

RESPONSE TO NOUS REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS – CAPE YORK LAND COUNCIL (CYLC)

TOR 1 Extent to which each organisation has achieved positive native title outcomes for persons who hold or may hold native title in its region taking account, where relevant, of disruptions caused by COVID-19.
Rec Nil recommendations
TOR 2 Extent to which each organisation assesses and prioritises applications for assistance in a manner that is equitable, transparent, and robust, and is well publicised and understood by clients and potential clients.
Rec Nil recommendations
TOR 3 Extent to which each organisation deals respectfully, equitably, transparently and in a culturally appropriate manner with persons who hold or may hold native title in its region, including by adequately investigating and resolving complaints. (Rec 1-3)
Rec 1 Increase connection with local communities in the RATSIB area through: identifying ways to enhance on the ground local staff or identifying opportunities to increase the number of client groups represented in CYLC's staff based in Cairns (appreciating that this needs to be considered alongside the relevant skills required for roles).
Response Accepted. Implemented. Since the review period CYLC has introduced a dedicated Community Relations Unit consisting wholly of Traditional Owners to increase the connection between CYLC and our stakeholders within the region. The unit assists with connection to our region as well as any other tasks needed e.g. pre-engagement for important meetings in communities.
Rec 2 Improve digital and written communications through: improved communication including varied modes for notification of meetings and up-to-date information provided through newsletters and on digital platforms such as the website or Facebook; and updating the CYLC website to capture more clearly the current activities and organisational information.
Response Accepted. CYLC has implemented notifications not only by mail but by Facebook and on its website. The CYLC website has undergone an update to meet the needs moving forward.
Rec 3 Seek more client feedback and not just rely on the formal complaints process.
Accepted. Our new Community Relations Unit seeks feedback in real world situations in the field that is passed on to CYLC relevant units and management.
TOR 4 Extent to which each organisation performs its functions in a cost-effective manner, including by identifying the key cost drivers for the organisation. (Rec 4-5)
Rec 4 Implement the newly development policies, including travel, and communicate them to all staff and board members.

Response Accepted. All policies and procedures are reviewed regularly including Travel and communicated to all staff as well as the board when needed.
Rec 5 Indicate clear funding allocations for each unique operational unit, with clear allocation of funding for individual units and for split roles, allowing for greater accountability of function leads in managing unit finances.
Response Accepted. Each unit within CYLC has their own budget to adhere to over the course of the financial year. Each unit Manager works closely with the CFO with regular monthly updates provided by the CFO on expenditure against budget.
TOR 5 Extent to which each organisation has governance and management structures, and organisational policies and an organisational culture that support efficient and effective project delivery. (Rec 6-10)
Rec 6 Work with relevant regional organisations - Balkanu and CYP - to develop a MOU that supports greater collaboration in achieving outcomes for the Cape York People.
Response Accepted. CYLC has sub-contracted to CYP implementation of a Cape York Summit in the first half of the calendar year 2025 and has a MOU with them. Our working relationship with Balkanu has recently been strained but with new management in place in the second half of the 2024 year it is CYLC's intention to rebuild this relationship. In general, CYLC works closely with other organisations within the Cape York Region. An over-arching MOU with these organisations will be a work in progress.
Rec 7 Review and update relevant HR policies to be more clearly aligned to the strategic and operational business of CYLC, for example demonstrating examples of types of conflict of interest that may arise in native title to explicitly demonstrate CYLC's approach.
Response Accepted. All policies are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
Rec 8 Implement a short staff survey to understand CYLC's staff experience and engagement, provide staff with an avenue for offering feedback and identify opportunities for improvement.
Response Accepted. To date, we have not implemented this recommendation, as recent times, have been challenging. Our office sustained significant damage from Tropical Cyclone Jasper in December 2023, requiring staff to work from home and hot desk at various locations during the first 6 months of 2024. This continued until the office was deemed suitable for occupancy again in June 2024. To conduct a survey during such a period would not be

helpful as it doesn't give a true indication of where CYLC could improve. It is CYLC's intention to implement this recommendation in the future.

Rec 9 Make changes to CYLC financial managements systems, to:

- Move from paper-based payroll and timesheets system to an electronic system which would save time and minimise the chance of error in manual inputs.
- Move from a paper-based invoice and purchase order system to an electronic system which would minimise the chance of error in manual inputs and create a system that supports the easier approvals and tracking of spending (noting that the current process involves the CEO approving expenses after they have already been paid).

Response

Accepted in part.

CYLC has started the process on this and as per the timesheet recommendation we are now at the point of testing what has been set up. If all testing goes well, we will start with a digital timesheet submission process in 2025. We have also started the process of sourcing the correct software that suits CYLC needs to implement the digital purchasing ordering system. This process will happen after we have implemented the timesheet system. Regarding CEO approving expenses after the fact, this is in part correct, as the CEO signs off on invoices that have been paid but prior to that signature, there are protocols set in place which requires a Purchase Order to be signed by either the CEO or CFO before any expenditure is incurred by CYLC. At this stage, once an invoice is received, it is matched to the PO and signed off by the CFO or CEO. The final payment form is then also signed off by the CFO and CEO. No expenditure is incurred without the approval of either the CFO or CEO.

Rec 10 Invest in professional development opportunities for Executive staff - noting the CEO being new to the role - recognising the importance of the leadership for high - performing organisations.

Response

Accepted in part.

CYLC has a dedicated training budget accessible to all staff, including management and CEO roles. Please note that these recommendations specifically refer to the former CEO, who is no longer with the organisation. Additionally, the CEO mentioned was not the CEO during the review period. Therefore, CYLC does not agree with this part of the recommendation.

TOR 6 Extent to which each organisation is adequately supporting Prescribed Body Corporates towards self-sufficiency. **(Rec 11-12)**

Rec 11 Implement service agreements with all client PBCs to strengthen the relationship between CYLC and the PBCs, and: enable CYLC to actively seek feedback from client PBCs on the type and quality of support provided; allow CYLC to better understand PBC needs and refine services to address the identified needs and improve satisfaction.

Response

Not accepted in part.

CYLC conducted a review of service agreements other NTRBs provided to their clients but found that these restricted us in the tasks/services we could offer. A review of the request for assistance system was then conducted and the Request for Assistance policy was

developed for services outside our core functions which are Compliance, Governance, Basic Support Funding and Legal Advice and Service Delivery. We now clearly explain our role and services we can offer and the request for assistance form is completed for anything outside the scope of our normal services.
Rec 12 Formalise policy for return of cultural material to Traditional Owners after claim determination, with policy emphasis on increasing visibility and communication of return timelines.
Response Accepted. This is a work in progress as it is a very complex matter. CYLC recently had the head of the Anthropology unit leave who was the staff member addressing this matter. CYLC has replaced this role, and the new manager will be addressing the matter, but it is envisaged that this will take some time.
TOR 7 Extent to which each organisation has developed its planning for a post-determination environment. (Rec 13)
Rec 13 Develop a formal, detailed post-determination strategy based on extensive consultation with Traditional Owners in the Cape York RATSIB area and CYLC staff, Executive and Board
Response Accepted. This will form part of the new strategic plan moving forward post CYU#1 Claim and will be worked on over an extended period.