

“We want our Women’s Centres to be strong”



2007

A collaborative consultation project between

- Women from Wugularr, Eva Valley and Barunga,
- The Fred Hollows Foundation
- Dawn House Inc.



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Report Summary

“When we started Women’s Centre, other Women’s Centres wanted to know about us. Ours was a model centre. We won an award for our food program. We want to go back to how things were. We were proud of our centre. That is good for the women, young and old. Good for community to have proud women.”

Woman from Wugularr

Purpose

Consultations were undertaken by The Fred Hollows Foundation (FHF) in collaboration with Dawn House Inc to support women from Barunga, Wugularr and Eva Valley in the future planning and development of their Women’s Centres. The purpose of the report is to document the views of women from these communities regarding the past and current operation of their Women’s Centre’s and, importantly, their vision for the future.

The need for the *“We want our Women’s Centres to be strong”* report became evident as women in the communities voiced their concern regarding the lack of support for their Women’s Centres from stakeholders and the lack of activities being undertaken. The women initiated the discussions regarding the need for consultation with them – the central stakeholders of Women’s Centres before any further planning or discussion took place with other stakeholders.

Women from three communities along the Central Arnhem Highway participated in the consultations: Barunga, Eva Valley and Wugularr – all communities on Jawoyn country. Wugularr (also known as Beswick) and Barunga are located on country belonging to the Bagula people, 120 kilometres and 100km respectively southeast of the regional centre of Katherine, Eva Valley is on the country mainly of the Dalabon people (although not exclusively) and is 100km south of Katherine. See appendice iv for map of region.

Report Structure

Section I: Introduction outlines the background, methodology, community profiles, and a brief description of external influences which is the backdrop to the present operation of Women's Centres in the region.

Section II: Findings conveys women's feedback regarding their Women's Centres. Their feedback primarily falls into the following 10 themes:

- a. General picture
- b. Values
- c. Management
- d. Programs
- e. Training
- f. Resources
- g. Community factors
- h. Political factors
- i. Stakeholders and
- j. Looking forward.

The women's feedback on each theme is presented in two ways. Firstly the responses of women to each theme are collated and summarized in a table. Secondly, in the Discussion, more detail is provided on *what* the women said regarding each theme. The Discussion will also explain *how* women feel their idea should best be implemented, as well as *why* they believe their suggestion is important and should be factored into future planning and development of their Women's Centres.

Each community had unique, site specific stories to share regarding the past, present and future of their Women's Centres. Yet for every theme, there were general trends that were common to all three. *Unless a point raised by women is noted as being specific to a particular community, then it is to be assumed that the point is applicable to women from all three communities who provided feedback.* Also when the report refers to Women's Centres or the Centres it is referring to all three.

Throughout this report when the *term 'stakeholder' is used it is referring to agencies* that have provided support in the past, do currently and who may have the capacity to the future. *Examples of stakeholders are NMNRC, FHF, JA, SHS, ICC, Territory and Federal governments and community clinics.* See appendices for acronym explanation.

Of course women and their communities are the central stakeholders of Women's Centres but for the purposes of this report they will be referred to as women and the community.

Conclusion Summary

"Before, we used to be strong Women's Centre, strong women used to run that Centre. We used to have a crèche for kids. Young mothers bring their kids there and sometimes we'd take the young mums and young kids out bush to have a picnic. So they can learn how to take young kids out and show them their culture, you know."
Woman at Eva Valley

a. General picture

Women believe that the region needs Women's Centres as they fulfill many important roles in the community, especially when they have the appropriate human, financial and material resources and are therefore dynamic and operating well.

Recognising that the Women's Centres are not currently thriving as they have in the past, women clearly want this to change so that they are functional, active, constructive, consistently well managed and safe community spaces once again. Women stated that there are a number of reasons why Women's Centres have not been strong and functioning well recently. Two of these are:

1. Women have limited opportunities, if any, to be engaged in decisions made regarding their Centres and
2. Key stakeholders have ceased funding and other forms of support since the demise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.

One consequence of lack of adequate funding is that currently none of the three Women's Centres have funding to employ a coordinator and therefore they do not have the capacity to undertake planning and organization to effectively carry out operations. Women at Barunga stated that their assets at their Centre have been removed and redistributed to other areas. At present apart from the kitchen area and a computer their Centre is empty.

Women believe their Centres should be a community space where women of all ages can participate in a range of programs, receive training and support and promote women as leaders. They particularly want their training delivered by skilled professionals who are funded to offer ongoing support as their learnings are integrated into action.

Women want their "Centres to be strong" and sustainable. For this to be achieved it is essential that Women's Centres have stakeholder support and are managed and staffed by a pool of local women. Furthermore it is important that these local women have adequately funded positions and sufficient opportunities to undertake well structured and relevant training.

Women expressed that they need greater support from stakeholders to operate the Centres yet want to be the decision makers regarding their development. There was a strong theme of Women's Centres being a space for intergenerational sharing of learnings and knowledge, for example: being a hub for organizing bush trips and women's health discussions.

Conclusions:

1. For Women's Centres to be functioning and vibrant, identified stakeholders must support the vision of the women of Barunga, Eva Valley and Wugularr.

b. Values

Women highly value the existence of their Women's Centres. They feel their Women's Centres were valued more in the past by a broader range of women, community members and by stakeholders than is evident at present and they would like to work to change this. Women would like people to care about their Women's Centres and recognize and value the important services that they provide for their communities.

Recently, the Women's Centre in Wugularr has been broken into by young people. While increased security measures were requested, women felt it was essential to consider ways to enhance the community's appreciation of the importance of their Centres and the community services they provide so that people are not so likely to damage their space.

"Want to be recognized for strong women we are"
Woman from Eva Valley

Women believe that when their Centres are operating well the whole community and stakeholders benefit in a range of ways, such as having an important platform for health and educational messages and providing food for community members through the school lunch and aged care programs. As a result they believe stakeholders and community members should value and support the operation of Women's Centres.

Women want people to acknowledge and value the work that they do for women, children and the community at large.

Conclusions:

2. Women's Centres have an important role to play in communities and community support is required to ensure the Centres can fulfill that role.

c. Management

Women feel that it is very important that local women manage and staff the Women's Centres.

*"We want ladies trained up to be a leader, coordinator, proper supervisors of Women's Centres."
Woman from Wugularr*

To achieve this objective all managerial and support staff requires quality training that is accessible and relevant. Furthermore women want their Centres to be managed in appropriate manner so they are sustainable and community-wide outcomes can be met. To achieve this women require resources to carry out job roles and Centre operations.

Another point raised regarding management is that the operation of Women's Centres may benefit if each one becomes an incorporated body. It would mean that women could control development processes, make decisions for themselves and oversee their assets.

Conclusions:

3. It is important that the Centres are managed by local women.
This will require:
 - support to develop sustainable governance models
 - training in service management for local women
 - Recurrent funding

d. Programs

Women want meaningful, diverse, appropriate and ongoing programs, in areas requested by local women, to be held at the Women's Centres. Where necessary they want skilled professionals to visit regularly, for example one once a week, to deliver meaningful programs. Concurrent to delivering the program content, women want the professional to work alongside a group of local women to model and train them in how to deliver programs, so that eventually they can be delivered by local women who have been well prepared. Consequently local women can share their acquired skills with other local women so that the knowledge grows and stays in the community thus promoting sustainability in the long term.

Conclusions:

4. A broad range of community programs to develop social, health, cultural, leisure and economic development skills can be managed from Centres. Collaborative planning and prioritizing must occur with the women in each community.

Currently Women's Centres only provide very limited training opportunities. At various intervals in the past Women's Centres have provided a range of training courses such as Health And Community Care (HACC), gardening, computing, hygiene, nutrition and domestic and family violence. Women would like a diverse range of quality courses delivered in the future. Leadership and management were key training areas requested.

The women would like training to be designed and delivered by professionals who visit on an regular basis so that local women have opportunities to learn from skilled professionals, gain new skills and also to train other local women so they can deliver the program in the future.

Conclusions:

5. Prioritise leadership and management training for local women
6. Conduct and tailor a training needs analysis for all women in the communities

f. Resources

A range of resources are required to support the existing and future work undertaken by Women's Centres. Women require financial, material and human resources to support and enhance the capacity of Women's Centres. Examples of each of these are:

- Operational funds to ensure day to day viability of Centres to support other program areas and to support core staff.
- Training for a range of diverse areas.
- Equipment to enable programs to occur.
- Adequate maintenance of facilities.

Conclusions:

7. An assets audit and register are urgently required for the Centres
8. After planning and development sessions, funding submissions developed to include resourcing as required to manage Centres and specific equipment to enable planned programs

g. Community factors

Women believe when Women's Centres are functioning well they can support their community to address issues. They see their Centres as focal points for other program areas, for meetings, for training activities and for development. Concurrently,

community issues can shape their operation. Recent examples are sorry business and a need for appropriate safe accommodation for women experiencing family violence. An important community factor is the mental attitude and motivation of women, where women believe that they have not been listened to, examples by the comment, “ we are asking and asking for support, but nobody is listening” .

In Wugularr examples of interlinked pressing issues are petrol sniffers breaking into the Centre and taking food as they are hungry. Consequently the operation of the Centre suffers. Nonetheless women have the desire to keep working as they believe the school lunch and aged care programs are very important.

Conclusions:
9. Issues with individuals and groups of community members, community organizations and other community factors impact on the day to day and long term operations of the Centres. A communication strategy that engages community members is required to address issues as they arise.

h. External influences

Broad political factors at national, territory and local levels shape the operation of Women’s Centres. Recent examples of these are changes to the structure of local councils, reduced spending on Women’s Centres over a long period of time, modifications regarding access to the welfare payments system and abolition of CDEP. One can only assume that the Federal and Territory Governments response to ‘Little Children are Sacred’ report on child sexual abuse in Indigenous communities will also affect communities and Women’s Centres.

Conclusions:
10. Women require support to provide feedback and information to the relevant external agencies regarding the potential of positive or negative influence on the further development of the Centres.

i. Stakeholders

“They should be talking with us.”
Woman from Barunga

There is need for a sustained commitment by a range of stakeholders. Women request support of various forms from relevant stakeholders. The forms of support given to the Women's Centres should be guided by the women so that it is conducive to their vision and therefore sustainable.

Women express that it is vital that they are genuinely consulted regarding the future plans for the Women's Centres and they have suggested models of the processes that could be followed. In order for the assistance to women to be relevant it is essential that women are included in any planning processes, especially regarding Women's Centres.

Conclusions:

11. As a matter of urgency, identified stakeholders meet to discuss conclusions of consultations with women
12. Identified stakeholders consult with women to further the conclusions of the consultations

j. Looking forward

It is essential that local women are involved in a meaningful way in any aspect of the development of their Women's Centre. This has been identified as a key element of their viability and sustainability. Women suggest representatives from each Centre in the region to meet regularly to "talk, share what's going on, support and learn about what's happening," Like when we had Women's Council." Women also want to be "talking and people listening to us."

Women believe if their Women's Centres are active and well appropriately managed this will support their objective to encourage more women to be involved. Furthermore, if the Women's Centre are active they will benefit a range of stakeholders. The women feel the Centres offer an accessible and relevant platform for the delivery of community health and educational messages. They also believe that Women's Centres are an important community space to address current social issues.

Women need resources to enable them to have the capacity to consistently deliver what they view as extremely important services.

Conclusions:

- 13 Identified stakeholders work with the Centres/Women's Network to develop a gender rights framework within the region
- 14 Ensure development of a regional women's network is included in planning and development of Centres

Section I: Introduction

Background

Leading up to and since the demise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), funding for Aboriginal women specific programs has been phased out. The only real funds designated for Indigenous females has been channeled into the National Indigenous Women's Leadership Program. This program was implemented in 2003. This meant that real program's monies specific to Community Women's Centres become non-existent.

In 2005, The Territory government made resources available to communities under the Building Safer Communities. These monies were utilized by women to cover the issues such as protecting children and young people, preventing violence and enlisting the aid of cultural mores to tackle substance abuse. Community Domestic Violence workers were funded for this purpose, however their mandates were restricted to training the community to respond to domestic violence.

Nyiranggulung Mardruk Ngadberre Regional Council (NMNRC) came into being in 2003. This is a regional governing body that amalgamated the seven main communities, mostly of the Jawoyn people. The centralization of services meant that where in the past Community Councils could gazette monies for Women's Centre to operate, this could not be done under the amalgamation. The status of being a legal entity was taken away from the Community Councils which operated the Women's Centre.

In the past Women's Centre were able to attract a calibre of person that had the ability to run the Women's Centre because of the real wage. The focus on using the Community Development and Employment Program as a means of salary for the managers and coordinators of a Women's Centre resulted in Indigenous and non Indigenous women with the appropriate skill sets venturing to more financially rewarding work.

Methodology

The need for the *"We want our Women's Centres to be strong"* report became evident as women in the communities voiced their concern regarding the lack of support for their Women's Centres from stakeholders and the lack of activities being undertaken. The women initiated the discussions regarding the need for consultation with them – the central stakeholders of Women's Centres, before any further planning or discussion took place with other stakeholders.

A consultant was identified (an employee of Dawn House Inc with expertise in community development and working with women) and a set of preliminary discussions commenced with FHF in Darwin and Katherine in early May 2007. The agenda and accompanying questions were collaboratively developed. It reflected the clear themes that had emerged from preliminary discussions between Bino Toby from FHF and women from the three communities to be consulted. These were:

Table 1: Themes and questions discussed in community meetings	
Themes	Questions
a. General picture	What were things like at Women's Centres? Did you come to the Women's Centres? Who came to the Women's Centres? What happened at the Women's Centres? What are Women's Centres like now? How would you like Women's Centres to be like in the future?
b. Values	Do you value the Women Centre in your community? Do you feel other community members and stakeholders value the Women Centre in your community?
c. Management	How were Women's Centres managed? What would be a good model for managing Women's Centres? Who should manage Women's Centres?
d. Programs	What programs were at the centres? Any programs happening now? What programs would you like?
e. Training	What training was run at the centres? What training is run at the centres? What training would you like run at the centres?
f. Resources	What resources were at the centre? What resources are at the centre? What resources does the centre need?
g. Community factors	What community issues affect Women's Centres?
h. Political factors	Do you know about the changes to local government? Do you want to know about the changes?
i. Stakeholders	What stakeholders do you require support from?
j. Looking forward	What is important to think about when planning for the future of Women Centres?

Following the preliminary meetings, research was undertaken into the history of Women's Centres in the region to document the changes in how they been managed and funded.

The consultant worked alongside Bino Toby to develop the agenda, report process and co-facilitate the meetings as Bino has existing relationships with the women from all three communities.

The first field trip involved meetings held in Barunga and Wugularr in mid May 2007. Women from all three communities, Barunga and Wugularr and Eva Vally attended the meetings. The meeting in Barunga had 15 participants aged from 18 – 56. The meeting in Wugularr had 16 participants aged from 18 – 66.



Discussion with young woman in Eva Valley photo courtesy The Fred Hollows Foundation

The meetings focused on identifying local women's perceptions of their Women's Centres. For each aforementioned theme women were asked how Women's Centres were in the past, how they are currently operating and what they would like to see for the future. The same set of themes and accompanying questions were discussed at the meetings with each community.

In early July 2007 in Eva Valley four women, 2 from Eva Valley and 2 from Barunga, all of whom once worked or continue to work at Women's Centres, participated in recorded interviews on the themes above.

The report aims to accurately represent the views clearly articulated by the women. To support this objective direct quotes by women are dispersed frequently throughout the report. All of the comments in the Discussion section of *Section II: Findings* are a compilation of women's responses to questions. The report author's role was to document women's comments rather than to interpret or add opinion.

Community profiles

Barunga, Wugularr and Eva Valley communities are linguistically diverse. While Kriol is the most commonly spoken language, people tend to speak a range of languages, including, but not limited to, Mayali, Rembarrnga, Dalabon, Djambarrpuynu and Gupapuyngu¹. English is used almost exclusively to talk with non-Indigenous people in their communities and throughout the wider region.

Precise population data for the communities of Katherine East is difficult to source. A wide variety of counts and estimates exist each yielding different results based on different methodologies. Approximate population figures are Barunga 200, Eva Valley 59 and Wugularr between 350 and 450. The age structure of the population is relatively youthful even by Northern Territory standards. This is especially so at Barunga and Eva Valley. Up to 40 per cent of the regional population is under the age of 15 years and in recent years the proportion of young people has increased.

Virtually all employment is through the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP). Over the last inter-censal period dependence on welfare payments increased sharply.

Current External influences

The timing of the scoping study is fortuitous in that it coincides with a number of shifts in the political landscape. These shifts include but are not limited to, changes in structures of local government, the framework underpinning access the welfare payments system, CDEP, DEWR work agreements and the Federal and NT Government's announcements in response to 'Little Children are Sacred' report on child sexual abuse in Indigenous communities.

The women are negotiating planning viable Centres with the backdrop of a constantly changing and interventionist political landscape.

¹ Katherine Language Centre



Section II: Findings

Collated comments

Table 2: Collated and summarised comments by women from all three communities regarding their Women's Centres			
Theme	Past	Present	Future
General picture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o High levels of activity o Diverse programs ie: art and craft, HACC o Training available o Diverse services ie: washing clothes, cooking for old people, taking old people out, working parents had meals there o Many women and children, of all ages involved o Running effectively o Crèche functioning well o Coordinator present showing leadership o Strong women running the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Very limited level of activity o Very limited training (food preparation, first aid the exceptions) o Only 'old' women involved o No leader to coordinate paperwork, planning, rosters & workplans o No support from council o Food systems, vouchers/ o Ordering not working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Want changes o High levels of activity o Proper training for leaders, coordinator, and staff o More women, of all ages being involved o Range of programs and training opportunities o Regular women's meetings o Coordinator or manager for the day o Caretaker present at night o Establish Women's Centre council or network [Like the Women's Council had in

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Centre o Plans made o Centre had a vision o Women's Council functional 		<p>1992]Women better organized and talk to each other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Appropriate food for programs o Well resourced o Women devoted o Learn from Kalano model o Women visit other Women's Centres that are working well
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Men in community and council valuing the important services women and the Women's Centres provide o People cared about the place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Men in community and council not valuing the important services women and the Women's Centres provide o Many in community not involved, valuing centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Want to name Centres after two special women elders to encourage community to value Women's Centre o Community and stakeholders can show that they value Centres by demonstrating support in a range of ways Women want community members to speak up for the importance of Women's Centres
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Running smoothly o Coordinator present looking after 5-6 CDEP staff o Coordinator showing leadership o Centre had a vision o Centres run by Indigenous and non-Indigenous women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o No management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Need a local woman as the coordinator who can support staff o Non-Indigenous woman to train three local women for three months and then be able to be contactable for support for a period of time afterwards o Number of

			<p>women trained in each role so skills are shared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Trained local women as employees/trainees o Women want to be making decisions for themselves
Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Range of programs o Art and craft: Sewing, weaving baskets, paintings, fabric designs, jewelry, screenprinting o [Art sold to local people] o Nutrition (Set up roster for food program) o Active crèche o People who ran programs came out once a week over a period of time o Domestic Violence programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Screenprinting [For a few weeks leading up to the Barunga festival] o Computer course (Ran recently but now concluded) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Art and craft: Sewing [curtains/bags, hair ties, shorts, t-shirts, patchwork, weaving baskets, paintings, fabric designs, jewelry, screenprinting, tie dye o Active crèche o Women's health o Young mum's parenting Young mums cooking, underweight kid [Night class] o Cooking [Cake making] o Computer/internet o Film making o Women's group discussions o Money story o Bush trips" fishing, collect pandanus, sugarbag
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Cooking o HACCC o Nursery o Computer cert o Hygiene o Nutrition o Domestic and family violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o First aid o Cert 1, 2, 3 in food training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Cooking healthy food o HACCC o Nursery o Computing o Hygiene o Nutrition o Domestic and family violence Management

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Carers course o Drivers licence o Small engine course o Welding course o Garden ie: whipper snipper, mowing o Leadership o Learn about complaints process o Strong Women Strong Babies
<p>Resources</p> <p><i>Please note the resource list here is not extensive and it is recommended that an adequate audit is undertaken of current assets and what is required to support future plans.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Washing machine o Phone o Video o Activities for children o Books and shelves o Cleaning items o Nursery o Computer o Gardening tools ie: whipper snipper, mower o Bus o Used as a safe house o Liked to work outside building rather than just inside as appropriate space was set up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Very limited resources at each Centre o Resources were stolen and removed from Centres o Washing machine o Kitchen supplies o Sewing machine (Some need to be serviced) o Computer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sewing machines (New and serviced existing ones) o Material for sewing projects o Vehicle o Cleaning products o Gardening tools ie: whipper snipper, mower o DVD player and DVD's o CD player o Centre re-painted so looks colourful. o Floor coverings o Curtains o Appropriate area set up outside so people gather together o Supplies to be a safe house
<p>Community factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o There was and still is a need for safe houses on communities. In the past WC were the answer. WC are not set up to address this need, so there still is a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sorry business o Women working but not feeling supported. A few women doing a lot of work. o Crèche is suffering. o Women using Women's Centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Yet to be determined

	<p>current need for safe houses.</p>	<p>as shelters/safe houses but its not secure, no safety for women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safe accommodation is an issue for women ○ At Barunga: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some women are not getting along so need activities that bring them together. ● System of food vouchers, ordering is not working ○ At Wugularr: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Young people (who are petrol sniffers) are hungry ● So they are breaking in, ● Damaging building and ● Taking food. This food is meant for school children and old people so ● Aged care and school food programs suffer ● Women who work at Women's Centres do not feel as motivated to work when their work environment is damaged in such a way. ○ Building needs someone to smoke the building ○ Have to wait long periods of time for 	
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		food orders and want to give old people right food, bush tucker	
External Influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Constantly changing political landscape at all levels regional, Territory and nationally made effective planning challenging o Cutting funding to Women's Centres o Abolition of ATSIIC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Constantly changing political landscape at all levels regional, Territory and nationally o Changes to the structure of local councils and thus women asked: Will we still have a centre? Will we still have jobs? Can we still do cooking? o Significant changes to DEWR and thus landscape of work/employment environment. o Modifications regarding access to the welfare payments system o Abolition CDEP o Federal Governments proposals made in response to 'Little Children are Sacred' report on child sexual abuse in Indigenous communities. 	
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NMNRC o JA o FHF o SHS o NT government o Federal Government o ATSIIC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NMNRC o JA o FHF o SHS o NT government o Federal Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o NMNRC o JA o FHF o SHS o NT government o Federal Government o Visiting services like Working

			Women's centre and other NGO's o NT Police
Looking forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Women's Centres are strong and a model for other Centres once again o Well trained, adequately funded and supported local women staffing and properly managing Women's Centres o When women are talking people are listening o Active Women's Centres that offer a range of programs and training opportunities o Women's Centres promoting women as leaders o Sustained stakeholder support o Women and their rights and their Women's Centres being respected and valued o Women from region meet regularly to talk and share and learn about what is happening at each Women's Centre and support each other 		

Discussion

a. General picture of Women's Centres

"Before, before we used to be a strong Women's Centre, strong women used to run that Centre and we used to take people out fishing.

We used to have a crèche for kids young mothers bring their kids sometimes they [Women's Centre] take the young kids out to have a picnic. So they [young mums] can learn how to take young kids out and show them their culture, you know."

Woman from Eva Valley

When women reflected on how their Women's Centres were in the past they felt that they were more active, well attended, better supported and better run than they are at present. They also voiced that there was organized communication between the Women's Centres and that this was beneficial. Women "want changes" like "want women getting involved."

Functional Women's Centres benefit the whole community by providing a crèche, daily healthy lunches for students which can support their education, 'old people' with daily healthy food, supporting women all ages to be proud and active, meaningful employment, skill development for employees and women participating in programs and an accessible platform for delivering health and educational messages.

Women would like their Women's Centres to be comfortable and active community spaces used by a range of women, be well managed and supported, "be strong" once again and for staff in each community to liaise/network with each other.

In the past there were high levels of activity at Women's Centres. The Centres provided diverse services such as "washing clothes, cooking for old people, taking old people out, parents who worked had meals there, training."

"Our crèche was strong. Crèche looking after kids."
Woman from Eva Valley

At various times a range of programs were offered such as women's health, cooking and art and craft such as screen printing, sewing, painting. Training in HACCC, nursery/gardening, computing, hygiene, nutrition and domestic and family violence was also available.

Currently the Centres provide a small range of services such as "cooking for old people" and sometimes make lunches for CDEP workers. Recently, in the lead up to the Barunga festival women screen printed t-shirts and in Wugularr. When there is adequate food provision, the "women make food for little ones, kids at school." It is viewed as important that in the future a range of programs and training opportunities are provided on an ongoing basis.

Women felt that in the past their Women's Centres were a community space where women and children were to draw to attend and be involved in. In the past a lot more women, of various ages, came to Women's Centres: "lots of women (were) going there, lots of women, kids young and old."

Currently mainly "only old women are interested in Women's Centres." In each community "some are devoted to Women's Centres." Women emphasized that they want women and children of all ages to feel the Centres are a place for them to gather and be involved. In particular they felt that it would be great if young mums used the Women's Centres as a place to meet and learn from older women. There was a strong theme of Women's Centres being a space for woman of all ages to be engaged in intergenerational knowledge sharing. Examples of what this may look like included being a hub for organizing bush trips with young mums, their kids and old people and "women's group" which discusses topics like women's health, domestic and family violence and leadership.

Women stated that in the past the management of Women's Centres was more consistent. Centres were "running smoothly" and "effectively." There was 5-6 staff" and "coordinator always be there for them, showing leadership." There were "plans, centre had a vision." There was "always a leader," a "good manager." Nonetheless it was noted that there were intervals where leadership could have been stronger. Women felt that Centres were more organized. During periods when this was the case the women were more drawn to be involved.

Currently “at Barunga there’s “no leader to coordinate paperwork, planning, rosters or workplans” and this seems to be the trend for Wugularr and Eva Valley as well. In the future women want “women better organized” and “talk(ing) to each other.” Women want “ladies trained up to be a leader, coordinator, proper supervisor.” In particular women at Wugularr requested a “caretaker at night” and a “coordinator for the day.”

Greater support from a range of stakeholders was said to be given to Women’s Centres in the past. Currently though women perceived that there was “no support from council. No support from people higher up. No support - just us, I feel like dropping out, stay at home. But then community loses out.” Women want support from relevant stakeholders while being able to be actively engaged in the planning and decision making processes regarding the development of their Centres. Support requested includes training ie nutrition by SHS, funding and assistance with building and garden maintenance by work local crews.

Women expressed that there were benefits to having a Women’s Council “as there was in 1992”. “Good to be meeting with women from different communities.” Having a chance to get together, learn from each other, get updates on community activity and issues and information on the political landscape the women are operating in were all cited as reasons why the Women’s Council’s were valuable. Women would like a new network of representatives from Women’s Centres to be formed and meet regularly. There was clear support for the suggestion that “women visit other Centres that are working well,” ones that are “run really well like Kalano.”² Women emphasized how they view Kalano as a great model to learn from.

If Centres offer a range of services, programs and meaningful training, are supported and are appropriately managed, then more women will want to use them.

Women have a great deal more detailed knowledge and ideas than could be collected in the scope of this project. For the future of Women’s Centres to be meaningful and constructive it is essential that women’s insight, knowledge and ideas are captured in greater detail.

Women’s vision for their Centres echo general shifts in best practice towards comprehensive centres, through the use and implementation of a community development model incorporating a strengths based approach.

Conclusions:

1. For Women’s Centres to be functioning and vibrant, identified stakeholders must support the vision of the women of Barunga, Eva Valley and Wugularr.

¹ *Kalano Community Association Incorporated. Women’s Centre.*

b. Values

Women stated that they highly value the existence of their Women's Centres. They feel their Women's Centres were valued more in the past by a broader range of women, community members and by stakeholders than is evident at present. Women in Wugularr expressed that in the past "people cared about the place. Like when Edna (*Snape*) was there." Women would like people to care about their Women's Centres and recognize and value the important services that are provided for their communities.

It is clear that women feel that if their Centres were perceived to be well managed and offering activities that were appropriate and relevant then more women will want to be involved as employees and participants. Women at Barunga felt that currently, unlike times gone by, the Centre is "only valued by few community women." Meanwhile women at Wugularr stated, "women not going to work, only few community women." They want their Women's Centres to be adequately supported so more women would want to come to work and participate.

Women stated that the current level of activity and management combined with limited support and value that stakeholders seem to be placing on Women's Centres are just two of a number of factors that are interlinked that diminish the Centres strength. Others include community factors and having limited resources and training opportunities.

"Many in community benefit from Women Centres when they are working well."
Woman from Barunga

Considering the contribution of the Women's Centre to the whole community, "when centre is strong women who are and have been involved in Women's Centres feel that their work should be valued". They feel that currently many women are not involved as there has been a period of Women's Centres being less active. They believe that sustained support in a range of forms is required to reinvigorate as they move towards being a "strong community space" again. Women want sustained support so that Women's Centres can go through a transitional period from their current status to being more active spaces and thus more attractive to a broader range of women and young people.

Women described feeling that men in their communities and the council do not value the important services women and the Women's Centres provide such as food for school children, elders and CDEP work groups. A women stated "want community members to speak up for the importance of Women's Centres, they're important for women, for the whole community." Another said "many in community benefit from Women's Centres (especially when working well)."

"More attention needs be given to the place (Women's Centre), like mowing, CDEP people could help make it look good. Make it look cared for outside. We've been

asking, again and again to have someone come just once a week even to mow, but nothing. No support.”

“We’ve been going for a long long long time (working at the Women’s Centre). We’re doing it all by ourselves.”

Women in Wugularr stated “the men can have anything us women have to ask again and again and again nothing.”

After considering ways to increase the community’s value of their Centre women in Wugularr suggested that they “name it after two women, special elders...because they are Traditional Owners, people will want to look after it, respect it.” They also suggest that “no good one day meeting with council staff. They should come for one week listen to them women, come and observe for a week. Then they’d see how things really are at the Women’s Centre and listen properly to us and what we feel should happen.”

“Name it [Women’s Centre] after two women, special elders. Because they are Traditional Owners people will want to look after it, respect it.”
Woman from Wugularr

Conclusions:

2. Women’s Centres have an important role to play in communities and community support is required to ensure the Centres can fulfill that role.

c. Management

Women feel that in the past the management of Women’s Centres was more consistent. Centres were “running smoothly” and “effectively.” The “coordinator was always there. There was 5-6 staff.”

“Coordinator always be there for them, showing leadership.”
Woman from Barunga

There were “plans, centre had a vision.” There was “always a leader,” a “good manager.” Women felt that centres were more organized and at periods when this was the case then women were more drawn to be involved.

Currently “at Barunga there’s “no leader to coordinate paperwork, planning, rosters or workplans” and this seems to be the trend for Wugularr and Eva Valley as well.

How do women want their Women’s Centres managed?

In the future women want “women better organized” and “talk(ing) to each other.” Women want “trained local women” as employees/trainees” and:

“Ladies trained up to be a leader, coordinator, proper supervisors.”

Woman from Barunga

In particular women at Wugularr requested a “caretaker at night” and a “coordinator for the day and they want them to be “good local ladies.”

Women voiced “we need a local woman as the coordinator who can support staff.” “Non-Indigenous woman to train some [around three] local women to be managers for three months” and then be able to be contactable for support for a period of time afterwards. It was suggested that it could be useful to train a number of women at the same time, even though only one woman will be the coordinator at a time.

Women want to have the capacity to manage their Centres properly and to have them grow from strength to strength. In order to do this they require training and financial support to employ staff.

Why do women want their Women’s Centres managed in this way?

Women feel that it is very important that local women are trained and manage and staff the Women’s Centres. They feel this is essential so that local women are have genuine opportunities to be competent managers and viewed as leaders. “Need a local woman as the coordinator who can support staff” because local women know their communities the best. Women want their knowledge to grow and stay in the community.

As women want their Centres to be managed in appropriate manner so they are sustainable and community-wide outcomes can be achieved they feel it is essential that Centre staff are trained by outside professionals who can share necessary skills in an accessible way. Furthermore they want this support to be ongoing so that the knowledge base in their community of women builds and strengthens. Thus important information can be passed on to other women.

A coordinator for each centre is viewed as important so that employees of the Women Centre have “someone staff go to. Someone, woman to organize the Women Centre.”

It was suggested that a number of women are trained in key roles and therefore skills can be shared as a number of people hold important information.

Women were adamant that:

“We [local women] need to be making decisions for ourselves” “Be included. We wanted that long ago.”

Woman from Wugularr

Conclusions:

3. It is important that the Centres are managed by local women.
This will require:
 - support to develop sustainable governance models
 - training in service management for local women
 - recurrent funding

d. Programs

In the past, Women's Centres were active environments that offered a range of programs and women would like this to be the case in the future. Women's Centres offered programs such as cooking, young mums and babies groups and nutrition. Wugularr women noted a woman (*Sue Wellings Nutritionist*)² was "based here doing nutrition program, set up roster for food program, that was good." Centres were also regularly providing art and craft activities such as basket weaving, painting, screen-printing, sewing and jewelry making. Women in Wugularr commented "we sold our art to local people. That was good." All three Women's Centres offered services such as "washing clothes, cooking for old people, taking old people out, parents who worked had meals there." Each Centre also provided a crèche and women voiced "our crèche was strong. Crèche looking after kids."

Programs that have been running recently in Barunga are a computing course and screenprinting with an artist (Jane Nankerville) from Katherine with the focus being the lead up to the Barunga festival. In Wugularr women said there is "nothing" and "been ages I can't even remember what programs (we did)."

What kind of programs would women like?

Women from each community felt that a well functioning crèche and an environment that is attractive to young mothers is a priority. Women in Barunga recommended art and craft activities such as basket weaving, painting, screen printing, sewing (including making patchwork quilts, cushions, clothes, curtains and bags), tie dye and jewelry making and would once again welcome opportunities to sell their products.

Groups that have focused discussions and education on women's health and young mum's parenting and programs such as cooking including "healthy food" as well as "cake making", computing including internet were popular suggested programs in each community. Trips out bush, fishing, collect pandanus and sugarbag were also extremely popular components of program. Information and development of programs to address community issues such as domestic and family violence were also discussed.

² FHF / NMNRC 2000 Nutrition Project.

In Wugularr women suggested that it would be useful to reintroduce financial management programs. In addition young women in Barunga and Wugularr felt that a film-making program for young women would be popular.

A woman stated that the decrease in the number of programs available began with the changes in funding arrangements 3 years ago.

How would women like programs run?

"If a young mum have a baby now we can show them how to cook good food you know. We should get one lady from that nutrition side to come and teach young mothers in the Centre. So they can learn. Show them how to cook good food, better tucker for the baby. That nutrition lady can show us how to cook and then we can show the young mothers how to cook, like that."

Woman from Manyllaluk

Women "want people to come to do programs for long periods of time. Come once a week for a long time. Then we learn skills." It is clear that they want to gain and develop skills and this objective is supported if the respective program facilitators are reliable and consistent. They want programs to be ongoing in nature. At times programs have been short term and it was felt while the activity can be enjoyable, if activities are longer term then women are more likely to become involved and maintain their involvement in Women's Centres activities. Furthermore each time a program is run they want some local women trained so they can deliver the program in the future.

Women felt that if young mums groups were held as night classes then this may be a time that could be suitable and attractive for these women. It was suggested that these sessions focused on cooking for healthy kids.

"Want to bring kids with them so be good to have a kid's activity on at the same time as women's classes."

Woman from Barunga

To build the confidence of community members, women in Barunga stated that they would like a women's gathering each time a woman comes back from getting a certificate so that they can teach inspire other women especially young ones about achievements, what women can do.

Why would women like more programs run?

There was a strong theme of Women's Centres being a space for intergenerational sharing of learnings and knowledge. It is clearly felt that programs which incorporate "trips out bush, fishing, collect pandanus, sugar" are extremely important, popular and enjoyable opportunities for older women to share culture "teaching young people, young women. Young women and their babies come and learn." It was also noted that

such outings are useful spaces for community health education messages to be delivered in an accessible way.

Women stated that where necessary some programs should be delivered by non-Indigenous women “she should work alongside local women” throughout the program to model ways that a program can be delivered. Therefore women at each community would increase their capacity to share skills with community members.

If programs are ongoing women can build on their skills so that the knowledge stays and grows in the community.

Conclusions:

4. A broad range of community programs to develop social, health, cultural, leisure and economic development skills can be managed from Centres. Collaborative planning and prioritizing must occur with the women in each community.

e. Training

Currently the Centres provide a limited range of training opportunities. At various intervals in the past Women’s Centres provided training in HACC, nursery/gardening, computing, hygiene, nutrition and domestic and family violence. A woman in Barunga explained that at present a small number of women are involved in training in “first aid and us women (involved in food preparation at the Centre) now doing certificate in food training.” In Wugularr it was expressed that regarding training opportunities there is “nothing now,” while women in Manyalaluk echoed that they also do not have access to training at their Women’s Centre.

Women believe that it is important that in the future a range of programs and training opportunities are provided on an ongoing basis.

What kind of training would women like?

Women at all three communities requested training in cooking, HACC, nursery/gardening, computing (including internet), hygiene, domestic and family violence, carers course “so we can lift them up properly” and nutrition “working with health mob so can learn how to make proper/appropriate food for old people and healthy kids. Learn about sugar and salt and healthy food.” They also want training in how to facilitate and run parenting programs, “train us so we can go to houses and talk with people, show good parenting.” It was expressed that the Strong Woman Strong Babies could be useful to use as a guide for future parenting programs.

Women in all three communities emphasized that they want and need training in management of centres so that they can competently carry out operations of the

Women's Centre. As well as training in management a woman in Wugularr stated that some Centre staff will need secretarial skills such as "write and file meeting minutes, ordering and taking messages."

Women emphasized the need for leadership training in non-Indigenous and Indigenous ways. "Leadership that's the one we really need" so "we can be heard" and "teach our young women." The cultural aspect of training and giving new information needs to be taken into account, given that the women are conscious of the gender roles in leadership.

Wugularr women asked for training in courses such as driving so they can acquire their car license, small engine, welding and use of gardening *tools* such as lawn mowers and whipper snippers.

"Want training so we learn about complaints process, because our complaints falling on deaf ears. Keep falling on deaf ears."
Woman from Barunga

How women would like training run?

In general women would like training run in a similar way to how they propose programs are delivered. The same key ideas are applicable to both. For example they want "person [trainer] come out once a week".

The women want programs to be designed and delivered so that local women have opportunities to learn from skilled professionals, gain new skills and also to train some local women so they can deliver the program in the future. Therefore the each community would increase their capacity to share skills with community members.

"Need to be making decisions for ourselves Be included. We wanted that long ago."
Woman in Eva Valley

Recognition of completion of training is important. Whether community members receive their certificate or award away from the community or at home it is important that there is a celebration at the community. Women in Wugularr voiced this recognition was important so that community members could be viewed as role models who can inspire others and share this new knowledge to achieve social and economic goals.

Conclusions:

5. Prioritise leadership and management training for local women
6. Conduct a training needs analysis for all women in the communities

f. Resources

A range of resources are required to support the existing and future work undertaken by Women's Centres. Women request financial, material and human resources to support and enhance the capacity of Women's Centres.

What resources were at the Barunga Women's Centre in the past?

Women stated that most of their material resources had been removed from their Centre. Women at Barunga mainly commented on the material resources that they had such as a washing machine, phone, video player, activities for kids, books and selves, kitchen with implements and a nursery. The space was set up so that there was an inviting and comfortable outdoor area. "Liked to work outside building not just inside." At times the space was used as a makeshift safe house.

What resources were at the Wugularr Women's Centres in the past?

At Wugularr women commented on resources that they had such as a computer, CDEP used to come and mow the place, had a bus but it was hot wired and they had "big mobs of money spent on mowers, whipper snipper all borrowed by men and never returned."

What resources are presently at the Barunga Women's Centre?

Currently at Barunga women have a relatively empty space, however they have a computer, washing machine, a sewing machine and a kitchen. Currently at Wugularr women also have kitchen facilities.

Please note women at Wugularr did not comment on what other resources they have at present.

What resources does the Barunga Women's Centre need for the future?

To enable women at Barunga can carry out activities and programs they require sewing machines and material, art and craft materials so they can make jewelry, do screenprinting tie-dying and painting and as a young woman said "video so kids can come and watch."

They would like their building "painted up so centre looks good and colourful," "floor coverings," curtains and a "big area outside to sit together."

To support their operations women "want a vehicle" and "need a coordinator."

What resources does the Wugularr Women's Centre need for the future?

In Wugularr, to run activities women want a "Troop carrier", "painting supplies, art supplies, like screenprinting," "new sewing machines, have them old ones serviced and get new parts," and "material for sewing."

They want their building to get a "shade cloth over sand pit," have a "fire break" and get the gate fixed. They also want implements for garden maintenance.

For there crèche they would like mats, carpets, cushions, CD player, "little toilets and showers," "toys, activities," "towels and baby baths."

To support their operations, women would like a 'supervisor just for Women's Centre,' a computer with internet access, phone with message bank, a Fax (for orders) and a photocopier. They would also like an "engraver to mark assets as Women's Centre" so that they do not go missing and also had the idea to "charge fees/deposit for lending resources."

For the Food programs they require kitchen utensils, electric goods, rice cooker, plates and a juicer.

Women in Barunga and Wugularr expressed that they require a safe house and an aged care home "so family not sent to Katherine" and can be cared for in their own community.

Conclusions:

7. An assets audit and register are urgently required for the Centres
8. After planning and development sessions, funding submissions developed to include resourcing as required to manage Centres and specific equipment to enable planned programs

g. Community factors

Community issues shape the operation of Women's Centres. Recent general examples of these are sorry business and the need for appropriate safe accommodation for women experiencing family violence that Women's Centres cannot adequately provide. Another issue women stated is that they "are asking and asking for support but nobody is listening."

"Women used it as a shelter. Husband would break in. Not secure, no safety." "Good that council fixed doors." "Need a caretaker there."

Woman from Wugularr

In Wugularr petrol sniffers are breaking into the Centre. They are “breaking in as they are hungry” and therefore consequently the important school lunch program suffers.

“Women not coming to work petrol sniffers breaking in, (they are) hungry they break in stealing food (meant) for the kids school food program.”
Woman from Wugularr

When the Centres are broken into and damaged, women are not as motivated to attend the Centre as they can feel unsafe and disrespected however they do so, so that the school lunch program suffers as little as possible.

“Kids not getting food because no food so no women working because women’s centre is trashed. Women have given up hope on everything.”
Women from Wugularr

It is apparent that women were not sure how to access and utilize the community grievances processes in the communities where they are available, to raise and address their concerns. Therefore while they have issues many do not feel that at present they have the necessary tools to address them. As a result women in Wugularr have requested ongoing education in the grievances processes.

At times when families and in particular women are not getting along it can deter women from coming to the Centre. Nonetheless women felt that if Women’s Centres were active then it would be beneficial for women to have a reason to come together, be productive and work things through.

In Wugularr women stated that the “system of food vouchers, ordering not working.” Have to wait a long time for food for Wugularr. “Sometimes they (food suppliers) don’t even come. Waiting three weeks, four weeks, 2 months.” We want to give old people right food, bush tucker.”

Also in Wugularr “someone needs to come and smoke the building and outside for family hanging around. Kids are scared to go there.”

Conclusions:

9. Issues with individuals and groups of community members, community organizations and other community factors impact on the day to day and long term operations of the Centres. A communication strategy that engages community members is required to address issues as they arise.

h. External influences

Broad political factors at national, territory and local levels shape the operation of Women's Centres. Recent examples of these are changes to the structure of local councils, reduced spending on Women's Centres, modifications regarding access to the welfare payments system and abolition of CDEP. One can only assume that the Federal and NT Governments response to 'Little Children are Sacred' report on child sexual abuse in Indigenous communities will also affect communities and Women's Centres. Long term recurrent funding for Women's Centres would enable them to operate sustainably.

Conclusions:

10. Women require support to provide feedback and information to the relevant external agencies regarding the potential of positive or negative influence on the further development and recurrent funding of the Centres.
11. Ensure development of a regional women's network is included in planning and development of Centres

i. Stakeholders

There is need for a sustained commitment by a range of stakeholders. Women request support of various forms of financial, human and material resources from stakeholders. The forms of support given to the Women's Centres should be guided by the women so that it is conducive to their vision.

*"They should be talking with us."
Woman from Barunga*

In general women were clear that they felt they needed support from stakeholders such as FHF, ICC, JA, SHS and NMNRC. The details of what kind of support women require from each stakeholder, for the operation of Women's Centres, was not explored during the meetings but obviously women have ideas. While women want ongoing support they are very clear that it is important that they are managing and "in charge of their Women's Centres."

There is a clear need for a broad range of stakeholders to provide support to Women's Centres. This is especially important while Women's Centres move through the transformation that women feel their Centres need so they are once again active and valued community spaces.

“Council staff no good one day meeting. They should come for one week, listen to them women, come and observe for a week. Then they'd see how things really are at the women's centre and listen properly to us and what we feel should happen.”

Woman at Wugularr

Women have expressed that it is vital that they are genuinely consulted with regarding the future plans for the Women's Centres and they have suggested models of the processes could be followed (as noted in the themes of general picture, values, management, programs and training). For Women's Centres to thrive it is essential that women are included in any planning processes undertaken.

Conclusions:

12. As a matter of urgency, identified stakeholders meet to discuss conclusions of consultations with women
13. Identified stakeholders consult with women to further the conclusions of the consultations

j. Looking forward

It is essential that local women are involved in a meaningful way in any aspect of the development of their Women's Centre. This has been identified by the women as a key element of the viability and sustainability of the Centres.

When they are functioning well they provide opportunities for people to meet and discuss issues of concerns for community and act as an outlet for delivering important community services.

Women would like representatives from each Centre in the region to meet regularly, suggesting every three months to “talk, share what's going on, support and learn about what's happening,” Like when we had Women's Council.” Women also want to be “talking and people listening to us.”

Having stakeholders such as NMNRC, NT and Federal governments acknowledging and valuing the work that they do for other women, children and the community at large, is important as they “want to be recognized for strong women we are,” and the important work that they do.

Many women stated that they want Women's Centres to be active, adequately resourced and dynamic spaces within their communities with “lots happening,” with activities that are attractive to a broad range of women. They believe this will support their objective to encourage more women to be involved. If their spaces are active and well used then Women's Centres benefit women, their communities and a range of stakeholders as they feel they are an important hub for community health and

educational messages to be delivered in an accessible space. The women also believe that Women's Centres are an important community space to address current social issues such as petrol sniffing, poor nutrition, family violence and the need for intergenerational sharing of culture.

A woman in Wugularr voiced that the women "want women rights respected." If the sustainability of Women's Centres is supported by stakeholders this will be viewed as a demonstration of their commitment to women's rights being upheld. The women request that "women control the centre," or in other words "women looking after Women's Centres." One woman expressed the need for people to "respect it is our (women's) space."

Women clearly need resources to have the capacity to consistently deliver what they view as extremely important services such as the school lunch program and food for aged care, educating women especially young mums on nutrition and young and old people out bush to "share culture teaching young people, young women."

Conclusions:

14. Identified stakeholders work with the Centres to develop a gender rights framework within the region

Appendices

i. Comments by Women from Barunga

Table 3: Comments by women from Barunga regarding their Women's Centres			
Theme	Past	Present	Future
General picture	When Edna B was managing the centre at Wugularr it was running smoothly Never boring always a lot of things happening Washing clothes Cooking for old people Sewing Taking old people out Lots of women kids young and old	No support from council, no support from people higher up. No support just us, I feel like dropping out, stay at home. But then community loses out. Food vouchers/ordering not working Have to wait a long time for food Sometimes they (food suppliers) don't even come...3 weeks, 4 weeks, 2 months Only old women are interested in Women's Centres	Want changes Want women getting involved Want a women's group Women better organized Women and Women's Centres need to talk to each other More support needed More programs happening Give old people right food, bush tucker
Values		Only valued by a few community women Women want community members to speak up for the importance of Women's Centres Many in community benefit including the old people	
Management			Trained local women Have someone staff go to. Someone, woman to organize the women centre More than one woman trained so skills shared Local women as trainees Finance
Programs	Sewing, crèche, art and craft weaving baskets, paintings,	Screen printing for last few weeks Computer course	Sewing, crèche, art and craft weaving baskets, paintings, tie dye, jewelry Women's health Young mum's groups Cake making Computer/internet Film making Sewing classes, making curtains/bags, hair ties Women's gathering each time a woman comes back from getting a certificate so that they can teach inspire other women especially young ones about achievements, what women can do Women's group discussions
Training		First aid Cert 1, 2, 3 in food training	Cooking HACC Nursery Computer cert Hygiene Nutrition Domestic and family violence Management Go to houses and talk with people

			<p>show good parenting program Strong woman strong babies Leadership that's the one we really need We can be heard Teach our young women Carers course Lift them up properly</p>
Resources	<p>Washing machine Phone Video Activities for kids Books and selves Cleaning Liked to work outside building not just inside Nursery Space used as a safe house</p>	<p>Washing machine Kitchen Sewing machine Use space for: Cooking for old ppl, council staff Make feed for the wake Making bread for council meetings</p>	<p>New building Chairs out front Vehicle to take people out bush Sewing machine Material Vehicle Cleaning 'Video so kids can come and watch.' Young woman aged 18 Painted up so centre looks good Colourful Floor coverings Curtains Big area outside to sit together Safe house Aged care home so not sent to Katherine</p>
Community issues		<p>Changes to LGANT Sorry business Women's asked to do Committees Obligated to be on committees \$16,000 given by HACC to NMNRC council to upgrade aged care but never seen, disappeared Women not getting along Kids not getting along Want to bring kids with them So be good to have a kid's activity on at the same time as program/classes</p>	
External influences		<p>We've heard nothing Will we still have a centre? Will we still have jobs/ Can we still do cooking?</p>	
Stakeholders			<p>Carers NT safety training SHS nutrition NMN Regional Council: Listen to want we need Not take things away from Women's Centres</p>
Looking forward	<p>Women from region meet every 3 months. Talk share about what's going on, support and learn about what's happening. Women looking after Women's Centres Talking and people listening to us Lots happening at the Women's Centre</p>		

ii. Comments by Women from Wugularr

Table 4: Comments by women from Wugularr regarding their Women's Centres			
Theme	Past	Present	Future
General picture	<p>Coordinator was always there looking after 5-6 staf. Coordinator always be there for them, showing leadership</p> <p>Plans, centre had a vision</p> <p>Always a leader</p> <p>Good manager</p> <p>Lots of women going there</p> <p>Crèche was strong</p> <p>Crèche looking after kid.</p> <p>Parents who worked had meals there, this was good</p> <p>No meetings at times [Mixed ideas about this.]</p> <p>We had a Woman's Council, good to meet women and talk</p>	<p>Nothing</p> <p>No leader to coordinate paperwork, planning, rosters, workplans</p> <p>Boring nothing happening</p>	<p>Ladies trained up to be a leader, coordinator, proper supervisor</p> <p>Some women devoted to Women's Centre</p> <p>Women's Centre run well like Kalano.</p> <p>Women visit other Women Centres that are working well</p> <p>Want a coordinator/manager for the day and a caretaker present at night</p> <p>Want a Woman's Council or group with women as representatives from each Centre to meet [regularly]</p>
Values	<p>People cared about the place. Like when Edna S was there</p>	<p>Women want community members to speak up for the importance of Women's Centres</p> <p>Many in community not involved, valuing centre. Even though benefits old people, kids, whole community, when centre is strong</p> <p>Women not going to work</p> <p>A few community women really value Women's Centres</p>	<p>Name it after two special elders, because they are Traditional Owners people will not want to damage the place, young ones. Community (will) want to look after it, respect it</p> <p>Council staff no good one day meeting. They should come for come for one week listen to them women, come and observe for a week. Then they'd see how things really are at the Women's Centre and listen properly to us and what we feel should happen</p> <p>More attention needs be given to the place (Women's Centre), like mowing, CDEP people could help make it look good. Make it look cared for outside</p> <p>We've been asking, again and again to have someone come just once a week even to mow, but nothing</p> <p>No support</p> <p>We've been going for a long, long, long time (working at the Women's Centre). We're doing it all by ourselves</p> <p>The men can have anything us women have to ask again and again and again nothing</p>
Management			<p>Need supervisor</p> <p>Balanda to train three women for three months</p> <p>Good local ladies</p> <p>Need caretaker</p> <p>Need administrator</p> <p>Secretarial work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write and file mtg minutes • Ordering • Taking messages

			<p>Need to be making decisions for ourselves Be included. We wanted that long ago. We want to own that building keep that building for the women</p> <p>Trained local women as trainees Finance workers</p>
Programs	<p>Art and craft: sewing, crèche, fabric designs, screenprinting, jewelry, We made clothes, curtains, bags, scrunchies Sue based here doing nutrition program Good (she helped) set up roster for food program Been ages I can't even remember (what programs we had) (Had programs) until changes in funding 3 years ago We sold our art to local people, that was good Person come out once a week</p>	Nothing	<p>Be good to have a kid's activity on at the same time as program/classes for women Money story Sewing, make curtains, shorts, tshirts, patchwork quilts, weaving baskets Night classes for young mums cooking, (especially for) looking after underweight kids Women's health Computers and internet Trips out bush, fishing, collect pandanus, sugar. Share culture teaching young people, young women Young women and their babies come and learn Want people to come to do programs for long periods of time, ongoing Come once a week for a long time Then we learn skills</p>
Training	<p>Cooking HACC Nursery Computer cert Hygiene Nutrition Domestic and family violence</p>	Nothing	<p>Car licence Small engine course Welding course Garden maintenance ie: whipper snipper, mowing Managing centres and staff Leadership that's the one we really need We can be heard Need to teach our young women Learn about complaints process because our complaints falling on deaf ears. Keep falling on deaf ears Cooking HACC Nursery Computer certificate Hygiene Nutrition working with health mob so can learn how to make proper/appropriate food for old people and healthy kids ie: learn about sugar and salt Domestic and family violence Strong women, strong babies Parenting program Train us so we can go to houses and talk with people show good Carers course so we can lift them up properly</p>
Resources	<p>CDEP used to come and mow the place Bus but hot wired parked</p>		<p>Engraver to mark assets that belong to Women's Centre Troop carrier</p>

	<p>at someone's home Big mobs of money of mowers, whipper snipper all borrowed by men and never returned Computer Supplies for crèche Supplies for kitchen</p>		<p>Gardening implements: ie whipper snipper and mower [Charge fees/deposit for lending resources]</p> <p>Computer internet access Website Phone/message bank Fax (for orders) Photocopier</p> <p>Crèche supplies ie: towels, baby baths, little toilets/showers, toys/activities</p> <p>Mats, carpets, cushions CD player Video so kids can come and watch</p> <p>Kitchen utensils ie: electric goods, rice cooker, plates, juicer</p> <p>Equipment cleaned up, new equipment Fix gate Fire break Shade cloth over sand pit</p> <p>Sewing machines have them serviced and get new parts Material Screenprinting equipment and materials Painting supplies Vehicle Cleaning</p> <p>Safe house Aged care home so family not sent to Katherine</p>
<p>Community issues</p>		<p>Kids not getting food because no food, so no women working (due to this situation and) because women's centre is trashed. Women have given up hope on everything No salary, support, leadership, no supervisor, no plans, not able to see budget so not be able to take control make decisions Crèche is suffering</p> <p>Someone to come and smoke the building and outside for family hanging around. Kids are scared to go there.</p> <p>Need a caretaker there husband and wife Fix up the space (Women's Centres are) Not secure, no safety "Women not coming to work petrol sniffers breaking in" Stealing food for the kids school food program</p>	

		<p>"Hungry they break in" Council fixing doors and that is good Women used it as a shelter Husband would break in</p> <p>Safe accommodation is an issue for women</p>	
External influences		Changes to local government we don't know about it	
Stakeholders			<p>SHS help with nutrition Carers NT safety training Jawyon help</p> <p>NMN Regional Council: Support Listen to us Money</p>
Looking forward	<p>We want freedom Women rights We want our own building is part of us We want to be the boss of that building</p> <p>Women control the centre Respect it's our (women's) space Women only area no one else</p> <p>Want to be recognized for strong women we are</p> <p>Women from region meet every 3 months</p> <p>When we started Women's Centre other Women's Centre wanted to know about us. Ours was a model centre. We won an award for our food program We want to go back to how things were. We were proud of our centre. That is good for the women, young and old. Good for community to have proud women</p>		

iii. List of tables

1. Themes and questions discussed in community meetings
2. Collated and summarised comments by women from all three communities regarding their Women's Centres
3. Comments by women from Barunga regarding their Women's Centres
4. Comments by women from Wugularr regarding their Women's Centres

iv. List of abbreviations

<i>ATSIC</i>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
<i>CDEP</i>	Community Development Employment Program
<i>DEWR</i>	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
<i>FHF</i>	The Fred Hollows Foundation
<i>HACC</i>	Home and Community Care
<i>ICC</i>	Indigenous Coordination Centre
<i>JA</i>	Jawoyn Association
<i>NMNRC</i>	Nyirranggulung Mardrulk Ngadberre Regional Council
<i>SHS</i>	Sunrise Health Service



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