

Barang Pathway to Empowerment Reform Agenda

Objectives, Principles & Methodology

Barang Pathway to Empowerment Reform Agenda

This is a project of
Barang Regional
Alliance Ltd.

It is based on extensive
consultation with the Central
Coast Aboriginal community,
partnership principles
developed by the Aboriginal
Peak Organisations of NT
(APONT) and the successful
Inner Sydney Empowered
Communities Pathways to
Empowerment model.

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The **Barang Regional Pathway to Empowerment Reform Agenda** provides a set of **objectives, principles and tools** to drive ‘*ongoing, sustainable structural reform*’ that shifts power into the community through increasing capacity and opportunity for greater decision making over the long term. Specifically it provides :-

- **4 key objectives** to shift from control to empowerment
- a **set of Empowerment Principles** to help guide a community empowerment-centred approach for non-Aboriginal organisations engaging in the delivery of services or development of initiatives impacting on the Aboriginal community on the Central Coast.
- an **Empowerment Methodology** that provides a practical model for building the capacity of the community and aligning investment to community priorities.
- A **Joint Decision Making process** to enable the community to have a greater voice in funding decisions which have an impact on them
- An **Accountability Framework** to track progress along the pathway to empowerment

This reform agenda will be applied to Barang’s Empowered Youth first priority area.

Barang's Regional Reform Objectives

- The common theme that emerged from extensive consultation of the Central Coast Aboriginal Community was the need for '**ongoing, sustainable structural reform**' that shifts power into the community through greater decision making over the long term, instead of 'once off', piecemeal initiatives.

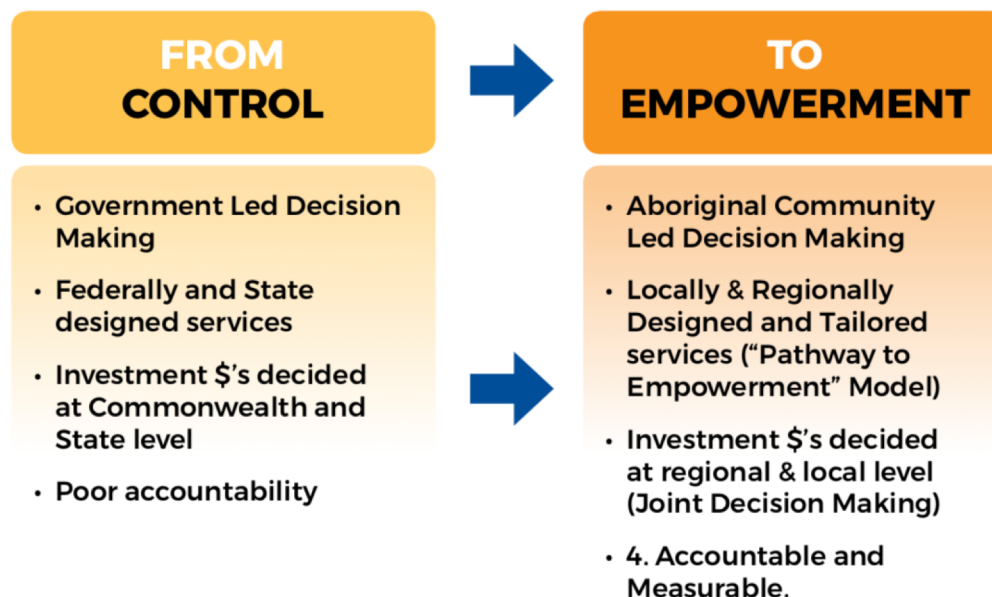


OBJECTIVES

WE STRIVE FOR STRUCTURAL REFORM

We understand our history, and where we want to be

To address Aboriginal disparity Governments must relinquish control and recognise Aboriginal Peoples' RIGHT to empower themselves to develop socially, culturally and economically



Barang Reform Agenda

Empowerment Partnership Principles

Barang's Partnership Empowerment Principles

Purpose

These Principles are designed to guide the development of an **empowerment-centred** approach for non-Aboriginal organisations engaging in the delivery of services or development of initiatives impacting on the Aboriginal community in the Central Coast.

By embedding these principles into regional funding agreements, service delivery contracts and MoU's a new way of doing business with the Aboriginal Community on the Central Coast will take hold.

Objective

Development of these Principles is underpinned by the strong aspiration of Aboriginal community controlled peak organisations to work with and secure the support of non-Aboriginal organisations towards the essential goal of strengthening and rebuilding an Aboriginal controlled development and service sector. It is about putting Aboriginal people back in the driver's seat.

Context

These Principles embody the spirit and substance of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). They have been developed through an understanding that a fundamental shift is required in policy approaches towards Aboriginal communities from a narrow service delivery focus to one based on a development approach. It is understood that to be effective, these Principles require a corresponding commitment from government to provide an enabling environment to properly support and resource action under the Principles.

Barang's Partnership Empowerment Principles

In supporting Barang's Empowerment Reform Agenda Principles, non-Aboriginal organisations agree to :

- 1. Recognise existing capacity:** Non-Aboriginal organisations will recognise the existing capacity and particular strengths of Aboriginal NGOs and identify how they can contribute to further developing this capacity.
- 2. Research existing options:** Non-Aboriginal organisations shall thoroughly research existing Aboriginal service providers and development agencies before applying for service delivery contracts or prior to considering community development projects.
- 3. Seek partnerships:** Where there is an Aboriginal NGO willing and able to provide a service or development activity, non-Aboriginal organisations shall not directly compete with the Aboriginal service provider, but will seek, where appropriate, to develop a partnership in accord with these principles.
- 4. Approach to partnership:** Non-Aboriginal organisations will be guided by the priorities of the Aboriginal NGO in developing a partnership. Partnerships will be based on building and strengthening, rather than displacing, Aboriginal organisational capacity and control. Processes for developing partnerships will need to recognise the inherent power imbalance between large non-Aboriginal organisations and small Aboriginal organisations, and will need to allow sufficient time for partnership development.
- 5. Recognise, support and promote existing development practice:** Non-Aboriginal organisations acknowledge that many Aboriginal organisations already have robust and effective development practices embedded in a cultural framework, although some of this may be implicit and undocumented. Non-Aboriginal organisations agree to recognise and support these practices, including through partnership arrangements.

Barang's Partnership Empowerment Principles cont...

6. **Work together with Aboriginal people to create strong and viable Aboriginal organisations:** Non-Aboriginal organisations recognise Aboriginal organisations and communities as lead agents in creating sustainable governance and leadership in Aboriginal communities in the NT, and agree to work within structures and processes that provide Aboriginal decision-making control. This may require formal delegation of power and the dedication of self-generated resources to assist with this process.
7. **Ensure Aboriginal control, not just consultation:** Non-Aboriginal organisations agree that Aboriginal organisations need to be in the 'driver's seat' and have control of development initiatives, services and programs delivered to their communities. This should include having input to decisions regarding resource allocations and staffing.
8. **Develop a clear exit strategy:** Where the desired outcome is for local Aboriginal organisations to deliver services or provide a development role, non-Aboriginal organisations will develop a mutually agreed, transparent exit strategy in consultation with their partners. Contracts with government should incorporate a succession plan and long term planning for local Aboriginal organisations to deliver services, with appropriate resourcing included.
9. **Ensure robust evaluation and accountability:** Non-Aboriginal organisations will develop a robust accountability framework and evaluation process together with partner Aboriginal organisations and communities.
10. **Cultural competency and appropriate development practice:** Aboriginal organisations and non-Aboriginal organisations will seek to work together to share learnings and establish effective development practice and cultural competency standards for development projects and service delivery initiatives.

Agreed To By: _____
'X' Organisation

Endorsed By: _____
Barang Regional Alliance

Barang Reform Agenda

Pathway to Empowerment Methodology

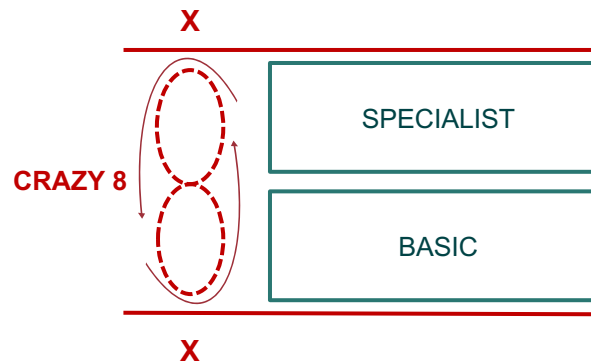
The Close the Gap approach promotes a cycle of disempowerment which we call the 'Crazy 8'

The deficit approach of Close the Gap is too heavily weighted on the provision of basic and specialist services. Too often these services tick the boxes without building community capability or aspiration, resulting in individuals cycling through the service system again and again.

This over-investment in 'band aid solutions' reinforces a cycle of disempowerment and despair. It removes community control and puts it in the hands of well meaning mainstream organisations who meet their 'outcomes' without actually having any lasting impact on community. We call this recurrent cycle through basic and specialist services the 'Crazy 8'.

We want to emphasise two overarching critiques of this Crazy 8 process:

1. **There is no genuine pathway to empowerment** for an individual to build the capability and aspiration required to access opportunities.
2. **The proper social infrastructure has not been established** that will enable the community to work together to secure a strong future.



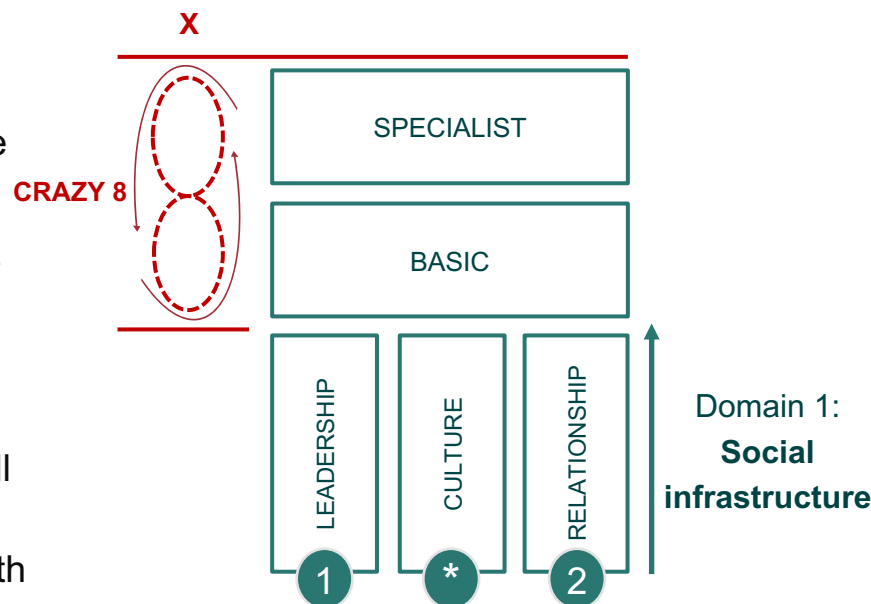
Examples:

- a job provider that achieves placements but not lasting employment.
- parenting classes, social workers or DV programs that don't inspire an individual or build their capability to achieve a better life.

Domain 1 - The foundation of our Empowerment Agenda is effective **social infrastructure** that develops genuine community decision making processes, ensuring strong cultural development and resetting the relationship between community and government

Our approach involves building pillars of social infrastructure:

- 1 strong and collaborative leadership** across the region that can work from a community base and includes effective succession planning
- 2 a new relationship with government** where investment into the region is realigned to the priorities of the community.
- * Fundamentally, running through the full pathway is a **strong cultural pillar**, placing our identity and cultural strength as a foundation of development.**



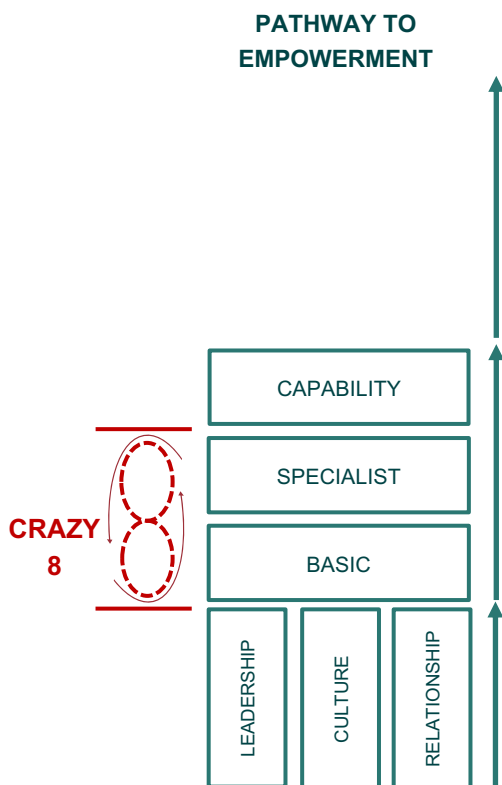
Aligned EC projects:

- Barang good governance, leadership and extensive community engagement
- Bara Barang 'children and schooling' program.

Domain 2 - in our Empowerment Agenda involves **Investing in our People** out of the crazy 8 cycle through removing tick-box programs and ensuring our service system invests in people

A successful pathway to empowerment requires refocusing our service system on community capability development and creating the opportunities for individuals and Aboriginal Controlled Organisations (ACO's) to be part of a thriving economy.

- Firstly, our service system needs to **invest in people**, with our basic and specialist services incorporating capability and aspiration building as core business activity. This investment means providers genuinely build the capability, confidence and discipline of our people so that they exit the service stronger and are better prepared to direct their own future .



Domain 2:
Investing in people

Domain 1:
Social infrastructure

A service system that invests in people through building capability, discipline and confidence. This means services delivered by community for community.

Aligned EC projects:

- Youth Development Strategy
- ACO Capacity Development Manager
- Gudjagang Ngara Li-dhi (GNL) Young, Black and Ready for School program

Domain 3 – finally, our Reform Agenda involves **rebuilding our economy** through regional economic development that is inclusive and culturally specific

- This includes supporting our people and organisations to build and achieve their aspirations, brokering opportunities that enable incremental and transformational change, and encouraging reinvestment back into community. Our communities once had thriving indigenous economies, so our goal is to regain our independence and prosperity



Accountability Framework - it is time to change the narrative from Close the Gap to building a Pathway to Empowerment

The Barang Reform Agenda represents a new way for doing business in the region, ensuring that stakeholders work to the communities priorities and are aligned to the Pathway to Empowerment. Importantly, this also means we need to establish a new way of measuring and communicating progress, moving away from Closing the Gap, and developing a reporting method for tracking progress towards our Pathway to Empowerment.



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