

Appendix 3

Summary of committee site visits related to the inquiry

This appendix contains summaries of the committee's visits to Tangentyere Constructions and Tangentyere Employment in Alice Springs (NT), the community of Papunya (NT) and to Campbell Page on Palm Island (QLD).

Site visit to Tangentyere Constructions and Tangentyere Employment, Alice Springs

Monday 28 August 2017

Introduction

Prior to the committee's Alice Springs public hearing on Monday 28 August 2017, the committee conducted a site visit at Tangentyere Constructions and Tangentyere Employment Services in Alice Springs (Northern Territory).

Senator McAllister (Chair), Senator Smith, Senator McCarthy, Senator Siewert and Senator Kitching participated in the site visit.

Tangentyere Constructions

The committee were welcomed to the main workshop of Tangentyere Constructions (TC) at 4 Elder Street, Alice Springs by Mr Michael Klerck (Manager—Social Policy and Research, Tangentyere Council), Mr Niels Pederson (Manager—TC) and Mr Brad Parsons (Assistant Manager—TC). Mr Pederson and Mr Parsons provided the committee with an overview of the work that TC undertakes. This work is largely construction and maintenance work in a number of remote communities throughout central Australia. TC can employ up to 70 per cent local Indigenous workers on some remote projects where there is a high unskilled labour component. This number falls when a higher proportion of skilled trades are required.

Photo 1: Mr Pederson, Mr Parson and Mr Klerck explaining the work of Tangentyere Constructions to committee members



The committee were told about some of the challenges that TC and remote communities face:

- Disjointed nature of projects in remote communities in which there can be long periods of time between projects.
- There is no register of participants in previous contracts in remote locations making it difficult for new contractors to know what skills are available locally. The committee were told that there is no continuity and that 'people end up where they started' in terms of cycling through CDP projects. Some participants achieve a certificate, but then this is not built on when the next contract or project comes to town.
- Many projects do not last long enough (<18 weeks) for TC to be provided with an incentive payment for placing a CDP participant in work. This is despite TC and other groups employing CDP participants and investing in skill development.
- Indigenous (and local Indigenous) employment requirements for government procurement. Concerns were expressed about the accountability and enforcement of requirements and whether non-compliance with these requirements impacts on future government procurement.

Photo 2: Committee members touring the workshop at Tangentyere Constructions



The committee were also told about the Indigenous Housing Authority of the Northern Territory (IHANT) initiative. In 2002, this initiative employed six builders across six remote communities who were commissioned to build two new houses per year. Four local Indigenous people were employed as apprentices at each site. Of the 26 participants, three completed Certificate 3 in carpentry at the end of the program. Many of the participants started the program with no literacy or numeracy skills. It was suggested that the program was well-intentioned, but that a 'little bit of the pie was missing'. If a program such as this was started again, there should be a focus on literacy and numeracy at the start. An example was provided of two participants in Santa Teresa who graduated with the Certificate 3; however, subsequent housing contractors told the NT Department of Housing that there was 'no-one in the community with these skills'. The committee were told that there are a number of real benefits to utilising local labour pools which include lower costs to contractors as there is no need to find and pay for accommodation, and pay allowances for fly-in fly-out workers.

The committee were provided with a tour of the workshop facilities and observed some of the work being undertaken.

The committee thanked Mr Pederson, Mr Parsons and other staff and participants for hosting and speaking with the committee.

The committee then travelled to a premises leased and operated by Tangentyere Employment Services at 26 Elder St, Alice Springs.

Tangentyere Employment Services

The committee were welcomed by Mr Walter Shaw (CEO—Tangentyere Council), Mr Matthew Ellem (General Manager—Tangentyere Employment Services (TES)), Ms Adele McCorkindale (Assistant Service Manager—TES) and Mr Geoff Shaw (founding member of Tangentyere Council) to a premises leased and operated by TES. The committee entered the building through a shop which sold a range of handcrafted products including painted jewellery boxes, scarves, and furniture. Many of the items were made from recycled materials, which are collected by municipal services businesses owned and operated by Tangentyere Council. All of the goods are handcrafted by local people as part of programs administered by TES. All proceeds from the shop are largely returned to those who contributed to making them.

Photo 3: Mr Matthew Ellem (General Manager—Tangentyere Employment Services) describing a handcrafted jewellery box to committee members



The committee were then taken on a tour of the workshop facilities and shown a number of products that were being made. The committee had the opportunity to speak with a number of participants and staff at the site about the program. TES generously hosted a morning tea for the committee. The committee thanked TES for hosting the site visit.

Photo 4: A number of hand-painted furniture pieces for sale in the shop at 26 Elder St, Alice Springs.



Photo 5: Tangentyere Employment Services participants, employees and committee members at the conclusion of the site visit at 26 Elder St, Alice Springs



Site visit to Papunya community, Northern Territory

Tuesday 29 August 2017

Introduction

On Tuesday 29 August 2017, the committee travelled by charter to the community of Papunya for a site visit. Papunya is a small indigenous community of around 300 people located approximately 240 kilometres north-west of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory.¹ The committee came to speak with the local CDP provider (Ngurratjuta Pmara Ntjarra), CDP participants and members of the community. This visit occurred the day after the committee held a public hearing in Alice Springs.

Senator McAllister, Senator McCarthy, Senator Siewert, Senator Smith and Senator Kitching participated in the site visit.

The committee were welcomed at the Papunya airstrip by Ngurratjuta Pmara Ntjarra staff including Mr Cameron Miller (Chief Executive Officer), Ms Katharine O'Donaghue (CDP Manager), Ms Melissa Cooke (CDP Compliance Manager) and Mr Nathan Roberts (CDP Employee). The committee were also accompanied by Ms Panata Stockmen. The committee were transported to, and provided with a tour of the community including the:

- Cemetery;
- Football Oval;
- Sorry Camp;
- Men's Activities (Lot 445); and
- Ladies' Activities (Bush Street).

At the end of the visit, Ngurratjuta Pmara Ntjarra and CDP participants hosted a morning tea for the committee.

Cemetery

The committee were shown the ongoing works being undertaken at the community cemetery including the fabrication and painting of new crosses, and general maintenance. The committee were told that the cemetery is a sacred place and that CDP participants had identified the work at the cemetery as a high priority for both men and women CDP participants. The focus on cemetery maintenance and improvement is also being undertaken in a number of other communities across the region.

1 Papunya is the closest town to the Australian continental pole of inaccessibility. This is the furthest point from the coastline on the Australian mainland.

Football Oval

The committee were taken to the football oval which is an important focal point for the community. A number of improvement works had been undertaken at the football oval as part of CDP including the installation of new seats and new boundary fencing. New lights had been installed recently by the McDonnell Ranges Regional Council (council). A number of future improvement opportunities were also highlighted including a new scoreboard and refurbishment of the clubhouse. The community is currently seeking funding for these projects. At the time of committee's visit, the local football team, the Papunya Eagles, were leading the local competition.

Photo 1: Committee members and Ngurratjuta Pmara Ntjarra staff visiting the Papunya community football oval.



Sorry Camp

The committee were then taken to the community's Sorry Camp. Sorry Camp is an integral part of the grieving process in community after the death of a community member. Relatives from the community and from other communities will gather in Sorry Camp until the funeral is held and afterwards to engage in cultural practices and protocols associated with death (also known as Sorry Business). The council recently bought new shade structures. The BBQ was assembled by CDP participants. CDP participants are also involved with preparations before, and ongoing contributions during the Sorry Camp process. For example, the committee were told that women will prepare damper and stew whilst the men will gather firewood for the Sorry Camp.

Men's Activities (Lot 445)

The committee travelled to Lot 445 where Men's Activities are undertaken where the committee met some of the male CDP participants and supervisors. This site used to be an aged care facility. This facility has been refurbished and built upon to now include a workshop area. Accommodation for the Ngurratjuta Pmara Ntjarra staff is also located at this site. The committee were impressed by some of the work being undertaken including fabrication of portable steel stockyard panels and bed frames. Participants were also keen to show the committee the new earthmoving equipment that had recently been purchased. The committee were told that all equipment purchased as part of the CDP by the Ngurratjuta Pmara Ntjarra would remain in the community.

Photo 2: A CDP participant operating a mini-excavator at Lot 445, Papunya



Ladies' Activities (Bush Street)

The final stop during the visit was to the Ladies' Activities at Bush Street. The committee were impressed by a number of activities being undertaken here for women CDP participants including art classes, cooking, sewing, literacy and numeracy, and computer skills. The CDP provider's case worker Ms Colleen Cleaver and the team leader Ms Rosabella Minor are based here, and until recently, Centrelink was also based here but has now relocated to the council offices in town. The community kindly provided a morning tea and the opportunity to informally speak with CDP participants.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the committee, Senator McCarthy thanked the community residents and Ngurratjuta Pmara Ntjarra for warmly hosting the committee's visit.

Photo 3: CDP participants, Ngurratjuta Pmara Ntjarra staff, and committee members at Bush Street, Papunya during the morning tea



Site visit to Palm Island community, Queensland

Wednesday, 4 October 2017

Introduction

On 4 October 2017, the committee travelled to Palm Island to hold a public hearing and conduct a site visit. The purpose of the site visit was to meet Community Development Program (CDP) participants and staff, and observe the activities being undertaken as part of the CDP.

Palm Island (island) is located 65km north west of Townsville and is the main island of the 16 islands in the Greater Palm Group. The island is home to an Indigenous community of approximately 2500 people.² The contemporary Indigenous name for Palm Islanders is 'Bwngcolman people', meaning 'many tribes – one people'.³

Senator McAllister, Senator Paterson, Senator McCarthy, Senator Dodson and Senator Lines participated in the site visit.

The committee's site visit commenced at the conclusion of the committee's public hearing at the Police Citizens Youth Club, where the committee heard evidence from the local CDP Provider—Campbell Page—and the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council. The committee's site visit was guided by Campbell Page staff, including Mr Sotir Kondov (Interim Chief Executive Officer), Ms Kylie Van Der Neut (Senior Manager, Contract Assurance) and Mr Nathan Vinson (CDP Program Manager). The committee visited the "chook shed" and then the activities centre, with an intervening visit to Palm Island's only grocery store

Carpentry, gardening and recycling activities centre

The committee were transported from the hearing venue to a former chook shed which had been repurposed as a CDP activities centre for training participants in carpentry, the use of power tools and hand tools, in addition to market gardening and recycling. Campbell Page informed the committee that it is expected that the skills taught to participants at the activities centre would be transferrable to the construction industry, where there are emerging opportunities in housing development and a significant redevelopment project at the town's waterfront precinct.

The committee were shown participants' recent examples of completed work including wooden garden beds and furniture. The garden beds and furniture were being distributed for use at various locations around the island. Participants shared with the committee some of their local knowledge of the CDP. Participants also discussed some of the challenges of living on a remote community like Palm Island

2 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2016 Census QuickStats: Palm Island (S)*, http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA35790 (accessed 6 October 2017).

3 Queensland Government, *Palm Island*, <https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/community-histories-palm-island> (accessed 6 October 2017).

including the high price of food, limitations of the local education opportunities and transport costs to mainland Australia.

Photo 1: Committee members speaking with CDP participants at the carpentry and recycling activities centre.



Arts and crafts activities centre

The committee travelled to the activities centre (centre) at the PCYC where the CDP provider facilitates an arts and crafts program. The committee were provided an overview of centre's operations by Mr Ian Palmer (Activities Supervisor) and were shown the various types of arts created by participants in the centre. The committee heard that the centre encouraged individual expression through art. Participants are also encouraged to share and sell their art through recent collaborations with art centres in Townsville, where participants' work has been displayed in exhibitions and also sold. In the event that a work is sold, participants retain 90 per cent of the profits of the sale.

The committee heard that the centre would like to extend the business training offered to participants, however the centre has struggled to access funding for this training.

Participants shared some of their experiences with the CDP. Participants also shared similar concerns to those in the "chook shed" regarding broader challenges of living in the Palm Island community, including access to Centrelink services and the high cost of food.

Photo 2: An example of an artwork painted by a CDP participant at the arts and crafts activities centre



Photo 3: Committee members with participants and Campbell Page staff at the arts and crafts activities centre.



Acknowledgements

The committee extends its thanks and appreciation to the members of the Palm Island community and the staff of Campbell Page for facilitating the committee's visit.