

ABORIGINAL PEAK ORGANISATIONS NORTHERN TERRITORY
Aboriginal Governance & Management Program (AGMP)

CEO FORUM REPORT

In The Hot Seat: Quality Management in Aboriginal Organisations

2ND OCTOBER 2015



APONT
**Aboriginal Governance
& Management Program**

Our Decisions | Our Actions | Our Future

APONT is an alliance of Central Land Council, Northern Land Council, Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency and the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT.



Priscilla Collins, North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency CEO and forum MC

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L-R around table: Emma Barritt, Ampilatwatja Health Centre CEO; Ruth Nalmakarra, former director Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA); John Morgan, Miwatj Health Chair; Christina Davidson, ANKAAA CEO; Kelly Baylis, Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association (TEABBA) Station Manager; Wes Miller, Aboriginal Governance & Management Program Project Officer.

“It is possible for a corporation to perform well with an excellent CEO/Manager and an ordinary board of directors but it is more or less impossible for a corporation to perform well with a capable board and a substandard CEO/Manager.”

ORIC Oracle, Feb 2013.

CEO Forum

In The Hot Seat: Quality Management in Aboriginal Organisations

Why this Forum?

Across the Territory, Aboriginal organisations service outstations, deliver municipal, health, housing and other programs, run stores and develop social enterprises. They provide thousands of jobs to Aboriginal people. They foster local economies and self-determination. The most recent research shows the largest earning NT Aboriginal corporations together currently generate about \$740m in income annually.

In short, successful organisations are key to Aboriginal community well-being, to reducing Indigenous disadvantage and indeed very important to the wider Territory social fabric and economy. Good corporate governance is a legal requirement and complementary quality management systems help to sustain organisations' success while reducing risk and management burnout.

What is quality management?

Quality management can be defined as the organisational structure, policies, procedures, processes and resources needed to best achieve the outcomes and objectives of the organisation.

This applies whether the organisation seeks accreditation or internally institutes basic best practice. Taking a systematic approach to ensure good management processes and procedures are in place is about going the extra mile to turn an average organisation into a great one.

We need to ask ourselves: do we have the right structure for the size of the organisation? How often are our policies and procedures reviewed? Is our strategic plan up to date and are we following it? Do we have a staff code of conduct and are we monitoring staff performance to best practice standards? Do we have financial and risk management policies in place and are we building an organisational culture that provides a safe and encouraging environment for staff?

As Frank Spry said at the Forum, "Getting the right management system in place in organisations takes a bit of effort but the benefits of improved performance, reduced risk and staff satisfaction outweighs that." The Forum's message to all delegates is that there is no room for complacency as our sector is under more scrutiny by government than ever before; but well-managed organisations can turn this to their advantage in successful funding submissions and contract deals.

NT Chief Minister opens the Forum

We were delighted to have NT Chief Minister, Indigenous Affairs Minister and Economic Development Minister, the Honourable Adam Giles, open the Forum. In his opening address he spoke of the important link between strong organisations and economic development in Aboriginal communities. He noted the role of the Forum in this context, supporting CEOs and senior managers, critical to organisations' success.

"It is a fantastic initiative that will help Aboriginal people take control of their own destiny," he said. "Forums such as this are an important step towards ensuring that new or emerging Aboriginal businesses run smoothly, avoid conflict, and benefit the whole Aboriginal community. Good governance builds trust with government agencies and business leaders, and helps to drive future investment. It underpins economic independence and breaks the cycle of welfare dependence."

The Chief Minister emphasised that good governance will be integral to Aboriginal businesses taking up the opportunities presented in recently introduced NT Government policies. Policies like the Government's remote contracting policy, now with a target of 70 per cent of small contracts in remote communities to go to Aboriginal businesses by 2017, plus targets for bigger contracts in joint ventures. There are opportunities for the well-governed and well-managed, including incentive for "Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses to work together in a spirit of partnership," the Chief Minister said.

"That's what makes forums such as this so important," he explained. "Governments can create the environments for business to operate in, even opportunities to start new business ventures. But it can't run the business on behalf of the owners. Ultimately it is up to you what you do with those opportunities."

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NT Chief Minister, The Hon. Adam Giles



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NT Chief Minister, The Hon. Adam Giles

Keynote presentation

The Forum's keynote speaker, Torres Strait Islander Leah Armstrong, is the chairperson of Supply Nation. She knows a thing or two about the links between strong governance and management, winning contracts and Aboriginal economic development. Yet she said: "If you came today looking to hear some textbook quality management advice, I'm sorry to disappoint."

Instead Leah's inspiring and challenging speech addressed organisational culture more broadly. Perhaps better known for her time as CEO of Reconciliation Australia, for 18 years Leah led Yarnteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation based in Newcastle, NSW. Yarnteen has successfully established and run social and commercial enterprises including a bulk warehousing facility, a car wash, conference centre and cultural tourism.

Leah said: "I have learnt from my experiences that building great organisations requires a focus on governance and organisational culture, which has an impact on the quality of management. Quality management is a reflection of not only the processes and systems which enable things to get done efficiently and effectively, but must be founded on the organisational values and behaviours."



Leah Armstrong, keynote speaker

“Take people with you and empower them.”

Leah Armstrong, keynote speaker

Importantly for lasting strength, Leah added: “Processes and systems can drive organisational culture but for long term sustainability the organisational culture should be driving systems change and reflect the organisation’s personality. It is my experience that attention to organisational culture is essential if we are to ensure quality management is sustainable.”

Organisational culture is, according to Leah, a system of shared assumptions, values and beliefs which govern how people behave in organisations. She said: “The role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and philosophical systems, cultural values, traditions, rules and beliefs play in your organisational culture and governance systems cannot be underestimated. The challenge is to ensure that governance solutions continue to reflect cultural norms, values and traditions while remaining practically effective.”

At Yarnteen this was facilitated by a vision shared by board, management and staff; and specific and focussed objectives.

But at both Yarnteen and Reconciliation Australia, what Leah called “a culture of restless self-renewal” was important in dealing with change in the operating or enabling environment that is so familiar to all CEOs of Aboriginal organisations. She explained: “Building a culture of restless renewal requires constantly questioning the status quo; we need to question our habitual ways of seeing things, to allow ourselves to examine our old assumptions and in doing so open up the possibilities. It is crucial for leaders to be attuned not just to what they can see but also to the way in which their perspectives limit them.”

For sustainability, her organisations have adopted a four-part mindset:

- Anticipate change – get ready for the goal posts to be moved, they always do;
- Monitor change – noticing small changes early helps you to adapt to bigger changes;
- Adapt to change – keep things simple and flexible, do not overcomplicate things or confuse yourself. Use technology but don’t over-engineer the technical solution;
- Accept that change happens – it is natural, if you do not change you become extinct.

It is my experience that attention to organisational culture is essential if we are to ensure quality management is sustainable.”

Leah Armstrong, keynote speaker

Leah acknowledged that this is not possible in crisis situations, that “management by crisis is the ‘ball and chain’ of many Indigenous organisations.” And that “change works best when everyone in the organisation knows the effect, because an organisation can only change when enough people in it change.”

On organisations’ human resources, she said the goal should be to build a staff culture “around the idea of freedom and responsibility”, with self-disciplined people “who don’t need to be managed, therefore we manage the systems not the people.”

Reflecting on her Yarrteen experience Leah also advocated “separating community and commercial enterprises.” She added, however, that “this does not mean that the commercial arm does not ensure it continues to reflect the community objectives. Alignment of values and purpose is vital.”

Leah’s final word?: “Focus on building the right culture.....corporate governance and meeting legislative requirements is important but what is equally critical is a continued focus on community governance. The work that APONT and the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute are doing to build governance capacity in communities is vital”.

We thank Leah Armstrong for accepting our invitation to speak at the Forum and for her wise words.

“Change works best when everyone in the organisation knows the effect, because an organisation can only change when enough people in it change.”

Leah Armstrong, keynote speaker



Case Studies

Frank Spry – CEO, NT Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation (NTSGAC)

Frank explained that when he began as NTSGAC CEO in 2014 there was no handover as his predecessor had already left. There were no adequate record-keeping systems in place and Frank had difficulty finding relevant documents: a familiar story of lost corporate knowledge.

Having worked at AMSANT, he was familiar with accreditation and sought AMSANT's assistance. Frank stressed accreditation was successful at NTSGAC because the staff and directors were fully involved. And in this context, he emphasised the importance of the intranet he introduced to NTSGAC.

Frank explained how the NTSGAC intranet now links to corporate documents such as leave requests and purchase orders. He's particularly proud of its activity register and the way all staff have embraced this tool which clearly demonstrates NTSGAC's work volume. For example in the last six months it has captured 678 data entries, and in the week before the Forum the register recorded the despatch of 600 newsletters.

Accreditation certification provides confidence in NTSGAC's services and its commitment to continuous quality improvement. Its quality management system has demonstrated improved business outcomes and assisted in managing risks. According to CEO Frank Spry, it has made NTSGAC more efficient. His powerpoint presentation is available to Aboriginal organisations on request.



"Getting the right management system in place in organisations takes a bit of effort but the benefits of improved performance, reduced risk and staff satisfaction outweighs that."

Frank Spry, NTSGAC CEO

Chris Francis – CEO, Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation

Chris gave a brief history of Laynhapuy, or Laynha for short, going back 30 years. The organisation went into voluntary administration in 2012 and came out in March 2014. Laynhapuy now has 13 employees, a \$15m annual turnover and assets exceeding \$20m. It services approximately 1000 clients from related homelands or outstations. Chris commenced with Laynhapuy in September 2014.

Chris spent the first three months engaged in what Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy (2012) call the ‘onboarding roadmap’, trying to understand where Laynha had been, where it needed to go, what it needed to accomplish, what changes were required and what would be expected of its management and board. He subsequently wrote a series of internal review reports on strategic planning, performance management, management development, corporate governance and importantly, customer service. This set the blueprint or roadmap for change. Organisations, he said, must be efficient, effective and customer focused.

His advice to new CEOs and managers in their first three months is to read all relevant, written corporate knowledge and then, if necessary, conduct similar reviews that can feed through the board to staff and ultimately set their organisation’s direction.

Chris talked about organisations adapting or dying and highlighted a key challenge in rapid expansion without sufficient expertise to manage that change.

Chris suggested organisations address four key principles before contemplating change.

- a *rationale* for the change (are we clear why we are changing?)
- the *direction* of the change (what are we changing to?)
- the *means* of change (how are we going to change?)
- a *timeframe* for the change (how long do we expect it to take?)

He spoke too about the fear of change. It’s uncomfortable and people either accept or resist it, he said. Chris spoke of different staff personality types in this context; and said CEOs must persuade, cajole, encourage, and rationalise among these staff types, recognising that people change at different rates, at different times, for different reasons.

Chris said Laynha’s focus is on customer service and it has made necessary changes to increase staff accountability in this area, including customer service training, a customer request process, a customer satisfaction survey and a customer service KPI performance appraisal.

“Organisations must be efficient, effective and customer focused.”

Chris Francis, Laynhapuy Homelands CEO

Q&A Panel discussion: Chris Francis, Frank Spry and AMSANT Quality and Accreditation Officer Ken O'Brien



L-R: Chris Francis, Laynhapuy Homelands CEO, Frank Spry NT Stolen Generations AC CEO, with AMSANT's Quality and Accreditation Officer Ken O'Brien

Colin Tidswell, CEO of Yilli Housing AC said CEOs can be like bulls in a china shop. He said the review time Chris spoke of is important. Yilli outsourced a survey of customer satisfaction and found over 90 per cent of tenants were satisfied with Yilli's service.

Mark Coffey, Regional Manager at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet said the prior presentations were great, but asked: how do we make quality management systemic across the sector? How do we make each organisation follow the path that the presenters set out?

Chris highlighted succession planning, saying things can be uncomfortable in succession but can sustain improvements.

Frank said if we introduce change properly an organisation's people will take it on board.

Ken pointed out that all staff members must be able to find key policies when they need them. Further, he made the following astute observations: echoing Frank, if people are involved in improvement and change they will want to be a part of it, because people want work life to be easier; auditors who dictate change shouldn't be employed (suggesting auditors should instead facilitate change); accreditation cannot be driven by just one person because when that person leaves, then the benefits are largely lost.

Eddie Mulholland, CEO of Miwatj Health AC emphasised self-regulation of organisations.

Chris said we can rely too much on external advice, rather than our own staff. He questioned why we use consultants in some cases, as they don't always give the answers.

Ken explained AMSANT is currently redeveloping its administration manual. This includes templates, policies, links to other websites etc, to assist staff. Manuals can sometimes help organisations address tasks internally and avoid consultants.

Steve Roeger, Executive Officer of Dhimurru AC suggested keeping "critical friends" i.e. close, supportive and constructive peers; they can be friends of your successor to help maintain your organisation's direction.

David Jagger, AGMP Program Manager said we should remember the important Aboriginal affairs principle: one size doesn't necessarily fit all. With Chris's talk focusing on customer service and Frank's emphasising data management, David asked: how do we find the balance between collecting and managing lots of data and servicing people; so that with limited resources we are not spending more time reporting on servicing than actually servicing?

Frank responded that: NTSGAC was fortunately already good at customer service, with case workers constantly dealing with clients, and protocols and procedures in place. Actually more people are coming to see NTSGAC now, he said. The data collection and management has only improved the relationship with customers.

Colin Tidswell, CEO of Yilli Housing AC said to have quality management you need a quality manager. We often enough see people who are not sufficiently qualified in these positions, he said.

Wes Miller, AGMP Project Officer said there's been some good quotes today - "critical friends", "policy on a page", "restless self-renewal" - and that he would like to add one more: "let your systems do the work for you."





Eddie Mulholland, Miwatj Health CEO



Michaela Johnstone, Danila Dilba Health Service Executive Officer



Steve Roeger, Dhimurru Executive Officer



Michael Robertson, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association CEO

Small group discussions

The CEO or General Manager role is critical to the success of any Aboriginal organisation. On a daily basis the CEO/GM can go from facilitating annual general meetings, to hiring and firing staff, to meeting with funders or private sector partners. The role is as diverse as it is demanding.

With representation from many Aboriginal organisations at the Forum, it was a great opportunity for senior managers to share their insights, discuss their challenges and learn from each other. The after-lunch session was dedicated to small group discussions to allow just that.

At registration delegates were asked to identify key management challenges. Central themes were used to create small group discussion topics and questions. Delegates broke into three topic groups:

- Building an Indigenous workforce.
- Staff retention and resourcing.
- Change management.

Pages 17 to 19 provide a summary of key discussion points.



Building an Indigenous workforce discussion group

Building an Indigenous workforce

What are the key challenges to recruiting Indigenous staff?

Challenges	Strategies to address challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money. It is difficult to compete with larger organisations or the public service that can afford higher salaries, better entitlements and job security. • Skills. There is a small pool of skilled Indigenous candidates. The lack of supported traineeship programs means it's difficult to upskill junior-level staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, implement and review your organisation's Aboriginal employment strategy. • Work closer with other Aboriginal organisations and mainstream NGOs (collaborative partnerships). • Diversify funding through governments and philanthropists. • Encourage and make time to discuss career planning with staff; develop incentives.

How can we engage and retain young Indigenous staff and advance them into more senior roles?

Challenges	Strategies to address challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retaining staff is reliant on funding particularly for less senior positions. • Professional development can be costly, but staff need qualifications to progress. • Trained staff are more attractive to other employers. • There is inadequate infrastructure and housing for staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build succession planning into your enterprise agreement. • Employees need to feel valued – embed it into the organisation's corporate culture. • Provide a culturally safe environment. • Provide holistic support for Indigenous staff (mentors, leadership training etc). • Build resilience through pairing skills-based training with life-training. • Develop strategies to support young employees when things go wrong. Have a mentor/uncle/grandparent take them out on country to heal. Bring in elders to help organisations deal with conflict resolution. • Link in with AMSANT's leadership course. • Create a job network for Aboriginal organisations.

Possible group actions

- Share visions, create plans and goals and consider mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Share success stories via the media to demonstrate successful models in Indigenous employment. Aboriginal organisations need to be acknowledged.

Staff retention and resourcing

Given the competing employment opportunities and funding uncertainties, how can organisations retain key personnel?

Challenges	Strategies to address challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not a level playing field - in opening the Forum the Chief Minister spoke of Indigenous employment targets for the NT public service. Unless conditions at Aboriginal organisations are brought into line, this will create further leakage from Aboriginal organisations to government departments. Terms and conditions set in earlier funding and contract negotiations sometimes leave an unsustainable legacy. Likewise, salaries and conditions compare unfavourably with the resources sector. Funding agreements should factor in the true cost of remote location employment, inclusive of housing and living costs. Housing is a critical factor in attracting and retaining staff in remote locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations have to be strong and stable with revenue buffers to attract good staff. Staff want job security. Good staff orientation. Good communication and transparency with staff is essential to creating a strong organisational culture. Aboriginal organisations need to sell the organisation's attributes, values and point of difference to potential employees – 'you're not just getting a job, but a lifestyle'.

Is there a way for organisations to share costs and resources in certain areas (e.g. HR and IT)?

- ALPA has a pooled staff replacement levy on each of its divisions that helps cover recruitment costs across the organisation.
- Collaboration between organisations can result in cost-saving arrangements. For example TEABBA was able to negotiate better insurance premiums through such collaboration.
- Jointly engage consultants or alternatively one organisation can employ and carefully share consultants with other organisations on a cost recovery basis.
- OH&S processes and procedures shared through flexible software.
- Create economies of scale via sharing key staff employed by a peak body with wide membership.

What are the benefits/pitfalls of developing salary benchmarks and/or conditions within sectors?
Is this something worth exploring?

- Yes, it adds strength to the sector or sub-sectors (e.g. ranger groups) in lobbying for funds.
- Must be a 'whole employment package' benchmark, not just salaries.

Change management

How do you keep your organisation strong in an environment where constant change seems to be the norm?

- Share information between organisations.
- Design an organisational structure that is resilient to change.
- Embed culture and values into your organisation.
- Leaders have to lead, not just manage.
- Be positive; ‘crisis brings opportunity’.

How do you build flexibility into your structures and costs to enable a nimble response to financial shocks like withdrawal or reduction of funding?

- Develop alternative funding streams.
- Know your core values and be brave.
- Use generic but adaptable job titles (e.g. project officer) and job descriptions .
- Be honest and set realistic expectations.
- Use a mix of employment contracts and methods, e.g. casual, agency-staff, full time etc.
- Build buffers into the budget. Don’t provide funders with more budgetary information than required.
- Have a risk management plan and a nimble property strategy.
- Have an exit strategy.

What can Aboriginal organisations do to minimise issues and ensure continuity in their relationship with government when government staff are continually changing?

- Ensure good record keeping.
- Set expectations for the relationship.
- Ensure compliance with the funding agreement.
- Be proactive in building the relationship.

Group action?

- Membership of a group providing support for Aboriginal organisations, even if fee for service.
- Appropriate change management tools.

“Be brave. Opportunity comes from crisis.”

Jill Smith, Council of Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services CEO



Staff retention and resourcing working group



Michelle Krauer, Gap Youth and Community Centre CEO



John Morgan, Miwatj Health AC Chair

A role for the Aboriginal Governance and Management Centre - looking ahead

The APONT Aboriginal Governance and Management Program will become the more permanent Aboriginal Governance and Management Centre from mid-2016, funding permitting. The Forum provided an opportunity to hear how supports for CEOs might be enhanced going forward.

Program Manager David Jagger outlined existing Program activities, detailing one in particular, the CEO network. In bi-monthly teleconferences, NT Aboriginal organisation CEOs share advice and innovation. They hear from guest speakers on relevant issues and air ways to overcome common challenges.

David said, “The network could perhaps take on and help resolve some tasks from the Forum, while more generally continuing the conversation”. David encouraged new members to join the network via the AGMP website.

He flagged that the Centre might provide some additional support for CEOs, including: annual Forums such as this one; CEO locums, mentoring and/or secondment facilitation; some orientation for new CEOs. Participant feedback suggested what is most needed is help checking new CEOs’ references and other credentials on behalf of boards.

Other suggestions included a role for the Centre in policy development, strategic advocacy, the promotion of Indigenous leadership and celebration of governance successes, to which David said evidence-based advocacy is envisaged in the Centre business plan. Feedback also suggested demand for a standard intermediate level governance training module.

Consistent with some comments in the small group discussions, there was interest in organisations coalescing in some form with the Centre. This could be as ‘members’ but not in the formal, legal sense; or ‘subscribers’. David suggested they might help to inform policy/advocacy through the Centre and/or help develop the content and delivery mode of the above training module. Several CEOs have suggested their organisations may later be interested in a paid subscription to the Centre, whereby they could have ready access to resources.

A further suggested role for the Centre focused on pooled consultants, whereby the Centre might formally engage consultants who then work for, and are paid by, more than one organisation simultaneously, at reduced costs.

Concluding remarks

By all accounts, the CEO Forum was a successful event. Through the evaluation forms, the majority of participants indicated they would attend further forums, considering this one well worth the investment in time and costs. The combination of high calibre speakers and a thoughtful, committed participant group helped to strengthen relationships and forge new ones, expanded the knowledge base and provided critical peer support.



"My final thought is to take people with you and empower them, it helps to keep things simple."

Leah Armstrong, keynote speaker

Acknowledgements

APONT would like to thank:

- The NT Chief Minister The Honourable Adam Giles for opening the Forum.
- Priscilla Collins, North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency CEO, for her energy as Forum MC.
- Leah Armstrong for her inspiring and insightful keynote presentation.
- Frank Spry and Chris Francis for their case studies on quality management.
- The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet for funding the APONT Aboriginal Governance and Management Program including this Forum.
- Robert Mills for his Welcome to Country.
- Valuable contributions made by each and every delegate. We thank the following Aboriginal organisations for sending delegates and supporting this inaugural initiative:
 - Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory
 - Ampilatwatja Health Centre
 - Arnhem Land Progress AC
 - Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists
 - Bawinanga AC
 - Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association
 - Council for Aboriginal Alcohol Program Services
 - Danila Dilba Health Service AC
 - Dhimurru AC
 - Gap Youth and Community Centre
 - Ingkerreke Outstations Resource Services AC
 - Ironbark AC
 - Larrakia Nation AC
 - Laynhapuy Homelands AC
 - Miwatj Health AC
 - North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency
 - Northern Land Council
 - NT Stolen Generations AC
 - Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association
 - Yantjarrwu Outstation Resource Centre
 - Yilli Housing AC

Forum Program

In The Hot Seat: Quality Management in Aboriginal Organisations

Adina Vibe Hotel, Darwin Waterfront
Friday 2nd October 2015

PROGRAM

8:40 – 9:00	Sign in
9:00 – 9:50	Welcome, Opening by NT Chief Minister The Hon. Adam Giles and Introduction by MC Priscilla Collins, CEO of APONT member North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency
9:50 – 10:40	Keynote address by Leah Armstrong, followed by Q&A
10:40 - 11:00	MORNING TEA
11:00 – 11:20	Accreditation: Lessons learnt Frank Spry, CEO of NT Stolen Generations AC
11:20 – 11:40	Quality management Laynhapuy way Chris Francis, CEO of Laynhapuy Homelands AC
11:40 - 12:10	Q&A panel discussion with Frank Spry, Chris Francis and AMSANT's Ken O'Brien
12:10 - 1:10	LUNCH
1:10 – 2:50	Small group work on key challenges
2:50 - 3:10	AFTERNOON TEA
3:10 – 3:50	Supporting CEOs – what role for AGMP?
3:50 – 4:00	Final wrap up
4:00 - 5:00	REFRESHMENTS & NETWORKING

Speakers' biographies

Leah Armstrong - Chairperson of Supply Nation and the Aboriginal Housing Office NSW

A Torres Strait Islander, Leah has over 20 years' business and not for profit experience. She has a demonstrated track record in achieving organisational results, creating and maintaining strong networks and stakeholder relationships by working collaboratively with governments, community and the private sector.



As CEO from 2010-2014, Leah led Reconciliation Australia to become a professional, trusted and innovative organisation. Leah was co-founder of Yarnteen Ltd (1992-2009), a successful Indigenous enterprise operating several commercial and social ventures including bulk warehousing, a car wash, a building company, a registered training organisation, cultural resource/education centres and the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP).

Leah holds several board positions including membership on the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council, Director of Career Trackers, a Fellow of the University of Sydney Senate and is Chair of The Smith Family Indigenous Advisory Group. Previously Leah was a Director with Indigenous Business Australia and the Chair of the Indigenous Business Policy Advisory Group.

In 2009 The Australian Financial Review Boss Magazine recognised Leah as a "True Leader" and in 2012 Leah was recognised in the inaugural Australian Financial Review/Westpac 100 Influential Women Awards. In 2010 Leah hiked the Kokoda Track as a mentor with the Jobs Australia Foundation Indigenous Youth Leadership Program.

Priscilla Collins - Chief Executive Officer of North Australia Aboriginal Justice Agency

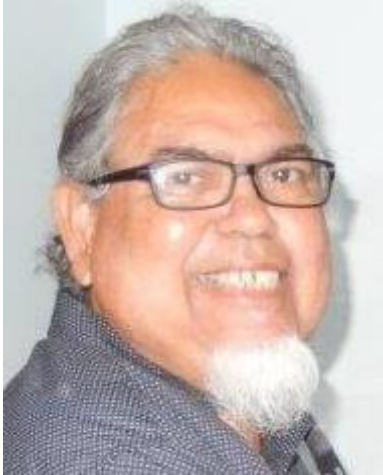
Priscilla Collins is Eastern Arrernte from Central Australia and mother of six children. As CEO of the largest legal service in the Northern Territory and Deputy Chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, Cilla is fully engaged in pursuing the rights of Indigenous people through law and policy reform.



Cilla won NT Businesswoman of the year in 2011 in the community and government sector. She holds a Master of Arts and is included in the 2008-2015 editions of Who's Who of Australian Women.

Previously Cilla was CEO of the CAAMA Group, the largest Indigenous owned and operated multimedia organisation in Australia.

Cilla formerly sat on a number of high profile boards and councils including the NT Indigenous Affairs Advisory Council, Indigenous Business Australia, Imparja Television and Indigenous Screen Australia, and was Chairperson of the Australian Indigenous Communications Association.

Frank Spry - Chief Executive Officer of NT Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation

Frank has 35 years' experience in middle and senior management positions. He was the Queensland State Manager of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TAFE Programs and worked in both the NT Education and Health departments.

Previously Frank worked as Training Manager for Miwatj Health AC in Nhulunbuy and as the Regional Coordinator for the Red Lily Health Reform program with Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT).

Chris Francis – Chief Executive Officer of Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation

Born in Brisbane and schooled in Australia and Canada, Chris' work has taken him around Australia to Ballarat, Kangaroo Island, the Gold Coast, Wadeye and now Yirrkala.

Formerly the CEO of Mornington Shire Council in Queensland from 2008-2014, Chris was appointed to Laynhapuy Homelands AC in September 2014.

Chris holds several degrees and is a member of several professional organisations.

Ken O'Brien - Quality and Accreditation Officer for AMSANT

Ken assists Aboriginal community-controlled health services in attaining the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners clinical accreditation, as well as Quality Improvement Council (QIC) and International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 9001 organisational accreditation.

Ken is a certified internal auditor under the International Register of Certificated Auditors. Ken is currently AMSANT's Work Health and Safety Officer.

Ken holds a number of qualifications including a Diploma of Work Health and Safety, Certificate IV in Occupational Health and Safety, Certificate IV in Business and a Bachelor of Science (Environmental Health).

About the Aboriginal Governance & Management Program (AGMP)

How did the program start?

In April 2013, about 300 Aboriginal people attended APONT's Strong Aboriginal Governance Summit in Tennant Creek. The AGMP builds on the summit recommendations – mainly that Aboriginal organisations need ongoing governance and management support.

What is the program?

The AGMP strengthens governance and management in NT Aboriginal organisations according to their self-determined needs, in a variety of ways:

- **Workshops** – often focused on specific themes, our workshops are free for representatives of NT Aboriginal organisations.
- **CEO network** and forum – giving senior managers of NT Aboriginal organisations space for sharing information and advice about governance and management.
- **Demonstration sites** – providing and demonstrating close and sustained governance and management support to several selected organisations.
- **Advice, resources and referrals** – including referrals to other suitable agencies like the program's pro bono legal partners.
- **Research** – on the governance strengths and needs of NT Aboriginal organisations, and best practice, models and networks.

What is the approach?

The program has a strengths-based, collaborative, action research approach. This means: building on organisations' existing strengths; working together with other agencies for collective impact; and researching and learning while supporting NT Aboriginal organisations.

Where is the program?

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

How is the program funded?

APONT acknowledges and welcomes Australian Government funding until mid-2016.

How is the program governed?

AGMP is guided by a Steering Committee of senior APONT and Australian Government staff, governance experts, including Aboriginal people with local community knowledge, and a representative of corporate Australia.

For more information about how the AGMP can assist NT Aboriginal organisations contact the team on 8959 1700 or info@agmp.org.au or visit our website aboriginalgovernance.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

About us, our values

The Program commenced operations in early 2014. Since then the small team of 3.5 staff have provided governance and management support to Aboriginal organisations across the NT.

With decades of experience in Indigenous affairs, our team brings trust and credibility, keys to success in Aboriginal NT.

We believe Aboriginal organisations are the heart and soul of NT communities. They understand the people in their communities and their challenges, so are best placed to meet their needs. They are vital to reducing Indigenous disadvantage.



Contact us



David Jagger | **Program Manager**
T (08) 8959 1701 | M 0400 914 957
E david.jagger@agmp.org.au



Lola Susuico
Project Support Officer
T (08) 8959 1703
E lola.susuico@agmp.org.au



Sarah Lacy | **Project Officer**
T (08) 8944 6639 | M 0403 417 976
E sarah.lacy@agmp.org.au



Wes Miller | **Project Officer**
T (08) 8944 6626 | M 0497 076 257
E wes.miller@agmp.org.au



John Morgan, Miwatj Health Chairperson



Leeanne Caton, NTG's Office of Aboriginal Affairs
Executive Director



In foreground: Mark Coffey, Central Australia Regional Manager, Department Prime Minister & Cabinet



Change management discussion group



Wes Miller, Aboriginal Governance & Management Program Project Officer



Joe-Martin Jard, (former) AMSANT Corporate Services Manager and Michaela Johnstone, Danila Dilba Health Service Executive Officer