

Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council's

**Domestic and Family Violence Service: a history and
overview**

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ABOUT THIS OVERVIEW

This history and overview has come from a national research project with three independent women's specialist services and the work they do with and for Aboriginal women experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV). A range of methods were employed in the project including literature reviews, surveys, interviews and focus groups. For more information about the project, please consult the final report – Putt, Holder & O'Leary (2016).

One of the partner services was the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC) Domestic and Family Violence Service (DFVS). The purpose of this paper is to document the evolution of the service in more detail than was possible in the main research report. The overview and history of the service draws on published and unpublished material, as well as interviews conducted with staff and stakeholders for the project in 2015. In total, 15 one-on-one interviews with DFVS staff, former staff, and stakeholders informed the research project. Where permission was granted, interviewees are named in this document. For current information and further background on the NPYWC and the DFVS please consult the website – www.npywc.org.

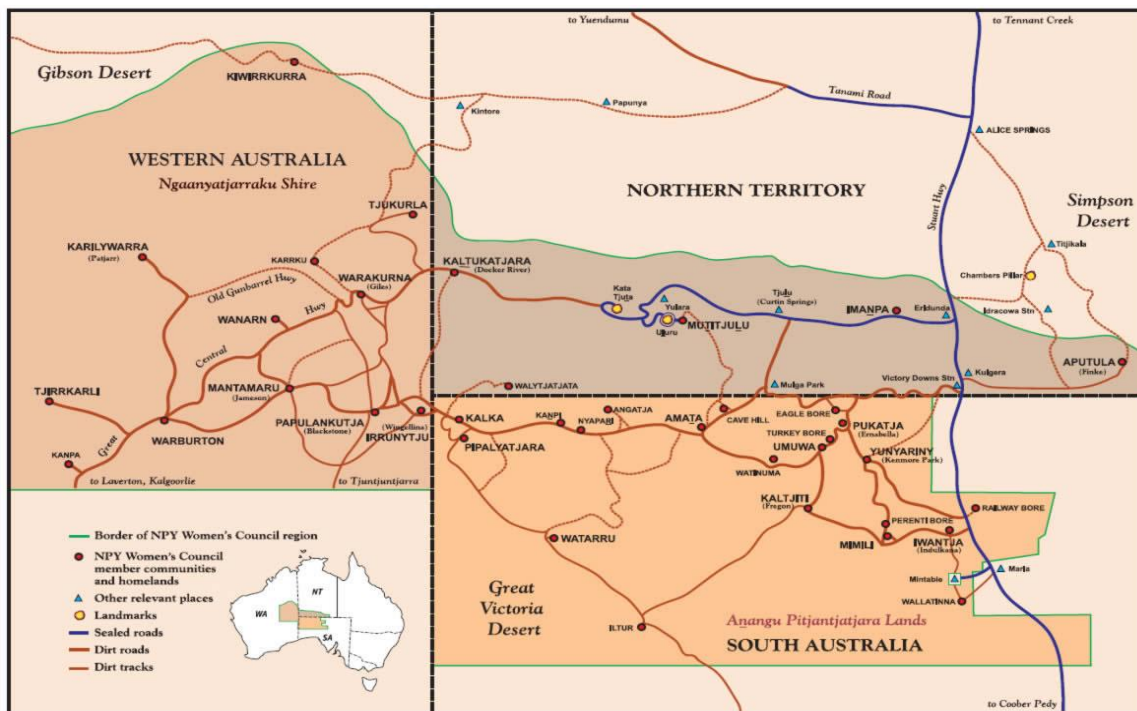
Introduction

The Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC) was established in 1980 largely in response to the South Australian Pitjantjatjara Land Rights struggle in the late 1970s, when women were dissatisfied that they had not been properly included or represented in the land negotiations. The women felt then that their needs and interests were not being adequately met by the Pitjantjatjara Council and resolved to establish their own organisation. The NPYWC website illustrates this through a quote from one of the women who was instrumental in the NPYWC's establishment;

“So I said to the women, ‘Eh, we should become separate.’ I suggested this because we had been told to be quiet and leave. We all had something to say, about caring for our children and families, about our aspirations to have good lives. We wanted to talk about issues to the government. We wanted to talk together to give a strong message. That's why we formed the Women's Council.” Nganyinytja OAM (dec.) (NPYWC Website, <http://www.npywc.org.au/about-npywc/history/> accessed July 15, 2015)

The NPYWC covers an area of about 350,000 square kilometres in the tri-state region of NT, SA and WA (see Figure 1). This area includes 26 remote Aboriginal communities and smaller homelands and it is estimated that approximately 6000 people live in the area with the predominantly Aboriginal population being highly mobile for family, cultural and other reasons. While NPYWC began as an advocacy organisation, it has evolved to become a major provider of human services in the region, working to address the needs that clinical health services cannot, and that government agencies do not directly provide in the area.

Figure 1: Map of the cross-border region of central Australia that shows the boundaries of the area covered by the NPYWC and its services



NPY Women's Council covers an area of 350,000 sq km in the tri-state region of NT, SA and WA. This includes 26 remote Aboriginal Communities and smaller homelands.

Source: accessed from NPYWC website, December 4, 2015

Table 1 summaries key events in the foundation and development of the NPYWC, which is a unique representative body of Aboriginal women that covers the dispersed remote communities in the huge geographical area of central Australia.

Table 1 Brief timeline of NPYWC – a history of advocacy

FIRST DECADE (1980-1990) SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENT VOICE	SECOND DECADE (1990-2000) EMERGENCE OF SERVICE DELIVERY TACKLING HARD ISSUES	THIRD DECADE (2000-present) HIGH PROFILE AS ADVOCATES
<p>Pre 1980 negotiation for the SA Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act, discussion largely dominated by men</p> <p>1980 Women gather to discuss the issue and their desire to be involved in the negotiations = establishment of NPYWC</p> <p>Limited police stationed on NPY lands</p> <p>1983+ numerous actions for land rights & protection of sacred sites</p> <p>1988+ commence campaign for alcohol sales restrictions in outlets close to the NPY communities</p>	<p>1993 Disability Support Project commences (Cth funded)</p> <p>1994 DFVS <i>Atunypa Wiru Minyma Uwankaraku: Good Protection for all Women</i> commences (pilot at Mutitjulu)</p> <p>1994 onwards Carer Respite brokerage, Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Child Nutrition Program, Mobile Childcare, Emotional & Social Wellbeing, Petrol Sniffing project, Youth Programs, Aged Care Support Program, Ngangkari, Intensive Family Support</p> <p>1995 onwards Protocols with NT, WA, SA Police Services on DFV</p> <p>1996 Bolger Review of Cross-Border DV Project</p>	<p>2003 NPY Tri-Jurisdictional Roundtable</p> <p>2003-04 information sharing protocols with police</p> <p>2003 NPYWC Submission on Customary law</p> <p>2005 intro Opal (low aromatic) fuel</p> <p>2007-08 six women died following DV assault</p> <p>2008-09 revised NPYWC Constitution and included Guiding Principles</p> <p>2008-09 Cross-border justice legislation</p> <p>2009 Mulligan Inquiry: NPYWC submission on shelter options</p> <p>2013-current Alice Springs Integrated Response to DFV – Family Safety Framework</p> <p>2014 – APY Family Safety Framework</p> <p>2016 NPYWC DFVS Service Review</p>

NPYWC is incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*, and its governing body is made up of twelve Anangu and Yarnangu women directors from the NPY region, four from each of the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia. The Directors meet at least four times per year and there is a constant flow of information and discussion between the members, the Directors and the senior managers who communicate that information to staff. NPYWC won the 2012 Indigenous Governance Awards presented by Reconciliation Australia and BHP Billiton.

Establishment of NPYWC's domestic violence service

More than a decade after the NPYWC was established, the DFVS commenced as a pilot project. In the early 1990s, women increasingly expressed concerns during NPYWC Executive meetings about violence against women, the poor response from the criminal justice system and the low sentences offenders were receiving. Jane Lloyd was working part time as an anthropologist at the Pitjatantjara Council at the time and attended NPYWC Executive meetings as a part of her role. In 1992, Lloyd co-wrote a paper with Nanette Rogers¹ which outlined the difficulties and barriers Aboriginal rape victims faced in going through the justice system. Also around this time there were two policewomen based at Marla, South Australia, and a senior policeman who was supportive and proactive around dealing with Domestic Violence incidents. He encouraged the policewomen to attend Council meetings to talk about restraining orders and raise awareness of possible responses to domestic violence. In 1993, Jane Lloyd, and two senior women now deceased, travelled to Sydney for one of the first domestic violence conferences in NSW. These experiences inspired them to establish their own domestic violence service. NPYWC's Domestic Violence service, "Atunypa Wiru Minyma Uwankaraku – Good Protection for All Women," began in April 1994 as a two-year pilot project that was funded in the amount of \$271,600 through the Federal Government Department of Health and Human Services.

This pilot project outlined nine objectives as follows;

1. Support existing women's initiatives to combat domestic violence by providing support and assistance on a community level.
2. Assist and support women experiencing domestic violence to develop strategies which seek family/community support.
3. Network and liaise with appropriate/complementary women's services and other agencies.

¹ Dr Nanette Rogers worked for many years as the Crown Prosecutor in Alice Springs.

4. Provide information on existing NT, SA and WA domestic violence and sexual assault laws and support for women wanting to report domestic violence.
5. Provide financial support for women and children to escape violent situations if no other alternative is available.
6. Record and respond to domestic violence referrals.
7. Facilitate and document how women's ideas and understandings of traditional conflict management and prevention practices can inform or be incorporated into their strategies against domestic violence.
8. Development of protocols to guide all services within the Women's Council's region regarding how they can support and assist women experiencing domestic violence.
9. Evaluate the overall pilot project, its progress, performance and its strategies on a regular basis.

The pilot community chosen for the project was Mutitjulu because of the existence of a Women's Night Patrol service in the community, its proximity to alcohol outlets, and frequent reports of domestic violence. Initially the project employed a coordinator based in Alice Springs, and a Project Worker based at Mutitjulu. There were almost immediate requests for assistance from women experiencing violence at Mutitjulu.

An early priority of the project was the development of relationships with police, initially with those based at Yulara, to assist in facilitating effective police responses to domestic violence. The Project Worker gained an understanding of the information the police required in order to act on reports of domestic violence, and police responded to the Project Worker's requests for help as legitimate callers. Lloyd, explained that previously,

“If the police came to Mutitjulu after a request to do so, there would be no-one to assist them, no-one, for instance, to tell them where the culprit was.... As a consequence the police didn't always respond to calls to assist women who had been assaulted.”

(Domestic Violence: Hints for our finest, 1995)

The police explained that previously they rarely heard about assaults, although they knew violence was prevalent. An article published in the NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services magazine quoted Yulara's Police Sergeant;

“You would see them walking around with bruises on their cheeks. You would ask what happened, but they would always say ‘nothing’. Now that it goes through (the Project Worker), the complainant is always there to make a statement in the morning.... Initially, it seemed a lot of work for us, with the extra paperwork, but it’s paid dividends because it reduced the violence.”... “So far four people have done major terms, so the community knows we will follow up on complaints.” (Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Services, 1995?).

Initially there was a good deal of hostility towards the project as community members held Project Workers responsible for men going to jail. A lot of time was spent explaining that the court makes a decision based on the men’s actions and that it’s the men’s responsibility. The election of the Project Worker as the Co-Chairperson of the Mutitjulu Aboriginal Council in early 1994 assisted in informing the Council about the development and rationale of the project, and the acceptance of the project by community members.

The practices implemented in this pilot stage included; assisting women victims of violence, mainly by informing them of their legal rights and options, and assisting them should they decide to lay charges and go to court; community development strategies focusing on informing and educating people about domestic violence and the options available so they can take actions themselves; and building links with other services and organisations. Initially the community development work was intended as the main strategy, but the number of women seeking assistance took the project by surprise, such that assisting victims of violence became the main strategy. However, this practice also had a community development effect in that it demonstrated to community members that women had legal rights and that violence against them would be punished.

As women began to utilize the legal system to obtain restraining orders, the presence of the Project Worker and/or Coordinator at Court sessions held in Yulara, to support women to navigate the legal process, became an essential part of the Project. Agreement was also reached that a lawyer who was employed by an organisation then known as Domestic Violence Legal Help (later known as Domestic Violence Service, and now known as Central Australian

Women's Legal Service (CAWLS)) would also attend Yulara court sessions to support women and Police Prosecutors.

In February 1995, the project facilitated an historic cross-border police meeting which included 15 police officers and aides from NT, SA and WA, as well as representatives from NPYWC, the Pitjatjantjara Council and Ngaanyatjarra Council, to begin to develop protocols relating to domestic violence and the safety of women to be followed by police across the tri-state region. Draft protocols were developed and sent to police in the three jurisdictions for comment, and by 1996, the NT and SA Police had agreed to the protocols.

Initially it was intended that another Project Worker would be employed to work in a community in the AP lands in South Australia. However, there was insufficient funding to support this at the time. Nonetheless, women from SA began to contact the service for assistance which was provided mainly by phone, and the Coordinator began to attend AP Lands Court circuits from late 1995 to facilitate service provision to women in the area over the period. SA Police support for the project was a factor in the project's impact in the region, despite its limited resources. There was limited progress in the Ngaanyatjarra lands of WA during the period, partly due to the vast distances but also due to the lack of any police presence in any of the communities on the lands, which were serviced by police from Laverton. An information session about the project provided at a meeting of the Ngaanyatjarra Council was met with hostility by the men present.

During the period of the two-year pilot, the project assisted 117 women. 43 were from NT, 53 from SA and 21 from WA.

An evaluation of the pilot project was undertaken by the funding body in 1996. The evaluation found that the project had made good progress towards achieving its objectives overall, but noted that this varied in that the service had made a lot of progress for example, in building links with other services and stakeholders, while very little progress was made in addressing traditional methods of dealing with violence. It also found that it had had most impact at Mutitjulu as would be expected of a pilot project, noting that the area to be covered is enormous and that there will always be a dilemma as to how best to use resources. In relation to this, it noted that there was a need to make a decision at some point about what is a reasonable outlay of time in assisting individual women, and the need to establish a case management process. It also noted that of the

117 cases, 12 involved sexual assault, three of which were against children, and recommended that such cases be referred to experts in the area. The evaluation noted the successful impact of ensuring a lawyer was present at the Yulara Court to assist women, and recommended that this strategy be extended across the region. It also recommended the development of a computer system to track cases as the caseload increased. The overall conclusion was that the project should continue and expand. (Bolger, 1996, pp. 24-30)

The project has continued since its establishment and, after a period of time, expanded to service all of the communities in the tri-state region serviced by NPYWC, and is now referred to as the Domestic and Family Violence Service, hereafter referred to as “the service.”

An external authority

One of the original objectives of the pilot program, Objective 7, “facilitate and document how women’s ideas and understandings of traditional conflict management and prevention practices can inform or be incorporated into their strategies against domestic violence,” was not an ongoing focus for the project. Lloyd, who became the initial Program Coordinator and worked in the role for 12 years, explained that the political climate at the time was one where it was thought that community solutions should be found. Lloyd herself had spoken to the women about calling the service “By way of the law” referring to non- Aboriginal and Aboriginal law. However, quite early on within the program, women explained that looking at traditional conflict management practices would not be appropriate. Invoking concepts of Aboriginal law would mean that men would interpret it as being their law, and it would not be right to do that, so the objective was not pursued. The need to focus on safety was emphasized by women which is how the name, “Atunypa Wiru Minyma Uwankaraku – Good Protection for All Women,” came about. (Lloyd, interview NPY3, 2015).

It became clear quite early on in the program that both victims and families wanted outside authorities to deal with the issue of domestic violence such that the service has developed as an external authorising body that can respond to family and domestic violence and report incidents to the police. As outlined in NPYWC’s recent submission to a Committee of the SA Parliament,

“... women can often expect limited protection from their kin when other social, ritual and economic interests moderate their safety. For the women and their children whose social world is largely defined by their kin in this region, leaving a relationship and their communities is rarely a long-term option.” (Ngaanyatjarra Pitjtantjatjara Yankunjatjara Women's Council, 2015)

Given the kinship ties that exist within remote communities, women may be reluctant to report domestic violence for fear of reprisal from family members, or may be pressured by family members not to follow through with legal action. Women looked to the service to act on their behalf and facilitated women’s access to criminal justice and assisted in holding men accountable.

The Women’s Council provides authority and accountability to the service as well as cultural credibility. At the time of implementation, the service model was controversial such that some outside agencies were challenged by it. The model was based on an understanding of the particular socio-cultural context of the women and the constraints they faced, and its development would not have been possible without the authority of the Women’s Council itself. However, the model exists within a complex cultural context. Conflicts of interest arise where a member of the Women’s Council supports the domestic violence service, but speaks against it when her son is a perpetrator. A worker in the service described the Council’s Annual General Meeting where the service provides its annual report and then “gets slapped by the women.” She went on to explain it as a form of grandstanding,

“They’re protecting themselves by deflecting the whole thing. The patriarchy has such control that even in a women’s space women amongst themselves have to put on this display. It’s not that the women don’t want it, they have to have this public presence.”
(Former worker in the service, interview NPY6, 2015)

The principle of empowerment can become a contested one in this context, in that invoking the “authorising outsider”² purposefully removes some responsibility from the victims of domestic

² The concept and role of the “authorising outsider” is outlined in Lloyd (2014).

violence, yet is also the means by which women are empowered to respond to domestic violence within the socio cultural context in which they live.

The development of the service as an external authority also influenced the way in which the service developed in relation to staffing.

Staffing

The establishment period saw the employment of a local Anangu Project Worker based within the community working closely with the non – Aboriginal Coordinator, which was in line with NPYWC’s employment approach, “malparara way” whereby two staff would work together on a program, one of whom was an Anangu woman, and the other the partner staff member, who was employed for her specific professional skills. However, this approach was not adopted as the Service expanded. Jane Lloyd, the then Coordinator explained that the position of the Project Worker became increasingly difficult. “...she was getting a lot of negative responses and she felt quite vulnerable. So we worked out quite early on that it couldn’t be standard policy and practice to work that way.... Women’s Council did accept that for domestic violence it really wasn’t possible. Unsafe. Too many conflicts of interest. It was dangerous.” (Lloyd, interview NPY3, 2015).

A former CEO of the NPYWC explained that employing local Aboriginal women in communities to work within the domestic violence service put a lot of pressure on them.

“It can lead to a lot of resentment from blokes in the community, or from the mothers of blokes in the community who are bashing their wives. It’s just that that small community, and kin based community stuff makes it very difficult, that’s why you need external services. They’re like the umpire I guess, the diplomatic corps.”. (Former CEO, interview NPY5, 2012³).

³ Permission was granted by the interviewee to include and refer to a transcript of an interview conducted some years before the current research project.

One exception to this experience was Daisy Ward who was a client who left a violent relationship and then became a strong advocate for the service and worked for the service at times. However, Daisy's experience is somewhat unique within the service.

The service itself grew over the years with funding being made available for employment of more staff, such that while for the first few years there were only two staff, there are now fourteen funded positions. This increased the capacity of the service to respond to instances of domestic violence. This growth in funding was the result of a number of factors that are further discussed in the advocacy section below.

As is the case with many programs in Central Australia, at times the service has struggled to recruit suitable staff, and the turnover of staff can represent a challenge to the service. While several NPYWC staff mentioned the importance of staff relationships with community as being central to the service's effectiveness, it was recognised that while staff turnover poses a challenge, community relationships with NPYWC are such that a new staff member is more readily accepted by community members because they work for the Women's Council. A case worker explained,

“As soon as you say ‘I'm from Women's Council’, there's an element of trust that comes before you, the person. But when you have been there a little while, certainly beyond a year, women get to know you. They only want to speak to you.” (Former worker, interview NPY6, 2015).

NPYWC's current CEO, Andrea Mason explains further that, along with the constitution, the Directors have set out guiding principles which outline how staff and members should be working,

“One of the guiding principles is having a kind heart. Your professionalism...and capability is really important but how do you learn to have a kind heart? If the key is relationships, that's actually...more important than what you know. Who you are and how you engage with people has more weight than what you know, because then you become defined as a person that is assigned particular attributes because of the way you conduct yourself My ideal is for a staff member to come in and have that good

starting point, good skills, experience and interest, and really working through particularly with non-Aboriginal staff that way of being kind, because kindness – when people don't have much, - dignity and kindness are valued almost like it is treasure, more than anything else.” (Mason, interview NPY1, 2015).

The service model can provide challenges to new staff, particularly those who have worked for domestic violence services within a different context, largely due to the contested nature of what constitutes empowerment for women in this context. The need for recruitment, induction and professional development processes that clearly outline the principles of the service model are highlighted in this context, as are regular, transparent reviews of the service model. NPYWC recently engaged an external body to undertake such a review and is currently implementing its recommendations.

Relationship with the police

The establishment and maintenance of effective relationships with the police was prioritised early within the service. As the service developed its role as the external authority in response to the needs of women who often wanted to invoke some action in response to domestic violence, reporting incidents to police quickly became the standard practice of the service. In addition, at the time of the service's establishment, very few of the communities had a permanent police presence, and there was a lack of criminal justice services within the region. The service was therefore very proactive in reporting incidents within this environment, and staff quickly developed skills in preparing statutory declarations and affidavits to support the police work. This has changed over the years as more police have been based in communities such that today, it may be the police who inform the service of domestic violence incidents. However, the practice of reporting incidents to police and maintaining a close working relationship with police, has been consistent throughout the service's operation.

The cross border police meetings were very important to the service's development within this context. Following the initial Cross border police meeting in 1995, further meetings were held in 1997, 1998, 2000 and 2003/4. The complexity of working across three states was a factor in the decision to hold these meetings. Having established effective relationships with police in South

Australia, it made sense to harness this relationship to assist in building relationships with police in Western Australia, for example. Also, it was an effective way to establish some consistency in police relationships. By engaging at a senior level and developing Memoranda of Understanding, the program became less reliant on the development of relationships with individual Police Officers who were often engaged with the service for short time periods. It also had the effect of increasing the service's profile in its dealings with police such that police quickly developed understandings about the service and the value of the DV service in assisting police in their work.

The importance of the relationship between the service and police is highlighted in a film produced by the Women's Council to mark the twenty-year anniversary of NPYWC's DV service. A West Australian Police Sergeant based on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in WA is interviewed for the film and outlines the value of NPYWC domestic violence work in focusing on the victims, while the police are focused on prosecuting offenders. The Sergeant asserts that the police couldn't do their job without NPYWC guiding and informing them, and exchanging information, and explains that the police and the service work together as a team to help families live safely. (NPY Women's Council, 2014)

The early cross border police meetings also provided a forum for the Women's Council to highlight issues relating to offenders crossing borders and evading criminal justice responses which helped to inspire the Cross-border Justice Scheme⁴. This advocacy role has been a major focus for the Council and particularly its Domestic and Family Violence Service.

Advocacy

NPYWC has its origins in advocating for women living in its region. As outlined in their submission to a South Australian government Committee, the organisation was created,

⁴ The Cross-border Justice Scheme took many years to finalise and involved three state governments passing legislation to enable its operation. It commenced in 2009. MOUs were also signed by key criminal justice agencies such as police, courts and corrections across the three jurisdictions. The Scheme enables the police and courts across the three jurisdictions to deal with matters that occurred in the specified cross-border area (for more detail see the evaluation report Putt, Shaw, Sarre & Rowden (2013). For more detail on the impact on policing see Sarre & Putt (2016)).

“to give women a voice in this region on issues such as substance abuse, domestic and family violence, child protection, policing and other safety issues as well as the needs of and aspirations of young people, our elderly and disabled people. At its heart, Women’s Council is about *family* and community – *walytja*.” (Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunjatjara Women's Council, 2015)

For many years, NPYWC lobbied for an increased police presence in the region. A former CEO of NPYWC explains, that

“Women’s Council was lobbying, and lobbying, and lobbying for many years, including the six years I was there, (...for) an increased sworn police presence in remote communities. The women wanted an independent third party, whether it be the police or Women’s Council worker”. (Former CEO, interview NPY5, 2012).

In addition, NPYWC actively lobbied for a cross border approach to policing such that territory and state borders within the region did not affect access to criminal justice. The high mobility of people living in the region meant that offenders could evade apprehension by travelling across borders, which could seriously impede the work of the domestic violence service. The cross-border police meetings facilitated by the service between 1995 and 2003 sought to improve responses across jurisdictions, and protocols and memoranda of understanding were developed between the various jurisdictions.

“NPYWC’s desire for a cross-border approach grew out of the difficulties that its Domestic and Family Violence Service encountered in assisting clients across the vast NPY area, with three different police services and justice systems.” (*Advocacy: Cross-border Justice Issues*, Fact Sheet 16, NPY Women’s Council, 2010, <http://www.npywc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/16-Advocacy-Cross-border-Justice-Issues.pdf> accessed 21/1/16)

In 2003, the Cross-border Justice Scheme was initiated and developed over several years, officially commencing in 2009. NPYWC also actively participated in a number of government inquiries over the years. The Gordon Inquiry into West Australian government agency responses to family violence and child abuse reported in 2002. There were two coronial inquiries into

petrol sniffing deaths on APY lands in 2002 and 2004. The NT Government's Inquiry into protection of Aboriginal Children from sexual abuse, "Little Children Are Sacred," was published in 2007 and the Federal Government's "intervention" was implemented in response. In South Australia, the report of the Mullighan inquiry into child sexual abuse in the APY Lands was presented in 2008. The result of these numerous enquiries was increased resourcing for community safety. Between the years 2003 and 2010, several permanent police stations were established within communities across the region.

The service was also proactive in responding to suggestions that safe houses be located on the APY Lands. Safe houses were funded on several Northern Territory communities as part of the "intervention" over the period 2007-2009. The NPYWC commissioned a paper outlining reasons why Council members were hesitant to recommend the construction of safe houses on the lands, and made alternative recommendations for safe accommodation for women and children experiencing domestic violence. The paper questioned the need for such facilities and their likely effectiveness, outlined accessibility issues, queried their cost effectiveness, highlighted the security, safety and privacy issues for clients and staff, and outlined workforce capacity issues. (Lloyd, Proposed Preferred Models for Safe Accommodation Services for Women and Children from the APY Lands. "More than Bricks and Mortar", 2009).

Expansion in service delivery

It was also during this period that the service itself was provided with more resources and grew rapidly such that while in the 2007/8 reporting period, the service had 291 clients, (Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankuntjatjara Women's Council's Domestic Violence Service, 2008) in 2015, it had 479 clients. Table 2 summarises estimates for the number of clients for the years 1994 to 1996, the year 2007/08, and from 2012 to 2015.

Clients: age range and source of referrals

Table 3 shows the age breakdown in clients for the year 2015. Just over (55%) were aged between 20 and 34 years of age, and 34 percent were aged between 35 and 49 years of age. Table

4 shows the source of referrals for clients from 2011⁵ to 2015 recorded on the Communicare database.

Table 2 NPYWC DFVS client numbers, 1994 – 1996; 2007/08; 2011 - 2015

Year	Number of clients
Two-year pilot 1994-1996	117 (av. 59 per year)
July 2007- June 2008	291
2011 (July-Dec)	254
2012	335
2013	392
2014	437
2015	479

Source: Communicare statistics provided by NPYWC DFVS for the years 2011-2015⁶

Table 3 DFVS clients by age group, 2015

Age range in years	Percentage
Under 20	4.1
20-34	55.3

⁵ In 2011 when Communicare started, all clients were added to the database including how they were referred. Since then, the referrals only show new clients referred during that year.

⁶With the Communicare record-keeping system the client is removed once he or she has exited. The numbers therefore do not reflect new clients each year but the number of ongoing clients (or clients who have not been exited) plus new clients.

35-49	33.7
Over 50	6.7

Source: Source: Communicare statistics provided by NPYWC DFVS

Table 4 Source of client referrals to NPYWC DFVS, number and percent, 2011-2015

Source	2011 ⁷	2012	2013	2014	2015
Accommodation	1	1	2	2	1
Family/community	13	10	12	7	8
Health	20	8	9	9	2
NPYWC teams	10	5	16	16	8
Police	101	25	57	62	36
Self	52	28	17	14	8
Other	32	16	25	6	4
TOTAL	229	93	138	116	67

Source: Communicare statistics provided by NPYWC DFVS

As Table 4 shows, of the seven categories used for source of referrals, the most common in each year from 2011 to 2015 was the police. The proportion ranged from 27 percent in 2012 to 54 percent of referrals in 2015. The next most common source is the women self-referring to the service.

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