



**Darwin Community**  
**LEGAL SERVICE**

*Celebrating*  
**30 YEARS**



# **Inverting the non-profit legal service delivery model in the Northern Territory**

**Matthew Shaw and Judy Harrison 25 Oct 2021**

**(PowerPoint relates to Matthew's paper of the same title)**



# INTRODUCTION



**Darwin Community  
LEGAL SERVICE**

- Who's covered?



**TOP END WOMEN'S  
LEGAL SERVICE INC.**

FREE LEGAL ADVICE FOR WOMEN

Advice | Information | Referral | Advocacy



**Northern Territory  
Legal Aid Commission**



**North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency**



# CURRENT MODEL

- Hub-centric (Darwin, Alice, Tennant, Katherine)
- Large geographic regions
- Services are systemically underfunded and tied to burdensome obligations
  - Leads to sacrificing services in some areas for others, or sacrificing communities altogether
- Relies on 'outreach' to bridge the divide
- Outreach does not allow the development of meaningful community presence

# CONSULTATIONS AND FINDING A NEW WAY

- 'Consultation' is not working – people are fatigued and sick of nothing being done
- Box of Veggies a powerful case study in explaining why
- Deficit discourse permeates existing approaches – unhelpful at best, harmful at worst
- Moving forward in new model, must not fall into these two traps





# HOW A NEW MODEL SHOULD LOOK & HOW TO GET THERE

- Communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives must be at the centre
- Must take stock of existing strengths and assets already in community (local knowledge and expertise)
- **More resources are essential – the whole pie must be increased**
  - *Likely requires at least doubling of current funding*
- Scope for change via the new Remote Jobs Program?
- Scope for change via NTG Local Decision Making agreements?
- Scope to invert power relations for improved accountability and impacts?

# IDEAS / THOUGHTS / QUESTIONS?

- Open space for discussion ..
- What makes certain things 'unthinkable'?
- What changes in NT non-profit legal service delivery models would you like to see in the next 2, 5, 10 or 20 years?

