



COMMUNITY FIRST
DEVELOPMENT

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ACIL Allen report highlights the health and economic benefits of First Nations-led community development

Leading economics firm, ACIL Allen, has undertaken a social and economic Impact Assessment of a national community development organisation delivering projects in First Nations' communities. It found the model has potential to deliver positive health, social and economic impacts for First Nations' people and significant cost savings for government.

ACIL Allen stated, "Community development activities have the potential to generate large amounts of cost savings for government, by reducing the reliance on government support, services and safeguards. This cost saving is significant, considering the cost of service provision for Indigenous Australians has historically been higher than non-Indigenous Australians."

The report found that the organisation generates a high return on investment delivering this model: a return of \$3.73 in health, social and economic benefits for every \$1.00 of contributions invested. After removing operating costs, ACIL Allen estimates the organisation, consisting of 31 staff, delivered an estimated \$12.8 million in employment, business, health, justice, welfare and housing benefits in the last financial year, and did this in the challenging operating environment of a pandemic. Improved health outcomes accounted for over half (55 per cent) of the total benefits, which alone delivers a benefit estimated to be twice that of the organisation's total cost. ACIL Allen also identified a significant range of additional qualitative benefits that could not be measured in monetary terms.

Chief Executive Officer for Community First Development, Stephanie Harvey, said: "For a small not-for-profit organisation, we are punching above our weight. We are delighted by the findings of this report. It demonstrates that community-led development approaches work and that there is high demand, and a strong argument for extending this type of support to more communities."

ACIL Allen acknowledged that demographic drivers for First Nations' people will only lead to further specialised support required, "Given the strong Indigenous population growth projected over the next decade, there will be sustained demand for self-determined community development activities going forward."

Community First Development is a First Nations-led community development and research organisation that co-creates positive change with First Nations' peoples and communities around Australia. Since 2000, Community First Development's staff and its network of cross-industry expert volunteers have



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undertaken over 5,000 community development projects, supported by donations from over 75,500 members of the Australian public.

The complete ACIL Allen impact statement on Community First Development can be found at www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/impactstatement

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