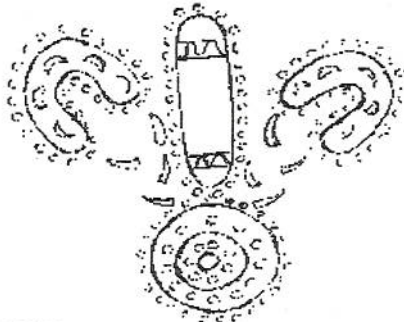


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# Kapululangu

## **Aboriginal Womens Law and Culture Centre**

PMB 7, Balgo, Via Halls Creek, WA, Australia, 6770.

Phone: 0429 422 645. Email: [z.deishtar@ug.edu.au](mailto:z.deishtar@ug.edu.au)

ABN: 49 137 871 641

**REVITALISING WOMEN'S CULTURE  
CARING FOR WOMEN & COMMUNITY**

Chairwoman: Margaret Anjule Bumblebee Napurrula  
Coordinator: Dr Zohl de Ishtar  
20 August 2008

### **Australian Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities**

Senator David Johnston (Chair)  
Senator Trish Crossin (Deputy Chair)  
Senator Judith Adams  
Senator Claire Moore  
Senator Rachael Siewert

Dear Senators,

Kapululangu Aboriginal Women's Association (AC), Balgo's women's organisation, wishes to bring the following matters to the Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities:

Kapululangu is Balgo's only local agency currently providing the following services:

1. Women-specific services, particularly for the women elders
2. Young Women and Girls' Intergenerational cultural knowledge activities
3. Traditional Healing service for females and males of all ages
4. Caring for the women elders and women living with a disability
5. Residential accommodation for older women / women elders
6. Safe refuge for women and children escaping violence and sexual abuse

The effective delivery of these services (above) has been negatively impacted and/or restricted by the following factors:

1. Kapululangu has never been funded to provide the majority of the above services
2. Kapululangu has never been directly funded – all funds have been channelled through a third party (Wirrimanu Aboriginal Corporation)
3. What funding has been received (indirectly) by Kapululangu has been severely insufficient: \$8000 (2005/06), \$20,000 (2006/07 rolled over to 2007/2008)
4. Access to the above limited funding has been consistently stalled by the historical difficulties within the third party, despite it having been under ORIC administration.

5. Kapululangu has been obligated to operate without ever having had a paid coordinator (from 1999 through 20 August 2008) or any other paid staff.
6. Kapululangu has few resources with which to deliver its services and no funding with which to secure these funds (e.g. the vehicle used for the past four years is private).
7. Kapululangu is currently providing services that other local agencies while having received funding have failed to provide (e.g. aged and disabled care; Indigenous healing practices).

Kapululangu seeks the Committee's support in drawing Balgo's needs and Kapululangu's actual and potential contribution to our community to the attention of government bodies which are, or should be, responsible for funding or providing these services to remote Indigenous communities. We request that they fund Kapululangu directly and adequately to enable the more efficient provision of:

1. Services to Women and Children
2. Young Women and Girls' Cultural Education
3. Health care – The *Tjarrtjorra* Contribution
4. Caring for Elders and Women Living with Disabilities
5. Safe Refuge – Violence and Sexual Abuse

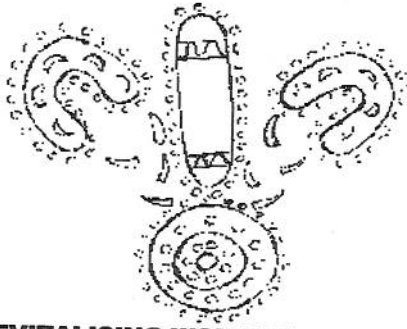
We hope that you can agree with us that Kapululangu has achieved much despite not being directly or appropriately funded. That Kapululangu has achieved so much, with limited resources and uphill against the historical difficulties within the third party – indeed that it has even managed to survive the past years – is an achievement which stands in evidence of the determination and vision which informs the Kapululangu elders and their organisation.

We thank you for coming to Balgo and for listening to the Women Elders of Balgo.

Chairwoman Margaret Anjule and Dr Zohl dé Ishtar (Coordinator)  
 Kapululangu Aboriginal Women's Association, Balgo  
 Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Queensland  
 Nobel Peace Prize Nominee 2005

Attachments:

1. Kapululangu's Services:
  - a. Services to Women and Children
  - b. Young Women and Girls' Cultural Education
  - c. Health care – The *Tjarrtjorra* Contribution
  - d. Caring for Elders and Women Living with Disabilities
  - e. Safe Refuge – Violence and Sexual Abuse
2. Kapululangu's Funding Difficulties
3. Recommendation from Kapululangu
4. *"Aboriginal Women Have Answers Themselves": the Report of the Balgo Women's Law Camp 2007.*



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20 August 2008

## KAPULULANGU'S SERVICES

More Information: Dr Zohl dé Ishtar – [z.deishtar@uq.edu.au](mailto:z.deishtar@uq.edu.au)

### 1. Services to Women and Children

Kapululangu alone in Balgo provides cultural education, traditional healing, aged and disabled care to women elders and safe refuge to women and children in Balgo.

#### 1.1 Services to Balgo's Women and Children

Kapululangu Aboriginal Women's Association (AC) was established by Balgo women elders with its primary purpose being to:

- i. support the women elders in fulfilling their responsibilities as Senior Law Women;
- ii. assist the elders to provide cultural activities for young women, girls and pre-pubescent boys;
- iii. assist the women elders in their daily activities;
- iv. support the elders as cultural healers for their people;
- v. work with young women to enhance their access to their elders;
- vi. provide a safe refuge for women and children in Balgo;
- vii. support the male elders in their tutelage of the young men and post-pubescent boys.

Kapululangu has historically achieved these goals by providing:

- a) a women's residential house for Kapululangu's elders;
- b) ceremonies and ritual engaging women, including young women;
- c) weekly culture classes for girls and culture camps for girls and boys;
- d) hunting excursions and trips to country for young women;
- e) touring of a women's dancing troupe – regionally, nationally, internationally;
- f) women's ceremonial leadership in Law Time ceremonies and mourning rituals;
- g) *tjarrtjurra* traditional healing for females and males of all ages, including babies;
- h) a safe refuge for women and children experiencing family violence and sexual abuse;
- i) a night watch scheme patrolling the community; and
- j) support to the male elders in their cultural work with young men and post-pubescent boys.

Despite the impacts of the ongoing financial difficulties on Kapululangu, some highlights of achievements over the past year include:

- Balgo Women's Law Camp (24-27 August 2007)
- Young Women's Culture Camp (14-17 April 2008)
- Re-establishing the Kapululangu Tjilimi / Women's House on the Balgo Women's Law Ground – as a residence for women elders
- Reinstating regular Tjarrtjurra Women's Healing Ceremonies
- Providing care and support to Kapululangu's chairwoman in her ordeal of having her leg amputated as a result of diabetes and learning to walk again (November 2007 ongoing)
- Providing Safe Refuge to women and children in need
- Providing daily care and support for Kapululangu's women elders

## **2. Young Women & Girls' Cultural Education: Circles of Cultural Learning**

Young women and girls are a priority of Kapululangu's intergenerational cultural knowledge program. The "Circles of Cultural Learning" (CCL) aims to empower individuals, enhance community, foster creative citizenship and build sustainable governance in Balgo's socio-cultural environment of struggle and survival.

The CCL project is a whole-of-community, whole-of-life approach designed to assist the Kapululangu elders to teach their traditional and contemporary cultural practices including rituals (songs, dances, painting-up) and customary Law and land relationships to younger generations. It is a natural extension, of the successful Kapululangu Women's Law and Culture Centre which ran as a "Learning Place of Women" and girls from 1999 through 2001.

CCL is Kapululangu's response to the socio-cultural crises currently impacting Indigenous residents of Balgo particularly women, children and youth. The Kapululangu elders believe that it is imperative that their younger generations grow up with a strong sense of identity and a pride in their Indigeneity. Kapululangu has a strong focus on physical, psychological and spiritual healing. The Kapululangu elders believe that their role is to heal women, men and children by "mending" their connection with their cultural heritage. For the elders, the answer to their peoples' health lies in their relationship with self, kin, land and cosmos (*Tjukurrpa/Dreaming*), coupled with respect for family and community.

The Circles of Cultural Learning (CCL) concept which consists of four steams:

1. Cultural Development
  - i. Tjilimi: Gynocentric "Living Culture" Space
  - ii. Cultural Sustainability – Economic Self-Sufficiency
  - iii. Cultural Knowledge Ecology – International Interactions
2. Cultural Education
  - iv. Traditional Law and Culture activities
  - v. Culture "After-School"
  - vi. Cultural collaboration with other agencies
3. Cultural Healing
  - vii. *Tjarrtjurra* traditional healing ceremonies
  - viii. Traditional foods and medicines
  - ix. Cultural Trauma Counselling

#### 4. Cultural Safety

- x. Building respect for women and children
- xi. Culturally-appropriate conflict resolution skills
- xii. Providing a safe refuge to women and children

The CCL program aims to contribute towards:

1. augmenting the resilience of Balgo residents, particularly young women and girls, by strengthening pride in cultural identity and encouraging positive life skills through providing an innovative learning program based on Indigenous philosophies and practices;
2. building a sustainable community by re-centralising the women elders as the leaders, teachers and healers of their community;
3. improving health and wellbeing by providing a culturally-safe holistic health service which offers a traditional healing environment and service to all women, men and children;
4. protecting against all forms of violence against women and children, including sexual violence, by providing a culturally-appropriate safe environment for women and children, improving self-protective skills held by women and children, and changing men's attitudes and behaviours regarding their relationships with women and children;
5. reinforcing women's capacity as active citizens by promoting a socio-cultural context where Indigenous organisational processes may contribute to local governance.

Although not yet funded, CCL reflects the work that Kapululangu has already begun. Kapululangu has recently signed off on funding from a government department to develop a business case presenting the CCL project to potential funders.

### 3. Health Care – The *Tjarrtjurra* Women Healers' Contribution

**Kapululangu's *Tjarrtjurra* contribute to Closing the Gap on Indigenous Health Disadvantage.**

One of Kapululangu's main aims is improving and enhancing the health and wellbeing – physical, psychological, and spiritual – of the local Aboriginal residents of Balgo. Kapululangu's contribution to this is by increasing the provision within the community of *Tjarrtjurra* – Traditional Women's Healing – by the Women Elders of the Kapululangu Aboriginal Women's Association (Balgo) to the women, men, children and babies of Balgo.

Aspects of the *Tjarrtjurra* Women's Healing Program are:

- women's healing ceremonies – including women, men, youth and children
- apprenticeship of young women to the women healers
- trip to connect to Country
- hunting trips to obtain nutritious foods and bush medicines.

The Kapululangu elders lead *Tjarrtjurra* Women's Healing Ceremonies on a regular basis with clients self-referring. The elders have also provided healing on an "emergency basis" at request.

*Tjarrtjurra* Women Healers are complimentary with the *Maparn* Male Healers – what the elders call "level". *Tjarrtjurra* is women's side while *Maparn* is men's side. They have different processes and achieve different outcomes. Both male and female healers of Balgo continue

to believe in the necessity for the healing balance between the two ways of practicing and will often refer clients to their complimentary side.

Currently only *Maparn* (i.e. male healers and a few women who practice the male way) have been incorporated into the Clinic's service provision. *Palyalatju Maparn* Health Committee was established in 1999 by the Mercy Health providers at the Balgo Clinic in consultation with the community to have a strong cultural stream (as the name suggests) but while it has paid the men's side for their services supporting the women elders has been left to Kapululangu – which has been difficult without funding.

*Tjarrtjurra* has been used for:

- i. healing a vast spectrum of physical ailments
- ii. preparing clients for upcoming operations and medical interventions
- iii. strengthening new born babies so that they grow up strong
- iv. strengthening new mothers so that they are strong and provide good breast milk
- v. growing up children strong and healthy
- vi. mending conflict within families
- vii. inter-generational reconciliation
- viii. exorcising of featherfeet (alien entities which seek to inhabit the human body)

Kapululangu believes that "Closing the Gap" on Indigenous health will be best achieved if local Indigenous health methods are empowered to contribution along with western medical methods. Kapululangu is currently able to provide this service because of funding through Quaker Service Australia but this ends in March 2009 and we are seeking further funding and ways to sustain this project.

#### **4. Caring for Elders and Women living with Disabilities**

**Kapululangu caters for the women elders who live at the Women's House, cares for a wheel-chair confined elder, and provides occasional time-out for their carers.**

Kapululangu was established by Balgo elders and has usually revolved around women elders living in the Women's House on the Balgo Women's Law Ground (the *Tjilimi*). In this gynocentric space, the women work together to provide Kapululangu's cultural education, cultural health, cultural safety and cultural development programs.

Currently there are no aged and disabled care facilities in Balgo, other than those provided by Kapululangu, although this has been achieved without resources or funding. In the absence of these services, it falls to the Kapululangu coordinator to:

- i. cater for the day-to-day needs of the women elders – assistance with shopping, transport, cooking, washing, provision of meals, medicines and personal care;
- ii. providing personal care to one woman elder who is confined to a wheelchair;
- iii. providing time-out for other carers in the community by providing occasional daytime activities for women elders who do not live at the Women's House; and
- iv. meals-on-wheels service of the women resident at the Women's House as the current service provided by the community would be better described as a "meals-without-wheels" service with food being cooked at the local store but with the clients expected to pick the meals up themselves.

While Kapululangu is mandated to work with the women elders, catering for the aged and disabled residents of Balgo is not an originating aim of the organisation. It is something that Kapululangu provides in response to the hiatus of properly constituted aged and disabled care in Balgo, and because Kapululangu is not positioned to provide such services to men, the male elders in the community tend to go without any assistance. This takes time and energy away from providing for the Law and Culture aspects for which the organisation was formed.

Kapululangu would also like to see the Wirrimanu Aboriginal Corporation re-establish the Old Peoples' House in the centre of the town as a fully functioning community centre with an operational Home and Community Care service, including a nutritious Meals-on-Wheels and laundry program.

This is notwithstanding that Kapululangu is mandated to care for the women elders who choose to live at the Women's House on the Balgo Women's Law Ground and as such it should be funded and resourced to provide for the care needs of the women elders. Such funding should include:

- v. a salary for one dedicated staff position
- vi. the renovation and furnishing of the Women's House (including beds & bedding);
- vii. a vehicle for driving the women elders on their daily round and for hunting trips;
- viii. funding to cover the costs of providing activities and entertainment for the elders.

## **5. Safe House – Protecting Against Violence and Sexual Assault**

**The Kapululangu women elders have historically provided a safe refuge to women and children on the Balgo Women's Law Ground.**

Kapululangu has provided a safe refuge to women and children since 1999 through to 2008. In the past week we have provided overnight accommodation and daytime shelter to three women and one six year old girl consisting to 7 incidences of use. This usage would be much higher if we were resourced to provide this facility and could formally invite women to seek refuge with us. There is clearly a need for such a service in Balgo, where sadly too many incidences still go unreported to the police.

The Women's House is a natural refuge environment for women of Balgo because it is on the Women's Law Ground and therefore is seen by our community to be off-limits to men. Most women have self-referred themselves or they have, in the past, been referred by and brought here by the police and the clinic. Unfortunately we have not been able to continue those arrangements because we have never been resourced to provide this service.

Balgo women have repeatedly stated, including as recently as the First Balgo Women's Law Camp in August last year, that they need and want a Safe House. This is documented in the report from the Camp: *"Aboriginal Women Have Answers Themselves"* which was reported on when Kapululangu was used as a case study by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commission Tom Calma's *Social Justice Report 2007*.

At this Camp (and in its subsequent report), in responding to the issue of childhood rape and sexual abuse and also persisting violence against women, Balgo's female residents identified

the need for a staffed Safe House to be managed by Kapululangu. The Safe House would be advised by a committee which would include the women elders, the police, the clinic, the child protection worker and other agencies. It would be staffed by qualified professionals and by paid local women.

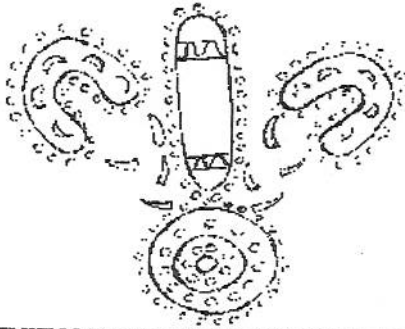
In establishing this Safe House, a safe refuge should initially be established in the current Women's House on the Women's Law Ground where we already have a building. Ultimately, as more funding becomes available, it may be advisable to construct a Safe House near the police station if that could enhance its safety factor. If not then it should remain on the Women's Law Ground. The provision of a safe refuge should not be delayed until a new building is constructed – as a suitable building is already been used as one.

**For More Information Contact:**

**Dr Zohl dé Ishtar  
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Kapululangu Aboriginal Women's Association  
0429 422 645  
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Coordinator: Dr Zohl dé Ishtar

20 August 2008

## **KAPULULANGU'S FUNDING DIFFICULTIES**

More Information: Dr Zohl dé Ishtar – [z.deishtar@uq.edu.au](mailto:z.deishtar@uq.edu.au)

Notwithstanding the concerns set out below, the Kapululangu Aboriginal Women's Association (AC) looks forward to working with the Wirrimanu Aboriginal Corporation for the current financial year. We welcome the changes taking place within Wirrimanu Aboriginal Corporation, including the ending of ORIC Administration period; the election of a Board of Directors consisting of and representing local Aboriginal residents; and the employment of a new CEO who has shown an interest in working with Kapululangu.

Kapululangu is relieved that Wirrimanu Aboriginal Corporation is finally coming out of ORIC Administration. From our organisation's historical vantage point, we are not convinced that the ORIC Administration period has been as beneficial or as effective as it might and should have been. From Kapululangu's perspective, ORIC should have acted more quickly in response to widespread, multi-agency complaints about the first Administrator. The Administration period has been a lost opportunity to improve Balgo's social indicators.

We are delighted that Wirrimanu Aboriginal Corporation will come a fully constituted Board of Directors consisting of local residents on 26 August 2008. This will reinstate a voice to the local Aboriginal community the absence of which has undermined local people's confidence in their own capabilities. We note that this is the first time in the history of secular administration in Balgo (i.e. since 1979) that there has been a concerted governance training program for local people.

We remain concerned that local people – and the community as a whole – were blamed for the failings of the administration of Balgo although all evidence stretching back to 1989 (at least) indicates that it was an issue of mismanagement (and perhaps corruption) by employed Non-Indigenous managers, resulting in it being placed under ORIC Administration. To the extent that some local residents were involved in this mismanagement this was by way of taking advantage of a failing system which was controlled by entities beyond their influence.

## Introducing Kapululangu

Kapululangu was established on 12 April 1999, and became incorporated on the 3 August that same year.

Kapululangu is governed by a Board of Directors led by a Chairwoman, which is currently Ms Yintjurru Margaret Anjule (/Bumblebee) Napurrula.

Kapululangu currently has forty listed members, but all adult Aboriginal women resident in Balgo may be a member of the organisation and Kapululangu aims to cater for all women and children of Balgo.

Kapululangu has had no paid staff in the ten years of its existence. Its current coordinator position is filled in a voluntary capacity by its founding coordinator Dr Zohl dé Ishtar (1999-2001, 2005-2008) who until January 2008 was a paid research fellow (sociologist) at the University of Queensland. Dr dé Ishtar has subsequently returned to Balgo fulltime in an unpaid position in an effort to assist the elders and women of Balgo to re-establish their organisation.

## Ongoing Problems Facing Kapululangu's Service Provision

Kapululangu is unable to provide all the services it wants to, or indeed to offer the services it does provide as efficiently as it would like, because of the following reasons:

- i. There has been no funding for salaries for Kapululangu over the past four years meaning that there has been no paid staff, including a paid coordinator, to project manage services;
- ii. Managing the services Kapululangu has provided is more than one woman can efficiently take on yet this has been the status quo for the past four years. Our volunteer coordinator was employed elsewhere in 2005 through 2007 and we were lucky that she was able to work in Balgo on a three-month on, three-month off basis – an unsatisfactory arrangement;
- iii. Repeated attempts to access the limited and indirect funding Kapululangu has been promised has been extremely demanding on the coordinator's time, taking energy and focus away from service provision;
- iv. Optimally Kapululangu would have three paid positions but Kapululangu does not currently have funding to offer fully-salaried positions to local women;
- v. A few local women currently work informally with Kapululangu but because the CDEP program in Balgo is not running efficiently (and has never run efficiently) most women who do work with Kapululangu are on various CentreLink pensions – aged, disabled, single-parent, carers pensions. Because they are not on CDEP they cannot receive "top-up" or additional financial remuneration for their contribution. Real jobs need to be funded.
- vi. As happens with all agencies in Balgo, the inherent restrictions of kinship alignments and family feuding means that while some women would (with appropriate payment) work with Kapululangu, others would and could not. If Kapululangu was able to provide salaried positions which could be more evenly distributed across clan and language groups this problem could be creatively dealt with.

## Kapululangu's Unorthodox Funding Arrangements with Wirrimanu

In August 2008, Kapululangu is in the process of receiving funds for a coordinator's salary and operational costs. These funds are from the Commonwealth Department of Family,

Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). These funds will be given directly to the Wirrimanu Aboriginal Corporation (WAC) which will manage them instead of Kapululangu.

This is a strange arrangement by which one organisation – Kapululangu – will have its coordinator employed by another organisation (WAC). WAC has also been supplied with funding by FaHCSIA to provide operational funds for Kapululangu.

Negotiations are currently taking place between WAC and FaHCSIA to which Kapululangu is not always privy even though the grant was requested by WAC on Kapululangu's behalf and involves Kapululangu.

This somewhat bizarre funding arrangement is not an auspicious arrangement. It is a direct funding to WAC to supply services to women and children. This is even though all stakeholders know that Kapululangu does and will continue to provide women and children's services in Balgo.

This arrangement has been concocted in good faith by all stakeholders on Kapululangu's behalf and with Kapululangu's agreement.

However, Kapululangu has repeatedly stressed that it gave its agreement to this arrangement only after being told that it there was no point in it applying to FaHCSIA directly because it would not be successful – but that it would be likely to receive funding if it went through WAC.

Thus Kapululangu has given its agreement to this arrangement under duress. Kapululangu asserts that its willingness to accept funds in this manner for 2008/09 in no way positions it under WAC's jurisdiction nor ties it to WAC in the future. Kapululangu will apply for funds independently for 2009/10. Kapululangu continues to operate as a separate entity and to receive and manage funds which are from sources outside of WAC's domain.

This arrangement with WAC is an embarrassment to and disenfranchises our organisation. By not providing Kapululangu with direct funding for the 2008/09 period FaHCSIA's message to Kapululangu is that we are being punished for the ensuing problems. It is possible that this is a result of the high-turn over of bureaucratic staff resulting in staff not being aware of the historical facts.

### **Kapululangu's Historical Funding Problems with Wirrimanu**

This funding arrangement has been presented to Kapululangu as a "chance for Kapululangu to prove itself". However the arrangement fails to take into account the following:

- i. WAC has never provided services to women and children in Balgo and (for the moment at least) has no intention of doing so.
- ii. It would be impossible for WAC to take over Kapululangu or to provide Law-based and culturally-based services to women and children without the agreement of the women elders who established Kapululangu. This is unlikely given that WAC and its new Board of Directors involve men and men cannot be involved in women's Law and culture activities.
- iii. WAC has a history of mismanagement which is what resulted in it being placed under Administration by ORIC/ORATSIC in 2003.
- iv. The ORIC Administration continued to have difficulties as evidenced that its first appointed administrator was "allowed to resign" in November 2006.

- v. All of Kapululangu's financial management problems have stemmed directly from it never having been provided with funding to employ a full-time coordinator, or indeed an accountant. To the extent that Kapululangu has managed to continue to operate under these conditions, let alone provide such a diversity of services, is remarkable.
- vi. For the fiscal years 1998/1999, 1999/2000, and 2000/01 Kapululangu received funding from ATSIC's Women's Program indirectly through WAC. The total amount awarded approximated \$80,000, however Kapululangu only received approximately \$12,000 of that amount (spent by WAC for Kapululangu). The difference remained unreleased by WAC. ATSIC failed to communicate with Kapululangu on this matter and we were unaware of these funds until a phone call on 4 July 2001. Over that period Kapululangu wrote five grant applications to ATSIC none of which were successful.
- vii. Since 2005 Kapululangu has received a total of \$28,000, consisting of two grants for \$8000 for 2005/06 and \$20,000 for 2006/07 – the last being rolled over to 2007/08 because it was not expended during to difficulties within WAC's ORIC-appointed Administration at that time.
- viii. These two grants were paid directly to WAC to be spent by Kapululangu yet no formal arrangement for smooth expenditure was put in place by either of ORIC's two Administrators, despite repeated requests from Kapululangu. This left Kapululangu having to spend funds from its own sources until a Purchase Order regime was instigated in March 2008 but only after a meeting between Kapululangu and a FaHCSIA staffer at which Kapululangu raised the difficulties it was having with accessing the funds. Even then the Purchase Order regime did not work efficiently for Kapululangu causing problems in accessing items it needed to operate its projects in a timely manner.
- ix. Kapululangu's 2005/06 application to the FaHCSIA's Indigenous Women's Program asked for \$53,200 but only achieved \$8000. Although it was in response to Kapululangu's application, these funds were delivered to WAC without agreement by Kapululangu. Due to problems within the ORIC Administration, these funds were not received by Kapululangu until October 2007. In November 2006, after many requests for reimbursement of Kapululangu expenditure against this grant, Kapululangu was informed by the ORIC Administrator that these 2005/06 funds have been returned to FaHCSIA. This forced Kapululangu to lobby to get the funds returned.
- x. Kapululangu's 2006/07 application to FaHCSIA's Indigenous Women's Program was for \$145,670, and included a coordinator's salary, but this was unsuccessful partly because the first ORIC Administrator had applied for funding and was awarded \$20,000. WAC's application did not include funding for a coordinator salary. Again Kapululangu was left to carry out the project without being directly funded for it, even though it is an incorporated entity in its own right. These funds were stalled by the problems within the first ORIC Administration.
- xi. Kapululangu's 2007/08 application to FaHCSIA's Indigenous Cultural Support was for \$199,350, including a coordinator's salary. This application was rejected outright. The 2006/07 grant was rolled over to 2007/08 and became available through WAC.
- xii. For fiscal year 2008/09 Kapululangu was advised not to bother submitting a grant to FaHCSIA because it would not be successful. We were told that an application by WAC would have more potential of succeeding.
- xiii. The funds for the 2005/06 grant were spent by Kapululangu in that year, but were not reimbursed until October 2007. As of 20 August 2008 Kapululangu has still not been fully reimbursed for expenditures made from the 2006/07-2007/08 grant.
- xiv. WAC has a history of misappropriating women's funding it was trusted to auspice for Kapululangu and its predecessors going back to 1989 – including funds which were spent on building Balgo's current store in 1994.

- xv. In 2001/02, WAC received \$23,409 for "Women's Coordinator Funds" which were held by it and went unspent rather than being directed to Kapululangu for that purpose.
- xvi. In 2001/02 WAC received \$80,525 for Balgo women and children which went unexpended. At least \$53,588 of this total amount was directly related specifically to women, \$20,937 was for mothers and toddlers, and \$6,000 was for children and youth.

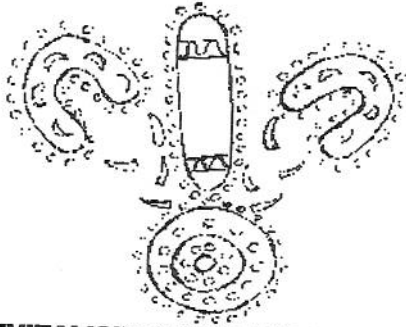
### **Summarising the Problems Impacting Kapululangu's Service Provision**

What stands out through this incredible saga is that:

- i. Historically, Kapululangu has had no influence over WAC's management of the funds it was trusted to receive on its behalf, even through an ORIC-appointed Administration and this has certainly not been to Kapululangu's advantage;
- ii. Kapululangu has had to manage its organisation without ready access to the limited funds that were supposedly available to it, and has been forced to operate even with an amazing delay in the delivery of funds;
- iii. despite repeated requests from Kapululangu neither Administration instigated a formal arrangement for Kapululangu to access the funds until Kapululangu brought this to the attention of the FaHCSIA staffer in March 2008 – this even though the problem had started in July 2005;
- iv. Where a Purchase Order regime was finally instigated, this resulted in duplication of work and significant delays which in some cases forced Kapululangu to spend its own funds and then ask for reimbursement;
- v. Kapululangu has persistently communicated with all stakeholders about the problems it was facing as a result of its funding being controlled by WAC but with little response;
- vi. those who were in a position to correct the problems at the time that they were occurring failed to do, despite repeated requests from Kapululangu;
- vii. ignoring the realities of this situation, those same entities persist in holding Kapululangu responsible for the financial difficulties our organisation has faced.
- viii. Kapululangu has paid a heavy price by its funding being tied to a third party.

### **For More Information Contact:**

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**REVITALISING WOMEN'S CULTURE  
CARING FOR WOMEN & COMMUNITY**

# **Kapululangu**

**Aboriginal Womens Law and Culture Centre**

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Chairwoman: Margaret Anjule Bumblebee Napurrula  
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20 August 2008

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM KAPULULANGU**

More Information: Dr Zohl dé Ishtar – [z.deishtar@uq.edu.au](mailto:z.deishtar@uq.edu.au)

### **RECOMMENDATION 1:**

#### **Kapululangu be directly funded for the Fiscal Year 2009/10 & three years thereafter**

We recommend that government departments fund Kapululangu directly and adequately and efficiently in fiscal year 2009/10 and for the three years thereafter. This funding to include: a coordinator's salary and full organisational costs.

Balgo's women elders have achieved much through their Kapululangu Aboriginal Women's Association, and its predecessors – the Desert Women's Project under the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (1986 to 1990) and Manungka Manungka (1990-1993). Over that 28 year period, however, they have received little funding and then for only seven (7) years (stretching over the entire time span). None of that funding has been government-originating since 1994. Kapululangu has been severely disadvantaged by having its funding tied to the processes and machinations of a third party – especially one which has been documented by both Federal and State governments as having internal management difficulties such that it was placed under ORIC Administration.

Kapululangu has entered into a funding arrangement with Balgo's Wirrimanu Aboriginal Corporation fully cognisant of this history but in recognition of positive signs of potential for the future year: re-established local council (Board of Directors), new CEO, and the ending of the five year ORIC Administration period. The purpose of this arrangement is to provide Kapululangu with a buffer year in which to re-establish itself – and to this end is being provided with a coordinator and operational funds for the first time (1999 onwards).

### **RECOMMENDATION 2:**

#### **The Kapululangu Circles of Cultural Learning Project be Funded as a Matter of Urgency**

Kapululangu to the Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities  
20 August 2008 - 14

The Circles of Cultural Learning is Kapululangu's response to the socio-cultural crises currently impacting Indigenous residents of Balgo and the greater region, particularly children, young women and middle-generational women and elders. A whole-of-community, whole-of-life approach which caters for all aspects of the community, it builds on Kapululangu's earlier successes with the Women's Law and Culture Centre (1999-2001).

An intergenerational cultural knowledge transmission template which centralises the elders the CCL project draws on the local Indigenous Law and cultural philosophies and practices of the community.

It aims to empower individuals, enhance community, foster creative citizenship and build sustainable governance, to contribute towards diminishing social and health problems negatively impacting Indigenous women and children (specifically but not exclusively), and to improve government policy affecting Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships.

This template was first designed by the Kapululangu women elders in 2004 and has been fine-tuned in subsequent meetings. Incrementally rolling out this program has been stalled by a lack of funding for the project itself, by the funding difficulties facing the organisation as a whole, and by the absence of properly functioning aged and disabled care in the community which has taken time from the cultural aspects for which the organisation was formed.

Kapululangu recommends that Kapululangu be funded directly to implement the Circles of Cultural Learning programs. And that this occurs forthwith as the elders are ageing prematurely with many of the founding elders already having died. The younger generations will be robbed of their cultural birthright unless effort is made to ensure that the elders are able to pass their cultural knowledge before it is too late.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3:**

#### **Kapululangu's Tjarrtjurra Healers' Contribution to Closing the Gap be Funded**

That Kapululangu's *Tjarrtjurra* Women's Healing Ceremonies program funded as a significant local contribution towards improving health and wellbeing of local Balgo residents through the provision of:

- women's healing ceremonies
- apprenticeship of young women to the women healers
- trip to connect to Country
- hunting trips to obtain nutritious foods and bush medicines.

And that Balgo's male healers (*Maparn*) be similarly funded.

That the Australian government encourage western medical providers to consult with local Indigenous healers to determine how to incorporate Indigenous cultural and healing knowledge into their services so as to improve the health status of Australia's Indigenous citizens.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4:**

##### **Effective Aged and Disabled Care Facilities be Established in Balgo**

That an efficient and effective aged and disabled care facility be developed in Balgo so that the people in need and their carers receive the full support that they require. This facility should be located at and operate from a residential and day-care centre be constructed in the centre of Balgo town.

In addition, full support should be provided for those places where people in need are currently or wish to live such as the:

- the Kapululangu's Women's House (*Tjilimi*) in "Top Camp"
- at the Single Men's House (or *Yampirri*) in "Bottom Camp".

That a fully operational Home and Community Care (HACC) service be established in Balgo, to include:

- Personal Care (including shopping, clinic etc)
- a Day-Care program with cultural activities
- a Meals-On-Wheels program; and
- Carer's Time-Out program.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5:**

##### **Funding to Provide a Safe House for Balgo – Initially at the Women's House**

Kapululangu has historically (1999-2008) provided a safe refuge for women and children escaping violence and sexual abuse. Because the Women's House is situated on the Women's Law Ground Balgo's female residents self-refer there by informal arrangement. Because Kapululangu has never been funded to provide this service there is no paid and skilled staff and no resources to assist the women.

Kapululangu is predominantly a Women's Law and Culture project and has been pushed into providing this service in lieu of a proper facility in Balgo.

Since women are currently using (and have always used) the Women's House for refuge, Kapululangu recommends that the Women's House be supported to provide a formal service to women and children in the first and immediate instance. Requirements include: a paid and qualified staff member, funds to cover food, clothing, bedding, and renovations to the existing building (to include improved security (e.g. fence).

Kapululangu also encourages the development of properly facilitated Safe House to be constructed near the Balgo Police Station (MultiPurpose Centre) and that work is started on this as quickly as possible.

Kapululangu stresses that the provision of a safe refuge to women and children should not be delayed until a new building is constructed – as a suitable building (the Kapululangu Women's House) is already been used by female residents who are self-referring.



## **RECOMMENDATION 6:**

### **Funding to Indigenous Women's Organisations in SE Kimberley be Increased**

Kapululangu is concerned that the level of funding for the FaHCSIA run Indigenous Women's Program (IWP) available to the south-east Kimberley is only approximately \$120,000 per annum. We understand that until recently it was twice as much as this. However, even then this is insufficient money for an area which includes communities from Kulumburu to Kununurra, from Balgo to Wyndham.

Kapululangu is happy to have received IWP funding for a salaried coordinator position and operational funds for the first time since 2005 (albeit indirectly). However we were dismayed to read in the *WestAustralian* newspaper that another community in the eastern Kimberley was accusing "Balgo" taking their women's funding. We are aware of another women's organisation which did not receive IWP funding this year, although they have received funding over the past years while Kapululangu received very little. We are disturbed to find that there is only enough funding in the region for one women's organisation to receive adequate funding in any given year or, as an alternative, that none may receive adequate funding in any year.

We recommend that the amount of funding available through the Indigenous Women's Program, or some other mechanism, be increased ten-fold to represent the true number of women's organisations in the south-eastern Kimberley.

### **For More Information Contact:**

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