COMMUNITY FIRST
DEVELOPMENT

GOOD GOVERNANCE PRACTICE LEADS TO GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

AN EXPLORATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY
FIRST DEVELOPMENT'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
APPROACH IN THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT.

First Report

Action research design, early findings and the first four case studies

MARCH 2020

ABOUT COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT

Community First Development is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation. We are a registered charity and not-for-profit community development and research organisation.

On 27 March 2020, we formally changed our name from Indigenous Community Volunteers to Community First Development. As this report was finalised just prior to our name change, you will see references to 'Indigenous Community Volunteers' and 'ICV' in this report.

Our people are incredibly resilient and resourceful, and are learning how to walk between two worlds to turn their ideas into reality. At Community First Development we walk together with communities to listen to their needs and to provide access to skilled volunteers and resources in areas where they have told us that they need support with education, health care and employment opportunities. This way of working is an action research approach to development, and this report is the first in a series to share this approach and our findings more widely.

CORRECT CITATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ETHICS APPROVAL

This research has received approval from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). HREC Reference Number: EO70-25012018.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this report may contain the names and images of people who have passed away.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

ARTWORK

ICV acknowledges the details of the artwork used in the design of this document.

We decided to commission the artwork to tell the story of our work in supporting the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in an authentic way. We wanted to create an artwork that would tell our story, and the story of our relationships with communities, volunteers and supporters.

Artist: **Krystal Hurst, a Worimi artist and the creative director of Gillawarra Arts.**

Title: **With Our People, For Our People**

Year painted: **2019**

Medium: **Acrylic on canvas**

KEY WORDS

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*: the original people of Australia.
- Bridges: The strategies, tools and pathways to navigate into the intersecting space where First Nations Governance and Western Governance meet.
- Community:
    - Community of Interest: A social group which shares a common culture, background and location, often structured as a community organisation - this is the meaning used in this report.
    - Community (geographic): A group of people residing within a geographical boundary.

For the purpose of this report and unless otherwise stated, any references to 'community' should be taken to mean 'community of interest'.

- Community Development Framework (CDF): ICV's community development approach.
- Community Development Officer (CDO): ICV staff who work directly with communities on community development activities.
- Community Development Team: The broader team including CDOs and the Regional Managers.
- First Nations: relating to the sovereign people of Australia, the original people of Australia.
- First Nations Governance: Culturally determined governance practices of First Nations people.
- Look, Listen, Learn: this is a foundation yarning practice used at ICV where people take the time to look, listen and learn, scanning the environment and observing what is going on; and keeping an open and inquiring mind, always learning.
- Non-First Nations: People and practices that are not First Nations.
- On the Ground Research Teams: the group of people working together on the ground in each community, made up of CDOs and local community representatives.
- Western Governance: the systems and structures that the mainstream uses to manage organisations and programs.
- Yarning: A traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander style of conversation and storytelling that is based on oral tradition. Yarning involves talking together in a respectful way, creating connections, developing relationships and making strong, honest dialogue.

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* 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' people and 'First Nations' people are considered interchangeable and both are used throughout this document. We note that the language to refer to so many separate and diverse nations is viewed differently, and through these two terminologies, we seek to acknowledge and honour our differences, and shared knowledge and experience.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

ICV works side by side with communities to reach their own identified goals, and we do this through using a number of different community development approaches and tools. The success of the work we do is framed by how we understand and respond to First Nations Governance. We understand the importance of relationships, of coming from a strengths-based approach, and that working together to co-design and co-deliver activities is what brings positive change.

This research is an investigation with 12 participating communities to explore this approach in a range of remote, regional and urban locations and seeks to answer the question:

'How does ICV's approach strengthen understanding and implementation of governance to empower communities to achieve their dream?'

It is exploring what works, and what doesn't. It is also exploring why self-determination, leadership and governance are important to First Nations people and communities.

1.1.   ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report marks ICV's continuing commitment to share our learnings, data and evidence of good governance practices in First Nations settings. By sharing our learnings with the people and organisations working with communities, we hope to positively influence their ways of working.

This first report focuses on the design and initial work that we have done, which includes some new insights around research methodology and our initial understandings about creating Bridges in Governance.

The report has four parts.

- Part 1 gives the background – why are we doing this research?
- Part 2 gives the detail of our research plan
- Part 3 shares our progress to date – what have we done and what have we learned so far?
- Part 4 shares what the next steps will be in the final phase of this project, due to be completed in the second half of 2020.

1.2.   ABOUT THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

This research is working to answer this question:

How does ICV's approach strengthen understanding and implementation of governance to empower communities to achieve their dream?

In the 2017-18 financial year, the year prior to this project commencing, ICV engaged with 164 communities on 112 community development projects. Every one of these community-led projects included an active learning and reflection approach and the level of engagement inspired us to think more deeply about what we were all learning together. Twelve of the 164 communities agreed to participate in this research, sharing their time and stories, to undertake action research on the community development projects they have underway with ICV.

As a First Nations organisation that embeds self-determination in everything we do, we also saw this as an opportunity to reflect on our own ways of working and understandings. By engaging in research on our own practice, in collaboration with the participating communities, we are strengthening the action learning methodology in our organisation's practice.

1.3.   WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

We have completed the first two phases of the research plan, working with twelve communities, spread across urban, regional and remote locations.

We have worked to understand more about what other people have learned and shared about good governance in First Nations organisations. We used those understandings to develop research tools that were then refined with community and which helped us all to document the community's interactions and understandings of governance practices; and to be able to monitor change throughout the research project. These tools have been used with all participating communities and we have learned a lot through that process – about what works, and about what doesn't work very well.

The On the Ground Research Teams in four communities have developed case studies, which are included in this report. These case studies show the link between good governance and achieving community priorities.

The CDOs have completed the first round of semi-structured interviews with participating communities, and we have worked together to complete governance matrices.

As part of this work, we have collected a lot of data and we have begun analysing it to see what we are learning, and what we need to do next.

1.4.   WHAT ARE WE SEEING?

We have started looking closely at the data we have gathered — from our purpose-built database, the governance matrices, the case studies, the interviews, and from team meetings. We are seeing some things emerging from the data, particularly about governance.

BLUE MOUNTAINS
ABORIGINAL CULTURE
AND RESOURCE CENTRE:
ELDERS OLYMPICS TEAM

There is an intersecting space where First Nations Governance practices meet with Western Governance requirements. For First Nations organisations, this is often called 'Two-Way' governance[1], where First Nations organisations work across the two Governance systems. This research is evidencing a way forward that privileges First Nations leadership and still meets the requirements for reporting and compliance. Through what we are calling 'Bridging' approaches, we are beginning to document effective strategies that people, communities, organisations and governments can use to navigate that intersecting space. Through creating bridges, First Nations Governance can take what works for them from Western Governance, and Western Governance can strengthen their interactions with communities, and perhaps strengthen their own practices in the process.

A significant insight has come through the creation and evolution of the Seed to Tree tool within the Monitoring and Evaluation approach. Through using this tool in an action research project, we have created an effective community engagement tool for participatory Monitoring and Evaluation. This is a significant turning point in strengthening engagement and information collection with communities and makes an important contribution to the field of evaluation.

The case studies have provided some interesting discussions around the implications for social policy. When all the case studies are done, we will be able to look across them all and work with the participating communities to check what we are seeing.

We are also seeing how important our ways of working are. We are a learning organisation, always working to improve our practices. In this project, the whole team has been learning more about formal action research approaches, and we can see the strong connection with our existing community development approaches. We are seeing in particular that our strong, long-term relationships with communities create a unique opportunity to engage in research that is meaningful for everyone.

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1   The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, 'Indigenous Governance Toolkit,'
     https://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/2-2-two-way-governance

PART 1. BACKGROUND

1.   WHY ARE WE DOING THIS RESEARCH?

ICV is doing this research so that we can strengthen our ways of working with communities to support them to achieve their aspirations. We want to strengthen the way we are working together with communities; and to make sure that the tools we are using to support this work are strong and effective.

In our work with communities, many have been choosing to focus on the area of 'Improved community and organisational leadership, governance and capacity,'[2] and so we have chosen Governance as a focus area for this research.
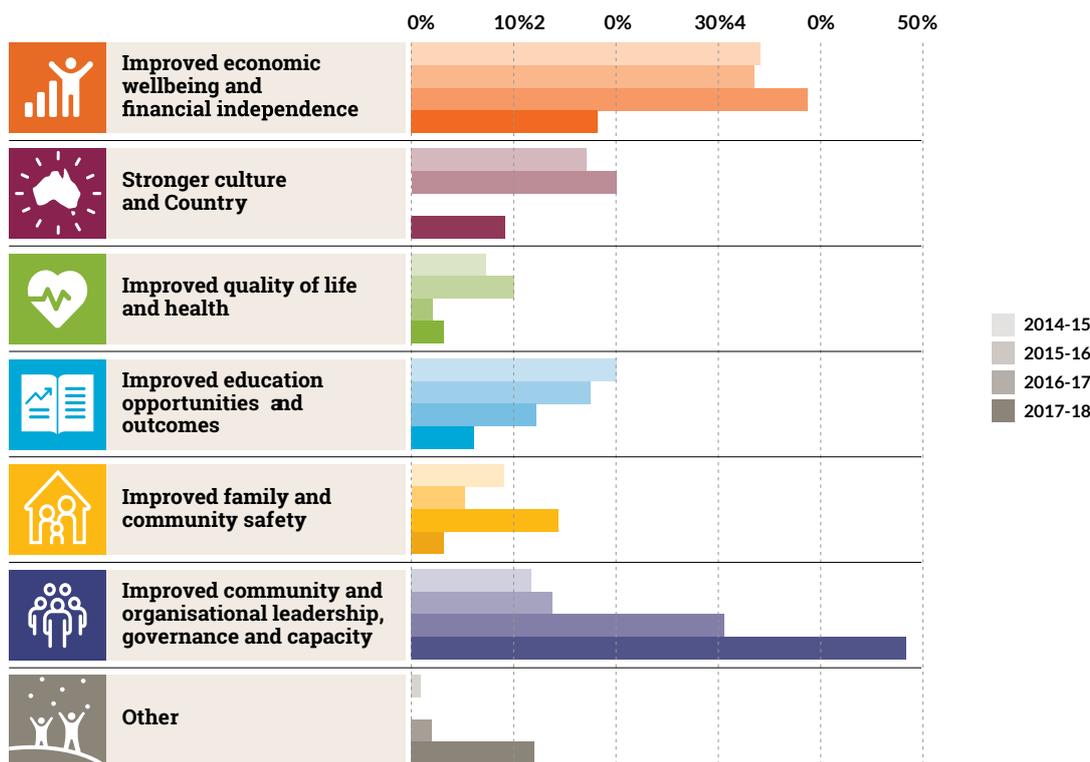
Figure 1: Community development activities requested by communities

ICV has been working with communities for the past twenty years and we have seen how important it is to strengthen and equip First Nations Governance structures so that the community can interact effectively with Western Governance structures. We have been observing that communities who can do this are then in a better position to work on strengthening their economic outcomes, and to influence health and wellbeing,[3] Country and culture outcomes (in the longer term).

The tools of Western Governance can affect communication with First Nations people and groups, and how good health practice can be encouraged and monitored.[4] However clear leadership and governance can also lead to better community harmony and wellbeing, and create the conditions for stronger health.[5],[6] To illustrate our work with communities, ICV developed a theory called "Story of Change". In our theory, First Nations Governance is one of the building blocks for communities to be able to achieve their long-term dreams.

2   Indigenous Community Volunteers Annual Report 2016-17.
3   Osborne, K., et al, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 'What works? A review of actions addressing the social and economic determinants of Indigenous health,' 2013.
4   Sullivan, P., et al, Lowitja Institute, 'Beyond Bandaids: exploring the social determinants of health', Chapter 10: Governance, Indigenous and non-Indigenous as a social determinant of health.
5   Sullivan, P., et al, Lowitja Institute, 'Beyond Bandaids: exploring the social determinants of health', Chapter 10: Governance, Indigenous and non-Indigenous as a social determinant of health.
6   Osborne, K., et al, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 'What works? A review of actions addressing the social and economic determinants of Indigenous health,' 2013.

ICV'S STORY OF CHANGE

Our vision is an Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised and celebrated for our culture and our contribution to Australia and societies around the world.

Sustained change determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Improved economic wellbeing & financial independence

Stronger country & cultural wellbeing

Improved quality of life & health

Improved education opportunities & outcomes

Improved youth development opportunities

Improved family & community safety

Greater community-owned evidence base influencing policy

Improved community & organisational leadership, governance & capacity

Improved community participation & partnership opportunities

Increase in active reconciliation & understanding of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultures

Improved community development practice

Figure 2: ICV's Story of Change

This research project is testing this theory to help us learn more about the different forms of governance and governance practices; and to check that are we using the "Story of Change" in the best possible way.

This research is informed by a survey by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI) which identified the gaps and challenges in First Nations governance research and the availability of practical tools to help. People who responded to the survey wanted a framework to be able to measure:

- the impact of enhanced governance and identifying how success might be determined
- the impact of governance capability on the effectiveness of services and programs and value for money
- what good performance and accountability looks like on the ground when it reflects local priorities.

We have chosen to focus on two of the four research themes identified by the majority of respondents:

- Western and First Nations governance systems and their interactions.
- Australian case studies of what works and what doesn't work (often identified as an urgent need) including:
    - comparative 'on-ground' studies across different types and sizes of organisations, communities and groups
    - organisational governance
    - implementation of successful governance initiatives
    - longitudinal studies and long-term multiple research case studies to build a robust evidence base that is more widely applicable.[7]

2.   ICV WAYS OF WORKING

ICV uses a community development approach which acknowledges the inter-connected elements of First Nations Governance. Our Community Development Framework (CDF) forms a key part of how we work to develop understandings and relationships with communities, how we engage, discover and explore community strengths and assets and how we co-design and deliver activities to support community development.

Figure 3: ICV's Community Development Framework

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7   Bauman, Toni et al, 'AIATSIS and AIGI survey of gaps and challenges in Indigenous governance research and practical tools: Draft summary of responses, 2014.

Through years of experience, ICV has learned what works, and what doesn't. In ICV's approach, communities have control, they invite ICV in. Communities prioritise and decide on the work to be done. Working only at invitation, where communities design and own the activities, ICV facilitates empowerment, genuine buy-in and long-term results. In working this way, we are making sure that change is driven by the people who are living with the issue and that the solution comes from their own lived experience. We are working to develop community capability, supporting projects that facilitate meaningful and relevant learning.

We don't build the house, we work with communities to learn how to build it, they then build it themselves.

By working with community to identify the method to address an issue, and designing the work together, we draw on communities' expertise and knowledge, and support them to identify the resources they can tap into in their region. Because of this ownership within the community there is also increased transparency and accountability around decision making and governance of work. Through our work, we see people develop pride in their achievements and want to share their successes, achieved through self-determined actions.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) states:

Article 3

"Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

Article 4

"Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.[8]

ICV acknowledges these rights by working with community, taking the time to understand the interconnected relationships and the governance structures that are already in place. Through ICV's CDF, we work side by side with the community to understand their long-term dream and to 'name' their governance systems, 'map' them to the western context and identify their own unique First Nations Governance approaches.

By identifying the 'skills and knowledge' required for particular leadership roles, communities are able to adapt the model of western leadership required to achieve the outcomes seen as successful in modern western society, whilst, at the same time, remaining true to cultural protocols and moving their community towards the goals set for itself.

A critical component of 'Our Understanding' is ensuring any activity and related decisions are owned by the community. ICV respects local knowledge and input.[9] ICV's Community Development Team spend time with communities to understand a community before any activities commence. The team takes a yarning approach, working to 'look, listen and learn', establishing relationships and working in a culturally strong approach that privileges community leadership and decision making.

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8   United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples-1
9   Indigenous Community Volunteers, 'Community First Community Development Framework,' 2016.

3. WHAT IS 'GOVERNANCE'?

ICV defines governance as

> *... the evolving processes, decisions, relationships, institutions and structures by which a group of people organise themselves to collectively achieve the things that matter to them.*

We know that there are two key forms of governance at play in the work that we do: First Nations Governance and Western Governance.

First Nations Governance operates within a cultural structure that determines the different roles that people play in different context.

> *...Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'leaders' have had a role in traditional systems of governance in Australia for tens of thousands of years, undertaking responsibilities for maintaining and protecting ancient laws, traditions, systems of knowledge, and jurisdictional rights and interests.*
>
> *Leadership is complex because:*
>
> - *it is shared amongst people who have different responsibilities for different matters*
> - *there are important age and gender dimensions*
> - *it is hierarchical, based on accumulating valued knowledge and experience*
> - *not all leaders are equally powerful—some are more influential than others.*
>
> *Senior women often have significant authority within their own groups, providing valued social support, and having recognised expertise and knowledge in areas of restricted women's ceremony. But their leadership may not always be as visible as men who often are the ones working on the governing bodies of incorporated organisations and interacting with external stakeholders.*
>
> *The individual authority of leaders is based on their cultural knowledge and reputation, personal qualities, recognised expertise and their ability to look after others—not only their family and group, but also the land, its resources, and related systems of knowledge and law.*[10]

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10   The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, 'Indigenous Governance Toolkit,' http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/4-1-indigenous-leadership.

Strong relationships with family and close kin, and the values of demand sharing and mutual responsibility are at the very heart and strength of First Nations leadership practices.[11]

DEADLY GATHERING COORDINATED BY MAD MOB TO MEET THE HON LINDA BURNEY MP, FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BARTON, AND SUSAN TEMPLEMAN MP, FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MACQUARIE.

11 The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, 'Indigenous Governance Toolkit,' http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/4-1-indigenous-leadership.

AIATSIS and AIGI provide a First Nations governance rationale of six key elements.[12]

GOVERNANCE ELEMENT	RATIONALE	DESCRIPTION
A group of people or entity	Who	Who is governing? Who is being governed? Roles, responsibilities, rights, who benefits, who is accountable and to whom. Individuals, families, groups, communities, native title holders, Traditional Owners, interest groups from specific industry sectors. Networks of kin and place, relationships to Country, ceremonial connections, language groups, clans and alliances of both.
Collectively organise	What	Collective identities and modes of governance depending on the context.
Things that matter to them	Why	Shared identities, worldviews, future visions, directions, goals, aims, aspirations, values, norms, traditions, laws and customs, well-being and livelihoods, commitment, jurisdiction, way of life, future generations, looking after Country, self-determination, nationhood, social and economic development, rights, events, initiatives, projects, programs, services, functions, resources, assets and traditional land areas.
NOW AND IN THE FUTURE		
The ways and means	How and with what	The processes for decision-making, procedures, systems, powers, rules, laws, regulations, policies, roles, responsibilities, choice, mediation and negotiation, conflict resolution, representation, participation, voice, accountability and strategies. Dependent on resources available.
To do those things	Doing	Capabilities, skills, behaviours, conduct, performance timeframes, implementation, milestones, training, learning, professional development, meeting, organising, actions and outcomes.

Table 1: AIATSIS and ALGI rationale of governance

Understanding the six elements of governance is foundational to ICV's partnership with a community. This understanding is gained in the first stages of ICV's CDF: 'Our Understanding' and in the second stage, 'Engage and Empower'. Much time is spent understanding the often complex and intertwined network of people connected, the 'who'.

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12 Bauman, Toni et al, AIATSIS and AIGI, 'Building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance: a report of a survey and forum to map current and future research and practical resource needs,' 2015.
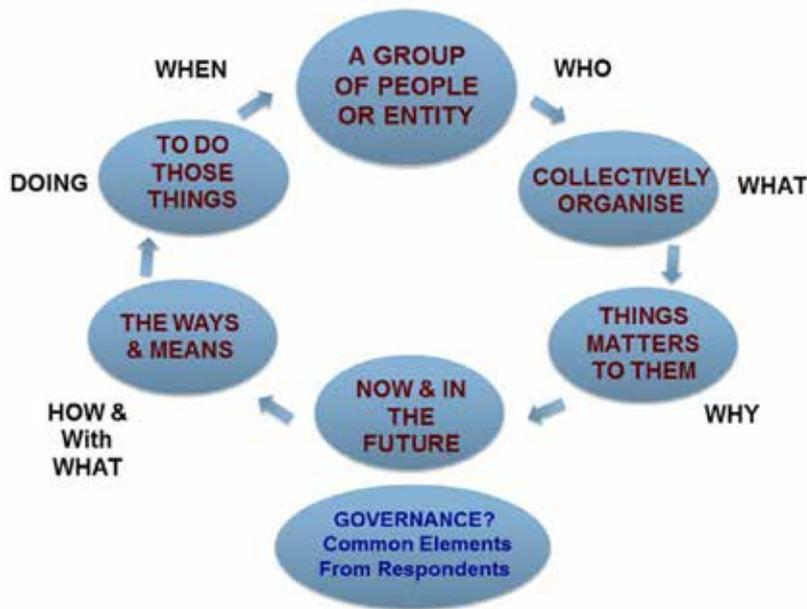
Figure 4: First Nations governance rationale

> Building governance is essentially a developmental issue; it is about institution building, and mobilising the leadership, knowledge, skills and resources of a group of people. What appears to matter for outcomes from 'governance building' is that it is under Indigenous control, and is a product of informed Indigenous choice and design. [13]

AIGI[14] provides some examples of legitimate, effective and strong locally generated First Nations Governance structures, as featured below.

The family model

The governance of some community and regional organisations is structured like a big family, with service and business arms growing out of a 'mother' organisation. Membership of the board is based on kin relationships and extended family ties. The Yarnteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation in NSW and Bunuba Inc. in Western Australia are examples of this.

Yarnteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation
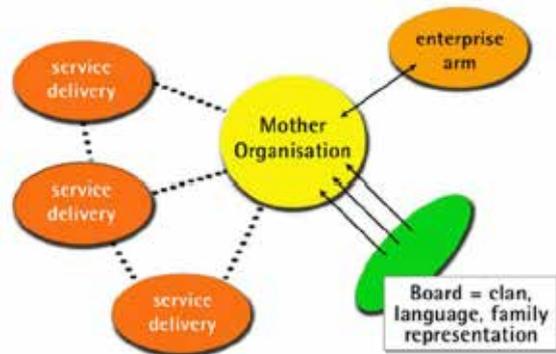
Bunuba Inc.

Figure 5: Examples of the family model of community governance

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13 Smith D. E, Researching Australian Indigenous Governance: A Methodological and Conceptual Framework, 2005, http://caepr.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/CAEPRWP29_0.pdf.

14 The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, 'Indigenous Governance Toolkit,' http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Different-Models-of-Indigenous-Governance_final.pdf.

The hub-and-spokes model

The governance of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is set up like a 'hub and spokes', with people living in outlying smaller communities linked to a central hub. This hub is made up of representatives from different cultures and is responsible for delivering services to the outlying communities. An example of this system is the Laynhapuy Homelands Association Inc. and Bawinanga Aborginal Corporation in the Northern Territory.

Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation

Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation
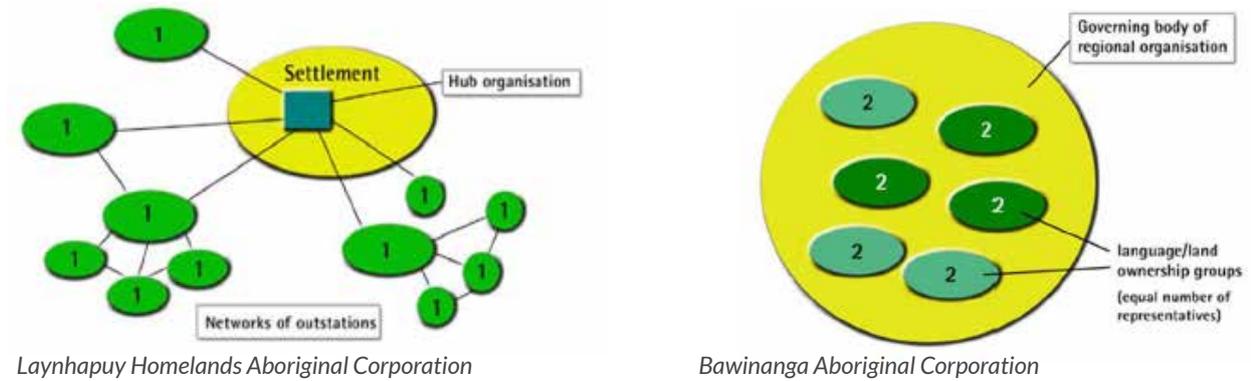
Figure 6: Examples of the hub-and-spokes model of governance

Equal representation model

Some regional governance models are based on equal representation of land-ownership, language, clan or family groups, using traditional decision-making processes and criteria for leadership. Examples of this are the Thamarrurr Regional Council in the Northern Territory, and the Yorta Yorta People Aboriginal Corporation and the Armadale Noongar Corporation in the south-east and south-west of Australia respectively.
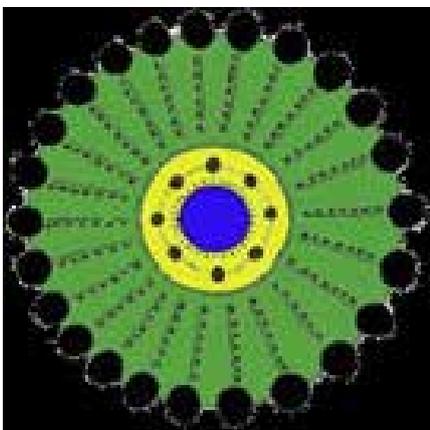
Thamarrurr Regional Council

This is the logo that the Thamarrurr Regional Council designed to explain how their different clan and land-ownership groups have come together to form a single community governance structure.

Figure 7: Example of the Equal representation model of goveernance

In contrast, Western Governance can be defined as 'the action or manner of governing or leading a state, organisation, etc.' or in its most archaic context, 'to rule; or control.' This can present a challenge for First Nations communities, who have existing cultural leadership practices in place within their own First Nations Governance. Many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander languages do not have a word for 'leadership' as defined in Western Governance.[15] An ongoing challenge for First Nations communities is understanding how to remain true to cultural protocols whilst meeting the legal requirements of western culture, which hold a particular view of how 'good governance' should look.

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15   The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, 'Indigenous Governance Toolkit,' http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/4-1-indigenous-leadership.

First Nations people are saying that it is often difficult to hold strong to their own governance in the context of the 'overwhelming dominance of western institutions of governance'.[16] At ICV we hold the position that it is through listening to First Nations people and learning from First Nations Governance, that more effective governance practices can be developed to be used by those who are engaging with First Nations people, communities and organisations[17].

ICV's approach has the potential to strengthen how people, organisations and governments approach governance with community. Rather than merely assessing organisations on 'upwards' accountability, risk avoidance, financial management, and compliance reporting, they can work with First Nations organisations to generate a more effective approach. First Nations organisations are focused on whether or not their organisation is operating fairly and well. People want to be consulted, to know what their organisation is doing, and what decisions are being made and why. Relationships are at the heart of First Nations organisations. Clear, culturally-informed and regular communication with community members is part of organisational practice.

Non-First Nations services and programs also need assistance in understanding how to acknowledge and understand existing First Nations governance structures and processes in their program design and delivery. Non-First Nations interventions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life will always encounter a pre-existing system of governance. This system might be informal and might have been changed by colonisation, but First Nations Governance practices continue to assert a strong influence on First Nations people's lives and their relations with non-First Nations people and organisations. What First Nations Governance looks like in such areas as decision making or dispute management changes depending on who is involved, the social context, and the nature of the issue. 'Indigenous cultures are diverse, and Indigenous ways of meeting governance challenges may be equally diverse. This is not a problem. It's a solution'.[18] There is no 'one-stop-shop' for governance and authority in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander setting.[19]

Both governments and First Nations people want community organisations to deliver reasonable levels of services, and to provide sound financial management and accountability. The key areas of difference relate to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relationships and ways of doing that sit at the heart of many organisations, and which emphasise internal accountability and communication; and governments' emphasis on 'upwards' accountability, risk avoidance, financial management, and compliance reporting. Being able to engage in these Western Governance practices are important, because governments assess an organisation as being effective when they can do this.

Governance is more than compliance. There are new practices that are emerging at the intersection of Western Governance and First Nations Governance, that are more responsive in nature, respecting and working with existing First Nations Governance practices. We are calling these new practices 'Bridges'.

LITTLEWELL-MINGENEW ABORIGINAL RESERVE

16 Bauman, Toni et al, 'AIATSIS and AIGI survey of gaps and challenges in Indigenous governance research and practical tools: Draft summary of responses, 2014.
17 Bauman, Toni et al, 'AIATSIS and AIGI survey of gaps and challenges in Indigenous governance research and practical tools: Draft summary of responses, 2014.
18 Stephen Cornell, Co-Director, 'Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development,' Harvard University.
19 Sullivan P, et al., 'Beyond Bandaids: Exploring the Underlying Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health', 'Chapter 10: Governance, Indigenous and Non-Indigenous, as a Social Determinant of Aboriginal Health,' Papers from the CRCAH Aboriginal Health Workshop, Adelaide, 2004.

PART 2: OUR RESEARCH PLAN

4. OUR RESEARCH APPROACH

4.1. WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

The aim of this research project is to explore ICV's community development approach in a range of remote, regional and urban communities. Through this exploration, we aim to improve our knowledge about and engagement with supporting First Nations Governance.

This research is also meeting an identified need for governance research that develops 'independent, objective, multidisciplinary' research methodologies that 'are practical and action based, involve the researcher walking with and alongside groups, respond to and incorporating their perspectives; and ensures strengths-based approaches and capacity building for the community while the research is occurring.'[20]

By identifying governance practices that ensure success for an ICV community development activity, and understanding how they influence positive change, community members are able to ensure that these 'governance practices' are included in each iteration of a community project, ensuring that the outcomes are community driven and imbedded in culture.[21]

4.2. ABOUT PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

ICV has chosen to use the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach as it aligns well with the CDF in its cyclical approach, bringing people together in a learning journey. Researching through collaboration allows researchers to work from the inside, rather than from the outside as observers. This establishes a more equal power relationship among research participants who are working together with an intention to change the world for the better.

The process of Action Research is a great fit for ICV. Lewin, the father of Action Research, explains that the method provides a way of solving practical problems as well as discovering general laws that govern group life. In Action Research, the intention is not to 'create knowledge for knowledge's sake but to aim to improve the quality of life by engaging people in a quest for improvement'[22]. As part of the cycle of Action Research, the research is part of the system of collecting data, analysing it and using it for action.[23]

Source: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 'On PAR: Using Participatory Action Research to Improve Early Intervention', 2010.
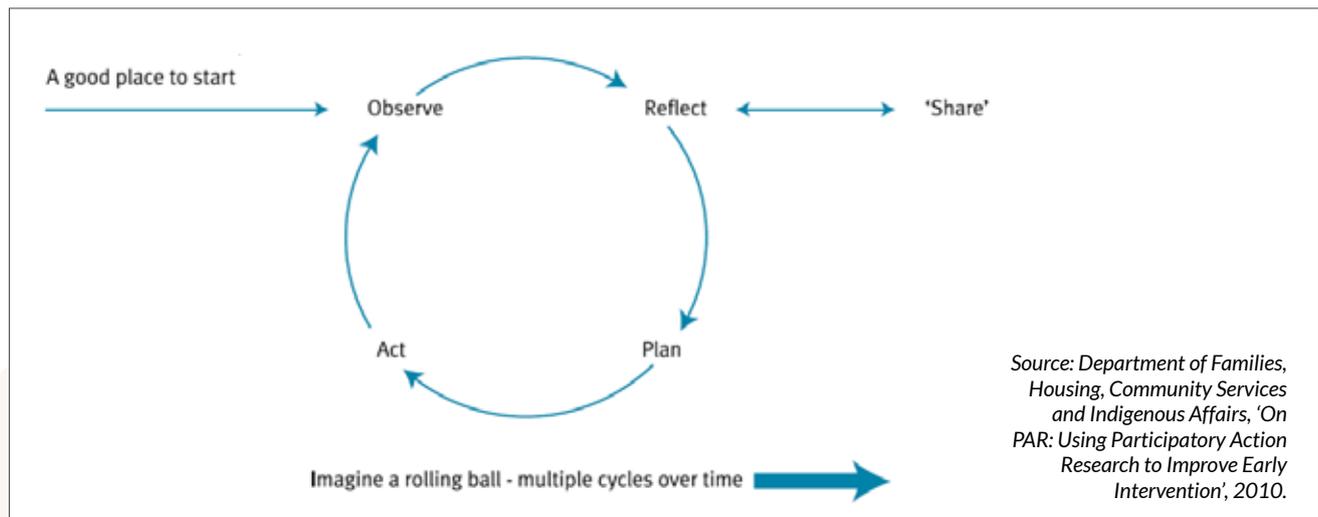
Figure 8: Action Research Cycle

20 Bauman, Toni et al, 'AIATSIS and AIGI survey of gaps and challenges in Indigenous governance research and practical tools: Draft summary of responses, 2014.

21 Examples of co-designed community development activities include submission writing and access to funding, strategic and business plans, improved infrastructure, website development, marketing / communications plans.

22 Rowell, LL, Polush, EY, Riel, M and Bruewer, A, 'Action researchers' perspectives about the distinguishing characteristics of action research: a Delphi and learning circles mixed-methods study', Educational Action Research, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 243-270.

23 Abraham, Selva, 'Action research characteristics: in a work-applied learning for change context', 2016.

As the research team works together in the Action Research cycle, they are interacting with each other and the world, they are talking and working together, they are exploring what it all means, and they're looking to see what changes they are making. This is the approach we use in our community development work and the approach that we have taken in our research.

There are clear connections between the Action Research cycle and ICV's CDF. Communities work in partnership with ICV to deliver a community development project, reflecting and learning along the way. At the end of the cycle, we reflect together on the work we have done together, and that tells us what the next steps will be. Sometimes this is another project with ICV, at other times it is a project the community will undertake without our support.

Participant observation and yarning are key aspects of the CDF 'engage and empower' stage and an ongoing aspect of the CDF cycle. The 'connect & build' stage involves CDOs working closely with the communities to identify and plan the next logical step towards attaining their dream. In the 'design & deliver' stage, CDOs nurture community's long-term vision through practical action and the delivery of a community development project. While reflection and celebration occurs throughout ICV's time working with a community, there are additional questions at the final stages of an activity/project that ICV reflects on to promote continual learning and improvement.

4.3. RESEARCH AND ETHICS APPROVAL

ICV applied for research and ethics approval for this project from the AIATSIS Research Ethics Committee. Because it is a large research project and there are multiple First Nations communities and ICV volunteers involved, and because of ICV's unique community development approach, AIATSIS worked closely with us to make sure this project was properly designed. AIATSIS has granted full research and ethics approval for ICV's research project (EO70-2512018). As part of this process, participating communities provided signed consent forms and letters of support indicating their agreement to participate in this project, prior to the project's commencement.

5. WHO IS DOING THIS RESEARCH TOGETHER?

There are a number of different groups engaging in this research, with overlapping membership and with different roles being played at different times.

5.1. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Community Development Team consists of highly skilled community development practitioners who work from many different places across the country, focusing on regions where there is the highest demand for our support work with communities. The team consists of CDOs and Regional Managers.

In this research project, members of this team are undertaking research both with community and within their own team, reflecting on their practice.

5.2. RESEARCH STEERING COMMITTEE

The Research Steering Committee consists of representation from ICV, including some of the leaders of the Community Development Team. This committee oversees data collection and analysis.

5.3. ON THE GROUND RESEARCH TEAM

The On the Ground Research Team for each participating community is made up of local community members and the CDOs who are working with that community. At each community, people have agreed to be part of the research project as participants and work with the CDOs to share stories and insights.

Twelve communities have agreed to participate in the research project. Each of these communities has an existing community development project agreement in place with ICV. The table below provides an overview of the communities including the duration of their relationship with ICV. This information has been de-identified for confidentiality purposes. Of the 12 participating communities:

- all have existing relationships with ICV and were assessed as having the availability to participate in this research project;
- four communities are located in New South Wales, seven in Western Australia (WA) and one in the Northern Territory;
- five are incorporated associations under the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC), six are corporations under the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) and one is unincorporated; and
- their primary classification in ICV's database are:
    - six in the 'stronger Country and cultural wellbeing' category;
    - two in the 'improved community participation & partnership opportunities' category;
    - one in the 'improved family & community safety' category;
    - two in the 'improved economic wellbeing & financial independence' category; and
    - one in the 'improved youth development opportunities' category.

MAD MOB STRONG NATION AND CAFÉ CORNER STORE COMBINED TO PROVIDE LOCAL ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH HEALTHY EATING, TRADITIONAL FOOD SLOW COOKER CLASSES.

COMMUNITY OF INTEREST (COI)	ICV REGION	GEOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATION	DURATION OF RELATIONSHIP WITH ICV (YEARS)	LEGAL STRUCTURE OF COI	HOW ARE TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND/OR COMMUNITY MEMBERS INVOLVED IN THE COI?	PRIMARY CLASSIFICATION IN ICV'S DATABASE
1	NSW and ACT	Urban	> 5	Incorporated association under ASIC	Staff; cultural advisors.	Stronger Country and cultural wellbeing
2	NSW and ACT	Urban	> 5	Corporation under ORIC	Board Directors; members.	Stronger Country and cultural wellbeing
3	NSW and ACT	Urban	1-3	Corporation under ORIC	Board Directors; members; key stakeholders.	Stronger Country and cultural wellbeing
4	NSW and ACT	Urban	<1	Corporation under ORIC	Board Directors; members; key stakeholders.	Stronger Country and cultural wellbeing
5	Western	Regional	>5	Corporation under ORIC	Board Directors; members.	Improved community participation & partnership opportunities
6	Western	Regional	1-3	Incorporated association under ASIC	Board Directors; provide cultural authority; participate in decision-making processes.	Improved family & community safety
7	Western	Regional	3-5	Incorporated association under ASIC	Board Directors; members; key stakeholders.	Improved youth development opportunities
8	Western	Regional	3-5	Unincorporated	Members; key drivers of the CoI.	Stronger Country and cultural wellbeing
9	Western	Regional	3-5	Corporation under ORIC	Board Directors; members.	Improved economic wellbeing & financial independence
10	Western	Remote	<1	Incorporated association under ASIC	Board Directors; members.	Improved community participation & partnership opportunities
11	Western	Regional	>5	Incorporated association under ASIC	Board Directors; key stakeholders.	Improved economic wellbeing & financial independence
12	NTSA	Remote	3-5	Corporation under ORIC	Board Directors; staff; members.	Stronger Country and cultural wellbeing

Table 2: Overview of communities who have agreed to participate in the research project

5.4. ICV VOLUNTEERS

Where there are volunteers working with a community, the On the Ground Research Team may choose to share the planning, data, or reporting with those volunteers, and to involve them with the research.

6. WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL PLAN?

6.1. RESEARCH TIMELINE

The research project was designed to rollout in the following three phases.

| Phase 1	Aug 2018 - Jan 2019	• Research & Ethics approval • Consent Forms • Governance Matrices • Co-author Case studies
Phase 2	Feb - Dec 2019	• Round 1 Research Questions (interviews and/or focus group) • Collate and analyse findings and learning • Co-Author case studies • Draft First Report
Phase 3	Jan - Aug 2020	• Round 2 Research Questions (interviews and/or focus group • Collate and analyse findings and learning • Co-Author case studies • Draft First Report

Figure 9: Research timeline

6.2. RESEARCH CYCLES

The research was planned to have a cycle of five key stages in each Action Research cycle.

Figure 10: Cycle of ICV Research Project with each participating community

6.2.1. Stage 1: Understanding and defining governance

ICV's Community Development Team identify the key governance elements that are in place. This is done through observations which are shared with the On the Ground Research Teams. This group then author the final description of the community governance elements using the elements in Figure 4. First Nations governance rationale. This tool is referred to as 'the governance matrix'.

6.2.2. Stage 2: Test ICV's Story of Change – the importance of governance

An ongoing challenge for First Nations communities is understanding how to remain true to cultural protocols whilst meeting the legal requirements of western culture, which hold a particular view of how 'good governance' should look.

Through the unique asset focused CDF of ICV, we work side by side with each community to 'name' their governance systems, and 'map' them to the western context. By identifying the 'skills and knowledge' required for particular leadership roles, communities are replicating the model of western leadership required to achieve the outcomes seen as successful in modern western society, whilst, at the same time, moving their communities towards the goals they have set for themselves.

6.2.3. Stage 3: Monitoring to explore the research question: interviews, focus groups and observations

The following monitoring components were to be included in the research project:

I.   A series of questions to understand the community's interactions and understanding of Western Governance practice. The interview is to be done with the delegated authority for the community chosen to work with ICV.

II. Following this, a short interview / focus group is conducted 1-2 times with each participating community throughout the research project to understand the impact of ICV's community development approach. The same set of questions is to be asked each time to understand the progression of change.

The focus groups are designed to understand the intended and unintended impacts of ICV's approach to strengthen understanding and implementation of governance, including the impact on a community's long-term dreams.

III. ICV's community development team members write their observations at the same time as the interviews, answering the same set of questions. They too are describing how they have interacted with the governance (relationships, roles, systems) in community and why.

IV. Where an ICV volunteer has been involved in supporting a community, they are to be interviewed. They are answering the same set of questions and also describing how they have interacted with the governance (relationships, roles, systems) in community and why.

MIDWEST YAMAJI ABORIGINAL MUSIC INC: ICV VOLUNTEER, AILSA, AND MYAMI DIRECTOR GLENIS LITTLE

Communities are provided a selection of volunteers to work with based on the required skill set they have identified and requested. The community then chooses the volunteer they would like to work with. All ICV volunteers undergo a screening and interview process, including referee phone calls and cultural awareness training.

V. ICV's existing monitoring system to understand progress towards a community development project and the community's dream. Communities choose the short and long-term indicators that will be monitored. Questions about these indicators are being asked at the start and end of each community development activity.

6.2.4. Stage 4: Understand impact of governance on community dreams

ICV's monitoring and evaluation system is designed to support holistic community development, to look at the big picture, rather than individual projects in isolation. ICV listens to communities when they share their dream, asking questions such as "what kind of community do you want your grand-kids or great grand-kids to grow up in?"

We then record the long-term change the community wants to see as dream indicators that have been chosen by the community *(example below)*.
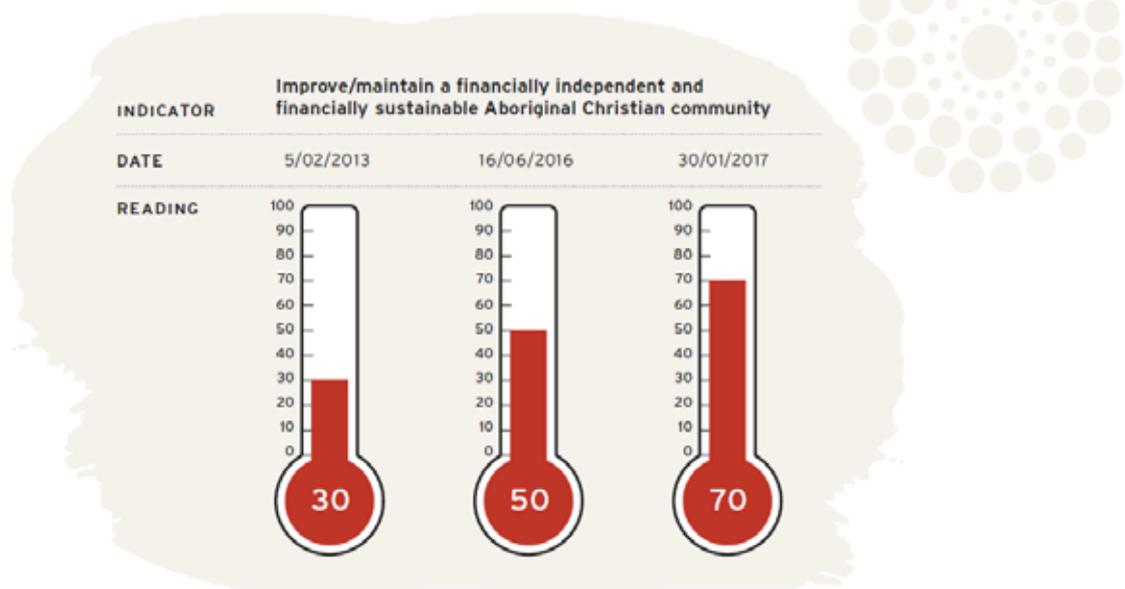
Figure 11: Community designed indicators of change

ICV also works with community to assign shorter term indicators to monitor for each project or activity. The 'seed to tree' tool (described below) is an example of this approach and this has now replaced the use of thermometers across the majority of ICV projects.

The dream is made up of a range of different projects/activities, the different steps along the way. ICV may be involved in some of these, but not all.
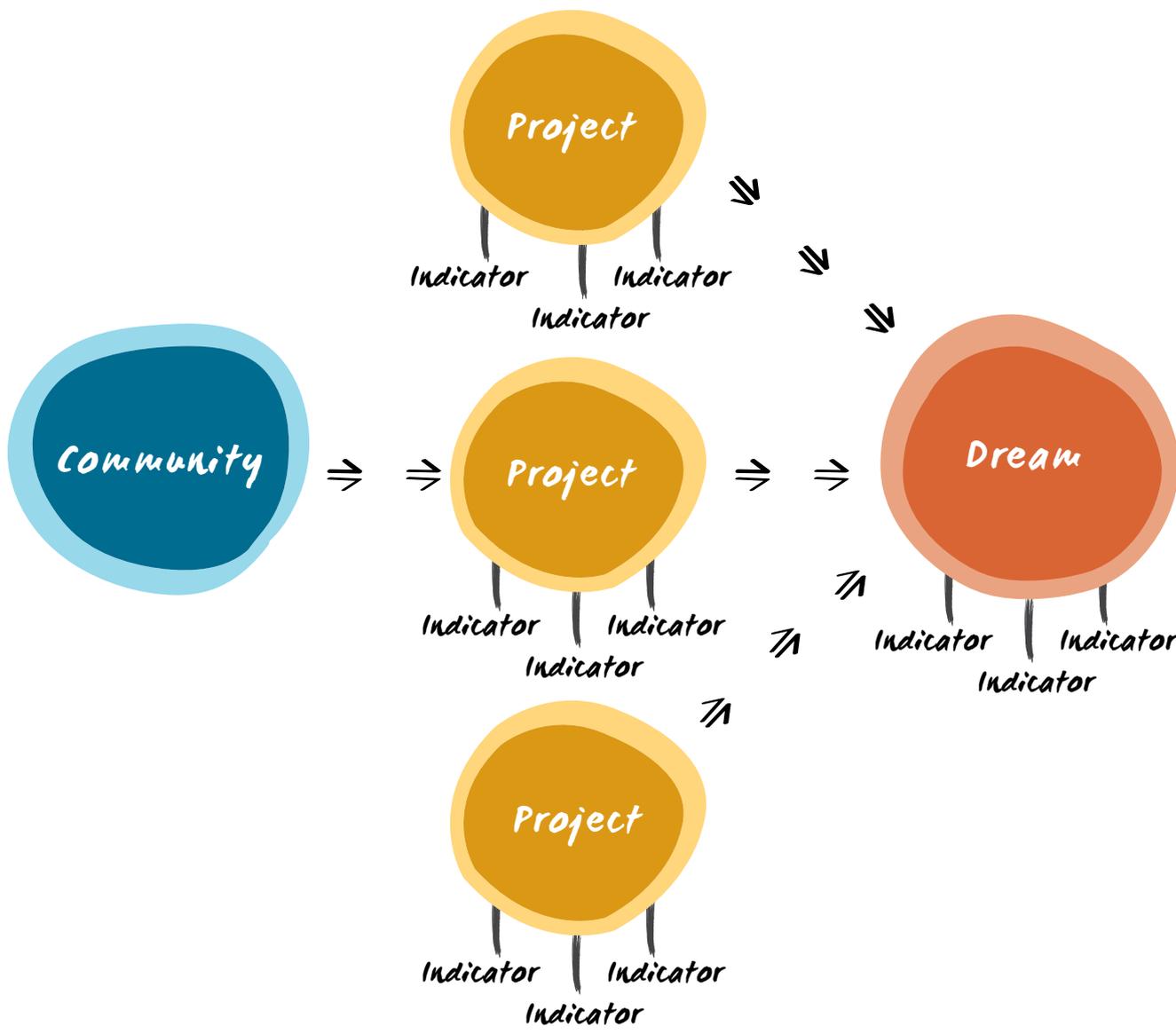
Figure 12: ICV M&E Framework

In addition to the research questions specifically about governance, an understanding of the trends of dream and project indicators is also drawn on to evaluate the wider intended and unintended outcomes of ICV's approach to strengthen understanding and implementation of governance.

The trends for participating communities' project and dream indicators will be aggregated to give a broad picture of the research (example below).

ILLUSTRATION OF NATIONAL TREND FOR PROJECT INDICATORS

Outcome: Improved community participation and partnership opportunities

BEFORE FIRST ICV MONITORING POINT

AFTER FIRST ICV MONITORING POINT
↑ POSITIVE CHANGE
↓ NEGATIVE CHANGE
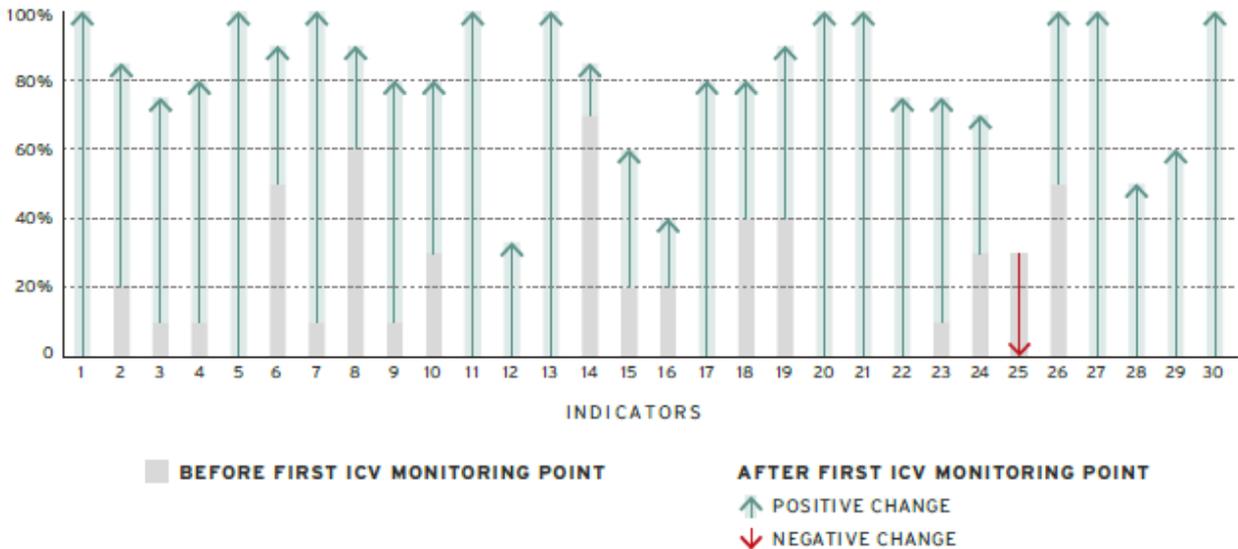
Sample size (no. of projects)	18
Earliest project start date	April 2014
Latest project finish date	October 2017

Point Change		% Change from baseline
Minimum	-30	-100.00%
Maximum	100	900.00%
Mean Average	62	197.31%

PROJECTS BY COMMUNITY LOCATION

URBAN — 17%
REMOTE — 6
78% — REGIONAL
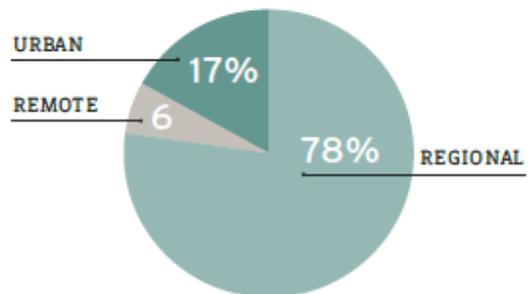
Figure 13: Aggregate view of a range of indicators chosen by communities

6.2.5. Stage 5: Collective learning and evaluation

Throughout the research project, we will continuously reflect on the tools and methods we are using and modify these as we go, working always to improve our practices. This includes the drafting of the Case Studies; team meetings and the co-design process at play throughout the research project. Each community is also engaging in this approach, generating their own findings which will inform their future projects and ways of working.

There are three key touch points for the confirmation of the learnings and findings from this project: confirmation of the themes; drafting of the Case Studies; and confirmation with communities of the sections of the final report that relate directly to them.

As we develop the findings that represent the collective learning of all the participating communities together, we will also be able to identify the next steps for each community – what comes next in their own journeys to achieve their long-term dreams.

7. OUR RESEARCH TOOLS

A number of tools are used throughout the research. Two of these have been developed through consultation and refinement during Phase 1 of the project – Governance Matrices and Seed to Tree questions.

7.1. COMMUNITY PROJECT PLANS

Project plans are co-designed with each community at the start of each community development project. This plan is shared with the community. Where relevant, the volunteer the community has chosen to work with is provided a copy of the plan.

7.2. ICV'S STORY OF CHANGE

A key aspect of ICV's action research project is to test ICV's Story of Change, specifically, the importance of governance in achieving the long-term goals of communities. The Story of Change is a visual representation of the social and economic impact ICV achieves. It illustrates that ICV's model of good practice community development, in the short term, achieves improvements in organisation leadership and governance capabilities as well as community participation. This in turn leads to improved outcomes in education, family and community safety, economic well-being and stronger country and cultural well-being.

7.3. ICV'S DATABASE

ICV has an extensive database documenting community development activities in our partner communities. The purpose-built database expands on our reporting capabilities and improves understanding of our impact. Together with our monitoring and evaluation framework, the database allows us to monitor progress towards a community's long-term 'dream' outcome and shorter-term project outcomes. For each participating community, these records will provide useful pre-existing information to inform case study development.

7.4. GOVERNANCE MATRICES

Governance Matrices were designed to gain background information, aimed at understanding the community's interactions and understanding of governance practice. These questions are to be asked of each participating community at the start of the research project. A delegated authority chosen by each community Board/Group will be interviewed, using these questions and the matrix below.

1. Does your community have a legal structure e.g. Incorporated body? Why did you choose to have this legal structure?
2. Who are your Board/Group members? (including number of people)
3. What do you have in place, and what do you still need to have in place, to secure funding to achieve the objectives of the Board/Group?
4. What is the Board/Group's relationship with the community?
5. How does the Board/Group engage (inform/connect/communicate/interact) with the wider community? (including number of people)
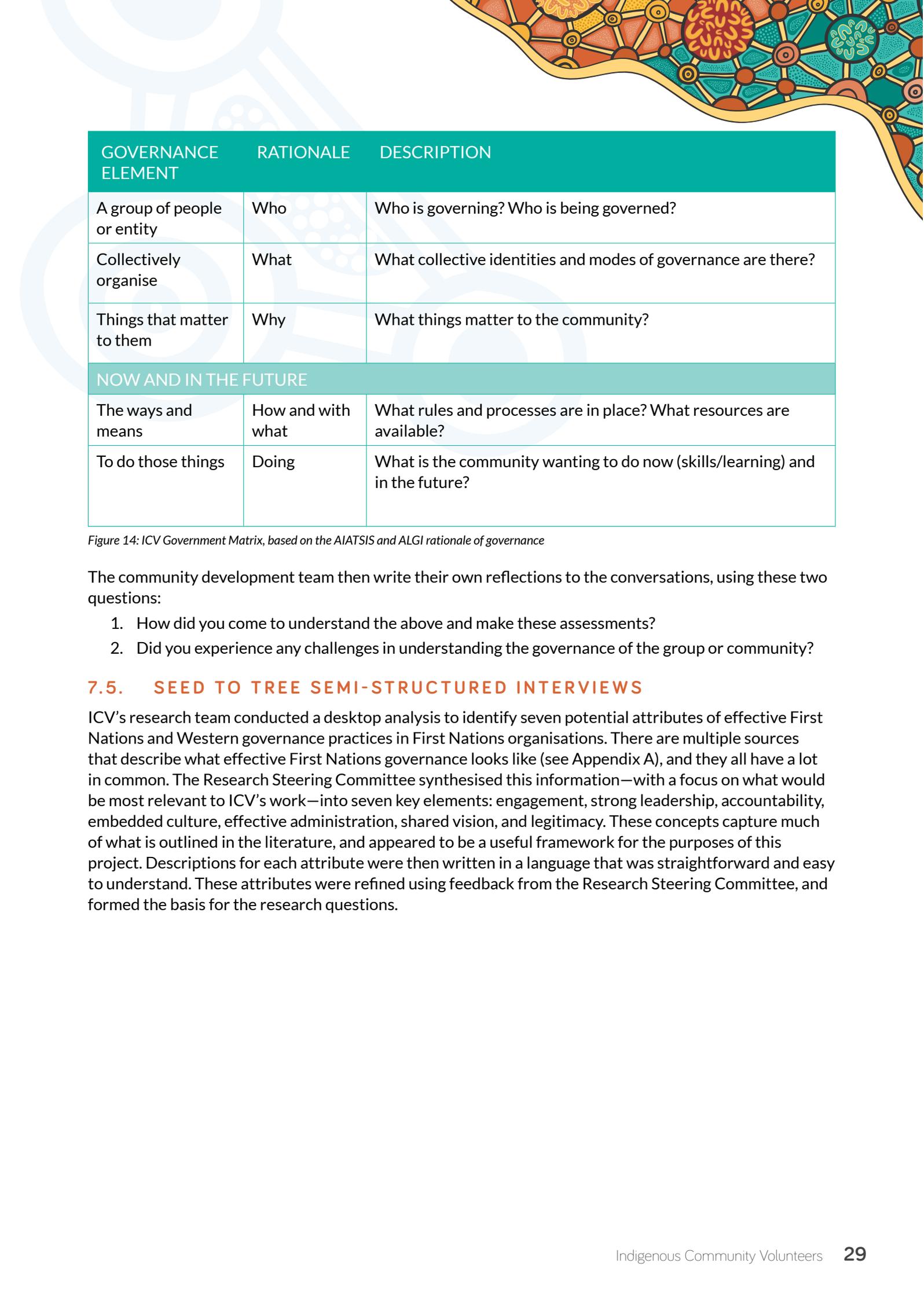
GOVERNANCE ELEMENT	RATIONALE	DESCRIPTION
A group of people or entity	Who	Who is governing? Who is being governed?
Collectively organise	What	What collective identities and modes of governance are there?
Things that matter to them	Why	What things matter to the community?
NOW AND IN THE FUTURE		
The ways and means	How and with what	What rules and processes are in place? What resources are available?
To do those things	Doing	What is the community wanting to do now (skills/learning) and in the future?

Figure 14: ICV Government Matrix, based on the AIATSIS and ALGI rationale of governance

The community development team then write their own reflections to the conversations, using these two questions:

1. How did you come to understand the above and make these assessments?
2. Did you experience any challenges in understanding the governance of the group or community?

7.5. SEED TO TREE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

ICV's research team conducted a desktop analysis to identify seven potential attributes of effective First Nations and Western governance practices in First Nations organisations. There are multiple sources that describe what effective First Nations governance looks like (see Appendix A), and they all have a lot in common. The Research Steering Committee synthesised this information—with a focus on what would be most relevant to ICV's work—into seven key elements: engagement, strong leadership, accountability, embedded culture, effective administration, shared vision, and legitimacy. These concepts capture much of what is outlined in the literature, and appeared to be a useful framework for the purposes of this project. Descriptions for each attribute were then written in a language that was straightforward and easy to understand. These attributes were refined using feedback from the Research Steering Committee, and formed the basis for the research questions.

The Seed to Tree questions will be asked of each participating community 1-2 times in the two-year period at a Board/Community Group focus group meeting. Where a Board/Group is unavailable, a delegated authority for the Board will be interviewed. Each question will be accompanied by a quantitative recording of a community's perception of progress towards achieving a specific aim, at a given point in time. These will be recorded and then transcribed.

Draft questions were developed during the early conceptual phase of this research project and refined once the governance attributes were finalised, to be able to get a sense of how each of the communities is putting 'effective governance' into place. Many of the original questions already corresponded to one of the governance attributes. In some cases, questions were refined, and new questions were introduced where there was a gap. There were no specific questions written for 'embedded culture' and 'legitimacy' as evidence of these is more likely to emerge through observation, or incidentally.

The Research Steering Committee reviewed and refined the updated set of questions, and these were shared with the Community Development Team to ensure their suitability for the community context.

Most of the research questions are accompanied by a quantitative question and take a strengths-based approach, framed in terms of growth, change and potential, rather than making a judgement on how in/effective an organisation's governance is at any one point in time. Turning what was originally designed as a vertical scale onto its side helped to make the measures of change more like a journey, rather than being 'good' or 'bad.' The addition of the image of a seedling helped to reinforce the notion of growth and potential; even where communities do not currently have solid and effective administration, for example, there is a commitment to it, and potential to achieve it.

0   25   50   75   100
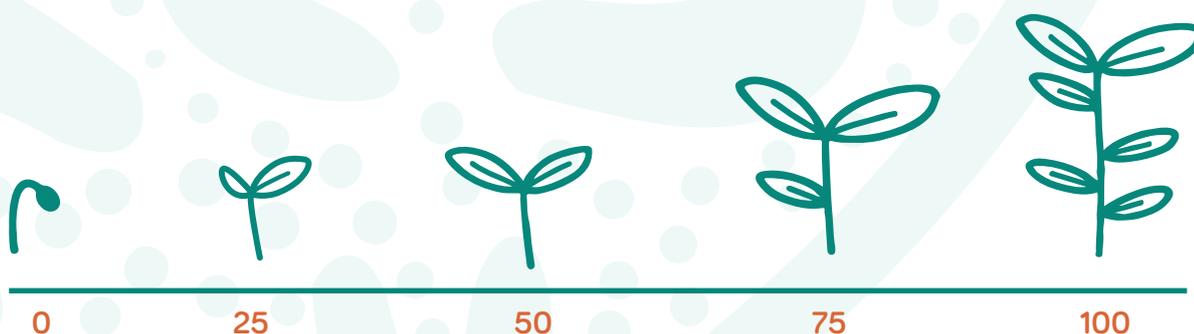
Figure 15: Seed to tree quantitative illustration

The final, revised set of questions are as follows:

ENGAGEMENT

Question: How do you capture the views of your local community/key stakeholders to make decisions? Please provide details.

> **a.** How has this changed since the last time we spoke to you?

> **b.** Who or what triggered this change? How?

Seed to tree reading: How would you rate your capacity to capture and use the views of local community/key stakeholders to make decisions?
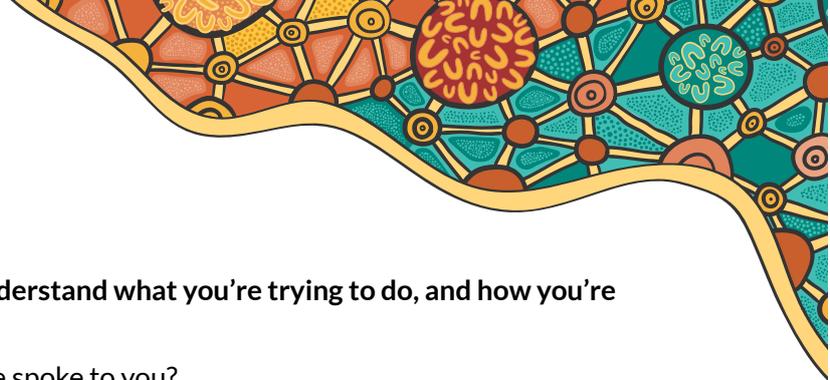
CLEAR AND SHARED STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Question: Does everyone in your organisation understand what you're trying to do, and how you're trying to do it? Please provide details.

a. How has this changed since the last time we spoke to you?

b. Who or what triggered this change? How?

Seed to tree reading: To what extent does everyone in the organisation understand what they're trying to do, and how they're trying to do it?

EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION

Question: What rules and systems do you use to make decisions and make sure you are doing things right? Please provide details.

a. How has this changed since the last time we spoke to you?

b. Who or what triggered this change? How?

Seed to tree reading: To what extent do you use rules and processes to make sure you are doing things right?

ACCOUNTABILITY: EXTERNAL AND AMONG COMMUNITY

Question: How do you inform your local community/key stakeholders about how things are being done and the decisions that are made? Please provide details.

a. How has this changed since the last time we spoke to you?

b. Who or what triggered this change? How?

Seed to tree reading: How open and transparent are you about your activities and the decisions you make?

STRONG LEADERSHIP

Question: Do all of the leaders in your organisation understand what they need to do to achieve your dream? Please provide details.

a. How has this changed since the last time we spoke to you?

b. Who or what triggered this change? How?

Seed to tree reading: What is the level of understanding?

ADDITIONAL QUESTION 1

Question: Who in the community has responsibility for talking to people from outside of the community? Please provide details.

a. Has the way you engage with external people changed? If so, how has it changed?

b. Are you training anyone else to do this in the future?

Seed to tree reading: How involved are young people with the organisation?

Question: Other than the things that you have mentioned, what do you see as the greatest obstacles to achieving your community's dream? Please provide details.

 a. How has this changed since the last time we spoke to you?

 b. Who or what triggered this change? How?

7.6. DOCUMENTED TEAM LEARNING

ICV has a strong culture of learning among its teams, particularly in relation to monitoring and evaluation. A strong learning organisation continuously transforms itself[24], requiring leadership and a shift in thinking and doing from everyone. A learning organisation discovers how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels.

Where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together.

Peter Senge[25]

A recent independent assessment of ICV's four-year Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning review found that ICV met or exceeded all the criteria for an organisational culture that supports and encourages discovery, sharing, reflection, feedback, action learning and application of knowledge using ethically and culturally appropriate approaches.[26]

This research project has provided an opportunity for ICV to strengthen our understanding about governance practices, and about action research. The different teams within ICV are meeting regularly to discuss their learnings and insights and the potential importance of what they are discovering. The whole team continues to meet together every six weeks.

8. WHAT DID WE PLAN TO DO WITH THE DATA?

8.1. CASE STUDIES

For each community, we planned to develop a case study that tells the story of change in each community and identifies the connections between First Nations and Western Governance practices and achieving community priorities in the areas of improved economic, education, cultural and health outcomes.[27]

These case studies will provide a summary of the learnings and insights in each community. Where requested by communities, other options of communicating the information are explored e.g. photo, audio, video, art, music.

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24 Radcliffe, D, 'Indigenous Community Volunteers: Draft Learning and Development Strategy', 2015.

25 Peter Senge is a leading writer in the area of learning organisations. His seminal works, 'The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization, and The Fifth Discipline Field book: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization', describe five disciplines that must be mastered when introducing learning into an organisation.

26 Rogers, A, 'Using data to demonstrate the value of community development: The Indigenous Community Volunteers story so far and recommendations for the future,' November 2017.

27 Similar approach taken by GroundUp and the Northern Institute at Charles Darwin University where the approach was to understand the meaning of 'governance' as it emerges in communities who were engaged to work on activities rather than on 'governance' as an abstract issue. 'Stage two plan 2014-2015: Indigenous governance and leadership development project, http://igld.cdu.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/IGLDP-Stage-1Report_Stage-2-Plan-April-2014-for-SC.pdf.

MIDWEST YAMAJI ABORIGINAL MUSIC INC:
COLEESHA JONES & ZAIN LAUDEHR PERFORMING AT
THE 2017 FIRST NATIONS FESTIVAL.

8.2.   THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Further analysis of the collected data will be done by the Research Steering Committee and the Community Development Team, generating key themes and learnings which will be confirmed through continued engagement with community.

8.3.   RESEARCH FINDINGS

For each community, the On the Ground Research Teams will generate collective findings about governance; and the ICV Team will also generate key findings about their ways of working and refine these through further consultation with the community.

The Research Steering Committee and the Community Development Team members will be involved in the analysis and chosen communication methods for the findings.

PART 3: PROGRESS TO DATE

9.   WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

This report comes after the first two phases of the project have been completed. A significant amount of research activity has been undertaken across all 12 participating communities, and some initial analysis has been undertaken.

9.1.   COMMUNITY PROJECT PLANS

Twelve communities are participating in this research project and all have developed project plans with their Community Development Team members.

9.2.   GOVERNANCE MATRICES

The first set of research questions (the governance matrix) aimed at understanding the community's interactions and understanding of governance practice have been completed with all participating communities. A CDO trialed this tool to test its applicability and ease of use, and the tool was further refined following feedback provided.

Using the refined governance matrix tool, CDOs completed this for each participating community based on desk research and their prior knowledge of the community. The draft matrix was then shared with the community and they were invited to provide feedback on this.

These governance matrices provide comprehensive background information on each community and their visions for the immediate and long-term future. They also provided baseline monitoring information in terms of their governance practices at the beginning of the research project.

Twelve co-authored governance matrices have been completed, and the Research Steering Committee has commenced analysis of findings and learnings.

9.3.   SEED TO TREE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The Seed to Tree questions have been used to conduct semi-structured interviews with all participating communities. Twenty-one people were interviewed either separately or as part of a focus group across twelve communities. Where consent was provided, these conversations were recorded (either audio or video) and transcribed so that the research team can refer back to them.

9.4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TEAM REFLECTIONS

The CDOs have been further developing their skills on recording their reflections and building these into the work that they do. Seven ICV team meetings have been held involving the Community Development Team and Research Steering Committee. Initially, these were held every two months, but from July 2019 they have changed to every six weeks.

In those meetings, the Community Development Team shared stories from participating communities and reflected on findings. In particular, staff are identifying how they are mapping and understanding First Nations Governance and how community development activities are bringing understanding and implementation of governance. Learnings are being drawn on to assist with overcoming gaps in the research and barriers to activities underway.

There has also been a lot of yarning between members of the Research Steering Committee, reflecting on their learnings and thinking about how to improve the research project, and the ways that ICV is working.

9.5. CASE STUDIES

Four case studies have been developed: Mad Mob Aboriginal Corporation in NSW, Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre (ACRC) in NSW, Littlewell Working Group in WA, and Midwest Yamaji Aboriginal Music Inc (MYMAI) in WA. These case studies were produced early in the research project and begin the documentation of the insights from communities. They highlight each community's long-term goals and aspirations, and the different journeys each community is taking towards achieving these. To varying extents, each community has chosen to engage with the Western Governance system as part of their journey and has enlisted ICV's support to assist with this.

For example:

- Mad Mob and Blue Mountains ACRC sought ICV's support to secure Deductible Gift Recipient status and to develop comprehensive business plans;
- MYAMI sought ICV's assistance to develop a funding plan for a First Nations Festival, identify potential partnerships, and to write grant submissions; and
- Littlewell initially sought ICV's assistance with writing funding applications for the Littlewell Reserve.

These four case studies can be found at Appendix B.

BLUE MOUNTAINS ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND RESOURCE CENTRE: YOUNG STRONG AND DEADLY PROGRAM.

10.   WHAT IS THE DATA TELLING US?

The research teams have all learned a lot about doing research during these first two phases of the project and we are beginning to see some themes emerging from the collected data to date.

10.1.   EMERGING THEMES

ICV team meetings, the governance matrices, and the case studies have been used to identify themes. An initial analysis has been undertaken to generate the following learnings which will form the basis of the next phase of the research project.

10.1.1. Governance

10.1.1.1 Bridges to better governance

Through the research, we have confirmed that there are two distinct forms of governance at play: First Nations Governance, and Western Governance. The Community Development Team have highlighted the differences between First Nations Governance practices and Western Governance systems.

For First Nations Governance practices, discussions highlighted the complex, sophisticated, relationship-based and enduring nature of these systems that take time to understand. These practices may also be governed by kinship laws.

> *[There are] interconnected layers of extended family, clans, leaders and their land ownership rights and interests. And these cultural networks form the foundation for a wide variety of different governance structures, depending on what suits the particular nation, community, or group*
>
> Regional Manager

For Western Governance systems, discussions highlighted the transactional, top-down, and relatively defined nature, where 'rules' are often subject to change. Discussions with ICV's Community Development Team indicate that Western Governance is much simpler to describe than First Nations Governance practices. Western Governance has systems and processes that are recorded in writing and publicly accessible. On the other hand, First Nations Governance practices are intrinsic and embedded, and therefore, can be harder for non-First Nations people to see. These practices vary across the communities and regions that ICV works in, and tend not to be written down.

The need to 'walk in both worlds' is a product of colonisation that has resulted in a new system of Governance practices being applied on top of ongoing First Nations Governance practices and decision-making processes. This can be challenging given both worlds are very different, for example, one is individualistic in nature and the other is collective and community-focused.

There is a third, intersecting space where the two forms of governance meet and First Nations organisations operating in that space have developed 'Two-Way' Governance practices defined by AIGI as:

> *This balancing act is called two-way governance. It refers to the efforts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in negotiating a pathway forward by developing governance arrangements that seek to achieve a workable balance between maintaining cultural integrity and maximising their self-determination. It also involves ensuring that their models of governance accord with the requirements (such as financial and legal accountability) of the wider society in which they live.[28]*

What we are seeing is that there are tools and strategies that can help people to navigate in and out of that space – and we are calling that 'Bridges'.

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28   The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, 'Indigenous Governance Toolkit,' https://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/2-2-two-way-governance
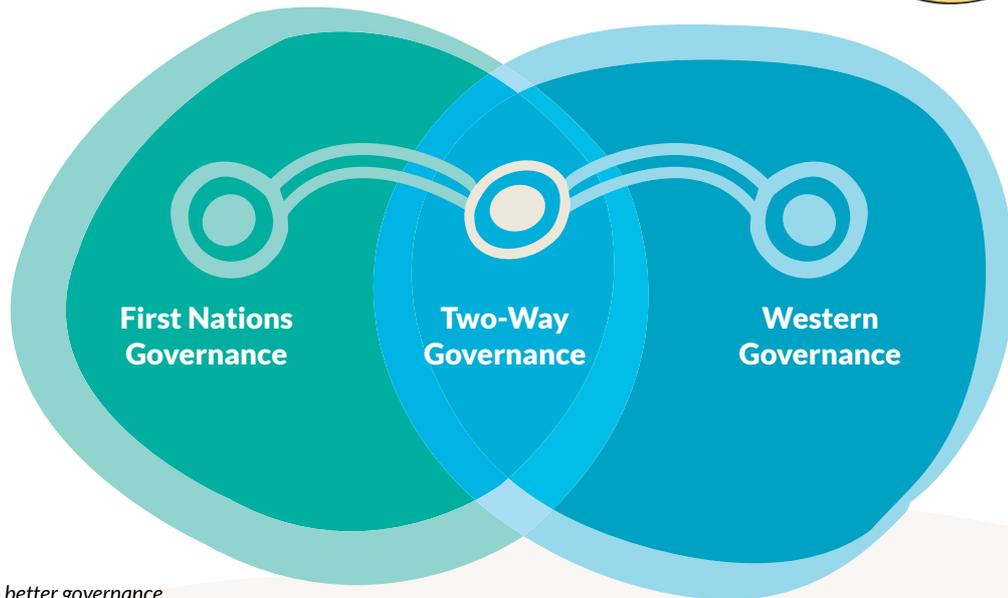
Figure 16: Bridges to better governance

10.1.1.2 Western Governance as compliance

First Nations organisations and communities are reporting that they are the ones who are always doing the adapting and changing, to meet the Western Governance requirements, and that they have no experience of Western Governance doing any of the adapting or changing. Currently, there is no bridge in from Western Governance, only expectations and rules. We will explore this theme further in the next phase of the research.

10.1.1.3 Western Governance Bridges as opportunity

From the research done so far, there is a suggestion that if Western Governance could come to that middle ground, then they would benefit through improved understandings and practices. We will test that proposal in the final phase of the project.

10.1.1.4 First Nations Bridges

Some First Nations communities and organisations are reporting that there are aspects of Western Governance that they are using in the intersecting space where First Nations Governance and Western Governance meet. They are bridging these aspects back to their own First Nations Governance practices. We will explore this further in the next phase.

10.1.1.5 First Nations Governance is a community-driven process, not a defined procedure.

We are seeing that communities see First Nations Governance as more important than Western Governance, which is often over-emphasised. Our reflections on this is that what we are actually doing is engaging and working with communities to build capacity to support community to achieve their goals. We are building on governance, working to strengthen First Nations Governance practices so that they survive and thrive, adapting to their environment, like an organism in an ecosystem. This idea will be explored further in the final phase of the project.

10.1.1.6 The word 'Governance' can be misleading

A key learning from this project to date is that the word 'governance' itself can create confusion. While ICV defines governance as *the evolving processes, decisions, relationships, institutions and structures by which a group of people organise themselves to collectively achieve the things that matter to them*, through this project, ICV has observed that people's instinctive reaction is to associate the word 'governance' with Western Governance. People, including ICV staff and communities, frequently mentioned terms such as 'white-fella paperwork', financial management, ORIC, ASIC, legal structure, incorporated or unincorporated and Board, in relation to governance. The Western Governance lens was particularly obvious with the completed governance matrices. Potential reasons for this include the desk-based, written approach to collecting this information and the prompting questions that may have unintentionally focused thoughts on Western Governance. This will be addressed in the final stage of the research project.

ICV will continue to explore these ideas, including how to better define governance so that it captures cultural and traditional governance practices. As part of this process, ICV will consider whether a different word or phrase is more suitable.

10.1.1.7 Governance matrices

Through an initial analysis of the completed matrices, some themes are beginning to emerge.

GOVERNANCE ELEMENT	RATIONALE	EMERGING THEMES FROM COMPLETED GOVERNANCE MATRICES
A group of people or entity	Who	Traditional Owners/Custodians are considered the key stakeholders within the geographic context for the majority of participating communities. Local councils are often listed as key players in the geographic context. However, the nature and extent of participating communities' relationship with these councils, varies.
Collectively organise	What	The majority of participating communities are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations registered with ORIC or incorporated associations registered with ASIC. A small number of participating communities are also registered charities. One participating community has deliberately chosen to be unincorporated, instead opting for a collaborative approach, underpinned by strong partnerships, to progress its goals. Collective organisation for participating communities often involves blending both Western Governance requirements and First Nations Governance practices. A majority of participating communities have an extensive and diverse list of key stakeholders. This includes the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.
Things that matter to them	Why	A majority of participating communities have clearly articulated visions, goals and objectives. While participating communities are diverse in nature and focus, common themes include: achieving sustainability; self-determination; future-focused; and preserving, protecting and celebrating local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.

The ways and means	How and with what	As per Western Governance requirements, a Board of Directors oversees the majority of participating communities. This Board is ultimately accountable for the performance of the community.
		The majority of Boards include both male and female members. Traditional owners and/or the local community are represented on the Board and the community's membership.
		Some participating communities have established a governance structure that blends both Western and First Nations governance aspects.
		A majority of participating communities actively engage with, and seek the input of, the broader community.
		Participating communities list a diverse range of assets including freehold land, knowledge, volunteers, funding, capital infrastructure, and farm land.
To do those things	Doing	Leadership teams have diverse skills, knowledge and experience.
		Participating communities are working towards a list of clearly defined milestones.

10.1.1.8 Policy implications

Each of the case studies completed so far highlight a number of social policy implications and provides evidence to support each of the seven key attributes of good governance. The case studies are evidencing that culture and community are at the core of everything these communities do, and that engaging with Western Governance is done out of necessity rather than choice, a step in the journey towards enabling them to achieve the things that actually matter to them.

10.1.2. ICV ways of working

In practice, application of the CDF is often more organic than the diagram suggests. It is important to remember that ICV does not operate in a bubble and that there are often bumps, twists and turns along the way. Each community and situation is also very different and the pathway each community chooses to take towards achieving a specific goal is dependent on a range of factors.

10.1.2.1 Communities see ICV as an 'instrument' to support them to navigate both worlds to achieve their dreams

ICV's research to date indicates that CDOs are highly skilled community development practitioners who work with communities to navigate a pathway towards achieving their goals. Communities see ICV as an 'instrument' to support them to navigate both worlds to achieve their dreams. In many ways, how they go about doing this is not technical but involves:

- community self-determination at the heart of everything they do;
- forming genuine, two-way relationships with communities that are underpinned by trust;
- taking the time to look, listen and learn/scanning the environment and observing what is going on; and
- sitting in the passenger seat and navigating through systems and stakeholders while communities drive and take the lead.

ICV's action research project demonstrates that the communities that ICV works with 'walk in both worlds' – that is – they balance both First Nations Governance and Western Governance practices and

requirements. The Community Development Team has observed that understanding these practices can take time, and even then, staff are conscience of not presuming to fully understand First Nations practices in all their complexity.

We may never really come to know the end of that entity or that organisation, but we know that they know

Senior Community Development Officer

While communities can access a range of tools and resources to support them to meet Western Governance requirements, there is limited support to enable non-First Nations people to understand and respect First Nations Governance. Research to date indicates that ICV is uniquely placed to contribute knowledge and experience in this area, with communities seeing ICV as an 'instrument' in the toolbox or a bridge to support them to navigate both worlds to achieve their goals. ICV's Community Development Team play an integral role in this process, through purposeful community engagement, skilled use of observation, and through the provision of culturally relevant information, support and mentoring for ICV volunteers.

ICV will continue to explore these issues in more depth, including potentially seeking ICV volunteers' views on their experiences and the type of mentoring and support they require to identify and work respectfully within a community's governance, or way of doing. ICV will also explore whether tools and resources designed for ICV volunteers could be of broader use and interest to others.

10.1.2.2 ICV's CDOs undertake purposeful community engagement underpinned by trust

ICV's Action Research project highlights the skilled and purposeful nature of the community engagement undertaken at ICV. As outlined in the CDF, the culmination of over 20 years of acquired knowledge and experience in community development practice, the 'engage & empower' stage involves ICV's CDOs taking the time to yarn or to 'look, listen and learn' with communities.

In research, this is called *participant observation*, a qualitative method of data collection in which the researcher collects information through observing and interacting with participants within a specific setting.[29] In the context of the CDF, CDOs use participant observation to understand the community, its strengths and what it is it wants to achieve.

MIDWEST YAMAJI ABORIGINAL MUSIC INC: BARRY ANDERSON FROM RADIO MAMA SPEAKING WITH ICV COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER EMMA MULVANEY AT THE 2017 FIRST NATIONS FESTIVAL.

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29   Lashley, Mark. "Observational Research, Advantages and Disadvantages". The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods. Edited by Mike Allan, SAGE Publications, 2018, pp1113-1115.
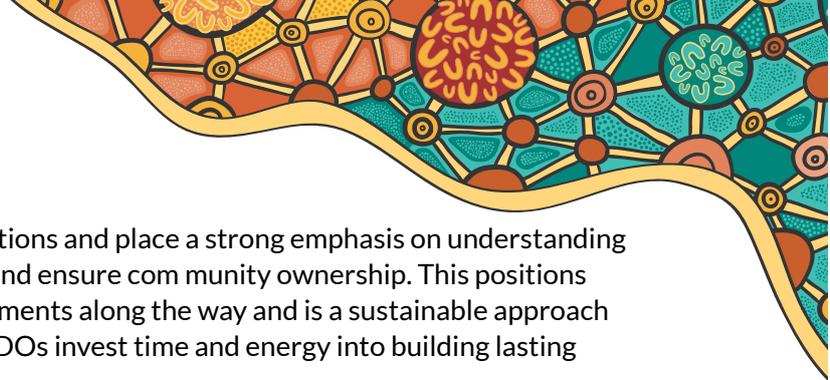
During this stage, CDOs carefully manage expectations and place a strong emphasis on understanding the community to play to its strengths and assets and ensure com munity ownership. This positions the community to own and celebrate their achievements along the way and is a sustainable approach to realising their long-term vision. At this phase, CDOs invest time and energy into building lasting relationships built on trust.

Creating open and trusting relationships with communities is a critical aspect of CDO's roles, and is what differentiates their approach from many others'.

You need to have that openness and availability to be there for whatever the group really needs. It's just an essential part of your relationship and our role. And I think as I said if we say "that's not what we do" we won't have the type of relationship we have with communities.

Community Development Officer

As one CDO reflected, CDOs create genuine and two-way relationships with communities and are always available to communities to support them where they can.

It's something that I think all CDOs with ICV do, so you develop a relationship with these groups and it's natural that things are going to come up in duration of us working together that may not necessarily be related directly to the objective, but it is important for them to work through, and they reach out to us for support around that.

Of course there are times when we won't have expertise and experience but always we will try and find someone who does.

Community Development Officer

The ability to 'look, listen and learn' or 'yarning', to give proper credence to the traditional practice, is a critical component of community engagement as it helps to build and maintain trust. As part of the feedback loops built into the research, CDOs repeatedly highlighted the importance of strong relationships underpinned by trust, to complete the governance matrices. Without the existence of such relationships, many believe this activity would have been much more difficult to undertake.

Cause there's a strong trust we're able to talk to people. Otherwise they probably wouldn't have signed off so quickly

Regional Manager

To understand it fully you still need to get on the ground and work with people and build this trust of the communities you work with

Regional Manager

I think I had a lot of history and contact with the board to really draw upon and also, like I said, the fact that they're being so transparent and open with us also really helped…I also found hearing directly from them also contributed a lot to my understanding as well

Community Development Officer

As someone who isn't Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and as the relationship with this community is still quite new for me, there's parts of this process that I feel like I just have no historical context of yet. Despite that, I feel like I've been so privileged to be able to build a really trusting relationship with this organisation already. Being invited to share at their board meeting was a trusting offer on their behalf, but also such a valuable insight for me to be able to see just how they operate, and all the things that are important to them that they are discussing at the moment

<div align="right">

Community Development Officer

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ICV will continue to explore how CDO's honour the traditional practice of yarning and its importance to effective community engagement. Linking this approach to the term 'participant observation' is a key learning that will act as a 'sign-post' to enable ICV to better articulate what it does through the use of technical terminology. It will also enable ICV to link to and contribute to existing research and training on this topic. Existing research and training may not be in a First Nations setting and the research will provide an opportunity for ICV to share its experience and support those working with First Nations people.

10.1.3. ICV's Story of Change

10.1.3.1 Governance is just as important as any other ICV outcome

During phases 1 and 2 of this research project, ICV's community development team challenged the Story of Change's linear approach and the assumption that strong governance is a short-term outcome that leads to longer-term outcomes. They advised that all outcomes are interconnected and that not one outcome is more important than another.

This feedback resulted in ICV's research team, in collaboration with the Community Development Team, creating a new circular Story of Change concept. The new concept emerged after multiple attempts and lots of yarning between the research and community development teams. Similar to an ecosystem, it has a core (self-determination), organisms (the 'outcomes'), and elements that contribute to the ecosystem flourishing (ICV's people, approach and governance).

At the heart or core of this ecosystem is community 'self-determination'. ICV sees self-determination as the most important element to enabling communities to achieve their dream. Everything starts here. To put it simply, without a heart or core, the ecosystem cannot flourish.

Surrounding the heart or core are a range of outcomes that contribute to making a community stronger. All outcomes are interconnected and of equal importance, and all elements need to be strong for the ecosystem to flourish. Changing one element of the ecosystem impacts on other elements and the ecosystem's overall function.

While all of the current outcomes have been revised to some extent, there have been a couple of significant changes. The 'Increase in active reconciliation & understanding of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultures' outcome aimed to highlight that reconciliation is an active, ongoing process that has elements of truth, justice, forgiveness, healing, reparation, and love. While our approach and values are the same, we discovered that the term 'reconciliation' means different things to different people and its use has generated significant discussion within the Community Development Team. As a result, we changed this outcome to 'stronger cross-culture community'. The 'Greater community-owned evidence based influencing policy' outcome aimed to show that communities' recorded information about their development story (and theory) and outcomes achieved. We changed this outcome to 'data sovereignty', an important and increasingly referred to concept about the right of First Nations people to exercise ownership of their data[30]. 'Data sovereignty' strengthens our existing outcome and aligns with developments in this area.

The new Story of Change concept also includes multiple arrows showing movement towards 'self-

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30 Maiam nayri Wingara Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data Sovereignty Collective, 'Key Principles', https://www.maiamnayriwingara.org/key-principles

determination' and away from self-determination towards community lead achievements'. They aim to demonstrate the multiple pathways within the ecosystem including how self-determination leads to stronger outcomes and therefore community led achievements; and how community led achievements strengthen self-determination.
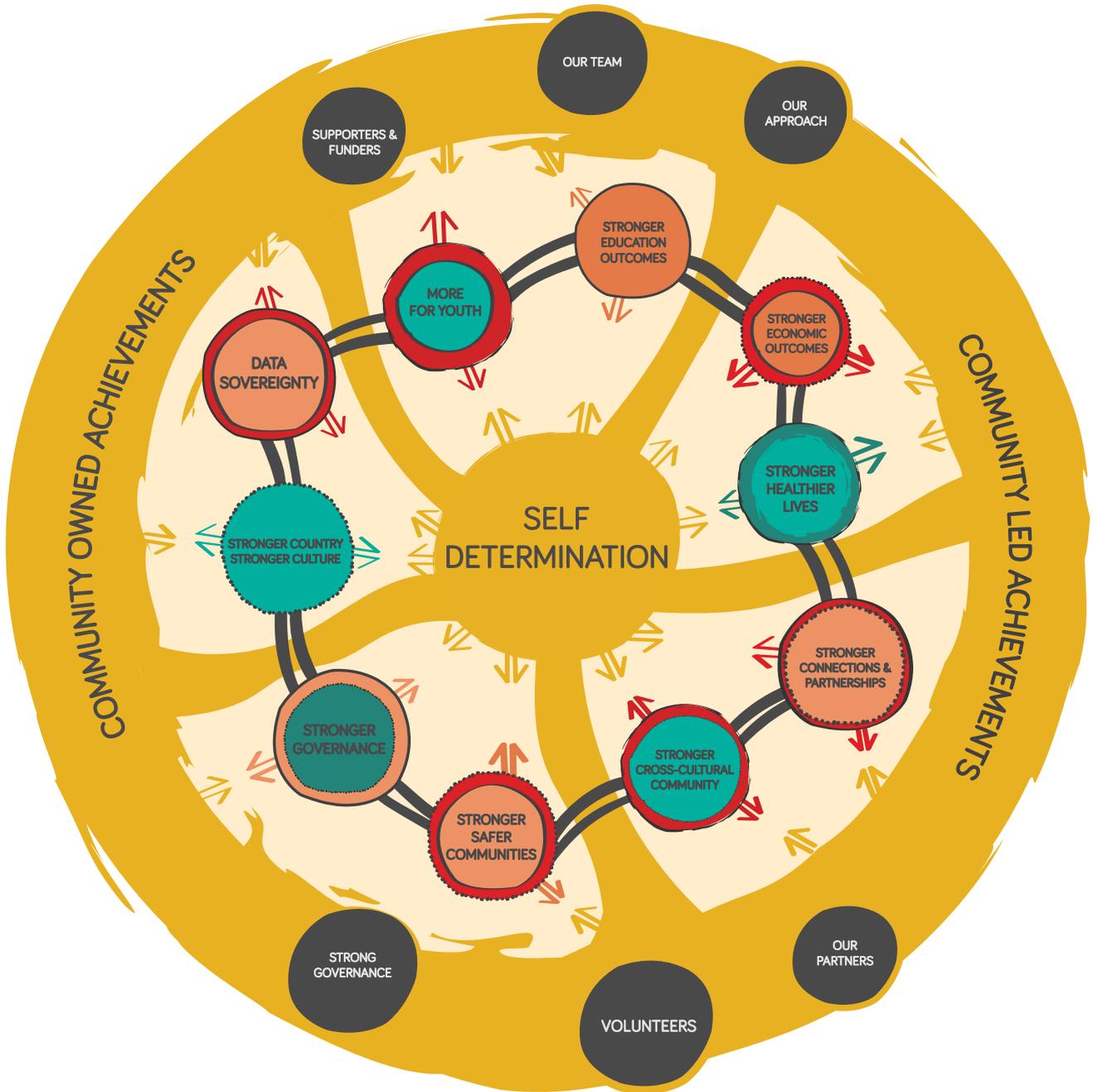

Figure 17: ICV Revised Story of Change Diagram

It is envisaged that the revised circular Story of Change concept will provide a more accurate way for ICV to communicate how we work and the outcomes we contribute to achieving through our community development work.

10.2.   STRENGTHENING OUR RESEARCH PRACTICES

ICV has been engaging in research activities for six years and we are actively engaged in strengthening our practice. It has become clear in this project that the type of research method used influences the type of information collected. This and other learnings about research will make a contribution to our own research practices and those of others undertaking research in similar contexts.

DEVON CUIMARA FROM THE ABORIGINAL MALES' HEALING CENTRE IN NEWMAN WITH, ICV'S DOYEN RADCLIFFE IN PERTH UNDERTAKING A SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW ON VIDEO CONFERENCE USING THE SEED TO TREE SCALE.

10.2.1.   Semi-structured interviews

The use of audio recording and the conduct of semi structured interviews was new to everyone and we learned a lot about this approach. The way we work together is usually less structured and the structured way that interviews work was a big change to how we do things. We are working to document our insights around this and will work to strengthen how we use this tool including getting some training. We will document our learnings and then change how we approach this to strengthen our practice.

10.2.2.   Seed to Tree tool

In our Monitoring and Evaluation system, we had been using a thermometer as a scale. Through doing this research, we learned that it was more effective to turn the scale on its side to make things seem more like a journey, rather than being 'good' or 'bad'. We added the image of a seedling and this helped to reinforce the idea of growth and potential.


| 0 | 25 | 50 | 75 | 100 |
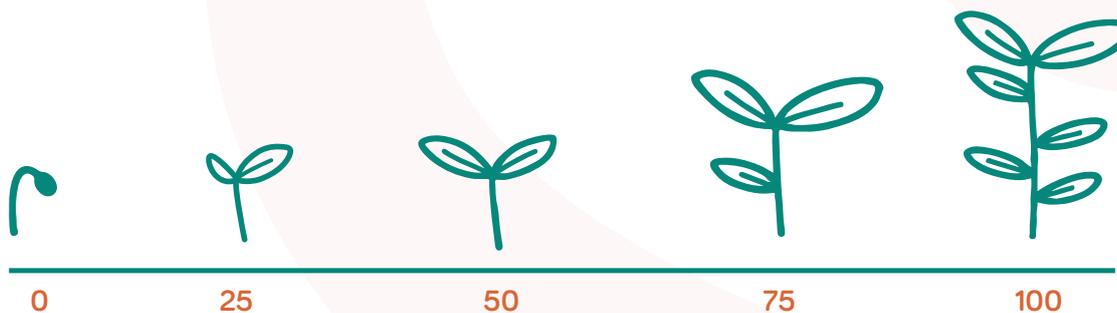
Figure 18: Seed to Tree tool

Using the research questions alongside the visual Seed to Tree tool, we found it easier to have good conversations in a participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approach. The tool was well received in a variety of settings and was a metaphor that resonated with some of the interviewees. ICV's Community Development Team adapted the Seed to Tree tool for multiple interview settings and purposes, including for interviews conducted in person and via video conference, and also to collect both past and current information at the same time.

Following completion of the first round of semi-structured interviews, ICV's Community Development Team took ownership of the Seed to Tree tool, using it to engage with communities not involved in the action research project. The team adapted the tool for project M&E purposes, and used it to facilitate strategic planning sessions with communities.

The tool has proven to be highly adaptable, with the team trialing it:

- with a range of community members from grassroots-level to Board Members and CEOs;
- in person with a single person;
- in person as part of focus groups or board meetings;
- in person via video conferencing;
- in conjunction with other participatory M&E methods and tools such as the Ten Seeds Technique[31]; and
- via email when they have been unable to visit a community in person and have needed to obtain baseline information.

SOUTHERN TANAMI KURDIJI IN YUENDUMU NT USE THE SEED TO TREE TOOL TO DISCUSS, 'HOW STRONG IS OUR PLAN?'

The Seed to Tree tool is beginning to be used by other organisations to support evaluation and ICV has used it in our work with Better Evaluation on their project, A protocol for ethical evaluation practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings.

We have recently published a Seed to Tree 'Stories of Practice' that tells the journey of this tool—how we developed it, and what we have learned from using it. This story has been published as a research output of this project.

31 Dr.Ravi I. Jayakaran, 2002, at: https://we.riseup.net/assets/5575/Ten+seed+PLA.pdf

10.2.3. Governance matrices

A lot of work went into the development of the governance matrices, but we have found that they are not very effective in collecting useful data. When viewed collectively, the responses to the written governance matrices appear to have a western lens and a focus on communities' adherence to Western Governance requirements. We have learned that the tools that we design change the way people talk about something. Because the matrices are in written form, we have found that they made conversation and discussion difficult and the focus became one of 'filling in the form' and that made them ineffective for authentic research. They were difficult to use—they are very detailed and broad and don't support the sometimes sensitive conversations that people are having.

> *Getting down to the nitty gritties of the organisation, and finding out that information [was challenging]. Although working with the organisation and the people in it themselves wasn't challenging because I have known these guys for years*

> Senior Community Development Officer

Some CDOs were still able to use the matrices relatively easily, because they had long relationships with the community and had skills and knowledge to work around the difficulties.

> *I already knew about the governance matrix and how the group operates, because, from my background I understand working in two worlds*

> Regional Manager

> *I think I had a lot of history and contact with the board to really draw upon and also, like I said, the fact that they're being so transparent and open with us also really helped…I also found hearing directly from them also contributed a lot to my understanding as well*

> Community Development Officer

The matrices have provided a lot of data that was used to generate the first four case studies, but we have decided not to use them in the last part of the project, but rather, to take a yarning approach instead.

10.2.4. Case studies

The four case studies were written using previously collected data stored in the database; the information collected through the Governance Matrices; and the semi-structured interviews. We found these challenging to co-author. The research team, together with CDOs, drafted the first case studies. These were then taken back to community to review.

In the next phase of the project, we will change the structure of the Case Studies, using the revised and more organic Story of Change as a reference, and taking a more narrative approach. We will use the original interview transcripts to tell us more and then yarning with communities, rather than using matrices. This will give us a better way of being able to develop case studies together.

We will work to strengthen our approach to co-authoring to ensure the community's voice cuts through more clearly. ICV is currently exploring a number of options around the process and format of future co-authored case studies. In addition to this, the Research Steering Committee is also exploring how to strengthen the feedback loop with communities around our team learning sessions and the development of reports.

10.2.5. The importance of Yarning

In this research project we have learned that yarning is the most effective tool to use to talk deeply with people about governance practices. Yarning is a traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander style of conversation and storytelling that has been used by researchers as a culturally safe and legitimate qualitative research method.[32,33] It is an approach ICV's Community Development Team frequently uses as part of their regular community development work, and their preferred approach to learning.

By yarning or using kapati[34] what we are actually doing is decolonising the traditional western methods of collecting information and data. The art of yarning or kapati yields far more value for CDOs and communities because it is personal, it builds strong relationships, bonds and trust. Once this happens, we gain a better insight and understanding of the community and vise versa – we almost become like family.

Regional Manager

ICV's yarning-based Community of Practice discussions and semi-structured interviews with communities yielded much richer data on First Nations Governance practices than were generated through the written governance matrices. This is perhaps not surprising given the importance of oral traditions to First Nations people. This key insight has informed and guided the redesign of the final phase of this research project.

MAD MOB CONTRIBUTION TO ST. JOHN OF GOD SERENITY GARDEN 'NGARA'.

32 Bessarab, D., & Ng'andu, B. "Yarning about yarning as a legitimate method in indigenous research." International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies, vol 3, 2010, pp37–150.
33 Laycock, A. (with Walker, D., Harrison, N., & Brands, J.) Researching Indigenous health: A practical guide for researchers. Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: The Lowitja Institute, 2011.
34 Ober, R 2017 Kapati Method in Learning Communities Special Issue: Decolonising Research Practices, Number 22, December 2017.

PART 4. NEXT STEPS

This final phase of the project will involve a bringing together of the learnings from this project.

11. REFINE AND CONFIRM THE EMERGING THEMES

The CDOs will take the draft themes back to the participating communities for discussion. This will be done through using the yarning methodology that has been identified in Phases 1 and 2 as the most effective methodology for this work.

12. CASE STUDIES

12.1. DRAFTS

Case Studies will be written to a new structure using the revised Story of Change. The Research Steering Committee together with the CDOs will draft the case studies using all the data that has already been collected, with a focus on the interview data.

12.2. FINAL VERSIONS

The On the Ground Research Teams will review and edit the drafted Case Studies, ensuring that community voice is privileged. The Case Studies will be published as part of the final research outputs of the project.

13. FINDINGS

13.1. FURTHER ANALYSIS

The Research Steering Committee will continue to analyse the collected data, including the final case studies, for new emerging themes, and for new insights that hold across the majority of the sites, as well as community-specific findings.

13.2. FINAL FINDINGS

The Research Steering Committee will generate the final findings of the project, confirming with the CDOs.

14. CONFIRM, PUBLISH AND SHARE OUR FINDINGS

14.1. FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

The final report will contain all twelve Case Studies and the verified findings from each community, from ICV, and the collective findings about Governance. The final report will also identify the opportunities for ongoing research with participating communities, and with ICV.

The draft report will be checked with community, with a focus on particular sections that relate specifically to the individual community.

14.2. STORIES OF PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Any 'Stories of Practice' developed as part of the research will be published as research outputs from this project.

APPENDIX A:

RESOURCES REVIEWED AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNANCE ATTRIBUTES

Indigenous Governance Toolkit, *Indigenous governance and culture*, available via
http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/2-1-indigenous-governance-and-culture

Indigenous Governance Toolkit, *The important parts of governance*, available via
http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/1-1-indigenous-governance-2

Limerick, M. (2009) *What makes an Aboriginal Council successful?* Available via
http://limerickandassociates.com.au/files/5214/2795/2719/Successful_Aboriginal_Council_Performance_
Report_Grey2.pdf

Reconciliation Australia, *Understanding Governance factsheet* available via
https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/iga_factsheet_1.pdf

Reconciliation Australia, *Culture and Governance factsheet*, available via
https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/iga_factsheet_2.pdf

Reconciliation Australia, *Governing the Organisation factsheet*, available via
https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/iga_factsheet_4.pdf

Smith, D. E. (2005) *Researching Australian Indigenous Governance: A Methodological and Conceptual Framework*,
Working Paper No.29, CAEPR available via
http://caepr.cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/CAEPRWP29_0.pdf

THOMAS CAMERON AT
THE OFFICIAL OPENING
OF THE LITTLEWELL-
MINGENEW ABORIGINAL
RESERVE, WA.

MIDWEST YAMAJI ABORIGINAL MUSIC INC:
SANDART AT THE 2017 FIRST NATIONS FESTIVAL
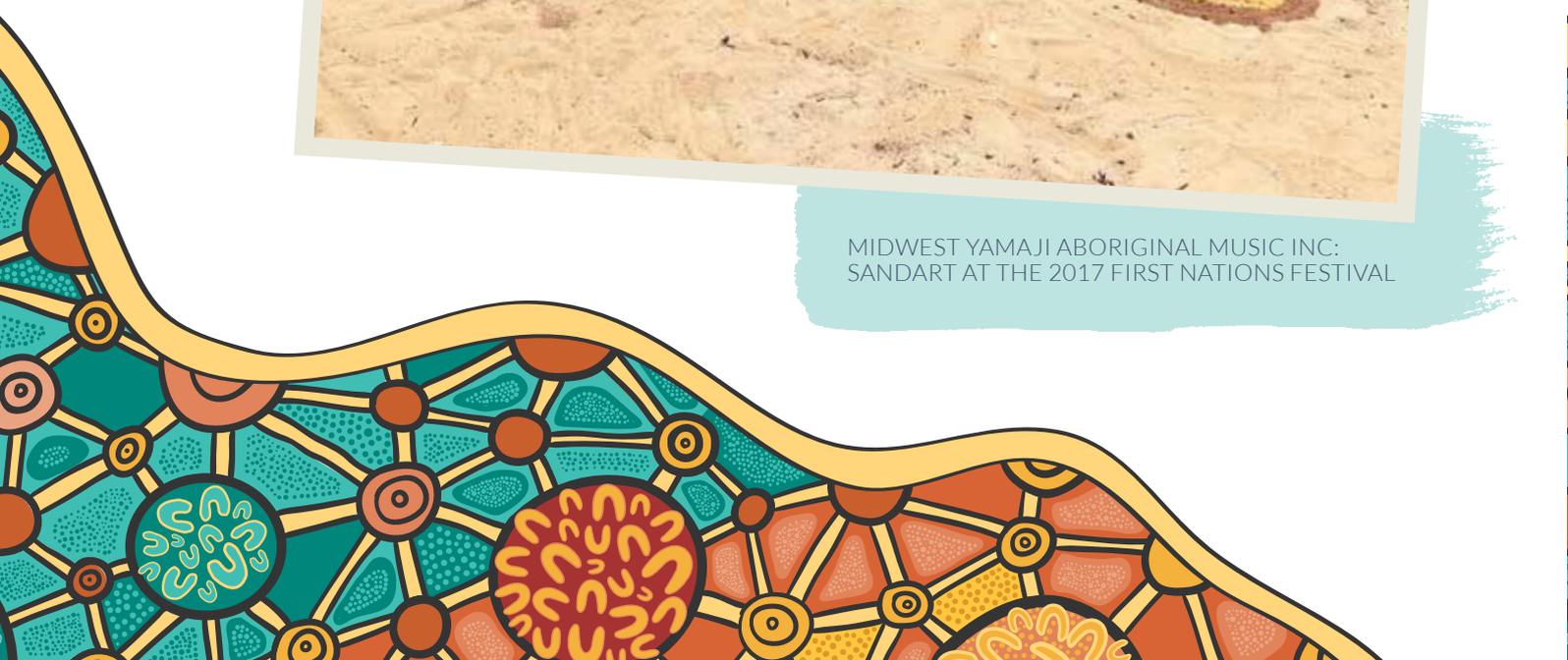
APPENDIX B:

CASE STUDIES

Mad Mob *culturally endorsed and strongly governed*

Change

Mad Mob is an Aboriginal Corporation based in Hawkesbury, NSW with a goal to educate and promote Aboriginal culture, art, spirituality, health and well-being within the wider community. They are using social and economic development to relieve the challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Mad Mob does this in a number of ways, such as the provision of cultural awareness training, and the production and sale of arts and crafts.

Mad Mob enlisted the support of ICV to become a sustainable organisation, to secure resources they need to keep their cultural heritage alive and to support and maintain improvements in the well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Mad Mob successfully secured Deductible Gift Recipient status to receive tax deductible gifts and to help them along this journey, and is currently engaged with an ICV volunteer to develop a five year business plan. They are seeking to articulate a clear direction for the organisation, including a roadmap to diversify funding sources and become sustainable in a way that will effectively meet the community's needs.

Deadly gathering coordinated by Mad Mob to meet our Indigenous MP the Hon Linda Burney and Susan Templeman MP Federal Member for Macquarie.

Social Policy Implications

Mad Mob has identified the importance of becoming sustainable in order to continue providing vital services to the Hawkesbury region. Two of the three projects Mad Mob is working on have identified 'Improved economic well-being and financial independence' as a key indicator.

As Mad Mob works to become sustainable by diversifying funding sources and recruiting paid employees rather than volunteers, they are setting themselves up to achieve economic independence. This is in line with the Federal Government Indigenous Advancement Strategy's key priority of 'employment, economic independence and social participation.'

In a 2018 report, Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) stated that:

In the contemporary era, the development of a robust and sustainable 'Indigenous economy' is essential for realising self-determining futures, facilitating sustainable and independent communities, and closing the gap. In line with the principle of self-determination, more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than ever are seeking to achieve economic independence by contributing to the economy through the establishment of Indigenous businesses.

ICV is working with Mad Mob to put the necessary structures in place to move towards sustainability so that they can secure a safe and culturally appropriate space for Aboriginal people to come and meet. As ICV continues to work with Mad Mob, and a number of other organisations around the country with similar objectives, it will gather broad insights around the process of Aboriginal and Toreres Strait Islander organisations seeking economic independence and sustainability. An improved evidence base in this space would be a valuable resource in light of both government priorities, and the potential benefits of successful Indigenous organisations and businesses to communities.

ICV reflections

Mad Mob only recently gained legal status as a Corporation and Not-for-Profit, yet they have made strides towards clearly articulating what they're trying to do, and how they're going to do it. ICV has been working alongside the community to support the development of a five year business plan, which will improve the accountability of the organisation and their effective use of resources. Mad Mob chose indicators that are most relevant to their dream, one of which was to develop a 'clear strategic direction for the organisation.' An ICV Community Development Officer has gauged their progress by making reflections at different monitoring points along their journey, as reflected below. The first reading read '0' as Mad Mob had only just approached ICV, they were just starting out, and they weren't yet a registered Aboriginal corporation. The thermometer reading was updated to '90' due to the development of a business plan which is now almost complete.

Progress towards indicator: develop clear strategic direction for the organisation
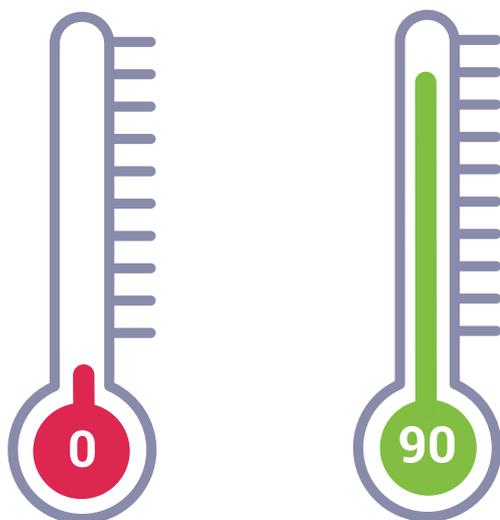
First monitoring point   **Second monitoring point**

Governance

Good governance is an important part of achieving "success in business investment," which in turn leads to economic independence. There are seven key attributes of good governance, which are listed in the table below alongside evidence of Mad Mob putting the attribute into action.

Attribute	Description	Evidence to support this attribute
1. Engagement	Community: community members and relevant local networks inform and/or participate in the decision-making process	Community members are central to the operations of Mad Mob, as the organisation currently has no funding. It is members and the community who work on a volunteer basis to deliver services.
	Broader networks: relevant stakeholders from the broader network, such as governments or other external institutions, inform and/or participate in the decision-making process	Through the process of seeking financial sustainability, Mad Mob has taken steps to build relationships with their broader network. For example, as they pull together a business plan they will be actively identifying potential investors and stakeholders who might like to get involved.

Attribute	Description	Evidence to support this attribute
2. Clear and shared strategic direction	A shared long-term view for what the community wants to do, and a timeline, or 'map', of how it will happen	Mad Mob has a shared vision to become a strong and united community proudly growing together by educating and promoting Aboriginal Culture, Art, Spirituality, Health and Well-being within the whole community. They have identified a series of milestones that they are working towards in order to achieve their vision, including steps to broaden their reach, develop additional products (such as books, arts and crafts) and services, and diversify their funding sources.
3. Embedded culture	Governing in line with cultural and community values, understandings, and behaviours. Cultural principles that underpin Indigenous systems of governance may include, for example: - A wide network of relationships - Relationships built on shared culture - Decision-making by consensus - Strong links between geography and community identity	Underpinning everything that Mad Mob does is a commitment to keeping their culture alive. The organisation is currently built on a network of shared culture and key values, which include: 1. Being proud 2. Working together in unity 3. Sharing 4. Respecting 5. Awareness of cultural values 6. Support 7. Diversity 8. Acceptance

Mad Mob contribution to St. John of God Serenity Garden 'Ngara'.

Attribute	Description	Evidence to support this attribute
4. Effective administration	Sufficient and appropriate: - processes (organisational policies, mediations, rules, roles and responsibilities), - resources (natural assets, infrastructure, cultural, social, economic and human capital), and - capability (leadership, financial management etc)	Mad Mob is legally registered as a Corporation, and as a charity and is subject to regulation in line with this business structure. They are in the process of finalising a business plan which outlines the strategic direction of the organisation, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of management. Mad Mob makes good use of human capital to deliver their services while they work towards building a sustainable funding stream. They run solely on community participation and volunteering of current members. They are currently being provided with a space rent free by Hawkesbury City Council within the Hawkesbury Community Nursery.
5. Accountability: external and among community	Actions and decisions are justified and communicated, in particular to community members and the wider network	Mad mob reports annually to ORIC and all meeting minutes are recorded and available to all members. Any decisions are communicated via newsletter, email and their social media pages.

Mad Mob, Strong Nation and Café Corner Stone combined to provide local Aboriginal community members with healthy eating, traditional food slow cooker classes.

Attribute	Description	Evidence to support this attribute
6. Legitimacy	Acknowledged legal, jurisdictional and cultural authority, and the genuine power to make decisions	Mad Mob became a corporation after Elders in the area approached them and suggested that they need another Aboriginal organisation in Hawkesbury. They were legally registered as a Corporation on 6 June 2017. Recently Mad Mob successfully completed Registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and the Australian Taxation Office and was granted Deductible Gift Recipient status in June 2018.
7. Strong leadership	Influential and respected leaders who act on behalf of shared values, and are held accountable for the decisions that they make. Leaders should encourage cooperation, use resources effectively, resolve conflicts and problems transparently, care for Country, and get things done.	The directors oversee the running of the corporation on behalf of all members, and make decisions about the affairs of the corporation. The directors manage, or set the direction for managing, the business of the corporation. The leadership has a diverse set of skills, including one individual with a Cert 4 qualification in Governance. They bring a range of skills, knowledge and experience between them which will play a crucial role in helping them to achieve their long-term dream.

Key references

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, *Inquiry into Indigenous Australians at work: Successful initiatives in Indigenous employment*, 13 August 2007.

Price Waterhouse Coopers, *The contribution of the Indigenous business sector to Australia's economy*, April 2018.

The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, *Indigenous Governance Toolkit: Culture is what makes governance strong*, http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/2-1-indigenous-governance-and-culture.

Underpinning everything that Mad Mob does is a commitment to keeping their culture alive

Indigenous Community Volunteers

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Indigenous community volunteers

Littlewell *strength in shared strategic vision*

Change

On the outskirts of the town of Mingenew in Midwest Western Australia lies a former Aboriginal reserve named Jinjamarba Baba, or Littlewell. In 2010, a group of elders—who are either former residents of Littlewell, or their descendants—established the Littlewell Working Group. There are now 30 members in the Group. The vision of the Group was to preserve the reserve, and build a heritage trail to celebrate and honour the lives of people who had lived there. They also wanted to record the history of the area, and post it online, so that their stories would not be lost in time.

The reserve was closed in 1972, and given to the Shire of Mingenew to use for recreational purposes. Littlewell realised early on that it would be important to work closely with the Shire in order to move towards their long-term dream. A key spokesperson was elected for the Group, who spent time building a relationship with the shire, with the local community, and other key stakeholders. Over time, this responsibility was shared by group members.

Littlewell has now achieved their dream to establish the trail and record their stories. This is a testament to their persistence, resilience, strategic thinking, and effective governance over the years. The Group won the 2019 NAIDOC Award for Caring for Country and the 2018 award of Woolworths Community Group of the Year through the Western Australian Regional Achievement and Community Awards as further evidence of their success.

"These stories are everything, they are important for our grannies, for us to be able to say this is where we came from, this is who we are, some of our grannies are young, teenagers, not really interested in these stories now, but in a few years they will be, now they will be able to have something to listen to, they will know who they are, know they come from somewhere."
- Kathy Jacobs

Social Policy Implications

There are a number of success factors that enabled Littlewell to achieve their dream. These factors are worthy of reflection, and should be incorporated into the design of other policies, programs and initiatives in order to yield positive results.

Littlewell had total control over decision-making, and directed their energy towards building relationships and working in partnership. This approach was key for Littlewell's success. The Working Group developed a strong relationship with the Shire of Mingenew, which was then formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This enabled the Shire to submit funding applications on the group's behalf, as the funding body required the application to be submitted by the legal owner of the land. Littlewell also established close relationships with Lotterywest, the key funding body, and with ICV.

Community control—which underpins ICV's community development approach—and working in partnership have been recognised as factors common to successful community-managed programs and organisations.

Specifically, community ownership over decision-making, and the 'establishment of trusting relationships with partners.' Through its relationships with the Shire and ICV, Littlewell is further evidence of the success of such an approach.

In addition to these factors, the long-term focus of Littlewell was a key enabler in their achievements. The group worked over many years to achieve their vision, and this would not have been possible in a shorter time-frame. This is partly due to the time it takes to build strong and meaningful relationships with partners, and because change takes time. In designing policy, programs or funding opportunities, a short project life cycle presents challenges in achieving social change. A lack of long-term commitment from external funding bodies has been acknowledged as an obstacle to successful community programs.

"Given the level and extent of disadvantage in some communities, and the fact that responses to social problems require significant time and resources, strict adherence to short-term implementation timelines is problematic
(Hunt, 2010; Smith, 2004 in CFCA Paper No. 32)."

ICV reflections

Littlewell have achieved all of their project indicators, and now, their dream indicators as well. As demonstrated below, the ultimate goal for the group was to establish a heritage trail at the reserve to commemorate the lives of Aboriginal families who resided there, and this has been achieved.

The first monitoring point reads '70' as the group had put a lot of time, money and resources into the project before ICV came on board as a key partner in 2014. The Group originally sought support from ICV to assist with writing funding applications for the reserve, and ICV has remained involved with Littlewell since. Between 2014-2018, ICV has worked with Littlewell on two projects – Littlewell Submission Writing Project (2014-2017) and Littlewell Oral History Project (2015-2018).

ICV's Community Development approach involves building on the existing strengths and assets of a community, and Littlewell is testament to the success of this model. Littlewell had complete control over the vision and implementation of their projects, which facilitated a strong sense of ownership for what they were working towards. ICV played a support role, providing the Group with additional assistance where required.

Now that Littlewell has achieved their dream, they are considering other potential cultural preservation projects in the area.

Progress towards dream indicator: A heritage trail is established at Littlewell reserve to commemorate the lives of Aboriginal families who resided there
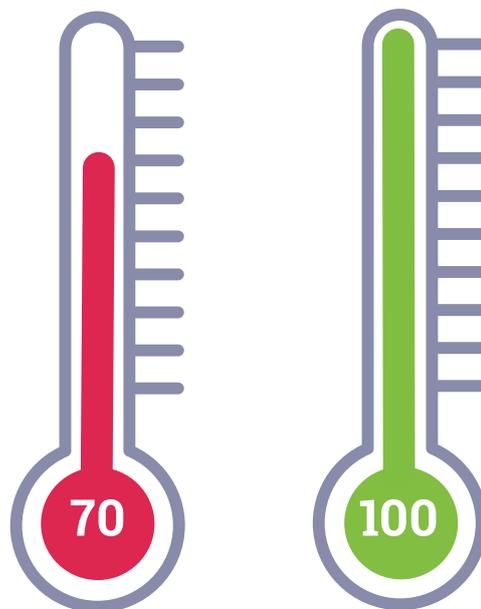
First monitoring point   **Second monitoring point**

We are not in a position to attribute Littlewell's strengthened governance to its involvement with ICV. ICV is, however, in the process of conducting participatory research to better understand the impact of a community development approach on the governance structures of communities we work with.

The evidence base on what constitutes 'good governance' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community development highlights a number of key themes:

Attribute	Description	Evidence to support this attribute
1. Engagement	Community: community members and relevant local networks inform and/or participate in the decision-making process Broader networks: relevant stakeholders from the broader network, such as governments or other external institutions, inform and/or participate in the decision-making process	The Littlewell Working group was formed in 2010, after a community meeting was held with Elders, key players and families from the Littlewell Reserve. All the families who have a connection to the reserve were consulted and as a result, they have representation from all of these families in the Littlewell Working Group. The 30 members are therefore able to bring their knowledge and understanding of the area to the work that they do. The group made the decision to elect a spokesperson to build and manage relationships with other stakeholders, both local and external to the community. This role has played a key role in strengthening engagement. Littlewell has been very strategic about building a few key partnerships. Bringing the Mingenew Shire on board right from the start, for example, proved to be an effective approach as the Group later discovered Lotterywest would only accept a funding application if it was submitted by the Mingenew Shire. This was because the reserve site comes under the Shire's portfolio. Fortunately, as the Group had already done so much significant groundwork in building the partnership with the Shire and securing their support for the vision, it was a straightforward process to get the Shire to submit the funding application on their behalf. This process may have been more challenging and drawn out if the Group did not have such a collaborative approach, or a pre-existing relationship with the Shire.

Littlewell has now achieved their dream. This is a testament to their persistence, resilience, strategic thinking, and effective governance.

2. Clear and shared strategic direction	A shared long-term view for what the community wants to do, and a timeline, or 'map', of how it will happen	The Group has shown strong consistency and commitment to the same, shared vision from the outset. An original planning document that the Group developed in June 2012 states, amongst other things, that they hope to 'Protect and preserve Littlewell for heritage and cultural education.' They continue to outline their intention to 'teach...next generations "Dreamtime Stories", their place of belonging, identity, culture, tradition, heritage'
		In the same planning session, the Littlewell Working Group identified a key goal for the opening of the reserve: "On the day of handing back Mingenew Aboriginal Reserve Jinjamarba Baba, "Littlewell," back to "Littlewell Group" our Elders want to plant three trees where the original three trees are located. These three trees have significant cultural implications to our Littlewell people". In keeping with this original objective, the Littlewell Working Group plan to hold a special tree planting ceremony during the opening, to honour and celebrate the Mingenew mob, past and present.
3. Embedded culture	Governing in line with cultural and community values, understandings, and behaviours. Cultural principles that underpin First Nations systems of governance may include, for example: -A wide network of relationships - Relationships built on shared culture - Decision-making by consensus - Strong links between geography and community identity	The members of the Littlewell Working Group, despite now residing in different areas, are all connected by their shared experiences of the reserve. Their shared culture, and strong determination to preserve it, is the driving force behind everything that they do. There are strong links between the Littlewell reserve and the identity of Group members, many of whom spent their formative years in the area. This is evident in the requirement for members to be former residents of Littlewell, or their descendants.
4. Effective administration	Sufficient and appropriate: - processes (organisational policies, mediations, rules, roles and responsibilities), - resources (natural assets, infrastructure, cultural, social, economic and human capital), and - capability (leadership, financial management etc)	The Littlewell Working group chose not to incorporate and instead focused on a collaborative approach, developing strong partnerships to progress the Littlewell vision. "Littlewell Group's aspiration/inspiration was to work in partnership with Indigenous Community Volunteers and Mingenew Shire Council to preserve Littlewell as a place of belonging, history, culture, identity and heritage" – Littlewell spokesperson. This removed many of the requirements on the group in terms of their administration, however they put mechanisms in place where necessary to assist them to effectively manage their affairs. For example, the election of a spokesperson was important for engaging with everyone and keeping all members in the loop.

5. Accountability: external and among community	Actions and decisions are justified and communicated, in particular to community members and the wider network	As an unincorporated group, Littlewell are not required to report to a regulator, as this line of accountability does not exist. At the same time, however, Littlewell invests time in its relationships, and is committed to keeping the local community and key stakeholders up to date with any developments or decisions. Littlewell Working Group has invested hundreds of hours travelling to the reserve to meet with stakeholders and the shire and there have been hundreds of emails exchanged. ICV has held regular teleconferences over the four years working with Littlewell.
6. Legitimacy	Acknowledged legal, jurisdictional and cultural authority, and the genuine power to make decisions	The Littlewell Working Group was formed by a group of Elders in 2010. All members have a strong connection with the land and local community, and have now been working together for an extended period of time. The Group derives its cultural legitimacy from these attributes. As the Group is not incorporated and the reserve does not officially belong to them, it has built a strong partnership with the Shire to leverage their legal and jurisdictional authority.
7. Strong leadership	Influential and respected leaders who act on behalf of shared values, and are held accountable for the decisions that they make. Leaders should encourage cooperation, use resources effectively, resolve conflicts and problems transparently, care for Country, and get things done	Whilst there is no explicit hierarchy underpinning the Littlewell Working Group, the key spokesperson for the Group will often lead, through engaging with key stakeholders and keeping members on the same page. His style is strong and inclusive, and geared towards extensive consultation with everyone with an interest in the Littlewell reserve. Littlewell are very transparent and actively encourage partners to travel on the journey with them. They celebrate wins and successes with stakeholders along the way.

Key references and Acknowledgements

Australian Institute of Family Studies, 'What works in effective Indigenous community-managed programs and organisations', Child Family Community Australia CFCA Paper No. 32, 2015.

The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, Indigenous Governance Toolkit: Culture is what makes governance strong, http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/2-1-indigenous-governance-and-culture.

Indigenous Community Volunteers

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Indigenous community volunteers

Blue Mountains ACRC *sustainable enterprise*

Change

The Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre (ACRC) was formed in 1994 as a meeting place for the Aboriginal Community, and to promote visibility of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the region. ACRC provides the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with support and services and makes culturally appropriate referrals to mainstream services where necessary.

ACRC has enlisted the support of ICV with the goal to become more sustainable and to develop a structured plan for the future of the organisation. Part of this has included securing Deductible Gift Recipient status to receive tax deductible gifts and diversify their sources of income. ACRC also engaged an ICV volunteer to learn basket weaving and tie dying skills as an important step for cultural preservation.

A key part of becoming sustainable is recruiting more staff to grow the organisation. ACRC are firmly on this path, having recently recruited four additional full-time staff.

The organisation is currently in the process of bringing together a business plan to outline their strategic direction. This has included seeking the input and feedback of potential investors and stakeholders in developing the plan and pulling together a list of actionable tasks for the Manager and Board to complete. This project is ongoing, however, a comprehensive draft business plan has been completed, outlining key actions and priorities for the next five years.

Social Policy Implications

ACRC has identified the importance of becoming sustainable in order to continue to offer their services, and to keep growing as an organisation.

As ACRC works to become sustainable by diversifying funding sources and growing their workforce, they are setting themselves up to achieve economic independence. This is in line with the Federal Government Indigenous Advancement Strategy's key priority of 'employment, economic independence and social participation.'

In a 2018 report, Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) stated that:

"In the contemporary era, the development of a robust and sustainable 'Indigenous economy' is essential for realising self-determining futures, facilitating sustainable and independent communities, and closing the gap. In line with the principle of self-determination, more Indigenous people than ever are seeking to achieve economic independence by contributing to the economy through the establishment of Indigenous businesses."

ICV is working with ACRC to put the necessary structures in place to move towards sustainability so that they can continue to promote visibility of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the area, and offer culturally appropriate services. As ICV continues to work with ACRC, and a number of other organisations around the country with similar objectives, it will gather broad insights around the process of Indigenous organisations seeking economic independence and sustainability. An improved evidence base in this space would be a valuable resource in light of both government priorities, and the potential benefits of successful Indigenous organisations and businesses to communities.
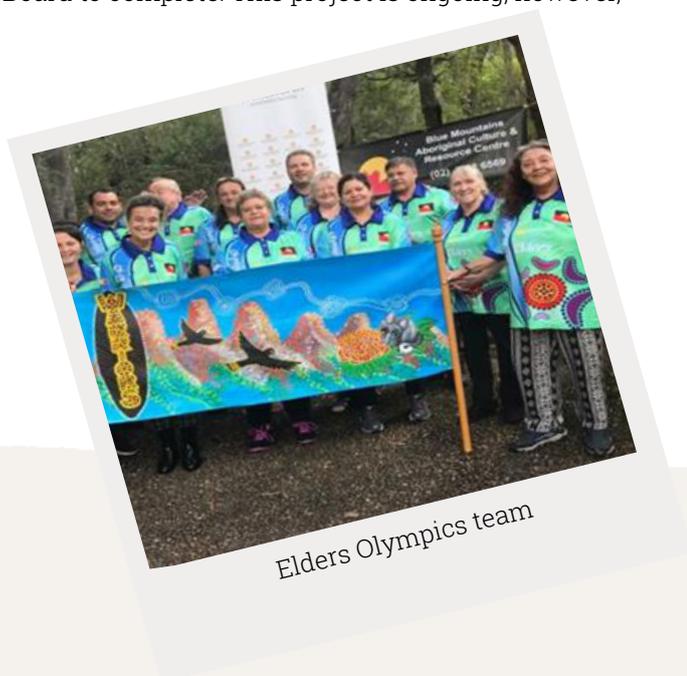

Elders Olympics team

ICV reflections

The development of a business plan is a key step for ACRC in achieving sustainability. ACRC has been working towards the creation of such a plan for many years, and has strengthened its operations and governance to a point where it is now ready to be developing this strategic document. ICV has engaged with ACRC on other projects over the years, such as obtaining DGR status, which has led the organisation to the position that it's in today.

Progress towards indicator: a business plan which outlines the strategic direction of ACRC has been developed

First monitoring point   **Second monitoring point**   **Third monitoring point**
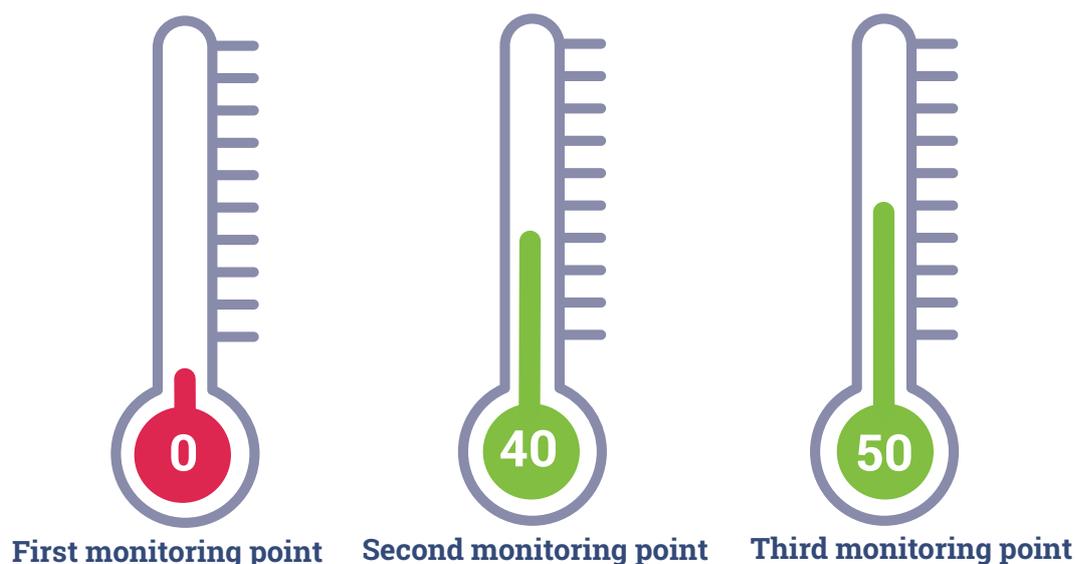
ACRC is part way through their journey towards achieving their long-term dream of financial sustainability. The organisation has recognised the importance of building strong relationships with key stakeholders as part of this process. This includes relationships with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, as well as key funding bodies and potential partners. A commitment to broad engagement is reflected in another project indicator: perspective of potential investors and stakeholders in developing the plan has been considered. Engaging widely with relevant and diverse parties is an attribute of effective governance, and will set the organisation up well for the realisation of its long-term goals (see table below).

We are not in a position to attribute ACRC's strengthening governance to its involvement with ICV. ICV is, however, in the process of conducting participatory research to better understand the impact of a community development approach on the governance structures of communities we work with.

Governance

Good governance is an important part of achieving "success in business investment," which in turn leads to economic independence. There are seven key attributes of good governance, which are listed in the table below alongside evidence of ACRC putting the attribute into action.

Attribute	Description	Evidence to support this attribute
1. Engagement	Community: community members and relevant local networks inform and/or participate in the decision-making process Broader networks: relevant stakeholders from the broader network, such as governments or other external institutions, inform and/or participate in the decision-making process	One of the ways that ACRC involves the local community is through their membership system. Indigenous people may apply to become members, and non-Indigenous people may apply to become associate members. Full members have the right to vote on matters concerning ACRC. For example, in order to decide on the wording to be used in a particular section of the Rule Book, members were invited to vote. The option with majority support progressed. ACRC has also established relationships with other key stakeholders, including Blue Mountains Computers, Greater Western Aboriginal Health Service, Transport NSW and the Department of Family and Community Services. These relationships have been important for supporting ACRC's work including assisting with access to funding, transportation, culturally appropriate health services and referrals to other services for the community and ACRC clients.
2. Clear and shared strategic direction	A shared long-term view for what the community wants to do, and a timeline, or 'map', of how it will happen	ACRC's mission statement is "fostering respect and unity in the Blue Mountains' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, by strengthening culture through community support, empowerment and embracing diversity to achieve self-determination." The traditional owners of the land are the Gundungurra and Darug/Dharug people. ACRC aims to acknowledge, appreciate and respect the traditional owners and their respective cultures. This shared vision is articulated in their Rule Book, and they are in the process of working with an ICV volunteer to develop a business plan that will map out their direction, and short- and long-term priorities, over the next five years.

Attribute	Description	Evidence to support this attribute
3. Embedded culture	Governing in line with cultural and community values, understandings, and behaviours. Cultural principles that underpin Indigenous systems of governance may include, for example: - A wide network of relationships - Relationships built on shared culture - Decision-making by consensus - Strong links between geography and community identity	ACRC is focused on providing services for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of the Blue Mountains. There are therefore strong links between the geography of the organisation, and the key priorities that underpin it. 'Awareness of cultural values' is one of the key values that drives the work of ACRC.
4. Effective administration	Sufficient and appropriate: - processes (organisational policies, mediations, rules, roles and responsibilities), - resources (natural assets, infrastructure, cultural, social, economic and human capital), and - capability (leadership, financial management etc)	The seven directors oversee the running of the corporation on behalf of all members, and make decisions about the affairs of the corporation. The directors manage, or set the direction for managing, the business of the corporation.
5. Accountability: external and among community	Actions and decisions are justified and communicated, in particular to community members and the wider network	ACRC communicates actions and decisions to members and the wider community through network meetings, community events, programs, newsletters, social media, AGMs and community meetings.
6. Legitimacy	Acknowledged legal, jurisdictional and cultural authority, and the genuine power to make decisions	ACRC largely derives its legitimacy from its long standing presence in the Blue Mountains' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. In 1994, a small group of local Aboriginal people had a vision of providing a meeting place for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the Blue Mountains. It was from this movement that ACRC was born. In 1996, ACRC incorporated and has played an important role in their community ever since. ACRC has now been an established organisation in the Blue Mountains for over 20 years.

Attribute	Description	Evidence to support this attribute
7. Strong leadership	Influential and respected leaders who act on behalf of shared values, and are held accountable for the decisions that they make. Leaders should encourage cooperation, use resources effectively, resolve conflicts and problems transparently, care for Country, and get things done.	The ACRC directors have a diverse skill set, and capabilities across a range of areas. This includes a bachelor degree in administrative leadership, a certificate in psychotherapy, qualifications in Aboriginal art and cultural practices, post graduate study in criminology, juvenile justice, and sociology, and many more. Their experience is broad, giving them a strong foundation to excel. The leadership is committed to professional development, and has plans for training with both staff and the Board in order to bolster the knowledge and skills of staff

Key references

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Inquiry into Indigenous Australians at work: Successful initiatives in Indigenous employment, 13 August 2007.

The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, Indigenous Governance Toolkit: Culture is what makes governance strong, http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/2-1-indigenous-governance-and-culture.

Young Strong and Deadly program

Indigenous Community Volunteers

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Library visit

Kirsti and Arianna

Indigenous community volunteers

Midwest Yamaji Music Aboriginal Inc

Change

Midwest Yamaji Music Aboriginal Inc (MYMAI) is a not-for-profit organisation in Geraldton, Western Australia. MYMAI support the growth and development of musical and artistic talent in the Midwest region, and create opportunities to showcase First Nations' talent. They have been working towards a vision of growing and nurturing an inclusive and inspiring community of Aboriginal musicians and artists in the Midwest and to generate positive change through creativity.

One key mechanism to achieve this has been the First Nations Festival, of which there have now been two. This is a music festival creating a platform for local talent, connecting with marginalised youth in the region, and bringing together the community to share their culture. MYMAI is striving to make this an annual festival, and has so far secured funding through to the end of 2019. The second festival saw a significant expansion from the first, with an increase in artists, activities, and stalls. Attendance went from around 500 to over 1000 people. ICV has supported MYMAI to develop a funding plan for the festival, identify potential partnerships, and assist in writing grant submissions.

"Over the past 8 months we have received a huge amount of interest from local musicians and artists to participate in the next festival."
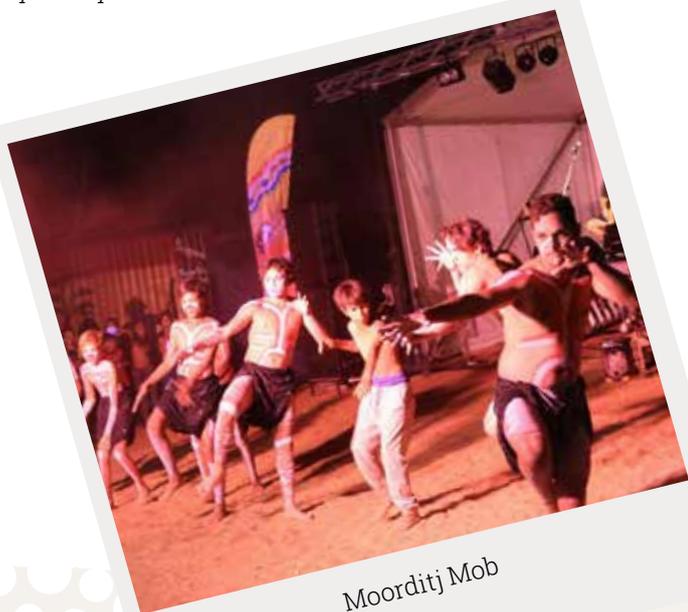
Moorditj Mob

"We learnt a lot from last year's festival, it was great to see all the community come together in such a positive way, the event really brought people together, we are learning every year and we are so happy with how the day went."

ICV is now supporting MYMAI to get advice around business structures and intellectual property as they consider next steps and a potential partnership.

Social Policy Implications

As ICV has engaged with MYMAI over the years, it has demonstrated many of the attributes of good governance, which they spent time establishing early on to set themselves up to achieve long-term and sustainable impact. There is evidence to support MYMAI's good governance in the table on the following page.

For over 15 years ICV has observed a re-occurring pattern: the importance of strengthening and equipping community governance structures to interact with western governance (as a short term outcome) to improve economic outcomes, quality of life and health and stronger Country and culture (in the longer term). ICV's Story of Change acknowledges the importance of community governance (evolving processes, decisions, relationships and structures) to achieve a community's long term dream.

The Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage 2016 report supports this with a key finding that:

...effective governance and leadership, and recognition of culture, play essential parts in the social and economic development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

The Australian Institue of Health and Welfare has found that within the health sector, strong leadership and governance for programs has been associated with long-term benefits for health and wellbeing:

...good governance leads to relative community harmony and a sense of wellbeing, and thus both to the conditions for better health and receptiveness to health programs.

There are clear benefits to be made by focusing on building the governance capabilities of First Nations'

organisations, as demonstrated by MYMAI's story of change. Ongoing support to develop the governance capability of First Nations' service providers should be a central consideration in the design and implementation of First Nations' policies and programs.

The evidence base on what constitutes 'good governance' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community development highlights a number of key themes, as demonstrated in the table below.

ICV reflections

Engagement features as a critical component of good governance in much of the literature. By working with ICV to identify, build and maintain positive relationships with their external network, MYMAI has positioned themselves well for future growth and sustainability.

"I can see now how important partnerships are in supporting what we want to do. It's important for us as a group to develop new parternships and look after the ones we already have. Partnerships are what will get us across the line."

Progress towards indicator: build strong partnerships to support their initiative
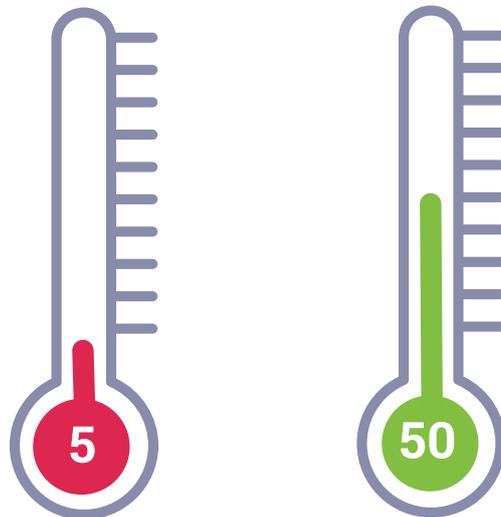
First monitoring point   **Second monitoring point**

An ICV Community Development Officer (CDO) made observations at different points throughout the project to keep track of MYMAI's progress. As one of their indicators, MYMAI chose to monitor the development of strong partnerships that would support their initiative. The thermometer readings above reflect the CDO's understanding of progress towards this outcome.

The thermometer currently sits at 50 to represent the significant progress MYMAI has made towards developing partnerships to support the First Nations Festival. This has included developing partnerships with key Aboriginal, youth and music agencies in Geraldton. Another key component of this indicator involves forming partnerships to develop an After School Music Program, which is another part of MYMAI's vision. Now that MYMAI has successfully built a number of productive partnerships for the First Nations Festival, in the next 12 months they will focus on developing partnerships to support the development of the After School Music program.

We are not in a position to attribute MYMAI's strengthening governance to its involvement with ICV. ICV is, however, in the process of conducting participatory research to better understand the impact of a community development approach on the governance structures of communities we work with.

| Attribute	Description	Evidence to support this attribute
1. Engagement	Community: community members and relevant local networks inform and/or participate in the decision-making process Broader networks: relevant stakeholders from the broader network, such as governments or other external institutions, inform and/or participate in the decision-making process	MYMAI has members who are prominent Aboriginal musicians, artists and community members of Geraldton who share a deep appreciation for the arts. The community voice is built into the governance system through the informal membership structure. MYMAI are sure to seek advice and input from local Elders and community members, and involve them in their activities. One of MYMAI's chosen indicators of their success is to build partnerships to support their initiatives. This has included building strong relationships with a number of government and private organisations. MYMAI has consulted with all of the key Aboriginal organisations in Geraldton including GRAMS (the Aboriginal Medical Service) Streetworks Aboriginal Corporation (the Aboriginal youth service) Bundyiarra Aboriginal Corporation (the Aboriginal cultural centre) the Irra Wangga Language Centre and Radio MAMA (the Aboriginal radio station) to seek their support and input into the First Nations Festival.
2. Clear and shared strategic direction	A shared long-term view for what the community wants to do, and a timeline, or 'map', of how it will happen	The board and members of MYMAI share a collective vision to grow and nurture an inclusive and inspiring community of Aboriginal musicians and artist in the Midwest and to generate positive change through creativity.
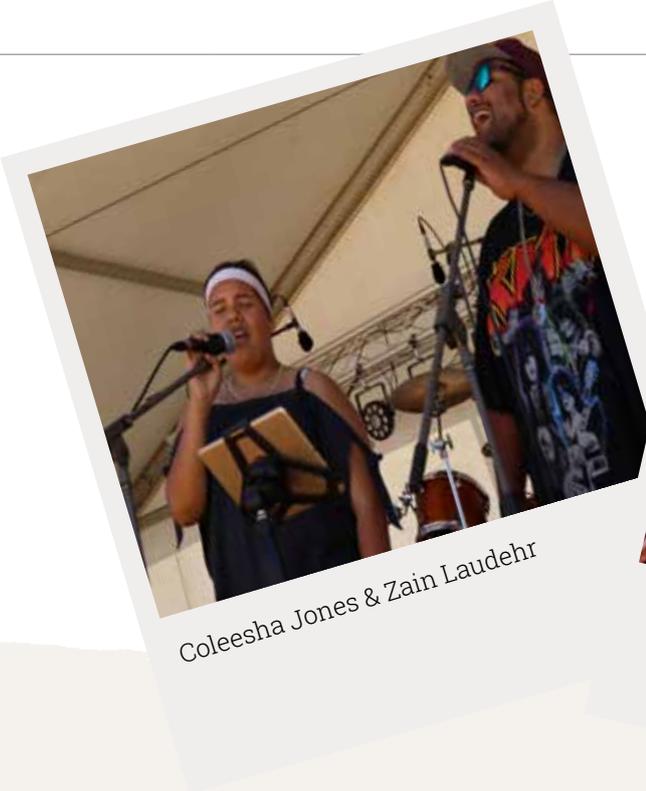
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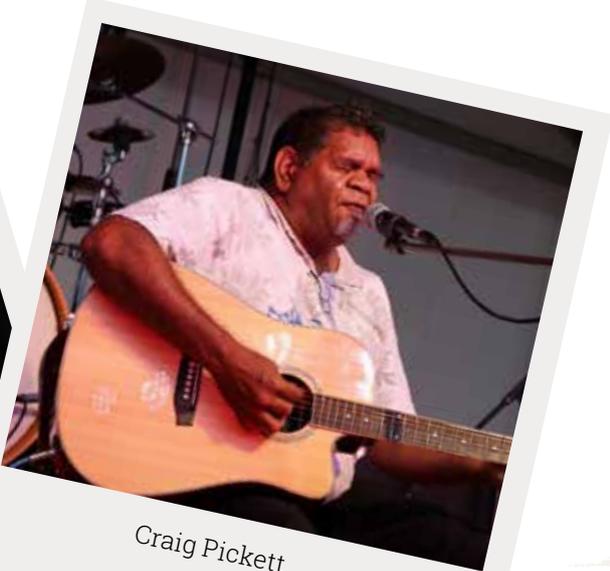
Craig Pickett

Attribute	Description	Evidence to support this attribute
3. Embedded culture	Governing in line with cultural and community values, understandings, and behaviours. Cultural principles that underpin Indigenous systems of governance may include, for example: - A wide network of relationships - Relationships built on shared culture - Decision-making by consensus - Strong links between geography and community identity	MYMAI has strong links between their geography, their collective cultural identity, and the governance structures in place. The community is organised around the Yamaji community, with relationships built around shared culture and appreciation for Yamaji musicians in particular.
4. Effective administration	Sufficient and appropriate: - processes (organisational policies, mediations, rules, roles and responsibilities), - resources (natural assets, infrastructure, cultural, social, economic and human capital), and - capability (leadership, financial management etc)	MYMAI has a Rule book in place outlining decision making processes and procedures. They develop event plans and risk management plans for the festival which they update annually, and secured public liability insurance for events and activities. MYMAI has also worked on business plans in the past to guide funding decisions. MYMAI have diligently managed their funding and have successfully acquitted all their grants. MYMAI have developed detailed spreadsheets to track their income and expenditure and have prepared extensive funding reports including creating videos to showcase the First Nations Festival to funding bodies.
5. Accountability: external and among community	Actions and decisions are justified and communicated, in particular to community members and the wider network	Actions and decisions are made by the board, who have regular meetings to discuss their course of action. "We have regular board meetings, however if all of *our directors cannot attend, we do have a rule in our rule book, that we can pass a decision if we have a quorum of at least 3 directors, we take minutes for every meeting and share them with all directors, I usually also ring the other directors who can't attend and let them know of the decision to keep everyone in the loop. Like the other day, we passed to have a third signatory for our bank account; this was something we had been discussing for a few years. So I just called the directors who couldn't attend to let them know, but there was already consensus this should happen"* – MYMAI Director

Attribute	Description	Evidence to support this attribute
6. Legitimacy	Acknowledged legal, jurisdictional and cultural authority, and the genuine power to make decisions	MYMAI was incorporated on 7 May 2013 under WA State Associations Act. *"We incorporated because no one would look at us otherwise or take us seriously as an organisation. One of our directors advised we register with the Chamber of Commerce under the WA State Associations act, because we could operate a bit more autonomously as an organisation"* – MYMAI Director
7. Strong leadership	Influential and respected leaders who act on behalf of shared values, and are held accountable for the decisions that they make. Leaders should encourage cooperation, use resources effectively, resolve conflicts and problems transparently, care for Country, and get things done.	The organisation currently has a board of six directors, with three elected office-bearers (chairperson, secretary and treasurer). MYMAI have a great representation of Aboriginal community members, artists and musicians involved in the board and they each contribute a different and valuable skill set including: governance, administration, networking and event management, as well as having strong connections with the local Aboriginal music and arts scene in Geraldton. The board shared the same vision for what MYMAI would like to achieve, and has worked strategically over recent years to continue to secure funds and grow the event. MYMAI are transparent and inclusive with all of their decisions and often seek the advice and input of the wider community. They have been transparent with their funding and the decisions they have made around their expenditure. MYMAI have developed a contract for all artists and stall holders participating in the First Nations Festival to sign prior to the event to mitigate any risks or conflicts around payments and fees.

Key references

Productivity Commission, Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2016.

Osborne, K., et al, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 'What works? A review of actions addressing the social and economic determinants of Indigenous health,' 2013.

Sullivan, P., et al, Lowitja Institute, 'Beyond Bandaids: exploring the social determinants of health', Chapter 10: Governance, Indigenous and non-Indigenous as a social determinant of health.

The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, Indigenous Governance Toolkit: Culture is what makes governance strong, http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/2-1-indigenous-governance-and-culture.

Indigenous Community Volunteers

About ICV

Across Australia, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are working towards building a brighter future. Our people are incredibly resilient and resourceful, they just sometimes lack the know-how to turn their ideas in to reality. At ICV we provide access to skilled volunteers and resources in areas where education, health care and employment opportunities are often limited. ICV is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation. We are a registered charity and non-profit community development and research organisation.

Vision

Our vision is an Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised and celebrated for our culture and our contribution to Australia and societies around the world.

Purpose

ICV believes that our people hold the keys to solving their own challenges. We provide the opportunity and support they need to make it happen.

Approach

When a community sets their own goals, they have a much better chance of success. It's why our community development approach is so unique and effective.

We do things with, not to or for, our people.

Indigenous community volunteers

COMMUNITY FIRST
DEVELOPMENT

FORMERLY

Indigenous
community
volunteers