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The PY Ku network on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands

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Anangu	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara, when referring to people or leaders
APY	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara, when referring to APY Lands
ATSIC	The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DKCRC	Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre
DoHA	The Department of Health and Ageing
DPC	Department for Premier and Cabinet
IT	Information technology
NHC	Nganampa Health Council
NP YWC	Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council
NT	Northern Territory
OIPC	Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination
RSD NPA	National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery
SA	South Australia
SRA	Shared Responsibility Agreement
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TKP	Tjungunku Kuranyu-Kuta Palyantjaku
UPK	Uwankara Palyanku Kanyintjaku
WA	Western Australia

Executive summary

The PY Ku network is a centrally managed network of community centres combining service delivery with technology, providing opportunities for training and employment, incorporating shared counter facilities for service delivery, and electronically linked multi-purpose meeting facilities. PY Ku: Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjaraku – for the people![1]

The network consists of one-stop shop remote area transaction centres located in the communities of Amata, Mimili, Fregon (Kaltjiti), Indulkana (Iwantji), Pipalyatjara and Watarru on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands of South Australia. Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara leaders conceived of PY Ku as a key pillar in their long-term vision for better service delivery options for Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (Anangu) communities. A key element of the vision for PY Ku is to sustainably involve Anangu more actively and directly in the service delivery system, by providing training and support to help them gain employment, and making sure that Anangu maintain a strong voice in the design, delivery and management of all services on their Lands.

In 2003, PY Ku was endorsed as one of two Council of Australian Governments 'whole of government' initiatives on the APY Lands for service delivery to remote Aboriginal communities – in this case, to provide a single local point in each community where a range of Commonwealth and state services could be accessed. From inception to operation, this innovative approach to integrated service delivery on the APY Lands posed many challenges for all people involved, especially:

- the coordination across levels of government, and with and between Anangu communities
- the costs involved in rolling out major new building and IT infrastructure across APY Lands
- the human resource issues involved in recruiting and training new Anangu staff for PY Ku
- finding a sustainable approach to develop and maintain both the PY Ku centres and the integrated services model.

This document reports on the findings of an evaluation of PY Ku that is a part of a larger research project of the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (called 'Desert Services that Work: Demand-responsive Services to Desert Settlements', Fisher et al. 2011). Desert Services that Work aimed to develop a sophisticated picture of the supply of services to desert settlements and explored how demand for services is expressed and responded to in remote community contexts. The research questions of the Desert Services that Work project guided our approach to this research. The research method we used combined a comprehensive review of documentation of PY Ku from inception to implementation. We identified and assessed the impact of key levers, success factors and critical points of change on remote service delivery to the target settlements. Our methodology used an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, drawn from collating respondents' overall feedback to narrative open-ended questions. We held extended narrative interviews and discussions with key Anangu leaders, and Anangu and non-Anangu key players who were involved at all levels of the PY Ku program. This gave us a rich overview of the dynamics involved in the implementation of what is a complex and multi-faceted initiative.

From interviews and discussions with people involved in using or developing PY Ku centres, we collected perspectives on the PY Ku program and its services. But ongoing concerns from the implementing agency (PY Media) about the possibility that government support for the program would not be renewed after the first term led us to become involved in meetings about the sustainability of the services. This provided insight on the challenges for government and service providers in achieving a sustainable service model.

1 Extract from application for project assistance to the Rural Transaction Centres Program, December 2003, provided by PY Media. The term 'Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjaraku Ku' also means 'belonging to the people'.

Establishing PY Ku has been a complex undertaking involving purpose-built facilities, new technology, training and employment of new Anangu staff, and multiple levels of contracting with different agencies for the delivery of specific services through PY Ku as a local agent. For the Anangu-controlled regional organisation PY Media – which acted as project manager for the planning, rollout and implementation of the program – the challenges often proved almost insurmountable. However, the successful introduction of PY Ku has demonstrated the tenacity and good faith of the many key Anangu and non-Anangu people involved.

Sustainable development of remote service delivery requires a high level of consistent, ongoing investment by governments. If systemic change is to be achieved, investments should be viewed over a ten-year, rather than three-year, horizon. The report highlights that while investing in a regional Anangu service provider to deliver PY Ku is good practice, local organisations would need to be adequately compensated for the burden this places on them. The strength of resilience, reciprocity, capability and goodwill between Anangu and non-Anangu individuals has led to remarkable growth in the capacities of Anangu to engage in the service system. Achieving an operational PY Ku network under Anangu leadership now places the network in a pivotal position to engage more with local people, achieve strategic community development and empower the Anangu people to get maximum long-term value from these services to their communities.

1. Introduction

PY Ku is a network of multi-purpose 'rural transaction centre' facilities specially designed and built in Amata, Mimili, Fregon (Kaltjiti), Indulkana (Iwantji), Pipalyatjara and Watarru on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands of South Australia. The 'demand' for a PY Ku network was expressed as the need for 'one-stop shop' service access centres in key locations in Anangu communities, run by Anangu as service providers. The conceptualisation of design and operational features was initiated by Anangu leaders in the early 2000s as part of a continuum of ideas for improvements to service delivery and community development. Since the *APY Land Rights Act 1981* provided a limited form of self-determination over development for Anangu on the APY Lands, Anangu citizens have actively pursued these and other initiatives such as Uwankara Palyanku Kanyintjaku (UPK), an environmental and primary health strategy, and Mai Wiru, a healthy foods store policy. In September 2003, PY Ku was adopted as a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 'whole of government' trial program on the APY Lands. On 7 September 2004, the Premier of South Australia (Rann 2004) outlined the timeframe for operationalising the PY Ku network: four of seven transaction centres would be opened by December 2005, and the final three were to be completed by June 2006. However, at the time of completion of this study the proposed PY Ku at Pukatja (Ernabella) had not eventuated. The centres opened on the following dates:

- Amata: 3 December 2007 (for limited business)
- Mimili: 28 April 2008
- Kaltjiti: 5 May 2008
- Iwantja: 19 May 2008
- Pipalyatjara: 1 September 2008
- Watarru: 22 September 2008.

This research report provides an overview of the introduction and rollout of the PY Ku network across the APY Lands. It explores both the demand for such service facilities and the factors that influenced responsive and timely implementation. The specific aims of this report are to:

- explain the background and reasons that the PY Ku program was delayed, particularly by analysing the dynamics between governments and communities, and their reciprocal responsibilities and expectations
- identify strengths, weaknesses and key learnings from the development of the PY Ku network on the APY Lands
- explore how supply and demand influences the implementation of the program
- assess the impact of the PY Ku network in communities where centres are located
- assess the potential for PY Ku's further development
- assess PY Ku's relevance to current debates about remote service delivery to desert settlements.

Data, analysis and commentary for this research report is based on a developmental evaluation of the PY Ku program conducted as part of the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre's (DKCRC) Project Desert Services that Work: Demand-responsive Services to Desert Settlements. Desert Services that Work involves researchers from institutions and universities around Australia working in sites such as the Georgina River area (western Queensland), the Barkly Shire (Northern Territory), the Newman area in the Pilbara (Western Australia), the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (Western Australia) and the APY Lands (South Australia). The aim of Desert Services that Work is to develop a picture of the supply of services to such desert settlements which is 'community down' or 'from ground level down to external decision makers' (Tedmanson & Guerin n.d.), and explore how demand for services is expressed and responded to in 'remote' community contexts. This will provide a more sophisticated understanding of who makes decisions about services within desert settlements and how services are used. The analytical

framework for Desert Services that Work conceptualises service delivery as an interaction between supply and demand (Fisher et al. 2011). From this perspective, 'demand-responsive' service delivery suggests it is possible for service providers to become more aware of what communities require and how service delivery is influenced and shaped by local contexts.

This conceptualisation of the service delivery process goes beyond suggesting there are better ways service providers can interact with the communities they service. It argues that new information is needed about ways to maximise the participation and engagement of local people in the service delivery system. Demand-responsiveness means not only better access to services for people living in desert settlements, but also greater involvement of local Aboriginal people in providing services within their communities, and better use of services within the context of local needs. Demand-responsiveness should also buffer communities from being overwhelmed by the responsibility of managing services that are not a high priority for that community. Figure 1 below provides a schema of this analytical framework.

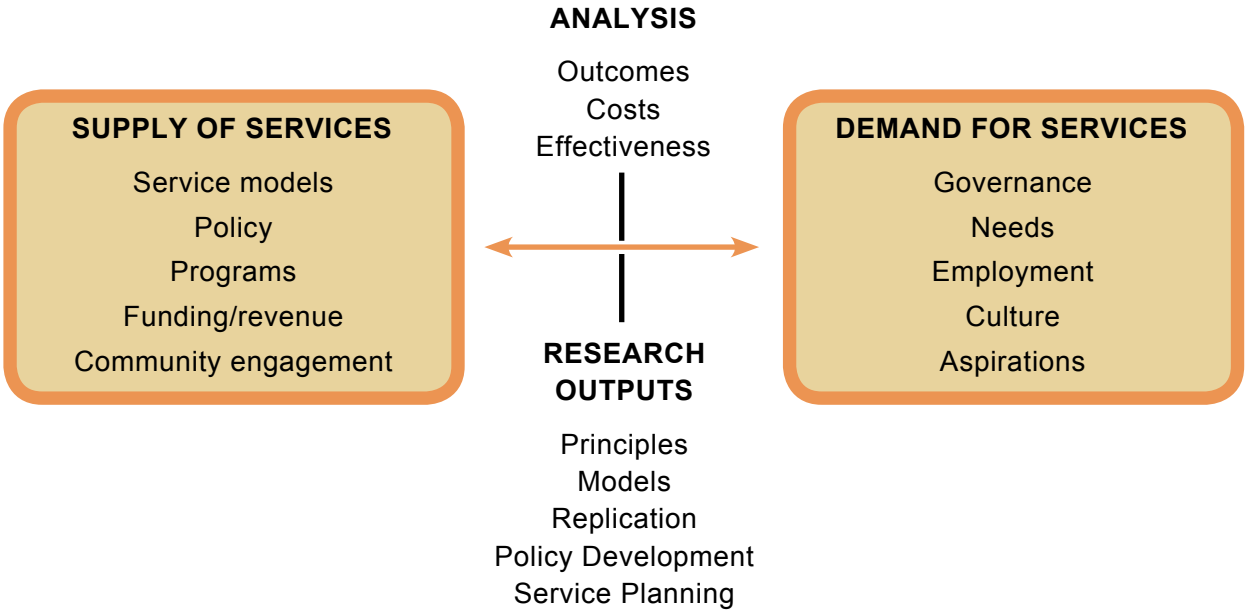

Figure 1: Desert Services that Work Project Analytical Framework

We use this analytical lens to examine the inception, rollout, implementation and uptake of the PY Ku program on the APY Lands. We comprehensively reviewed documentation of PY Ku's inception to implementation process. We identified key levers, success factors and critical points of change, to assess their impact on remote services delivery to desert settlements. We held extended narrative interviews and discussions within communities, with key Anangu leaders and key Anangu and non-Anangu individuals involved at all levels of the PY Ku program. This led to a rich overview of the dynamics involved in the implementation of what is a complex and multi-faceted initiative.

The rollout of the PY Ku program into communities and full realisation of its service delivery potential has been slower than originally envisaged by governments. This research report provides a better understanding of some of the reasons for the delays. Collaboration and partnership between governments and communities who deliver remote services to desert settlements is a dynamic undertaking that requires a sophisticated understanding of reciprocal responsibilities and expectations. It also requires continuous financial and human resource support. This is not always easy to achieve and/or maintain in government departments, which are subject to changes in government policy priorities, restructuring and regular turnover of staff. This research report highlights the strengths, key learnings and impediments to the development of a PY Ku network on the APY Lands.

The report first provides a background to the development of the PY Ku program on the APY Lands. This section summarises the context within which Anangu leaders developed the concept for a network of multi-purpose local service community centres. This Anangu initiative aimed to strengthen local service delivery to Anangu communities by Anangu people. The paper then explores how the initiative was taken up by government to become one of two COAG trial programs for the APY Lands. We then examine the role of Commonwealth and South Australian governments in operationalising the PY Ku initiative by contracting PY Media – a regional Anangu-controlled organisation – which managed the program and network of centres. The report explores the 'supply side' factors that emerged to impede the rollout of PY Ku, delaying its on-ground start-up and operation in communities. We then explore community responses to PY Ku from the 'demand side' perspective of local Anangu service users and Anangu PY Ku staff. The report concludes with reflections about the impact of the PY Ku network in communities where centres are located. We also highlight the potential for its further development in the context of current debates about remote service delivery to desert settlements.

2. Background to PY Ku

2.1 APY Lands context

The APY Lands cover approximately 103 000 square kilometres in the far north-west of South Australia. They are defined and protected under the *APY Land Rights Act 1981*. The freehold title to the land is held by APY, the body 'corporate' of traditional owners as defined and established under the *APY Land Rights Act 1981*. The APY Lands are part of a much larger country of Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (NPY) people which covers some 350 000 square kilometres of South Australia (SA), Western Australia (WA) and the Northern Territory (NT). This region is known as the 'tri-state' or 'cross-border' region. Communities in the cross-border region share strong language and cultural ties that operate irrespective of state borders. The estimated total population in the APY Lands is approximately 2600 – or roughly ten per cent of the Aboriginal population of SA (Nganampa Health Council, cited in Urbis Keys Young 2006, p. 3). The population is comparatively young, with 34 per cent aged under 15, and only nine per cent over 55 years of age. The population in the tri-state region is estimated to be 5000. There is considerable mobility throughout the whole region for family, cultural and service access reasons. Alice Springs, which is 400–800 kilometres from APY communities, is the main hub for many Anangu to access services such as hospitals, banking and other business. Other Anangu need to travel to Port Augusta (1300 km away) or Adelaide (1500 km away) to access services.

The main communities in the South Australian APY Lands region are Pukatja (Ernabella), Pipalyatjara, Kalka, Murputja Homelands, Amata, Kaltjiti (Fregon), Iwantja (Indulkana), Mimili, Watarru, Anilalya homelands, Turkey Bore and Tjutjunpiri homelands. Pukatja is the largest community. Communities range in size from 400–500 citizens to smaller homeland groups of 100 or fewer citizens living in kinship cluster groups on their traditional country. Umuwa is the administrative hub for the APY Lands, and is where the APY Executive, a number of regional Anangu organisations, government agencies and service providers have offices (or a base that they visit). The larger communities of the Lands have Community Councils elected by local residents. These are incorporated councils in their own right and pre-date, in most cases, the coming of the *APY Land Rights Act 1981*. The Community Councils are therefore not accountable to the APY Executive, which is elected triennially and separately from 'electoral' zones across the Lands.[3]

In addition to the APY Executive and Community Councils, there are a range of other Anangu-controlled organisations, some of which pre-date the *APY Land Rights Act 1981*. The Nganampa Health Council (NHC), the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPY WC), AP

Services, APY Land Management and PY Media are Anangu-controlled organisations. They are quite separate from the APY Executive and each has an elected Board of Management and constitution. These bodies are responsible for providing regional services to a wide area across the tri-state region – particularly the NPY WC and PY Media. AP Services is also an Anangu-controlled organisation. It provides infrastructure, construction, essential services, road maintenance and support services for the functioning of APY. APY Land Management provides feral animal control, environmental and land management support, and has an interest in small enterprise development (such as pastoralism, cattle and tourism). In addition, there is a major network of locally based Anangu-controlled arts centres called Ku Arts, and an active PY Education committee which coordinates Anangu education services and activities.

The complex array of governance bodies therefore includes:

- the APY Executive as a formally elected[2] governing body for the APY Lands (responsible for decisions relating to access to, development, use and management of the Lands)
- locally elected, incorporated Community Councils[3]
- Anangu-controlled regional service delivery organisations[4].

As well, a new consultative forum called Tjungunku Kuranyu-Kuta Palyantjaku (TKP) was established in 2005. Tjungunku Kuranyu-Kuta Palyantjaku (Rann et al. 2005; South Australian Government 2007) means 'working together for our future' in the Pitjantjatjara language. This non-elected human services committee was formed with government support to coordinate the service needs of Anangu. It:

> aims to get better results through improved services for Anangu through shared responsibility for policy development, service planning and coordination (including priorities, gaps, barriers and opportunities), and reporting on progress and results.
>
> (Rann et al. 2005).

The membership of TKP which represents the interests of Anangu includes representatives drawn from key Anangu regional organisations:

- Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Media Corporation (PY Media)
- NHC
- NPY WC
- Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee
- Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Executive (APY)
- Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Services (APY Services) and Ku Arts
- representatives of Commonwealth and SA government department interests:
  - COAG Indigenous Trial (Secretary, Department of Health and Ageing) and their South Australian delegate
  - SA Manager, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC)
  - Manager, Port Augusta Indigenous Coordination Centre
  - Department of the Premier and Cabinet
  - Division of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation.

2 The 10-person Executive of APY is formed of Anangu representatives elected from constituent zones at tri-annual elections overseen by the Australian Electoral Commission. The Executive selects a Chair from among the 10 elected. The APY Executive is elected pursuant to Section 9 of the *Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act* and hold meetings in accordance with Section 10 of the *Act*. The Executive must hold its meetings at least once in every two months. The Executive is designated by the *APY Land Rights Act 1981* as the 'governing body of Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara' and carries out the day to day business of the organisation. The Executive Board must endeavour to advance the interests of Anangu at all times and must comply with a resolution made at an Annual or Special General Meeting of all Anangu.

3 Local Community Councils, e.g. for Pukatja, Mimili, Amata, Fregon, Indulkana etc., are local community governance bodies comprised of local community representatives elected annually by the communities.

4 Anangu regional organisations such as PY Media; Nganampa Health; NPY WC and APY Services are Aboriginal-controlled service organisations managed by Anangu Boards of Management elected at Annual meetings carried out in accordance with the particular incorporated organisation's constitution. Most (but not all) are tri-state regional organisations serving Anangu across the tri-state border region of SA,WA and the NT.

In addition to TKP, Wiru Palyantjaku is a broadly inclusive, community-controlled Anangu consultative committee. It was formed by Anangu at the time of TKP's establishment to strengthen the range of Anangu consultative voices to government at the interface of service delivery for the region. Wiru Palyantjaku, which means 'better outcomes' in the Pitjantjatjara language, is a forum of Anangu organisational and community representatives which aims to provide an avenue for local community voices to be heard. Community Council Chairs or community members can make direct contact through Wiru Palyantjaku to discuss problems in service delivery (PY Media 2009) and:

> In this way, Wiru Palyantjaku can discuss the matter and report back to TKP … this group can be used as a way of advising government how things are from the Anangu side of things.

Figure 2 depicts the TKP in more detail. Figure 3 shows where the PY Ku program sits within the TKP and Wiru Palyantjaku Anangu consultative forums, as well as its links to government structures.

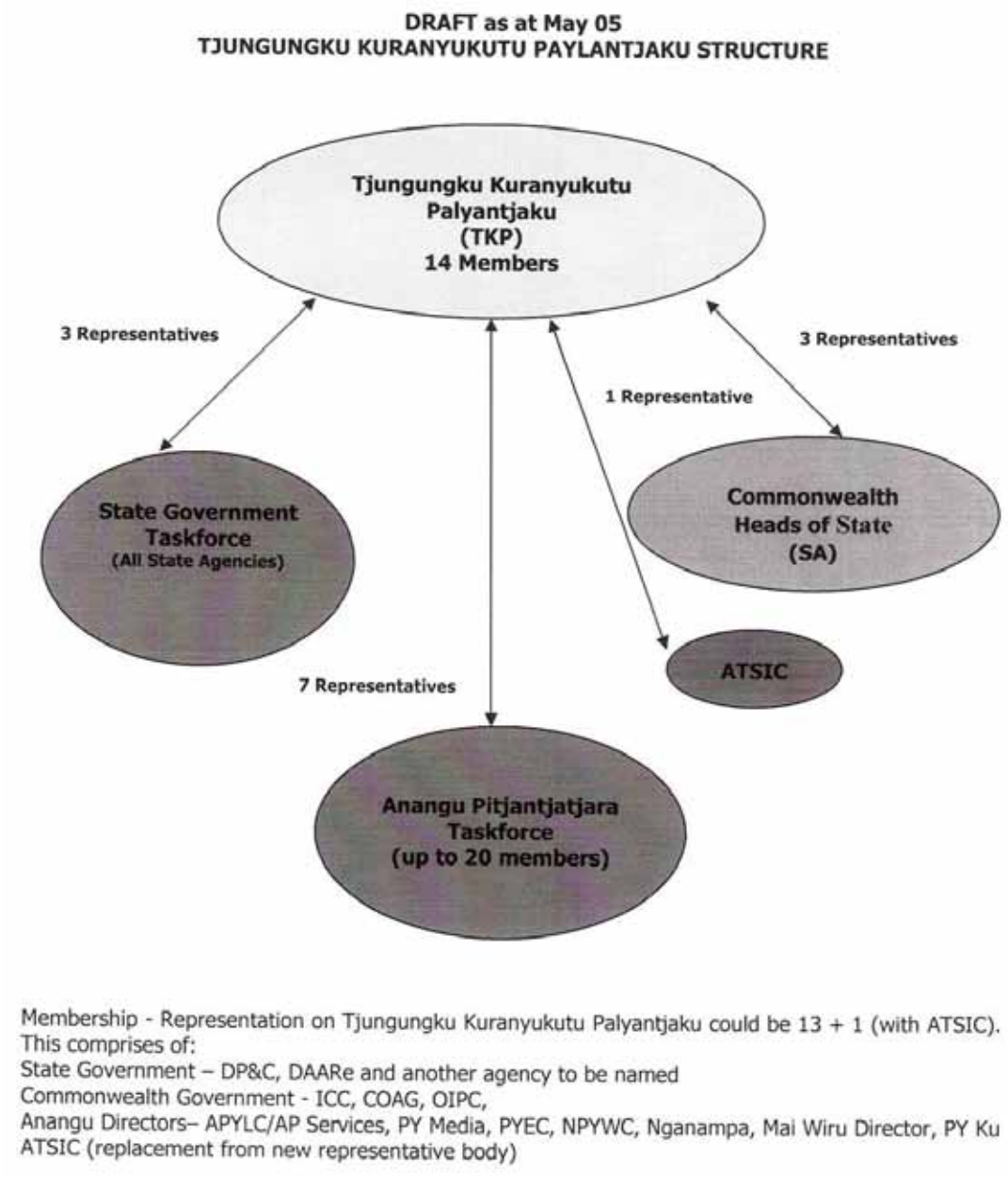

Figure 2: Tjungungku Kuranyukutu Paylantjaku (TKP)

Source: TKP secretariat draft minutes

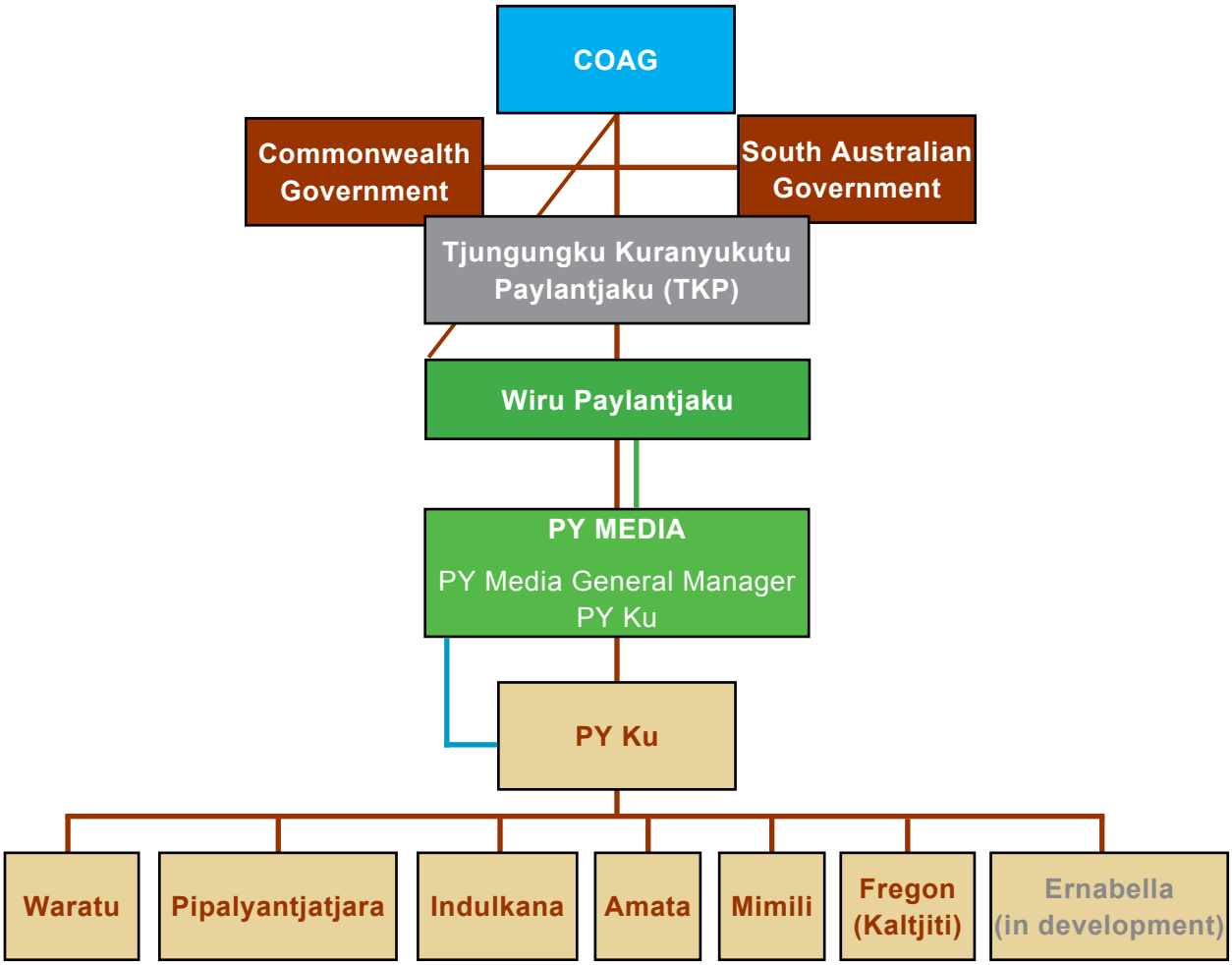

Figure 3: Lines of accountability for PY Ku

2.2 PY Ku: background to the concept

For many decades, Anangu citizens on the APY Lands have had to travel to either Alice Springs or Port Augusta to complete services such as pay fines, apply for licences, register vehicles and guns, enrol to vote or go to a bank. More recently, it is possible to conduct some of these business transactions in Marla, for example, where regional police are based, or when police visit the APY Lands to check on licences. Though some services are provided on APY Lands, most Anangu find them hard to access. Anangu have long expressed a wish to control the delivery of such services in ways that are culturally appropriate, safe, and easy to access locally at key community locations. Regulated banking and financial services have always been missing from the suite of services available, and remain a priority issue for Anangu communities.

In research on utility stress as a determinant of social health and wellbeing in remote Aboriginal community contexts, Willis et al. (2006) talk about how people access and use key services such as electricity, gas, water and telephone services in remote Aboriginal communities. Their research focuses on communities around Coober Pedy. They argue that lack of access and services information impacts on people's ability to pay bills, their ability to gain appropriate subsidies, how they budget their payments, and creates material and emotional stress that threaten health and wellbeing. The economics of household and community functioning in remote contexts has only been briefly touched on in literature and research. The most relevant studies have been done by Cairnduff and Guthridge (2001); Nganampa Health Council (1987) in the development of the UPK strategy discussed below; and

Tregenza and Tregenza (1998). Such studies have repeatedly pointed to the compounding social and health problems caused by Anangu households continually 'trapped' in the 'catch 22' cycle of juggling low incomes, the high cost of living in remote communities, and limited (if any) access to needed services.

Lack of local service access has similarly been raised as a critical issue in many Inquiries and reports, including the findings of the South Australian Coronial Inquests into deaths by petrol sniffing in 2002 and 2005. The Coroner's 2002 Inquest (Chivell 2002) was critical of the 'remoteness of bureaucracies'. It suggested that Commonwealth and state governments spend more effort trying to better coordinate departmental activity by establishing consultative forums and committees, than on direct service delivery to APY communities. In his subsequent 2005 Inquest (Chivell 2005) the SA Coroner suggested that government's focus on coordination risked slowing on-ground local action, rather than facilitating it, by becoming 'bogged down in further consultative efforts and bureaucratic negotiation'. The demand for an integrated local access point for a range of services has therefore been a longstanding expressed wish of Anangu. As Nicholls (2007a) points out:

> It can be very difficult and costly for Anangu to access many of the services that other Australians take for granted. Simple tasks such as renewing a driver's licence, registering a motor vehicle or requesting a copy of a birth certificate become major challenges when the nearest government office is many hundreds of kilometres away.

In the course of this study, Anangu leaders described how they spent many years of effort looking for external support to develop community centres to deliver services 'by Anangu, for Anangu', and to be a focus for ongoing community development activity in communities across the Lands. Anangu interviewees spoke of the need not only for greater local access to services, but also for strategies that would enable and empower local residents to actively participate in delivering the services. In the words of one Anangu service organisation worker:

> There was a clear need for access to government services on the Lands as people on the margins, on low incomes, often need to do a lot of government transactions with government [e.g. with Centrelink, Australia Post, Registration and Licensing]. That's why we continued to pursue the PY Ku … [which] could provide a source of employment for Anangu as many young Anangu were becoming computer literate.

Anangu interviewees spoke of wanting training to find and participate in employment to deliver services to their own communities; wanting skills, information and opportunity to be more actively engaged in identifying service needs; and designing culturally and locally effective services that fit with desert settlement contexts. As one Anangu leader suggested:

> The dream of Anangu … was to have a relationship with a training body so it was virtually a total learning environment. That's what it was for. It's for work on the ground and learning to take over [delivering our services] and the opportunity for that is amazing if you can get the right people, the right partner.

According to Anangu interviewees, the demise of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and a shift of Community Council office priorities – away from self-determined community control over local affairs towards more government-directed administrative functions – created an idea. Key Anangu leaders wanted to develop 'one-stop shop' multi-purpose facilities that could provide easy local access to services and opportunities for Anangu to take up paid administrative, management and service delivery positions in the burgeoning local municipal and human services sector. Anangu looked for a strategy that would grow local employment in the service economy while lessening community dependency on non-Anangu service providers:

> Working Ananangu to Ananangu … I want to see things run by Ananangu … that's the way we want it to be. We need to see Ananangu doing things, starting straight away and still growing.

For some respondents in this study, a strategy of stepped introduction of local service centres that were managed by, and responsive to, local Anangu community needs was a logical development. It would follow the trajectory of self-governing rights as codified in the historic *APY Land Rights Act 1981*. PY Ku is seen in this context as part of an Anangu social movement – part of a broader constellation of initiatives by Anangu which aim:

> for us to be able to step up, take control of our own lives and communities … meet Anangu needs locally and get our young ones trained now to do the jobs for us, looking after Anangu needs ourselves.

For many Anangu respondents, the PY Ku program thus fits alongside a range of Anangu program initiatives that share the common goal of improving the wellbeing of Anangu communities – next to the formation and growth of Anangu regional organisations such as PY Media, Nganampa Health, APY Services and NPY WC. It also fits with Anangu-led programs such as UPK and Mai Waru, which further Anangu engagement in the service system. From the perspective of Anangu community leaders interviewed for this study, these organisations, programs and initiatives aim to enable and empower Anangu to be 'self-actualising' and responsible citizens in contemporary Australia:

> We're entitled to be able to bank and do business, get health care and other proper services … we all citizens here too … we just happen to live on our country which is better for us, it's where we always been and where we gonna stay … it's government that always changes – not Anangu.

2.3 Before PY Ku: UPK and Mai Wiru

In the late 1980s, the Anangu-controlled regional health services organisation NHC developed an environmental and public health strategy, called Uwankara Palyanku Kanyintjaku (UPK), for the APY Lands. This happened through a process of widespread consultation and community engagement. The UPK strategy (Nganampa Health Council 1987) provided a holistic approach to enhancing the wellbeing of Anangu. The approach had a comprehensive strategy for the desert settlements across the APY Lands. It involved providing appropriate housing and community infrastructure, environmental health services, and community development initiatives for improved public health (Pholeros et al. 2000). Elements of the strategy for holistic healthy living are depicted in Figure 4 below.

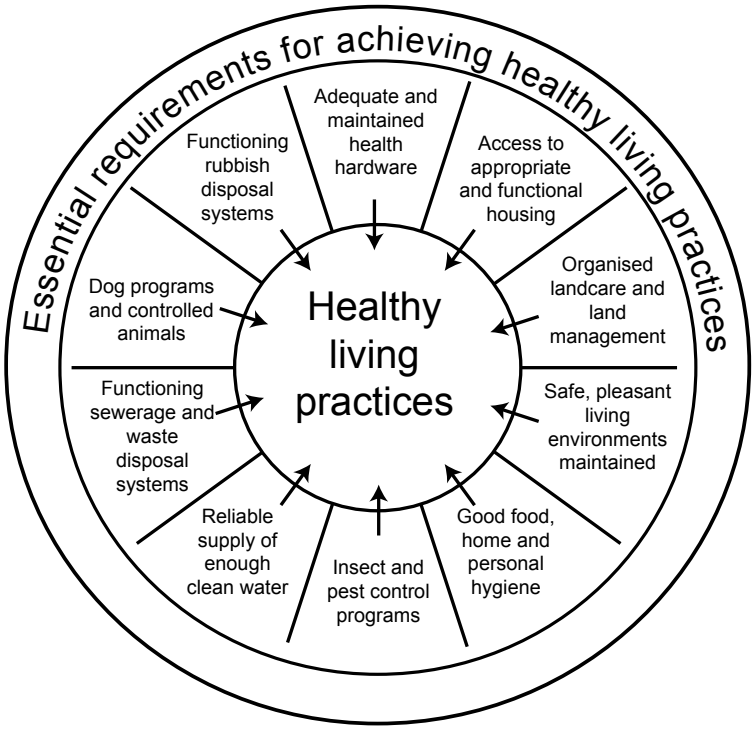

Figure 4: Healthy living practices

Source: Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services 2002

One part of this strategy was improving people's nutrition. In 1985, 'Mai Wiru', the first nutrition intervention policy, was trialled by Anangu in the Pukatja community (Nganampa Health Council & Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council 2002). In Pitjantjatjara, 'Mai Wiru' means 'healthy food' – but as Colin et al. (1993) suggest, it is ' not just about cooking, it is about everything … about knowing about healthy food and knowing how to buy it, how to look after money, write it all down, and teach the children … people say they want to learn everything about Mai Wiru'. The sentiments expressed by Anangu are clear (Nganampa Health Council & Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council 2002, p. 24):

> *Anangungku money tjukutjuku kanyini munu mai wiru tjuwangka ngarinytja wiya kunpuringkuntjaku. Wages tjukutjuku. Tjuwangka prices katu. Anangunku rawangku wangkapai tjuwa palya mai wiru tjara munu price tjapu tjara rawangku year tjutangku.*
>
> Anangu are very worried about the health of people on the Lands. Every family has someone who is ill from diseases that are linked to eating rubbish foods or not enough to eat. Anangu do not have enough money and the right food in the stores to be healthy. Wages are low. Store prices are high. Anangu have been trying to get good stores with good food and lower prices for many years.

After systematic consultation and agreement from the local community, the APY Executive proposed in 1998 that a Mai Wiru stores policy would be developed across the APY Lands. The policy was ratified by a General Meeting of APY in July 2001 (Nganampa Health Council & Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council 2002, p. 29).

After these successful initiatives by Anangu for improving community wellbeing, Anangu leaders were keen to find out how they could become more involved in direct service delivery on the APY Lands. In particular, there was strong demand emerging in communities for more local access to crucial financial and administrative services. Anangu service providers spoke about this vision:

> Prior to 1999 there had been a concentration on development of physical infrastructure in the APY Lands (roads, water, sewerage, houses, etc.). In the late '90s it was recognised that there was a need to develop financial infrastructure as Anangu were living on very small amounts of money … At the time there was a report called '*Banking too far away*' and all this sort of stuff which said it's essential financial infrastructure for the individual. You've got to have access to regulated banking! And there was a hope that we could then build on it.
>
> We actually had agreement from all the communities, plus Nganampa Health and the major organisations and we were in discussion with [name deleted] Credit Union and they were going to set up in these RTC's [Rural Transaction Centres] down here and all our grant monies [for APY Lands] would have gone into [the credit union]. They were registered to receive government grant funds. So we would have boosted their funds by $40 million … and this could help build other community initiatives and finance other local community ideas and enterprises.

Executive members also wanted to make sure there was continuity and integrated focus for their concept of a transaction centre network for the Lands, given the 'silo' nature of government funding:

> Even in the 'Networking the Nation' [funded from T1 – Telstra sell-off] program, Building Services and Technical services were meant to be funded together but responsibilities were divided between two different departments.

In August 2002 (respondent interview 2009), a delegation of APY Executive members travelled from the APY Lands to Adelaide to meet with senior staff of Services SA. They wanted to explore how a rural transaction centre model could meet Anangu aspirations for increased Anangu involvement in

providing local services. At this time, Commonwealth funding was available to establish transaction centres across Australia in rural locations; however, due to a sunset clause, this funding opportunity was about to expire. The APY Executive members present in the discussions with Services SA (and later interviewed for this study) were keen to establish a regional model or network of transaction centres before the funding stopped. For that reason, case-by-case submissions were not required for each transaction centre in the seven major communities on the Lands, so that no communities missed out. This funding deadline had a major influence on the decision to try to develop all of the PY Ku centres concurrently, rather than community by community. Managing the development of all of the centres concurrently placed significant stress on the organisation charged with the task.

However, Anangu momentum towards the pursuit of funding for the development of 'one-stop shop' facilities was about to be absorbed into the trial of a new Commonwealth and state government policy approach to 'whole of government' service delivery for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia, announced in early 2002 (Council of Australian Governments 2002).

2.4 Engaging with COAG

In April 2002, the COAG announced that governments intended to work in partnership to improve service delivery to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Council of Australian Governments 2002). This included nomination of eight trial sites in which the federal and state/territory governments would work on a 'whole of government' basis together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The aim was to improve outcomes at a service delivery level and build community capacity (Bulis & Stehlik 2005). In addition, the policy principle of 'shared responsibility' was introduced to underpin these policy initiatives (Council of Australian Governments 2002):

> Responsibility for the condition and wellbeing of Indigenous communities is one shared by the community, its families and individuals and with governments – this is being called Shared Responsibility … communities and governments will need to change their current approaches by building their capacity – in different ways.

The eight trial sites selected for the COAG 'whole of government' approach were:

- APY Lands, SA
- Cape York region, Queensland
- east Kimberley region, WA
- Murdi Paaki region, western New South Wales
- Shepparton region, Victoria
- Wadeye (Port Keats) region, NT
- all of the Australian Capital Territory
- the north-east region of Tasmania.

Each trial was to be led by one Commonwealth and one state government agency. For the APY Lands, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) was the designated lead agency and the SA Government Department for Premier and Cabinet (DPC) was the state agency. Governance structures to support each trial site included a high-level Ministers' Group and Canberra-based Departmental Secretaries Group on Indigenous Issues. An Indigenous Communities Coordination Taskforce was also established in Canberra to provide support to the Secretaries Group and to coordinate across the departments. At the SA level, DoHA set up a COAG team, which included officers posted to Adelaide and supported by Canberra (Bulis & Stehlik 2005, p. 5):

> Besides these higher level structures were the COAG team's networks at the more operational level that garnered local knowledge and shored up grassroots partnerships.

The original partners to the in-principle Shared Responsibility Agreement (SRA) developed for the APY Lands trial COAG site were:

- the lead Commonwealth agency (DoHA)
- the South Australian government (through its Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation – later absorbed into the Department of Premier and Cabinet)
- the then ATSIC
- the APY Executive (through its Chairman).

The envisaged 2003 finalisation of the original SRA was delayed by changes to the *APY Land Rights Act 1981* in 2004–05 and simultaneous political and organisational changes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs at the Commonwealth level (such as the abolition of ATSIC). However, after consultation with Anangu organisations and APY Lands communities, five broad priority outcomes were developed and agreed to:

- improve the health and wellbeing of Anangu by:
  - implementing responses by all of the partners to the problem of substance misuse
  - improving availability and affordability of healthy food
- improve educational attainment, training opportunities, employment opportunities and career pathways, especially for younger Anangu
- improve access for Anangu to a wide range of social and community services by developing the infrastructure for regional delivery of basic services. This would include banking and financial facilities, postal and telecommunications services, and a range of Commonwealth government services (e.g. Centrelink, Medicare Easyclaim, Job Network)
- improve physical infrastructure, especially the quality, reliability and affordability of essential services; the maintenance and upgrade of roads, air and other public transport; and appropriately designed, constructed and maintained community housing
- support and strengthen existing regional governance structures.

In early 2003, DoHA provided funds for the APY Executive to engage a consultant to develop a business case and funding submission for establishing a rural transaction centre on the Lands.[5] The consultant commenced in June 2003. Given the vast area to be covered by any one-stop shop facility, subsequent consultations and negotiations were conducted on the basis that a network of transaction centre–type facilities was needed for the APY Lands. A General Meeting of Anangu Pitjantjatjara in August 2003 decided the name of the proposed network would be Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjaraku – or 'for the people'[6] – and henceforth known as 'PY Ku'.

A two-day workshop called 'Working together – shared responsibilities agreement' was held in Alice Springs in early September 2003 to set priorities for the COAG trial. It involved COAG stakeholders, government and Anangu community representatives (Urbis Keys Young 2006, p. 10). The two priorities nominated by Anangu at this meeting for COAG to consider backing were the Mai Wiru stores program and establishing the network of transaction centres in each main Anangu community (which Anangu had now termed the PY Ku program).

At this meeting, attendees suggested that the PY Ku network comprise a series of linked, permanent facilities located in each major Anangu community on the Lands. The centres would provide Anangu residents with ease of access to a range of contracted and government services. Such services included Centrelink, government licensing and births, deaths and marriages registrations, Australian Electoral Commission, Australia Post, and other services that citizens in urban areas take for granted, such as banking and financial services. In September 2003, the Steering Committee of the APY Lands COAG

5 Source: personal communication with a key worker who also assisted researchers by facilitating supervised access to relevant archival records, including submissions and related correspondence. The researchers are very grateful to the generous and open support which was given by this individual, a number of other Anangu organisations and staff, PY Media staff and Board and also relevant government agencies and staff in the course of this study.

6 Also interpreted as meaning 'belonging to the people'.

trial agreed that Mai Wiru and PY Ku could best address the outcomes identified for the SRA, and so were officially endorsed as COAG trial projects. Responsibility for developing the two projects was given to DoHA as the lead agency.

3. Implementation

3.1 Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjaraku: 'for the people'

Although PY Ku was endorsed as a COAG 'whole of government' trial project for the APY Lands in September 2003, a range of internal departmental and intergovernmental coordinating issues appeared to take precedence over on-ground implementation. As one respondent in this study explains:

> No-one ever spelt out what endorsement was meant to mean. In practice people endorsed the 'idea' of PY Ku but there was no real 'buy in' from agencies.

As major government stakeholders aligned their function and purpose in response to shifts in the political, institutional and policy environment, there was a complex political process of interdepartmental and intergovernmental change. This meant coordination issues at the regional level were constantly in flux. In March 2004, just six months after the announcement that the APY Lands would be the designated COAG trial site for SA, with PY Ku one of the two targeted programs for 'whole of government' support, the SA Government transferred responsibility for services on APY Lands from the Department for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation to the DPC. The Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands Intergovernmental Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee was disbanded as a result, and an APY Lands Taskforce to promote the 'whole of government' approach was established in its place.

This change was more than an internal re-alignment of functions. New lines of accountability were drawn and new senior appointments made. A lot of corporate history of complex, sensitive, bi-cultural relationship-building can be lost or set back each time this kind of major bureaucratic reorganisation occurs, because new 'actors' are introduced into relationships which may have taken many months to develop. This can be particularly disruptive to Anangu agencies and actors, who find agreements changed or processes needing to be restarted.

Membership of the new APY Lands Taskforce included key Commonwealth agencies, such as DoHA, as well as relevant South Australian Government agencies. Sub-groups of the taskforce also involved several APY Lands community-based service providers, such as the NPY WC, PY Media and the NHC. This taskforce produced an APY Lands Strategic Plan, which set out six key objectives in line with objectives developed at the General APY meeting and workshop in Alice Springs in 2003. The new key objectives were to:

- increase public safety
- increase health and welfare services
- improve service and program co-ordination
- improve employment, education and training outcomes
- improve housing, infrastructure and essential services
- develop an effective governance model for the APY Lands.

In March 2004, an SRA was signed on behalf of the South Australian Government. The SRA announced provision of an additional $25 million over four years to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan (Urbis Keys Young 2006). However, the SRA remained unsigned by APY Lands respondents. The South Australian Government announced it was placing an administrator in charge of

the APY Lands in March 2004. Mr Jim Lister was appointed, then Mr Bob Collins, following Lister's resignation. Mr Collins provided the South Australian Government with an initial report, then tendered his resignation in June 2004, which took effect formally in August 2004. In June 2004 the South Australian Government, through the Aboriginal Lands Task Force, endorsed the principle of delivery of appropriate State services through the PY Ku network (Urbis Keys Young 2006, p. 10). ATSIC was abolished in June 2004 and the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) was established in July 2004. OIPC was to focus on coordinating Aboriginal policy and programs.

In June 2004, DoHA signed an agreement with PY Media to implement and manage the PY Ku network 'on behalf of Anangu' (Aucote 2007). According to Aucote (2007), this agreement represented:

> A formal partnership arrangement between PY Media and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Indigenous Trials Steering Committee membership to develop and establish a Network of seven Rural Transaction Centres across the APY Lands.

According to the records of PY Media (Aucote 2007), DoHA released operational funding ($178 206) to PY Media in June 2004. PY Media commenced regional project development work for the PY Ku network in July 2004. In August 2004, funding of $2.23 million for PY Ku infrastructure, provided through the Department of Transport and Regional Services, was announced (Urbis Keys Young 2006, p. 10).

In August 2004, the Secretary of DoHA met with representatives of the SA Department of Premier and Cabinet to discuss reconvening the COAG Trial Steering Committee, which had not met since February 2004. Professor Lowitja O'Donoghue and Mr Tim Costello were appointed in August 2004 by the SA Government as advisors on the APY Lands. In September 2004, they visited the Lands to consult with community members and organisations. O'Donoghue and Costello then provided the Premier with a report and urgent recommendations, which were not released publicly until the following year (Costello & O'Donoghue 2005). In September 2004, the responsibilities of the APY Lands Taskforce were broadened to cover all Aboriginal lands in SA, and it was renamed the Aboriginal Lands Taskforce. Following a legislative review by the SA Parliament, a series of amendments to the *APY Land Rights Act 1981* were passed. A new APY Executive was later elected in October 2005.

In February 2005, another 'whole of government' workshop was held in Alice Springs. Attendees included representatives of PY Media, NHC, NPY WC, the APY Executive, OIPC, Indigenous Coordination Centre, DoHA and Department of Premier and Cabinet. Attendees determined that a new policy and planning group should be formed, with representation of Anangu service providers, the new APY Executive, Commonwealth and SA Governments. It would be called Tjungungku Kuranyukuta Palyantjaku, or TKP (see Figures 2 and 3).

TKP eventually consisted of representatives of DoHA, OIPC, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Directors of PY Media Corporation, NHC, NPY WC, PY Education Committee, APY Services, Ku Arts, and the APY Executive. The Terms of Reference for the TKP were similar to those identified for the SRA drafted in 2003. TKP's aims were to get better results through improved services for Anangu by sharing responsibility for policy development service planning and coordination (including priorities, gaps, barriers and opportunities).

While the role of the TKP in relation to the COAG Trial was not specifically referred to in the draft Terms of Reference, workshop attendees determined that the COAG team would develop a funding package for TKP that included support for secretary functions, paying a meeting facilitator, and travel and accommodation expenses for representatives. The PY Ku network Planning Committee, which was established to specifically support the development of the PY Ku network and facilitate Commonwealth

and state government service engagement, met for the first time in March 2005. This committee was to report to DoHA and TKP. In this way, it functioned as an informal sub-committee of the TKP, responsible for overseeing PY Ku.

At that stage, the PY Ku network was intended to provide seven customer service centres across the Lands and to deliver a range of government and financial services. The designated locations were: Iwantja, Mimili, Kaltjiti (Fregon), Pukatja (Ernabella), Amata, Watarru, and Pipalyatjara/Kalka (see Figure 5). There was disagreement on the location and built form of the Pukatja (Ernabella) PY Ku, so building the other six centres was prioritised. In 2009–10, there were discussions to canvass the possible relocation of the Wataru building to achieve a PY Ku for the Pukatja community. Figure 6 shows the floor plan for the PY Ku centres. The aim of the PY Ku centres, stated from the outset and announced by SA Premier Rann in 2004 (Rann 2004), was to provide:

- a range of government and non-government services to communities
- training and employment for local Anangu
- public access Internet facilities
- office, meeting, conference, video-link, Internet and administrative support facilities for government staff and visiting professionals.

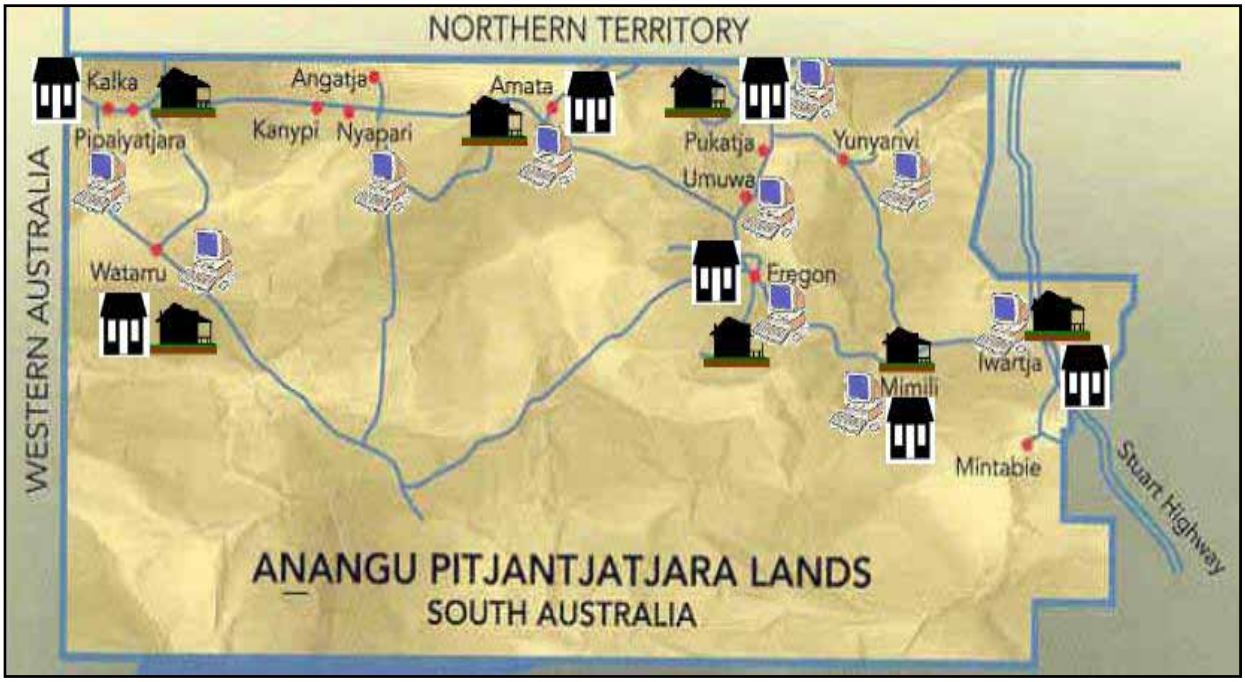

Figure 5: Map of PY Ku centre locations

Source: PY Media 2009

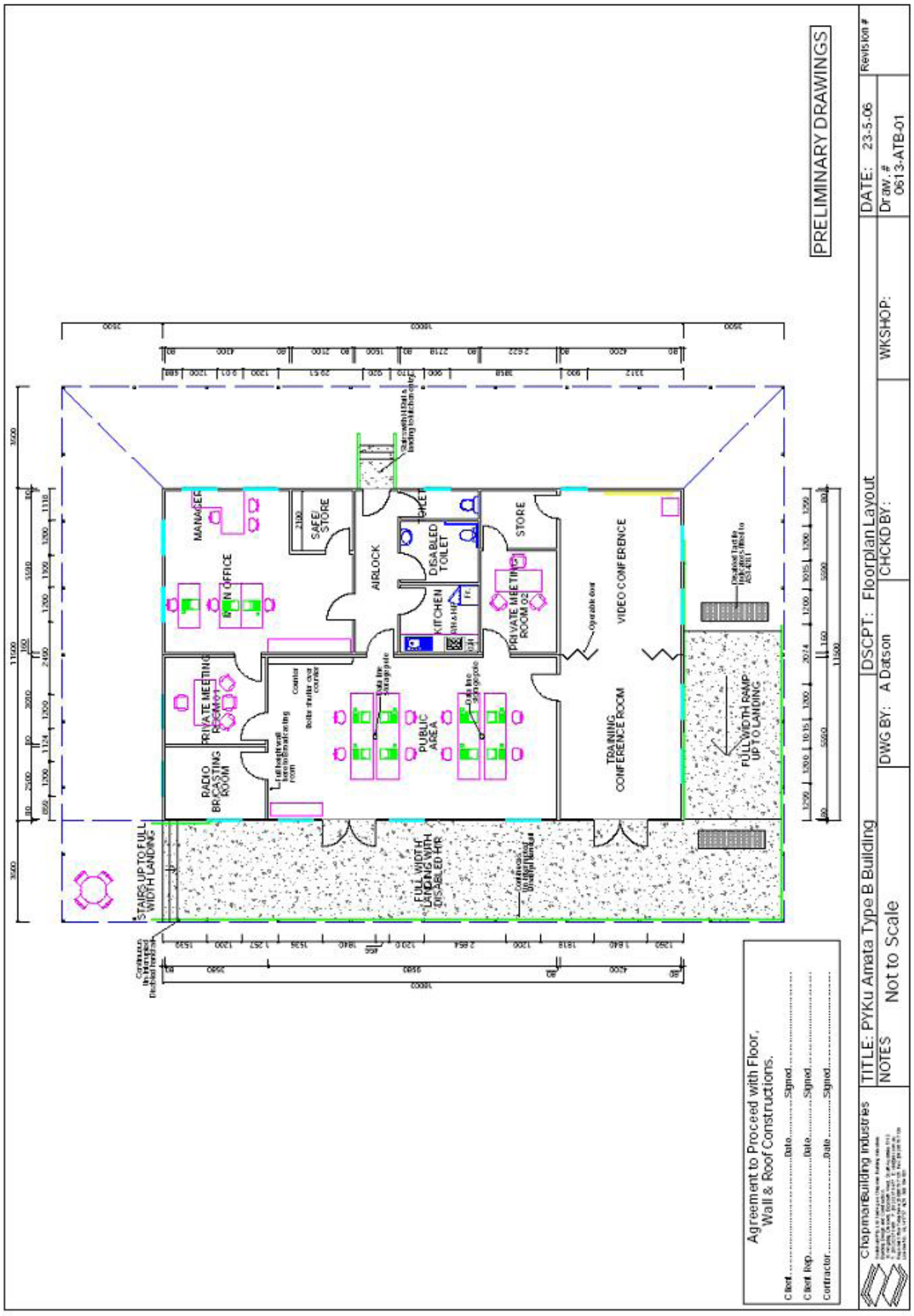

Figure 6: Floor plan of PY Ku centres

Source: PY Media 2009

This contrasts in scale with the vision suggested by Bulis and Stehlik (2005, p. 3) of a fully-fledged PY Ku. Bulis and Stehlik's PY Ku centres would be 'tailor-designed to suit the individual requirements of each community and their associated homelands', and not just provide infrastructure for business and electronic service delivery but provide important links to health, for example. Government champions of the PY Ku network suggested that by working through PY Ku centres, governments could support broader, flexible and innovative ways to address a range of priority outcomes identified in the SRA – for example, access to health, employment and training services (Bulis & Stehlik 2005):

- public Internet, video conferencing facilities … funded by 'Networking the Nation' and managed by PY Media [which] will be migrated into the PY Ku network
- technology and connectivity … combined with new and improved services, providing staff and the public access to both technology and services
- Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) positions, providing employment opportunities to Anangu and links to potential employment throughout various organisations in the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands
- integrated counter facilities, providing Anangu with a range of services, staff with a range of skills and experience and organisations with a range of service delivery options
- meeting rooms that will be equipped with video-conferencing technology, providing a range of meeting options for Anangu, Community and homeland Councils and government and non-government organisations.

In March 2005 when the PY Planning Committee was established, a request for a budget increase to PY Media for the rollout of the PY Ku buildings was put to Department of Transport and Regional Services. A further $1.82 million was approved in September 2005. In July 2005, five Anangu people secured ongoing part-time positions when two transaction centres opened on a trial basis in temporary accommodation at Amata and Mimili. Another two part-time Anangu staff were later employed to augment the team. Staff received induction training and training from Centrelink and Services SA (Urbis Keys Young 2006). A 2005 progress report on PY Ku compiled by DoHA stated:

> The PY Ku network has been providing Centrelink services from the Amata and Mimili trial sites since July 2005. On completion of the building infrastructure Centrelink services will be provided from the remaining sites.
>
> SA Government services are now available in Mimili and Amata and the required training has been delivered to existing staff. SA Government service delivery may be expanded across the Network when established. Services now available include payment of Expiation Notices and Fines, renewal of standard vehicle registrations, application for Birth, Death and Marriage Certificates.
>
> Negotiations have commenced with Australia Post and the Australian Electoral Commission for delivery of services. The Australian Electoral Commission has also expressed interest in delivering services on a trial basis at Mimili and Amata in the short term.

Contrary to such claims, during fieldwork conducted for this study there was no evidence of access to Services SA or other SA government licensing and registration services being made uniformly available through PY Ku centres across the Lands in 2008–09. However, the hopes, political announcements and widely promulgated timetables were changed by unforeseen circumstances. Building, fit-out and technology problems delayed the opening of the first PY Ku centre at Amata until December 2007. The other centres opened in:

- April 2008, at Mimili
- May 2008, in Kaltjiti and Iwantja
- September 2008, at Pipalyatjara and Wataru.

In 2009, only Centrelink services were consistently provided through the PY Ku centres. In April 2005, the OIPC engaged consultant Mr John Thurtell to 'undertake a preliminary assessment of what was required to improve program and service delivery in the [APY] Lands … and consequently improve outcomes for the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara [Anangu] people, communities and organisations'.

Mr Thurtell was further engaged by the SA Government as a Regional Service Coordinator for the APY Lands, to replace the past three administrators/consultants to government. Thurtell (2007, p. 42) also investigated municipal and local governance arrangements on the APY Lands and suggested PY Ku centres could help deliver municipal services to communities:

> Ideally, Rural Transaction Centre Supervisors and staff could relieve Municipal Services Officers and other Community Office staff of some of their workload and provide an alternative service delivery centre in the major communities. Additionally, it may be easier to attract Anangu to work in the Rural Transaction Centres than in Community Offices.

In 2005, there was a third TKP meeting (in May) and fourth planning workshop (in September) of COAG government and Anangu regional organisation stakeholders. Planning and service goals similar to 2003 were identified as priorities. An Anangu respondent talked about the ongoing cycle of consultations, meetings and priority setting:

> All I want is the same thing I wanted when this was first raised in that meeting in 2003 – to be able to pay for my licence here instead of having to go to Alice, to use a local bank, to sort out some basic things like that and even use the Internet now and then – it ain't rocket science is it? How hard can it be?

However, another Anangu leader qualified this view:

> Yes, well, it has taken a long time but it will happen and I want PY Ku to be where Anangu run our own services; we should run this and it can be our PY Ku and us delivering our services and getting paid for it – this is how with everything happening we keep control of our own lives in our own communities – and it's worth getting it right!

In February 2007, the Commonwealth Government released a first-stage evaluation of the APY Lands COAG trial. The evaluation indicated that 'significant aspects of the funding requirements for implementation of PY Ku remained to be resolved' (Urbis Keys Young 2006, p. 7). The evaluation raised concerns about how the project would be managed and funded in the long term:

> Several of the parties consulted during the study raised concerns about the long-term management of the PY Ku, noting that this would be a challenging task and was well outside PY Media's core areas of activity. There was also concern that the project could not be self-sustaining and would require long-term commitment of public funds.
>
> At one point a reduction in the number of transaction centres from seven to three or four was contemplated; however, DoHA's expectation is that all seven PY Ku service centres will be constructed during 2006.

In September 2007, a reconfigured and more tightly focused PY Ku Planning Committee was established as the new PY Ku Advisory Group. In October 2007, a new PY Ku manager was appointed by PY Media. According to a report (Aucote 2007, p. 8) prepared for the PY Ku Planning Committee:

> The first two years (2005 and 2006) were very demanding years for PY Media with staff required to undertake extensive travel, community and agency consultation; contract negotiations, staff recruitment, orientation and training and building design. The PY Ku RTC Network was a new concept that threatened existing administrative arrangements in communities and the PY Ku team worked hard to overcome barriers to the establishment of the new way forward.

This research report will now explore how Anangu organisations and communities experienced the delays and issues with the rollout of PY Ku, before examining the impact of PY Ku centres on communities after they opened during 2008.

3.2 Organisational challenges

3.2.1 Complexity

Moran and Elvin (2009, p. 415) discuss the complexity of current governmental, administrative and services delivery arrangements to remote Aboriginal desert settlements in Australia. They suggest governance is changing at an unprecedented rate:

> Aboriginal leaders and community managers describe the change as bewildering, with ever-revolving agents and agencies and increasing quantities of administration. Governments are preoccupied with finding linear 'solutions' to new conceptualisations of the 'problem' and packaging these for top-down implementation. However, governance in practice involves multi-dimensional interactions of a complex system, which are difficult to predict, let alone to control for outcomes.

The 'complex system' analysis is a useful lens for analysing the delays that troubled the initial implementation phases of PY Ku. As mentioned earlier, the SA Coroner was critical of the complexity of coordinating bodies established for the 'whole of government' approach to Aboriginal affairs administrative mechanisms. He suggested that governments became bogged down with consultation (Chivell 2002):

> The establishment of these [governmental coordinating] bodies met with a generally favourable response, although there have been criticisms about failure to consult, and delay … [such] bodies have taken far too long to act … meetings are too far apart, and still seem stuck in the 'information gathering' phase. There is no need for further information gathering, and there is a vast untapped pool of professional expertise to be utilised. What is missing is prompt, forthright, properly-planned, properly-funded action.

Three years later in his 2005 Inquest, the Coroner again spoke more directly of the plethora of specific SA-level coordinating and consultative committees – and in particular, bodies such as the APY Lands Interdepartmental and Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee and the APY Lands Task Force:

> Neither body achieved substantial gains. Indeed, they became bogged down in further consultative efforts and bureaucratic negotiation.

Similar frustrations were expressed by a number of respondents in this study. They mentioned SA Government coordinating bodies, shifts in Commonwealth approaches, time spent in meetings and discussion rather than action, lack of continuity and the need to continually re-state community aspirations:

> The dominant paradigm in Aboriginal Affairs is 'theatre of the absurd'. It's nonsense! That's the only way it makes any sense to me … It's not based on corporate knowledge, or professional knowledge, or logic. It's theatre of the absurd … "if only they'd pump all the tyres up…!". What they're reaping now is the harvest of thirty years of failure of governments to discharge their fiduciary duties to this population of people … It's as simple as that. It's got nothing to do with recalcitrant Aboriginal people, which is what they are trying to say these days.
>
> Dysfunctional government agencies is what I'd put down as one of the main cause of failure. It's got nothing to do with local politics out on the ground.
>
> Because government has not recognised the complexities involved in rolling out such a program, people are still working in silos.

> It's not dysfunction in the communities that gives me the biggest headaches, it's dysfunction in the state and the lack of will to get on with it. Why is it that Services SA isn't in there?

While the 2004 agreement with PY Media to manage the PY Ku rollout was clearly intended to reflect a genuine approach to building the local capacity and local control, the program complexities and infrastructure challenge was a considerable challenge for a relatively small regional media organisation. PY Media's core business was delivering radio and other media to Anangu communities, rather than delivering major social service or being experienced project managers. Establishing a PY Ku network across an area as vast as the APY Lands is a complex and challenging undertaking. The review of the COAG trial on the APY Lands (Urbis Keys Young 2006, p. 10) counted 'over 20 partners at Australian and South Australian Government level as well as Anangu organisations' involved in the PY Ku program, at 2006.

The interface of Commonwealth and state agencies was therefore fraught with coordination challenges – across 'silos', as some respondents suggested. As well, within the body politic of the Lands, there are complexities in negotiating community-by-community agreements, given the 'one-size-fits-all' model of regional service delivery and building configurations. Some of the challenges included:

- ensuring adequate telecommunications coverage
- meeting 'hidden' costs to maintain equipment
- recruiting, training, inducting, supervising and developing Anangu staff to work on unfamiliar and complex administrative tasks
- lack of direct support for Anangu staff.

PY Media came under severe stress when several long-term senior staff left in 2006–07. This threatened the capacity and operations of PY Media to maintain its role and responsibilities as a regional media organisation while rolling out such a complex program as PY Ku.

3.2.2 Goal displacement

Bohte and Meier (2001, p. 174) suggest that precise measures of appropriate standards of performance for complex social problems become impossible. As well, public programs with complex policies and competing, often contradictory, goals can generate 'Herculean' expectations for agencies. These expectations – intentional or not – can lead to forms of goal displacement, where the process of striving for a goal overshadows achievement of the goal itself. Sometimes the core mission/goals of an organisation are also displaced when the organisation takes on new programs, projects or goals.

Organisational goals and processes are established by individuals within organisations who collectively have sufficient control of organisational resources to commit them in certain directions and steer away from other directions (Chisolm 1992, p. 172). The loss of key PY Media staff who had been instrumental in securing the PY Ku rollout created uncertainty and turbulence. Not only was the stability of the organisation threatened, but during changes at the Commonwealth level to the 'whole of government' COAG trial approach, the funding approach for PY Media changed as well.

In December 2006, the PY Media Executive advised DoHA of their formal decision to discontinue the regional management of the PY Ku. COAG stakeholder agencies were advised that PY Media needed to concentrate their efforts on improved outcomes in their core business: community broadcasting and media. According to stakeholder respondents, PY Media had become increasingly vulnerable as a direct result of both the goal displacement and heavy load on key staff and Board members. One interviewee suggested this vulnerability came from 'the expectations and responsibility placed on it for the carriage of the COAG trial PY Ku network program'.

PY Media had become an organisation 'at risk', from the perspective of Anangu Board members and key staff. Its decision to terminate its role in PY Ku was based on the struggle to meet obligations under funding agreements as a media organisation, while also trying to manage a large, complex and important initiative. PY Media was also without the assistance of either an established and experienced General Manager or dedicated PY Ku manager. The pressure to deliver and manage PY Ku without adequate support staff led PY Media to determine that it was an extraordinarily difficult task for a small Anangu agency – an 'impossible ask'.

However, in April 2007, after a series of negotiations with DoHA, the PY Media Board formally rescinded its earlier decision to terminate its roll out of PY Ku. In summarising this decision, PY Media staff said (Aucote 2007):

> The PY Media Executive made its decision to continue with PY Ku because of obligation felt to all stakeholders and their aspirations for the future of young Anangu. Executive Members and Anangu generally express their vision of the PY Ku providing 'the gateway' for Anangu to receive the training and support required to assume management of their own communities. Government agencies in planning their needs and considering the costs to their organisations of committing to the future operations of PY Ku must bear in mind that they are in partnership with PY Media [representing Anangu] and there is an implied obligation on COAG members to ensure that PY Media has sufficient resources to guarantee the sustainability of PY Media as an organisation into the future.

By the end of 2007, the Amata PY Ku had opened and five other PY Ku centres had been constructed and handed over to PY Media (Nicholls 2007b). However, in early January 2008, delays in the supply of Telstra services (telephone and fax lines) were seriously delaying the opening and function of the PY Ku centres. On 31 January, Telstra had completed work on the Amata PY Ku centre and staff could install computers, faxes, printers and other essential equipment. The Mimili and Iwantja centres were also almost ready for opening, although Telstra still needed to complete work at both centres and power was yet to be connected at Iwantja (Nicholls 2008b). On 21 April 2008, PY Media reported Amata PY Ku centre as 'working excellently … most visitors are very impressed', and that additional services would be introduced over the coming months (Nicholls 2008a). PY Media also noted that 'the other five centres had all been outfitted and that local staff had been signed to proper work contracts [not CDEP] and were excited about moving into the new buildings' (Figure 7).

Figure 7: PY Ku centre openings

Source: PY Media 2007, 2008 ©

3.2.3 Ngapartji-Ngapartji: reciprocity and continuity

Before discussing the impact of PY Ku centres in communities, we will briefly discuss one feature that has stood out during the prolonged and, at times, difficult implementation of the PY Ku network. First, a significant factor in the successful opening of the PY Ku centres in 2008 is the enduring patience, consistency and determination of key Anangu and non-Anangu actors in both government and Anangu organisations. Without the commitment of a number of these individuals – particularly within

PY Media and DoHA, but also in other Anangu organisations and communities, and state and other governmental agencies – the PY Ku network would never have got 'off the ground'. The willingness of these individuals to keep faith with delivering on the original commitments made by Anangu people for a one-stop shop facility for Anangu communities on the Lands has been remarkable. Some people tolerated great upheavals in their work, including switching between departments and government and non-government sectors, to maintain their commitment to the overall aim of PY Ku.

When Moran (2008, p. 194) discusses adaptation to complexity and the increasing administrative burden placed on Aboriginal communities, the role of 'trusted outsiders' is highlighted. Moran (2008) suggests that innovation in indeterminate, uncertain and complex environments can be enhanced by productive social relationships between Aboriginal people and 'outsiders' working together to incrementally overcome the complex problems that arise when new service delivery models are introduced. Problems such as those encountered in the rollout of PY Ku are not always easy to anticipate, plan for or predict in advance. They are often only revealed through practise and 'trial and error' in local communities. Interpersonal relationships between Anangu leaders and non-Anangu staff became even more essential for productive progress as the pressure of intercultural governance and bureaucratic dilemmas increased. Moran and Elvin (2009, p. 419) suggest:

> Almost all senior positions of local organisations in remote settlements are held by permanent resident employees: 'outsiders' who are from elsewhere. These outsiders are mostly of non-Aboriginal descent or of Aboriginal descent but originally from elsewhere. In some cases they have lived in the remote settlement for many years, but with some ongoing social distance from the local community. Their effective operation is contingent on a high degree of local familiarity and trust. Not all outsiders behave in a manner whereby they are trusted, or stay long enough for relationships to develop, but those that do can become powerful agents within the system.

The importance of trusting relationships to good practice in the service system is not only within one organisational context. Such trusted relationships can operate – and this research report suggests that they did operate in PY Ku – across organisational boundaries and, for example, between non-Anangu 'trusted outsiders' and Anangu 'trusted insiders'. However, the danger in how important these relationships are comes from the high turnover of staff in Aboriginal Affairs. Reliance on human relationships has been cited as a 'two-edged sword' by some interviewees:

> If you've got a good relationship with a bureaucrat things can work really well. They have an incredibly high staff turnover in these departments … I've probably had six project officers I have worked with … There is a lack of corporate knowledge at government level which has a big impact on … projects running out. Then there's … leaving things in in-trays and going off on … leave for three months and no one else takes on responsibility for the project.

One observation from this study is that, at times, as delays troubled the program, interpersonal hostilities between key individuals confused and contaminated what otherwise had been a remarkable process. Significant tensions developed when funding delays and multiple levels of accountability made managing the complex and multi-layered capital infrastructure, human resources and service integration very difficult. This was exacerbated by an inherently politically charged local and COAG-driven policy context.

Where there is uncertainty in politically charged environments, there is a high tendency to apportion blame to offset responsibility. Politicians announce initiatives with high impact but can create unrealistic expectations of timelines and anticipated delivery. In complex intercultural and multi-lateral program negotiations it is not surprising that miscommunication can to lead to accusations of misdeeds and fault. In the past decade, systemic tensions and uncertainties have escalated in Aboriginal Affairs administration. Dillon and Westbury (2007, p. 192) suggest that much of the 'institutional framework of government which operates in the rest of the nation disappeared in [remote Indigenous] communities'.

This can exacerbated interactions between department officials and remote Aboriginal community representatives. To simplistically blame Aboriginal community constraints or issues of governance, or conversely blame particular bureaucrats or 'the system' for delays, rather than appreciate the interplay of factors and dynamics of context that can impede progress, is understandable but unfortunate. Institutional delays sometimes occur through no fault of singular individuals or factors endemic to either Anangu or non-Anangu polity.

However, some respondents suggested the stress of attributions and frustrations have not been constructive to good relationships across the 'whole of government' interface with Anangu, nor helped PY Ku implementation:

> Discussion is often only about problems not about good things that are happening. The government is running the wrong story … We should keep talking together to talk to people and keep things going. This is for Anangu!

> It has not been fair for people to say this, create this impression about my department … we have worked hard to support PY Ku and will continue to do so … we haven't turned away, that isn't fair, and we have maintained the funding and policy commitment throughout; some people cause mischief which is unnecessary and it is difficult as individual public servants to respond.

> It is better with the Commonwealth, the state people here seemed to lack the understanding and commitment to the project … The SA and Commonwealth should talk more … there's so much tension between them and we get caught in the middle in our communities.

> Government has not recognised the complexities involved in rolling out such a program. People are still working in silos … COAG was a good idea but nothing changed around it. You still had to work within the constraints of the existing system. It was only possible to do things if you found an individual within government who was willing to find a way around the system. Thus PY Ku was 'dependent' on such individuals. Over time the 'go to' people left government or were less willing to find a way around the system due to increasing pressures on public servants.

In a presentation to representatives of SA and Commonwealth Government officials at the end of 2009, Anangu Board members of PY Media discussed the importance of keeping 'whole of government' and government/Anangu relationships strong, to maintain momentum towards service improvement. A range of issues were raised. These included the need for respect for Anangu traditions in providing leadership, a need to share information, 'cultural safety' and continuity of support. The Chairman of PY Media relayed this message (Brumby 2009) to all involved in PY Ku:

> Building a TRUST relationship between government and Anangu takes time. Maintaining that TRUST requires commitment from all parties to LONG-TERM GOALS and a willingness to work together to overcome the barriers to achieving those Goals. Placing TRUST in Anangu's active involvement in the planning and delivery of services in their communities is the most essential foundation for building a positive and equitable future.

> Government representatives (non-Indigenous) often wonder why Anangu do not agree with new programs being introduced even though benefits can be identified by all parties. This has been explained by Anangu – how can Anangu have faith in government when they constantly change their rules and laws and show by these constant changes that they have no confidence and belief in their law? Anangu must always keep Anangu Law in front because it is ever present; it doesn't change, it's consistent.

> Too many times programs have been started, promising new beginnings for Anangu. Too many times these programs end with changes in rules, laws and governments. As very senior Anangu once said: "Every time new people come with new programs, we give a piece of our heart. Our heart is all gone now, there is nothing left. Now we die". Continuing to build on the beginnings made with PY Ku is the right way forward.

> No more fighting. No more decisions made on behalf of Anangu. PY Media to work with government to build a future for young Anangu. PY Media to work in partnership with government to continue to build PY Ku. Anangu to be involved in the decisions that will shape their future … Ananangu across the lands support PY Ku and want to see it continue. PY Ku workers are asking for more work, more services, more training and more support.
>
> The infrastructure for future community service delivery is in place. The capacity of Ananangu involved in the first trial has established role models in the community and a sense of pride amongst Anangu generally. Though there may have been some troubled times this first partnership between government and PY Media has succeeded in laying a firm foundation for the future.
>
> PY Media wish to acknowledge the support of DoHA over the past five years. [PY Ku is about] Ananangu to have improved access to suitable and culturally safe services. Ananangu and government working together to develop and delivery services at the community level … Continuing to build on the beginnings made with PY Ku is the right way forward. Ngapartji Ngapartji with 'Ananangu Law in front'.
>
> We will deliver the objectives of the National Partnership on Remote Service Delivery:
>
> - improve access to suitable and culturally inclusive services
> - raise the standard and range of services
> - improve the level of governance and leadership
> - facilitate simpler access and better coordination of government services
> - increase economic and social participation.

4. PY Ku centres in operation

4.1 Community perspectives

4.1.1 Centre openings

In effect, the PY Ku program began well before the buildings opened to provide a locus for the activities in the program. In a report on the status of PY Ku to the PY Ku Planning Committee in 2007, Aucote (2007) indicated that:

> A legitimate recognised structure has been put in place for the training and employment of Ananangu in the delivery of services in their communities which assists Anangu with their aim of eventual administration and management of their own affairs.

From September 2006, Centrelink services were delivered through PY Ku staff to Amata and Mimili, and eventually to Watarru, Kaltjiti and Indulkana. For Ananangu PY Ku staff at that time, Centrelink provided training and support in other community buildings as they waited for the PY Ku centres to arrive. The Aucote report (2007) also details the negotiations under way:

- with Services SA for delivering specific licensing services
- with the Department of Premier and Cabinet for interpreter services
- with the Australian Electoral Commission
- with a proposed Wiltja Connections video-conferencing project to link students based in Adelaide with their families on the Lands
- for banking services
- for funeral support.

A regional PY Ku logo was developed by Jo Boniface of 'Red Dirt Graphics' (Alice Springs). Ananangu considered design options and accepted the final logo. Community Councils worked with PY Media to plan the opening days for each centre, which were events of great community celebration with

barbeques, music and speeches. The opening of each PY Ku was marked by the participation and enthusiasm of communities at each site, which demonstrates high levels of community interest and ownership of PY Ku.

Figure 8: Opening of Mimili PY Ku, 28 April 2008

Source: PY Media 2008 ©

On 3 December 2007, the Amata PY Ku opened for limited business. Mimili PY Ku centre opened for business on 28 April 2008, followed by the opening of the Kaltjiti PY Ku on 5 May and Iwantja on 19 May. Pipalyatjara PY Ku opened for business on 1 September 2008, followed by Watarru on 22 September 2008. Each opening was a community event. The opening of each centre was on the continuum of building momentum for PY Ku as a community development initiative that was geared to enable Anangu to shape and deliver services within and for their communities, rather than government formally presenting the program. The openings also held significance for local people as a material manifestation of spaces that demonstrate Anangu agency. The openings signified hope for both improved service delivery and Anangu control over the intercultural interface of service delivery. As one Anangu worker explained:

> It's an Anangu space … our Anangu idea and now we work here! … we can train our people, educate them to use services well … speak in language and people come and ask what they don't know … it's an Anangu dream PY Ku … and I'm proud to be part of it!

Figure 9: PY Ku centre Kaltjiti

Source: *PY Media 2008* ©

4.1.2 Service uptake

An original intention of PY Ku was to establish a baseline of data about what services needs to be provided for communities. Patterns can then be evaluated to find services that are in high demand, about seasonal changes, whether people move between locations to do their administrative business, and whether people go to centres where trained Anangu information specialists speak in local languages. However, because negotiations about SA Government, banking, Australian Electoral Commission and other services stalled, the mainstay of PY Ku business remained Centrelink. Records kept by PY Ku workers to log customer contact and their queries indicate an average of 10–15 interviews a day (up to 30, at times). There was steady daily traffic at all centres. People were looking for information and advice about services, and in particular, to process, collect and discuss Centrelink payments. The centres open from 10 am to 4 pm, with a midday break. Steady traffic of Anangu in, through and around the centres makes it easy to see their popularity as a source of information and support.

Other records highlight that, for example, when the Mimili PY Ku centre was temporarily closed, people from Mimili travelled 80 km or more to the Indulkana centre to conduct their business. This movement to use PY Ku facilities from areas where no PY Ku was located or when a specific centre was not operating shows that the Anangu knew what the centres were for, and that they wanted to use them. Records show that PY Ku attendance increased at one location when other centres closed, and that people who previously had not used Centrelink started doing so when centres opened in their communities. However, it has been difficult to track the use or patterns of non-Centrelink services due to the slow rollout of centres, variations in continuity of opening and staffing, but mostly because of the lack of availability of other promised government services through the centres.

Public access to computers has been extremely popular – all centres report queues at peak times to access them. The public access computer cafes have been a significant boost to community access: they are used for activities such as online banking and checking world news, and by students seeking reference materials out of school hours. Many community members wished that the community radio and video-conferencing facilities of PY Ku could be fully realised, because they are much needed and wanted.

4.1.3 PY Ku and other local services

In some locations, service providers such as TAFE have co-located (for a rental fee) with PY Ku staff in the PY Ku buildings. In such cases, those staff use one of the fully equipped, modern PY Ku offices and they share kitchen, toilet and IT facilities with Anangu staff. In such instances, the synergies between the services are evident. While some visiting staff occasionally complain about supporting clients coming to PY Ku, or playing at times a mentoring and helping role for PY Ku staff and clients, the response has been overwhelmingly positive about these co-locations. They are largely viewed as a sensible, efficient sharing of space and resources.

Figure 10: TAFE class being held in the conference room at Kaljiti (Fregon) PY Ku 21 May 2008.

Source: *Koori Mail* 19 November 2008, p. 41 (© PY Media 2008).

One of the key areas of interface for the new PY Ku centres is with local Community Council offices. While initially there was occasional need to resolve some differences and issues of duplication, in general, the relationship between Council office staff and PY Ku staff has been positive. People have, for example, worked out arrangements such as who will collect or hold mail, or provide advice on travel support. A proposal from PY Media included using PY Ku offices as the Community Council office and assuming some Community Council roles. This proposal for PY Ku centres to have a more substantive role in local municipal service delivery agrees with suggestions made by Thurtell (2007, p. 42) in his scoping study of future municipal and local government arrangements on the APY Lands. This has currently only remained an idea for discussion as the roles, functions, hiring and funding arrangements for Municipal Services Officers located with local and regional councils undergoes further review and changes are occurring. Some uncertainty remains about Community Council futures, given the possible shifts of council functions to a more formal local government/regional model. While this debate occurs, a clear link with PY Ku centres only extends to local informal arrangements.

Meeting rooms within the PY Ku centres are hired out for little or no fee to local family groups and homeland organisations for meetings and family functions. This opportunity may seem like a relatively minor service. However, providing a neutral, well-equipped, comfortable space for families and community members to hold discussions, Anangu to Anangu, provides an option that can help to prevent or resolve conflicts and uncertainties. Respondents spoke about the 'safety' of an Anangu space where they could hold family meetings away from the home but in the community, and viewed it as a shared community resource.

Services such as visiting Courts Department officers, visiting social workers or health professionals similarly use the PY Ku centres and have commented on not only the convenience but the centrality of the centres in the community, and how they are now well-known locations where people can come to and be assured of some privacy and respect. In one location, local police interviewees spoke about how the PY Ku centres had assisted their own work:

> The chance to educate and immediately resolve a minor issue rather than all the delays and knock-on effects of charges or fines is great! Can really see what a change long term this will make … and we now come straight to the PY Ku, it's like an information centre … can find out who's around and who's in town and what's going on … we love it, people love it … saves time and all in central location … why don't the big brass see how much potential PY Ku has to help communities build themselves up and turn things around?

4.2 Anangu workers in PY Ku

4.2.1 Recruitment and training

A number of the PY Ku workers were recruited early to the program, before the centres themselves were built in communities. This provided the advantage of PY Ku staff with a long lead time for training and becoming familiar with, for example, customer service, Centrelink services and functions, and working alongside existing non-Anangu staff before assuming lead roles in the centres when they opened. Staff were recruited by PY Media from the communities wherever possible and sometimes people from families with a background in other areas of service delivery. A number of PY Ku staff have sisters or mothers working in administrative roles, or for Nganampa Clinics, as teachers, or in training for teaching through the Anangu Tertiary Education Program.

This provided a more natural trajectory for staff who see being part of PY Ku as an extension of other areas of the Anangu endeavour to assume roles within the service delivery system. Of particular interest was the number of PY Ku staff who spoke of how important family support was to their ability to take up and fulfil their new work roles as PY Ku staff. Family and community support is essential to being able to take on work and continue to work in roles that demand separation of home and work life (such as servicing clients with a measure of confidentiality and professionalism).

While in all organisational contexts some staff turnover can be expected, there has been a core of leading PY Ku staff who have remained. Some have assumed lead roles in mentoring and supporting new staff. The Indulkana centre has been highly successful and, in many ways, an exemplar of good practice. Much can be attributed to the competence and commitment of the key staff located there. Given the level of training and sense of pride Anangu PY Ku staff expressed about their jobs, it is not surprising that a number spoke about wanting comparable (to non-Anangu staff) full-time wages: 'Although this is a part-time position (10 am to 4 pm), I end up often working more hours than this, and I want proper pay like other Centrelink staff elsewhere'. While the use of CDEP had been debated early in discussions about this program, many staff expressed a desire to be seen as full-time (or formalised as part-time) professionals with expectations of a career trajectory, ongoing development as public servants, and social or human service professionals in their communities. Staff see PY Ku as an opportunity to embrace a career – eschewing any notion they were para-professionals or casual aides to service delivery on behalf of departmental (or PY Media) seniors.

The Chairman of PY Media and other committee members have spoken of the importance of the Anangu models of education being 'learning by doing'. Ideally, competent PY Ku workers could rotate to work or visit at each centre, to help support, train, mentor and guide new PY Ku workers. All Anangu PY Ku staff spoke about the need for ongoing training. All were studying customer service training – some achieved Certificate 2 or 3, others wanted to achieve a Certificate 4 level. One respondent said they felt like a 'social worker now' in terms of their work, and how they were seeking opportunities to continue to build knowledge and skill levels towards professional human service careers. The combination of on-the-job practice as well as training was evident during repeat visits to centres where PY Ku staff could clearly map their own growth in knowledge and understanding of professionalism in service delivery. As one Anangu PY Ku worker explained:

> When I started it was hard to tell my relatives what to do and advise on forms and entitlements, 'cause they are my family … but now they are still my family but I tell them no: when you are here behind this counter you are my customers now here … not my family and you must treat me like you are the customers and I am helping you as a trained worker here.

Others spoke of how important it was to know that the community valued this work and that the local PY Ku 'people respect me and what I do … and they take turns, wait their turn and are very cooperative knowing this is an important Anangu service here – this is our PY Ku and we all want this to work for all Anangu':

> This is a PY Ku 'movement' and people will see being a PY Ku worker as a job to train up to – schoolkids can see now we can work in our own communities and not always piranpa [non-Anangu people] doing those jobs.
>
> I do so much more than just Centrelink and advise people on new things happening and who to see … be good to have key cards based here … and new programs … I've done my training now and can see so much we can learn and do and want to keep learning and training … but we need help with IT and it takes time to know this is our job, our place … it's an Anangu dream PY Ku … and I'm proud to be part of it.

4.2.1 Experiences at the shopfront

Figure 11: Customers receiving over-the-counter service and visiting the Centrelink hotline

Source: *PY Media 2008 ©*

The response of communities in general to PY Ku has been one of pride and willingness to do whatever was required to adhere to the standards of participation to support PY Ku. Community members spoke of the importance of giving Anangu the opportunity to staff the centres. A common sentiment was special regard for the PY Ku staff, as shown in this statement from one respondent waiting to be served at a PY Ku centre:

> It make me proud come in here, Anangu serving Anangu … you got to be plenty ninti[7] to work here … in Adelaide you got Vietnamese and African people, all sorts serve their people at Centrelink … here we now got our PY Ku people delivering services to us in language … we can build up community from here … I like the computers and one day we do banking here too … everything strong way for Anangu, right way … I like this one PY Ku.

The buildings themselves appeared to be cared for as Anangu facilities, which signified a shift in service delivery towards community control. They appeared to suffer less vandalism than some might expect, especially when closed for periods of time. Community members visiting the PY Ku centres commented

7 The term 'ninti' means 'clever' in various languages of the western desert region in Australia.

on the air-conditioned, modern comfort of the buildings, and appreciated features such as the curtains of Aboriginal motif fabric (custom-made through a contract given to local women to produce). However, the single most overwhelmingly commented-on feature of PY Ku was the importance of being served by Anangu staff:

> It's good to see Anangu working … it makes us feel comfortable … it's especially good for the old people … they see faces they are familiar with. With Anangu working we don't get shame … and they [staff] don't get cranky because they know Anangu here.
>
> We don't feel shy or shame because there are no piranpa workers. PY Ku is the only 'Anangu only' agency in town where piranpa are not working. This removes the shame and shyness.

For many respondents there was puzzlement as to why other services were not available as expected through the centres. Generally people expected that it was only logical that other services should be provided through PY Ku. 'Where are the banking and financial services people spoke of early on?' was a common query. Others seemed prepared to wait, because PY Ku was viewed as a new concept in service delivery – there was therefore some acceptance that it would grow over time.

On occasions when the PY Ku centres (for diverse reasons) were closed for periods of time or when staff were away, reports came of people voluntarily maintaining the premises, sweeping, cleaning and tending the plants close to the centres. This community voluntary effort demonstrated much care and support for the centres and the staff within them. One elderly customer explained that while she liked the piranpa (non-Anangu staff) who had previously delivered Centrelink into her community, 'we had to line up like cattle out there near that small room and often wait a long time in 40 degrees plus heat. Now we have privacy in the PY Ku centre and can even speak one-on-one in a meeting room alone if we need to – and it's air-conditioned, comfortable and we are speaking in Pitjantjatjara'. While not wishing to criticise non-Anangu staff, there was a clear and unanimous view that PY Ku offered a superior and more culturally safe service delivery environment. This perception of the centres as culturally safe spaces for Anangu resonates with the notion of Aboriginal service settings as defined in DKCRC research conducted by Paul Memmott (2010) in western Queensland. Drawing on behavioural and environmental psychology, Memmott (2010, p. 40) suggests that an 'Aboriginal service setting can be defined as one that is controlled by Aboriginal people and is designed to be comfortable'. PY Ku centres are locations that are conducive to Aboriginal people conducting a range of transactions, largely because of the presence of Anangu staff. A sense of Aboriginal identity and ownership of the setting by Aboriginal people is generated 'when the service is being delivered in an effective way' (Memmott, 2010, p. 41). One of the key innovations of PY Ku is undoubtedly its impact on communities as a safe and culturally conducive Aboriginal service setting.

4.2.2 Developing capacity

In international development literature, concepts such as 'sustainable livelihoods' provide a framework for analysis which emphasise the building of community assets (Chambers & Conway 1992; Fisher 2002; Scoones 1998). The livelihoods approach is comparable to what is termed, in the social work literature, a 'strengths-based' approach (see Hounslow 2002; Ife 2002; Kretzmann & McKnight 1993; Laursen 2000; Saleebey 2002). It focuses on building community assets and enhancing local capacity, rather than assuming a 'top down' interventionist approach is necessary due to dysfunctions and deficits inherent in the community context. Chambers and Conway (1992) provide the following definition:

> A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base.

The livelihoods approach suggests that key factors, such as linking concerns about work and employment with poverty reduction, and broader issues of adequacy, security, wellbeing and capability, are important ways to both develop resilience, capacity and sustainable change. It takes 'the skills, status and possessions of people and analyses how they use those assets to improve the quality of their lives' (Fisher 2002, p. 2). The approach also seeks to understand the interconnectedness of assets so that they can be deployed to meet the varied aspirations and needs of people. Within this context, a strength-based approach takes a more holistic approach to program developments which – rather than focusing on family and community weaknesses or deficits – aims to collaborate with families and communities to discover and support functions and strengths (Laursen 2000). At the foundation of such livelihood, asset-building and strengths-based approaches is the belief that individuals, families and communities have 'unique talents, skills, and life events, in addition to specific unmet needs' (Sullivan & Rapp 1994, p. 98). Within such approaches, there are important assets to sustain and build upon, such as existing community reserves of:

- social capital (strengths of relationships which can provide both bonding and bridging leverage)
- human capital (knowledge, skills and talents which enable capacities to learn and grow)
- physical capital (buildings and infrastructure)
- natural capital (environmental resources)
- financial capital (economic resources).

From this perspective, the engagement of Anangu as PY Ku workers demonstrates important capacities to be drawn on and developed. Ongoing training and support not only will develop the capacities of particular individuals, but also provide a much needed boost to local knowledge about services, which builds the social and human capital assets of families and communities. This is revealed in the following quotes from staff respondents:

> Because I can speak to my customers in language I can show them things and explain how to do things for themselves in ways others can't. It's not just language, it's understanding … and also can tell people sometimes they're on wrong payment or how to progress with their education … what's available … since being here a while now can see things that are needed because people ask … and wish [they] could tell someone: hey this is what's needed here … in my community.
>
> It's like you see the patterns as people ask … I like my studies and maybe now I am a social worker you know … maybe I can be a trained one if I keep up studies … it'd be good to have more community workers in here … not just delivering our service but talking to customers and families and making grow new programs to make it always getting better … mainly for the young ones too you know.

4.3 Service implications

4.3.1 Future service development potential under National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery

Delays and complex challenges of the start-up and rollout of PY Ku placed many undeniable stresses on the program and all those involved. These stresses were compounded by the receipt of less funds and less service business than originally promised by both levels of government during PY Ku's initial phase. Nonetheless, PY Ku has revealed important strengths about the efficacy and potential of a one-stop shop transaction centre model of integrated service delivery to remote Aboriginal communities, operated collaboratively under the stewardship of Aboriginal control. The PY Ku network provides an

'ideal' demonstration project of information and resource locations which can significantly advance local Anangu, state and Commonwealth COAG goals. It can be a crucial example in the quest to improve service delivery and provide pathways into sustainable employment for Anangu citizens.

The PY Ku network was envisaged by Anangu as a long-term goal for a community development base which would provide pathways into Anangu engagement in service delivery (as outlined in earlier sections of this report). However, as a model, it also reflects contemporary thinking in public administration for human services over the past two decades about themes of service integration and complex adaptive systems (Moran & Elvin 2009). These in turn form part of the repertoire of practical responses to the quest for more demand-responsive service delivery approaches. As Agranoff (1991, p. 553) suggests: 'human service integration refers to … development of systems that are responsive to the multiple needs of persons-at-risk, victims of the most severe social problems'. In complex and, in this case, remote community contexts, attention needs be placed on how to manage the range of social problems for the best results.

The PY Ku program as an initiative of COAG (2002) 'Working Together' has provided a significant opportunity for governments to build on the investment already made in APY Lands to further the principles and goals of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery (2009). The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery (RSD NPA) specifies principles of engagement, sustainability, access and integration, which can be argued relate specifically to the PY Ku network. The RSD NPA, which was signed by Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland, WA, SA and the NT governments in January 2009, aims to:

- improve the access of Indigenous families to a full range of suitable and culturally inclusive services
- raise the standard and range of services delivered to Indigenous families to be broadly consistent with those provided to other Australians in similar-sized and located communities
- improve the level of governance and leadership within Indigenous communities and organisations
- provide simpler access and better coordinated government services for Indigenous people in identified communities
- increase economic and social participation wherever possible, and promote personal responsibility, engagement and behaviours consistent with positive social norms.

Two locations (Mimili and Amata) in the APY Lands have been identified as targets for increased funding and resources under the new RSD NPA. Both these locations have PY Ku centres well-positioned to play an active and pivotal role in implementing the objectives of the RSD NPA. Through PY Ku centres at Indulkana and Kaltjiti, the impact and uptake of new government policy initiatives can also be enhanced. Among the Commonwealth- and state-agreed national Principles for investment in these locations (Amata and Mimili as hub sites) are:

- the recognition that remote Indigenous communities … are entitled to standards of services and infrastructure broadly comparable with that in non-Indigenous communities of similar size, location and need elsewhere in Australia
- a commitment that investment decisions should aim to improve participation in education, training and access to the market economy on a sustainable basis.

The aims behind RSD NPA are to reduce dependence on welfare wherever possible, while promoting personal responsibility and engagement consistent with 'positive social norms'.

Other national principles within the new RSD NPA resonate quite specifically with the aims of the PY Ku network. The RSD NPA aims to focus on 'areas where we have already applied significant reform effort that can be readily built upon', specifically locations where:

- communities have demonstrated a willingness to actively participate in the change process, supported by

strong leadership
- there are labour market opportunities
- there is potential for corporate investment/partnerships and business development
- where there is a capacity to be developed and used as a service hub (including transport) with linkages to smaller communities/homelands.

The RSD NPA also details its interest in whether service supply needs can be met – including considering the capacity of existing local service providers and of the location to support incoming services (e.g. availability of built facilities and staff housing for staff). The PY Ku network run by and for Anangu clearly meets the 'design' principles behind the RSD NPA policy. We will now briefly summarise the key principles of engagement, sustainability and access, as these mirror much of the philosophy and interests of Anangu communities in advocating their control over service delivery in communities and their pursuit of a PY Ku network.

Engagement principle

One of the priority principles identified in the RSD NPA is the 'Indigenous engagement principle'. It states that 'engagement with Indigenous men, women and children and communities should be central to the design and delivery of programs and services'. In particular, under the Indigenous engagement principle, attention should be given to (National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery 2009, p. C-2):

- recognising that strong relationships/partnerships between government, community and service providers increase the capacity to achieve identified outcomes and to work towards building these relationships
- engaging and empowering Indigenous people who use government services, and the broader Indigenous community in the design and delivery of programs and services as appropriate
- recognising local circumstances
- making sure Indigenous representation is appropriate, with regard to local representation
- being transparent about the role and level of Indigenous engagement along a continuum from information-sharing to decision-making
- recognising Indigenous culture, language and identity.

The PY Ku network exemplifies each of these key features of engagement. It has also shown the capacity for community and governments to innovate and learn from the processes of implementation – some of them frustrating and problematic, and some of them unexpectedly positive. Sometimes the most useful learning and adaptation happens through unexpected consequences of program implementation.

Sustainability principle

The PY Ku network, established collaboratively and operating under Anangu stewardship, is an exemplar of the engagement principle in practice. The long lead time for the establishment of PY Ku as an operational entity, while frustrating for many engaged in the process at the time, had the unexpected positive consequence of promoting a more sustainable model of service delivery that has been well-grounded since its developmental stages. The 'sustainability principle' under the new RSD NPA argues that: 'programs and services should be directed and resourced over an adequate period of time to meet the COAG targets'. In particular, attention should be given to service systems which (RSD NPA 2009, p. C-2):

- use evidence to develop and redesign programs and services, and set priorities
- recognise the importance of early intervention
- include strategies that increase independence, empowerment and self-management
- ensure adequate and appropriate resources.

The flexibility of the PY Ku network to adapt to meet local needs is an important aspect of its design, and one which will ensure it can develop over time to meet changing circumstances and respond to new local priorities. However, an important issue will be the ongoing maintenance of the buildings and staff. Without ongoing investment in PY Ku staff development, and training to assume increasing responsibilities in service delivery, the network will not develop to its full potential. The RSD NPA (2009, p. C-3) emphasises 'building the capacity of both Indigenous people and of services to meet the needs of Indigenous people', particularly by:

- developing the skills, knowledge, competence, independence and empowerment of Indigenous people, communities and organisations
- supporting Indigenous communities to engage corporate, non-government and philanthropic sectors
- building the capacity of governments and service delivery organisations to develop and implement policies, procedures, and protocols that recognise Indigenous people's culture, needs and aspirations.

The RSD NPA also argues for supporting and developing service delivery contexts which 'foster and do not erode capacity or capability of clients' (2009, p. C-3) and recognises Aboriginal delivery as an important contributor to direct and indirect outcomes. It argues that fostering opportunities for Indigenous service delivery is important to sustainability. This report asserts that the PY Ku network fulfils the important policy intent of these RSD NPA aims.

Access principle

Within the RSD NPA framework, government has argued that programs and services for remote communities should be physically and culturally accessible to Indigenous people and be responsive to the diversity of local needs. In particular, the RSD NPA (2009, p. C-3) suggests that attention be given to:

- considering appropriate and adequate infrastructure and placement of services (including transport, IT, telecommunications and use of interpreter services)
- minimising administrative red tape that may be a barrier to access
- providing adequate information about available programs and services.

This principle seems well-fulfilled with regards to the physical infrastructure now available across six community locations on the APY Lands.

Integration principle

The RSD NPA principles (RSD NPA 2009, p. C-4) argue that there should be collaboration between and within governments at all levels, and their agencies, to effectively coordinate programs and services. In particular, attention should be given to:

- articulating responsibilities between all levels of government
- identifying and addressing gaps and overlaps in the continuum of service delivery
- ensuring services and programs are provided in an integrated and collaborative manner both between all levels of governments and between services
- ensuring services and programs do not set incentives that negatively affect outcomes of other programs and services
- recognising that a centrally agreed strategic focus should not inhibit service delivery responses that are sensitive to local contexts.

It can be argued that the PY Ku network exemplifies the integration principle, which is a core statement of the new RSD NPA; however, its capacity to fully realise this and the other principles will be, to some extent, dependent on both state and Commonwealth governments. It is dependent on their willingness to fully get behind the service development potential afforded by the current PY Ku network, to enable

it to reach its full potential. Governments should consider the potential role that the PY Ku network can play in the delivery of approaches to Family Income Maintenance support, if APY communities (individually or collectively under APY Executive guidance) choose to engage in this RSD NPA initiative.

5. Analysis and conclusions

5.1 Conditions of successful practice

5.1.1 Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

The PY Ku network has received strong support across the APY Lands with few exceptions (noted during the evaluation process). Some small divergence of opinion exists regarding the process of its introduction and implementation. Some Anangu respondents were frustrated and confused about the delays to its rollout; others suggested that a community-by-community approach may have been more effective than a 'one size fits all' regional approach brokered through PY Media (rather than locality-based Community Councils); and others expressed a sense of ongoing and cumulative disillusionment with the capacity of bureaucratic systems to deliver on politicised policy promises. However, among all Anangu leaders, respondents and communities, there is a clear and often-stated commitment to the Anangu vision of PY Ku. That vision represents a significant government and community partnership which can further Anangu employment and engagement in service delivery. It has been the implementation, time delays and resource implications that have concerned some Anangu, not the underlying and original aims of PY Ku. One Community Council chairman, for example, sought advice and clear legal agreement on the long-term maintenance and support that would be available for PY Ku centres before agreeing to any such facility being located within that community. However, as cited above, another Anangu leader described the PY Ku network as a movement which would enable Anangu workers to aspire to significant roles in the service delivery chain to Anangu communities. For example, working in a PY Ku centre would be seen 'as a job to train up to – schoolkids can see now we can work in our own communities and not always piranpa doing those jobs'.

Across communities, clear disappointment was expressed at a perceived lack of support from government for PY Ku to deliver promised services to Anangu citizens. However, there is near unanimous support from community respondents for locally based access to Commonwealth and state government services and an approach that PY Ku Centres would eventually provide:

- banking services
- Services SA licences
- Australia Post
- Australian Electoral Commission
- birth/death certificates
- additional funeral support
- pay phones
- health promotion
- financial support services
- other required services.

Banking and financial support services were particularly raised as a major gap in service provision.

Community members consistently speak highly of their local PY Ku centre and PY Ku staff, and view the achievement of Anangu employed to deliver Centrelink and other services to communities with great pride. People see the PY Ku centres as service hubs and a pivotal place for communities to gather and gain/swap/learn information. The Internet cafes are well patronised and viewed as a gateway to self-service, and contact and access to worldwide information. Anangu staff delivering services in Pitjantjatjara is viewed with pride and recognition of APY communities as deserving of respect and dignity by the wider government service delivery system. People expressed a sense of cultural safety

when conducting business at PY Ku centres: 'We don't feel shy or shame because there are no piranpa workers. PY Ku is the only 'Anangu-only' agency in town where piranpa are not working. This removes the shame and shyness'.

A number of community respondents spoke of PY Ku as a safe space, a 'neutral place' that belonged to everybody locally and where community meetings could be held. Some PY Ku centres reserve the meeting room for family or homeland kin groups, for discussions where plans can be made, or internal disputes discussed or resolved:

> PY Ku's not just providing services to community, it's also a service in itself – 'cause neutral spaces matter here and PY Ku belongs to everybody, is for all Anangu and people here know that.

PY Ku workers described delivering Centrelink to 'clients' and also educating service users. Other local service providers have spoken highly of the potential of PY Ku as the pivotal focus for service delivery in communities. Police visiting one community spoke of now being able to take a young person to PY Ku to sort out a vehicle issue online, rather than issuing a charge or fine: 'the chance to educate and immediately resolve a minor issue, rather than all the delays and knock-on effects of charges or fines is great!'

A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) was drawn from collating respondents' overall feedback to narrative open-ended questions. The questions asked about 'what works best?', 'what would you most wish to change?' and 'what can make or break the PY Ku network?'. They aimed to elicit people's perceptions about the unique strengths and weaknesses of the PY Ku initiative, and what they perceive as critical success factors or key determinants of its efficacy. It became evident in this analysis that such factors are contingent on context – some features currently seen as weaknesses could be strengths depending on how they are repositioned and how responsive and adaptive the PY Ku network can be. A perceived key strength for the future sustainability of the PY Ku network is its partnership with government. The opportunity is for this partnership to enable optimal development of the network; however, this partnership is also perceived as posing a key threat and a weakness for PY Ku if governments do not 'come to the party' to underpin investment in Aboriginal engagement in local service delivery. Similarly, PY Ku is perceived as a key opportunity for governments to deliver required services in ways that are more inventive and conducive to remote Aboriginal community circumstances. At the same time, there are perceived risks (or threats) around what can be viewed as a blurring of accountabilities when government service delivery, decision-making and control is devolved to and/or mediated by a regional or local managing agent such as PY Media. Thus the relationship between Anangu communities and organisations and state and Commonwealth governments is perceived as critical: it is the make-or-break factor, a catalytic strength, weakness, opportunity and threat simultaneously. Table 1 is a summary of the SWOT analysis for PY Ku, which draws out pivotal change points and critical factors in its future. Following the text summary is a diagrammatic representation to show how interrelated the strengths and weaknesses are, and how threats can become opportunities.

In all such case studies, there is a correlation between strengths and weaknesses, and threats and opportunities. Some of these links are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: SWOT analysis for PY Ku

Strengths	Weaknesses
• buildings; 'hub' location • partnership with government providers – partnership as strength • trained and committed Anangu staff • 14 PY Ku employees enrolled in Traineeships with all employees undertaking accredited Business Certificate training through TAFE SA • 'corporate culture' s strong regional and local identification of 'PY Ku workers' as special cohort • 'hygiene' factors (supervision, motivation, working conditions) – strong identification of PY Ku workers as team • initial 'teething' period of 'change', transition to opening has passed; strong uptake by communities • familiarity of service users with accessing PY Ku: how to use • Internet cafe • reliability of PY Ku • PY Media as auspice – horizontal and vertical integration • regional identity • local identification of 'our' PY Ku • variability of PY Ku operations between communities – allows for local 'ownership', character/customisation	• partnership with government providers – partnership as weakness - fragility of government suppliers service contracts • unreliability of government/s • lack of follow through by government; insecure base funding • unrealistic expectation of self-funding in short-medium term cripples consolidation and planned growth • 'hygiene' factors (supervision, motivation, working conditions) – inadequate remuneration for PY Ku staff • lack of career progression/pathways, inadequate back-up and supervision • poor IT back-up • backed by PY Media as auspice – dependant on stability of PY Media organisationally
Opportunities	**Threats**
• potential as service hub • local 'feed-back' loop to service providers • advice on regional service planning • financial advice/budget advisory services • support for local enterprise development – micro business incubator • video-health conferencing • educational programs through Internet; local information/ resource centre • local media resource centre; specialisation of PY Kus – each centre to have generic services, e.g. Centrelink, but also differentiated to have regional delivery specialisation of, e.g. health, or children's service information • primary health care/health promotions outlet; non-government service outlet • community development base • cohort of trained PY Ku workers to develop as a collegiate professional group • total learning environment; pathways for PY Ku workers into service occupations – management/health and welfare/ business/public administration • attract traineeships; become Registered Training Organisation • local visitor and 'tourist' information; repository of local history and culture • library outlet; international local to local collaborations	• uncertainty/lack of government support • loss of or not enough govt service contracts • insecurity of core level funds to secure base-line operations • need to be pursuing cost recovery for base operations at expense of quality delivery and development • loss of Anangu control/take over by 'outsiders'; loss of Anangu management, e.g. separation from PY Media • loss of 'network' if program broken up • turn-over of staff/loss of 'intellectual' and corporate culture if 'hygiene' factors not taken account of – permanency/appropriate remuneration of staff/ professionalisation of 'career' pathways for PY Ku staff • poaching of staff to other services/programs • loss of momentum through intractable struggles for 'ongoing' sustainable base funding and support

5.1.2 Role of key actors

Despite all odds, the manifest commitment, leadership, strategic flexibility, goodwill, and capacity of actors on 'both sides' of the government/community divide, and Anangu and non-Anangu, has been significant. To have achieved such a high degree of continuity, progress and outcomes seems counterintuitive in such a complex environment and circumstances. Extraordinary goodwill was demonstrated through PY Media beginning the program, determining part-way through to hand it back, then rescinding this decision and continuing to work hard on its delivery. Similarly, the commitment of DoHA to maintain its work with and through Anangu structures, to overcome barriers, remain determined to engage with Anangu staff, and respectfully speak with communities and leaders (some of whom were, at times, cautious, frustrated or resistant to aspects of the PY Ku initiative), shows an ethical professionalism which can be easily underrated if only the institutional arrangements are taken into account.

The lead officer for the government and their team, the lead Anangu people involved in the PY Media, the temporary PY Ku manager seconded from AP Services, and the range of Anangu representatives engaged in the development and delivery of the PY Ku have shown extraordinary professionalism, forbearance in adversity, resilience, problem-solving skills, goodwill and commitment to the delivery of improved and better service provision. Reciprocity, relationship, trust, tenacity and respect appear to be components of good practice which have been shared by individuals within both Anangu and government public service domains in implementing the PY Ku program. One condition of successful practice is that the corporate and cultural contextual knowledge in this situation and the relationships which helped to build it should not be lost, but affirmed and, where possible, built upon. If the potential afforded by the current PY Ku network is to be realised over time, it is imperative that a strengths-based approach that is cognisant of international sustainable livelihoods approaches be embraced. This is particularly relevant given the explicit support in RSD NPA for principles of Aboriginal engagement, sustainability, access and integration.

The benefit of strengths-based and sustainable livelihoods approaches (as outlined in Section 4.2.2) lies in shifting the focus away from problems and deficits, and instead towards building existing local assets and capacities. Embedded in such approaches is the assumption that people are all capable, active participants to identify and resolve their own needs, and that strengths and resources exist to overcome issues and problems in their personal and external situations. Such approaches consciously emphasise 'the strengths of people rather than their needs' (Fisher 2002, p. 3) and try to make sure that people involved in processes of change work together to move forward constructively, by organising the influences that can change how goals are reached. The sustainable livelihoods approach suggests that all five dimensions of capital – natural (e.g. locality, environment, spatial setting); social (e.g. relationships, sociality, group membership, clans/kinship); physical (e.g. infrastructure, IT equipment, buildings); human (e.g. education, health, opportunity to develop capacities) and financial (e.g. funding, access to credit, loans, grants) – are essential to the sustainability of activities (Fisher 2002. p.:11). Blaming others or 'passing the buck' is viewed as counterproductive to such approaches because it undermines initiative and the imperative to build (not deplete) social capital. Social capital is viewed as just as integral and essential to sustainable development as other dimensions of capital. A strengths-based approach suggests that, in practice, all of the people involved in this introduction of a significant new 'whole of government' agreement with Anangu, and an important new remote service delivery program, are accountable for the outcomes achieved. It is the synergy between the composite and reciprocal strengths of both government (state and Commonwealth) and Anangu (organisational and community based) actors engaged in a comprehensive partnership agreement, to work together to overcome short-term implementation and operational problems encountered to date, that will significantly influence PY Ku's sustainability.

5.2 Scale and governance

5.2.1 Rationalisation by scale

One of the features of the PY Ku initiative was the intention to respond to local need for an accessible one-stop shop integrated service delivery outlet. An essential factor in its design is that PY Ku is a vehicle for service delivery operated by Anangu, which employs Anangu staff as the shopfront point of contact for all Anangu service users or clients. From the demand side, the issue is simply access – the ability to access local services such as licensing, banking and enrolling to vote, which are taken for granted by most Australians. On the supply side, the introduction of an integrated service delivery mechanism should also lead to rationalisation of delivery at the local level, and provide for increased efficiency and effectiveness to engage with and meet the needs of Aboriginal consumers/clients in the APY Lands. Above, we have discussed the transaction centres initiative, the COAG trials and the development of the PY Ku program itself in some detail. However, because the policy rationale was to develop integrated service delivery, we will now use the policy rationale to examine what could be considered 'good practice' goals in this context. We will then discuss questions of scale and governance.

As human services became increasingly complex and organised along specialised lines throughout the twentieth century (Fine 2001; Fine et al. 2005; Moran 2008), public administration researchers have become concerned at the way many services have increasingly been provided from within the 'silo' structure of governments (Fine et al. 2005). Programs are increasingly structured by supply side organisational parameters, 'whether provided by government departments, by statutory authorities, or by independent providers supported by government grants' (Fine et al. 2005, p. 15). As professional expertise has become more specialised, public policy shifts have led to more fragmented and specialised service delivery. The concept of integrated service delivery emerged in the United States of America in the 1980s, where experimenting with new technology focused attention on points of access for quicker, more efficient and effective consumer service in the 1990s, and was soon followed in Britain; similar changes followed in Australia throughout the 1990s. There are three main sets of arguments for improved integration: improved access for consumers; increased efficiency by achieving more from the use of limited resources; and enhanced effectiveness, resulting in better outcomes for consumers and funders (Fine 1997). According to Fine, Pancharatnam and Thomson (2005, p. 2), the shift towards coordinating and integrating services in Australia has taken two major forms:

> Integration by geographical location (involving regional planning authorities and community level projects) and integration of a variety of different services used by particular clientele. People most vulnerable in society, with multiple needs who use services that are funded by the state and federal government, and people within particular geographical areas or catchments have been identified as those most likely to benefit from such a holistic approach.

Proponents of an integrated approach to human service delivery argue that there is greater effectiveness, efficiency, and increased client responsiveness in this approach, which helps minimise the deficiencies in a fractured bureaucratic system of service 'silos' (Bruner 1992). From a bureaucratic perspective, integration aims to eliminate duplication of tasks such as intakes, eligibility, assessment, diagnosis, and personal and social history taking (O'Looney 1993). As well, Fine, Pancharatnam and Thomson (2005) suggest that by introducing integrated service delivery, there will be improvements to the demand side of service delivery:

- Consumers will be able to access assistance more effectively in their one-stop centres.
- Access to services will be assured through program hooks (improved referral patterns and consumer access mechanisms).
- Coordinated systems-planning will make a more comprehensive set of services available.
- There will be a better fit between consumers and community needs, and the array of services made

available, because of more coordinated planning, information sharing, and pooling of agency funds.
- Direct service workers will be more knowledgeable of the entire array of services available and become more capable in delivering a wide range of services.
- The synergies from an integrated approach lead to innovation and a streamlining of service delivery through information and skill sharing.

On the supply side, it is expected that where there is sufficient commonality, integrated service delivery will enable services to group together to reduce the transaction costs for providers. Such 'economies of scope' (Fine, Pancharatnam & Thomson 2005) will occur if a single outlet can reduce the cost of service delivery outputs to an overlapping client base, through a form of 'flexible specialisation'. These costs are compared to those incurred by delivery through separate, more traditional, Fordist structures of government and non-government welfare organisations (O'Looney 1993, 1994).

Using new technology to support integrated service delivery enables services to be placed online. New ways to support online consumer communities can be developed so that service providers communicate with one another, which can increase the demand-responsiveness of those services. While the term 'integrated service delivery' has become commonly used, there are distinct degrees to which integration occurs and levels at which it operates. In a broad sense, integrated service delivery is the convergence of (usually) government services under one consumer access interface, as Table 2 shows.

Table 2: The continuum of integration: a basic schema

←Autonomy **Integration→**

Autonomy	Cooperative Links	Coordination	Integration
Parties/agencies act without reference to each other, although the actions of one may affect the other(s).	Parties establish ongoing ties, but formal surrender of independence not required. A willingness to work together for some common goals. Communication emphasised. Requires goodwill and some mutual understanding.	Planned harmonisation of activities between the separate parties. Duplication of activities and resources is minimised. Requires agreed plans and protocols or appointment of an external coordinator or(case) manager.	Links between the separate parties draw them into a single system. Boundaries between parties begin to dissolve as they effectively become work units or subgroups within a single, larger organisation.

Source: Fine et al. 2005, p. 6; based on work by Leutz 1999

In analysing integrated service delivery in the human services, Fine argues that full integration enables the lead agency to gain 'control of resources to define new benefits and services that it controls directly, rather than better coordinate existing services' (2005, p. 15). However, a review by Leutz (1999) of integrated services in the health field in the USA and Britain suggests that the level of integration should be determined by the level of need of clients. Leutz (1999) argues that people with the highest level of needs may be more expensive to service, and could benefit from the greatest integration, whereas those with less need could benefit from less expensive coordination and linkage. Waldfogel (1997) suggests that not enough attention is given, in human service literature and public policy practice, to the level of coordination and integration required to make sure effectiveness is maintained. Waldfogel suggests this can lead to dis-economies of scale. The schema in Table 3 is adapted from Fine (2005) to conceptualise the link between level and degree of integration.

Table 3: Level of integration

Macro-level	**Commonwealth and state governments**	Policy, planning, finance and administration of different programs and service types
Meso-level	**Local services providers**	Links between regional services at management level
Micro-level	**Individual consumers and staff**	Teamwork between different service providers assisting the same individual

← **Autonomy** **Co-operation** **Co-ordination** **Integration** →

Source: adapted from Fine 2005

This notion of co-relating need to costs and level of integration poses interesting questions for service delivery to remote Aboriginal desert settlements, and was partly behind the initial move to establish the PY Ku network. While the theoretical rationale for integrated service delivery and, in the case of PY Ku, the introduction of a multi-purpose one-stop shop facility to deliver services from one site can be seen as both logical and defensible, lessons can be drawn at this stage of the research to show that investment to date in the PY Ku program has been for horizontal integration at the regional level (the macro- and, to some extent, meso-levels [see Table 3]), and far less at the local- or micro-operator level of the community. The nature of APY governance and COAG 'whole of government' coordination placed demands on all actors to be engaged in an interface about program design and resource issues. This engagement took place primarily between PY Media as the regional program auspice, Commonwealth departments such as DoHA and Centrelink, and SA Government agencies such as the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Services SA. Contracting, building design and service agreements were all handled centrally for the program. Even the selection, training and engagement of staff occurred at a regional or central level.

One community leader who felt anxious about the future of PY Ku expressed some reservation about government's long-term intentions (pers. comm.): 'we hear about this PY Ku but we don't know what it really means anymore now, and we're not really sure what it might do to our community or what role we will have in it at all'. Similarly, these comments have been echoed by people frustrated that control over resources remained with government while PY Media was felt to bear all the 'risk': 'It's still coming from the government down'. To date, there is evidence of a high degree of horizontal integration at the regional level. However, there is less evidence of either vertical integration or horizontal integration at the local community level, which is the critical element for service delivery focused on a demand-driven service system. A plan presented to a PY Ku Planning Committee in 2008 (before the formation of the revised PY Ku Advisory Group) showed a schema which represented, in a diagram, a possible scenario for increased horizontal service coordination at the local community level, where PY Ku centres are a focus for local community development (Figure 12).

Figure 12 shows one representation of how a PY Ku integrated service centre that provides Centrelink, banking, Services SA, Australian Electoral Commission and other services could link with the service network of local municipal and essential services, plus other human services and the CDEP program, and provide an avenue for advocating for unmet needs and consumer demands.

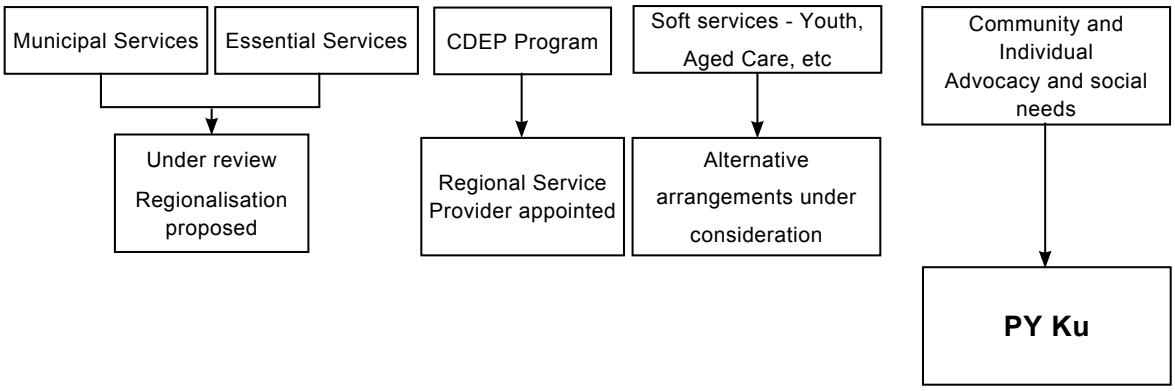

Figure 12: One possible model of service integration

Source: PY Media 2009

The commitment of Anangu communities to PY Ku as a networked one-stop shop integrated service delivery mechanism, its adoption as a 'whole of government' COAG trial, and PY Media assuming responsibility for its development demonstrates an approach to the supply side service interface that reflects the demand for such a service model amongst Anangu. As discussed elsewhere in this paper, the repeated endorsement of the PY Ku program as a key priority at the 2003, 2004 and 2005 peak strategic priority-setting workshops of all Anangu stakeholders and governments appears to give evidence to support this. At the PY Ku Planning Committee (and now Planning Advisory Group) meetings and from respondent feedback, it is clear that some Anangu stakeholders view the PY Ku program as 'the 'vehicle' to achieve management of their own affairs in their communities' (Aucote 2007, p. 13).

However, the pace of change for Anangu organisations and communities was without precedent for the period in when PY Ku was rolled out. Since 2002, the APY Lands have experienced a major period of internal instability and contestation. This instability came from:

- the SA Government instituting major consultations about reforms to Land Rights legislation (which had been a key source of pride and an unchanging feature of Anangu life for 25 years)
- the announcements by government in 2004 that self-determination was at an end
- the installation by the SA Government of three different administrators within a 12-month period
- two Coronial Inquests
- a major Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse (Mullighan 2008)
- a number of consultant and other reports on service delivery and governance issues.

In addition to these state government interventions, the Lands was also targeted by the Commonwealth government as a COAG trial site, has witnessed major changes to Commonwealth policy (from the abolition of ATSIC to the introduction of SRAs), experienced new housing reforms, experienced major reforms to the CDEP program, and shifts in funding at all levels, which have particularly impacted on local service delivery.

Since 2007, Anangu communities – whose kinship links are not demarcated by state or territory borders – have watched as their NT extended kin and counterparts have lost control of community management entirely and been subjected to the Northern Territory Emergency Response. While suspending race discrimination legislation, it has also targeted individuals and families for new welfare stringencies on the basis of their Aboriginality and remote community locations. In this context, local Anangu community members have expressed that local PY Ku centres hold a special meaning to demonstrate their own agency to engage in the service delivery system as employed and able citizens. Informed demand can shape one's capacity to exercise citizenship choices which have been delimited on the basis of culture and Aboriginality in other parts of Australia.

One suggestion which was placed before a PY Ku Advisory Group meeting discussed developing a local community education and awareness program in line with the following analysis, which is drawn from the Aucote Report (2007, p. 13). It summarises well the challenge that lies ahead for the PY Ku program as it engages more thoroughly at the local community level, to promote and support informed choice and active engagement by all Anangu to match their needs with effective, efficient, timely and relevant services:

> To increase support for the PY Ku, the demand for services and to protect PY Ku staff working in the Rural Transaction Centres during the 'change' process, agencies and Anangu generally have to understand the purpose and potential of the PY Ku network.

With the rapid introduction of the governments' 'reform' agenda on the lands, Anangu need to hear about and understand the changes being implemented and with this gain an understanding of the limitations that mainstream service delivery expectations place on Anangu when they are employed in the PY Ku to deliver government and other agency services. This is critical to the success of PY Ku and fundamental to the broader aspirations of Anangu to build on the training and knowledge gained through PY Ku to eventually manage their own communities.

5.2.2 Governance

One of the often cited and vexing issues for program implementation on the APY Lands has been the question of governance. As discussed above, the question of regional versus local intervention has long been a complex issue in the APY Lands. In APY Lands, separately incorporated Community Councils enjoy a level of autonomy, yet under the *APY Land Rights Act 1981* the APY Executive also has a form of governance function in relation to developments on the APY Lands. The PY Ku network was originally scheduled to be up and running by June 2006, but as Nicholls claims (2007b), 'delays and setbacks have not lessened its importance for Anangu'. The Review of Progress of the COAG Trial on the APY Lands prepared by consultants Urbis Keys Young (2006), noted that while much effort had been expended on interdepartmental and intergovernmental coordination, effective collaboration and community engagement remained problematic. The report states (2006, p. 12):

> Despite the progress made in recent years … there was still a 'long way to go' in effectively involving the community, in simplifying and rationalising government processes and in achieving genuine cross-agency collaboration.

The report (Urbis Keys Young 2006, p. 13) also claims that despite the institutionalisation of government and Anangu service provider consultation through the TKP forum, some people they consulted believed that:

> Some TKP meeting time was 'wasted' on dealing with state/Commonwealth disagreements that could have been addressed in advance; TKP meeting procedures and business were not necessarily easy for all members to follow (especially those for whom English was a second or third language); government agencies still imposed onerous responsibilities and demands on small-scale community organisations … there was still apparent ill-will and lack of co-operation among some agencies, and 'the blame game' was still being played … [and that] recent major changes to the CDEP system were cited as an example of government failure to consult with and listen to Indigenous communities.

The development of additional consultative arrangements, such as the TKP forum, to underpin the government interface on the APY Lands has generally been viewed as positive. However, doubts remain about the extent to which internal and 'whole of government' governance infrastructure has aided the implementation of programs such as PY Ku, or indeed, delayed it. The Urbis Keys Young report (2006, p. 14), for example, records:

> Concern among community organisations represented on TKP that, "it's still coming from the government down" – that is, that government members were dominating the TKP agenda and proceedings.

Another issue identified in that report (Urbis Keys Young 2006, p. 14) was that the tripartite SRA negotiated in 2003 (as a framework for the then COAG trial) was never signed off by APY. This caused concern about 'some unresolved issues about government and community roles and responsibilities in relation to … PY Ku'. In a powerful critique of the dangers of over-investment in coordination by government departments, the Fitzgerald Cape York Justice Study made the observation that 'often coordination by governments can become a euphemism for inaction' (Fitzgerald 2001).

The complexity of government processes of coordination was one troubling aspect for the interface of APY regional service delivery. The same could be said of the complexity of internal Anangu governance arrangements within and across the APY Lands; and between local community-based Councils, regional level Anangu service provider agencies and the APY Executive. Each of these layers of governance and service providers are separately constituted, but sometimes overlap and share individuals involved in representative positions. This can provide intricately sophisticated networks of Anangu knowledge and information transmission, and shared understanding and purpose, but also be affected by conflicts between and amongst family and kinship groups, depending on Anangu cultural mores and issues of timing, purpose, resources and perspectives. In their report to the SA Government, Costello and O'Donoghue (2005), refer to the complexity and sensitivities of APY Lands politics and 'serious clan and factional conflicts'. Others have spoken of non-Anangu difficulties in comprehending the situation on the APY Lands, characterised as 'chronic neglect overlaid with internecine politics' (Urbis Keys Young 2006, p. 4).

While governments and departments look for centralised control, lines of authority and accountability – and sometimes project this onto Aboriginal domains – Anangu communities have developed more organically formed, localised or purpose-specific community organisations and governance arrangements over nearly 25 years. In his work on localism and dispersed community governance, Sanders (2004, p. 15) suggests that 'power-sharing, responsiveness and autonomy' seem to be the preferred mode in such dispersed community arrangements. He says this may reflect the 'value placed on autonomy within Aboriginal society' (2004, p. 15).

Rowse has suggested that self-determination may be as much about having autonomy from each other as from non-Aboriginal people and governments (Rowse 1992, pp. 89–90). Costello and O'Donohue (2005) express reservations about relying on existing Anangu service delivery network of agencies to realise government priorities. They suggest (2005, p. 6) that where, for example, in the case of major health and women's organisations, there was broad cross-border jurisdiction 'between WA, NT and SA, the level of accountability to South Australian government-funded actions and lines of clear responsibility are more problematic'. The report that Costello and O'Donoghue (2005) prepared for the Premier in late 2004 advocated a clear role for an advocate or ombudsman for the APY Lands. This advocate could break down departmental silos and work across service provider agencies to make sure funds and services got directly to, and were quickly matched with, local community needs. The report (2005, p. 6) states:

> Health and welfare services are still multitudinous with a huge number of Indigenous representatives involved on various boards. Whilst this might appear to be an exercise in participatory democracy it makes for confusing lines of accountability and cohesion. The delivery system of health and welfare services in the APY Lands needs to be rationalised and a simple, clear and sane model agreed upon.

Within the Anangu body politic there is a complex interconnection between and across organisations and committees. This could be interpreted as reflecting the strength of bonding and bridging social capital (Bourdieu 1986; Etzioni 1993; Putnam 2003) and, more appropriately, cultural capital unique

to Aboriginal life. However, others may suggest this permeability of boundaries is potentially prone towards a form of closure, which concentrates power into small family or kin 'elites' where accountability lies between players, more than to consumers of services, or in the case of the Executive, its constituent body corporate. While normative subsidiarity can apply in Anangu organisational arrangements (as Tregenza & Tregenza [1998] describe the mix above), Smith (2005, p. 16) also suggests different forms of power, authority and decision-making, dispersed across gender, age, and political lines, where individuals and groups negotiate across 'complex sets of overlapping rights, interests and alliances'. The question of 'who speaks for all Anangu' at the point of service interface is therefore a complex issue.

The expectation or pursuit of a homogenous single view from Anangu could be viewed as both naïve and essentialising, given that highly politicised and factionalised non-Aboriginal parliaments, political parties and bureaucracies shape the policy context where such service delivery happens. Nevertheless, in the case of the PY Ku program, issues of consultation, negotiation and consent building have troubled the supply side interface. It seems intuitive that Aboriginal groups, communities or regions could have competing voices and interests, and highly charged disputes about power, who holds it and for what purpose. However, developing service integration models and implementing required programs on a regional basis appears to have been problematic in PY Ku's introduction.

One feature of the new PY Ku program is that the governance arrangements for the PY Ku as a network may duplicate aspects of the representative governance structures of local Anangu Community Councils and regional forums. This issue may be problematic for some communities and welcomed by others. If, at the local level, PY Media arranges service contracts and delivery from a PY Ku Centre, which is directly accountable to a PY Media's central node of control, this may bypass the role and functions of elected Community Councils to some extent.

Some respondents have observed that there could be tension between locally elected representative Anangu structures and councils, and the PY Ku program. This is because PY Ku is 'owned' by PY Media – which, while it is a highly regarded and well-respected Anangu-controlled regional organisation, is viewed by some as a service provider and not a governance structure. However, it can be seen that the PY Ku network could be well placed as the spine of an organisational delivery system for government service delivery – especially if, like in the NT, community governance through elected councils is legislatively suspended, abolished or absorbed within a regional local government model. Some people may realistically fear that such a service structure could dominate the small and currently de-funded (but elected) Community Council local representative governance bodies.

However, the future governance of PY Ku centres themselves remains an open question. For example, they could just as easily be taken over by the local Community Council and managed as a local community development resource base to enable empowerment, and increase local participatory civic engagement and voice. Alternatively, they may assume the participatory and advocacy role from local governance by virtue of their practicality as a service centre and resource base, well-connected into a range of other networks.

The PY Ku network provides an unique base of engaged, sustainable, accessible centres, able to provide for integrated local service delivery through Anangu staff, and consistent with the overarching principles and objectives of the RSD NPA agreements and focus.

5.3 Technology issues

Arguably one of the most unique and exciting features of the PY Ku initiative is its use of new technology to provide access to, and delivery of, a range of government and commercial services to Anangu in local communities through a single access site. The auspicing of the PY Ku program to PY Media has increased attention to the innovative potential of using video-conferencing and other

Internet and technology options for increasing Anangu community development. PY Media helped to secure the introduction of broadband technology across the Lands (Aucote 2007). They also talked about the possibility of hosting video-conferencing for young people boarding in Adelaide (through the Wiltja program) with their families. Not surprisingly, there is a strong interest by PY Media (Urbis Keys Young 2006, p. 11) in how new technology, available through the PY Ku network, could enhance Anangu community wellbeing:

> The PY Media Corporation recently brokered an agreement between themselves, the Australian and SA Governments and Telstra to progress rollout of ADSL2 Broadband technology across the APY Lands region. This will not only benefit the PY Ku network through state-of-the-art technology on which Internet access and video-conferencing can ride, but also deliver a range of benefits for education, health, justice and community services.

However, the viability of the new technological components of the PY Ku program is likely to be dependent on community education, awareness and IT training provided to support the ongoing operations of PY Ku. The Commonwealth Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts initially supported PY Media with funding for IT training and support until the end of 2004, and a combination of DoHA, FaCS and DPC funds replaced this source until June 2006. Without continuing significant investment in IT training and support, the potential of the new technology accessible at the local community level cannot be realised. A fee for service training and technical support model seems unrealistic for the new centres, even in the foreseeable future.

5.4 Responses to research questions

As discussed in the introduction, the DKCRC project Desert Services that Work: Demand-responsive Services to Desert Settlements aimed to develop a sophisticated picture of the supply of services to desert settlements and explored how people express demand for services, and responses to that demand, in remote community contexts. The overall research of the project gave a richer understanding about who makes decisions about services in desert settlements and how services are delivered and used. In this section, we summarise and discuss responses to the project research questions mapped during the course of this study.

1. What are characteristics of the interplay between demand and supply of services, according to the perceptions of consumers and service providers engaged at the local interface?

A point made repeatedly in this report is that the leading role that Anangu organisations, PY Media and Anangu staff played in the delivery of the service was critical in making the interplay between demand and supply as positive an experience as possible. This point deserves emphasis here because it means much more to service users than simply increasing how comfortable they are in using the services of PY Ku. Instead, the pride and commitment that local people have for the new service centres comes directly from a sense that the idea was largely generated by Anangu people, and that they have been able to see a complex process through to conclusion. Emphasising the benefits for young people is also important as a way of cementing a long-term commitment to the future of people living successfully in their communities.

Although it was frustrating for everyone involved, the delayed implementation of the program allowed for more staff training, and the centres were ultimately better prepared to provide services when the centres opened. By the time our evaluation was completed, the centres had started to take on a broader role as a source of information for local people and for other community services.

In this sense, the interplay between demand and supply through PY Ku has started with a huge advantage. The challenge is to maintain the positive aspects in the future.

2. What are the conditions that permit successful practice to develop between consumers and service-providers?

Given the recent history of turmoil over governance arrangements and service responsibilities on the APY Lands, it is perhaps not surprising that we found strong responses to the question of 'conditions for successful practice to develop'. For many local people, good practice comes from governments recognising local complexities, meeting their obligations and overcoming organisational 'silos' and dysfunction. But the government is a large and soft target. There is no doubt, as we have discussed, that shortcomings of government agencies have led to failings in service effectiveness. However, good communication and understanding have rarely been a feature of collaboration between governments and Anangu people. Internal struggles and local political turbulence on the Lands can make the job of outsiders difficult, especially in addressing the perennial question of who represents Anangu people in their dealings with government agencies and service providers.

At the level of the PY Ku program itself, an overwhelmingly positive feature is the attractiveness of the concept to local people, plus its currently proven ability to meet their needs for access to a basic range of services. The potential for more services to be added is obvious. The key element of the service model that appears to contribute most to successful practice is that trained Anangu people occupy key customer service positions, and usually very quickly understand the needs of customers. The respect that users have for the buildings and infrastructure of PY Ku increases how comfortable they are with the service as a whole. It is interesting to observe that the centres themselves may not be Aboriginal 'service settings' as Memmott defines them (2010). However, because of the presence of Anangu staff, they are locations that are conducive to Aboriginal people conducting a range of transactions.

3. At what scales of governance should different service delivery functions be assigned in order to optimise in terms of both demand- and supply-based criteria?

Our research indicated that service users valued the combination of a local Aboriginal-controlled implementing organisation (in PY Media) with strong and consistent government support. The notion of 'Anangu running our own services' is a powerful one. In the case of the remote transaction centres it is sometimes expressed as 'our PY Ku, with us delivering the services and getting paid for it'.

Implicit in these statements is a desire for Anangu people to be in the front-line of service delivery. At the same time, we observed people's recognition of the importance of government in maintaining support for the centres and the processes that sustain them. In terms of a response to the research question: people favoured local governance arrangements, but within a broader framework that ensured government interest and support. Of course, the short supply of individuals with specialist skills and knowledge within PY Media left the organisation vulnerable to losses of key staff, which happened in 2006, putting the program under heavy pressure.

The matter of governance, and the balance between the roles of government and local organisations, is a delicate one. One stark example of this for PY Ku is that government holds resources and transfers the risks onto the implementing agency. This is a common patron–client nature for contractual arrangements between government and non-government or private sector companies. While the service is functioning well, this causes few problems. But when there are difficulties with staff turnover or financial viability, tensions quickly come to the surface.

In addition, and similar to DKCRC research observations on governance in Martu country in WA (McGrath et al. 2010), government and Aboriginal people often have significantly different ideas about the scope and nature of effective governance. This means that when effective governance is discussed, there are contrasting perspectives about the definitions and frames of reference of some words.

4. What are the service type and delivery style priorities of consumers within a specified budget framework, and what is their capacity to participate and willingness to contribute to services?

An observation continually reinforced by various interviewees during the evaluation was that the vision of Anangu people and government coming together to deliver services at the community level is highly valued. Having Anangu people as the majority of staff within the centres is a source of great encouragement and pride to local people, leading to more use of services than would have been the case otherwise. Although the evaluation only examined the first phase of the program (rather than a longitudinal study showing service uptake by age and gender, for example), indications are that service delivery through remote transaction centres is suitable for and attractive to Anangu people. Increased use of centres in neighbouring communities when a centre in one location was closed shows the willingness of people to travel to use the services.

It is interesting to note that centre staff believe that support from family members and respect from the community are central to their motivation to work. Similarly, the pride of service users in the modern style and condition of the buildings also points to a strong preference for transaction centres for service delivery. The fact that some respondents want to see more services beyond Centrelink provided through PY Ku – to include banking, finance support and video-conferencing – reinforces that point. Reports of local people looking after the centres during periods of closure by sweeping the outdoor areas and tending the plants is another indication of local commitment.

5. What are the critical issues and strategies to improve the service system, including the strengths and weaknesses of different technology and governance options?

The PY Ku program has provided the greatest insight into the potential for technology to directly address shortcomings in access to, and quality of, services in desert settlements that we have gained within the project Desert Services that Work. At this early stage in the program, issues and strategies to improve the system relate more to long-term sustainability than inherent problems within more established services that have suffered setbacks.

Specifically, service users need confidence that the centres will continue to operate, which will only happen if the centres are continuously funded. This is already emerging as a key issue and is likely to grow in importance as more people use the centres. A comprehensive financial model needs to be drawn up, negotiated and accepted for long-term operations. Particular concerns include establishing a balance between payments by users, receiving funding from government and clarifying employees' pay rates. Looking to the experiences of similar programs in other states, especially remote WA and Queensland, will be valuable in working through this task.

A second critical issue is the range of services that the PY Ku program will provide in the future. To an extent, local expectations have been raised. This means that technology and cost challenges need to be addressed if the centres provide more technical services. Applying the lessons of this evaluation to our broader research question, we believe that a viable model and a range of services that meet needs and demand locally are critical to any service system.

5.5 Key learnings, summary and conclusion

The PY Ku program emerged from the demands expressed by Anangu leaders and communities for greater local access to needed services and for more Anangu engagement in jobs delivering services to Anangu communities. Two programs were selected to be pilot initiatives for the first COAG 'whole of government' trial in the APY Lands. They aimed to expand 'mainstream boundaries of program service delivery' (Bulis & Stehlik 2005, p. 1). One of the two trial programs was implementation of the Mai

Wiru Stores policy, a coordinated approach to a healthy foods strategy. It was initiated by Anangu, led by Nganampa Health, and was based on a regional regulatory framework involving the general stores located in communities across the Lands. The other was the PY Ku program, which aims to locate a network of purpose-built rural transactions centres in key communities to provide a single local point in each community where a range of Commonwealth and state services can be accessed.

The PY Ku program was bedevilled by delays and the 'burden of bureaucracy' more than the Mai Wiru program, which was implemented at the same time and in the same local context. Anangu regional service provider Nganampa Health managed the implementation of Mai Wiru, and PY Media managed the implementation of PY Ku. Both Mai Wiru and PY Ku used consultative groups or processes involving a range of local people and organisations.

However, the development of the Mai Wiru program had been the subject of long-term discussion, negotiation and consultation on the APY Lands in and between local Community Councils. The original program had been a 'signed' joint initiative of Anangu communities; that is, it had arisen from the 'bottom-up' before becoming a COAG trial program. In contrast, the PY Ku program, while expressly responding to the longstanding wishes of community members for increased service access, was developed at a more regional level. It can be interpreted as having had more 'top-down' implementation. PY Ku is also a far more complex program, involving sophisticated interdepartmental and intergovernmental coordination which was not possible for PY Media to achieve from 'outside' the government system. According to the Urbis Keys Young report (2006, p. 8), representatives of Nganampa Health commented on the enormous task of consulting effectively over a very large geographical area during the development of the Mai Wiru program. The focus of consultation in the Mai Wiru program appears to have been communities themselves at a local level, while for PY Ku the point of intervention appears to have been at the 'whole of government' and TKP regional levels.

The development of the PY Ku network is a complex endeavor, involving:

- purpose-built facilities or refurbished existing buildings
- the use of appropriate new technology
- the training and employment of new Anangu staff
- the particularly complex multiple levels of contracting with different agencies for the delivery of their specific services, via PY Ku as the local agent.

The complexity of the integration task and number of actors involved is an enormous undertaking. It is suggested that a 10-year staged time frame may well be more appropriate than the original time frame which people expected. Thurtell (2007, p. 42) suggests PY Ku centres are well placed to assume a greater role in local community and municipal service delivery. However, Thurtel cautions that 'without appropriate supervision, mentoring and support', problems and huge workloads that overwhelm under-supported Anangu staff 'may only set them and the rural transaction centres up to fail'. Sustainably developing local Anangu service delivery requires a high level of consistent, ongoing investment by governments, and should be viewed over a 10-year – rather than three-year – horizon if the systemic change envisioned is to be achieved.

The PY Ku program also needed to create a business case to become self-sustainable over time. Many people question this as an achievable goal, at least in the short term. While delivering government services as a managing agent for a fee may be realistic, it is difficult to see how this could become profitable in a remote location in a short to medium time frame. PY Ku has the advantage – or disadvantage, in terms of increased complexity – of optional growth into providing accommodation, business, community development or other services. Ironically, the nature of its flexibility and local adaptability generates instability, in that it has an unbounded potential to fulfil a range of functions at the local level. This makes it harder to define in tangible and uniform ways to a disparate population. Success for these people will be defined by its ability to make life easier and less trouble, rather

than to increase complexity or administrative responsibility. It could be argued that the PY Ku program generated too many expectations and incorporated too many potential functions within its vision. For PY Media, the expectations and responsibility it has borne have, at times, outstripped its organisational capacity to simultaneously deliver on so many interdependent goals and so many layers of accountability. It needs be emphasised that PY Media is also operating within a bi-cultural context: its core business is a media organisation, and service delivery is not its core business nor a familiar function.

In addition, the PY Ku program had built within it a requirement and expectation that the employment generated would be filled by Anangu. The PY Ku program is unique as an initiative, because it steadfastly promoted and continues to promote Anangu jobs at all stages of its implementation. The strength of the program and its champions has been the commitment to ensure funding for work within the program, and as much as possible, that all contracting would benefit Anangu organisations and Anangu people. However, its very strength carries internal deficiencies if this goal is not accompanied by substantial investment in human capital and capacity development. This development takes the form of training, organisational support and allowing sufficient lead time for the development, introduction and rollout of the program. Structured, planned and staged lead time is, of course, different from unforeseen delays.

While substantial funds have been devoted to PY Ku programs development, both PY Media and other stakeholders have commented that insufficient resources have hampered progress (Aucote 2007; Urbis Keys Young 2006). Difficulties also include:

- the complexity of the interdepartmental, intergovernmental and APY Lands governance arrangements
- the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of the program itself
- the multiple layers of contracting and service agreements involved in the integrated service delivery model
- the different local issues of the host communities
- the turbulence of the policy and consultative context.

However, a key finding is the powerful and important role of individual key actors in the story.

The context of service delivery in the APY Lands is a complex and sophisticated system of interaction in and between regional and local levels of Anangu-incorporated governance arrangements; and in and between Anangu regional service providers and Anangu-elected representative forums. Anangu leaders may play multiple roles in representation, governance and service delivery at the same time. The enactment of the *APY Land Rights Act 1981* deemed all APY traditional owners in a specified, bounded locality as one body corporate. As an incorporated entity, the collective Anangu can, through the APY Executive Board, make determinations over who can and cannot enter their Lands, and what can and cannot occur on and in the Lands. Separate, incorporated Community Councils feature along with homelands at the local level, and historically strong Anangu-controlled regional service organisations add a further base of strong Anangu engagement. While the Act has provided unique rights and responsibilities for Anangu with respect to the Land, the creation of all Anangu as a body corporate has created unique service system features where complex layers of governance intersect with regionally specific service supply and demand tensions. The cultural, political and legislative context of the APY Lands gives rise to some exciting and unique service design and delivery opportunities.

Many shifts in government policy settings have paralleled the introduction and rollout of the PY Ku network. The *APY Land Rights Act 1981* became the focus of amendments during 2004–05. The amended Act changed the election and governance powers of the APY Executive Board, referring to it as the 'governing body for the Lands' without specifying its role in service delivery. Shifts in the Commonwealth policy environment led to the identification of the APY Lands as a trial site for COAG 'whole of government' approaches to service delivery. This coincided with debate and contestation about changes to the *APY Land Rights Act 1981* within and among Anangu, and between Anangu

and non-Anangu, from 2002 to 2005. The PY Ku program was designated one of two COAG pilot initiatives. Establishing new consultative forums, such as TKP and the Wiru Palyantjaku, give evidence of the strength of Anangu participation, engagement and agency at the interface of these agencies and bodies.

The PY Ku program is a complex, multi-faceted approach to providing local service access through a one-stop shop for integrated service delivery. It uses new technology and aims to employ and empower Anangu to deliver services. There are complex, sophisticated and sensitive multi-layered, interdependent governance arrangements at the interface between 'whole of government' systems, Anangu consultative processes and long-established infrastructure of Anangu-controlled regional service providers. The program generates great opportunities for innovation and great risks for the efficacy of delivery and sustainability of the initiative. A wry observer commented on this complex service environment: 'One would have to be some kind of 'artful dodger' to weave their way through this maze!' Other respondents commented:

> Yes, well, it has taken a long time but it will happen and I want PY Ku to be where Anangu run our own services, we should run this and it can be our PY Ku and us delivering our services and getting paid for it – this is how with everything happening we keep control of our own lives in our own communities – and it's worth getting it right!
>
> Why don't the big brass see how much potential PY Ku has to help communities build themselves up and turn things around?
>
> Discussion is often only about problems not about good things that are happening. The government is running the wrong story … we should keep talking together to talk to people and keep things going. This is for Anangu.

This report has highlighted that while good practice suggests it is entirely appropriate to invest in a regional Anangu service provider to deliver the PY Ku program, careful thought by Anangu and non-Anangu needs to be given to compensating organisations adequately for the burden this may place on their organisational capacity. However, a significant learning is that the strength of resilience, reciprocity, capability and goodwill between key Anangu and non-Anangu individual actors has led to some remarkable growth in the capacities of Anangu staff and communities to engage in, and support, the service system. The champions in this PY Ku story have, through sheer dedication, generated a powerful vision at the supply side for a vibrant, community-based integrated service delivery one-stop shop. If this is realised at local community level, it will open new pages on which new PY Ku stories will be written – by Anangu for Anangu.

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