Community Justice Centre

2025/26 Annual Report



NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

The Hon Marie-Clare Boothby MLA
Attorney-General
Parliament House
DARWIN NT 0801

Dear Attorney-General

COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE 2025 - 26 ANNUAL REPORT

I am pleased to provide you the Annual report of the Community Justice Centre for 2025-26, in accordance with s39 of the *Community Justice Centre Act 2005*.

Section 39(3) of the Act requires that you table a copy of this Annual Report in the Legislative Assembly within 6 days after you have received the report.

Yours sincerely

Ms Erin McAuley
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Attorney-General's Department

29 September 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

The Community Justice Centre acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country on which we work and live. We pay our respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the Northern Territory, and to Elders past and present. We acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters and seas, and their rich contributions to our community.

We recognise and stand alongside Aboriginal Elders, community leaders and mediators who are working for peace in their families and communities.

Interpreter Services

The Northern Territory Government is committed to providing accessible services for Territorians. If language is a barrier to understanding this annual report, you can contact us on 1800 000 473 and we will arrange an interpreter to assist you.

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1. Directors Message

I am pleased to present the Community Justice Centre (CJC) Annual Report for the fiscal year ending 30 June 2026.

The 2025-26 year has been a year of returning to core business for the CJC. Peacemaking programs headed by the CJC have transferred to the Aboriginal Justice Unit and out of Government to not-for-profit organisations for work to continue in large scale peacemaking programs and efforts.

This has left the CJC returning to its previous staffing, budget and core business purpose of providing mediation services to the community. Several acting directors have done their part in the last few years to ensure the CJC maintains operations throughout.

Through all of this the CJC has continued to provide free mediation service to Territorians and continues to be present to assist people of the Northern Territory to sit down and work together to overcome conflict outside of the legal system.

In my short time at the helm of the CJC, I have been impressed with the dedication and professionalism of the mediators and staff who are passionate about conflict resolution and making sure parties are afforded the best chance to have a difficult conversation respectfully and work together to search for a mutually acceptable solution to their conflict.

At the same time, the CJCs experienced mediators continue to train frontline staff and existing peacemakers in conflict resolution skills and train the next generation of mediators with our Australian Mediator and Dispute Resolution Accreditation Standards (AMDRAS) accredited training course. Many of whom utilise these dispute resolution skills in their day-to-day dealings and the dedicated few who go on to accreditation as an AMDRAS accredited Mediator.

More and more businesses and Territory and State run bodies are using Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods in their operations to deal with family, commercial, workplace, neighbourhood and community disputes. The CJC continues to play its part for the community alongside courts, dispute resolution centres, counsellors, commissions and statutory bodies embracing ADR as a party led, cost effective and informal way of resolving conflict.

To the staff and mediators, both current and former of the CJC, thank you for your continued efforts to assist people.

The CJC looks forward to tackling even more conflict in the next year, growing its mediator base (and reach) further across the Territory, supporting the community and Territorians to deal with conflict early and constructively.

Yours sincerely

Mr Dane Armstrong

Acting Director

Community Justice Centre

2. The Community Justice Centre

The CJC was established in 2003 and under the *Community Justice Centre Act 2005* (the Act) was set up:

(a) to provide mediation services; and

(b) to carry out other functions as provided by any other Act.

Under this guideline, the CJC has provided mediation services at no cost to the NT community and low-cost workplace mediation services to businesses who require workplace mediation.

The CJC is as a statutory body pursuant to the Act, and a Recognised Mediator Accreditation Body under the new Australian Mediator and Dispute Resolution Accreditation Standards (AMDRAS).

A small administrative team of three manage the day-to-day operations and a panel of accredited practitioners are engaged to provide mediation and training services. The Centre is in Casuarina at the CASCOM centre and Mediators on the panel in Darwin Katherine and Alice springs.

The Centre also previously was situated in the Desert Knowledge Precinct in Alice Springs however this shop front has closed, and services are now arranged by staff in Darwin who then engage Alice Springs based mediators to conduct the mediation.

Mediation Case Study 1
Joan* and Jane* were referred to the CJC from Court after a PVRO was filed.
A dispute arose surrounding lending money to a family member/friend of the parties.
Both parties attended mediation and discussed what had happened in the past and came to a confidential agreement on how to fix what had happened. During negotiation, they discussed how to move forward in the future to make sure the issues didn't occur again and set a plan with acceptable boundaries.
The mediator noted it was so rewarding to see a court referred mediation end in parties hugging each other, walking out of the office together and talking after a mediation.
*(*All names have been changed for confidentiality & privacy)*

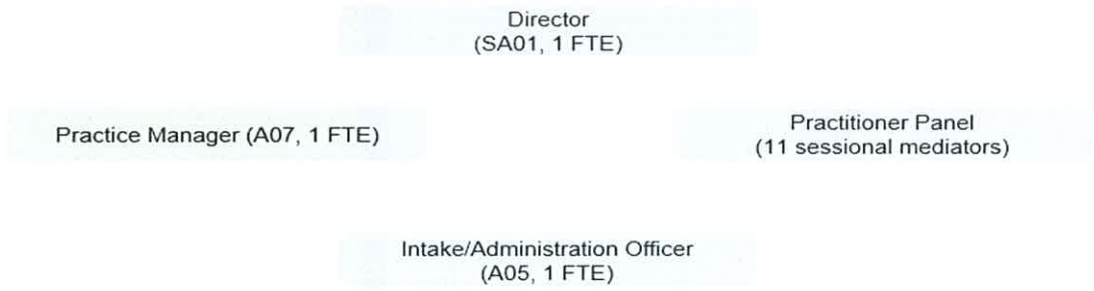
2.1. Community Justice Centre Services

The CJC's mission is to provide fair, accessible and effective dispute resolution services that meet the diverse needs of Territorians. The Centre's scope of services include:

- Facilitative mediation for civil disputes and personal violence matters.
- Conduct the Certificate of Training for national accreditation of mediators.
- Mediation support to community peacemaking.
- Restorative conferencing.
- Adjudication pursuant to the *Construction Contracts (Security of Payments) Act 2004.*

2.2. Organisational Structure

The CJC has three full-time employees and a panel of mediators that varies but currently sits at 11.



3. Achievements 2025/2026

- Provided conflict resolution training for Not-For Profit Organisation frontline staff.
- Conducted the AMDRAS Certificate of Training for 36 new mediators in Alice Springs Darwin and Arnhem Land.
- The CJC has partnered with leadership groups, community organisations and NT Government Departments to upskill staff and assist peacemaking efforts.
- Achieved a 75% client satisfaction score from contributing participants.
- Achieved an overall agreement rate of 64% for matters that progressed to mediation.

4. CJC Services

4.1. Referrals

The below graph outlines referrals by third parties and does not include Self-initiated cases by a party to the mediation.

Enquiries by referral source.

Referral source		2025-26
NT Police		72
Courts and Tribunals		89
Local Council		7
Legal Services		5
Government Departments		10
Other/Not Identified		12
	Total	195

NT Police referrals via SupportLink.

Referral outcome		2025-26
Established Contact		42
Attempted Contact		9
Referred to another service		20
	Total	71

4.2. Dispute Assistance

The CJC manages enquiries through a helpline, emails and a drop-in centre. People have often attempted to resolve their matter in other ways and contact the CJC following a referral from another agency. During these initial contacts, Centre staff provide an overview of mediation and the process of inviting the other party to the dispute to mediation. The team assist people to navigate the justice system, refer to legal and advocacy groups and then consider options for early resolution of the conflict.

4.3. Mediation Services

The CJC delivers two distinct streams of mediation services:

- Court-annexed; and
- General civil mediation services.

Mediation in both streams is voluntary, confidential and impartial. Services are free (with the exception of workplace mediations within the general mediation stream).

4.4. Case Management

Support link and other agency referrals often prior to the party receiving legal advice on their rights and responsibilities or referred to the CJC for advice that the CJC is not set up to provide, or a party is seeking advocacy. The CJC must remain impartial and not advocate for any party. As such a lot of referrals are received by the CJC where we explain the Voluntary, Confidential and Impartial mediation service we provide, encourage parties to come into mediation fully informed of their legal avenues, rights and responsibilities (and provide information for legal services for them to do so) and then come to mediation fully prepared as we cannot advocate for them during the process.

Because a large number of parties are still looking for advocacy services or information on all their legal avenues, many parties who do not want mediation yet, come back to us as a self-referred case after receiving this advice. This results in a high number of referrals from third parties not eventuating in cases but creating an increased self-referred case load after they have received advice and advocacy and then return to the CJC to try mediation as a free and confidential next step.

Opened cases by referral source.

Referral source		2025-26
NT Police		12
Courts and Tribunals		50
Local Council		1
Legal Practitioners		5
Government Departments		12
Self-Referred		30
Other		7
	Total	**117**

4.5. Dispute types

Mediation Case Study 2
Bill* and Steve* were referred to the CJC to mediate as part of a PVRO matter.
In the debrief to the Director the mediator stated that it was one of the best mediations they had ever been a part of. The two men put all their animosity aside and went straight from their positions to a value discussion. An agreement was quickly reached, and the PVRO application was to be withdrawn.
"This was one of the best mediations I've ever been a part of. That's why I love this work" CJC Mediator

Of the dispute types, consistently the general mediation stream covers a higher percentage than the court annexed stream. Family matters for the CJC usually cover non-residing family members as Relationships Australia and their team of Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners deal with more family Dispute Resolution matters.

All cases by dispute type.

Dispute types	2025-26
Antisocial Behaviour / Bullying (Schools)	5%
Court Annexed	43%
Family	11%
Business/Consumer	5%
Minor Civil Disputes	5%
Neighbourhood / Community	12%
Organisational / Association / Service Provider / Schools	5%
Remote Indigenous Intra-Family/Community Conflict	5%
Workplace / Contractors	5%
Tenancy/Body Corporate	4%

Neighbourhood disputes stand for 12% of all matters handled by the CJC in our statistics however statistically there are other dispute types that also address certain community and neighbourhood dispute types such as anti-social behaviour, minor civil disputes and community conflict. The following table provides a further breakdown of the neighbourhood / community dispute type:

Neighbourhood dispute sub-types.

Dispute sub-type	2025-26
Dogs / Animals	0%
Fence / Boundary	11%
Noise	40%
Nuisance	24%
Trees / Overhanging Branches	23%
Water / Drainage	2%

4.6. Regions

Within the regions the CJC can mediate in Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs and the surrounding areas. Arnhem Land is supported by the Aboriginal Resource and Development Services (ARDS Aboriginal Corporation) Dispute Resolution team and other places such as the Tiwi islands and Yuendumu having their own existing peacemaking team. The CJC can assist in these regions but usually only if requested directly, there is a conflict of interest or a request for additional mediator support.

All cases by NT region.

Region	2025-26
Alice Springs	7%
Central Australia	2%
Darwin	78%
Katherine/Big Rivers	7%
Tennant Creek/Barkley	3%
Top End	3%

Mediation Case Study 3

A financial institution reached out to the CJC and requested mediation with a business and its operators. The mediation was conducted with one of the CJCs experienced mediators and resulted in a signed agreement from all parties. This agreement formed the basis of the next step of legally turning the good faith agreement into a deed of settlement with assistance of their solicitors after mediation. After a long mediation process and reality testing the agreement to ensure it would work, parties were shaking hands and thanking each other for the collaborative approach each side took as part of the mediation process and the effort and time the mediator and CJC staff put in to help everyone.

4.7. Facilitative Mediations

Of the mediations that proceeded, agreement rates have dropped. Favourable outcomes remain higher in the General Mediation Stream than the Court Annexed stream. This is often attributed to parties attending mediation before conflict has escalated.

Court Annexed mediation attendance rates are higher than general mediation. This is perhaps a result of the court order referring parties to mediation, as opposed to both parties voluntarily choosing mediation to resolve conflict.

Three-year comparison of mediation agreement rates.

Case type	Facilitative mediations	Agreement rate 2025-26	Variance 2024-25	Variance 2023-24
Civil Mediation	19	64%	54%	79%
Court Annexed	28	58%	21%	54%

The total outcomes are written below. Where there is a variation it is due to select cases having multiple mediations. The outcomes of cases with multiple mediations are likely to record some variation of a non-agreement followed by an agreement or multiple non-agreements or agreements.

All case outcomes.

Case type	Mediated cases	Centre assisted	Unable to assist	Currently open	No response	Declined	Withdrawn	Scheduling issues	Total
Civil Mediation	19	1	2	3	25	10	21	3	84
Court Annexed	26	0	0	0	1	12	12	0	51

4.8. Case complexity

The more complex cases based on the CJC's complexity matrix involve groups of people over multiple locations with abusive behaviours to threats of violence. A lot of these more complex matters are tied to the larger peacemaking projects that the CJC commenced. Now with the projects having moved out of the CJC the number of complex mediation matters have reduced. Where the CJC does not have a mediator presence, if a matter is simple a mediator can host a mediation virtually, fly to the location or the CJC can assist existing peacemakers to host a process.

Complexity of opened cases.

Level of complexity	2025-26
Minor	68%
Moderate	28%
Complex	4%

4.9. Adjudication

Part 4 of the Act provides for parties to adjudicate matters under the *Construction Contracts (Security of Payments) Act 2004* of a lesser amount than what is heard through the Construction Contracts Adjudication panel.

No adjudication referrals were received in the 2025-26 period.

4.10. Client satisfaction

Client satisfaction was 80% positive, 20% negative out of the client surveys received in the 2025-26 fiscal year period. Feedback regarding process and mediators is generally highly scored. Low scores relate to the location of CJC Offices and there only being one open office location in the CASCOM complex in Casuarina and now none in Alice Springs. The other low scoring metric is the likelihood or referring other parties in conflict to mediation.

4.11. Complaints

The CJC received one formal complaint to the Director in the 2025-26 fiscal year period.

5. Training and Accreditation

5.1. Accreditation

The CJC has ceased as an AMDRAS Recognised Accreditation Provider (RAP) for mediators. Instead the CJC has partnered with Mediation Institute and Resolution Institute, two of Australia's leading Mediator RAPs for a pathway to accreditation after our training course.

5.2. Training

The CJC transitioned its 'Certificate of Training' mediator training course to the new AMDRAS standards in 2025. The Alice Springs training course was the first course under the new standards.

Mediation Case Study 4

A mediation matter was referred to the CJC. The two parties were friends when a disagreement paired with communication problems resulted in a potentially dangerous act. The parties shared hobbies, associates and a mutual circle of friends. The parties attended mediation and, with the assistance of a mediator and a support person for each side, they were able to talk about the incident, their history, what they wanted and also their values and why they wanted it.

It became apparent that they were taking different paths in life and through discussions in mediation they realised this. While they agreed their friendship had come to an end, the agreement they reached meant nobody lost their mutual circle of friends, acquaintances and hobbies they both held dear.

Every year the CJC Conducts a training course in Darwin and Alice Springs, and this year trained 24 participants in Darwin and 12 in Alice Springs.

Further to this the CJC continues to run tailored conflict courses for frontline staff and organisation groups who deal with conflict in their day-to-day work. One conflict course was provided to a Not-for-profit organisation in Katherine in the fiscal year.



CJC Practical Mediation Skills course: Darwin May 2026

6. Practitioner Panel

The CJC Practitioner panel currently has 11 Mediators on its panel.

The CJC has strong representation for mediators in Darwin and sufficient mediators in Alice Springs and Katherine. The CJC has been without an accredited mediator in Tennant Creek since 2024. The CJC is working with stakeholders in the region on Training and upskilling Tennant Creek residents to become mediators and assist with civil disputes in the area.

If you are an Accredited mediator and wish to be on the CJC panel to assist in community disputes please reach out to the CJC.

CJC Practitioner Panel.

Location	Total
Alice Springs	2
Katherine	1
Darwin	8
Tennant Creek	0
Total as of 30 June 2026	**11**