

Evaluation of Law and Justice Groups in the Northern Territory Kintore and Maningrida

Final report

November 2025

An independent evaluation commissioned by the
Paul Ramsay Foundation. Report prepared by



Contents

Executive summary	4
Summary of recommendations.....	7
Introduction to the evaluation	8
Program overview.....	9
Evaluation purpose.....	13
Methodology	13
Key Findings.....	15
1. Targeted benefits.....	15
a) Are LJG processes in place?	15
b) Are LJGs engaging and supporting Aboriginal leadership?	18
c) Is community safety enhanced through reduced offending and recidivism?.....	21
2. Improvements/changes to the broader justice ecosystem in the NT	26
a) Does collaboration between NT Government, NGOs and Aboriginal Territorians in developing and delivering services and programs to Aboriginal people improve?	26
b) What emerges when we view this through an Aboriginal social justice lens?.....	28
Impact statement	30
Annex 1: Documents reviewed.....	31
Annex 2: Evaluation participants	32
Annex 3: Information sheet and consent form.....	34
Annex 4: Rubric for determining program merit.....	37
Annex 5: LJG Local Action Plans – Tracking progress towards Goals and Activities	38

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AGD	NT Attorney-General's Department
AJA	NT Aboriginal Justice Agreement 2021-2027
AJAGMC	Aboriginal Justice Agreement Governance Monitoring Committee
AJU	Aboriginal Justice Unit
AOD	Alcohol and Other Drugs
CJRESU	NT Criminal Justice Research, Evaluation and Statistics Unit
Corrections	NT Department of Corrections
DCMC	NT Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence
LJGs	Law and Justice Groups
Nja-marléya	Nja-marléya Cultural Leaders and Justice Group
NT	Northern Territory of Australia
NTG	NT Government
WLJG	Walungurru Law and Justice Group

Acknowledgements

Pandanus Evaluation acknowledges First Nations' unceded sovereignty over the lands and waterways of Country across Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Stephanie Harrison and Nea Harrison



Executive summary

The establishment of Community Courts and Law and Justice Groups (LJGs) are key actions under the Northern Territory Government's (NTG) Aboriginal Justice Agreement 2021-2027 (the AJA). This aligns with a recommendation for 'Community Justice Groups' made by the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

This report explores the establishment of two LJGs, the Walungurru Law and Justice Group (WLJG) in Kintore and the Nja-marléya Cultural Leaders and Justice Group (Nja-marléya) in Maningrida. It builds on the findings from the Interim Report provided in January 2025. This was an independent evaluation commissioned by the Paul Ramsay Foundation (PRF) who partnered with the NTG to support implementation of the AJA. The evaluation was participatory and followed empowerment evaluation principles to ensure practices were culturally safe and findings were useful for multiple audiences.

Ethics

Ethical approval on the approach taken was sought from the LJGs directly. A submission was made to and approved by Menzies' Human Research and Ethics Committee Northern Territory. HREC Reference Number: 2024-4943.

Governance

The evaluation was overseen by the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Governance Monitoring Committee (AJAGMC), which includes members from the NTG's Attorney-General's Department (AGD) – specifically the AJU and Criminal Justice Research, Evaluation and Statistics Unit (CJRESU) – as well as the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (DCMC); the Department of Treasury and Finance; and Menzies School of Health Research. The evaluation was also guided by a governance group made up of representatives from both LJGs, as well as from PRF, AJU, CJRESU and the NT Local Court.

Data collection methods

Desktop review of 15 program documents, including quantitative community offending data provided by the CJRESU

Four face-to-face focussed-group discussions: two with LJG members and two with Community Court participants and family members in both communities

22 semi-structured interviews with justice system representatives and service providers across both communities

Has the partnership between PRF and the NTG achieved its short-medium term outcomes?

Generally, the partnership is achieving its short-medium term outcomes.

LJG processes are developing in both Kintore and Maningrida.

Both Nja-marléya and the WLJG have a Local Action Plan (LAP) with goals and actions to achieve these. LJGs are beginning to address the developing law and justice priorities identified by community but face significant challenges related to resourcing and infrastructure.

LJG members are confident community leaders who are building skills in the law and justice space through on-the-job experience and initial training. Ongoing and certified training is identified as being required.

The strengths and capabilities of Aboriginal people are recognised by through paid employment and opportunities to enhance their skills. LJG members are employed on a casual basis, with their hours tracked via timesheets and payment provided for activities such as training, meetings, and participation in court.

LJG engagement and support for Aboriginal leadership are developing in both Kintore and Maningrida.

LJG members are seen as role models and mentors in their communities and are establishing and promoting positive values and behaviours. LJG members in both communities are leaders, both culturally and professionally. It is significant that community members witness that Elders are both 'culturally responsible' for them and can perform in that role as well as 'in the whitefella way'.

Communities have a say in how victims, offenders and their families are supported in their interactions with the justice system. This occurs through Community Court processes and community safety meetings, which have been facilitated by the LJGs.

Cultural authority is being recognised and strengthened through Community Court processes and community leadership of law and justice. Most sentences delivered through Community Court include staying in community under the supervision of the LJGs. Staying in community under the guidance of cultural leaders is a major strength of the program. Keeping people on Country would help reduce the risk of reoffending.

Reductions in offending and recidivism is developing and are contributing to improved community safety in Kintore, though progress is currently limited in Maningrida.

In Kintore there has been a significant reduction in police reports of offending over the reporting period, despite qualitative reports of periods of increased anti-social behaviour from youth and fighting between families.

The CJRESU data shows no reduction in offending in Maningrida; however, it is expected that outcomes will take longer to mature given the larger size of the community. There has been a tangible reduction in the rates of property offences since the establishment of the Maningrida Security Service, a community-led initiative.

The evaluation could not access data on recidivism due to the short time frame of the program.

Improved collaboration between NTG, NGOs and Aboriginal Territorians is developing in both Kintore and Maningrida.

Both LJGs are working adequately with Police, Community Court Judges, Community Corrections and Community Youth Justice Officers. Nja-marléya is collaborating closely with a range of stakeholders and is actively co-ordinating interagency meetings. WLJG has had minimal formal collaboration with external agencies delivering services to Kintore.

An Aboriginal social justice lens:

Despite significant investment, data indicates worsening outcomes for Aboriginal people in the NT criminal justice system. Additional funding has been directed to community-led justice programs, but gaps remain in local partnerships and the alignment of spending with community priorities.

A combined total of approximately \$10.23 million was spent on prisoners from Kintore and Maningrida over the reporting period. Costs to the criminal justice system increase again when we include the money granted to programs and services being delivered by NTG departments and NGOs, and court costs.

What can we learn about the program model to produce wider systemic change?

The program model, which centres LJGs as leaders of law and justice work in their communities, is beginning to improve law and justice outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians at the local level. A justice system representative reported that cultural authority is 'poignant for offenders facing Community Court, because the concept of shame [in front of your cultural leaders] is extremely powerful.' Progress towards outcomes can be further strengthened by continuing to fund LJGs as a cultural justice arm of the justice system and embedding collaboration with LJGs into service agreements with other organisations funded to provide services in Maningrida and Kintore.

What can we learn about culturally appropriate community-led local justice initiatives?

LJG processes - and the outcomes sought - take considerable time, sustained resourcing and support to develop. LJGs align with the NTGs commitment to reducing crime through early intervention programs and addressing demands on the justice system.¹ Notwithstanding these advances the NTG has not allocated funding to support the programs and services being identified by LJGs that have the potential to support crime reduction. While AERs are legislated as part of Community Court, there is no budget allocated through the Courts for LJGs to create them. This means there is no direct financial reflection of the sentencing requirement for AERs to be produced by LJGs, or the significant amount of time and energy required to develop them.

There is an opportunity to improve outcomes if the LJGs continue to be centred as the leaders of law and justice work in their communities. LJGs should also be prioritised for national funding, such as Justice Reinvestment, to ensure they are not required to compete with other organisations for the same funding streams.

Impact statement

In the short timeframe of implementation, it is evident the program model is successfully reducing the incarceration of Aboriginal Territorians from Kintore and Maningrida and supporting Aboriginal leadership by having offenders come under the cultural authority of the LJGs. The program model uniquely situates Aboriginal community and cultural leaders as law and justice representatives in their communities, working alongside Police, Community Corrections, and the Courts.

Preliminary evidence suggests that the program has contributed to a reduction in recorded crime in Kintore, attributable to the efforts of the WLJG in mediating community tensions. Results are expected to take longer to mature in Maningrida given the size of the community and the lack of services identified as being required, notably men's behaviour change and Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) services.

It is imperative that the NTG continue to allocate resources to LJGs to ensure the effective delivery of Community Courts and post-court cultural case management services, as a direct outcome of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement. Both LJGs need resourcing and infrastructure to progress towards the goals in their Local Action Plans.

Overall, collaboration between Aboriginal Territorians, the NTG and NGOs has been improving. It can continue to improve, by directly communicating the roles and responsibilities of the LJGs amongst service providers while centring working to the priorities of the LJGs into service agreements.

¹ Attorney-General's Department (2025) Agency Budget Statements. Retrieved from: https://budget.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1514907/2025-26-bp3-book.pdf

Summary of recommendations

No	Target	Recommendation
1	LJGs	Regularly review and update Local Action Plans (LAPs) to reflect emerging community needs and priorities. This should happen quarterly, at a minimum. Ensure LAP activities include developing and formalising partnerships and collaboration with other organisations operating in the community, to strengthen progress towards goals, through MOUs or Terms of Reference. See Annex 5 for a tool to help LJGs evaluate progress towards their law and justice priorities. ²
2	NTG	Continue to develop and implement guidelines and mechanisms to provide support to LJGs, including sustained operational and project-based funding. This will support the development of both the hard and soft infrastructure required to implement LAPs.
3	AGD	Regularly provide LJGs with quantitative data on offending through accessible community-data packs that contain information on different offending categories, sub-categories and demographics. This should include NT Police's SerPro data on recorded crime in the community and Youth Detention data.
4	NTG	Work with LJGs to develop and fund an on-going training and capacity development program. Include in-services to develop understanding of the changes to laws; mediation/peacemaker training; DFV training and trauma-informed practice; paid traineeships with a certification component, such as a Certificate III in Correctional Practice or Certificate II in Security Operations; Community Court processes, with a focus on sentencing procedures.
5	WLJG	Ensure WLJG members receive induction on their roles and responsibilities such as mediating, attending Community Court, cultural authority case management and delivery of cultural rehabilitation programs. Allocate time during meetings to reflect on each delivery area to track progress, identify challenges, and ways to improve implementation.
6	NTG	Collaborate with LJGs to match Position Descriptions to award levels, to recognise the unique contributions of LJC members, including their roles in cultural case management, community-based corrections work, developing AERs and working alongside lawyers and Judges in Community Court, providing leadership in community law and justice initiatives, and mediating community tensions.
7	NTG	Communicate the role and responsibilities of LJGs with NGOs and government agencies engaged to deliver services and programs in communities where LJGs are operating, particularly in Kintore. Ensure that service agreements require that agencies work in collaboration with - and are guided by - the LJGs as leaders of local decision-making. Additionally, work with the Federal Government to prioritise Justice Reinvestment funding for LJGs.
8	NTG	Clearly outline how programs identified as priorities in AERs can be developed - for example, by incorporating program development requirements into funding agreements with external partners.
9	Nja-marléya	Include the local schools as key stakeholders for collaboration around youth justice. Include schools in the Youth Justice Network and other meetings about at-risk youths.
10	WLJG	Develop communication pieces to share with key agencies and committees that outline the community's law and justice priorities and the LJGs role and responsibilities.
11	LJGs	Develop a proposal that outlines the LJGs vision for community-led justice, such as building cultural rehabilitation centres or community-led work-farms. The proposal should identify what the LJC wants to do, how they want to do it, and how much it will cost. LJGs should communicate with the Aboriginal Partnerships Reform to find out what meetings are happening in regional areas and request an opportunity to present their proposal.
12	NTG	Embed the role of the LJGs into the Community Court system by allocating funding to them that acknowledges their role as a cultural justice arm of the justice system.

² See [Annex 5: LJC Local Action Plans – Tracking progress towards Goals and Activities](#)

Introduction to the evaluation

This was an independent evaluation commissioned by the Paul Ramsay Foundation (PRF). PRF partnered with the NTG to support implementation of the AJA. This report explores the establishment of two LJGs, the Walungurru Law and Justice Group (WLJG) in Kintore and the Nja-marléya Cultural Leaders and Justice Group (Nja-marléya) in Maningrida.

The evaluation aimed to gain an early understanding of whether community-driven initiatives and local decision-making are improving law and justice outcomes in Kintore and Maningrida. The evaluation also aimed to highlight gaps in service provision or areas where LJGs need additional support. It reports on progress towards short-medium term outcomes in the [Program Logic](#) and against baseline data. This report looks at data from January 2024 to June 2025.

The evaluation was participatory and followed empowerment evaluation principles to ensure practices were culturally safe and findings were useful for multiple audiences.

In the Northern Territory (NT), establishment of Community Courts and Law and Justice Groups (LJGs) are key actions under the Northern Territory Government's (NTG) Aboriginal Justice Agreement 2021-2027 (the AJA). The AJA is overseen by the Aboriginal Justice Unit (AJU), a business unit that sits under NTG's Attorney-General's Department (AGD). LJGs and Community Courts provide a platform for Aboriginal Territorians to engage with the justice system, enact local decision-making, and develop culturally safe, place-based strategies to improve local justice outcomes.

The formation of LJGs and Community Courts aligns with a recommendation for 'Community Justice Groups' made by the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The Commission highlighted that for justice and social policies to be effective and culturally appropriate, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must be given power and genuine authority to make decisions and exercise control over matters affecting their lives and communities.³

Ethics

The evaluation was designed to meet the [AES Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations](#) (2013), the National Health and Medical Research Council's [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#) and [Keeping research on track II](#).

Ethical approval on the approach taken was developed with the LJGs directly. The evaluators travelled to each community and worked with LJGs to develop local evaluation plans reflecting the aims and objectives specific to each group. The evaluators worked with LJGs to agree on ownership, management and communication of data and results to ensure data sovereignty - meaning that data was 'collected, stored and shared in ways that benefit and do not harm Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people'.⁴

Letters of ethical approval were provided by the LJGs to the evaluators and a submission was made to and approved by Menzies' Human Research and Ethics Committee Northern Territory (NT HREC) in August 2024. Approval to conduct the research was received in October 2024 (NT HREC Reference Number: 2024-4943).

³ Commonwealth of Australia (1991). *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, National Report*. Volume 4

⁴ Productivity Commission (2020). *Indigenous Evaluation Strategy*. Retrieved from: <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/indigenous-evaluation/strategy/indigenous-evaluation-strategy.pdf>

Governance

The evaluation was overseen by the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Governance Monitoring Committee (AJAGMC), which included members from the AGD – specifically the AJU and Criminal Justice Research, Evaluation and Statistics Unit (CJRESU); the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (DCMC); the Department of Treasury and Finance; and Menzies School of Health Research. The evaluation was also guided by a governance group made up of representatives from both LJGs, as well as PRF, AJU, CJRESU and NT Local Courts (See Table 1 below). The group collaboratively designed the evaluation, tracked progress, contributed data and participated in analysis.

Table 1. Evaluation governance group members for each reporting phase

Name	Role / Organisation	Organisation	Location	Report phase
Seide Ramadani	Chief Executive Officer	Nja-marléya	Maningrida, NT	Interim / Final
Warren Jackson	Deputy Director	AJU	Darwin, NT	Interim / Final
Sarah Combe	Senior Project Officer	AJU	Darwin, NT	Interim / Final
Carolyn Whyte	Director	CJRESU	Darwin, NT	Interim / Final
Joy Mingi	Principal Research Officer	CJRESU	Darwin, NT	Interim / Final
Kathy Share	Analyst	PRF	Melbourne, VIC	Interim / Final
Douglas Lovegrove	Central Australian Project Manager	AJU	Alice Springs, NT	Interim
Anna Gill	Community Courts Registrar	NT Local Court	Darwin, NT	Interim
Squirrel Main	Evaluation Manager	PRF	Melbourne, VIC	Interim
Samara Hanley	Director, Law and Justice / Territory Regional Growth	DCMC	Darwin, NT	Interim
Patrick Green	Co-ordinator	WLJG	Kintore, NT	Final
Sandy Griffin	Monitoring and Evaluation Manager	CJRESU	Darwin, NT	Final

Operating context

During the creation of this report, significant changes occurred within the NT political landscape which have impacted upon the development of this report. In August 2024, NTG elections saw a change from the Territory Labor Party to the Country Liberal Party (CLP). The CLP's 'tough on crime' approach introduced several new laws aimed at reducing crime and improving safety including stronger bail laws, changes to public drinking offences, truancy laws and lowering the age of criminal responsibility from 12 to 10.⁵ Amendments to the Youth Justice Regulations 2006 (NT) in July 2025 reclassified 13 offences as 'serious', requiring children to attend court instead of being eligible for justice diversion programs.⁶

The LJGs in Kintore and Maningrida received operational funding from NTG through the AJU. This funding has been confirmed to continue until June 2026.

⁵ NTG. (25 October 2024). *Reduce crime - new laws introduced*. Retrieved from: <https://nt.gov.au/news/2024/reduce-crime-new-laws-introduced>

⁶ Ferguson, G. (2025) *NT youth crime law change to see kids ineligible for prison alternatives*. Retrieved from: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-07-04/nt-government-flags-changes-to-youth-justice-laws-crime/105493592>

Program overview

The NTGs Aboriginal Justice Agreement 2021-2027 (the AJA)

The purpose of the AJA is to reduce Aboriginal peoples' over-representation in the justice system and to make the justice system fairer, more accessible, and culturally responsive. The establishment of Community Courts is an action under Aim One, *Reduce offending and imprisonment of Aboriginal Territorians*. Establishing and supporting LJGs is an action under Aim Two, *Engage and Support Aboriginal leadership*.

*'Aboriginal Territorians are significantly over-represented as both offenders and victims in the justice system. The human impact and cost of this on families, communities and the Territory, cannot be overstated.'*⁷

Law and Justice Groups

LJGs are representative groups of Aboriginal people who come together to address issues to improve justice responses and community safety. Members of LJGs are determined by locally driven processes which reflect a gender-balanced and fair representation of the cultural groups within a community.

LJG members can apply to become 'appointed', which means they can sign off on Aboriginal Experience Reports (AERs) and sit beside the Judge in Community Court.

About Kintore and the Walungurru Law and Justice Group

Kintore is on Pintupi country approximately 530km west of Mparntwe/Alice Springs and 40km from the NT-Western Australian border. The community is predominantly Pintupi speakers, along with Luritja and some Warlpiri. Kintore has a population of 420 people, just over one third of which are classed as 'youth' by the western legal system.⁸ The Pintupi people experienced no contact with white settlers prior to the 1960s and some not until 1984 when the Pintupi Nine walked out of the Gibson Desert.⁹

In May 2023, the Walungurru Law and Justice Group (WLJG) received formal approval from the AGD as the LJG for Kintore. The WLJG currently has 14 members, 12 men and two women, with strong cultural authority and connection to Kintore. Most family groups in the community are represented. Two members have been appointed and three more are in the process of applying.

The WLJG has a full-time Pintupi co-ordinator who manages the group and is the main point of contact. An extra administrative staff member has been appointed to assist with WLJG operations. The WLJG worked with external consultants to explore governance structures and became an incorporated body in early 2025. The group is under the auspices of Yirara College of the Finke River Mission Inc. (Yirara).

⁷ Uibo, S. (2021) *Minister's Message*, in the Northern Territory Aboriginal Justice Agreement 2021-2027, p.5. Retrieved from: https://justice.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1034546/nt-aboriginal-justice-agreement-2021-2027.pdf

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *Walungurru (Kintore)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/UCL722035>

⁹ Mahony, A. (2014) *The day the Pintupi Nine entered the modern world*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30500591>

About Maningrida and the Nja-marléya Cultural Leaders and Justice Group (Nja-marléya)

Maningrida is on Kunibidji country approximately 540km east of Garramilla/Darwin and 593km north-east of Katherine. It is one of the largest remote towns in the NT, servicing 35 outstations and around 3,500 residents.¹⁰ Maningrida is one of the most multilingual places in the world, with at times 17 language groups residing there, including Burarra, Kunwinjku, Ndjébbana (also known as Gunavidji), and Mayali.

In May 2023, the Nja-marléya Cultural Leaders and Justice Group (Nja-marléya), which has been registered as a formal body since 2022, was approved as the LJG for Maningrida. Nja-marléya has 12 Directors: 7 men and 5 women, who represent all the different language groups in Maningrida. Five Directors have been 'appointed'. The organisation employs a full-time Balanda¹¹ Chief Executive Officer and Youth Services Team Leader. There are seven Bininj¹² staff. The group is in the process of recruiting a team leader to co-ordinate case management and capacity building activities. There are plans to also recruit a male and female Senior Youth Worker and two Community Court officers to support clients on the ground, acknowledging the workload associated with supporting Community Court participants both pre, during, and post-sentencing.

Local Action Plans

An output for LJGs is the development of a Local Action Plan (LAP) - a place-based and community informed list of issues and priorities along with practical strategies to address them. Nja-marléya finalised its LAP in April 2024 and the WLJG finalised its LAP in May 2024.

Community Court

Community Courts are a community-led sentencing procedure available on application for Aboriginal offenders who have pleaded guilty to offending in the Local Court or Youth Court. It is a whole-of-community process that encourages 'collaboration between the Court, legal practitioners, victims, offenders, stakeholders and community members'.¹³ The Community Court model is informed by the *Sentencing Act 1995* (NT) and the *Youth Justice Act 2005* (NT).¹⁴ The usual sentencing options still apply and the Judge can sentence an offender to prison or detention through the Community Court.

Kintore's first Community Court was held on 19 September 2024. Maningrida's first Community Court was held on 6 December 2024.

Aboriginal Experience Reports (AERs)

Community Court sentencing procedures require appointed LJG members to create and provide Judges with an AER, a detailed document about 'an offender's cultural and personal circumstances ... as well as the impact on the community [and victim] of the offending'.¹⁵ In the AER, LJGs may identify certain programs or treatments that are not currently available in the community but would assist with the offenders' rehabilitation if they were developed.

LJG members are encouraged to identify how such programs could be achieved in the community and if any local initiatives could grow their capacity and adapt current services to meet the gap.

¹⁰ Nja-marléya Cultural Leaders and Justice Group. (2024). *Annual Report 2023-24*. p.7

¹¹ Non-Aboriginal person

¹² Aboriginal person in this context

¹³ Northern Territory Local Court (n.d.). *Part 5 SPECIALIST JURISDICTIONS PRACTICE DIRECTIONS: Practice Direction 38 Community Court Sentencing Procedure (Adult)*. p. 104-105

¹⁴ See Part 6 Division 3A of the *Sentencing Act 1995* (NT) and Part 5 Division 4 of the *Youth Justice Act 2005* (NT)

¹⁵ Northern Territory Local Court (n.d.) *Offender Factsheet: Community Court in the Northern Territory*

Program Logic for LJGs and Community Courts

Inputs	Outputs	Short Term Outcome	Medium Term Outcome	Long Term Outcome
Funding (Operational funding from NTG; National Justice Reinvestment)	Guidelines and mechanisms for NTG to provide support to LJGs are developed and implemented, including processes and policies to support Local Decision Making	LJG members feel prepared and confident in their role leading law and justice in their communities and participating in Community Court processes	LJG members are seen as role models and mentors in their communities, establishing and promoting positive values and behaviours	Community safety is enhanced from reduced offending and recidivism
Skills, knowledge and leadership from LJG members	LJGs are established and recognised	Communities (individuals and organisations) are engaged in Local Action Plan activities	Communities have a say in how victims, offenders and their families are supported in their interactions with the justice system	Aboriginal people have increased understanding, trust and confidence in the justice system
Skills, knowledge and support provided by NTG (AJU, DCMC, CJRSU, Territory Families, Local/Community Courts and AJAGMC members)	Local Action Plans that identify community law and justice priorities and actions to achieve them are developed and implemented by LJGs	LJGs are able to address the law and justice priorities identified by community	The strengths and capabilities of Aboriginal people are recognised through paid employment and opportunities to enhance their skills	Improved justice responses and services for Aboriginal Territorians
Skills, knowledge and support provided by NGOs (e.g., Bowman Advisory, Yirara College)	Community engagement activities that establish links between Aboriginal communities and courts, police, corrections and other parts of the justice system are developed and implemented by LJGs	Cultural authority of Aboriginal Elders and respected persons is recognised through Community Court sentencing processes and when addressing community justice priorities in their communities	The justice system has increased understanding of and sensitivity to the needs and cultural values of Aboriginal communities	
	Training and skills development for LJG members is requested and provided (e.g., Community Courts training; other training/skills development needs identified by LJGs)	Collaboration between NTG, NGOs and Aboriginal Territorians in developing and delivering services and programs to Aboriginal people is improved		
	Community Court is held and Aboriginal Experience reports are prepared and provided by LJG members and considered by Community Court Judges			
	Meetings between NTG, NGOs and Aboriginal Territorians to discuss law and justice in communities, including developing and delivering services and programs to Aboriginal people, are held and led by LJGs			
	Monitoring and evaluation is undertaken to track progress and adapt to emerging insights			

Evaluation purpose

The evaluation assessed:

- If the partnership between PRF and the NTG achieved its short-medium term outcomes
- What we can learn about the program model to produce wider systemic change
- What we can learn about culturally appropriate community-led local justice initiatives.

At the local level, LJGs wanted the evaluation to tell the story of their establishment, show NTG where there are gaps in service provision and what needs to happen to strengthen support for community leadership of law and justice.

Methodology

Evaluation approach

Participatory planning workshops were held with LJGs, and the governance group between February and June 2024 to design the evaluation. The evaluators worked to centre local community voices and perspectives, acknowledging ‘that the people who are most affected by a program or intervention are the ones who are best able to evaluate its effectiveness and determine how to improve it.’¹⁶

Data collection, analysis and reporting

The evaluation used mixed methods of data collection, analysis and reporting. The CJRESU supplied quantitative data for review and qualitative data was collected from a representative sample of stakeholders as well as from program data. Data collection methods included:

- desktop review of program documents¹⁷
- focussed-group discussions with LJG members from Kintore and Maningrida and community members involved with Community Court
- semi-structured interviews with NTG and NGO service providers, law and justice representatives.¹⁸

A baseline was established for collaboration and offending during the first round of data collection for the interim report. This occurred in November 2024.

Data collection for the final report occurred in July 2025. The evaluation team travelled to each community and spoke face-to-face with LJG members. Community data from CJRESU was shared and discussed with both LJGs. Data collection in Kintore coincided with a Community Court sitting. Community-based researchers were engaged in both communities and supported translation where required. Application was made to the Aboriginal Interpreter Service to support data collection in both communities. There were no interpreters available in Kintore. Nja-marléya’s Directors communicated they did not require the services of a formal interpreter.

¹⁶ EvalCommunity. (2024). *Empowerment Evaluation Theory: Key Principles and Applications*. Retrieved from: <https://www.evalcommunity.com/career-center/empowerment-evaluation-theory/>

¹⁷ See [Annex 1: Documents reviewed](#)

¹⁸ See [Annex 2: Evaluation participants](#)

Interviews were held either face-to-face while in community or remotely. Participants were provided with information about the evaluation before informed consent was received, either written or verbal.¹⁹ Findings were validated with participants during data collection, where possible, or remotely. Direct quotes were checked with participants before inclusion.

Findings were synthesised into a document organised by evaluation questions before being sent to members of the evaluation governance group for review, discussion and agreement. A plain-English report was developed for distribution at the local level. The report is framed to meet the guidelines in PRF's evaluation approach.²⁰

Development of an Aboriginal Social Justice Lens

The evaluation drew on a range of different perspectives from First Nations' leaders, academics and community members to develop the Aboriginal social justice lens through which collaboration between NTG, NGOs and Aboriginal Territorians has been viewed. A rubric was developed to support this assessment.²¹ Emerging findings were tested and refined through conversations with LJG members and other First Nations' stakeholders.

Aboriginal social justice acknowledges and implements 'the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to self-determination, participation in decision-making, respect for and protection of culture, and equality and non-discrimination.'²² The evaluation acknowledges the differences between Western 'law' and Aboriginal 'lore' and considers the intersection of law and justice with social, historical and cultural determinants of health and wellbeing.

Limitations

The evaluation could not access recidivism data for Community Court participants due to the short timeframe between Community Court commencing and data collection for this report. The evaluation could not access re-offending data for people whose re-offending did not come to the attention of authorities, were not proceeded against by police or fell outside the specified timeframes for measuring recidivism.

This evaluation occurred during a period where there were several legislative changes resulting from the change in government. The evaluators acknowledge the impact that stricter legislation has had on quantitative data related to rates of offending in each community. This data alone does not tell the whole story and is combined with qualitative data to strengthen the evaluative judgements made.

¹⁹ See [Annex 3: Information sheet and consent form](#)

²⁰ Paul Ramsay Foundation. (n.d). *Evaluation at the Paul Ramsay Foundation: Guidelines for our Evaluation and Learning Partners*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/j8ylzbjua1o1ihrkz05gt/Information-for-EL-partners.pdf?rlkey=8xvdohos6a2l4ait47cdfxzmp&e=1&dl=0>

²¹ See [Annex 4: Rubric for determining program merit](#)

²² Australian Human Rights Commission. (n.d) *About Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice*. Retrieved from: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/about-aboriginal-and-torres-strait>

Key Findings

1. Targeted benefits

a) Are LJG processes in place?

Summary of findings

LJG processes are developing in both Kintore and Maningrida. Both Nja-marléya and the WLJG have a Local Action Plan (LAP) with goals and actions to achieve these. LJGs are beginning to address the developing law and justice priorities identified by community but face significant challenges related to resourcing and infrastructure.

LJG members are confident community leaders who are building skills in the law and justice space through on-the-job experience and initial training. Ongoing and certified training is identified as being required.

LJG members are employed on a casual basis, with their hours tracked via timesheets and payment provided for activities such as training, meetings, and participation in court.

i. Are LJGs able to address the law and justice priorities identified by the community?

LJGs are beginning to address the law and justice priorities identified by the community. Both groups have local action plans (LAPs) with goals and actions to achieve them. Some actions, such as establishing Community Court and developing AERs, have been achieved. Some actions needed review or are outside the control of the LJGs requiring input or leadership from other stakeholders. Both group's LAPs were developed before the groups fully understood their roles in Community Court and in addressing community priorities. As a result, the LAPs need reviewing and updating to reflect community priorities and the LJG's developing roles and activities.

Recommendation 1 (for the LJGs): Regularly review and update Local Action Plans (LAPs) to reflect emerging community needs and priorities. This should happen quarterly, at a minimum. Ensure LAP activities include developing and formalising partnerships and collaboration with other organisations operating in the community, to strengthen progress towards goals, through MOUs or Terms of Reference. See Annex 5 for a tool to help LJGs evaluate progress towards their law and justice priorities.²³

The lack of sufficient human and financial resources is a significant issue for both LJGs. Neither group has adequate facilities to support daily operations or programs.

In Kintore, WLJG has secured a temporary office space and meeting room located at the back of a storage shed at Yirara's secondary school compound. The WLJG has access to one of Yirara's cars, however members are regularly using their own vehicles for LJG-related work, including traveling to Alice Springs to support community members summonsed to appear at the Local Court.

In Maningrida, Nja-marléya operates out of the local youth centre which is reported as being 'grossly inadequate' for the size of the community, where half the population are under 25 years of age, and

²³ See [Annex 5: LJG Local Action Plans – Tracking progress towards Goals and Activities](#)

for the growth of the organisation. A significant issue is that staff cannot be recruited to fill the need, particularly of cultural authority casework after sentencing, as there is no housing or adequate office space available.

No funds have been allocated by the NTG to LJGs for developing infrastructure or purchasing assets needed to meet community priorities, such as a cultural rehabilitation centre or youth centre in Maningrida, a 'work farm' in Kintore, or vehicles and equipment for therapeutic on-country camps.

'When you're dealing with people's lives, it's important it is taken seriously. We want to offer a good service. We need infrastructure and resources. We need an office and a meeting space.' – WLJG member

'The biggest challenge is there's no resourcing. We know what the issues are. It [makes me sad for Maningrida] because people aren't given a chance at a proper recovery, rehabilitation, support and engagement. We just don't have the facilities. We need supported early intervention programs, particularly for the youth.'
– Nja-marléya member

Recommendation 2 (for the NTG): Continue to develop and implement guidelines and mechanisms to provide support to LJGs, including sustained operational and project-based funding. This will support the development of both the hard and soft infrastructure required to implement LAPs.

The LJGs cannot track progress towards LAP goals related to reduced offending, reoffending and incarceration as there is no data sharing arrangement with the CJRESU, Local Courts or local police. Regular updates on offending in each community would strengthen LJGs' understanding and support local planning and discussions with stakeholders.

Recommendation 3 (for the AGD): Regularly provide LJGs with quantitative data on offending through accessible community-data packs that contain information on different offending categories, sub-categories and demographics. This should include NT Police's SerPro data on recorded crime in the community and Youth Detention data.

In Kintore, the WLJG is developing programs that provide pathways for offenders coming through Community Court, as well as creating food security, industry and economic sustainability. The WLJG has trialled a program which involves sitting down with senior men and Elders to talk about the fighting between families, how it started and what can be done to manage ongoing tensions.

The WLJG is working closely with police in both Kintore and Alice Springs. WLJG members communicate with Alice Springs police whenever Community Court participants who are under their cultural authority travel there. The WLJG members also follow up with the participants and remind them to report to Police. A notable achievement for the WLJG is increased attendance of new young men at Yirara, having held a meeting with Elders encouraging them to stay at school after going through ceremony. This was reported as an 'unprecedented' outcome.

In Maningrida, Nja-marléya began with a focus on reconnecting youth to community, culture and services. Since its involvement with Community Court, the group has mainly dealt with adult cases, many of which are Domestic and Family Violence (DFV). With no men's behaviour change programs currently running in Maningrida, Nja-marléya has planned for activities and services needed to address this need.

Nja-marléya and local police are working closely on the Volatile Substance Alcohol Committee and the Community Safety Management Plan. The police intend to include Nja-marléya on the panel to review alcohol permits in the community and participate in fortnightly alcohol management meetings.

A MOU between Nja-marléya and local police has been drafted but not finalised. A MOU between Nja-marléya and the Bawinanga Homelands Aboriginal Corporations' Night Patrol is being drafted to allow Night Patrol to refer community members to Nja-marléya.

Nja-marléya is providing a range of activities for youth through their Stronger Communities for Children grants and Youth Wellbeing programs. The group is planning to set up a Cultural Rehabilitation Centre to deliver rehabilitation programs and services within the region and wants to collaborate with NTG to do this. Part of the initiative includes 'teaching our mob' to become corrections officers, enabling them to take over these duties at the local level. The group has received funding from the Federal Government to begin development of the concept. This will allow them to expand their capacity to support the community and engage with and help more family groups.

ii. Do LJG members feel prepared and confident in their role leading law and justice in their communities and participating in Community Court processes?

LJG members are respected senior men and women or emerging leaders. Both LJGs have received Community Courts training from the Local Courts registrar, but neither has undertaken certified law and justice training, which has been identified as a need. Nja-marléya's Directors require more training around bail laws and mandatory sentencing. WLJG members in Kintore report needing more experience.

Recommendation 4 (for the NTG): Work with LJGs to develop and fund an on-going training and capacity development program. Include in-services to develop understanding of the changes to laws; mediation/peacemaker training; DFV training and trauma-informed practice; paid traineeships with a certification component, such as a Certificate III in Correctional Practice or Certificate II in Security Operations; Community Court processes, with a focus on sentencing procedures.

In Maningrida, Nja-marléya's Directors have undertaken practical training with the local police in conflict resolution, crisis response, mediation, youth justice responses and attended education sessions on Domestic Violence Orders and legal terminology. They are discussing further training opportunities with NAAJA's Community Legal Education team, though scheduling is challenging.

Directors reported they were building their confidence in navigating Community Court processes through 'on-the-job' learning. They have 'a lot more confidence' speaking up in court, navigating court processes, and communicating their views to the Judge. They are learning to navigate the complexities, including when the defendant is a family member of one of the Directors in the room. They have learnt the importance of letting the court know at the end of every case that the sentencing decisions sit with the judge. One justice system representative praised their understanding of Community Court processes, noting this leads to improved outcomes under the *Sentencing Act 1995* (NT).

In Kintore, WLJG members understand cultural aspects of managing community unrest, and some have completed basic mediation training. There is, however, confusion about roles and responsibilities, especially when intervening in community conflicts, with some members mistakenly acting as police and risking injury. The unpredictable dynamics and remoteness of Kintore presents challenges. WLJG members now wear Peacemaker uniforms during conflict mediation, strengthening group identity and community recognition.

Recommendation 5 (for the WLJG): Ensure WLJG members receive induction on their roles and responsibilities such as mediating, attending Community Court, cultural authority case management and delivery of cultural rehabilitation programs. Allocate time during meetings to reflect on each delivery area to track progress, identify challenges, and ways to improve implementation.

iii. Are the strengths and capabilities of Aboriginal people recognised through paid employment and opportunities to enhance their skills?

In Kintore, WLJG members are employed on a casual basis, and timesheets are completed to show hours worked. WLJG members are paid for a range of work done in the community such as stopping fights and doing their own night patrolling. WLJG members are also paid for their time when undertaking skills development, training, holding meetings and providing support at court.

In Maningrida, there is an option for interested directors to move into part time or full-time employment. Most of Nja-marléya's Directors reported they prefer casual employment because they 'like the flexibility it offers'. As the Community Court case load builds, there will be a need for extra hours. The rate of pay is set to the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services industry award although there is acknowledgement that the LJG role does not fully align with it or other existing awards.

Recommendation 6 (for the NTG): Collaborate with LJGs to match Position Descriptions to award levels, to recognise the unique contributions of LJG members, including their roles in cultural case management, community-based corrections work, developing AERs and working alongside lawyers and Judges in Community Court, providing leadership in community law and justice initiatives, and mediating community tensions.

b) Are LJGs engaging and supporting Aboriginal leadership?

Summary of findings

LJG engagement and support for Aboriginal leadership are developing in both Kintore and Maningrida. LJG members are seen as role models and mentors in their communities and are establishing and promoting positive values and behaviours. LJG members in both communities are leaders, both culturally and professionally. It is significant that community members witness that Elders are both 'culturally responsible' for them and can perform in that role as well as 'in the whitefella way'.

Communities have a say in how victims, offenders and their families are supported in their interactions with the justice system. This occurs through the development of Aboriginal Experience Reports (AERs), the ways in which Judges give LJG members the opportunity to speak during Community Court, and the manner the recommendations in the AERs are used during sentencing.

i. Are LJG members seen as role models and mentors in their communities, establishing and promoting positive values and behaviours?

In Kintore, WLJG members are known throughout the community due to their family connections to residents and their individual relationships with service providers. They are seen as the 'leaders of the community' and are well respected, even though some are going through their own Court matters or have been in trouble with the law in the past.

'WLJG hold deep cultural authority in the community and are widely respected. I see the way they bridge cultural and community governance and provide strong role modelling.' – Kintore stakeholder

WLJG members have been actively mediating tensions in the community, doing their own night patrolling, holding community safety meetings, and, where possible, making decisions to send people away before things escalate. It was reported that through the WLJGs work, community members can see that their Elders are both 'culturally responsible' for them and can perform in that role as well as 'in the whitefella way'.

WLJG members are being contacted by community members, particularly young people, to provide support at Circuit Court in Kintore and in surrounding communities. An example of this is Mutitjulu, which is on the same Southern Circuit Court schedule. Mutitjulu community members have asked WLJG members to come and interpret for them and want to start a Community Court in Mutitjulu.

The WLJG has been proactive in engaging with local stakeholders and Community Corrections. However, awareness of the group amongst external service providers was found to be limited. This lack of awareness needs to be addressed given the intersection of Law and Justice with Health and Education, such as the impacts of sniffing and Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) on community safety.

'[Health issues like FASD, AOD and sniffing], they end up becoming a police [and therefore a Justice] issue.' – Kintore stakeholder

Recommendation 7 (for the NTG): Communicate the role and responsibilities of LJGs with NGOs and government agencies engaged to deliver services and programs in communities where LJGs are operating, particularly in Kintore. Ensure that service agreements require that agencies work in collaboration with - and are guided by - the LJGs as leaders of local decision-making.

In Maningrida, Nja-marléya Directors are respected cultural leaders, senior Traditional Owners and Elders from their different language groups. They are effective 'because they are the leaders, both culturally and in terms of their job title too.' It was reported that many residents have started calling Nja-marléya's Directors about law and justice issues they are having, particularly where police are involved. A significant outcome is that LJGs members bridge the 'language gap', particularly for young people who are struggling.

'Having a cultural leader, or a model that puts value into the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community, it enables young people to be heard. Which is such an important thing.' – Maningrida stakeholder

Nja-marléya Directors have been advocating for people to 'drink responsibly' when they come to collect alcohol on 'grog weekend'. This has received a lot of positive feedback, given that rates of DFV escalate '100 per cent on grog weekend'. In the wet season of 2024-25, there was an 'unprecedented number' of assaults reported. Nja-marléya's directors came together and decided to temporarily cancel grog weekend. When grog weekends resumed, several directors stood at the collection point and spoke to community members about drinking responsibly, staying safe and not fighting. The community well received this action.

Nja-marléya has quickly come to be respected and is seen as a local success story. The group has developed strong and strategic partnerships with a range of local organisations but still has a long way to go, particularly in articulating where they 'fit' in the broader service sector.

'I can't articulate where Nja-marléya fit. They're something new. They're not council, they're not police ... What Nja-marléya do is much deeper. It's a kind of social justice.' – Maningrida stakeholder

ii. Do communities have a say in how victims, offenders and their families are supported in their interactions with the justice system?

Communities have a say through the development of Aboriginal Experience Reports (AERs), the ways in which Judges give LJG members the opportunity to speak during Community Court, and the manner the recommendations in the AERs are used during sentencing. They also have a say during community safety meetings which have been co-ordinated by the LJGs in both communities.

A key challenge is that Community Court allows LJGs to propose needed programs or services that are not currently available and there are no existing mechanisms to facilitate their development.

Recommendation 8 (for the NTG): Clearly outline how programs identified as needed in AERs can be developed - for example, by incorporating program development requirements into funding agreements with external partners.

The case story below shows how LJGs and the Community Court process give communities a voice and are a mechanism for change. This story was shared by a family member of a Community Court participant from Maningrida.

Case story: One man, Community Court, and a positive outcome

A woman had one son and two daughters. As a youth the son went through young man's ceremony and learnt the cultural knowledge and 'right way' to behave, how to respect his Elders. He was taught the law by his family. He participated in all the important cultural ceremonies, including funerals.

After his father passed away, the man was grieving. While he was in Darwin with his partner, an older woman who suffered from mental health issues, they had a fight, and he assaulted her. He was arrested and held in custody. The man had never been in trouble with the police before. He felt scared when he was being interviewed. His aunt, who had been an interpreter, supported him. He was bailed and summoned to court in Darwin. His aunt and uncle helped make sure he did not miss court.

His mother warned him if he went to gaol, he was going to 'sit there and miss out on everything'. She told him they had raised him in a good way and that he was a cultural man for their family. He was worried he was going to go to prison. In court he pleaded guilty and was referred to Community Court in Maningrida. The interview to develop the AER was hard. He felt a lot of shame speaking about what he had done with the cultural leaders from Nja-marléya.

He and his family gave their story to Nja-marléya and the Judge. Instead of the expected sentence of eight months in prison, he was given a suspended sentence in the community under the cultural authority of Nja-marléya. He had to report weekly to Community Corrections and to Nja-marléya until he completed his sentence. His sentence included participating in the NTG's Family Violence Program and an 'on country' therapeutic program run by the Murnun Men's Shed. These men become his role models. They sit together on country. On country he feels he can open up and talk about things, talk about violence. He reconnects with his identity. When his sentence ends, he hopes to find work in the community. He wants to be a hunter. He wants to stay out of trouble.

iii. Is the cultural authority of Aboriginal Elders and respected persons recognised and strengthened through their role in addressing Law and Justice issues in their communities?

The cultural authority of Aboriginal Elders and respected persons is recognised and strengthened through Community Court processes and community leadership of law and justice. It was reported that the Community Court model 'ensures the Elders and leaders in community take increased responsibility for offending behaviour in community.' A WLJG member reported, '[our] cultural authority is being recognised by people on the ground ... as well as being recognised by the NTG.'

LJG members are aware of the need to declare 'conflict of interest' when dealing with direct family members who are coming through Community Court. There is evidence that family connection strengthens outcomes. In Kintore, for example, the small size of the community means that most LJG members will have a family connection to Community Court participants. During one Community Court hearing a LJG member spoke directly to the defendant, who was his son-in-law, saying 'you have to stop [this trouble] and look after my daughter'. A justice system representative reported that this cultural authority is 'poignant for offenders facing Community Court, because the concept of shame [in front of your cultural leaders] is extremely powerful.'

Most sentences delivered through Community Court included Community Corrections' orders, staying in community, and following the directions of the LJGs. Four offenders have been sentenced to-date through Community Court in Kintore, covering a total of 23 charges. Ten offenders have been sentenced through Community Court in Maningrida, covering a total of 17 charges. In Kintore, most offences that lead to court happen when people are away from their home community - 76 per cent of all adult offending and 100 percent of youth offending. This offending mostly occurs in Alice Springs.

The process of developing AERs was reported as significant for offenders 'who walk into a room of cultural leaders who interview them in language'. Facing the 'Western' court and law system does not hold as much weight as facing Elders. This is a significant strength of the Community Court model.

'[Community Courts ensure] Elders and leaders in community take increased responsibility for offending behaviour in community [and the correction and rehabilitation of offenders]' – Justice system representative

c) Is community safety enhanced through reduced offending and recidivism?

Summary of findings:

Reductions in offending and recidivism is developing and are contributing to improved community safety in Kintore, though progress is currently limited in Maningrida. In Kintore there has been a significant reduction in police reports of offending over the reporting period, despite qualitative reports of periods of increased anti-social behaviour from youth and fighting between families.

The CJRESU data shows no reduction in offending in Maningrida, however it is expected that outcomes will take longer to mature given the larger size of the community. There has been a tangible reduction in the rates of property offences since the establishment of the Maningrida Security Service, a community-led initiative.

The evaluation could not access data on recidivism due to the short time frame of the program.

Kintore

Between January and September 2024 there was a significant rise in anti-social behaviour, property damage and burglary.²⁴ The Walungurru Primary School temporarily closed, and teachers were evacuated as a result. Many non-Aboriginal service providers reported feeling unsafe. Two community safety meetings were held by WLJG. This resulted in the community coming together to send some of the offenders to other communities where they could 'get the support they need' from grandmothers and other family members.

In November 2024 there was another episode of 'community unrest' with fighting between two families that escalated into a series of public brawls. Extra police were sent in from Alice Springs and seven people were charged with serious offences including taking part in a riot, failing to comply with an order relating to a riot, failing to disperse from a riot, and going armed in public. Several of the offenders were airlifted to the Alice Springs watchhouse, some of whom suffered injuries including broken bones. It is noted that tensions continue to rise and fall within the community.

Recorded crime

Recorded crime (which may or may not proceed to court) shows a decrease from 52 counts in the Jan-March 2024 quarter to 20 counts in Jan-March 2025. Recorded crime further decreased in Apr-June 2025.²⁵ This is visualised in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Total recorded crime in Kintore, per quarter, over the reporting period

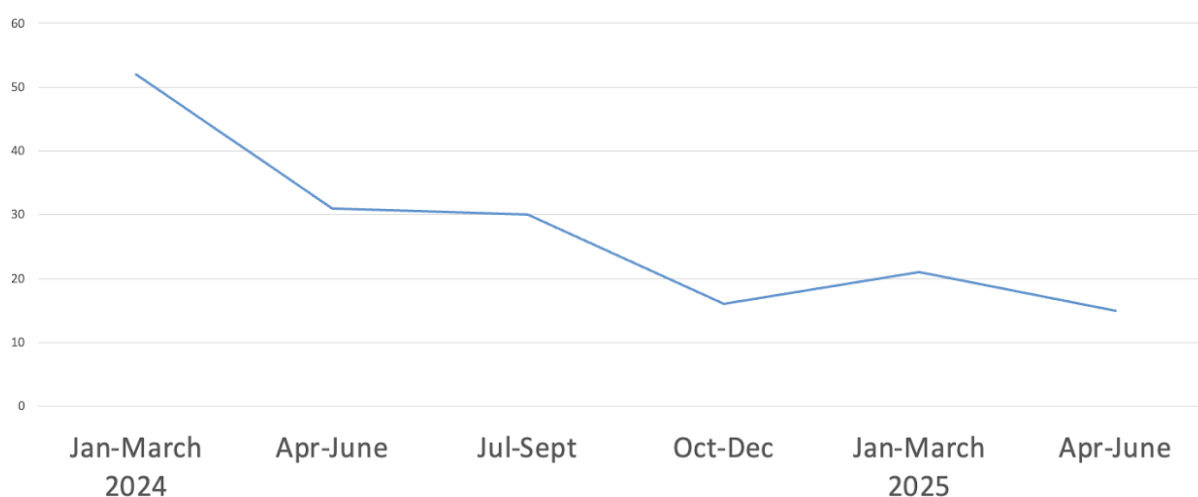


Table 2 on the following page shows each Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (ANZSOC) offence category expressed as a percentage of all crime recorded for each quarter. Quarter 1 (Q1) and Q2 2025 are measured against a baseline for the same period in 2024. Data for Q1 shows a reduction in six categories of offending. In Q2 there was a reduction in five categories. There was no data for Q3 and Q4 2025 to assess change against the 2024 baseline. However, during these periods, burglary and public order offences were high. Assault was high in Q3. This highlights the impact of community tensions and the episodic nature of offending, especially during times of unrest.

²⁴ Burglary is defined as 'the unlawful entry with the intent to commit a further offence, such as stealing or causing property damage.' Sourced from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-offence-classification-anzsoc/2023/06>

²⁵ This counts the number of recorded offences in the community, not the number of victims or alleged offenders. Not all offences have an alleged offender identified, and not all alleged offenders go to court. Data extracted from SerPro on 16 July 2025.

Table 2. Total recorded crime in Kintore, as a percentage, comparing 2025 quarters 1 and 2 against baseline from same quarters in 2025

ANZSOC Offence Division	Q1 Jan-Mar 2024 (Baseline)	Q1 Jan-Mar 2025	Change from Q1 baseline	Q2 Apr-Jun 2024 (Baseline)	Q2 Apr-Jun 2025	Change from Q2 baseline	Q3 Jul-Sept 2024 (period of unrest)	Q4 Oct-Dec 2024 (period of unrest)
Burglary	25.0	9.5	↓	29.0	20.0	↓	43.3	81.3
Assault	25.0	42.9	↑	22.6	20.0	↓	3.3	31.3
Offences against justice procedures and orders ⁺⁺	28.8	28.6	↓	16.1	20.0	↑	3.3	6.3
Property damage	7.7	4.8	↓	9.7	26.7	↑	20.0	6.3
Public order, health, and safety offences ⁺	1.9	4.8	↑	0.0	13.3	↑	16.7	31.3
Theft	3.8	0.0	↓	3.2	0.0	↓	10.0	12.5
Harm or endanger persons	5.8	4.8	↓	0.0	0.0	↓	0.0	6.3
Weapons and explosives offences	1.9	0.0	↓	6.5	0.0	↓	0.0	0.0
Traffic and vehicle offences	0.0	0.0	—	12.9	0.0	—	0.0	0.0
Drug offences	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	0.0	—	3.3	0.0
Environmental offences	0.0	4.8	↑	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	0.0

⁺⁺ Includes breach of domestic violence restraining orders and breach of bail orders

⁺ Includes public riots and post and boast offences

Maningrida

At the end of 2020, Maningrida was reported as being 'in crisis'. Young people were regularly breaking into and stealing from the local MPA store as well as other businesses. At the start of 2023, the community mobilised to protect assets and reduce the offending. MPA grouped together with several other local organisations, including the newly established Nja-marléya, to initiate a private security service. This service, which included security guards and dogs, had a tangible impact on reducing the number of property offences occurring.²⁶

Assault has been consistently high in Maningrida. There is a strong correlation reported between DFV, assault, and 'grog weekend'. For Nja-marléya's Directors, the impact of alcohol and its relationship to anger and offending is significant. It 'brings up the sadness' and people's trauma 'affects them more'. This leads to people engaging in fighting and anti-social behaviours. There are no Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) services in Maningrida.

Recorded crime

Recorded crime (which may or may not proceed to court) increased from 118 counts in the Jan-March 2024 quarter to 178 counts in Jan-March 2025. Recorded crime further increased in April-June 2025.²⁷ This is visualised below.

Figure 2. Total recorded crime in Maningrida, per quarter, over the reporting period

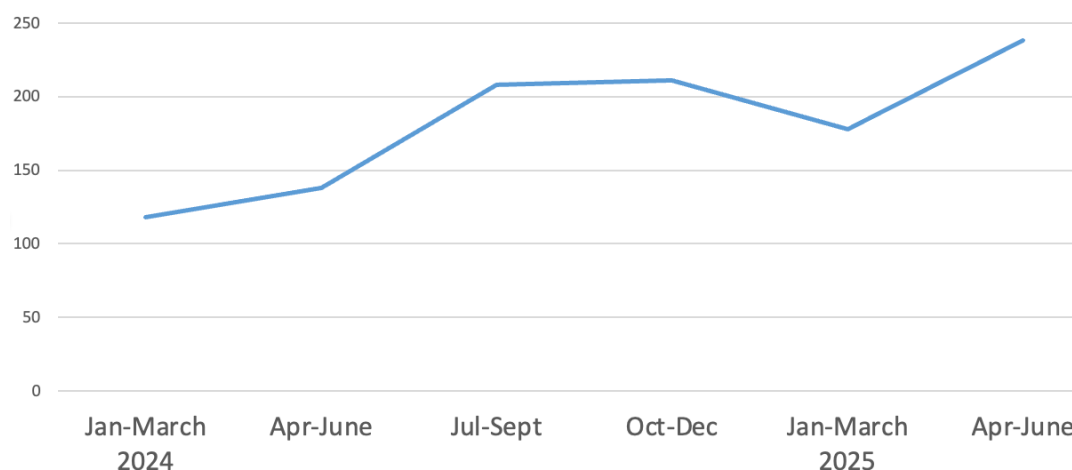


Table 3 on the following page shows each ANZSOC offence category expressed as a percentage of all crime recorded for each quarter. Quarter 1 (Q1) and Q2 2025 are measured against a baseline for the same period in 2024. The data for Q1 shows a reduction in six categories of offending. In Q2 there was a reduction in four categories. There was no data for Q3 and Q4 2025 to assess change against the 2024 baseline, however assault was high in both quarters. Traffic and vehicle offences were high in Q3, which roughly correlates with the dry season when roads are open when police are actively patrolling. Offences against justice procedures, which include breach of domestic violence restraining orders and breach of bail orders, and assault were high in Q4, which roughly correlates with the beginning of the wet season when roads and services close, and people become 'stuck in' the community.

²⁶ Property offences include Burglary, Theft and Property damage.

²⁷ This counts the number of recorded offences in the community, not the number of victims or alleged offenders. Not all offences have an alleged offender identified, and not all alleged offenders go to court. Data extracted from SerPro on 16 July 2025.

Table 3. Total recorded crime in Maningrida, as a percentage, comparing 2025 quarters 1 and 2 against baseline from same quarters in 2025

ANZSOC Offence Division	Q1 Jan-Mar 2024 (Baseline)	Q1 Jan-Mar 2025	Change from Q1 baseline	Q2 Apr-Jun 2024 (Baseline)	Q2 Apr-Jun 2025	Change from Q2 baseline	Q3 Jul-Sept 2024	Q4 Oct-Dec 2024
Burglary	17.8	4.5	↓	5.8	7.6	↑	1.4	7.2
Assault	33.9	29.2	↓	32.6	21.4	↓	23.7	32.4
Offences against justice procedures and orders	12.7	25.3	↑	9.4	20.6	↑	11.5	20.7
Property damage	5.9	8.4	↑	2.9	8.0	↑	6.5	8.1
Public order, health, and safety offences	4.2	11.8	↑	14.5	7.1	↓	10.1	12.6
Theft	5.1	3.9	↓	6.5	2.5	↓	2.2	4.5
Harm or endanger persons	1.7	2.8	↑	2.2	2.9	↑	0.7	0.9
Weapons and explosives offences	0.8	2.2	↑	1.4	4.6	↑	1.4	1.8
Traffic and vehicle offences	9.3	8.4	↓	18.1	15.1	↑	39.6	9.9
Drug offences	5.9	2.2	↓	4.3	7.6	↑	2.2	1.8
Sexual offences	2.5	1.1	↓	1.4	0.8	↓	0.0	0.0

2. Improvements/changes to the broader justice ecosystem in the NT

a) Does collaboration between NT Government, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Aboriginal Territorians in developing and delivering services and programs to Aboriginal people improve?

Summary of findings:

Improved collaboration between NTG, NGOs and Aboriginal Territorians is developing in both Kintore and Maningrida but needs improvement. Both LJGs are working adequately with Police, Community Court Judges, Community Corrections and Community Youth Justice Officers. Nja-marléya is collaborating closely with a range of stakeholders and is actively co-ordinating interagency meetings. WLJG has had minimal formal collaboration with local stakeholders and external agencies delivering services to Kintore.

Improved collaboration between NTG, NGOs and Aboriginal Territorians in developing and delivering services and programs was rated as ‘needing improvement’.²⁸

In Maningrida, Nja-marléya is collaborating closely with a range of stakeholders within the justice space as well as local NGOs, particularly those created under Maningrida’s Local Decision-Making Agreement 2024-29 including the Homelands School Company, Women’s Cultural Hub, and the Murnun Men’s Shed.

Nja-marléya is working closely with local police, NTG stakeholders and NGOs to develop the services and programs identified as priorities. One of these is the development of the Family Leadership Program, being co-designed in partnership with a fly-in-fly out NGO. The Program is planned as a ‘non-judgemental space’ that supports people to reflect on their strengths and how they can be the best man/father/husband they want to be.

Nja-marléya has also led the creation of the Youth Justice Network, a focussed group of key service agencies who are working with the same ‘at-risk’ youths. This was reported as ‘an important first step in streamlining collaboration between local organisations’. A joint Terms of Reference has been drafted. One local service provider identified the need to include the secondary school in this group as a ‘key stakeholder in the youth justice story’.

Recommendation 9 (for Nja-marléya): Include the local schools as key stakeholders for collaboration around youth justice. Include schools in the Youth Justice Network and other meetings about at-risk youths.

Nja-marléya faces the challenge of referring clients to services in Maningrida. Services are operating at full capacity, which prevents them from accepting additional referrals. Other organisations limit their support because they want to avoid risks of damage to their own assets. Some stakeholders cannot collaborate with the LJGs because their funding agreements are inflexible. Additionally, some service providers hesitate to work together, as they are competing for the same funding. The NTG needs to

²⁸ See [Annex 4: Rubric for determining collaboration merit](#).

continue developing guidelines and mechanisms that embed the role of LJGs in the broader service delivery sector.

See Recommendation 7 (for the NTG)

In Kintore, collaboration with WLJG in a formal capacity was limited outside of those stakeholders involved directly with Community Court. Several stakeholders reported they were not aware of the WLJG's role and responsibilities, what services and programs WLJG is developing, or wants to develop, or how to access these services. Collaboration with external stakeholders (those located outside the community) working in the health, education and youth diversion-funded spaces needs to be strengthened.

Unlike Nja-marléya, WLJG does not coordinate interagency meetings, and the external service provider landscape is different, characterised by sporadic visiting services. Several interviewees reported that Kintore is often 'forgotten about' and faces a 'tyranny of distance' for service delivery. There is a need for greater communication of the WLJG's role responsibilities and structures that embed collaboration in service agreements to support their work.

Recommendation 10 (for the WLJG): Develop communication pieces to share with key agencies and committees that outline the community's law and justice priorities and the LJGs role and responsibilities.

A significant challenge for both LJGs is the lack of NTG mechanisms to support development and delivery of services and programs identified as needed.

There is evidence that people in both communities are missing out on the services they need because the services are simply not there.

See Recommendation 8 (for the NTG)

Both LJGs are still learning the channels that exist within the NTG so they can have a 'seat at the table'. The DCMC Aboriginal Partnerships and Reform Unit leads the Closing the Gap agenda and works with Aboriginal organisations on investment opportunities, providing one such channel.

Recommendation 11 (for the LJGs): Develop a proposal that outlines the LJGs vision for community-led justice, such as building cultural rehabilitation centres or community-led work-farms. Describe what you want to do, how you want to do it, and how much it will cost. LJGs should communicate with the Aboriginal Partnerships Reform to find out what meetings are happening in regional areas and request an opportunity to present their proposal.

b) What emerges when we view this through an Aboriginal social justice lens?

Summary of findings:

Despite significant investment, data indicates worsening outcomes for Aboriginal people in the NT criminal justice system. Additional funding has been directed to community-led justice programs, but gaps remain in local partnerships and the alignment of spending with community priorities.

Around \$3.98 million was spent on adult prisoners from Kintore over the reporting period, around \$191,346 per person. Four youths with last known address Kintore had eight detention episodes at a total cost of around \$72,900.

Around \$6.25 million was spent on adult prisoners from Maningrida over the reporting period, around \$191,131 per person. Five youths with last known address Maningrida had six detention episodes at a total cost of around \$378,100.

A combined total of around \$10.23 million was spent on prisoners from Kintore and Maningrida over the reporting period.

Costs to the criminal justice system increase again when we include the money granted to programs and services being delivered by NTG departments and NGOs, and court costs.

A lot of money is being spent on developing and delivering programs and services for Aboriginal people. In the NT, data on progress towards Closing the Gap *Outcome 10: Adults are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system* and *Outcome 11: Young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system* show that things are worsening.²⁹ A lot of money is also being spent on incarceration in the NT. In 2023-2024, Aboriginal Territorians accounted for 94 per cent of all adult prisoners, averaging 1,955 people in prison per day at an annual cost of \$127,750 per person.³⁰ This means around \$249.75 million was spent that year on incarcerating adult Aboriginal Territorians.³¹

Data for NT youth under detention-based supervision shows that in 2023-2024, the average daily number of young people in detention was 37 Aboriginal youths and 1.8 non-Indigenous youths. Of these, more than 98 per cent were male.³² At a cost of over \$986,000 per person per year,³³ around \$36.5 million was spent that year on the detention of young Aboriginal Territorians.

²⁹ Australian Productivity Commission. (2025) *Closing the Gap Information Repository*. Retrieved from: <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/dashboard/se/outcome-area10> and <https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/dashboard/se/outcome-area11>

³⁰ Report on Government Services (2025), Table 8A.2, retrieved from <https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2025/justice/corrective-services>

³¹ Institute of Public Affairs. (2024). *The Cost of Australia's Prisons in 2024*. p.2. Retrieved from: <https://ipa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/IPA-Research-Note-June-2024-Cost-of-Prisons-2024.pdf?falframeUniqueid=s57aigl4b6&hostURL=https://ipa.org.au/tag/ahrc>

³² NT Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities. (6 September 2024). Weekly detention statistics. Retrieved from: <https://tfhc.nt.gov.au/youth-justice/youth-detention-centres/youth-detention-census>

³³ Australian Government Productivity Commission. (22 January 2024). Table 17A.21 in the *Report on Government Services 2024*. Retrieved from: <https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2024/community-services/youth-justice>

‘That money [spent on prison] would create a lot of jobs for [local Aboriginal people]’ – Nja-marléya member

CJRESU community data shows that, on average, there were 12.9 adults from Kintore in gaol per quarter during the reporting period and 7.9 adult on remand. Ninety-eight percent of prisoners were Aboriginal males and 1 per cent were Aboriginal females. Using the 2023-24 cost of prison figures above, approximately \$3.98 million was spent on prisoners from Kintore over the reporting period, which is around \$191,346 per person if they were imprisoned for the whole time (18 months).

Four youths with last known address in Kintore had eight detention episodes during the reporting period. Collectively, these youths spent 27 days in youth detention. The length of stay ranged from two to five days. This represents a total cost of around \$72,900.³⁴

CJRESU community data shows that, on average, there were 15.6 adults from Maningrida in gaol per quarter across the reporting period and 17.1 on remand. Ninety-four per cent were Aboriginal males and 5 per cent were Aboriginal females. Using the 2023-24 cost of prison figures above, approximately \$6.25 million was spent on prisoners from Maningrida over the reporting period, which is around \$191,131 per person if they were imprisoned for the whole time (18 months).

Five youths with last known address in Maningrida had six detention episodes. Collectively, these youths spent 140 days in youth detention. The length of stay ranged from 2 to 53 days. This represents a total cost of around \$378,100.³⁵ One youth was still in detention as of 30 June 2025.

Costs to the criminal justice system increase again when we include the money being granted to programs and services being delivered by NTG departments and the ever-growing number of NGOs, some of which are not working to the priorities of the LJGs. For example, in the 2023-2024 federal budget, the Albanese Government committed \$10 million over four years to support community-led Justice Reinvestment initiatives in Central Australia. This sat under the \$250 million plan for A Better, Safer Future for Central Australia.³⁶ Nja-marléya was one of nine NT organisations selected to receive the first round of federal funding, along with an NGO that runs community development projects in Haasts Bluff, Papunya, Mount Liebig, Nyirripi and Kintore. The NGO held consultations in communities to explore ideas aimed at reducing local incarceration rates. These meetings were held in all communities except Nyirripi and Kintore.³⁷ There is no partnership agreement between that NGO and the WLJG and there is no Justice Reinvestment money being used in Kintore to support the work of the WLJG.

This evaluation has not accessed data on court costs in Maningrida and Kintore, but it assumes these costs are considerable. Circuit and Community Courts incur expenses for wages, travel, and accommodation for Judges, court orderlies, defence lawyers, prosecutors, and Aboriginal Interpreter Services (AIS) translators. AIS translators are often unavailable locally and must be sourced from outside the community. Similarly, Aboriginal people from Kintore or Maningrida face high travel costs to attend court in urban centres like Alice Springs or Darwin. The cost of court warrants further investigation, as reported inefficiencies arise when courts adjourn cases or when representatives and defendants have missed communications about court dates.

³⁴ 27 days at a daily cost of \$2,701, based on 2023-24 costings.

³⁵ 140 days at a daily cost of \$2,701, based on 2023-24 costings.

³⁶ Commonwealth Government's Attorney-General's Department. (2025). *Central Australia Justice Reinvestment initiative announced*. Retrieved from: <https://ministers.ag.gov.au/media-centre/central-australia-justice-reinvestment-initiative-announced-17-07-2025>

³⁷ Ngurratjuta Wanka Wilurratja Alturla Rinya Aboriginal Corporation (2025) *Ulparratja Wilurratja Ara*.

Learnings

LJG processes - and the outcomes sought - take considerable time, sustained resourcing and support to develop. The 2025-26 NT Budget states a commitment to reducing crime through early intervention programs and addressing demands on the justice system.³⁸ LJGs align with this commitment through their role developing and delivering early intervention programs, supporting Community Court, and providing community-based supervision post-sentencing.

Notwithstanding these advances the NTG has not allocated funding to support the programs and services being identified by LJGs that have the potential to support crime reduction. While AERs are legislated as part of Community Court, there is no budget allocated through the Courts for LJGs to create them. This means there is no direct financial reflection of the sentencing requirement for AERs to be produced by LJGs, or the significant amount of time and energy required to develop them.

Recommendation 12 (for the NTG): Embed the role of the LJGs into the Community Court system by allocating funding to them that acknowledges their role as a cultural justice arm of the justice system.

There is an opportunity to improve outcomes if the LJGs continue to be centred as the leaders of law and justice work in their communities. This should include the requirement of having collaboration embedded into service agreements. LJGs should also be prioritised for national funding, such as Justice Reinvestment, to ensure they are not required to compete with other organisations for the same funding streams.

See Recommendation 7 (for the NTG): Additionally, work with the Federal Government to prioritise Justice Reinvestment money for LJGs.

Impact statement

In the short timeframe of implementation, it is evident the program model is successfully reducing the incarceration of Aboriginal Territorians from Kintore and Maningrida and supporting Aboriginal leadership by having offenders come under the cultural authority of the LJGs. The program model uniquely situates Aboriginal community and cultural leaders as law and justice representatives in their communities, working alongside Police, Community Corrections, and the Courts.

Preliminary evidence suggests that the program has contributed to a reduction in recorded crime in Kintore, attributable to the efforts of the WLJG in mediating community tensions. Results are expected to take longer to mature in Maningrida given the size of the community and the lack of services identified as being required, notably men's behaviour change and AOD services.

It is imperative that the NTG continue to allocate resources to LJGs to ensure the effective delivery of Community Courts and post-court cultural case management services, as a direct outcome of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement. Both LJGs need resourcing and infrastructure to progress towards the goals in their LAPs.

Overall, collaboration between Aboriginal Territorians, the NTG and NGOs has been improving and can continue to improve, by directly communicating the roles and responsibilities of the LJGs amongst service providers while centring working to the priorities of the LJGs into service agreements.

³⁸ Attorney-General's Department (2025) Agency Budget Statements. Retrieved from: https://budget.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1514907/2025-26-bp3-book.pdf

Annex 1: Documents reviewed

Title	Provided by
Kintore adult prisoner numbers.xls (baseline data)	CJRESU
Maningrida adult prisoner numbers.xls (baseline data)	CJRESU
Kintore - March qtr 2020 - June qtr 2025 v2.xlsx (community crime data)	CJRESU
additional data for Kintore - March qtr 2020 - June qtr 2025.xlsx (further breakdown of data on prisoner numbers and specific offences)	CJRESU
Maningrida - March qtr 2020 - June qtr 2025.xlsx (community crime data)	CJRESU
additional data for Maningrida - March qtr 2020 - June qtr 2025.xlsx (further breakdown of data on prisoner numbers and specific offences)	CJRESU
Kintore adult prisoner numbers.xlsx	Corrections, via CJRESU
Maningrida adult prisoner numbers.xlsx	Corrections, via CJRESU
Nja-marléya Local Action Plan	Nja-marléya
Walungurru LJG Local Action Plan	WLJG
Practice Direction 4AC Youth Justice Community Court Sentencing procedure.pdf	NT Local Courts
Practice Direction 5I Community Court sentencing procedure (Adult).pdf	NT Local Courts
Law and Justice Groups: Community Court Approval Guidelines	NTG
Redacted Kintore Community Court finalised.pdf	NT Local Courts
Redacted Maningrida Community Court spreadsheet .pdf	NT Local Courts

Annex 2: Evaluation participants

Kintore

Name	Data Collection phase of report	Role	Organisation	Interview type
1. Charlie 'Ringo' Michaels	Final	LJG Member	WLJG	Face-to-face
2. Pelita Wakuri	Interim and Final			
3. Bundi Rowe	Interim and Final			
4. Justin Corby	Interim and Final			
5. Marlene Spencer	Interim and Final			
6. Joe Young	Interim and Final			
7. Patrick Green	Interim and Final			
8. Jeffrey Zimran	Final			
9. Roderick Green	Interim and Final			
10. Victor Robinson	Interim			
11. Phyllis Rowe	Interim			
12. Tristan Cole	Final	Administrative Assistant	WLJG	Face-to-face
13. Marissa Gallagher	Final	Community members		Face-to-face
14. Rowena Gibson	Final			
15. Justin Gibson	Final			
16. Lanyon Smith	Final	Sergeant	Kintore Police	Face-to-face
17. Leander Menezes	Final	CEO	Pintupi Homeland Health Service	Phone
18. Nick Richardson	Final	Former Principal	Walungurru Primary School	Face-to-face
19. Amanda Lambden	Final	Senior Criminal Defence Lawyer	Central Australian Women's Legal Service	Face-to-face
20. Finbar Piper	Final	Solicitor	NT Legal Aid	Face-to-face
21. Elisabeth Armitage	Interim	NT Coroner	DAGJ	Phone
22. Machiko Raheem	Interim	Crown Prosecutor	Director of Public Prosecutions	Face-to-face
23. Debra Grey	Interim	Director, Stakeholder partnerships and response	NT Department of Health	Face-to-face
24. Jessica Kragh	Interim	Youth Services (MacYouth) manager	MRC	Face-to-face
25. James Rafoi	Interim	Central Services Co-ordinator	MRC	Phone
26. Rebecca Boyle	Interim	Court Officer	NT Local Courts	Face-to-face
27. Douglas Lovegrove	Interim	Central Australian Project Manager	AJU	Face-to-face
28. Colin Philip	Interim	Project Officer	AJU	Face-to-face

Maningrida

Name	Data Collection phase of report	Role	Organisation	Interview type
1. Garth Doolan	Interim	Director	Nja-marléya	Face-to-face
2. Jessica Phillips	Interim and Final			
3. Elizabeth Wullunmingu	Final			
4. Lucy Yarrarwanga	Interim and Final			
5. Mel Bonson	Final			
6. Julius Kernan	Final			
7. Marlene Kernan	Interim and Final			
8. Tim Wilton	Interim and Final			
9. Joseph Diddo	Interim			
10. Shane Namanurki	Interim			
11. David Jones	Interim			
12. Seide Ramadani	Interim and Final	CEO	Nja-marléya	Face-to-face
13. Roxanne Roy	Final	Community members		Face-to-face
14. Charlene Roy	Final			
15. Max Roy	Final			
16. Greg Macdonald	Final	Judge	NT Local Courts	Face-to-face
17. Noeletta Mckenzie	Final	Community Services Manager	Bawinanga Aboriginal Homelands Corporation	Microsoft Teams
18. Timothy Gillahan	Final	Officer in Charge	Maningrida Police	Face-to-face
19. Jacinta Graham	Final	Assistant Principal	Maningrida Secondary School	Microsoft Teams
20. David Crombie	Final	Place based child protection team leader	Department of Children and Families	Face-to-face
21. Ian McLay	Final	CEO	Maningrida Progress Association	Face-to-face
22. David Hardy	Final	NO MORE Community Development Worker	CatholicCare	Phone
23. Taje Fowler	Interim	Youth Coordinator	Nja-marléya	Face-to-face
24. James Wood	Interim	Mayor	West Arnhem Regional Council	Face-to-face
25. Charlie Gunabarra	Interim	Chairperson	Mala'la Health Service Aboriginal Corporation	Face-to-face

Annex 3: Information sheet and consent forms

Researcher name: Nea Harrison
Ph: 0457 850 051
E: nea@pandanusevaluation.com



PO Box 349 | Parap NT 0804
ABN 84 614 388 895

Law and Justice Group evaluation Information sheet for interviewees

THIS IS FOR YOU TO KEEP

We are Pandanus Evaluation. We work in Darwin and Alice Springs. The Paul Ramsay Foundation (PRF) and the NT Government (NTG) have asked us to evaluate the Law and Justice Groups (LJGs) as they develop in Kintore and Maningrida. The evaluation has ethics approval through Menzie's School of Health Research's Human Research and Ethics Committee (HREC Reference Number: 2024-4943).

Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation will help the LJGs, the NTG and PRF learn about community-led law and justice and report on progress towards outcomes.

How can you participate?

The evaluators will speak with LJG members and key community and justice system stakeholders. Interviews can happen face-to-face in Alice Springs and Darwin, or over the phone. Before we talk, we will make sure everyone agrees to take part and understands what the evaluation it is about.

What will you be asked?

You will be asked:

- Your experience and engagement with the LJGs, including through Community Court and Local Action Plan activities?
- Whether you see the LJG members as role models and mentors?
- Whether you think communities have a voice in how victims, offenders, and their families are helped when dealing with the justice system?
- Whether you think the cultural authority of Elders and respected people are recognised at Community Court and at meetings about law and justice?
- Whether communities feel safer over time?
- Whether collaboration between service providers and communities in developing and delivering programs and services is improving?

What will we do with the information you provide?

The information you share will be used in a written report for the LJGs, the Paul Ramsay Foundation, and the NT Government. There will be two reports: one in early 2025, and the final report in September 2025.

If we use any of the words from your interview, we will check with you that you are happy for them to be included in the reports, and whether you want your name included or another word (like 'Community Court staff member').

Mandatory reporting: We have a legal responsibility to report to child protection services if you share any information with us that suggests a child is being, or has been, harmed or abused.

What if I don't want to participate, or I do but then I change my mind?

You can choose not to take part. Whether you join or not won't change your relationship with Pandanus Evaluation, the Paul Ramsay Foundation, or the NT Government. If you decide to take part but change your mind later, you can stop at any time before the reports are finished. You do not need to give a reason.

Confidentiality

Pandanus Evaluation will do everything possible to keep your input anonymous, unless you tell us you want to be identified. No information will be linked to you personally without your written permission. If there is a chance you could be identified, the evaluators will ask how you want the information shared.

Concerns and complaints

If you have any concerns or complaints with this evaluation, you can contact the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Northern Territory, Department of Health, and Menzies School of Health Research.

Email: Ethics@menzies.edu.au

Phone: (08) 8946 8687

About the evaluators

Pandanus Evaluation is an independent, NT based evaluation and planning consultancy providing high-quality services throughout Australia and the Pacific. Our team has over 30 years' experience in supporting government, and non-government agencies, Indigenous and community groups to evaluate and plan effective programs, policies and systems.



Researcher Name: Nea Harrison
Ph: 0457 850 051
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Law and Justice Group evaluation
Consent form for interviewees

This Means You Can Say NO

I have been provided with an information sheet about the Law and Justice Group evaluation and:

- ☐ I give my consent to participate in this interview.
- ☐ I give permission for the interview to be recorded
- ☐ I give permission for the interview to be transcribed.
- ☐ I can determine who may be present during the interview.
- ☐ I have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that:

- My participation is voluntary, and I can withdraw from the evaluation at any time.
- I can request any information collected from me to be withdrawn at any time.
- At any point during the interview I can choose not to answer a question or continue with the interview for any reason.
- Even if I agree to participate now, I may change your mind and/or stop at any time.
- If I withdraw, I can request that any information collected from me to be returned or destroyed.
- My decision to participate or not to participate will not affect any current or future relationships with Pandanus Evaluation, Paul Ramsay Foundation or the NTG.
- Any information shared during the interviews will only be used for the above-mentioned purposes to inform the evaluation.
- Pandanus Evaluation will make every effort to deidentify my inputs in the final report unless I specify that I wish to be named.
- No information in the report will be attributed to individuals without written permission.
- Digital recordings, notes, and summaries will be stored securely with the evaluators and made accessible to me if I ask for a copy.
- The evaluators are legally required to report to child protection services if I share any information with them that suggests a child is being, or has been, harmed or abused.
- *For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:* The ownership of Aboriginal knowledge and cultural heritage is retained by me and will be acknowledged in research findings and in the dissemination of the research.

Participant Name: Signature:

Date: Time:

Witness/Interpreter Name: Signature:

Date:

Researcher Name: Signature:

Date:

Annex 4: Rubric for determining collaboration merit

Evaluation Criteria	Excellent	Expected	Needing improvement
Improved collaboration between NTG, NGOs and Aboriginal Territorians in developing and delivering services and programs to Aboriginal people	<p>All of expected, and:</p> <p>Diverse/underrepresented voices are heard and represented (youth etc.)</p> <p>LJGs set the agenda for meetings and programs and invite people (from NTG/NGOs) in.</p>	<p>LJGs set the agenda for meetings and lead discussions.</p> <p>Aboriginal Territorians are involved and actively participating in developing and delivering services and programs in collaboration with NTG and NGOs.</p> <p>Multiple members of community are engaged in a process where the final product is better than could have been achieved independently.</p>	<p>NTG/NGOs lead discussions in community and continue to 'consult' with Aboriginal people.</p> <p>The agenda is directed and driven by outsiders, not Aboriginal people living in remote communities.</p>

Annex 5: LJG Local Action Plans – Tracking progress towards Goals and Activities

Walungurru Law and Justice Group

Key: On track More work needed No progress

Goal 1: Young people are growing up strong with culture, going to school and getting local jobs, not stuck in drugs and justice system cycles.	Developing opportunities to participate in sport.	Taking kids to visit and camp at other communities or outstations.	Establishing clear pathways to jobs for school leavers, with guidance and training available	Ensuring a WLJG member is on recruitment panels for NTG positions locally	Finding people interested in AIS jobs and helping them to do the application paperwork	Working with schools to develop drug and alcohol information programs
Goal 2: The community is harmonious and safe for all.	Strengthening community Night Patrol by working with existing patrol to support the period from midnight to 9:00am.	Developing a way for the WLJG to conduct mediation work to proactively manage tensions in community and be financially compensated for the mediation work they already conduct.	Facilitate Respectful Relationships training in Walungurru	Working with MacSafe to discuss and develop a future strategy for Night Patrol (including administering organisation, funding streams and operational structure).	Talking to local Police about more Aboriginal Liaison Workers working in Walungurru.	
Goal 3: Maru Anangu and non-Aboriginal people understand the justice system and work together to support it and use it effectively.	Establishing a process of referral and ensuring the WLJG gets Community Court and governance training.	Developing case management services for offenders and victims from Walungurru, including supporting people going to court, building understanding of the court process, attending court to give culturally appropriate support and advice, and supporting offenders post-sentencing.	Understand and utilise Aboriginal Experience Reports (AER) to influence future sentencing.	Supporting a community workshop with NT Local Court on the process and understanding who can attend and what support can be accessed.		
Goal 4: Less Maru Anangu are offending, re-offending and being incarcerated.	Developing the idea of camps on outstations or elsewhere as part of a broader review of alternatives to custody and local and culturally appropriate rehabilitation and diversionary programs for offenders.	Setting up referral pathways for offenders to go to a cattle farm, camel-catching or to other workplaces for rehabilitation/healing if they have any spare positions for employment.				
Goal 5: The WLJG is strong, knowledgeable and effective in the community.	Visit Groote Eylandt to discuss Spotters and Peacemakers, and Maningrida to learn about the Cultural Justice model and their other work.	Work with consultants to determine the most appropriate governance model for long-term success, including exploring the potential benefits of incorporation or other structures.	Explore medium- and long-term sources of financial support and funding, including the NTG, Australian Government and any other sources.	Share more about what the WLJG are doing within the community and make WLJG members known to community as per a comprehensive community engagement plan.	Introducing an Induction Program for new non-local appointments to shadow a WLJG member or nominated local resident to learn about Walungurru.	Ensuring that WLJG members receive Wild 1 training to prepare them for dealing with youths.

Key: On track ■ More work needed ■ No progress ■

Nja-marléya

Goal 1: Young people are growing up strong with culture, going to school and getting local jobs, not stuck in drugs and justice system cycles.

Stronger Communities for Children and Youth Wellbeing programs provide a range of appropriate and engaging activities for youth

Service providers work together on delivering activities

Outside service providers who can deliver appropriate programs are engaged

Leaders are actively involved in passing on cultural knowledge growing kids up strong

Employment opportunities are provided for young people

Goal 2: At risk youth are identified and supported to get back on track before they become involved in the justice system.

Service providers, families and leaders work together to identify at risk youths

Referral system to Nja-marléya's cultural justice model is set up as a pathway to support at risk youths

Ways of working are established with all relevant service providers to make sure at risk youths have access to the support and programs they need to get back on track

Goal 3: Ensure Bininj worldview and approach to justice is embedded in the court system to reduce reoffending and support rehabilitation outcomes.

Get Nja-marléya approved as the Law and Justice Group for Maningrida

Establish Community Court in Maningrida

Work with the courts to upskill Bininj involved in the Law and Justice Group and Community Courts

Nja-marléya working with courts and police to support increased court attendance and understanding of process for offenders and victims

Aboriginal Experience reports prepared and considered in Community Court

Community based options are considered for parole and sentencing based on Nja-marléya's cultural justice model

Goal 4: There are a diverse range of community-based sentencing approaches available to increase use in Community Courts processes, reduce reoffending and support rehabilitation outcomes.

Clearly identify and articulate what community based support as part of sentencing is available now through youth programs and cultural justice model

Cultural leaders, Traditional Owners and services providers work together to identify and work together on country (homelands) programs

Goal 5: Maningrida has an alternative custody facility.

Cultural leaders, Traditional Owners and services providers work together to identify an appropriate site/s for alternative custody facilities

Feasibility study is undertaken on alternative custody facilities

<p>Goal 6: Bininj already in the justice system can come under the cultural justice model.</p>	<p>Advocate and better understand how Bininj already in the justice system, including in custody, can return to Maningrida utilising the cultural model as an alternative</p>	<p>Look at ways to support Bininj in custody to stay connected to culture and family while incarcerated including through the Visiting Elders Program and supporting return for ceremony</p>	<p>Build more understanding of the parole process and support Bininj in this process to support return to community where possible</p>
<p>Goal 7: All of our efforts towards improving justice outcomes mean less people are offending and re-offending and less people are being incarcerated.</p>	<p>Work with stakeholders to identify and contribute to baseline data to understand offending and incarceration now</p>	<p>Actively participate in and, where needed, run our own monitoring and evaluation processes to make sure our work is supporting us to achieve our goal.</p>	<p>Review and make changes to the work we are doing based on evidence.</p>