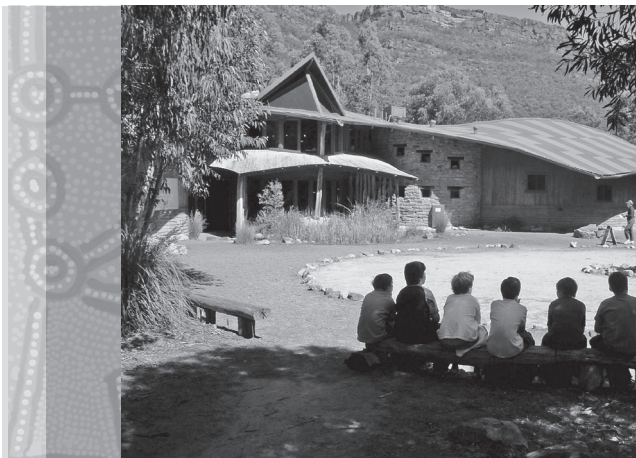
Effective collaboration is a two-way process at Brambuk Cultural Centre

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9 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
SPECIFIC TO NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

1. Recognise that Indigenous Protected Areas are a viable alternative to achieving the same environmental protection and biodiversity conservation objectives inherent in the lease-back joint management arrangements, which originated in a pre-native title era that characterised Indigenous land-ownership as an expression of government benevolence rather than an inherited common law right.

2. Encourage all governments to develop and utilise statutory arrangements (such as provisions of Section 76 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*), as well as non-statutory mechanisms, to support the long-term viability of Indigenous Protected Areas.

3. Recognise that free, prior and informed consent by Indigenous people is a requirement for the development of mutually respectful, beneficial and productive protected area management partnerships (whatever form those partnerships take) and is consistent with Recommendation 24 from the 2003 IUCN World Parks Congress.

4. Encourage/require federal, state and territory governments to set a goal of negotiating consent agreements with the appropriate Indigenous groups for the management of all existing protected areas by a nominated target date (say 2013, the date of the next World Parks Congress), to ensure that Australia meets world best practice in protected area management.

5. Support the concept of Indigenous sole management of protected areas currently subject to joint management arrangements, recognising that the goal of sole management is a catalyst for enhanced investment in Indigenous education, training and employment in protected area management, and that the meaning of sole management will be negotiated locally to meet the needs of local Indigenous people and their partners.

6. Recognise that Indigenous sole management of protected areas can be a catalyst for increasing the diversity of Indigenous partnerships, and hence strengthen multi-

Rangers Greg Peckham and Richard Baker, Nitmiluk Rock Art Protection

stakeholder support for the ongoing management of the protected area.

7.   Support the use of alternative mechanisms for Indigenous management of protected areas, such as through contracted services, in place of or complementing, Indigenous employment within protected area management agencies.

8.   Recognise the social, cultural, employment and economic benefits that can flow from appropriately negotiated and supported Indigenous partnerships in protected area management, including through local Indigenous monopolies in delivering contracting services and tourism enterprises.

9.   Support the development of Junior Ranger Programs or other mechanisms to involve and build capacity among young people (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) in understanding and managing their local protected areas.

10   Support dedicated capacity development/training positions as one of the mechanisms to contribute to meeting Indigenous training and employment goals.

11.   Recognise that Indigenous rights and interests in protected area management are not restricted to remote, northern Australia; governments should be encouraged to develop equitable arrangements that provide similar opportunities in protected area management for Indigenous people throughout Australia.

12.   Recognise the benefits of on-Country, practical partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous environmental managements; hence encourage/support conservation agencies to strengthen on-ground partnerships and secondment arrangements to enable government conservation and natural resource management staff to develop long term on-Country working relationships with Traditional Owners, promoting mentoring, skills transfer and cross-cultural understanding.

13.   Recognise that there are particular challenges for Indigenous people to develop equitable partnerships in the management of their sea Country within marine protected areas (MPAs) comparable to the partnerships that have developed in the management of terrestrial protected areas over the last

Morgan Brown,
Wreck Bay Aboriginal
Community member and
Booderee National Park
staff member at work in
the Park Visitor Centre

decade; hence support Indigenous people, government agencies, NGOs and industry to explore innovative governance arrangements and other approaches to the recognition of Indigenous peoples rights and interests in MPAs, including the establishment of IPAs over sea Country.

14 Support the establishment of a national clearing house for management of Indigenous protected areas which could:

> coordinate a national email network of Indigenous people involved in protected area management;

> share best practice including innovative ideas for visitor engagement with Indigenous people;

> develop alternative curricula for Indigenous people involved in protected area management, including Rangers and Junior ranger programs and other caring for Country functions, which build on existing programs;

> develop nationally accredited flexible innovative vocational pathways for Indigenous employment in protected areas;

> build a national network of skilled, trained and nationally accredited Indigenous and non-Indigenous natural resource management facilitators, negotiators, mediators and participatory community developers network building on the Department of Environment and Heritage's Indigenous facilitators network;

> develop a generic protected areas national intercultural awareness and engagement curriculum into which local components may be incorporated.

15. Support for the development of digital archives for protected area cultural materials and for dedicated positions for developing intercultural awareness approaches, coordinating training in intercultural engagement and undertaking community education.

Albert Burgman, senior linguist at Wangka Maya