

2016-17
ANNUAL REPORT
Community Justice Centre



The Hon Natasha Fyles MLA
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
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Dear Attorney-General

ANNUAL REPORT - COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE

In accordance with section 39 of the Community Justice Centre Act, I submit this Report on the operations of the Community Justice Centre for the year ended 30 June 2016.

Section 39(3) of the Community Justice Centre Act requires that you table a copy of the report in the Legislative Assembly within 6 sitting days after it is received.

Yours sincerely



Troy Degenhardt
Director

27 September 2017

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Community Justice Centre Overview

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Community Justice Centre (CJC) of the Northern Territory for the year ended 30 June 2016.

It has been an exceptionally challenging year for the Centre in continuing to provide professional and timely dispute management services to the Northern Territory community. While the CJC continues to contribute to the de-escalation of conflict across a variety of dispute environments, the Centre has experienced an increased pressure to deliver a full range of services within a limited budget.

In addition to these budgetary challenges, the CJC has experienced difficulties in recruiting, and retaining suitably qualified staff and mediators during the reporting period. This has presented opportunities however to rethink the design and delivery of CJC services going forward.

The Centre has continued in its commitment to actively endorse and promote the National Mediator Accreditation Standards; and as the only Recognised Mediator Accreditation Body in the Northern Territory continues to be recognised as a major contributor to the national conversation surrounding best practice in alternate dispute resolution.

Whilst relatively new to the role, I believe there is momentum and a growing capacity for the CJC to realise a strong, if not leading presence, in the delivery of effective dispute resolution services in the Northern Territory. The Centre is currently undergoing a process of renewal and I am confident it will emerge from this process a more valued and utilised service.

I would like to record my appreciation and thanks to the staff and mediators of the Community Justice Centre who continue to undertake their duties with diligence, professionalism and a strong focus on service delivery for our clients.

Yours sincerely



Troy Degenhardt
Director

27 September 2017

The Community Justice Centre

The Community Justice Centre is a statutory body established pursuant to the *Community Justice Centre Act 2005 (NT)*. The Centre is funded as an output within the Northern Territory Department of Attorney-General and Justice budget.

While the Community Justice Centre staff undertake most of the day-to-day services, the Centre relies on a panel of contracted dispute resolution practitioners for the provision of mediation, conferencing and adjudication services.

Community Justice Centre services

The Community Justice Centre:

- provides conflict resolution processes for the early resolution of disputes;
- seeks to restore harm and facilitate re-integrative restorative justice processes for adult offenders, and their families /or victims;
- conducts adjudication process pursuant to the *Construction Contracts (Security of Payments) Act 2004 (NT)*;
- empowers clients to identify and actively resolve conflict across a range of dispute environments;
- promotes the National Mediator Accreditation Standards through dispute management training and accreditation services; and
- maintains the register of accredited mediators.

The aim of the Centre is to provide Territorians with a confidential, timely and cost-effective means of addressing conflict away from the more formal justice system.

Community Justice Consultative Council

Section 25 of the *Community Justice Centre Act* sets out functions of the Consultative Council, including:

- to make Guidelines under section 26;
- to deal with a complaint under section 27;
- make reports and recommendations to the Minister on any of the following matters the Council considers appropriate:
 - (i) the operation of the Centre;
 - (ii) any matter that may be the subject of a review under section 32(1);
 - (iii) any other matter arising from the operation of this Act.

The Council is currently comprised of six members, with one-member vacancy. The term of appointment for five of the members expires on 26 November 2017; and a further one member expires on 16 September 2018. Under section 24(4) of the Act a meeting of four Council members constitutes a quorum.

On 30 June 2017 members of the Consultative Council, were as follows:

- Michael O'Donnell
- Catherine Holmes
- Daniela Mattiuzzo
- Linx MacPherson
- Maureen Abbott
- Philip Brown

Location of the Community Justice Centre

Street Address	Postal Address	Phone	Fax
Zone B, Level 1 Darwin Local Court Nichols Place Darwin NT 0800	GPO Box 1722 Darwin NT 0801	1800 000 473	(08) 8999 6226

Corporate Planning

The Community Justice Centre contributes to the corporate planning processes of the Northern Territory Department of Attorney-General and Justice, including development and implementation of strategic and risk management plans. The Centre develops a comprehensive business plan each fiscal year to guide its operations.

The Community Justice Centre Business Plan 2017-18 focuses on the significant process of renewal the Centre will undertake to revitalise services and support the emerging trend for people to engage in alternate dispute resolution processes.

Achievements 2016-2017

- Maintained a rate of agreement for community mediations more than 80%.
- Improved the employment relationship between the Community Justice Centre and contractual mediators.
- Successfully recruited the position of Director, attracting a suitable candidate with considerable experience and expertise in a range of dispute contexts.

Service Limitations

The Community Justice Centre continues to experience challenges in ensuring services are accessible to all locations across the Northern Territory. The geographical scope of service for the Centre encompasses Darwin and the Top End, through to Alice Springs and the border of Northern Territory / South Australia.

The Community Justice Centre also maintains a commitment to provide service in rural and remote locations all within current budget and staffing constraints.

The staffing of the Centre is limited to three permanent positions, including 1) the Director; 2) a Mediator and Project Officer; and 3) a Dispute Assessment / Intake Officer.

For the Community Justice Centre to continue to provide accessible, timely and professional dispute resolution services it is encouraged for staffing numbers to increase to include a further two persons experienced in dispute assessment, restorative justice and facilitative mediation.

Directions 2017-2018

- Provide more appropriate and responsive dispute resolution services in a range of suitable dispute environments.
- Improve the design and delivery of training courses to support increased registrations and strengthen financial viability.
- Empower communities to identify and actively resolve conflict through a specialised training and development program.
- Develop appropriate governance frameworks to support continued business growth and minimise exposure to risks.
- Improve reporting mechanisms to guide service reviews and support continued growth.

Performance

The following indicators represent an overview of the service outputs of the Centre in carrying out its core functions.

Complaints

The Community Justice received nil complaints during the reporting period.

New Cases Received

The Community Justice Centre provides a confidential dispute resolution service for the Northern Territory community.

Number of new cases	2016-17
Community mediation	117
Dispute assessments / conflict coaching	83
Court referrals	54
Restorative justice	19
Dispute management consultations	2

Dispute Contexts

The Community Justice Centre provides conflict management processes in a range of dispute environments. These services

Issue	2016-17
Antisocial Behaviour	33%
Body Corporate	5%
Burial Rites	2%
Damage to Vehicle	4%

Child Protection	1%
Consumer / Trader	2%
Contract / Trader	3%
Defamation	1%
Neighbour - Animals	3%
Neighbour - Fences	7%
Neighbour - Noise	7%
Neighbour - Trees	8%
Nuisance / Harassment	6%
Remote Indigenous Intra-Family / Community Conflict	4%
Small Claims / Minor Debt	6%
Special Interest Groups / Associations	2%
Residential Tenancy	1%
Workplace	5%

Case Timeliness

The Community Justice Centre provides a timely dispute resolution service to the Northern Territory community.

Timeliness of matters	2016-17
% of matters finalised in 0 to 7 days	25%
% of matters finalised in 8 to 14 days	10%
% of matters finalised in 15 to 30 days	23%
% of matters finalised in more than 31 days	42%

Case Complexity

The Community Justice Centre assesses each case against a range of criteria to determine a complexity score. This score allows the Centre to implement the most appropriate case action plan and to allocate sufficient resources to manage the case effectively.

Complexity	2016-17
% of matters considered minor in nature	71%
% of matters considered moderate in nature	25%
% of matters considered complex in nature	4%

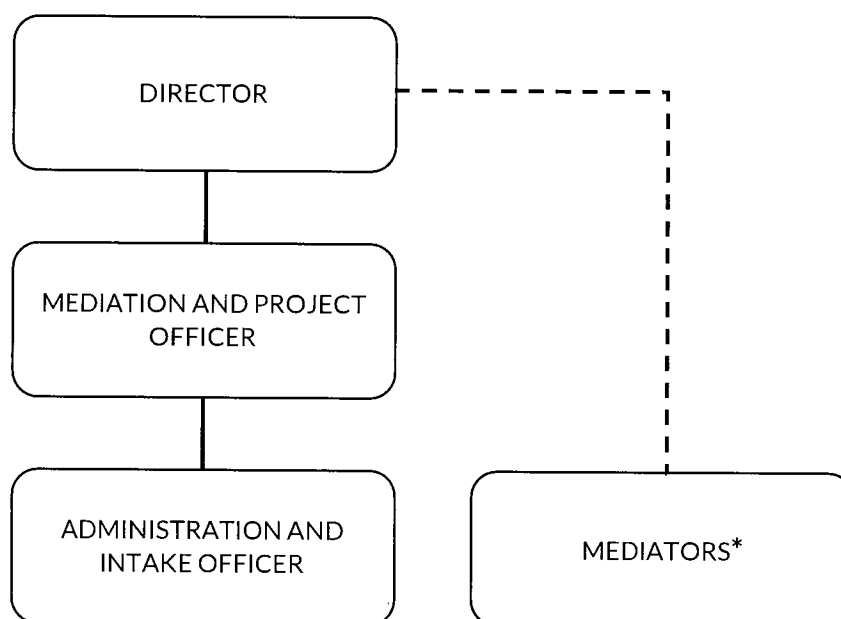
Mediator Accreditation and Employment

The Community Justice Centre maintains a professional panel of contract mediators proficient in conducting dispute resolution processes in accordance with legislative frameworks and the National Mediator Accreditation Standards.

The Community Justice Centre is also a Recognised Mediator Accreditation Body responsible for the training and accreditation of mediators to the National Mediator Accreditation Standards.

Mediator category	2016-17
Accredited Mediators under the National Mediator Accreditation Standards	48
Community Justice Centre Contracted Mediators	18

Staffing Structure



* Community Justice Centre dispute resolution practitioners are employed on a contractual basis for a period not exceeding one year. Current contracts expire in May 2018.