

I refer to the Draft Summary Report (2017) on Service Delivery in Remote and Discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. I am a mature-age Bwgcolman, Lamalama and Yidingi woman from Palm Island/Townsville with community connections in far north Queensland which are both wide and strong. I would like to offer my opinions in relation to this document.

1. Structural Reform:

Decision Making

As per the structural reforms to decision making, I fully support the concept of a service delivery system that puts *communities* at the centre. This notion has been championed by the First Nation People (FNP) of Australia since colonisation. As a result, I agree with the suggestion for Community Representative Bodies, in Remote and Discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, to facilitate the structural changes in the decision-making process.

Likewise, I fully support the sentiment that communities will need support in relation to the proposed changes in the decision-making structure. I don't, however, agree with the suggestion that governance capability be provided by regional bodies. If the aim is to put *communities* at the centre of service delivery (i.e. decision making), then the community must remain outside the scope of Government. I would prefer that governance capability be provided by the Independent Oversight Body. Please refer to the attached diagram titled "decision making & accountability framework" for a detailed explanation. Upon closer examination, you will discover that I have incorporated some of the responsibilities of the Regional Bodies and the Independent Oversight Body, as well as providing some expansion and clarification.

Accountability

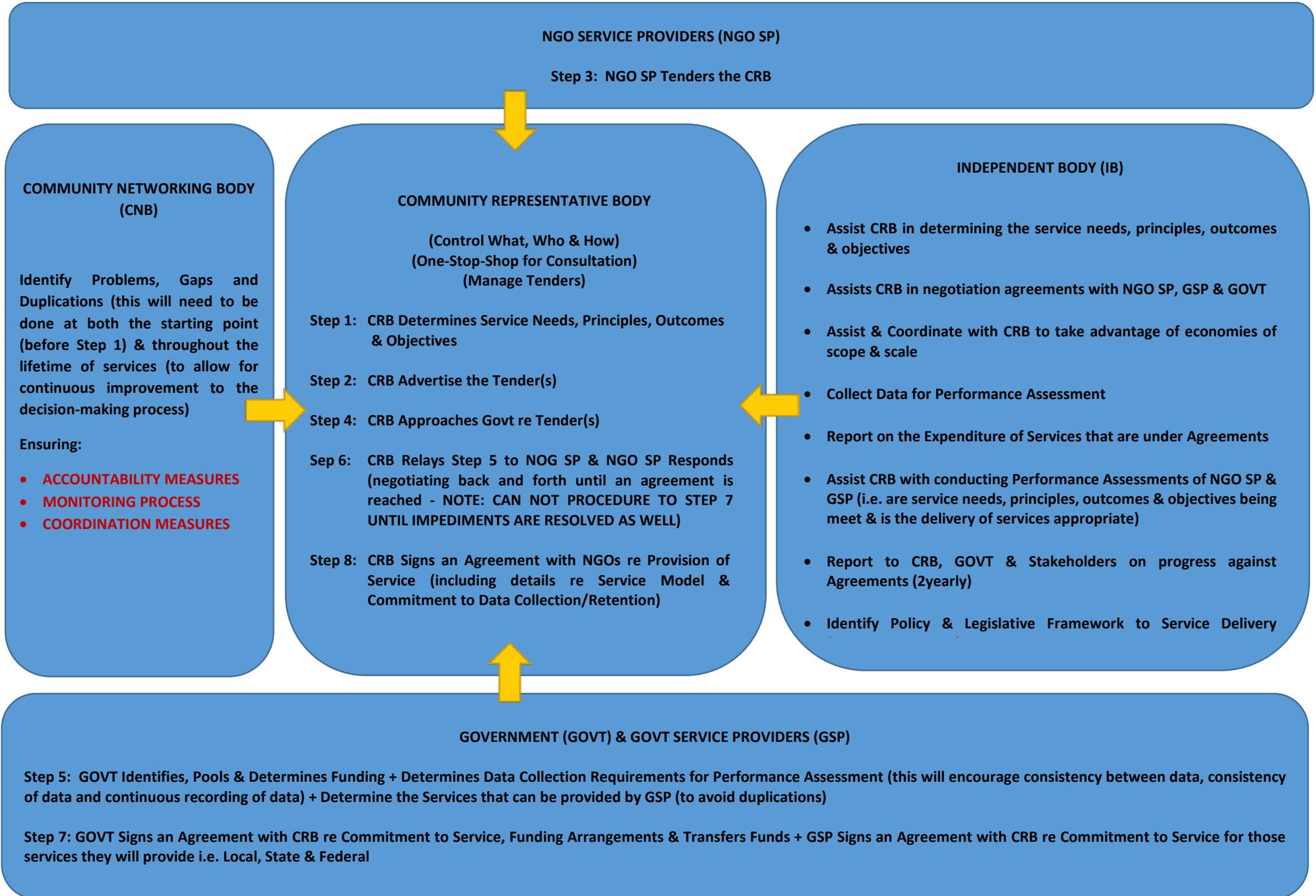
As per the structural reform to accountability, I totally agree with the concept of a service delivery system that focuses on performance assessment, however, I do not agree with the suggested model for ensuring accountability. This model is in direct contradiction to the structural reforms to decision making. Instead of putting "communities at the centre of service design" (i.e. a down up approach), the structural reform to accountability still places Government at the "centre" (i.e. a top down approach) - since the Government is "determining" the objectives and outcomes. The role of community is only to determine the best way to achieve these. I believe the only primary accountability issue, is the requirement that service delivery needs are being met. Once again, I refer you to the attached diagram titled "decision making & accountability framework" for a detailed explanation.

Consequences to Accountability

The flow (i.e. steps 1-8) in the attached decision making & accountability framework, details the process taken during the planning stage. In terms of the review and evaluation stage (which the Queensland Productivity Commission has suggested should occur on a 2-yearly basis), there are a few additional steps which need to be added, that are dependent upon the outcome of the review and evaluation process. Should service providers (i.e. NGOs and Governments):

- (i) Meet the service delivery needs as detailed in the service agreement, the Community Representative Bodies then approves the continuation of the service being delivered by the relevant provider; or
- (ii) Should they fail to meet the service delivery needs, then the Community Representative Bodies could either:
 - (a) Breach the agreement and repeat steps 1-8 again; or
 - (b) Re-negotiate the agreement. This option would be dependent upon valid reasons for the failure - such as unforeseen circumstances that were not identified in the planning process.

DECISION MAKING & ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

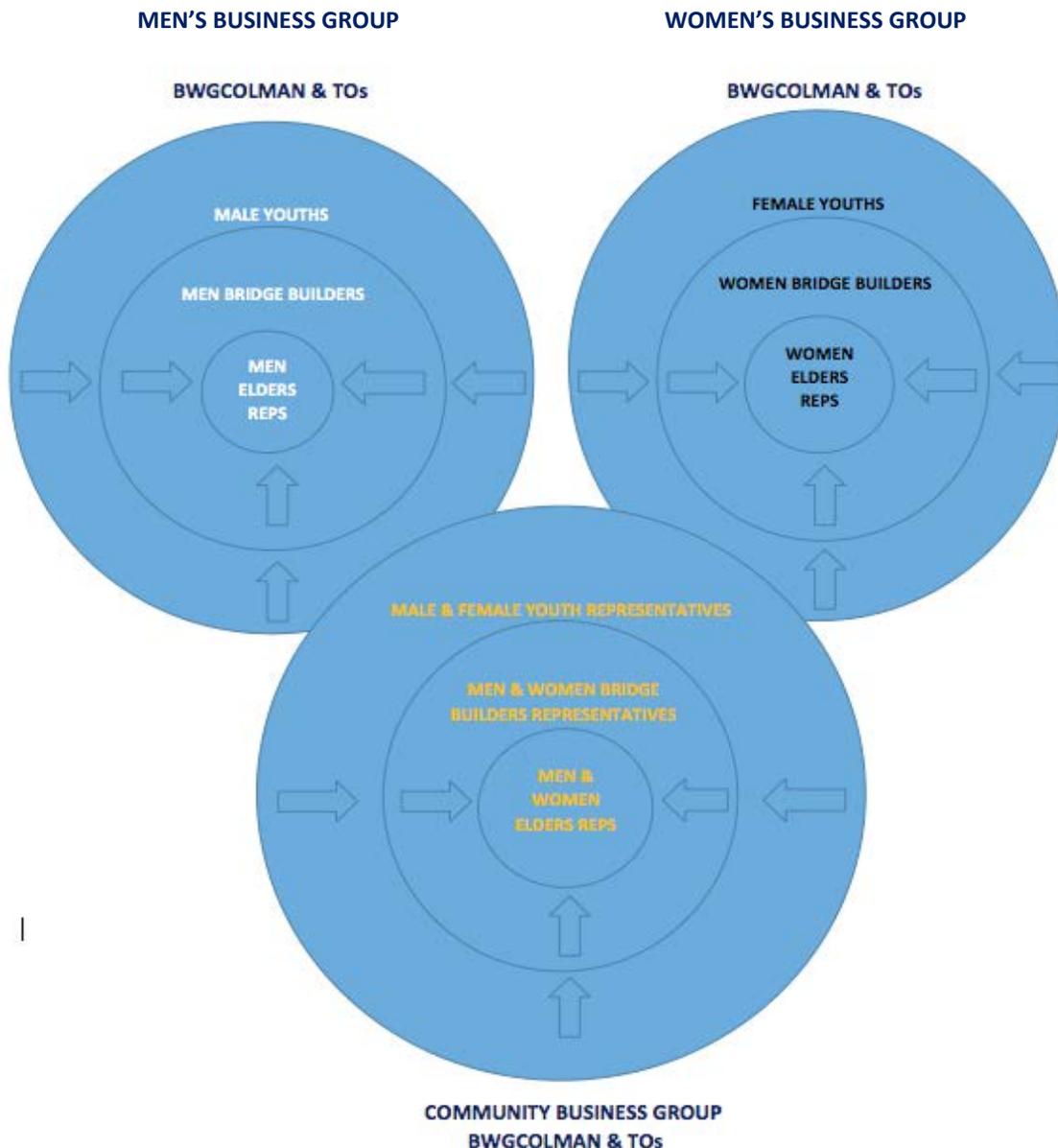


2. Economic Reform:

I support all the recommendations thus far in terms of the suggested support for economic and community development, except for recommendation 10 in relation to land tenure. I acknowledge the need for property rights as a prerequisite for economic development, but I am concerned about the transfer of DOGIT lands, in Remote and Discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, over to Aboriginal Freehold Land. In my opinion, this would open the opportunity for land to be sold from Aboriginal to Non-Aboriginal people and negate the aim to support Indigenous Economic Development. There is great danger of Aboriginal people being thrust into even greater poverty by becoming alienated from traditional lands.

3. Community Representative Body:

To restore social coherence in Remote and Discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, any initiative must be owned, managed and controlled by the *community* - as well as being based in Culture. Unfortunately, through the effects of colonisation, too many cultures have been dispossessed. As such, any initiative must involve a means of 'reinvesting' and 'reconnecting' communities to their cultural identity. I have suggested a possible model in relation to the set-up of the Community Representative Bodies. I believe the pattern of discussion detailed in this model will (i) enhance the transformation of a community by collaborative problem solving; (ii) support the structural reforms to decision making; (iii) support the idea of the "one-stop-shop" for community consultation and (iv) eliminate any issues surrounding "representation".



4. Networking Body (meets frequently – maybe monthly):

For my last comment, I refer to PICCs submission and their response to questions relating to “Co-ordinating Service Delivery” (which I assume were a part of a consultative survey produced by the Queensland Productivity Commission). As an answer the question, “How effective are the current arrangements for coordinating service delivery in remote and discrete communities?”, I offer the following response: I believe there is no “real” co-ordination regarding the delivery of services on Palm Island. Referrals are not a form of coordinating services. They are just a process of revolving doors (and especially ineffective when referring to oneself - such as in the case of PICC and their largely monopolised hold on the service delivery sector on Palm Island).

I believe the co-ordination of service delivery would be greatly enhanced by the creation of a networking body (as placed in the decision making & accountability framework above), which would include representation from all stakeholders. The following is a short incomplete list of potential members (i.e. until all stakeholders can be identified).

CRB, GSPS, NGOs, IB & BUSINESSES

FOR EXAMPLE:

CRB Elders Reps & Youth Reps (Male and Female)

Public Prosecutor

Police

PLOs

Probation and Parole

CJG

Legal Aide

TAFE

Education Queensland

Job Network Providers

Qld Health

QLD Housing

PICC

Ferdy’s Haven and ATOS

PI Council (Mayor and Councilors)

Healing Foundation

ETC

Concluding Comments:

In conclusion, I would like to make a few general comments on various points noted in the draft summary report.

(i) I refer to recommendation no. 3 which states that the Queensland Government should identify at least 2 regions where reforms can be implemented and that consideration should be given to an expression of interest process. I would like the Queensland Productivity Commission to strongly recommend the selection of the Palm Island Community. During the last 5 years, I have conducted a time-series analysis into Palm Islands' various social indicators and my preliminary investigations are as follows:

- The population of Palm Island (which as at 30th June 2016 was 2,444) is relatively stable (due to low population growth), is a very young population (due to life expectancy), is representative of predominately Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and has slightly more males than females;
- Lacks a "stable" economy in terms of trade (resulting in no continuous supply for training and avenues of employment), as well as a lack in the numbers or potential growth in the business economy (largely affected by Native Title, Government regulations and no property rights) - which is compounded by isolation from the mainland;
- Has a relatively high level of unemployment and a possible trend in the reduction of "taxable income";
- Demand for housing is high - due to the number of outstanding applications, the number of people at risk of homelessness and a possible transient population - in a market that is already suffering from overcrowding;
- Graduation numbers at both the Bwgcolman Community School and TAFE Queensland North are very low;
- 80% of the "burdens" of the natural diseases are associated with long-term substance abuse; and
- Lacks adequate numbers in terms of private vehicles and has no public transportation system at all.

Crime is yet to be determined (awaiting statistical data) and no analysis has been conducted in relation to children in out-of-home care (due to sensitivity issues).

(ii) In reference to the "community voice" (i.e. the Community Representative Bodies), I believe consideration needs to be given to the implementation of an administrative branch, to support the activities of this body (whether set-up under the Queensland Productivity Commission framework or as per the above decision making & accountability framework). Additionally, consideration may also need to be given to some form of incentive to encourage community participation and engagement in the Community Representative Bodies.

(iii) Lastly, I refer to recommendation no. 3 which states that an implementation plan should be developed in consultation with communities within six months. To state the obvious, I would strongly recommend the prior establishment of the Community Representative Body and the Independent Oversight Body (including governance capability training), before any such action is taken. Adopting such a practice would support the preference for a "one-stop-shop" community consultative body (as noted in the draft summary report) and would assist with the structural changes in decision-making and accountability.

Kind Regards

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Buckal Jinna Gadan

(Black Foot Coming)

Madjangji (Yidingji), Lamalama and Bwgcolman Women