

KEY ISSUES FOR ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS – ABORIGINAL NGO FORUM

26 June 2014

- Aboriginal organisations want mainstream NGOs to:
 - recognise their existing capacity and recognise the existing services they provide to their communities. The indicators in current contracts are now referred to as “aspirations”. This is too general. Contracts need to explicitly recognise the existing local capacity and provide appropriate indicators, such as local employment targets.
 - be held accountable for their actions when they disregard the NGO Principles. Although these principles are not a legal contract, they should be incorporated into contracts and tenders to ensure effective partnerships with Aboriginal organisations.
 - be transparent when operating with an Aboriginal organisation.
 - have open communication with the local community and Aboriginal organisations.
 - recognise the self-determination of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. Aboriginal people need to be in control of their lives and their communities. “It’s not about our mob getting the money. It’s about empowering them”.
 - ensure that contracts can be transitioned to local community organisations – partnerships, terms and conditions that align with KPIs in building local capacity.
- Aboriginal organisations want APO NT to hold regular forums with NGOs to facilitate wide compliance to the principles. It is difficult for Aboriginal organisations to keep abreast with what is happening with this space, until it is too late.
- Aboriginal organisations recognised that the Northern Territory Government and Australian Government were a large stakeholder missing from this forum. Governments regularly enter communities to provide services or do work. Aboriginal organisations want governments to be subject to the NGO principles and be held accountable for their actions.
- Aboriginal organisations need governments to change the procurement processes to align with the NGO principles.
- Aboriginal organisations acknowledged that governance and management is very important and that Aboriginal organisations need to keep strengthening this.