



NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL

# Fact Sheet

*Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life*

## NLC Community Planning and Development Program

### 1. What is the goal of the CP&D Program and how does it work?

Our CP&D Program supports Aboriginal people to work together to build strong lives and futures. We work with Aboriginal groups who want to use their money from land use agreements for community benefit.

'Community benefit' can be social, cultural, environmental and economic.

The Program is based on principles and a process that have Aboriginal group control and decision-making at every step of the way. Our 8-step process was approved by the Full Council of the NLC in 2016.

### 2. Who does the CP&D Program work with?

We work with groups of Aboriginal people, including Traditional Owners and Native Title Holders, who want support from the NLC to use their money to get good things happening in their communities, outstations and regions.

If Traditional Owners and Native Title Holders decide to involve other Aboriginal people, like Aboriginal community leaders or people with good experience in planning and decision-making, then we work with them too.

### 3. How does the funding side work?

Each Aboriginal group decides if they want to join the program and how much money to set aside for community benefit. The more money set aside, the more community benefit projects that can be done. But it must be at least \$250,000. That's because if you want to set up projects that are really going to make life better for your group it takes serious money.

If your group doesn't have this much money you can decide to save up over a few years and let it build up to \$250,000.

Once your group makes an informed decision on using money for community benefit the funds are held in an NLC Community Planning and Development Trust Account under a direction by the CEO. This money earns interest. Funds are only paid out to a partner organisation when a project has been planned and the group has agreed to fund it, working through the NLC CP&D eight-step process.

### 4. How long do we need to sign up for?

There is no minimum number of years but we've seen in other places that you get better outcomes when you lock in a decision to set aside money each year for community benefit for say 5 or 10 years. A request to the NLC to set aside funding for community benefit each year for at least five years will give your group the best chance of achieving strong community benefit outcomes.

### 5. What if we want to do economic or business development?

We support groups to plan and fund economic development projects through the eight-step process. This is already happening in Gapuwiyak in North East Arnhem Land. The first project is usually to get a feasibility study and business plan done. Like all other projects it will need a strong project partner to be involved.



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## 6. Is there anything that can't be funded under the CP&D Program?

The NLC Full Council has decided that the Program cannot:

- purchase vehicles (but they can be leased by a partner organisation if there is a clear need and strong plan for vehicle management); or
- pay off debts on behalf of other organisations.

## 7. What is the role of NLC staff?

CP&D staff support each group through the eight-step process so they can make informed decisions about projects that will provide lasting benefit to as many group members as possible. Other NLC staff are also involved. For example, anthropologists advise on Traditional Ownership, lawyers prepare funding agreements, and finance helps to manage the funds, including making payments to partner organisations.

## 8. Who does the work to deliver the projects funded through the Program?

Part of the planning process is to find the best organisation to deliver the project and talk to them to make sure there is a strong plan and fair budget. We call this a partner organisation. They can be Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, Government or non-Government. The main thing is to be sure they have the skills and experience to deliver the project well, including:

- doing the project in the way that the plan says and the TOs have agreed to; and
- managing the funds properly;
- Giving clear information and reports on how the project went.

The NLC can't do most of the projects – we do not have the right skills or the resources to do all the different kinds of projects that groups want to do.

## 9. How long does it take to get from planning to action and outcomes?

It depends on the group and projects they want to do. A strong group that works well together and decides to do a simple project (like running culture camps through their existing ranger group) will see action and outcomes 6–12 months after starting. If a group has trouble agreeing on its priorities or decides to do a more complicated and expensive project that it needs to save up for (like building a community swimming pool) it could take years.

## 10. Can we ask the Government to provide co-funding?

Yes, the NLC can help you to ask the government to provide matching funding for projects funded through the CP&D Program. This can get a better outcome and make your money go further. But it also takes time and effort to get money out of government so this could slow things down.

## 11. Who covers the NLC's costs for this Program?

NLC's costs – for staff, travel and traditional owner meetings - are funded at the moment from the NLC's operational budget or in some cases by third parties to land use agreements.

If you want to find out more, email [cpd@nlc.org.au](mailto:cpd@nlc.org.au) or freecall 1800 645 299

Visit the NLC website to see the 8 Steps in the CP&D process at  
[www.nlc.org.au/our-land-sea/planning-and-community-development](http://www.nlc.org.au/our-land-sea/planning-and-community-development)