

Productivity Commission 2017

Please find attached submission associated with inquiry into service delivery in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The submission has presented some findings and strong communication dialogue within the operational cycle of indigenous engagement of which has presented a variable of complexity and challenging environment in which to work and operate.

The context of the submission has connectivity to the overcoming disadvantage Report;

- Key Indicators 2016- trends in national indicators
- COAG targets and headline indicators¹

The strategic areas for action content as indicated require extensive improvement to expedite the urgency to address the six (6) determinants.

- A. Governance/leadership/culture - (data Gap)
- B. Early childhood development: - (some progress and some results unclear)
- C. Education and training: - (data gap and some progress)
- D. Economic participation: - (some progress and some results unclear)
- E. Home environment: - (results unclear, no significant change and still overcrowding)
- F. Safe & Supportive communities: (no significant change, Data gap and regress/recidivism)
- G. Healthy Lives: (data gap, results unclear & regress in mental health /suicide/self-harm)

Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage reports focus on six determinants of governance:

1. governing institutions
2. leadership
3. self-determination
4. capacity building
5. cultural match
6. Resources (Queensland Government, 2017; Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2016).

Submission Response to the above strategic areas for action and core determinants are tabled as:

GOVERNANCE:

1. **Roles and responsibilities between all tiers of government is not effective;** especially within the scope of integrated services and delivery to remote and discrete communities.

We have three layers of government² that are orchestrated to coordinate an effective strategy to help combat the destruction of the core essence of Indigenous peoples right and interest which include addressing matters such as inequality, racism, discrimination, disparity, poverty, domestic and family violence, recidivism and reduction of prison incarceration;

¹ Ref Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage –key indicator 2016, Page 3

² ICC, DATSIP & Premier and Cabinet

however it seems that each role is cultured within a political and bureaucratic process of uncertainty, lack of commitment and what presents as an indiscrete application and or disposition of a saviour mentality that further fuels a systemic process of suppression, chronic illness and a complexity of chronic mental health that form multiple clusters of deep trauma related attachments that effect an expedient course of demise to dwindle the integrity of indigenous peoples life span and what is deemed a slow death of remote and discreet communities.

2. Current delegation of decision making powers regarding service delivery is not effective and very slow in responding ;

- a) There presents a high level of uncertainty or silent treatment around decision-making and implementation of actions; one aspect is due to high turn-over in CEO's role effecting disruptive delay and slow delivery of contingency operations.

These disruptions may present poor management capabilities and or poor intent as individual attitudes may tend to make biased judgements as per personal values and interpretation of how business should be run, leaving no room for consistency and or what is needed to support community operation and service delivery that bring benefit to the whole community;

- b) Especially when you have statutory limitations of funding arrangements and restricted flexibility which is not effective business to deliver long term desired outcomes.

3. Extent to which communities and individuals are able to use local governance arrangements to voice their preferences, concerns or needs is not effective;

- a) Communication dialogue become bogged down with empty words - without no true conviction to carry out the actions most needed to make positive change and progression.
- b) An application of ineffectiveness enforce a system of minimal transparency and Non-inclusiveness, disallowing effective decision-making and poor understanding of roles and responsibilities with poor communication transmission between funders, providers and the service users.
- c) Lack of transparency and improper engagement, disadvantage community people bringing a negative effect, reducing the actual economic viability and longevity needed.
- d) Remote and discrete communities are highly likely disadvantaged due to educational disparity which is most times suppressed by a system of control by individuals who sit in influential positions; hence literature/authority is drafted without no fair and equitable process of scrutiny to ensure decisions are obtained with full consent by all those affected and to clarify if it will bring benefit to the community and its people.

4. Government services and or non-government service programs and institutions are not properly effective and or well groomed;

- a) Especially when it comes to dealing with a systemic core problem of socio-economic disparity and “*mental health crisis*” that is prevalent in remote and discrete communities.
- b) The composition of chronic infestation is enshrouded within an invisible film of complex trauma that is filtered through the networks of community settlement bringing a scourge of a silent epidemic that is spreading with no real form of crisis management that is creating social disharmony and dysfunction within our society especially across the greater Mount Isa & Gulf regions.
- c) It is viewed as an instrument of poor governance and ineffective processes that struggle to deliver and address compliance of regulatory regimes that are hindered and or masked by decision-makers and or individual’s poor judgment that decline to apply best practice or to allow for positive intervention to occur.
- d) The nature of this type of practice presents a high risk of nepotism and or breach of conflict of interest, especially in isolated communities; whereby quality assurance checks is poor, no-one checks on the high risk of criminal intent of persons exploiting business to obtain individual financial profit and or for their friends and associated colleagues.

The positions/roles must have clear mandate to provide high standard of service delivery to maximize performance management and desired objectives to secure sustainable socio-economic gain/benefit for the community and its people as a whole.

5. Impediments : inequality, injustice and or acts of suppression

These areas require urgency to address the social and emotional wellness of the community and its core functionality, purpose and long term viability.

Some core areas of concern are listed, but is not an exclusive list;

- a) unskilled human resource (aboriginal community people is high concern)
- b) lack of cultural competency especially within service provider delivery
- c) racism /discrimination
- d) lack of proper community and governance training
- e) dealing with a religious saviour mentality
- f) dealing with the concept that the black person is not intelligent enough
- g) Dealing with concepts where non-indigenous person are favoured and or appointed in a job over the black person.
- h) Dealing with concept of cultural inappropriateness and or indirect discrimination to engage new non– indigenous staff over existing aboriginal staff.
- i) dealing with unfair processes of employment
- j) Lack off scrutinisation when non-indigenous people are appointed in positions/jobs that should be mapped in accordance to an Aboriginal succession plan for community.
- k) Lack of proper referral and or referee /witness to address full scope of roles especially within remote and discrete communities.
- l) Nil to minimal implementation of community economic succession plan to secure permanent jobs for Aboriginal community people.
- m) nil to minimal access, affordability and availability to proper mental health care

6. **Indigenous organisational governance and service delivery:**
 - a. need to enhance the viability of community governance structures with strong education and skills sets to induce equity and quality life style choice
7. **Empower self-determination and implementation of an effective succession policy /plan**
 - a. provide governance and community development education into school curriculum
 - b. provide governance and community development education into CDEP programs
 - c. Embed training within all facets of community business to capitalise on local skilled human resource and reduce fly in fly out staffing including government employment.
8. **Improve community engagement to extend an inclusiveness of all community people;** to actively have productive input into community planning and development that will help address better relationships and partnerships.
9. Provide educational support to help community people and families to improve better processes to achieve prior informed consent and choices that will help sustain overall community wellbeing.
10. **Extent of community level of governance is non-effective,** in influencing and improving service delivery that is fair for everyone;
11. **Extent of government decisions** have eroded or influenced local governance bands that operate in silo's effecting a mode of fear and rejection of community people feeling unable to have their say in what affects them and their community life
12. **Existing governance arrangements** are not forthcoming in securing effectiveness and efficiency in defining and addressing community needs and aspirations

Roles and responsibilities:

All tiers of government are not engaging effectively and or working in collaboration to facilitate and or plan and deliver the most effective outcome for remote and discrete communities.

i.e. the PCYC infrastructure and the Youth Hub infrastructure both funded by separate tiers of government; however built in the same complex area but separate from each other, but the problem is they both service the same group of community youth ,hence how can those tax payer dollars be better managed to provide best fit for the community.

1. Post-secondary education -participation and attainment

- a) poor skill levels
- b) poor literacy numeracy capacity
- c) racism
- d) isolation/remoteness
- e) poor labour market

2. Disability and chronic disease

- a) high risk of kidney failure
- b) high risk of undiagnosed illness
- c) high risk of chronic alcoholism
- d) poor access and suitability of educational support and effective service delivery

3. Household and individual income:

- a) labour market is very minimal (local council, government store, MyPathway CDEP)
- b) high unemployment (work for the dole)
- c) cost of community living is high; money doesn't go very far
- d) Uncertainty of NDIS recipients and or the number of undiagnosed NDIS recipients.

- e) unfairness in equal pay; especially with non-recognition of Aboriginal peoples unique skill sets that is vital to securing desired outcomes aligned to cultural competency and achieving desired government outcomes,

- f) the disparity between non indigenous pay rates is of high concern in remote and discrete Communities; and

- g) conflict of interest and nepotism is not properly scrutinised; as non-indigenous individuals/ family units are more than likely placed into full time jobs with no proper consideration of Aboriginal community being offered economic opportunity to succeed and prosper with a good standard of income that will support socio-economic wellbeing.

4. Substantiated child abuse and neglect

- a) This area is of a very sensitive nature as community members raise concerns but fear the repercussion of family and community violence
- b) Apparently young girls between 12-16 are being coerced and or groomed to submit to offers of high risk taking through supply of drugs and alcohol in exchange for sexual favours;
- c) apparently this includes sex for food and bed
- d) other matters include use of minors to run drug errands for adult family members
- e) youths being neglected by not having enough food- effecting high risk of break and enter (most break and enters involve stealing of food only)
- f) youths wander the streets all hours of the night, and parents seem to have nil care (are these kids of parents that have been subjected to similar history of neglect and complex trauma)
- g) youth defacing Govt service provider vehicles (is it a cry for help or an end product of neglect)
- h) Youth vandalising council vehicles (is it a cry for help or an end product of neglect)
- i) There is no proper scrutinisation of external workers who have been alleged to have interfered with community people and youth with exchange of drugs for sexual favours

5. Engagement with services

- a) nil to minimal positive engagement
- b) nil to minimal access to services
- c) nil to minimal cultural appropriateness
- d) There is strong perception that local service providers (NGO'S) are predominately family oriented effecting high risk of poor performance outcomes and high risk of avoidance by targeted service users and or community groups.
- e) Police engagement present problems due to having nil to minimal respect and or working knowledge and understanding for Aboriginal cultural value, belief, rights and interest.
- f) General engagement present problems due to no proper community induction that prepare

staff (both external and internal) about expectations, values, local trends and or essential needs including the effect of the environmental disparity that has strong association with a systemic cycle of mental health problems associated with the Doomadgee Aboriginal community.

6. Early child development perceptions present varying degrees of;

- a) high risk of poor mental health
- b) living in high risk of poverty
- c) nil to limited access to effective services
- d) high risk of chronic disease
- e) high risk of poor health care
- f) high risk of socialisation impediment
- g) high risk of learning impediment
- h) high risk of nil to limited social and cultural participation
- i) high risk of nil to limited educational attainment

7. Basic skills for life and learning:

- a) Desire strong consideration to improve educational strategies to enrich nurturing; and
- b) Improve education about the standard of care for kids and their rights.
- c) Improve education and strong skills to enrich family and kinship responsibility

8. Education training: there is a much needed urgency and desire for strong consideration and actions to;

- a) nurture effective family strategies for home learning and development
- b) remodel the learning environment to enhance school education with strong cultural attachments
- c) increase more opportunity for VET structure around aboriginal community development and economic innovation
- d) integrate life skills as essential building blocks for higher education capability;
- e) integrate community education and planning foundation at all levels of education, employment and training
- f) Integrate cultural values and belief as core essence of community education, planning and implementation.

9. Teacher quality:

- a) Desire strong consideration to ensure cultural competency
- b) Improve staff broad knowledge around aboriginal community functionality
- c) Need to improve working relationship with all tiers of education to support relevant Educational structures that provide intense support to local community teachers and staff.
- d) General engagement present problems due to no proper community induction that prepare staff (both external and internal) about expectations, values, local trends and or essential needs including the effect of the environmental disparity that has strong association with a systemic cycle of mental health problems associated with the Doomadgee Aboriginal community.

10. School engagement:

- a) **attendance** (is struggling to effect high attendance rate)
- b) **interest** (is very low to nil, maybe due to lack of connectivity with culture and purpose)
- c) **motivation/effort** (is fractured with a void of uncertainty that lack real purpose of connectivity and purpose for students and their family)
- d) Disadvantage has high bearing on the fact that there is a medium to high percentage of Youth/adults/parents/guardians that are non-literate in the community.

11. Transition from school to work:

- a) very poor (highly likely effected by the multiple complexity of trauma and socio-economic disparity)
- b) there is limited opportunity; especially for high school and boarding school students to access work experience and or training in their local community.
- c) This approach may present opportunity for improvement in school engagement; especially boarding schools to implement better working relations with selective community and to co-design alignment of curriculum to have strong grounding of community foundation and economic capitalization.

12. Access to primary health care: still presents with a high risk of an entrenched mode of poor service delivery which include;

- a) nil to limited early detection and treatment of illness
- b) nil to limited active management of chronic illness/conditions
- c) nil to limited active use of prevention programs
- d) nil to limited access to effective services
- e) nil to limited ability and willingness to use services
- f) affordability is inequitable, regulated by government and bureaucratic draconian attitude
- g) disadvantage of living in remote locations, influence access, availability and affordability
- h) poor education/relations effect weak perception of services and application

13. Mental health presents with a high level risk of an entrenched mode of neglect with an invisible and multi-complex burden upon Aboriginal life which stem from a trans-generation of being subjected to a systemic cycle of disparity, racism, isolation and a structure of violence that is instrumental in the continuous fluidity of;

- a) mental illness
- b) domestic violence
- c) substance misuse
- d) physical health problems
- e) incarceration
- f) family breakdown
- g) social disadvantage
- h) psychological distress
- i) Suicide and self-harm (both recorded and unrecorded)
- a) systemic history of trauma and grief
- b) past dislocation and mistreatment;
- c) Including service provider staff being overwhelmed with high population of client.

14. Economic participation is one of a subservient structure that operates within the mode in the nature of a suppressive style of practice, eluding to poor operational standards failing to;

- a) Improve a fair system of wage component that offer standard level of income and not the continued application of minimum wage
- b) improve living standards and working environment
- c) help improve self-esteem and self- worth
- d) help improve reduction of social alienation
- e) help reduce long term reliance on income support
- f) help improve access to education/tools and risk management of disadvantages that accompany low social economic status.

15. Overcrowding in housing: there is much needed urgency and desire for strong consideration and actions to address associated problems of overcrowding which;

- a) Is effecting strong grounds for social disharmony, poverty and a high level increase of family and domestic violence and mental health trauma
- b) Poor design of housing settlement and planning, require more transparency and active input from an inclusive approach that provide much needed desire for community to have input into planning a design that give prior informed consent to achieve good resolve for community relations.
- c) Housing tenancy is being used as a currency to impose a negative disposition of ownership whereby some family units allegedly have homes in different community or town settlements,
- d) Hence raise questions about government scrutiny and poor monitoring that effect housing tenancy abuse which disadvantage others on waiting list to live in a structure of homelessness and overcrowding.
- e) DFV is also an item of currency that is manipulated to secure immediate housing in other settlements to accommodate personal gratification -fueling anger and rejection of those in need of accommodation who will have to extend their waiting period whilst in limbo of homelessness and overcrowding.
- f) There is a need to properly train staff in their roles and responsibility; including the moral and ethical aspects associated with community living and working environment.
- g) It is paramount of strong consideration that an overhaul on housing placement and services is needed to effect efficiency and effectiveness of access to good and appropriate standard of housing needs and more importantly deliver education and compliance measures.

16. Rates of disease associated with poor environmental health:

- a) housing conditions are an ongoing process of refurbishment effected by poor infrastructure design, funding and maintenance delays;
- b) basic level of environmental health is poor with high perception of vulnerable to high risk cases of what presents an ongoing system of poverty and disparity;
- c) hence support increase in hospitalisation; and
- d) Increase in death rate, compounded by complex trauma and chronic illness is at an alarming state of affairs for the community.

17. Safe and supportive communities / Alcohol consumption and harm:

- a) is still rife and increasing with domestic and family violence
- b) sly grogging is still highly prevalent, supplied via Mt Isa and other local towns
- c) The cask of wine is a high currency item -bought in bulk /discarding packaging in transit and disguised to import into the community.
- d) Sly grogging is still prevalent, however community is aware of who supplies but hold grave fear of family and community repercussions of bullying and physical violence.
- e) Need strong education of Children's rights and parents/guardians responsibilities with core focus on the legal consequences and or penalties for breaching children's rights.
- f) Improve supportive network and home structure support for children
- g) Child neglect presents as a high risk due to dysfunctional families and break down of kinship structures causing effect of vagrancy and abuse by perpetrators.

18. Drug and other substance use and harm

- a) Is still rife and increasing with domestic violence and especially family violence whereby the partners' user will bully the other by use of police threats with manipulation of false DFV.
- b) Unknown source is still trafficking illicit drugs into the community, and operational use affect young children as mules or runners for the suppliers; and also high risk of very young females groomed up to provide sexual relations.
- c) Drug importing is still prevalent, however community is aware of who sells but hold grave fear of family and community repercussions of bullying and physical violence.
- d) Need strong education of Children's rights and parents/guardians responsibilities with core focus on the legal consequences and or penalties for breaching children's rights.

19. Juvenile diversion:

- a) There is uncertainty of the use of police cautioning which maybe workable in the community.
- b) there is uncertainty of the use of conferencing, which maybe workable if we have the right people and support structures;
- c) interventions need to consider access to appropriate Housing/infrastructure that accommodate juvenile support and education; and to give supported structure and family integration that embrace standards of child care/responsibility and bring about constructive change to family wellness support and improvement in positive lifestyle choice.

20. Community functioning: there is much needed urgency to deliver practical and workable support structures that are mapped to build on localised and external solutions with strong focus on core strengths and opportunities to combat the deficit which;

- a) Is struggling to bridge strong value and purpose of connectedness to country
- b) require reinvigorate strategies that will add value and purpose to the importance of tenure that tie traditional land and history;
- c) require effective formalisation and validation processes to effect an education and communication structure that is infused and integrated into all aspects of community life that embrace culture and identity;
- d) require enquiry into community engagement with Dept. Human Services to map a strategic profile of the various types of center-link payments; and their assessment processes in order to effect a workable solution that will enable better money management /usage to help enforce effective education on positive life style choices that will improve family structure, reduction of poverty/financial hardship and to help improve the home environment with a choice of statutory and or voluntary performance management agreements /targets that will help stop Domestic and Family Violence.
- e) Require enquiry into how the NT government and the QLD government can work to address the problem of alcohol management and illicit Drug suppliers – hence community people transiting into the gulf and greater Mount Isa region to access alcohol and are basically placing themselves in homeless situation that is causing social disharmony and an unnecessary financial burden on targeted families, communities and social service providers.
- f) Leadership is a much needed investment that must be encourage within all streams of the community and governance structures in the hope to bring true purpose for each individuals role, structure and routine within their community.
- g) feeling safe and vitality is one of mixed layers of fear, unknown and rejection, as the perception presents a view that there is nil to limited help, that is being served to help people to be empowered to help themselves as a strong community that will commit to building strong social network and relationships build on trust, respect and proper community integration of community services and delivery.
- h) Basically: as this enquiry is presented there need to be urgency in finding a better and sustainable way to provide socio-economic benefit to discrete and remote communities, and to put in place proper safety nets that will help to scrutinise how business is being managed and how we make sure bad business is not reoccurring in our discrete and remote communities.
- i) Enquiry may need to investigate better performance and financial management strategies that undertake regular and more intense scrutinisation of human resource/job expenditure. This will include how we remodel our business to ensure dignity, fairness and honesty; especially as some individuals stand to gain profitable outcomes with no real intent to helping community to grow and prosper.