

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

### WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Lambley to the Chief Minister

#### **The Community Champions program**

1. Why has your Government decided to scrap the Community Champions program, as of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017?
2. What evidence and advice informed your decision to scrap the Community Champions program?
3. Did you make an election promise to keep the Community Champions program prior to the August 2016 election?
4. What has been the cost of operating the Community Champions program over the past 12 months from 1 June 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017?
5. Exactly what Northern Territory Communities were included in the Community Champions program?
6. Please list what CE and Deputy CE were matched to each community?
7. For each community included in the Community Champions program, provide a comprehensive list of what projects were being worked on within the program?
8. Members of the current Labor Government have described the Community Champions program as positive and giving people a voice in their community, how did the Community Champions program do this?
9. The Community Champions program was allocated \$18m over three years. How much of this \$18m has been spent?
10. The Community Champions program also allocated \$3m to community grants. This has now been reduced to \$2m. Could you explain exactly how this \$2m will be allocated?
11. How will the Northern Territory Government continue the important work undertaken by the Community Champions program to develop and expand economic opportunities and employment? Please provide examples within each of the communities involved in the Community Champions program how Government will continue to assist.

12. The Community Champions program provided a critical link between remote Northern Territory Aboriginal communities and the Northern Territory Government. How will these links be maintained, expanded and strengthened by the Northern Territory Government, in lieu of the scrapping of the Community Champions program?
  13. Please provide a comprehensive list of all Northern Territory Government funded initiatives and programs that will exist or operate in remote Northern Territory Aboriginal communities after 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017, aimed to assist in building local economies, local economic opportunities and local employment?
  14. How long did the Community Champions program operate for and what has been the total cost to the Northern Territory Government?
  15. Was there any review or cost benefit analysis done on the Community Champions program before making the decision to scrap it?
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## **Answer:**

1. The Community Champions Program was a time limited project scheduled to end in June 2018.

Feedback from across the Northern Territory indicated that many communities felt excluded from the Community Champions Program and there was wide view that a few communities benefited while others did not have access to the same support of government.

The Community Champions Program has now been refocused to support all remote Aboriginal communities in a range of programs, with an emphasis on supporting Local Decision Making. Staff within the Office of Aboriginal Affairs that supported the Community Champions program now work as Regional Development Officers in the DCM Regional Network Group, contributing to the development of Local Decision Making across all communities within the regions they work in.

The Government's commitment to Local Decision Making provides opportunity to all communities, over a 10 year timeframe, to empower local people making decisions in their local regions, with a focus on enabling communities to build stronger community-led social and economic development opportunities.

2. Refer to question 1.
3. A key election commitment of the Government was to return local decision making to local Indigenous communities across the Territory. At the time this envisaged a continuing role for Departmental CEOs acting as Community Champions in a few select towns. Following feedback from a wide range of communities restructuring took effect to re-focus resources, including staff within the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, to supporting implementation of Local Decision Making across all communities, not just some.

Local Decision Making is a 10 year commitment to transfer, in an agreed way, key decision-making about government services back to remote communities, enabling Government, Aboriginal representative organisations and Aboriginal people to work together on key service delivery priorities.

4. As a result of September 2016 machinery-of-government changes, the Community Champions program transferred from the former Department of Local Government and Community Services to the Department of the Chief Minister, effective 1 July 2016.

The cost of operating the Community Champions program from 1 July 2016 to 28 February 2017 was \$1.5 million (excluding grants).

5. The Community Champions Program included Borroloola, Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Tiwi Islands, Groote Eylandt, Milingimbi & Ramingining, Galiwin'ku, Gunbalanya, Utopia, Numbulwar, Ngukurr, Maningrida, Ntaria, Wadeye and Yulara District (Imanpa, Mutitjulu and Docker River).
6. Only Departmental Chief Executives or General Managers were nominated as Community Champions.

<b>Community</b>	<b>Community Champion</b>
Milingimbi and Ramingining	Dr Len Notaras CEO Department of Health
Groote Eylandt	Ken Davies CEO Department of Education
Borroloola	Greg Shanahan CEO Attorney General and Justice
Wadeye	Luke Bowen GM Northern Australia Development Office
Maningrida	Alister Trier CEO Dept Primary Industries and Fisheries
Galiwin'ku	Dave McHugh CEO Department of Infrastructure
Gunbalanya	Rod Applegate CEO Department of Lands, Planning and Environment
Utopia	Jodie Ryan Under Treasurer Department of Treasury
Ngukurr and Numbulwar	Michael Tennant CEO Department of Business
Yuendumu and Lajamanu	Mike Chiodo CEO Dept of Local Govt & Community Services
Tiwi Islands	John Coleman CEO Department of the Chief Minister
Hermannsburg	Ron Kelly CEO Department of Mines and Energy
Yulara District	Tony Mayell General Manager Tourism NT

7. The office has supported 74 projects through the Community Champions Program to the value of \$2.78 million.
8. The Community Champion Program had a Community Champion Department Liaison Officer (CCDLO) and Chief Executive Officer attached to each nominated community. The CCDLOs worked with their nominated Chief Executive on community priorities and projects.

9. The Community Champions program was initially allocated \$18 million over three years from 2015-16.

Questions related to 2015-16 expenditure should be referred to the former Department of Local Government and Community services.

For 2016-17 expenditure please refer to the response provided to question 4.

10. \$2 million has been allocated to the Remote Aboriginal Development fund. This fund comprises two grant programs: \$1 million to support remote economic development initiatives through the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation and \$1 million to support governance and capacity-building initiatives (in support of Local Decision Making) through the Department of the Chief Minister. This fund will be accessible to support proposals coming from any remote community, not just one of the 13 communities supported by the previous government's Community Champions program.
11. \$1.3 million has been committed for the Department of the Chief Minister to commence and lead the development and implementation of Local Decision Making across the regions. Line agencies with responsibility for Local Decision Making within their area of responsibility, for example Housing and Community Development, also contribute to the development of this whole of government policy.

Field staff that previously had a role in the Community Champion Program in the Department of Local Government and Community Services now work within the Regional Network Group, Department of Chief Minister and continue to have a key role supporting all within the regions they work in, not just a select few.

12. Reflecting their commitment to drive and coordinate a significant Aboriginal Affairs agenda, the Northern Territory Government moved the Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) into the Department of the Chief Minister. This transfer took place in September 2016 following the Machinery of Government announcements.

The key priorities of this work include Local Decision Making, Treaty consultations and support for the development of Aboriginal Land and Seas. The intent is to lead and coordinate systemic change across government so that all remote and Aboriginal communities, not just some, benefit from support to progress their development plans.

Across government and community links will be maintained and strengthened through the Regional Network Group. Regional Development Officers (formerly Community Champion Department Liaison Officers) will have greater access to support and opportunity with resources and support available to all communities in the Regional Network group that they service, not just a few select towns.

13. The amount of administrative effort required to respond to this question is onerous and excessive and would result in undue diversion of resources from the core business service delivery of the department.
14. The previous arrangement of appointment of CEOs as community champions to select towns, and an economic development grant program, operated for two years. The cost of operating the Community Champions program from 1 July 2016 to 28 February 2017 was \$1.5 million (excluding grants).
15. The Community Champion Program was a time-limited program ending in June 2018.

The decision to refocus work of the Community Champions Program as a part of implementation of Local Decision Making was based on the objective of broadening opportunity for all communities across the Territory to participate and have support. The refocussed work will ensure a more holistic approach to systemic change; so that all, not just some, communities benefit from government listening, government support in response to community priorities and Local Decision Making.