



Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation Kununurra

Stakeholder Engagement – Summary of Findings

January 2022

In August 2021, an organisation called Think Culture, working together with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), was contracted by the Department of Communities to undertake stakeholder engagement in the East Kimberley Region to guide the development and design of the Kununurra Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation.

A summary of the key findings and most common themes and comments from the stakeholder engagement is presented in this document.

Background

Kununurra is the largest regional centre in the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley which provides a hub for employment, amenities, health services, social care, education and training. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander¹ people living in the East Kimberley Region (and broader) regularly travel into Kununurra for a variety of reasons. This includes accessing the Kununurra Primary Health Centre and other services and facilities, as well as visiting family and friends, attending funerals, training and to meet cultural responsibilities.

The WA Government committed \$20 million under the Kimberley Recovery Plan as part of the WA Recovery Plan² suite of initiatives to build a new Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation (ASSA) facility in Kununurra.

The Department anticipates the Kununurra ASSA will support the economic participation of Aboriginal people in the region as they are better able to access support services and employment opportunities. Employment opportunities will be provided during the construction of the facility and the ongoing management and operation of the facility.

The Kununurra ASSA will be built in Kununurra, with the primary aim of providing short-term accommodation for people visiting the regional centre from outlying towns and communities.

¹ From this point forward the word Aboriginal will be used to describe Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Torres Strait Islander people.

² <https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2020-07/Kimberley-Recovery-Plan.pdf>

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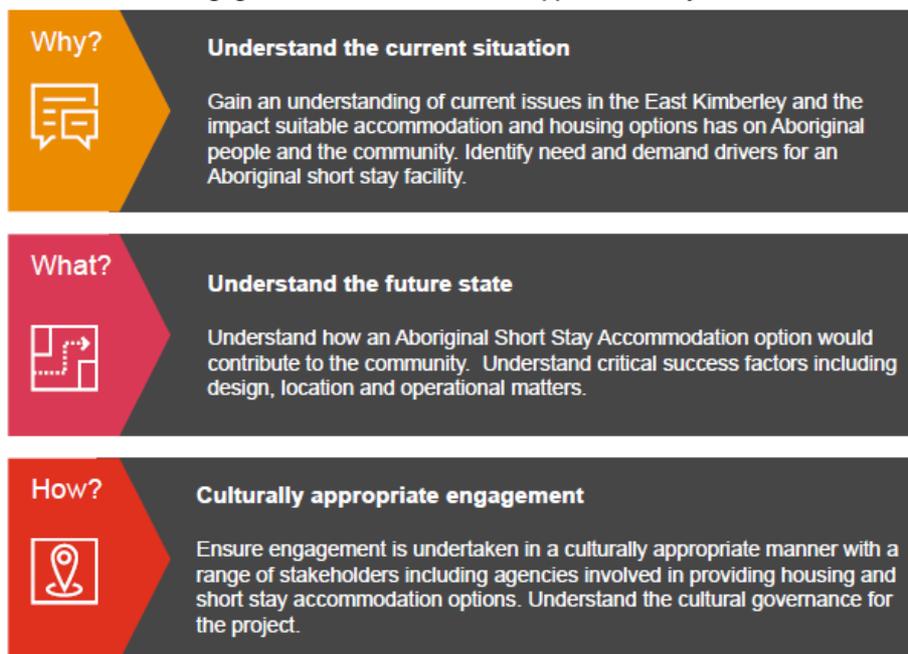
It was determined that the Kununurra ASSA would embody the principles of the existing ASSA facilities operating across Western Australia in Broome, Derby and Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

Whilst basic features of the Kununurra ASSA were understood, further input was sought from people in and around Kununurra regarding the location, scale and scope of the build, as well as how to best accommodate the needs of the intended users. The accommodation also needs to be placed-based in its design, i.e. it must be tailored to the needs of the East Kimberley region as well as the Aboriginal communities and language groups who will use the Kununurra ASSA.

Overview of the Stakeholder Engagement

The aim of the stakeholder engagement was to develop an evidence-based report, including community input on how the Kununurra ASSA could be developed, site location, design considerations, and the operations and management of the facility. The demand for the Kununurra ASSA was also explored, as well as the local construction capability.

The stakeholder engagement was undertaken to inform three key themes:



A broad range of stakeholder groups were consulted including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Government (Federal, State, Local), existing ASSA Service Providers and Community Service Providers.

Engagement Design

Think Culture sought input from a broad range of stakeholders in focus areas (outlined below) with an emphasis on enabling the stakeholders' experience and unique perspectives to be strongly reflected in the findings of the stakeholder engagement. The key questions raised with stakeholders in the focus areas were as follows:

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Focus Area	Key Questions
Need and Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Need and Demand - why Aboriginal people come to Kununurra, when, from where and how many people. • Community Need - the impact that suitable accommodation, short stay accommodation and housing options has on the local community. • Supply - current housing, social housing and short stay accommodation options available in Kununurra, whether these are sufficient, fit-for-purpose and culturally appropriate. • Additional Benefit Realisation - what other services could be accessed and wrapped around the accommodation.
Design and Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where should an Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation facility be located? What is important to be close by, what should be further away? • What are important design factors for the Kununurra ASSA, including configuration, room typologies, amenity? What are the learnings from other accommodation facilities in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Broome and Derby?
Local Construction Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there local capability to construct the facility in Kununurra? • What are some of the models or ways of working that could be considered for this project?
Facility Operations and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How should the facility operate? What is critical for success of the facility? What type of interface should the facility and its management have with the Aboriginal community? • How can operations maximise interaction with other service providers to improve outcomes for potential residents, including across the areas of Aboriginal employment and engagement?

Key lines of enquiry for the community stakeholder meetings also included the following:

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- Current short-term housing options in Kununurra and the impacts that a lack of appropriate accommodation is having on the community.
- Determine the need for an ASSA facility by understanding who comes to Kununurra, for what reasons, when and for how long.
- Critical success factors for the location and design on the facility (e.g. building configuration, layout, fitout, etc.).
- Understand how the facility should operate and the parameters by which people stay there (e.g. what features help people feel safe and supported).

Think Culture spoke to 33 different stakeholder groups, comprising over 80 people including Aboriginal people and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. This included people living in Broome, Derby, Kununurra, Halls Creek and Wyndham, Warmun, Kalumburu, and Balgo. Local service providers in the East Kimberley region noted that demand will not solely be from communities in WA, as many people come into Kununurra from NT communities to access services and visit family. Miriuwung and Gajerrong (MG) Corporation were consulted as the Traditional Owners.

Stakeholder engagement was subsequently undertaken with Communities from Northern Territory including Victoria Daly Regional Council (Timber Creek) and West Daly Regional Council (Wadeye).

Engagement Limitations

Many meetings with stakeholders were held face to face, however some virtual and phone meetings were conducted to comply with health measures in place as a result of COVID-19. Meetings took place between late August and early October 2021.

Key Findings

Use of the Accommodation

- There was a unanimous view (by 100% of stakeholders) that there is a need for an Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation facility in Kununurra.
- Stakeholders indicated that the Kununurra ASSA is likely to be used for a wide variety of purposes. The following purposes were most consistently noted: visiting Kununurra for medical appointments, funerals (sorry business), sporting and cultural events, visiting family and other important reasons.
- Demand will be from Aboriginal communities within Western Australia and from communities across the border in the Northern Territory, who visit Kununurra to access services and visit family.

Length of stay

- A maximum length of stay of 28 days was agreed by most stakeholders. Stakeholders also asked that longer stays be considered for special circumstances, such as

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education and training courses which may be up to 5 months, or during wet season when people need to wait for road access back to communities.

Peak times of use

- Stakeholders agreed that 'sorry business' would bring more demand for the Kununurra ASSA.

Bed numbers

- Stakeholders believed that the proposed 70-bed facility was appropriate given the expected demand. Some stakeholders believed the facility could be designed with the view for expansion over the medium-long term if this were warranted. Further modelling based on Census and other data will be undertaken to confirm the likely demand and bed numbers required to meet the demand.

Design and Layout of the Accommodation

- People said the accommodation should be safe and secure for guests.
- People also advised the accommodation should be run in a culturally appropriate way that understands Aboriginal people and the different groups who stay there.
- Outdoor areas should cater to the needs of Aboriginal people with outdoor cooking areas, seating and meeting areas, kids' playgrounds and sufficient shade.
- Stakeholders also said they wanted the following within the accommodation: meeting rooms, games rooms and computers to access the internet. This will be considered in the context of existing community facilities in Kununurra.
- In terms of building the accommodation, there was no consistent preference for the configuration of rooms. It was recognised that rooms with ensuites would help if there is a need for isolation and quarantine (such the COVID-19 experience). More detailed engagement regarding the facility's configuration will be undertaken in 2022.

Location

- Stakeholder feedback confirmed several potential sites located in Kununurra could be considered for the Kununurra ASSA. There was agreement that several sites are suitable in scale, in location and are culturally appropriate. Several sites were also ruled out following the stakeholder engagement, as being not appropriate for an ASSA.
- Consistent feedback was received from stakeholders on the importance of engaging with (MG Corporation as the Traditional Owners. This was particularly strong for site selection and the cultural aspects of the project.

Local Construction Capability

- There is a large construction industry in Kununurra, and Aboriginal employment through construction contracts is important to the local community. Local companies are likely to bid for the construction of the Kununurra ASSA facility and there is an option to partner with local and non-local contractors to ensure the project can be

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delivered with the right mix of capabilities. Stakeholders reported that Kununurra is experiencing the pressure of construction price increases, as is being felt throughout WA.

Facility Operations and Management

- A number of service providers operating in Kununurra may be interested in operating the Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation, and there are employment and learning opportunities for local people and providers to be involved with governance and operations of the facility.
- Local providers have specific place-based knowledge to support guests of the facility.
- A strong expectation is that a large proportion of the facility's workforce would be Aboriginal people.

Summary

Overall, there was significant local and regional interest and enthusiasm for the Kununurra ASSA facility. There were some strong community expectations about what they would like to see in terms of design and operations of the facility. Stakeholders provided valuable insights in relation to the selection of a site for the facility, and into who might be interested in constructing and operating the facility. The extensive community input obtained from the stakeholder engagement will provide an important basis for the project and the learnings obtained will provide pivotal reference points at key stages in the development of the project.

Further engagement with stakeholders will be undertaken in 2022.

Think Culture would like to respectfully acknowledge the Miriuwung and Gajerrong people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which this project relates to, and which many people were engaged upon for this project. We would like to pay our respect to the Elders past and present.

Further Information

To find out more about Kununurra Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation project, please visit our website or contact us by email.

- **Web:** www.communities.wa.gov.au/kununurraassa
- **Email:** ASSAProgram@communities.wa.gov.au