



Celebrating Indigenous Governance

Success stories of the
Indigenous Governance Awards

2006
Indigenous
Governance
Awards

Recognising Excellence



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Cover photos – staff and members of the 2006 finalist organisations

Foreword

In 2006 the Indigenous Governance Awards were held for the second time attracting top quality applications from across the country. This demonstrated once again the depth and breadth of Indigenous achievement in Australia and provided an opportunity to showcase inspiring stories of success to the wider community.

A partnership between Reconciliation Australia and BHP Billiton, the Awards have uncovered many Indigenous organisations making a difference in their communities. All of them are exceptionally well run by extraordinarily competent leaders committed to a clear and constant vision. I thank and applaud all the organisations that applied for the awards this year.

The members of the independent judging panel faced a challenging task in selecting eight finalists from an outstanding field of applicants. Each finalist received a site visit from members of the judging panel before our final selection of the National and the Highly Commended award winners.

The site visits filled me with an enormous sense of hope and pride. It was inspiring to see these organisations on top of their game, demonstrating strong leadership and creating positive environments to grow and develop people and communities. Good governance is the heart of success. It lifts people's spirits to be involved in a healthy organisation, one they can depend on and be supported by.

This booklet is about sharing these stories of success. It includes profiles of the 2006 Awards finalists and, importantly, is full of 'ideas that work' — stories from the applicants of what *is* working in Indigenous communities. By learning from each other, organisations can shape practical solutions to everyday governance challenges and replicate success across Indigenous Australia.

I know Indigenous people can succeed because I've seen it. We are capable, we can lead, we can make changes for the better. The Awards continue to show me that Indigenous success is all around us. Let's learn from what works and let's breed that success.

Good Indigenous governance and leadership need to be supported as they are the foundation for success. Please join with me in promoting the achievements of these and other outstanding Indigenous organisations.



*Professor Mick Dodson AM
Chair, Indigenous Governance Awards
April 2008*



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Good governance means good business

In many of the 25 countries in which BHP Billiton operates we are hosted by Indigenous communities. Being a part of these communities, we understand that strong leadership and sound governance are critical for their health, pride and prosperity.

From our experience we also know that good governance is central to the success of any organisation, whether it is a small non-profit group, a local council or a large business.

At this time of growth in much of regional Australia there are many opportunities for new businesses: as service providers, suppliers and business partners. In this regard, Indigenous organisations are sometimes a relatively untapped resource.

We hope our colleagues from the corporate and government sector will join us in actively supporting Indigenous business and providing whatever support they can to foster good governance in these organisations. Many Indigenous entrepreneurs are considering how they can best participate in new opportunities – they are creative and innovative and keen to learn about the success factors required to have a viable and sustainable business.

Over the past few years, the enterprises that have featured in the Indigenous Governance Awards have provided concrete evidence that well governed organisations do exist and are making significant contributions to society.

Equally, we have found that the wisdom from these organisations is highly valued and transferable, and the information in this booklet is one way these learnings can be shared.

We are enormously proud of the Indigenous Governance Awards program for identifying and promoting Indigenous success and we are proud of the partnership with Reconciliation Australia which shows how different sectors can work together to bring about reconciliation.



Marcus Randolph
Group Executive & Chief Executive Ferrous and Coal
BHP Billiton

Image: All About Us





What is governance?

Governance may seem like a relatively new word, but every society, culture and group of people have been practicing governance since time began. Governance is the way we organise ourselves to get things done. The ancient Greeks first defined governance as the art of steering boats. Over time governance has been adapted to mean the art of steering societies and organisations.

Governance exists in all societies and organisations, from family clan groups to banks and sporting teams. Governance can be the laws and traditions that form the cultural basis of any particular group as well as the formal documents of organisations such as policies, rules and business plans.

'We use a simple definition of governance. It is to make sure things are run well.'

*Richard Weston, Regional Director,
Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation, NSW,
finalist 2005 Indigenous Governance Awards*

Governance gives a community or organisation the ways and means to:

- assign and exercise power and authority;
- determine group membership and identity;
- make the important decisions and implement them;
- develop and enforce its rules;
- work together to carry out its roles and responsibilities;
- resolve conflicts and negotiate with others; and
- plan future strategic direction.

Essentially, governance is how a group of people choose to share power, authority and accountability in order to make the decisions that enable them to achieve their collective goals and vision.

Image: Traditional Credit Union

Indigenous governance



A society or collective group of people cannot function effectively without good governance. Indigenous Australians have been successfully practicing their own form of governance for tens of thousands of years in the form of rules governing everyday life, marriage, gender roles, family structure, hunting and trade, land and resource use, leadership, ceremony and ways of behaving.

Each Indigenous family, group and community has its own unique form of governance based on its own history, environment and culture. Even though there are differences in the way each group practices governance, Indigenous people across Australia share many of the same cultural values and traditions. Similarly, while Indigenous organisations operate across a broad spectrum of sectors and locations, they share many of the same governance issues and challenges, and benefit from sharing solutions.

The system of western governance brought by British colonists has its own particular traditions and values that are different to those of Indigenous society. In Australia today Indigenous people are trying to live under two laws or two ways of governance – traditional cultural-based governance and western corporate governance.

History has shown that the most successful communities and societies are those that have designed and implemented their own forms of governance. They have created their own rules, made their own decisions and carried out their own plans. Indigenous organisations need to develop their own systems of governance that incorporate the culture and traditions of the community they serve, while still responding to the formal requirements of the wider governance environment.

Image: Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation

The Indigenous Governance Awards

The Indigenous Governance Awards were created by Reconciliation Australia in partnership with BHP Billiton to identify, celebrate and promote effective Indigenous governance. These biennial awards are part of a wider Indigenous governance program that includes Sharing Success Workshops, the Indigenous Community Governance Research Project and the development of a web-based Indigenous Governance Toolkit.

In the first two years of the Awards (2005 and 2006) 104 applications were received from across the country, and a total of \$50,000 was awarded to Indigenous organisations to further their development. The achievements of the applicants, finalists and winners were widely reported in the Indigenous media. The finalists have also been promoted through the Awards website, DVDs and a range of resources including the first *Celebrating Indigenous Governance* book and the Productivity Commission's 2007 Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Key Indicators Report.

Reconciliation Australia draws on the achievements of the finalists and applicants to highlight Indigenous success and to positively influence policy and opinion.

As well as recognising and acknowledging good practice in Indigenous governance, the Awards also increase the understanding of the significance and benefits of good governance and inspire people to begin investing in it. The Awards promote innovative models and practices, and allow organisations to share and transfer practical information and ideas. The Awards are also instrumental in showcasing Indigenous achievement to the wider Australian community in an effort to counteract negative stereotyping.

The Awards are open to incorporated Indigenous organisations nationwide that are at least 51% Indigenous owned. In 2006 there were two categories – organisations established for less than 10 years (Category A) and organisations established for more than 10 years (Category B). In each category the national winner received \$10,000 and the highly commended award winner received \$5,000.

Applicants were required to outline how their organisation makes and carries out decisions, solves problems, develops leaders, embeds culture, and plans for the future. A review committee appraised the applications and made recommendations for further assessment.



Image: 2006 Finalists

The independent judging panel (see page 68) shortlisted eight finalists and conducted site visits to more thoroughly assess each organisation in their own environment. At the conclusion of the awards process, the finalists were flown to Melbourne for an informal workshop with the judging panel before the winners were announced at the presentation event.

At each stage of the process the applicants were assessed against the following criteria:

1. How legitimate, representative and accountable is the governing body?
2. How effective is the administration function?
3. Are effective dispute resolution systems in place?
4. What is the level of commitment to leadership development?
5. How does the organisation's governance model reflect the cultural norms and values of its members?
6. What is the level of strategic planning ability?

In 2006 the 47 applicants were from seven of the eight states and territories with most entries coming from New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia.

Health was the largest sector represented. The other applicants were involved in areas such as culture, economic development and employment, local or regional government, education and training, media, land-related issues and legal. The most common source of funding (78%) was government, although nine applicants were entirely privately funded.

By entering the 2006 Awards the applicants identified themselves as being successful organisations. When asked to highlight areas that needed improving the most common response was related to the capacity of the people. This was mentioned by 62% of the organisations, and far exceeded any other limitation, such as those to do with organisational systems or funding. Some applicants specifically mentioned that governance capabilities needed to improve. This response clearly indicates an urgent need for greater emphasis on building and developing the capacity of Indigenous organisations, particularly for governance.



Key elements of good governance

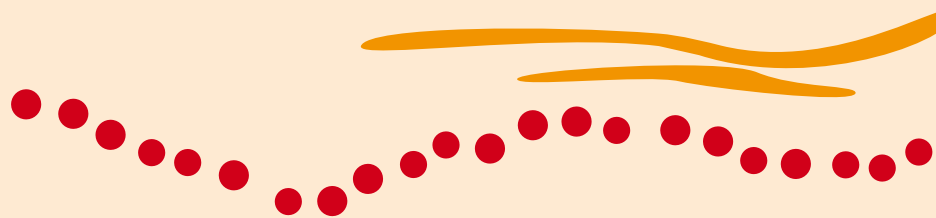
Organisations around the world share similar standard governance arrangements such as policies and procedures, budgets and strategic plans. It is clear however, from the 104 organisations that applied for the Indigenous Governance Awards in 2005 and 2006 that models of governance are quite diverse and there is no one size fits all.

In Australia Indigenous organisations face a unique set of challenges. The successful organisations not only have standard governance arrangements in place, they have also developed a unique set of solutions that help to define Indigenous governance.

In June and July 2006 members of the Awards judging panel visited each of the Awards finalists in their communities and spent a day meeting with members of the organisation's governing body, management and staff as well as with external stakeholders such as clients, members, partners and funding bodies. The judging panel conducted similar visits with the 2005 finalists and in both years they noted a range of key elements that were common to most, or all, of the finalist organisations.

Listed here are some of these key elements that have contributed to good Indigenous governance, and are therefore important factors in the success of Indigenous organisations.

Image: All About Us



Cultural norms and values

The organisation (governing body, management and staff) is able to operate effectively in 'two worlds' — it is responsive and accountable to both the blackfella community and to whitefella requirements.

Ongoing support is provided by the community and gives the organisation the cultural legitimacy it needs to operate.

Indigenous ways of doing business are incorporated into the organisation's rules, structures, values and processes. Often the governing body reflects the community's social structures.

A positive working environment is created that is warm and welcoming with appropriate cultural values so that staff feel empowered and community members feel engaged. Often a sense of family is nurtured. The organisation is inclusive of the different Indigenous groupings in the area as well as of non-Indigenous people.

Staff participate in cultural awareness training. The organisation recognises the cultural life of staff and provisions are made for family and ceremonial events.

The organisation actively recruits and trains Indigenous staff and creates career pathways for them.

The organisation undertakes ongoing consultation with community members who have a real say in the way the organisation does its work, and in the organisation's future planning.

The relationship between the governing body and the community's traditional decision-making arrangements is clear, giving the governing body the legitimacy it needs to function.

Governing body

There is a balance on the governing body between community representation (age, gender, background, region etc) and the expertise and experience needed to govern effectively.

The governing body provides positive and confident leadership with a clear vision, and a commitment to achieving that vision. It doesn't engage in, and isn't influenced by, local politics.

The organisation has a confident and able governing body with plenty of enthusiasm and passion and an accessible, hands-on chairperson.

The governing body meets regularly (e.g. monthly, every six weeks, every three months etc.) and holds an Annual General Meeting.

Special efforts are made when required to enable governing body members to understand the issues they are dealing with so that they are fully informed and considered decisions can be made. Successful organisations have strong professional relations between the CEO and the governing body, each being clear about their roles and how to exercise them fully and appropriately.

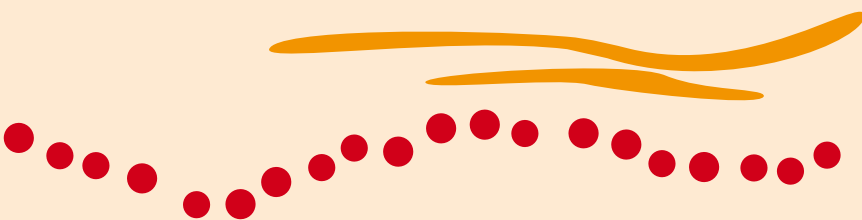
There are good systems in place for maintaining continuity and skills on the governing body such as staggered elections, mentoring of new members, developing potential members and succession planning.

Frameworks and tools such as strategic direction documents, guides and plans are in place which help the governing body make good decisions. There are also policies and practices to avoid conflicts of interest. Where decisions are difficult or deadlocked, further information or advice from Elders or other parties can be sought.

The governing body, staff and others are aware of the systems, policies and procedures that are in place to clarify roles and responsibilities, and to set standards of how the organisation conducts its business.

The organisation has their accounts audited annually and produces an Annual Report.

There is good financial management through preparation of a clear budget each year, regular financial reports to the governing body, and policies outlining financial procedures and delegations (e.g. who can spend what, who can sign cheques etc.).



Making and implementing decisions

There is a clear separation of strategic and operational decision-making and an ability to appraise options and risks in making any decision. Decisions are made democratically, often by processes which develop a consensus after first clarifying what the decision is about and what is at stake.

Staff and communities know what decisions have been made, and decisions can be reviewed by the governing body as needed. There is a record of decisions made at each governing body meeting, and this information is circulated to everyone who needs it to ensure decisions are acted upon.

Clear and well-developed planning systems flow from a broad long-term strategic plan, through a more detailed business plan, into shorter-term workplans for individual units or staff.

Staff and management are confident in each other and there is a culture of cooperation. Staff feel they are supported by the governing body and trusted by management.

The organisation's staff are committed to their work and they understand, share and deliver the vision of the organisation. There is a feeling of unity and team spirit among staff.

Leadership development

Professional training and development is provided for the staff, and compulsory governance training for governing body members.

Clear performance management systems are in place to monitor and support staff so they have the necessary skills to action decisions and access training as required. The best organisations have systematic, planned approaches to staff training, mentoring and development which begin at induction. At each stage people acquire the skills to perform their job and progress through the organisation.

The organisation invests in human development of the governing body, staff, young people and potential leaders in a multitude of ways, such as by linking Elders with younger people and providing training and mentoring. There are also mechanisms for youth participation in the organisation's governance and programs, and opportunities for external leadership development.

The organisation is not over-managed. Clear guidelines and frameworks are set with the confidence that staff will get on with the job, often in small teams, supporting each other. Staff have usually chosen to work where they do because their values align with the organisation's mission, and they want to make a difference in their community.

Conflict resolution

Operational policies, procedures and codes of conduct are in place to guide staff to help prevent conflicts and crises by avoiding misunderstandings, and to guide appropriate action when problems arise.

Systems are established to receive and deal with complaints from staff and clients, and to proactively invite suggestions for improvement. Often these approaches are tiered i.e. the complaint is first dealt with at the lowest level necessary in the organisation, and if that fails to resolve it the matter is escalated to increasingly higher levels.

Future planning

The organisation is seen by potential partners and key external stakeholders as having financial, administrative and organisational credibility.

Strategies are developed for greater self-reliance to enable the organisation to be more self-determining, and more able to expand or diversify by providing the kinds of services and programs needed by their communities and clients.

The organisation is creative and finds appropriate models and solutions to challenges and difficulties. It is flexible, adaptable and able to learn from experience.

Finalists – 2006 Indigenous Governance Awards

Category A: Organisations established for less than 10 years





Winner of the 2006 National Indigenous Governance Award Gannambarra Enterprises, NSW

Develops sustainable businesses and provides opportunities for local Indigenous people to find employment in their preferred fields. It offers employment-related services to Indigenous clients such as providing pre-employment training, placement in work activities to gain skills, on the job training, and assistance to find employment. Gannambarra also provides culturally appropriate mentoring services to clients and employers. Two of its current enterprises in Wagga Wagga are Deadly Detailers, a car detailing service, and Gannambarra Pottery, an arts and crafts centre.

PANEL COMMENTS

Board consciously seeks to recruit people who are respected and admired by the broader community.

Risk of losing staff has been realised and active steps are being taken to address the issue through career development opportunities.

Emphasis is on teamwork at all levels – Board, management and staff.

Good, strong and candid engagement with participants – organisation challenges them with the question 'do you want to work?'

Gannambarra has been instrumental in helping promote reconciliation within the region.

'Gannambarra has helped improve the attitude of employers and the wider community towards Indigenous people.'

Comment by staff member.



Winner of the 2006 Highly Commended Award Wunan Foundation, WA

Provides long-term economic benefits for Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley by developing commercially sustainable and successful Aboriginal-owned business enterprises. The Foundation operates four main enterprises engaged in training and employment for local Aboriginal people. Kimberley Group Training recruits, trains, places and mentors young trainees and apprentices. Kimberley Wilderness Adventures is the largest Aboriginal-owned tour operator in the region. Wunan House is a hostel for Aboriginal people seeking education, training and employment. Wunan Business Services provides a range of customised support to remote community organisations.

PANEL COMMENTS

Board has established a robust, best practice organisation along business lines, and as a result has become far less reliant on recurrent funding.

Its ability to improve the governance and operations of other organisations is making a real contribution to the Kimberley region.

Experienced staff members act as role models and mentors for less experienced employees.

Management has a strategic focus for the region – projects are long term and designed to be sustainable and deliver measurable outcomes.

Wunan has a strong understanding of community structures and cultural values.

'Wunan is consistent, stable and leads by example. Its greatest strength is that it has community trust!'

Comment by stakeholder.



2006 Finalist

Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre, NSW

Muru Mittigar operates a range of diverse businesses that provide training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the Penrith area, while also creating a meeting place for the sharing of cultures. The Moluccana Provenance Nursery grows native tube stock for wholesale distribution, and for their rehabilitation project at the local quarry. The cultural centre includes a café and museum as well as guided tours and activities. The retail gallery showcases Indigenous artists from NSW. Muru Mittigar staff are cross-trained in the different business activities, providing them with a range of skills and experience.

PANEL COMMENTS

Accomplished Board members who bring a high level of expertise to the management of the organisation.

Staff believe strongly in the vision for the organisation and see themselves developing the capacity to get there.

Core of key personnel who have provided growth and strong management to ensure the organisation is sustainable.

High level of unity among the staff, management and Board.

Muru Mittigar is a nurturing environment, particularly for those who require additional support.

'If Indigenous people want to make a go of their life, Muru Mittigar is the organisation of choice.'

Comment by stakeholder.



2006 Finalist Nyirranggulung Mardrulk Ngadberre Regional Council, NT

Established through the amalgamation of several communities and outstations around Katherine, the Council manages the regular essential services in the region. Through the CDEP program it provides a range of training and employment opportunities in areas such as housing, aged care, mechanical services, arts and crafts, and sports and recreation activities. The Council's main business enterprises are the tourism venture at Manyallaluk and the major and minor civil works projects currently underway.

PANEL COMMENTS

Board uses 'The Money Story' to visually explain important issues and concepts.

It is more than just a municipal council – the community receives other benefits such as training, infrastructure, skilled workers etc.

Comprehensive induction for all staff.

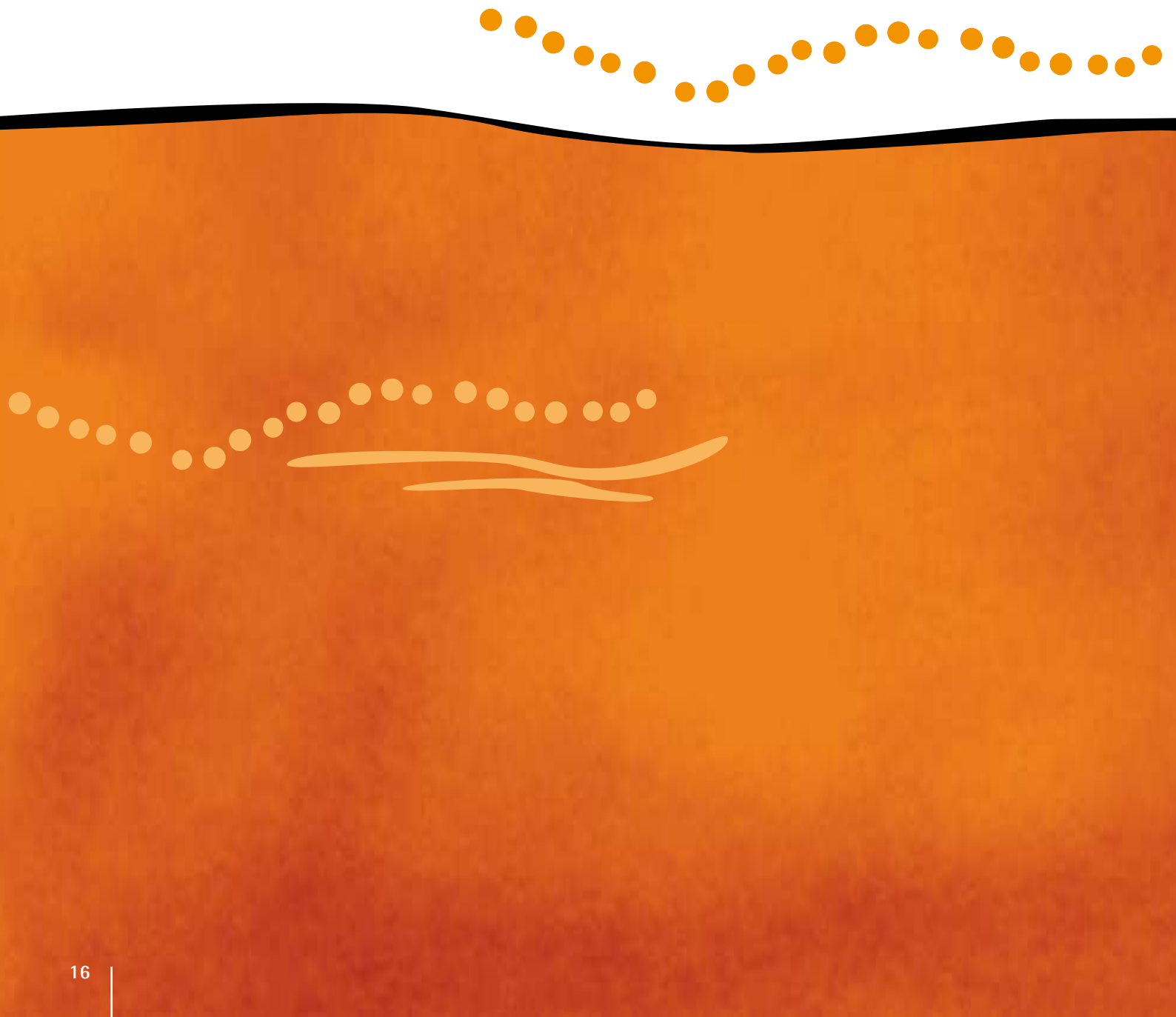
Members of staff understand, share and deliver the vision of the organisation.

Nyirranggulung has turned itself around from earlier trouble.

'The Council members of Nyirranggulung will always ask questions to get to the heart of the issues, not just go along blindly.'

Comment by stakeholder.

Category B: Organisations established for more than 10 years





Winner of the 2006 National Indigenous Governance Award Wuchopperen Health Service, QLD

Improves the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples so they can share and contribute to the economic wealth of far North Queensland. Wuchopperen is an essential health care service provider that considers the social, emotional and cultural well-being of the whole community and not just the physical well-being of the individual. Its services include specialist clinics and chronic disease management, oral health, and social health and wellbeing. Its *Filling the Gap* program, an innovative project that relies on a network of volunteer dentists from metropolitan areas, has had a significant impact on improvements in oral health. Wuchopperen also oversees the establishment of medical services and clinics in remote regions such as Atherton and Mt Isa.

PANEL COMMENTS

Continuous improvement ethos and effective processes to identify and implement change.

Management supports and encourages innovative and creative approaches by staff.

Good processes for communicating views and decisions both internally and externally.

Stakeholders endorsed the quality of the organisation and its role as a leader and model in a range of areas.

Wuchopperen has a focus on generational change and effective actions to achieve it.

'Wuchopperen is the cornerstone of community controlled services. It takes a lead role and is a benchmark for Indigenous primary health care standards.'

Comment by stakeholder.



Winner of the 2006 Highly Commended Award Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation, WA

Tells the stories of Aboriginal communities through Indigenous performing arts. The company evolved from a youth theatre project to a corporation with a worldwide reach through major national and international tours. Yirra Yaakin provides opportunities for Aboriginal artists in all levels of creation and production including arts management, staging and performing, and their training program is supported with certified modules through TAFE. Yirra Yaakin also delivers a variety of workshops to schools including theatre, circus skills, didgeridoo and dance.

PANEL COMMENTS

The structure and qualification required for election to the Board provides a strong platform for effective and passionate representation.

Strong business plan that gives direction for the organisation in the performance area as well as for staff development and succession planning.

Very positive reputation in the community and is highly regarded as more than just a theatre company.

There is a sense of family and inclusiveness.

Yirra Yaakin staff have a high level of enthusiasm and commitment towards the Board and management, as well as to the organisation and its vision.

'Yirra Yaakin looks after the community on every level – working here has given me confidence and greater identity as an Aboriginal!'

Comment by staff member



2006 Finalist Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, WA

Preserves and protects the 30 Aboriginal languages of the Pilbara region, and promotes the local Indigenous culture and history. It records and analyses languages, historical events, songs, stories and images for the production of books, DVDs and educational material. It also delivers cross-cultural training in the broader community and has a translating and interpreting unit. Wangka Maya operates a Link Up service to reconnect Indigenous people to their families.

PANEL COMMENTS

Board has a great diversity of members with representatives from all its regions and communities.

Traditional obligations are well represented in organisational thinking and development.

Excellent manuals, policy documents and other written materials to guide the Board and staff.

Employees are valued and appreciated and there is a feeling that this is a very special place to work.

Stakeholders praised Wangka Maya's integrity, its focus on core business and its constant vision.

'Wangka Maya has a nurturing environment based on sound governance principles and creative ways of thinking.'

Comment by stakeholder.



2006 Finalist Yarrabah Shire Council, QLD

Endeavours to raise the living standards of Indigenous people in the region. As the local government body it provides all regular essential services to the local community including major projects, housing, roads and permits. The Council operates a number of other activities such as a women's centre, an arts and crafts workshop and retail gallery, and an aged care facility. It also manages the largest CDEP program in the country with over 800 participants.

PANEL COMMENTS

Board has good strategic approach to identifying and dealing with key issues.

Processes have been developed to ensure separation of powers operates effectively.

Effective use of external expertise where needed.

Positive attitude to externally imposed change management.

Yarrabah has a legacy of good leadership in the community.

'Yarrabah isn't afraid to put issues out to the community and to look at the big picture. It's always trying to find ways to improve.'

Comment by stakeholder.

What works: Lessons from the 2006 Indigenous Governance Awards



Drawing on the applications in the 2006 Indigenous Governance Awards, this resource highlights ideas and practices that are proving successful for a broad range of community organisations.

This section focuses on six key elements of good governance:

- 1) **Governing body**
- 2) **Making and implementing decisions**
- 3) **Conflict resolution**
- 4) **Leadership development**
- 5) **Cultural norms and values**
- 6) **Future planning**

Each of these elements plays an important role in achieving good governance. This section provides an explanation of these key factors, as well as examples of how different organisations respond to them, and what processes they have in place to achieve them.

These examples or 'ideas that work' have been developed by Indigenous organisations to suit their particular needs and situations, and they are positive illustrations of what is working well in communities across Australia.

The 'ideas that work' are also practical solutions to everyday governance issues faced by any organisation trying to operate effectively in a complex environment. These solutions could be adapted by, or provide inspiration to, other organisations to continue building healthy and robust Indigenous communities.

Image: Warlayirti Artists

1 Governing body



A governing body is the group of people given the power and authority to govern an organisation. They are elected by the members of the organisation through an agreed procedure such as voting or by a traditional Indigenous process. Governing bodies come in all shapes and sizes, and can take the form of a Board, a council or a committee.

As representatives of the organisation, people on a governing body must be able to speak on behalf of all the members, as well as protect their rights, interests and well-being. The mix of people on a governing body should reflect the broad diversity of the members of the community and the organisation. They must also be able to perform the job of governing.

A governing body needs to have legitimacy to function effectively. It gets cultural power, authority and legitimacy from its community and the members of its organisation. It gets a different set of legal powers, authority and legitimacy from the particular legislative and funding frameworks it operates under.

The governing body has specific roles and responsibilities that all its members need to be aware of and committed to. Its role is to guide the organisation while keeping the interests of all its members at heart. It sets the overall goals of the organisation and creates the rules by which the organisation works to achieve those goals. It develops the rules and strategies by which the organisation as a whole operates, deciding what the policy directions of the organisation are, and ensuring that management implements them.

It is important that the members of a governing body understand and are committed to their role as ethical and honest governing leaders, and to their legal, moral and cultural responsibilities to their organisation and members. Governing bodies also need to ensure that they have the right mix of skills, experience and expertise to govern well.



Power and authority in an organisation are shared by the governing body and the management and there needs to be a clear separation of these powers. The governing body is responsible for making policy and setting the strategic direction of the organisation and management's role is to implement those policies as effectively as possible.

In order for the organisation to operate effectively and get things done properly, the governing body and management have to work together as a leadership team. They need to be travelling in the same direction and be communicating well and regularly to provide the leadership the organisation needs. The cooperative roles of the governing body and management are also critical to protect against the abuse of power by one or the other.

Choosing a governing body

Most organisations that applied for the Awards used a process of nominations and voting to elect the governing body.

Many indicated that their governing body was composed of a number of representatives drawn from each of the particular sectors that make up their community such as clans, families, language or skin groups, wards, regions, associations or other community controlled organisations. By structuring their governing bodies to be representative of the different groups they serve, these organisations are ensuring cultural legitimacy.

A governing body needs to have legitimacy to function effectively.

Image: Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation

IDEAS THAT WORK

Bungala Aboriginal Corporation has a Board of Management that is elected by a ward system of representation, with voting conducted by postal ballot.

Institute for Aboriginal Development has a Board of 22 members, 12 of which are elected by the community at the Annual General Meeting (according to the processes of the Australian Electoral Commission) and 10 of which are positions for representatives from other Aboriginal-controlled organisations.

Gannambarra Enterprises altered its rules to allow 'Skilled Directors' to sit on its Board in an advisory capacity, and they currently have a lawyer in that role. Other Board members are member-nominated and employee-nominated.

Wuchopperen Health Service staggers the election of its ten Indigenous Directors so that half are elected for a two year term at each AGM. This ensures the continuity of knowledge and experience while at the same time providing the opportunity to develop new and interested directors. Nominations to the Board must be made in writing prior to the AGM and include a brief summary of the nominee's skills, experience and aspirations for the organisation. All nominees give a short oral presentation to the AGM prior to voting by members. Following the AGM, the elected Board has a week-long retreat to induct new members, and to link them with experienced members who act as informal mentors.

Wunan Foundation Board is made up of two representatives from each of the three wards of the Wunan (East Kimberley) Region, a specialist advisor, and up to three people with commercial, management or other relevant expertise. Board members are carefully chosen to include respected community leaders as well as those who are known beyond the region and who can contribute to the profile and credibility of the organisation at a national level. This also helps Wunan to attract external support.

Mutitjulu Aboriginal Community Corporation has altered their constitution to ensure that there is a 50 per cent gender balance on their governing committee, including both a male and female Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

Size and frequency of meetings

To make decisions effectively, governing bodies must have the right balance of representation, skills and number of members. Time and money are also factors if the governing body is large or members have to travel great distances to attend meetings. Meetings can be long, often up to a full day, which is a significant amount of time for governing body members to devote to their organisations. Large governing bodies may also experience problems achieving quorums to enable them to make decisions and conduct their business.

The governing bodies of the Awards applicants generally meet monthly. They tend to be small, with less than 15 people, and most had less than 10 members. Only two of the organisations had over 15 members, clearly demonstrating an overall preference for smaller governing bodies.

IDEAS THAT WORK

Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC) has a governing body of 12 members representing 18 tribal groups. Nine of the groups have representation in their own right, and the other nine have combined to select three representatives between them, to keep the Board a manageable size. Each delegate to the Council can have several proxies to ensure that each meeting obtains a quorum, but they must all be nominated by the tribal group. In many instances issues need to be taken back to the tribal groups before decisions can be made. There is respect and acknowledgement for Elders at all times.

Change and continuity

Organisations frequently hold annual elections but this does not mean that all governing body members change, as those people who have served well are usually re-elected. But sometimes, rapid turnover of governing body members can cause problems as the new members take time to learn their roles and get a full understanding of the organisation's issues. A balance needs to be struck between stability of membership and depth of knowledge, while providing opportunities for 'new blood', fresh ideas and development of younger or different people.

A number of organisations that applied for the Awards conducted elections every year and others held them every two years. Some organisations had rolling arrangements in place for the election of their governing body. For example, some elected only half the members one year, and the other half the subsequent year, to ensure that at least half the members continued each year. Some organisations also described a variety of sub-committees which provided them with additional expertise, information about community priorities, and ways for a wider group of people to be involved in the organisation.



Image: Yamatji Marla Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation

The time frames for governing body membership varied with organisations having terms of office for one, two or three years. Nine organisations have staggered arrangements such as electing only one third of all places in any year to maintain continuity.

IDEAS THAT WORK

Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service has a Board of 12 who each serve a three-year term. Every year four members are up for election, ensuring continuity and gradual change over the three-year cycle.

Yirra Yaakin Board members must have been members of the organisation for 12 months prior to their election, which prevents stacking at the AGM. Additionally, members must serve two years on the Governing Committee before being eligible for Executive positions. A three-year rotational term for Board members also allows for continuity, experience and stability.

Financial decision-making

Governing bodies are responsible for the efficient management of the funds and assets of the organisation. They need to plan for the future and ensure the organisation has clear strategies for remaining financially secure. They must approve budgets and monitor income and expenditure on a regular basis, and ensure the organisation has sufficient funds at all times to meet its financial responsibilities to staff and others. The financial policies and procedures must be transparent and robust to protect the organisation from corruption or misappropriation, and they need to be clear about who has delegated authority to spend the organisation's money. The accounts should also be audited annually by a qualified and independent auditor.

The vast majority of organisations that applied for the Awards clearly understood who had financial authority in the organisation as well as the rules for signing cheques. Around half mentioned budgets and financial procedures, while a few less mentioned financial policies relating to delegations. Many organisations mentioned all of these aspects of financial decision-making. Six organisations mentioned a financial or business plan which guided them, or using external support.

IDEAS THAT WORK

Gannambarra Enterprises has a finance manager who is responsible for their financial affairs and presents monthly and quarterly financial reports to the directors. Financial accounts are maintained using a MYOB accounting system. A minimum of two signatures are required for signing cheques and two passwords for operating internet banking and electronic payments. All expenditure is considered and approved at the monthly directors' meetings.

Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre has a manager who is responsible for the day to day financial operations. The manager prepares monthly financial reports and an annual budget, which are presented to the Executive Committee (EC) for approval. Once approved, the manager has responsibility to ensure that expenditure is in line with budgets. The manager has approval to spend up to \$5,000, anything over this amount requires the approval of the EC. The members of the EC and the administration officer are signatories to the accounts, and two signatures are required for all cheques and deposits.

Accountability tools

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is an important forum for the governing body of an organisation to formally report to its members on the activities of the preceding year. It is also a chance to endorse any significant change in structure or practice such as amending the constitution. In addition, an AGM is an opportunity to present a set of financial accounts, appoint an auditor for the coming year, answer any questions, and hold elections as required. An Annual Report, including an audited financial statement in an easy to understand format, is an important form of public accountability.

All the 2006 nominees required to hold an AGM did so, and all had their accounts audited annually. Approximately 80 per cent of the organisations produced an Annual Report.

IDEAS THAT WORK

Arnhemland Progress Association distributes copies of its annual report to all member's communities in sufficient quantities for circulation to everyone concerned. Its AGM is held in a different member's community each year.



How to: Develop visual governance tools

WARLAYIRTI ARTISTS

Warlayirti Artists wanted their reporting information and planning resources to be accessible and culturally appropriate so that their committee and staff could engage fully with the material. As a non-government organisation whose funds come wholly from the sale of artworks, Warlayirti thought it particularly important that their artists and committee members understood where the money from sales went in the running of the organisation and how profits were calculated. They knew that complex financial concepts and reports were difficult to comprehend for many, let alone those with a literacy or numeracy barrier.

Based on this need Warlayirti began a relationship with consultants Little Fish, who specialise in working with organisations on their financial and governance information flow.

Working with Little Fish, the committee and staff developed a shared visual language of symbols, illustrations and culturally appropriate concepts that they began to use across many areas of the organisation.

Starting with the Money Story, which is a visual flow chart of the complex journey of the organisation's finances, the use of visual tools grew to encompass quarterly reporting and strategic planning. Little Fish periodically visits the organisation to train artists, committee members and staff in the visual governance tools and spends time going through reports and plans, answering questions and developing new ideas.

Warlayirti emphasise the following three very important principles central to getting visual governance tools right:

1. **Consistency.** People learn by repetition, and especially with complicated financial information, it's essential to use the same style and symbols each time to ensure people are confident that they understand the concepts. The basic story and key symbols need to be consistent so when you introduce another symbol people have already got the basic idea.
2. **Customisation.** Warlayirti highlights the importance of tailoring visual resources to make them socially and culturally relevant to their users. Importing concepts and symbols from other contexts is not recommended as they should have cultural and place-based resonance for the people for whom they are designed. For example water, a scarce and valuable resource in the desert, is used as a metaphor for money. Warlayirti use the desert term 'living water', which refers to the precious permanent waterholes people use in dry times, to represent term deposits or money that is put aside to appreciate.
3. **Training.** It's essential to train people and involve them in the development and use of visual resources. A resource can look good and seem appropriate, but unless it is coupled with consultation and training it can be just as confusing to users as the complex material it is interpreting.

Warlayirti found the engagement of an external adviser, Little Fish, invaluable in developing their resources. Not only did they not have the time or capacity to develop the tools on their own, but they have come to value the insight and impartiality that an external adviser brings.

The Money Story and associated visual resources have improved the organisation's governance capacity. As artists and committee members have become more confident with the visual governance tools they feel more empowered to ask questions and engage with the information and the overall operations of the organisation.

How to: Create a strong governance structure

BROOME ABORIGINAL MEDIA ASSOCIATION

In 2002 Broome Aboriginal Media Association (BAMA) wanted to venture into new media areas to help it achieve its long term goals. Their immediate hurdle was that it was only funded to operate as a radio station and nothing else. The Board of BAMA started discussions to set up a fully-owned holding company, Goolarri Media Enterprises. BAMA understood the risks of setting up a commercial enterprise so they established a governance structure that not only protected the assets of their community-based organisation but would also provide stability. In particular, BAMA wanted to safeguard its daily operations from negative influences such as nepotism and favouritism.

Creating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BAMA and Goolarri was an integral part of setting up Goolarri, as it was essential to spell out the different roles, responsibilities and rights in decision-making each party had. The decision was made both by the Board and the organisation's membership at the AGM.

The MOU established a clear delineation between BAMA and Goolarri regarding levels of authority and management, as well as a strong chain of command for the implementation of Board decisions. The MOU also states that Goolarri's daily business affairs are its own responsibility, with all internal decisions, including all financial decisions, determined and implemented by the company's Directors. For example, the Board of BAMA

might develop a policy regarding the percentage of Indigenous people that should make up the staff of Goolarri, but the Managing Director of Goolarri is the one with the responsibility to hire and fire. This creates a stress free Board and combats nepotism because the BAMA Board can't be held responsible for implementation in this area. It also allows the Board to focus on the bigger picture.

The MOU covers a five-year period, at the end of which there is an established process for its review and then renewal.

It was essential to spell out the different roles, responsibilities and rights in decision-making.



2 Making and implementing decisions



The separation of the strategic role of the governing body and the day-to-day management of the organisation is an essential principle of good governance. Fundamentally, management is accountable and answerable to the governing body, and the governing body is accountable and answerable to its members and to the whole organisation. The role of the governing body is to make policy and the role of management is to implement those policies. Power is shared between the governing body and the management. They each have particular roles and responsibilities and a special set of powers to enable them to carry out their jobs effectively.

Organisations have two different streams of accountability. One is internal and involves clear communication and understanding of tasks from the governing body, through the management to the staff and back again. The other accountability is external and includes keeping members, partners and funders informed of the work the organisation is doing. This helps to ensure the organisation is meeting its funding requirements as well as providing the services and delivering the outcomes that the community expects.

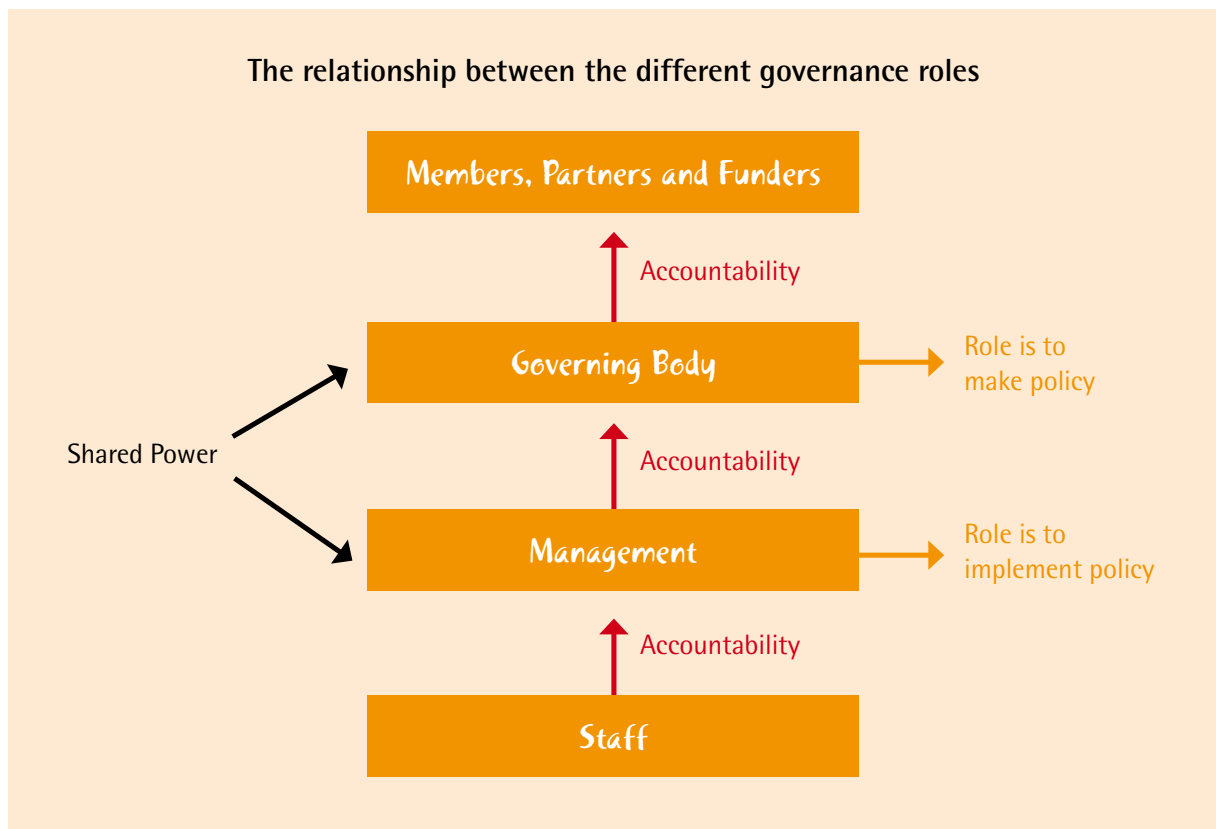



Image: Traditional Credit Union



Tracking and monitoring progress is necessary to ensure the organisation is working towards achieving its goals and vision, as well as meeting all its internal and external accountabilities.

Successful organisations should be able to separate themselves from local politics. Staff and governing body members are often involved with a range of organisations in varying capacities, but there must be a clear distinction between those different roles. The management and operations of the organisation shouldn't be influenced by outside sources. This is particularly critical where business development is concerned.

Decision-making processes

Most organisations said they always used or preferred to use consensus approaches to decision-making. If agreement could not be reached however, they would use a democratic process such as voting. Some indicated that they used consultation with communities or families, while others used sub-committees to feed into decision-making. Many used a mix of methods and approaches to making decisions. A number distinguished between different types of decisions – such as operational or strategic – the need for a thorough assessment of options and risks, and the different roles of staff and the governing body.

Some organisations gave the Chair a casting vote to break a deadlock, while others sought further information from Elders or community members. It was clear that difficult decisions are not rushed, and as much information as possible is gathered before decisions are made. Community input to decision-making was often mentioned, and traditional authority also played a role for some organisations.

Organisations strive to improve the informed quality of decisions made by their governing bodies by utilising strategic direction guidelines, decision-making protocols, explanatory tools and training opportunities. Some of the organisations also employ visual tools to facilitate their decision-making process.

IDEAS THAT WORK

South Eastern Aboriginal Regional Management Services uses the following series of questions to guide its decision-making:

- Is there a good reason for doing it?
- Does it benefit the organisation's client group – directly or indirectly?
- Is it in the best interests of the organisation?
- Is it in line with the organisation's strategic and business plans?
- Is it allowed under the organisation's constitution and rules?
- Is it acceptable within the organisation's funding agreements?
- Does it meet legal requirements?
- Does the organisation have the resources to do it – human and financial?
- Have all the options been explored to find a better way of resolving or responding to the issue – practically, financially and politically?

Traditional Credit Union holds a separate meeting with the Indigenous Board Directors (Traditional Owners and/or Elders, comprising half of the Board) on the day prior to Board meetings, with an interpreter who runs through the Board papers in their language so that the Directors are fully aware of what is going to be discussed at the meeting and have a chance to think about any important matters before a decision has to be made.

Aboriginal Prisoners and Offenders Support Services will sometimes involve Elders to break a deadlock with the Board when it is appropriate.

Arnhemland Progress Association may seek assistance from Yolngu Mala leaders or other ceremonial leaders if difficult cultural issues arise.

Warlayirti Artists says that decisions are made by consensus after clear information in an accessible format, usually visual, has been presented to the Committee for consideration. The senior people who have cultural authority are consulted by the Committee for advice on certain issues and this advice helps guide the decisions that are made. The Committee members have articulated the responsibility that senior people carry, which must be respected, despite the fact that they may not be Committee members.



Image: Yarrabah Shire Council

Yarrabah Council often makes hard decisions relating to housing allocation. To avoid family pressures on councillors and to have a fair approach, the Council relies on a housing policy which incorporates criteria such as length of time on the waiting list and assessment of need. The Council also ensures that where a Councillor has an interest in a matter before it (usually because it involves a relative) the Councillor leaves the room and takes no part in the discussion to ensure family bias does not enter the decision-making.

Gannambarra Enterprises makes decisions on a 'majority rules' model, however the directors always try to ensure that a general consensus and a win-win situation is the end result, as the Board is strongly committed to working as a team.

Wunan Foundation has a handbook that clearly outlines that their committee strives for consensus decisions, although decisions are ultimately reached through majority resolutions based on a show of hands. The handbook also sets out clear protocols to ensure that conflicts of interest and confidential considerations are managed appropriately.

Institute for Aboriginal Development Board members receive a file containing the agenda and all correspondence relevant to the agenda items before all its meetings so that they can make fully informed decisions.

Naiyu Nambiyu Community Government Council never imposes a time limit on debates as it understands that significant issues, especially cultural ones, are far too important to have such limits.

Mutitjulu Aboriginal Community Corporation

accepts that while decisions take longer to make by using consensus decision-making, when they are made they are strong decisions.

Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre

and **Wuchopperen Health Service** use a mix of traditional and democratic processes in the decision-making at meetings. Traditional consensus following open discussion and debate is the main means but in rare instances when disagreements arise, the democratic process is used.

North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency

uses consensus, democratic process or traditional authority depending on the matter in question. By having the traditional authority structures in place, there is a level of security that there are people in charge who can be depended upon to make the hard decisions when necessary.

Yirra Yaakin Board uses 'business angels', or advisory groups of experts, who volunteer their time to support the Board to make informed decisions. These groups form an associate, non-Indigenous membership base, with no voting rights. Yirra Yaakin also taps into AdviceBank (an initiative of the Australia Business Arts Foundation) and other volunteer organisations as required.

Power is shared
between the
governing body and
the management.

The greater the grass-roots accountability, the more empowered the communities are.

Implementing decisions

Over half the Awards applicants noted that a record of decisions is taken, that there is a mechanism to share information about those decisions, and that it is then the responsibility of the management to ensure that they are carried out. This indicates a clear understanding of the different roles of the governing body, management and staff. In cases where decisions made are not acted upon, nearly half the organisations refer the matters back to the governing body to review. Some mentioned having mechanisms or procedures to prevent inaction on decisions.

IDEAS THAT WORK

Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural Education Centre clearly defines the roles of its staff in the delegation of authority, which is issued annually by the Board. This document outlines the particular policy areas to be actioned by specific levels of management, as well as their levels of financial responsibility.

Darlingjungle Cattle Company engages a management consultant to assist in its day-to-day operations and its financial administration. The consultant provides a report on activity to each meeting of the Board, which is subsequently provided to its shareholders. Action items are tracked by the consultant who advises if things are not being dealt with.

Gannambarra Enterprises holds a meeting with all its employees within two weeks of every monthly directors' meeting to provide feedback to the staff.

Aboriginal Prisoners and Offenders Support Services staff have delegations and timelines from their Board written into their monthly work plans. Staff then report on the outcomes in their monthly performance report.



Durri Medical Service has team leaders who communicate between the staff, management and Board. Team leaders are responsible for reporting to and from staff and implementing any action related to their particular program or service delivery area that has been decided at Board level and put into the work plan of the CEO. Team leaders have weekly meetings and the rotation of the position means that many staff can gain leadership and management skills.

Wuchopperen Health Service senior staff are able to attend Board meetings. Minutes and an action list are produced after each meeting with action officers identified to carry out the decisions. A Board communiqué is also prepared and emailed to all staff, providing an overview of the key non-confidential decisions, upcoming events and newly accepted financial members.

Hunter Valley Aboriginal Corporation has a system whereby once the Board is elected by the members at the AGM, it then meets to vote for the office bearers. If people accept a position they sign a duty statement for the role they are taking on such as Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer or Executive member, to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities.

Informing stakeholders

Maintaining relationships with stakeholders is vitally important. The primary stakeholders should be the communities or constituents that organisations are established to serve. Research suggests that the greater the grass-roots accountability, the more empowered the communities are. Organisations also have to meet expectations of other stakeholders, especially those who fund them. These differing demands can be significant for Indigenous organisations, and at times the requirements of one may conflict directly with the demands of the other. Organisations have to carefully and wisely balance these competing pressures.

A range of mechanisms are used to inform different stakeholders about decisions that have been made and acted upon. For example, some organisations have an 'actionable items' schedule that goes back to the governing body. Community members are informed primarily through newsletters or notice boards as well as open meetings or workshops, including the AGM.

IDEAS THAT WORK

Boigu Island Council hold public meetings for any matters that have a bearing on or which might affect the lifestyle or activities of the general community, so that issues can be openly debated until a consensus is reached.

Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC) hold weekly staff meetings to bring everyone up to speed with current issues and projects that people are working on. The ARC also holds quarterly meetings with its principle government stakeholders and an annual regional workshop for its community stakeholders. This workshop, usually held over three days and attended by over 150 people, is used to address issues faced by the 18 tribal groups it represents and to confirm the mandate of the people on the ground.

Anyinginyi Health keeps the community informed through the local free newspaper and by running promotions at shows and other public venues. It also advertises its meetings, encouraging the community to attend any time, and holds forums on special interest issues to gain feedback from the community.

Arnhemland Progress Association circulates information directly to the community through its website, public notices, a local Yolngu language radio station and word of mouth.

Broome Aboriginal Media Association distributes copies of its quarterly newsletter 'Gimme More News' to both the community and its funding bodies. The newsletter contains a message from the Director and articles from each of their departments. For its various projects BAMA delivers reports, acquittals and performance indicators to stakeholders and funding bodies on a regular basis.

Institute for Aboriginal Development has engaged a remote coordinator whose role is to meet with communities in remote areas to advise them of decisions and changes. It also uses standard methods to inform its stakeholders such as fax, email, word of mouth and the AGM.

Nauiyu Nambiyu Community Government Council posts matters of general interest on community notice boards and also prints flyers.

Women's Karadi Aboriginal Corporation uses monthly lunches and fortnightly morning teas to assist with communication flow about its activities.

Wuchopperen Health Service places Annual Reports, newsletters and information about its various programs on its comprehensive website.



Image: Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation

How to: Build an independent organisation

WUNAN FOUNDATION

When the Wunan Foundation was established its Board was clear in its vision — it needed to be a financially independent and robust organisation with the capacity to tackle the social and economic problems facing the people of the East Kimberley region over the long-term. It had a staged approach to its organisational development. It needed a strong commercial base, and its first goal was to develop \$10 million worth of gross assets within seven years. With starting capital of \$3 million from ATSIC, Wunan Foundation borrowed further funds and invested wisely to achieve that goal. It created a basic income stream from land and property investments, then developed an investment with Kimberley Wilderness Adventures, a tourism company. Both the tourism business and an associated group training company fell on difficult times, but the Foundation had sufficient flexibility with its own funds to support them through their restructuring so that they are both now successful and profitable businesses.

Wunan has had a deliberate strategy to be independent of government, and this has created a focus on building good business practices to develop a solid foundation with the financial independence to have a 20–30 year vision. Wunan's view is that you can't tackle the hard issues from day one; you have to build the capacity to take them on successfully.

The CEO says the Board was right in the first stage not to get distracted by trying to respond to all the problems facing the communities, but to focus on building the strong economic base which now gives Wunan the strength and flexibility to invest in social development. The goals were clear, measurable and limited in scope and the organisation brought in good capable people who fit with what the Board was trying to achieve. Having a clear vision and purpose means everyone knows what to focus on. The financial independence Wunan has achieved enables it to have a go at new business opportunities to test them out, and to take some risks, as without doing so the Foundation believes it won't find real solutions for complex local problems.

Wunan wants to see the social problems of the communities it serves addressed, but it takes an investment approach to this aspect of its work too. It invests where it can expect to see a return in improved social outcomes. It's not just doing things to feel good. For example, when recently approached to run an employment program for highly at risk young people, Wunan felt that the resources being offered to do the job were too limited for it to achieve success, so it declined to run the program as proposed. Wunan Foundation is serious about making a difference in its region, and is actively supporting education, training and employment initiatives which create and get people into real jobs. It now uses its experience to support remote organisations with the business side of their community management, to enable them to remain focused and effective in their community work.

It invests where
it can expect
to see a return
in improved
social outcomes.

How to: Manage growth and restructuring

WUCHOPPEREN HEALTH SERVICE

In 2004/5 Wuchopperen Health Service Board realised that the rapid growth of the organisation, while welcome, was creating new issues for the organisation. It meant some staff were working too many hours. They needed to stop and rethink how they were doing things. They decided their management structure would need to be changed to match the growth in the program areas. For example in their social health area the manager at the time was line-managing around 20 people which was too many.

The Board realised that they needed to take the pressure off the one Executive Officer they had at that time who was responsible for both strategic and day-to-day operational matters. So they created a new position of Chief Executive Officer who would be responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation, for relationships with external stakeholders and the Board. Two Executive Officer (EO) positions would be responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the broad program areas of primary health care and social health. The senior medical officer, CEO and the two EOs would then form a four-person Executive Management Team (EMT) for the organisation. Within each of the two program areas, a new level of management was created. For example in the social health area, many different programs with numerous funding sources were grouped into four major units, each with its own manager. These managers were existing staff who undertook up-skilling to take on more senior roles, and continue to be mentored by the EMT.

This restructure has been a mammoth task according to Wuchopperen, but it has been very successful. Factors in its success included the way everyone was involved in and kept informed about the change processes, how responsibility has been devolved, and the faith the managers have in the staff to have decision-making authority. The idea for the restructure was discussed widely before the Board made the decision, and once it was taken, the Chairperson addressed a full staff meeting so that everyone would be fully informed. When the CEO was recruited all the senior staff position descriptions were jointly reviewed and rewritten by the CEO and the person in the job in a negotiated way. A new communications strategy was also developed which included communication within the organisation and externally, so everyone was clear about communication processes. The change went very smoothly over about six months.

A recent addition to the Wuchopperen team has been a dedicated human resources position. This had previously been a load borne by all managers across the organisation, and the newest staff member is already working towards uniformity of recruitment, induction etc.

3 Conflict resolution



Good communication is the key to resolving and often pre-empting disputes. Conflict of views is normal, but organisations must have ways of resolving conflicts if the organisation is to move forward. Individual members have to discuss and cooperate with each other to reach a position that is acceptable to everyone. This requires a level of skill in communication, negotiation and interpersonal relations.

Many of the 2006 nominees have a mechanism or process in place to try to prevent or pre-empt internal disputes or complaints, such as clear policies and clarity about roles and responsibilities. About a quarter have some form of dispute resolution process in place. Internal disputes are generally resolved by the CEO (sometimes by another manager at a lower level), or in many cases they are resolved by the governing body or Chair. Some organisations also mentioned external and internal mediation services.

External complaints tend to be resolved most frequently by the governing body or the CEO and formal processes are set up for dealing with them.

The dispute resolution procedures were generally of a stepped nature. That is, the dispute was first dealt with at the least formal level in the organisation, and if a process at that level failed to resolve it, the matter was raised to increasingly higher levels. In some cases disputes could be referred to dispute settlement bodies outside the organisation.

Internal conflicts

The potential for conflict within the governing body and among the staff is reduced when people are clear about their roles and responsibilities and have good communication skills. Consultation to pre-empt or resolve conflicts is desirable to ensure that conflicts are not left to simmer. When conflicts occur it is essential to have clear procedures in place for dealing with them.

Some organisations indicated that the comprehensive training and briefing of governing body members was an important and effective method of avoiding disputes. Other organisations used a strategic plan to keep the governing body focused on decision-making as a way of reducing conflict. A few of the nominees mentioned the use of traditional authority to assist in resolving disputes.

The resolution of staff conflicts is usually the responsibility of the CEO or equivalent person. If they happen to involve the CEO, the Chairperson may need to handle the issue. Some organisations referred to the use of external mediators, arbitrators or counsellors in dealing with staff conflict.

When conflicts occur
it is essential to have
clear procedures
in place for dealing
with them.

Image: Institute for Aboriginal Development

The potential for conflict is reduced when people are clear about their roles and responsibilities.



IDEAS THAT WORK

South Eastern Aboriginal Regional Management Services (SEARMS) has a thorough stepped approach to internal dispute resolution. The first step is mediation between the parties by a designated person (the Executive Officer in the case of staff, or a person nominated by the Board in the case of disputes within the Board). Each party can have a support person with them if desired. If agreement is not reached at this stage an external mediator is brought in to assist. If an agreement is still not reached following external mediation, the person designated to manage the dispute will make a final recommendation. Individuals are entitled to resolve their grievance through any external legal means available at any stage of the process.

Arnhemland Progress Association has its own internal complaints/disputes procedure and recognises that sometimes disputes need to be dealt with in a culturally sensitive or traditional way. In such cases, the Board will decide who is best placed to deal with the issue in an appropriate manner.

Gannambarra Enterprises has a sequential approach to resolving internal disputes or complaints, and issues go through as many steps as necessary to resolve them including:

- The employee may approach the team leader for discussion and advice;
- The employee can put the issue in writing or discuss it with the supervisor;
- The issue can be discussed with or put in writing to the manager who will make a decision and advise the participant within seven days; and
- If management is still unable to reach a resolution the issue is discussed at the next directors' meeting.

Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre has two conflict resolution officers, one male and one female, who are the first contact points for staff or external stakeholders who may have complaints or disputes. Management may assist these officers to resolve a dispute if required. If necessary a four-step process is used involving reporting, informal and formal conciliation, and formal determination.

Aboriginal Prisoners and Offenders Support Services call on the services of an independent facilitator if, in the final stage of their dispute resolution process, their Board of Management are unable to resolve either an internal or external dispute.

External complaints

A few organisations saw complaints from members, clients and stakeholders as a means to continue improving their services. Others prided themselves on receiving very few of them. Many of the organisations had a specific policy in place for handling external grievances, which was generally a phased approach following a number of different steps or levels. Some of these organisations kept a register so that the process could be tracked through its different stages, for example if it couldn't be resolved initially and needed to be reviewed by the CEO, or failing that the governing body.

IDEAS THAT WORK

Nyirranggulung Mardruk Ngadberre Regional Council had fallen behind with some reporting requirements, and it worked with its stakeholders to get back on track. The local Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC) created an issues register, and then monthly meetings were held between the Nyirrangulung councillors and staff and representatives from local and federal government departments to discuss the problems and assist with solutions until the Council was back on track with its reporting requirements.

Gannambarra Enterprises handles all external complaints through a register managed by the administration officer. The register contains all the details about the complaint (including dates), the actions taken (such as any changes to services or procedures), and the outcome of any investigation.

Durri Medical Service recognises that in its line of work the satisfaction of clients/patients directly affects health outcomes, so complaints are handled as a matter of urgency. Complaints are seen as an important source of customer feedback about their services (particularly in highlighting deficiencies in any areas) and Durri encourages the patients' right to complain. Durri provides patients with information on how to provide feedback and/or make a complaint and asks all clients/stakeholders to put their complaint in writing. However recognising that many of its clientele have basic literacy levels they also provide a staff member to help the complainant put their concerns in writing.



Image: Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre

Institute for Aboriginal Development has a comprehensive set of governance documents and policies to deal with internal and external complaints. These allow disputes to be handled in a variety of ways depending on their nature and severity. All complaints from clients, stakeholders and the public are received by the quality officer who enters the details into a computer database such as name, contact details, date and nature of complaint, action taken, employee(s) responsible, final outcome, date of corrective action report and correspondence generated and filed. This enables the progress and resolution of complaints to be monitored.

Goolum Goolum, Muda Aboriginal Corporation and **Wuchopperen Health Service** engage a professional mediator or arbitrator to resolve a dispute as a last resort.

4 Leadership development



Leadership qualities and capacities are critical to the success of an organisation. Leaders need a range of skills and knowledge, but they also need a set of personal qualities such as integrity, courage and fairness. Leadership is about working with people and motivating them to achieve an outcome. Leaders must always act with a set of principles and values in mind, especially around ethical and honest behaviour. Good leaders gain respect and inspire people to work together to achieve a shared vision. A good leader will also recognise their own weaknesses and will call upon others with the relevant expertise to assist them.

Leaders are the foundation stones for community and organisational governance. They need to know what their role is, its limits, and they must be committed to carrying out the responsibilities given to them.

It's important to distinguish between leadership and management. An organisation needs to have both, but not all leaders are good managers, and equally, not all managers are good leaders.

Leadership is not just for people at the top. Everyone can be a leader by discovering and using their talents and power that lies within them to make a difference each day. Building team leadership is an important part of building an organisation. As Mick Dodson has said 'we have to have leadership right through our organisations.'

Indigenous leadership is complex as it is not only based on kinship, family and knowledge-based systems and laws, but also on the governance rules, laws and expectations of western-style incorporated bodies. There are also extra challenges for Indigenous organisations and communities because there is a small pool of leaders, they have a huge workload, and have to wear many different hats. This means leaders usually have multiple responsibilities and obligations.

Indigenous leaders have a 'two-way' accountability. On the one hand they need to regularly explain and justify their decisions to family and community. On the other hand they will also have to explain and justify their decisions to organisational authorities and funding providers, in the context of the rules and laws of those stakeholders.

Just like accountability, Indigenous leaders need to ensure they have a two-way legitimacy – from their own members and community, and from external stakeholders – if they are to continue to work effectively on behalf of their organisations.

IDEAS THAT WORK

Wuchopperen Health Service encourages and develops leadership capacity by firstly creating an organisational culture that values leadership and personal and professional development. Secondly, good leadership is consistently demonstrated from the top down through value based actions including honesty, professionalism, open and transparent decision-making, and moral and financial accountability. When leadership potential is identified, opportunities are provided to grow and nurture up-and-coming leaders.

Yirra Yaakin, a Perth-based Aboriginal theatre company fosters leadership by mentoring other Aboriginal arts and performance groups in the management of international touring.

Developing staff

Staff are the greatest resource in an organisation as they are the people who actually do the work that enables the organisation to achieve its goals. Staff who are skilled, competent, informed and respected are an essential part of any organisation's success. Enabling staff to fulfil their role means ensuring they are managed and supported effectively and that they have the skills and knowledge to complete the tasks required of them.

Providing staff with opportunities for improving and strengthening their skills, abilities and knowledge, is an investment in achieving the organisation's goals. Building an internal culture that values people and their individual and collective contributions also fosters a greater shared commitment to the vision and outcomes of the organisation.

For a start there needs to be good policies, systems and rules in place that everyone can work within so that staff are clear about their individual roles and responsibilities and what's expected of them. It is also important to build team respect and relationships through all levels of the organisation. Creating and reviewing individual professional development plans and actively engaging in formal and informal relevant training enables staff to reach their full potential and to actively participate as valued members of the organisation.

Many of the organisations that entered the Awards have a deliberate, planned approach to staff training. For example, it is built into human resource development plans and/or staff appraisal processes, and staff are able to attend training courses, workshops and conferences that will foster their development. In a number of the organisations staff are undertaking formal study, and some specifically mentioned mentoring or on-the-job training.



Image: Broome Aboriginal Media Association

IDEAS THAT WORK

Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre commits to spend the equivalent of 10 per cent of its wages costs on training for its Koori staff to ensure they can actively progress through the organisation and be represented strongly at all levels of management. Twelve of their 27 staff have recently completed Frontline Business Management training and six have commenced Workplace Trainer and Assessor Training in OHS&E qualifications.

Yarrabah Shire Council's central objective is to build the skills and capacity of its Indigenous staff to eventually assume full responsibility for managing the community's affairs. Towards this aim the Council has provided financial support (e.g. paid leave, HECS fees and travel expenses) for employees to achieve formal qualifications at university and TAFE. It has attracted apprenticeships in the trade and outdoor workforce and employed a number of high school students on school-based traineeships. Completed qualifications or apprenticeships are recognised through its staff appraisals, which may lead to an increase in salary. To maximise external training opportunities the Council has entered into arrangements with James Cook University, the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and Cairns TAFE. Construction has begun on a new skills training centre, which will increase the availability of training to Council staff and community residents.

Nyirrangulung Mardrulk Ngadberre Regional Council has a new corporate services manager who has implemented an individual personal development plan with every member of staff.

Wuchopperen Health Service provides financial support and release from duties to staff who are undertaking accredited training and university courses. They are also gradually implementing individual development plans as a way of assisting staff to set work and professional goals and identify their training and educational needs.

Anyinginyi Health has a specific Aboriginalisation policy to ensure that Aboriginal people are entering and working their way through the organisation. All non-Indigenous staff have a responsibility to mentor and train Aboriginal staff to fill their position in the future.

Durri Medical Service staff attend mandatory training each year facilitated through their partnership with North Coast Area Health Service. Staff members also undertake in-service training and attend relevant conferences. Another partnership with the University of Sydney Rural, Public and Environmental Health enables staff to improve their skills in statistical analysis, report writing, computing and research.

Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Media Association (TAIMA) staff have appraisals every six months. Management and the Board review the appraisals and make recommendations on the areas in which staff need professional development. Training is offered through short workshops, certificate courses at Batchelor College and attending national conferences. TAIMA also recognises the importance of verbal encouragement, so that staff and volunteers know they are valued members of the organisation.

Yumba Meta Housing Association accommodates flexible working hours for staff undertaking accredited courses of part-time study (as approved by the Board) and will also purchase resources such as videos and literature.

Developing the governing body

A key factor in the success of any organisation is members of the governing body having a clear understanding of, and commitment to, their roles and responsibilities. Members of a governing body often have different levels of skills and experience and one way to ensure everyone is at the same level of understanding is to undertake regular governance training. This may be formal training sessions by a consultant, or more informally by an advisor. Some governing bodies meet the day before Board meetings to discuss and gain a better understanding of the issues. Others have developed their own visual language to explain the flow of money through the organisation. Organisations need to carefully plan and time the changing over of governing body members, and ensure there is sufficient mentoring for new and younger members.

Some of the organisations indicated that their governing body received training either as a group or as individuals, while others indicated that their governing body was supported by consultants or mentors who assisted them with planning, reviews and other strategic processes. Some nominees also indicated that governing body members attended other sorts of training or conferences to build their skills.

Building team leadership
is an important part of
building an organisation.



IDEAS THAT WORK

Ngaanyatjarra Governance Training Program Papulankutja Artists, working together with other regional art centres in eastern WA (Warakurna Artists, Minymaku Artists, Kayili Artists and Irrunytju Artists) has designed a governance training program for the Executive Committee members and staff of these art centres. The program delivers three-day workshops, four times a year, in language and using Ngaanyatjarra concepts. As well as providing practical information, the training is also boosting the confidence and capacity of the individual committee members as well as the stability and sustainability of each centre.

Malabam Health Board says most of its training takes place on the job, as Board members are also heavily involved in the day to day running of the organisation. The Coordinator is a qualified teacher and also has a Certificate IV Training and Assessment qualification. They held financial management training monthly in 2004, but reduced it to quarterly in 2005 as Board members became more familiar with a system called HandIT back. Training in that system also takes place on a day to day basis, and has given the Board real control over the organisation's finances and demystified the money story for them.

Yarrabah Councillors elected in 2004 are undertaking a four-year Councillor Training Program developed by the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation. A consultant undertook a training needs assessment and Councillors are receiving modules in strategic planning, teamwork, policy-building, managing self, roles and responsibilities, budget management, financial management, risk management, meetings, contract management, internal controls, consultations and public presentations.

Broome Aboriginal Media Association requires elected Board members to participate in induction workshops designed to explain the history and operations of the organisation and their role and responsibilities. It then encourages Board members to undertake additional training to build their understanding of governance issues, and sends them to relevant training where appropriate.

Anyinginyi Health undertakes extensive orientation and induction training for all new members of the Board. This takes around two days and involves meeting with the section managers and previous Board members.

Arnhemland Progress Association often holds workshops on varying subjects with the Board to ensure they fully understand the issues before making a decision. New directors also go through an orientation program so they understand their duties and obligations.

Muda Aboriginal Corporation engages consultants to conduct corporate governance workshops in conjunction with other Aboriginal organisations in the area for their new committees.

Wuchopperen Health Service provides relevant governance courses to its Board members, who also attend seminars and workshops on governance and service issues. The Board undertook an assessment of its own governance skills and developed a governance improvement plan which is now being implemented.

Nyirrangulung Mardulk Ngadberre Regional Council is committed to the development of good leadership and has been responsible for developing and managing a governance training package (to the value of \$75,000 of Commonwealth funding) for elected members of the Council and two other organisations.

Yirra Yarkin Aboriginal Corporation has rules for its governing body which provide a strong platform for effective and passionate representation. People have to be a member of the organisation for a year before they can be elected to the Governing Committee. They must then be a member of the Governing Committee for another year before they can become an office bearer. Yirra Yarkin also have a three-year rotational term for members of the Governing Committee. These combined features assist the Board members to have the knowledge, skills and experience to carry out their roles effectively.

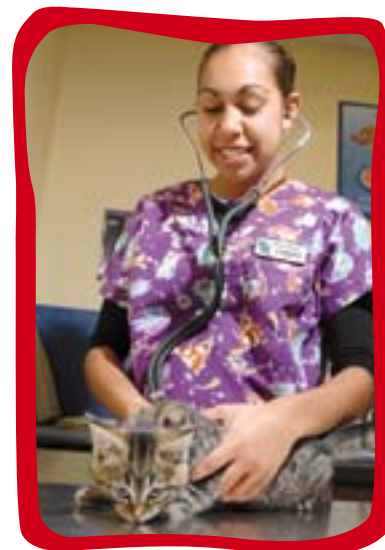


Image: Gannambarra Enterprises

The idea of succession planning has been around for a long time in Indigenous communities.

Developing future leaders

Developing future leaders, or succession planning, ensures that there are always experienced and well trained people to guide the organisation and keep it stable. This means that organisations that are working well today will be able to continue their good work in the future.

The idea of succession planning has been around for a long time in Indigenous communities. Traditional Indigenous societies have always had rules and processes for educating their next generation of leaders into the knowledge, skills and qualities needed to progressively take on leadership roles.

These days, Indigenous leaders need skills and knowledge from two cultures to lead their communities and organisations. To ensure good governance and the long-term survival of their organisation, leaders today need to mentor and develop the leaders of tomorrow.

If future leaders are to govern their organisations well they need to have regular place-based governance training in their roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities. They also need opportunities to develop their skills and experience, and access to appropriate advice and ongoing support. Mentoring, training and work experience are all important aspects of developing future leaders.

The most commonly mentioned strategy for developing future leaders is mentoring. A third of the organisations have a planned process of training and development for their staff and governing body, and others provide development opportunities such as conference attendance etc. Some have youth-focused activities designed to develop young people's leadership, and others provide scholarships or traineeships to develop younger or new people. Six organisations specifically sent people to leadership development programs or provided programs themselves.

IDEAS THAT WORK

The North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency provides legal aid and justice initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people in the Top End of the NT. It offers young Indigenous high school and college students a chance to get a taste of the law by employing them as junior field officers and administrative officers during their breaks. This exposure to para-legal work has led to everyone involved to date electing to undertake a law degree on completion of their placement.

Malabam Health Board has set up a youth development committee involving all levels of government and other organisations working in the area to develop a plan for young people in the region.

Warlayirti Artists believes the development of the careers of young artists is an essential part of its strategy to sustain and self-fund its arts centre. Younger artists travel with senior artists to exhibition openings in capital cities, giving them insight into the art industry and confidence to speak about their paintings and the corporation.

Arnhemland Progress Association has a youth education fund that assists students who wish to further their education (secondary and/or tertiary) away from the community.

Darkinjung Cattle Company (DCC) offers a scholarship scheme to Indigenous youth to encourage them to gain skills, including all aspects of management, that would enhance a career with DCC.

Women's Karadi Aboriginal Corporation has a young women's leadership program which assists and mentors young Indigenous women in the community to reach their full potential.

How to: Develop staff

MURU MITTIGAR ABORIGINAL CULTURAL AND EDUCATION CENTRE

Muru Mittigar's long-term goal is to develop a team of qualified Aboriginal staff to manage the Penrith Lakes parklands. The organisation fosters loyalty, confidence, a sense of participation and trust, so staff feel ownership of their jobs.

When staff first join Muru Mittigar time is spent assisting them to settle in. For example they may come to Penrith from country NSW and need help to find accommodation or get a driving licence, or they may need small loans to get established.

New staff members usually begin on a casual full-time basis and are helped over three to six months to become job-ready. They are offered short courses through to more intensive training. During this period they are paid full adult wages, not training wages, as Muru Mittigar recognises staff generally have families to support, and they also want them to be a functional role model for their children and family. They use competency-based processes to enable staff to complete trade certificates within a couple of years. Mentoring takes place throughout the organisation, especially peer mentoring. Many staff develop skills across the various aspects of the organisation such as the native plant nursery, land rehabilitation, shop, café, cultural tours etc. This enables them to move around the organisation as funding fluctuates in different areas, and provides them with greater job security.

The organisation provides a great deal of support to its staff, including financial mentoring and assistance with taxation issues, child support arrangements and bill-paying. It also provides micro-loans for payment of such things as housing bonds or fines. It assists staff in their interactions with Centrelink, the police and other government agencies, often accompanying them to meetings or inviting agencies in to explain policies and procedures to the staff. Muru Mittigar has strict drug and alcohol policies, and assists employees who have had problems in these areas with counselling and monitoring individual plans. Muru Mittigar offers counselling to staff whenever it is needed.

Muru Mittigar sees itself as a gentle employer of its 42 staff (full-time equivalent) and is flexible with family and wider kinship matters and related leave requirements. Aboriginal staff comprise two-thirds of the workforce. They have their own separate meetings as necessary and are involved in decision-making about the organisation.

Muru Mittigar provides holistic support to develop its staff so that they are not only capable and loyal employees, but also so that they gain confidence in their interactions with non-Indigenous agencies and act as good role models in their families and the wider community.

Mentoring takes place throughout the organisation.



How to: Develop new leadership in the governing body

YIRRA YAAKIN ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Yirra Yaakin is a theatre company dedicated to telling Aboriginal stories through an Indigenous-determined performing arts process. It began in 1993 and has been through many ups and downs. As with any other small theatre company, staying financially positive is hard work, and good leadership is all-important.

Yirra Yaakin has been keen to develop its Board and to draw on available expertise to assist them. In 2004 governance changes were introduced through amendments to their Constitution to strengthen their Board succession arrangements. They were having difficulty in attracting people with the right mix of skills and with the time to attend monthly Board meetings. All their Board members have full-time jobs, so it is sometimes difficult to coordinate meetings to suit everyone. They were also concerned about having a succession plan to avoid Board members being there indefinitely. In addition they wanted to avoid family or factional stacking and nepotism on the Board.

Yirra Yaakin's membership is drawn from the Aboriginal community, from which a minimum of seven and a maximum of 30 members can be voted on to the Board. Even with 30 members, the Board still only requires a minimum of five people for a quorum. To be elected to the Board a person must have been a member of Yirra Yaakin for at least 12 months. To become a member of the Board's Executive Committee they must have then been on the Board for at least 12 months. Board members are elected at the organisation's Annual General Meeting, and a rotational system applies, with three-year, two-year and one-year membership to start the ball rolling. This means that from now on only one third of the Board changes at any time.

This supports skills transfer, helps retain corporate memory, and ensures that the departure of Board members is a considered and strategic process. Members can be re-elected after three years, but this is not automatic, and no Board member can sit for more than two three-year terms.

New Board members are given an induction program which includes the history of the organisation as well as its current situation. They are also encouraged to participate in governance training and other development opportunities. Board members are also able to give their proxy to each other if they are unable to attend a meeting, so that the organisation need not be without a quorum to make decisions. Some of the original Board members are being brought back through the membership pool to help with the Board transition as older, foundation members step down. This helps keep the organisational knowledge on the Board. Board members are also invited to evaluate their role on the Board through an annual self-assessment questionnaire.

When necessary, Yirra Yaakin makes use of Business Angels (an advisory group of experts who volunteer their time to support the Board) to make well-informed decisions. This interaction between the Board and the advisory groups helps develop the Board itself. These groups form a non-Indigenous associate membership base with no voting rights. In addition Yirra Yaakin draw on AdviceBank (an Initiative of the Australia Business and the Arts Foundation) and other volunteer initiatives as required. This all adds up to the development of a dynamic and well-informed Board.

5 Cultural norms and values



Indigenous governance is a system of ancient laws and traditions that communities, clans, families and groups use to organise themselves so they can collectively achieve the things that are important to them. Today Indigenous people bring these cultural ways of doing things in to their organisations, working them into their rules, structures and constitutions. Incorporating these values and traditions gives Indigenous governance its own unique qualities.


Including culture in modern business or community organisations isn't always easy. It means paying attention to traditional ways of decision making, acknowledging the need for cultural legitimacy and recognising the role of community in governance. While Indigenous governance arrangements need to be informed by cultural standards if they are to be regarded as legitimate by community members, the non-Indigenous governance rules and accountabilities of the organisation also have to work – it has to be capable of getting things done in the contemporary environment.



An Indigenous organisation needs to find common ground between the governing processes and organisational structures it wants to develop, and the cultural values and traditions of its members. It needs to reflect the unique culture of the local community, and it must have ongoing support from that community to survive.

Problems may arise for Indigenous organisations and leaders when they lose sight of the fact that their ongoing legitimacy is grounded at the local level, in culturally-based relationships and ways of doing things. Achieving cultural legitimacy and support from community members can be difficult, especially when so many communities have a mix of cultural traditions.

Practical capacity and cultural legitimacy go hand in hand and reinforce each other. When organisations and leaders lose cultural legitimacy with their members it can affect their credibility with external stakeholders, who question whether the organisation or leader is capable of doing their job properly. At the same time, if an organisation and its leaders cannot deliver services effectively and get practical things done for the community, then they lose credibility with the community.



An Indigenous organisation needs to find common ground between the governing processes and organisational structures it wants to develop, and the cultural values and traditions of its members.

Image: Nyirranggulung Mardrulk Ngadberre Regional Council

An organisation needs to know the different cultural groupings and interests amongst its members and in the wider community. It must consult with its members to understand what their concerns and priorities are and be open, fair and honest in dealings and decisions. It should state to members where it's heading, what the strategic plan is for getting there, what resources will be used along the way, and report back to members on progress and problems. Organisations need to manage resources wisely and well, and deliver services and outcomes to the members and wider community that it's undertaken to do.

Successful organisations reflect their own cultural norms and values in the rules and processes they set up, the behaviours they allow and encourage, and the cultural expectations they create for all the people involved, while still meeting the western requirements as incorporated bodies.

Among the Awards nominees, cultural norms and values are reflected in the governance of organisations in three major ways:

- In the governing body representation arrangements where for most organisations the composition is formally elected by voting and represents the community social structures.
- In the code of conduct or accepted decision-making arrangements, which incorporates the values and norms of the community.
- In the processes of the organisation where there is ongoing consultation with community members.

In addition to these approaches some organisations described other ways in which traditional owners, native title holders or elders had some special additional roles, such as in the design and/or implementation of programs. Others mentioned the way culture is embedded in programs, or that programs are delivered in a culturally sensitive way, or delivered by Indigenous or cross-culturally trained staff. Four mentioned the separation of women's and men's business.

Organisation and culture

Cultural authority is an important aspect of legitimacy for governing bodies and is most often reflected by having members that represent the various communities, clans or language groups that they serve. Many organisations also talked about specific roles or positions for elders or traditional owners. Traditional authority is also used by a number of organisations in decision-making and dispute resolution.

A few organisations mentioned specific policies that acknowledge the use of language and the cultural life of staff and make provisions for ceremonial or traditional events. Some organisations provide cross-cultural awareness training for staff, and also deliver that training to other local groups and businesses.



Image: Wuchopperen Health Service

IDEAS THAT WORK

Malabam Health Board has eight local language groups on the governing committee which also consists of ceremony leaders and Elders who ensure that the right people are involved in decision-making and stay focused on keeping the culture strong.

Warlayirti Artists has a governing Committee that consults senior people with cultural authority for advice, which is incorporated into their decision-making. Even though these Elders may not be Committee members, the responsibility that they carry is respected.

Broome Aboriginal Media Association refers culturally sensitive decisions to the Board, and if necessary the matter may be referred to a key stakeholder such as the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre.

Yarrabah Council is an elected body that reflects the diversity of the community and provides for a balance between the traditional and historical people and between the major family groups. While traditional practices are not overtly evident, the Council's decision-making and operations are subtly influenced by the community's unique, contemporary practices. For example, the CDEP workforce is structured around family groups affiliated with particular areas in the community, and Council decision-making about land involves extensive and delicate negotiations with traditional owner groups and other interested parties.

Nyirrangulung Mardrulk Ngadberre Regional Council has a unique constitution grounded in the traditional Aboriginal power structures and systems of governance for the region. The regional council is shaped so the Elders are in control as they have the cultural knowledge.

Women's Karadi Aboriginal Corporation has an honorary position on its committee for an Elder.

Institute for Aboriginal Development has a certified agreement that recognises the cultural life of its staff. This includes provisions for the practice of and participation in traditional ceremony.

Gannambarra Enterprises is dedicated to the provision of cultural awareness training for both its clients and employees. Gannambarra sees this as an essential part of the success of their business, allowing Indigenous culture to be nurtured as well as fostering and strengthening the relationships between Indigenous and mainstream organisations.

Community and culture

Many organisations acknowledged the value and importance of broad community consultation to inform their strategic planning and decision-making processes. This is generally achieved by holding open community meetings, forums and workshops.

IDEAS THAT WORK

Narrama Multi Service Aboriginal Corporation has a Committee comprising nine Elders from different communities and three younger persons, which ensures that cultural values are reflected in its work. They also conduct community 'yarn ups' (social functions that are sometimes attended by up to 120 people) as a means of disseminating information about current issues.

Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre stated that they acknowledge their oral culture by actively involving their staff in any meetings that directly affect them or the environment they live or work in. They also regularly consult with the community over major projects or funding applications.

Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service reflects its cultural norms and values by conducting all of its Board meetings as open forums, which are advertised in the community. Community consultation is a vital mechanism not only for expressing its cultural practice, but also for establishing its legitimacy and support within the community.

Warnkurr Sports and Social Club immediately closes if there is a death in the community, and remains closed on the day of the funeral out of respect for the deceased.

Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Media Association states that cultural protocol is a major consideration of their charter when communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

6 Future planning



Another key element of good governance is the ability to think strategically and plan for the future. Mapping out a business or development plan allows an organisation to set goals and to monitor progress towards those targets. A strategic planning process guides the organisation in the direction decided by its governing body and members, and it provides staff with the opportunity to understand how their work contributes to the overall aims of the organisation.

Many of the nominees had clear strategic plans or directions, and almost half of them had specific business plans.

Image: Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre



Many of the nominees had clear strategic plans or directions, and almost half of them had specific business plans. Almost a third of the organisations mentioned both, indicating that the majority of the organisations have clear plans. In nearly half the cases, specific strategies for earning greater income or becoming more self-reliant were mentioned.

IDEAS THAT WORK

The Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC) is applying for Cultural Heritage Body status. Once it has gained this, it can set up a company and charge a fee-for-service system for councils, developers, water and electricity authorities who may need to disturb the ground and need to comply with the Queensland Cultural Heritage Act. This requires them to contact Traditional Owners to confirm whether a cultural heritage assessment is required. The ARC will also provide trained field officers to work with the Traditional Owners to provide the cultural heritage assessment reports required. It is also developing an Indigenous Business Network which will form a business cluster under the Cairns Regional Economic Development Corporation, and tap into the business opportunities in Cairns. ARC hopes to identify new business opportunities that they can develop with members of the Indigenous community.

Warlayirti Artists undertook a governance training program that resulted in the development of a visual strategic business plan. The plan aims to ensure the sustainability of the art and culture centres by outlining the ongoing capacity development of the Committee, the development of the careers of younger and emerging artists, and the maintenance of corporate knowledge within the organisation in the face of staff changes.

Darkinjung Cattle Company (DCC) has established successful joint ventures with other companies while retaining majority Aboriginal control. DCC wants to promote the usefulness of such ventures and to show that if operated properly it can provide a great benefit to the community.

Aboriginal Prisoners and Offenders Support Services reviewed its current strategic plan by holding a two-day workshop with its Board members, staff, clients, volunteers and community members. This allowed them to sharply focus their plan on the specific needs of their target group.

Durri Medical Service engaged a consultant to help them develop a strategic plan, business plan, policies and procedures, as well as to assist staff develop individual work plans.

Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre engages skilled consultants to support their Executive Committee in developing strategic and business plans.

Wuchopperen Health Service Board holds two weekend planning workshops each year to review and monitor progress towards the goals of its strategic plan. Multiple streams of funding create a healthy mix of base and project-based resourcing.

Wunan Foundation aims to grow its commercial and investment asset base towards a target of \$20 million by 2010, effectively doubling its current asset base. Their strategy will involve strategic engagement and partnerships with the private, philanthropic and government sectors to harness new resources, expanding their fee-for-service base by establishing a new subsidiary entity of their business services centre, and in particular growing their property assets.

Financial planning

Budgeting and planning for the future to allow for diversification, expansion, development or seeking new sources of income is another key exercise for organisations. To become even partially self-funding, if not totally self sufficient, organisations need to focus on generating income, reducing expenditure or forming new partnerships with sponsors and funding bodies.

IDEAS THAT WORK

Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre plans to become at least 50 per cent self-sustaining, not by reducing the real value of the grant funding it receives but by boosting other activities such as cultural awareness workshops, cultural tours, language lessons, interpreting and translating services, retail sales etc. This will generate dollars and increase activity and opportunity for its members.

Bungala Aboriginal Corporation became South Australia's first Indigenous Employment Centre and is also a partnered Registered Training Organisation through Jobs Australia. Bungala has the capacity to deliver nationally accredited training packages in carpentry, horticulture, business services, tourism and small business, attracting a large number of clients each year.

Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) is financially independent and has developed reserves and conservative investments to ensure its long term survival and growth and to enable it to diversify its income stream. The Board seeks advice about good business practice from an external investment committee made up of a diverse, national group of respected business leaders. ALPA is also a Registered Training Organisation, offering nationally accredited certificate-level qualifications in retail operations, and runs a consultancy service that provides management and accounting support to Aboriginal-owned businesses in remote communities throughout Australia.

Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre

believes that diversity is the key to longevity – in business streams, staff expertise and the staff themselves. It has several different income streams including a professional land rehabilitation crew, cultural tourism, café, retail gallery, wholesale nursery, environmental monitoring services and employment and training programs. It has also developed a partnered Register Training Organisation to deliver accredited training to complement its existing employment services and enhance funding opportunities in the future. The newest income stream that Muru Mittigar is attempting to develop is donations. As a registered deductible gift recipient they have now turned their marketing attention to attracting donations.

Wunan Foundation earns income from its travel business (Kimberley Wilderness Adventures, KWA), hostel (Wunan House) and business services centre (Wunan Business Services, WBS). KWA operates in partnership with remote Traditional Owner communities and is now also part of a joint venture with Australian Pacific Touring to help it achieve further growth and development for the future. Wunan House caters especially for young Aboriginal people pursuing education, training and employment opportunities. WBS offers a range of services to help improve the operational effectiveness and governance performance of remote Indigenous community organisations. Wunan Foundation is also a registered, deductible gift recipient.

Broome Aboriginal Media Association (BAMA) in conjunction with commercial development, focuses on engaging local businesses to guarantee their financial stability. Through its holding company, Goolarri Media, BAMA also delivers accredited training as a Registered Training Organisation.



Image: Yamatji Marla Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation

Hunter Valley Aboriginal Corporation earns income for its various community programs and activities through their large number of rental properties and the hiring out of a mini bus and a youth activity trailer.

Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) plans to expand its fee for service programs including language and cultural awareness, and expand the market of IAD Press offshore to reduce its dependence on government funding and become self-sufficient. IAD is also committed to streamlining the allocation of resources to minimise operational costs.

Boigu Island Council is developing a motel/guest house on the island, which together with their new rural transaction centre, with internet café and post office, will hopefully support future small scale tourism and create self-generated income.

Yirra Yaakin is seeking to increase its earned income to grants ratio through sponsorship, philanthropic support (nationally and offshore) and partnership development.

How to: Network for support

WANGKA MAYA PILBARA ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE CENTRE

When Wangka Maya first started in 1989 it depended on small grants from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to run oral history projects. It operated for several years without any regular income, but after the federal government allocated funding for language programs the organisation began to grow. This growth led to the Committee and staff needing to better define their roles. They started to identify programs which they could charge for, such as cultural awareness training, interpreting services and language-related books and CDs.

One of the things they realised was that as a bigger organisation they had to be mindful of whether their internal tools could cope with the growth. They recognised that there was some work to do. They worked towards the development of a strategic plan and a business plan, the latter especially relating to the development of cultural tourism possibilities for the future. They also needed a manual of staff policies and procedures and clear role descriptions for everyone. But they were always very busy and it was hard to find the time to get these documents prepared.

Through a community organisation newsletter and a local meeting of Indigenous organisations, the manager of Wangka Maya found out about Indigenous Community Volunteers (ICV) a non-profit organisation which provides skilled volunteers to Indigenous communities and organisations. The organisation has to be able to identify clearly the skills they need from ICV as well as the local people who will gain these new skills from the volunteer. It also has to provide a project manager to oversee the project, a cultural mentor to support the volunteer during their stay in the community, and accommodation for the duration of their stay.

Wangka Maya has done all this and over time has now hosted three different ICV volunteers. The first helped them with documenting their strategic plan, and then aligning all the staff job descriptions with that plan. Another worked with them on developing their business plan. A third assisted with compiling an excellent staff policies and procedures manual. They have been extremely happy with the quality of the volunteers they have received and these people have worked well with them to get the tasks completed.

This example illustrates the value of networking and bringing in support to do well-defined tasks that help strengthen the organisation, so that as it grows, its organisational tools keep pace. That way, everyone remains clear about their directions, their roles, and the policies and procedures of the organisation.

Indigenous Community Volunteers can be reached at GPO Box 2213, Canberra, ACT 2601 or by calling toll free 1800 819 542 or by email at info@icv.com.au.



Governance diagnostic tool

Regular evaluation and review are important elements of good governance. Organisations need to monitor their progress to ensure they are meeting both internal and external requirements. Internally this means meeting the outcomes of the business or strategic plan, and externally it means delivering the services to the community and complying with funding procedures. Tracking and evaluating allows organisations to adapt and improve policies and programs if necessary, preventing workplace stagnation and obsolete operational procedures.

This quick diagnostic tool was developed using an analysis of the applications for the 2005 and 2006 Indigenous Governance Awards. The answers to the following questions will provide a good indication of how well an organisation is travelling, and what governance areas need to be developed and strengthened. The tool is particularly useful if used at all levels of the organisation – governing body, management and staff.



Image: Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation

Governance diagnostic tool

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The governing body of my organisation is clear about their governance roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The governing body of my organisation provides strong, clear guidance for our future direction, plans and goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The governing body of my organisation is not undermined by internal conflicts, factions or entrenched differences of opinions between members of the governing body.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The members of my governing body have a clear understanding of the financial viability and management of our organisation, and are engaged in planning its future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The resources of my organisation are well-managed and used effectively and properly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The governing body of my organisation communicates well with staff, management and community members, and there is a high level of trust between them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The leaders of our organisation have strong, valuable networks with other Aboriginal leaders and leaders in government and the wider region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. My organisation has policies and procedures to make sure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. There is a clear separation of powers and responsibilities between our governing body and management in the day-to-day operation of our organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. My organisation provides induction and training for the members of our governing committee that prepares them to carry out their governance responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Meetings in my organisation are well managed and we use sound decision making processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Governance diagnostic tool

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12. My organisation has effective processes for communicating important issues and decisions to its members and the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. My organisation has professional development programs for every level of the organisation – the governing body, management and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. My organisation makes sure our members have a say in planning for the future and how our services are provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. My organisation seeks feedback from our members about important issues and decisions it needs to make.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. My organisation has systems for evaluating and managing the work performance of staff and management.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. My governing body has a system for periodically evaluating its own performance, and implementing follow-up improvements in its governance arrangements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. My organisation has plans and strategic documents to guide and support decision making at all levels.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. My organisation works to recognise and develop the skills and potential of our young and emerging leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. My organisation has procedures for fairly dealing with disputes and complaints from staff and members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. My organisation would effectively manage an organisational crisis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. My organisation is flexible and able respond to new challenges and opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. My organisation recognises and makes provisions for the cultural life of staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. My organisation is proud of doing business in an Indigenous way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Sharing the stories

Sharing Success Workshops

The 2006 Indigenous Governance Awards demonstrated once again the breadth and depth of Indigenous achievement across Australia. By sharing these stories of success with the wider community and with Indigenous organisations we all learn from each other and continue building good governance.

In 2007 Reconciliation Australia, in partnership with BHP Billiton, hosted three Sharing Success workshops in regional New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland. The workshops were an opportunity for leaders of local Indigenous organisations to share stories with finalists from the Indigenous Governance Awards about what has worked for them, and how they got started on building their governance.

A workbook was produced based on the knowledge gained from the Awards and the Indigenous Community Governance Research Project. It contained practical ideas, information and tools on developing good governance and how to get there through strong leadership.

When it comes to good governance, we can all learn from each other. The workbooks and the outcomes from the workshops are available on the website at www.reconciliation.org.au/igawards.

Indigenous Governance Awards

Winners of the 2008 Awards will be announced in August. Applications for the next round of Awards will open in 2009, check the website for details at www.reconciliation.org.au/igawards

And be on the lookout for the next good news stories from the Indigenous Governance Awards!

'Blackfellas talking to blackfellas about how to make things better for blackfellas'

Comment from a participant at a 2007 workshop

Image: Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation

The 2006 Applicants

Aboriginal Family Support Services, SA

The Aboriginal Family Support Services Inc (AFSS) was created in 1978 as an Aboriginal agency to deal with matters relating to the welfare of Aboriginal children. The AFSS is based in South Australia and it identifies Aboriginal children at risk and provides assistance, support and advocacy to children, youth and families.

Phone: 08 8212 1112

Email: afss@afss.com.au

Website: www.afss.com.au

Aboriginal Housing Company, NSW

The Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) in Redfern was the first community housing organisation in Australia. It was established in 1973 to provide Indigenous people with affordable housing for home ownership and rental. The AHC is self-funded and its income is generated through the organisation's business activities.

Phone: 02 9698 9249

Email: info@ahc.org.au

Website: www.ahc.org.au

Aboriginal Prisoners and Offenders Support Services, SA

Formed in Adelaide in 1994, Aboriginal Prisoners and Offenders Support Services Inc (APOSS) provides an independent Indigenous specific service for Aboriginal prisoners, offenders and their families in line with recommendations in the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Report. As well as providing support and assistance, APOSS acts as advocate for Aboriginal prisoners, offenders and their families.

Phone: 08 8223 3177

Email: frank.lampard@aposs.net.au

Aboriginal Rainforest Council, QLD

The Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC) was established in 2003 as an outcome of three years negotiation between the Department of Environment and Heritage, Wet Tropics Management Authority, Environment Protection Authority, Queensland Parks and Wildlife, and Department of Natural Resources and Mines. In consultation with the Rainforest Aboriginal groups, the ARC acts as a one-stop shop for both government and Rainforest Aboriginal people to deal with natural resource and land management, as well as cultural heritage issues, in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in Queensland.

Phone: 07 4035 5213

Email: reception.arcinc1@westnet.com.au

Website: www.arc-inc.org.au

Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service, NSW

Created in 2003 the Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS) in NSW caters for the primary health care needs of the local community, and gives the community a sense of ownership and direction in relation to health issues. As well as providing bulk billing primary health care, AWAHS is also a positive meeting place for the community.

Phone: 02 6042 1200

Email: reception@awahs.com.au

Website: www.awahs.com.au

Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation, NT

The aim of Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation (AHAC) is to be the number one primary health care provider and advocate for the community service needs of Aboriginal people in the Tennant Creek region. Its four core programs are the health centre; public health program; stronger families program and active life program. Formed in 1985, the AHAC now has a service area of over 300,000 sq kms which has prompted the establishment of the remote health services section.

Phone: 08 8962 2633

Email: Judith.ansell@anyinginyi.com.au

Arnhemland Progress Association, NT

Established in 1972, the Arnhemland Progress Association (ALPA) serves its members through its core business of running community stores. ALPA's strategic priority is to improve the health and nutrition of the local communities.

Phone: 08 8944 6444

Email: reception@alpa.asn.au

Website: www.alpa.asn.au

Boigu Island Council, QLD

Boigu Island Council in the Torres Strait has been operating since 1984. As well as the usual local government concerns such as provision of services, roads, garbage and sanitation, Boigu Island Council is also responsible for employment via a CDEP scheme, public housing and enterprise operations including a guest house and a crab farm.

Phone: 07 4069 4066

Email: ceo@boigu.qld.gov.au

Broome Aboriginal Media Association, WA

The Broome Aboriginal Media Association (BAMA) was established in 1991 to facilitate and develop Indigenous media, communications and performing arts in the Kimberley region. The organisation delivers its range of services through its company Goolarri Media Enterprises Pty Ltd. These services include Goolarri Radio 99.7FM, GTV35 and video productions, reality based training, music development, events management, information technology and graphics, enhancement of RIBS services and provision of the GME Club outdoor venue.

Phone: 08 9192 1325

Email: reception@gme.com.au

Website: www.gme.com.au

Bungala Aboriginal Corporation, SA

Bungala Aboriginal Corporation was established in 1994 as a CDEP to provide employment and training opportunities for Indigenous people in the Port Augusta area. The corporation has a vision to provide participants with opportunities for training and employment that lead to the acquisition of skills aimed at developing and improving their economic, social and cultural status.

Phone: 08 8642 6533

Email: kjoyce@bungala.com.au

Website: www.bungala.com.au

Bunya Wakka Wakka Cultural and Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, QLD

The Bunya Wakka Wakka Cultural and Heritage Aboriginal Corporation was formed in Queensland in 2005 to help protect cultural and heritage matters, and to give guidance to the local community. Some of the benefits from the corporation are a dialysis unit that has been donated to the community hospital, and the initiation of a scholarship fund for young Indigenous children to further their education to either secondary or tertiary level.

Phone: 07 4168 3044

Email: wakkawakka@datawave.net.au



Image: Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre

Darkinjung Cattle Company, NSW

Darkinjung Cattle Company was formed in NSW in 2003 to produce high grade branded beef for export, and to improve the breeding herd genetics to increase production efficiency in meat quality and yield. DCC is 75 per cent owned by the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council and 25 per cent owned by Outback Beef. By entering into such joint ventures it aims to promote the usefulness of such enterprises and to show that if operated properly it can provide a great benefit to Aboriginal communities.

Phone: 02 4351 0642

Email: darkinjungcattlecompany@dlalc.org.au

Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service, WA

Established in 1974, Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service provides holistic, culturally secure health services for Aboriginal people and communities in the Perth metropolitan region. DYHS has undertaken a number of positive steps in the past few years to ensure the stability and viability of the organisation. These changes have occurred through the concerted efforts of staff, board and community members to ensure that the service provides the best possible care for clients.

Phone: 08 9421 3888

Email: bushbyp@derbarlyerrigan.com.au

Website: www.derbarlyerrigan.com.au

Doomadgee CDEP, QLD

The Doomadgee CDEP has been in operation since 1966. It was established to provide employment opportunities and payment for work performed by Indigenous residents of this region of Queensland. Since the start of 2005 Doomadgee CDEP has been under new management. This has resulted in an overhaul of the whole structure of the organisation and the implementation of six new income-generating projects.

Phone: 07 4745 8209

Email: ceo@doomadgeecdep.com

Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service, NSW

Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service in NSW has provided an essential, culturally appropriate health and medical service to the Aboriginal communities within its boundaries for the last 28 years. Their goal is to make primary health care and education accessible to all members of the local community to improve their health status and wellbeing. Durri is very proud of the governance processes it has put in place over the last 10 years and believes that even though it has endured testing periods over the years, good governance has allowed it to continue to grow and increase services to keep up with community demand.

Phone: 02 6562 4919

Email: jstirling@durri.org.au

Eastern Yugambeh Native Title Group Management Committee, QLD

In 1998 the Eastern Yugambeh Native Title Group Management Committee was formed in response to a clear need for all Traditional Owner families to be involved in cultural heritage management and native title issues in the local urban region of Queensland. It represents the interests of all the Indigenous communities of the Gold Coast and south east hinterland.

Phone: 07 3391 3066

Email: admin@easternyugambeh.com.au

Website: www.easternyugambeh.com.au

Gannambarra Enterprises, NSW

Gannambarra Enterprises develops sustainable businesses and provides opportunities for local Indigenous people to find employment in their preferred fields. Two of its current enterprises in Wagga Wagga are Deadly Detailers, a car detailing service, and Gannambarra Pottery, an arts and crafts centre.

Phone: 02 6925 7233

Email: waggacdep@optusnet.com.au

Website: www.gannambarra.org.au

Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative, VIC

Established in Horsham, Victoria in 1983, the main role of Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative is to provide a service in health and community welfare to the surrounding district. This includes the areas of culture, health, welfare, education, legal, youth and Elders.

Phone: 03 5382 5033

Email: ceo@goolumgoolum.org.au

Hunter Valley Aboriginal Corporation, NSW

Formed in 1993, the Hunter Valley Aboriginal Corporation deals with a range of issues affecting the local Indigenous community including health, education, sport, employment, housing, youth activities, youth homelessness, women's camps, men's camps, night patrol and promoting Aboriginal culture. For example, the Corporation provides a transport service for people visiting their families in prison and has also sponsored a young touch football team.

Phone: 02 6543 1180

Email: hvacorp@bigpond.com

Institute for Aboriginal Development, NT

The Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) was established in Alice Springs in 1969. Its primary aim is to provide education for Aboriginal people up to and including tertiary qualifications. The Institute also houses an Aboriginal Language and Cultural Centre that specialises in language, cross-cultural and cultural maintenance programs, as well as providing interpreter services and language research. IAD Press also produces materials on Aboriginal people, language and culture.

Phone: 08 8951 1322

Email: directorate@iad.edu.au

Website: www.iad.edu.au

Kalkadoon Tribal Council Night Patrol, QLD

In 2003 the Kalkadoon Tribal Council Night Patrol was created in Mount Isa to assist people at risk. Its role is to assist the homeless, the intoxicated, young people at risk and victims of domestic violence.

Phone: 07 4749 1435

Email: dingoblues@bigpond.com

Malabam Health Board Aboriginal Corporation, NT

In 1998 the Malabam Health Board was formed in Maningrida in the NT to give the community control of primary health care services by uniting various service providers under one umbrella. Malabam Health Board provides advocacy, policy and administrative support to health organisations in the community and surrounding outstations. It also provides comprehensive primary health and substance use services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the area.

Phone: 08 8979 5772

Email: coordinator@malabam.com.au

Website: www.malabam.com.au



Image: Wuchopperen Health Service

Muda Aboriginal Corporation, NSW

Muda Aboriginal Corporation was created in 1995 to protect and promote the living culture of the Indigenous people in north-western NSW. It develops Aboriginal communities in the region by creating employment, encouraging cultural activities, boosting the attendance and participation of Aboriginal students in local schools and raising the knowledge and understanding of non-Aboriginal people concerning the past, present and future of Indigenous people and their culture. Muda Aboriginal Corporation has developed two very successful arms of business – the Muda Language Centre that is committed to recording, preserving and teaching the local Wangkumarra language, and the popular 2CUZ FM radio station.

Phone: 02 6872 1065

Email: muda@auzzie.net

Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre, NSW

Provides a meeting place for sharing cultures, and seeks employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the Penrith area. Its businesses include a cultural centre, land rehabilitation crew, cafe, retail gallery, accredited wholesale nursery, environmental monitoring services and a range of employment and training programs.

Phone: 02 4729 2377

Email: info@murumittigar.com.au

Website: www.murumittigar.com.au

Mutitjulu Aboriginal Community Corporation, NT

The Mutitjulu Aboriginal Community Corporation was originally incorporated as the Uluru Community in 1974. It was created to provide services to the local community in the areas of well being, housing, education and training, enterprises, land management, supporting culture and self determination, and managing community services.

Phone: 08 8956 2088



Naramya Aboriginal Corporation, WA

Naramya Aboriginal Corporation was created in the south west of WA in 1999. The purpose of the organisation is to maintain and protect Aboriginal law, customs, songs, sites and traditions.

Phone: 08 9528 4360

Narrama Multi Service Aboriginal Corporation, NSW

Narrama Multi Service Aboriginal Corporation was established in 1993 to provide care for frail, aged and disabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders within their communities in the Bega and Eurobodalla shires in NSW. The service provides aged care packages, meals on wheels, peer support, a youth program, carer respite and training in community service.

Phone: 02 4476 4133

Email: mmsac@snoopamail.com

Naiyu Nambiyu Community Government Council, NT

The Naiyu Nambiyu Community Government Council has been in operation in the Northern Territory since 1988. Its main concern is roads, rates and rubbish the Council and it also runs a child care centre, sports and recreation facility, mechanical workshop, housing branch, an essential services branch, civil works branch, night patrol, aged care program and CDEP. The Council manages a licensed club and takeaway, the Naiyu store, the Daly River Roadside Inn and the Daly Riverbank Store.

Phone: 08 8978 2356

Email: ceo@naiyunambiyu.nt.gov.au

Website: www.naiyunambiyu.com.au

North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency, NT

The North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) is a newly formed organisation that intends to be a one-stop shop for justice for Indigenous people in the Top End. It was created by bringing together three Aboriginal Legal Services to provide legal aid and justice initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory. NAAJA has a number of different streams including community legal education with prisoners and others, juvenile justice campaigns such as the '2 deadly 4 violence' program aimed at urban youth, and advocacy and liaison with government decision-makers, police and other key stakeholders.

Phone: 1800 898 251

Email: mail@naaja.org.au

Website: www.naaja.org.au

Nyirranggulung Mardrulk Ngadberre Regional Council, NT

Provides a meeting place for sharing cultures, and seeks employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the Penrith area. Its businesses include a cultural centre, land rehabilitation crew, cafe, retail gallery, accredited wholesale nursery, environmental monitoring services and a range of employment and training programs.

Phone: 08 8972 9000

Email: reception@nmnrc.nt.gov.au

Website: www.nmnrc.nt.gov.au

Papulankutja Artists, WA

Papulankutja Artists in Western Australia applied for the Awards on behalf of Kayili Artists, Warakurna Artists, Minymaku Artists and Irrunytju Artists. Earlier this year, Papulankutja Artists identified a clear need to develop the skills of the art centre committee and so established the Ngaanyatjarra Governance Training Program, a series of workshops for the art centres in the region. The energy the program has created across this remote region of the central and western deserts has been of enormous benefit to the centres. Each has gained a more skilled and competent executive committee, some of whom also sit on other boards and committees, thus devolving the skills deeper into the community and region. In communities of acute disadvantage and significant cross-cultural challenges, the governance training has resulted in a robust, open forum for committees to understand and participate in the art centres' operations. Staff have also benefited by acquiring new skills and practices to ensure accountability and equity.

Phone: 08 8956 7969

Email: artists.papulankutja@bigpond.com

Shared Vision Aboriginal Corporation, NSW

In 2000 the Shared Vision Aboriginal Corporation was established to facilitate change in the delivery of services in the Northern Rivers region of NSW. It operates an information and access centre to enable members of the local Indigenous community to gain better access to services.

Phone: 02 6621 5578

Email: wulawulanga@nrg.com.au

Website: www.sharedvision.org.au



Image: Yarrabah Shire Council

South Eastern Aboriginal Regional Management Services, NSW

Established in 2003, the South Eastern Aboriginal Regional Management Service (SEARMS) is a co-operative that consists of six Aboriginal housing providers, servicing the Aboriginal communities between Ulladulla and Bodalla on the NSW south coast. SEARMS was created under a Regional Management Model to improve service provision of to the community owned rental properties and bring about better housing management performance outcomes.

Phone: 02 4472 1996

Email: christine@searms.com.au

St Francis Xavier's Primary School, NSW

St Francis Xavier's Primary School has been teaching students from the Lake Cargelligo area of NSW since 1929. It aims to provide a full education to the children and adults in this isolated community, along with support and continuing love to the entire community. The school strives to ensure that Indigenous children are given every opportunity to learn about their culture and participate in activities, especially sporting and cultural events outside this remote community.

Phone: 02 6898 1611

Email: the.principal@sfxlake.cg.catholic.edu.au

Website: www.sfxlake.cg.catholic.edu.au

Sutherland Shire Council Aboriginal Advisory Committee, NSW

In 1998 the Sutherland Shire Council in NSW established the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to ensure that there would be appropriate consultation, partnership and planning with the local Aboriginal community. The role of the committee is to advise decision-makers on matters of relevance to the Indigenous people of the area, and to work together to achieve the best outcomes for the community as a whole.

Phone: 02 9710 0617

Email: kowen@ssc.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.sutherland.nsw.gov.au

Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Media Association, QLD

Formed in 1981, the Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Media Association network broadcasts to over 20 Indigenous communities in north Queensland. It provides informative programs on topical issues, up to date news and information and resources to the wider community. It also promotes local artists, identities and role models and provides training and employment opportunities for Indigenous people.

Phone: 07 4772 5466

Email: mail@4k1g.org

Website: www.4k1g.org

Traditional Credit Union, NT

Established in 1994, the original aim of the Traditional Credit Union was to provide financial services to residents of Arnhemland communities who were disadvantaged by a lack of banking provisions. Today it provides personalised, quality financial services for Indigenous people and organisations in numerous remote communities of the NT.

Phone: 08 8928 0777

Email: accounts@tcu.com.au

Website: www.tcu.com.au

Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, WA

Dedicated to preserving and protecting the 30 Aboriginal languages of the region, the Centre promotes the culture and history of the Pilbara. It produces a range of language resources and conducts cultural awareness training and local community events.

Phone: 08 9172 2344

Email: wangkamaya@kisser.net.au

Website: www.wangkamaya.org.au

Warlayirti Artists Aboriginal Corporation, WA

Established in 1987, Warlayirti Artists supports the art and culture of Indigenous people in the Kutjunga Region (Balgo, Billiluna, Mulan and Yaka Yaka) in the southern Kimberley region of WA. It represents more than 300 practicing artists generating social and economic benefits that flow from the production and sale of their art. Warlayirti Artists operates an Art Centre and a Culture Centre that sells fine art work and facilitates a range of programs and activities to support the development of artists and the broader wellbeing of the artists and their families.

Phone: 08 9168 8960

Email: admin@balgoart.org.au

Website: www.balgoart.org.au



Warnkurr Sports and Social Club, NT

The Warnkurr Sports and Social Club was created in 1998 to provide a licensed liquor outlet in Kalkaringi in the NT, offering a social drinking atmosphere and the responsible service of alcohol. The club will continue to improve its facilities to cater to the needs of the community while meeting the requirements of all relevant legislative bodies.

Phone: 08 8975 0366

Email: waynewolski@bigpond.com

Women's Karadi Aboriginal Corporation, TAS

In 1988 the Women's Karadi Aboriginal Corporation was established in Tasmania to meet the need for a separate Indigenous women's space to foster learning and to be a meeting place. The purpose of Karadi is to support Aboriginal community members and their extended families, as well as to foster the role of women as an integral part of the community's cultural identity. It also promotes recognition of women as lead role models in the family unit.

Phone: 03 6272 3511

Email: rcoad@karadi.org.au

Website: www.karadi.org.au

Wuchopperen Health Service Limited, QLD

Wuchopperen Health Service was formed in Cairns in 1979 as an essential health care service provider. Its services include specialist clinics and chronic disease management, oral health, and social health and wellbeing. It also oversees the establishment of medical services and clinics in remote regions.

Phone: 07 4080 1000

Email: enquiries@wuchopperen.com

Website: www.wuchopperen.com

Wunan Foundation, WA

Wunan Foundation creates partnerships to recruit, train, place and mentor young Indigenous people. It also operates Wunan House, a Kununurra hostel for Aboriginal people pursuing education, training and employment; and a business services centre that provides a range of customised support to remote community organisations.

Phone: 08 9168 3881

Email: addis@wunan.org.au

Website: www.wunan.org.au

Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation, WA

The Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation was first recognised as a native title representative body for the Yamatji region in WA in 1994 and assumed responsibility for the Pilbara region in 2000. The primary role of the organisation is to conduct facilitation, certification, notification, dispute resolution and agreement making functions under the Native Title Act on behalf of the native title claim groups it represents.

Phone: 08 9268 7000

Email: shawkins@yamatji.org.au

Website: www.yamatji.org.au

Yarrabah Shire Council, QLD

The local government body in this area of Queensland since 1984, the Yarrabah Shire Council is responsible for the provision of all regular essential services to the local community, and manages the largest CDEP program in the country with over 800 participants.

Phone: 07 4056 9120

Email: ceo@yarrabah.qld.gov.au

Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation, WA

Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation tells the stories of Aboriginal communities through Indigenous performing arts. The company evolved from a successful youth theatre project to a corporation with a world-wide reach through major national and international tours of authentic Aboriginal productions.

Phone: 08 9202 1966

Email: yy@yirrayaakin.asn.au

Website: www.yirrayaakin.asn.au

Yumba-Meta Housing Association Ltd, QLD

Yumba-Meta Housing Association is a non-profit organisation that was established in 1973. It provides long-term, secure, affordable and culturally appropriate accommodation and housing related support services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the Townsville region.

Phone: 07 4723 5611

Email: admin@yumbameta.com

Judging Panel 2006

MICK DODSON (CHAIR)



Professor Mick Dodson is a member of the Yawuru peoples, the traditional Aboriginal owners of land and waters around Broome. He is Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University and

Professor of law at the ANU College of Law. A Board member of Reconciliation Australia and the Lingjari Foundation, Mick was a founding member and Chairman of the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre. He is Chairman of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Mick has recently been reappointed a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (until 2010). He helped craft the text of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, overwhelmingly adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007. Previously Mick was Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (April 1993 to January 1998), was Counsel assisting the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and was Director of the Northern Land Council.

GARY BANKS



Gary Banks has been Chairman of the Productivity Commission since its inception in April 1998 and has headed national inquiries on a variety of public policy and regulatory topics. Gary also chairs the inter-governmental steering

committee for the Review of Government Service Provision which produces the annual *Report on Government Service Provision* and the two yearly report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage*. Previously he worked at the Centre for International Economics and has consulted for the OECD and World Bank. He was also a member of the GATT Secretariat in Geneva and Visiting Fellow at the Trade Policy Research Centre, London.

ERIC BRAHIM



For the past six years Eric Brahim has been the Aboriginal Affairs Officer for BHP Billiton Iron Ore in Newman, Western Australia. He previously worked with ATSIC in the Pilbara doing community development with both urban and

remote communities, and at a local level he is involved with a number of committees that include education, employment and social issues. His family is from the Bunuba people in the Fitzroy area of the Kimberley.



EDDIE CUBILLO



Eddie Cubillo is an Aboriginal man with strong family links throughout the Northern Territory. He works as a policy officer in the Aboriginal Affairs Division of the South Australian Department of Premier and Cabinet and has more than 15

years experience in the Northern Territory Government working at the grass roots of Aboriginal affairs. He obtained a Bachelor of Laws Degree in 2001 and the following year was admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory. He was elected to the ATSIC Yilli Rreung Regional Council in 2002 and subsequently became the Chair. He has also been the Chair of the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency and the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (NT).

SIMON LONGSTAFF



Dr Simon Longstaff is Executive Director of St James Ethics Centre which is an independent forum for the examination of ethical issues arising in the Australian society and abroad. He has worked on Groote Eylandt in the Gulf of Carpentaria

and has worked and studied in New South Wales, Tasmania and Cambridge in the United Kingdom. Since 1991 he has worked as a philosopher with a particular interest in ethics.

HEATHER RIDOUT



Heather Ridout is Chief Executive of the Australian Industry Group with responsibility for the overall development and implementation of the Australian Industry Group's policies, strategies and services.

Heather has been particularly active in developing AIG's public policy in relation to economic, industry, innovation, education and training. She was recently acknowledged as one of Australia's top 25 leaders in the Australian Financial Review's Boss Magazine.

KERRIE TIM



Kerrie Tim is a Senior Executive at the Leadership Development Group, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

A graduate of the University of Queensland, she has extensive experience in public policy and administration, joining the Australian Public Service in 1985. Kerrie Tim is actively committed to social justice and for 14 years has been involved in leading edge work on ending racism. Her international experience includes leading peer counselling workshops on ending racism in South Africa, Israel, and New Zealand.

Image: All About Us



Other resources

Reconciliation Australia

www.reconciliation.org.au

Indigenous Governance Awards

www.reconciliation.org.au/igawards

Reconciliation Australia: Rowena Withers and Robert Beattie (eds) 2006. ***Celebrating Indigenous Governance: Success Stories of the 2005 Indigenous Governance Awards***, Reconciliation Australia, Old Parliament House, Canberra.

The Indigenous Community Governance Research Project

http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/ICGP_home.php

It contains material and resources on Indigenous community governance such as:

Community Governance Newsletter

www.anu.edu.au/caepr/ICGP_publications.php#CGn

Community Governance Research Update

www.anu.edu.au/caepr/ICGP_publications.php#CGRU

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2003 Building Effective Indigenous Governance Conference

Jabiru, Northern Territory

www.nt.gov.au/cdsca/indigenous_conference/web/index.html

2002 Indigenous Governance Conference

Canberra, ACT

www.reconciliation.org.au/igawards

Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

www.anu.edu.au/caepr

Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations

www.orac.gov.au

The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development.

www.ksg.harvard.edu/hpaied/

The Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy, at the Udall Centre, University of Arizona.

www.udallcenter.arizona.edu/nativenations

The Institute on Governance (Canada) www.iog.ca

National Center for First Nations Governance

www.fngovernance.org

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) 2007

Success Stories in Indigenous Health: A Showcase of Successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Projects

ANTaR, Sydney. Available at: www.antar.org.au/success

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) 2007a. ***Maps to Success: A Handbook***

Successful Strategies in Indigenous Organisations

AIATSIS and The Australian Collaboration, Canberra. Available at: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research_program/publications/australian_collaboration

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) 2007b. ***Organising for Success: Policy Report***

Successful Strategies in Indigenous Organisations

AIATSIS and The Australian Collaboration, Canberra. Available at: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research_program/publications/australian_collaboration

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) 2007b. ***Organising for Success: Policy Report***

AIATSIS and The Australian Collaboration, Canberra. Available at: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research_program/publications/australian_collaboration

Glossary

Accountability is being legally and culturally obligated to account for your actions or decisions to members, community or some other authority.

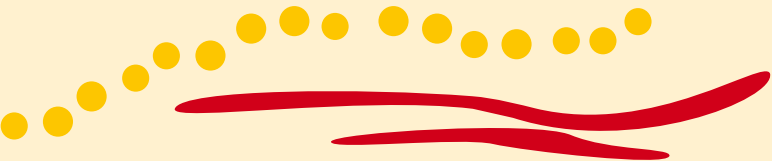
Capacity is the combination of people, skills, institutions, resources and organisational abilities, powers and practices that enable a group of people to reach their own goals over time.

Character is the sum total of an individual's personality traits and the link between a person's values and their behavior.

Communicating is the ability to express oneself effectively in individual and group situations, either orally or in writing. It involves a sender transmitting an idea to a receiver.

Conflict of interest occurs when a governing body, elected member, or a CEO/Manager of an organisation profits at the expense of the organisation they serve, or when a person's own self-interest conflicts with their official duty to act in the best interests of the organisation.

Consensus is an opinion, agreement or position reached by a group as a whole.



Delegative leadership is a style of leadership in which the leader entrusts decision making to an employee or a group of employees. The leader is still responsible for their decisions.

Diversity is an environment where the full potential of all employees can be used by paying attention to, and taking into account, their differences in work background, experience, age, gender, race, ethnic origin, physical abilities, religious belief, sexual orientation, and other perceived differences.

Environment is the political, strategic, or operational context within the organisation or outside the organisation.

Ethical climate is the 'feel of the organisation' about the activities that have ethical content, or those aspects of the work environment that constitute ethical behaviour. The ethical climate is the feel about whether things are done right, or the feel of whether people are behaving the way they ought to behave.

Evaluation is judging the worth, quality or significance of people, ideas or actions. Standards or indicators can be used to measure if actions outlined in plans have been achieved.

Governance is about how groups, organisations and communities organise themselves to achieve their visions or goals. This means they need to have processes and structures in place to be able to:

- assign and exercise power and authority
- make the important decisions
- enforce their decisions
- resolve conflicts and negotiate with others
- plan their future strategic directions
- work together to develop and implement their rules, responsibilities and obligations.

Goals are broad statements of long-range purposes, qualitative but not yet quantified.

Integrity is the behaviour and decisions that are consistently in line with your principles, and usually include ethics and honesty.

Leadership is the process of influencing people while operating to meet organisational requirements and improving the organisation through change.

Legitimacy is being given the right to hold a particular position, power or responsibility by a community or members of an organisation, being authorised under cultural and corporate laws, and being in accordance with established or accepted patterns and standards.

Mandate is the power granted by an electorate. It also means permission, consent or authorisation.

Mission statement describes the overall role of the organisation and it clearly identifies what the organisation does, and why and for whom it does it.

Motivation is the combination of a person's desire and energy directed at achieving a goal. It is the cause of action.

Negotiation is a discussion intended to produce a mutual agreement.



Image: Broome Aboriginal Media Association

Nepotism is favouritism shown by somebody in power to their relatives and/or friends, especially appointing them to good positions.

Objectives are clear targets for specific action — precise, quantified, time-based statements of desired outcomes or accomplishments that must be realistic and attainable.

Organisational culture is the set of important assumptions, values, traditions and shared behaviours that members of an organisation share. It is a system of shared values about what is important and beliefs about how the organisation works. These directly influence the ways the organisation operates and therefore, its outcomes.

Participative leadership is a style of leadership in which the leader involves one or more employees in determining what to do and how to do it. The leader maintains final decision-making authority.

Performance standard is a criterion or benchmark against which actual performance is measured.

Planning is a course of action to accomplish goals — establishing priorities and allowing appropriate allocation of time and resources as well as proper assignment of people to achieve feasible, acceptable and suitable goals.

Representative is someone who serves as a delegate or agent on behalf of a community or members of a group.

Respect is the regard and recognition of the absolute dignity that every human being possesses. Respect is about compassion and consideration of others, which includes a sensitivity to and regard for the feelings and needs of others and an awareness of the effect of one's own behaviour on them. Respect also involves the notion of treating people justly.

Stacking is to arrange something underhandedly to ensure a desired outcome

Standard is an established norm against which measurements are compared — the time allowed to perform a task including the quality and quantity of work to be produced.

Stewardship is the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to your care.

Values are the ideas about the worth or importance of things, concepts and people.

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The Koori Mail and the National Indigenous Times continue to support the Awards and we thank them for their generosity.

We are grateful to Wayne Quilliam for the photographs of the finalists.

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A DVD of the 2006 Finalists was produced by Terry McArthur. Copies of the DVD are available from Reconciliation Australia.

We would also like to acknowledge the work done by researchers from the Indigenous Community Governance Project at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at The Australian National University, particularly Janet Hunt and Stephanie Garling for the analysis of the 2006 nominees, and work on sustainable Indigenous governance undertaken by Diane Smith.

And finally we thank the members of the Awards Review Committee that was Chaired by Mick Dodson – Boyd Hunter, Peter Schnierer and Kerrie Tim – for their time and expertise.

Image: Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation





Reconciliation Australia is an independent, not-for-profit organisation established in 2000 by the former Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. We are the peak national organisation building and promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians for the well-being of the nation.

By working in partnership with other organisations across the Australian community, our overarching objective is to close the glaring gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children. That the life of an Indigenous child born today is likely to end 17 years earlier than a non-Indigenous child's is not acceptable in an affluent country like ours.

All the varied work we do with our partners contributes to narrowing that gap.

BHP Billiton is the world's largest diversified resources company with businesses in over 25 countries around the world. In many of these we are hosted by Indigenous communities so we have a strong association with them. Working on land traditionally owned by Indigenous people means it is our responsibility to ensure their rights are respected.

Building relationships and partnerships is essential to our business, as it is for reconciliation.

We are enormously proud of our partnership with Reconciliation Australia and the achievements of the Indigenous Governance Program in identifying and promoting Indigenous success.

The Indigenous Community Governance Project (ICGP) is a research partnership between the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) at The Australian National University and Reconciliation Australia. The ICGP is undertaking research on Indigenous community governance with participating Indigenous communities and organisations across Australia in order to understand what works, what doesn't work and why. The research is practical and applied, and intended to contribute to effective capacity development in Indigenous communities themselves, and among governments and others who work with them.

The research has been supported under the Australian Research Council's Linkage funding Scheme (Project No 0348744) and is also sponsored by the Northern Territory and Western Australian Governments and the Australian Government through the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The Project publishes overview research reports, papers and reports based on the individual community case studies, the Community Governance newsletter and Community Governance Research Updates, and has an extensive website at www.anu.edu.au/caepr/ICGP_home.php



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