

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS STORYBOOK



CELEBRATING & SHARING
GOOD NEWS STORIES

The Kimberley and Pilbara Edition



THE WEST AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS STORYBOOK



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INTRODUCTION

This Storybook is the first in a series of Indigenous Storybooks showcasing the achievements of Indigenous people and communities across Western Australia. Each Storybook will be a celebration of Indigenous people who have contributed to social, economic, health and environmental outcomes for their communities. These contributions have either been made individually or collectively, to improve the quality of life and wellbeing for Indigenous peoples across Western Australia.

PHAIWA believes that a Storybook is not only a terrific way to celebrate these achievements but is also a creative way to disseminate and share information across the state in a user friendly and non-threatening way. Sharing successes and failures is a great way of moving forward, spreading ideas and improving practice. PHAIWA hopes these stories will encourage a change in how Indigenous projects are planned, delivered and disseminated. This could be achieved directly by supporting the storytellers to publish and present their stories, or indirectly through communities and partners who read a story and consider it replicable in their own settings.

Each story is different. Each storyteller has used their own style to tell their story. Some stories are in first person; some reflect on the work of others in communities; some stories describe one-off programs and others span years of hard work. Some are told by non-Indigenous people who have been working with Indigenous communities. Despite their format, style or topic; the common thread amongst all the stories is they have resulted in making a difference. They tell of positive impacts at the community level.

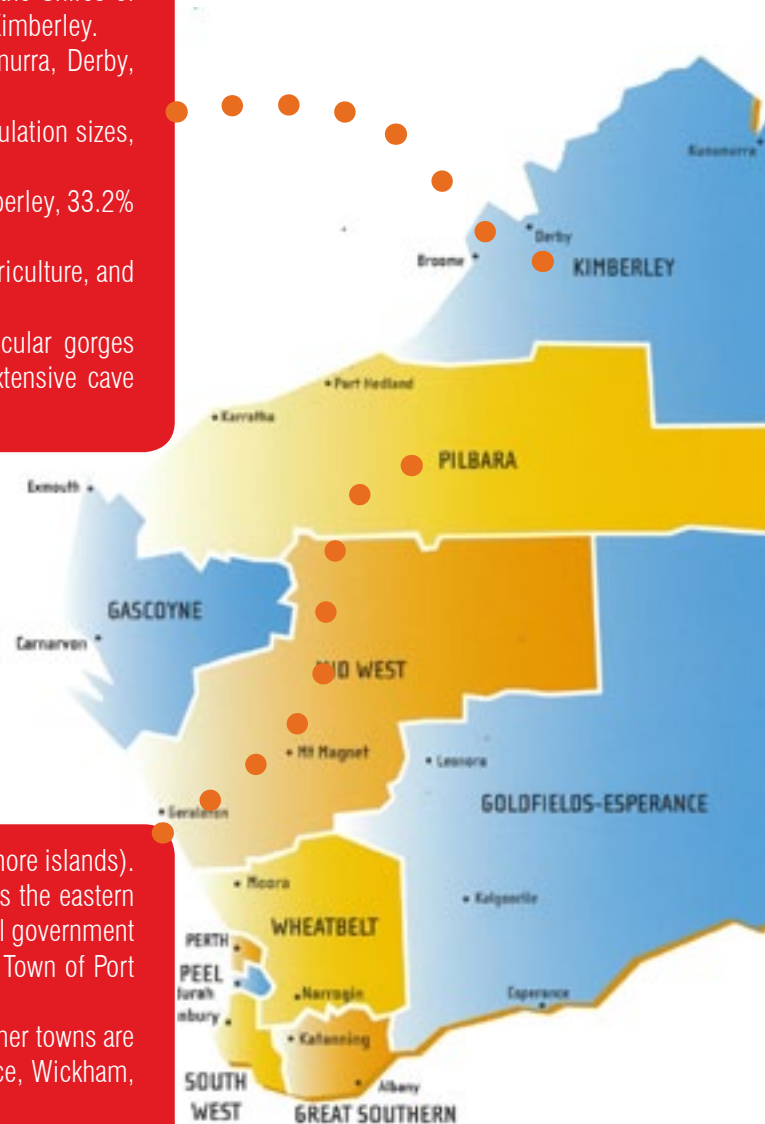
This inaugural Storybook has assembled stories from the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia. The Kimberley and Pilbara edition showcases a variety of stories including; healthy lifestyle initiatives, community awareness programs relating to suicide and good parenting, local government environment and health projects, stories of effective partnerships, social benefit programs and environmental stewardship. All stories reveal detailed information about a project or program, the organisations involved and the individual storyteller. Authors, along with sharing their stories, share contact details, photographs and quotes to make this an interesting and valuable read.

PHAIWA welcomes all stories that focus on Indigenous issues – whether these are individual stories or those that have affected whole communities. If you would like to contribute your story to future Storybooks please contact PHAIWA at www.phaiwa.org.au.



About the Kimberley

- The Kimberley encompasses an area of 424,517 square kilometres (km²)
- The region consists of four local government areas, including the Shires of Broome, Derby-West Kimberley, Halls Creek and Wyndham-East Kimberley.
- The major population centres are the towns of Broome, Kununurra, Derby, Halls Creek, Wyndham and Fitzroy Crossing.
- There are also over 100 Aboriginal communities of various population sizes, scattered throughout the region.
- According to the 2006 Census of the total population in the Kimberley, 33.2% are Indigenous persons.
- The Kimberley has a diverse economy, with mining, tourism, agriculture, and pearling all major contributors to the economic output of the area.
- Geographically, this region features arid desert areas, spectacular gorges and river valleys, beautiful beaches, pockets of rainforest and extensive cave systems.



About the Pilbara

- The region covers a total area of 507,896 sq kms (including offshore islands).
- Most of the inhabitants are located in the western third, whereas the eastern third is largely desert with few inhabitants. The region has four local government areas - the Shires of Ashburton, East Pilbara, Roebourne and the Town of Port Hedland.
- The major towns of the region are Port Hedland and Karratha. Other towns are Roebourne, Dampier, Onslow, Pannawonica, Paraburdoo, Tom Price, Wickham, Newman, Marble Bar and Nullagine.
- According to the 2006 Census of the total population in the Pilbara, 30.0% are Indigenous persons.
- The Pilbara came to national and international prominence during the 1960s when the go-ahead was given to extract iron ore deposits in the region. Today the Pilbara economy is crucial to the State, providing two of the State's largest export revenue earners - iron ore and liquefied natural gas



BUILDING BETTER ROADS

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Program Partners: The community members of Djarindjin

Staff Involved: Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation

Keywords: Dust suppression, infrastructure, environment & health, community partnerships

Once upon a time...

the roads in Djarindjin were made up of mostly deep sand. You really needed a 4WD vehicle to drive around and cars were often getting bogged. Walking in the sand was hard going, let alone trying to ride a bike or push a pram. For the community accessing every day places such as the school, the office, the shop or the clinic was very difficult. The dust in the community was a real problem especially when a south easterly blew.

Dust causes health problems by irritating the skin and parts of the body that secrete mucus, which contributes to eye diseases such as trachoma, respiratory disease and skin infections. Dust can transmit animal and bird droppings and bacteria to roofs and may contaminate the water supply.

Djarindjin is a remote community of 320 people. The community is located towards the tip of the Dampier Peninsula, about 200 kilometres north of Broome in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

The community prides itself on having close links to country, maintaining key aspects of traditional Bardi Jawi life, building a low impact and sustainable community infrastructure while having the resourcefulness and community spirit to survive and thrive in this beautiful location.

Djarindjin has very few material assets. Even basic services struggle to be provided with the withdrawal of Government funding, so fixing the roads so that the community could function effectively was paramount.

About the storyteller...

The following story was written by Chicky Clements an Environmental Health Worker with the Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation, located in Broome.

About Nirrumbuk...

Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation is an Indigenous owned, non-government organisation that has experienced a high level of success in the delivery of services to discrete Aboriginal communities. This in part, can be attributed to the Indigenous membership of the organisation and the organisational philosophy which maintains social inclusion, cultural relevance and appropriateness.



And then one day...

the community got a quote from a private contractor to fix the roads, but the quote was exorbitant. The community expressed disappointment about the quote to Nirrumbuk and it was decided that if a partnership with the community was to be developed, the job could be done a lot cheaper. The only funds Nirrumbuk needed was for the loader, fuel and a contract grader. The Djarindjin community contributed to the schedule of community works to be completed in conjunction with Nirrumbuk. The aim was to seal the main roads within the community.



And because of that...

we worked with the locals to construct 1600 metres of formed and graded gravel road in the town. It took 3 weeks to complete the job. But the real story is the partnerships we developed and the way the job was done. There were no allocated funds to complete this job, so we used Nirrumbuk gravel trucks and water carriers. We had to hire in a grader and driver but we managed to negotiate a lower price for this service. The community members were asked to use their hoses to wet the gravel down and this was very successful, with nearly all of the residents assisting in some way. Workers from the Community Development Employment Program also assisted in the building the road.



The grader at work



Almost done

And since that day...

the community now has a serviceable road and a significant decrease in the amount of dust. One of the most obvious results and constant reminder of improvement has been the use of the new road by parents with prams and the community kids. Kids are riding their bikes and scooters again, which helps to keep them occupied, active and healthy. And mums can now push their prams around town and access the store and clinic. The community has been successful in obtaining a water cart and front end loader to assist in maintaining the road and local scooter and bike sales have increased.

This project has demonstrated how you can achieve big changes through the formation of local partnerships.



our borrowed loader



we hired a driver, he did an awesome job and gave us a great price



the finished product



The kids are out riding their bikes again



Many in the community gave a helping hand



What an amazing difference! The Community is very happy with the results

SNAP INTO LIFE



Contact Name: Dr Alice Tippetts

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Program Partners: Healthyway, Alcohol Education & Rehabilitation Foundation (AERF), Boab Health & the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council (KAMSC)

Staff Involved: Alice Tippetts (Creator), Julia Broadley & Justine Holmes (Project Officers)

Keywords: Indigenous health, child health, nutrition, physical activity, smoking, alcohol

About the storyteller...

This story was written by Justine Holmes, Project Officer with Boab Health Services in Broome

About Boab Health...

Boab Health Services is a not for profit organisation (previously known as the Kimberley Division of General Practice Ltd). With their motto, *Grow Strong – Live Well* they provide collaborative leadership for improved primary health care outcomes for people within the Kimberley region of WA.

Once upon a time...

there was a doctor named Alice Tippetts. Alice was a long term resident of the Kimberley and formerly a doctor at the Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service (OVAHS) in Kununurra. Dr Alice was confronted with chronic disease almost every day in her work around the Kimberley – and wondered if there was a way to approach it differently. She realised that after years of treating really sick people as a doctor, it was time to put her energy into doing something that might stop people getting sick in the first place.

Dr Alice reflected on the idea of teaching the young people of the Kimberley about the lifestyle risk factors that lead to chronic diseases. She wanted to raise awareness and help encourage them to make better choices for their health, so they could enjoy a healthy and vibrant adulthood.

Dr Alice discussed this idea with a number of people from different communities and towns across the Kimberley to gain support for her idea.

Over the next few years she carried on working as a busy doctor but continued to ponder on ideas of how to influence lifestyle behaviours. She realised the best way to get information out to the young people in the communities was to ensure that it was fun and interesting. This led to the idea of a creating a board game; a fun, interactive and importantly, educational board game to help relay her messages.

And then one day...

Dr Alice had a terrible accident and fell off a waterfall and damaged her knee. The injury meant she was now unable to work for a few weeks, and was unable to play any sport or do any bush walking for at least a year. Devastated at first, she soon realised her knee injury was a blessing in disguise, as this now gave her the time to evolve her board game idea. With the help of others, she successfully sourced funding from organisations such as Healthyway, Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AERF), the Kimberley Division of General Practice (now Boab Health) and the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council (KAMSC) to help bring her board game idea to life.

"By seeing the consequences of actions in a game situation, it is hoped that the players will absorb the importance of healthy lifestyle choices, and make the right choices as they grow up"

- Dr Alice Tippetts

She began by consulting with friends, colleagues and the Aboriginal community members across the Kimberley. She shared her ideas and thoughts with many and got their input on how the game should look and be played. She trialled a number of versions of the game to ensure its content, language, graphics and layout were relevant and appropriate to all groups across the region.



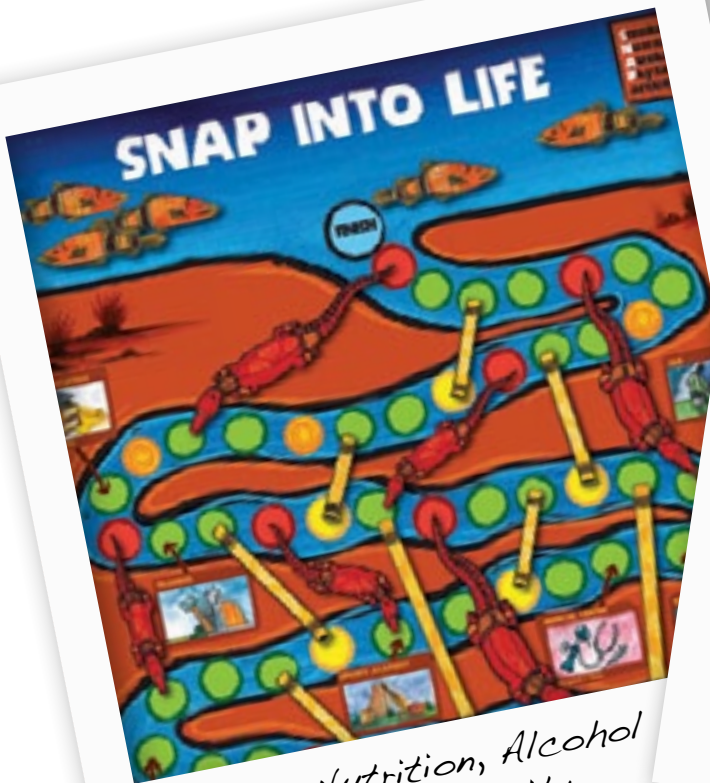
And because of that...

Dr Alice created SNAP into LIFE a fun, interactive and culturally appropriate board game designed specifically for the Kimberley region. The game covers topics such as smoking, nutrition, alcohol and physical activity. It includes other basic educational topics such as; ear, eye and dental health, environmental health, mental health and road safety. A set of sexual health cards was also developed to be available separately on request.

SNAP into LIFE is based on a snakes and ladders game but with crocodiles, didgeridoos and question cards on health. Each turn, players must answer a question about health (e.g. what is more healthy – ice-cream, yogurt or chocolate?) Correct answers and healthy lifestyle choices are rewarded by players moving forward in the game to the sports academy, going out bush, getting a

place in a training course, further education or a job. Similarly, they also face crises when the long term consequences of unhealthy lifestyle choices become obvious – and they are sent off to the hospital, to the alcohol rehabilitation centre and sometimes even to prison. Dr Alice hoped that by players seeing the consequences of their actions in a game situation, they would absorb the idea of how important healthy lifestyle choices are early on in life, and make the right choices as they grow up.

With the funding received by Healthway, AERF and Boab Health, 500 copies of the game were professionally produced and given to schools and community organisations across the region. Boab Health employed a project officer (funded for the first 6 months by Royalties for Regions) to help spread the SNAP into LIFE message and be available to help groups learn to play the game and highlight its significant messages.



*Smoking, Nutrition, Alcohol
& Physical Activity
(SNAP)*



*Student from Broome
Primary having her roll*



And since that day...

SNAP into LIFE has been played by many across the Kimberley. People are learning more about their health and the benefits of making healthier choices in life. The game has reached many groups from year four students, to teenage girls to men's groups.

SNAP into LIFE won the Community Innovation Award at the Injury Control Council of WA's Community Safety Awards in 2010 and also received the Best Poster Presentation at the Australian Health Promotion Conference in 2011.

Since its development, SNAP into LIFE has received full support of the Kimberley offices for Catholic Education, Department of Education and Training and the Aboriginal Education Unit, as well with various health organisations. However, more importantly feedback from children has been that the game is 'deadly'.

Recently, a further 500 copies were produced and are now available for anyone to purchase at the SNAP into LIFE website: www.snapintolife.com.au.

The SNAP game is fabulous. Everyone that I have shown, played and talked to, have all agreed this is one game worth its weight in gold. There is just so many ways of playing this game, from the board game to pop quizzes. Just love it. Very interactive"

- Aboriginal Health Worker.

"It's fantastic. Thus far we have now done it with 4 groups of different ages and a group of young mums... and IT'S A HIT!!! It really is a great resource. The kids all really engage. It really promotes conversation about all the important stuff and it is FUN!!!"

- Child and Maternal Health Nurse

It is so rewarding to see how well received and popular the game has become and how much fun the children have playing it. In the future we hope to adapt and promote the game to other communities across Western Australia, Australia and eventually hopefully overseas. We are exploring the ideas of adapting the game to be in a variety of Aboriginal languages and also the possibility of creating an electronic version of the game to help more communities enjoy its benefits.

Dr Alice would like to thank the very many people who helped create SNAP in LIFE and all those continuing to support it and promote it, and also to Healthway without whom the game would never have got off the ground. There were times during the 10 years that it has taken to come to fruition, when she felt like giving up, but it was the encouragement of the Aboriginal children and adults that kept her persevering. She would also like to acknowledge JCY Architects and Urban Designers who did all the amazing graphic design work.

The aim now is to continue spreading the word and making sure people keep playing the game with the children and that all 'new' health staff know how to find a copy.



*Dr Alice Tippetts
Creator of Snap into Life*



*Kids from Ngalapita Remote
Community School in Fitzroy Crossing
enjoying a game of SNAP into LIFE*

HOPE FOR LIFE

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Program Partners: Standby Suicide Response Service, headspace Kimberley, Burdekin Youth In Action, Leon Mead Photography & Kinway Anglicare

Staff Involved: Zoe Evans - Standby, Lloyd Pigram - Burdekin, Karli Orazi - headspace Kimberley

Key Words: Suicide, youth, photography, hope, helplessness

Once upon a time...

many people, young and old had taken their lives in the Kimberley. Suicide is a common occurrence and something that not only affects the individual, but all those left behind; family, friends, work mates and the community.

Traditionally, shame and stigma exist around suicide. Shame felt when acknowledging someone close to you has passed away through suicide or when acknowledging that you have experienced suicidal thoughts yourself, are real issues.

People were feeling as though they had to tip toe around the subject, and not say the 'S' word. What we now realise is, the longer we don't talk about suicide, the longer the heartache associated with suicide will go on. Suicide is a growing issue in the Kimberley. We knew we needed to raise awareness, to remove the stigma and find a way to educate people on the risk factors and warning signs.

About the storyteller...

The following story was written by Karli Orazi the Youth Engagement Project Officer with headspace Kimberley.

Program partners...



The StandBy Response Service is a community based program that provides a 24 hour coordinated crisis response to assist families, friends and associates who have been bereaved through suicide.



headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation. They help young people who are going through a tough time, with advice, support and information.



Burdekin Youth In Action is a community based, non-profit, non-government youth service. They provide counselling, assistance with advocacy and act as a referral agent for 12-25 year olds and their families.

We were also aware that there was a need to encourage people to talk to each other about suicide and seek help. People needed to know that suicide is preventable, but we needed to find strategies to make them feel safe to talk about it.

And then one day...

during July 2010, the Standby Suicide Response Service developed the Hope for Life Photography Project in partnership with headspace Kimberley, Burdekin Youth in Action and KinWay Anglicare WA.

The project aimed to increase awareness of suicide across the Kimberley and encourage young people to embrace life. In addition, we wanted to educate young people about the behaviours associated with suicide and how to be aware of these to protect themselves and those around them. We wanted people to know that it is okay to ask for help, and if you are worried about someone else, it was good to talk to them about it. So this project provided communities with the opportunity to finally start talking about suicide. It was important that the project was led by young people in the community. This would allow them to grasp a full understanding of its purpose. We wanted them to



Jimmy Edgar welcomes people to the Hope for Life exhibition and his traditional country at Broome's Entrance Point, along with young photographer, Brayden Tollentino.



Hope for Life : Photo Competition Entries

show interest, take ownership, work together and plan how such a project should be run. The Hope for Life Photo Project involved participants taking two photos; one that represented how they felt when they were in a place of sadness and the other to represent inspiration to move towards more positive feelings. In short, we wanted the young people to capture hope and hopelessness through photography.

Leon Mead, a local photographer spent time with the young participants, teaching them the skills associated with photography, helping them to realise their artistic vision and how to express their feelings through images. The project focused on young people in our community. Adolescence can be a very challenging time, so we wanted a project that encouraged young people to share their feelings, by just having a yarn with someone, using music, writing

And since that day...

the aim of Hope for Life has been achieved. We were able to raise awareness and get people talking about suicide in the Kimberley. The photos received media attention at a community level. This was a great opportunity to share the photos and their purpose with those unable to attend the exhibition. The photographs are now displayed at headspace Kimberley, in Broome.

The project's outcomes were subsequently presented at the National Suicide Prevention Conference. The project was also discussed alongside the Alive and Kicking Goals Suicide Prevention project on their cultural exchange to Ireland in October 2010.



Anthony Woods expresses his feelings through a monologue performed at Hope for Life



Photos of hope and despair by young photographer, Jason George.



Robert Spry Wiggan, one of the young photographers performed on the day.

or photography. We also encouraged participation from the whole community, especially those families who had been affected by suicide. We felt it was important to provide an opportunity for them to see that it is okay to talk about suicide; it is ok to feel pain and to grieve. The project aimed to help people move forward with their healing.

And because of that...

on September 10th, 2010 on World Suicide Prevention Day, the first Hope for Life photo exhibition was held in Broome. Five young participants, Robert Spry Wiggan, Braydn Tollentino, Ebony Orazi, Emma Lee Foy and Jason George shared their feelings of hope and hopelessness and gave their communities the opportunity to talk about suicide. All participants' photos were displayed and their stories shared with the community. A local young man by the name of Anthony Woods also preformed a touching drama piece at the exhibition.

Hope for Life provided an opportunity for young people to express themselves around a topic that is often hard to talk about. It allowed them to share their feelings of hope and hopelessness through photography. It helped them to express feelings that may have otherwise gone unshared. This project has given our community an opportunity to start the conversation about suicide. We mustn't be silent any longer.

We would like to thank...

There are several people we would like to thank who played a significant role in the success of the project. Firstly to Zoe Evans – Coordinator of the StandBy Suicide Response Service in the West Kimberley, photographer Leon Mead, Lloyd Pigram from Burdekin Youth In Action, and headspace Kimberley. Also most importantly, we must thank the young people who were involved in the project for their participation, passion and insight.

- Robert Spry Wiggan
- Brayden Tollentino
- Ebony Orazi
- Emma Lee Foy
- Jason George

Thank you also to Anthony Woods for his amazing monologue performance at the exhibition. Lastly, we would like to thank the community for supporting this project, especially those who have been affected personally by suicide.



THE STORY OF LIFE CYCLE

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Program Partners: Broome Regional Prison, Department of Corrective Services,

Staff Involved: Kevin Smith (Program Manager), Aaron Fay (Special Projects Officer)

Keywords: Pre-release offenders, participation, life skills

About the storyteller...

This story was written by Kevin Smith, Manager of Re-entry Program, Men's Outreach Service.

About Men's Outreach Service...

Men's Outreach Service (MOS) in Broome offers a range of services to enhance men's social and emotional wellbeing. The service provides a drop-in "coffee club" for men - a secure and comfortable place to spend the day for the many homeless Indigenous men in Broome. The service also hosts the award winning Alive and Kicking Goals suicide prevention program, and the Men and Family Relationship program which offers counselling and outreach work in both Broome and the Dampier Peninsula. Men's Outreach Service also run the Re-entry and Transport Options Program funded by the Department of Corrective Services. Both programs help offenders re-integrate back to communities across the Kimberley.

And then one day...

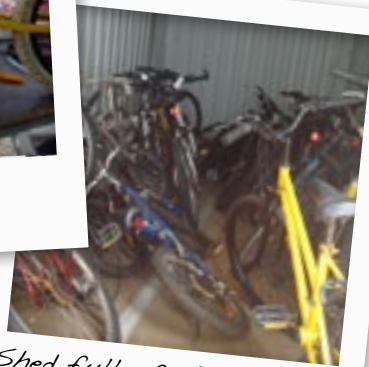
in October 2010 with funding from a social innovation program provided by the Department of Corrective Services, we created Life Cycle. Life Cycle is a project targeting pre and post release offenders, providing them with the skills to recondition the abandoned skeletons of old bicycles. The idea included presenting each prisoner, once released, with a reconditioned "life cycle", providing them with much needed transport to get around their communities.

The program runs every day for six hours from the Men's Outreach Service located next to the Prison in Broome. A workshop has been set up at the centre, with all the tools and equipment necessary to fix and maintain old, run down bikes. The bikes come in all shapes, sizes and states of repair. We are continually surprised with the number of bikes needing repair. We collect bikes that have been dumped at the local tip. We also get a large number from the local police station, including those that have been handed in as stolen or have been confiscated by Police Officers.

A local partnership with the local bicycle retailer has been established to provide discounted parts and technical assistance to our project coordinator.



Life Cycle

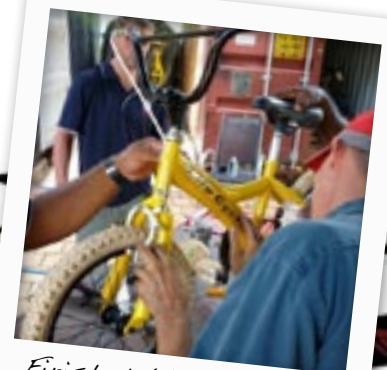


Shed full of abandoned old bikes, ready for repair

Once upon a time...

we decided to gather snapshot on the client base in the Broome Regional Prison and found that a high percentage had driver-related offences including driving under the influence, driving unlicensed and driving under a ban. An issue arising from this was that at the time of release, many offenders had no means of transport. In Broome, there is limited public transport, and if an offender lived in a community, there were few options to get around.

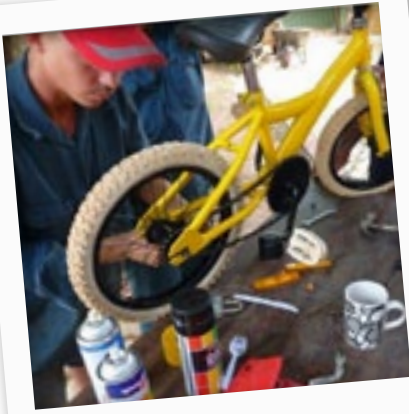
We realised that once released, being unable to drive or get around would make the transition back into the community an even bigger challenge. It was clear that something had to be done to help prisoners from reoffending and being caught by the police driving unlicensed. We wanted to help create an alternative to driving.



Finished bike getting its Life Cycle logo



Life Cycle



During repair



The workplace

And because of that...

to date, a total of 50 prisoners have been involved in the program and around 80 Life Cycle bikes have been given a new life. For the pre-release offenders, being involved in the program has had a number of benefits. Many have described these benefits to be an increase in self-esteem and practical skills that they can use in their communities.

These skills are broad and invaluable and include how to plan a complete rebuild of a bicycle, how to communicate with others by working in a team environment, goal setting, organisational skills, time management and record keeping.

This is a very popular program among the prisoners as they actually get to see the outcomes. By participating in the scheme, offenders are not only able to fix a bike for themselves, but they are also helping the wider community. Given the large number of old bikes found and reconditioned, Life Cycle is now donating them to a variety of settings across the communities.

A Life Cycle logo has been developed and it was decided that every restored bike would be painted bright yellow and decorated with a logo. So with the logo and bright colour, every Life Cycle bicycle gets noticed around the communities.

"The client gets direct benefit from engagement in the program, learning new skills and most importantly they get a sense of pride when we have been able to assist some of the remote schools in the Kimberley region."

Kevin Smith, Program Manager

And since that day...

the Life Cycle project has broadened further to address the chronic social needs of remote communities, including the provision of children's bikes to remote community schools. In developing strong, tangible links with remote communities, the Life Cycle team presented eight Life Cycle bicycles to the One Arm Point Primary School in April 2011. One Arm Point is located approximately 200 kilometers north of Broome on the Dampier Peninsula. The Principal used the bicycles as an incentive for student attendance. The bikes were raffled off monthly to the top 20 student attendees.

More recently, the Gibb River Station School was given 10 bikes. Staff encouraged their students to earn and save "play money" to enable them to purchase their Life Cycle. The Kalumburu and Beagle Bay schools have also expressed interest in the project. Beagle Bay plan to use the bikes in their physical education classes and also involve the local Police to help teach the kids about road safety. In 2012, we plan to have an Aboriginal Life Cycle team compete in the Gibb River Road Bike race and conversations about securing a team are currently underway.

We are happy to say that Life Cycle is continuing to grow. Plans are underway to offer a bike maintenance and repair service through the Men's Outreach Service. This will allow community members who rely on cycling as a means of transport to access our skills and tools to help them safely maintain their bikes.

Finally, we are keen to integrate the important issues of health benefits associated with cycling and road safety into the program. We have lots of ideas in mind and are really looking forward to what the future holds for Life Cycle.



One Arm Point School received 8 Life Cycles



The bikes were raffled off monthly to the top student attendees.

CAR BODIES COLLECTION



Shire of Derby /
West Kimberley

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Program Partners: Shire of Derby/West Kimberley, Aboriginal Environmental Health Unit, SIMS METAL, Communities within the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley

Staff Involved: Kerwin Malay, Peter Parker and Emma Catlin

Keywords: Waste management, vector control, community control

About the storyteller...

This story was written by Kerwin Malay an Environmental Health Field Support Worker at the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley.

About the environmental health team...

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley (SDWK) Aboriginal Environmental Health team is made up of an Environmental Health Officer/Building Surveyor, two Aboriginal Environmental Health Field Support Officers and a Trainee Aboriginal Environmental Health Field Support Officer. This team is committed to providing a range of health based services to Aboriginal communities within Derby/West Kimberley. The area is home to forty eight Aboriginal communities. The three town centres are Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and Camballin.



Kerwin Malay

Once upon a time...

Aboriginal communities within the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley were suffering from problems created by the large number of car bodies abandoned around the Town Reserves. These abandoned skeletons of cars were not only a waste management issue but were home to snakes and mice, particularly during the wet season. Plus the pools of stored water were becoming a popular breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Over time, the number of car bodies grew and were dotted all over the communities. Many were stored out the front or back of homes, abandoned near roads both in and out of town, and piling up quickly at the community tips. These car bodies were also an attractive playground for children, who were unaware of the potential dangers. Curious kids were put at risk of mosquito bites and serious cuts by sharp broken car bits.

The car bodies were clearly a health hazard, but they were also unsightly to look at. The car bodies needed to be collected. However, removing old car bodies is impossible for community members to do alone. We needed some external support.

Did you know? Across Aboriginal communities mosquito-borne viruses and parasites are major causes of sickness, especially among children. Ross River virus is the most common mosquito-borne infection in Western Australia. Symptoms can include joint pains and swelling, sore muscles, rash, fever and fatigue and may persist for several months or even years in some individuals.



And then one day...

the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley's Aboriginal Environmental Health Unit approached Sims Metal Management. Sims Metal is one of Australia's largest collectors, processors and suppliers of recycled metal in Australia. They service cities, towns and communities across all States and Territories and have a strong commitment to the environment, sustainability and the health of communities.

In October 2009, at the end of the dry season, the Shire and community members worked to gather all old car bodies and move them to a single location, the community tip. The Centre of Appropriate Technology (CAT) assisted the process with the use of car loaders. Several cars were not able to get to the tip on time, so where possible, Sims Metal, picked them up on their way through a number of communities.

In total, we collected car bodies from 15 communities within the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley. Approximately 400 cars were successfully crushed on site at the tip and removed by Sims Metal. An additional bonus to the cars being removed was that all car bodies were weighed and money per tonne was provided back to the communities. On average this worked out to be around \$50 per car.

And because of that...

our communities are not only safer places, but they are also cleaner and less cluttered. The aim of this project was to clean up communities, reduce mosquito and snake breeding and help ensure a safer environment for children. This was achieved.

A significant outcome of coordinating this project with Sims Metal was that communities received money from old and disused car bodies. This money was used to assist the Shire with other community projects such dog de-sexing, building shaded areas, providing safe play equipment for children and community greening programs.

And since that day...

we plan to continue working with Sims Metal to run similar events each year, with collection due to occur at the end of each dry season. We are also working with Sims Metal to collect and remove old white goods (fridges, freezers and ovens). If these white goods are able to fit inside the old car bodies, the metal crushers are able to compress them both.

With the money earned from 2011 car body removal, we plan to focus on enhancing the Shires dog de-sexing programs.



Mowanjum car body dumping ground before collection



Mowanjum car body dumping ground after collection



HAWK NOW!



Contact Name: Ayesha Moss

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Program Partners: Department of Health and Ageing, WA Country Health Service, Derby Aboriginal Medical Service, Boab Health, Garnduwa, Department of Sport and Recreation, Women's Resource Centre

Staff Involved: Kerwin Malay, Peter Parker and Emma Catlin

Keywords: Healthy eating, physical activity, community participation, chronic disease

About the storyteller...

This story was written by Ayesha Moss, the Healthy Communities Coordinator with the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley.

About NPAPH...

The National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health (NPAPH) was announced by the Council of Australian Government (COAG) on 29 November 2008. The NPAPH aims to provide \$872.1 million over six years from 2009-10. This is the largest investment made by an Australian Government in health prevention. The NPAPH seeks to address the rising prevalence of lifestyle related chronic disease by laying the foundations for healthy behaviours in the daily lives of Australians, through settings such as communities, early childhood education and care environments, schools and workplaces, supported by national social marketing campaigns such as MeasureUp.



Once upon a time...

through the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health, the Australian Government offered the initial round of \$71.8 million under the Healthy Communities Initiative (HCI). This funding was to support local government deliver community-based physical activity and healthy eating programs, as well as develop local policies that support healthy lifestyles. The target population was individuals at risk of chronic disease and those not predominantly in the paid workforce.

Under the pilot phase in April 2010, the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley was one of 12 local governments across Australia to be awarded funding under this initiative. The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley has a high percentage of Aboriginal people, and many are unemployed. We also have some of the highest reported incidences of chronic illness in Western Australia. So the opportunity to be part of this new initiative was exciting and seemed to fit the needs of our community.

While a number of opportunities to be active and eat well already existed within our communities, there was a clear lack of culturally appropriate programs that engaged our Aboriginal communities.



Ayesha Moss, Healthy Communities Coordinator

And then one day...

in partnership with a number of agencies and groups, and in consultation with community members, we used the funding to develop a program called HAWK now! – healthy and active in the West Kimberley.



HAWK Now! was designed as an interactive program aiming to raise awareness of the benefits of healthy weight among those at risk of developing chronic disease. The program involved a range of accessible, sustainable and culturally appropriate lifestyle programs and sessions. We wanted the program to educate and promote healthy living among our community and provide opportunities to help people make any necessary lifestyle changes.

One of our key goals was to encourage participation from our Aboriginal community to address the high mortality and morbidity rates associated with chronic disease. We really wanted to build capacity amongst the Aboriginal community members and encourage leadership and ownership of the program.

And because of that...

the HAWK now! program has come to life. Since commencing the program, we have run a variety of activities and planned events across the community, encouraging people to eat well and get active. And it seems to be working!

The program has plenty to offer, from regular nutrition and cooking workshops, shopping tours and access to 1-on-1 dietetic advice. We run regular physical activity programs, specifically designed for people with, or at risk of, chronic diseases. These include walking groups, aqua fitness, strength training and sports. The program also supports community groups and events such as a community Christmas, concerts



*The launch of
HAWK Now!*



Aqua training

To help achieve this we facilitated a community consultation. Here we captured a snapshot of what the Aboriginal community wanted and needed from the program. Some of their ideas included:

- Access to affordable and healthy food
- Increase knowledge on managing chronic illnesses
- Transport solutions
- Safe and secluded spaces
- Going bush – fishing, hunting, swimming
- Local Indigenous people delivering healthy lifestyle programs
- More regular family friendly events
- Competitions and sports (e.g. basketball).

and sporting associations with healthy foods and activities for the whole community to share and enjoy.

We pride ourselves on ensuring the sessions are kept flexible, regular and rewarding to all those involved. We make sure our participants feel they are part of a supportive group and can work together to make positive changes in their lives.





Kids enjoying some healthy fruit

Unfortunately...

we did hit a few hurdles with getting the program off the ground and sustaining participation rates. Building trust with the community takes time, and we continue to work at this. It was also a challenge to move people from being aware of the program and its purpose, to actually participating in the activities.

Another issue was accessing trained health professionals to facilitate sessions – as you can imagine, we have quite a transient workforce through our town!

Transport to and from activities or an event was another barrier, so in the end, we took some of the services to them!

And finally, although in the original submission for the HCI funding we had identified a number of potential strategies, in reality, when we tried to implement these, they were not accepted by the community. An example is the production of an Aboriginal cookbook. Well, the community told us they didn't want a cookbook, so we created laminated cooking cards, featuring their own local recipes instead. So being flexible has been really important for this project.

And since that day...

there have been lots of community based activities happening within Derby, and I think that the local Aboriginal people's awareness of living a healthier lifestyle has really improved. We have been successful in developing a healthy lifestyle policy, we receive regular referrals of clients from the local Aboriginal Medical Service, we run regular physical activity events such as walking groups, coordinate healthy lifestyle challenges and run a men's and women's group.

We have tremendous support from local businesses in providing incentives and prizes and also for ensuring pathways into mainstream services for some of our participants.

We have always been aware that this was a limited pot of money, but we are hopeful that the HAWK now! project will live on in Derby through the active partnering with other agencies.



Cooking class - the recipe was Fast Fish Medley



HAWK Now! Advertising across the community



THE DESERT FEET TOUR SINGS ABOUT DIABETES PREVENTION

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www.diabeteswa.com.au

Program Desert Feet Tours and Ab Music

Partners:

Staff Involved: Damien Thornber, Emily Minchin, Bryte MC, Ulla Shay, Ewan Buckley, Richard Watson, Aboriginal Health Team at Diabetes WA - Helen Mitchell, Kerri Colegate and Asha Singh

Keywords: Aboriginal health, Music, Community participation and engagement, Diabetes prevention, Health promotion



About the storyteller...

This story was written by Kerri Colegate, the Aboriginal Health Coordinator at Diabetes WA and Asha Singh, Diabetes WA, Aboriginal Health Project Officer.

About Diabetes WA ...

Founded in 1965, Diabetes WA is the peak body and voice of diabetes in Western Australia. Their vision, Freedom from Diabetes, captures the focus of what they aim to do: minimise the impact of diabetes in Western Australia.

The project benefits whole communities by providing music equipment for ongoing use and creating employment and performance opportunities for local musicians.

Reconciliation is also at the forefront of the project. Desert Feet aims to create positive media portraying remote communities and Indigenous Australians as a cultural asset and exposing the beauty of the desert. While increasing awareness, recognition and respect for Aboriginal culture.



Kerri Colegate & Asha Singh

Once upon a time...

in 2008, Damien Thornber and the Orphans, through V.O.W Educational Services created the Desert Feet Tour: Educational Music Workshops and Concerts. The tours provide no-cost, alcohol free community concerts and educational music workshops to rural and remote communities across the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia. With the help of talented Aboriginal musicians, the project targets Aboriginal children and young people using music to inspire them to stay in school and pursue their dreams.



*The Desert Feet Tour Team.
(R-L & Top-Bottom) Emily Minchin, Ulla Shay,
Bryte MC, Richard Watson, Asha Singh, Helen
Mitchell, Ewan Buckley, Damien Thornber.*



And then one day...

a chance meeting led to Diabetes WA Aboriginal Health team embarking on a new and exciting partnership with the Desert Feet Music Tour. This provided us the opportunity to link our diabetes prevention messages with the Desert Feet Music Tour.

We were invited to attend our first Desert Feet Tour in October 2011, where we travelled with the Desert Feet team, delivering interactive activities and sharing healthy lifestyle messages with the children. As part of the music workshops, the Desert Feet Crew helped the kids write, perform and record songs that relayed healthy messages such as choose water, eat healthy and keep fit. Incentives such as second hand football boots, story books and water bottles were used to encourage and reward participation.

Following the workshops, Desert Feet would park their specially made truck (that doubles as a stage) on the community basketball court and the whole community was invited to a concert. During the concert the kids not only performed their new songs, but also got the opportunity to perform alongside the Desert Feet acts, including some well know artists such as Bryte MC and Ulla Shay. Local bands and musicians were also invited to come and perform at the concerts.

And because of that...

many Aboriginal children are being given the unique opportunity to not only learn about music but perform with talented Aboriginal musician role models and learn valuable lifestyles messages. Through the concerts, the children are able to share these messages with the whole community.

Since the start of this project, a number of Aboriginal people who participated in the music workshops have linked in with Abmusic. Abmusic is a long term tour partner providing opportunities for local musicians who wish to pursue a career in the music industry. The tour has also resulted in improvements in school attendance in some of the communities where music equipment was provided for ongoing use.

From a health perspective, a highlight of the October 2011 tour occurred as we departed One Arm Point. We stopped at the community store where we could hear the songs the kids produced playing through the sound system – “Choose water, eat healthy, and keep fit. One Arm Point Kids never quit!” It was very rewarding!

And since that day...

the Desert Feet tour continues to travel to rural and remote Aboriginal communities across WA. They continue to receive positive feedback from local Elders and Community Council staff about the Desert Feet program. We are happy to say that this new partnership and the delivery of healthy lifestyle messages will continue to be an important component of future Desert Feet Tours.

Desert Feet aims to revisit communities on a bi-annual basis, to further build on relationships and maintain links with the communities. It is hoped that with further funding of the project, more communities will be included on the tour itinerary. But best of all, the kids in the communities that have already been visited by the Desert Feet tour, continue to sing the songs! “Don’t want diabetes! We eat from the earth at One Arm Point”!

The October 2011 tour was jointly funded by Healthway, the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Macmahon, Woodside and Cole Clark.



Helen Mitchell reading the kids a story about the importance of eating healthy food & being active to prevent diabetes (One Arm Point).



The kids write a song about been healthy in their community (Beagle Bay)



The kids enjoy a performance by Bryce MC (One Arm Point)



Desert Feet Tour - October 2011

SONG LYRICS

CHOOSE WATER, EAT HEALTHY, KEEP FIT

Written and performed by Ulla Shay,
Damien Thornber & the kids from One Arm Point.

CHORUS:

Choose water, eat healthy, keep fit
One Arm Point kids never quit

verse 1: When you need to take
a drink, Don't choose drinks
that make you sick

-CHORUS-

verse 2: Foods full of sugar, salt
and fat, Will make you sick
and that's a fact!

-CHORUS-

verse 3: Swim, ride, jump, hop and
play, Make sure you exercise everyday

ONE ARM POINT – DON'T WANT DIABETES

Written and performed by Bryte MC and the kids from One Arm Point.

Fishing in the Sea
Gotta stay healthy fish is good for me

Hunting on the land
But before I have a feed I gotta wash my
hands

Eating fruit and veg
Gives me stronger arms and stronger legs

Drinking lots of water
Keep me fit and solid and makes me awesome

Make a better choice
We eat from the earth in One Arm Point
Make a better choice
Gotta eat good or I'll lose my feet

Don't want Diabetes!
Healthy!

Don't want Diabetes!
Fitness!

Don't want Diabetes!
Food from the earth will make me wicked!

Hahahahahahaha (laughter)

BEAGLE BAY – BEAGLE BAY IS OUR COMMUNITY

Written and performed by Ulla Shay, Richard Watson and
the kids from Beagle Bay.

Beagle Bay is our community
Our Culture gives opportunity x 2

I want to grow up big and strong
A healthy diet helps me live long
If you want to get the edge
You have to eat your fruit and veg!

Beagle Bay is our community
Our Culture gives opportunity x 2

LET'S WORK TOGETHER



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Program Partners: Pilbara Meta Maya Regional Aboriginal Corporation (PMMRAC), Mawarnkarra Health Service and the Shire of East Pilbara

Staff Involved: Janell Slater, Peggy Slater, Alan Storey and Paul Whitby

Keywords: Environment and health, dog health, partnerships

About the storyteller...

This story was written by Janell Slater, the Environmental Health and In-house Practical Support Supervisor with Pilbara Meta Maya Regional Aboriginal Corporation, in South Headland

About Pilbara Meta Maya...

Pilbara Meta Maya Regional Aboriginal Corporation (PMMRAC) is an incorporated Indigenous organisation established in 1994 to provide services to remote Aboriginal communities in the areas of essential services (power, water and wastewater), housing management, in home practical support and environmental health.

And then one day...

Peggy and I were invited to attend the North West Environmental Health Group Meeting - a week-long conference in Broome. This was a great opportunity for us to meet other Environmental Health Workers from the Kimberley and Pilbara regions in the North West of Western Australia.

As this was our first conference, we did a lot of listening to stories and experiences of other Environmental Health Workers and took particular interest in those running Healthy Dog Programs in their own communities. During this conference, we had a great idea. We needed to get together with other Environmental Health service providers in the Pilbara so they could teach us more about running a dog health program. Pilbara Meta Maya is based in Port Hedland and luckily the closest environmental health service, Mawarnkarra Health Service, was only two hours away in the Roebourne Shire.

Once upon a time...

the Pilbara Meta Maya Regional Aboriginal Corporation employed two new Environmental Health Workers, myself, Janell Slater and Peggy Slater to run the Healthy Dog program. The only problem was we had no experience in facilitating such a program. There is a lot to know about running a healthy dog program such as dog handling, how to give injections, muzzling, capturing dogs and accessing proper equipment and support. It was clear that we needed access to these skills and information to ensure the success of the program.



(L-R) Ian Chance (Ashburton Shire Ranger) with Janell Slater, Peggy Slater and Alan Storey



Alan Storey



(L-R) Ian Chance (Ashburton Shire Ranger) with Janell Slater, Peggy Slater and Paul Whitby



Paul, Janell and Alan



So, during the Broome conference, we decided to approach the group from Mawarnkarra to share and discuss this idea of learning from them. It was agreed that working together to gain the knowledge and the experience needed to run a successful dog health program was a sensible idea. The Mawarnkarra mob introduced the idea of crossing borders and working together to help us run our Healthy Dog Day program.

During the conference Peggy and I swapped contact details with the Mawarnkarra mob, and within a few weeks we contacted Mawarnkarra and offered funding assistance for their two Environmental Health Workers, Alan Storey and Paul Whitby to assist us in learning about how to run a healthy dog program.

By May 2011, the number of dogs per household in Warralong dropped from 12.5 to only 2.5 dogs. The Ngurawaana community also resolved its fringe dwelling wild dog problem, which resulted in their domestic dogs thriving in a much more active, healthy life style.

Many other communities benefited from this joint venture between Meta Maya and Mawarnkarra. Communities such as Cotton Creek, Jigalong in the Western Desert, Bindi Bindi, Jundaru in Onslow Ashburton Shire and Mirtunkarra in the East Pilbara Shire. All of these communities are now being serviced by the Healthy Dog program.

And since that day...

we have had lots of enquiries to extend the Dog Health program into other communities. The program was a great success as not only did we reduce the over population of dogs in these communities, but we noticed a dramatic difference in the health and personalities of the existing dogs. We know this is something that would not have been possible without everyone coming together to provide us the skills, knowledge and tools to run the Dog Health Program.

Although we could not have done this without the help of the Shire of Roebourne and the Shire of East Pilbara, it is Mawarnkarra who deserve the biggest thanks. The team at Mawarnkarra provided us with the vital on the ground support, ideas, knowledge and assistance we needed to achieve the results we have today. The population of the dogs in these communities is currently down by 90% compared to this time last year and more importantly dog health is up 100%. We are so grateful to everyone involved and are thrilled by what was achieved from the simple idea of working together, sharing skills and experience.

And because of that...

the first of many successful Healthy Dog programs commenced on May 25th 2010. Each program ran for a week. Environmental Health Workers would go from house to house, talking with families one on one about dog health and offering treatments for problems such as mange, ticks, flea and worms. We also took away any unwanted dogs to be euthanized and offered Covinan injections to stop bitches coming on heat for three months. All outcomes of the dog health program were reported back to the community.

Communities such as Warralong and Ngurawaana were some of the first to benefit from the programs. Both these communities needed immediate assistance to cull the overpopulation of domestic and wild dogs. During the programs, the Ranger from East Pilbara Shire also offered assistance, as did the Shire of Roebourne. They helped source equipment and allowed us to use of their dog trailer. The results of the program highlight its great success.



Janell, Paul & Alan giving an Covinan injection



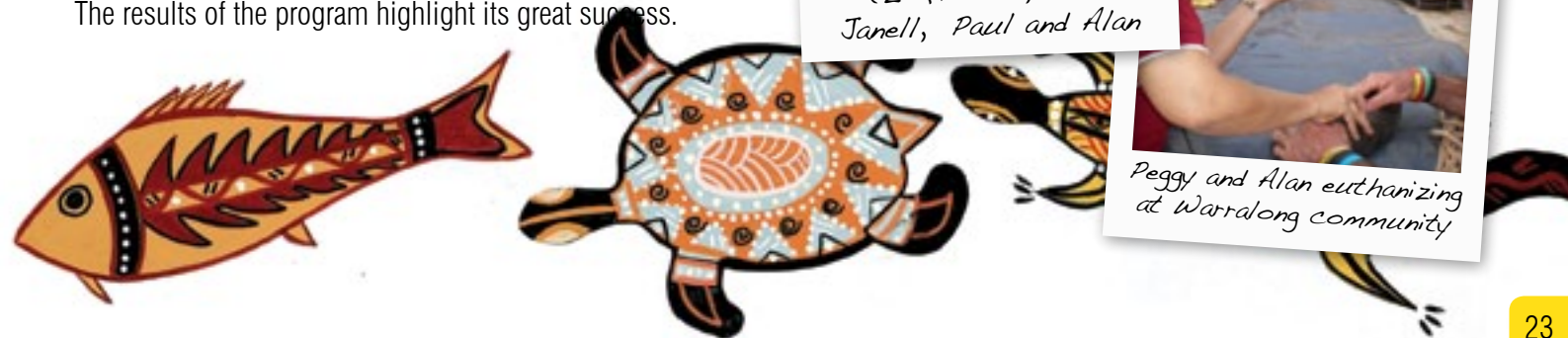
(L-R) Kevin Sanders (former East Pilbara Shire Ranger) with Peggy, Paul and Alan



(L-R) Kevin, with Janell, Paul and Alan



Peggy and Alan euthanizing at Warralong community



ALIVE AND KICKING GOALS SUICIDE PREVENTION PROJECT

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Program Partners: Men's Outreach Service, Department of Health, WA Country Health Service, Rio Tinto, Healthway, Standby Response Service, Kinway, headspace Kimberley, Family Relationship Centre, Department of Families, Housing and Community, Services and Indigenous Affairs (ICC West Kimberley)

Keywords: Suicide Prevention, sport, music, leadership

About the storyteller...

This story was written by David Pigram, the Kullari Mens Health Coordinator with the Kimberley Population Health Unit and the President of the Broome Saints Football Club.

About the project...

Alive & Kicking Goals encompasses community development, leadership development, youth health, sport, music and education. The project is based around youth suicide prevention through peer education. It is about dreaming big and exploring the positive possibilities in life.



David Pigram



And then one day...

the young men from the Broome Saints with guidance from Joe Tighe created the Alive and Kicking Goals project. Our aim was to raise awareness of suicide among young Indigenous men throughout the Kimberley region. Alive and Kicking Goals is a youth suicide prevention project which uses football and peer education to help identify suicide risk and develop prevention strategies within a culturally appropriate environment.

The aim is to develop peer educators and natural leaders who share stories and teach their peers about the issues and what they can do about it. The program builds self-esteem through community development and leadership training enabling volunteers to deliver suicide prevention and education forums to young people in the Kimberley region. Alive and Kicking is a grass roots initiative to educate, inspire and model to young people in Kimberley communities, alternatives to suicide by helping them create a future of hope through positive relationships and life choice.

Once upon a time...

there was a football club with a goal they wanted to achieve. Their success was not only measured by how many goals they kicked or how well they performed that day on the footy field, but by how many lives they hoped to help save. I am talking about the Broome Saints Football Club. In 2008, the team began voicing their concerns about the staggering youth suicide rates across Broome and the Kimberley. It was a fact that young Indigenous men were seven times more likely to complete suicide than non-Indigenous men.

As a club we didn't think enough was being done to educate and support people at risk of or dealing with suicide. Most of the young fellas on the team had lost friends and relatives, some just teenagers, to suicide. But they rarely spoke about it; they were dealing with the issue alone. Some were not even aware of the alarming rates, because no one talked about it. This needed to change.



Peer Educators (L-R)
Craig Sampi, Sam Edgar
and Joshua Sibosado



The programs started with 15 blokes from the footy team volunteering their time to drive the project, and be the voice of Alive and Kicking Goals. We met regularly with the guys after training, talked about different plans and built up ideas. These initial meetings allowed the guys to tell their stories of how they had been affected by suicide and discuss how and why they wanted to be a leader and help others in the community. We ran training courses with the group, teaching them about the causes of suicide and the signs and symptoms to look for when out in their community.

And because of that...

the Alive and Kicking Goals Program continued to develop with generous support from Men's Outreach service, Department of Health WA Country Health Service, Rio Tinto, Healthway, Standby Response Service, Kinway, headspace Kimberley, Family Relationship Centre, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (ICC West Kimberley) and has become well known across the community.



Peer Educators (L-R) Joshua, Llyod, Bud, Dylan, Robert and Kelrick



Club volunteers / steering committee members completed the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

Overall, our plan was to train and educate the guys, to create strong leaders and role models within our community. As role models they had the potential to reach out and engage with others and share the message that dreaming big and exploring the positive possibilities in life is the key. We wanted to highlight how turning to the good things in life like sport, music and cultural activities could help and that it was OK to talk to someone if things were not going right.

Joe Tighe, a fellow footy devotee and Men's Outreach worker, volunteered his time to help lead the group. Joe a native Meath (Irish lad) was thrilled to be involved in growing the program. To him, if the young men were the ones making the decisions rather than him or the footy club committee, great things could be achieved. We wanted to change the common top-down government approach to suicide and mental health.

We get involved in a number of community events, visit schools and other groups spreading our message. In early 2010, the members of Alive and Kicking raised money to help support an international trip to Ireland for a leadership and cultural exchange opportunity. We wanted to take the opportunity to not only share our love of footy with the Irish, but also learn how they dealt with their shocking rate of youth suicide and bring their messages back to the Kimberley.

In September 2010, we took 15 of our peer leaders to Ireland for two weeks and met with two Gaelic Football Clubs. As part of this cultural exchange, we shared a few matches of footy but we also shared our ideas on how to tackle the issue of suicide. We told them about our program and they told us all about the things they were doing. We also visited local suicide prevention groups in Bray, Derry and Belfast.

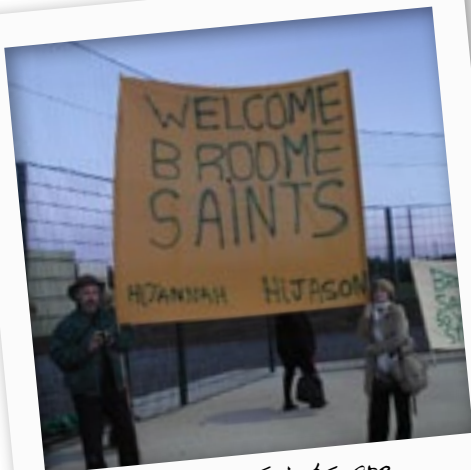


Overall, the trip was an eye opening experience into the issues other communities were facing around the world. They were having similar issues, had high rates of suicide and they were really stoked at the type of peer education program we were implementing. I think they really learnt something from us.

On the trip, we realised we were a lot further ahead in tackling the suicide challenge than the Irish and that we already had some positive strategies in place. We actually appreciated how lucky we were. The groups in Ireland that were trying to tackle suicide were under-resourced, but still working very hard to make some changes.

And since that day...

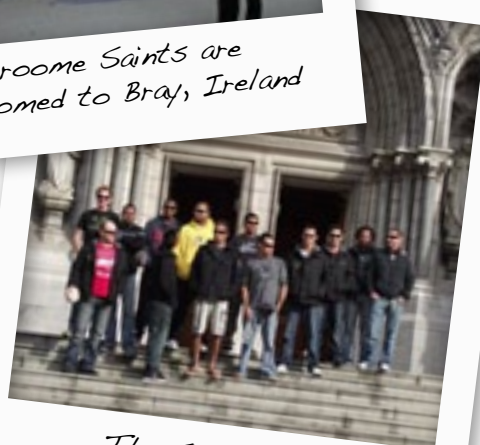
we have returned to Broome, bringing home with us the experience and lessons learnt from Ireland and we will continue to expand our program. The guys that attended also returned with a sense of achievement in being able to set a goal and work hard to make it happen. In partnership with Men's Outreach Service we secured funding from the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) which meant we were able to create four positions; three peer educators and a team leader. As a team we are continually looking into methods to better engage our young Aboriginal men, and by employing a female peer educator have included engaging young women to talk about the issues also. The new team has established themselves and are working well in the community.



Broome Saints are welcomed to Bray, Ireland



Alive & Kicking Goals Ireland tour



The Saints tour Northern Ireland



Sharing our culture

In 2009 The Alive and Kicking Goals project was a finalist in the WA Youth Awards and in 2010 won the National LIFE Suicide Prevention Award. The project also won the Regional Achievement and Community awards in November 2010 (Community group of the year award).

One new initiative has been the creation of a DVD with three local men talking about their experiences with suicide. The aim of the DVD was to get people talking about suicide and let people know it is OK to express their feeling and emotions. The program is being evaluated by Griffith University to enable sustainability into the future. Our long term plan is to train and educate role models within the community throughout the Kimberley, who can engage with people on a daily basis. This is especially important for the more remote communities as we don't just want someone coming and going; we want someone there permanently, who lives in and is known by the community members.

We are very excited to see where the program can go and it's been a great journey so far. A lot of people were expecting big outcomes quickly, but I think the process has been the key and getting young people involved in the program has given it more sustainability and more meaning. We hope to see the project continue to grow and more young people in their communities to Stay Alive and Kicking Goals!



TOWN RESERVE COMMUNITY MEETINGS

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Program Partners: 4 Town Reserve Communities (Budulah, Karmarlinunga, Burnnuhga and Djimung Ngude), Shire of Derby/West Kimberley Department of Indigenous Affairs, Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation

Staff Involved: Peter Parker, Kerwin Malay, Emma Catlin and David Ellis

Keywords: Indigenous communities, partnerships

About the storyteller...

This story was written by Peter Parker an Environment and Health Field Support Officer with the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley.



Shire of Derby /
West Kimberley

Across the Shire, a number of community groups and organisations plan and coordinate projects and offer services to increase the wellbeing and social environments for community members.

But there was limited communication between the organisations, and it was discovered communities such as Budulah, Karmarlinunga, Burnnuhga and Djimung Ngude; which lie within the Derby town boundaries, were often being forgotten and not involved in these projects.

However, as these organisations all had similar goals, to improve living and social conditions, it was clear that something needed to be done to open the communication lines and get people working together.

And then one day...

in early 2009 Lynette Menmuir from the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) put forward the idea of running a Town Reserve meeting every month. Her aim for these meetings was to invite all interested organisations and their stakeholders to come together and discuss common issues with the possibility of forming partnerships.

The meetings were planned to allow each organisation time to discuss the issues affecting their communities. Additional



Once upon a time...

over 2000 kilometres north of Perth lies the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley (SDWK). The Shire covers a vast area of 118,560 square kilometres and remains a supply point to the Kimberley's pastoral, mining, oil and tourist industries.

The Shire is made up of forty eight Aboriginal communities and the three main towns are Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and Camballin.



time was allocated to discuss potential projects and partnership opportunities.

The following organisations were invited to the meetings:

- Shire of Derby/West Kimberley (SDWK)
- Derby Youth Centre
- Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA)
- Derby Police
- Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation
- Department of Housing
- Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC)
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs(FaHCSIA)
- Department of Health
- Department of Child Protection
- Centre for Appropriate Technology
- Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA)

In late 2009, when Lynette left the Department of Indigenous Affairs, the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley Environmental Health Unit started coordinating the meetings. Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation generously hosted the meetings in their training rooms at no cost to the group.

And because of that...

a number of great partnerships have been created and new projects and ideas have resulted. Some examples are featured below:

Refurbished basketball courts

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley, Indigenous Coordination Centre, Emama Nguda and the Town Reserves teamed together to refurbish the Stanley Street basketball courts. This was done in a few stages.

Stage one - involved working with Tiger Turf to resurface the courts and repaint the lines. Disappointingly, minor vandalism occurred during the drying process of the courts however, they are still fully functional.

Stage two and three are still in production. To date, we have commissioned the painting of a mural on the nearby toilet blocks, which is to be painted by one of the local artists. Seating is planned to be built in between the two courts and will be constructed by Djimung Nguda, one of the local communities.

This basketball court project was made possible through the effective partnerships formed at the Town Reserve meetings.



Jealousy Creek project

A drinking spot known to the locals of the four Town Reserves as “Jealousy Creek” was attracting people from outside the local communities. The large amount of alcohol consumed at Jealously Creek often led to violence and noise issues disturbing residents, especially children. In addition to the consumption of alcohol issues, the area was unsafe due to the number of washouts that had occurred during the previous wet seasons, leaving deep gullies, and a deteriorated culvert, which were traps for serious injuries.

At the Town Reserve meeting, many organisations agreed something needed to be done to stop people drinking at Jealousy Creek. After consulting with the Aboriginal Land Trust, the Aboriginal Environmental Health Unit and the Derby Police chaired a Town Reserve meeting, where a decision was made to install new drainage and build a sign-posted fence



to let people know that drinking would no longer be permitted in the area. Funding was provided by the DIA and the SDWK.

The community members were advised that anyone who was caught drinking at Jealousy Creek would face a number of penalties including a fine, move on notices and in extreme cases, arrest. So far, the fence has proved a success, with no one attempting to trespass or drink in this area.

Finding funding for future project in the communities

The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley along with Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation have helped the Town Reserves and the communities they represent acquire funding and grants for a range of other community based projects. One example includes the Town Reserve communities applying for \$500 community quick grants from the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley. In this case, each community received \$375. When combined a total of \$1500 was committed to a dog de-sexing program, which was held on the 23rd of August 2011.

Unfortunately...

challenges do arise when planning and coordinating the Town Reserve meetings. Often we struggle to find a meeting time that suits all organisations. This is common, so we simply set a time that suits most. We have also had the issue with organisations not being able to commit long term to certain projects or individual staff leaving an organisation and failing to handover sufficient tasks or information to another staff member. While we are aware of these problems, overall everyone is very dedicated and do what they can to support the group. We try our best to keep the communication lines open and work together to solve problems as they arise.

And since that day...

it has been decided that these meetings will continue to be held indefinitely. The Town Reserves representatives are very happy with the partnerships that have been formed and the successful outcomes of the projects that have resulted from these meetings.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff of each organisation for contributing openly in each meeting.

We would strongly recommend other regions and communities follow suit and plan to meet regularly to discuss how you can best work together to better improve health, wellbeing and social conditions in your own communities.

We will continue to work together and maintain our commitment to find funding to support more community projects.



*Jealousy Creek
before shot*



The new fencing



*Jealousy Creek's
new culvert*

"Working together helps facilitate all the projects more effectively as each partner knows what the project is trying to achieve and can cooperate more efficiently in their area of expertise"

Emma Catlin, Environmental Health Unit.



WUNGURR RANGER'S STORYBOOK



Contact Name: Lloyd Nulgit & Tim Brown

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Website: <http://klc.org.au/rangers/wungurr-rangers/>

Program Partners: Rangers are funded by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

Staff Involved: 8 Wungurr Rangers (Lloyd Nulgit, Ashton Nandoo, Robin Dann, Roy Benning, Dean Smith, Sam Bayley, Kevin Dann & Sherika Nulgit)

Keywords: Aboriginal Culture, conservation, looking after country

About the storyteller...

This story was written by Lloyd Nulgit, the Head Ranger with the Wanjina Wungurr Wilinggin Rangers.

About the Wangina Wunguur People...

The Federal Court formally recognised the Wanjina Wungurr Wilinggin people as the rightful owners of their traditional lands in a native title determination on August 27, 2004.

The Wanjina Wungurr Wilinggin claim covers 60,150 square kilometres of land – an area about the size of Tasmania. The Gibb River Road is the main access route to the claim area which is located in the central northern Kimberley

Once upon a time...

there was a Wanjina Wungurr Wilinggin clan who wanted to keep law and culture strong for future generations. I am a member of this clan and the Head Ranger with the Wanjina Wungurr Wilinggin Rangers. We are a group of eight Aboriginal Rangers employed through the Land and Sea Unit at the Kimberley Land Council. Our job is to work across the land with people both young and old, to learn from our Elders and use our skills and training in Conservation and Land Management to look after our country.

We are based along the Gibb River Road, looking after 60150km² in the heart of the Kimberley. We look after our cultural sites and waterways, control feral animals and work to protect flora and fauna.

Being a Ranger is fun but hard – we travel a lot, work in confined spaces, have early morning starts and late night finishes, work in hot weather, have lots of car troubles, sleep rough and are often away from family and friends.



Robin with the water pack during our Certificate 3 in Fire Burning course

Lloyd during the fire burning course

The Ranger program has been so successful that we have increased in size from three Rangers to eight Rangers in the past 18 months. We have also employed more than 70 different traditional owners to help us along the way.

And then one day...

the Wungurr Rangers decided that it was time to let people know exactly how we were looking after their land. The reporting for the government was dry and boring and did not allow us to show how good our projects really were. We also wanted to give something back to our people that they could enjoy reading.



Lloyd Nulgit, Kevin Dann, Donnelly Carlton, Ashton Nandoo, Sam Bailey, Robin Dann, The Rangers at the beach in Goombaragoon



And because of that...

we came up with the idea of putting together a storybook to show the diverse range of activities we did on the land. During wet season, we are often office bound, so it seemed a great time to sit down, reflect and develop our stories about our experiences, the people we meet and how we were looking after our country.

The storybook is produced once a year and is full of short stories written by each of the Rangers. Although the stories have some text, they are mostly photographs with captions but we all know a picture tells a thousand words. This format is a great skills building exercise for us, as we learn how to use a range of computer programs and how to tell a story and deliver key messages.

Some of the stories we have told include keeping the cane toads out of Western Australia, croc spotting and cooking classes during Youth Week, a back to country woman's trip where we took people back to their sacred places, fencing off rock painting sites and our Certificate III training for fire burning.

We have also used the storybook as a resource during our cultural awareness sessions with tourists along the Gibb River Road to make them aware of the cultural significance of the area and increase awareness of the cultural aspects of tourism. We have run two cultural awareness sessions with tourists – one at Silent Grove (King Leopold Nature Park) and the other at Manning Gorge.

Unfortunately...

the storybook is expensive to produce. It costs around \$30 per issue to put together, so we need to think about how to pay for this activity over time.

Also we need to relocate. We are currently located in Derby but this is not actually in Wanjinna Wunggurr Wilinggin country. We get tired of the constant travelling, being away from home, and being away from our country.



Ranger, Robin Dann

And since that day...

the storybook is well received by many. We send it to our project partners, our funders, our Steering Committee members, to communities, and it is also available on the Kimberley Land Council website.

Some of the benefits of producing this storybook include:

- Giving people an idea about what we do
- Creating stronger relationships and participation with Traditional Owners
- Gaining widespread support from Ngarinyin communities
- Getting a high rate of participation from the Ngarinyin communities, including women and children
- Increasing project partner support and Fee for Service projects
- Educating tourists about the cultural significance of our country.

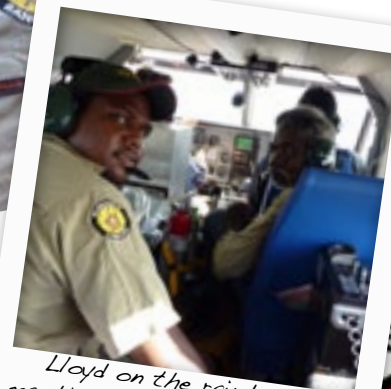
We want to keep the concept going as it is great to showcase our work – and we think it is really important. Why don't you go on line and read our latest issue? You will find it at www.klc.org.au/rangers/wunggurr-rangers/



*Lloyd Nulgit
(Head Ranger)*



*The Wunggurr
Rangers*



*Lloyd on the raïndancer
machine with the Department
of Environment & Conservation*

THE KUNUNURRA WOMEN'S FISHING GROUP

ANGLICARE
CHANGING LIVES WA

Contact Name: Yogita Thompson

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Program Partners: Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service (OVAHS), Domestic Violence Hub, Department of Mental Health, Miriuwung Gajerrong Corporation

Staff Involved: Yogita Thompson and Thelma Birch

Keywords: Aboriginal culture, women's group, social problems, fishing

About the storyteller...

This story was written by Yogita Thompson a counsellor with KinWay, a division of Anglicare WA in Kununurra. Yogita has worked with KinWay for the past four years. Prior to that she worked at the Department of Child Protection (DCP) in Kununurra.

About Kununurra...

Kununurra is a town in far northern Western Australia located at the eastern extremity of the Kimberley Region approximately 37 kilometres from the border with the Northern Territory. The town is located on the banks of Lake Kununurra and the Ord River. In the local Aboriginal language, Kununurra means "The Meeting of the Big Waters". An appropriate name indeed, as water is the most noticeable feature of this region.

And then one day...

I took on the challenge of establishing an Indigenous women's group. In particular, I wanted to find a way to bring these women together in a culturally appropriate manner and help address some of the social problems they were experiencing in their lives. Using my knowledge of community development theory and practices, I decided to first consult the women in the community and find out whether they also saw the need for a women's group.

Initially I spoke with Indigenous workers, Ruth Abdullah from our local office and Donna Birch from a local Aboriginal legal Service about my idea. Both showed a keen interest and both women had a strong understanding of the Indigenous culture and were familiar with the kinship relationship within the community. Ruth and Donna became my mentors.

In order to create the important link with the women in the community, and share my ideas, I arranged to attend a meeting with local women artists, a group of largely Elders in the community. The evening prior to the meeting Donna introduced me to her 82 year old mother Thelma Birch. I talked about my idea with Thelma and invited her to come to the meeting the next day.

On the day of the meeting Thelma explained to the women that we wanted to start a women's group. I was given permission to share this idea with them. The women agreed but felt we needed



Yogita Thompson

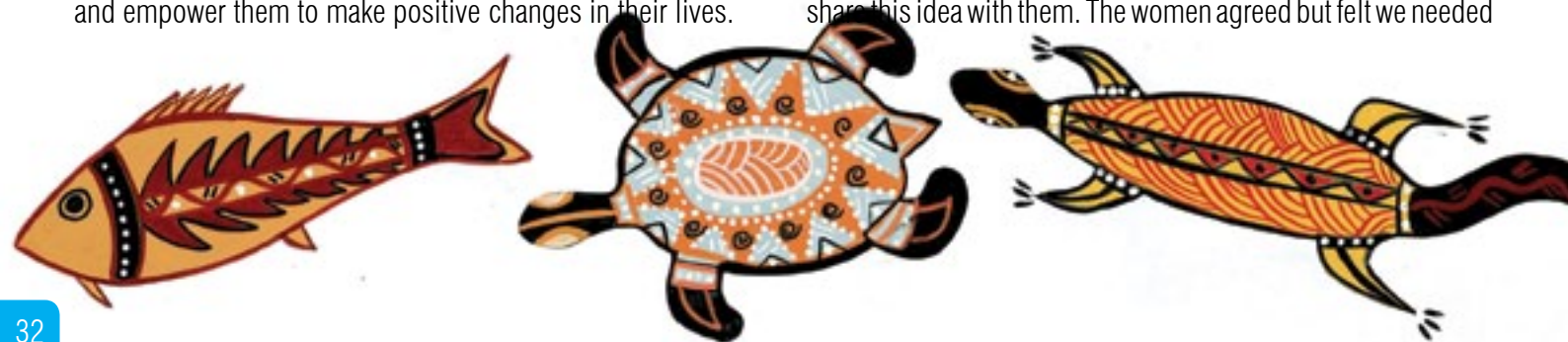


Thelma Birch

Once upon a time...

as a counsellor, I was becoming more and more aware of the many social problems facing Indigenous women in the Kununurra community. These included problems such as overcrowding, poverty, family and domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse cultural breakdown, disruptive neighbours, taking on the care of their relative's children as well as non-related children, and marginalisation.

There seemed to be a lack of community support for these women and I wanted to help provide them with some respite and empower them to make positive changes in their lives.



to tell all the women in the community, to avoid any jealousy. So after the meeting we drove around the community and spoke to the women, sharing the possibility of starting a women's group with them. We were lucky that the women already knew Thelma and many of them knew me also from my previous work.



And because of that...

Donna, Thelma and I set up the first women's group meeting. Other services in the community also got involved, including Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service (OVAHS), Centrelink and The Language Centre.

Amazingly twenty women showed up for this first meeting. They all spoke very passionately about concerns for their family and community. They spoke about alcohol abuse, lack of respect from children, teenagers getting into trouble, and their children dumping their kids at their place to look after. Overall the meeting was a great success and they agreed they wanted to have another meeting.

Unfortunately, while the women were verbally supportive of the idea of a women's group, no one showed up at the next two meetings. Thelma and I realised we needed more direction and a purpose for the group, so we decided to include some recreational activity.

The first outing was a picnic down at Swim Beach. We invited Elders who attended Frontiers services. These women were living in overcrowded housing often with people who liked to party regularly, and were frequently humbugged for money. So it was a great opportunity for them to have a break from this.

The beach outing was really successful so we decided to do these once a month. We would borrow the OVAHS's bus and KinWay staff provided lunch. These trips gave the women the opportunity to talk about their problems and have them affirmed by others. I remember one woman saying "I thought I was the only person with these problems. Now I don't feel all alone". Most of the women had a physical disability and did not have access to a vehicle, so this was also a chance for them to get out of the house and sit on country with supportive company.

About a year later Thelma came to my office saying that the women in the community told her that they wanted to go fishing. The idea of a fishing group was alien to me. I had never fished before, but this is what the women said they wanted. The group had a new focus and purpose! Together with KinWay, who funded the group and gave us access to two cars and a couple of workers, and Miriuwung Gajerrong Corporation who donated two large containers of fishing gear, we planned our first fishing trip. Specifically we wanted these fishing days to provide the women with a well earned day away from family problems and chasing up the kids.

At first the fishing days were a lot of work for me and the other KinWay workers as we would go back and forth with food and drinks and fishing gear, and this was especially tiring in the heat of the day! At this stage the group lacked ownership by the women and there was no real evidence of the influence of local Indigenous culture. As facilitator of the group I encouraged all participants to have a say in the decision making process to try and change this. Initially the women were happy for Thelma and I to make decisions but as the group developed trust and familiarity with each other, the women started to express their own opinions.



Frontier services provided the women once a week with the opportunity to attend its service and have a shower, possibility to sleep over night, have a cup of tea and cake, company and watch telly.

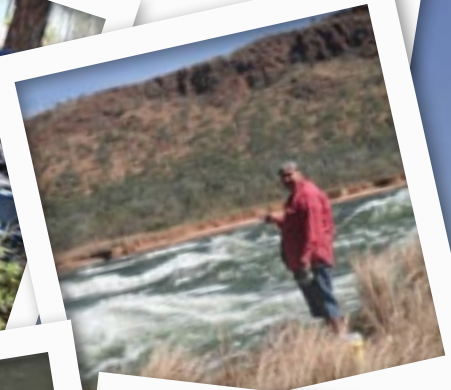
A day in the life of The Kununurra Womens' Fishing Group

A poem by Yogita Thompson

We drive 2 hrs around town
picking everyone up.
Someone has slept in.
Some who were not coming,
came.
Some who were coming, are not.
Someone we forget and have to
go back.
Patience is stretched, growling
takes place, Silence is felt.
And cheering is heard as we
finally get out of town.

A decision is made where to go
fishing.
After searching around we find a
good spot.
The car is unloaded.
A couple of hours fishing go by.
We gradually return to the camp
site.
Some will gather up wood to
light the fire, someone makes
damper.
Ribs are cooked over the fire
and fish on the coals with the
damper tucked underneath.
The billycan sits on the edge, and
tea thrown in when the water
boils.

Yarning takes place while others
listen, bantering and laughter is
heard.
A good feed is had, followed by
another hour or 2 of fishing.
The sun nears the horizon and
tiredness casts it's net over us.
We gather up the stuff, put it in
the car and off we drive into the
Kimberly sunset.
A good day is had by all. We sleep
well.



Eventually the group became more culturally secure and particular women were taking charge of how things were done. For example, on arrival at the fishing spot on one of the trips, a younger woman, very naturally took the lead on the itinerary for the rest of the day simply because in her mind this was what happened when Aboriginal women went fishing. After an hour of fishing she lit a fire and boiled the water for tea. Gradually the women got up from fishing and helped themselves to tea. Then at lunch time she collected all the fish, cleaned them and threw them on the coals to cook. The women were so pleased with this change of catching their own lunch rather than having sandwiches provided, that we decided to do this every outing.

Another positive change that occurred with more fishing trips was the shift from just catching fish to yarning. This first happened when the women in each of the two cars wanted to go to different fishing spots, but come together for lunch for a yarn. During lunch, the women who had grown up in the area told stories from their childhood, and how they would travel to school by boat on the very river we were fishing from. There was laughter and teasing amongst them as the stories unfolded, the women opened up to each other. I also began to feel more included in the group.

Acknowledging the positive impact that bringing the women together for lunch had on the group, we adopted the rule that at lunchtime everyone should put down their lines, come together and share a good 'feed', have a cuppa, a yarn or just sit quietly in the company of supportive women in a natural environment that they loved so much.



And since that day...

the women's fishing trips have become an important activity for Kununurra women. Initially the fishing groups were held

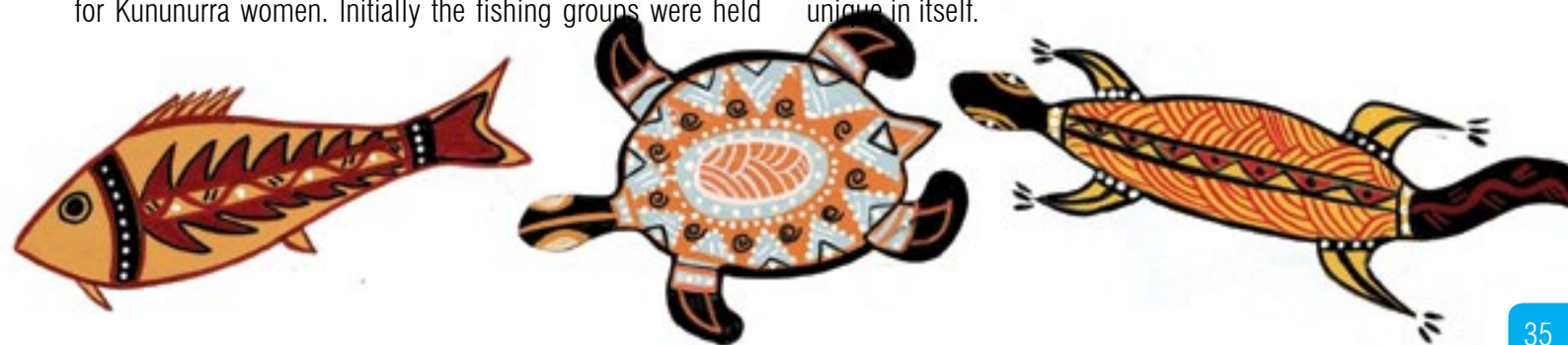
once every four to six weeks, but the women wanted them more often. While there were some issues to overcome, we now run them fortnightly. The regularity of the group has given the women something uplifting to look forward to. One woman expressed that if things were going bad for her she could still anticipate going out fishing. These days I know the groups enthusiasm for the trips and going out and catching fish is just one of the benefits. It's also about being able to be in a place that is spiritually and culturally nourishing, away from town and all its problems. It is healing for them. I believe that is what has sustained and developed the group. To Aboriginal people this might be obvious but for me it was something the women taught me.

These women have such a strong connection to the their land and through these fishing groups I have become aware of how imperative it is for women to be able to leave town and all their problems behind, and connect to the land and practice Aboriginal culture. I could write for pages on what I have learnt from Thelma and the other women and the cultural differences I have discovered along the way.

There are many people I would like to thank, for helping to bring my idea into reality:

- Thelma Birch for being the key into the local women's Aboriginal community
- KinWay, Anglicare WA for their financial support and their encouragement in developing the Kununurra Fishing Group
- Ruth Abdullah for her ongoing support and mentoring in the development of the group
- Donna Birch in the initial stages, for having faith and supporting my idea
- The Domestic Violence Hub who provided us funding for fishing gear.
- To all the people and organisation who provided their time, funding and resources
- Ann Gordon from the Department of Mental Health,
- Rebecca Fisher from OVAHS
- Janet Moore from KinWay Anglicare
- Sister Alma from St Josephs of God
- Jane, Joe, Rennee and Helen, from KinWay Anglicare
- Emmie and Ann from Moonamah
- Miriuwung Gajerrong Corporation

And of course to all the wonderful Aboriginal women who have participated in the Kununurra Fishing Group and brought with them their own uniqueness which has made the group unique in itself.



WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE COMMUNITIES HEALTHIER



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health
WA Country Health Service

Contact Name: Clayton Bell

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Program Partners: Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service (OVAHS), The Kimberley Population Health Unit (KPHU)

Staff Involved: Clayton Bell, Paul Binbusu and Iris Prouse

Keywords: Environment & health, notifiable diseases, referral system

About the storyteller...

This story was written by Clayton Bell a Senior Environmental Health Field Support Officer with the Kimberley Population Health Unit based in Kununurra.

About the program partners...

- Ord Valley Area Health Service is a Community Controlled Aboriginal Health Service which operates out of Kununurra.
- The Kimberley Population Health Unit is a Western Australian Country Health Service provider which covers the Kimberley Region.



Clayton Bell

Once upon a time...

treating the symptoms and not the cause of diseases, was becoming a frustration for many doctors and clinicians across the Kimberley. So in late 2009, the doctors at the Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service (OVAHS) approached the Environmental Health Team from the Kimberley Population Health Unit (KPHU) about the frequent and repeated presentations from clients with diseases such as gut-infections like gastro and diarrhoea, scabies and other skin infections, ear and eye infections and trachoma.

They agreed that as there was a notifiable disease program in place, the considerable time lag from the onset

of these diseases to the date when the Health Unit received notification that the diseases was a problem, particularly when trying to avoid and prevent future outbreaks. Not only was this time lag becoming a problem, but some of the day-to-day presentations were not actually considered notifiable, meaning they would not be reported to the Population Health Unit at all – in essence they were going un-noticed.

When reviewing their statistics, OVAHS found that many of the health issues affecting their clients related to an unhealthy home environment. Overcrowding was particularly significant, as this was leading to stress within common areas in the home environment, such as the kitchen, bathroom, laundry, sewage and septic systems.

It was becoming obvious that there was no adequate referral or follow-up system in place to deal with these types of diseases coming through the OVAHS clinics. As timing is an important factor in detecting and eradicating disease, it was considered that the referral needed to happen on a regular basis to allow for some sort of remedial action to occur. The Environmental Health Team approached the Kununurra Health Service and Community Health about these concerns. All of the services voiced the same frustrations and agreed that a new referral or follow-up system was critical to help deal with these types of diseases repeatedly presenting through the clinics.

A notifiable disease is any disease that is required by law to be reported to government authorities. The collation of information allows the authorities to monitor the disease and provide early warning of possible outbreaks.



And then one day...

the services worked together to design an environmental health referral form and establish a communications system between services. This was a relatively simple system – no high tech solutions – just a dedicated pigeon hole at OVAHS, and a notification through referral, fax or phone call to the Kununurra Hospital and Community Health Service.

The environmental health referral form included client details, environmental health concerns noted by the medical practitioners, and many diagrams to identify the parts of a septic tank, toilet system, external tap or household plumbing system that should be checked by the Environmental Health Workers to locate any potential causes of the disease being presented by that patient.

The Environmental Health Worker, upon receiving the referral form, would make contact with the family and inspect the household plumbing and septic systems for failing infrastructure. They would also use this visit to provide some basic education about household maintenance and hygiene practices. After leaving the house, the Environmental Health Worker would report any fault to the appropriate agency, determine a follow up date and then complete the referral form, identifying all actions taken.

And because of that...

the benefits of this referral system have been diverse and varied. The “hands on” approach by the Aboriginal Environmental Health Workers has been greatly appreciated by community members. Not only do these site inspections identify the cause of many illnesses, but strategies are put in place to help prevent the same problems occurring in the future.

Another significant outcome has been the improvement in the time in which faulty housing hardware is fixed. This time has been drastically reduced, as the referral system ensures that the responsible agencies are notified immediately. Another notable benefit is the improved and sustained partnerships between all the agencies.

However, the most significant benefit has been for the community members. This referral system has developed into a strong community education tool which has given families and individuals an awareness of how their home and surrounding environment impacts on their health. It has also been the springboard for many additional services being offered to communities – including trailers being provided for waste and rubbish collection, permanent bin bags being provided to communities, the opportunity to access funding to provide clotheslines and implementing a dog health program to assist in de-sexing and caring for dogs.

And since that day...

a number of other agencies have become involved in this program. These include Community Housing, which is an extended service of the Housing Department, the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley's Environmental Health Officers and Shire Rangers, Home and Community Care through their elderly clients, and the Department of Child Protection through the placement of children in care housing.

We are proud to say that this program is giving people a better understanding of the impact that living conditions and the environment can have on health and wellbeing. While we still have a long way to go, we know this small change in connecting services, creating partnerships and working with the community is a step in the right direction.

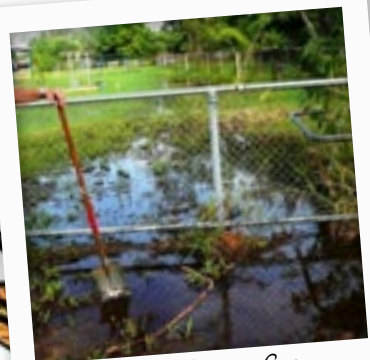
We are constantly learning from each other and will continue to do so. We know there is more we can do. In the future, we want to focus our efforts on improving service provision and evaluating programs such as this one, to make improvements to help and support the health of our community.



EHOs out on site



Unblocking a drain



Results of an overflowing septic tank

A JOURNEY IN DOG HEALTH

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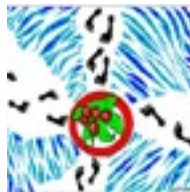
Program Partners: Veterinary Board of WA, Department of Health, Djarindjin Community Housing, University of Sydney, AMRRIC, KREHS

Staff Involved: The environmental health team at Nirrumbuk

Keywords: Indigenous health, environment & health, dog health

About the storyteller...

The following story was written by Ray Christophers the director of Nirrumbuk's Environmental Health and Municipal Services, located in Broome.



Once upon a time...

It was realised that the health of our community dogs was quickly becoming a major health problem. The number of dogs was constantly growing leaving many dogs uncared for, unfed and carrying diseases that were being passed onto humans. To address these issues we needed to take the dog health program to another level. Zoonotic diseases such as worms and parasites were affecting our people causing a number of illnesses such as skin infections, vomiting, diarrhoea and even more serious conditions such as kidney problems.

The overpopulation of dogs was becoming a noticeable issue. Not only were dogs and the people they came in contact with getting sick, but their behaviour and safety was becoming a problem. Dogs were fighting each other causing permanent injury and even death. There were even horrible cases of attacks on community members. We love our dogs. They are like family. They bring so much joy to our community. But something needed to be done.

And then one day...

In 2004, Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation developed a basic dog health program for Kullari's Aboriginal communities. The program operated under the Dog Health Protocol, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Veterinary Board of Western Australia and the Department of Health. The program began with community education, a one on one service between community members and trained Environmental Health Workers. Interest in the program and learning how to care for dogs grew quickly. Over the next few years the program expanded with many strong partnerships built to help get dog health under control.

In 2006, we began a micro-chipping program which was the critical first step toward dog population control.

In 2007, in partnership with Djarindjin Community Housing we created the Healthy Homes project. This education project involved sessions that covered the importance of controlling worms in dogs, life cycles of pests and showed graphic pictures of human zoonoses and disease. With at least one tenant from each house taking part, the word continued to spread about dog health. As a result, the Djarindjin community started talking about what else they could do to improve dog and community health.



In 2008, Djarindjin and Nirrumbuk entered a partnership to set up dog desexing. This was a significant moment as it was the first time (that we know about) that a local Aboriginal community had contributed their own funds to a dog management project. We also planned together to further raise community awareness by promoting a Gorrna Illa ("Deadly Dog") Competition through Djarindjin's Tidy Town activities. The competition was run for the healthiest community dog.



Nirrumbuk consulted with the local vet May Sabir-Ali from Broome Veterinary Hospital, and agreed on roles, responsibilities and the operation of a two day de-sexing program. Aiming to keep the project affordable for the Community Council, Nirrumbuk provided support through facility preparation and cleaning supplies. In addition, the Regional Environmental Health Team actively participated over the two days by spreading word-of-mouth, gaining the support and trust of the community, collecting and returning animals, assisting with preparing animals for surgery, conducting animal recovery, sterilising equipment, providing post-op advice to pet owners and conducting follow-up visits after surgery.

The local Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities (BRACS) radio also ran community announcements to help encourage dog de-sexing.

Shortly after, the University of Sydney and AMRRIC the Animal Management in Rural and Remote Communities approached Nirrumbuk to be a local partner in their National “Healthy Dogs, Healthy Communities” research. Our team supported the University vets in gathering data at Bidyadanga, providing education and assisting AMRRIC in delivering two more dog desexing programs.

Bidyadanga’s first desexing program, again paid for by the community, was held in early March with AMRRIC taking the lead. The second, was held in September. Nirrumbuk provided community education, using the “Healthy Dogs, Healthy Communities” resources, at Bidyadanga prior to the second round of desexing. This focused on the importance of dog health in protecting community health, and desexing as the best way to control rising dog populations.

Community awareness was raised by using posters (featuring a Bidyadanga artist’s work), presentations to the primary and high school and other promotions by an Environmental Health Worker. The involvement and commitment of the Bidyadanga community increased significantly as a result of this process. The impact on community participation, through witnessing the initial successful project can also be attributed as part of the second round success.

Discussions at Beagle Bay Steering Group resulted in the Department of Indigenous Affairs agreeing to fund a one off de-sexing project, in line with the delivery of this service across the Kullari Region. At this time, the project was able to support a student Vet Nurse to assist (through the Broome Veterinary Hospital) and we saw 18 females and 3 male dogs desexed.

In late 2009, we held the third round of desexing at Bidyadanga. PAKAM (Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media) came to record the project, conducting interviews and shooting scenes. The dog health grapevine had made its way to Broome ABC, who arrived and recorded a news story.

And because of that...

the Community and the Environmental Health Workers felt ownership of the project and all combined efforts made for outstanding numbers on our first desexing project - 21 dogs (19 female, 2 male) desexed over 2 days. Based on the desexing programs success and Nirrumbuk’s ability to facilitate low program cost and growing community interest, Ardyaloon came on board to form a partnership in a desexing program for their own community. The program ran much the same way and saw 15 females and 5 male dogs desexed. The commitment of the two Community Council’s in paying for their desexing program demonstrates the high value placed on both dogs and community health.



And since that day...

consistent delivery of the dog health program and a commitment to local interests has seen the program build and gather momentum. Small steps and strong trust, have led to sound outcomes, great experience, knowledge and skill.

Nirrumbuk has acted in an advocacy role by promoting discussion with the Shire of Broome and the Dampier Police Station in an effort to address the gap in service regarding vicious dogs and dog attacks. Nirrumbuk is now working with Community Council and stakeholders to develop a practical working plan for the regulation of dangerous dog issues.



Cliffo



Clipping nails as part of post operation care



Another operation taking place



Salt & Pepper take out the Gorrna Illa prize in Djarindjin

Recently, with our project partners, we have identified a need to further address population control and cheeky dogs. Research and consultation has been conducted with a number of stakeholders across the Nation e.g. NSW, NT, AMRRIC, Bali Dog Program etc. Our aim is to promote humane methods for catching of camp, un-owned or cheeky dogs.

The Veterinary Board has approved our application (through the Broome Veterinary Hospital) for oral and tranquiliser gun application of sedatives. The oral sedatives have already proved to be of great assistance on desexing days.

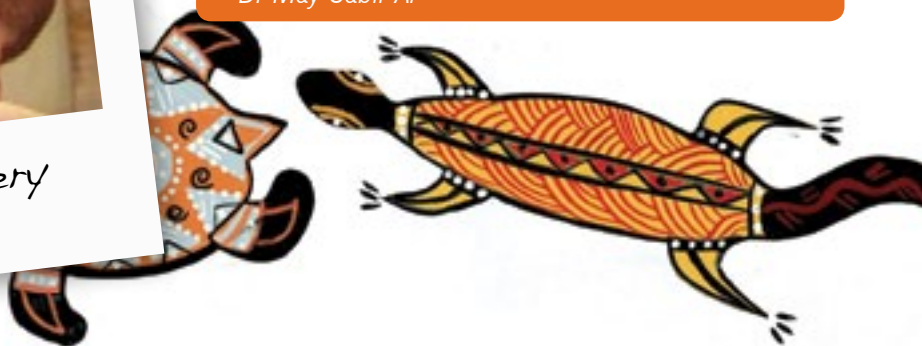
Nirrumbuk continues this Journey in Dog Health. Since that day we:

- Continue to run dog health programs and dog desexing projects
- Promote dog health through education campaigns, including PAKAM television story and other school/community based methods
- Continue to focus on reducing skin infection and rheumatic heart disease – by promoting hand washing and dog washing
- Continue using the dog hydrobath as a health promotion tool
- Continue to investigate and consolidate methods for further dog population control, focusing on camp and un-owned or wild dogs with strong community partnerships
- Have implemented the FaCHSIA and Department of Health pilot project “Animal and Dog Management Plan” for the Ardyaloon and Djarindjin communities
- We have seen a significant reduction in the number of dogs euthanized across the region.

Acknowledgments: We would like to acknowledge the enthusiastic support of the Broome Veterinary Service – Dr May Sabir Ai



Preparing for surgery at Ardyaloon



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Stories from all over Western Australia are welcome and encouraged.

