

Our home, our homeland

Community Engagement Report

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Abbreviations

CDEP.....	Community Development Employment Projects
ICC.....	Australian Government Indigenous Co-ordination Centres
DET.....	Northern Territory Department of Education and Training
DH&F.....	Department of Health and Families
DLGH.....	Department of Local Government and Housing
DPI.....	Department of Planning and Infrastructure
NTG.....	Northern Territory Government
ORA.....	Outstation Resource Agency
PFES.....	Northern Territory Police, Fire & Emergency Services
VET.....	Vocational Education and Training

Introduction

In September 2007 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the NTG and the Australian Government in regard to Indigenous Housing, Accommodation and Related Services. One important component of this agreement was that the NTG would take over responsibility for the delivery of municipal and essential services to Territory outstations starting 1 July 2008.

The NTG published the Outstations Policy Discussion Paper in October 2008 in order to “stimulate consultation and discussion over the development of a Northern Territory Government policy on outstations.” The release of the discussion paper was stage one of a five stage policy development process. The NTG anticipates that a new policy framework would commence in July 2009.

In response to the publication of the Discussion Paper 43 written submissions were received by the NTG.¹ Community engagement sessions were held in 17 locations throughout the Territory in the first two weeks of December 2008 (*refer* Appendix 2). In addition, following a community invitation, a visit to the Utopia region was arranged in December, which included visits to Arlparra, Ampilatawatja, Irrultja and Apungalingam.

The following report outlines the key outcomes from this series of community engagement meetings and makes recommendations to the NTG. These recommendations are intended to provide early direction to the NTG on the development and implementation of future policy.

¹ It should be noted that many of the written submissions to the NTG were made after the originally published submission deadline of 1 December 2008. Because of the lateness of many of the submissions, not all were read by the authors in time to be considered in this report. Therefore, the recommendations within are derived in the main from the community engagement sessions held between 1-12 December 2008. Readers should note that the Office of Indigenous Policy (Department of the Chief Minister) is currently preparing a full analysis of all written and video submissions for consideration by the NTG.

Policy Context

The Australian Government has had responsibility for Territory Outstation housing, municipal and essential services for over the last 30 years. Relevant data on Territory outstations is currently imperfect and will require significant validation over an extended timeframe. However, it is broadly agreed that Commonwealth funding has been delivered to over 500 discrete outstations since the early 1970s. It is also understood that the combined Indigenous outstation population across the Territory is approximately 10,000 out of a total remote Indigenous population of 40,000.

In September 2007 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the NTG and the Australian Government in regard to Indigenous Housing, Accommodation and Related Services. One important component of this agreement was that the NTG would take over responsibility for the delivery of municipal and essential services to Territory outstations for an initial three year period, starting 1 July 2008. The agreement also allows for funding from the Commonwealth to the NTG at \$20 million per year for three years to meet the costs of municipal and essential services to the outstations. Following the initial 3 years of funding, a new agreement between the Australian and Northern Territory Governments will be required.

The NTG published the Outstations Policy Discussion Paper in October 2008 in order to “stimulate consultation and discussion over the development of a Northern Territory Government policy on outstations.” The Discussion Paper is not only concerned with municipal and essential services (MUNS) provision to outstations, but the full range of services, including health, education, housing and policing which are delivered throughout the Territory.

From the community engagement sessions held in December 2008 it is clear that four recent significant policy and legislative reforms are directly impacting upon remote Indigenous Territorian's views concerning the future of their outstations and the development of an effective policy:

- The Federal Intervention into NT Aboriginal Communities: including the implementation of mandatory income management and concerns over the implementation of new Commonwealth leasing and tenure arrangements
- CDEP reform: uncertainty over the future and form of CDEP
- Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP): The Federal Government and the NT Government have committed to the provision of over \$670 million over five years for building new houses and refurbishing existing houses within Indigenous communities that lie within “prescribed areas” and/or are currently subject to Commonwealth town/community leasing arrangements. Currently, the vast majority of outstations and homelands are not eligible for this significant housing funding since they continue to be located on Aboriginal Land. Furthermore, homelands were never intended to be recipients of the SIHIP funding program.
- The NT Local Government Reform 2008: the recent legislative enactment of 8 “bush” shires across the Territory, which now replace numerous local government entities, has produced some concern over the future of service delivery to outstations and the continuing role and funding of Outstation Resource Agencies (ORAs).

Historical context

Who changed the name from homelands to outstations? These are our homelands. In Mardayin Law the land has always belonged to the clans, and always will belong to the clans. The Land was never Terra Nullius.

Our ancestors lived on these lands a very long time before the English came here, and every place has its own Wanga-wartangu, its own clan, who are the owners. This never changes. We do not sell our land. Every clan has its own places, and this does not change. We do not have private ownership of land, we have clan ownership. Homelands belong to the clans. They are not outstations of a larger community where people go for a better lifestyle. They are the lands that have always belonged to the clan...They are the homelands of the people and they are the Djalkiri, the heritage of the people.

In Arnhem Land, when the white people came, they wanted us to move off our homelands, into the missions and government settlements. Some people did, and some people always stayed on their homelands. In the larger communities, there was often fighting between clans because they didn't live like that before. Some of the people who had moved to the communities decided to go back to their homelands....

We are very confused by what the Government has been doing to us lately. Has the Government changed its mind again, to stop treating us like people?...

We want both governments [Australian and Northern Territory] to recognise that there is a Land Law here that was here before either of them, and is still here.

Extracts from written submission #40
Message from Mala Leaders at Galiwin'ku to the NTG
11 December 2008

This quotation contains extracts from a written submission (#40) which was handed to the authors of this report at the community engagement session held at Galiwin'ku on 11 December 2008. It provides a clear expression of the most significant historical starting point for any discussion concerning the future of homelands in the Northern Territory:

- Homelands are the ancestral homes of specific Indigenous groups across the Territory. Their existence, as the Galiwin'ku authors state, substantially predates the arrival of non-Indigenous Australians.
- Homelands represent the intersection of specific areas of country, with individual, social and spiritual Indigenous identities. That is, they do not represent random settlements "where people go for a better lifestyle" away from the larger communities created by non-Indigenous agents. In contrast, homelands represent particular living areas in which each Indigenous individual and group is based in order to fulfil their own cultural obligations to their inherited country and its underlying traditional Law.

In summary, before any decisions are made by governments about future support and funding, there must be a serious reflection upon, and acknowledgement of the origin and meaning of homelands to Indigenous Territorians.

The post-contact history and policy of homelands and outstations has been summarised, analysed and discussed previously in some detail by a number of authors.² It is important here to briefly touch on the history of service provision

² The short paper by H.C. Coombs on the "Homeland Movement" included in the collection of his essays *Aboriginal Autonomy* (Cambridge University Press, 1994) provides a useful introduction to how a key policy-maker viewed the purpose of homelands in the initial Commonwealth funding period post 1970. Another key reference document is the report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs Report, authored by C.A. Blanchard (Chairman). The report is entitled, *Return to Country: The Aboriginal Homelands movement in Australia* (March, 1987: Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra). A recent discussion is provided by Jon Altman,

to homelands in order to better understand views raised by some participants throughout the community engagement sessions.

Outstation resource agencies (ORAs) and prior to July 1, 2008, some local government councils, delivered essential and other services to a majority of homelands across the Territory beginning, in some cases, back in the 1970s. Of these service agencies, ORAs have been judged to provide a significant “mediating role” between homeland residents and government funding and service agencies over the last 20 or so years.³

On July 1 2008, 8 new “bush” shires were instituted across the Territory replacing numerous local government bodies. These new Shires have currently taken over responsibility for the delivery of services to around a third of all outstations and homelands currently funded through the Municipal and Essential Services (MUNS) program. In contrast, 26 ORAs now provide such services to the remaining two-thirds of all MUNS-funded outstations and homelands.

Following the community engagement sessions in December 2008, it is clear to the authors that the experience of service delivery to outstations and homelands by residents themselves is diverse. That is, some homeland residents praised the service provision delivered by their respective ORA or Shire. However, many had major criticisms or questions regarding both level and frequency of services.

For example, residents from one homeland in Central Australia stated that they had not received any response from their service agency for a period of 3 days after their water supply had run out due to a broken pump. The clear definition of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of both ORAs and Shires in the provision of services will significantly contribute to the continuing sustainability of homelands.

Finally, throughout the community engagement sessions, the authors were frequently presented with current and future visions of homeland life which included:

- IT solutions (broadband; wireless) for education, health, communications and enterprise delivery.
- Participation in the emerging industry of carbon trading/ abatement.
- Participation in eco-tourism, coastal and regional security provision and caring for country/ land management activities.
- Provision of climate change knowledge to government and industry.
- Cultural mediation and exchange services to the wider Territory and Australian communities.
- Provision of cross-cultural education and art-based programs.

Therefore, the authors acknowledge that the future history of homelands lies in their successful innovation and utilisation of emerging economic opportunities and technologies.

2006. In search of an outstations policy for Indigenous Australians. *CAEPR Working Paper 34*. (www.anu.edu.au/caepr/working.php)

³ Jon Altman, (op. cit.) 2006: 6; the reader should note that Altman was also involved in a review of ORAs for ATSIC that was carried out between 1997-8 and published as Altman, J, Gillespie, D. & Palmer, K. 1999. *National Review of Resource Agencies servicing Indigenous communities*. (ATSIC, Canberra)

Community Engagement: method & outcomes

In the first two weeks of December 2008, community engagement sessions on the NT Outstations Discussion Paper were held in 17 locations across the Territory. The following four member team facilitated 16 of these sessions:

Patrick Dodson (DodsonLane)
Paul Lane (DodsonLane)
Daniel Suggit (Socom)
Veronica Birrell (Local Knowledge)

On 3 December at Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Agency near to Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Alison Anderson (MLA, MacDonnell) facilitated a session within her own electorate. Summaries of outcomes from all 17 community engagement sessions are appended to this report (*refer* Appendix 1).

At each of the community engagement sessions, participants were provided with a brief overview presentation which concluded with a series of five questions. The resulting discussions covered both system-wide and local-level issues.

The 5 questions can be found below along with some common responses listed underneath each question heading. It should, however, be noted that there was a diversity of opinion presented across all 17 sessions, and the reader is encouraged to refer to all the appended summary outcome reports to view the detail recorded at each location (*see* Appendix 1).

- 1. What is important to you about living on your outstation/homeland?**
 - It is our country – we belong to our country – from our ancestors.
 - We have cultural obligations to look after our areas – ceremony, grave sites, sacred sites, hunting and fishing areas.
 - Our homelands are the proper place to learn and teach our culture and language – if you live in another person's country it is hard to teach your own culture and language.
 - Social stability – it is important to get away from the problems in the larger towns and communities – it is safer for children out here – safer for everyone. If people live on their own country, groups don't fight over land – there are no arguments like there are in town where different people are heaped up together.
 - We are healthier – physically and spiritually – living on our country – it makes us strong hunting, fishing and visiting our important places.

- 2. Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?**

- Cultural obligations – attendance at funerals, ceremony etc – mean that Aboriginal people are sometimes away from their homeland visiting other areas and other family members.
- All year access to outstations would make it easier for people to stay all through the year – the Wet makes it difficult to be here all year round.
- Effective service delivery and/or greater access to services would also make it easier for people to stay all through the year. A lack of available services may force homeland residents to move into hub communities or towns.
- Starting a business and gaining local training and employment for young people was a common aspiration for many homelands residents.

3. Which services work well in your homeland?

- Health services commonly visit our homelands.
- Solar power systems – ‘bushlight’.
- Land care programs – caring for country programs – bushfire management.

4. What are the barriers to your homeland working well? What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?

- Access to education.
- Communication issues with government agencies.
- Lack of housing and infrastructure.
- Poor telecommunications services.
- Poor roads.
- Quality water supply.
- Public transport for school kids and accessing health and other services in the larger communities.

5. What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- To understand the role of all relevant agencies in the delivery of services to our homeland – it is often unclear who does what and how often – we need this clearly explained to us.
- Regional planning and decision making.
- Economic development opportunities and support; employment and training.
- Funding for access roads to outstations.

- Public transport options for access to schools and other services.
- Housing maintenance and repairs.
- For both Territory and Australian Governments to openly value the major contribution which homelands make to the social, cultural, environmental, economic and security of our regions and to the whole nation.

In addition to the schedule of 17 publicised community engagement sessions, the facilitation team was also invited to visit the Utopia area of outstations in Central Australia. On Friday 5 December, Patrick Dodson, Paul Lane, Daniel Suggit and Barbara Henry (Office of Indigenous Policy, Department of the Chief Minister) met with a number of outstation residents and agency personnel from the Utopia area at Arlparra. From there we were invited to visit Ampilatawatja, Irrultja and Apungalingam. This trip was highly informative and allowed outstation residents to describe their own service provision and infrastructure situations on country.

Prior to the community engagement phase of the project, facilitation team members met with NTG agency personnel and the Minister for Indigenous Policy in October and November 2008 to discuss the most effective community engagement approach and to gain important background information on current service delivery to homelands. Daniel Suggit from the facilitation team liaised throughout November 2008 with DET, Catholic Education Office, NT Christian Schools Association, DH&F, PFES, DLGH and DPI personnel to develop data-sets with accompanying maps which show at both Territory-wide and Shire levels the current delivery of municipal and essential services, primary health care, police and education service provision to homelands throughout the Territory. The preliminary maps prepared by DPI were found to be effective consultation and reference tools throughout the community engagement program in December 2008. The authors would suggest that in the next consultation phase – scheduled from March to June 2009 - these maps are updated and validated with each agency and used during regionally-based discussions with homeland residents and their relevant service agencies and representatives.

Recommendations

The following 20 recommendations were derived from an analysis of the responses from the community engagement sessions facilitated by the authors across the Territory in the first two weeks of December 2008.

In developing a policy for outstations, it is recommended that the Northern Territory Government give consideration to the following:

Definitions

1. The term “homelands” be used to describe what are currently called “outstations” by governments. The official term used by Aboriginal families, groups or clans living on their own country is *homeland*. The term “homeland” also expresses the inherent mobility of remote Indigenous residents and combines the fundamental elements of people and place. The policy definition of homeland should be finalised through further consultations scheduled in 2009.
2. Homelands receive formal status within a Whole-of-Territory planning, service provision and funding schema. For example: homeland, community, town, suburb, city and shire/municipality. Town Camps and Community Living Areas need to be incorporated within such a standardised schema.
3. Homeland *residents* be defined as those who occupy their homeland as a principal place of residence. *Principal place of residence* is to be defined as residing for a minimum of 6 months a year, in which each individual can only maintain one principal place of residence at any given time. Number of residents (principal place of residence definition) per homeland should be one key determinant of service provision and funding level for homelands.
4. Current homelands with principal place of residence populations of over 100 residents should be designated as communities and be serviced and funded to the same level as like Territory communities.
5. The authors understand that there are a number of homelands across the Territory which are primarily non-residential (principal place of residence definition). A few of these homelands are currently used effectively to deliver social, landcare and/or economic programs in remote areas. One obvious example is the Mt Theo Program at Putulu near Yuendumu in Central Australia which is referred to in some detail within the NT Outstations Discussion Paper. It is recommended that such homelands continue to be funded on achievement of program outcomes. There are also a number of non-residential (primary place of residence definition) homelands which may be utilised effectively on an *ad hoc* basis for cultural, recreational, aged care, youth, school and correctional services visits/ programs. In this context, the relevant Homeland Resource Agency or Shire must seek financial contributions

towards maintenance and improvement costs from agencies utilising these remote facilities to achieve their own program outcomes.

Data Collection & Analysis

6. The NTG work with the Australian Government, Shires, Homeland Resource Agencies, Land Councils and homeland residents to create a valid, accessible and annually reviewed data-set on all Territory homelands and remote communities. Such a data-set should include:
 - population (principal place of residence plus visitor categories; number of school-aged children must also be specifically recorded);
 - housing and infrastructure audit;
 - road network audit;
 - communications audit (telephone, satellite and broadband services);
 - service delivery summary for all major services, including municipal and essential services (water, sewage, rubbish management etc), health, education, housing, police. This summary should describe service delivery methods and frequency of provision from hub communities (e.g. school of the air, virtual schooling, weekly primary health care visits);
 - emergency provisions to hub community or town/city services (e.g. maintained airstrip);
 - land tenure status;
 - business activity and economic opportunities;
 - skills audit.

It is noted that the NT Department of Local Government and Housing has commenced an assessment of outstation utilities and municipal services infrastructure. It is sensible that NTG agencies collaborate in the collection of outstation audit data, with co-ordination provided by the Department of the Chief Minister. Additionally, a register of this data needs to be provided by the NTG to all relevant Homeland Resource Agencies and Shires for annual update purposes.

7. The NTG undertakes a comprehensive economic modeling exercise to determine the cost of investing in homelands at both minimum and preferred levels of service delivery. This modeling should include the cost of providing key enabling infrastructure, such as roads and telecommunications, and would support programs which maximize opportunities for economic development and employment.
8. Furthermore, the NTG undertakes a thorough cost/benefit analysis to better understand what might be the effects to the Territory and National economies of continuing to invest or not invest in homelands. For example, it is important to quantify what costs may be incurred by not investing in homelands. For example, loss of potential income from arts and tourism industries; loss of health and wellbeing; increased human services and infrastructure costs (e.g. correctional

services, public housing, homelessness, police, alcohol and drug rehabilitation) through approximately 10,000 remote Indigenous Territorians moving permanently to larger communities and towns/cities with some expected increase in anti-social behaviour. Finally, the cost benefit analysis needs to account for the significant contributions which homelands make (and could potentially make) to the cultural, social, health, environmental, economic and security values enjoyed by all Territorians and all Australians.

Policy Development and further consultation

9. Following sufficient data collection and the completion of economic modeling and a cost/benefit analysis, the NTG and its agencies will be better placed to begin the process of developing a draft policy for future public consultation. Drawing on this research base, the key NT agencies will also be able to work collaboratively to model cost-effective regional solutions to meet the diverse reality of homelands within the Territory context.
10. During the community engagement sessions in December 2008, participants were informed that further community consultation on the development of the homelands policy would occur in March through June 2009. It is recommended that during these future consultation sessions that all available data, including the outcomes from the economic modeling study and the cost/benefit analysis, as well as NTG proposed regional models of delivery are presented for public comment. In addition, preliminary maps of homelands and service delivery to homelands that were presented to participants in December 2008 – once updated and refined – could also be utilised to assist the facilitation of community input into the policy development and future implementation processes. The authors appreciate that much work needs to be undertaken by the relevant government agencies to present the above information to the public in 2009. Within this context, the NTG should consider delaying future public consultations until the additional information outlined above has been prepared.

Policy Implementation

11. That the NTG facilitate and coordinate negotiations between Shires and Homeland Resource Agencies (HRAs) to determine as to whom and how the essential and municipal services are to be delivered to all those living in homelands within each Shire area. Those in receipt of such services must be consulted as part of this process. Consideration should also be given to Shires eventually taking over the delivery of all essential and municipal services to homelands as part of their responsibilities as the third tier of Government.
12. The relevant Homeland Resource Agencies and Shires be required to develop, in consultation with each homeland, an annual Service Delivery Plan which will describe the provision of services to each

homeland. In the case where Shires are currently the providers of these services, the Shire Service Delivery Plans should incorporate services to homelands into their overall plan. Shires and Homeland Resource Agencies should be funded to deliver agreed levels of services as defined by their Service Delivery Plans.

13. Funding of Homeland Resource Agencies should take into account their vital connections to homelands and the many services they deliver. Consideration should be given to the proposal that Homeland Resource Agencies might be freed up in the future from the delivery of municipal and essential services, and rather receive funding to support the social, cultural, economic and environmental development of the homelands.
14. Economic development is strongly supported in many homelands. The NTG should work closely with Aboriginal Landowners, Land Councils and the Australian Government to ensure that issues of land tenure are effectively resolved to support future enterprise development. The NTG should consider funding Land Councils to expedite long term tenure arrangements and economic development opportunities for homelands. The negotiation of any tenure arrangement needs to take place within the cultural priority of Aboriginal land holders, and with the support of Land Councils and the NTG.
15. NTG, AG, Aboriginal land holders, and Territory Land Councils should develop shared principles and a process to support economic development on homelands where the relevant consents have been provided. The NTG and Territory Land Councils should work cooperatively to provide quality business, training and employment advice and support to homeland residents on request.
16. Whole-of-Government service delivery agreements should be developed with the involvement of all homelands residents and relevant service agencies to homelands. For example, Homeland Resource Agencies, Shire Councils, DET, DPI, DH&F, OATSIH and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, PFES, Telstra, FaHSCIA and DEWR. These Whole-of-Government Service Delivery Agreements should be available to all homelands. The planning and funding for these processes should be regionally focused.
17. All children resident (principal place of residence definition) at homelands should have access to a quality education. DET should explore and implement a range of innovative ways of delivering education to remote locations, including school of the air and virtual schooling options. A regional approach to education provision is already being applied successfully in some homelands and this approach should be built upon across the Territory.

18. The future housing and infrastructure needs, as well as the repair and maintenance requirements of homelands should be correctly costed and funded so as not to allow for the further deterioration of assets and to deal with issues of overcrowding and/or poor housing standards. This cost should then be compared to the significant contribution by many homeland residents to the cultural, social, economic and environmental wealth of the Territory and the whole nation.
19. Tenants occupying and using existing housing stock on homelands should enter into a care and management agreement. Similarly service providers will ensure standards are met and that essential services such as water, rubbish, sewage and power are provided to homeland residents.
20. The NTG should ensure that homeland residents have access to adequate and safe drinking water supplies, and will create offences for anyone damaging or tampering with the points of water supply or the water.

NT Outstations Policy
Community Engagement

Borroloola

Tuesday, 9 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

Responses to 5 questions

**What is important to you about living on your outstation/
homeland?**

- Returning to country
- Practice ceremony
- Social stability
- Takes pressures off social situation in Borroloola

**Some people live on their homeland for most of the year.
It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for
running an outstation?**

- Development of an economy – participation in business enterprise

Which services work well in your homeland?

- Strong Governance – outstations where people do not sustain their outstations - these are defunded.
- Local and ongoing maintenance processes are very strong
- Skills and training transfers effective
- Service Agreements between outstations are in place so service delivery obligations are known by both parties

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?**

- Caring for Country is an important initiative on outstations in the Borroloola region, but resourcing confusion and uncertainty over funding cause anxiety at the present time.
- Education access – Daily collection of students by vehicles (60% of students each day). Some islands have no education access. Approximately 30% have no education access. Some School of the Air participation
- Uncertainty about future of CDEP
- Limited health services - people must come to Borroloola for health care services
- Robinson River operates like a mainstream community but is still considered an outstation

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Proper engagement with existing Outstation Resource Agency and outstation residents - serious consultation on future policy development is needed.
- Continued resources for Outstation Resource Agency for governance and outstation support
- Funding for access roads to outstations
- Outstations are unable to access IBA funding because titles for lands where outstations are built are held by the local Land Trust. (Therefore any assets built on Trusts Lands become the property of the Trust)
- Regional planning and decision making
- All year access to outstations would make it easier for people to stay throughout the year
- Support from IBA and ILC to develop economic opportunities while sustaining cultural and social activities

- Housing maintenance funding to address Closing the Gap targets
- Re-establish local Aboriginal Health Service
- Better Dental services – currently visits every 3 months (only does extractions)

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Darwin

Monday, 1 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

General Comments:

- Almost all participants at this session were not outstation/homeland residents
- Concerns were raised over lack of planned visits to outstations within the community engagement schedule

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/homeland?

- Places with strong connections to country and family
- Consubstantial connection to the country – religious realities
- Homelands - they are the traditional homes of people
- Places which rejuvenate cultures and languages – to maintain cultural integrity and identity. Places which reproduce cultural, linguistic, social, physical, economic and ecological resilience
- Importance of preservation of cultural and social assets, for example, ceremonies and languages – a national treasure
- Homelands promote self management, it is about
 - choice
 - ownership
 - accountability
 - responsibility
- Outstations are places of intrinsic spiritual connections

- Places for natural resource management and access to bush food, medicines, art materials
- Places for the management of sacred sites
- Places for the maintenance of security, strengthening of social capital, health and well being improvements
- Places to escape social issues which tend to impact in larger communities. Sanctuary from obligation, fights, tensions of sedentary assimilation, residence and density interaction.
- Economic, environmental development and cultural maintenance opportunities:
 - arts
 - rangers
 - eco-tourism
 - pastoralism
- Investments in outstations are not just a matter of how much it is going to cost, but what can be the long term economic benefits to governments from this investment. There may be cost savings through improving physical, mental and social health outcomes.
- Investment in environmental conservation or traditional activity living on country can have economic benefits given the current climate crisis - lots of potential for alternative regional economic development.

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?

- Research is required into how outstations are used and the nature of social mobility between outstations, larger communities and towns. Also the government needs to look at outstations in terms of a broader context, to better understand the impact on townships by any drift from remote communities. The Government must also determine all assets in homelands and outstations: social, cultural and economic.
- Outstations and homelands can be utilised for agency programs such as:

- dry-out shelters
 - safe houses
 - caring for country
 - customs
- Where housing and community infrastructure is adequate outstation living is likely to become a more permanent arrangement
 - Semi permanent occupation of outstations can serve purposes. Such as the maintenance of traditional cultural activities:
 - ceremony
 - land management activities

Which services work well in your homeland?

- Renewable Energy systems are known to work well where they are appropriately maintained; power, water and access are important issues.

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?**

- Roads/Weather
- Lack of responsiveness by some service delivery providers
- Capital expenditure requires recurrent funding to maintain infrastructure and programs
- Lack of sustainable livelihoods and economic opportunity that provide income and opportunity. This is highlighted by the lack of support for access equity in traditional country through the Aboriginal Land rights Act (NT Act 1976)
- Governments are happy to provide services such as school of the air and flying doctor to support small pastoral communities. Why not to outstation communities?

- Constant changes to service delivery systems - Shires don't have the capacity to provide what they are expected to
- Why develop a discrete policy for homelands education for example as opposed to one about distant education?

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- More research is needed to understand questions of economic viability and the impact on health outcomes in relation to outstations
- Recognition of the rights to maintain traditional Aboriginal Social and cultural values without the imposition of a Western value system
- The first step is to acknowledge and accept the quality of life of outstations, and then work to make them viable. Don't start with the idea that they are unviable.
- As people who don't live on outstations we feel we can't directly answer the questions nor say why people choose to live on outstations – but we hope the team acknowledge that outstation people are not a homogenous group and each homeland will have their own experience and policy needs to reflect this.
- Need to look at funding: \$20M for 10,000 people = \$2,000 per person. What would be the costs if 10 000 people moved into towns? Are there figures on the costs of providing adequate services for 10,000 people in urban areas to compare with the \$20M on offer? A cost benefit analysis is needed – for example, the cost of increased anti-social behaviour in larger communities and towns. Need to look at all relevant funding – the whole economy of outstations. Government must co-ordinate the funding buckets to increase efficiencies and value for money.
- The word "outstation" misrepresents the importance of place for first nation's peoples. "Homeland" is a more appropriate term and is most popularly used in the Top End.
- Regional approaches and the use of research-based evidence to guide policy development

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Galiwin'ku

Thursday, 11 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

Prior to the start of the meeting, the facilitators were advised that the community wished to organise and direct the meeting. Community leaders then indicated that they would present their submission and that a number of people from the community and surrounding homelands would speak to that document.

This document has been since registered as written submission #40 by the Office of Indigenous Policy, Department of the Chief Minister.

The consultation team were presented with the written submission which was read aloud to the meeting by a Senior Traditional Owner and subsequently the contents were addressed by a number of other Senior people and a series of questions were asked of the consultants in relation to the community's concerns about the way in which Government Policies and programs were developed and delivered. Much of this was in the context of the Federal Intervention and the changes proposed to the Bi-lingual Education system.

The issues addressed in the Submission were broadly reflective of issues raised in other community meetings attended by the consultation team. However, the structure and processes of the meeting did not allow for a consideration of specific issues as had been the case at the other community engagement sessions.

The large attendance and the responses of affirmation made it very clear that the submission as presented had strong support among all those in attendance, these numbering approximately 200–300 people.

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Gunbalanya

Tuesday, 09 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

General Comments:

- Concern that not enough Homelands people were present at meeting – not the right people present who should be consulted about these issues
- Request for Minister for Indigenous Policy to attend an additional meeting with Homelands people. Mamadawerre (community id #355) was suggested as a possible location for a follow-up meeting.
- Support was expressed for keeping Demed strong as the agency providing delivery of basic services to homelands in the region. Participants spoke of the important history of Demed's role in helping many homelands to establish themselves. Demed has assisted different homelands to develop their "own way" of running their communities over many years.

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/ homeland?

- Cultural maintenance and identity. Teaching places for kids – important places for learning about "our identity" and "who we are." People belong on their own country.
- Homelands are places where we can have "autonomy" and live "our own way"
- Places to practise ceremony and caring for ancestors' burial sites and sacred sites
- They are important places for traditional hunting, fishing and food collection
- Safe place for kids to live when there are social problems in the major communities and towns. Diversion programs can

be run at homelands. They can do bush walking and learn more, to get away from drugs and learn who belongs to the country

- Place for young people to learn leadership and respect
- Homelands are important to our well-being

Some people live on their Homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an Outstation?

- Most Demed homelands are lived on permanently – they receive weekly food deliveries, fortnightly health visits and some receive partial educational service delivery
- There are many cultural reasons why homelands may not be lived in permanently: family feuds, ceremonial obligations away from the homeland which one “cannot miss out on,” attendance at funeral ceremonies and family visiting obligations to other areas
- If homelands do not have enough basic services or limited/poor housing it makes it hard for people to live there all the time

Which services work well in your Homeland?

- Health visits are regular to homelands
- Food deliveries are regular and allow people to live at their homeland through most of the year
- Some rubbish management
- Airstrips are maintained for emergencies - excepting Mandilbarreng (community id # 359)
- Transport for cultural and community use is supported by 4 vehicles run through Demed
- The Council helps with funerals

**What are the barriers to your Homeland working well?
What does not work well at your homestead?**

- Education services are limited in many homelands. Kids often have “broken” schooling as they move between different communities
- Homeland Learning Centre infrastructure is consistently poor and run down
- Education system is not flexible enough to meet cultural needs. Two-way education should be supported. Kids should also learn to write in their own language
- Housing maintenance funding has not been available for 2 years – still no idea when this funding will be made available to fix up many of the houses on homelands
- There are sewage infrastructure issues at Manmoyi (community id # 363). This has implications for public health in this homeland
- Housing availability is a serious problem on homelands. “More babies coming – not enough houses – some people using a tarpaulin or tent for shelter on homelands”
- No employment opportunities so not enough money to live on homelands. No proper jobs – only rubbish collection and cleaning.
- Poor roads in wet season
- Communications are an issue to homelands. Some balanda people don’t understand Aboriginal people. Telephones are often broken down at homelands.
- Some participants questioned how many Aboriginal staff were working full-time at Demed. Questions were raised also about whether there was any receptionist and how the lack of one severely impacted communications to the homelands. Demed staff members informed the meeting that currently Demed employs 17 FTE Aboriginal staff.

What are the key things you need for your Homelands to work well?

- There was some discussion about the need for the provision of business support and advice to homelands. Participants acknowledged the need for homeland communities “to go forward” with enterprise and employment opportunities.
- Education, training and employment pathways need to be supported for homeland communities
- Training for horticulture, cooking, sewing and women’s health
- More educational opportunities in homelands – more literacy and numeracy. Mobile preschools would help homeland communities to develop into the future
- More support from the Police in case of trouble or death. Need to have access to female police officers.

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Katherine

Wednesday, 10 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

General Comments:

- Representatives from Mistake Creek, Bamboo Springs, Brumby Plains, Old Top Springs, Kalkarinji, Dagaragu, Bulman, Jilkminggan/ Mole Hill/ Mulgan, Minyerri, Ngukurr, Roper Valley/ Kenulyi and Wardaman outstations were present at this session
- The meeting requested that the Minister for Indigenous affairs attend the next meeting in Katherine during the future consultation period scheduled from March – June 2009
- The meeting requested a summary be made available to participants through the relevant Shire and Resource agencies

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/ homeland?

- To maintain and sustain our cultural and language heritage
- To care for our country and protect sacred sites and sites of significance
- "It is my country where I can be buried"
- Care for the past and our ancestors – burial sites
- Outstations should be called "homelands" or "communities" – they are our homes
- Provide a healthy lifestyle – hunting and gathering
- Healing places
- A safe place compared to larger communities and towns – a good place for people to come "during troublesome times"

- We belong to the country. They are spiritual places.
- Important places to teach our law and culture
- Create opportunities to develop our own economic base and businesses

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?

- Many outstations are occupied most of the year. In the Wet, many outstations are vacant due to poor road maintenance.
- Some people can't stay on their outstations because of a lack of funding and service support
- A lack of transport is another reason why some outstations are unoccupied
- Death and ceremony are parts of Aboriginal life where people must leave communities and their homes. This is another reason why some outstations may not be occupied permanently
- The outstation at Dilinya used to have a healing program running there for the East Katherine region. The program no longer receives funding support from government.

Which services work well in your homeland?

- Power and Water services
- Health services (delivered from Kununurra in W.A. to N.T. border outstations)
- Education and Telstra at Kalkarinji
- Resource Centre and health service at Lajamanu

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?**

- Getting good support from our local service agency – no regular community meetings. Confusion over which agency has responsibility for each outstation
- The management of contractors doing work at outstations
- Poor quality roads – limited access to services
- Transport for kids to attend school
- Not enough houses
- Education delivery options – preschool, primary and secondary
- Poor telephone communications; no internet access or fax
- Cross-border (WA/NT) issues – who has responsibility for service delivery? Some NT outstations currently receive assistance from WA agencies (resource and health services)
- Essential services (R&M housing and equipment; waste management and sewerage) at Bulman outstations
- Housing repairs and maintenance

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- The same level of essential services that other people in Australia receive
- Good roads
- All season airstrips for emergencies
- New housing – too overcrowded at the moment
- Power solutions – solar plus generator
- Water quality improved – only bore water at some outstations

- Mobile pre-school service
- Job creation, capacity development and training opportunities
- The development of a regional plan
- Funding for business development to provide on-going employment opportunities
- Boarding accommodation for children to attend high school

NT Outstations Policy
Community Engagement

Maningrida

Friday 12 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

Responses to 5 questions

**What is important to you about living on your outstation/
homeland?**

- Returning to country
- Practice ceremony
- Social stability
- Takes pressures off social situation in Maningrida
- Lifestyle
- Safety of Children

**Some people live on their homeland for most of the year.
It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for
running an Outstation?**

- Development of an economy – enterprises
- Tourism opportunities
- Central to sustaining cultural life

Which services work well in your homeland?

- Strong Service support from local Outstation Resource Agency
- Local and ongoing maintenance processes are very strong
- Skills and training transfer are effective
- Caring for Country programmes are very strong and effective

- Employment through Caring for Country and CDEP supports homeland endeavours
- Health outcomes on Outstations are better than when living in a large community.

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well on your outstation/ homeland?**

- Caring for Country is an important initiative on homelands in the region, but some resourcing confusion and a lack of certainty in regard to on-going funding
- Access to education
- Uncertainty about future of CDEP
- Housing maintenance funding uncertainty

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Continued resourcing of Outstation Resource Agencies for the support of governance and outstation service delivery
- Funding for access roads to homelands
- Regional planning and decision making
- All year access to homelands would make it easier for people to stay throughout the year
- Support from IBA and ILC to develop economic opportunities while sustaining cultural and social activities and values
- Housing maintenance and additional investment to address Closing the Gap policy and program commitments
- Increased support for local Aboriginal Health Service
- Sustain CDEP Funding

NT Outstations Policy
Community Engagement

Naiiyu/ Daly River
Friday 12 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

Responses to 5 questions

**What is important to you about living on your outstation/
homeland?**

- It is our own home, homeland, country – we belong here. If you don't look after your own country, other people come in and claim it as theirs. Argument starts when people don't look after their own country.
- These places are close to ceremony and burial areas – “we worry for that country”
- Need to look after and learn about our own country and culture
- Holiday places – hunting and fishing too
- Opportunity to develop businesses on our own country: e.g. farming crocodiles, buffalo industry, timber and furniture making, art and craft and cultural tourism.

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an Outstation?

- Older people are the main ones living on the outstations – not many kids. Some of the outstations are not lived in permanently.
- At Wudicupildiya and Peppimenarti people are looking at starting businesses on their own country which can employ the kids. For example, the incubation of crocodile eggs.
- Kelerrk outstation runs cultural tourism for school kids
- Parry family at “Mango Farm” want to use their outstation as a base camp for commercial pig shooting and cultural tourism. Require business advice and support.

Which services work well in your homeland?

- Health services visit regularly although there is a clinic building there but can't get staff to stay in the community.

What are the barriers to your homeland working well? What does not work well on your outstation/ homeland?

- Transport and good roads is a major barrier to living on these outstations. In the wet season, health visits are difficult to the outstations.
- Education services are hard – kids have to go to boarding school in Darwin to do high school
- Need new houses
- No permanent Government employees
- No regular communication or feedback from the relevant agencies
- No transparency in Resource Centre, Shire and Northern Land Council decision-making, funding and service delivery allocations.
- Woodiculpidiya has a "beautiful" health centre but no permanent nurse based in the community. Need a full-time nurse.
- Woodiculpidiya needs its own shop
- Development royalties need to go back to those people living on their own country.

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Business planning and development advice and support to outstation residents
- Follow-up from government and non-government agencies after each visit/promise

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Nguiu

Monday, 1 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

General Comments:

- Some concern at the meeting that not enough outstation people were present
- One participant was interested in building a new outstation at Deception point

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/homeland?

- It is our home – we have a strong feeling for our own country
- These are places where we can maintain and teach our cultural traditions
- They are places which promote pride – for example, residents tend to keep their houses cleaner at outstations
- They are quiet, peaceful and safe places with “no humbug,” as opposed to town or larger community living

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?

- Access to many outstations are limited during the Wet
- Paru (community ID #407) 7 houses but only 2 (non-Tiwi) people living there

Which services work well in your homeland?

- School at Rangku (#868)

- Repairs and Maintenance to houses in all outstations except Paru (#407)

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?**

- Road network is poor
- No public transport system available – especially at Putjamirra (#1020) and Rangku (#868)
- Telephone service is not reliable at Rangku (#868)
- Some participants reported that there were no emergency health services and no weekly health visits to Rangku (#868) from Nguiu – this was disputed at the meeting.
- Not enough housing stock

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Airstrip for Rangku (#868)
- Invest in the local road network
- Public transport solutions would increase access to health, education and employment opportunities
- Explore the possibility of virtual schooling in outstations (Marion Scrymgour, MLA noted that both Bathurst and Melville Island had access to fibre optical telecommunications cabling)
- Increase housing stock
- Support and invest in economic development opportunities (e.g. Rangku - #868)
- Develop a local service level agreement with all relevant service agencies, the Land Council and the Shire to define service delivery standards, responsibilities and deliverables to outstations. It was proposed that the local Federal Government Business Manager might co-ordinate the development of such an agreement.

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Ngukurr

Monday, 8 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/ homeland?

- Through the law from generation to generation it sustains us as Aboriginal people
- Pass on our law and knowledge to our children in their roles as Traditional Owners
- Greater social peace and harmony than in the main community
- Escape from gunja, alcohol and fighting
- Caring for Country
- It is our home, where we come from

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?

- Access to Bush medicines
- Feral Animal Control
- Land Care
- Ranger work

Which services work well in your homeland?

- Community cohesion
- Land Care projects

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?**

- Wet season interrupts the continuous ability to live on the outstations
- Access to education
- Access to health services
- Maintaining airstrips
- Transport

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Create greater access to health services
- To build a strong Homelands Resource Agency
- Support from Northern Land Council
- Education access
- Bushlight systems to save on energy costs
- Enterprise and business development support
- Bridges and roads maintenance
- Satellite dishes for school and communication
- Water tanks

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Tennant Creek

Wednesday, 3 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/ homeland?

- Looking after country, sacred sites and burial places
- Maintaining and developing the culture – performing traditional ceremonies
- Working with elders and keeping our stories and history alive – young families returning to their grandparents' country
- Its home and living there makes your spirit feel good. It makes your identity strong – we belong to our country– we are not mixed up with other tribes like we are in town. Living on someone else's country makes you sick – you have no power, no say and no control.
- Better health outcomes
- Social stability and less “humbug”
- Builds stronger connections between generations
- Healthy place – greater access to bush foods and exercise
- Safe place for women to raise children (“town is trouble”: underage drinking, etc)
- “We are not respected for our ability for caring for country and the contribution we make”

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?

- Training in life skills for young people
- Development of an economic base and enterprise development options
- Lack of access to schooling, health and other services prevents more permanent residency
- Some people don't live on their outstations permanently for cultural reasons such as for sorry business and ceremony
- Some people don't live there permanently because of work, health, training or educational commitments
- Lack of a good water supply prevents some people from living on their outstations

Which services work well in your homeland?

- Bushlight and solar power works well
- Solar powered bores
- Solar phones ok – although cut out when working in wet/ cloudy conditions
- Health services work well with many outstations
- Emergency responses to essential services issues, e.g. power, water and sewage

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?**

- Some schools are not accessible to outstations. Hostels in town are not the answer
- No access to reliable transport – kids need to get to school

- Need to have better lines of communication with officials – “we are not nuisances and should not be treated as out of sight out of mind”
- Language can be a barrier – people need to communicate effectively. Requests in writing are also a common barrier to getting many things done
- Some outstation people do not have good English skills
- Lack of modern communications to address safety and economic development issues
- Lack of economic and employment opportunities
- Access to a wide range of health services
- The cost of living on outstations is prohibitive
- Difficult to maintain infrastructure
- Access to water and poor water quality (bores were originally used for cattle only)
- Lack of interest from agencies and poor response times from service deliverers
- Lack of housing, infrastructure and roads
- Some confusion over rent and leasing legislation in relation to outstations
- Not enough housing
- Don't know how rates are going to affect living on our homelands
- Confusion and concern over future cancellation of CDEP and implications for outstations

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Better Infrastructure
- Better water supplies

- More roads and housing maintenance
- Service agencies to visit regularly and deliver basic services
- Equity in funding with mainstream communities
- Access to schools
- Better access to health clinics
- Access to economic development and business planning advice, e.g. tourism, arts and craft and tree planting
- Regionalisation of services and resources
- Resource planning processes for community and economic development are needed. To assist this process you need good data on population and other factors that are fundamental to planning.
- Provision of airstrips for emergency services, e.g. Police and Health
- Training to go along with service provision, for example, training local residents to maintain a power plant
- More mobile services, for example, health and playgroups for kids
- Outstations and their service agencies should investigate alternative funding sources, e.g. corporate and/or philanthropic relationships

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Ti Tree

Thursday, 4 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/ homeland?

- Aboriginal homelands existed a long-time before white governments made laws in Australia
- Homelands are spiritual places – spirits must rest there after Aboriginal people pass away on their own country
- Aboriginal people have fundamental rights to live on their traditional lands
- Aboriginal people have a different culture from white people who live in the city – “we have a different identity – your way of life is not my way of life... If housing and government funding make trouble for my family – let the government take it away. Family is more important we’ll go back to our old ways of living if we have to. We were healthier then too. I don’t want to be flash, I never went to school. I don’t need a flash house, flash car and talk flash English.”

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?

- Aboriginal people have cultural obligations to visit other relations away from their outstations, for example, for sorry business and ceremony

Which services work well in your homeland?

- There has been some investment in Education service delivery in the Utopia area with 6 schools/ homeland learning centres and a proposed Middle School planned to be built at Arlparra in 2009. Aboriginal people need quality education on a par with non-Indigenous Australians.

- Aileron receives weekly visit from the Ti Tree nurse and Aged Care services routinely visit as well.

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?**

- Significant levels of investment in health and education are needed in the bush
- Lack of continuity in programs and policy does not allow for real development to occur in outstations
- Shire reforms have created confusion for outstation people
- Water supply is a major problem for Aileron outstation – pipes have been broken – lots of water not getting to the houses. The bore is also an issue. Contacted Shire but the outstation had no water for 3 days.
- Septic tank at Aileron is broken – no rubbish removal (dump in town)

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Early childhood program and playground for kids at Aileron
- Business advice and support for Aileron is needed
- Better communication and service delivery by Shire to Aileron outstation

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Timber Creek

Monday, 8 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/ homeland?

- This is our own country - from grandfather. We belong to this area. Connections to our land.
- A place to strengthen our families and our identity
- A safe place
- Our culture, dreaming – “deep reasons.” We have cultural obligations to look after the country. We need to stay together in our clans
- A place to pass on and teach cultural knowledge, values and traditions
- Opportunity to start our own business on our country

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?

- We like to visit all year round – it is our permanent home
- Government agencies make our people go to town during the wet because of costs to fly in food and services. We lose outstation people to the pub when they go to town
- Aboriginal people need to leave a place when a family member passes away. It is our law.
- At ceremony and sorry business times, Aboriginal people need to visit other family members out of respect.

- Sometimes important equipment is removed by the service agency without telling the families. When the community returns there is no water pump and we have to wait in town until the outstation is fixed up.

Which services work well in your homeland?

- Essential services – rubbish run, power and water, maintenance of pumps and generators by Ngaliwurru-wuli Association
- CDEP
- Bush fire Management
- Caring for country program
- Katherine West Health Board provides good visiting health services to outstations

What are the barriers to your homeland working well? What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?

- Roads and distance. In the wet season the Gilwi road becomes hard to travel. A lot of road infrastructure work needs to be undertaken throughout the region to allow families to stay on their outstations
- No public transport
- A concern that money put aside for outstations is not getting to them, and that there is no accountability on service providers to deliver services to the outstations
- Good communications – telephone
- Some people living in a shed with no septic
- Uncertainty over the future of CDEP – this program has led to the development and employment of a number of Aboriginal health workers, mechanics and carpenters into full-time work
- Kids need to live with their parents. The Federal Intervention has talked a lot about how there are problems within Aboriginal families. Governments must allow kids to live in

their outstations and also to attend school either at the outstation or to provide transport to attend Timber Creek school. The kids from Fitzroy outstation currently must live closer into town to get picked up by the school bus. This means that some kids are not living with their own parents.

- There needs to be better communication between school teachers and the parents of the kids.

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Sports and Recreation facilities
- Child care and Playgroups
- Aged Care services
- Women's centre
- Repairs and Maintenance to existing equipment – for example, generator and water pumps
- Airstrips for emergencies (Gilwi, Bobs Yard and Barrak-Barrak)
- Housing shortage
- Rubbish Dump maintenance
- Fencing
- Access to machinery and equipment, for example, a tractor
- A regular bus service for kids to attend school and others to visit the clinics and other town services
- Employment, training and enterprise opportunities for young people
- Business planning advice and support to increase economic development opportunities

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Tjuwanpa near Ntaria
Wednesday, 3 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

General Comments:

- Representatives from Labrapuntja, 8 Mile, Yakala/Tnyimipurta Ntakarra, Ltira, West Waterhouse, Ilkaralama, Camel Hump, Arrkapa, Rutjingka, Alkngurrintja and Palm Paddock outstations were present at this meeting
- The meeting was facilitated by Alison Anderson, MLA and the following summary is derived from notes taken by Cynthia Lang from the Department of Local Government and Housing.

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/ homeland?

- Caring for country
- People don't really like to live in the bigger communities – there is safety on our outstations – it is also a means to retain cultural connections, practices and preservation.

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?

- Currently, there is a generational change, where older people are moving closer to a central or hub community. Older people still need to know they can go back and that the place will be there for their grandchildren. Many are turning to their grand-children to take over the responsibility for caring for their outstation and traditional country

Which services work well in your homeland?

- Essential services

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?**

- Roads and transport are key issues. The issue is not just ownership of a vehicle but ability to maintain it. Road conditions destroy vehicles at an accelerated rate. Income Management impedes an individual's ability to meet the costs of vehicle maintenance
- Some discussion about which agency – the Shire or the Resource Agency – has responsibility for roads to and between outstations
- Housing and overcrowding - overcrowding within communities may be addressed possibly through Shire and Outstation Resource Agency negotiating access to vacant houses on outstations. This could be complicated by ties to country and the right family group would need to be assigned a house on an appropriate outstation
- Housing tenancy and rent issues - it was discussed how people will no longer be able to be both a Territory housing tenant in a Town as well as have a community house and or outstation house. At the meeting the following question was raised: are people allowed to pay rent on two houses? Sometimes a family may need to stay for periods at a time because of health needs in town.
- Big changes to CDEP will impact on the Resource Centre and ability to service outstations at the same level.

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Regional transport planning and funding
- Better joint planning and co-ordination between the new Shire and the Outstation Resource Agency - Tjuwanpa Board of Management expressed a willingness to engage in a MOU or partnership arrangement with the Shire for roads and housing maintenance and any other area that may serve a mutual benefit.
- Enterprise and business planning advice and expertise

- Clarification of the lease arrangements over outstations in the area and the implications of these for housing funding and maintenance
- Housing, power and infrastructure maintenance training for outstation residents so that many problems can be fixed more cheaply and quickly

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Waderr

Thursday, 11 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

General Comments:

- Representatives from Nardidi, Kuy, Kubuyirr, Yederr, Ngudaniman (Fossil Head), and Nama and Wudapuli outstations were present at this session.

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/ homeland?

- To keep languages and culture strong – to look after our totems and our cultural sites
- Identity is important. It is our traditional country. Aboriginal people must follow their own language and country. Aboriginal people shouldn't become "mixed-up" by living on other peoples' country
- Children can learn from their elders: hunting and ceremony
- Old people need to be looked after on their outstations
- Keep health and well-being strong through exercise, living in the bush, fresh air, peace and eating bush tucker
- Living on your own country encourages self-esteem and the growth of the spirit
- Towns and large communities have bad aspects: kids stay up late and eat "rubbish" food; there is violence and gang behaviour; drug taking. Outstations allow small family groups to get away from the negative parts of town and large community life. Outstations can act as places to "escape" from the problems of larger communities.
- To keep the country alive and to look after the burial places of ancestors. Aboriginal peoples' spirits return to their own traditional country and need looking after by their countrymen

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?

- Some outstations in the region are visited frequently for general recreation purposes, i.e. "picnic and holiday place." Participants suggested that other funding sources could be used to support these non-residential facilities. For example, Aged Care, Youth Services and Correctional Services might fund the general up-keep of these areas to allow social, rehabilitation and recreational programs to be run outside of the larger communities.
- In the past, outstations have been used to place community members who are fulfilling court orders. Outstations can be a good location for such programs, since ex-offenders are not generally exposed to the anti-social behaviours common to larger community settings

Which services work well in your homeland?

- Education goes out to some outstations (Kuy). Nama and Wudapuli have a good school building.
- Health services visit on a fortnightly basis
- Airstrips for emergencies are generally ok
- Mains power, water and sewerage all work well (Nama & Wudapuli)
- At Wudapuli and Nama women do the gardens around the houses and the men do the rubbish run

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?**

- A key problem is there is no agency that currently communicates, informs and explains the delivery of services to outstations and their residents. Outstations are getting lost in the Waderr region. Participants requested more information on the roles of both the Shire and Resource agencies in delivering services to outstations.

- No agency visits the outstations regularly. There are no meetings organised for outstations.
- There is no regular program of essential services and housing maintenance to outstations
- Power is an issue in many outstations. Kuy has no power currently and they get no assistance when there are breakdowns. There needs to be a solution to power issues. Hybrid systems – solar plus back-up diesel generators – need to be considered as cost efficient systems for remote communities
- Many houses are falling down in outstations (e.g. Kubuyirr)
- Roads to outstations are generally poor (e.g. Kuy, Fossil Head/ Ngudaniman, Kubuyirr & Yederr).
- A consistent water supply can be an issue (e.g. Yederr, Fossil Head/ Ngudaniman)
- Not many transport options for outstation residents. Wudapuli will need a bus next year to pick up the children
- Radio communications (HF/ UHF) between outstations and major surrounding communities need attention (e.g. Yederr). There is no-one in charge of monitoring radio communications from outstations.
- Yederr representatives also noted that they need assistance with shade sheds, toilets and lawn mowing.
- Kuy representatives also noted that there is not a consistent delivery of diesel and oil to their outstation, and that they need help with lawn mowing.
- Fossil Head/ Ngudaniman representatives also mentioned that they have no working telephone and there is no maintenance of their airstrip, generator and pump.
- Wudapuli representatives also requested that their airstrip be fixed up. Nama and Wudapuli representatives also noted that there is no working telephone and no mobile phone coverage. Furthermore, there was a need identified by this group for more houses “for all the clan,” a rubbish dump (“good one with a fence”) and a shaded meeting area

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Enterprise, employment and training is a key to the future success of outstations. There are not enough job opportunities in many of the outstations. Business plans must be developed to support homelands and outstations. For example, some communities might grow vegetables and farm chickens to sell to others.
- Education services can be supported through access to a trained teacher who can work with a local person to build an effective teaching team in outstations.

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Yirrkala

Wednesday, 10 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/ homeland?

- This is our home and we have returned to Homelands on our own initiative. It is central to our lives, our culture, our language and the well-being of our people.
- Important to live on traditional lands for the maintenance of law, language, ceremony and culture
- Yolngu law requires us to maintain our kinship to the land
- Drug and alcohol free lifestyle
- Community safety for women and children
- Both ways education
- The land owns me – it is the future it has story, song and dance
- It is our identity – our whole being
- These places sustain our family identity

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?

- Yolngu have a right to live on their homelands as traditional landholders – as Yolngu people
- Maintain the country and fulfil cultural obligations
- Protect sites
- Seasonal access to bush plants and foods

- To provide a safe environment for children
- Opportunity to develop enterprises – tourism, art etc.

Which services work well in your homeland?

- CDEP Training
- Homeland Education
- Homeland Health Services
- ORA - Laynhapuy Homelands Service
- Land care and management
- Bushlight systems
- Community Safety
- Health Outcomes

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?**

- Limited essential services funding
- People are poor but land is rich
- Poor housing
- Road access
- Sewage systems are poor
- Transport, access roads and airstrips
- Communications
- Capacity for emergency evacuation
- Housing maintenance
- Resources are often allocated to mainstream communities
- Reliable and affordable power and water

- Access to police services when required
- Uncertainty over the future of CDEP
- Lack of proper Government Consultation and negotiation

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Regional decision making and service delivery
- Resources for essential services
- Housing maintenance
- Strong and well resourced education services
- Strong and well resourced health services delivered on the homelands
- Capacity to determine our own futures
- Proper informed consultation with Government and agencies
- Support for mentoring – an exchange of cultural skills between both cultures
- Support for Yolngu leadership
- Support for development of economies in the Yolngu way
- Better road access
- Training
- Consistency of funding
- Access to more Bushlight systems

NT Outstations Policy Community Engagement

Yuendumu

Thursday, 4 December 2008

Meeting Outcomes Summary

Responses to 5 questions

What is important to you about living on your outstation/ homeland?

- Central to the lives of the Warlpiri for sustaining their traditional country
- Education and training of young people on country – traditional language and knowledge
- Aboriginal people need to be buried on their country
- Dreaming places and sacred sites need to be looked after
- Nurturing role of bush medicines and foods
- Homelands are important for keeping families safe – kids can get away from problems and trouble
- “Ngurrawalarla” = “home-ownership place” is the Warlpiri word for homeland

Some people live on their homeland for most of the year. It is their permanent home. Are there other reasons for running an outstation?

- Mt Theo/ Putulu (#117) provides a youth rehabilitation program that has contributed to many families – traditional owners are seeking the construction of more houses for residential needs – the argument is that they have saved government lots of money through the local provision of an important human service
- Aboriginal people have cultural obligations to attend funerals and ceremonies

Which services work well in your homeland?

- Local health services do visit most outstations
- Bushlight solar power systems are effective

**What are the barriers to your homeland working well?
What does not work well at your outstation/ homeland?**

- Water supplies are a major issue in the region
- The maintenance of water pumps and bores is also a concern
- Roads are poorly maintained
- Consistent telecommunications and kids playground is needed at Mt Denison (# 110). Also, no nurse visits currently and no airstrip at Mt Denison.

What are the key things you need for your homeland to work well?

- Explore the use of local Indigenous rangers to work under the Shire to provide services to outstations
- Rent should be paid on outstations if services are delivered
- A consistent quality water supply is needed for all outstations
- Shire needs to support the development of a local board dedicated to outstations in the region to advise the Shire on their needs and to receive clear information and advice
- Economic development opportunities and business advice – e.g. employ local road crews

Appendix 2

HOMELANDS COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS 2008 ATTENDANCE NUMBERS			
Number of Meetings	Estimated number of attendees at meetings	Number Homeland resident, name and contact details supplied	Number of government and community representatives contact details supplied
1. Galiwinku	180	23	0
2. Maningrida	75	52	23
3. Ngukurr	73	72	1
4. Borroloola	31	23	8
5. Yirrkala	54	53	1
6. Timber Creek	34	32	2
7. Tenant Creek	70	43	7
8. Yuendumu	35	22	5
9. Ti Tree	35	21	2
10. Darwin	24	0	24
11. Nguiu	25	24	1
12. Alice Springs	58	19	39
13. Tjuwanpa	34	20	14
14. Gunbalanya	22	16	6
15. Katherine	51	40	11
16. Wadeye	37	31	6
17. Daly River	12	12	0
18. Oenpelli	35	17	12
Total	905	520	161