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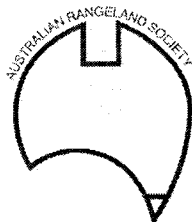
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# CAPACITY BUILDING: AN INDIGENOUS LAND CORPORATION APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

This discussion paper is derived from the Indigenous Land Corporation's (ILC) need to focus and address the issues of capacity building as it begins the implementation of its 2001-2006 National Indigenous Land Strategy (NILS). The capacity building issues for the ILC are firstly, community capacity building where the focus is on building the capacity of Indigenous landowners to successfully achieve their aspirations and produce sustainable outcomes through relevant and appropriate extension, education and training programs and services and secondly, ILC capacity building which focuses on building the capacity of ILC staff to provide a high quality, effective and efficient service to its clients. This paper clearly indicates the multifunctional nature of capacity building and the need for a clear policy position that provides the basis for the development of a well-defined framework.

## INTRODUCTION

The need for the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) to develop a Capacity Building Strategy is primarily designed to assist in the implementation of the National Indigenous Land Strategy (NILS). In doing so the Capacity Building Strategy will serve a three-fold purpose. Firstly, to assist Indigenous land-owning groups to determine their own values and priorities in managing and operating their land and enterprises more efficiently and effectively. Secondly, to enable the ILC to build its own capacity to improve the standard of efficiency in service delivery and all workplace activities. Thirdly, to create strategic networks with appropriate Commonwealth Government agencies to jointly provide appropriate programs and resources to build and strengthen the capacity of Indigenous land-owning groups.

## WHAT IS CAPACITY BUILDING?

For the purposes of this paper the United Nations definition has been adopted that is; *'the process by which individuals, organisations, institutions and societies develop abilities (individually and collectively) to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives.'* (United Nations Development Program, 1997). The policy program and project framework model described in this paper is based upon this. There are fewer reasons for the adoption of the United Nations definition; some of these are as follows:

Firstly, if the ILC work is seen in the light of a land reform process rather than a welfare process, it can be analysed within the intellectual framework of land reform rather than that of an encapsulated minority that has special welfare needs in a developed economy. Given that neither the US, Canada or Norway have equivalent programs of national land purchase acquisition, it is arguable that the ILC legislation role and function is more in keeping with third world land reform or first world land redistribution. Given this, it is important that there is a shift in thinking from a welfare mentality where the ILC is viewed internally and externally as an organisation operating within a welfare environment and culture to an organisation whose services and programs are development based on land generating benefit. Secondly by adopting an international framework the ILC is in a better position to establish international benchmarks of performance. Thirdly, by adopting the United Nations definition it is possible then to model several key aspects of capacity building. These are (a) the transfer of skills and knowledge to Indigenous groups for when the ILC Purchases land (b) the strengthening of the organisational capacity and (c) the strengthening of the ILC internal capacity building facility.

In strengthening the ILC internal capacity the UN definition also allows for the ILC to develop strategic alliances with appropriate agencies that will enable the ILC to focus on the whole needs of the ILC's Indigenous clients.

Therefore the role of Capacity Building is to:

- Assist the overall strengthening of the organisation, to promote best management practices and to improve its delivery of services. The research component is intended to strengthen knowledge and understanding about issues that will enhance the impact of the Project as a whole.
- Ensure that ILC clients are able to manage and operate their land in a sustainable manner to provide economic, environmental, social or cultural benefits for themselves
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of ILC personnel and to identify or develop appropriate mechanisms and tools through which to strengthen their skills and abilities.
- Assess what kind and level of support is mostly likely to promote a more inclusive and equitable society; and secondly, to monitor and modify any negative outcomes of that support.
- Building the infrastructure of the organisation's capacity to promote their productivity and achievability.
- Provide information 'about' the Project context, Capacity Building can also generate valuable information and insight 'for' the Project and its most effective delivery. In this sense, Capacity Building has the potential to assist the ILC by reviewing and validating the initial Project assumptions, and can support project management in their response to any change in emphasis or focus that might arise from experience or from any realignment in thinking on the part of Project participants, including the Project sponsors.

The following section develops these themes in detail The purpose of providing this model is to (a) provide debate that will ultimately assist the ILC to adopt a clear position on the nature, role and function of Capacity Building within the ILC. The following sections therefore detail one model of capacity building. This model is submitted for discussion and debate.

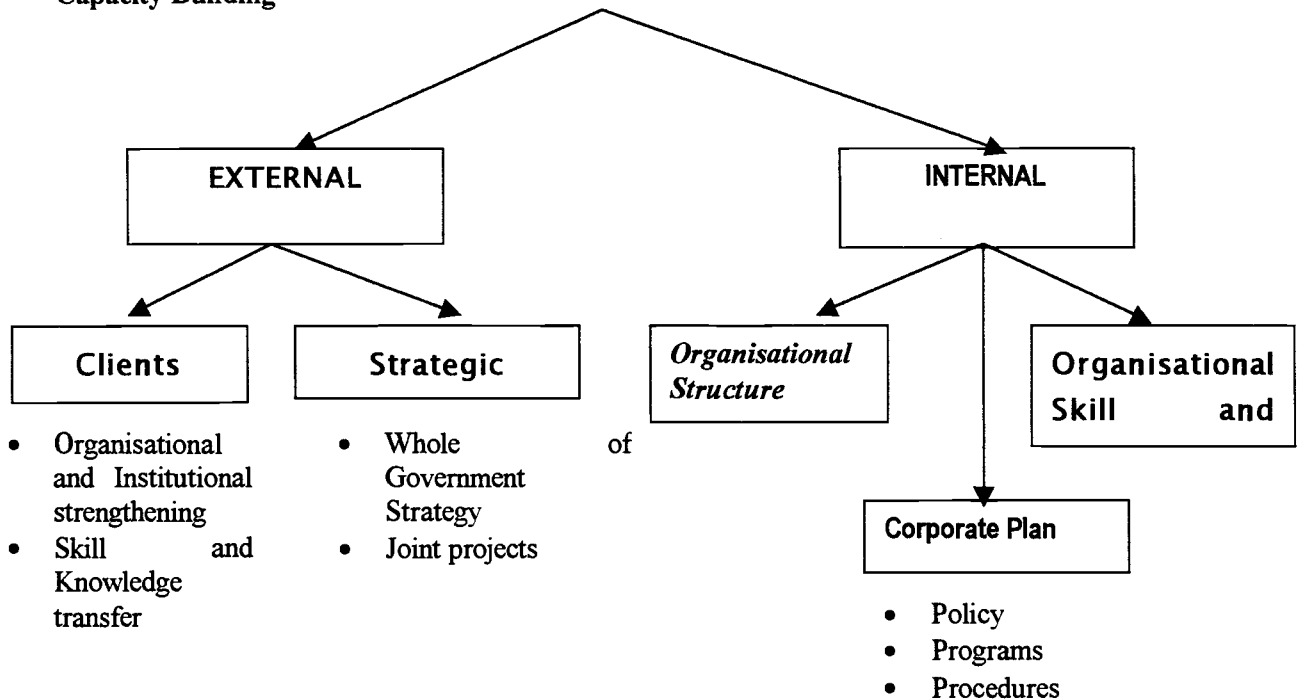
#### **Why Is Capacity Building Important for the ILC?**

The core function of the ILC is to assist Indigenous people to acquire and manage land to provide economic, environmental, social or cultural benefits for themselves and future generations. Therefore, capacity building relates to:

- Capacity Building for the ILC as an organisation (internal).
- Capacity Building for Indigenous groups (external).

These suggest that for the ILC the following aspects of capacity building will be critical in developing a capacity building process.

## Capacity Building



Some of these elements are now discussed.

### a) Capacity Building for the ILC as an organisation (internal)

For the purpose of the performance of the Indigenous Land Corporation's functions, the Indigenous Land Corporation must give priority to the following:

- Ensuring that the Indigenous Land Corporation has access to the skills and resources required to perform its functions (ATSIC Act, 1989, 191F 2a).

### b) Capacity Building for Indigenous groups (external)

*Current functions in relation to capacity building for Indigenous groups.*

- The aim of land management is to assist Indigenous people to manage their land in a sustainable way providing them with cultural, social, environmental or economic benefits. The ILC is committed to providing a professional and focused coordination role, so that it can assist Indigenous landowners to gain access to the resources, advice and expertise required to manage their land in a sustainable way. (NILS 2001, p8).
- This involves the active participation of the ILC in dealing with Land management issues as a service, rather than simply a funding provider. An intention of the Act is that the ILC must assist Indigenous people to make full use of the funds and programs available from other agencies and be involved in the provision of technical and professional advice, information and training. (NILS 2001, p11).
- The ILC's objective is to assist Indigenous people to manage their land in order to derive cultural, environmental, economic or social benefits from it by building capacity for self-reliance and supporting enterprises that deliver sustainable outcomes. (NILS 2001, p20).
- Land Management – The ILC will support activities under the following Strategic initiatives; group based planning, enterprise development, regional development, coordination and research. (NILS 2001, p21).

### Towards a Possible ILC Capacity Building Aim

A possible ILC's Capacity Building aim is to a) assist Indigenous land-owners to achieve long term sustainability and b) to improve the ILC capacity to improve the quality and efficiency in service delivery and all workplace activities. In working towards achieving this aim the ILC will recognise the importance of investing in people (ILC staff, clients and relationships with other agencies) as critical to achieve this aim. Box 1 outlines the possible ILC areas of capacity building:

**Box 1: Possible ILC areas of Capacity Building**

Human	Resource (Land)	Financial	Organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extension – transfer of information – knowledge and skills</li> <li>▪ Education</li> <li>▪ Training</li> <li>▪ Networks – marketing, political, institutional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Land</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Plant and equipment</li> <li>▪ Tools</li> <li>▪ Information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Income</li> <li>▪ Expenditure</li> <li>▪ Fixed</li> <li>▪ Variable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structure</li> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Community members</li> <li>▪ Skills and knowledge</li> </ul>

### Towards Building a Capacity Building Function in the ILC

It is proposed that there will be two streams to ILC Capacity Building. These are:

1. ILC Capacity Building (Internal)
2. Community Capacity Building (External)
3. Extension, Education and Training Strategy

#### 1. ILC Capacity Building (Internal)

The ILC will build the capacity of their workforce by:

1. Conducting professional intensive training courses for staff in different fields that will be identified in the capacity building assessment of staff.
2. Providing consultancy services to those who lack the knowledge and experience.
3. Exchange programs for motivated and skilled staff within the organisation as a new terminology of transferring quantitative and qualitative transformational data that will build the in-house capacities organisation.
4. Lobbying and networking with appropriate Commonwealth and State agencies with the purpose of implementing mutual and intellectual strategies that will enhance staff abilities and capabilities.

#### 2. Community Capacity Building (External)

The ILC has the ability to foster capacity building in Indigenous groups through land management activities to promote social, cultural, environmental or economic benefits for Indigenous people.

Establishing and implementing the following structures or programs to support capacity building by Indigenous organisations can achieve this by:

- Policy development and research
- Advocacy
- Information collation and dissemination
- Building alliances, coalitions and networks
- Facilitating organisations to plan future land use and solve land management problems
- Assisting decision making through participatory planning workshops

- Training in leadership development (and problem solving capabilities)
- Provide access to expertise.

The ILC will need to formally develop collaborative relationships with organisations to:

- Identify their current development position utilising participatory planning tools and techniques (such as community based planning and social impact assessment);
- Develop mechanisms that facilitate a whole government approach to achieve outcomes by forming agreements with appropriate Commonwealth agencies;
- Identify the opportunities that currently exist within the COAG framework where partnerships are based on reciprocity, shared responsibility and accountability between all stakeholders.

### 3. Extension, Education and Training Strategy

The EETS currently serves as a development function within capacity building where an integrated training system is being trailed, tested, monitored and evaluated on ILC purchased properties in three pilot locations. Once the pilots have been completed it is envisaged that the EETS will be operationalised in the three divisions of the ILC, where it will be utilized to support the building of capacity of Indigenous landowners.

In order to achieve this the ILC will need to a) establish an appropriate organisational structure for the Capacity Building Unit and b) clearly define the roles and responsibilities of capacity building staff. The ILC Capacity Building structure is as per the current approved ILC organisational chart. Although it is also acknowledged that decisions are in place with the view to augment the existing approved organisational structure with specific EET capacity building staff.

#### *Role ILC Capacity Building Officers*

It is proposed that two Capacity Building Officers (CBO) will be located in each ILC division. Both positions will be built into divisional structures with one position to have an extension, education and training role and the other a policy/community development role. While the CBO's will undertake varying roles they will be complementary in achieving a high standard of efficiency in service delivery and all workplace activities. Capacity Building Officers will be responsible for all capacity building matters in the division in relation to;

- Knowledge building
- Leadership
- Network building/communications
- Valuing community
- Supporting information and analysis.

Which includes;

- Coordination of resources,
- Implementation of programs, processes, tools,
- Training,
- Networking with immediate groups and organisation for the division.

This will be achieved by:

- Coordination/Brokerage
- Assessment
- Implementation
- Promotion

They will:

- Take day to day direction and from the Divisional Manager
- Take professional accountability from the Deputy General Manager, ILC
- Facilitate use of the LPCB Directorate.
- Be involved in key aspects of capacity building procedures policy.

### **Existing Capacity Building Initiatives**

ILC Policy and Research have developed a number of initiatives regarding building capacity through strategic alliances. The availability of information for staff provides a base, and a starting point from which strategic alliances can be investigated and formed. The second part of this process is the development of memoranda of understanding with key stakeholders within government, inter-government and non-government parameters.

#### *Coordination*

The ILC is committed to providing a professional and focused coordination role, so that it can assist Indigenous landholders to gain access to the resources, advice and expertise required to manage their land in a sustainable way (NILS p8).

The ILC will provide Indigenous groups with information on coordination, available funding and support programs in their region. The ILC will coordinate the delivery of services to achieve maximum benefit for local Indigenous landholders with other agencies. (NILS p22)

A coordination database has been established and is situated on the ILC intranet under Land Information. The database has been designed to allow staff to easily access information regarding agencies and organisations resources, and funding and support programs available to Indigenous landholders. The database is a major player in fulfilling the ILC's coordination role.

#### *Research Project*

The second and third components of our major Research Project 1999/2000 were centered on regional profiles, strategies and land uses.

*Component 2 was completed by CSIRO for Tropical agriculture and identified Regional;*

- Profiles and strategies
- Key stakeholders
- Physical and environmental characteristics
- Key land use, management and environmental issues.

Component 3 was completed by Pinnacle Management and identified Regional;

- Land use profiles for Australia
- Profiles of land based industries
- Indigenous participation in land based sectors
- Stakeholders, useful websites and GIS Data set.

The information from this research project is in the process of being put on the ILC intranet, and is located under Land Information, Regional Profiles, for staff use. Various parts of the research project were also made available on the intranet in report form.

#### *Regional Profiles Database*

*The branch is also currently investigating the viability of purchasing ATSIC's Regional Profiles Database. The program has been viewed and possibilities discussed with ATSIC and it was concluded that the database would be beneficial for the ILC to have. Currently the possible purchase this database is still being coordinated.*

#### *MOU Project*

The objective of the project is to develop cooperative arrangements between the ILC and Federal Government agencies and non-government organisations involved in land management. The aim of the arrangements is to coordinate activities and enable the provision of a wide and varied range of assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for land management activities.

Draft memoranda of understanding have been drawn and circulated to:

The following government agencies:

- Environment Australia
- The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
- The Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services

The following inter-government agencies

- The Murray Darling Basin Commission

The following non-government agencies

- The Australian Bush Heritage Fund
- Greening Australia
- The Australian Conservation Foundation
- The Wilderness Society
- Queensland South Representative Body

Divisional offices also have memoranda of understanding with agencies relevant to their areas.

### **Priority Internal and External Initiatives**

#### *External*

- National approach to property management planning.
- National approach to skill and knowledge transfer.
- National approach to community organisational strengthening.
- National approach to inter-agency coordination.
- National approach to enabling land owning groups to access information.
- National approach to the provision of labor and capital support for land owning groups eg. CDEP scheme.

#### *Internal*

- National standards, procedures and practices for land acquisition and land management assessment.
- National standards in terms of field practice and field equipment.
- Two-way approach to policy, program and procedural development (top-down, bottom-up, interactive).
- Identification of and training in generic ILC required skills eg. Property management planning, property assessment, cross-cultural communication, financial management, project management, training and skills audits.
- Identification of and regular sharing between all areas/functions of ILC and best practice.
- Career structure based on merit and standardised numeration packages.
- Nationally structured staff development programs directly linked to ILC's Key Performance Indicators.

### **CONCLUSION**

In order to develop a Capacity Building program the ILC will need to develop an internal capacity building program, and an externally focused program that covers;

1. An internal focused program that is based on sound policy, programs, procedures and a corporate ILC approach.
2. Externally focused program that develops the capacity of community groups for whom the ILC buys land and builds interagency relationships that will support the same groups.

In support of this the ILC will need to consider a range of ancillary issues. These include staff training, property assessment procedures, acquisition support packages, formal relationships with client groups and other State and Territory agencies.