



ASIC
Australian Securities &
Investments Commission



Financial Services Industry Workshop

Summary document

Wednesday 19 June 2024



Servicing First Nations communities with a focus on culture,
community and engagement



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Background

The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) published its [Indigenous Financial Services Framework](#) in February 2023. The Framework outlines Key Learnings relating to First Nations peoples' access to and engagement with the Australian financial system. These learnings have been tested and confirmed by First Nations consumers and communities as important concepts to be acknowledged and understood as part of positive change.

ASIC is committed to working towards the Framework's long-term outcomes. We draw on the Key Learnings, through our own work and through collaboration with stakeholders, to support positive financial outcomes for First Nations peoples. This includes ongoing engagement through dedicated streams, namely:

- **ASIC's Indigenous Advisory Group**, which ensures that First Nations consumers' needs, experiences and perspectives inform our work, and that ASIC is aware of emerging and systemic challenges experienced by First Nations consumers when engaging with the financial system,
- **Cross-Government Engagement Group**, which includes a range of federal government agencies whose priorities, functions, and responsibilities align with the Framework's outcomes, and the objectives of which include identifying opportunities to collaborate, share information and learnings, and leverage each other's activities where objectives align, and
- the **financial services industry**, including industry associations, to discuss priorities and activities of First Nations consumers and hold ASIC-facilitated workshops for industry representatives on key themes that are important to First Nations consumers.

The organisations that attended this workshop are listed in the [Appendix](#).

Staying in touch

If you would like to contact ASIC's Indigenous Outreach Program, please email us at Indigenous.fs.framework@asic.gov.au. We look forward to keeping you up to date as we continue this important work.



Summary of workshop sessions

ASIC opening remarks

Alan Kirkland, Commissioner, ASIC

Mr Kirkland highlighted service provision to First Nations communities as the workshop theme, with the objective to facilitate shared learnings, encourage collaboration and foster creative initiatives for how stakeholders can provide more accessible and effective engagement channels for First Nations communities. Mr Kirkland outlined the increased focus in recent years on the importance of providing in-person services in remote locations, not only financial but all forms of services.

For remote First Nations communities, accessing financial services in person can be challenging. Mr Kirkland provided an example of the substantial distance that remote consumers may have to travel and the myriad external factors – whether social, cultural or economic – that might affect their capacity to do so. He also noted First Nations peoples' experience of financial exclusion can be further compounded by the increased shift to online services. Any support for the financial inclusion of First Nations peoples must recognise these unique circumstances and experiences.

Mr Kirkland suggested this workshop is a timely opportunity for all participants to think about the provision of accessible services to First Nations consumers, particularly in regional and remote Australia. This includes designing and providing services for community members that reflect the needs, wants and circumstances of communities.

Servicing remote communities: Banking and superannuation needs

Graeme Marrinan and Lina Zocaró – Australian Retirement Trust

Debra Mansfield and Bridget Inder – AustralianSuper

Angela MacMillan and Cody Milnes – Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Grace Lewis – Westpac Banking Corporation

This panel session focused on sharing approaches and insights about the provision of existing services to remote First Nations communities, including the steps involved in the development and what on-the-ground engagement looks like.

Panel members shared best practice for developing and providing meaningful services in remote locations:

- Keep customers as the priority in all approaches and activities.
- Gather insights on customer experiences – from information and data your organisation holds internally, but also by listening to customer experiences. You should be aware of knowledge gaps that can occur between what customers are *actually experiencing* on the ground and compare that to the *perceptions* of how processes are rolling out.
- Use available data about customer locations to be informed about locations suitable for remote service provision and where an on-the-ground presence may be beneficial.
- Do your homework to understand the region and customers' circumstances before rolling out activities. For example, learn about the primary languages spoken in the areas you're engaging with and appropriately adapt key messages and communications.
- Listen to experiences and needs – leave your expectations at home; be genuine and humble.

- Plan activities in response to community need and tangible outcomes, rather than short, light-touch engagement, which can cause community harm. This means developing an approach based on community feedback and input to avoid being perceived as 'seagulls' and 'white ants' that fly in and out.
- Ensure tangible outcomes delivered on the ground reflect what the community is asking for – for example, visit only when invited – and deliver services and education on topics that have been requested.
- Allow organisation representatives from front line teams to be on the ground in local regions – in particular those involved in Indigenous call lines and local service delivery (e.g. bank branches).
- Impart a responsibility on representatives involved in on-the-ground activities to advocate from within the organisation and encourage community engagement to evolve into real change after the event.
- Engage with local third-party organisations on the ground and like-minded organisations ahead of community visits to be aware of logistics and local supports, and to ensure those wrap-around services are engaged holistically with the community.
- Make sure you do what you say you will do. This builds trust and strong relationships for future activities – *communities always remember*.

Panel members also gave examples of the types of assistance and support that can be offered as part of the services provided in remote locations:

- Assist with banking inquiries like opening or closing accounts, in-person identification verification issues and bank card or PIN replacements.
- Identify complex organisational processes resulting in significant challenges in remote locations, then apply flexible approaches where available. For example, accessing and receiving death certificates can be challenging in remote locations. Where a death certificate is not a legislative requirement, consider alternative options that could assist in accessing death benefits.
- Provide face-to-face education, either one on one with individual customers or as part of sessions facilitated more broadly. One panel member highlighted that in-

person interactions allow physical communications like body language to help communicate key messages or topics to First Nations customers.

- Flag customers on internal systems to ensure future engagements are directed to dedicated First Nations channels that are resourced to provide culturally appropriate and sensitive services (e.g. Indigenous call lines).

Panel members were also asked about feedback sought and received after delivering services in remote locations and what insights that gave to the organisation:

- Some sought and recorded customers' stories and experiences, which were expressed in the customers' own way, then shared those stories across the organisation after an event. This was a powerful way to spread awareness and messages on topics covered during the activity.
- Community members were empowered by affirming that their stories and feedback are important and valuable. This builds trust and is important for making First Nations customers feel valued.
- The organisations had an opportunity to see and hear customers' challenges firsthand, identify areas requiring further internal training and education and recognise the need for remote service provision.

This will inform future activities, but also is a source of information to share with decision makers on challenges and potential solutions.



Aboriginal Justice Open Days: Creating access to services for First Nations communities in Western Australia

Dennis Hodges and Simon Keenan – Department of Justice Western Australia (DoJWA)

Brian Smith and Vanessa Hansen – Government Employees Superannuation Board

Annette Morgan – Curtin Tax Clinic

This panel session focused on [Aboriginal Justice Open Days](#) coordinated by DoJWA as an example of regular, coordinated on-the-ground service delivery that provides holistic and tangible outcomes.

The open days are held all over Western Australia to provide a central location for official documentation and administrative services that can otherwise take months to resolve. Agencies such as the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, the Sheriff's Office, Centrelink, Department of Transport, Legal Aid WA and the Australian Electoral Commission assist during the open days. Attendees are helped with issues involving documentation such as driver's licences, birth certificates, tax returns, fines, Medicare and concession cards, and provided broad assistance to access legal advice and support.

The panel provided some insights into the logistics and overall aim of the open days to deliver outcomes that are aligned with the needs identified by communities. These insights included:

- identifying locations for open days and responding to the community's circumstances (e.g. unexpected weather events, increased need for assistance)
- inviting service providers to collaborate and be involved in open days based on identified gaps (e.g. insights from available data such as limited available homes, percentage of residents with outstanding fines), and



- recognising the need and benefits of continuous engagement ahead of the event and being aware of changes – the coordination role involves a comprehensive planning process with a large amount of community and stakeholder engagement and being adaptable to account for possible changes that may occur due to Sorry Business, weather and up-coming events or dates of significance for the community.

Panel members spoke of the benefits from their participation in these events, including:

- assisting and meeting community members where they are at
- recognising that First Nations consumers may have a limited understanding of the benefit of a particular financial product, which provides an opportunity to explain the benefits and value of products like superannuation – this information may then be shared across families and communities
- applying learnings from these events more broadly across other community engagement, particularly where there are barriers to engagement and accessibility within the financial system
- understanding that existing barriers can cause frustration and require deep listening and empathy, and taking those experiences back to the organisation to look for opportunities to streamline processes and address administrative frictions
- seeing the importance of face-to-face engagement to develop and understand the financial system that consumers are trying to navigate
- sharing costs of coordinated events, which often means that more can be done together, than can be achieved alone, and
- despite being limited in their ability to regularly return to specific locations, leaving a legacy or implementing education and knowledge that endures.

Dreamtime stories in a modern context

Carolyn Cartwright – MoneyMob Talkabout

During this session, Ms Cartwright shared how MoneyMob Talkabout engages and consults with community successfully. In particular, Ms Cartwright spoke about the strengths-based approach to education to produce tangible outcomes led by First Nations communities. Topics include financial concepts like financial abuse and the effect it can have on community members.

This session focused on MoneyMob Talkabout’s project to produce [two short films](#) titled Wati Tjintilyka – or Grasshopper Man Story – and the Minyma Ngiyari – or Thorny Devil Woman Story – with Anangu people.

Ms Cartwright spoke to this project and its origins in trying to understand how their service could grapple with complex situations of financial abuse that staff were seeing through their service channels. Ms Cartwright voiced that many financial counsellors in urban and larger regional areas are able to refer non-financial counselling matters to other services. However, in the remote communities that MoneyMob services, there are no referral pathways for complex needs such as for people who are involved with financial abuse. In response, Ms Cartwright and her team took a community development approach and drew on the abundance of local knowledge in communities.

The two cultural stories emerged from joint workshops MoneyMob instigated with Anangu community members who were part of an NPY Women’s Council mental health literacy group called ‘Uti Kulintjaku’ (Clear Understanding). The workshops were part of a small project called ‘Healthy Money, Healthy Families, in which MoneyMob shared case studies with the Uti Kulintjaku group and listened to community members talk about the challenges and difficulties of dealing with such scenarios. The Healthy Money, Healthy Families project asked community members to try to imagine alternative and more positive outcomes to the financial abuse scenarios. Interpreters and visual aids were essential to outline the complexities of the discussions. Ms Cartwright noted that many of these conversations involved



connecting Western legal terminology and complex financial concepts to relatable concepts.

While the project did not produce 'answers' as MoneyMob had originally envisaged, in a way it produced something much more culturally relevant; the Uti Kulintjaku group was ultimately able to draw analogies between these old cultural stories and the financial abuse scenarios we were discussing with them.

Ms Cartwright and her team took the next 4 to 5 years to find ways to produce these stories with community members, as MoneyMob did not have any dedicated funding for this purpose. MoneyMob was finally able to produce the stories with additional money received during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

Ms Cartwright shared the power and strength of local representation in having Anangu people tell Anangu stories to spread awareness of lived experiences in the community. Beyond this, Ms Cartwright highlighted the joy and humour that Anangu people found in sharing and acting out these profound messages, and the broader impact it is starting to have for others. MoneyMob Talkabout is using these videos in a training module on financial abuse across the Northern Territory and Western Australia. A number of training participants have already recognised and self-identified that they have been engaging in financially abusive behaviour and have expressed that they want to stop.

Ms Cartwright shared that these types of discussions and stories are extremely personal for people and that the information and their lived experiences must be treated with tact and sensitivity. The pace of work can't be forced or rushed, but instead requires considerable patience and trust in the process. Ms Cartwright highlighted that this work involves the oldest continual culture in the world; these cultures have existing moral frameworks, wisdom and knowledge to consider and apply to these contemporary topics.

MoneyMob Talkabout continues to work with Anangu people to think about how to broaden the impact of these stories.



Appendix: Organisations in attendance

Allianz Australia Insurance Limited	American International Assurance Company (Australia)	Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited	Australian Retirement Trust	AustralianSuper
Australian Taxation Office	Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre	Aware Super
Bank of Queensland	Bendigo and Adelaide Bank	Cbus Super
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	Coral Coast Distributors	Council of Australia Life Insurers
Curtin Tax Clinic	Deloitte Digital	Department of Justice WA
Department of Social Services	Emergency Services and State Super	First Option Bank
Government Employees Superannuation Board	Great Southern Bank	Hannover Life Re of Australasia
Heritage Bank	HESTA	Hostplus
HSBC Bank Australia Limited	IFM Investors	IMB Bank
Indigenous Business Australia	Insignia Financial	Keystart

Liberty Financial	LINK Group	MetLife Australia
MoneyMob Talkabout	National Australia Bank	NGS Super
People's Choice Credit Union	RACQ	Rest Super
Services Australia	Summerland Bank	Super Consumers Australia
Super Members Council	Territory Insurance Office	Treasury
Unity Bank	Westpac Banking Corporation	Zurich Financial Services Australia Limited

