

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

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

About Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the NT:

APO NT was established in October 2010 in response to a longstanding need in the NT for effective collaboration amongst Aboriginal organisations on issues affecting Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT) is an alliance comprising the Central Land Council (CLC), Northern Land Council (NLC), North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA), Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS) and the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the NT (AMSANT). The alliance was created to provide a more effective response to key issues of joint interest and concern affecting Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, including through advocating practical policy solutions to government.

The alliance was established in October 2010 in response to a longstanding need in the Northern Territory for effective collaboration amongst Aboriginal organisations on issues affecting Aboriginal communities. The abolition of ATSIC in 2004 removed an important Aboriginal voice, both in the NT and nationally. When the Northern Territory Emergency Response—the Intervention—was imposed on our people and our lands, the need for a rejuvenated voice to negotiate new ways forward for our peoples became acutely urgent. Alongside this was the need to be able to coordinate engagement between our member organisations and other Aboriginal organisations in the Northern Territory in responding to the plethora of government actions—and inaction—that we experience.

APO NT is leading a movement for change in the Northern Territory that is seeing Aboriginal people taking back control of our lives and futures following years of disempowerment and disengagement under failed, top-down government policies.

This is an important moment in the long struggle for self-determination for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory and nationally.

Above all, it is a critical turning point, offering a path that will ensure that we—as Aboriginal people with our own organisations—are provided the opportunity and resources to take responsibility to lead the building of our communities and future prosperity.

APO NT's structure as an alliance rather than an incorporated body is one of its strengths, ensuring a truly collaborative approach to our work. Strong and effective governance is key to APO NT's success. Our governance and organisational structures were developed to complement those of the member organisations.

The Governing Committee, comprising the CEOs of the member organisations, provides direction and makes decisions regarding the alliance's work, in consultation with their respective boards and executives.

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An Officers' Group comprised of senior staff of APO NT members and the APO NT Coordinator and other secretariat staff, ensures that APO NT's work is carried out. The Group meets regularly, mostly by teleconference, and is convened by the APO NT Coordinator.

As APO NT is an unincorporated body, AMSANT auspices APO NT funding and APO NT staff.

The following provides a brief overview of each of our member organisations:

- The **CLC** is a Council of 90 Aboriginal people elected from communities in the southern half of the Northern Territory. The roots of the CLC lie in the history of Aboriginal struggle for justice and our rights to our traditional land. The CLC is a representative body promoting Aboriginal rights. It is a statutory authority under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. It also has functions under the *Native Title Act 1993* and the *Pastoral Land Act 1992*.
- The **NLC** is an independent statutory authority of the Commonwealth under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. It is responsible for assisting Aboriginal peoples in the Top End of the Northern Territory to acquire and manage their traditional lands and seas. The NLC is also the Native title Representative Body for the northern region and has functions prescribed under the *Native Title Act 1993*. The NLC is also authorised to perform functions under a number of Northern Territory laws.
- **NAAJA** delivers quality and culturally appropriate Aboriginal Legal services to the Top End of the Northern Territory in the areas of criminal law, family law, civil law, and welfare rights including Centrelink and income management problems. NAAJA also provides prisoner support and throughcare services, conducts research and provides advocacy and community legal education.
- **CAALAS** provides high quality, culturally appropriate legal advice and representation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Central Australia in the areas of criminal, civil, family and welfare rights law. The organisation advocates for the rights of Aboriginal people and improved social justice outcomes. Additionally, CAALAS provides community legal education, support for young people interacting with the justice system and assistance to prisoners and their families to support reintegration into the community.
- **AMSANT** is the peak body for Aboriginal community controlled health services in the Northern Territory and advocates for equality in health, focusing on supporting the provision of high quality comprehensive primary health care services for Aboriginal communities.