



**APONT**  
Aboriginal Governance  
& Management Program

# Newsletter: October 2022

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## Top End Joint Management Forum a success

**The importance of two-way governance to successful joint management of NT Parks**

AGMP is proud to have partnered with the Northern Land Council to design and deliver of the Top End Joint Management Forum, held in Katherine in September 2022.

This was the first time in 14 years that Traditional Owners and the NT Government's Parks & Wildlife Commission have come together as a big group to discuss how they work in partnership on the joint management of Top End parks and reserves.



***"Unity is being forged."*** Forum participant



Over the three day forum participants talked, listened, learned and reflected on all aspects of joint management. Everyone shared their ideas on what's working, what's not and suggestions for the future.

The clear message from participants was that good governance – including respectful two-way decision making and regular communication — is key to good relationships and a strong partnership approach to joint management.

These recommendations and all feedback gathered from Traditional Owners during the forum will contribute to the NT Parks Masterplan and the ongoing strengthening of how Traditional Owners and NT Parks work together on joint management.

***"I had a great time meeting new people and understanding each other's needs."***

Forum participant



## Supporting Aboriginal boards to conduct CEO performance appraisals

Over the past few months, AGMP has been helping a number of Aboriginal boards with their important duty of supporting the managers and CEOs of their organisations.

The Aboriginal board members of the Galiwin'ku Women's Space, Mimal Land Management and Lhere Artepe are some of the organisations leading by example in this area.

Through the support of AGMP, these boards have been learning how to provide structured feedback and direction to their organisation's leaders through a performance appraisal process. Whilst this is a key responsibility of all boards, it can sometimes be a challenging aspect of good governance to navigate!

AGMP has developed a user-friendly template (or 'report card') to guide the appraisal process, which promotes structured and strengths-based feedback and accountability. Importantly – it also ensures that cultural competency skills are considered equally alongside mainstream expectations of leadership and management.

***"This process lets us make sure that we have the right person sitting in the job. It's about knowing that we have a good relationship with the manager."***

*Aboriginal board member*

***"Personally, I've gotten a lot out of it, for me to know how I'm tracking, and what I need to focus on. It's been a really good experience."***

*Organisation CEO*

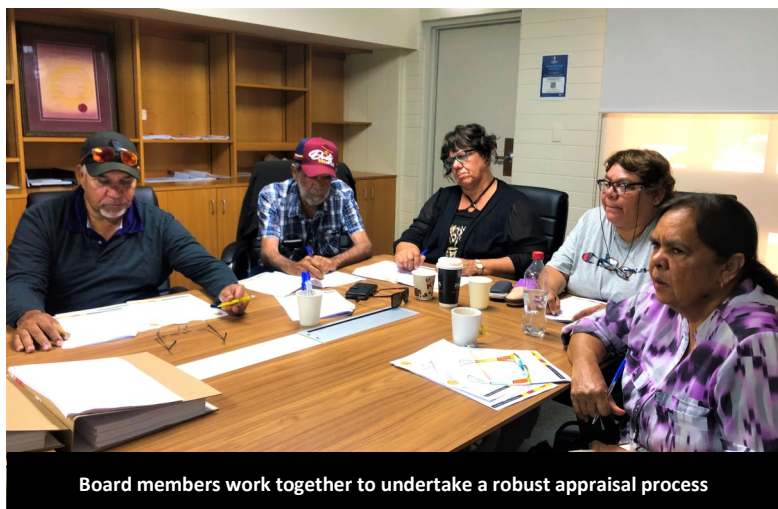


AGMP supports Aboriginal boards with CEO appraisals

AGMP works with the board to tailor the template to ensure local performance requirements and measures of success unique to each organisation are included.

As well as supporting and empowering board members to design the assessment template, AGMP works with the board to reflect on and record the CEO / manager's performance, then share the feedback through a supported discussion.

Finally, we look at how to embed the process as an annual organisational procedure. Undertaking a performance appraisal of the CEO / manager is a great way for boards to ensure that their organisation's leadership is on track. Appraisals are an opportunity to provide feedback and direction in a safe and constructive way – celebrating the CEO / manager's strengths and achievements as well as identifying goals and plans for the future.



Board members work together to undertake a robust appraisal process



## New council, new beginnings:

### Setting foundations for strong governance with Yipirinya School

Yipirinya School is a unique Aboriginal-led school providing a strong two-way education for young people in Alice Springs. The newly formed Yipirinya School Council are made up of Central Arrernte, Western Aranda, Luritja and Warlpiri leaders and parents of children who attend the school.

AGMP is so excited to be working with these council members and support their vision of two-way education in Alice Springs.

When AGMP is invited into any organisation, we begin by getting to know each other, then making an agreement and a plan for how we will work together.



Yipirinya School Council are planning for a bright future

Regular workshops have now been scheduled with the Yipirinya Council over the coming months, covering important themes such as understanding the council's role and responsibilities, how to run effective meetings and good two-way decision-making processes.

We've started by talking a lot about two-way governance, what this means in practice, how it works at the school and the important role that elders play alongside the council and the school principal.

Maintaining cultural protocols whilst meeting mainstream government requirements for running the school are some of the important challenges ahead for the council members.

***"Things are looking up and I'm feeling good about changes at the school.  
I want to see it work. I want to see kids get education. We should be proud of our school.  
I'm here to help the elders.  
I want to make it better."***

Council member

## Strengthening governance for the Aboriginal health sector

AGMP is proud to be working in partnership with the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT) to strengthen the governance of Aboriginal health services across the NT. AMSANT is the Territory's peak body for Aboriginal community controlled health services and community clinics.

This project is funded through the NT Government Office of Aboriginal Affairs and will contribute to Closing the Gap commitments in the NT. It is part of a new approach for AGMP—working with Aboriginal peak bodies to strengthen governance across a whole sector. AGMP project officer Kate Muir explains,

***"We are looking at the good work being done across many health services and sharing this across the sector."***

We are also drawing on the results of our 2021 governance survey – which has helped inform us of the needs, gaps and areas of interest for governance support from Aboriginal health services.

We will work with Aboriginal board members, an Aboriginal graphic designer and with AGMP knowledge and expertise to create an engaging and culturally appropriate good governance toolkit for Aboriginal health services. It will be practical and applicable in the remote NT context. We will also develop a program for ongoing training and support specific to the needs of board members of Aboriginal health services.

By strengthening good governance in health services AGMP, together with AMSANT, is working to support the ongoing community control of Aboriginal health and improve Closing the Gap outcomes in the NT.

***"We need to work together, bring each other along. Governance is the vehicle to self-determination."***

AGMP project officer



Anyinginyi and Danila Dilba health services share a strong commitment to good governance



# APONT Aboriginal Governance & Management Program

## Governance resources created from the grassroots

Did you know that AGMP designs tailor-made governance materials and training resources in partnership with Aboriginal organisations?

Fun and engaging presentations, activities, posters and templates – designed with and for Aboriginal boards are a powerful way to learn, teach and share ideas about good governance.



Bagot board members testing the 'Good meetings tablecloth'

Recently – we've been working with the Bagot Community Aboriginal Corporation on a 'Good meetings tablecloth' to help guide members through all the important steps they need to take when sitting around the board table for meetings.

Our work with Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation on developing user-friendly ways for the board to understand the organisation's finances has also been exciting. The board are building financial literacy through the process of creating visual and plain-language finance reports.

***"So many of our organisations get into trouble with finances. If all organisations had this we'd all be stronger."***

Chairperson, Mimal Land Management

AGMP also uses stories, case studies, games and activities to make workshops fun whilst building skills and confidence in good governance. We are building, creating and distributing best-practice governance training materials and resources – tailor made to suit the needs of Aboriginal boards in the NT.

Let us know if we can help you create good governance resources for your organisation.



Our Decisions | Our Actions | Our Future

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