



Ngaanyatjarra
Pitjantjatjara
Yankunytjatjara
Women's Council

Australian Government
Department of Social Services
Community Sector Public Consultation
By email: CSAGSecretariat@dss.gov.au

A stronger, more diverse and independent community sector

The Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council ('NPYWC') writes in response to the Department of Social Services invitation to comment on the issues paper, named, 'A stronger, more diverse and independent community sector' ('issues paper').

Who are we?

NPYWC is an Aboriginal Corporation that advocates for Anangu in the NPY region and is a major provider of human services for the NPY Lands. The NPY Lands span the tri-state Central Desert region of South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, covering 350,000sq km and encompassing 26 remote communities and homelands, with an overall population of around 6,000 Anangu and Yarnangu (Aboriginal people), **annexed and labelled "A"** is a map of the region. NPY Women's Council's core purpose is to work with women and their families of the NPY region to increase their capacity to lead safe and healthy lives with improved life choices. The Council provides health, cultural and community service projects to over 6,000 men, women and children in our region. These services are not duplicated by any other service in the area.

NPYWC holds a deep legacy for the advocacy of all Anangu to have the right of living well in both worlds. This vision has always been driven by the belief that Anangu know what is best for Anangu and actualisation of self-determination and positive socio-health outcomes has to be supported by a strong and independent community sector. Above all the collective agency of Anangu women and cultural guidance are the pillars of what make Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) the leading experts for placed-based solutions for the communities they serve.

NPYWC, will continue to define the organisation as a 'Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation' (ACCO) as oppose to the 'community sector' due to the significance and importance of ACCO's advocacy, service delivery, expertise and leadership for positive outcomes that so often becomes the blueprint for all Australians.

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Regional and Remote Needs

As referenced above and annexed below, the NPY region intersects with the tristate and territory region of Central Australia. The 26 communities within the region are some of the most remote communities in all of Australia. To deliver services to the region, funding needs to reflect the real cost of delivery. A list of considerations that are not needed in other regional and urban areas include but are not limited to; travel allowance for staff, petrol, vehicles, remote housing, housing maintenance and emergency maintenance costs, flight expenses and food expenses.

Frequently, the funding allocated to ACCOs is for project creation and service delivery, and therefore, is restricted to these outcomes. To create a stronger Aboriginal controlled community sector, funding needs to include the real costs of sustaining and strengthening organisational capacity and core services. While funding of programs is important, without funding for administration roles, human resources and other key corporate roles, the sustainable and increased growth of ACCO's is severely hindered.

To put this into context, NPYWC currently has a deficit of a minimum of ten (10) corporate positions. These positions have been identified as crucial for an organisation of NPYWC's size and service delivery. Achieving the intended outcomes and vision of NPYWC cannot be achieved without these roles and should be afforded to ACCOs as seen in other leading generalist organisations. Having these core services funded will ensure a strengthened sector and show a commitment to national reconciliation goals such as closing the gap.

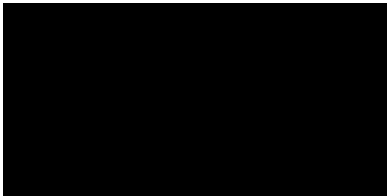
Another consideration for a strengthened Aboriginal community sector includes having funding reflect the costs and needs of remote communities in comparison to regional towns. Frequently, funding is grouped under "regional needs" without any disparity given to the costs of delivering services to remote communities. Servicing regional towns and surrounding areas requires less travel, reduces the need for allocated accommodation and staff have greater access to peer-to-peer support. Having 'regional town', synonymous with remote communities creates a funding blind spot for NPYWC and reduces the capacity to deliver the services needed out in remote communities. Another consequence of this funding allocation is the salary parity that arises between organisations in Alice Springs. Greater funding can be allocated to staff salary and consequently there are greater initiatives for staff retention. NPYWC is unable to utilise funding allocation in the same way. To strengthen the service of NPYWC we need the best people to do the best job. Being able to pay accordingly will support this objective.

For a stronger and independent sector, funding needs to acknowledge regions in accordance with the communities ACCOs service. The region, funding, and need cannot be siloed in state and territory boundaries. When this occurs often there is the creation of division amongst Anangu, particularly when there is a greater investment in one state and/or territory over another. For a stronger sector, recognition of funding need, has to reflect the communities organisations are there to support.

Thank you for providing NPYWC with the opportunity to comment on this important issues paper, and please do not hesitate to contact us if there are any further questions about what we have raised in this submission.

Prepared by [REDACTED] on behalf of NPY Women's Council

Kind Regards,



Chief Executive Officer
7 October 2023

Annexure A:

