

Remote Community Pilots evaluation

Published report

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dandolopartners respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and the Remote Community Pilots program is taking place. We recognise the invaluable contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have made to this report, dandolo's work, and to public policy in Australia more broadly.

dandolopartners

Background

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations commissioned dandolopartners to evaluate the Remote Community Pilots program.

Background to the work

- The Australian Government has recognised the importance of supporting language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) adult foundation skills outcomes in remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- In 2019, the Australian Government established the Foundational Skills for Your Future Remote Community Pilots (RCP) program. The program contracted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander small to medium enterprises to deliver LLND skills training tailored to the needs of their specific communities – one each in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia, and northern Queensland.
- The pilots seek to:
 - Directly raise the LLND skills of community members in those remote communities
 - Identify and develop effective approaches to LLND skills training delivery in a remote context, to inform future program delivery and funding arrangements

Scope of the work

- The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the Department) engaged dandolopartners (dandolo) to evaluate the RCP program. The purpose of dandolo's evaluation was to assess whether proof of concept has been established, identify and assess potential outcomes of the pilots, and give insights that can inform future program design and delivery.
- Dandolo's evaluation ran between October 2020 and June 2023. It included four formative information and reporting cycles and a summative assessment.
- Dandolo engaged Yarning, an Aboriginal consultancy organisation, as partners of the evaluation. Yarning was responsible for conducting site visits at each provider site. See Appendix A for more information.
- This report covers a high-level summary of pilot and program level findings.

This document

This report provides an overview of evaluation findings.

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1. Executive summary

Overview of the RCP program

The RCP program is supporting pilots to improve the LLND skills of people in four remote communities across Australia.

Program level

The RCP program aims to improve LLND skills for community members in remote communities and identify and develop systemic approaches to LLND skills training delivery in remote communities. The program is delivering LLND skills training in four remote communities.

Pilot level

In delivering a pilot, providers are expected to lead a co-design process to ensure the delivery of locally relevant training to meet the needs of community members. See *Appendix D for more information (page 42)*.

South Australia



- **Location:** Delivering to five different communities (Ceduna, Yalata, Koonibba, Oak Valley (Maralinga Tjarutja) and Scotdesco) in South Australia.
- **Provider:** EyrePlus (EP) is the Community Development Program (CDP) provider in partnership with the Australian Employment and Training Solutions Pty Ltd (AETS) which is a registered training organisation.

Queensland



- **Location:** Doomadgee community in northern Queensland.
- **Providers:** Corporate Culcha (CC), delivering in partnership with My Pathway (CDP and wraparound support provider), and Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF).

Western Australia



- **Location:** Northern Western Australia, in the Djarindjin, Lombadina, Ardyaloon and Beagle Bay Communities on the Dampier Peninsula.
- **Providers:** Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation (DAC) is the local Aboriginal Corporation, delivering in partnership with Business Foundations, a not-for-profit (NFP) supporting business development in WA.

Northern Territory



- **Location:** Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory (NT).
- **Provider:** Literacy for Life (LFL) is an Aboriginal not-for-profit organisation that delivers an internationally-inspired model of 'literacy campaigns'.

Timeframe

The pilots were initially funded from mid 2020 to mid 2023 (becoming operational in 2021) and were later extended to mid 2024

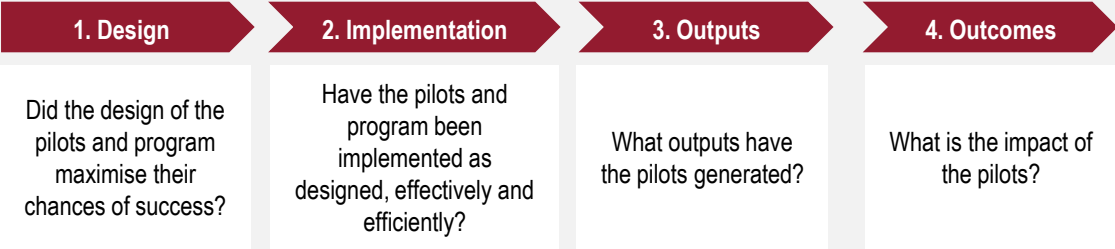
Our approach to the evaluation

This evaluation report is informed by quantitative and qualitative data collected through quarterly cycles and site visits.

The purpose of this evaluation was to...

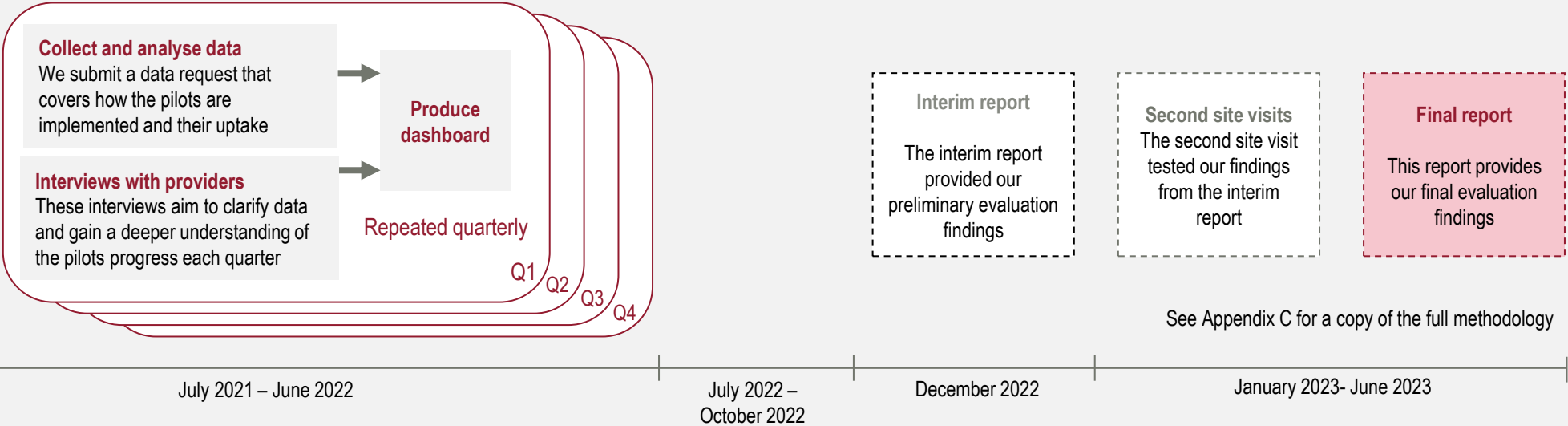
- Determine whether the pilots have established proof of concept / improved LLND foundation skills in the pilot communities.
- Identify lessons for:
 - Improved delivery of the pilots
 - The potential for scaling up in other remote communities
 - Future delivery of LLND skills training more broadly
 - Potential changes to funding arrangements and existing programs (e.g., Skills for Education and Employment)

To do this we considered the following questions...



See Appendix B for the full evaluation framework

Our approach included the following activities...



See Appendix C for a copy of the full methodology

The role of the RCP program in the adult foundational skills landscape

The RCP program is one of several key Australian Government programs in the adult foundational skills landscape. It focuses more on remote delivery and innovative co-design with community.

The Australian Government supports adult foundational skills through three main programs:

Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program

Program description: The SEE program delivers LLND skills training to assist job seekers to get the skills they need for a job, or as a pathway to further education.

Program model:

- Delivered by one of three methods: face-to-face, mixed mode (a combination of face-to-face and online) and through a distance provider
- Delivered in remote, regional, and metropolitan areas
 - Delivery of SEE in remote locations tends to be short-term or project-based.

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

Program description: The AMEP program offers English language and literacy training to migrants and humanitarian entrants to improve their English language skills and settle into Australia

Program model:

- The program offers face-to-face and online classes, a volunteer tutor scheme, and distance learning

The Foundation Skills for your Future (FSFYF) program

Program description: The FSFYF program offers LLND skills training to employed and recently unemployed Australians

Program model: The program offers flexible training in LLND skills through:

- Employer workplace training – workplace training projects that are employer or industry-specific.
- Personalised skills training – personal skills training is delivered with a client-centred approach. The training is flexible to accommodate the lifestyle and learning needs of participants.

The RCP program is the latest program in the adult foundational skills landscape:

The RCP Program

Program description: The program was established in 2019 to trial innovative and community led approaches to foundational skills delivery in remote Australia and to inform future program development. The pilots aim to improve the English LLND skills of all community members.

Program model:

- Training is a mix of accredited and non-accredited, depending on the needs of the communities and participants.

The RCP program differs from other programs in the following ways:

- It places emphasis on co-design with community. These pilots are place-based and designed with the communities according to their community priorities.
- The program has a specific focus on remote communities, as opposed to job seekers or recent migrants.

Evaluation findings on a page






There are signs that some pilots are succeeding to some extent, but we need more evidence – particularly on LLND skills outcomes – before concluding that proof of concept has been comprehensively established across the program. The next 12 months will provide important data to support this conclusion.

Pilot level

- Two pilots have demonstrated both improved LLND skills and other outcome areas (e.g., employment). As such, we cannot conclude that proof of concept has been comprehensively established across the pilots.
- For the other two pilots, we have seen more evidence of improvement in other outcome areas, such as engagement in work-readiness activities and employment. Proxy measures for success indicate that they could potentially improve LLND skills outcomes in the future, as the pilots continue to embed themselves in community (e.g., improved confidence around LLND skills).
- Although the pilots are diverse, there are common elements across the four pilots that work well across the different models at the participant, provider, and community level. Conversely, there are common elements across several pilots' that proved to be challenging, such as remote delivery. There have also been common barriers to success across pilots, such as COVID-19 responses in various jurisdictions.

Program level

The program was designed and administered in a way that has given pilots the opportunity to succeed. The various elements of program design are working sufficiently well to meet the program's current objectives. However, implementation has highlighted opportunities for improvement in the following areas:

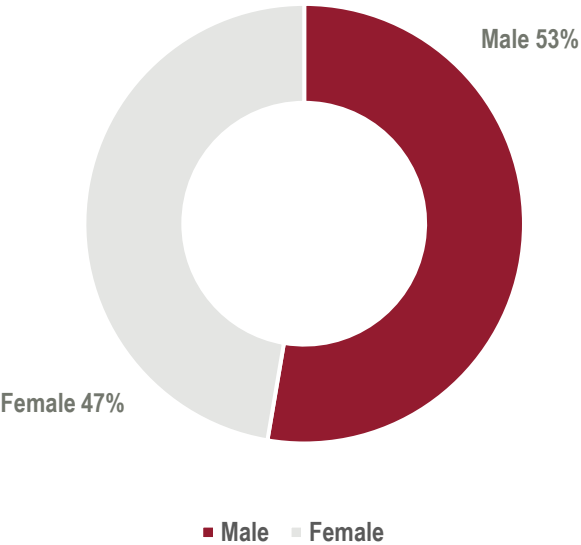
-  Program objectives
-  Procurement
-  Program management
-  Performance management
-  Funding arrangements

Please see page 18 for a more detailed summary of program level findings

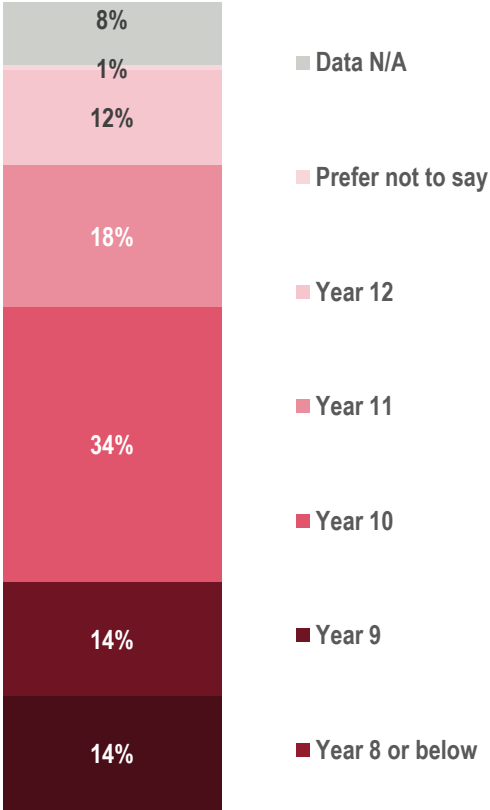
Participant demographics summary

Pilot participants are typically young and have come into the pilot with low levels of LLND skills. The majority of participants have not completed secondary schooling.

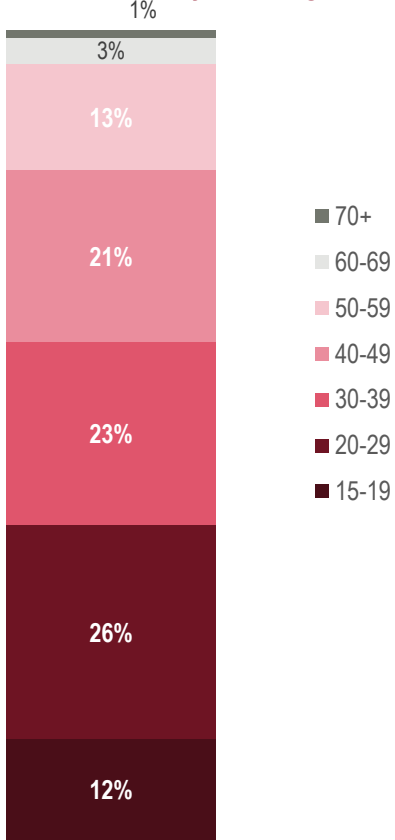
Men and women are participating equally in the pilots



On average across the four pilots, a third of participants have not completed schooling past year 10*



On average across the four pilots, most participants have been below 40 years of age*



* These percentage values do not add to 100% due to rounding to the nearest whole number.

Pilot outcomes summary

There are three scenarios playing out across the pilots. Some pilots are driving increased confidence in LLND skills but lack evidence of substantive skills improvement. Some pilots are showing some evidence of LLND skills improvement as well as employment and further education and training outcomes. Other pilots are showing more substantive improvements across the board.

Pilot scenario 1:

- **Increased confidence in LLND skills.** Participants who consistently engage with the program report an increase confidence in LLND skills resulting from their participation, and a feeling of improved literacy and numeracy overall.
- **Some education and employment outcomes.** Some participants have enrolled in further education or training or gained employment.
- **Limited evidence of LLND skills improvement.** There is little or no assessment data to demonstrate LLND skills improvement.

Pilot scenario 2:

- **Increased confidence in LLND skills.** Participants feel more confident in their LLND skills.
- **Positive work and further education outcomes.** Participants report positive work or further education and training outcomes, including starting their own businesses or getting a job in their local community. This implies that participants were able to use the skills that they have learned in their training and apply it in a real-world context.
- **Some evidence of completed participants improving their LLND skills outcomes.** A small number of participants have had an ACSF indicator increase across progress and final assessments.

Limited LLND skills improvement

Some LLND skills improvement

Significant LLND skills improvement

*Low evidence of direct
LLND skills improvement*

*High evidence of direct
LLND skills improvement*

Pilot scenario 3:

- **Increased confidence in LLND skills.** Participants report increased confidence in LLND skills resulting from their participation in the program.
- **Positive work and further education outcomes.** Participants feel that the program empowers them to pursue further opportunities such as accredited training or employment.
- **More substantive evidence of completed participants improving their LLND skills.** A large number of participants have had an ACSF indicator increase across progress and final assessments.

* The Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) is a tool which assists both specialist and non-specialist English language, literacy and numeracy practitioners describe an individual's performance in the five core skills of learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy.

Pilot level – What is working at the participant level (1/2)

The most successful training models have been individualised, flexible and culturally responsive. They use learning environments and digital technology in smart and intentional ways.

Success at a pilot level looks like...



An individualised, flexible and culturally responsive training model

Pilots have been more successful where training is:

- Delivered by trainers face-to-face either to one participant or a small group of participants.
- Individualised to a participant's learning level, preferences and goals, rather than a 'cookie-cutter' approach.
- Flexibly delivered in terms of both time and place. This is particularly relevant when providers are required to deliver training on short notice, e.g., when participants attend pilot locations.
- Easy to 'pick up where we left off', acknowledging that many participants engage with training sporadically and may also be transient between different communities.
- Culturally responsive, including training that: enables participants to fulfil cultural obligations (e.g., travel for Sorry Business); leverages participant interest in local culture (e.g., learning on country, learning local language); accounts for cultural factors that may influence learning preference (e.g., gendered classes).



A positive learning environment

Participants are more likely to attend training consistently when they perceive that the learning environment is:

- Generally welcoming and culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants.
- Supportive of participants with specific learning needs, such as those who require adjustments to the physical learning environment or wraparound support such as childcare.
- For some participants, discreet – acknowledging that in some communities there is 'shame' associated with engagement in adult foundational skills training or government programs generally.
- A place where their LLND skills achievements – no matter how small – can be celebrated.



Smart use of digital technology

Most pilots attempted to integrate the use of digital technology to some extent in their training models. This has been successful where:

- Digital technology plays a genuine role in the training model (for example, interactive or play-based learning that would not otherwise be possible or cost effective in face-to-face delivery).
- Participants have the capacity and capability to use the technology effectively.
- The use of digital technology helps to build digital literacy generally (for example, learning through online platforms).

Pilot level – What is working at the participant level (2/2)

Pilots have been more successful when they have taken a holistic approach to training and provided high-quality wraparound support. They have also linked their training models with employment pathways and other practical outcomes.

Success at a pilot level looks like:



A holistic approach to training

Pilots have been more successful when they have taken a holistic approach to training – acknowledging that many participants are experiencing a range of barriers or personal commitments that may impact their ability to engage effectively or consistently in training.

We observed that some providers, at times:

- Identified barriers when participants enrolled in training and continued to monitor and update this data throughout a participant's engagement.
- Used their knowledge of these barriers to either formally or informally adjust training delivery (for example, formal changes to learning plans or more informal flexibility in delivery) and / or facilitate access to wraparound services.

Pilots were more successful when wraparound services were delivered by the most appropriate service provider. For example, 'referring out' to another local provider with more capability and capability to address certain needs, rather than attempting to address needs 'in house'.



Links to employment pathways and other practical outcomes

Participants are more likely to engage with – and complete – training where they perceive practical pathways to employment, further education and training and other practical outcomes.

These pathways can be:

- Formal – for example, arrangements with local employers to employ participants who complete training or arrangements with local VET providers for articulation in longer-form qualifications.
- Informal – for example, enabling participants to complete important certifications that require a minimum level of LLND skills, such as drivers' licences.
- Opportunistic – for example, leveraging the entry of a new employer, or having a facility or program in community to create employment pathways out of training.

Pilot level – What is working at the provider level

Pilots have been more successful when they have engaged local staff and invested in their development. They have also leveraged past participants for pilot engagement and – in some cases – training delivery.

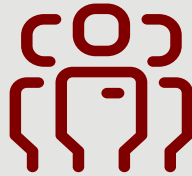
Success at a pilot level looks like:



Providers with local staff and links to community

Providers (or provider consortiums) have been successful where they:

- Engage and retain local staff who understand the community context and can leverage personal relationships to attract and support participants (for example, understanding a participant's need for wraparound services).
- Are embedded locally, either through their own presence in community as a local service provider or through another local organisation.
- Have strong pre-existing relationships with community leaders – or the ability to build these relationships.



Capable staff with access to professional development

Providers have been successful where they attract, recruit, retain and develop capable staff who believe passionately in the pilot's mission.

For example, we have observed providers who:

- Target local talent in pilot locations, particularly where prospective staff have strong links to community.
- Acknowledge 'critical person risk' by focusing on retention, while diversifying risk across the organisation.
- Invest time and money in developing their staff (for example, additional trainer qualifications to improve training delivery).
- Match staff appropriately with roles and responsibilities, relative to their skills, experience and qualifications (for example, ensuring that staff can effectively administer assessments).



Leveraging past participants

Pilots have been more successful where they have developed ongoing roles for past participants, including as:

- Informal mentors who support providers to promote the pilot within community, recruit new participants and informally support existing participants to continue engaging in training.
- Formal mentors who are part of the formal pilot model, and play a critical role in supporting participants to engage in training and learn effectively.
- Qualified trainers who formally deliver training to participants, either exclusively or in collaboration with other, more experienced trainers.

However, this is contingent on past participants taking on roles and responsibilities consistent with their experience, skills and qualifications.

Pilot level – What is working at the community level

Pilots have been more successful where they have continued to cultivate community buy-in, integrate with other community organisations and adapt to changing community context and feedback.

Success at a pilot level looks like:



Community buy-in and active involvement

Although a minimum level of community buy-in was a prerequisite for all pilots, those which continued to cultivate buy-in and active involvement from community members were more successful.

Community buy-in and active involvement manifested in a variety of ways, including:

- Community leaders endorsing the pilots – and in some cases directly contributing to their implementation – which increased the likelihood that community members would engage with training.
- Local community members coming forward to help deliver the pilots, either as trainers or administrative staff, which leveraged local relationships and helped individualise training delivery.
- Local community members informally promoting the pilots amongst one another through ‘word of mouth’, which we observed has been the most effective form of promotion and engagement.
- Community contributing to the governance and oversight of pilots through various advisory groups, which helped tailor implementation to local context and aspirations.



Integration with other community organisations

Pilots were more likely to deliver a more holistic participant experience when they were well-integrated with other community organisations, including:

- Local Aboriginal corporations or equivalent bodies, which provide critical endorsement, oversight and links to other community leaders and organisations.
- Other service providers, which provide external wraparound support (such as health services and childcare) and post-training pathways (such as the Community Development Program).
- Local employers and registered training organisations, which provide practical training opportunities and post-training pathways into further training and employment.
- Organisations that act as ‘customers’ for the pilots. For example, a local prison engaged with one pilot to deliver LLND skills training to inmates.
- Government organisations in addition to the Department, such as the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), which can link providers and participants to other government services. For example, one pilot leveraged NIAA liaison officers to establish training in a new community.



Adapting to changing community context and feedback

Pilots have been more successful where providers and their models have been sufficiently agile to adapt to changing community context and feedback. This has been particularly important given the challenges of delivering training in a remote context.

For example, we have seen pilots:

- Adapt to COVID-19 responses, including by implementing remote learning arrangements on short notice (for example, ‘take home’ learning packs).
- Make changes to training delivery to better suit learner preferences and pilot constraints, including changing from one-on-one to small group sessions or moving to a more ad hoc training schedule.
- Tailor training delivery to the most prevalent participant goals, including practical outcomes such as drivers’ licences and specific job opportunities in community.
- Respond to the risk of participant and trainer ‘burn out’ by altering training schedules.

Pilot level – Implementation challenges

Pilots have experienced three key implementation challenges that were at times barriers to success: COVID-19; community context; and provider capacity, capability and access.

COVID-19



Pilots became operational when remote communities were experiencing – or experiencing for the first time – COVID-19 infections and associated government responses, including mandatory isolation periods and community closures.

This had several implications for training delivery:

- Some participants and local provider staff could not attend in-person training sessions when they were serving mandatory isolation periods.
- Many participants and local provider staff did not attend in-person sessions due to the infection risk.
- External provider staff could not access community when they were closed to outside access. This had a particular impact on pilots that relied on 'fly in, fly out' trainers.

These implications had 'knock on' impacts on specific parts of the pilots, including providers' ability to undertake timely LLND skills assessments.

Community context



Pilots were run in remote communities that experience significant social and economic disadvantage, which creates multiple barriers to effective participation in adult foundational skills training.

This had several implications for the pilots:

- Providers often had difficulty engaging and retaining participants in training due to a range of factors, including low education attainment, caring responsibilities, and problems relating to health, housing and transport.
- Participants often commenced training from a very low LLND skills base. Some participants are unwilling to participate in LLND skills assessments due to shame and anxiety.
- Some communities have few pathways into employment and further education and training, which impacted participants' perceptions of usefulness.

These communities also at times experience events that further impact training, including: Sorry Business and other cultural obligations; royalty distributions; and community unrest relating to local family relationships.

Provider capacity, capability and access



Delivering LLND skills programs in a remote and culturally-diverse context is challenging. The Department endeavoured to select the most appropriate providers for each pilot community.

While providers have many strengths, constraints on their capacity, capability and access to community have presented some challenges. For example:

- Individualised and flexible training has been cost-intensive and placed pressure on pilot budgets.
- Most pilots have lost critical partners or staff at some point, including lead trainers and project officers.
- Most pilots have reported staff 'burn out' due to the challenges associated with adult foundational skills training in remote communities.
- Some providers have relied on past participants to fill pilot roles without the required support or training.
- Some pilots have relied on 'fly in, fly out' models due to a lack of capability in community, but this can be impacted by housing and transport constraints.



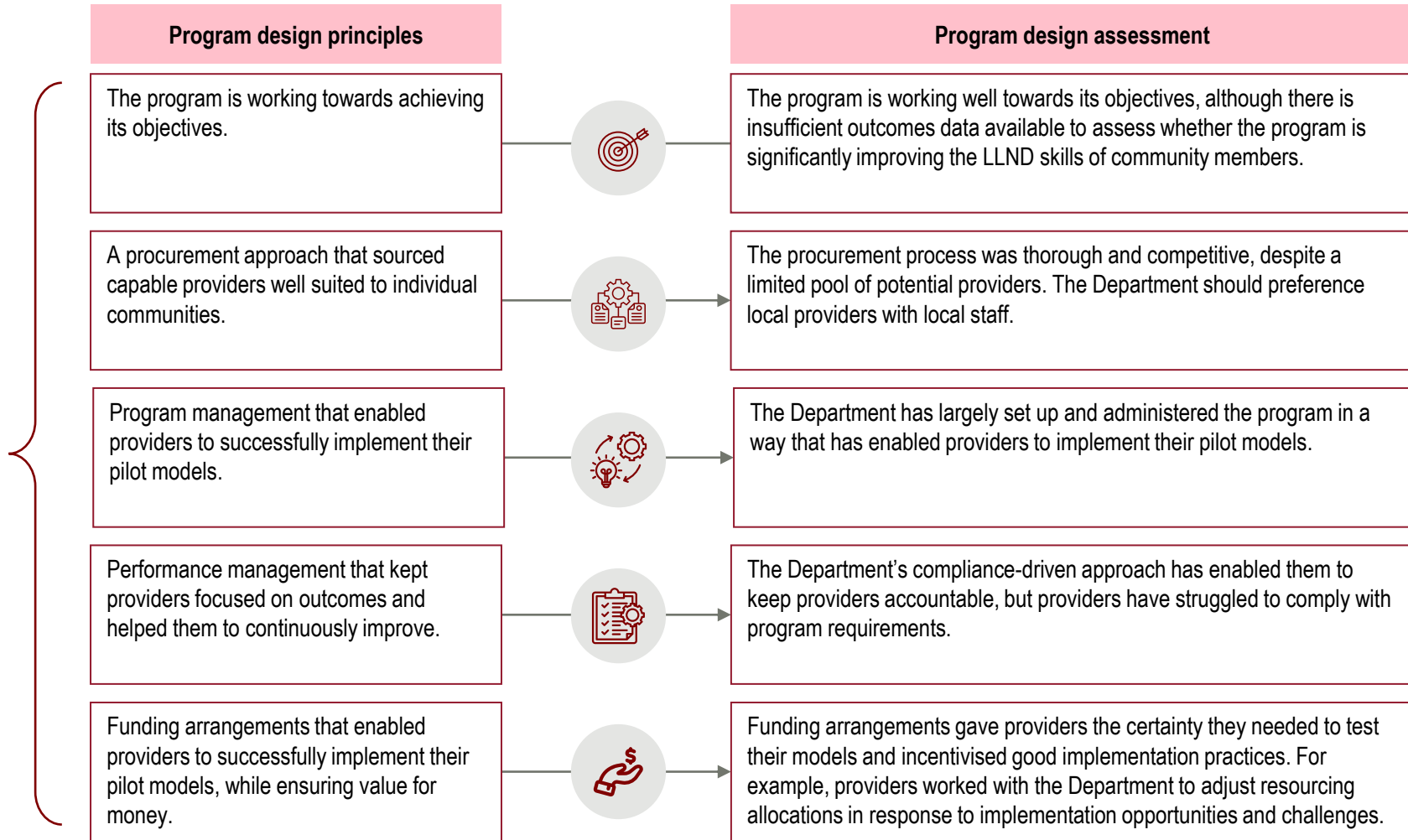
Providers had varying levels of capacity and capability to respond to challenges associated with COVID-19 and community context. For example, some providers pivoted effectively to 'learning from home' models and some were more comfortable providing wraparound support or accommodating cultural obligations.

Program level – Overall assessment

The program has been designed and administered in a way that has given pilots the opportunity to succeed. More could be done to better enable success in a potential future program for adult foundational skills in remote communities.

Embedded principle of self-determination

We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should have self-determination through policies and programs that affect their lives and are empowered to design and participate in the pilots through equal partnerships.



Program level – What is working and challenges

The program had a thorough procurement, planning and community engagement approach...



What is working well at a program level

A thorough planning process

The program had a thorough planning process that included:

- A two-step procurement approach
- A pilot plan that outlined the six stages of delivery
- Core KPIs that included seven plans for the providers to complete to monitor and assess their pilots (e.g., implementation and management plan, stakeholder engagement plan, and a co-design process)
- A self-evaluation and action plan

Community engagement

Community buy-in was embedded throughout the program. For example:

- A co-design process to contextualise the LLND skills training and assessment model. The process included key community members, training participants, local pilot providers, and employers to ensure the LLND skills training model and training participant support and outcomes model are tailored to meet local needs.
- Assessment of the provider's non-training support to deliver or facilitate wrap-around services for training participants.
- The inclusion of community KPIs in the pilot's performance management framework. These KPIs are tailored to a specific community and are developed in consultation with community members.

...but there have been difficulties associated with measuring program outputs and outcomes.



Challenges to the program

A traditional compliance-driven approach to performance management

A compliance-driven approach has enabled the Department to keep providers accountable, but providers have found it difficult to fully comply with their performance requirements due to:

- Capacity issues
- Capability issues
- A perception that the reporting requirements are overly burdensome and are counter to achieving outcomes.

For example, providers have struggled with providing quality data due to a lack of capability and some requiring extensions on reporting deadlines. One provider told us that they spend an unreasonable amount of time 'completing spreadsheets at the expense of delivering outcomes on the ground.'

Challenges in assessing some KPIs, making it difficult to know whether the program is increasing the LLND skills of participants

There have been varying degrees of engagement and 'completion' across the pilots which are dependent on several key factors:

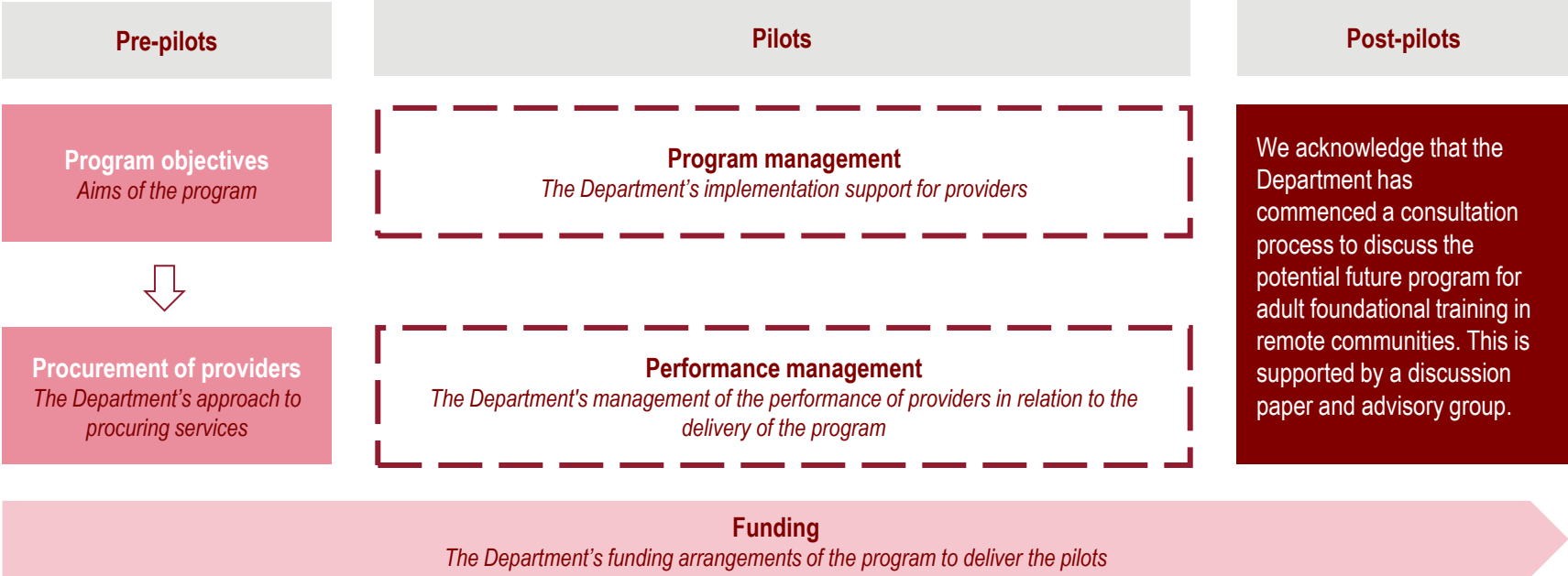
- Community context
- Provider capacity and capability / provider partnership model
- Training model
- Impact of COVID-19

The Department has had difficulties in measuring KPIs because of the low-quality assessment data and lack of participant feedback data that has been provided. Providers have faced challenges in reporting data accurately and comprehensively to the Department.

2. Evaluation findings – Program level

Program components

The program comprises several key components that we are examined as part of the evaluation.



Summary of program level findings

The program has been designed and administered in a way that has given pilots the opportunity to succeed. More can be done to better enable success in the future.

[More detail](#)

Program objectives

The program is working towards achieving its objectives of developing systemic approaches to LLND skills training and delivery. It has produced a variety of pilots, each with a different approach to LLND skills and training. However, we are currently unable to assess whether the program is successfully raising the LLND skills of community members due to a lack of available outcomes data.

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Procurement

The program had a thorough but lengthy procurement process that successfully sourced providers that are well suited to their individual communities. To assist in sourcing high quality providers, the Department should consider innovative approaches to procurement such as shorter procurement documents that are easier to understand or implementing a rolling procurement process where providers are able to submit expressions at any point.

Pages
20-21

Program management

The Department had a program management structure that successfully supported the providers in implementing their pilots. To date, the Department has played a contract manager role in managing the program and relied heavily on providers to receive feedback on how the program is running. The Department should consider alternative ways to include community voices in their program management approach and act more as an enabler rather than a contract manager.

Pages
22-24

Performance management

The Department's approach to performance management is largely compliance-driven and is consistent with that of comparable departmental programs involving private sector delivery organisations. The approach has enabled the Department to ensure accountability to objectives, but all providers have struggled to fully comply with their reporting requirements. With any compliance-driven program, there is a trade-off between accountability and enabling providers to focus on delivering outcomes. We consider there are opportunities to fine-tune this balance going forward, underpinned by the concept of self-determination.

Pages
25-29




Funding

The Department's approach to funding included block funding amounts, incremental payments to providers in arrears on the completion of agreed milestones and having set milestones that were related to implementation deliverables. This approach provided certainty to providers and communities and incentivised providers to follow best practice implementation approaches and kept providers accountable.

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Program objectives

The RCP program is achieving its objective of developing systemic approaches to LLND skills training delivery. However, more data is needed to determine whether the program is improving LLND skills of community members across all communities.

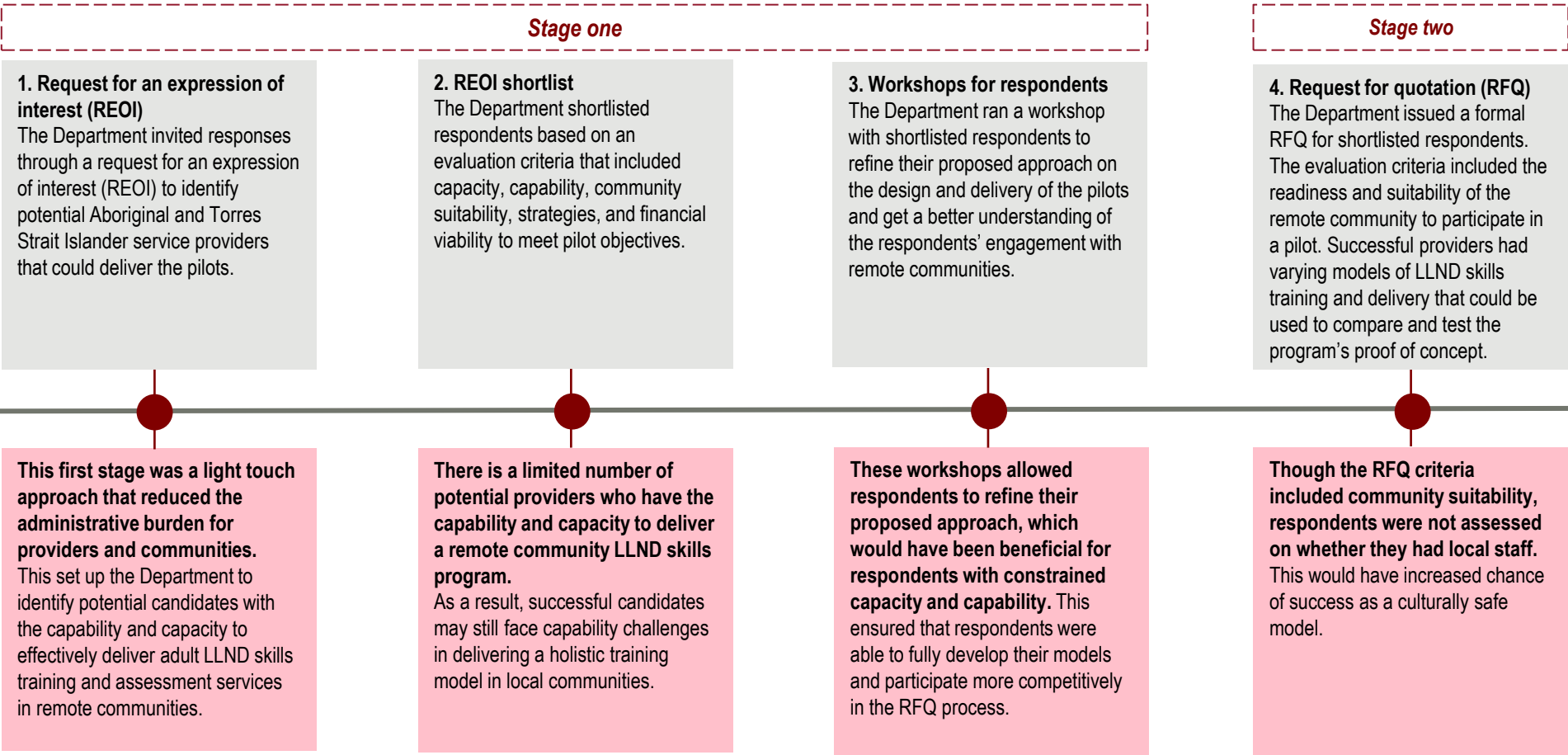
Program principle: <i>The program is working towards achieving its objectives</i>		
The objectives of the RCP program are to:	Assessment	Rationale
 <p>Improve the LLND skills of community members in the remote communities</p>	●	<p>Based on current data, only some pilots have improved LLND skills outcomes. For other pilots, some proxy measures suggest that outcomes may start to improve in the future.</p>
 <p>Identify and develop systemic approaches to LLND skills training delivery in the remote communities</p>	●	<p>The RCP program produced a variety of pilots, each with a different model for LLND skills training delivery. Each provider underwent a co-design process with key community members, training participants and employers to ensure their LLND skills training model was tailored to meet local needs.</p>
 <p>Inform future program delivery, new funding arrangements and/or changes to existing programs</p>	●	<p>The evaluation has made findings to inform the future of the program, both at a program and pilot level. We are confident government can apply these findings to other remote and adult foundation skills programs.</p>

- The program is achieving this objective
- The program is somewhat achieving this objective

Procurement approach – Process

The Department conducted a thorough two-step procurement process that resulted in the engagement of diverse providers.

Program principle: A procurement approach that sourced capable providers well suited to individual communities



Procurement approach

Although the procurement process was sound, the process was long and intensive...



Design and implementation in practice

- The procurement stretched over a substantial period, from the first quarter of 2020 when the REOI was first issued to the second quarter of 2021, when the final two providers were confirmed. We understand this occurred due to:
 - The Department's shifting priorities in relation to the COVID-19 response.
 - The need for a comprehensive procurement process that set up providers and communities for success.
 - The challenge of identifying the most appropriate communities and providers to test proof of concept.
 - One instance where two providers pulled out of consortium arrangements at short notice.
- We understand that the Department faced supply-side challenges, both in the quantity and suitability of applicants.

...and the Department is likely to face supply-side challenges again.



Implications

- The long procurement process does not necessarily indicate a problem with the procurement process in principle. However, we note that providers who were confirmed earlier in the process commented on the 'loss of momentum' they experienced as a result. It also delayed the commencement of training in some pilots, which has shortened the overall time period that some pilots have been effectively operational.
- The Department is likely to continue experiencing supply-side challenges, particularly in finding suitable local providers. Given the difficulty of matching willing communities with capable local providers, the Department may also continue to face challenges in finding providers that have the local capability to scale up the program. Where possible, the program should preference local providers with local staff to ensure providers are well suited to individual communities.

The Department should consider alternative approaches to procurement.



Opportunities for improvement

To help the Department source high quality providers, the Department should consider innovative approaches to procurement.

Examples could include:

- More streamlined approaches to procurement e.g., both in writing and verbally.
- Shorter procurement documents that are easier to understand.
- The ability for communities to submit expressions of interest at any point throughout a rolling procurement process.

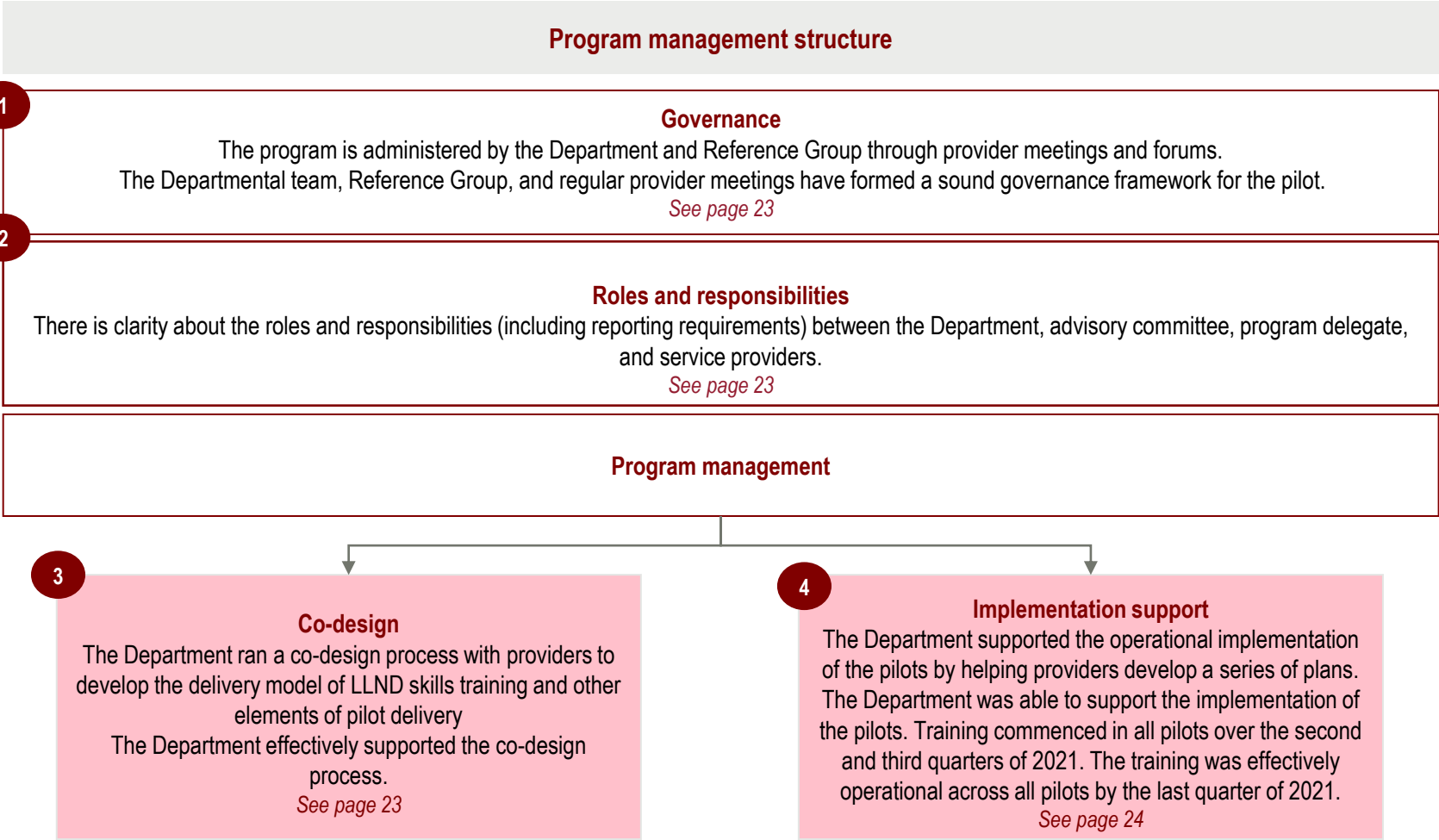
These approaches can:

- Provide more flexibility for providers in applying, particularly in the context of remote and Indigenous communities.
- Enable self-determination by empowering communities to participate more effectively in the procurement process.

Program management – Process

The Department has a sound management structure that successfully supports the providers in implementing their pilots.

Program principle: Program management that enables providers to successfully implement their pilot models



Program management – Assessment (1/2)

The Department relied on the perspectives of providers to assess the effectiveness of the design and implementation of the pilots. The Department should consider mechanisms that implement the feedback of community voices.



Design and implementation in practice



Implications



Opportunities for improvement

Governance

The governance framework set up the program well to gather a range of perspectives and troubleshoot issue as they arise. However, there was a lack of participant and community perspectives within the governance structure.

The governance structure meant that the Department has relied extensively on providers, rather than participants or the community, to provide perspectives on the pilots. Although useful, this may not necessarily represent a comprehensive or impartial view of the pilots.

The Department should set up mechanisms for end users and community voices to provide feedback on the program e.g. an advisory group. This would better support self-determination to be embedded throughout the program.

Roles and responsibilities

The definition and delineation of roles and responsibilities has been sound. While the Department plays a contract manager role, providers are responsible for the delivery of the pilots.

There are opportunities for the Department to pivot from a contract manager role to an enabler of the program. For example, taking responsibility for aspects of the pilots where there are capability and capacity issues.

The Department should consider delivering or coordinating some pilot components centrally.

Co-design support

The Department was able to run workshops to support providers to lead their respective co-design processes, which included working with relevant stakeholders to tailor their LLND skills training and assessment delivery models.

The Department's role in organising the co-design process enabled the providers to meet the requirements of the program.

The Department should have further involvement in the co-design process by iteratively working with providers to ensure the pilot components align with best practice.

Program management – Assessment (2/2)

Providers had mixed feedback on their pilot milestone requirements, and the Department should provide alternative implementation support that better meets the needs of providers. Dandolo endorses the Department’s approach of involving evaluators early in the program.



Design and implementation in practice



Implications



Opportunities for improvement

Implementation support

The Department supported the operations of the pilots by helping providers meet their pilot milestones. The milestones required the providers to develop a series of plans such as the Implementation and Management Plan, the Stakeholder Communication Engagement Plan, and the Training and Assessment model document. The Department also advised providers either informally on a day-to-day basis or through formal provider forums. For example, the flexibility in the timing approach of assessments and advice on outcome measurements.

The requirements of the pilot milestones received mixed feedback. Some providers felt that the requirement was an administrative burden on top of their organisational capacity and capability. Other providers felt that the requirement enabled them to better plan for their pilots and set them up for success in implementing the pilots.

We understand that the current implementation requirements can be overly burdensome for providers, making it difficult for them to comply. For example, providers regularly required extensions on reporting deadlines and reflected that the time spent completing reports took time and energy away from pilot delivery.

The Department should provide implementation support that balances both the program objectives and the capacity and capability of providers. For example, shortening the plans or negotiating when providers submit the plans which considers the timing of their training.

Evaluation

We endorse the Department’s approach of engaging an evaluator early in the program. We note that individual pilots also undertook their own evaluation activities.

The formative and summative aspects of the evaluation enabled dandolo to provide real-time feedback to providers and the Department, while forming a more comprehensive view over the course of the pilots.

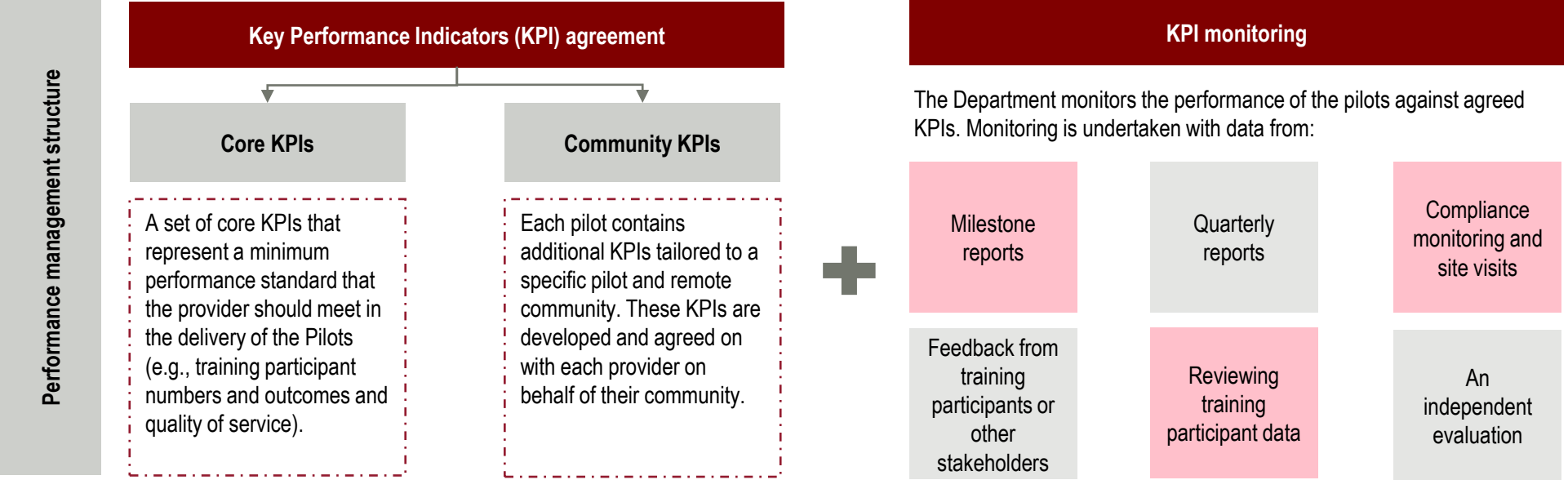
There is an opportunity to integrate pilot level evaluations into the overall methodology of the evaluation. For example, integrating the pilot level evaluations at an earlier stage to have confidence in the robustness of the methodology and information collection processes of pilot level evaluations.

Performance management – Overall framework

The two-tier KPI approach provides a balanced approach to assessing both a minimum performance standard (through core KPIs) and KPIs that account for the individual needs of communities (through customisable community KPIs).

Program principle: Implementation support that enables providers to successfully implement their pilot models

The performance management model is made up of two components:





Performance management assessment

We consider the two-tier KPI approach of the program to be appropriate. The core KPIs provide a minimum performance standard that can be consistently applied across all pilots, while the community KPIs allow for customisation of success measures to account for the aspirations and context of each individual remote community. However, we note that many community KPIs did not necessarily relate directly to improving LLND skills, acknowledging that the pilots have sought to deliver outcomes beyond LLND skills. To assess the KPIs further, we have set out four key questions for core and community KPIs (see pages 26-29). The questions are:

- Was the overall approach sound?
- If so, were the KPIs and measurement appropriate?
- How should the Department measure the KPIs?
- Where should the Department collect the data from?

Performance management – Core KPIs (1/3)



The Department should better define ‘commencements’ and ‘completions’ to measure participant outputs more effectively.

<p>Core KPIs</p>	<p><i>Was the overall approach sound?</i></p>	<p><i>If so, were the KPIs and measurement appropriate?</i></p>	<p><i>How should the Department measure the KPIs?</i></p>	<p><i>Where should the Department collect the data from?</i></p>
<p> Training participant numbers</p> <p><i>Measured by...</i></p> <p>The number of commencements and completions anticipated at the start of the pilot is met or exceeded over the duration of the pilot.</p>	<p>Training participant numbers may not be a reliable indicator of success due to a lack of definition for critical terms such as ‘commencements’ and ‘completions’. The diverse range of providers and training models makes it difficult for the program to adopt a common definition of ‘completions’.*</p>	<p>The KPIs are somewhat appropriate. The Department should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better define commencements to capture the number of participants that are meaningfully engaged in training, rather than merely enrolled. • Specify a common definition of ‘completions’, or explicitly agree appropriate definitions with individual providers relative to their training and assessment model. 	<p>The Department should revisit the measurement of the KPIs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisiting the methodology of calculating commencements and completions. • Negotiate with the provider on what ‘commencements’ and ‘completions’ mean for their pilot when completing their contract. 	<p>The Department should collect this data from the provider reports.</p>
<p> Training participant outcomes</p> <p><i>Measured by...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of training participants who commence training have measurably improved their LLND skills on exit. • 80% of training participants are satisfied with their post training pathway. 	<p>The direct measurement of participant outcomes is sound. The Department should collect baseline data to be able to compare participants’ outcomes pre and post pilots. The Department should also consider whether 80% is an appropriate figure – as we don’t know whether that is a feasible success rate. The Department should include a process or methodology for choosing 80% as its threshold for the KPI. A starting point for a methodology could include a scoping exercise to determine the pool of potential enrolments and the number of participants that would realistically engage in the program.</p>	<p>The KPIs are largely appropriate, however:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department should consider whether 80% is a viable target for providers to reach. • Employment post training pathways are currently not an explicit objective of the program. The Department should consider whether this KPI should be included. 	<p>Proxy measures can be used to measure this KPI, given the ongoing challenges in measuring LLND skills. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A participant’s perception that their skills have improved and satisfaction with their training. • A participant’s confidence in LLND skills. <p>Questions going to these proxies were included in the participant survey, however in practice survey reporting was too low to measure.</p>	<p>The Department can collect this data from the provider reports (including assessment outcomes) and through a participant survey that is fit for purpose. For example, using innovative approaches (e.g. verbal surveys) to boost response rates.</p>

* Providers had varying definitions of commencements and completions. For example, some defined commencements as the point of enrolment, while some defined it to be when participants had their first class.



Performance management – Core KPIs (2/3)

The Department should consider more innovative ways to consult with participants to better measure the program’s quality of service.

<p>Core KPIs</p>	<p><i>Was the overall approach sound?</i></p>	<p><i>If so, were the KPIs and measurement appropriate?</i></p>	<p><i>How should the Department measure the KPIs?</i></p>	<p><i>Where should the Department collect the data from?</i></p>
<p> Quality of service</p> <p><i>Measured by...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of training participants are satisfied with their LLND skills training outcomes. • 80% of non-training participants are satisfied with how co-design, self-evaluation and action learning, and the LLND skills training model, have been implemented and managed. 	<p>The overall approach is sound and is consistent with performance management approaches in assessing the quality of service of a program. The Department should assess whether 80% is an appropriate percentage to use, as outcomes are heavily contingent on the context of the community. The Department may wish to exclude a percentage to measure core KPIs altogether.</p>	<p>The KPIs are appropriate. However, the Department should consider an additional measurement that relates to whether participants are satisfied with the training / program. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of training participants that were satisfied with the training • % of participants that felt that the program was accessible and that they were well supported 	<p>The Department should consider and co-design a more innovative approach to participant consultation that is fit for purpose and a culturally appropriate measure of surveying participants. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A verbal survey where trainers administer the survey and log the results onto the system. 	<p>The Department should collect this data from consultations with participants.</p>
<p> Milestone completion</p> <p><i>Measured by...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of milestones are completed by the milestone dates specified in the contract. 	<p>The overall approach is sound.</p>	<p>The KPI and measurements are appropriate to use.</p>	<p>The Department should continue to work with providers to ensure that they can complete the milestone plans through an iterative process.</p>	<p>The Department should collect this data from the providers</p>

Performance management – Core KPIs (3/3)

The Department’s approach to measuring reporting is sound. However, there is a lack of information on how the Department is measuring the accuracy of data provided.

<p>Core KPIs</p>	<p><i>Was the overall approach sound?</i></p>	<p><i>If so, were the KPIs and measurement appropriate?</i></p>	<p><i>How should the Department measure the KPIs?</i></p>	<p><i>Where should the Department collect the data from?</i></p>
<p> Reporting timeliness</p> <p><i>Measured by...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of reports are submitted by the submission deadline. 	<p>The overall approach is sound and is a standard feature of contracts.</p>	<p>More weighting should be given to the other KPIs as the Department should avoid an overly compliance-driven approach to reporting.</p>	<p>The Department should work closely with providers to understand whether there are any issues in meeting reporting timelines, and if so, work together to provide solutions.</p>	<p>The Department should collect this data from the providers.</p>
<p> Reporting accuracy</p> <p><i>Measured by...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95% of data submitted is accurate. 	<p>This KPI is a standard feature of contracts, though there is more information needed on how the Department will validate the accuracy of the data with providers.</p>	<p>The 95% target is not feasible and is difficult to validate in practice, given all the providers struggled to report data accurately and comprehensively. The threshold for a feasible percentage to achieve this KPI is largely circumstantial due to the capability of the provider, their motivations, and the community context.</p>	<p>The Department should consider whether it should have an increased role in collecting and validating report data to fill the capability gaps of providers. The Department could consider doing strategic spot checks on the accuracy of the data. Where there are concerns, the Department should work with providers to improve their data accuracy.</p>	<p>The Department should look to independently spot check the accuracy of information of information from providers through reports. For example, the Department could look to develop a set of criteria to measure data quality that can be used to assess the data given by the provider.</p>

Performance management – Community KPIs

The Department should continue supporting providers with community KPIs and play less of a compliance role to better empower providers to set their own measure of success.

Community KPIs

Examples of community KPIs that providers have identified in consultation with the community include:

South Australia

- Sewing project: the development of sewing skills that have the capacity to assist community members to obtain potential employment.
- Licence preparation project: the community identified barriers to obtaining and maintaining drivers' licences.

Western Australia

- To help people feel psychologically safe to learn.
- To capture a participant's confidence in their ability to learn.

Queensland

- To increase the use and sharing of First languages in the community.

Northern Territory

- 60% graduation rate per intake
- 10-15 participants per intake
- Improved self-management and self-confidence in participants

Was the overall approach sound?



The inclusion of community KPIs into the program's performance management framework supports the agency and self-determination of communities. However, the Department should acknowledge that this may cause 'scope creep' away from the primary outcomes of increasing LLND skills in remote communities.

It is unclear whether community KPIs are formally codified and the role that they play in performance management. The Department should consider that community KPIs should not supersede core KPIs but should serve to supplement the core KPIs. If the Department were to continue to include community KPIs, the purpose of these KPIs should be well defined, including how they will be used for performance management (if at all).

If so, were the KPIs appropriate?



There are a diversity of community KPIs as they reflect the unique context of each remote community.

We have observed that some community KPIs are related to specific projects within the community. Several of the projects are unrelated to LLND skills (e.g. Assistance in obtaining personal identification documents), while some are tangentially related to LLND skills (e.g. LFL and DAC have KPIs that relate to a participant's level of confidence and pride in their abilities).

The Department should better define the scope of community KPIs. Specifically:

- Whether there is a threshold for a community KPI
- Whether a community KPI must be directly related to improving LLND skills or can be used for – for example – general engagement

How should the Department measure the KPIs?



More clarity can be provided on how the providers are planning to measure these KPIs, as community KPIs are circumstantial.

The Department should negotiate with the provider on how they will be measured while allowing communities to set their own measures of success. This will empower providers and create a sense of autonomy and agency in their work and approach to performance management.

Where should the Department collect the data from?



The Department should collect this data from providers, in consultation with their community members. For example, Corporate Culcha plans to measure its community KPI using analytics on the platform and by interviews with its community's Elders and participants.

Funding arrangements

The Australian Government should provide funding in a way that provides ownership and certainty to communities, while ensuring that the program delivers value for money.

Program principle: *Funding arrangements that enable providers to successfully implement their pilot models, while ensuring value for money*

What is the approach?

Is this appropriate?

The Department:



Agreed overall block funding amounts with each individual provider based on estimated demand and costs for the pilot as a whole.

Provided certainty to providers and communities that government was supporting the pilot in full. Calculating overall block funding amounts based on estimated demand and costs is an appropriate starting point, noting that this can be adjusted in the future.



Makes incremental payments to providers in arrears on the completion of agreed milestones.

Keeps providers accountable and enables the Department to oversee the pilots. However, regular milestones during the testing phase did create an administrative burden, which may have taken provider attention away from effectively testing their models.



Set milestones that are related to implementation deliverables, rather than pilot outputs or outcomes.

Incentivises providers to follow best practice implementation practices, which contributes to pilot success. This is appropriate for the testing phase, but less appropriate for an ongoing, established model.

Approach is appropriate

Approach is somewhat appropriate

3. Appendices

Appendix A: Partnership with Yarning

Evaluation partnership with Yarning

Yarning, an Indigenous-owned and operated consultancy, played a lead role in engaging with pilot participants and communities. Yarning also ensured our communication and fieldwork tools were culturally appropriate.



Who Yarning is

Yarning is a 100% Indigenous-owned and operated consultancy who have extensive experience engaging with diverse communities, including Indigenous and remote communities.

- Their mission is to actively reduce Indigenous disadvantage, by promoting and supporting Indigenous engagement and participating the right to self-determination using culturally appropriate practices and processes.
- Yarning has established relationships in Indigenous communities across Australia, and has a proven ability to develop deep, lasting relationships with Traditional Owners and Clan groups.



Why we engaged with Yarning

We recognised how critical engagement with Indigenous communities was to the evaluation, and we sought out a partner that had experience directly engaging with Indigenous communities:

- Yarning has a strong track record in designing effective community and stakeholder engagement strategies that align with best practice community engagement guidelines.
- Yarning has a reputation for delivering culturally safe and responsive engagement processes, including with linguistically diverse groups and in accordance with the discrete cultural protocols of different groups.



Value of Yarning partnership

Yarning ensured that our evaluation was culturally safe and appropriate in the following ways:

- Yarning reviewed our communication and fieldwork tools to ensure they were culturally safe.
- Yarning facilitated a co-design workshop with all four pilot providers which identified outcomes that are important to their communities, identify hypotheses they had about the impact of their pilots, and identified appropriate ways to engage with their communities.
- Yarning directly engaged with participants, elders, and important community members in pilot communities to ensure that they felt valued in the evaluation and that they were engaged appropriately.

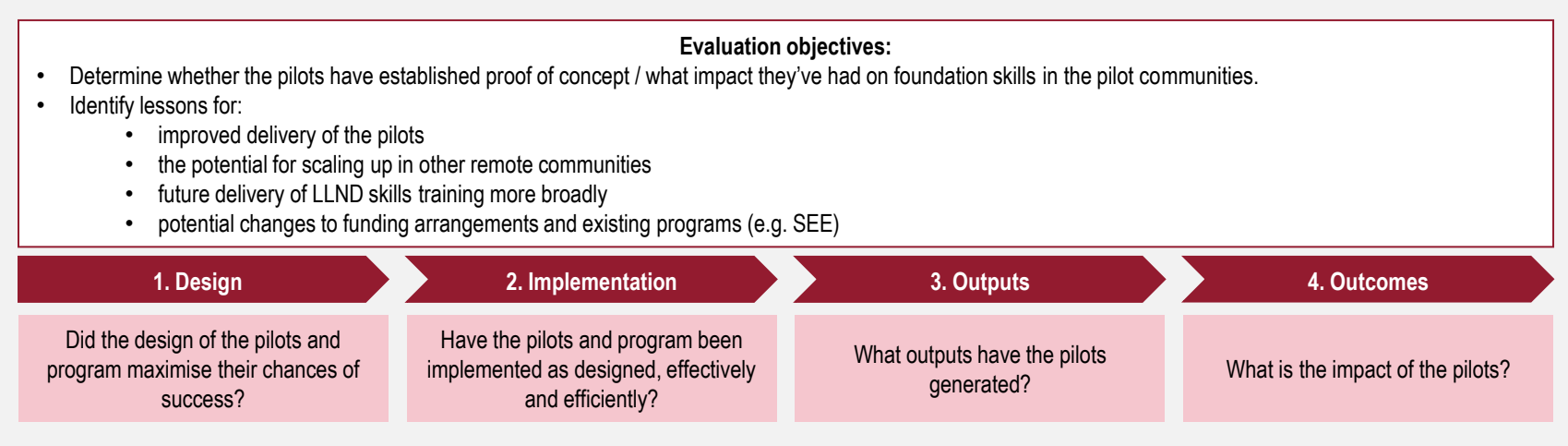
Appendix B: Evaluation framework

Evaluation approach

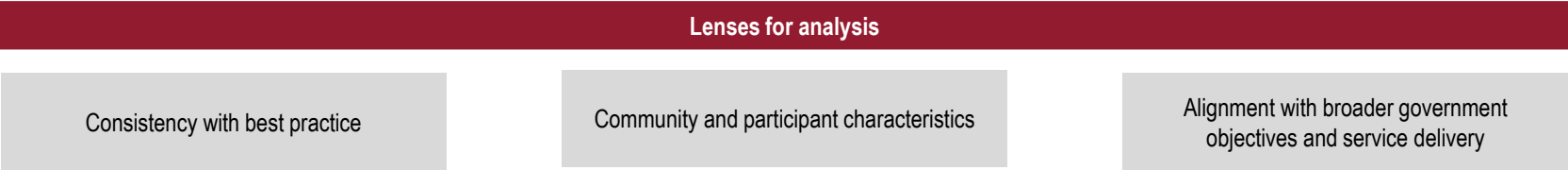
The evaluation aimed to understand whether the pilots successfully improved foundation skills in their communities, and what key factors contributed to this.

The evaluation framework for this project...

- Considers how the pilots and pilot program were designed, implemented, what outputs they produced and how those outputs have translated into outcomes:



- Is framed by three different lenses for analysis that will help us understand whether the pilots successfully improved foundation skills in their communities:



Evaluation framework

Evaluation objectives:

- Determine whether pilots have established proof of concept / what impact they've had on foundation skills in the pilot communities.
- Identify lessons for: improved delivery of the pilots; the potential for scaling up in other remote communities; future delivery of LLND skills training more broadly; potential changes to funding arrangements and existing programs (e.g. SEE).

1. Design

Did the design of the pilots and program maximise their chances of success?

Program level

Pilot objectives and provider procurement:

- Did the pilots have clear and consistent objectives, aligned with the pilot theory of change? Did these objectives align with other relevant government programs? (e.g. SEE, CDP)
- What was the procurement model? (i.e. REOI / workshop / RFQ criteria) What was the rationale?

Pilot management:

- What was the pilot management model? (inc. governance, roles / responsibilities, partnerships, sub-contracting, staffing, resourcing, budgeting, KPIs and monitoring / reporting) What was the rationale?

Pilot level

Pilot design

- How did the Department set parameters for and support the design of the pilots? (e.g. planning templates, co-design toolkit)
- How did the providers co-design the pilots in practice and tailor them to the local context?
- What were the design features of each pilot? (inc. LLND skills training and assessment model, wrap around support, post-training pathways and evaluation / action learning)
- What was the rationale for these features?
- Did design draw on local expertise and comparable programs?

2. Implementation

Have the pilots and program been implemented as designed, effectively and efficiently?

Program level

Provider procurement:

- Did the RFQ workshops produce better quality responses and align expectations?
- How many REOI / RFQ responses were received? How were they assessed? What were the characteristics of providers who responded to RFQ / were contracted?

Pilot management:

- Were Pilots managed as designed? What were the key enablers / barriers?

Pilot level

General:

- Were pilots implemented as co-designed? What were the key enablers / barriers? (e.g. community context)
- Were pilots delivered on schedule and on budget? What were the main cost drivers?
- Did the design of the pilots change as they were implemented and over time? Why / why not?
- How was data collected and used?

Pilot delivery:

- How were participants recruited and engaged in training?
- How were stakeholders engaged in practice? (inc. working with other service providers to fill service gaps, with local employers and providers to leverage local job opportunities)
- What did LLND skills training and assessment models look like in practice? How did they differ?
- How did providers deliver wrap around support and post-training pathways / support?
- Were pilots subject to continuous improvement through performance assessments, self-evaluation and action learning?
- How did providers develop exit and transition strategies?

3. Outputs

What outputs have the pilots generated?

Training outputs:

- How many people participated in / completed training? Did this align with expected numbers?
- What were the profiles of these completing cohorts?
- What were the profiles of non-completers?
- Did participation / completion rates improve over time?
- How many local community members were trained as mentors, trainers or champions?

Post-training outputs:

- How many post-training pathways and transition strategies were implemented?

4. Outcomes

What is the impact of the pilots?

Foundational skills improvement

- Have participant LLND skills improved, consistent with the Australian Core Skills Framework and Digital Literacy Skills Framework?
- Have participants increased their confidence in their LLND skills?

Ongoing participant engagement and participation

- Have participants engaged in work, further study and / or do they participate more actively in society?

Holistic improvement in participant wellbeing

- Have participants' cultural, social and emotional wellbeing improved?
- Do participants enjoy higher levels of empowerment and self-actualisation?

Local community engagement and participation

- Has there been strong engagement of the local community (individuals, services, organisations both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) in the pilot?
- Has there been improvement in the capacity and economic development of the community and community members?

Lenses for analysis

Consistency with best practice

Community and participant characteristics

Alignment with broader government objectives and service delivery

Development of outcomes for the evaluation framework (1/2)

We have strived to take a culturally responsive approach to defining what success looks like for participants and communities in the pilots, in the context of the evaluation.

We have taken what we heard from providers in the co-design workshop...

Providers agreed that the definition of success in the pilots needs to:^{1,2}



Capture improvement in the LLND skills of participants

Outcomes relating to LLND skills are at the foundation of what success means to providers.



Include a holistic view of success

Improvement in the wellbeing, development, engagement and participation of participants and communities is key as both an enabler and outcome of LLND skills improvement. These 'softer' aspects of success are just as important as actual improvement in the LLND skills of participants.



Be both specific and broad to support meaningful measurement of outcomes, for all communities and participants.

The evaluation framework needs to recognise that success can look different for each pilot community or participant.

... and supplemented this with key Indigenous frameworks and strategies

Indigenous Evaluation Strategy 2020³

Evaluation of programs affecting Indigenous peoples should centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, perspectives, priorities and knowledges.

Indigenous Wellbeing – A framework for Governments' Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Activities⁴

Wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities is closely interlinked with cultural heritage – it exists through a continuation of cultural knowledges and practices.

National Strategic Framework for Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023⁵

Social and emotional wellbeing includes connection to seven overlapping domains across body, mind and emotions, family and kin, community, culture, country, and spirituality and ancestors.

Closing the Gap Targets and Outcomes 2020⁶

A holistic understanding of outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities is also recognised in Closing the Gap. This includes:

- High levels of social and emotional wellbeing
- Strong, supported and flourishing cultures and languages
- Strong economic participation and development
- Informed decision-making regarding their own lives

1. Feedback from pilot providers in the November 2021 co-design workshop.

2. Written feedback from pilot providers on the proposed RCP evaluation framework.

3. Productivity Commission (2020), Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.

4. Vicki Grieves (2007), Indigenous Wellbeing - A framework for Governments' Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Activities, prepared for the Department of Environment and Conservation NSW.

5. Commonwealth of Australia (2017), National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-2023.

6. National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020).

Development of outcomes for the evaluation framework (2/2)

We have used our definition of success to propose a set of holistic outcomes that centre on participants' and communities' goals and aspirations generally. The Department may wish to use these outcomes in considering the potential objectives of a future adult foundational skills training program for remote communities.

We are proposing a set of holistic outcomes that center on participants' and communities' goals and aspirations generally, including:

Foundational skills improvement

- Have participant LLND skills improved, consistent with the Australian Core Skills Framework and Digital Literacy Skills Framework?
- Have participants increased their confidence in their LLND skills?

Ongoing participant engagement and participation

- Have participants engaged in work, further study and / or do they participate more actively in society?

Holistic improvement in participant wellbeing

- Have participants' cultural, social and emotional wellbeing improved?
- Do participants enjoy higher levels of empowerment and self-actualisation?

Local community engagement and participation

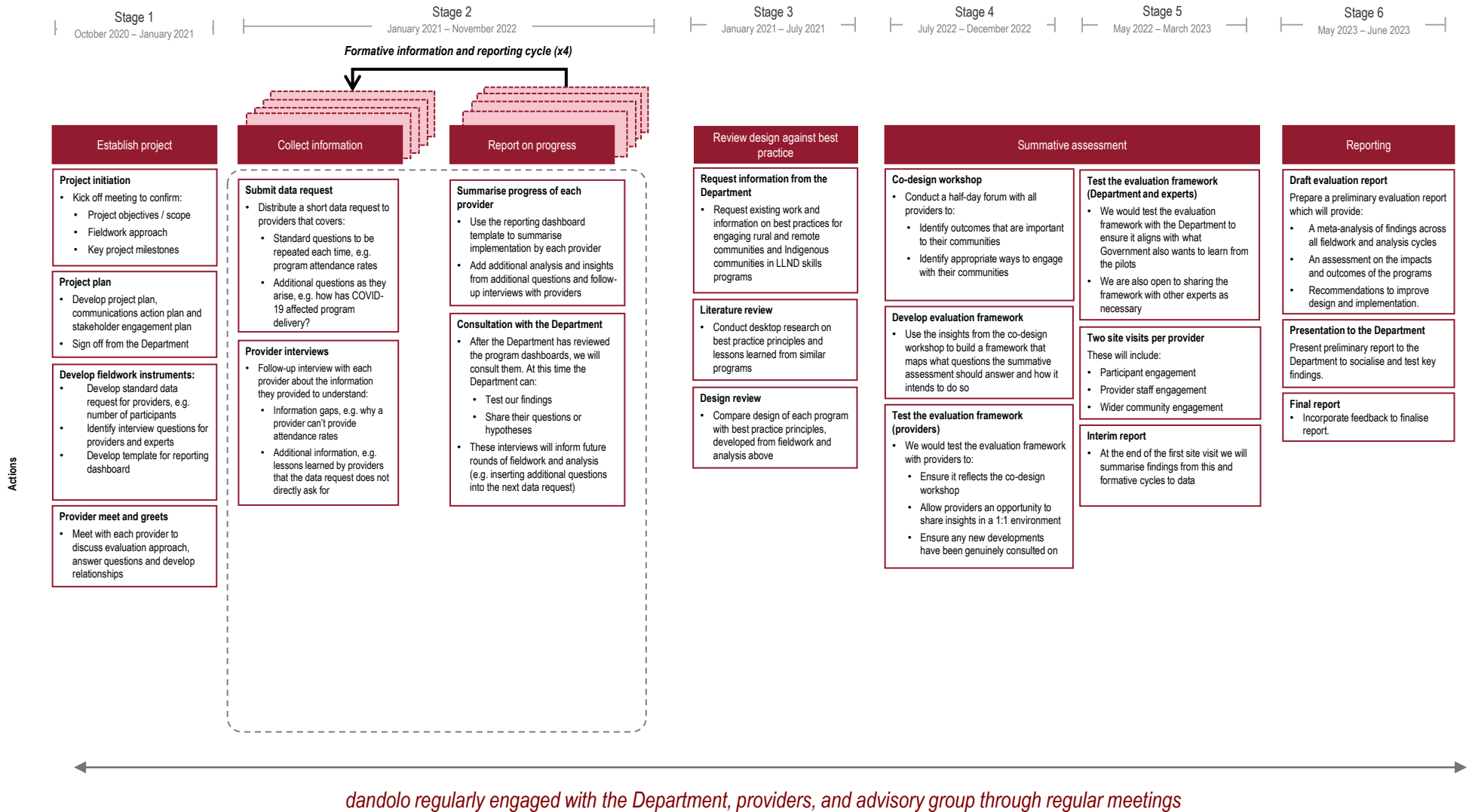
- Has there been strong engagement of the local community (individuals, services, organisations both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) in the pilot?
- Has there been improvement in the capacity and economic development of the community and community members?



We note these additional outcomes go beyond the main program objective of improving LLND skills outcomes. The development of outcomes for our evaluation framework considers other outcome areas that go beyond LLND skills improvement.

Appendix C: Methodology

Methodology diagram



Data limitations

This report relies partly on quantitative data that has three key limitations: it is cumulative until March 2023; self-reported; and incomplete. We have attempted to mitigate these limitations through our own fieldwork.

Cumulative to a point

This report is based on cumulative quantitative and qualitative data received up to March 2023.

We expect that pilots would have had further enrolments, commencements, completions and outcomes since this time.

Data self reported

The findings in this report are partly based on quantitative data that was self-reported by providers on a quarterly basis.

We have relied on the Department to validate data accuracy. We have mitigated the risk of data inaccuracy through quarterly interviews with providers to validate our analysis and additional site visits for each pilot, where our partner Yarning engaged with stakeholders on the ground.

In some cases, we have identified some data inconsistencies, which are noted in this report.

Incomplete data

A substantial amount of self-reported quantitative data across the pilots is incomplete. For example, some pilots might not report on a data point at all or there might be data 'patchiness' across a participant cohort.

Data incompleteness was particularly problematic in relation to final assessment data, which is key to determining whether LLND skills outcomes are improving.

We have mitigated the risk of incomplete data through quarterly interviews with providers to validate our analysis and additional site visits for each pilot, where our partner Yarning engaged with stakeholders on the ground. We have also used proxy measures to 'fill in the gaps' where appropriate, as explained and justified in various parts of this report (for example, using participant confidence to assess the likelihood that LLND skills outcomes may be improving).

Appendix D: Pilot profiles

South Australia pilot design

EyrePlus approach to wrap-around support is deeply embedded in the model, and assessments have been iterated based on participant feedback.

Pilot and provider context

Pilot location

The pilot is delivered across five communities along the far West Coast Region of South Australia: Ceduna, Yalata, Koonibba, Oak Valley (Maralinga Tjarutja) and Scotdesco.

Location context

Key employment opportunities in the communities are local mines, agriculture, and tourism.

Provider context

EyrePlus (EP) is the local CDP provider in the region and has strong links to services and organisations throughout the communities.

AETS is the RTO and delivers a variety of training alongside the pilot.

Ownership of EP is shared by: Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation, Koonibba Community Aboriginal Corporation, Scotdesco Aboriginal Corporation, Yalata Anangu Aboriginal Corporation, Oak Valley Aboriginal Corporation and Asuria.

EP runs other programs alongside the pilot, each operating from the central building hub. These are a Community Development Program, and a Business Incubator pilot.

Delivery arrangements*

EP is the core provider, working in collaboration with other organisations to provide wraparound support and student services.

EP benefits from their role as a CDP provider and RTO, and the associated access to potential participants.

Co-design and community engagement**

A co-design working group was established to inform appropriate wraparound supports, recruitment, training content, and post training pathways.

EP worked with TANDI (training and inductions) to identify learning modules relevant to identified community needs.

Recruitment and training model*

Recruitment model

- The training plan is designed to deliver to a maximum of 60 participants at a time.
- Recruitment is driven through leveraging existing relationships in the community, the co-design working group, and EP's role as the local CDP provider.

Training model

- 10 hours in person, 5 hours learning at home.
- Combination of 1:1 lessons and group learning in person.
- Accredited training opportunities are made available at multiple points throughout the training program, to allow for flexibility for participants.
- Participants complete an "about me" book during their training using the skills they learn.
- Learners are enrolled in a mix of accredited and non-accredited units of their choosing.

Wrap-around and assessment model*

Wrap-around support model

- The model is very flexible, reflecting an understanding of cultural, and environmental issues that may impact participation in the pilot for their communities.
- An assessment of needs and development of support plan is to be conducted for each participant at enrolment.
- EP can provide referrals and services to participants given their established role in the community. The partnership with Ceduna Aboriginal Support Services and other SEE providers was designed so participants are fully supported.

Assessment model

- Participants are assessed at:
 - Commencement,
 - Completion, and
 - Progressively at the 3-, 6- and 12-month mark.
- Assessments are conducted through a range of mechanisms, including direct observation, structured ACSF assessments, questioning, review, and third-party feedback.

Queensland pilot design

The QLD pilot uses a Hub and Spoke model to deliver LLND skills learning to participants.

Pilot and provider context



Pilot location

The pilot is delivered in the Doomadgee community in northern Queensland.



Location context

Key employment opportunities in the community include local stores, mines, and community groups.



Provider context

Corporate Culcha (CC) is an Indigenous-owned and operated company, delivering in partnership with My Pathway (Community Development Programme (CDP) and wraparound support provider), and ALNF (literacy specialist).

- ALNF are not based in Doomadgee but provide daily remote support and fly into the community every 1-2 months to help train mentors, build relationships, and do other case-management work. My Pathway is based in Doomadgee with Project Liaison based in Cairns.
- CC operates all around Australia with a focus on Indigenous workforce development and providing services to assist other organisations to engage and work with Indigenous Australians

Delivery arrangements*

CC is the core delivery organisation, who are supported by My Pathway and ALNF.

- My Pathway provide wraparound services and case management.
- ALNF co-designed, delivered the LLND skills training model, and assist in delivering the program.

Co-design and community engagement*

Pilot model was co-designed with the Doomadgee community and facilitation of the consortium, drawing on the expertise of the ALNF including help with identifying what success looks like, a common vision of the future and achieving growth goals, current LLND skills levels, and how best to ask and answer these questions

Recruitment and training model*

Recruitment model

- The pilot aimed to have at least 90 active participants at any one time. It was planned that participants would be referred to the program from a range of community organisations. It was expected the main source of recruitment would be through the CDP mutual obligation requirements.
- Mentors were planned to be recruited via existing relationships to My Pathway staff, with high performing participants then moving into mentor roles. This was designed to support retention and assist with post pilot transitions.

Training model

- Approximately 4 hours of direct learning per week
- The pilot used a Hub and Spoke model. Mentors would first deliver LLND skills learning in the classroom before participants then complete activities and learning in community / real world contexts (CDP activities) to put learning into practice.
- The pilot also used a local language app as a way of improving their literacy skills and preserving the local language.

Wrap-around and assessment model*

Wrap-around support model

The approach to providing wraparound support was to:

- Establish impact of non-training issues and work with mentors / services to develop support plans at enrolment
- Identify and engage wraparound services in the local community
- Monitor post training pathways for participants

Food insecurity and transport to the training location were identified as a barrier to participation in the co-design phase. As a result, My Pathway have a mini-bus available to pick up and drop off participants, as well as catering provided for days that training was on.

Assessment model

- Participants had a baseline, midline, and exit assessments
- Delivery partner ALNF designed a mixture of assessment methods to allow participants to demonstrate skills learned during the course through routine assessments.
- In addition to the formal ACSF assessments, ALNF used questioning, portfolios, and third-party reports to measure LLND skills.

Western Australia pilot design

The WA pilot uses a combination of in person and app-based learning to develop their LLND skills.

Pilot and provider context



Pilot location

The pilot is delivered across 4 communities along the Dampier Peninsula on the northern coast of Western Australia: Djarindjin, Lombadina, Ardyloon, and Beagle Bay.



Location context

The main employment options for community members are the airport, tourism (i.e., boat tours), and the local general store.

Several participants are already employed at the airport at the time of enrolment and used the pilot to upskill to gain a promotion.



Provider context

Delivered via collaboration between DAC and Business Foundations.

- DAC is the local Aboriginal Corporation, operating in Djarindjin since 1985 and is 100% owned by community members.
- Business Foundations is a not-for-profit supporting business development in WA based in Perth.

Delivery arrangements*

- Business Foundations undertakes the assessments, travels to community quarterly to conduct assessments and provides online support to local trainers.
- DAC provides the training location and assists with enrolments, building community buy in and linking participants to employment pathways.

Co-design and community engagement*

Design was building on earlier work undertaken in 2019 which was designed in close collaboration with the community to identify the best delivery methods, build relationships, and understand the LLND skills goals of the community. This was then scaled up with the development of the training app and VR technology.

Recruitment and training model*

Recruitment model

- The CEO of DAC flagged that their initial target of recruiting participants was too high. They reduced their target to be more reasonable due to the program being voluntary and the community being apprehensive of this type of program.
- Their recruitment strategy relies on word of mouth from community elders and participants to promote the pilot.

Training model

- One in-person session planned per week. Participants have a one-on-one session with the trainer which are completely tailored to the participant's LLND skills level and learning goals e.g. to support vocational goals.
- In person learning is to be supplemented by app-based learning that would be completed in the participants' own time.
- Virtual Reality (VR) to be developed for participants to practice their LLND skills and build confidence in potential roles. The VR models familiar places within the community (e.g. a VR environment designed to model being the shop attendant in the local general store).

Wrap-around and assessment model*

Wrap-around support model

Several mechanisms were designed to support participants throughout training:

- Flexible training delivery: to allow participants to work around their own schedules, participants were to be given windows when the trainer's available to come to the facility when it best suits the participant.
- Trainers travel to participants' community to deliver lessons.
- Access to free childcare services for participants if required.
- Catering provided during lessons.
- DAC planned to include a referral service leveraging their close links to other services in community.

Assessment model

- Baseline and progress assessments which are conducted quarterly
- A combination of direct observation and one-to-one assessments in the face-to-face environment while using the training app analytics to track progress.

Northern Territory pilot design

Literacy for Life uses a campaign model that has been adapted to the Tennant Creek community.

Pilot and provider context



Pilot location

The pilot is delivered in a single location in the Tennant Creek community in the NT.



Location context

The main employment options for community members are tourism, hospitality, mining, and community and professional services.



Provider context

- Literacy for Life (LFL) is an Aboriginal organisation, emerging from an original steering group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and education leaders within the community-controlled sector.
- LFL supports Aboriginal communities to deliver the adult literacy campaign “Yes, I Can”, which is a model developed internationally, to communities in a variety of locations – from remote, regional, to urban.

Delivery arrangements*

The pilot is co-governed with local Campaign steering groups and local staff such as:

- Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Rise-Ngurratjuta - CDP provider
- Campaign Working Group

Co-design and community engagement*

Co-design occurs throughout LFL campaign delivery across the three phases.

There is a Campaign Working Group in place to help contextualise lessons, address retention issues, advise of potential cultural events (e.g., Sorry Business) and help develop the curriculum for the final delivery phase.

Recruitment and training model*

Recruitment model

- Aim to onboard 6 intakes, each of approximately 20 participants.
- The model for recruitment and training was cohort focused where groups are onboarded at the same time, and progress through training together, before the next intake is recruited.
- Each intake has 2 cohorts, split by gender, in response to feedback during co-design that culturally it is inappropriate for men and women to learn together.

Training model

LLND skills training delivery is designed to be split into 2 key phases:

Yes – I can!:

- 8 hours per week over 12-15 weeks
- Local facilitators deliver learning both directly and through a DVD
- Class-based LLND skills training sessions aimed to build participants' literacy skills in particular

Post-Literacy

- 100+ hours of delivery 3 to 4 days weekly over 12 weeks
- Aims to apply the learning to real-world contexts, identify post-learning pathways, deepen critical awareness and address non-training barriers

Wrap-around and assessment model*

Wrap-around support model

Wraparound supports identified in design include:

- 'Warm referrals' to services as needed
- Childcare tuition and referrals to playgroups / mothers' groups
- Transportation to and from class
- Meals provided at training
- Legal aid referrals
- In class health checks by Aboriginal health services
- Mental health first aid
- Housing assistance
- Assistance with Centrelink and jobs providers

Assessment model

- Internal assessment:** Week 10 of phase 2 progress is assessed through a series of tasks and is approached as part of the learning process.
- External assessment:** Participants are assessed at entry to the campaign and at exit.

Assessment process is 'invisible', so it is embedded or integrated within the routine teaching and learning process of lessons. This is designed so that classrooms maintain a positive and supportive dynamic.

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**The following sections refer only to the design of the pilots, but it does not reflect how the pilot may have been implemented in practice.*