

To Whom It May Concern:

A submission regarding the benefits of the establishment of a new regional development funding program:

I would like to outline the benefits of regional collaborative funding programs as experienced first hand in the development of the proposal *Northern Territory Indigenous Music and Cultural Economies: Keeping and Sharing*. This proposal had been submitted through the Area Consultative Committee for consideration for funding through the Regional Partnership Fund.

The partners in this proposal included:

- Charles Darwin University (CDU), training provider, regional network and facilities
- The National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia (NRP)
- The Northern Territory Library (NTL) regional workplace and facilities

In developing this project direct benefits were gained by requiring applicants to demonstrate enhanced capacity and outcomes through partnership through such areas as:

- Engagement / consultation with Indigenous communities through partners established relationships
- Take up of well established protocols for engagement with Indigenous communities established by the NRP
- Avoidance of duplication of skill sets and infrastructure across organizations
- Sharing existing infrastructure
- Collaborative planning of future infrastructure needs e.g. at NTL Libraries and Knowledge Centres
- Collaborative staffing considering both existing staffing profiles and staffing needs of both organizations
  - Secondments
  - Joint appointments

There were a range of broader based, embedded benefits of the partnerships in regard to enhanced capacity across a range of core activities that came to light as the partnership developed. These included:

- Provision of 'doorways' into deeper organizational relationships
- Provision of access to organizational networks
- The development of economies of scale
- Provision of access to specialist knowledge within organizations and access to best available practice

- The use of existing organizations quality control and audit mechanisms to review effectiveness of project. (e.g. accreditation processes, external audits (AUQA), recognition by professional bodies)

### Strengths of RPF

The partners in the project noted a range of benefits that resulted from working with the Area Consultative Committee (ACC) including:

- Advice regarding the sourcing of funding for the development of a business plan. (This was successfully achieved through the NTG Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development)
- Referrals to key government departments and NGOs involved in comparable activity
- Provision of local specialist / targeted advice and support in development of the application and business plan
- Rigorous 'testing' of the application by the ACC
- Access to input and review by key community organizations and businesses represented on the ACC who are directly and effectively engaging with Northern Territory communities

In conclusion it has been a disappointing that a rigorously developed program that built significant capacity through a considered partnership, had worked closely with Indigenous communities, and was able to demonstrate significant outcomes has stalled in the creation of Regional Development Australia.

We hope the points noted above will be of use in reviewing the current situation. We also hope it is clear that a regional office driving local applications is critical in ensuring the most effective and targeted outcome. In the case of our project *Northern Territory Indigenous Music and Cultural Economies: Keeping and Sharing* the ACC played a catalytic role in the developmental process, a function that would have been reduced in effect if overseen from a remote interstate office. We would be interested in discussing this matter further if the occasion arose.

Kind Regards

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