

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

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

West Arnhem Governance & Management workshop

25th November 2014



-- Report for participants --

Our Decisions, Our Actions, Our Future

West Arnhem Governance & Management Workshop

Where, when & what?

On the 25th November, representatives from Aboriginal organisations and groups across the West Arnhem region gathered at Kakadu Crocodile Hotel for a workshop on **Governance and Management**. The workshop was organised and facilitated by Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT) as part of their Aboriginal Governance and Management Program (AGMP). The workshop program is attached to this report.



Fred Baird, Parks Australia and Otto Dann, Arrguluk Reference Group, reporting back after a workshop breakout session



Ricky Gurrawiwi, Johnny Namayiwa and Roderick Lee, Yagbani Aboriginal Corporation

Who came?

Twenty-two people came to the workshop, representing at least eight different Aboriginal organisations or groups. Representatives came from around West Arnhem, and from as far away as Galiwin'ku, and brought with them a wealth of governance and management experience and enthusiasm.



Helen Nyomba, Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre



Donna Nadjamerrek (left), Injalak Arts and Crafts Association, with Linda Codgen, Arrguluk Reference Group



Fred Baird, Parks Australia and Marcus Fletcher, Murrwanyan Aboriginal Corporation

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Who presented?



Stephanie Guyula, Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre



Stephanie Guyula and Helen Nyomba, Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre

Stephanie Guyula gave a memorable presentation on youth leadership, sharing her story on how she has become a director-in-training for Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre and become a strong role model for young people in Galiwin'ku.

Stephanie was chosen by Marthakal's elders for her promise in community affairs and leadership. For 18 months Stephanie and the other young emerging leaders chosen by the elders will work alongside the existing directors in meetings, workshops and training, before they become directors in their own right. During this 'apprenticeship', Stephanie has to show commitment and contribute to Marthakal meetings and other community meetings.

Elder Helen Nyomba explained that Marthakal embraced this model because it aligns closely with the vision of the organisation.

This is a positive way to pass on knowledge to young people and build their confidence and skills in a safe and supportive environment. The AGMP congratulates Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre for this approach to succession planning and thanks Stephanie for her inspiring presentation.

"Have a good heart, and good understanding. Share your knowledge."

Stephanie Guyula, Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre

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It's good to learn more things, but in both worlds. I need to see more how any development works, to get more knowledge of how."

Stephanie Guyula, Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre

"We need to support young people, because they are the future, they will be the driver of the organisation. We don't look down on young people, but take their hand and lift them up."

Helen Nyomba, Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre



Marcus Fletcher, Murrwanyan Aboriginal Corporation



Mathias Baird, Parks Australia



Lincoln Gumurdul, Gunbalanya Economic Development Aboriginal Corporation

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Directors' Roles & Responsibilities

The session commenced with a discussion about what people saw as important responsibilities of directors. These were written up on a whiteboard:

- 🕒 Hire the CEO and monitor their performance
- 🕒 Navigate the organisation – provide direction to the organisation and the CEO
- 🕒 Check on the budget and finances
- 🕒 Oversee grants
- 🕒 Maintain relationships between the members and directors
- 🕒 Chair and run effective meetings of the organisation
- 🕒 Make good decisions

We then added the following points to the whiteboard. He explained what they meant and sought comments from the participants.

- 🕒 Honesty
- 🕒 Separation of Powers
- 🕒 Solvency
- 🕒 Conflict of Interest
- 🕒 Networks

The following four key directors' roles were then presented and discussed (from the Governance Toolkit listed later in this report).

<i>Lead</i>	Represent all members, maintain the vision, put the interests of the organisation first, have a code of conduct for directors
<i>Plan</i>	Set direction, goals and values. Implement the strategic plan and manage risk
<i>Organise</i>	Develop policies, communicate and work together with management and members, build networks and partnerships
<i>Control</i>	Make sure the organisation is operating within the law, accountable, financially stable and is achieving outcomes. Provide support and direction to the CEO or senior manager

"The directors (of any organisation) need to know what money is coming in and what is going out. That's their responsibility."

Helen Nyomba, Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre

Strengths of West Arnhem Aboriginal organisations identified at the workshop



- Ⓢ Strong chairpersons, boards and members
- Ⓢ Directors and CEOs working well together
- Ⓢ Strong business and financial practices
- Ⓢ Strong communication between the board, staff and community
- Ⓢ Strong understanding of and monitoring of finances
- Ⓢ Strong understanding of the roles and responsibilities of directors
- Ⓢ Committed staff
- Ⓢ Sharing ideas and knowledge in what works well
- Ⓢ Having strong and effective policies in place
- Ⓢ Having strong community back-up and support
- Ⓢ Regular board meetings

"At the end of the day the CEO is there for the organisation, so the board is the boss, representing the organisation."

Phillip Saunders, Gunbalanya Economic Development Aboriginal Corporation

"Culture and work need to balance in your organisation."

Donna Nadjamerrek, Injalak Arts and Crafts Association

Areas to strengthen identified at the West Arnhem workshop



- ⌚ Improved attendance by directors at meetings
- ⌚ More governance and management training
- ⌚ Increased resources to grow the business footprint
- ⌚ Policy development
- ⌚ Planning for a strong organisational structure
- ⌚ CEO to have a strong understanding of the organisation's social and cultural history with member support. Use of cultural advisors to give support and advice to Balanda staff
- ⌚ Sufficient funds to implement the strategic plan
- ⌚ Stronger youth engagement

"We want to have more governance and management training in place, because we don't always know what roles and responsibilities we are sitting on."

From a breakout session report back

"We want our business to be a better place, so our artists can earn more money."

Donna Nadjamerrek, Injalak Arts and Crafts Association

Youth Engagement in Aboriginal Organisations

The sessions on youth engagement/leadership started with the strong presentation from Stephanie Guyula with support from Helen Nyomba, both from Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre at Galiwin'ku. This was followed by a breakout session where groups discussed the following question: *How can we get more young people involved in governance and management?*

Comments were recorded on butcher's paper and one person from each group presented a summary of their discussion to the main group (as had occurred earlier to list organisational strengths and needs). Main points to get more young people involved in governance and management included:

- 🕒 Build resilience in young people
- 🕒 Provide a solid education and map out a future for our young people
- 🕒 Provide more encouragement for young people to get involved
- 🕒 Bring young people to meetings to listen and learn
- 🕒 Communicate at meetings in a way that young people can understand
- 🕒 Incorporate governance and management training into schools, specific to the community and the organisational workplaces there
- 🕒 Schools provide more work experience
- 🕒 Encourage leaders to engage and stand together with young people to be the next role models
- 🕒 Give more support to young people who have just started in their position
- 🕒 Families provide more support and encouragement to young people to get them involved
- 🕒 Create an environment of excellence



Phillip Saunders and Lincoln Gururdul, Gunbalanya Economic Development Aboriginal Corporation

"Kids have to have the support at home...education starts at home....and everyone needs to get involved, big brother, uncle, so it's not just one person growing the kids."

Fred Baird, Parks Australia



Group discussion



Donna Nadjamerrek and Linda Codgen from Gunbalanya



Left to right: Rangers Shane Cooper, Mathias Baird and Fred Baird

"Governance education in school is important because we want to see our kids graduate in our local community, and this is part of it."

Donna Nadjamerrek, Injalak Arts and Crafts Association

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

- 🕒 **Mentors for young people** to gain leadership experience and skills.
- 🕒 **The Governance Toolkit** on the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute website is a useful, free online resource for Aboriginal organisations:
<http://www.aigi.com.au/toolkit-resources/link-to-toolkit/>
- 🕒 **Invite independent directors onto your board** – ensure that it is someone who can bring needed skills or experience to the board.
- 🕒 **The Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre** leadership and governance courses.



Edmond Dirdi, Adjumarllarl Aboriginal Corporation

"The workshop has given me the understanding and knowledge of how to conduct myself as a Chairman."

Edmond Dirdi, Adjumarllarl Aboriginal Corporation

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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. AGMP has also commissioned research on organisational best practice, models and networks.
- ② **Hold regional governance and management workshops** - The West Arnhem workshop was the fifth workshop held in the NT in 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:

- 📧 You would like to join or to find out more about the AGMP's **CEO/Board network**.
- 📧 You would like electronic copies of the **corporate templates developed by the AGMP** and given out at the workshop.
- 📧 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!

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"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

Acknowledgements

APO NT would like to **thank**:

- 🕒 **Stephanie Guyula**, from Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre, for her memorable presentation.
- 🕒 **The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet** for funding the APO NT Aboriginal Governance and Management Program including this workshop.
- 🕒 **Donna Nadjamerrek** and **Rachel Koch** for their support and assistance in promoting the workshop in Gunbalanya and facilitating participation.
- 🕒 The following Aboriginal organisations and groups for sending representatives to the workshop:
 - Adjumarllarl Aboriginal Corporation
 - Arrguluk Reference Group
 - Gunbalanya Economic Development Aboriginal Corporation
 - Injalak Arts and Crafts Association
 - Kakadu National Park/Parks Australia
 - Marthakal Homeland Resource Centre
 - Murrwanyan Aboriginal Corporation
 - Yagbani Aboriginal Corporation



Left to right: Ranger Shane Cooper and William Noinba, Murrwanyan Aboriginal Corporation; with Roderick Lee and Marcus Fletcher, Yagbani Aboriginal Corporation

Governance & Management Workshop

Kakadu Crocodile Hotel, Jabiru

25th November 2014

-- Program --

8:45 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:45	Welcome and introductions
9:45 – 10:00	Aboriginal Governance & Management Program (AGMP)
10:00 – 10:30	Governance and management concepts
10:30 - 10:50	MORNING TEA
10:50 – 11:30	Directors' roles and responsibilities
11:30 – 12:45	Building on organisational strengths - Small discussion groups
12:45 - 1:30	LUNCH
1:30 – 2:00	Youth Leadership Presentation Stephanie Guyula Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre
2:00 – 3:00	Youth leadership in Aboriginal organisations - Small discussion groups
3:00 - 3:30	AFTERNOON TEA
3:30 – 3:50	Open forum
3:50 – 4:00	Final wrap up
4:00	WORKSHOP CLOSES