NSW Closing the Gap Priority Reform Four Joint Program

The NSW Data Connector Service

Closing the Gap – Reform on Data Team

Ian Brown & Maelona Stephens
18/06/2024

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the First Nations Peoples of NSW and pay our respects to Elders both past, and present. We recognise the youth as they will be the leaders moving forward into the future.

We acknowledge the ongoing connection Aboriginal people have to the lands, waters and seascape of NSW.

We recognise Aboriginal people as the original custodians of this land.

Overview

1. The National Agreement on Closing the Gap – Priority Reform Four

2. NSW Policy Landscape

3. Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance

4. NSW Joint Program on Priority Reform Four

5. NSW Data Connector Service

6. Case Study – Just ReInvest

7. Service Tracking

8. Contact Information

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap - Priority Reform Four

Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level

Outcome:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

Target:

Increase the number of regional data projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make decisions about Closing the Gap and their development.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and their Interconnection

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap states:

69. Shared access to location specific data and information will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to support the achievement of the first three Priority Reforms through:

   a) Priority Reform One: Participating as equal partners with government, with equal access to all processes and information to support shared decision-making.

   b) Priority Reform Two: Driving their own development by making evidence-based decisions on the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs for their communities in order to develop local solutions for local issues.

   c) Priority Reform Three: Measuring the transformation of government organisations operating in their region to be more responsive and accountable for Closing the Gap.

70. The Parties agree that disaggregated data and information is most useful to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities to obtain a comprehensive picture of what is happening in their communities and make decisions about their futures. Priority Reform Four arises from the 2019 engagement process.

"Collect, analyse, use our own data to meet our own needs. It's our information and we should use it for our own purposes as decided by us."

Survey participant from New South Wales

NSW GOVERNMENT

Priority Reform Four in NSW:
Going beyond Shared Access to Data

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.'

~ National Agreement on CTG Clause 17d

Achieving this outcome requires delivery of data projects that improve the collection, access, management and use of data through formal partnerships, sharing of disaggregated government data in accessible and timely ways, and capability building. Doing so enables Aboriginal people to obtain a more comprehensive picture of their communities, and in turn, participate in shared decision making and drive accountability as equal partners with government.

~ adapted from the National Agreement on CTG Clauses 69–71, Clause 81.a.iv

From being…	To being…
Centred on government needs	Centred on community priorities
Deficit-framed	Lifeworlds
Decontextualised	Contextualised
Aggregated	Disaggregated
Hard to access	Available and accessible

In addition to Closing the Gap - the NSW Government Data Sharing Strategy commits to implementing Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance

Undertake a statutory review of *the Data Sharing (Government Sector) Act 2015 (NSW).*

Work with Aboriginal Community to implement and evaluate the Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance principles in the Data Strategy and in the consolidated whole of NSW Government data policy, including for data sharing.

Engage with the Aboriginal Community to gain an understanding of the people that wish to participate in community engagement about the Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance Strategy

Develop a clear set of data ethics principles for NSW Government, drawing on the ethical principals outlined in the NSW Artificial Intelligence (AI) Ethics Policy (Community benefit, Fairness, Privacy and Security, Transparency and Accountability) and complementing exciting research ethics frameworks in the use by agencies.

Consolidate whole of NSW Government data policy, including developing a common data sharing agreement and streamline approval process across government, aligning with the Australian Government's data sharing scheme as appropriate; and working with the aboriginal Community to ensure inclusion of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance principles.

Foster increased release of open data across government, with appropriate safeguards to promote government transparency and provide a platform for innovation.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty & Indigenous Data Governance

"Information or knowledge, in any format or medium, which is about and may affect Indigenous peoples both collectively and individually".

Data on Resources/Environments

Land history, geographical information, titles, water information

Data about Aboriginal People and Communities

Demographic or social data- legal, health, education, use of services, including Aboriginal held data

Data from Aboriginal People and Communities

Traditional cultural data, archives oral literature, ancestral knowledge, community stories

Indigenous Data Sovereignty
"The right of Indigenous people to exercise ownership through the creation, collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination and reuse of Indigenous data".

Indigenous Data Governance
"The right of Indigenous peoples to autonomously decide what, how and why indigenous data are collected, accessed and used. It ensures that data on or about Indigenous peoples reflects their priorities, values, cultures, worldviews and diversity".

Exercise **control** of the data ecosystem, including creation, development, stewardship, analysis, dissemination and infrastructure.

Contextual and **disaggregated** data (available and accessible at individual, community and First Nations levels).

Data that is **relevant** and empowers sustainable self determination and effective self governance.

Data structures that are **accountable** to Indigenous peoples and First Nations.

Data that is **protective** and respects First Nations' individual and collective interests.
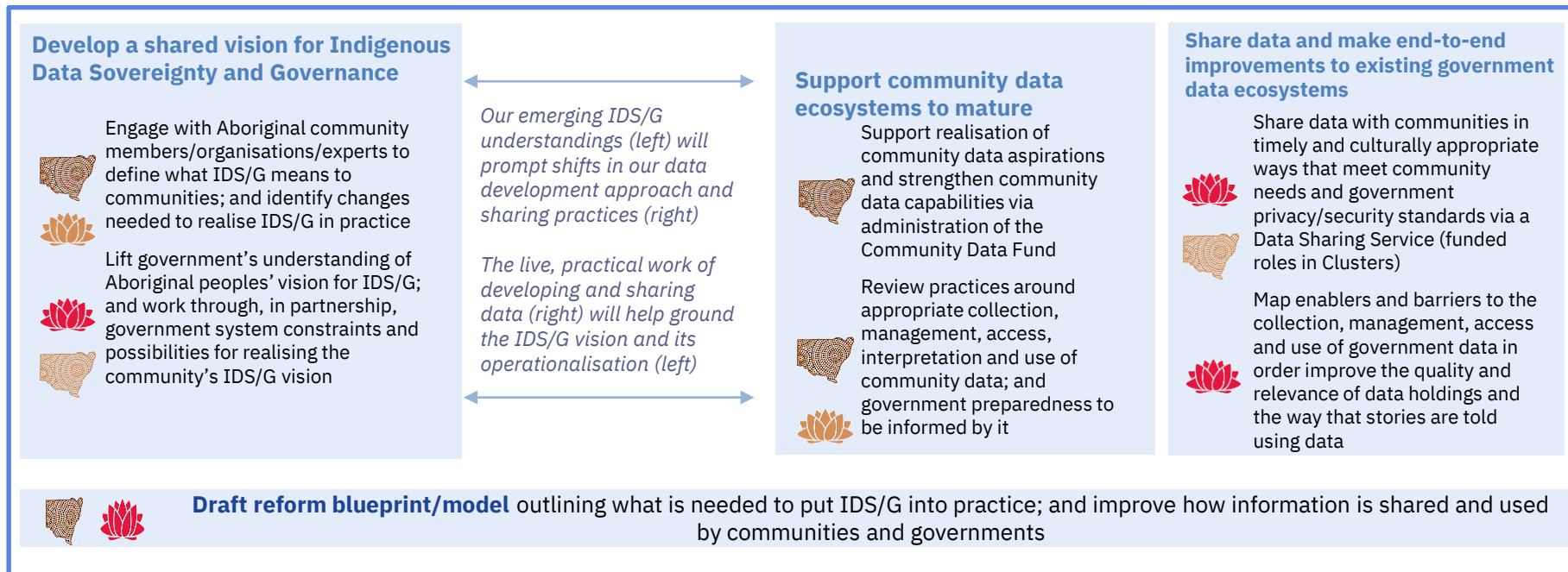
Source: Maiam Nayri Wingara

8

NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO) – NSW Govt Joint Work Program to Transform NSW Data Ecosystems

KEY: NSW CAPO leading   NSW Gov leading   NSW CAPO supporting   NSW Gov supporting   Light grey text = DOE led parallel workstream
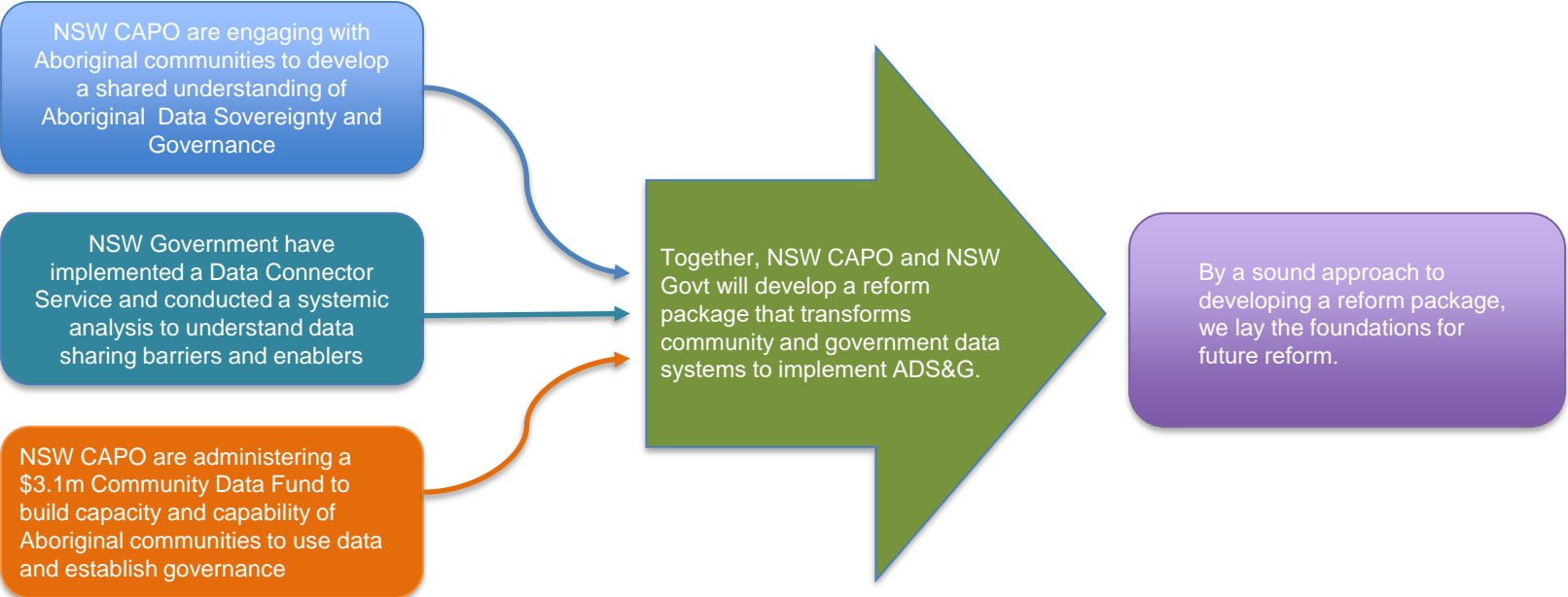
From – Data about Aboriginal people today is often centred on government program needs, aggregated, decontextualised and hard to access; the insights it can produce are often partial and deficit based.

Develop a shared vision for Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance

Engage with Aboriginal community members/organisations/experts to define what IDS/G means to communities; and identify changes needed to realise IDS/G in practice

Lift government's understanding of Aboriginal peoples' vision for IDS/G; and work through, in partnership, government system constraints and possibilities for realising the community's IDS/G vision

Our emerging IDS/G understandings (left) will prompt shifts in our data development approach and sharing practices (right)

The live, practical work of developing and sharing data (right) will help ground the IDS/G vision and its operationalisation (left)

Support community data ecosystems to mature

Support realisation of community data aspirations and strengthen community data capabilities via administration of the Community Data Fund

Review practices around appropriate collection, management, access, interpretation and use of community data; and government preparedness to be informed by it

Share data and make end-to-end improvements to existing government data ecosystems

Share data with communities in timely and culturally appropriate ways that meet community needs and government privacy/security standards via a Data Sharing Service (funded roles in Clusters)

Map enablers and barriers to the collection, management, access and use of government data in order improve the quality and relevance of data holdings and the way that stories are told using data

Draft reform blueprint/model outlining what is needed to put IDS/G into practice; and improve how information is shared and used by communities and governments

Scope and develop data-related training and career pathways for Aboriginal students and communities

To – A reformed data ecosystem that respects and upholds Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles and implements Governance Practices. Data about Aboriginal people is contextualised, available, accessible, and reflects Aboriginal peoples' priorities and lifeworlds. The ecosystem facilitates streamlined data sharing, and enables self-determination, dialogue and joint decision-making anchored in a more complete picture.

NSW CAPO and NSW Government were funded $18.76m over 2 years to work in partnership on system reform under the NSW CTG Implementation Plan

NSW CAPO are engaging with Aboriginal communities to develop a shared understanding of Aboriginal Data Sovereignty and Governance

NSW Government have implemented a Data Connector Service and conducted a systemic analysis to understand data sharing barriers and enablers

NSW CAPO are administering a $3.1m Community Data Fund to build capacity and capability of Aboriginal communities to use data and establish governance

Together, NSW CAPO and NSW Govt will develop a reform package that transforms community and government data systems to implement ADS&G.

By a sound approach to developing a reform package, we lay the foundations for future reform.

NSW Data Connector Service

The NSW Data Connector Service

What is the NSW Data Connector Service

- The NSW Data Connector Service is one part of a joint program of work between the NSW Government and the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peaks Organisations.

- The service aims to provide Aboriginal Peoples throughout NSW with information/data about their communities for purposes including but not limited to, informed decision making and future planning within a community context.

- The Service is made up of Data Connectors, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who work across several government departments
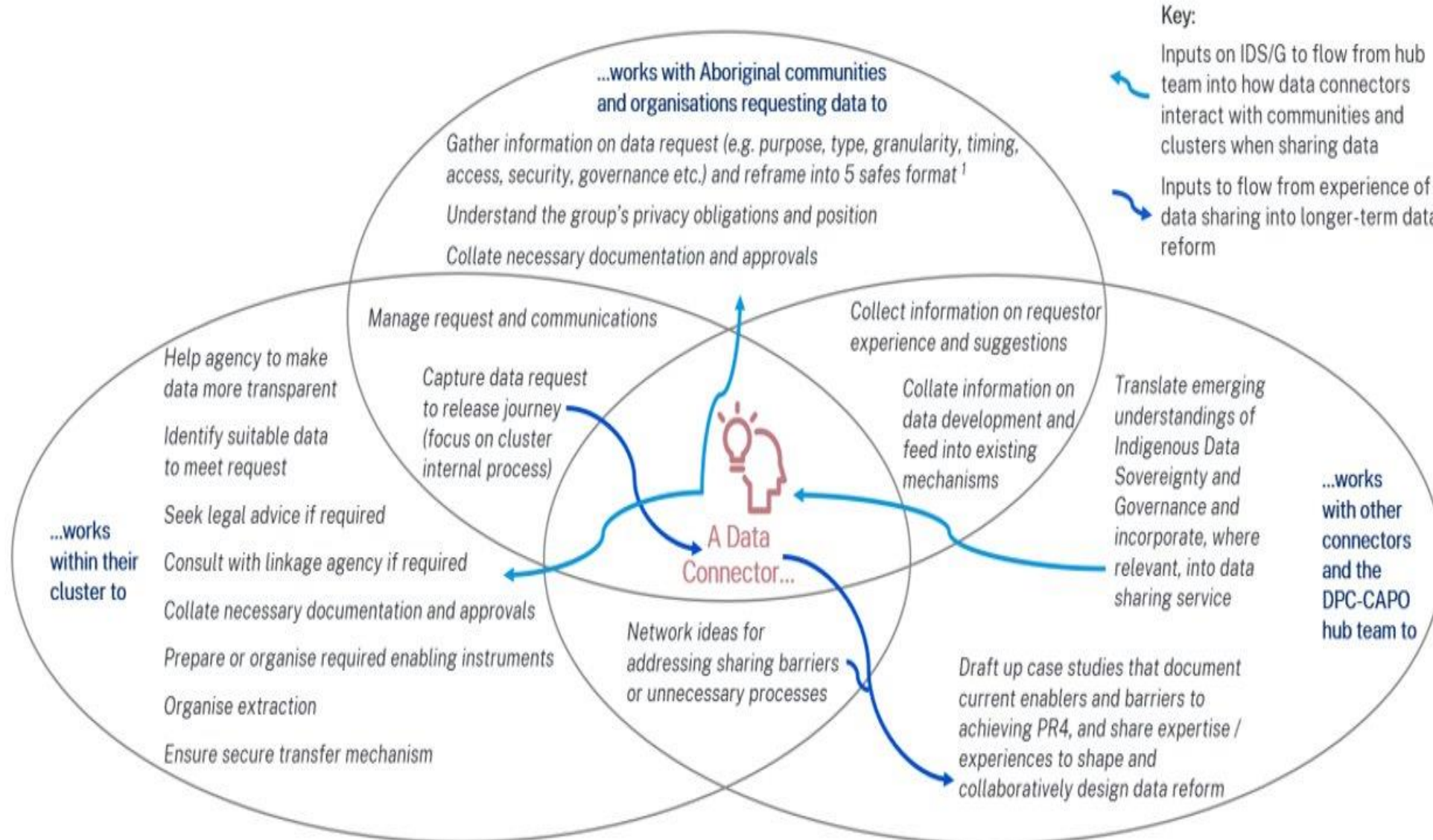
What the service is already doing now

- Providing a single-entry point to request government-held data.

- Improving consistency of the experience through better engagement and a networked service.

- Supporting community members and organisations find the data and information they need.

Where the service will be moving over the course of our program

- Developing insights and tools that could share information with communities in more useful formats

- Streamlining and aligning agency processes and procedures to enable more timely data release.

- Systematic analysis of data barriers and enablers identified in data requests, to inform system reform options.

Linking Role of Agency Data Connectors

...works with Aboriginal communities and organisations requesting data to

Gather information on data request (e.g. purpose, type, granularity, timing, access, security, governance etc.) and reframe into 5 safes format [1]

Understand the group's privacy obligations and position

Collate necessary documentation and approvals

Manage request and communications

Collect information on requestor experience and suggestions

...works within their cluster to

Help agency to make data more transparent

Identify suitable data to meet request

Capture data request to release journey (focus on cluster internal process)

Seek legal advice if required

Consult with linkage agency if required

Collate necessary documentation and approvals

Prepare or organise required enabling instruments

Organise extraction

Ensure secure transfer mechanism

Collate information on data development and feed into existing mechanisms

Translate emerging understandings of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance and incorporate, where relevant, into data sharing service

...works with other connectors and the DPC-CAPO hub team to

A Data Connector...

Network ideas for addressing sharing barriers or unnecessary processes

Draft up case studies that document current enablers and barriers to achieving PR4, and share expertise / experiences to shape and collaboratively design data reform

Key:

Inputs on IDS/G to flow from hub team into how data connectors interact with communities and clusters when sharing data

Inputs to flow from experience of data sharing into longer-term data reform

13

Steps of responding to Data Requests

Steps Taken by Data Connectors

1. Develop an understanding of the community's needs

- Initial contact by email

- Introductory meeting **taking time to listen and understand** the issues and concerns raised.

- Undertake an initial assessment of the proposed data request

- Re-engage with the requestor **to formulate and refine the data request**

2. Understand the purpose of the request and proactively meet information needs.

- **Understand what the data and information will be used for** and what the requestor will do with it
- **Direct to potential data sources** i.e. Aboriginal Led Dashboard
- **Identify variables** that may meet the requestors need
- **Share information** about the limitations/quality of available data
- **Suggest and share contacts** to other Data Connectors in other Government agencies (where relevant)

3. Provide relevant data/information in a useful and relevant format

- Understand what **format would be useful to the requestor**, so that it is accessible and easy to understand

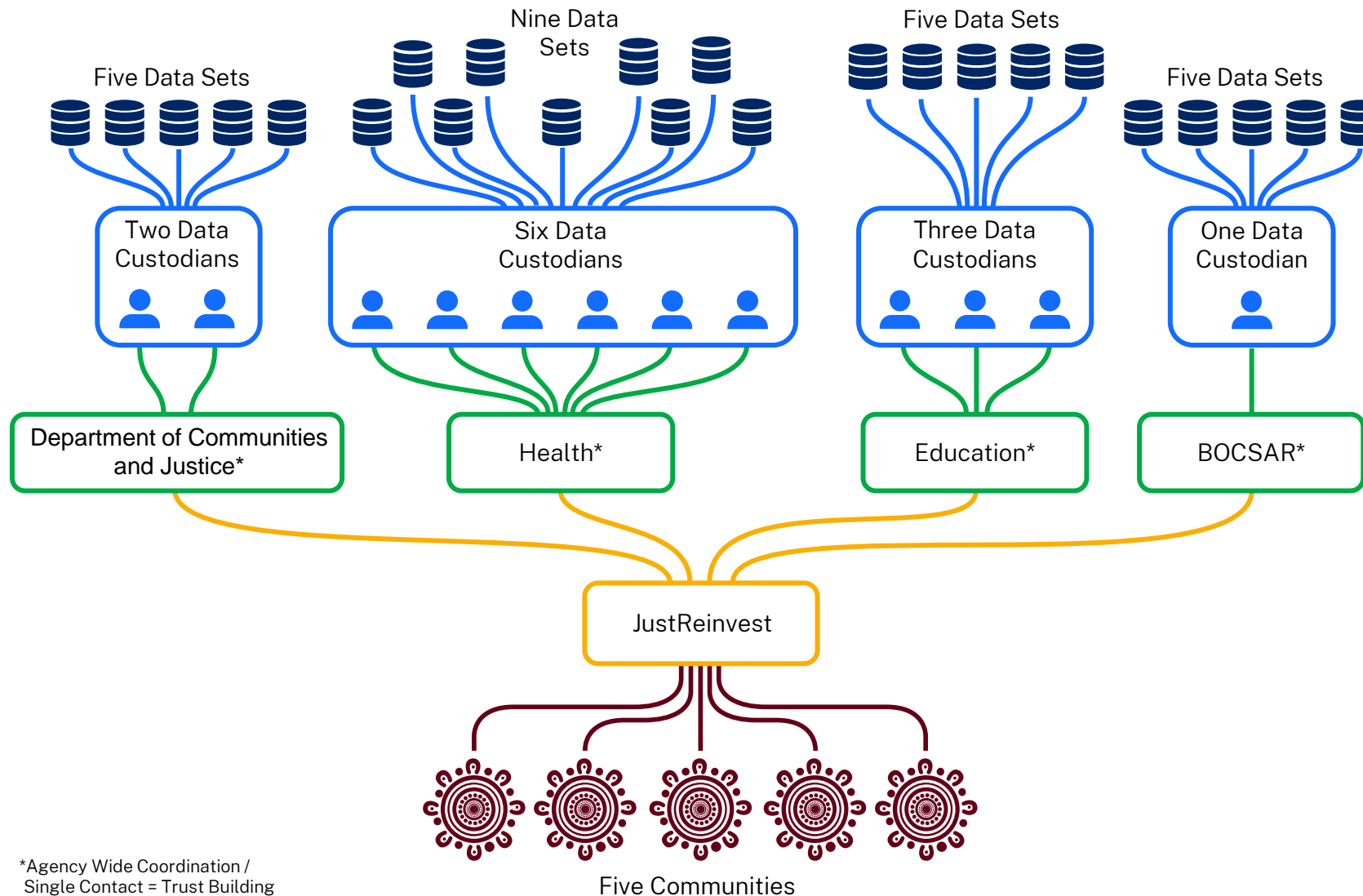- Check in with the requestor to gauge whether the data has been beneficial and met their community's needs

NSW Data Connector Service Case Study/Example: Multi-agency, multi-location aggregated data request from NSW Just Reinvest
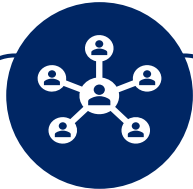
Scenario:

- Throughout 2023-24 JustReinvest NSW (JR) have submitted data requests on behalf of five communities, for both existing and proposed sites (Bourke, Moree, Mt Druitt, Nowra and Kempsey).

- JR supports Aboriginal communities to explore and establish justice reinvestment initiatives and advocates for systemic changes that build safer and stronger communities.

- JR are seeking to establish regular data sharing arrangements between themselves and agencies as an intermediary to Aboriginal communities.

- Data Connectors have supported coordination and troubleshooting across their agencies and assisted JR to formulate data requests.

NSW Data Connector Service Case Study/Example: Multi-agency, multi-location aggregated data request from NSW Just Reinvest continued

Five Data Sets

Nine Data Sets

Five Data Sets

Five Data Sets

Two Data Custodians

Six Data Custodians

Three Data Custodians

One Data Custodian

Department of Communities and Justice*

Health*

Education*

BOCSAR*

JustReinvest

Five Communities

*Agency Wide Coordination / Single Contact = Trust Building

Who has requested data to date and for what purposes?

73
Data requests through the Data Connector Service to date

136
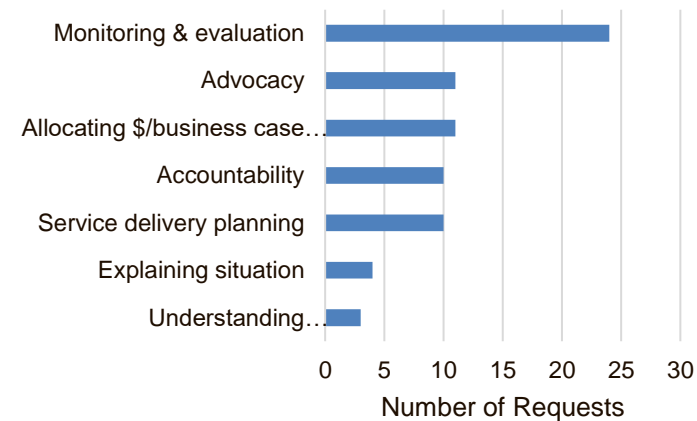Data sets requested through the Service to date

222
Data custodians the Data Connectors have engaged on behalf of community requesters Service to date

Who is requesting data?

- ACCO
- Aboriginal Researcher
- Gov. - Agency
- Gov. - Aboriginal Outcomes Team
- Community Member
- Aboriginal Organisation
- Aboriginal Peak Organisation
- Other

53%
11%
8%
5%
3%
12%
3%
4%
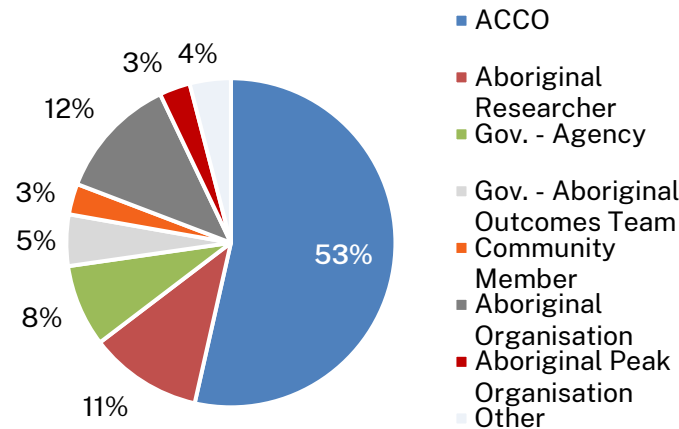
ACCOs account for over half of all data requests.

Purpose for Data Requests

Monitoring & evaluation
Advocacy
Allocating $/business case…
Accountability
Service delivery planning
Explaining situation
Understanding…

Number of Requests
(0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30)

Monitoring and Evaluation, Advocacy and Accountability are the top three reasons for data requests.

Different types of community members and organisations request data for different purposes, all of which support local decision making

As of May 21, 2024

Summary of the NSW Data Connector Service performance since commencement + from March 2024

Total data requests	73	↑ 23	**New requests since March 2024 mostly …**
Requests finalised since March 2024	13	0	• Allocating $/business dev case **(10)**
Median time taken to finalise requests (in days):	7	↓ 6	• Involve aggregated data **(20)** • Ask for LGA-level dis-aggregation **(13)**
Median time taken to finalise requests without (in days):	54	0	• Come from ACCOs **(15)** and Aboriginal researchers **(3)**
Pending requests above 100 days	12	↓ 1	• Already finalised **(14)** while some are still in progress **(7)**

KEY ■ Positive change   ■ Neutral change   ■ Negative change

As of May 21, 2024

Contact Information

For any additional information on the Data Connector Service, please head to the link below:

- https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/closingthegap/priority-reforms/nsw-data-connector-service/

If you are seeking any data/information from The Department of Communities and Justice, you can contact our team directly:

- NgaramanalaDataConnector@dcj.nsw.gov.au

If you are seeking data/information from another or multiple NSW Government agencies, you can make the request through the Priority Reform Four Team at The Cabinet Office:

- CTGPriorityReform4@tco.nsw.gov.au