

# Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

An alliance of the CLC, NLC, CAALAS, NAAJA and AMSANT

## *Central Australia Governance & Management workshop*

7 – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014



*-- Report for participants --*

*Our Decisions, Our Actions, Our Future*

## *Central Australia Governance & Management Workshop*

### **Where, when & what?**

In the afternoon of the 7<sup>th</sup> May and the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> May, representatives from Aboriginal organisations across the Central Australian region gathered at Yipirinya School Multi-Purpose Centre for a workshop on **Governance and Management**. The workshop was organised and facilitated by Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory (APO NT) as part of their Aboriginal Governance and Management Program (AGMP). The workshop program is attached to this report.



Glenis Wilkins, Manager, and Audrey Turner, Director, at Animparrinpi Yututju Women's AC



Jenny Bedford, CEO of the Institute of Aboriginal Development

*"Governance is going on all the time, it's just not in a board room"*

Glenis Wilkins, Animparrinpi Yututju Women's Aboriginal Corporation Manager

***Our Decisions, Our Actions, Our Future***



## Who came?

Thirty-one people came to the workshop, representing at least 13 different Aboriginal Organisations. Representatives came from as far away as Mount Liebig, Yuendumu and Arlparra, and brought with them a wealth of governance and management experience and enthusiasm. Combined together these 13 organisations have more than 300 years of experience!!! APO NT would like to acknowledge the following important achievements of just some Aboriginal organisations at the workshop. The AGMP builds on organisations' strengths, and these achievements are a sign of strength:

- Ⓢ Central Australian Aboriginal Congress has been in operation for **40 years**
- Ⓢ Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation has been in operation for **34 years** and were **Reconciliation Australia's Governance Award Winners in 2012**
- Ⓢ Tjuwampa Resource Centre has been in operation for **30 years**
- Ⓢ Animparrinpi Yututju Women's Aboriginal Corporation - Mount Liebig Aged Care has been in operation for **32 years**
- Ⓢ Known earlier as the Mt Theo Program, Walpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation has been in operation for **20 years**
- Ⓢ The Institute for Aboriginal Development Incorporated has been operating for **44 years**
- Ⓢ Urapuntja Aboriginal Corporation has been in operation for **33 years**



Andrea Mason, Coordinator at NPY Women's Council with Graham Dowling, Congress Director



Elizabeth (Betty) Pearce, CAALAS Director with Diane Smith, AIGI Director

*"There are over 5000 incorporated Aboriginal organisations in Australia. If you add up all the staff and the boards, that is tens of thousands of Aboriginal people involved in managing and governing Aboriginal organisations"*

Diane Smith, AIGI Director

## Who presented?

Representing **Walpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation**, Directors and Co-Chairs Eddie Robertson and Lottie Robinson, along with CEO Susie Low, shared information about WYDAC's successful governance and management structure and processes. They played a short video called "Strong Organisation, Strong Communities, Strong Young People" which explores what makes WYDAC strong. The DVD can be watched online:

<http://mttheo.org/home/strong-organisation-strong-communities-strong-young-people-video/>



Eddie Robertson, Lottie Robinson, Susie Low from WYDAC with AGMP Project Officer and workshop facilitator Wes Miller

CEO Robynne Quiggin and Director Diane Smith introduced the recently established **Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI)**. The AIGI is a national centre for Indigenous governance. Among other important work, this involves researching and sharing stories on effective governance practices. More information about AIGI is available on their website: <http://www.aigi.com.au/>

Diane and Robynne also shared valuable information about the AIGI **Indigenous Governance Toolkit**. The Toolkit is a free online resource for Indigenous nations, communities, individuals and organisations looking for all sorts of information to strengthen their governance: <http://www.aigi.com.au/toolkit-resources/link-to-toolkit/>



Diane Smith, Director at AIGI

CEO of **Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS)**, Patricia Miller also gave a memorable speech about her career and the key to longevity in an Aboriginal organisation.



Patricia Miller, CEO of CAALAS

*"The board is not only for old people but for young people"*

WYDAC video

*"We need to encourage young people and be proud of them, not cut them down. Longevity is where education co-exists with lifelong learning"*

Patricia Miller, CAALAS CEO

***Our Decisions, Our Actions, Our Future***

## **Strengths of Central Australian Aboriginal organisations identified at the workshop**



- Ⓢ **Regular communication, strong relations and mutual respect** between the executive board, senior staff, the CEO and members.
- Ⓢ **Longevity** – Having long-term, experienced boards and managers.
- Ⓢ Everyone having a **strong understanding and awareness of their roles and responsibilities**.
- Ⓢ **Succession planning** – looking at how young people are being involved and included in governance practices and processes, as well as leadership opportunities.
- Ⓢ **Aboriginal Law, culture and values** supporting governance and management practices.
- Ⓢ **Strong guiding principles** help Aboriginal organisations be transparent or open and accountable, not secretive.
- Ⓢ **Shared commitment, determination and passion** are all necessary for success.
- Ⓢ **Conflict resolution** – creating a safe place to negotiate arguments.

*“Without good relationships and communications organisations can’t survive”*

Lottie Robinson, WYDAC Chairperson

*“Accountability is really important. We are all organisations for people of people”*

Graham Dowling, Congress Director

*“Everyone (all staff) is a leader and can contribute... everyone has a valuable contribution to make”*

Andrea Mason, NPY Women’s Council Coordinator

***Our Decisions, Our Actions, Our Future***

## Some governance and management *ideas, tools and resources* shared at the workshop to strengthen your organisation

- ② A handbook /small rule book to give to board members, CEO and staff in local language or in accessible English to clearly explain their different roles and responsibilities.
- ② Mentors for young people to gain leadership experience and skills
- ② Using a variety of ways to communicate with members including:
  - sending out newsletters to members
  - sending meeting papers to board members before meetings so everyone knows what is going to be discussed
  - holding community meetings
  - having local campaigns
  - sharing annual reports which identify strengths, as well as areas for improvement
- ② The **Governance Toolkit** on the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute website is a very useful, free online resource for Aboriginal organisations.
- ② Invite independent directors onto your board – ensure that it is someone that can bring needed skills or experience to the board.



Quentin Kenny, Chairperson at Tjuwanpa Outstation Aboriginal Corporation



Graham Dowling, Director at Congress



Helen Kantawara, Housing Officer and Mentor Tjuwanpa Outstation AC

## Aboriginal Governance & Management Program (AGMP) – A snapshot

### How did the program come about?

APO NT held the Strong Aboriginal Governance Summit in April 2013. Held in Tennant Creek, the forum was attended by some 300 Aboriginal people from Aboriginal organisations across the NT.

The AGMP builds on recommendations and outcomes from the summit – mainly that Aboriginal organisations need ongoing governance and management training and support.

### How is it funded?

APO NT acknowledges and welcomes Commonwealth Government funding that has made an initial three years of the program possible.

### Where is the program?

The program is territory-wide, with program staff based in Darwin and Alice Springs.

### How is the program governed?

AGMP is guided by a Steering Committee, made up of senior APO NT and Commonwealth Government staff, as well as Governance experts, including Aboriginal people with local community knowledge.

### What is the approach?

The program has an *action research* approach. This means researching and learning while supporting NT Aboriginal organisations.

### What are some of the key aspects of the program?

- ② **Research information on NT Aboriginal organisations** – AMGP completed a survey on the strengths and needs of NT Aboriginal organisations earlier this year. A report was completed (and distributed at the workshop) on the first 30 responses.
- ② **Hold regional governance and management workshops** - The Central Australia workshop was the first of six workshops scheduled across the NT for 2014.
- ② **Facilitate Board/CEO network** – This is a way for senior representatives of NT Aboriginal organisations to share information and advice about governance and management, and to learn from each-other. Meetings will be held mostly by phone.
- ② **Demonstration sites** – The AGMP will provide close governance and management support to several organisations chosen as demonstration sites by the Steering Committee. AGMP staff will also collect information there as authorised by the organisation, to help demonstrate strong ways of working.
- ② **Respond to governance and management needs and requests from NT Aboriginal organisations** – AGMP can assist NT Aboriginal organisations by:
  - Giving advice and referring on to suitable support providers
  - Providing corporate policy templates
  - Sharing governance and management resources and best practice

***For further information about the program or how your organisation can be involved, please contact program staff.***



## Reminders

Please contact AGMP staff members if:

- ② You would like to join or to find out more about the AGMP's **CEO/Board network**.
- ② You would like electronic copies of the **corporate templates developed by the AGMP** and given out at the workshop.
- ② You have any further **feedback** on the workshop or the AGMP, or would like some governance and management **assistance**, we would love to hear from you!

## Aboriginal Governance & Management Program Staff

**David Jagger**

**Program Manager**

Phone: 8959 4613 / 0400 914 957

Email: [programmanager.apont@amsant.org.au](mailto:programmanager.apont@amsant.org.au)



**Sarah Lacy**

**Project Officer**

Phone: 08 8944 6639 / 0403 417 976

Email: [sarah.lacy@amsant.org.au](mailto:sarah.lacy@amsant.org.au)

**Wes Miller**

**Project Officer**

Phone: 8944 6626 / 0497 07 6257

Email: [wes.miller@amsant.org.au](mailto:wes.miller@amsant.org.au)



**Acacia Lewis**

**Project Support Officer**

Phone: 8959 4600

Email: [acacia.lewis@amsant.org.au](mailto:acacia.lewis@amsant.org.au)

*"Governance and management need to work together. Two legs that need to be travelling at the same pace. Can't have one without the other"*

Wes Miller, AGMP Project Officer

***Our Decisions, Our Actions, Our Future***



## Acknowledgements

APO NT would like to **thank**:

- ② **Yipirinya School** for allowing us to host this important workshop at their multi-purpose hall.
- ② Eddie and Lotti Robertson and Susie Low from **Walpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation** and Robynne Quiggin and Diane Smith from **Australian Indigenous Governance Institute** for their wonderful presentations.
- ② **Central Land Council** for lending APO NT their PA system.
- ② **The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet** for their funding of the Aboriginal Governance and Management Program which enabled this workshop to take place.
- ② The following Aboriginal organisations for sending representatives to the workshop:
  - Animparrinpi Yututj Women's Aboriginal Corporation
  - Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
  - Central Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Unit Aboriginal Corporation
  - Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service
  - Central Land Council
  - Ingkerreke Outstation Resource Services Aboriginal Corporation
  - Institute of Aboriginal Development
  - Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation
  - Ltyentye Apurte Health Service
  - Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Womens Council
  - Tjuwanpa Outstation Aboriginal Corporation
  - Urapuntja Aboriginal Corporation
  - Walpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation

## Governance & Management Workshop

*Yipirinya School Multi-Purpose Centre*

*7-8 May 2014*

### -- Program --

<i>Day One, 7th May</i>		<i>Day Two, 8th May</i>	
12.00 - 1.00	<b>Lunch &amp; Registration</b>	8:30 – 9:00	<b>Recap of Day One</b>
1:00 – 1:25	<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>	9:00 – 9:20	<b>The AGMP – Looking Forward</b>
1:25 – 1:45	<b>Aboriginal Governance &amp; Management Program (AGMP)</b>	9:20 – 10:30	<b>Australian Indigenous Governance Institute</b>
1:45 – 2:15	<b>Case Study – Warlpiri Youth Development AC</b>	<b>10:30 – 11:00 MORNING TEA</b>	
2:15 – 3:00	<b>AGMP Survey Results</b>	11:00 – 11:50	<b>Open Forum</b>
<b>3:00 – 3:15</b>	<b>MORNING TEA</b>	11:50 – 12:00	<b>Final Wrap Up</b> Workshop close
3:15 – 4:30	<b>Building on Strengths</b> Break-out groups	<b>12:00 – 1:00 LUNCH</b>	
4:30 – 5:00	<b>Report back</b> Break-out groups	1:00	<b>NGO Forum commences</b>
<b>5:00</b>	<b>END OF DAY ONE</b>		