

Memorandum of Understanding on Indigenous Development Effectiveness

Between

the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs on behalf of the Australian Government

and

the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

and

World Vision Australia

2012–2017

Preamble

Australian Government

The Indigenous Affairs landscape has undergone substantial and comprehensive changes over recent times.

The Australian Government has embarked on major reforms, including establishing ambitious Closing the Gap targets, committing an unprecedented level of funding and ensuring all jurisdictions work together to build a better future for Indigenous Australians.

To support this major reform agenda, the Australian Public Service has built strong working relationships with state and territory governments, establishing high level internal governance arrangements and a renewed emphasis on place-based responses.

Through this unprecedented effort and support across the Australian community, we are seeing the start of real and sustainable change, with encouraging progress against a number of the Closing the Gap targets.

But there is still much more to do.

The Government has responsibility to deliver programs and services to people in all communities. While the role and responsibility of Government is different to that of a development organisation, we recognise that the international and domestic development sectors can provide valuable expertise in helping us foster the conditions necessary to assist Indigenous communities to drive their own development.

To complement the considerable work already underway, the Government, through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, will engage the expertise of the domestic and international development sectors to provide advice on development administration.

We are specifically interested in those agencies with the systems and experience in administering development practice, while working closely with multiple levels of government, communities and their organisations.

The Government will explore a comprehensive development approach that creates the framework, tools and methods to foster sustainable community driven development within a first world context.

World Vision's breadth of experience in administration of development practice provides an opportunity to draw upon and tailor the lessons learned in providing the systems needed to support development practice.

The Government understands that if it is to enhance its support for Indigenous people as they seek to drive their own development, its agencies must build upon their understanding of the broader principles and practices to help communities develop.

Through this memorandum, the forging of closer collaboration and working relationships with a large international development non-profit organisation such as World Vision and subsequently more broadly across the non-profit sector,

provides an opportunity to accelerate and enhance learning about how to implement comprehensive development approaches from within complex and multi-layered organisations such as those found across the Government's Indigenous portfolio.

World Vision

World Vision is Australia's largest international development agency, with more than 60 years of experience. The value World Vision brings to this memorandum is in its experience of administering development through a global network of almost 100 countries with a staff of over 40,000 people. It is a highly regarded and experienced development agency with a proven track record of working with governments and communities, both internationally and domestically, to bring about sustainable change for impoverished children and their families, not only economically but also more broadly in terms of capability and social participation.

Through its Australia Program, World Vision Australia has worked with Australian Indigenous communities since the mid-1970s, initially through leadership programs and now playing a more facilitative role in communities to progress development programming. World Vision Australia has firsthand experience of the unique development context of Indigenous communities and the structural impediments that exist within the system of Indigenous Affairs and which can unintentionally work against progressing community driven development.

Of particular importance to this memorandum is World Vision Australia's expertise in administering development programs and systems within a large and complex institutional structure and in partnering with governments to identify and progress the structural changes government must consider in building an enabling and accountability framework within which community driven development can occur.

Parties

This memorandum is between the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, on behalf of the Australian Government, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and World Vision Australia (WVA).

Purpose

This memorandum is a high level strategic document to inform better development practice across the portfolio of Indigenous Affairs.

The Government will draw on expertise and support from World Vision to guide administrative processes, standards and system changes to support the government's work with Indigenous communities to strengthen governance and promote community driven development.

Scope

The scope of this memorandum is to examine processes, systems, structures and capabilities necessary to facilitate and administer support for community driven development.

The parties will not uncritically transplant international solutions to the markedly different contexts found in Indigenous communities in Australia. The parties will focus instead on the principles, systems, and capabilities that will assist effective development practice in Indigenous communities.

The parties recognise that there are many organisations in Australia (Indigenous and non-Indigenous, non-profit and for-profit) that are working alongside Indigenous communities to support their development. Any initiatives arising from this memorandum will be, in the first instance, a result of consultation and design with local Indigenous communities and their organisations. They will respect and support those organisations, will not displace, duplicate or compete with their efforts and where appropriate through invitation and partnership, strengthen their capabilities.

The parties also recognise the important role of state, territory and local governments in achieving the Closing the Gap outcomes. They also

note the formal arrangements through the National Partnership Agreements and will factor those arrangements into any initiatives arising from the memorandum.

This memorandum does not preclude engagement with other NGOs including both Indigenous and non-indigenous organisations. The memorandum is a non-binding and non-exclusive statement of mutual intentions of the parties. Any binding commitment or legal obligations with respect to the implementation of the memorandum will require the execution of a separate and formal agreement between the parties.

Objectives

Under this memorandum the Parties agree to work together to:

- build a shared understanding across government of a development approach and its application as an administrative framework to assist community driven development
- collaborate on complementary processes to supplement existing service delivery approaches
- strengthen individual capabilities of government staff, community members and their organisations and other stakeholders necessary to the adoption of development practices and
- contribute to the evidence base of best practice approaches to development.

Commitment of the parties

The parties agree that to the extent of their respective capabilities they commit to:

- contribute information, technical experience and corporate knowledge gained from their respective fields of expertise to the specific initiatives developed under this memorandum
- engage with and seek the agreement of Indigenous organisations and stakeholders in the design of initiatives developed under this memorandum
- provide access to networks to ensure a robust and broad dialogue on development practice

- coordinate whole-of-government action to support the purpose and objectives of this memorandum
- facilitate effective partnerships with stakeholders to support participation from across the international development, government, academic, Indigenous and private sectors and
- share development practice and critical challenges to inform innovative approaches to government policy and program design and delivery.

Principles

As signatories to the National Compact: *Working Together* (**Schedule 1**) the parties agree to commit to the guiding principles outlined in that document. Further, the parties agree that the following principles underscore the operating approach that will be pursued under this memorandum and agree that:

- they will not seek to represent, compete with or displace the views, priorities and directions for development as held by Indigenous leaders and organisation. They will seek to inform the organisational processes and structures of the Australian Government, so that it can be more responsive and supportive of the efforts of Indigenous people towards realising their development
- they will value and be pro-active in maximising the knowledge and experience of Indigenous Australians in working to achieve the objectives of this memorandum
- they will work closely to ensure activities supported through the memorandum maximise the positive impact for Indigenous Australians and
- they will work in a way which is consistent with the principles in the Australian Council for International Development's Practice Note: *Principles for Development Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities* (**Schedule 2**).

Implementation

The memorandum will be effected by a joint Action Plan. On signing the memorandum the Parties will develop the joint Action Plan detailing priorities, areas of collaboration, and timeframes. The Action Plan will clearly articulate the processes for consultation with Indigenous people and their organisations where initiatives have a direct impact on their community. The joint Action Plan will be agreed by the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Secretary of FaHCSIA and the CEO of World Vision Australia.

Where the parties identify specific collaborative initiatives they wish to undertake, each initiative will be subject to:

- consultation with the local community and its organisations
- consideration through the normal approval processes of each Party
- terms and conditions set out in a specific agreement between the Parties in relation to the initiative and
- administration of any funding through formal funding agreements through mutual agreement and in line with standard FaHCSIA and World Vision procedure.

Each agreement and any other agreements entered into between the parties with respect to Indigenous Affairs will reflect the objectives and principles set out in this memorandum. In particular, the parties will allocate risk in such agreements case by case, in good faith as partners and taking into account the type of agreement or arrangement and the circumstances.

Further provisions regarding administration and the implementation of the memorandum are contained in **Schedule 3** to the memorandum.

Stakeholders

This memorandum seeks to inform government processes and structures towards a development approach that creates the framework for sustainable community driven development. To that end, the parties agree that for this memorandum to succeed, it must engender productive relationships across the broad range of stakeholders that constitutes Indigenous Affairs including:

- Indigenous Australians and their organisations
- Australian, state, territory and local governments and their relevant agencies
- Industry and the corporate sector and
- Non-government organisations.

Timeframes

This memorandum will come into effect on the date on which the memorandum is signed by the last party to do so and will be in effect for a period of five years, with extension by agreement of both the parties in writing.

This memorandum may be amended at any time by agreement in writing of the parties and amendments may extend to substituting another schedule for an existing schedule, amending an existing schedule or adding a further schedule.

An independent review of the implementation of the memorandum will be conducted after the first year of its operation by FaHCSIA and World Vision Australia, taking into account the annual reports and other parameters identified by the parties and key stakeholders.

Annual reports will be exchanged between FaHCSIA and World Vision Australia beginning one year after the memorandum comes into effect and over the life of the memorandum detailing progress against the purpose and objectives on terms agreed between the parties and noting the specific reporting requirements of the parties' respective organisations.

Outcomes

In line with the purpose and objectives of this memorandum the expected outcomes are:

- established structures and processes to adapt learning and insights, gained from international and domestic development practice, into initiatives that complement and strengthen the delivery of government programs and services to Indigenous people;

- strengthened individual capabilities, organisational processes and systemic structures needed to embed and foster a comprehensive development approach across the portfolio of Indigenous Affairs including through the development of further education and training opportunities in Indigenous development; and

- tested complementary process, products and delivery mechanisms to supplement and strengthen the existing service delivery approach currently underpinning Indigenous Affairs, including through engagement and participation of Indigenous communities through a comprehensive development approach.



The Hon Jenny Macklin MP

Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs



Finn Pratt, PSM

Secretary

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs



The Rev. Tim Costello

CEO World Vision