




AIGI

OUR PEOPLE, OUR WAY
STORIES OF INDIGENOUS
GOVERNANCE SUCCESS





The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute acknowledges the Traditional Owners of all lands upon which we live and work. We honour and celebrate their Elders past, present and emerging.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this document may contain names or images of people who have passed away.

The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute collaborates with Reconciliation Australia and the BHP Billiton Foundation on the Indigenous Governance Awards. The case studies featured throughout this publication are produced through the Awards program.

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CEO FOREWORD

This publication was developed by the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI) in collaboration with Alekarege Community Development Working Group, Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, Purple House, Robe River Kuruma Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC, Warlpiri Education and Training Trust, and Yawuru Corporate Group.

AIGI is a national Indigenous-led centre of governance excellence, connecting Indigenous Australians to world-class governance practice, providing accessible research, disseminating stories that celebrate outstanding success and solutions, and delivering professional development opportunities to meet the self-determined governance needs of Indigenous peoples.

We believe that effective and culturally legitimate governance is the fundamental building block for delivering real change. Organisations with good governance practices are able to improve the daily lives of individuals and families in the community.

The organisations featured here are creating such change. They are beacons, shining a light on how Indigenous peoples and communities are coming together and finding innovative governance solutions to meet their needs.

Their case studies are a truthful exploration of the challenges of Indigenous governance. These serve as a reminder that successful governance doesn't happen overnight. It can be a long-term journey of trial and error, but in the end, the effort is worth it.

Culture sits at the heart of Indigenous governance. For thousands of years, the world's oldest continuous living culture has been making decisions that benefit the whole community. The success of these organisations lies in the continual evolution of culturally informed governance solutions. This is a living breathing process - reviewing, reshaping and renewing - as circumstances change.

Their stories reflect a strong grounding in Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, yet we can also see this is contextualised in the modern governance environment. One that works to rebuild governance systems, political identities and to shape relations with wider Australia in ways of our own choosing.

As the CEO of the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute I am proud to present this publication. These stories are full of challenges, conflict, resilience, hope, strength and success. They are stories of the human spirit, of deep cultural and ancestral knowledge.

I acknowledge the generosity of these organisations for sharing their experiences as case studies that others may benefit from.

Michelle Deshong
CEO
Australian Indigenous Governance Institute



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INTRODUCTION

Indigenous governance is about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people making and implementing decisions about their communities, lives and futures.

The Indigenous Governance Awards were established to identify, celebrate and promote effective governance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and projects.

Reconciliation Australia and the BHP Foundation have proudly partnered to deliver the Awards since 2005. The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI) has been involved in the Awards since their inception and in 2016 were excited to become an official partner.


The national Awards program highlights success in Indigenous Australia—strong leadership, good management, effective partnerships and brave, creative thinking.

Over the past 14 years, the biennial awards have attracted a total of 526 applications from across the country and awarded a total of \$300,000 to some of the most respected Indigenous organisations in Australia.

The Awards are open to Indigenous-led incorporated organisations and non-incorporated initiatives or projects. In each category, the judges look for governance that demonstrates:

- Innovation
- Effectiveness
- Self-determination and leadership
- Cultural relevance and legitimacy
- Future planning, sustainability and resilience

This publication presents in-depth case studies of six finalist, highly commended and winning organisations from the 2016 and 2018 Awards. The case studies offer insights into current best practice, as well as lessons and solutions to some of the big challenges of governance. We invite you to learn from these outstanding examples Indigenous governance success.



ALEKARENGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Highly Commended Category B 2018



ALEKARENGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Highly Commended Category B 2018

In 2012 the Alekarenge traditional owners received compensation from the federal government for compulsory 5-year leases taken out over the community during the Northern Territory Emergency Response¹. Alekarenge traditional owners decided to use the money to carry out projects to benefit the community, so they formed a working group to plan projects.

The community of Alekarenge is located 400kms north of Alice Springs and was established in 1956 as a Warrabri Settlement. Many Warlpiri people fled their traditional lands after the Coniston Massacre² in 1928 and settled around Phillip Creek and Banka Banka Station about 100km north of Tennant Creek. From here, people were relocated to the new settlement of Warrabri. Over 1,200 people populated Ali Curung in its early days, and currently the population sits at around 450 people. The community consists of mainly four language groups, the Warlpiri, Warumungu, Kaiditch and Alyawarra.

The term Alekarenge is a Kaiditch (Kaytetye) word meaning country of the dogs, dog area, or dog dreaming. Totemic ancestors, including the ancestral dogs which travelled near Alekarenge, are believed to have created the landscape in their travels. The dogs that visited this area created the shallow watercourses and flood plains in this region.

The Alekarenge Community Development Working Group is comprised entirely of Aboriginal residents who live in Alekarenge. The group's role is to initiate projects for the benefit of Alekarenge community using funds that belong to the traditional owners of Alekarenge. The working group was originally tasked with planning and prioritising projects with final sign off from the broader traditional owner group, however when more of the lease money was given to community development programs, the traditional owners gave the working group the authority to sign off on spending the money. This is about the Alekarenge community determining the use of their resources for the benefit of their community.

¹ In June 2007, the federal government staged a massive intervention in the NT to "protect Aboriginal children" from sexual abuse. Without consultation Aboriginal peoples' lives were heavily regulated, and many felt ashamed and angry. Despite wide-spread protests the intervention was extended until 2022.

² The Coniston massacre, which took place near the Coniston cattle station in the then Territory of Central Australia (now the Northern Territory) from 14 August to 18 October 1928, was the last known officially sanctioned massacre of Indigenous Australians and one of the last events of the Australian Frontier Wars. More than 60 people of the Warlpiri, Anmatyerre, and Kaytetye groups were killed.

Culture is number one
– it determines our
whole lives.

Graham Beasley,
Committee Member



Alekarenge Community Development Working Group History

When the government took out a lease as part of the Northern Territory Emergency Response, the community held a big meeting in the park in the centre of Alekarenge to talk about what they were going to do with the money. They decided to set up a working committee to figure out the best way to use the money. At the beginning of the Alekarenge Lease Money Project, the broader traditional owner group established the working group. After less than a year of operation in this way, non-traditional owner residents approached the committee about being involved. The traditional owners recognised the valuable contribution other Aboriginal residents make to the community and the need for the working group to have broader representation. The working group changed the membership to be more inclusive. Currently Alekarenge community leaders and traditional owners choose the working group and give them a mandate to plan projects for the benefit of the Alekarenge community.

Committee members are people who are reliable, and they have something to say - something to share. It doesn't have to be a big story – you just have to say something that we can understand.

Graham Beasley, Committee Member

How is the group set up?

The working group aims to represent the community. The committee selects people who demonstrate commitment and are reliable and passionate about supporting and developing the projects. Most of the current members are people in the community who were interested and came to meetings on a regular basis and demonstrated an interest in the community and project delivery.

Committee members are people who are reliable, and they have something to say - something to share. It doesn't have to be a big story – you just have to say something that we can understand.

As all community members are invited to participate in the meetings, the working group in consultation with the community have developed rules and a structured agenda for meetings. The committee meets on a needs basis, when they need to make decisions about funding and projects which is generally anywhere from monthly to every six months and can at times be longer when the committee waits for funds to build up.

Teamwork

Be a voice for the community and work for the whole community

Land council gives support

No chairperson

Community members tell their ideas to the working group

Respect each other

Working group quorum is 3 people

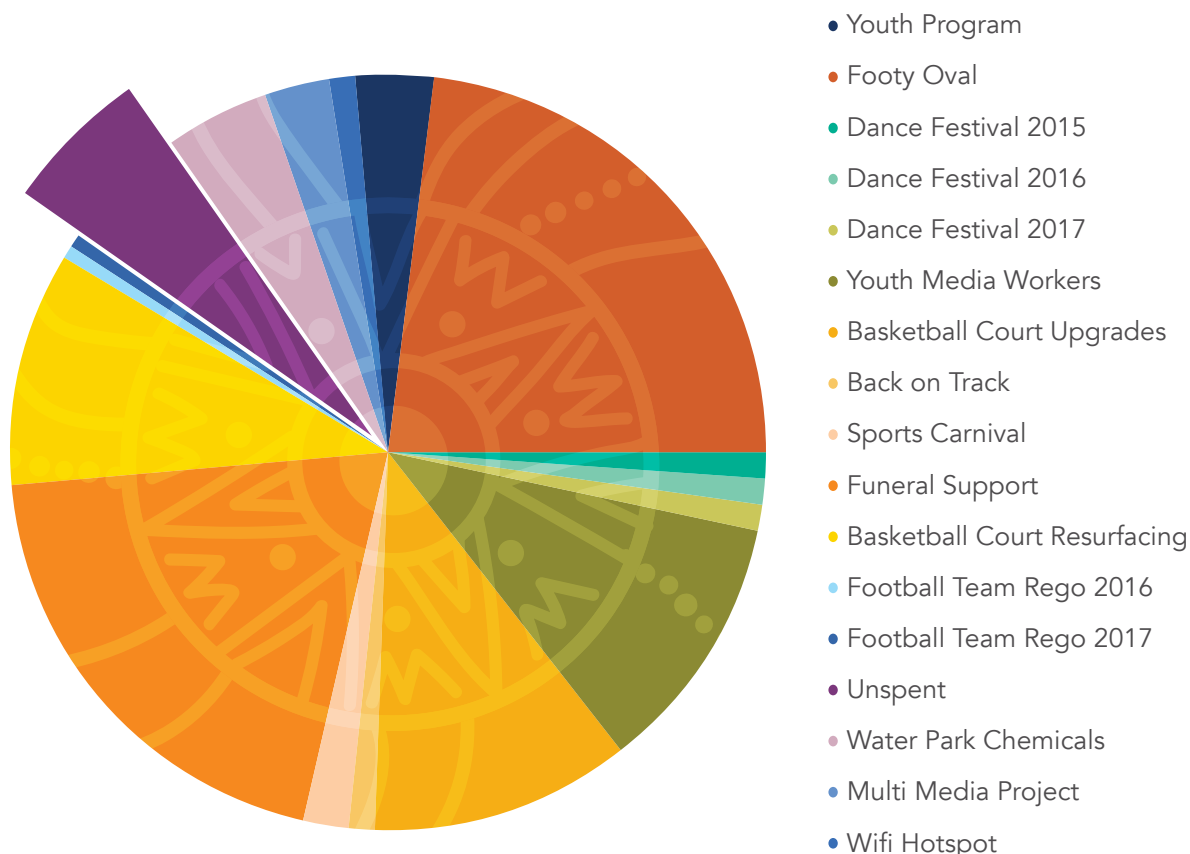
How does the group make decisions?

After many hours discussing the most effective use of their resources to make their community a stronger place, the working group comes up with an idea or a project they would like to implement in the community. They discuss what objectives they hope the project will achieve and how to make sure it's carried out in a way that will achieve them. As the working group are developing their plans – they talk with organisations with particular knowledge and expertise that may be able to help them carry out the project. The group also talks through the risks associated with the proposed project and what they can do to mitigate those risks. The working group members don't make rushed decisions – they have well thought through discussions over several meetings, this allows the members to go away and talk with their families and other community members to make sure all views are considered.

We consult widely, we get a consensus and then we make decisions.

Derek Walker, Committee Member

Alekarenge Community Lease Money Project



The working group also works with young people within the community to involve them in the projects especially in planning and decision-making. This includes specific invitations to the meetings and appointing young people onto the working group. The working group opens their meetings for all community members to attend, and regular community meetings are also held to talk and share about upcoming projects being planned and seek community feedback on not just upcoming projects but also completed projects. In addition, the working group puts out a newsletter that is distributed around the community.

Once a decision has been made about what kind of projects they would like to deliver in the community, the committee identifies suitable partners that can support their projects. The committee will hold discussions with these potential partners to see whether they are the right fit for the committee, the project and the community. After planning and discussion with the project partner –the final plans are presented to the committee for approval.

Each project has clearly identified objectives and after these projects have been completed the working group looks back at the process to see if the objectives have been met. The committee also talks to community members that were the main beneficiaries of the projects and other stakeholders. The committee asks the partner to submit a report to the community at the completion of the project and at various stages of the project. The committee is able to measure the impact of the projects simply by talking to the community. The working group identified 'youth issues' as the main area they wanted to address. The working group was clear that they wanted to explore the provision of healthy activities for young people to engage in.

In the meetings we discussed the concern we had about our young people. We wanted to provide alternative healthy activities for them and make the community a safe place. We talked to the community about our ideas. One of the first ideas we had was a water park. The water park has helped us so much for the community because in the hot season we have nowhere to go and the waterholes are too far from the community. The kids come straight from school – straight to the water park in the afternoon.

Derek Walker, Committee Member

The committee also supported the local football team to reform. Committee member Graham Beasley said that rather than the committee making the decision, he wanted to see the footballers at the meeting having a voice "to get young people to come to the meetings I said to them - if you want us to fund the football team – you need to come to the meeting".

Graham states that since the football team has reformed it has not only been positive for the players but also for the community as a whole.



The football team has brought people together – our community is better because of it.

Challenges

As with all governance structures there are challenges. Alekarenge has four language groups – Kaytetye, Alyawarr, Waramungu and Warlpiri – and sometimes there can be tension. One of the working group members stated that keeping people together and working cohesively can sometimes be a challenge and at the same time a strength. The working group has made efforts to ensure that all language groups are represented on the committee and to value the opinion and perspectives of all people equally.

That's the main thing we have – the different language groups, so we can understand what the community needs.

Not all projects are as successful as others and, as the Alekarenge working group has experienced, there are lessons to be learnt along the way. The committee wanted to support jobs and training for young people, so they employed two young people from Alekarenge to work on a music project the community was running. However due to a lack of ongoing funding and support for the project the positions were not able to continue. The committee says that in the future they will work more towards sustainable projects and ensure that more formal commitments are made from other stakeholders.

We had an existing music program for young people and the committee wanted to see this continue as our young people really liked and benefitted from the project. The committee funded two positions employing local young people to work on the project. After the money ran out the project was discontinued because we couldn't secure money to keep it going.

The committee has since talked about the importance of long-term planning and how they can make sure this program continues. How does the committee advocate for this? How do they secure funding? And how do they gather evidence to evaluate the impact of the project? These learnings are critical to the continued development of the committee, to grow their decision-making capability, and to identify what works, what doesn't work and what they need to strengthen.

The Alekarenge working group has also had to adapt during project implementation. One of the projects was to set up a wifi hotspot so the community could access the internet, download and make phone calls for free. The committee partnered to deliver the project and after a year the wifi hotspot still wasn't established. Instead of seeing the partnership and project as not completed or failed, the committee ended the partnership and negotiated with a new partner.



The hotspot was set up within a number of weeks and it has now been running for a year. At peak usage there were 85 devices connected to the wifi per day. The committee has made the decision to keep the wifi hotspot for another two years.

The Alekarengge working group says that overall their biggest challenge is engaging young people.

The committee is planning for succession and working to bring young people onto the committee. Like many committees the working group finds this a challenge as many young people can feel intimidated by the processes of committees and boards or think they are boring or that they don't have the right to be in that space. The Alekarengge working group is working toward young people receiving governance training to understand more about being on a committee in a safe environment. As one of the committee members says:

"It's really important for us to have our young people coming on board and making decisions – what if we weren't here? Young people would have to stand up.

I'd like to see in about 20 years' time my grandkids grown up and they say – oh, look that's what my grandfather did, this is the work he did as a committee member. I might take the role like he did and do something for my community and for the generation to come".

Derek Walker, Committee Member

The Alekarengge Community Development Working Group are committed to their community and to their young people. Continuing to build strong governance is something they work on all the time, it's ongoing. As a committee they are keen to continue to build on their existing skills and knowledge, to make sure that they are doing the best for their community – and they will keep working hard to pass this on to their young people.

We need to encourage younger people to join us, for them to see what we are doing and for them to have a voice.

**Sabrina Kelly,
Committee Member**



INSTITUTE FOR URBAN INDIGENOUS HEALTH

Finalist Category A 2014,
Joint Winners Category A 2018



INSTITUTE FOR URBAN INDIGENOUS HEALTH

Finalist Category A 2014, Joint Winners Category A 2018

Our story – our community

The Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) was established to transform the way healthcare was governed and delivered by Indigenous people in South East Queensland (SEQ). In 2009, there were unprecedented challenges for the Indigenous community. The region had the largest and fastest growing Indigenous population in Australia – the biggest health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and in no way did the existing services have the capacity and capability to meet those challenges. As a result, health access rates and outcomes were poor and well below national averages. Faced with this magnitude of need, there was a realisation that only transformational change would deliver the level and pace of improvements necessary, as well as being able to contribute in a substantial way to the newly created Closing the Gap campaign, launched by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in the preceding year (2008).

It was those imperatives which shaped the blueprint for the radically new IUIH governance architecture. Before IUIH was established there was a limited understanding of the continuing significant disadvantage experienced by urban Indigenous Australians. This included a policy move which believed that urban Indigenous populations could easily access and benefit from 'mainstream' health services. The actual reality was that there was a high degree of inequality and segregation, with urban Indigenous people typically residing in isolated, outer suburban areas, characterised by low socioeconomic status, limited employment opportunities, and a lack of access to culturally suitable services. These barriers, along with the fact that a rapidly growing majority of Indigenous people live in urban areas (79%), have contributed to the situation where the bulk of the total national Indigenous burden of disease (76%) and the bulk of the health gap (74%) is now in urban settings.



With a rapidly widening health gap the four existing SEQ Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) were not well placed on their own to appropriately address the health needs of the population. A renewed strategic vision to significantly improve access was developed. At the heart of this strategy was a reaffirmation of the fundamental principle that Indigenous people need to have full control over their own health services, and how they engage with their community. This same principle that guided the early Indigenous pioneers who established the Community Controlled Health Services – was now the catalyst for shaping transformational reforms in community governance architecture. An integrated community governance model was established – this backbone model driven by the community was underpinned by empowerment principles and designed to bring about the systemic changes required.

The cultural frame of reference for this innovative model draws on traditional ways of doing and belonging, when Aboriginal tribes from across SEQ had come together to achieve shared cross territorial goals. These traditional ways have been revived and are redefining shared aspirations and driving unparalleled governance reforms in SEQ.

The health organisation always played a key role - because of course Aboriginal peoples' health has always been neglected - so we looked at our ancient ways of doing things because we are a very old culture, a society of great age.

Dr Mary Graham, Associate Adjunct Professor,
School of Political Science and International
Studies - Kombumerri People



Self – determination and community engagement

The IUIH's flagship Deadly Choices campaign serves as a stand-out case study of how the Indigenous community in SEQ has been empowered and engaged on an unprecedented level. The success of Deadly Choices is based on community-driven concepts of self-determination. With the question "what is your Deadly Choice" an ongoing conversation between health services and community takes place. As a result of Indigenous people choosing, Deadly Choices range across a wide spectrum well beyond the narrow frames of 'disease prevention'. At the heart of this has been the IUIH's cultivation of community-driven demand and its highly systemised approach to community engagement. Through valuing and using cultural identity to articulate what it means to make healthy and deadly choices, IUIH is now also giving collective 'deadly voices' to the over 35,000 Indigenous people who engage with the IUIH network each year. Importantly this is also working to address perceptions of Indigenous invisibility, which has in the past challenged the capacity of Indigenous Australians in major urban settings to exercise decision making power. While the IUIH's legitimacy to govern is underwritten by the authority granted through an Aboriginal Community Controlled Model, at the same time, its legitimacy is equally dependant on demonstrating accountability back to the community – the IUIH's relationship with community being a reciprocal relationship.





The establishment of the IUIH is an example of Indigenous community led reform, representing a transformational shift in the government and community dynamic. By both necessity and design, SEQ IUIH initiative was initially in response to a change in government policies; however it was also a motivator which determined a new paradigm where increased responsibility, agency and autonomy by Indigenous people themselves created the catalysts for change. In the SEQ context – Community Control is seen as the driver of strategy and momentum through an Indigenous led process – that we set the tone. The organisation's primary accountability is to the Indigenous people of SEQ to deliver comprehensive and culturally appropriate health services which envisions healthy, strong and vibrant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Families and Communities. Central to this model is the principle of subsidiarity – this is where decision-making authority is continually placed at the closest level possible to the people themselves. Through enacting of their own agency, SEQ Communities have mobilised and voted with their own feet; accessing health services and creating demand which has seen a growth within an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Context that has not been seen in over 20 years. This doesn't diminish the importance of accountability to government and board directors – but it structurally reflects a bottom up rather than a top down process.

The future is all about growth – as our people grow our services need to grow. So the importance is to make sure that we continue to ensure our services are available to our people so they can continue to exercise control over their own health.

Adrian Carson, CEO, IUIH

The governance structure

The IUIH has four member organisations, comprising the founding ACCHSs which collaborated to establish the organisation in 2009. The IUIH has a 'mixed' board membership model, with both community representation and skills-based director composition. To optimise board capability, the IUIH has equal board positions (4 each) for independent skills-based directors and 'nominee' directors (representing Indigenous appointees from each of the four ACCHS member organisations). The nominee directors appoint one of their own to be the Chairperson of the Directors for a term of up to 24 months as determined by the nominee directors.

Directors meetings are convened five times per the calendar year. The finance and risk management and remuneration and performance sub-committees meet bi-monthly or a minimum of five times per year. The board and the senior management team jointly meet at least on an annual basis to undertake a strategic review, including monitoring progress against the annual plan. The IUIH's late patron Aunty Pam Mam and Senior Woman of the Kombumerri Aunty Mary Graham both brought a rich cultural wisdom and guidance to IUIH and the board, including from the perspective of the IUIH's Cultural Integrity Investment framework. As one of the founders of the first ACCHSs in Queensland – including three out the four IUIH member organisations – Aunty Pam was able to provide an in depth perspective on how, as the first graduated Indigenous nurse from Palm Island, she established the initial community controlled services in SEQ and how this translates into continuing the vision for the IUIH's regional mission in SEQ.

Careful recruitment of directors ensures that there is a broad and deep range of skill sets across the board, including the contribution made from the independent directors. The IUIH leadership harnesses the extensive research capability of the IUIH to ensure that detailed and well-evidenced briefing papers are prepared for board consideration and annual joint board and Senior Management Team strategic review workshops are held. The IUIH supports the board by conducting mandatory director Induction training, external training opportunities such as the 5-day Australian Institute of Company Directors course and attendance at relevant conferences.

Sustainability

The deep stability that a backbone organisation such as IUIH provides encourages investment on many levels, a high level of corporate and collective respect and has allowed the organisation to better leverage business opportunities, attract independent skilled directors and demonstrate its corporate credentials more broadly. At the same time the IUIH is able to celebrate its Community Controlled status in the corporate world while continuing to strengthen its strong cultural foundations.

The IUIH is working toward a more sustainable financial future; the organisation is increasingly sourcing self-generated income streams, including Medicare funding. Self-generated income makes up 30% of the IUIH's annual turnover. The IUIH Network is the largest Community Controlled health service in the country, the second largest Indigenous Corporation of any sector and the third largest community based NGO health organisation (mainstream or Indigenous) in Australia.

We really needed an organisation that could run governance in the space as well as a lot of other areas. There was talk of forming an Institute way back and I was fortunate enough to be involved in that and now when I look at where we are down the track it's just gone to another level.

Steve Renouf, Deadly Choice Ambassador

Culture and innovation

The IUIH continues to have a bold vision that contributes to healthy, strong and vibrant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Families and Communities in SEQ. This vision acknowledges the significant growth in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within SEQ, with which comes the honour and continuance of our cultural obligation to the people. In fact, IUIH are looking to extend service provision to reach more of our people and double the number by 2021. We need to keep up with the continuing rapid growth of our people, and this target is ambitious because of the gap that remains within the system. Based on evidence we know that through a systematic approach i.e. IUIH's integrated system of care, we can make a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities within the region. The IUIH Network is in a unique position to make a significant difference in the lives of our people, in a region which has the single biggest health gap and the biggest population in the country. This presents enormous challenges for the IUIH Network and the IUIH board. However, the adaptive and agile governance structures have been designed to support this very challenge, and the culture and resilience of the organisation make the IUIH well placed to support further change and innovation.

The IUIH has embarked on an intentional phase of solution brokering and ideas generation. Such as commencing future scoping of options, conducting an innovation and incubation workshop of senior leaders, and completing a study tour of large scale Indigenous health organisations in Anchorage Alaska to explore the potential knowledge translation to the SEQ context.

The IUIH have worked hard over the past few years to move beyond cultural awareness training to equip staff and embed cultural knowledge and values to service delivery. Working closely with Senior Community Members, Elders and the IUIH Patron, the IUIH developed a framework which provides a focus on continually investing in the integrity and efficacy of IUIH as an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation. The objective of the IUIH Cultural Integrity Investment Framework is to consciously articulate and embed Aboriginal Ways and Aboriginal Terms of Reference structurally and relationally within all aspects of community and organisational operations. The Cultural Integrity Investment Framework and 'The Ways Statement' are expressions of cultural and philosophical understanding which have become foundations on which all organisational and operational processes are embraced. Through the embodiment of The Ways Statement, the IUIH and its member services have a basis on which all other processes are justified and from which meaning is drawn.

The grounding essence of the framework is the certainty that Aboriginal people used to run the country – a stable system based upon ethical approaches to humanity and relationality between people and country. The resolve to develop a Cultural Integrity Investment Framework came from the conviction that the foundation for why the IUIH exists as an organisation, including the reason for its being, must be driven by its cultural and philosophical values; and not government policy. The development of The Ways Statement was a deliberate and conscientious undertaking that focused on connecting the yarns of the past to a cultural foundation: a statement based not on a rhetorical viewpoint or a response to government initiatives, but instead on Aboriginal cultural values.

The Ways

The Ways Statement is at the heart of the Cultural Integrity Investment Framework and underpins and guides every aspect of how the IUIH conducts its business – from the way the Board operates through to all levels of management and individual staff and how they relate to each other and clients. Increasingly decisions are made, programs designed, and policies formulated to align with the approaches of, and are framed by, Aboriginal Terms of Reference as articulated by The Ways Statement.

These perspectives shape the everyday ‘worldview’ of staff:

- Work in Ways which acknowledge your own journey and influences your Ways
- Order your Ways of Knowing with a new logic of strength and determination
- Respect and value our community’s autonomy
- Learn to walk with humility
- Deadly choices are the enactment of agency
- Vibrant and strong families and communities
- Intentional action that challenges and balances systems
- Engage every potential pathway which leads to the positive transformation of lives
- Work with integrity progressively – the IUIH is ensuring that all existing policies and processes have strong cultural alignment with Aboriginal Terms of Reference and The Ways

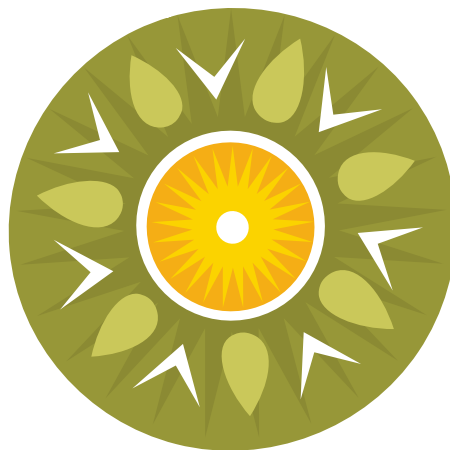


All new and existing staff spend a full day during their orientation to learn and start to apply (through yarning sessions) The Ways Statement. Elders play an active role with facilitators during the orientation. All policies, procedures, training programs, meeting templates and decision guiding tools are from the perspective of The Ways. For example, performance appraisals are now conducted through reflective discussion in relation to how staff operate from The Ways. The same is applied across all areas of reflective practise undertaken by clinicians.

New forms of consultation with community have been developed, including Yarn It Up Gatherings which utilise yarnin' methodology rather than a set line of questioning standard in other approaches. Programs are being developed from the starting point of The Ways Statement. This includes how the very function of a program, tool, or policy is constructed and how it frames the relationship we have with our people. For example, in the Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology disciplines this includes getting rid of individualistic and linear forms of making a diagnosis - including benchmarking against a mainstream standard - and replacing it with more culturally sensitive and holistic yarns including (where appropriate) group yarning circles. This has resulted in soliciting required information but in a more meaningful culturally respectful way leading to more impactful outcomes.

The premise behind our Cultural Integrity Investment Framework is to question - how do we have integrity as Aboriginal people working in an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation and ensure our systems and process are informed by and balanced by our Cultural Terms of Reference as Aboriginal people from this region. Culture is not a veneer applied at a surface level; culture underpins and is structurally embedded into the functions and very core of society. Our obligation is to be conscious and question ourselves about which culture that is.

Renée Brown, Organisational Development, IUIH



PURPLE HOUSE

Winners Category A
2016



2000

- Western Desert Dialysis Appeal raises \$1.1 million at the Art Gallery of NSW in Sydney

2001

- The Kidney Committee is formed
- Return to Country and Social Support services begin in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), NT
- Committee members travel to Bidyadanga and Broome in WA to explore remote dialysis options

2003

- Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (WDNWPT) is officially incorporated

2004

- WDNWPT starts dialysing at the Purple House in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), NT
- WDNWPT starts dialysing with one machine in Walungurru (Kintore), NT within the Pintupi Homelands Health Service

2007

- Primary health care services commence at the Purple House

2020

- Purple House celebrates 20 years

2019

- Purple House takes over the school nutrition program in Amunturrngu (Mt Liebig), NT
- Purple House runs its first conference:
- 'Share A Tale'
- Remote dialysis services open in Ampilatwatja and Amengernterneh (Utopia), NT and Pukatja (Ernabella), SA
- Purple House features on ABC Television's Australian Story with actor Jack Thompson
- Purple House expands into new premises at Lindsay Avenue in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), NT

2018

- WDNWPT expands into a second house in Alice Springs, NT
- Aged care and NDIS services begin in Purple House Mparntwe (Alice Springs), NT
- While retaining its corporation name, WDNWPT rebrands as Purple House
- Starting in November remote dialysis receives funding through a new Medicare Benefit Schedule item number
- CEO Sarah Brown is named by the Australian Financial Review as a 'BOSS True Leader'
- Purple House wins NT Telstra Business of the Year
- Bush Balms Social Enterprise wins the Territory NRM Sustainable Enterprise Award
- Dialysis begins in Kalkarindji

2017

- WDNWPT begins dialysis services in Papunya, Docker River and Mt Liebig
- WDNWPT raises over \$200,000 to begin dialysis services in Pukatja (Ernabella), SA, at an art auction at Tarnanthi in Adelaide
- CEO Sarah Brown is awarded HESTA Australia's Nurse of the Year
- WDNWPT takes over aged care services in Amunturrngu (Mt Liebig), NT

2008

- WDNWPT is asked to establish dialysis in Yuendumu, NT by Kurra Aboriginal Corporation
- WDNWPT established the Bush Balm social enterprise at the Purple House

2010

- WDNWPT opens dialysis in Yuendumu and Ntaria (Hermannsburg), NT
- Renovations to our new premises in Walungurru (Kintore) are completed by Woden Rotary increasing our capacity to two machines. This enables some people to stay full time in community on dialysis

2011

- WDNWPT is awarded the national HESTA Primary Health Care Award for Team Excellence
- WDNWPT is a finalist for a Human Rights Award for Community Organisation
- The Purple Truck is launched at Papunya Tula Artists gallery in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and travels to Papunya on its first assignment

2012

- The Purple Truck dialyses for a month in Mirlirrjarra (Warburton), WA
- Renovations are completed to the Purple House headquarters in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), NT
- WDNWPT is named a finalist in Reconciliation Australia's Indigenous Governance Awards

2013

- WDNWPT is awarded the National Disability Award
- WDNWPT wins the Ethical Enterprise Award for its Bush Balm Social Enterprise
- Commencement of permanent dialysis services in Lajamanu, NT and Mirlirrjarra (Warburton), WA

2014

- Commencement of dialysis in Kiwirrkurra, WA
- Celebration of 10 years of dialysis in Walungurru (Kintore), NT
- Opening of Panuku, the Purple House branch in Darwin, NT

2015

- WDNWPT collaborates with Miwatj Health Service to deliver dialysis in Yirrkala, NT
- Dialysis services commence in Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa), NT
- WDNWPT celebrates 15 years since initial art auction
- The book Patrick Tjungurrayi – Beyond Borders is launched
- Services extended in Yuendumu, NT increasing capacity to four chairs
- Bush Balm products are stocked by Oxfam stores throughout Australia

2016

- Beginning of dialysis service in Wanarn, WA
- Dialysis services under construction in Ampilatwatja, Arlparra, Kalkarindji, NT and Pukatja (Ernabella), SA
- Planning begins for a building extension at the Lajamanu, NT branch to accommodate four dialysis chairs
- WDNWPT wins Reconciliation Australia's Indigenous Governance Award in the incorporated organisations category
- The Purple Truck turns five

Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (Purple House) is an Aboriginal community controlled, not-for-profit organisation providing dialysis treatment and support services to renal patients from remote communities in Central, Northern and Western Australia. Our name means 'Making all our families well' and it recognises that people must be able to stay on country to look after - and be looked after by - their families. Our mission is to improve the lives of people with renal failure, reunite families and reduce the impact of kidney disease in our communities. We are run by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people and we work to provide culturally appropriate dialysis services in remote communities, helping people get home to country and family.

How did Western Desert Dialysis come about?

In the 1990's Pintupi Luritja people from the Western Desert communities of Kiwirrkurra, Mt Liebig and Kintore grew increasingly concerned about their family members being forced to move away from the community to receive treatment for end stage renal failure. Leaving behind their homes and families to access dialysis treatment in Alice Springs they experienced great hardship. People worried about the future of their communities without senior Pintupi there to provide leadership and pass on cultural knowledge.



For people from remote communities moving to a regional centre like Alice Springs or Darwin for dialysis is often a stressful and scary experience. They are far away from family and country, feeling sick and confused while having to negotiate the health care system.

Sarah Brown, CEO

The current health system was not providing services that the Pintupi needed so they decided to create services that were more appropriate for their community. The whole process of establishing dialysis in disadvantaged communities in the most remote part of Australia was not an easy task. The Pintupi were determined, they talked up, and they fought hard and learned new things. They saw the service grow, they managed risks, looked after the money and learned to do new things that governments wanted to see in terms of safety and compliance without losing the point of what they were all about. The Pintupi managed difficult situations; family and community dynamics and they walked in both worlds to stay true to their mission.

Determined that renal failure should not be a one way ticket to Alice Springs, away from family, country and everything important, senior men and women created four collaborative paintings. These paintings were auctioned at the Art Gallery of NSW in 2000 and raised over \$1 million dollars. After the auction of the paintings, people formed a 'kidney committee' to look after the money and make a plan. This seed money led to the formation of Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation – Western Desert Dialysis or Purple House. We started with one dialysis machine in Alice Springs and one in Kintore. The independent money was our opportunity to come up with a model of care which was led by cultural priorities and compassion. We knew we had a responsibility to our old people and communities and we also knew that we had the ability to run a complex organisation.

At first people were only providing services to their own language group. Word spread across remote communities that people were getting home and being looked after on country. We began to get calls from other communities and language groups wanting our help. The directors said:

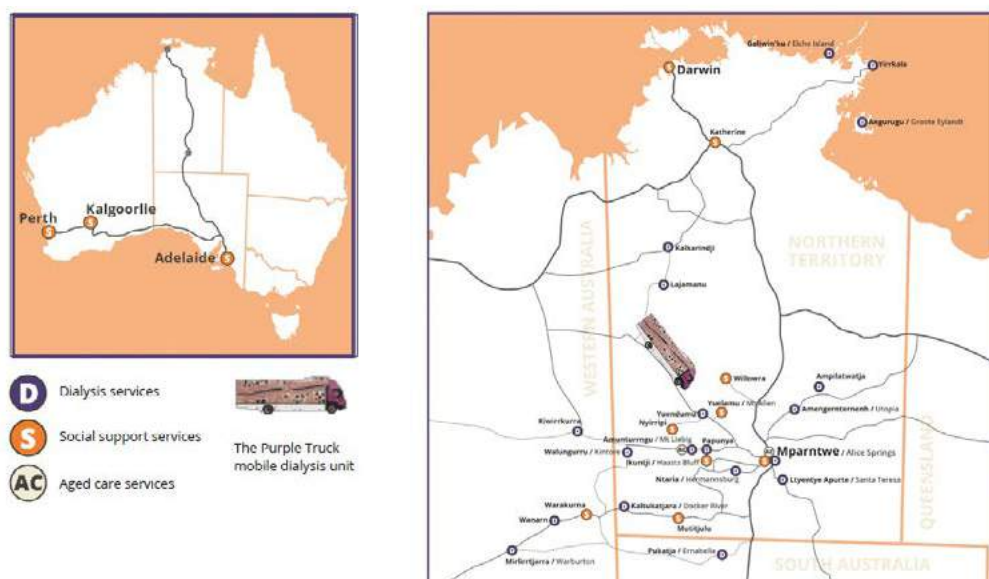
Poor things (Kuunyi) – it doesn't matter whether you are Pintupi, Warlpiri or Pitjantjatjara, we are all one family and we cry for our family far away on the machine.

Over the past 15 years we have grown to provide on country dialysis in 18 locations across NT, WA and SA. Stretching from Yirrkala in the far north of Australia to Warburton in Western Australia and as far south as Pukatja. We work with other communities to get dialysis going and to keep the model strong. In 2011, we launched the Purple Truck, which is a completely philanthropically funded mobile dialysis service. With two dialysis machines on board, this beautiful vehicle travels to remote locations where there is not a permanent dialysis unit providing patients the opportunity to spend time with family and reconnect with country.

The Pintupi directors describe their role like a mother bird looking after the babies in the nest. Maybe one day they might be strong enough to fly away (become separate to Purple House) but Pintupi mob will always be their mother, looking after them. Important in this process was making sure that communities had local ownership with the Pintupi directors overseeing the lot, making hard decisions if needed. In some communities like Lajamanu and Yuendumu there are dialysis committees who meet facilitated by us to make decisions for their local services. In other places such as Santa Teresa and Yirrkala we work with existing health boards ensuring each service has local buy in. We don't want to be a McDonald's dialysis! And we don't want to create governance structures and extra meetings if there are existing structures that can be supported.

Our Services

Purple House operates permanent dialysis clinics and a mobile dialysis unit called the Purple Truck, which makes it possible for patients to return to their remote communities at culturally critical times. We also offer support services, advocacy, wellbeing activities, health education, primary health care, aged care, National Disability Insurance Scheme services, nutrition programs, volunteer opportunities and Bush Balm, a rapidly growing social enterprise.



How do the directors make decisions?

The directors feel an absolute sense of responsibility and their attendance at and participation in meetings require significant travel. The directors meet in Alice Springs so that stakeholders and the patients are able to attend. The meetings happen in the garden at the Purple House and are open to all dialysis patients and family members to come and listen and be asked their opinion by directors. This means there is a high level of transparency and the patients get to understand how the organisation works, the funding and organisational commitments as well as why we can do some things and not others. The meetings go for two days to give enough time to present information and for directors to have time to reflect before making decisions the next day. Many of the directors have been on the board for all or most of the organisation's history so they have a shared corporate knowledge and pride in what they have achieved.

*They have sought out the best advice and they have learned as they have grown.
The directors are strong, committed with a strong vision.*

How does Purple House communicate with the communities they work with?

The organisation also has meetings in remote communities; we hold forums and patient meetings, and attend board meetings of other organisations. We regularly present reports of progress at Central Land Council³ and Kurra meetings⁴, and we keep our website and Facebook page current. We also present at conferences and gatherings and we are often invited to other communities to come and talk about our model. We held our first conference in 2019 at the Purple House in Alice Springs called 'Share a Tale' where we invited people from all over the country to come and learn about remote dialysis and our model.

³ The Central Land Council represents and provides services to Aboriginal traditional owners and residents of Central Australia.

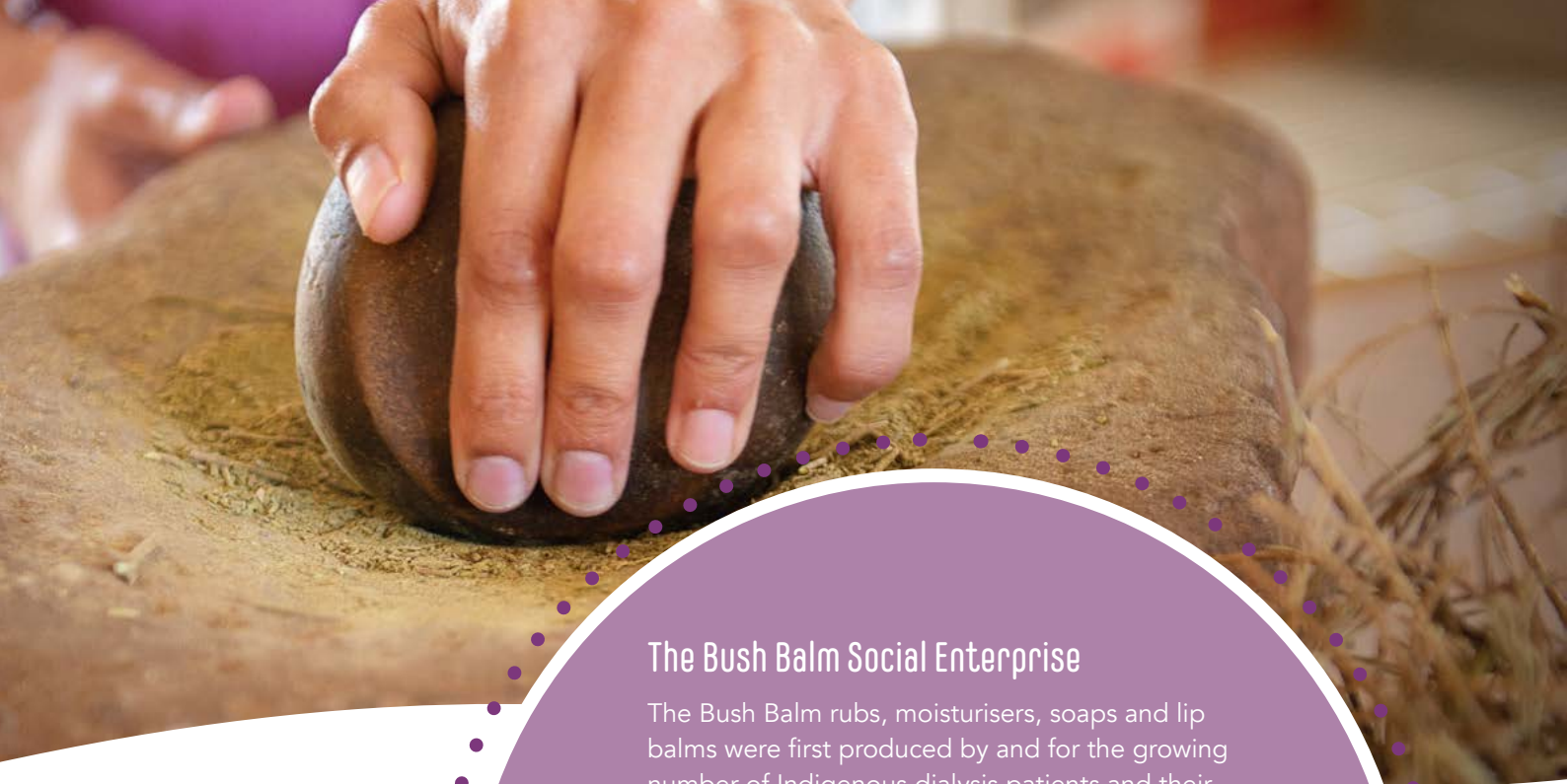
⁴ Kurra Aboriginal Corporation is a decision-making body made up of the traditional owners of Newmont Asia Pacific, the mining company that runs the Tanami gold mine.



Culture

Purple House sees culture as fundamental to the way we run our organisation. We work hard to take the dispassionate edges off a 'one size fits all' medical system which is alienating, in particular to those who are not middle class and from the dominant culture. We support people to find their voice and to find ways to inform and influence the mainstream about the critical importance of cultural values. When people are in Alice Springs and away from home for dialysis, we aim to help fill some of the gaps and reduce the trauma of loss. In a practical sense, kinship relationships affect communication and service delivery. Also, the importance of men and women's business is recognised and accommodated as vital to cultural safety. Avoidance relationships, the importance of being on country for sorry business, community events and ceremony is factored in to our provision of services out bush. The importance of grandparents and the significance of the oral transference of cultural knowledge is recognised. Differences in the understanding of disease causation and treatment between Western and traditional Indigenous world views are acknowledged, including having access to traditional healers and medicines in addition to the machine, is vital.

Waltyja (family), Ngurra (country), Tjukurrpa (dreaming) and Kuunyi (compassion) is the philosophy that drives the work that we do. There is a strong sense in the community that the kidney dialysis machine is a tool which, when on country, helps people to fulfil their cultural responsibilities. There is a cultural imperative to look after the old and sick, to do things the 'proper' way and to 'hold' people close. Our directors encourage patients to not just think about themselves but to work with each other to look after staff and help them to understand and learn. Time on country, being able to participate in ceremony and sorry business, to be there to care for children and grandchildren and to pass on cultural knowledge are fundamental to wellbeing.



The Bush Balm Social Enterprise

The Bush Balm rubs, moisturisers, soaps and lip balms were first produced by and for the growing number of Indigenous dialysis patients and their families around Central Australia. Forced to leave their country indefinitely for treatment, many longed for traditional bush remedies to remind them of home. Indigenous Australians have used native plants to treat common ailments and illnesses for thousands of years. Their traditional knowledge inspires the Bush Balm products, which are made from wild harvested medicinal plants expertly collected on Aboriginal Lands in Central Australia. The products are readily available to dialysis patients and are also for sale to the public from the Purple House in Alice Springs, as well as online and through ethical local and national stockists.

Advocacy

As for many Indigenous organisations, we are impacted by the current political system and the ability for government policy to change quickly. We work hard to raise our own funds by sharing art and cultural knowledge with others, and we know not to put all our eggs in one basket!

However, we have spent many years lobbying and advocating for further funding to provide services that are culturally robust and self-determined by our communities and our people. It takes up a lot of our time helping governments to understand the cost savings of a model of care wherein patients are happy, optimistic, being supported by family and not requiring all the supports that people away from home require. It has not been easy!

Our biggest challenge and our biggest strength is that we don't fit! We attempt to do as much as possible ourselves – being resolute and optimistic that compassion and common sense will prevail. Often we have to push ahead, try new things, start new services and then once they have proved themselves – ask for support so that we can push on!

In 2018 as a result of many years of hard work, lots of hassling and talking to as many people as we could, the federal government listed remote dialysis on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) which is a list of Medicare services subsidised by the Australian government. This ensures a rebate for every dialysis patient. The 2018 federal budget also saw \$25 million toward the expansion of renal clinics in remote areas which takes the number of machines from 36 to 54 and the number of patients able to receive Purple House services each year from approximately 250 to more than 400.

Our directors are continuously advocating for communities to access dialysis and it doesn't stop with funding. Our communities within central Australia are impacted by different states and territory borders. These borders mean little to Aboriginal people but can impact their opportunity to receive lifesaving dialysis. In 2009 the borders closed preventing new dialysis patients from accessing treatment. So for instance a patient could live 400km from Alice Springs, a familiar place where they have always accessed health care and have family. Due to the borders closing, that patient now can only access dialysis in Adelaide which is over 1,500km away, where they don't know anyone, have never been before and have no language support networks or accommodation. People were choosing to stay at home and die rather than have to relocate to an unfamiliar city where they would barely survive. We worked hard and spoke up on this critical issue so people could access treatment before they passed away. This advocacy led to the commonwealth government commissioning a review of dialysis services in central Australia. This was a win in the partial reopening of the borders and subsequent funding commitments for further dialysis infrastructure in remote communities.

The Pintupi have developed an entirely new model of dialysis care that has cultural priorities front and centre. They have worked hard to create an Indigenous solution to a problem which is relatively new. The solution isn't linear; it involves having a deep understanding of the people who are receiving the services and finding ways for them to take back control of their lives, their futures and those of their families and communities. This model was not new to the Pintupi but certainly a new model to mainstream health services and a complete reframing of the current delivery of dialysis services to Aboriginal people in central Australia.

Seeing people on country, being with their family rather than sad, sick and homeless in the city waiting for dialysis is the best reward! We know we can prove that our mob are healthier and happier than those people who do not have our supports. We see the pride people have in being part of getting dialysis on their country (often with a fight!) and we see Elders being active members of their community and contributing through painting, passing on their cultural knowledge and providing leadership in their communities.



ROBE RIVER KURUMA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION RNTBC

Finalist Category A 2018



ROBE RIVER KURUMA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION RNTBC

Finalist Category A 2018

Robe River Kuruma Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (RRKAC) holds its community at the core of the corporation's governance structures, processes and policies, ensuring it is led, controlled and championed by community. Succession planning and the capture, retention and transfer of knowledge are recurring themes across the corporation.

RRKAC successfully locates a 'recognition space' between the legislative requirements of the Australian legal system and the traditional laws and customs of the group, within and throughout its Indigenous governance model. The group recognises culturally appropriate and community-inclusive representation in its framework, and community drive RRKAC's corporate values. They are instrumental in the strategic plan development process and underpin the corporate governance framework, including through their strong representation throughout all decision-making bodies.

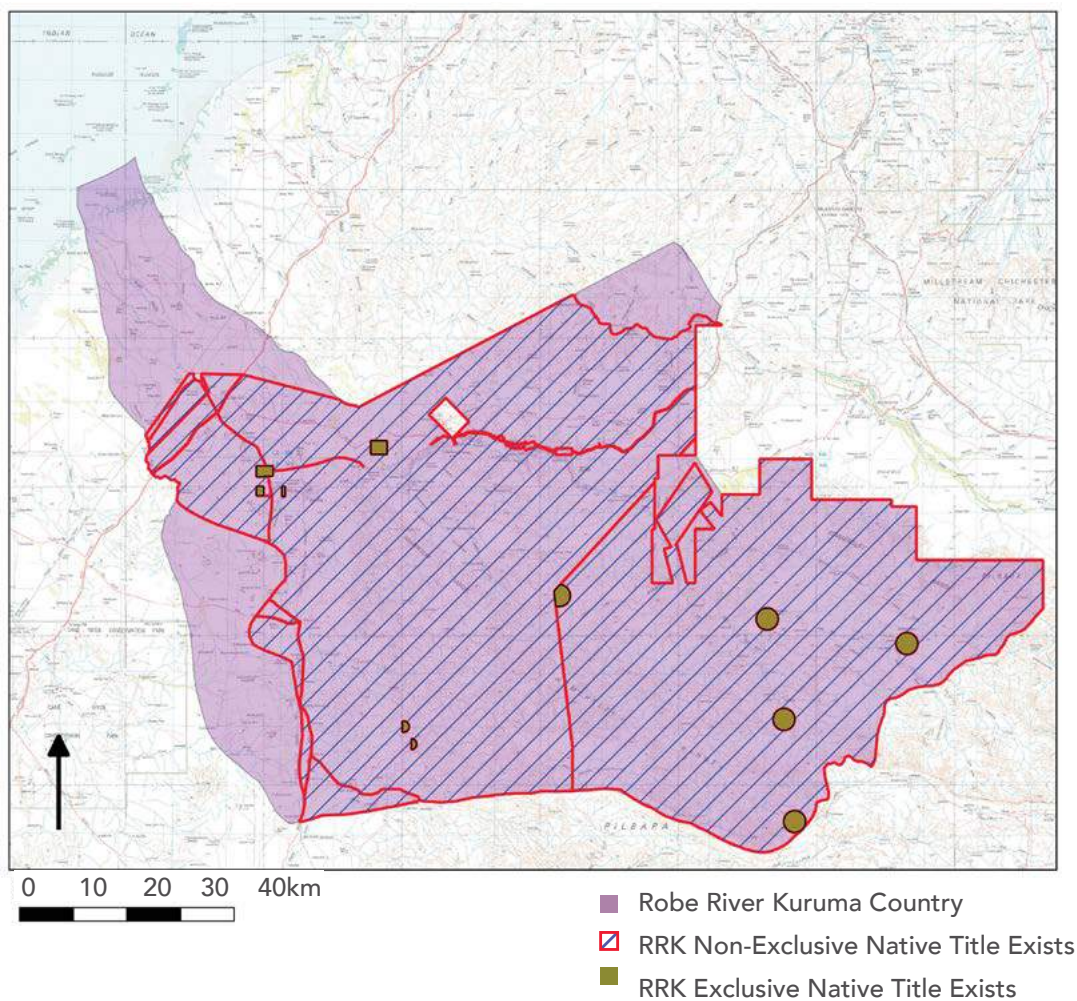
This approach removes any potential stagnancy, keeping community informed, empowered and accountable for their corporation's performance. The framework is community inclusive and provides for communication exchange across all decision-making bodies to ensure consistency and transparency, and allowing the group to measure RRKAC's effectiveness and sustainability.

We help our community members achieve personal independence with the community programs that we deliver. We value our member's participation and are transparent in everything that we do; we involve our community heavily in our governance processes.

Sara Slattery, Chair RRKAC

Who are we?

Based in Karratha, in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, RRKAC was established as a corporate identity for the Robe River Kuruma (RRK) people. RRKAC is the registered native title body corporate for RRK native title determined areas. The RRK people have traditional rights to an area covering nearly 16,000 square kilometers in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, of which almost 10, 000 square kilometers is determined by native title. RRK traditional lands lie within the Shire of Ashburton and comprise part of the Fortescue River and the complete river system of the Robe River, in the most westerly part of the Hamersley Range.



RRKAC's objectives are taken from its vision to: *work together as a community to establish a solid foundation towards independence, community wellbeing, and cultural identity now and for future generations*. RRKAC has a pivotal role in progressing the broader interests of approximately 350 RRK people and in representing them in their dealings with government and the private sector. In addition, RRKAC monitors and implements obligations under the RRK people's various participation agreements, provides services that protect and preserve RRK cultural heritage, and utilises charitable trust funds to deliver programs for the betterment of the RRK people.





How did we get here?

RRK people lodged their native title application in the Federal Court in 1999. The native title application was divided into Part A and Part B. The Part A area was determined in November 1, 2016, with an on-Country Federal Court hearing. The consent determination recognised the Robe River Kuruma people's exclusive and non-exclusive rights to an area about 4,123 square kilometers in size. The Part B area was determined on the 26th April 2018. The Part B determination area includes the Robe River, the Bungaroo Valley and the Buckland Ranges, and covers an area of around 5,720 square kilometers. The Part B area is particularly significant as the Robe River, or Jajiwura, has long been considered the lifeblood of the Robe River Kuruma people, and the 'main artery of Robe River Kuruma country'.

Following the successful negotiation of a Claim-Wide Participation Agreement (CWPA) with Rio Tinto Iron Ore (RTIO) in 2011, Kuruma Marthudunera Limited (KML) was established as the Trustee for the RRK people. It is responsible for holding and managing the monetary compensation payable by RTIO and other contributors (including API and CITIC Pacific) for the impact of operations on the native title rights and interests of the RRK People.

In 2013 the RRK established the Kuruma Marthudunera Aboriginal Corporation (KMAC) as a corporate entity for the RRK people. KMAC was appointed the Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) for the RRK People for the determined Part A of the RRK Claim in November 2016, and for determined area Part B in April 2018. With their native title rights and interests recognised and the Federal Court acknowledging that "...native title in the Determination Area is held by the Robe River Kuruma People", the community voiced their desire to rebrand the identity of the Corporation in line with the identity of the community. The new corporation name 'Robe River Kuruma Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC' was officially resolved 17th April 2019 at the Annual General Meeting.

Today RRKAC is a forward-thinking corporation that holds a long-term vision in pursuit of its strategic objectives. This is embedded in the governance framework, which captures the cultural governance and decision-making of the Robe River Kuruma group.

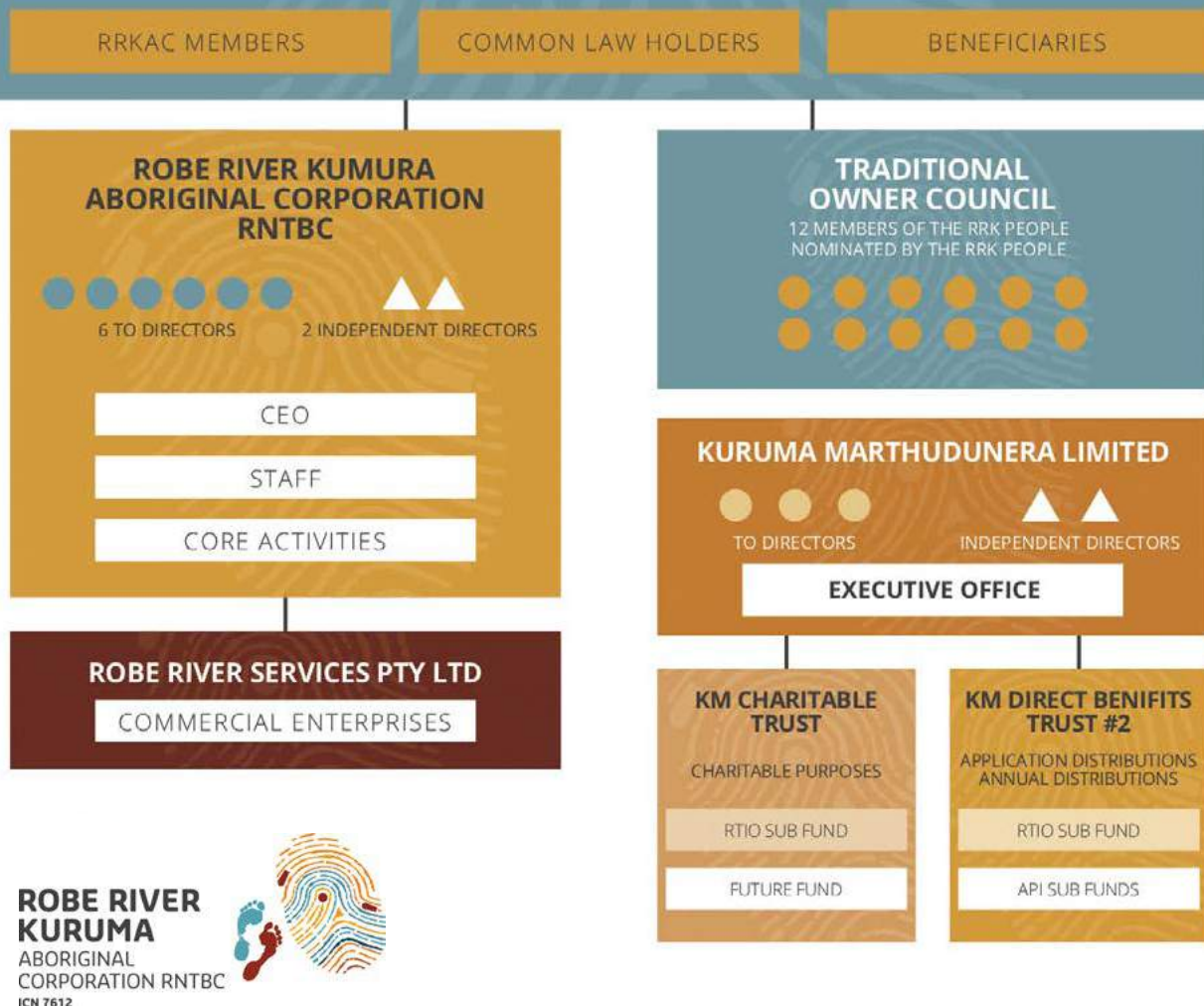
The RRK Corporate Structure

Community control is woven throughout the RRKAC governance framework from the strategic plan development process to the RRKAC Rule Book Board composition requirements and various committee Terms of Reference which demand equitable community representation consistent with the RRK's traditional decision-making processes and practices. The RRKAC Board and community are forward-thinking, proactive and engaged members who continuously strive for governance best practice through early strategic initiatives that sets the corporation and community up for success. The governance arrangements are driven and approved by community and reviewed cyclically. This allows the corporation to undertake macro and micro environmental scanning to review the corporate needs and strategic direction of RRKAC, an approach which has held RRKAC steadfast through economic downturns.

The RRK peoples' corporate structure has been developed to incorporate 'customary' decision-making processes. Their governance systems are therefore based on carefully validated cultural and family structures. The guidance of RRK people, particularly the Traditional Owner Council (TOC) as spokespeople for the community and the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) as RRK culture and heritage advisors to RRKAC, has considerable cultural authority within the group.



RRK PEOPLE



We try to involve the community in everything the corporation does. The corporation has a board of eight directors and whilst we have the legal authority to make decisions, we involve the community in the decision-making process. Traditionally, decisions always came back to the wider RRK community and different families. We have numerous committees that report to the board, so we approximately have forty representative community members involved in the internal decision-making process of the corporation. It is very important to the board that we involve the community in the process and the community has ownership and meaningful engagement with the corporation. This is an example of how we incorporate Robe River Kuruma traditional governance into our corporate governance.

Sarah Slattery, Chair RRKAC

The eight key RRK decision-making bodies are:



Kuruma Marthudunera Limited (KML)

A company limited by guarantee receives, holds, disperses and is accountable for mining benefits and other income. It manages a Charitable Trust and a Direct Benefits Trust. KML has three Traditional Owner directors and two independent directors.



Traditional Owner Council (TOC)

An unincorporated entity consisting of representatives from the six apical ancestors. The TOC endorse major policies, approve beneficiary memberships and are an advisory group to the Trust.



Robe River Kuruma Aboriginal Corporation (RRKAC)

An Aboriginal Corporation and PBC which is the active, operative entity entering into contracts and undertaking initiatives. RRKAC is the sole member of KML and receives funding from it, and reports to its members in accordance with its Rule Book and the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (Cth) (CATSI Act). RRKAC also has various functions and obligations as regulated by the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) and the Native Title (Prescribed Bodies Corporate) Regulations 1999 (Cth). RRKAC currently has six Traditional Owner director positions and two independent director positions. RRKAC and KML have a crossover Traditional Owner and independent director.



Heritage Advisory Council (HAC)

Senior members of the RRK group, and two identified emerging cultural leaders, who have been appointed by the community to speak with authority on matters of Native Title, culture and heritage.



Negotiation Advisory Committee (NAC)

Comprises representatives of RRK decision-making committees and are appointed as a working group for negotiations with mining proponents.



Environmental and Conservation Advisory Committee (ECAC)

A committee of six RRK Senior Knowledge Holders who are current members of the HAC, RRK members active in environmental land and natural resource management and/or aspiring leaders of the RRK community. The committee provide environmental and conservation governance advice to the RRKAC Board and act as a reference point for RRKAC management and other committees on related projects and programs.



Youth Council (YC)

A representative council of the RRK Youth which foster and encourage emerging leaders to speak up and have a voice, and empowers them with skills in leadership, organisation, governance, advocacy and negotiation to fulfil their future roles. The YC underpins RRKAC and KML's joint succession strategy to future proof our corporate governance structure.

Our traditional culture and heritage is important – we have various large mining agreements with compliance and protocols regarding activities and impacts on RRK country. Our board developed a Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) which includes our most senior elders and community members who hold valued knowledge of RRK country and culture. The HAC holds an important and valued role within the corporation as they advise on all matters relating to RRK culture, heritage and country.

Sara Slattery, Chair RRKAC

The legal entities in the RRK Group (in addition to RRKAC and KML) are:



The Kuruma Marthudunera Charitable Trust (KMCT)

The KMCT is part of the RRK People's benefits management structure which holds benefits for the RRK People. The KMCT has a series of charitable purposes (for the benefit of the RRK People), which it uses the trust funds to pursue.



The Kuruma Marthudunera Direct Benefits Trust No. 2 (KMDBT No. 2)

The KMDBT No. 2 is another part of the RRK People's benefits management structure which holds benefits for the RRK People. The KMDBT distributes funds directly to the RRK People, as the trust's beneficiaries.



Robe River Services Pty Ltd

Robe River Services is a 100% subsidiary company of RRKAC. Robe River was established to be the business arm of the RRK Group. In the future, it is intended that Robe River will undertake profit making ventures and generate income for the RRK Group.

The various legal entities within the RRK group, along with the functions and obligations of the PBC attracts an additional complex layer of legislative and other compliance and further demand on corporate governance best practice. RRKAC operates with a small core team of dedicated and hardworking employees responsible for pursuing the wide range of strategic priorities identified by the community and managing RRK resources wisely and effectively, with robust communication and community engagement processes in place.

RRKAC does not conform to what is expected to be the 'norm' for corporations of this type. RRKAC is pro-active and strategic in seeking out opportunities. This drive has shown an overwhelmingly positive impact and benefit. For example, one of RRKAC's ways to measure effectiveness is member engagement and participation with the corporation. Since 2015, the RRKAC membership base has increased by 66% and attendance at RRKAC community meetings increased by a similar percentage. Member interest in decision-making body participation has also increased including applications for director and various committee positions.

By holding the RRK community at the core of the corporation's governance structures, processes and policies, ensuring it is led, controlled and championed by community, the corporation has built cultural legitimacy. They maintain this legitimacy by ensuring members are recognised, have a voice in discussions and decision-making and are fairly represented and responded to. This in turn has had a positive impact on RRKAC's credibility with external stakeholders, with a positive shift in proponent relationships, and an increase in government and non-government organisations reaching out to collaborate on various projects and initiatives.

People will often say to me – well, you're the Chairperson. And I'll say yeah, but I'm also on the Board with my grandmother, my mothers, uncles, big brothers and sisters. It can be hard to deal with the intricacies of family and community relationships whilst dealing with corporation matters. Trying to understand your corporate authority, where you sit culturally within the RRK community and who are the right people to speak on certain matters can be a delicate balance.

Sara Slattery, Chair RRKAC

Succession planning

The board was aware some years ago that they needed to engage more young people into the governance of RRKAC. Young people needed to have a voice in the decision-making process. Initially the board engaged with their children and other family members to gauge interest and encourage them to participate and set up a youth council. It was a time-consuming process and the board faced challenges in engaging young people more broadly throughout the community. It wasn't until Daniel Farmer – a young RRK man, demonstrated a real passion for the work and wanted to get young people to engage and participate in decisions affecting the community – that the youth council started to grow. Daniel stood up at the AGM and said that as a young person he would go out and talk to all the young people. Since then the youth advisory committee has become strong, they have their own Facebook page and they lead themselves, they have created their own strategic plan and vision. There is now a core group of eight young people who are heavily involved in the decision-making.

Daniel Farmer interview:

My mother is on the RRKAC Board of Directors and she got me thinking about where things are going in the future. I wanted to understand more about what they were doing and what direction they were going in and how they run the organisation. Where the money that we get is going and kinda how it all runs. Obviously, money doesn't last forever so I thought – what things can we do to keep the money coming in? What grants can we apply for? And I found that interesting. There is money here now but that's not going to last forever.

I wanted to start the Youth Council to get everyone involved. So for our generation, it will still be there when we have kids. The Youth Council is slowly improving at the moment and hopefully it keeps building.

Daniel Roy is working for us, supporting us. He looks out for grants and works with us on how to run things - he goes through stuff with all of us and with me as the Chair. First, we'll get some training for the council and then we'll try and train other youth members. Daniel is really helping with that. We will slowly restructure a bit with different roles. I'm the Chair and we will also have a secretary and treasurer.

About eight of us meet approximately every three weeks. This depends on our schedules – we all work as well and are in between the ages of 18 and 24. Then either I, or now Daniel, will help to communicate what we think is a good idea to the Board. We currently don't sit on the committee, but we are trying to work on how we communicate to the Board of Directors and they are keen for us to be in their meetings. So, myself or the Vice-Chair will probably start attending their meetings and talk about what we talk about in our Youth Council meetings.

We are all really busy working as well, most of us are apprentices and we can't really afford to have days off. That's where it's been great to have a RRKAC employee as he can give that feedback about what we want to say to the directors. Hopefully when I have holidays and breaks we will organise for the whole Youth Council to sit in on their meetings so they can see what the directors talk about, not just what we talk about. And we are lucky to have the Chair Sarah come and sit in on some of our meetings and other directors have sat in on our meetings too. They're not there to have a say, they're



just there to see what we talk about so they have an understanding about what we want and what we are trying to do.

The way the directors have been going with us is really supportive. They really want this to succeed because they understand that we are the future and they are doing everything they can to make sure the Youth Council is successful. At the start it wasn't really working. We were having only two or three people joining. Then we kicked it off again, had a big meeting and got it going. Ever since then they've been really supportive with all the stuff we want to do, and they are really trying to make everything that we've asked for happen. I think they do a great job and now that they've hired Daniel even better. They are obviously showing that the youth are the future and are the voice for the corporation. With his job getting grants, linking with the Shire, getting hooked into other community events and trying to get our name out there - I think they really want us to succeed, which is really good.

I was going down to the youth events they were running because my mum was involved and the things they were running just weren't as engaging as they could have been. I mean they had good ideas – but not that fresh. Then I approached people at a meeting and talked about why I want young people involved and now we are just growing.

I think people were a little bit shy at the start. We were trying to start something that no one in the Pilbara or anywhere close to us was doing – I think the closest was Broome and that's eight hours away.

I think the fact that we were doing something different was strange for everybody. So, everyone was kinda on the edge of 'I don't know if we could do something like that'. They weren't sure they wanted to get involved. But once we sit down with people and explain why we want to do it and explain what we are trying to do with the corporation and where we want it to go, they understand it a bit more. Some of the youth are very shy and I'm a bit the opposite – I grew up playing footy with men when I was 15 and was always around older people so I don't find it as nerve wracking. But basically, we just want to build confidence in the youth and then slowly build them to talk to directors and slowly start talking to groups and stuff like that. And that's why we want to do certain courses and develop the Youth Council first and then obviously the youth members as well and then they become mentors and we build off each other.

I did a lot of the speaking and people just listened and stood around and we didn't expect them to speak at the start. After a while people started to develop their own voice and meetings got longer. We have such great support with Sally Atkinson and Josie slowly developing young people at RRKAC. They would come to our meetings, help us out, try and get people involved and build our confidence. Without them calling people and picking them up, it wouldn't be as successful. We try to close any barriers for young people to attend.

When you get to 22 or 23 years old you start to think 'we need to do something'. You know, maybe we should do language classes. We can speak a bit, but the young ones can't so

let's learn more from our older people and we can teach the younger people. And we can have a big family/corporation day and go to Pannawonica where we are from and we can all learn and understand what Robe River is.

We want to get our people to develop in different areas. We've won a grant in life skills and we want to get in bankers, people who do tax, and teach people how to do it. Also resume writing – trying to get them ready for the real world. We are from a small town where you have the mines everywhere and people don't know how to manage money – we go from small paying jobs or high school to just the mines which pays quite well. We try to develop young people every way we can and if we do that as a whole corporation for our Youth Council – it will make us a lot stronger as a whole. Everyone is on the same level, we're trying to get other corporations involved in the same thing. It shows there's a trend. We all have the same problems and people are seeing it and we want to fix the problems so we don't get to the next generation and they don't know either. We want it to be second nature to them. Young people to young people, we want to make sure people aren't falling behind. We want to support people in any way we can.

RRKAC provides mentors to youth council members from within the organisations staffing group. Chairperson Sara Slattery is also heavily involved in supporting the youth council and encourages them to take any opportunities offered to them outside the Pilbara. Most recently one of the young people attended a Youth Governance Masterclass in Melbourne.

...so for the youth councillors to spend time outside of the region and meet other young inspiring people around the country, it put a fire under them. They returned with new experiences and new concepts they wanted to implement. They asked, 'can we do this and that' and I said, 'why not? Let's get it happening'. Now our young people are thinking more broadly and want to start a Pilbara Aboriginal Youth Council. And that's inspiring – that's something that has come from our young people.

Sarah Slattery, Chair RRKAC

RRKAC has provided logistical support for the youth council and recently created a dedicated position to assist the youth council to develop. The board also supports the young people to connect to their culture and continue their learning.

We try and support them as much as we can. One of the big things for them was getting back to country and learning culture. It seems like a small thing but we sent them fishing with the Elders, which was marvelous. They got to spend all day with the old people just listening to them. After that opportunity they came back even more inspired.

Understanding the complexity of the governance structure, compliance, partnerships and decision-making can be intimidating and daunting. The amount of mining agreements and companies the board has to deal with can at times seem overwhelming. RRKAC works with their young people to become familiar with this knowledge over a period of time in a safe environment. They speak to the mining companies about their succession plan and invite them to support the process. This has led to members of the youth council attending meetings so they can become familiar with the discussion, including how mining companies do business and the jargon that often becomes embedded in big corporations. When the board participate in ORIC training (Office of the Register of Indigenous Corporations)⁵ they not only invite the whole community but they ensure that young people, especially the youth council members, attend. RRKAC want to include their young people in as many decision-making processes and partnerships as possible.

We want to expose them as much as we possibly can to everything that we do. And we are very mindful of not frightening them off and instead supporting them to want to learn more. We have a really good bunch of kids – they are wonderful to get behind. They are inspiring to tell you the truth.

⁵ ORIC provides training about the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006, rule books and other aspects of corporate governance.



WARLPIRI EDUCATION AND TRAINING TRUST

Winners Category B 2018



We are Warlpiri educators and traditional owners and together we control the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT). We know what is best for our people and invest income from our lands wisely to support our families and communities. We help our people to help themselves.

In 2001, a passionate group of Warlpiri teachers engaged with the Central Land Council (CLC)⁶ and advocated for their assistance to access royalty income funds for education in the Tanami region. These women educators wanted to have access to money that would support Warlpiri education goals.

WETT first began with our idea. We were thinking about how we could have better opportunities for education and training in our communities. In 2001 we approached the Director of the Central Land Council and asked him to help us find a way to use some mining royalty money for education projects. We worked with Kurra, the traditional owners of the Newmont gold mine, to set up WETT.

With the support of the Central Land Council, over the next three years, the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust was developed. Over that time negotiations occurred with Newmont Asia Pacific (now Newmont Goldcorp), the mining company that runs the Tanami gold mine, and the Kurra Aboriginal Corporation (Kurra), who are the traditional owners of the mine.

Kurra is the name of the country in the middle of the Tanami desert. The Land Rights Act gave Yapa (Aboriginal) people power and voice, and the Kurra traditional owners have rights for accessing and receiving compensation for mining on their lands.

⁶ The Central Land Council represents and provides services to Aboriginal traditional owners and residents of Central Australia.



A percentage of royalties were allocated to WETT and Kurra was appointed as the Trustee to make the final decisions on WETT funding.

We started WETT in 2005. Consultants interviewed Yapa in Yuendumu, Willowra, Nyirripi and Lajamanu to ask them what their priorities for education and training were in their community. WETT looks for good strong partnerships to run programs in our communities. We work with our partners to deliver programs in five areas:

- *the children and families program,*
- *the language and culture in schools program,*
- *the secondary school support program,*
- *the youth development program,*
- *the community learning centre program.*

We encourage everyone in our communities to participate in WETT programs to have the opportunity keep learning. Learning is a lifelong journey.

WETT's Governance

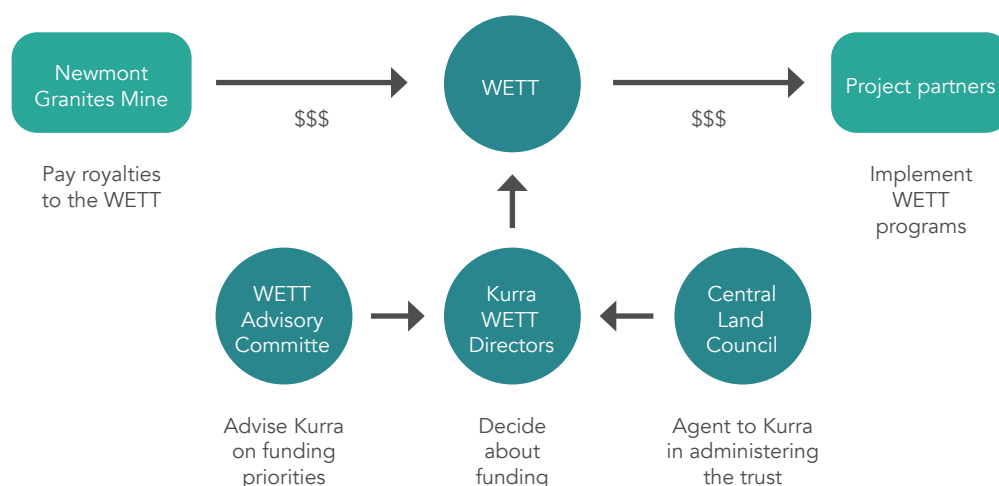
We are all working together now to keep WETT going strong into the future, to keep it going for our kids.

WETT's governance structure is two tiered. The first tier is the Advisory Committee with representation from the four Warlpiri communities. Their role is to develop and plan WETT projects and programs reflecting broad Warlpiri aspirations, identify program partners and provide funding advice to Kurra. The second tier of the governance structure is Kurra Aboriginal Corporation who, as the Trustee, considers the recommendations and advice from the Advisory Committee and makes the final decisions.

The Advisory Committee is like the brain of WETT, doing the thinking and planning work. Kurra is like the heart, they are the traditional owners, the ones with the connection to where the mine is.

The Central Land Council acts as an agent for Kurra and administers WETT. Staff from the CLC's Community Development Unit work with committee members to facilitate WETT's governance arrangements, including facilitating WETT meetings, supporting program planning, decision-making processes and program implementation and management.

How the WETT works





We are members of the WETT Advisory Committee. There are 16 Warlpiri members on the Committee, including four from each Warlpiri community; Lajamanu, Nyirrpri, Willowra and Yuendumu. We meet three times a year and meetings are very important to make sure the programs we fund are meeting community needs. We talk about everything and plan it all, and then we pass resolutions about how to spend the WETT money which then go to Kurra. Kurra, who are the traditional owners for the mine site, have the final say before releasing money to the programs.

Initially it was difficult for the Warlpiri Educators to get Kurra to listen. Some people were not supportive of the new approach to set money aside for education and training. WETT found this an ongoing challenge, however, Advisory Committee members persisted, and they kept championing the projects and over time the impact of this work became evident and gave the Kurra directors increased ownership over WETT.

At first it was really hard to convince them, the Kurra directors, that WETT was a good idea. There was arguments and conflict, they thought the Kurra money from the mine was going into our pockets. But since WETT has gotten up and running we have showed the directors that WETT money is being spent wisely to support our families and communities. They know more and support us now.

The confidence and capacity of Warlpiri members of the Advisory Committee has developed over the years. The Warlpiri members' expertise as educators, their cultural knowledge and contextual understanding of community life makes them an essential driving force for the success of WETT.

WETT has always been a place where Yapa can have a voice. In our meetings we discuss whatever issues come up, talk about the partnerships, and talk about solutions and do planning. We learn from each other; we go to different trainings and conferences so we can always keep learning more.

Looking to the future

We want to keep this good work going into the future, so our kids can keep learning both ways and grow up strong. We are the ones who know what is best for our communities and for our kids.

As with many organisations and committees one of the current challenges for the WETT Advisory Committee is ensuring that strong Warlpiri leadership continues into the future. A large percentage of the Advisory Committee are members who founded the trust, some of whom have been on the committee for more than 13 years. This is a major strength to the committee – their collective knowledge and experience means the group is well informed to plan and make decisions. However, this presents a vulnerability to the committee moving forward as long serving members make plans to retire or are no longer able to serve due to ill health or other reasons. It is critical that young people feel able to join the committee and have the opportunity to be mentored into their role by experienced members.

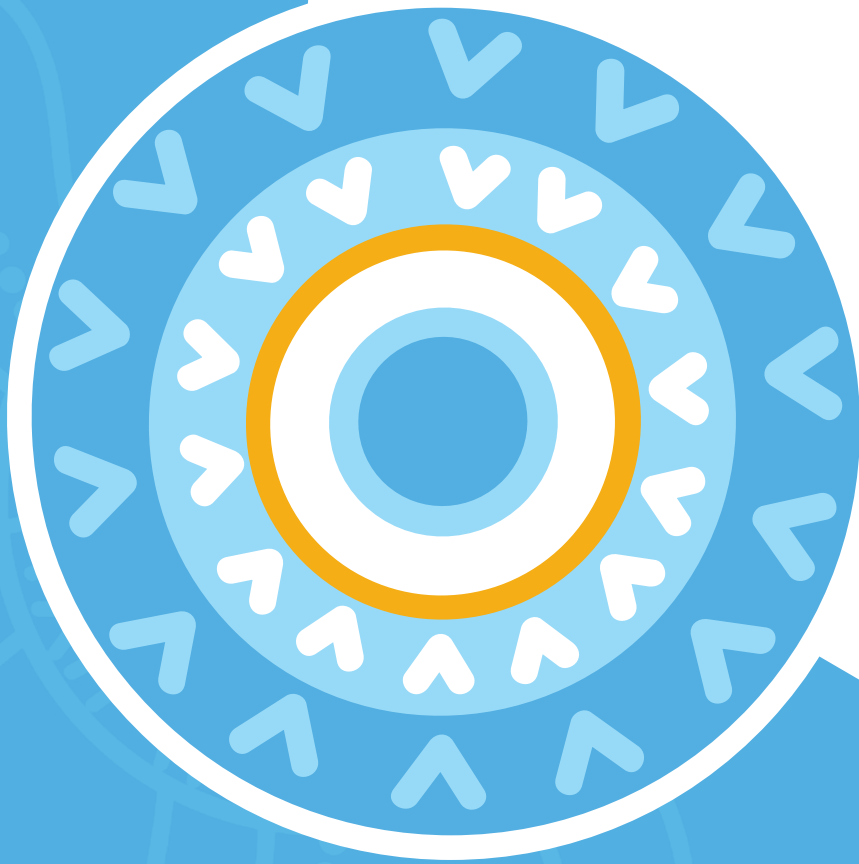
As a part of WETT's succession planning strategy, in 2018 four new Advisory Committee positions were created and made available to young community leaders, with one young person being nominated through an election process from each of the four representative communities.

Our criteria for the qualities of a WETT Advisory Committee member:



An induction program is underway for the new members joining the Advisory Committee which prioritises experienced committee members providing guidance through sharing their stories and experiences.

We are now bringing in younger members onto the committee so they can learn from experienced members. This is part of how we are planning for a strong future for WETT. We are feeling proud and happy to see our new WETT committee members take on this responsibility. They are the next generation of leaders for WETT and are taking the journey with us to keep education strong in our communities.



Kamparru kamparru nyanjaku: Our vision

'We are Warlpiri educators and traditional owners and together we control the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT). We know what is best for our people and invest income from our lands wisely to support our families and communities. We help our people to help themselves.

WETT supports partnerships for training and education so all Warlpiri people will have better knowledge through Warlpiri culture and two-way learning.

Our vision is for our children's children to be strong in their knowledge of culture, country and language, to be strong role models for future generations and to stand up for our communities.

Our language, culture and decisions will be respected. Our voices will be heard. We will have the same opportunities as everyone else.

Our children will be confident, knowledgeable, disciplined, healthy and respected. They will have good roles and jobs, as will the generations to come'.



Nyampuju Kuruwarri kuja nyarrpa yanu wurna manie yangka WETT
ja-jarrija manu wiri-jarrija

This is the journey of how WETT started and how it grew over the years.

YAWURU CORPORATE GROUP

Joint Winners Category A 2018



Yawuru Governance Case Study

Since the Bugarrigarra...

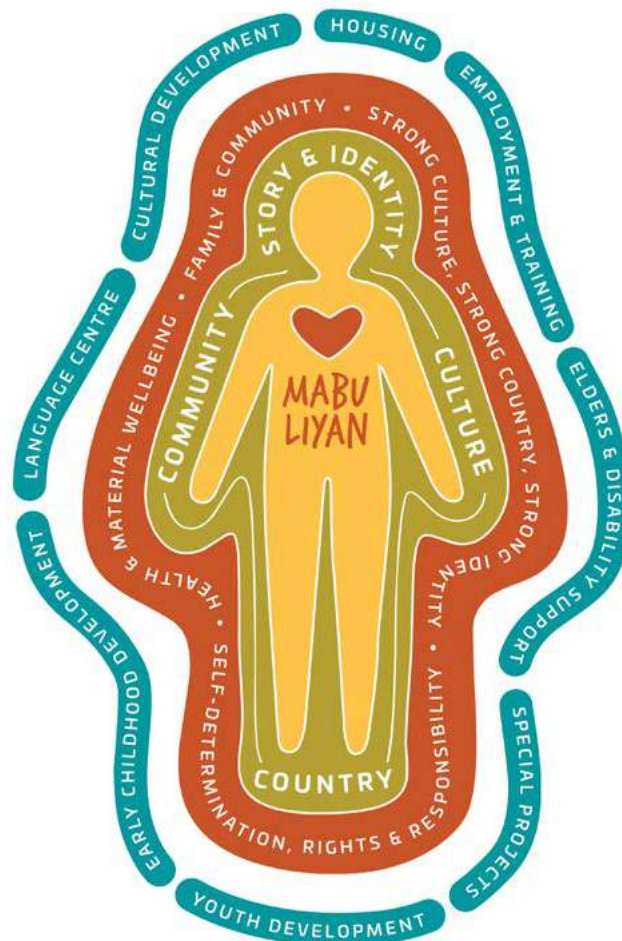
Since the Bugarrigarra (the Dreamtime) the Yawuru people have been the custodians of the lands and waters in and around Rubibi (the town of Broome) in the south, through to Wirjinmirr in the north, and from the ridges of Garawany in the east, including modern day Roebuck Plains and Thangoo pastoral leases and lands adjacent to them, in the Kimberley region of northern Western Australia.

Yawuru were recognised as the native title holders of these areas in 2006 after years of lengthy court battles. When we established our PBC in 2008, the whole community came together to consider how to ensure these Native Title rights and interests were protected for current and future generations of Yawuru people.

After a long and torturous period of court hearings, and then negotiations, the State of WA and Broome Shire finally signed an Indigenous Land Use Agreement with the Yawuru people, on 25 February 2010.

Achieving our native title was a truly significant moment, not just for the Yawuru community, but it was a real milestone in native title history for Australia in terms of different tenures, partnerships and locations. But then, for us the real work began. We had to ensure the community would be empowered and retain their rights and culture into the future. We had to determine what form of governance would deliver opportunity, equity and advancement. We had to do all this and establish the structures and policies that would balance cultural expectations and corporate requirements. So over time, we can see things have shifted and changed, but essentially what has remained the same is the commitment to the basic Yawuru values of country, culture, community and prosperity. It's the common connection that delivers mabu liyan for our community.

Patrick Dodson, Yawuru law boss and former CEO of Nyamba Buru Yawuru



mabu buru, mabu ngarungunil, mabu liyan
(Healthy country, strong people, good feeling)

We are committed to a vision of an inclusive Yawuru community and sustainable economy which supports Yawuru and other Aboriginal people to achieve their full potential, while staying true to the mabu liyan philosophy. This vision incorporates commercial success and the renaissance of Yawuru cultural values and practices, embodied in the philosophy of 'mabu liyan' (good spirit) which is a holistic understanding of positive wellbeing.

The concept of 'liyan' is a balanced integration of personal, social and environmental aspects that contribute to a good life. Nyamba Buru Yawuru, the development company for the Yawuru PBC adheres to this philosophy and it is encapsulated in the Purpose Statement for the Corporate Group: *"Making mabu liyan real for all, always" People, land, culture, prosperity*.

The Yawuru promise

To ensure that we can deliver on our promise to the Yawuru people, and to create full and active participation in the wider community, the Yawuru PBC needs a solid foundation and good governance. Those foundations and our governance are informed by corporate structures, statutes and western legal requirements. However, they are equally informed by our liyan and the expectations of our community to maintain and enhance our culture and heritage, which is the basis of our Native Title and connection to country. We are marrying our mabu liyan with the structures of contemporary corporate practice.

All PBCs need community involvement, no matter where they are, and I really want our community to be smart about our land and culture, and to have a say in how we look after our native title. It's the young ones that are coming after us who should benefit from this as much as us and they need to grow up to understand this is part of their community responsibility. So, good governance helps us make important decisions to benefit our community now and for coming generations.

Debra Pigram, Board Director Yawuru PBC

Our mabu liyan framework is based around our four pillars of Community, Country, Culture and Prosperity: this is used in many ways throughout the Yawuru Corporate Group and everyone understands the philosophy and the values that it embodies.

LIYAN-NGAN NYIRRAWA PRINCIPLES:



The key to good governance for the Yawuru Corporate Group is ensuring that we deliver high quality western governance balanced with our cultural governance that is defined by our native title status, understood as coming from the Bugarrigarra.

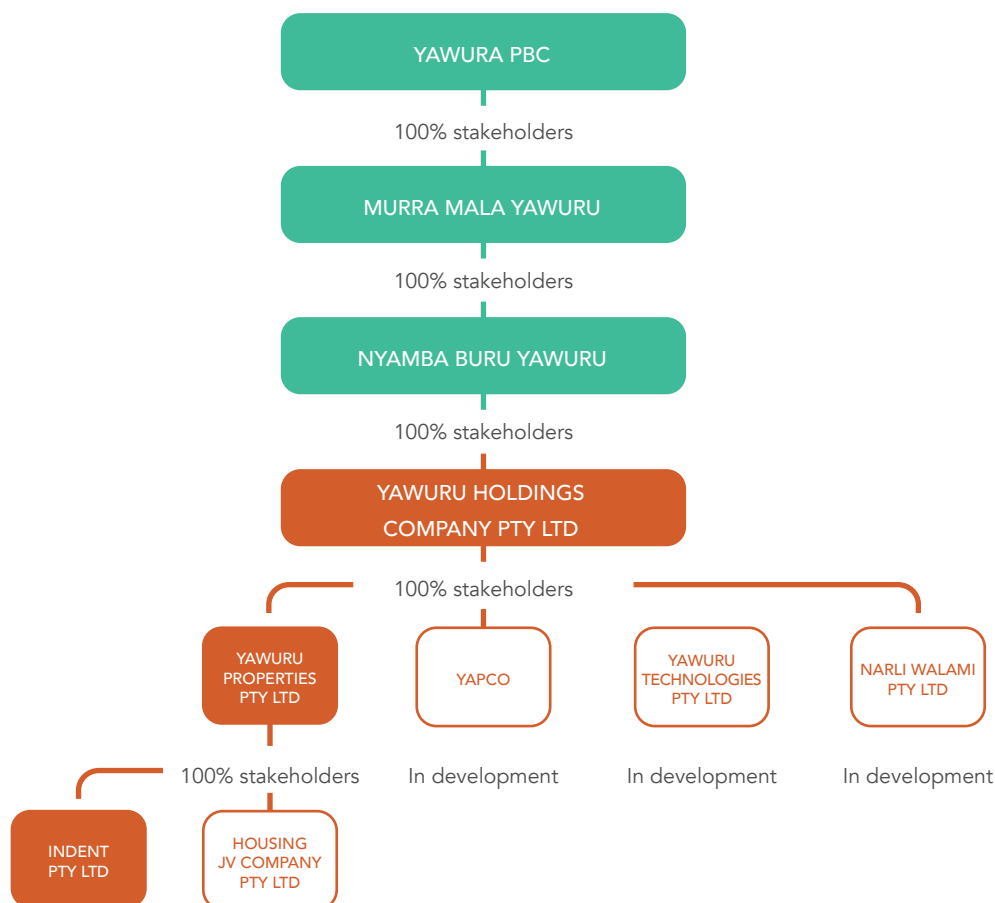
Yawuru corporate structure

The Yawuru Agreements were negotiated with the Western Australian Government in 2010. The signatories to the Agreements are the State of Western Australia, the Shire of Broome and the Yawuru Native Title Holders Aboriginal Corporation and other State entities. The Yawuru Agreements include two Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs); ie The Yawuru Area Agreement and the Yawuru Prescribed Body Corporate Agreement. They were officially registered by the National Native Title Tribunal on 6 August 2010. These Agreements inform the structure of the Yawuru Corporate Group. There are three main entities within the Yawuru Corporate Group, and there are three boards with different functions:

- Yawuru Registered Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) is the membership entity for our Yawuru community. The PBC board has 12 Yawuru directors; six directors with responsibility for customary laws and six directors chosen by members.
- Murra Mala Yawuru is a holding company that allows the PBC to create a separate business arm of the Corporate Group. It isolates the PBC and members from risk and allows the business of looking after native title and cultural responsibilities to be kept separate from commercial activities of NBY, thereby recognising the different skill sets required and protecting individuals from risk. The board has four Yawuru directors.
- NBY is the Yawuru operational arm. It manages Yawuru's commercial assets, employs staff, undertakes development and does business to generate sustainable income. NBY is established under the Corporations Act, and the Board is comprised of up to five Yawuru directors and two independent directors who have commercial and legal expertise.

The NBY Board has evolved to have great capacity. We have a range of Yawuru professionals with broad experience in government, legal, corporate, enterprise and community work. We also have a couple of non-Yawuru directors who bring their own expertise and experience. They may not live in our community on a daily basis, but they understand our vision and commitment, and they are aligned with the ambitions of NBY to empower our people but manage the balance with our cultural values.

Cara Peek, Chairperson NBY Board



Together as the Yawuru Corporate Group (YCG) they develop economic, cultural and social sustainability so that, as Yawuru people, we can enjoy our land, values and culture in perpetuity, while empowering our families and the community in which we live.

We Yawuru people, and all Aboriginal people, have always had our own cultural governance. Our stories and philosophy comes from the Bugarrigarra, the time before time, putting the languages in the country for the people and creating laws. So now our role as law bosses on the board of the PBC is to maintain our traditions and to ensure they are part of the decision making process that the Yawuru group goes through. I have enjoyed being on the board because I feel proud to have a role for my community that connects our heritage with our future. I have learnt a lot and the training program really helped me understand the legal functions of the Board and what impact our decisions have on the future for our community. It's very important and so we take our decisions very seriously and consider them as a group with everyone having something to say.

Thomas 'Unda' Edgar, Chairperson of the Yawuru PBC

The governance of these entities can be complex and decisions require more consideration than just adherence to Western policy and practice. We need to have high quality governance so that we can make fully informed decisions about our future direction, including risks, impacts of policy, development opportunities, investments, impacts on our environment, cultural integrity and benefits for our community.

The structure of the Yawuru Corporate Group, with NBY as the development entity, means we operate in a western company structure and do business on a level playing field with other corporations. But we ensure that the business that is done supports the aims and ambitions of our Yawuru community. NBY is a not-for-profit entity, and the joint ventures, partnerships and investments are there to deliver a sustainable base that will benefit the community into the future. Our aim is for Yawuru people to develop their education and skills and to support their ambitions for a holistic life that ensures culture, language, access to country and opportunity is maintained.

Peter Yu, CEO of the Yawuru Corporate Group

Governance Training

The Yawuru Corporate Group has been investing in a Governance Development Program since 2014. Its aim is to build the capacity of all our Yawuru Board members for better decision making and to help the board members understand their important role and the legal function they are required to fulfil. The program marries Yawuru values with the rights and responsibilities of the role of Board Director in a culturally appropriate and meaningful way. We don't want to invent a new form of governance, but to ensure adherence to best practice corporate standards that are required by statute, at the same time as ensuring traditional Yawuru values are integrated into decision making in a meaningful way.

The integration of the Yawuru values and mabu liyan philosophy ensures that all directors, executive and staff have a clear understanding of not only the 'letter of the law', but the 'spirit of the law' when it comes to ensuring best practice is implemented.

The Yawuru Governance Improvement Program increases the capacity of the directors and their interactions at a board level, but also assists them to think and act at higher levels during interactions with the wider community, in public forums and in their daily lives as cultural and civic leaders. The program helps people feel confident in their roles because they are not only working for the organisation itself, but are representatives within the broader community and are the public face of Yawuru in many cases.

The program also extends the invitation to members of the Yawuru community. This helps to build capacity in our wider community and engages interested or younger members in potentially being involved at a board level.

We did the governance training program and I found it really helpful. As the Chairperson of MMY I feel the responsibility to ensure that we are properly fulfilling our role as the link between the PBC and NBY. Other board members also appreciate the training and I know we have improved Board performance as a result – we are all proud to have a role on the Boards and we all turn up to meetings and have good discussions that help us reach our agreed outcomes.

Maxine Charlie, Chairperson of Murra Mala Yawuru

Underpinning values

The Yawuru values guide our work and are reflected in the cultural and administrative governance of our corporate group and community. These values are clear, well understood and shared widely so that everyone knows them and they are publicly available:

Mabu Liyan

Business is conducted with a clear heart, and an open and honest but respectful behaviour, incorporating integrity and transparency; that issues outside the Yawuru sphere are dealt with outside and not brought in to affect Yawuru business.

Country as foundation

Recognition in business, policy and strategy that country is the foundation; that proper respect for land will be recognised and maintained; that if you look after Country it will look after you.

Culture is knowledge

From the Bugarrigarra comes knowledge of right and wrong, transparency, accountability, acceptance of responsibility, and the depth of knowledge as to how business is conducted in culturally appropriate ways.

Build for the future

All business, policy, practice and direction should be conducted for the sustainability of Yawuru society and culture in perpetuity and the building of Yawuru Equity and to create mabu liyan (positive Yawuru wellbeing); that short term gain is only appropriate if they actually build long-term outcomes.

Together, not individually

In accordance with the values upheld during the struggle to achieve Yawuru Native Title determination, recognition that the Yawuru Corporate Group is about the whole, and while recognising individuals and families is important, decisions are taken for the benefit of all and not for individual segments of Yawuru society.

Individual and corporate responsibility and accountability

While the corporations are accountable to Yawuru people, Yawuru individuals are also aware of their responsibility, commitment and avoidance of self-interest in working for the benefit of the whole Yawuru community.

From these values, the boards, staff and management worked together on our 2016 – 2020 *Strategic Plan* to ensure it met our aims for development and cultural integrity. The strategies and goals are all connected to the values which reflect both Yawuru's corporate and cultural governance.



Strategy	Goal
Develop and implement an investment strategy to sustain the organisation.	Identify and grow economic opportunities while building social, cultural and human resources for sustainable Yawuru community benefits.
Develop and implement appropriate and effective corporate governance for the Yawuru corporate group.	Develop best practice corporate governance that respects Yawuru customary law and values within a normative Western context.
Maximise Yawuru engagement and participation in land and sea management activities, to achieve holistic and sustainable management of Yawuru country.	Develop and implement holistic management plans across Yawuru country through combining Yawuru knowledge and Western science and technology.
Represent and advocate for Yawuru interests through future acts and cultural heritage negotiations.	Apply best practice methods of cultural heritage and environmental protection guided by Free, Prior and Informed consent principles.
Preserve and promote Yawuru culture through increased cultural activities and Yawuru community engagement.	Develop and deliver programs and initiatives aimed at building the cultural and social capital of the Yawuru Nation.
Undertake research and develop policy which enables new opportunities to be identified or confirmed.	Generate knowledge and understanding of Yawuru culture, society and economy – both historic and current – by working with local, regional, national and international partners which inform the work of NBY and its achievements.

Connecting the Yawuru strategic vision to the operational work

The YCG has an internal Board Charter and a Code of Conduct. These documents, along with our values outlined in the mabu liyan philosophy, define the relationship between the CEO and the governing body. There are distinct roles and responsibilities of the Board, the Chair, individual directors and the CEO which are set out in the Board Charter. Having clarity of roles defines the spheres of influence and action for each entity.

It is important for all parties to maintain respect and accountability and to act within their defined role. This ensures that there are clear lines of authority, responsibility and communication. Communication is a key feature of good governance and dialogue is entered into with good liyan (good spirit). This good working relationship between directors and CEO is done through regular meetings with

a clear, professional procedure that informs both the boards and the CEO of the opinions, directions and considerations required on both sides to achieve the Yawuru goals and strategies. There is freedom of expression and opinion within these relationships that allows many voices to be heard.

Good governance on an operational level also means we have comprehensive policies and procedures that are kept up to date. NBY employs around 100 people, including casual staff and so managing those staff includes ensuring everyone understands our operational procedures. While our policies and procedures are informed by regulatory and statutory regimes, we also try to make them relevant to our staff on a cultural level. Our annual performance review process is referred to as 'junyba' (sharing) which is intended to influence the process to be an open and constructive dialogue for both managers and staff that will encourage better performance and communication.

What's important to our community

Good governance reflects what is important to our community. We are responsible to our community and so we aim to meet those expectations. Our responsibility also means we have the social licence to make investments and drive the economic agenda for future growth of the organisation.

Communication is important to ensure our community has confidence in our ability to make the right decisions and manage the land, physical assets, intangible assets and other issues. The value of communication is reflected in strategy number five and there are a range of ways Yawuru undertakes this; we have regular public community events at Easter and Christmas to bring the community together. We also produce regular newsletters, use social media and also more direct forms of engagement that include sub-committees and workshops with the Cultural Reference Group, Yawuru Park Council, Yawuru Housing Reference Group and others.

These sub-committees and groups rely on our committed and knowledgeable community members to be involved and to bring their knowledge to the table. We appreciate their generous and patient commitment of time and they are remunerated for their work.

The basis of Yawuru's authority rests on our community's native title and so any decisions that affect our land are returned to the community and we invest time and effort in ensuring that we have well-informed decisions that are based on community will. Our Environmental Services and Native Title teams work closely on country with community members to determine good on country practices and programs. One example is the ongoing discussions and development of approaches to customary fishing along our Yawuru coastline.

Yawuru works carefully with different stakeholders when we develop programs and policies around our natural resources and development. In Broome we play a leading role managing, liaising and influencing others to ensure we have good relations and good understanding about customary practice on our country. We have comprehensive discussions with our own community, but also neighbouring saltwater groups, the local Shire, Dept of Fisheries and Dept of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. It's a long process, but undertaken very carefully so that we can be confident that it will lead to sustainable management of saltwater resources and respect for our traditional and customary practice.

Dean Mathews, Environmental Services Senior Policy Officer

Conclusion

We know that effective governance is an ongoing process that involves a huge number of elements on operational and strategic levels. In 2018, feedback from the independent auditor, Moore Stephens, assessed the YCG board papers to be "of a high standard". Review of board outcomes over the last two years indicates that every meeting produced clear resolutions. We have Annual General Meetings that run smoothly and engage our community. We are currently performing very well and feel confident in our ability to keep moving forward and serving our community, but are aware that we need to keep checking on ourselves, our processes, our community feedback and our vision. We hope to keep working closely with our community, maintain our high standards and ensure that our mabu liyan framework continues to be communicated and used into the future to ensure we can deliver on our promise of sustainable and culturally connected prosperity for everyone in our community.

We keep our purpose in mind: *"Making mabu liyan real for all, always"*.

Yawuru Milestones

1994

First native title claim lodged with the National Native Title Tribunal on behalf of Yawuru people.

1998

The Rubibi claimants and a claim lodged by Leregon over Kunin lawground sit down to try and come to agreement about native title.

1999

Eight different claims combined in to a single application.

2001

The Federal Court makes a decision that recognises native title over Kunin lawground. (Rubibi Community v Western Australia 114 FCR 523).

2006

On 28 April Justice Merkel from the Federal Court makes his decision. The judge decides that Yawuru have maintained their law and customs from the time of Bugarrigarra and that the common law of Australia now recognises these rights. (Rubibi Community v Western Australia (No6)).

2008

Appeal by State of Western Australia and others to the Full Court of the Federal Court against the determination. (Western Australia v Sebastian FCAFC 65). Yawuru native title holders choose the Yawuru Native Title Holders Aboriginal Corporation to be the corporation that holds the native title rights on trust for them – creation of the Yawuru PBC.

2010

Yawuru Agreements signed.

2010

Strategic plan 2010 – 2015: Vision. Mission and values.

2013

Publication of the Yawuru Cultural Management Plan, creating a baseline reference text for cultural, planning and on country work.

2014

Yawuru regained ownership of Roebuck Plains Station and sub-leased it to ILSC for management.

2016

2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan developed.

2018

Yawuru Futures paper published, providing policy outline connecting development with Yawuru values to enhance prosperity for Yawuru and the broader regional community.

2018

New Yawuru branding and website developed to better define identity and ambition.

