



APONT
Aboriginal Governance
& Management Program

Newsletter: May 2022



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Farewell to Wes Miller

This newsletter is my last as Program Manager as I step away from the position on 13 May. I know my replacement will bring passion, commitment and integrity to the role to steer the AGMP through its next exciting chapter.

The AGMP was established in late 2013, immediately after the NT Intervention, as a positive step towards re-building of the Aboriginal community controlled sector and a powerful reassertion of Aboriginal self-determination.

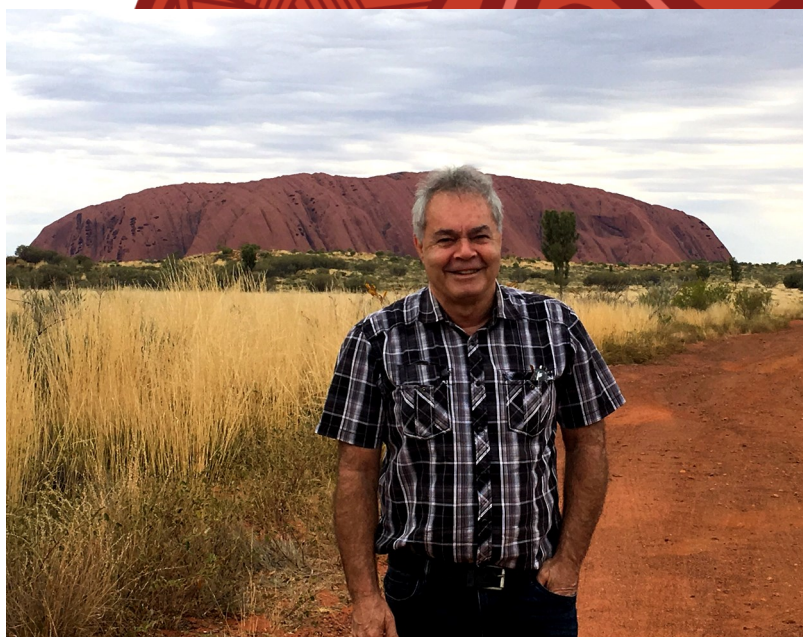
Established under the safe hands of the Aboriginal Peak Organisations (APO NT) alliance, the AGMP has witnessed major changes within the policy landscape, none more significant than the ground-breaking signing of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* in July 2020. The capacity-building role played by the AGMP at the organisational level, as well as in partnership with Aboriginal peak bodies across the NT, has been substantial.

In my time I've particularly enjoyed travelling throughout the NT to meet with Traditional Owners and decision-makers around their board tables and on their lands, building trust and transacting business based on ethical principles, truth-telling and by acknowledging and working within traditional and contemporary decision-making processes and structures.

It's not goodbye for good. I'll continue to work with the AGMP in a supportive and mentoring role, building on our exciting new initiative – establishing a fee for service arm to grow the program's reach and impact and strengthening many more NT Aboriginal people and their entities.

We've come a long way from the Intervention but there's still a lot more to do yet!

Best wishes,
Wes



Our Decisions | Our Actions | Our Future

Results are in!

AGMP Governance & Management Survey

Over the last few months we've been surveying Aboriginal organisations across the NT. We're checking in to make sure we understand the governance needs and the best ways to provide support to Aboriginal Board Members and organisational leaders. This information is helping us to plan our program and the ways we work in the future.

The survey has been distributed through peak organisations – helping us understand the specific needs of each sector. We have collated the results from a range of different sectors including health, stores, land and sea management, housing, community development, art and culture, municipal services, and more.

This is the first time we have run a survey since 2014 and the results were strikingly similar!

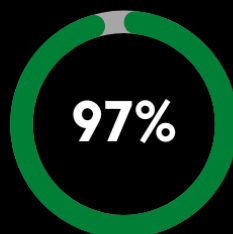
All Aboriginal organisations surveyed have overwhelmingly said that governance support is essential for their success. However, less than half have done any regular governance training in the past 3 years.

Organisations have told us that topics like succession planning, understanding finances and the roles and responsibilities of Board Members are their biggest needs.

Also, the biggest considerations when looking for a governance provider is finding culturally appropriate, affordable, tailored support that can be delivered in remote workplaces.

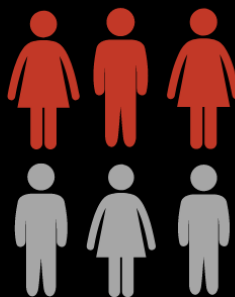
The good news is – the AGMP does all these things! If you'd like to talk with us about tailor-made governance training delivered anywhere across the NT – get in touch. We'd love to chat with you about the governance needs for your organisation and how we can support you to succeed!

AGMP Governance & Management Survey Results 2022



Organisations

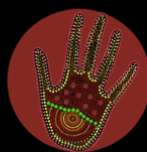
see regular governance training as **essential** for their success



Board Directors

over half (55%) had **irregular** or **no** governance training in the past 3 years

Most important when choosing a governance provider



Appropriateness of content



Capacity to deliver remote



Cost

Most needed areas of governance support



Succession planning, youth leadership



Understanding the organisation's finances



Understanding roles and responsibilities



HR support, recruitment and staff development



Strategic planning and writing funding proposals

Mimal Money Magic

Often the only contact Directors have with the organisation's accounts is in a board meeting. This can make it hard to ensure everyone understands the full money story and is on the same page. The Directors of Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation have stepped up and decided to do something about this.

Since inception in 2015, Mimal has been innovatively growing the organisation whilst supporting Traditional Owners in caring for country. Today, they conduct cultural burning and receive fire abatement income to support their core staff, they are setting up their own Indigenous Protected Area (IPA), they deliver the Working on Country program, and they receive a range of grants for other cultural land management projects. Lots of opportunities... Lots to keep track of!

The AGMP is working with Mimal Directors to improve their understanding of the organisation's money story. We are developing tools and delivering workshops to support Directors to get clear on where their money comes from and goes to, equipping them with skills to advocate for more and better funding. By the end of our April workshop, Directors were well across all details of their different income sources, were able to question the financial reports and were asking lots of critical questions— keeping CEO, Dom, on his toes.

“My head is hurting, but it’s good! I know more about what it means to be a Director. There is a lot to know, but I feel like I can explain it to other members now.” John, Chairman

Good governance the key to good service delivery for Galiwin'ku Women's Space

The Galiwin'ku Women's Space (GWS) was created by Yolngu women on Elcho Island to ensure that local women and their families have access to culturally safe support from domestic and family violence. The founding members have worked hard to build GWS up from nothing to now providing essential preventative, supportive and responsive services. Importantly, the Governing Committee have also built strong approaches to organisational governance and decision making using two-way culturally safe principles.



Yolngu women from Galiwin'ku have a bright plan for their future

When the GWS approached the AGMP to review and strengthen their governance – we were happy to accept. First we conducted a good governance 'health check-up' so the Committee could reflect on their strengths as well as some areas for improvement. In our first workshop in April 2022, the Committee and management sat down together to review their understanding of two-way governance, roles and responsibilities and the organisational structure. We began a process of updating the strategic plan – setting a course for the future that builds on the progress and achievements so far. We also reviewed the Constitution to ensure it reflects the values and aspirations of members in delivering culturally appropriate support to Yolngu women and their families on Elcho Island.

“We have learnt a lot and we have a clear vision and strategy on how we are going to proceed.”

Committee members, GWS



Mimal Directors took a deep dive into their shared understanding of the corporation's income in April



APONT Aboriginal Governance & Management Program

APO NT Partnership Principles for working with Aboriginal organisations and communities in the Northern Territory

Supporting a transition to Aboriginal Community Control

Did you know ... One of the key commitments of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is increasing the number of Aboriginal organisations funded to deliver services in Aboriginal communities. This means that some programs currently delivered by government or non-Aboriginal organisations will be transitioned to local Aboriginal organisations in the future.

The AGMP is working to support this commitment by building the governance and management capacity of Aboriginal organisations across the NT. The AGMP is also a proud member of the APO NT alliance and a key player in Closing the Gap.



Did you know... In 2013, the APO NT Partnership Principles were developed as a tool to ensure Aboriginal people are in the driver's seat when working in partnership with non-Aboriginal organisations. The Principles reflect the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. They are a guide for non-Aboriginal organisations in how to build strong, collaborative partnerships that build Aboriginal capacity and recognise Aboriginal organisations' expertise and role in decision making. They are a guide for how to ultimately hand over programs to Aboriginal community control.

The Partnership Principles have been endorsed by large non-government organisations working in the Territory such as Anglicare, YWCA, Oxfam, Red Cross and World Vision. They are also noted as the foundation for partnerships between Government and Aboriginal people in implementing Closing the Gap in the NT.

Did you know... The AGMP is well equipped to facilitate the Partnership Principles in action. We work alongside Aboriginal organisations to build good governance. This means increasing organisations' ability to successfully manage and deliver programs that meet the needs of Aboriginal people, communities and funders alike. The AGMP has the experience and the strategies to help organisations implement the Partnership Principles.

Let us know if you'd like to talk more about applying the APO NT Partnership Principles and how we can help you with transition support. We'd love to hear from you.

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