



# Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Evaluation of Indigenous  
Coordination Centres

**Final Report**

GOVERNMENT

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### ***Inherent Limitations***

*This report has been prepared as outlined in the methodology of this report. The procedures outlined in the methodology does not constitute a comprehensive review of operations.*

*The findings in this report are based on a qualitative study and the reported results reflect a perception of the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and associated stakeholders but only to the extent of the sample surveyed, being the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs approved representative sample of stakeholders. No warranty of completeness, accuracy or reliability is given in relation to the statements and representations made by, and the information and documentation provided by, stakeholders consulted as part of the process.*

*KPMG have indicated within this report the sources of the information provided. We have not sought to independently verify those sources unless otherwise noted within the report.*

*KPMG is under no obligation in any circumstance to update this report, in either oral or written form, for events occurring after the report has been issued in final form.*

*The findings in this report have been formed on the above basis.*

### ***Third Party Reliance***

*This report has been prepared at the request of the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs in accordance with the terms of KPMG's contract. Other than our responsibility to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, neither KPMG nor any member or employee of KPMG undertakes responsibility arising in any way from reliance placed by a third party on this report. Any reliance placed is that party's sole responsibility.*

## **Acknowledgements**

KPMG wishes to thank the many ICC staff and management, community representatives, State/Territory office staff and national office staff who participated in this evaluation. The evaluation team is thankful for their hospitality, honesty, and willingness to talk about their experiences and hopes for the future.

We would also like to thank the Project Steering Committee who provided us with guidance and feedback during the life of the evaluation.

## **Acronyms**

<b>AGD</b>	Attorney-General's Department
<b>CDP</b>	Continuous Development Plan
<b>ATSIC</b>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
<b>ATSIS</b>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
<b>DCITA</b>	Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts
<b>DEST</b>	Department of Education, Science and Training
<b>DEWR</b>	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
<b>FaCSIA</b>	Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
<b>FFP</b>	Flexible Funding Pool
<b>IBA</b>	Indigenous Business Australia
<b>ILC</b>	Indigenous Land Corporation
<b>ICCs</b>	Indigenous Coordination Centres
<b>MTF</b>	Ministerial Taskforce
<b>OIPC</b>	Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination
<b>ORAC</b>	Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations
<b>PFA</b>	Program Funding Agreement
<b>PSG</b>	Project Steering Group which is a high-level group comprised of senior representatives of relevant Australian Government departments
<b>SRAs</b>	Shared Responsibility Agreements
<b>RPAs</b>	Regional Partnership Agreements
<b>WoG</b>	Whole of Government

## Glossary

<b>Community Engagement staff</b>	Some ICCs have staff dedicated to the role of engaging with communities and organisations, to develop networks and build relationships. These staff are referred to as Community Engagement staff.
<b>Contract managers</b>	Are line agency and FaCSIA staff responsible for managing Program Funding Agreements between their agencies and individual organisations.
<b>Home agency</b>	Refer to line agencies. Although not a line agency, FaCSIA is considered a home agency.
<b>Line agency State Manager</b>	The State Manager (or equivalent) for each line agency.
<b>ICC Manager</b>	Is employed by FaCSIA and is the leader of the ICC.
<b>ICC Model</b>	Refers to the Secretaries five-point plan for the operation of ICCs.
<b>Line agencies</b>	<p>Refers to those Australian Government agencies who are co-located in urban, regional and remote ICCs or who contribute staff to the ICC functions. These agencies are also referred to as home agencies. Line agencies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR);</li><li>• Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST);</li><li>• Indigenous Business Australia (IBA);</li><li>• Attorney-General's Department (AGD);</li><li>• Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA);</li><li>• Department of Transport and Regional Services (DoTARS);</li><li>• Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA); and</li><li>• Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC).</li></ul>
<b>Network Support Branch</b>	Is a key co-ordination point for ICC support and capacity development located in Canberra.
<b>Program Managers</b>	Are line agency and FaCSIA staff responsible for the coordination and management of a particular program within a portfolio. Program managers understand the program guidelines, program's policy intent, associated funding amounts, cycles and other processes.

### **Secretaries Group**

Is the group of Secretaries of Australian Government departments involved in the provision of services to Indigenous Australians which implements the directions provided by the Ministerial Taskforce. Agencies represented on this group are:

- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (Chair);
- FaCSIA;
- DEWR;
- DEST;
- DoHA;
- AGD;
- DCITA;
- Department of the Environment and Water Resources (formerly the Department of the Environment and Heritage); and
- DoTARS.

### **Solution Brokers (or equivalent)**

Staff employed by line agencies and FaCSIA to develop integrated Indigenous-specific and mainstream responses to community need. Some line agencies (i.e. DEST and DCITA) refer to this role as Regional Managers or Incentive Brokers.

### **State Managers**

State Managers for FaCSIA to whom ICC Managers report.

## Executive summary

### Key findings

The evaluation of Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) found:

- **The ICC Model** (the Model), including the whole-of-government approach, is supported by all staff, ICC Managers, State Managers and line agencies. Community and government stakeholders acknowledge the Model's ability to build targeted and flexible solutions to community-identified priorities by bringing together government and the community as partners.
- **Building partnerships** with Indigenous communities and organisations is a core strength of ICCs. They are effective at building trust of communities, visiting communities and organisations, and managing community expectations. The community recognises this as a key aspect to receiving appropriate support and services.
- **The implementation of whole-of-government collaboration** requires significant improvement in the areas of:
  - information sharing;
  - developing flexible funding solutions<sup>1</sup>; and
  - co-location of the appropriate line agency staff.

Currently, approaches to whole-of-government collaboration vary between ICCs. Opportunities for improvement include:

- developing formal structures for sharing information between agencies at the local level;
- developing a common understanding across agencies and within ICCs about flexible funding solutions; and
- establishing a core complement of line agency staff within ICCs will lead to greater whole-of-government collaboration.

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<sup>1</sup> Flexible funding solutions involves developing a range of funding options for a particular need taking into account the capacity of the organisation, the outcomes to be achieved and the nature of the issue to be addressed. Such solutions may include: Shared Responsibility Agreements, Regional Partnership Agreements, Flexible Funding Pools, mainstream program funding and/or Indigenous-specific program funding.

The role of Solution Broker is integral to connecting line agencies, ICCs and communities.

Any model to enhance whole-of-government work must be in-built with an inherent flexibility required by communities, but that is also balanced with government expectations regarding accountability. Such a model will provide ICCs with a clear mandate for action.

- **The implementation of developing flexible and responsive solutions** to community-identified priorities requires clarity and improvement in the areas of:
  - the use of flexible funding solutions;
  - accountability processes (including reporting, delegations and assessment processes); and
  - reducing red-tape.

This will allow staff and ICC management to adopt a truly issue / community centred approach at a local level rather than a program-centric approach resulting in the availability of more flexible responses for communities.

- **Good practice** is occurring in particular areas in particular jurisdictions. Given the high degree of variability in how ICCs and line agencies have implemented the Model, it is important to share and build upon the good practice to improve the implementation of the ICC Model overall. Examples of good practice include:
  - the development of formal mechanisms for Solution Brokers at the local level to discuss priorities and issues, how their agencies can respond, and design a collective solution;
  - assisting communities to build their capacity to engage in priority setting and negotiation of solutions by brokering training and development sessions with the Office of the Registrar for Aboriginal Corporations (ORAC);
  - the development of relationships between ICCs and State/Territory government agencies. In some cases, this relationship building extends to aligning policy and program priorities;
  - joint community visitation arrangements between line agencies within an ICC and feedback arrangements to relevant line agency staff regarding community need; and
  - “coordination” role of the ICC Manager who focuses on cross-linking communities and line agencies and facilitating appropriate processes to bring the relevant people together.

To address the findings, it is proposed that the Continuous Development Plan (CDP) focus on:

**1 Developing an operating framework for ICCs to underpin the ICC Model and provide guidance on “how to” implement the ICC Model as well as provide a platform to enhance community understanding of the role and function of ICCs.**

This will benefit all ICC stakeholders by clarifying the core elements of the ICC Model to ensure consistent practice across ICCs and jurisdictions while also allowing the flexibility for the operating framework to accommodate local need.

**2 Improving information and knowledge flow regarding policy and program directions for the whole-of-government arrangements.**

This will benefit:

- government stakeholders as they will provide, and be provided with, consistent messages regarding the new arrangements’ policy directions and the common standards for the operation of ICCs. Mechanisms for ICC Managers and State Managers to influence policy and programs should also be built to encourage this information flow; and
- communities and organisations as they will have more frequent access to the most relevant information about what funding exists and who to talk to in an ICC.

**3 Further investment in the development of ICC Managers and Solution Brokers as leaders for the ICC Model and the whole-of-government arrangements.**

This will enable the sharing of leadership responsibility and allow for championing of the ICC Model and whole-of-government collaboration within the ICC, outside the ICC (to communities, within FaCSIA and line agencies) and within line agencies.

**4 Investing in improvements and monitoring the implementation of the Model and its achievement of outcomes.**

This will ensure that the implementation of the ICC Model is refined and improved through a continuous improvement process. This will also ensure that the Model continues to improve the way government responds to community-identified priorities.

The strategies for improvement will be fully explored in the second stage of this project which involves the development of the CDP to improve the implementation of the ICC Model across all ICCs.

## **Scope of the evaluation**

The evaluation aimed to assess the progress of ICCs against the Secretaries' Group ICC five-point plan and to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in the implementation of the ICC Model.

The evaluation assessed these issues against the five dimensions of building partnerships with Indigenous communities, whole-of-government leadership, flexibility and responsiveness, whole-of-government collaboration, and ICC capacity. A sample of eight ICCs from around Australia were selected to participate in the evaluation.

## **Background and context**

During 2004, the Australian Government commenced a number of significant changes to take a whole-of-government approach to Indigenous affairs, thus breaking down silos between departments, reducing red tape, duplication and harnessing a range of services for Indigenous communities across a range of government departments.

ICCs were established as the service delivery hub for the new arrangements. When first established, ICCs were intended to be a 'one-stop-shop' for coordinating and improving Indigenous services, while providing Indigenous people with a single-entry point to government.<sup>2</sup> ICCs work with Indigenous communities to determine their local priorities and needs through a range of funding and agreement-making processes.

The role of the ICC Manager is critical to the improving and coordinating service provision to Indigenous communities. The ICC Manager also provides whole-of-government leadership and day-to-day management of the ICC.

Bringing together these core elements of ICCs is the Secretaries' Group five-point plan which requires ICCs to focus on building partnerships with Indigenous communities and organisations, whole-of-government leadership, whole-of-government collaboration, developing flexible responses, and building the capacity and governance of ICCs.

It is the implementation of these five components that have been examined through this evaluation.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.oipc.gov.au/About\\_OIPC/Indigenous\\_Affairs\\_Arrangements/](http://www.oipc.gov.au/About_OIPC/Indigenous_Affairs_Arrangements/), date accessed 17 November 2005.

# 1 Introduction

## Purpose of the evaluation

FaCSIA engaged KPMG to undertake an evaluation of ICCs. The evaluation assessed the progress of ICCs against the ICC five-point plan and identified the strengths and opportunities for improvement in the implementation of the ICC Model.

The evaluation assessed these issues against the five dimensions of the ICC Model which include:

- working in partnership with Indigenous communities;
- whole-of-government leadership;
- flexibility and responsiveness;
- whole-of-government collaboration; and
- ICC capacity and governance.

A sample of eight ICCs including Perth, Kalgoorlie, Darwin, Alice Springs, Ceduna, Sydney, Wagga and Rockhampton participated in this evaluation. FaCSIA in consultation with ICCs and line agencies, selected these ICCs as they reflect the diverse size, arrangements and locations in which ICCs operate nationally.

This document reports the findings from the evaluation, their implications and possible strategies for improvement. This document will also inform the ICC CDP to be developed upon the conclusion of the evaluation.

## Background and rationale

During 2004, the Australian Government commenced a number of significant changes in the arrangements for Indigenous affairs. The purpose of these changes was to take a whole-of-government approach to Indigenous affairs, thus breaking down silos between departments, reducing red tape, duplication and harnessing a range of services for Indigenous communities across a range of government departments. The whole-of-government approach is underpinned by the principles of: collaboration; regional and local need; flexibility; accountability; and leadership.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

The key features of these changes include:

- the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and its administrative arm, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSIS) and the transfer of programs administered by ATSIC and ATSIS to mainstream Australian Government departments.<sup>4</sup> The transfer of staff from these programs followed the transfer of programs themselves;
- the establishment of a Ministerial Taskforce (MTF) on Indigenous Affairs, which includes Ministers who have day-to-day responsibility for delivering programs and services to Indigenous Australians. The MTF has developed a 20-30 year vision for Indigenous affairs with the target areas which include: early childhood intervention; safer communities; and building Indigenous wealth, employment and entrepreneurial culture.<sup>5</sup> These priorities inform policy-making, service delivery and funding within the Indigenous affairs portfolio;
- the establishment of a Secretaries Group to implement the directions identified by the MTF, and report on results. Key performance indicators regarding the progress of their individual departments in achieving outcomes for Indigenous communities are built into each Secretary's individual performance agreements;
- the appointment of a National Indigenous Council to provide expert advice to the Australian Government on policy, program and service-delivery issues affecting Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders;
- creation of the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) which is responsible for advising on Indigenous policy, coordinating the whole-of-government approach nationally, developing new ways of engaging communities, overseeing State/Territory and Australian Government relationships, and monitoring performance; and
- the establishment of ICCs to offer a whole-of-government response to issues identified by Indigenous communities.

In addition to these new structures, new processes were established to increase coordination of spending on Indigenous programs. For example, the single budget

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that programs were not transferred to the following agencies: DEST, DoTARS, and Department of Environment and Heritage.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

process in Indigenous affairs now sees all new policy proposals from all Ministers considered together, and a single budget submission is produced.<sup>6</sup>

In December 2005, machinery of government changes transferred the responsibility for Indigenous affairs from the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs to the Department of Families, Community Services. With the original changes in 2004, ICCs were managed by OIPC. Since the machinery of government changes in December 2005, responsibility and management of ICCs was transferred to FaCSIA. Under this new arrangement, ICC Managers report to FaCSIA State Managers.

### **Indigenous Coordination Centres**

Under the new arrangements, it was intended that most Indigenous programs and services are funded through the network of 30 multi-agency ICCs in urban, rural and remote Australia.

ICCs were intended to be a 'one-stop-shop' for coordinating the funding and delivery of Indigenous services, while providing Indigenous people with a single-entry point to government.<sup>7</sup> The corollary of a 'one-stop-shop' arrangement is the co-location of staff of the key departments involved in funding and providing services<sup>8</sup> to Indigenous people and communities. The physical co-location of agencies ensures ready access to a full range of Australian Government programs and funding.

The 'staff follow function'<sup>9</sup> was the process by which ATSIC and ATSI staff were transferred to mainstream Australian Government agencies on 1 July 2004. This involved 'mapping' ATSIC and ATSI staff to mainstream Australian Government departments. Staff were 'mapped' to the same agency that the program area they worked within was mapped to. Hence 'staff followed' their program area.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the staff mapped to line agencies formed the staffing complement of ICCs. This staffing complement includes a range of staff such as program managers and Solution Brokers.

Solution Brokers are intended to be experts in their line agency's mainstream and Indigenous-specific programmes. Solution Brokers are to use this expertise to pull

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<sup>6</sup> Australian Government. New arrangements for Indigenous Affairs. August 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Services include: employment, education, community services, information, communication and technology and justice.

<sup>9</sup> Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination. (no date). Indigenous Coordination Centre Model for Rural and Remote Australia. Internal document.

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that some staff mapped to mainstream agencies did not have the program knowledge required to manage the program on the agency they were transferred to. This was also a function of the lower level at which staff were transferred.

together 'service packages' to meet the needs of communities / organisations through SRAs and RPAs.<sup>11</sup>

The role of Solution Broker was also seen as a timely way to increase the skill and capacity of ICCs to assist ICC Managers in developing solutions and responses to community need. Solution Brokers, along with other line agency staff located in ICCs, are directly accountable to their line agencies.

To guide the roles and responsibilities of ICCs and line agencies, a Common Services Agreement (CSA) was developed. The CSA, which applies to all ICCs and co-located line agencies, describes the obligations and responsibilities of each party for the delivery of services on a WoG basis. The CSA is focused on administrative matters regarding sharing of corporate services including: service monitoring and governance; provision of common services; office accommodation; pool vehicles; information and communication technology; grants management; office services; library services; web services; and staff residences.

It is noted that Australian Government agencies, such as Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) and the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), were not originally co-located within the ICCs when ICCs were established on 1 July 2004 as few ATSIC and ATSI staff were 'mapped' to these agencies. However, since this time, DEST and DoHA staff have joined some regional ICCs.

In addition to Australian Government agencies, some State government agencies, such as Department of Aboriginal Affairs in New South Wales and the Department of Housing and Works in Western Australia, are co-located in ICCs throughout their respective states.

ICCs work with Indigenous communities to determine their local priorities and needs. These needs can be addressed through:

- SRAs, which are agreements between the Australian Government and Indigenous families or communities, to provide benefits in return for community commitments;
- FFPs which are to be used to develop flexible responses to community need which do not meet traditional program funding criteria;
- Indigenous programs which target Indigenous people and communities and supplement existing mainstream programs; and
- Mainstream programs which are existing programs funded by Australian Government agencies which are accessible to all who meet the funding guidelines.

RPAs, are also used to identify community and regional priorities. In particular, RPAs are agreements between the Australian Government and groups of Indigenous

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<sup>11</sup> Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination. op cit.

communities across a broader region, which can be used to coordinate the Government's interventions across a regional area.

### **Urban and regional/remote ICCs**

In the development of ICCs, the Secretaries' Group intended for ICCs located in urban areas to differ from regional/remote ICCs.

The role of urban ICCs (i.e. those ICCs located in capital cities and metropolitan areas including Perth and Sydney) were developed with an emphasis on 'harnessing the mainstream'. This is also referred to as increasing Indigenous communities' access to mainstream services and programs. Additionally, it was not expected that the full complement of line agency staff would be co-located in an urban ICC, rather they could remain in their agency's state office. It was intended that Solution Brokers would be based in urban ICCs along with ICC Managers and State Managers.

The core focus of urban ICCs is to:

- manage relationships with State/Territory governments and Australian Government agencies;
- support the development of bilateral agreements;
- coordinate Australian government services across metropolitan area; and
- lead whole-of-government reform.<sup>12</sup>

Urban ICCs also took on the task of developing SRAs with communities and organisations.

In contrast, regional/remote ICCs are intended to develop individualised and tailored solutions to address community need predominantly through SRAs, RPAs and Indigenous programs. A core complement of staff (including program managers and Solution Brokers) representing AGD, DEWR, DEST, FaCSIA, DoHA, DCITA, DoTARS and IBA would be co-located in these ICCs in order to develop timely responses.

While all ICCs focus on increasing access to mainstream programs / services by Indigenous people, this may be more of a challenge for regional / remote locations where such services may not exist. Resulting in the need for tailored and individualised responses

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<sup>12</sup> JML Australia. (July 2004). Candidate Information: ICC Coordinators. Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs: Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, pp7-8.

It is noted that some agencies due to their operational structures and limited staff numbers, have not distinguished their urban and regional/remote operations.

### **Role of ICC Manager**

The role of the ICC Manager is critical to improving service provision to Indigenous communities. The ICC Manager provides leadership and day-to-day management of the ICC. ICC Managers are staff of FaCSIA and report directly to the FaCSIA State Manager in their jurisdiction.

Reflecting the expected outcomes and structure of the ICC, the ICC Manager is expected to:

- ensure effective engagement with local Indigenous representative and communities;
- engage with State/Territory and local governments to establish agreed consultation and service delivery strategies for their region;
- negotiate agreements which allow the government and Indigenous organisations / communities to work together and establish agreed goals and shared responsibility;
- coordinate a whole-of-government approach by ensuring that team members from different government departments work together cohesively to facilitate delivery of innovative and coordinated services to Indigenous communities; and
- provide policy advice and other reports to the OIPC and other government agencies and monitor the success of interventions and outcomes of the ICC.<sup>13</sup>

Each line agency is responsible for recruitment, training and management of its staff. The ICC Manager through the MOU is responsible for ensuring that staff are working cohesively to ensure effective delivery of strategies consistent with a whole-of-government approach.

ICC Managers are employed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the position of SES Band 1 or Executive Level 2.

It is acknowledged that limited training and support to facilitate this change occurred at this time. As a result, most staff located in ICCs did experience a degree of ambiguity about the nature of the business of the ICC, their relationship with their home agencies and the ICCs' operating model.

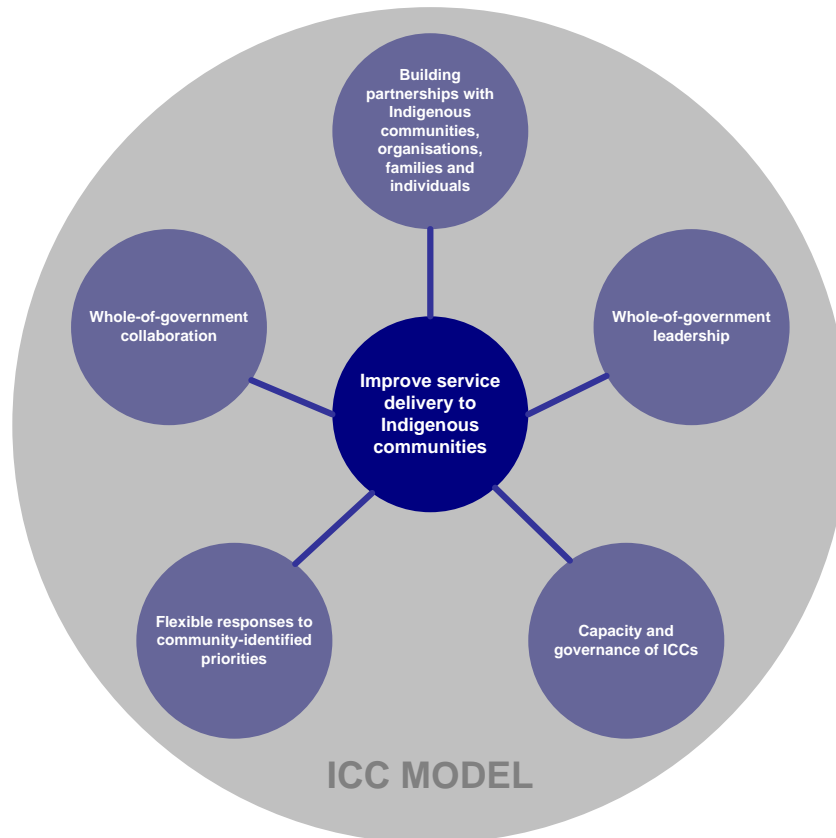
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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

## Secretaries' Group ICC Model

During 2005, the Secretaries' Group developed a five-point plan, which is illustrated in Figure 1, in order to provide clarity about the ICC Model.

Figure 1: Secretaries' Group five-point plan<sup>14</sup>



As illustrated above, the core objective of ICCs is to improve service delivery to Indigenous communities. To achieve this, the five-point plan describes the core enablers for improving service delivery as:<sup>15</sup>

- 1 **Building partnerships with Indigenous communities and organisations** - this involves sharing responsibility with Indigenous communities, committing to Indigenous participation, engaging with representatives and adopting flexible approaches.

<sup>14</sup> This diagram is based on the Secretaries' Group Model and has been developed for the purposes of this evaluation.

<sup>15</sup> The definition of each of the enablers have been derived from the Secretaries' Group Bulletin (4/2005) *The ICC Model: Five point plan*.

- 2 **Whole-of-government leadership** - this requires the ICC Manager to play a key role in coordinating government investment, negotiating with Indigenous representatives, and managing ICC stakeholder relationships.
- 3 **Whole-of government collaboration across ICC agencies** - this involves regional, state and national office support of ICC operations, communication and information sharing, involvement in decision-making, fostering whole-of-government initiatives, early issue resolution and involvement of ICC Manager in staff recruitment.
- 4 **Flexible responses to community-identified priorities** - this involves maximising benefits to communities by connecting Indigenous-specific and mainstream program responses, developing flexible funding solutions, and building the capacity of communities.
- 5 **Capacity and governance of ICCs** - this involves the coordination of business planning at the ICC level which feeds into each home agency and the provision of whole-of-government training.

It is against this model that ICCs were evaluated.

### **Evidence from previous evaluations and reviews**

Since the implementation of the new arrangements, a number of reviews and evaluations regarding the different components of these arrangements, including those relevant to the operation of ICCs, have been conducted. The key findings and recommendations from each of these reviews are summarised below.

#### **OIPC review (2005)**

An internal review of the cultural and attitudinal change required for the successful implementation of the new arrangements' whole-of-government approach was conducted in 2005.

This review found that enablers, such as leadership at all levels within government, relationship-building, networking and the ability to engage with Indigenous communities, were essential to implementing a whole-of-government approach. Barriers to these enablers included a lack of information sharing and guidance regarding the purpose of whole-of-government, as well as a lack of shared outcomes and purpose in improving services to Indigenous people across agencies.

This review recommended, in part, that OIPC focus on:

- developing a strategic framework to build whole-of-government practice and leadership;
- ensuring the right staff with the right skills are recruited to achieve whole-of-government objectives, including undertaking a skills audit;

- improving internal communication from the top-down, as well as feedback from the bottom-up; and
- evaluating the implementation of the whole-of-government approach.

### **Reducing Red-Tape (2006)**

This independent evaluation assessed the extent to which red-tape existed in funding received by agencies through ICCs.

This evaluation found that the existence of perceived red-tape was greater than actual red-tape. The evaluation found that the accounting, reporting, assessment and funding structures themselves did not create red-tape or unreasonable administrative burden, rather it was the interpretation of those processes by program managers which created unreasonable administrative burden.

The evaluation report recommended training and capacity building of staff and funded organisations underpinned by a paradigm shift based on mutual responsibility.

### **Hilyard Report – Affecting Change in Indigenous Service Delivery (2006)**

This independent review examined OIPC and ICCs implementation of the new arrangements.

This review found a significant ‘misfit between the policy intent and the implementation’ of the new arrangements.<sup>16</sup>

To address this ‘misfit’, the review report recommended the: centralisation of funding within OIPC and devolution of project responsibility to ICCs; capacity building and leadership development of SES level staff and ICC Managers regarding the implementation of the policy intent; and revision of managerial control systems.

As a result of this review, a series of workshops were held with management and staff regarding the meaning of whole-of-government and how it applies to ICCs.

### **Observations on Indigenous Coordination Centres (2006)**

This independent review focussed on the administrative burden experienced by Indigenous organisations receiving funding by Australian Government agencies through the new arrangements.

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<sup>16</sup> Hilyard, K. (2006). Affecting change in Indigenous service delivery – A way forward. Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination; Canberra, p1.

This review found positive examples of whole-of-government leadership at the ICC level, building relationships with communities between ICC and line agency staff, and developing flexible solutions based on local need. Areas which required improvement included:

- levels of authority and decision-making;
- communication between ICC staff and national office program managers;
- capacity building of communities to engage in the new arrangements; and
- development of the risk assessment approach.

## 2 Methodology

### Evaluation approach

The data collected from the sampled ICCs and the document reviews has been used to form the key themes and trends in the implementation of the Model overall. The key measures, indicators and data collection methods used to evaluate the ICCs were tested and endorsed by the Project Steering Group.

The evaluation sought to answer the following questions:

1. How and to what extent is the ICC Model being implemented?
2. How and to what extent are the individual components of the ICC Model being implemented?
3. How appropriate is the ICC Model and what improvements can be made?

Specific questions regarding each dimension of the ICC Model to guide the consultations were also developed. These are contained in Appendix B.

### Data collection methods

The research questions above were explored using the following qualitative data collection methods:

- review of individual ICC documents including: strategic plans; business plans; community and government action plans; corporate plans; and internal protocols and working arrangements including the Common Services Agreement;
- review of reports, policy and procedures manuals/guidelines, planning documents, protocols and communiqués at the national office level;
- semi-structured interviews during ICC field visits with ICC Managers, Deputy Managers, FaCSIA staff and line agency staff (including those staff who conduct ICC business but who are located outside of the ICC), and Solution Brokers (or line agency equivalents);
- semi-structured interviews with FaCSIA State Managers;
- semi-structured interviews with a selection of community stakeholders and state government agency staff as nominated by ICC staff and ICC Managers during community visits;
- semi-structured interviews with a selection of national office line agency staff;
- focus group with the OIPC Network Support Branch; and

- combination of focus groups and semi-structured interviews with DEWR, DCITA, AGD, DoHA and DEST State Managers (or equivalent).

A total of 158 Australian and State Government agency staff and 35 community and organisation members were consulted

### **Data analysis**

Data was synthesised to bring together information from various stakeholder groups and documents reviewed in order to address the questions posed for the evaluation. This involved analysing the common and divergent themes and trends to arise from the consultations and document review and blending the information into a coherent assessment regarding the implementation of the ICC Model.

This analysis also provides a view on the strengths and opportunities for improvement for each of the evaluation dimensions.

Analysis of the above informed the overall evaluation providing FaCSIA with information on the effectiveness and appropriateness of the ICC Model. They also provide useful insights which can be used to develop options for future continued positive change and ongoing performance measurement for the CDP.

## **3 Findings**

This section presents the findings regarding the implementation of the ICC Model (referred to as the Model) as a whole, as well as its individual components.

### **ICC Model as a whole**

Overall, there is a high degree of variability in the implementation of the Model across ICCs. It is difficult to make generalisations regarding the findings and for this reason a number of practice examples have been provided throughout the findings to illustrate the difference in implementation.

The implementation of each component of the Model has strengths and opportunities for improvement:

- a core strength of the sampled ICCs is their ability to build relationships with Indigenous communities and organisations. Other strengths include building relationships with state government agencies and participating in their existing community consultation processes; and
- the implementation of whole-of-government collaboration and developing flexible responses requires the most improvement. Different agency structures regarding funding, delegations, risk assessments and program boundaries were consistently described as barriers to whole-of-government collaboration.

Specific findings regarding the implementation of the ICC Model are outlined below.

### **Support for the ICC Model**

All those consulted expressed strong support for the ICC Model and agreed that, if implemented effectively, it can lead to improved service delivery to Indigenous communities. Given the complex and wide-ranging needs of many Indigenous communities, a whole-of-government response, which brings together multiple agencies to design solutions and align priorities, is the logical way to respond in a timely manner, to meet needs and improve overall service delivery.

### **Changes and evolutions of the ICC Model**

Comparison of the consultation data and the document review data indicates that, in order to accommodate the local needs of ICCs and communities, certain parts of the Model have evolved differently to the Model's original intention. This shows a degree of flexibility in the Model to accommodate the diversity of different locations and ICCs.

Examples of divergence from the Model as originally intended include:

- some line agencies do not have Solution Brokers or program management staff based in some regional/remote ICCs; and

- movement away from large-scale, comprehensive SRAs to the use of smaller-scale, targeted SRAs and FFPs.

### **Line agency engagement with the Model**

Approaches to engaging with the Model varies between line agencies. Ultimately, not all line agencies have adopted some of the key strategies to implement the Model including FFPs, Solution Brokers, and the co-location of staff in ICCs.

For example, State Managers and staff from one line agency advised that, while they have Program Managers located in ICCs nationally, they do not have an FFP or Solution Brokers. In contrast, another line agency has an FFP of \$20.4m over five years. This agency also has Solution Brokers located in most ICCs.

This variation in co-location and models of engagement impacts on each ICC's ability to develop flexible and responsive whole-of-government solutions to community need. Agreement regarding the core group of agencies that need to be co-located in ICCs is required. Determining this core group of agencies can be developed on a local basis to accommodate local priorities and the most appropriate responses for communities.

### **Role of FaCSIA in the implementation of the ICC Model**

FaCSIA has a dual role of coordinator of whole-of-government activities as well as funder and deliverer of services. FaCSIA's role as coordinator of whole-of-government activities includes:

- supporting the Secretaries' Group;
- communicating policy directions regarding ICCs and the new arrangements to ICCs and staff located in ICCs through regular bulletins;
- supporting ICCs through FaCSIA's State Offices and the Network Support Branch;
- reforming and refining the implementation of the new arrangements; and
- coordinating whole-of-government work with Australian Government agencies at the State/Territory level through monthly State Managers' meetings.

As a funding agency, FaCSIA is responsible for administering funds for a range of mainstream and Indigenous-specific programs. Like line agencies, FaCSIA experiences its own challenges in increasing Indigenous communities' access to its mainstream programs. As with line agencies, FaCSIA relies on its Solution Brokers to facilitate connection between mainstream programs and Indigenous communities.

### **Urban and regional/remote ICCs**

Urban and regional/remote ICCs have implemented the Model in different ways, and this has been in accordance with the original intention of the focus of urban and regional/remote ICCs. For example, the sampled:

- urban ICCs (i.e. Perth and Sydney) focus on increasing Indigenous people's access to services by 'harnessing the mainstream'; and
- regional/remote ICCs increase access to services by developing tailored solutions through SRAs.

An exception to this is the evolution of Darwin ICC which was originally established as an urban ICC. The Darwin ICC has moved away from a pure urban ICC model to a hybrid of urban and regional/remote operations by providing a combination of tailored responses through SRAs as well as harnessing the mainstream. This means that the Darwin ICC requires a higher complement of line agency staff than other urban ICCs.

The distinction in focus between urban and regional/remote ICCs is appropriate as it is responsive to the contextual differences, strengths and challenges in which ICCs operate.

### **Solution Brokers**

Solution Brokers play a key role alongside State Managers, ICC Managers and Community Engagement staff in leading whole-of-government collaboration and developing flexible responses. Some Solution Brokers undertake this leadership role by:

- challenging program-centric solution design within their agencies;
- sharing information and designing collective solutions with other Solution Brokers and ICC Managers;
- facilitating relationships between their line agency Program Managers, ICC Managers and communities; and
- testing and challenging community-identified need to ensure an appropriate solution is designed.

Where line agencies provide Solution Brokers with support and training<sup>17</sup>, they were more likely to undertake these activities. Conversely, Solution Brokers who had not received guidance or training regarding the expectations of their role indicated this had limited their ability to operate as a conduit between their line agency and ICCs. This often results in developing less flexible and less innovative responses to community need.

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<sup>17</sup> Examples of such training and support includes role clarification, development of principles for effective solution broking (e.g. sharing information, having an entrepreneurial spirit, seeing beyond program boundaries), and information sharing and exchange between Solution Brokers.

An evidenced benefit of effective solution broking is the leveraging of existing programs and responses (including mainstream programs) to address a community-identified priority.

The role of Solution Brokers as the connector between the ICC, community and line agency programs is a vital one that requires ongoing support and development to ensure it is effective.

## Individual components of the ICC Model

The findings regarding the individual components of the ICC Model - building partnerships, whole-of-government leadership, whole-of-government collaboration, flexibility and responsiveness, and ICC capacity and governance - are detailed below.

### Building partnerships

Building partnerships with Indigenous communities, organisations, families and individuals is a core component of the operation of ICCs. The Secretaries' Bulletin refers to 'building partnerships' as sharing responsibility with Indigenous communities, committing to Indigenous participation, engaging with representatives and adopting flexible approaches.

Overall, building partnerships through Indigenous participation, engagement and sharing responsibility is a strength of ICCs. ICC Managers, Deputy Managers and Community Engagement staff (where they exist) play a key role in building relationships with communities and organisations. The consultations found that such relationships are built by:

- regularly visiting communities and organisations;
- participating in formal networks such as inter-agency meetings; and
- participating in formal community planning processes that may be location or issue-specific such as Community Working Parties (regional NSW), Negotiation Tables (Qld), or Regional Engagement Groups (in metropolitan NSW).

Partnerships with communities and organisations are generally built around the negotiation of solution(s) for a particular need or to resolve a range of issues through the development and negotiation of an SRA.

Where line agencies have existing relationships with communities / organisations through Program Funding Agreements (PFAs), these relationships have been maintained directly between the funded organisation and Program Manager.

Building *effective* partnerships is highly dependent on existing personal relationships as well as building trust over time. Where ICC staff and management do not have existing relationships with communities and organisations and where communities do not have a clear leadership, building partnerships is significantly more challenging for ICCs.

Community / organisations reported the importance of having a single and consistent contact point for negotiating and managing their funding relationship. An example of where this is effective is in the Darwin ICC. Community representatives advised that the Solution Broker and Program Manager are their key contact points in the ICC, and this arrangement works well as they have their questions and issues responded to in a timely manner.

The findings regarding specific aspects of building partnerships are explored below:

### **Increasing the use of community planning and priority setting processes**

This refers to the strategies used by ICCs to engage communities to identify needs, set priorities, establish goals for improvement and design solutions. Community plans may be implemented using SRAs, RPAs, use of FFPs, WoG grants or by accessing mainstream programs or a combination of these.

The extent to which ICCs and communities undertake joint planning activities varies. For example:

- some ICCs employ formal, strategic and structured planning activities which build on existing community or state government managed planning / priority setting activities such as Community Working Parties, Negotiation Tables or Regional Engagement Groups (REGs); and
- other ICCs employ locally-based and opportunistic responses through the development of SRAs as issues within communities arise.

An example of a strategic planning approach is the Sydney ICC's participation in the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs community planning activities known as REGs. REGs are an existing community consultation mechanism designed to help community and government identify the key priorities and areas for action. Indigenous peak organisations for housing, health and community services are members of the REG. Individual Community Action Plans are then developed to address each identified priority area.

### **Increasing genuine Indigenous participation and the development of partnerships with Indigenous communities, other local organisations and businesses**

Participation in the context of ICCs extends from the concepts of shared responsibility and mutual obligations. This refers to collaboration between government agencies and communities / organisations to bring about change.<sup>18</sup> Each 'partner' is jointly responsible for priority setting and achieving outcomes.

The involvement of communities and organisations in identifying need and negotiating responses is occurring in all sampled ICCs. However, different meanings of participation in the context of ICCs exist. The range of definitions included:

- communities / organisations and ICCs building SRAs and responses together;

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<sup>18</sup> Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination. (No date). Shared Responsibility and Strategic Investment. ICC document.

- ICCs providing communities with support to build their capacity so they can be equal partners in negotiating agreements;
- the active seeking out and engagement of unidentified Indigenous organisations and leadership as partners; and
- responding to communities / organisations as they approach the ICC rather than seeking them out.

There was also a clear distinction between line agency staff and ICC Managers/Deputy Manager's meanings of partnership. ICC Managers and Deputy Managers incorporate positive measures to develop genuine partnership through capacity building, including:

- assisting organisations examine their governance structures;
- funding organisations to purchase the services of consultants from the Panel of Experts to review service arrangements and internal controls; and
- providing communities and organisations with information about the new arrangements, different funding options and solutions.

Given the diverse meanings of partnership, participation and engagement, commonality regarding these concepts is required.

### **Increasing the presentation of a single-united face**

This refers to the extent to which ICC and line agency staff present to communities / organisations as a team who can assist in addressing need.

There is a definite trend of line agency staff presenting to communities / organisations as representatives of their agency. While ICC Managers, Deputy Managers and Community Engagement staff present as ICC. Communities / organisations reported this as confusing as they do not know who to talk to or if they have to talk to all the different agencies instead of accessing services through the ICC.

Additionally, ICC staff and line agency staff rarely visit communities together. Rather, ICC staff and line agencies often visit the same communities separately. Communities / organisations indicated that this arrangement was confusing and time consuming.

An example of the lack of a 'single-united face' exists in a regional/remote location. In this location, organisations reported not knowing the business of the local ICC and explained that, when they need assistance, they contact the government agency they think can help. Where this occurred and the agency could not help them, they were not referred on to an agency that could assist.

In contrast, the visiting arrangement for Kalgoorlie ICC is an example of good practice in presenting a single, united face. Given the distances required to travel to

communities in the Kalgoorlie ICC's catchment area, wherever possible, ICC staff coordinate their travel plans so they can travel to the same communities in the same vehicle. Communities / organisations commented that they preferred this approach to separate visitation approach.

### **Achievement of outcomes**

An outcome of ICCs and the new arrangements is to improve service delivery to Indigenous communities and to redress Indigenous disadvantage. Measures of this include the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Strategic Areas for Action*. The *Strategic Areas for Action* are monitored through the *Blueprint for Action* which ICCs must report against to FaCSIA on a monthly basis.

Due to the lack of data to make comparisons of service delivery over time, it is too soon to tell if service delivery has improved as a result of the ICC Model. Additionally, it is too soon to tell if there has been an impact on the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Strategic Areas for Action*.

Monitoring progress and achievement of outcomes is an area which requires further exploration.

### **Increasing the capacity of Indigenous organisations**

This refers to the extent of Indigenous organisations' capacity to:

- engage in the new arrangements;
- share responsibility;
- meet funding requirements; and
- identify their needs.

ICCs work with, and fund, communities and organisations that have differing levels of capacity. Where a community or organisation has limited capacity due to a lack of leadership or governance, for example, ICCs Managers and Deputy Managers help organise the community to identify priorities and negotiate with government.

Examples of ICC staff assisting communities build their capacity include:

- In most ICCs, where an organisation's application for funding may be unsuccessful through the normal grants process, the ICC Manager may assist the community to build its financial management and governance arrangements in order for the organisation to negotiate and implement an SRA.
- Where an organisation and ICC agree, the Community Engagement staff in the urban ICC will negotiate a training and support package to be provided to the community by ORAC.

However, barriers to building capacity do exist for some line agencies. Many line agency staff were unable to provide governance and financial management assistance to organisations due to probity issues related to the assessment of funding applications. This contrasts with approach of ICC Managers, Deputy Managers and Community Engagement staff in assisting communities and organisations with these matters.

This highlights a clear delineation between the role of ICC Management and Community Engagement staff in building capacity and line agency staff in managing programs and funding.

Overwhelmingly, communities and organisations commented on the need for consistency in the government's approach. Communities advised that it was difficult for them to keep abreast of the changing policy and service delivery environment and this impacts on their capacity to engage with government. What is evident from these conversations however was the resilience and adaptability of the community and organisations to a constantly changing service delivery environment.

### **Key implications**

The findings for building partnerships evidence the need to:

- develop Common Standards regarding the core components of building partnerships and the responsibilities of each ICC stakeholder in that process (e.g. capacity building responsibilities transferred to ICC Manager/Community Engagement staff while Program Managers maintain a separate responsibility for funding);
- streamline the primary ICC contact points for communities and organisations and provide a consistent message to communities and organisations about service delivery to Indigenous communities; and
- build on existing community planning activities and where they do not exist use examples as a starting point.

## Whole-of-government leadership

Whole-of-government leadership requires the ICC Manager to coordinate government investment, negotiate with Indigenous representatives and manage ICC stakeholder relationships (including staff, line agencies, State Managers, communities and external organisations).

ICC Managers play a key leadership role as coordinators of whole-of-government work within ICCs. A core enabler of this leadership role is constant communication between ICC Managers and ICC stakeholders about community need and solution design.

Whole-of-government leadership is also prevalent and necessary for a range of roles including Solution Brokers, Community Engagement staff and State Managers. To be truly effective, whole-of-government leadership must occur not only at the ICC level, but also at the State and central office levels.

The findings regarding the specific aspects of whole-of-government leadership are detailed below:

### Adoption/uptake of leadership role by ICC Manager

ICC Managers are clearly identified as the key coordinators of Australian Government responses for Indigenous communities.

The core set of skills and attributes to undertaking this leadership role effectively, include:

- the ability to work and lead a team in an environment of ambiguity;
- the ability to build relationships with the appropriate people within the ICC, line agencies and FaCSIA, State/Territory and local government, and the community;
- knowledge of government processes including an understanding of each line agencies' and FaCSIA's delegations, funding arrangements and risk assessment processes;
- being solution-focussed and knowing which agencies (as well as the relevant people in those agencies) to engage in a particular issue / priority;
- the ability to manage competing priorities and demands regarding responses for Indigenous communities (i.e. Communities in Crisis, strategic intervention sites and other ICC business);
- the ability to implement, facilitate and coordinate whole-of-government solution design processes; and
- managing community expectations.

ICC Managers reported frustration in undertaking this role. As coordinators, Managers indicated that they do not have authority to gather agency staff support. This issue particularly arises when Managers cannot gather the required staff resources to build a timely response for a community as the core program management responsibilities of line agency staff is the priority of line agencies.

Line agencies confirmed that their staff are directly responsible to their line agency and that the ICC Manager has no authority to compel or direct staff to undertake ICC work. This places greater emphasis on the role of ICC Managers as facilitators, negotiators and coordinators.

Solution Brokers, Community Engagement and State Managers also play a significant leadership role in the WoG directions, both within the ICC and outside the ICC. In particular, Solution Brokers play a key role in challenging silo-ed program-centric thinking within their agencies, while Community Engagement staff play a key role in managing community expectations and communicating funding opportunities to the community.

The flow of information between each of these 'leader' groups therefore is essential to improving services to Indigenous communities.

### **Increased coordination of agency activities & ability to overcome barriers to coordination**

Coordination in the context of ICCs involves:

- identifying synergies and alignments between agencies' core business and community need;
- bringing all the relevant agencies together to discuss priorities and design solutions;
- providing all parties involved in the solution design with the appropriate information to make decisions; and
- facilitating processes to overcome barriers in coordination.

Most Managers 'coordinate' the appropriate agency staff to assist with developing a response to community need. This coordination usually occurs through Solution Brokers. However, some line agencies indicated that on occasion they were not involved in the development of SRAs when their programs could have provided a response.

Where barriers to coordination exist, such as agencies not understanding each other's programs (therefore expecting other agencies to provide funding rather than themselves), these barriers have been overcome by developing formal processes to raise awareness and understanding of each agency's programs and responsibilities.

Examples of coordination activities include:

- The ICC Manager and FaCSIA Solution Broker in an urban ICC have developed fortnightly Solution Broker forums to coordinate Australian Government activity on an issue-by-issue basis. Each fortnight, Solution Brokers and other relevant staff from agencies including DEWR, DCITA, FaCSIA, AGD, IBA, DoHA, DEST discuss community-identified priorities and how each agency may be able to respond. Solution Brokers reported that this forum assists them in understanding what each agency can respond to in light of their policy directions.
- ICC Managers undertake the WoG Action Planning process which involves the input of all line agencies. This planning process is a formal structure in which ICC and line agency business is aligned and provides the mandate for staff to engage in the ICC work.

### **Increased cross-linking of agencies and communities**

Cross-linking refers to the ability of ICC Managers to connect line agencies and communities for the purpose of planning, identifying priorities / issues and designing solutions.

Line agencies see ICC Managers as the conduit between:

- community and line agencies; and
- line agencies and line agencies.

However, as noted in 'building partnerships', some line agencies have their own direct relationships with communities and organisations through PFAs.

Staff and ICC Managers reported varying levels of effectiveness of processes to cross-link agencies, resulting in missed opportunities for information sharing. For example, staff from one ICC reported that monthly ICC staff meetings are used to discuss administrative issues rather than strategies to increase coordination, such as community issues and solution design. On the other hand, Solution Brokers from another ICC commented that their Solution Broker forums had improved over time and were important for exchanging and sharing information about each other's programs.

### **Increased support from line agencies**

Support from line agencies can be provided in various forms, including:

- the provision of line agency Program Managers and Solution Brokers to individual ICCs;
- the provision of information regarding programs and funding;
- championing the new arrangements and whole-of-government work in Indigenous communities upwards through their agencies and especially to National Program Managers located in central office; and

- continually reinforcing to staff the line agency's commitment to working in and with ICCs in addition to the core program management function of the agency.
- Support for ICC Managers predominantly exists in the form of access to Solution Brokers to develop responses. However, given not all agencies have Solution Brokers located in all ICCs, this access does vary between ICCs.

Line agency staff located in ICCs commented that they experience a tension between their program management responsibilities (i.e. the expectations of their line agency) and their responsibility to engage in what they referred to as ICC work (i.e. the expectations of ICC Managers and communities). Staff reported that their program management responsibilities always prevail. Line agency State Managers affirmed this finding and restated the tension between program management and ICC work which has led to some ICC Managers pressuring staff to undertake ICC work.

Conversely, ICC Managers reported feeling powerless in some situations as they do not have the authority to direct change; rather, their role involves coordination, negotiation and facilitation. Managers in regional and remote ICCs reported the need to have more Solution Brokers based in their ICCs. Also having staff who are able to make decisions for their line agency would also be of great assistance.

Further devolution of authority by line agencies and expansion of some line agencies' co-location arrangements would help overcome this barrier.

### **Key implications**

The findings for whole-of-government leadership evidence the need to:

- develop a shared vision and collective outcomes for the operation of ICCs that is 'owned' by all ICC stakeholders;
- clarify roles and responsibilities of each of the ICC stakeholders;
- continuation and expansion of mentoring for ICC Managers;
- linking ICC Managers performance to participation in the SES leadership development program;
- strengthen the interface between community and Solution Brokers through local advisory, consultative and joint-solution design arrangements; and
- explore the expansion of co-location arrangements to increase information flow and responsiveness.

## Whole-of-government collaboration

Broadly, whole-of-government collaboration (also referred to as 'joined-up government') requires:

- devolution of responsibility;
- developing a collective approach to problems across agencies with shared outcomes;
- the capacity to identify and assess different perspectives and views; and
- joint power sharing and joint accountability arrangements.<sup>19</sup>

Dr Peter Shergold, Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, commented that whole-of-government arrangements are achieved 'not in rearranging bureaucratic structures but in modifying the networks between them and the behaviour of those who work within them'.<sup>20</sup>

Whole-of-government collaboration in the context of ICCs involves:

- regional, state and national office support of ICC operations;
- communication and information sharing;
- involvement in decision-making;
- fostering whole-of-government initiatives; and
- early issue resolution and involvement of ICC Manager in staff recruitment.

It also requires improving networks between agencies. In particular, the key characteristics of whole-of-government are:

- collaboration between key government agencies;

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<sup>19</sup> Baxter, C., Chang, K., Cleary, R., Harrison, K., Letcher, A., and Wintergreen-Arthur, R. (2005). Whole-of-government implementation: Cultural and attitudinal change within OIPC and the Australian Government. Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs: Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination.

<sup>20</sup> Shergold, P. (2004). Connecting Government. A speech to launch *Connecting Government: Whole-of-Government Response to Australia's Priority Challenges*. Management Advisory Committee, Report No 4. 20 April 2004.

- joint leadership;
- flexibility;
- focussing on regional need; and
- accountability.<sup>21</sup>

Overall, the implementation of whole-of-government collaboration in ICCs is an area requiring significant improvement. Many of the issues that impede whole-of-government collaboration are structural and have little to do with ICC staff and management's willingness to collaborate.

The findings regarding specific aspects of whole-of-government collaboration are discussed in detail below.

#### **Increased regional, state and national collaboration**

This refers to the extent to which ICCs and FaSCIA have formed relationships and partnerships with a range of government agencies at the local, regional, State/Territory and national levels. Collaboration at all of these levels does exist; however, the effectiveness varies.

Whole-of-government collaboration exists around particular issues (e.g. Communities in Crisis and strategic intervention sites) as well as having a more strategic, forward planning or continuous development focus.

Examples of collaboration include:

- Networking with local councils as a key to harnessing the mainstream by participating in interagency meetings and networks. This collaboration has led to the inclusion of local councils in SRAs or joint funding arrangements.
- As discussed in 'building partnerships', at the local ICC level some ICCs have engaged with the state government through existing planning processes. However, in most jurisdictions, these relationships are still being built.
- State Managers' forums exist in all jurisdictions. State Managers reported varying degrees of effectiveness. Predominantly, most indicated that the forums could benefit from a more strategic focus.

The focus and structure of State Managers' meetings varies between jurisdictions. Some are held fortnightly, while others are held monthly with different membership for

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<sup>21</sup> [www.oipc.gov.au/About\\_OIPC/Indigenous\\_Affairs\\_Arrangements/](http://www.oipc.gov.au/About_OIPC/Indigenous_Affairs_Arrangements/), date accessed 17 November 2005.

different meetings. State Managers' forums are generally well represented. Some State Managers' forums include ICC Managers. All State Managers for involved line agencies are invited.

The focus of these forums range from being issue-based, to discussing policy and program issues not just for Indigenous communities but for all service users, to information sharing forums, while others focus specifically on improving the implementation of the new arrangements within their jurisdictions. The effectiveness of these forums is reported to vary between jurisdictions; some State Managers would prefer a more strategic focus rather than focussing on detailed administrative issues.

Line agency State Managers reported that collaboration efforts were successful:

- when each agency was aware of their roles and responsibilities;
- they aligned their outcomes as much as possible; and
- they held a shared vision for improving service delivery.

#### **Increased collaboration and integration within ICCs and ability to overcome barriers to collaboration**

ICC Managers, State Managers and staff reported different visions for working in a whole-of-government way, including:

- agencies identifying issues to be resolved and their solutions together, resulting in collective ownership and responsibility;
- policy and program coordination and alignment at all levels (i.e. national, State/Territory, regional and local);
- clear identification of roles and responsibilities in the context of whole of government; and
- alignment of agencies' policy and program directions to the MTF directions including the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Framework Strategic Areas for Action* and developing a common methodology for reporting against these outcomes.

A line agency State Manager noted that whole-of-government 'is not just about various agencies contributing funding. Rather agencies must see the full picture and be equally accountable for the solution design and implementation.'

Barriers to collaboration were reported to include:

- the time consuming nature of bringing agencies together;
- unfocussed and undisciplined discussion about issues and solutions; and

- the inability of agency representatives to make decisions / commitments on behalf on their agency because of lack of devolution of authority.

To overcome barriers to collaboration, most ICCs with Solution Brokers engage in some form of collaborative solution broking; this is where Solution Brokers come together to identify priorities, discuss possible program responses and develop solutions. Many staff and ICC Managers also saw co-location as an essential ingredient to overcoming the barriers to collaboration.

### **Appropriate funding, reporting and delegations**

This component examines the extent to which the current funding, reporting and delegation arrangements within ICCs and line agencies are appropriate for enabling whole-of-government collaboration.

Overwhelmingly, the consultations repeated the message that the current funding and reporting arrangements are a significant barrier to whole-of-government collaboration. Specifically, line agencies have different program guidelines, funding rounds and delegations which do not align and consequently impede timely responses.

The e-sub process is a key element to the whole-of-government coordination of funding procedures. However, it was reported that the rigour required for applications for small amounts of funding was too onerous when compared to the low-level of risk.

An example of effective streamlining of funding advertising and applications process is the WoG grants process. WoG grants is coordinated by the ICC, and this coordination is reported to be working well. However, complaints were raised about the different risk assessments each line agency applies to applications. In some cases, this can result in applications undergoing up to eight different risk assessments.

An example of an existing program funding selection process which engages ICCs is DEST's whole of school intervention strategy. Regional and state assessment panels are formed to assess applications for funding through this initiative. As part of its commitment to whole-of-government collaboration, DEST invites ICC Managers to participate in the assessment panel. ICC Managers are able to provide and share local knowledge regarding applicant organisations in these for a, as well as increase their understanding of DEST's programs.

In terms of reporting, staff and organisations understand the need for accountability requirements, however, suggested that funding application and reporting processes through ICCs should be streamlined so that organisations are not required to report back to multiple agencies.

### **Role of Solution Brokers**

Solution Brokers are intended to assist ICC Managers in whole-of-government collaboration by being the conduit for their agency's response to community identified need.

All line agencies that have Solution Brokers see this role as the key to harnessing the mainstream and connecting the agency and ICC. These agencies have dedicated significant resources to develop this role.

For example, DEWR has developed a range of supports for their Solution Brokers, these include:

- an on-line toolbox for Solution Brokers which is accessible through the DEWR intranet. The toolbox contains information on creating SRA schedules, flexible funding pools, DEWR programmes and quarterly environmental data;
- national DEWR Solution Broker workshops to share good practice and receive information about DEWR's direction; and
- regular video-conference seminars.

On the other hand, Solution Brokers from other agencies indicated that they had been given very little guidance about their role and their agencies' expectations. These Solution Brokers reported that they had not received any training to undertake the role.

It should be noted that not all ICCs are staff with Solution Brokers for every line agency. For example, AGD has two Solution Brokers based in the Sydney ICC, but they are responsible for brokering solutions for all of NSW. Given the key role of Solution Brokers, ICC Managers repeated the need for Solution Brokers from the core line agencies to be based locally in every ICC.

Solution Brokers reported receiving very little guidance or support regarding their role from OIPC/FaCSIA and, as a result, developed their role organically. Solution Brokers see their role as:

- educating the ICC and community about line agency business; and
- educating their line agency about ICC work and what it means to harness the mainstream.

The characteristics and skills of effective Solution Brokers were described to include:

- championing whole-of-government collaboration within line agency;
- championing increased Indigenous people's / communities' access to their line agency's mainstream programs;
- having a detailed knowledge of their line agency's mainstream and Indigenous-specific programs and knowing how to access them;
- having a clear whole-of-government coordination focus rather than juggling program management responsibilities (e.g. DoHA Solution Broker model where Solution Brokers do not have any program management responsibilities);

- channelling the appropriate information and filtering out the 'noise', including testing and challenging community need and managing expectations;
- understanding the business of ICCs and their role within the ICC; and
- the ability to assist communities and organisations understand their issues.

It was consistently reported that Solution Brokers require more support and, in response to this, WA and NSW have developed a Solution Broker conference. The conference will allow Solution Brokers to share information and experiences to inform their practice.

### **Key implications**

The findings for whole-of-government collaboration evidence the need to:

- align outcomes and collective vision at the local, regional, State and national levels based on the OID Framework Strategic Areas for Action;
- clarify the roles, responsibilities and expectations of Solution Brokers, State Managers and line agency staff in the context of ICCs;
- balance reactive responses with strategic planning of need and priority setting;
- build on existing solution design fora which encourage whole-of-government collaboration;
- shift the focus of higher level, State Manager, meetings to building strategic alignment;
- share program and funding information between line agencies and ICCs;
- develop Common Standards regarding concepts such as 'engagement' and 'harnessing the mainstream'; and
- encourage and invest in the role of Solution Brokers and the expansion of the co-location of Solution Brokers.

## Flexibility and responsiveness

Developing flexible responses to community-identified priorities involves maximising benefits to communities by connecting Indigenous-specific and mainstream program responses, developing flexible funding solutions and building the capacity of communities.

Developing flexible responses requires a client-focussed or issue-focussed approach that is free from traditional program boundaries. Instead of assessing an application on its ability to fit within program guidelines, flexible funding solutions that are responsive require staff to build solutions around a particular need.

Overall, ICCs have taken advantage of SRAs as a responsive and flexible funding solution, however uptake of other non-program responses, such as flexible funding pools, is mixed both within the ICC and the line agencies. Further, the most consistent finding is that individual line agency structures and program guidelines impede the reduction of red tape, flexibility and responsiveness.

Staff also reported the difficulty in knowing which scenarios to use for which funding solution. There are examples of SRAs being used when a mainstream or Indigenous-specific program response would have been suitable. Where this occurs, there is a high degree of risk of cost-shifting and duplication of funding. Developing principles to guide the appropriate use of the different funding solutions is required.

The findings regarding different aspects of developing flexible responses are discussed in detail below:

### Increased responsiveness to community priorities

Responsiveness refers to the time taken to:

- develop and implement solutions; and
- the willingness (and ability) to respond to community need.

Overall, the level of responsiveness varies within and between ICCs. Responsiveness is higher for Communities in Crisis and strategic intervention sites. The reason for this is the environment of urgency which surrounds these sites in addressing critical issues and gathering a whole-of-government response which is directed by the Minister.

On the other hand, the development of SRAs generally have a lower rate of responsiveness. For example, one ICC took over 12 months to negotiate and approve an SRA which was worth under \$50,000 in funding. The time taken to develop this SRA seems excessive given its value. The ICC Manager in this instance reported that receiving individual line agency approval of the SRA was the time consuming element of this process.

To overcome the barrier of obtaining multiple line agency approvals as outlined above, many ICCs have adopted the approach of developing smaller SRAs in terms of dollar value, number of signatories and issues to be addressed. This approach, however, may come at the cost of developing a true whole-of-government response.

Communities / organisations provided mixed feedback in this area. Some organisations indicated that it took too long to develop and implement SRAs or to receive other forms of funding. While others indicated that it was easy to access the ICC to raise and discuss issues and access funding.

### **Increased connection of Indigenous programs to mainstream**

Connection of Indigenous programs to mainstream is also referred to as 'harnessing the mainstream'. Harnessing the mainstream requires increasing Indigenous communities and organisations' access to line agencies' mainstream programs in addition to Indigenous programs. Harnessing the mainstream reinforces the concept that Indigenous programs are designed to supplement (rather than duplicate or replace) mainstream programs.

There is a difference of opinion amongst and within agencies as to what 'harnessing the mainstream' means. For example, one line agency reported that harnessing the mainstream involves taking funds from mainstream programs and quarantining those funds in an Indigenous FFP, while other line agencies explained that it is about increasing access to mainstream programs in the first instance and using Indigenous specific funding second.

Harnessing the mainstream is a core focus of urban ICCs. For example, ICC Managers, Deputy Managers and Community Engagement staff focus their efforts on facilitating relationships between Indigenous organisations and mainstream service providers. Similar relationship building occurs between organisations / communities and Solution Brokers. Solution Brokers in urban ICCs reported that a core function of their role is to facilitate Indigenous communities / organisations access to their line agency's mainstream programs where appropriate.

Harnessing the mainstream in regional and remote ICCs is more prevalent for Communities in Crisis (CIC) and strategic intervention sites. Through CICs and strategic intervention sites, a range of government agencies build a series of responses to address community need. In doing this, some agencies must harness existing mainstream programs.

### **Reduction in 'red-tape'**

Reducing red-tape refers to the extent to which unreasonable administrative burden on staff and funded organisations has been reduced. Reducing red-tape is evidenced by streamlining of structures, processes and guidelines to enable timely and flexible responses. Those consulted, including community representatives, agreed that red-tape has increased with the inception of ICCs.

A perceived barrier to reducing red-tape is line agencies' different program and funding guidelines and models for engaging in ICCs.

An example which illustrates this is the WoG grants process. Up to seven line agencies can be involved in the assessment of applications for WoG grants. During the assessment process, a risk assessment is conducted for all applications to determine eligibility for funding. Risk assessment procedures vary between line agencies. For example, one agency may apply a more rigorous risk assessment for applications over \$100,000, while another agency's more rigorous assessment only applies to applications over \$150,000. For an application of \$100,000, it must go through at least three different risk assessment processes before it is considered for approval. One ICC reported that some applications went through seven different risk assessments.

As a result of the different assessment processes, the time taken to approve applications for funding had increased.

Similarly, communities and organisations indicated that, if they receive funding from multiple government agencies for a particular issue, they are required to report on those funds to the individual agencies separately rather than preparing a single report which is distributed to all agencies.

#### **Increased flexible funding solutions**

This refers to the extent to which solutions outside of traditional program funding have been developed and adopted by ICCs and line agencies. There is a mixed response to the uptake and development of flexible funding solutions.

Flexible funding solutions predominantly exist in the form of SRAs and FFPs. FaCSIA, DEST, DoHA and AGs all have FFPs and associated delegations with these FFPs; however, these FFPs have been newly created. The delegations, guidelines and amounts for these FFPs vary between agencies. For example:

- FaCSIA - the total amount of the FFP is unknown however ICC Managers have delegation for funding under \$100,000 and State Managers from \$100,000 to \$500,000.
- DoHA - in July 2007, State Managers will have delegation to approve funding through the FFP of up to \$50,000. The total FFP budget is \$1.4m per annum. This amount is then pro-rata'd to State and Territory offices according to the number of ICCs located within each jurisdiction.

All FFPs are financial year by financial year funding and are not recurrent beyond the financial year. Unspent FFP funds cannot be rolled over into the next financial year.

DCITA and DoTARS do not have an FFP, however DoTARS accesses flexible funds for SRAs through its Regional Partnerships Program. Conversely, DCITA provides funding through SRAs and its six monthly funding rounds.

Line agency State Managers and Solution Brokers suggested that to be truly flexible, FFPs should not have guidelines. On the other hand, some FaCSIA State Managers and ICC Managers indicated flexibility also needed to be balanced with financial accountability.

The use of FFPs in the context of mainstream programs, Indigenous-specific programs, SRAs and RPAs is an area of ambiguity for many ICC staff and Solution Brokers. They reported not knowing when to use an SRA or an FFP or Indigenous-specific program and requested guidance in this area.

In response to this, a set of principles guiding the appropriate use of flexible funding solutions would benefit ICC Management and staff.

### **Changes in the government's response**

Government stakeholders agreed there had been a change in their response. Communities agreed there had been a change but were still unclear about the structure of the changes.

There were mixed views about the effectiveness of the changes. For example:

- communities indicated that they were more involved in priority-setting, however the time taken to deliver responses had increased;
- government agency staff at the national and state levels reported that, while working in a whole-of-government way needs improvement, it has progressed significantly since the new arrangements commenced in July 2004; and
- ICC staff commented that they operated in a more collegiate way prior to ICCs.

### **Increased capacity building**

The findings regarding this measure are explored in detail in 'building partnerships'. As discussed in 'building partnerships', ICCs do focus on building the capacity of Indigenous organisations where their capacity to negotiate agreements, manage funds, or develop funding submissions is limited. Communities and organisations welcomed this support.

### **Key implications**

The findings for flexibility and responsiveness evidence the need to:

- streamline reporting procedures to reduce red-tape for communities;
- develop principles regarding the use of FFPs in the context of other available flexible funding solutions; and
- develop guidance (not prescription) regarding the purpose of flexible funding solutions.

## Capacity and governance of ICCs

Capacity and governance of ICCs involves the coordination of business planning at the ICC level which feeds into each line agency, as well as building the skill capacity of staff and enabling the structural environment for whole-of-government work.

Overall, concerns were raised regarding the current Common Services arrangements and how these impact on ICC work. Concerns were also raised about the lack of training and support provided to staff about whole-of-government work.

The findings regarding specific aspects of capacity and governance are discussed in detail below:

### Increased staff capacity building

This explored the extent to which staff have the skills and knowledge to work in a whole-of-government way.

Staff reported participating in a workshop on working in a whole-of-government way, however they reported the need for more training and support to work in a whole-of-government way.

Multiple communiqués regarding new arrangements and the Model are released to staff on an ongoing basis, however staff indicated that the ICC Model was not clear. It was suggested that such information should be complemented with 'just in time' training or readily accessible information online or touch point in national office.

Staff, management and State Managers all indicated the need for ICC induction packages to be developed to assist new staff learn about the work of ICCs and the environment in which they operate.

Additionally, urban ICC Managers indicated that they were under-resourced and required more staff resources to assist them in harnessing the mainstream. ICC Managers and Deputy Managers reported that the lack of staffing resulted in shifting their focus from strategic issues and the management of the ICC to managing detail such as writing SRAs and meeting minutes.

### Increased and timely resolution of staffing issues

This component explored the mechanisms for resolving staffing issues such as conflict resolution procedures and grievance policies.

The approaches and time taken to resolve staffing issues varies between ICCs. Where effective resolution occurs, it is based on clarity of roles and responsibilities of ICC Managers, line agency staff and line agencies. There is also a tendency towards informal and prompt resolution of issues, and dealing with issues in such a manner is supported by line agencies.

An example of this is contained in the DoHA Solution Broker Manual which encourages the prompt and informal resolution of staffing issues in the first instance.

Where issues cannot be resolved informally or locally, they are often escalated to the State Manager level (either line agency or FaCSIA State Manager).

Despite these procedures, some staff reported dissatisfaction with the direction provided regarding the work of ICCs and the expectations placed on them as a result.

### **Appropriate risk management procedures**

Risk management procedures relates to those procedures used to assess the risk of grant and funding applications.

All staff and management are aware of and employ the risk management procedures. As explained in the findings for 'flexible responses', such procedures can be cumbersome when each agency applies their own risk assessment on top of the ICC procedure for funding applications.

### **Increased compliance with accountability requirements**

Accountability refers to managing and justifying the approval and expenditure of funds as well as staff reporting back to their line agencies. Each line agency, as well as the ICCs, have their own requirements which are generally complied with.

Some staff did report the need for more support from their line agencies, especially where they are the single officer for their agency based in a remote ICC.

### **Capable IT infrastructure**

All staff and ICC Managers have access to email and IT infrastructure, but with differing degrees of access to support. However, line agency staff do not have access to the FaCSIA intranet where ICC practice and program information is stored.

### **Increased planning**

Business planning exists, however there is little alignment between line agency and ICC planning on a strategic level. WoG Action Planning was reported to be an effective process for aligning agencies', ICC and community goals / priorities.

All ICCs have business plans, however these plans are reported to be mixed in quality and focus. Examination of the business plans show that they primarily focus on achieving key deliverables such as accessing the mainstream, developing tailored solutions, agreement making and implementation, maintaining a whole-of-government approach, community engagement, executive management, and program management.

These business plans have strategies for implementation with associated measures and timeframes for performance.

Criticism was received from line agencies around the level of consultation with line agencies in the development of ICC business plans. In particular, one line agency

indicated that a regional ICC's business plan did not align with the line agency's core business and objectives.

### **Effective national, state and regional office relationships**

This issue is explored in the findings regarding 'whole-of-government collaboration'. Overall, relationships between ICCs and the various levels of government are generally effective. The extent of relationships with State/Territory agencies vary between jurisdictions.

### **Effective decision-making**

As with the findings in whole-of-government leadership, ICC Managers indicated that their lack of authority meant that they could not make decisions effectively.

In terms of funding, devolution of decision-making regarding funding has occurred within FaCSIA with the introduction of the FFPs and delegations to ICC Managers for funding of \$100, 000 or less. FaCSIA State Managers have delegation to approve FFP funding for up to \$500,000.

In terms of authority over line agency staff, this will remain an issue as line agency staff are directly accountable to their agencies.

### **Key implications**

The findings for capacity and governance evidence the need to:

- promote the role of the Network Support Branch as a key resource for building FaCSIA staff capacity as well as to support ICC Managers;
- promote the role of the Common Services Agreement as a mechanism to engage line agencies in an agreed processes and funding for WOG staff development in ICCs
- invest in additional staff support for urban ICCs; and
- develop standards and a quality improvement process for planning and mechanisms to bring together line agencies and ICCs in the planning process.

## Summary of the key findings and implications

Summarised below are the key strengths, opportunities for improvement and implications to arise from the findings:

### Building partnerships with Indigenous communities and organisations

#### Strengths

- ✓ Effective modes to engage community.
- ✓ Ability to work with communities to build their capacity to negotiate.

#### Opportunities for improvement

- Community confusion regarding how to access services/funding through ICCs.
- Different meanings of 'engagement', 'participation' and 'partnerships' and how to achieve these.

#### Implications

- Build on existing models of engagement by mining and sharing good practice throughout the ICC network and line agencies.
- Develop Common Standards regarding the core components of building partnerships and the responsibilities of each ICC stakeholder in that process (e.g. capacity building responsibilities transferred to ICC Manager/Community Engagement staff while Program Managers maintain a separate responsibility for funding).
- Streamline the primary ICC contact points for communities and organisations and provide a consistent message to communities and organisations about service delivery to Indigenous communities.

### Whole-of-government leadership

#### Strengths

- ✓ Development of forums by ICC Managers to engage line agencies and communities.
- ✓ Agreement between line agencies and ICC Managers about the coordination role of ICC Manager.
- ✓ Leadership role of Deputy Managers, Solution Brokers and Community Engagement staff.

### Opportunities for improvement

- Ambiguity about what “coordination” means in context of line agencies being responsible for their staff and having existing direct relationships with community and the role of ICC Managers in helping build capacity and responding to community need.
- Support provided to ICC Managers both administratively, operationally and in leadership development.
- Inconsistent two-way information flows between ICC Managers/Deputy Managers and line agency staff.

### Implications

- Develop a shared vision and collective outcomes for the operation of ICCs that is ‘owned’ by all ICC stakeholders.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of each of the ICC stakeholders.
- Explore the expansion of co-location arrangements to increase information flow and responsiveness.
- Continuation and expansion of mentoring for ICC Managers.
- Link ICC Managers performance to participation in the SES leadership development program.
- Strengthen the interface between community and Solution Brokers through local advisory, consultative and joint-solution design arrangements

### Whole-of-government collaboration

#### Strengths

- ✓ Where joint planning exists, it includes all line agencies, the community and State Government to align with the COAG strategic areas for action. Such planning is based on evidence of need, and responses are prioritised based on this need.
- ✓ Where agencies have Solution Brokers, they are the primary conduit for brokering solutions between the ICC and their agency’s mainstream and Indigenous programs. Some ICCs have developed a regular meeting structure for all Solution Brokers to discuss and problem solve various community-identified need, and this was seen as an effective starting point for whole-of-government work.

- ✓ State Managers forums vary in effectiveness but, where they work well, they focus on strategic implementation issues regarding the Model, rather than operational issues.

### **Opportunities for improvement**

- The different approaches that line agencies have for engaging with the ICC Model has resulted in agencies having different levels of staffing and degrees of co-location in ICCs.
- Limited accessibility of existing information / guidelines regarding ICC work.
- Different expectations of the role of Solution Brokers.
- Focus of State Managers forums on local / operational issues rather than strategic issues.
- Tendency towards reactive responses rather than planned strategic approaches.

### **Implications**

- Align outcomes and collective vision at the local, regional, State and national levels based on the OID Framework Strategic Areas for Action.
- Clarify the roles, responsibilities and expectations of Solution Brokers, State Managers and line agency staff in the context of ICCs.
- Balance reactive responses with strategic planning of need and priority setting.
- Build on existing solution design fora which encourage whole-of-government collaboration.
- Shift the focus of State Manager meetings to building strategic alignment.
- Encourage and invest in the role of Solution Brokers and the expansion of the co-location of Solution Brokers.
- Share program and funding information between line agencies and ICCs.
- Develop Common Standards regarding concepts such as 'engagement' and 'harnessing the mainstream'.

## Flexible responses to community-identified priorities

### Strengths

- ✓ Devolution of authority and decision making through delegations to the State Manager, ICC Managers and Solution Broker levels by some agencies which is reported to have increased timeliness of decisions and responses.
- ✓ ICCs are taking the opportunity to coordinate multi-agency responses to community need.
- ✓ Development of FFPs.
- ✓ Mixed use of SRAs, FFPs, and mainstream and Indigenous funding solutions.

### Opportunities for improvement

- Different guidelines exist between agencies regarding the use of FFPs which leading to inflexibility and delays where process / guidelines conflict.
- Confusion regarding how FFPs, SRAs, RPAs, WoG grants and traditional program grants/funding are to be used in concert in the ICC Model. This can also limit the extent to which mainstream programs are harnessed.
- Perception of an increase in red-tape as a result of different and multiple delegations, guidelines and risk assessment procedures.

### Implications

- Streamline funding, assessment and delegation procedures through a unified operational framework.
- Streamline reporting procedures to reduce red-tape for communities.
- Develop principles regarding the use of FFPs in the context of other available flexible funding solutions.
- Develop guidance (not prescription) regarding the purpose of flexible funding solutions.

## Capacity and governance of ICCs

### Strengths

- ✓ Compliance with risk assessment procedures.
- ✓ Good examples of local and regional planning which involves the ICC, line agencies, State government and the community.
- ✓ Timely resolution of staffing issues in some ICCs.

### Opportunities for improvement

- Conflict regarding the Common Services Agreement detracts attention from providing services to Indigenous communities.
- Both FaCSIA and line agency staff reported they either did not have access to or found it hard to navigate the FaCSIA intranet on which a range of program and procedure information is housed.
- Alignment between line agency and ICC business planning needs to occur as this will assist in clarifying and defining the direction and work of the ICCs.
- Limited staff support for urban ICC Managers.
- Difficulties recruiting appropriately skilled staff to remote locations.

### Implications

- Develop guidance regarding the administrative arrangements under the Common Services Agreement.
- Provide staff and management with ongoing training.
- Allow all staff involved in ICC work access to the FaCSIA intranet.
- Promote the role of the Network Support Branch as a key resource for building FaCSIA staff capacity as well as to support ICC Managers.
- Promote the role of the Common Services Agreement as a mechanism to engage line agencies in an agreed process.
- Invest in additional staff support for urban ICCs.
- Develop standards and a quality improvement process for planning and mechanisms to bring together line agencies and ICCs in the planning process.

## 4 Conclusions

The development of ICCs represents a significant cultural and practice change, in pursuit of a whole-of-government response to supporting the health, development and social well-being of Indigenous communities. Staff within ICCs have been drawn together from a range of different government agencies, with different working styles and operating models, to work in an integrated fashion to achieve sustainable change. However, it is only by creating a shared culture and a focus on the best interests of Indigenous communities that lasting success will be achieved.

There are various drivers for change - the views and strong involvement of the Indigenous community; commitment among staff; and the political impetus. Underpinning each of these is the leadership of the ICCs and the supporting departments with a stake in addressing Indigenous disadvantage. Changes to people's mental models and shifts in organisational cultures will hold the key to creating genuine and lasting change.

To improve the implementation of the Model, FaCSIA will need to work closely with the line agencies, leaders and staff. However, this task is made easier due to the expressed support for the Model and any improvements as shown by this evaluation.

Additionally, this evaluation highlights a number of common or core principles which will help build the 'ideal' ICC Model. These common elements are:

- Role of ICC Manager - continue to focus on coordination function, facilitation and negotiation responsibilities. ICC Managers also have a key role in helping build community capacity where program managers cannot due to probity issues. Community Engagement staff also have a role in building community capacity.
- Staffing - each ICC must have a full complement of staff from a core group of line agencies including AGD, DoHA, DEST, DEWR, DCITA and FaCSIA. At a minimum, line agencies will include Solution Brokers and Program Managers. It is program managers who have the funds management and accountability responsibilities.
- Solution Brokers - solution broking is critical to whole-of-government work and, at a minimum, the role of Solution Brokers should focus on coordination and harnessing mainstream programs to develop flexible solutions and to align to ICC planning.
- Co-location - at a minimum, staff should be co-located in all ICCs.
- Balancing responsiveness with planning - ICCs need to continue to be responsive to community-identified priorities as they arise, however this should not be at the cost of forward thinking, strategic planning at the local and regional levels. Community and WoG planning forums should regularly occur at the ICC level.
- Funding and responses - to reduce cost-shifting and duplication and to increase responsiveness, all staff, including State Managers, national program managers, Solution Brokers and ICC management, need to be aware of the full range of

funding solutions available to communities and use them at appropriate times. In these arrangements, devolution of authority through delegations continues and is expanded.

- Accountability - to reduce the administrative burden on staff and communities, funding application, assessment and reporting processes should be streamlined wherever possible within line agencies and FaCSIA to integrate with a single funding process specifically for ICCs.
- Information flows - sharing of knowledge and information regarding policy and program changes occurs top-down (i.e. from the Secretaries' Group to the ICC level) and advice to inform these changes is facilitated through bottom-up feedback processes from the ICC level to the Secretaries Group. It is also important for such information to filter through to National Program Managers in line agencies. The Network Support Branch plays a key role in facilitating these information flows.
- Continuous improvement - the above arrangements are continually monitored, reviewed and improved through the ICC CDP.

Overall, these common elements foster and support local ICC advisory, planning and engagement arrangements. The role of State/Territory and national structures and staff is to support this function.

### **Strategies for improvement**

To achieve the ideal model, a number of strategies to improve the existing structures are suggested. These are:

- 1 Development of an operating framework for ICCs to underpin the ICC Model and provide guidance on "how to" implement the ICC Model and provide a platform to enhance community understanding of the role and function of ICCs. This could include:**
  - developing strategies to streamline delegation, assessment and funding processes;
  - building on existing structures for issue identification and solution design at the ICC level;
  - providing examples of "practice" guidance and clarity regarding each of the components of the ICC Model, in particular what it means to harness the mainstream and work in a whole-of-government way; and
  - supporting any practice guidance and the operating framework with training targeted at the State Manager, ICC Manager, Solution Broker and staff member levels.

Given the ambiguity staff and management experience in developing the appropriate responses and solutions to accommodate their local need, principles to guide the use of flexible funding solutions is of particular importance. Such principles could include consideration of the following:

- capacity of the applicant organisation and community.
- nature of the issue or need to be addressed;
- amount of funding required;
- types of responses required and corresponding agencies with portfolio responsibility; and
- different solutions available and examples of when those solutions may be used, as outlined in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Funding solutions and rationale for use**

Solution	Rationale for use
Mainstream programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity of the organisation is high</li> <li>• Issue to be addressed fits within existing program guidelines</li> <li>• Single agency responsibility or multi-agency responsibility</li> </ul>
Indigenous-specific programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity of the organisation is high</li> <li>• Issue to be addressed fits within existing program guidelines</li> <li>• Single agency responsibility or multi-agency responsibility</li> </ul>
SRAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity of the organisation is low-medium</li> <li>• Issue to be addressed does not fit within existing program guidelines</li> <li>• Issues are locally based</li> <li>• Multi-agency responsibility</li> <li>• Other partners involved (i.e. industry, philanthropics, local government, State/Territory government)</li> </ul>

Solution	Rationale for use
FFPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity of the organisation is low-medium</li> <li>• Issue to be addressed does not fit within existing program guidelines</li> <li>• Issues are locally based</li> <li>• Multi-agency responsibility</li> </ul>

This will benefit all ICC stakeholders by clarifying the core elements of the ICC Model to ensure consistent practice across ICCs and jurisdictions, while also allowing the flexibility for the operating framework to accommodate local need.

**2 Improvement of information and knowledge flow regarding policy and program directions for the whole-of-government arrangements, including:**

- increasing communication between Secretaries Group and all levels of each line agency and FaCSIA regarding the whole-of-government directions for improving service delivery to Indigenous communities;
- ensuring all staff located in ICCs and all State Managers have access to the FaCSIA intranet which houses policy and program updates and guidelines;
- mining and sharing good practice across ICCs; and
- developing a program and funding information guide for each line agency's mainstream and Indigenous-specific programs to be accessible by Community Engagement staff, ICC Managers and Solution Brokers.

This will benefit:

- government stakeholders as they will provide, and be provided with, consistent messages regarding the new arrangements' policy directions and the common standards for the operation of ICCs. Mechanisms for ICC Managers and State Managers to influence policy and programs should also be built to encourage this information flow; and
- communities and organisations as they will have more frequent access to the most relevant information about what funding exists and who to talk to in an ICC.

**3 Further investment is required to develop ICC Managers and Solution Brokers as leaders for the ICC Model and the whole-of-government arrangements. This could be achieved by:**

- clarifying the roles and expectations of these positions;
- providing mentoring and leadership development opportunities within the Australian Public Service;
- linking professional development goals and achievement of outcomes through the ICC Model to individual performance monitoring systems through all layers of management in ICCs and line agencies; and
- developing the leadership skills of community members by linking them to leadership development programs.

This will enable the sharing of leadership responsibility and allow for championing of the ICC Model and whole-of-government collaboration within the ICC, outside the ICC (to communities, within FaCSIA and line agencies) and within line agencies.

**4 Investment is required to improve and monitor the implementation of the Model and the outcomes it is achieving.**

This will ensure that the implementation of the ICC Model is refined and improved through a continuous improvement process. This will also ensure that the Model continues to improve the way government responds to community-identified priorities.

These strategies and the common elements of the ideal model will be further explored in the development of the CDP with ICC Managers and the Project Steering Group.

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## **B Specific research questions**

### **1 Building partnerships with Indigenous communities and organisations**

- How are partnerships being developed by the ICC and ICC agencies with Indigenous communities and community organisations?
- How are the ICC and ICC agencies ensuring genuine Indigenous participation in these partnerships? What indications are there that a genuine shared responsibility approach is being adopted?
- To what extent are ICC agencies presenting a single, united face of the Australian Government to communities and community organisations?
- What difference are these measures making? What evidence is there of better outcomes for Indigenous people as a result of these measures?
- How is the capacity of Indigenous communities and community organisations affecting the achievement of partnership outcomes?
- What factors are limiting the contribution of communities to the achievements of outcomes?

### **2 Whole-of-government leadership**

- How is the ICC Manager adopting a leadership role in the ICC's whole-of-government work?
- In what ways is the ICC Manager adopting a leadership role in working with ICC staff and coordinating their activities?
- How well is the ICC Manager galvanising and cross-linking cross-agency staff and stakeholders?
- What barriers have been overcome by the ICC Manager in performing this role? What barriers remain?
- How can the ICC Manager provide better leadership for whole-of government activities?
- How can ICC agencies better support the operations of the ICC Manager and State Manager in exercising a leadership role?

### **3 Whole-of-government collaboration**

- In what ways are staff from the ICC and ICC agencies (in regional, state and national offices) collaborating and integrating in a whole-of-government way?

- What mechanisms or strategies have been put in place since the implementation of the ICC Model to improve collaboration and integration between ICC agencies?
- Have these mechanisms or strategies led to improvements? What evidence is there of better collaboration and integration?
- Are there any barriers to closer collaboration and better integration between ICC agencies that have been overcome? What barriers remain? Are there other opportunities for collaboration / integration that have yet to be realised?
- How can ICC staff (from OIPC and other agencies) improve collaboration and integration between ICC agencies? How can ICC agencies better support ICCs? Some smaller agencies do not have staff in all ICCs, how does this affect whole-of-government collaboration?
- Are there structural barriers to working effectively in a whole-of-government way resulting from the differences in how the various agencies manage their business?
- Do funding mechanisms and timeframes, as well as reporting and delegation structures, allow effective and efficient operation of ICCs?
- Is the role of solution brokers well established and consistent across ICC agencies and locations? Are solution brokers effectively skilled and deployed to support the whole-of-government outcomes at the local level? Is any further development of the role and training for solution brokers desirable?

#### **4 Flexible responses to community identified priorities**

- How are ICC agencies responding to flexibly to community identified priorities for SRAs and RPAs?
- What connected initiatives are being planned or have been established that tap into Indigenous specific and mainstream, new and existing resources?
- What indications are there that ICC agencies are reducing red tape and developing flexible funding solutions?
- What changes have Indigenous communities and community organisations noticed in the way the Government (through ICCs) listens and responds to their issues?
- If an Indigenous community or community organisation has capacity issues, what have the ICC and ICC agencies done to build its capacity?

#### **5 Capacity and governance of ICCs**

- How can the ICC build the capacity of its staff, and improve its capacity generally, to operate in a whole-of government way?

- Are there unresolved issues and how can these be overcome? What is the role of ICC agencies in resolving staffing issues?
- To what extent has the ICC identified the risks involved in its undertakings and taken adequate steps to guard against these?
- Did the ICC's operation in a whole-of-government context impact on its ability to meet its accountability obligations?
- To what extent have relationships between the OIPC national office, FaCSIA's state/territory offices and ICCs been effective? Can these relationships be improved?
- To what extent did the ICC's IT infrastructure facilitate whole-of-government processes?
- What planning has been undertaken by the ICC to ensure that it achieves its objectives? Have these plans changed and why? Would they benefit from further development?
- Are there differences in decision-making practices and levels between agencies in each ICC?