

## Tangentyere Council Inc.

PO Box 8070  
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871  
Ph. (08) 8951 4222  
Fax (08) 8952 8521  
Email: tangentyere@tangentyere.org.au



9 June 2008

Committee Secretary  
Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

### **RE: SUBMISSION FROM TANGENTYERE COUNCIL, ALICE SPRINGS TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

Thank you for providing Tangentyere Council with an opportunity to submit to the select committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities.

The following comments relate to the inquiry, under the following Terms of Reference:

*That a select committee, to be known as the Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities, be appointed to inquire into and report on:*

- a. the effectiveness of Australian Government policies following the Northern Territory Emergency Response, specifically on the state of health, welfare, education and law and order in regional and remote Indigenous communities;*
- b. the impact of state and territory government policies on the wellbeing of regional and remote Indigenous communities;*
- c. the health, welfare, education and security of children in regional \*and remote Indigenous communities; and*
- d. the employment and enterprise opportunities in regional and remote Indigenous communities.*

Overall, I emphasise the following points:

1. In relation to Tangentyere Council and the town camps of Alice Springs at this point in time, the NT Emergency Response has not resulted in more resources and opportunities for people.

In particular I make the following comments:

- There has been no additional money or resources for programs for town camps, whether it be in housing, family and children's services, services for frail or elderly people, early childhood development or night patrols, all areas that could well be considered crucial to child and family safety and welfare.

- The scrapping of Tangentyere CDEP in November 2007 resulted in all but 35 of 280 CDEP participants were made welfare dependent rather than being able to make a contribution to their communities. We are pleased that this scheme is to be reintroduced, although it is noted that the number of participants will be reduced from 280 to 125.
  - In relation to housing, we are falling behind in comparison to housing allocations elsewhere. The announcement in April 2008 of an allocation of \$647 million for housing construction, refurbishment and infrastructure developments did not include any allocation for town camps in Alice Springs.
  - In addition, the remaining \$7.5M of the \$10M upgrade for housing allocated by the NT government in 2006 has been put on hold subject to discussions on tenure. And while town camps receive the equivalent of only \$2,200 per house per year for maintenance, under the Local Government Reform in the NT, there will be an allocation of the equivalent of \$8,000 per house per year for maintenance.
2. Damage is being done to people's self esteem and to their pride in their Aboriginal identity due to the race basis on which the NTER rests.
- Preliminary findings from Tangentyere Council's research on the impact of the NTER indicate that town camp residents feel some positive impacts, and also significant negative impacts, including feeling powerless, discriminated against, and ashamed that people perceive them as child sexual predators.
  - In the past, people hid their Aboriginality due to shame. Deborah Mailman commented on this in relation to her father recently on "Enough Rope":
 

*It took me ages to understand where he was coming from because there was a whole generation and a generation who were brought up to be ashamed of who they were. You know, so that's in here.*
  - I want to avoid a situation where people once again feel shame at being Aboriginal. Having policies based on race, and suspending the Racial Discrimination Act in order to be able to do so, sets us back on the path of reinforcing negative stereotypes, and makes it just that much harder for those who battle against the odds, but are nevertheless treated in the same way as those who are doing the wrong thing.

This submission that follows my cover letter is divided in three sections:

**Part One. Specific Interventions on Town Camps in Alice Springs as a result of the NT Emergency Response**

This is a brief overview of which aspects of the package of measures that make up the NT Emergency Response have and have not been applied to town camps in Alice Springs.

**Part Two. Services, Facilities and Resources for Town Camps following the NT Emergency Response**

This provides information under various headings on whether resources and services for town camps have increased, decreased or experienced no change after the NT Emergency Response

**Part Three - Attachments.**

These include:

1. Brief overview of Tangentyere programs and the history of town camps in Alice Springs
2. Matrix of Tangentyere Council's recommended action on intervention measures
3. Impact of income management.
4. Description of Tangentyere's Food Voucher system
5. CDEP recommendations and response to discussion papers
6. Comments for Tangentyere Job Shop
7. Briefing Paper on Tangentyere Day and Night Patrols
8. Summary of preliminary findings from Intervention Research

Yours sincerely



William Tilmouth  
Executive Director

## **Tangentyere Council Inc.**

PO Box 8070  
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871  
Ph. (08) 8951 4222  
Fax (08) 8952 8521  
Email: tangentyere@tangentyere.org.au



# **SUBMISSION FROM TANGENTYERE COUNCIL, ALICE SPRINGS TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

## **PART ONE. NT EMERGENCY RESPONSE (NTER) MEASURES FOR TOWN CAMPS IN ALICE SPRINGS**

The following specific actions have been part of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) for town camps in Alice Springs.

1. Welfare quarantining (income management)
  - Income management began on town camps on 7 January 2008.
  
2. Abolition of CDEP/ creation of real jobs
  - Tangentyere CDEP had an allocation of 280 positions and was abolished on 16 November 2007.
  - Approximately 15 full time equivalent positions (filled part-time by 35, almost all of whom were people from town camps) were created at Tangentyere Council in recognition of a number of CDEP jobs actually being “real” jobs. These are funded to end June only at this stage. It is expected that CDEP will recommence on 1 July.
  
3. Alcohol and Pornography
  - All town camps have been declared dry.
  - Very large signs have been placed at the entrance to town camps specifying prohibition of pornography and alcohol.
  - No one in the NT can buy more than \$100 worth of alcohol without showing identification and stating where it will be drunk.
  
4. Health Checks
  - A total of 261 health checks have been undertaken on children living on town camps (29.05.08). The main health problems identified have been infections especially trachoma, scabies, lice, and anemia.

5. Government Business Managers

- A government business manager has just been appointed to Tangentyere Council for three months, and will cover Amoonguna and outstations around Alice Springs, as well as the town camps.

The following measures have been imposed on remote prescribed communities in the Northern Territory as part of the NTER, but not on town camps.

1. Compulsory Acquisition of Town Camp Housing Associations' Leasehold.
  - No notices for acquisition of town camps have been served. Tangentyere Council is proposing a 20 year sub lease arrangement with the NT government, with the establishment of an Affordable Housing Company
2. Abolition of Permits
  - As town camps do not come under the NT Lands Rights Act, the removal of the permit system that applied to remote communities under the NT Emergency Response did not affect town camps in any legal sense. Tangentyere Council requests that those wishing to visit town camps to apply for permission to do so. However their proximity to town has made this difficult to enforce and town camps have been vulnerable to scams at various times because of this proximity.

For an overview of all the programs and services provided by Tangentyere Council, as well as a brief history of the town camps in Alice Springs, please see Attachment 1.

For a list of Tangentyere's recommendations in relation to the range of measures under the NTER, please see Attachment 2.

## PART TWO. IMPACT OF THE NTER ON SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR TOWN CAMP COMMUNITIES

The following comments relate to the impact of measures undertaken as part of the NTER and to whether there has been an increase, decrease or no change to services and facilities for town camps in Alice Springs, following the NTER. These comments are grouped under the following major headings:

1. Housing
2. Health
3. Income management
4. Education
5. Security of Children
6. Employment and Enterprise Activities
7. Law and Order
8. Wellbeing

These areas are not listed in priority order. All of these areas are interconnected and considered to be of high priority.

However two areas are considered crucial for improving the conditions of town camp residents in the short to medium term. These are **housing**, because of its importance to enabling education, health and wellbeing to improve, and **community centres on town camps**, because they enable access to mainstream education, health, early childhood development, playgroups and other programs, as well as ownership by residents of the situation and services on their own town camp.

### 1. Housing

- There has been no change to funding available to Tangentyere Housing programs or to the number of houses on town camps as a result of the NTER.
- The announcement in April 2008 of an allocation of \$547 million, by the Australian government over the next four years through the Northern Territory Government, with a further \$100 million from the Territory Government for housing construction, refurbishment and infrastructure developments, did not include any allocation for town camps in Alice Springs.
- It appears that, at this stage, the town camps in Alice Springs are not receiving the same level of assistance for housing needs that many remote communities have been allocated, especially those that come under the imposed five year leasing arrangements as determined by the National Emergency Response Act 2007. While all communities need a substantial investment in housing, town camps are particularly feeling the impact of the combination of long standing under investment with consequent overcrowding, exacerbated by increasing numbers of visitors from remote communities, many of whom stay with relatives in town camps, often for extended periods.
- The remaining \$7.5M of the \$10M upgrade for housing allocated by the NT government in 2006 has been put on hold subject to discussions on tenure.

- As town camps' tenure do not come under the NT Land Rights Act, the automatic five year lease of prescribed remote communities to the government under the NT Emergency Response Act 2007 has not applied to town camps in Alice Springs.
- Under the Local Government Reform in the NT, there will be an allocation of the equivalent of \$8,000 per house per year for maintenance. Tangentyere currently receives the equivalent of \$2,200 per house per year for maintenance of houses on town camps in Alice Springs. Homeland outstations and town camps will not be receiving this increase in maintenance funding.
- Tangentyere Council has proposed, to both this and the previous government, the establishment of an Affordable Housing Company to be run as a separate legal entity with a Board comprising town camp representatives, NT and Australian government representatives, and housing industry experts. (see Attachment XXX) This proposal includes a 20 year lease arrangement to the government, with subleasing back to the Housing Company. The previous Minister for Indigenous Affairs rejected this offer. The current Minister is at present considering this proposal.

## **2. Health**

### **2.1 Child Health Checks**

- As of May 21 there had been 261 Child Health Checks (CHCs) completed by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress for children living on town camps aged 0-15 years. Congress will no doubt provide more detail of these checks. Our information from them includes the following.
  - All those checked need dental follow up. There was a lot of initial treatment for lice, scabies and anaemia which were treated with penicillin and iron injections. There were some referrals for dental treatment, but for some it was problematic as they needed to be treated through general anaesthetic via the hospital. These procedures include a pre-op one day then show at 7am the next morning which apparently was not all that successful.
  - Generally the CHC's results were broken down into three categories
    - specialist referral and appointment(s) and then follow by GP.
    - trachoma follow ups, these need to be treated as a 'cluster' (everyone in household) and then a recall in 6 months.
    - anaemia, scabies and lice which will be treated if and when people re-present.
  - The Phase 2 of these CHCs has one doctor employed with 2 Aboriginal Liaison Officers until June 20, mostly following up on the trachoma treatments. If children/families are difficult to find the different Tangentyere programs, Ketye (Under 7s), Safe Families, and Hidden Valley and Larapinta Valley Community Centres will provide what assistance they can.

## 2.2 Health and Housing

- While treatment of all of the infections identified through CHCs can be provided, experience in the Northern Territory is that these infections are treated frequently and are highly likely to re-occur unless housing and environmental health conditions improve substantially. This can only be done through significantly improved housing combined with environmental health practices and education programs that engage people in a sustained, non judgmental and constructive manner.

## 3. Income management

- Prior to income management under the NTER, approximately 840 adults living on town camps in Alice Springs had been utilising Tangentyere's food voucher system on a voluntary basis, through the Centre Pay system. With 1955 residents of town camps, including children, this means that there is a high percentage of adults living on town camps who utilise this system. For details on how this system operates, please see Attachment 3.
- Some people continue to use Tangentyere's food voucher system in conjunction with income management under the NTER.
- The level of micro management involved in the NTER income management makes the system cumbersome, and mistakes that affect individuals are numerous and an inevitable result of such micro management of people's lives.
- Anecdotal feedback indicates that financial education by Centrelink is either not being provided or is ineffective.
- The current checking requirements also place large demands on community organisations and community stores. For instance, Tangentyere Council keeps all the Food Vouchers and cash register docketts from the Milner Road supermarket (of which it is part owner). By the end of 12 months, there will be 60 arch lever folders containing around 9,900 vouchers. It should be noted that the larger stores such as Woolworths, Coles and Kmart do not have to undertake this detailed reporting as they are able to provide a store gift card instead. Hopefully the new debit card system will alleviate these problems.
- Anecdotal feedback regarding how people feel about the effects of income management includes both people who indicate that more money is being spent on food and clothes and other people who have been quite distressed by the application of income management. These people feel a great sense of shame through being treated in the same category as negligent or abusive parents, on the basis of race only. Some people have experienced problems due to lack of immediate disposable cash for obligations such as travelling to funerals.
- Tangentyere Council would prefer a voluntary system of income management, combined with a compulsory income management system for certain individuals based on clearly identified unacceptable behaviour. This would mean a system based on choice for those who see benefits in having some income quarantined, would impose consequences for unacceptable behaviour, and would remove race as the basis for the policy. A financial education process to increase long term independence could also be incorporated.

- The details of the mechanisms for identifying those who would be on compulsory income management would need further research but options may include
  - Orders issued through the alcohol court
  - As a penalty for breaching activity test requirements
  - Through child protection processes
  - A system such as that being developed on Cape York, in consultation with local community members

Please see Attachment 3 for specific examples of the impact of income management on clients and Tangentyere Council's financial systems.

In addition Attachment 4 describes the operation of the Tangentyere Food Voucher system over the last 25 years.

## 4. Education

While education is obviously the responsibility of the NT Education Department, Tangentyere Council has attempted to assist town camp children access education, primarily through the Yarrenyty-Arltere Learning Centre (YALC) at Larapinta Town Camp. There is an adjunct to Gillen Primary School located at YALC which has been successful in providing a transition to a mainstream school for children at Larapinta Town Camp. Funding for this facility, or similar facilities on other town camps, has not changed under the NTER.

## 5. Security of Children

### 5.1 The Tangentyere Safe Families Program

The Tangentyere Safe Families Program focuses on an Aboriginal, family inclusive, community centred approach in relation to child protection issues in order to keep Aboriginal young people safe and with family.

Safe Families has a 6 bed residential house for kids to stay in up to six weeks. These kids come from vulnerable families, some are under child protection orders and some are there through agreements with family.

Safe families works with vulnerable families to making sure kids are safe. They also help the Department of Family and children Services in finding safe family placements. They do this with non-indigenous and aboriginal Family Workers.

Two transitional houses have also been set up by this program to help families learn how to manage their own homes in a safe and healthy way.

#### *The Safe Families Vision Statement includes:*

- Kinship care is crucial to the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of all young people
- Support of families to preserve their traditional obligations to nurture and provide care to young people
- Fostering and preserving community connectedness and the cultural integrity of Aboriginal families
- Ensuring young people grow up strong, safe, resilient and healthy in their transition to adulthood

### ***Safe Families Target Group***

- Children and young people aged up to 14 yrs
- Young people presenting as “at risk”
- Young people subject to child protection intervention
- Young people who present with multiple and complex issues

### ***How it Works***

- Employment of local Aboriginal staff members
- Family mapping
- Family meetings
- Language speakers
- Informal and formal networks
- Collaboration with other organisations and agencies

Safe Families acknowledges that some Aboriginal children need residential options outside of their immediate family for periods of time to keep them safe. This shows that these children don't need to leave the care of their community. The same community that is invested in keeping them safe is also the one working with families or finding long term safe care elsewhere.

### ***Status of the Safe Families Funding***

Safe Families is funded from FACSIA, NT Department of Families and Children and Aboriginal Hostels.

The funding from FACSIA and the Northern Territory Government ceases on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June and negotiations are underway.

## **5.2 How is child abuse and family violence tackled on town camps overall?**

Tangentyere Council provides a range of services that address issues of child abuse and family violence on town camps. In actual fact most of Tangentyere's services provision is about making the lives of town camp residents safer. Outlined below are just some of our areas of service provision.

### **▪ *Early Childhood Services***

Tangentyere delivers playgroups on 5 of the 18 town camps as this is the maximum we can deliver with funds available. With these services we have access to children who are not yet part of the education system. If the Playgroup identifies children that need extra support they refer them to the Tangentyere 0-7 program. This helps us identify children that need assistance from an early intervention program. If more serious concerns come to the attention of staff from either program referrals are made to relevant statutory bodies. At the same time these cases would become active to Tangentyere to ensure follow up from relevant agencies.

### **▪ *Community Centres at Larapinta camp and Hidden Valley camps.***

These community centers are points of contact for services delivering into town camps. Organisations like Alice Springs Women's Shelter, Sexual Assault Referral Centre and Northern Territory Department of Families and Children attend regularly at these centres developing relationships and engaging with town camp residents. These centres also case manage individuals with drug and alcohol problems, monitor the situations that arise on the camps, they advocate for families and attempt with community to address issues of child safety.

- ***The Safe Families Program***

This program has been outlined previously. The program does play an important part in Tangentyere's overall response to child safety concerns by filling gaps between other service providers and interventions from statutory services. On several occasions statutory services have not acted as quickly as Tangentyere would have liked and safe families has stepped in with safe plans to ensure children are safe until statutory services respond.

- ***Tangentyere Youth Activity Services (YAS)***

Tangentyere Council's YAS operates a wide range of structured activities for 400-600 young people aged 6-18 years living in the eighteen town camps in Alice Springs. These activities include sport, music, circus and social activities and are run after school, during evenings, on weekends and during vacation times up to six days per week throughout the year. Most of these activities run out of the YAS premises at 3 Brown Street in Alice Springs.

Tangentyere YAS program is a service that highlights strengths, abilities, and positive relationships between participants. These positive experiences build skills, self esteem, access to mainstream services, familiarity with practicing constructive relationships and a platform for learning that is positive and successful. Young people participating in YAS activities are expected to attend school and this has been a successful outcome for the service.

It should be noted that the majority of services that Tangentyere provides have a role in injury reduction and town camper's safety. Night Patrols, Family Well Being Programs, Youth Link Up Services and Sport and Recreation for young people all have a role to play in child safety.

### **5.3 Has there been an increase or decrease in problems related to child security?**

The roll out of the intervention has had some negative effects on town camps, mostly related to the increase in urban drift. It should be noted however that urban drift is not solely the result of the intervention. People come to Alice Spring for many reasons including medical services, sporting events, education services, shopping and recreation.

It has been the Council's experience of recent months that levels of drinking have increased near town camps and this has lead to an increase in intoxicated people on the camps. With the intervention, the number of drinking spots around Alice Springs has spiraled. These places typically are locations that are inaccessible or hidden from view. Town campers complain now about intoxicated people coming on to camps and they worry for family drinking where they cannot be looked after. The intervention appears to have just moved the problem rather than addressed problem drinkers' alcohol addiction.

It has always perplexed Tangentyere Council how pushing problem drinkers into Territory Housing and secluded locations keeps children safe from child abuse. This is magnified by the hidden nature of child abuse. Pushing drinking behind closed doors also brings intoxicated people and vulnerable individuals into close proximity.

In relation to child abuse the accepted figure across western populations is a figure of 1 in 5 children will have some involvement in the Child Protection system. If this is true for the population of Melbourne and Canberra there is no reason to think the figure is going to be any less in Aboriginal communities. It should be noted that this number includes child protection issues such as neglect and emotional abuse.

This leads us to ask the question of how we identify increases and decreases of actual abuse if we accept that high levels of abuse go unreported. The accepted wisdom around abuse numbers is that an increased notification is an indicator of a functioning system. We do know that the notifications received in the Northern Territory jurisdiction is 38.9 per 1000 children this lines up to the national average of 34.7 per 1000. (AIHW 2008)

A more measurable aspect than actual child abuse is increases in notifications and we know that child health checks have not lead to increased notifications. But we do know that programs based in communities that are based on relationships do increase the levels of notifications. The Alice Spring Child Welfare Coalition made up of Tangentyere Council, Congress, ASYASS, NPY Women's Council and other NGOS has been campaigning for improved child protection services for several years. These organizations make many notifications and have even negotiated a protocol with the NT Department of Families and Children to make the process more accountable.

Through this protocol Tangentyere send staff to Mandatory Notification Workshops regularly. The different departments of Tangentyere make notifications directly and in some cases are supported Divisional Managers. The total numbers are not collated and only those directly involved in particular cases are involved or informed about child protection notifications to ensure Tangentyere is not in breach of the confidentiality clauses of the Child Welfare Act. This confidentiality component is to ensure that notifiers are protected and the information going to NT FACS is not impeded. Some Departments within the Tangentyere Family and Youth Services Division are in daily and weekly contact with the Department of family and Children Services.

## **6. Employment and Enterprise Activities**

Town Camp residents are among the most marginalized, least educated and least job ready sector of Australian society. Unemployment rates in Town Camps are three times the average for the Northern Territory. A lot of pre employment, literacy and vocational training are required to bring most of our clients to a stage where they may take up employment. This cannot be done in a short time frame.

Tangentyere CDEP was terminated one week prior to the election in 2007. it will now be restored in July 2008. When our CDEP was placed into transition last November we lost all of our participants. This means that we will have to recruit from a base of zero from 1 July 2008. It will take some time, perhaps several months before we get near to our allocation of 125. Consequently it will be very difficult to prepare a critical number of participants for work off CDEP in those earlier months. Very few placements would be likely in the first six months of the year.

In previous years the organization has been very successful at placing large numbers of participants into employment. This was achieved from a large catchment base of up to 280 Average Contracted Places (ACPs) (in 05/06) and an average utilization rate of 250. Our allocation for the current financial year was set at 200. It was agreed that Tangentyere would have 125 in 2008-09. However, a KPI of 80 job placements has been set from this much smaller number which Tangentyere feels will be difficult for the above reasons.

Please see Attachment 5 for Tangentyere's recommendation on a revised CDEP.

For information and comments from Tangentyere Job Shop, please see Attachment 6

## **7. Law and Order**

Town Camps became dry areas under the NT Emergency Response Act 2007.

Anecdotal information from town camps generally is that drinking decreased quite significantly at first, but then climbed back to previous levels. While people have realized that there are insufficient police officers to service the town camps properly, drinking nevertheless has been pushed further out into the hills surrounding the town camps and the town generally. This has raised concerns about drink driving and safety of people in those 'drinking camps'. These areas are not patrolled regularly by the police or Tangentyere community day or night patrols, as they are often hidden and/or inaccessible. There is often limited access to water or telephones, which raises safety concerns for drinkers and the children they may have with them, as they would have limited access to ambulances if needed.

Tangentyere Council works closely with police through our night and day patrols, and supports extra police services. However, we also advocate monitoring and improving police practice, including training and cultural awareness training, and establishing an independent police complaints body as a check and balance to extra powers the police now have. As outlined in our attached interim report on research into the impact of the intervention, the changes to policing practices are of greatest concern to the community.

Please see Attachment 7 for a Briefing paper on Tangentyere Patrols and funding requirements.

## **8. Wellbeing**

The damage to health of racism and reduced self esteem through people feeling discriminate against is well documented (Ref: Alex Brown and Ngiare J Brown, The Northern Territory intervention: voices from the centre of the fringe, (Ref. Medical Journal of Australia 2007; 187 (11/12): 621-623)

Please see Attachment 8 for an overview of the preliminary findings of Tangentyere's research into the effects of the Emergency Response on town camp residents.

## THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOWN CAMPS - THE TANGENTYERE STORY

Alice Springs and surrounding areas are the traditional lands of the Arrernte people, who call the town Mparntwe.

The establishment of the Telegraph Station in 1872 brought with it many changes to the ways that Aboriginal people lived in and around Alice Springs. By 1915 the Bungalow was set up for Aboriginal children of mixed parentage. In 1928, Alice Springs became a prohibited area for Aboriginal people and they were not permitted to be in the town after dark.

As a result, fringe camps sprang up around the outskirts of Alice Springs. There were concerted efforts to remove Aboriginal people from the town area altogether, including the removal of a substantial number of people to Arltunga, 130 kilometres to the east, and other people to Hermannsburg in the west.

Despite these efforts, Aboriginal people continued to stay in Alice Springs. The inclusion of Aboriginal workers into the NT Cattle Industry Award in 1968 resulted in mass lay-offs of Aboriginal stock workers. Many of these people ended up also living on the "Town Camps" around Alice Springs.

With changes in policies towards Aboriginal people in the 1970s, the Alice Springs town camp struggle changed from resistance and survival to actively asserting their existence as legitimate communities. However, as the camps were located on crown land, and Aboriginal people had no legal tenure over that land, the government would not fund any housing, power, water or sewerage services to those communities.

Tangentyere Council was established in the 1970s to assist Aboriginal people to gain some form of legal tenure of the land they were living on in order to obtain essential services and housing.

A major goal of Tangentyere was to improve the quality of life for people living on the fringes of Alice Springs. This was a very hard struggle, according to Mr E. Rubuntja, Tangentyere's first President, because the whitefellas in Alice Springs didn't like the camps.

*They tried to push us away. But this was our country. Arrernte country. Aboriginal country. The other people living in the camps - Warlpiri, Luritja, Pintupi, Pitjantjatjara, Anmatjere - had been pushed off their land too. We wanted our own land so we could sit down and not worry about whitefellas pushing us off.*



After negotiations with Government, Tangentyere Council obtained legal status to 16 parcels of land in the form of Special Purpose Leases, which have since been converted to Leases in Perpetuity.

These 16 areas are still known as Town Camps. There are a further two Town Camps that have not been granted leases but are part of the Tangentyere Council membership. Each Town Camp has an Incorporated Association (Housing Association) whose members are the residents. Each Association is autonomous with its own Constitution and Rules. These 18 Town Camps form the membership of Tangentyere Council.

Today, Tangentyere Council manages 198 houses for approximately 1,600 to 2,000 residents, the populations fluctuating on Town Camps as they play host to a constant visitor population from Central Australian communities. The two housing associations that still have no security of tenure cannot access any government funding for housing and infrastructure so they live in tin sheds with no running water and no power.

Each Town Camp comprises a largely distinct Indigenous community based on language and kinship groups. The majority of Town Camps have Arrente residents, who are the traditional owners of Alice Springs and its immediate surrounds.

However a number of Town Camps have residents belonging to other language groups, whose traditional lands are further from Alice Springs, but who have moved to Alice Springs over a period of time for various reasons. Town Camp residents often have strong links with remote communities and there is substantial mobility between bush and town.

While these Town Camps are located in Alice Springs, residents are often culturally and linguistically isolated from the services available in town. Provision of services, and facilitation of access to services by Tangentyere Council means that Town Camp residents have access to services which they would otherwise miss out on.

Tangentyere also provides some services to remote area communities such as Remote Area Night Patrols, Inhalant Substance and Youth initiatives, and Return To Country program. Tangentyere recognizes that the support of remote area communities reduces the impact on Alice Springs and Town Camp communities.

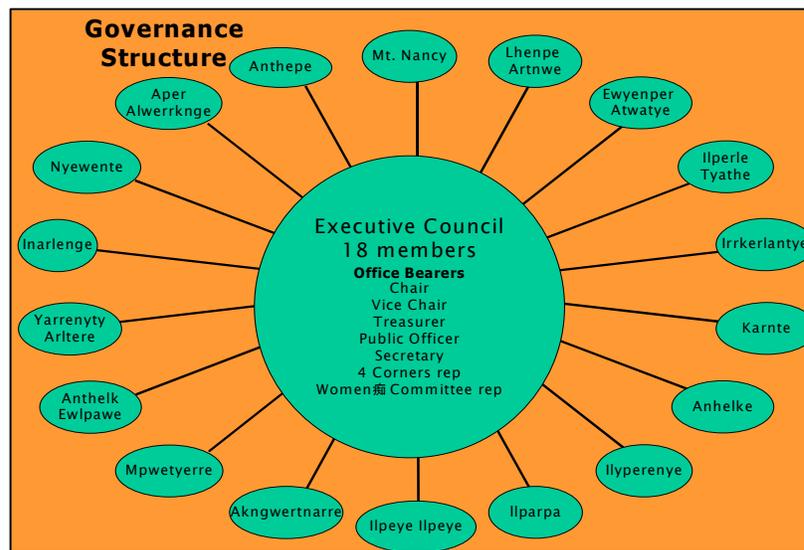
While there has been an undeniable improvement in town camp conditions - from illegal squatters to land tenure, from humpies and bits of tin to houses, the living standards of town camp residents remain unacceptably low. Overcrowded housing and poor levels of education and health are common.

Town Camp residents have been tenacious in their determination to stay on their own place. However, the right to control their own lives is still one which town campers must constantly assert.

# Governance and Management of Tangentyere Council

Tangentyere Council has an Executive comprising the elected Presidents of each of the 18 Town Camps, a member of the Women’s committee and a member of the 4 Corners committee. From this membership, the Executive council elects a Chair, a Vice Chair, Treasurer, Public Officer and Secretary. The Executive Council meets approximately every four weeks.

The role of the Executive covers the constitution, policies, procedures and business plans. Over the course of the 25 years the Tangentyere Executive have been creative in fulfilling this role in a way meets the requirements of Aboriginal law and western administrative legislation and procedures.

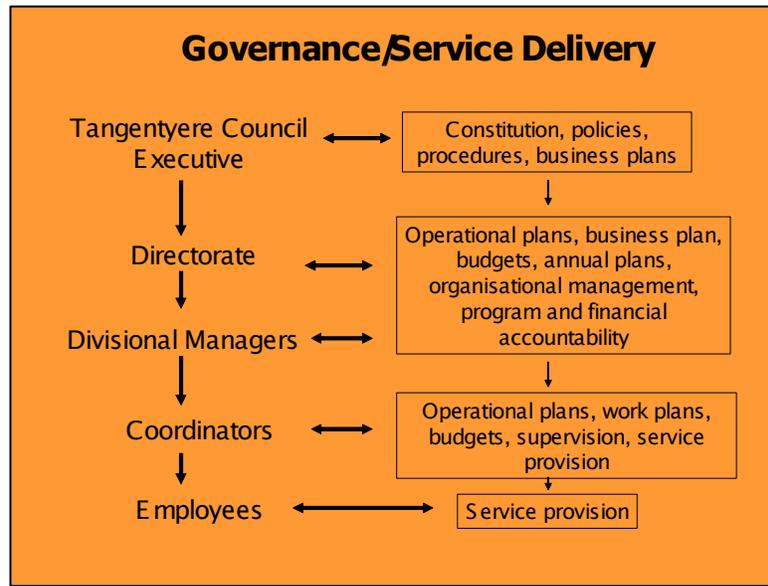


The internal planning of the camps also adheres to Aboriginal culture - camp planning constraints include the need to provide areas for different family groups, temporary accommodation for people who have to leave houses following a death, the need for visitor camping, and sacred site protection.

The strong involvement of Council members in the Executive of Tangentyere ensures that the organization is accountable to its constituency and that its priorities are those of its members.

“Our bosses are our clients and our clients are our bosses.”

# Internal Structure of Tangentyere Council



The Executive Director reports directly to the Executive Council. As head of Tangentyere Council the Executive Director represents the Council on a number of external committees and provides leadership in the strategic direction of the overall functions of the Council and its roles and relationships in the wider community. The Senior Executive Officer reports to the Executive Director and through that position to the Executive Council. This position undertakes much of the internal management of the organization.

Tangentyere has six divisions each of which has a Manager and each program within a Division has a Coordinator. The divisions are:

- Housing
- Social Services
- Family and Youth Services
- CDEP and Training
- Finance
- Corporate Services

In addition, there are five not for profit enterprises. These are:

- Tangentyere Job Shop
- Alice Springs Employment and Training Services (ASETS)
- Tangentyere Constructions
- Tangentyere Design
- Indigenous Landscapes

In total there are about 200 staff of whom over 70% are Aboriginal.

# Housing and Environmental Health Division

The Housing and Environmental Health Division provides the following services:

## **Housing Association Executive Support**

The Tangentyere Housing office provides executive support for the 18 separately incorporated Housing Associations, coordinating approximately 90 meetings per year including 18 annual general meetings and regular general meetings. This service assists Housing Association members / residents to maintain control of their own future. This service is also responsible for organising Housing Associations' 'Trespass Notices' to be issued and served, and for all other general administration, correspondence, member requests relating to Housing Association business.

## **Property Maintenance**

Tangentyere operates a repairs and maintenance program with its prime focus to improve the health of residents through environmental health principles. This service;

- recognises the importance of the nine environmental health based 'Critical Healthy Living Practises';
- carries out quarterly survey / fix work in every house by indigenous property maintenance officers;

## **Tenancy and Rental Management**

Tangentyere operates a tenancy and rental program that recognises and supports cultural imperatives and lifestyles. This service aims to operate a humane and flexible system.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

### **Dog Management Program**

Tangentyere operates a comprehensive dog management program across Town Camp communities aiming to reduce and maintain an appropriate number of healthy dogs, and improving the health of residents. This program removes an average of between 300 and 400 unwanted dogs from Town Camp Communities per annum.

### **Pest Control Program**

Tangentyere carries out a pest control program across Town Camp community housing.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

### **Waste Management Program**

Tangentyere Council provides a garbage collection service, emptying household waste from two 44-gallon drums, twice a week, for every house across the 18 Town Camps.

### **Municipal Services Program**

Tangentyere carry out a range of municipal services across communal areas of the 18 Town Camp communities.

### **Wood Collection Program**

Tangentyere Council collects, cuts, bags and delivers fire wood for 50 clients of the Tangentyere Aged and Community Services Program.

## **Cleaning Program**

Tangentyere provide regular cleaning of community facilities and communal ablution facilities. This service is occasionally extended to clients of the Tangentyere Aged and Community Services Program, and to clean houses on a change of tenancy.

## **Social Services Division**

The Division includes the following programs:

- Social Justice Programs – Aboriginal Community Patrols & Community Safety
- Community Support Services- Client support services, 'Return to Country' and Prisoner Release Support
- Remote Area night Patrol Support Programs
- Aged and Community Services
- Tangentyere Artists
- Research Hub – “Researching ourselves back to life”

### **Social Justice Unit**

This Department uses expertise within the indigenous community to address social behaviour issues and offer mediation, crisis intervention, harm prevention and other services to protect community safety. These services include:

- Night Patrol
- Day Patrol
- Youth Night Patrol

### **Community Support**

The following services are offered by the Community Support team:

- A user pays 'Return to Country' service
- Proof of Identity through the issue of a recognised photo identity card, in partnership with Births, Deaths and Marriages.
- Emergency Relief for people in crisis.
- Prisoner Release Program
- Case Work

### **Old People's Services**

The team provides services to 60 clients, nine of whom received Community Aged Care Packages (CACP). We provide personal care services to 17 people, seven days per week, and to 12 other people each week. We deliver 50 meals-on-wheels per day, five days per week, deliver food boxes to 25 people twice a week, and deliver wood for cooking and heating. We also assist clients with laundry, banking, shopping, cleaning and transport to and from appointments.

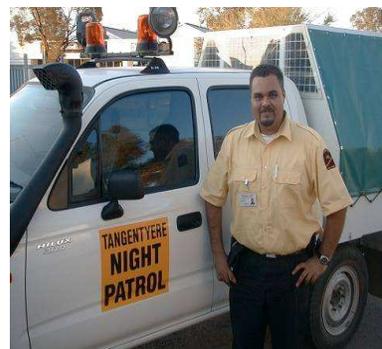
### **Research Hub**

The Research Unit aims to place indigenous people in the centre of research where they determine and participate in all stages of research. This is supported through a formal partnership arrangement with Curtin University (National Drug Research Institute), Edith Cowen University, Flinders University and Charles Darwin University (Centre for Remote Health). The Ayeye project provides archival protection and digital presentation of stories relating to town camps and Tangentyere Council.

### **Tangentyere Artists**

Tangentyere Council's art program for artists living in the Town Camps aims to:

- provide men's and women's art sessions, art materials, and sales and marketing support to Town Camp residents;
- reduce the practice of "carpetbagger" dealers trespassing on Town Camps in order to purchase paintings cheaply for resale;



- assist artists on Town Camps who wish to pursue the sale of their art through ethical outlets;
- establish a Town Camp Artists Exhibition as an annual event.

## Youth And Family Services Division

The Youth and Family Services Department has the following programs:

### **Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre**

An Intergenerational Learning Centre on Yarrenyty Arltere (Larapinta) town camp that supports whole of family and whole of community approach to redress substance misuse, family violence, health, education, social and economic issues.

### **Hidden Valley Learning Centre**

The Hidden Valley Learning Centre is also based on the principle of intergenerational learning and aims to coordinate the delivery of recreational and early intervention programs. It provide a strong family centered model that promotes and provides education on nutrition, family well being, and parenting.

### **Early Childhood Development Service**

A program that provides playgroups and early children learning and parenting skills on town camps

### **Youth Activity Services**

Provides a sport, recreation, cultural activities, music, circus, video training and other skills based programs to children from Town Camps aged 5-18 years.

### **Drum Atweme**

The Drum Atweme program provides 150 town camp children with drumming lessons weekly and has a performance group of approximately 40 core drummers who perform at major Alice Springs events and at national and local conference openings, receiving both local and national acclaim.

### **Safe Families Program**

An early intervention and crisis response services to support children aged 0-6 and 6-15 who are at risk of entering the child protection system. This program provides crisis accommodation and family placement support to children aged 7-15 years. This program aims to remove children from the welfare system back into their families and redress the history of the Stolen Generations.

### **Central Australian Youth Link Up Service**

A regional program working with remote communities and Alice Springs to address inhalant substance misuse and youth related needs from both a community and regional perspective.

### **Family Well Being**

A therapeutic program providing

- delivery of the Family Well Being courses looking at family violence, problem solving skills and self esteem
- training of Indigenous Facilitators.

### **Life Skills**

The project targets essential areas including home hygiene and DIY-maintenance, tenants' rights and responsibilities, access to support services, alleviating overcrowding, requesting repairs and maintenance. The program is based on community development principles and takes place mainly within the residents' homes, working with whole households not just individuals. Consideration is given to identifying the life skills issues that limit individual households' ability to maintaining their housing.

# CDEP Division

Tangentyere Council ran a Community Development Program (CDEP) from 1990 until November 2007, when it was closed as part of the rollout of closures of CDEP under the NT Emergency Response. Tangentyere CDEP had been extremely successful in adapting to becoming a transition to work program, and had placed 213 CDEP participants in jobs over its final two and one half years of operation. Tangentyere Council is providing input into the reforming of CDEP under the current government and looks forward to delivering a new CDEP in the near future.

The CDEP program has had three main focuses:

## **1. Transition to employment program**

Assisting the bulk of participants to enter mainstream employment options through appropriate training and work activities to ensure that participants are obtaining the skills necessary for engagement in the work force in an area of their interest. In the six months prior to CDEP being closed down, it placed 85 participants into employment.

## **2. Enterprise development**

This was part of the CDEP to Work plan where participants undertake contract work to obtain experience in enterprise activities including:

- Landscaping
- Curbing and road work
- Concreting

The next phase of this program was to be assisting participants who wish to enter their own small business.

## **3. Community Activities**

These included a range of tasks on town camps such as assisting with garbage removal and clean up of camps, wood collection and general camp maintenance.

## **Land and Learning**

The land and learning section sits within the CDEP Division. The program provides the following:

- Working with schools and Aboriginal traditional elders in remote areas and town.
- Combining Western scientific and traditional knowledge of land
- Developing material for school based curriculum that is recognised by NT education department
- Informing development joint NT Parks/Land Council Indigenous Reserve Land Management Centres

## **Finance Division**

The Finance division provides Accounting Services to all programs and services under the leadership of three CPA. In the 2006/2007 financial year, the Finance Division, managed income from 18 different funding bodies predominately Australian Government agencies to the volume of \$13,109,148. The Finance division ensures all funds are spent according to grant conditions and the scope of the funding provided.

The Division delivers a number of services including:

- The generation of electronic purchase orders after satisfactory evidence of purchase requirement and compliance with programs available funds and ensure purchase is within funding guidelines
- Accounts Payable ensures supplier invoices are paid in a timely manner, and with GST compliancy;
- Accounts Receivable ensures invoices are raised in a timely manner, client debtors are managed appropriately, and provide bank account reconciliations;
- Asset Accounting ensures major assets, financial and operational leases are registered/recorded in a timely manner, undertakes periodic stock-takes, co-ordinates the process of major and minor asset disposal and handles schedule and post monthly depreciation;
- Taxation Services provides fringe benefits tax (FBT), pay as you go withholdings, and GST/BAS returns;
- Manage and maintain the main NEXUS accounting system, and a host of smaller subsidiary systems for enterprises; and
- System security, user training and provision of electronic financial reporting (currently under testing)

### **A Community Banking Service**

A Community Banking Service is provided through a partnership arrangement with Westpac Bank including an ATM machine for easy cash access.

The Community Banking Service also offers a nutrition account to clients whereby they can nominate through their CentreLink payment an amount to be deducted and used through the nutrition account for food. They can then access a food voucher/ s to that amount that is redeemable at a local supermarket that is an investment of Tangentyere Council. This assists with the feast and famine cycle that many of our client experience and is a highly successful and accessible initiative.

### **Financial Counselling Program**

The Council offers the services of a Financial Counsellor to all Indigenous clients. This service is not limited to Town Campers and is also used by many remote community people. The service provides information, support and advocacy to families and individuals who are experiencing financial problems. The service provides advice or assistance with debt problems, money worries, bankruptcy, gambling issues, budgeting, credit options, saving tips and referrals. In addition the Financial Counsellor provides consumer advocacy and assist clients access a range of funds in settlement of funeral costs, and on some occasion deals with non-complicated deceased estates.

## **Corporate Services Division**

### **Human Resource Management**

The Corporate Services division provides Human Resource Services for all Tangentyere employees including those employed in Tangentyere enterprises. Services include recruitment, performance management, staff maintenance, occupational, health and safety and training and employment programs.

### **Fleet Management**

Tangentyere Council provides an internal fleet management system that maintains fleet vehicles for all Tangentyere and associated enterprises vehicles including light and heavy vehicles.

### **Records Management**

Records Management provides whole of Council records management standards, procedures and systems to ensure the creation and effective management of full and accurate records.

### **Generic Corporate Services**

Corporate Services also handles the general administration of the Council, including reception, property management to all Tangentyere buildings and handles the Council corporate insurance policy.

# Enterprises

The Council has five enterprises, Tangentyere Design, Tangentyere Constructions, Alice Springs Employment and Training Services (ASEATS), Indigenous Landscapes NT and Tangentyere Job Shop.

## **Tangentyere Design**

Tangentyere Design is the architectural business that designs all houses on the Town Camps in consultation with community, in addition to tendering for other architectural works in the township and on remote communities.

## **Tangentyere Job Shop**

The Tangentyere Job Shop is a Job Network Provider, a member of *Job Futures* and a specialist job provider for indigenous job seekers. The Job Shop provides culturally appropriate support to Indigenous job seekers to find and sustain appropriate employment. In addition to employment services, the Job Shop also provides a personal support program. The Job Shop lost its contract to provide services to Indigenous people in Alice Springs in 2007, but provides job network services to five remote communities around Alice Springs.

## **Alice Springs Employment and Training Services (ASEATS)**

ASEATS provides a range of training options to unemployed people, CDEP participants, Tangentyere staff and others. ASEATS is able to utilise the Registered Training Organisations (RTO) status of Job Futures to deliver nationally recognised accredited training.

## **Tangentyere Constructions**

Tangentyere Constructions is the Council's local building team, providing general building, construction training & employment project management, Aboriginal housing, specialist buildings such as schools, community stores and health centres, remote area construction services, renovations and management of community repairs and maintenance programs.



## **Indigenous Landscapes NT**

Indigenous Landscapes NT provide landscaping services and have won tenders on major contracts both in Alice Springs and in remote communities.

All enterprises operate as charitable trusts with profits going to Town Camps. The aim is to establish both social and business initiatives with independence from the government grant process.

# INTERVENTION POSITION OF TANGENTYERE COUNCIL

MEASURE	TANGENTYERE COUNCIL	AUSTRALIAN GOVT* / NT GOVT
<p>Town Camp Leases.</p> <p>No notices for acquisition of town camps have been served. Previous government rejected proposed 20 year lease.</p>	<p>Tangentyere Council has proposed that existing Housing Associations sublease houses for 20 years to a new jointly managed entity, Central Australian Affordable Housing Company (CAAH).</p> <p>CAAH would have six Housing Associations representatives, one Australian Government representative, one NT government representative, and two independent housing experts, one of whom would act as Chair.</p> <p>Security of tenure for White Gate and Namatjira Camps</p>	<p><b>Australian Govt</b> Consider in 12 month review</p> <p>Supports effective partnerships with lessors and negotiated outcomes.</p>
<p>Housing (see above)</p>	<p>Evaluate housing tenders based upon delivery of training and employment opportunities to Aboriginal communities rather than on price and speed of construction. Houses must be buildable and cost effective utilising Indigenous employment based on the Central remote and town camp model.</p> <p>Funding for Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) of housing to establish evidence of successful and/or failed housing design and construction. Make POEs an essential part of housing procurement.</p> <p>Inclusion in all Commonwealth and NT Government housing tenders requirements for detailed consultation with communities and residents regarding housing needs. Develop a portfolio of housing designs that meet health and cultural objectives and are cost effective, in consultation with communities and town camps.</p> <p>Amend housing procurement processes to minimise spending on Capital Works Project Managers and maximise spending on actual housing infrastructure. Go straight to the housing providers.</p> <p>Re-commence the Connecting Neighbours Program, to upgrade infrastructure on town camps. A financial allocation was made to the NT government to undertake this work. All mapping and planning work was undertaken but the work itself has been put on hold.</p>	<p><b>Australian Govt</b> Evaluate progress in 12 month review.</p>

<p>Welfare (income management)</p> <p>Income management began on town camps in Alice Springs on 7 January 2008</p>	<p>At present, 2 systems, income management and Centre Pay operate. This is extremely expensive on Centrelink resources, and also places demands on community organisations. Abolish income management as a separate system and incorporate a predominantly voluntary system under Centre Pay, without the fees currently associated with Centrepay.</p> <p>Compulsory income management through Centre Pay to be based on a system that identifies those people, possibly through the court system, who are not looking after their children, perpetrating family violence, or who are abusing drugs and alcohol. In addition, unemployed people could have their Newstart or other payment income managed if they breached their activity requirements, rather than being subject of loss of 8 weeks income.</p> <p>National Welfare Rights Network president Michael Raper analysed Senate Estimate figures to show that indigenous Australians were bearing the brunt of the social security penalty regime. He said that "In northern Australia, 68 per cent of those who lost all Centrelink payments for eight weeks were indigenous (271 out of 401)". This can impact negatively on families whereas imposing income management as a penalty avoids this.</p> <p>Tangentyere Voluntary Nutrition Account to be supported and replicated.</p> <p>Support organizations/ communities to meet costs of voluntary income management (Tangentyere Council employs one full time person to manage a voluntary system that has provided approximately 850 food vouchers per fortnight, and over 15,000 food vouchers per year).</p> <p>Strengthen financial counseling and education programs. Legislate against key cards and pin numbers being held by dealers (second persons).</p> <p>Provide a local complaints system with an attached interpreter service to enable people to have their complaints resolved.</p> <p>Food Voucher bus to be funded to provide transport for clients to access supermarkets, Centrelink and banks.</p> <p>Provide regional banking services in remote communities to enable people to become familiar with mainstream banking and money management practices (Ref. S.McDonnell <i>"Chasing the Money Story: An Evaluation of the Tangentyere Bank Pilot Project and its relevance to Indigenous Communities in Central Australia."</i> CAEPR Working Paper No. 21/2003. ISSN 1442-3871, ISBN 0 7315 4920 1).</p>	<p><b>Australian Govt</b> Consider welfare measures in 12 month review.</p>
--	--	---

<p>CDEP / real jobs / economic development</p> <p>Tangentyere CDEP was terminated in November 2007 and will be reintroduced on 1 July 2008.</p>	<p>Support retention of modified CDEP by ensuring positions are project based (not government services), contribute to job readiness, and are time limited.</p> <p>Support rollout of <u>real jobs</u> that have been undertaken with CDEP participants and provide mentoring of new employees.</p> <p>Ensure that procurement policy includes training and employment of local indigenous people in all Government NTG/Commonwealth Contracts i.e. housing construction, infrastructure, roads, etc..</p> <p>Outsource wherever possible appropriate government contracts to proven Aboriginal organisations, eg. aged care, employment services, etc.</p>	<p><b>Australian Govt</b> Retain / reinstate and modify CDEP.</p> <p>Commitment over 5 years of \$90M to train and employ and additional 300 Indigenous rangers, \$50M to expand the Indigenous Protected Areas Program, \$10M to enhance Indigenous participation in carbon trading.</p>
<p>Government Business Management.</p> <p>Government Business Manager was appointed to town camps in June 2008.</p>	<p>Empower communities to have to have agency in the decisions that affects them via democratically elected councils that are provided with executive support and training.</p>	<p><b>Australian Govt</b> Consider in 12 month review</p>
<p>Racial Discrimination Act</p>	<p>Remove RDA exclusions</p> <p>Support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</p> <p>Enact Human Rights Bill for Australia</p>	<p><b>Australian Govt</b> Remove RDA exclusions (legal advice suggests many measures unlikely to be RDA compliant).</p>
<p>Funding of Intervention measures</p>	<p>Monitor and evaluate the targeting and outcomes of spending.</p> <p>Less spending on fly in fly out bureaucrats and more on positive local programs.</p> <p>Work with community organisations to spend money effectively on programs and services that have a proven track record.</p> <p>Formulate evidence based funding.</p>	<p><b>Australian Govt</b> Consider current funding in 12 month review</p>

<p>Alcohol and Pornography.</p> <p>All town camps have been declared dry. Very large signs have been placed at the entrance to town camps specifying prohibition of pornography and alcohol.</p>	<p>One alcohol free day per week in Alice Springs</p> <p>Establish pricing benchmark for alcohol units</p> <p>Work with Liquor Commission to establish dry houses and public areas in town camps</p> <p>Establish and fund regional transport strategy to reduce number of people ‘stranded’ in Alice Springs</p> <p>Do away with invasive signs which serve to denigrate Indigenous people even further</p> <p>Establish outreach programs for drug and alcohol related problems.</p> <p>Develop programs that encourage responsible drinking and learning to live with alcohol.</p>	<p><b>Australian Govt</b> Consider in 12 month review.</p> <p><b>NT Govt</b> Against \$100 law needing to show ID</p>
<p>Policing</p>	<p>Support extra police but monitor and improve police practice, including training and cultural awareness training</p> <p>Strengthen and securely fund locally controlled Aboriginal community patrols</p> <p>Establish independent police complaints body as check and balance to extra powers.</p>	<p><b>Australian Govt</b> Commitment of \$200M for an additional 500 Federal police officers in the next 5 years and an Indigenous Australia AFP recruitment strategy.</p>
<p>Health.</p> <p>261 health checks were carried out on town camp children as at 29 May 2008</p>	<p>Town camps involvement in screening families for early childhood health and chronic disease management.</p> <p>Family Well Being programs to be available on all town camps. Men’s Health Programs on town camps</p> <p>Town camp based “strong mothers strong babies” programs</p> <p>Environmental Health Programs developed by town campers for town camps.</p> <p>Ensure longevity of the successful Fixing Houses for Better Health program.</p> <p>Review NT Health Framework agreement to ensure additional participation from consumers, especially town camp residents.</p> <p>Tangentyere to be recognized in its role of Health Promotion, Health Prevention and Environmental Health on Town Camps and also to be recognized in its role in Injury Prevention and Indigenous research in Town Camps and Central Australia.</p>	<p><b>Aust Govt</b> Eliminate the 17 year gap in life expectancy within a generation. At least halve the rate of Indigenous infant mortality within a decade.</p>

Children	<p>The Federal Government establish a body to develop a national child protection strategy</p> <p>Federal Government and Territory Government develop sustainable bilateral agreements to fund out of home care, with an emphasis on out of home care provision for and by Aboriginal people.</p> <p>All Child Protection Staff attend and satisfactorily complete accredited cross cultural practice workshops.</p> <p>Provide continued funding for Tangentyere’s highly regarded Safe Families program.</p> <p>Extend Aboriginal Child Care placement principles to residential facilities and appropriately resource such facilities.</p>	<p><b>Aust Govt</b></p> <p>Commitment of \$261M to early childhood development, child and maternal health, parenting support, and intensive literacy and numeracy.</p>
Education	<p>Engage with communities to provide appropriate education services (models like Larapinta Learning Centres and Hidden Valley Community Centre to be replicated)</p> <p>Town camps resourced to deliver child care centres as part of community centres to support early childhood education and development.</p>	<p><b>Aust Govt</b></p> <p>At least halve the difference between Indigenous and non Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy benchmarks within 10 years. Pay for teachers for 2000 NT Indigenous children not enrolled in schools currently.</p>
Youth	<p>Provide sustainable youth services, particularly diversionary programs, for town camps and remote communities, that are resourced sufficiently to allow for ongoing staffing, involvement of families and communities, meaningful and culturally relevant activities, and involvement of role models, to be provided by local representative and community accepted organisations.</p>	
Permits	<p>Support retention of permits. Permit free access for journalists not simple (need to consult with land councils) and Lease Holders (SPL) ensure all screening of all people who are issued with permits i.e. Hawkers, Art Dealer, Transport and permit holders to be accountable to other measures and legislation, eg. public health act for hawkers.</p>	<p><b>Aust Govt</b></p> <p>Retain/reinstate but allow journalists and doctors permit free access</p> <p><b>NT Govt</b></p> <p>Support retention of permits</p>

Community Stores	<p>Ensure a pricing structure that encourages good nutrition and value for money.</p> <p>Ensure consumer rights and protection.</p> <p>Provide access to financial counseling services and to regional banking services in remote communities to enable people to become familiar with mainstream banking and money management practices. (Ref. S.McDonnell "Chasing the Money Story: An Evaluation of the Tangentyere Bank Pilot Project and its relevance to Indigenous Communities in Central Australia." CAEPR Working Paper No. 21/2003. ISSN 1442-3871, ISBN 0 7315 4920 1)</p>	<b>Aust Govt</b> Consider in 12 month review
Intervention Outcomes	<p>Scrap taskforce and establish working party with local Aboriginal representation (Town Campers) and a long term development plan.</p> <p>Need to inject community respect and community engagement in process.</p> <p>Complementary measures on child protection such as the Tangentyere Safe Families program.</p>	<b>Aust Govt</b> Establish NT working party <b>NT Govt</b> Closing the Gap' response with funded initiatives
Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Ensure proper monitoring and evaluation of all intervention measures and spending in inclusive and transparent way</p> <p>Include monitoring and evaluation measures to capture unintended outcomes</p> <p>Tangentyere is about to commence its own research on the impact of the intervention on town camps residents, employing local indigenous researchers.</p>	<b>Aust Govt</b> Conduct 12 month review of the intervention

\*Information on Australian Government commitments taken from a letter from NT Senator the Hon Trish Crossin to NTCOSS on 22 November 2007, outlining Labor Party commitments in relation to the NT Emergency Response.

**EXPERIENCES OF INCOME MANAGEMENT ISSUES OF THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT  
AND BANK AGENCY AT TANGENTYERE FROM JAN 08 TO END MAY 08:**

**1 Identification issues**

Some clients who have been known to Tangentyere Council for years under either their married or skin or family name, have been changed in Centrelink to their birth name.

Consequently they will come in to the bank not realising that Centrelink has now changed their name, and will ask for their food voucher.

We will be unable to locate any funds under their usual name, and not knowing that they have a different birth name, they have to go away empty-handed until someone twigs that they have a different name.

This happened about a dozen times since we came on to IM in Jan to the end of Mar.

We are now having to spend more time loading people's details in order to be able to call them up by Centrelink Reference Number or DOB rather than name.

We are not funded to do this administrative work, and we now have 3 full-time people involved in this process at an approximate cost of \$225,000 including computer, paper, and utilities costs.

**2 Rent for Housing Associations**

Our second problem area is with the rent for the Housing Associations. We would appear to have several people listed as paying rent from Centrelink to our Camps when they either don't live there, are not and never have been tenants, or are only there while they are in town.

The Town Camps have a membership list of who is a resident and who should be paying rent.

Centrelink has recently been checking with our Housing Office to see if the clients are rent payers, but we are still receiving rent from people who are not residents, so the process is not consistent.

This tends to tie up the time of our Reconciliations Officer who is not included in the 3 staff members listed above, and would add another \$30,000 cost to our overheads just for the work, this officer is having to do to sort out the rent matters.

It also means that we have to return funds to Centrelink for those who should not have paid rent in the first place. This is another unfunded cost for Tangentyere and another drain on the limited funds of the client who initially had to wait for these funds to be returned.

### **3 Centrelink coding system**

The Centrelink coding system has been divided into two sets, one for Centrepay deductions and one set for Income Management. Tangentyere Council now has to deal with 5 extra codes on top of the 4 we had for Centrepay. When the Council downloads the file, it now has to be sorted in to these different codes doubling our previous workload. Another cost to Tangentyere.

### **4 Return of Income Management Funds**

We have been unable to keep up with the demand for return of IM funds to Centrelink and as a consequence, Centrelink has paid the clients before our funds have been returned. In some cases, especially where these funds are for food vouchers that the client now says they don't want, the client has received the returned benefit from Centrelink AND has taken a food voucher from us without telling us they had cancelled the voucher request. This technically puts us in debt to Centrelink under our agreement with them, even though the client has received a double benefit and should be repaying Centrelink as a normal debt. It is highly unlikely that we will see the client again, but Centrelink has the capacity to recover debts where Tangentyere does not.

### **5 Need for Additional Systems**

Currently we do not keep our tenancy records client by client only camp by camp. However, now that there is so much confusion on who should be paying rent and who shouldn't and the number of requests for refunds from Centrelink is not diminishing, we have had to purchase a new licence for our accounting system to set up the tenancy records on a separate accounting system. This is just so we can track clients and where they live. The rent download from Centrelink still contains between 15 and 20% of clients without any reference to which camp or house they live in. This adds again to our administrative overhead.

### **6 Sale of goods bought with store cards**

We have anecdotal evidence that the store cards are not working as intended, as those clients that are addicted are selling their \$100 worth of food for a discount and using the cash to buy grog. We also have allegations that clients buying clothes on the KMART cards are selling those at a discount also. (Allegations of returning the clothes for cash refunds are groundless as KMART says that it refunds card purchases with cards not cash, and that they have stopped selling cigarettes on KMART cards also.)

### **7. Centrelink Queues**

People often have to wait at Centrelink for long periods. The Tangentyere Centrelink sub-office is not able to handle income management even though this would relieve congestion and be less embarrassing for people. Clients having to wait for up to three hours is not uncommon.

## **8. Funeral expenses**

A complaint has been submitted to the Ombudsman's office in relation to one woman having her bereavement payment income managed, and receiving \$800 in store cards rather than money going to the funeral expenses, which would normally happen.

### **Summary**

The administration required to control Indigenous CentreLink recipients' benefits in the Territory is horrendous. Tangentyere receives no funding for the amount of administration involved, and are having consequently to redirect finance officers from their nominated duties to accommodate the changes that the intervention has brought, which also creates stress for these officers.

The income management system in Alice Springs fails to stop those who are impossibly addicted from finding ways to fuel their addiction, currently benefits the large retailers over small businesses, removes freedom of choice for non-addicted people and applies only to Aboriginal communities.

## TANGENTYERE'S VOLUNTARY FOOD VOUCHER SYSTEM

### **Proudly serving Aboriginal people for 25 years**

#### **Purpose**

The food voucher system is designed to overcome the “feast and famine” cycle of fortnightly Centrelink benefits, whereby people can find themselves without money for food for the last part of the fortnight before they received their next payment.

#### **Background**

The food voucher system was put in place at Tangentyere Council over 25 years ago by Aboriginal elders living on town camps.

#### **How it works**

- Tangentyere’s food voucher system is voluntary.
- People signed up with Centrelink can choose to have a nominated amount of money deducted from their Centrelink payments every fortnight. This money is then provided to them in the form of a food voucher, which is issued through the Tangentyere community banking service.
- This system is also used for food boxes for pensioners or meals on wheels to eligible town camp residents.
- The food vouchers are made out to the Aboriginal owned supermarket in Alice Springs because it is the only supermarket that has to date expressly agreed to make sure that people don’t get change from the vouchers to purchase alcohol. In the past, the big supermarkets were reluctant or unable to police this problem and would give people change which could then be used to purchase alcohol at the supermarket’s alcohol outlet.
- Family members with drinking problems can give written permission for a sober family member to collect their food voucher when they are drinking. The bank staff will only give people a small voucher for food when they are drunk in case they lose their voucher or forget that they got them. They can pick up the rest of their voucher when they are sober.
- If people are going out bush for cultural reasons for a while, they can cancel their deductions while they are away, and start up again when they come back to town.

## **How much does it get used**

- There are 840 food voucher clients (including old people and those who are income managed). These people use the bank at least twice a month and often twice weekly.
- Since 2001, 1970 food voucher clients, including old people, deceased clients and people from remote communities, have signed on to the food voucher system.
- The Tangentyere Community Bank Service handles between \$8,000 and \$14,000 each day in withdrawals for these people.
- In the financial year 2006-7, the Tangentyere Community Bank Service issued \$1,700,000 in food vouchers; \$155,000 in food boxes; \$60,000 for meals on wheels, and \$1,000 on blankets and mattresses.

## **Costs**

Centrelink charges \$.99 to Tangentyere per person for each transaction they make.

In 2006-7, these fees totaled \$17,000 and \$1,650 in GST. Tangentyere Council is not funded for these charges.

# Response to the Northern Territory Government's CDEP Discussion Paper, March 2008

## Tangentyere Council April 2008

This paper provides comments by Tangentyere Council on the *CDEP Discussion Paper March 2008*, developed by the Northern Territory Government.

Tangentyere Council has developed a detailed proposal for a reformed CDEP with 17 specific recommendations, which is provided at **Attachment One**. This paper is geared to how a CDEP would work for town camps and Alice Springs but has wider implications and is broadly in line with much of the framework outlined in the NTG Discussion Paper.

The following comments relate to specific sections of the NTG Discussion Paper.

### 1. Why we need CDEP.

Tangentyere Council agrees with the views expressed in the paper about the reasons for CDEP being needed. In our experience, CDEP, provided it is properly managed, provides valuable skills, familiarity with workplaces and work culture, and community /social capital that is not available to most participants in any other way. It is also a good mechanism for job placement where there is a labour market. Tangentyere CDEP placed 131 participants into employment off CDEP in the two years between July 2005 and July 2007. It then placed another 80 people in jobs in the second half of 2007 before it was closed in November.

For many people who were participating on CDEP, its demise has meant that they are either on welfare benefits or on no income support at all, and have no day to day structured activity. They have gone from participating and contributing, and having a pathway to employment, to being passive and dependent. Work for the Dole has proved to be an insufficient and inadequate replacement. It has not had the capacity to pick up anywhere near the number of people involved previously with CDEP or to enable a sense of either personal skill development or of contribution to the local community.

Tangentyere Council believes that CDEP should be available to people who are not job ready and who do not have skills that would enable them to find employment without the assistance of CDEP.

### 2. Different Labour Markets

Tangentyere Council has outlined in its attached proposal that CDEP should operate differently in different circumstances. This accords to some extent with the framework outlined in the paper.

The division of economies into 3 categories for the purpose of CDEP is questioned however, as this raises issues of different rules and delivery mechanisms applying to each of these situations. Tangentyere Council believes that CDEP should be geared to the opportunities that are available in each location, with distinction only between CDEP in established labour markets and in limited labour markets. CDEP projects that are in urban areas with established labour markets, should be primarily aiming at job transition. In limited labour markets, CDEP should be making use of any job or business opportunities, but improving community and social capital, as well as skills and work preparation, should be a major aim of the program, as outlined below.

## **2.1 Established labour markets**

Tangentyere Council proposes that there are 5 town based CDEPs in the NT - Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Darwin and possibly Nhulunbuy. All others should be considered as in limited economies, although they will have differing ranges of opportunities available within that category. This allows for greater ease in administration.

Town based CDEPs would be very clearly a transition to work program. They should be time limited and concentrate on skills development and job placement. Under the Tangentyere proposal, entry would be dependant on satisfactory participation in a relatively short term Work for the Dole scheme, in order to get them used to work expectations. Failure to participate in CDEP would result in a return to Work for the Dole or Newstart allowance and may also carry with it the possibility of income management. Those who satisfactorily participate in CDEP may wish to take advantage of Tangentyere's employee savings scheme. In other CDEPs, access to Centrepay on a voluntary basis could be useful.

## **2.2. Limited labour markets**

All CDEPs outside the town areas outlined above would be in limited labour markets to differing degrees, which may mean that CDEP has a different emphasis in different places.

The role of CDEP in these areas would be:

- Skills development
- Transition to work
- Viable business development
- Community work and activities of benefit to the community
- A training ground for employment in infrastructure projects within the community such as housing and essential services.

## **3. CDEP activities**

Tangentyere Council believes that some of the activities proposed for CDEP, particularly in remote areas, are too broad and in some cases unrealistic.

### **3.1 Voluntary mobility**

Tangentyere Council does not view assistance with voluntary mobility as part of the role of CDEP. This is a function of job network providers for those registered with them or in some cases such as mining companies, the company itself may provide assistance. The Discussion Paper provides no detail on how it envisages that this might work.

It is also debatable whether people should be encouraged to move from a CDEP position in a remote community to an established labour market such as Alice Springs if they do not have a job organised and have limited skills, as this may only result in being unemployed in town. This may then exacerbate overcrowding on town camps, as there is a long waiting list for public housing and unemployed people are unlikely to be able to afford commercial rents. Encouragement of people to move from remote communities to towns may aggravate existing problems of homelessness and overcrowding in those towns.

### ***3.2 Transitioning or shadowing people into existing jobs not currently done by local people.***

This may be viable where jobs do not require specific qualifications. However, for those jobs such as teachers, nurses and doctors, police, and qualified child and aged care workers, support for local people to gain these qualifications should be strongly encouraged, but is likely to be outside the scope of CDEP.

If there are to be trainee positions in management and administration positions, for instance in the new shires, then these should be properly resourced as trainee positions, not CDEP positions. Similarly it may be better to create traineeship positions within stores, rather than encourage CDEP subsidised positions.

### ***3.3 Enhancing the range of life experiences***

This is a vague term and needs to be explained more clearly both in terms of the activities it might involve and how they would be funded. There may be a danger in having unrealistic expectations that CDEP can meet all the needs of its participants and all the needs of the community.

### ***3.4 Literacy and numeracy***

There is a high need for properly resourced and skilled tuition in literacy and numeracy in the majority of Aboriginal communities. Caution should be exercised in adding this into the list of CDEP activities in an ad hoc way. There may be a place for some work based literacy and numeracy but, for these skills to be learnt satisfactorily, it requires dedicated teaching resources over the medium to long term. Literacy and numeracy is primarily a responsibility of education organisations. However, language facilities such as language laboratories on communities could be useful in facilitating literacy and numeracy, which in turn could be accepted as a CDEP activity.

## **4. CDEP Delivery Issues**

### ***4.1 Wages and Top Up***

CDEP should be waged and have clear expectations about attendance and work performance with clearly set out penalties for non attendance.

Tangentyere Council strongly believes that there should be no system of top up. This creates a two tier system which can be detrimental to the view of normal CDEP participation. Importantly, if a job exists, it should be treated and resourced as a proper job. Where wage subsidy labour market programs for jobs exist, CDEP participants should be considered eligible for those positions.

Tangentyere Council strongly believes ongoing jobs should not become CDEP top up positions. This institutionalises a second rate system of service delivery for Aboriginal communities that would not be acceptable elsewhere and allows governments to under resource normal services.

CDEP jobs and training should be geared to work that is not ongoing or that would not normally be funded via government. This may consist of a wide range of project based jobs and training such as creating a vegetable garden or orchard, fencing a community facility, painting, making curtains for community facilities etc. A list of activities should be planned in advance for each CDEP.

The skills and work experience gained through CDEP may enable a shelf labour hire company in some cases whereby CDEP participants are able to be employed when community infrastructure programs such as building of houses, infrastructure or major repairs and maintenance are undertaken, rather than all of this work being undertaken by teams of workers from elsewhere. All major projects of this nature should be required to employ and train a number of local people as part of their contract.

Similarly it may be possible for CDEP gangs to take up full time contracts for particular jobs such as road works, minor household repairs (possible on a partial fee for service basis) or concreting work.

#### **4.2 Business Development**

Business development needs to be approached in a realistic way. Small businesses are often unsuccessful and often employ very few people. It can be possible to enable many people to contribute to a business in a flexible way however, in the manner that Titjikala's Gunya Tourist enterprise has, with numerous associated long term social and economic benefits.

#### **4.3 Case management**

CDEP in the past did not have resources for individual case management, such as that provided by intensive support under job network for unemployed people, and it is hard to see that it will in the future. The scope of this proposal in the NTG discussion paper and how it would be resourced is unclear.

#### **4.4 CDEP administration**

Tangentyere Council believes that CDEP should be administered on a regional basis to ensure consistency of administration and enforcement of work expectations, and to utilise economies of scale. This does not necessarily mean that they should be run by the new shires in the NT. CDEP organisations should be selected on merit and capacity to deliver.

Related aspects of CDEP administration include:

- A need to train and register CDEP coordinators and have consistent pay and conditions
- Successful CDEPs to be funded for three years
- Development of a CDEP award
- A peak organisation for CDEPs to promote professionalism and share good practice.

## **Recommendations in relation to the NTG Discussion Paper on CDEP**

(these are additional or complementary to those in the attached paper by Tangentyere Council on CDEP reform)

1. Fund CDEPs in established and limited labour markets with specific objectives and performance targets appropriate to each labour market. (section 5 of NTG Discussion Paper)
2. Assistance with mobility to be provided through job network or those employers able to offer jobs, such as mining companies, not through CDEP.
3. Encourage literacy and numeracy training through appropriate provision of resources through education and training organisations and enable CDEP participants to take up opportunities for this training.
4. Do not use CDEP workers to undertake ongoing jobs or services that are the responsibility of governments to provide, whether or not top up is provided.
5. Where possible, facilitate the establishment of labour hire companies to utilise the skills gained by CDEP workers to enable them to take up contract work, such as repairs and maintenance, and housing and infrastructure upgrades, in the community and elsewhere as needed and as opportunities arise. Any contractors should be required to employ and train local labour as part of their contractual requirements.

Please refer to the following CDEP additional recommendations proposed by Tangentyere Council.

### *Recommendation 1.*

- The CDEP scheme should be retained and reformed. There should be different types of CDEPs to address the different circumstances existing in NT communities.

### *Recommendation 2*

- Urban based CDEPs in the NT should be retained and function as an indigenous transition to employment program. Incentive payments for placing participants into work should be commensurate with those given to Job Network Providers for similar outcomes. Urban based CDEPs should focus on participant development and job placement. Remote CDEPs should focus on community development.

### *Recommendation 3*

- Town based CDEPs in the NT should be limited to a maximum of five, one each in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Darwin and possibly Nhulunbuy.

### *Recommendation 4.*

- Participants must qualify for CDEP by showing they can participate productively in WfD. This would mean that CDEPs would have fewer participants but they would be more work ready.

### *Recommendation 5.*

- CDEP wages should not be used to cross subsidize government or other programs. The real jobs in communities should be properly funded by government or business to provide proper employment pathways for participants.

*Recommendation 6.*

- The use of CDEP wages to subsidize non-government jobs should be strictly limited. It should only be available as a tool to encourage employers to take on indigenous staff. It should be available for a maximum of six months and only on the condition that it will convert into a real job after that time.

*Recommendation 7.*

- CDEP Managers and coordinators should be registered and undergo proper training in how to deliver an effective CDEP program. They should have a standard salary and conditions commensurate with the task.

*Recommendation 8.*

- Funding of CDEPs should be for up to three years to allow for effective planning and retention of staff.

*Recommendation 9.*

- There should be a separation of capital and recurrent funding. Capital allocations should be fair and equitable based on community needs and not on the size of the CDEP.

*Recommendation 10.*

- There should be a minimum limit (100) to the size of a CDEP to ensure viability. Participant numbers should not be the only determinant of how much funding is allocated to a CDEP. Smaller community based CDEPs should be funded adequately to be able to provide an effective CDEP service.

*Recommendation 11.*

- CDEPs should be regionalized or merged to take up advantages of scale and to more effectively develop enterprise opportunities.

*Recommendation 12.*

- The CDEPs main role should be the training and employment of participants to enhance the social capital of a community. The secondary role should be business development but only where this leads to viable and sustainable employment. CDEP should not be a surrogate community service delivery agency unless it is under a proper contractual arrangement.

*Recommendation 13.*

- CDEPs should be developed as enterprise hubs within communities able to undertake commercial opportunities and generate real jobs in communities.

*Recommendation 14.*

- CDEP participants in transition to mainstream employment should be regarded as employed to all intents and purposes. A proper CDEP award should be developed with leave accruals, workers compensation and superannuation entitlements provided for in the funding arrangements.

*Recommendation 15.*

- Participation on CDEP in urban centres should be time limited to 52 weeks. Participants should be aware that CDEP is an opportunity that should be grasped and not a destination.

*Recommendation 16.*

- There should be a moratorium on the future role of CDEP in the NT. All stakeholders in the community should be invited to attend a forum and have the opportunity to present their ideas for a reformed CDEP.

*Recommendation 17.*

- CDEP organizations in Australia should be allowed to form a peak body where issues that effect the operation of the CDEP program may be discussed and so provide a conduit for informed feedback to and closer consultation with the policy makers.

# TANGENTYERE JOB SHOP

## Senate Select Committee on regional & remote Indigenous communities

### 1. Background

The Tangentyere Job Shop is an enterprise arm of Tangentyere Council with a focus on employment and training for Indigenous people living in Alice Springs and in communities in Central Australia. It has been operating since February 2000, and delivers employment services contracts as a member of Job Futures. Out bush, the Job Shop has five sites – Titjikala, Santa Teresa, Harts Range, Utopia and Ti Tree.

### 2. Comments on the terms of reference

#### 2.1 The employment & enterprise opportunities in regional communities

- Town Camp residents in Alice Springs continue to largely miss out on the labour market demand for professional people, skilled workers or people with tickets. Moving the Job Network caseload to mainstream organisations, combined with the loss of CDEP and top up as a pathway have both had a negative impact on employment & possible enterprise opportunities for Town Camp residents. Limited literacy and low education levels remain systemic barriers, and will take years to address.
- Work for the Dole, in regional centres as well as remote communities, needs to shift to being a stepping stone pre CDEP.
- Using the job seeker account innovatively meets with restrictions from DEEWR. It is hoped that the new enterprise services market genuinely cuts red tape, micro management and detailed reporting for its own sake.

#### 2.2 The employment & enterprise opportunities in remote communities

- The return of CDEP will restore a pathway for skills development, enterprise development, and community pride in places like Titjikala which were shattered by the effect of the CDEP shut down, particularly on enterprises such as Gunya Tourism.
- Governments need to recognise that communities which are not targeted by the NTER also have employment & enterprise needs and opportunities eg the outstations of the Urapuntja Community Council, which are home to about 1000 people.
- Mining remains the largest potential source of jobs and enterprise in much of Central Australia. The Job Shop is very fortunate to be able to work with the Central Land Council's Mining Employment Unit which has been a lead agency in training and job development.
- The new model for employment services is a major break through for remote community delivery. It recognises the lack of realism of trying to deliver six entirely separate programs to a limited labour market. As with Town Camp residents, limited literacy and low education levels are widespread, and it has been a difficult transition with the expectation of active participation.

## Tangentyere Council Inc.

PO Box 8070  
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871  
Ph. (08) 8951 4222  
Fax (08) 8952 8521  
Email: tangentyere@tangentyere.org.au



### ALICE SPRINGS ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PATROLS BRIEFING PAPER

#### 1. BACKGROUND

There is a strong base of evidence regarding the effectiveness and benefits of community patrolling in Aboriginal communities (see References). Such benefits include reducing violence, including domestic violence, assisting in the prevention of child abuse, increasing community perceptions of safety, minimising the harm of substance misuse, creation of jobs and self esteem for community members, and reducing the costs incurred by other services, such as incarceration and health care.

Despite this, there has been no increase in support for Night Patrols in Alice Springs as a result of the Intervention.

#### 2. CURRENT OPERATION OF ABORIGINAL PATROLS IN ALICE SPRINGS

##### 2.1 Tangentyere Night and Youth Night Patrols

Tangentyere currently operates a Night Patrol (one vehicle, 5 nights per week) and Youth Night Patrol (one vehicle, 3 nights per week) funded by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department. Night Patrol has operated since 1990, and Youth Night Patrol has been operated by Tangentyere Council since February 2007, and was formerly operated by another agency in Alice Springs.

Patrollers (both Night and Youth) were formerly CDEP subsidised employees, and are paid at the rate \$17.92 per hour. They are not eligible for penalty rates. See 3.1 for further discussion on this point.

##### 2.2 Tangentyere Community Day Patrol

Tangentyere Community Day Patrol is funded by the NT Department of Health and Community Services and operates 5 days per week, commencing pre-dawn 4 days per week. The service has been in operation in current form since late 2006 (and previously operated between 2002 and early 2006).

The service was re-designed in 2006 to not be reliant on CDEP subsidies, and staff are paid according to the Tangentyere Collective Agreement at a rate of \$20.64 an hour.

#### 3. CURRENT PROPOSALS FOR SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

The following proposals have been identified as ways to address key challenges for Alice Springs Night and Youth Patrol services. Some of these challenges were identified in the review of Tangentyere Night Patrol conducted by the Attorney-General's Department in 2007.<sup>1</sup> Tangentyere fears that the challenges relating to the current models of patrolling, if not addressed, may lead to a reduction in community safety, with the resulting increase in violence, alcohol abuse, and other problems.

<sup>1</sup> Audit of the Prevention, Diversion, Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice Programme, Tangentyere Council Section, p. 3.

All proposals have been included in our submissions for Night and Youth Night Patrol to the ICC for 2008/09.

### **3.1 Normalising rates of pay**

The current rates of pay and conditions for town based Night Patrollers are well below that of the equivalent Award and other conditions of the Tangentyere Collective Agreement. Wages for Patrollers have traditionally been 'pegged' to CDEP wage levels, so that all Patrollers employed were able to remain on CDEP. In this way, the service was dependent on CDEP program subsidies, a situation which has now been addressed by the Department. With CDEP no longer in place in Alice Springs at all, this pegged wage rate no longer applies, and is expected to be challenged when the current Collective Agreement is renegotiated.

To address this issue, Tangentyere proposes a staged move to more appropriate remuneration for patrollers on attainment of experience and qualifications. This would involve pay increments over a period of three years, linked to the career development plan outlined below.

### **3.2 Improving career pathways**

It is difficult to recruit and retain staff on patrolling services. This is not only due to the rates of pay, but also a lack of career pathways. The most skilled patrollers are highly sought after by local employers, and those who gain skills tend to move on to more highly paid positions with more established career pathways.

A career development plan has been proposed which would allow patrollers to progress through three levels of employment as patrollers and achieve a transferable, nationally accredited qualification while working for Tangentyere Night or Youth Patrol. The implementation of this plan will foster pride in the work and ambition amongst patrollers, as well as recognition by agencies external to Tangentyere of our skilled and professional workforce.

It is proposed that advancement to higher levels of skills and qualifications will be linked to pay increases, to bring Night Patroller wages in line with Community Day Patrol wages in a staged process, thereby improving our retention rate on night time patrolling services.

### **3.3 Streamlining data collection**

Tangentyere Night Patrol maintains a comprehensive database of patrol activity for reporting and service planning. Through routine monitoring and reporting using the Patrol Database, Tangentyere Council ensures that the Night Patrol service addresses performance measures outlined in the Program Guidelines. Regular meetings with Patrollers and reflection on the data also allows for qualitative interpretation and service improvement.

However, there is potential to further optimise our process of data collection, reflection and service development. In recruiting patrollers, priority is given to those with cultural seniority, language skills, excellent mediation skills, etc. However, some people with these skills do not possess high levels of literacy or numeracy. In addition, the budget does not allow for the employment of any administrative staff to regularly enter the data collected on the paper sheets into the computer.

It is proposed that along with the Night Patrol Team Leader, the patrol base is staffed each night by one person responsible for simultaneous electronic data collection on all service activities, whereby patrollers in the vehicles radio back information to base, which is immediately entered electronically. This enables those in the vehicle to focus on and use their skills to address the situations at hand. In addition, staff will be trained and rotated through the data entry role to develop electronic data collection skills.

This will require the employment of one additional patroller per shift, shared between Youth and Night Patrol.

### 3.4 Increasing the number of patrols

Currently, one patrol car is in operation for Night Patrol, five nights per week, and one Youth Night Patrol vehicle three nights per week. Given that they are expected to patrol 19 town camps, residential areas and public spaces in a town of over 25,000 people, this has been identified by many community members and other key stakeholders as an inadequate level of service delivery.<sup>2</sup>

Tangentyere proposes to double this level of service delivery. Not only would the community outcomes be vastly improved, a two car operation for each service would improve occupational health and safety by allowing 'back up' from the second vehicle should the need arise.

In our submission to the ICC for 08/09, Tangentyere has requested additional staff for both services, along with a new Youth Patrol bus to facilitate this expansion.

### 3.5 Extending hours of operation

At several meetings of stakeholders in Alice Springs in 2007, it was identified both night time services, and in particular, Youth Night Patrol would better serve the community if their services were to operate later on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

As a result, Tangentyere Council prepared a proposal outlining a model for later operation of both Youth and Night Patrol on those nights. As Northern Territory Government agencies were prominent in calling for the later hours of operation, this proposal was sent to the Northern Territory Government in the first instance, as well as being incorporated in our submission to the ICC for 2008/09.

This would require the payment of shift allowances for Night and Youth Patrollers on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, to the equivalent of penalty rates.

---

## 4. COSTED SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To implement all of the above solutions as proposed in our ICC eSub, Tangentyere requires:<sup>3</sup>

- 4.1 **Three additional full time Night Patrollers** to allow for dual car operations (~\$173,000 pa).
- 4.2 **Two additional 0.6 FTE Youth Night Patrollers** to allow for dual car operations (~\$73,000 pa).
- 4.3 **A laptop computer** and an **additional full time Patroller** to collect data, shared between both Youth Night Patrol & Night Patrol (\$3,000 one-off grant; ~\$58,000 pa).
- 4.4 A new **Youth Patrol bus** (~\$46,000 one-off grant).
- 4.5 **Shift allowances** for Youth and Night Patrollers to work later on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights (~\$74,000 pa).
- 4.6 **Pay rises over period of three years** for patrollers advancing according to the career development plan (This cost would be variable depending on career advancement rates. An estimate of annual costs for each service has been made in our ICC submissions for 08/09. Hourly rate increases at current levels would be as follows: Patroller level 1 = \$17.92 p/h; Patroller level 2 = \$18.86 p/h; Patroller level 3 = \$20.64 p/h).

## 5. CONTACT DETAILS

Marg Reilly  
Social Services Manager  
Tangentyere Council  
Phone: 08 8951 4244  
Email: [marg.reilly@tangentyere.org.au](mailto:marg.reilly@tangentyere.org.au)

---

<sup>2</sup> Alice Springs Town Camp Review Task Force, *Review Report* (2006), pp. 9, 16.

<sup>3</sup> All estimates are based on 2008/09 costs. These would increase according to CPI in future years.

## 6. REFERENCES

Alice Springs Town Camp Review Task Force, *Review Report* (2006).

Blagg, H. and Valuri, G., 'Aboriginal Community Patrols in Australia: Self-Policing, Self Determination and Security' (2004) 14(4) *Policing and Society*.

Commonwealth, Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, *National Report* (1991), Recommendations 83-91.

Mosey, A. 'Final Evaluation of Ali Curung Night Patrol', (Evaluation on behalf of Ali Curung Community Government Council, 2000)

Sputore, B., Gray, D. and Sampi, C. 'Review of the Services Provided by Jungarni-Jutiya Alcohol Action Council Aboriginal Corporation', (National Drug Research Institute, 2000)

Strempel, P., Saggars, S., Gray, D., Stearne, A. 'Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Projects: Elements of Best Practice', (ANCD Research Paper No 8, Australian National Council on Drugs, 2003).

Tangentyere Council Patrollers & Elek, C. '*Relhe Marre Tnyeneme: Community Patrols in Alice Springs: Keeping People Safe*' Indigenous Law Bulletin, June/July 2007 6(28), 24-26.