

AIGI may use the terms Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interchangeably. The term Indigenous is used most frequently to refer to the many nations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the continent and islands now called Australia, as we acknowledge and support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge and respect that terms preferred in different jurisdictions and locations may vary.

Jess Bulger & Abbey Wright

Unpacking Indigenous Governance
Unpacking some of the terms; self determined governance, culturally
legitimate, community informed.

SNAICC
November 2022

Developed and presented for the SNAICC Gathering November 2022.





Australian Indigenous Governance Institute

The AIGI exists to strengthen the self determined governance of Indigenous peoples and nations.

NGO

NFP

10+ years of building the evidence base

Research & Resources

Advocacy

Indigenous
Governance Awards

Professional
Development &
Advisory

Programs



[Resources ▾](#)[Professional development ▾](#)[About us ▾](#) Indigenous Governance Toolkit

RESOURCE

Indigenous Governance Toolkit

All your governance needs in one place. Our Toolkit provides practical resources – including fact sheets, templates, case studies and videos – on key governance topics – from getting started to managing staff and disputes.

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Our Approach

1. Celebrating Indigenous ways of knowing and doing
2. Solutions focused
3. Strengths based
4. Evidence based



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Governance

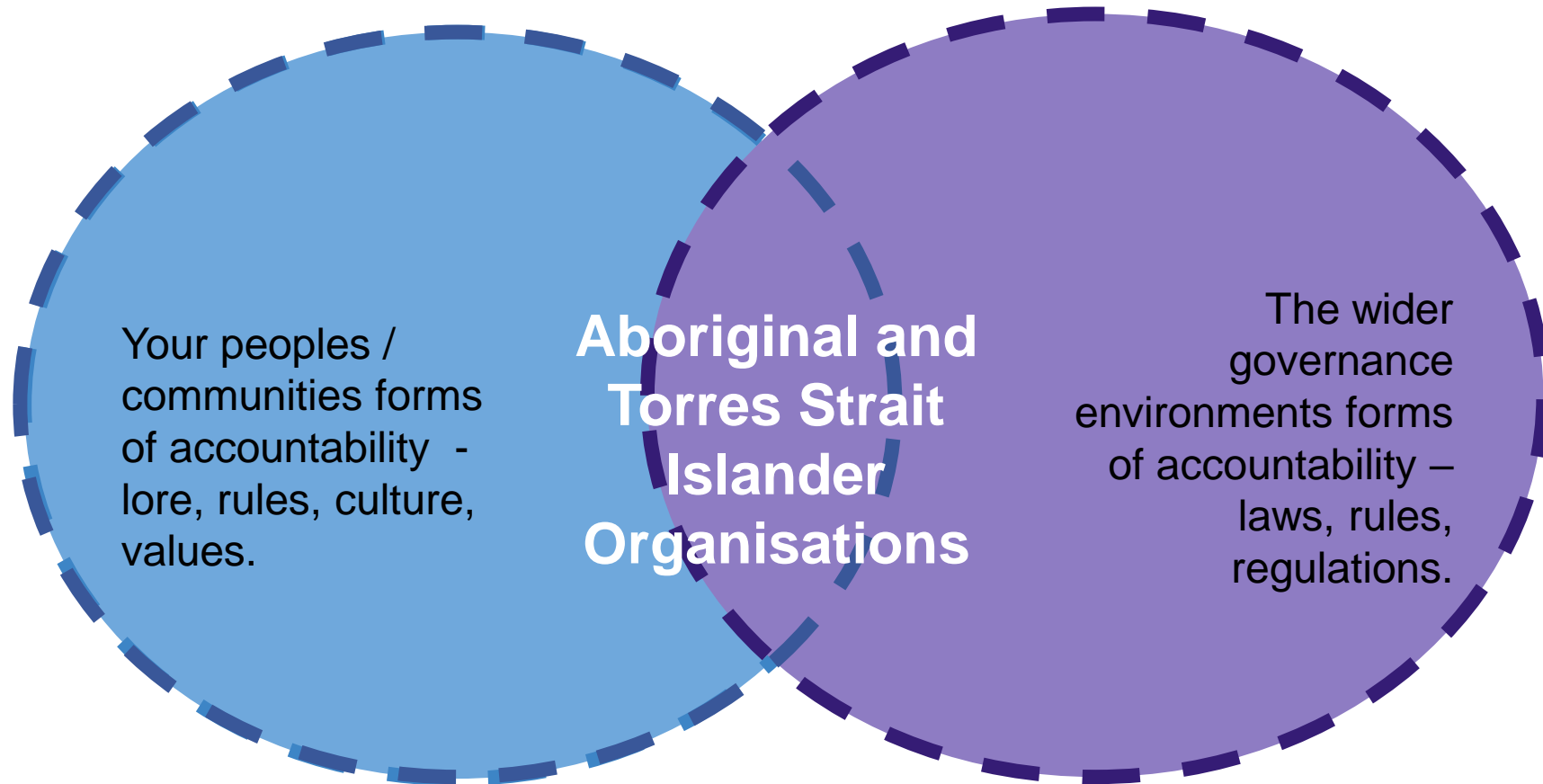
How people choose to collectively organise themselves to manage their own affairs, share power and responsibilities, decide for themselves what kind of society they want for their future, and implement those decisions

Governance is the way people organise themselves to achieve a shared goal

Governance is the art of group work

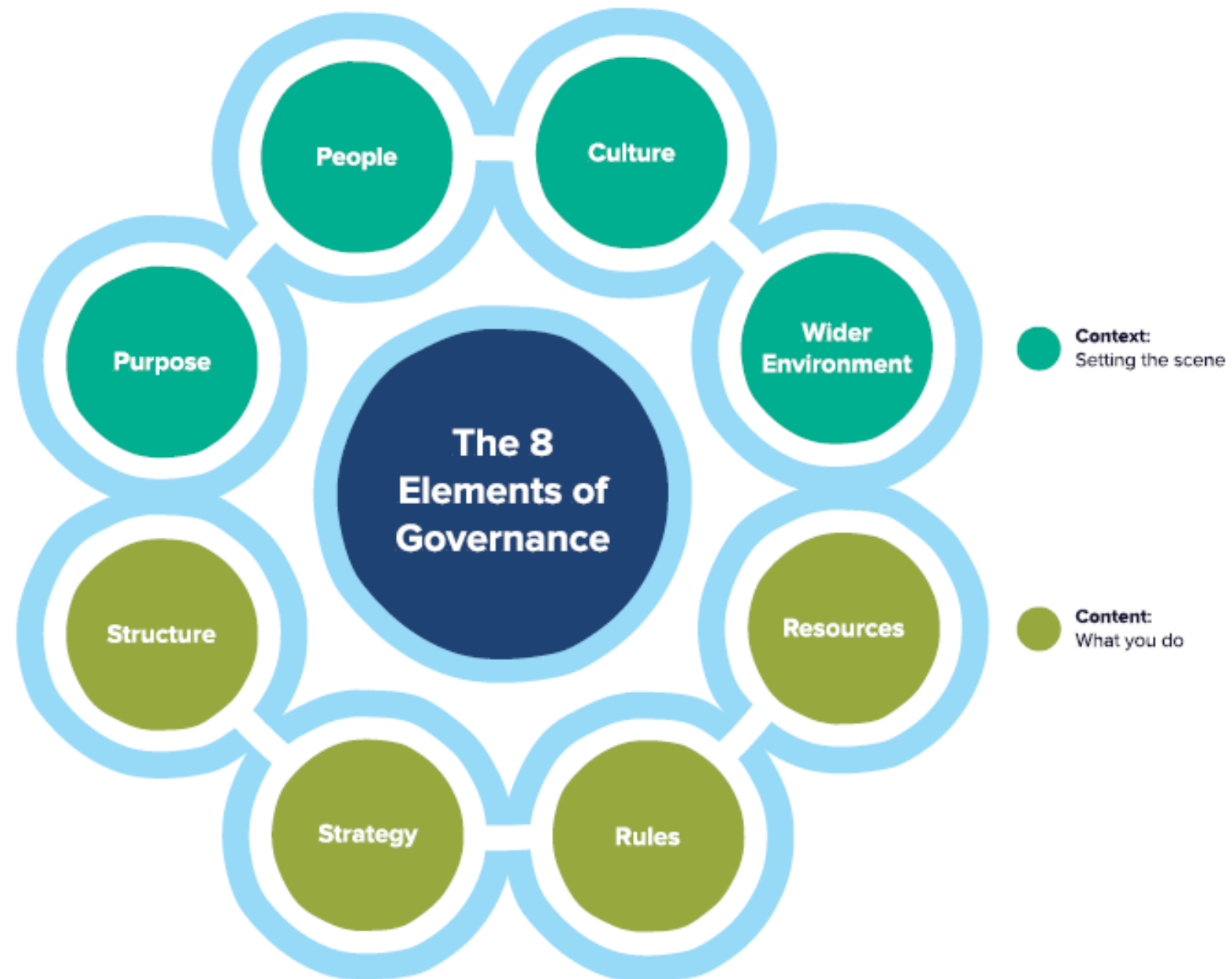


Two way Governance



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Elements of Governance

Purpose
(what brings you together)

Family, community, nation, vision or mission
Project, program or service delivery

People
(who does it)

Directors, managers, staff, elders, local leaders,
members, clients, community

Culture
(the way you do things)

Values, customs and traditions, relationships

Wider Environment
(outside influences)

Other groups, organisations, communities,
networks, government, regulators

Elements of Governance

Context

Context is all the stuff that makes you who you are as an org or nation or community in your environment

Purpose
(what brings you together)

People
(who does it)

Culture
(the way you do things)

Wider Environment
(outside influences)

Elements of Governance

Structure
(the type of group you form)

Committee, club, organisation etc

Processes
(how you do it)

Rules, policies and procedures, roles and responsibilities

Strategies
(what you do)

Plans, goals, activities, milestones

Resources
(what you need)

Funding, infrastructure, technology, natural assets

Elements of Governance

Content

Content is your **governance model**. Governance is most effective when you use knowledge about your content to design your governance.

Structure
(the type of group you form)

Processes
(how you do it)

Strategies
(what you do)

Resources
(what you need)



Principles for Effective Governance

Customised: your governance model is designed for your specific purpose, environment and resources.

Culturally Legitimate: your governance matches your members', community's, or nation's way of doing things

Evolving: your governance model adapts over time to match changes in your members', community's, or nation's priorities and preferred ways of doing things

Accountable: the people who your governance serves have a say in your governance design, priorities and strategy



Health check... Self assessment... Diagnostic...



Culturally Legitimate: your governance matches your members', community's, or nation's way of doing things

Are there examples where the community or region's cultural values, relationships, considerations and priorities were embedded in the organisation's governance model and processes in practical ways?

Does culture play an important role in how the organisation functions?



Health check... Self assessment... Diagnostic...



Accountable: the people who your governance serves have a say in your governance design, priorities and strategy

Does the organisation have Indigenous people in leadership positions with decision making power?

Does the organisation encourage community participation?

Does the organisation act on feedback it receives, even uncomfortable?



Elements of Governance

Purpose
(what brings you together)

People
(who does it)

Culture
(the way you do things)

Wider Environment
(outside influences)

Structure
(the type of group you form)

Processes
(how you do it)

Strategies
(what you do)

Resources
(what you need)

Using your context to customise your governance model

Culture
(the way you do things)

Values, customs and traditions,
relationships

Processes
(how you do it)

Rules, policies and procedures, roles
and responsibilities

What are the values of your organisation?

We respect the knowledge of our elders

Our decisions benefit our community

How can these values translate into our governance rules?

How we make decisions

How we share information

Examples of
customising governance

Purple House



1. We will ensure that Walytja (family), Tjukurrpa (dreaming) Ngurra (country) and Kuunyi (compassion) are central to all that we do and say
2. **We will be strong, clever, brave and determined to make life better for our people**
3. **We will think deeply, plan wisely and take action to support patient agency, enhance wellbeing and maintain dignity**
4. We will share our experiences and knowledge with others so that we all can learn
5. We will foster understanding and respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people

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Purple House

How we make decisions

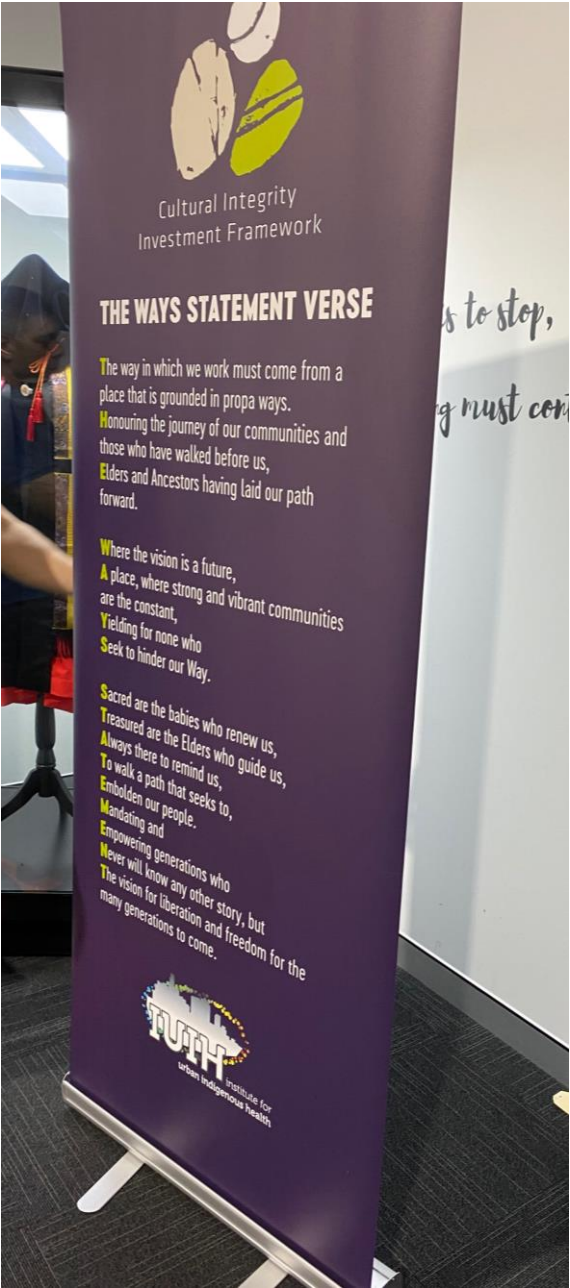
1. Directors meet in Alice Springs so that stakeholders and the patients are able to attend.
2. Meetings are open to all dialysis patients and family members to come and listen and be asked their opinion.
3. Meetings go for two days to give enough time to present information and for directors to have time to reflect before making decisions the next day.

How we share information

1. Hold meetings in remote communities, forums and patient meetings.
2. Attend board meetings of other organisations, and regularly present reports of progress at Central Land Council and Kurra meetings.
3. Keep the website and Facebook page current.

Examples of customising governance

IUIH (Institute for Urban Indigenous Health)



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