



NORTHERN LAND
COUNCIL

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

Community Planning and Development Program

Building stronger communities and better lives.

Monitoring Report for 2016 - December 2018 Executive Summary

June 2019

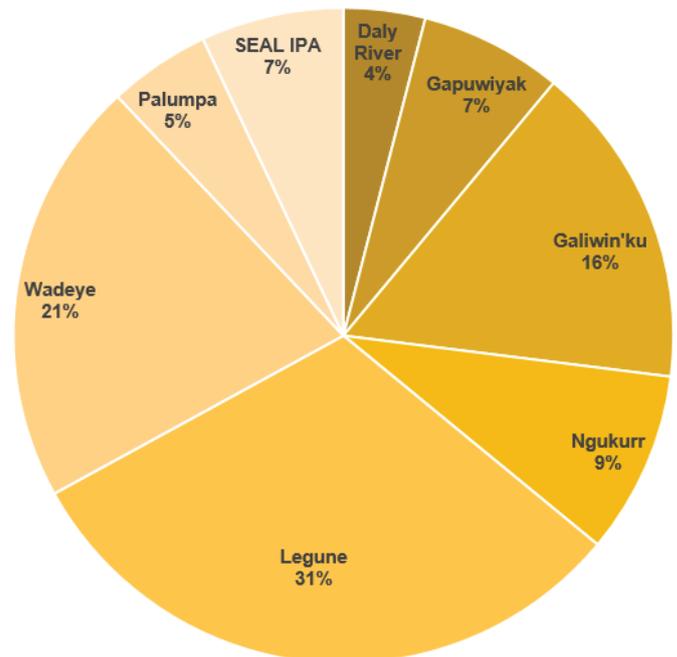
Background

In 2016, the Full Council of the Northern Land Council (NLC) established a Community Planning and Development (CP&D) Program to help Traditional Owners plan and manage community projects using their own income from land use agreements.

The NLC CP&D approach builds on established theory around community development practice in Australia and beyond. Community development is a practice of enabling and supporting groups and communities to work together and drive their own development. The CP&D Program supports Aboriginal people to define their vision for stronger lives and communities and to identify projects they can do to achieve it, using their own money.

Between 2016 and December 2018 the NLC worked at eight project locations with Traditional Owners who committed over \$6.5 million toward community development. Of this, more than \$2.34 million was approved using the NLC's CP&D Program for specific community projects.

% of CP&D money committed by project location



Monitoring and Evaluation

In 2017 the CP&D team initiated a plan for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the CP&D work to ensure its accountability to Traditional Owners. CP&D Program monitoring data collected from 2016 to 2018 was used to create a baseline report. This report outlines the key findings of the Program since its commencement in 2016 against the CP&D objectives. Findings and recommendations from this monitoring report are presented in this executive summary.

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life



Findings from the monitoring report

Early indications suggest satisfaction with both the overall community development approach and a growing sense of increased Aboriginal control and increased group cohesion in most of the project locations. Staff reflection suggests the community development approach, with its eight clearly defined steps, is considered appropriate and effective by Traditional Owners. The process is clear and respectful and ensures that Traditional Owners have power and control at each step in the project management process. It works best where people have existing capabilities and/or experience in shared governance through other projects.

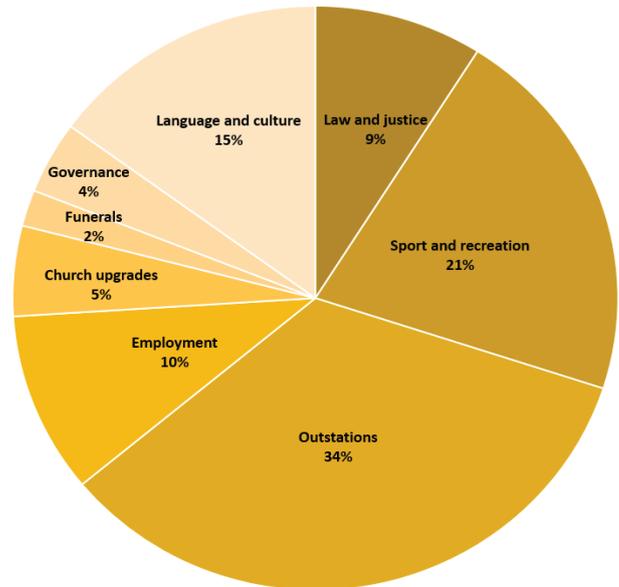
"It's happening – we did the planning and it's happening"
(Traditional Owner)

On the other hand, there are some risks. The CP&D process can potentially challenge or undermine traditional decision-making structures. There is some risk that the process can change group dynamics, potentially giving more control to those with better English comprehension or more formal education.

There is evidence of emerging interest by Aboriginal people in information about projects. The interests are varied and include requests for information about the process of projects and activities in other communities, and for more information about the outcomes and value of the projects for which Traditional Owners have invested their money.



% of CP&D money allocated by project type



There is strong evidence in each location that Aboriginal people are allocating their money to activities that will directly benefit themselves and other people in that location. There is a very strong interest in projects that preserve culture through activities such as culture camps, upgrades to outstations and return to country visits. There is also considerable attention to support for young people, both to divert them from illegal and unhealthy practices and to connect them more strongly with culture and traditional knowledge. Finally, there is interest in employment for Aboriginal people and in projects that will provide a possible stepping stone to more sustainable businesses or longer-term benefits.

"To see us out here with our own job being our own bosses, this upgrade has started it, it's the gateway to our future. I can bring my grandmother back here now. Bring our kids out here and show the sacred sites."
(Traditional Owner)

There are several likely benefits from increased communication about the CP&D Program. In particular Traditional Owners can be supported to share with others in their own locations about the work they are supporting for community benefit. Communication from one project location to another could potentially broaden the ideas and learning between Traditional Owner groups supporting ongoing development of ideas.

Recommendations from the monitoring report

1. Prior to working with Traditional Owner groups through the 'eight step' process, engage with the Anthropology Branch to identify existing information about community structures and dynamics.
2. Acknowledge existing decision-making and group dynamics in each location, track the impact of the community development process on these existing structures, giving attention to how this supports sustainable and effective outcomes for people.
3. Acknowledge that information is important for Traditional Owners and communities, undertake regular inquiry with groups to identify the information they want and the form in which this should be provided.
4. Recognise that the original scoping report strongly recommended a 'whole of NLC' approach to implementation of community development, give further attention to developing CP&D cooperation with other NLC branches, looking to maximise complimentary knowledge and activities.
5. Translate key concepts into local language, ensuring that the translation is appropriate to the specific context of the different projects. Ensure that this is shared across the NLC so that there is common understanding of how specific concepts are understood in different locations.
6. Acknowledge the importance of the planning process for project outcomes, provide additional support for working groups and Traditional Owners to understand the steps in the planning process and the connection of these to their desired outcomes.
7. A communications strategy be developed to accompany the community development process. The strategy should privilege the opportunity for Aboriginal people to speak about their own achievements.



The full Community Planning and Development Program Monitoring Report for 2016 - December 2018 is available on the NLC website www.nlc.org.au





NORTHERN LAND
COUNCIL

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

Community Planning and Development Program

Building stronger communities and better lives.

CP&D Program Goal and Objectives

Goal

Healthy, resilient and engaged Aboriginal people, groups and communities that are strong in language, culture, connection to country, health, education and employment.

Objective 1

Strengthen Aboriginal capacity, control and group cohesion, particularly through the management of their money.

Objective 2

Achieve social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes Aboriginal people want, value and benefit from.

Objective 3

Document, monitor and evaluate the work to make sure it is on track in delivering outcomes valued by Aboriginal people.

Objective 4

Show governments and other organisations the value of and how they can better support Aboriginal-led planning and development.



What is monitoring and evaluation?

Monitoring is like doing a check-up of your car – you need to make sure the tires and engine are good so you can keep driving. Monitoring helps the NLC keep on track and heading towards goals set by Traditional Owners. Monitoring is also a way to recognise and celebrate achievements.

NLC Head Office

45 Mitchell Street

Darwin, NT 0801

GPO Box 1222

Darwin NT 0801

Tel (08) 8920 5100

Fax (08) 8920 5255

cpd@nlc.org.au

www.nlc.org.au

