



NATIONAL CONGRESS
OF AUSTRALIA'S FIRST PEOPLES

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

An alliance of the CLC, NLC, CAALAS, NAAJA and AMSANT



MEDIA RELEASE

Aboriginal organisations and NGOs launch collaboration to put communities back in control in the NT

31 October 2013

An alliance of Aboriginal organisations and non-Aboriginal NGOs will today launch a set of principles aimed at empowering Aboriginal organisations and communities in the NT to take control of their futures.

The launch of the principles will be held in Darwin at the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) at 10am.

“Today a number of local, national and international NGOs have publically endorsed a set of principles which will guide partnership centred approaches for NGOs working in Aboriginal communities” said Ms Priscilla Collins, spokesperson for Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT (APO NT). (A copy of the principles is attached.)

“These non-Aboriginal NGOs have agreed to work together with Aboriginal organisations and communities to promote Aboriginal community-control of service delivery. It’s about putting Aboriginal people back in the driver’s seat”, said Mr John Paterson, spokesperson for APO NT.

Organisations endorsing the principles include national and international NGOs engaged in delivery of health and community services in the Northern Territory. A full list of NGOs that have endorsed the principles is below.

Development of the principles was informed by a forum in Alice Springs in February that brought together sixty participants from twenty-seven non-Aboriginal NGOs and six NT Aboriginal representative organisations – the first gathering of its kind in the NT. The forum acknowledged that there are a number of NGOs that already have good working relationships with Aboriginal organisations, but this is not systematic.

The principles present significant opportunities for these organisations to learn from each other, create better partnerships and working relations with Aboriginal organisations operating at the ground level and achieve better outcomes for communities.

Organisations leading the initiative include APO NT, Strong Aboriginal Families, Together (SAF,T), the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples, the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) and the NT Council of Social Service (NTCOSS).

“It is important that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations work side by side in partnership to put Aboriginal people back in control of service delivery in their communities,” said Mr Lindon Coombes, CEO of The National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples (Congress).

The general consensus reached at the Alice Springs Forum was that the formal endorsement of the principles by organisations should effectively operate as a voluntary code.

“This work represents significant leadership and partnership from both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal NGO sector, in pioneering new ways to work together to get the best possible outcomes for Aboriginal people in remote NT communities,” said Mr Simon Schrapel, President of ACOSS.

The next stage of the collaboration will be to operationalise the principles.

“We look forward to working together to develop operational guidelines for how these important principles will work in practice,” said Ms Wendy Morton, Executive Director of NTCOSS.

“This is something that Aboriginal agencies have been wanting for a long time. These principles will guide the development of true partnerships that will result in better understanding and outcomes for all concerned,” said Terry Chenery, Acting CEO of SAF,T.

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Agencies which have signed onto the principles for developing partnership centred approaches for non-Indigenous NGOs working with Aboriginal Organisations and Communities in the NT
Amnesty International
Anglicare NT
Benevolent Society
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Fred Hollows Foundation
Lifestyle Solutions
Mission Australia
National Shelter
NT Shelter
Oxfam
Reconciliation Australia
Australian Red Cross
Save the Children
The Smith Family
World Vision
YWCA