



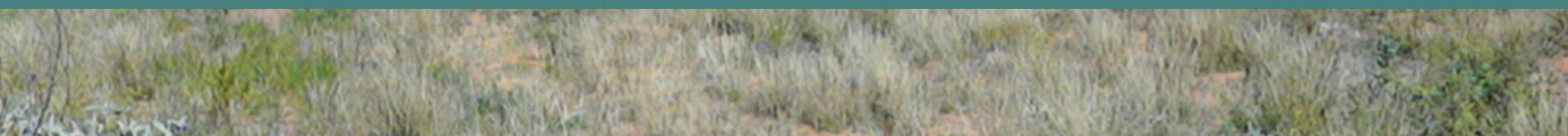
# THE WEST AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS STORYBOOK



CELEBRATING & SHARING  
GOOD NEWS STORIES



The Goldfields / Esperance and Great Southern Edition





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Special thanks to:

- Ray Christophers
- Lyn Dimer
- Juli Coffin
- Dave Pigram

Finally, PHAIWA would like to sincerely thank all the storytellers who contributed their experiences and stories. Special thanks to Sunni Wilson and Melissa Stoneham from PHAIWA for providing the coordination roles.

## Cover Photo - Photo Credit Sue Bray

The area where the cover photo was taken has special cultural significance to the traditional owners of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. This is the story behind the photo.

### Yantji Yantji - Pukura Serpent Story

The serpent left Pukura (a place south of Irrunytju or Wingellina) and travelled looking for help for the son who was wounded. The serpent left the son there. He travelled to where all the snake people were. He was looking for a special thing to help the son. When he came from Pukura he had something else with him - the honey. In return to get something from the snake people he had to give the honey. The snake people wanted to go with the serpent to help the son but, because the son wanted to marry this young girl, they stayed back. So the serpent travelled alone towards Ilurpa. The snake people country is called Lirrun or Sherwin Mural Crescent (Ranges).

PHAIWA would like to acknowledge and thank Mrs Daisy Ward for the story behind the cover photograph.

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Welcome to the fourth edition of the WA Indigenous Storybook which focuses on the Goldfields/Esperance and South West regions. It is especially pleasing to include three stories from the remote Ngaanyatjarra Lands in WA. These stories describe an incredible walk, where health and culture mix, NG Media which has a wide reach and involves film, radio and music production and a Youth Healthy Relationships project where a series of films were made about the importance of sexual health, self-respect and healthy relationships. These amazing projects are just the tip of the iceberg when looking at the incredible projects and innovations that are occurring in one of the most remote parts of our country. For anyone reaching for the alphas... the Ngaanyatjarra Lands WA, encompass sections of the Gibson Desert, Great Sandy Desert, Great Victoria Desert and the Central Ranges of WA. It covers 250,000km<sup>2</sup> or approximately three per cent of mainland Australia. There are around 1800 Ngaanyatjarra, Pintipi and Ngaatjatjarra and Pitjantjatjara people living on the Ngaanyatjarra lands in 12 remote communities.

No less important are the other stories in the book, which all describe positive stories and illustrate how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and projects really are making a difference to the lives of the people in their communities. In this edition, we feature stories that describe services, education facilities, art, environmental stewardship, healthy communities and innovative social programs. The Public Health Advocacy Institute of WA (PHAIWA), together with our key partners Healthway and the Government of Western Australia are very proud to be associated with the authors and contributors acknowledged in this Storybook. From the very first Storybook right through to this the fourth edition, we have and continue to, acknowledge the book as a terrific way to recognise and celebrate the often invisible projects that positively influence the lives of others. The next Storybook is planned for the far north of the state – from Broome to Kununurra and eastwards. PHAIWA welcomes all stories that focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues – whether these are individual stories or those that have affected whole communities. If you would like to contribute your story please contact PHAIWA at [www.phaiwa.org.au](http://www.phaiwa.org.au)

## ABOUT THE NOONGAR PEOPLES...

- Noongar people's country covers the entire South-Western portion of Western Australia. Archaeological evidence establishes that the Noongar people – alternative spellings: Nyungar/Nyoongar/Nyoongah/Nyungah/Nyugah and Yunga – have lived in the area and had possession of tracts of land on their country for at least 45,000 years. The boundary commences on the west coast at a point north of Jurien Bay, proceeds roughly easterly to a point approximately north of Moora and then roughly south-east to a point on the southern coast between Bremer Bay and Esperance.
- Noongar are made up of fourteen different language groups (which may be spelt in different ways): Amangu, Yued/Yuat, Whadjuk/Wajuk, Binjareb/Pinjarup, Wardandi, Balardong/Ballardong, Nyakinyaki, Wilman, Ganeang, Bibulmun/Piblemen, Mineng, Goreng and Wudjari and Njunga. Each of these language groups correlates with different geographic areas with ecological distinctions.

Reference: [www.noongarculture.org.au/media/5224/tindale%20final%20web.pdf](http://www.noongarculture.org.au/media/5224/tindale%20final%20web.pdf)

## ABOUT THE WONGATHA PEOPLES...

- Wongatha is the name of language group of the Aboriginal people of the North-Eastern Goldfields, it comes from the word meaning "speaker". The Wongatha people made use of the natural resources within their tribal boundary which borders the biogeographic regions of Coolgardie, South-East Wiluna and the Western half of the Great Victoria Desert.
- Wongatha people played an important role in the discovery of gold and supporting early prospectors with information about locally available gnamma holes. They also assisted with early so-called Afghan camel-drivers, instrumental in providing outback gold mining communities with provisions.
- Many former sheep stations have passed into Wongatha ownership, and traditional art has grown to become a major income to Wongatha communities.
- It is estimated that there are about 200-300 first-language Wongatha speaking people.



## ABOUT THE GOLDFIELDS - ESPERANCE

- The Goldfields-Esperance region is one of the nine regions of Western Australia. It is located in the south eastern corner of Western Australia, and comprises the local government areas of Coolgardie, Dundas, Esperance, Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Laverton, Leonora, Menzies, Ngaanyatjaraku and Ravensthorpe.
- It also incorporates that area along the Great Australian Bight to the South Australian border known as the Nullarbor.
- The Goldfields-Esperance region is the largest of Western Australia's regions, with an area of 771,276 km<sup>2</sup>.
- It has a population of about 59,000 people, about half of whom live in the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. Another quarter live in the Shire of Esperance, and the remaining shires are very sparsely populated. Nearly 10% of the region's populations are of Aboriginal descent, which is substantially higher than the state as a whole.
- The economy of the Goldfields sub-region is based on the extraction and processing of various mineral resources, primarily gold and nickel. Further south near Esperance, the economy is based on agriculture and fishing, with wheat and barley widely grown.
- As WA's largest region, over three times the size of Victoria, the Goldfields-Esperance is also sparsely populated; the towns of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Esperance make up most of the population. It's estimated that more than 30,000 people live in Kalgoorlie-Boulder while Esperance's population is estimated to be more than 14,000.
- The town of Kalgoorlie and the Shire of Boulder officially joined and became 'Kalgoorlie-Boulder' in 1989. 'Kalgoorlie' comes from the Wongi word Karlkurla, meaning 'place of the silky pears'.



## ABOUT THE GREAT SOUTHERN

- The Great Southern region is one of the nine regions of Western Australia. It is a section of the larger South Coast of Western Australia and neighbouring agricultural regions.
- It officially comprises the local government areas of Albany, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet and Woodanilling.
- The Great Southern has an area of 39,007km<sup>2</sup> (15,061 sq mi) and a population of about 54,000. Its administrative centre is the historic port of Albany. The region has a Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters.
- The economy of the Great Southern is dominated by livestock farming and crop-growing. It has some of the most productive cereal grain and pastoral land in the state, and is a major producer of wool and lamb. Albany is a major fishing centre.
- Fishing, tourism and leisure are significant industries in the Great Southern.
- Noongar people have inhabited the region for tens of thousands of years. European settlement began with the establishment of a temporary British military base, commanded by Major Edmund Lockyer, at King George Sound (Albany) on Christmas Day, 1826. Albany is consequently regarded as the oldest European settlement in Western Australia.

# GIRLS ARE DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Kalgoorlie Girls Academy

## CONTACT PERSON:

Sarah Ashwin, Tammy O'Brien

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## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Role Models and Leaders Australia

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Sarah Ashwin, Tammy O'Brien

## KEY WORDS:

Education, self-esteem, leadership, basketball, mentorship, achievement

## About the storytellers...

Sarah Ashwin is the Program Manager of the Kalgoorlie Girls Academy.

Tammy O'Brien is the Development Officer at the Eastern Goldfields College.

## About Kalgoorlie Girls Academy...

The Kalgoorlie Girls Academy is a unique program developed specifically for girls aged 12-17 years. The program focuses on mentoring, sport, outside activities, workplace training and leadership and teamwork opportunities.



## Once upon a time...

at Kalgoorlie Boulder Community High School in 2007, many of our Year 8, 9 and 10 female students were part of the Girls Basketball Program and played in the school team. We noticed being involved in the basketball team appeared to be having a positive effect on school attendance rates so we decided to extend the program to the Senior Campus to include the Year 11 and 12 female students. Girls from all the year groups loved playing the game and we were so impressed with their enthusiasm, we started to think about how we could implement a sports-based-program which focussed on achieving educational outcomes. Fortunately, we had to look no further than Mr Ricky Grace, former American/Australian professional basketball player and CEO/ founder of Role Models and Leaders Australia (the organisation provides leadership, sports and education programs to assist Australian youth, particularly Indigenous youth, who suffer from poverty, sickness, misfortune, or a disconnectedness from their community). As part of his work, Mr Grace had previously identified a lack of sports orientated programs that specifically targeted girls in schools across Western Australia.



*Go for Gold - Snr High Academy girls*

When he contacted us to see if we were interested in expanding our program to incorporate the practical principles and objectives of Role Models and Leaders Australia, we told him we loved the idea. Consequently, we started a journey together that would take the girls' participation in basketball to a whole new level. With Ricky's guidance, we adopted a framework developed by Role Models and Leaders Australia and established the Kalgoorlie Girls Academy, which is an initiative of Role Models and Leaders Australia. The aim of the Academy is to provide a unique curriculum for female students to ensure that they achieve skills for further education, training and employment.



*Sarah Ashwin, Tammy O'Brien*



*At the Clontarf Classic, Perth*



*"The first step to success is showing up."*

Concurrently, it provides the opportunity to improve their sporting and life skills. We now have approximately 120 students at both campuses and our enrolment numbers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, continue to grow.

## And then one day...

through trial and error, we gradually implemented the unique programs that we run today. We currently offer two programs and several specialist classes over two campuses. The Kalgoorlie Girls Academy incorporates the basketball program and consists of academic lessons, physical education and leadership training. We also run the Endorse program for the Year 10 students which aims to prepare them for the transition over to the Senior Campus. The Endorse Program is pretty important because when the girls leave Year 10 and enter Year 11, some will struggle to cope and feel quite intimidated by the change. For the first time in their schooling life they are actually treated like young adults and are assuming responsibility for their actions and managing their own time, which can be confronting. That is one of the reasons we have an open-door policy at the Academy, so the girls know that support is always available if they need it.

The form class or the 'Nuari Girls' program (for Indigenous girls only) is held four times per week for each year group and targets 'at risk' students who struggle to attend school. We provide breakfast in the morning class as many of these students do not eat regular meals. Some of the students in Year 11 and 12 find the study load too difficult in General Studies so the school places them in the Links Program which is targeted at students who have attendance issues and are struggling with their literacy and

numeracy. The main goal for this particular group is to get them to attend school. As long as they're coming to school, we, as educators, have the opportunity to plant the seed that they can achieve what they want to achieve. They are also taught life skills and are required to go out into the community and do work placements in order to prepare them for life after school. Leadership camps are also a big part of the Academy and we often travel to Esperance or Perth but we have also taken the students to Albany, Dwellingup and up to Broome. Every second year we aim for an overseas adventure. In 2008 and 2010, Ricky embarked on a trip, where he took several of the girls to America. We thought he was very brave to take several teenage girls overseas to expose them to different cultures.

His message was that the trip did not have to be viewed as 'a trip of a lifetime'. They can all achieve success in their own futures and see as much of the world as they choose to. At present we are the only Academy in WA which assimilates both Indigenous and non-Indigenous girls. Initially, when we got the program up and running, there was some division between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous girls and we have worked very hard on changing that. When I started as Manager of the Academy, I was very clear that there would be no segregation between the girls. I am determined to continue to instill the importance of reconciliation. When these young people finish school and life extends beyond the school walls, they won't be entering an all Indigenous workplace so we need to prepare them for that reality. It's important for the girls to establish relationships with people from different backgrounds.



## And because of that...

after completing their first year at the Academy, the girls have a choice as to whether they want to continue the following year, as we don't make it mandatory. Some girls find the program a bit tough because we are really focussed on achievement and our expectations are high. In saying that, we also have realistic expectations as well. We don't endorse a 100 per cent attendance rate but we explain that 85 per cent and above is what they need to achieve their educational outcomes. The first step to success is showing up. If the girls are not attending classes regularly then they can't complete their schoolwork which can lead to failing a class. This means their chances of graduating will be compromised. So, we really try to instill the importance of regular attendance.

We are always impressed with how well the girls respond to this program. Combining sport with education definitely makes learning more enjoyable, and keeps the girls fit! It is such a well-rounded program which delivers a good, solid foundation for future endeavours. We have many success stories and one of our ex-students is a perfect example. She was the recipient of the prestigious Geoff Powers Role Model Award when she graduated. She now works at the ANZ bank here in Kalgoorlie and has worked her way up to a training position where she now guides and instructs new staff. Another of our graduates won the Year 12 WA Indigenous State Award and is currently studying medicine at a university in Perth, which is a fantastic achievement.



*Go for Gold - Jnr High Academy girls*

## And since that day...

our principal outcome, which is to increase the percentage of girls who graduate each year, is well and truly on track. We hold an annual Awards Ceremony named The Academy Awards to recognise the students who are putting in an exceptional effort. It's a great, fun event. The girls dress up in glamorous Hollywood outfits and walk the red carpet and we hand out special awards for each year group. They include; the Most Outstanding Award, Academic Achievement Award and Sportswoman of the year; The Eastern Goldfields College Ambassador Award, the Kalgoorlie Boulder Community High School Ambassador Award, and the Ricky Grace Role Models and Leaders Australia Award where the winner receives an iPad. It's an important ritual for the students. Recognition for high achievement in front of teachers, parents and peers is a remarkable feeling for the winners. My hopes for the future of the Kalgoorlie Girls Academy is to create a 'giving back' program where we bring in past students to share their stories once they are established in the workforce. I think it would be an added incentive for the students to work hard towards completing school and graduating.

"I really love my job and I especially enjoy seeing the girls' achievements. As I didn't have a mentor when I was in high school, I understand how necessary it is. To be able to mentor and support these girls is extremely valuable. Being an adviser is like being a second mum, we want the girls to succeed on as many levels as possible." (Tammy)

"The relationships I have with the students is what makes my job so worthwhile. One of my proudest moments was seeing my first group of Year 8 students graduate from Year 12. I know what the cycles are in the community-I've lived it and I have family who are living it so if I can make a difference in one child's life, then I am happy. My message is they can achieve whatever it is that they want in their lives, but they just have to put the effort in to reap the benefits and live a proud life." (Sarah)

*"Our principal outcome, which is to increase the percentage of girls who graduate each year, is well and truly on track."*





# TJUMA PULKA MEDIA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

## ORGANISATION NAME:

TjumaPulka Media Aboriginal Corporation

## CONTACT PERSON:

Debbie Carmody

## EMAIL AND WEBSITE:

manager@tjuma963fm.com.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Office for the Arts

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Debbie Carmody, Libby Carmody, Naomi Beck

## KEY WORDS:

Educational, informative, entertaining



## Once upon a time...

around eight years ago, in the Goldfields town of Kalgoorlie, there were many talented local Aboriginal musicians but their voices were not being heard on the local radio stations. At the time in Kalgoorlie there were several radio stations, mostly commercial, but they didn't play songs written by Indigenous people. As there wasn't a media outlet which represented First Nation musicians in the region, it was clear that Indigenous people needed a voice in their community.

A committee was formed by a group of passionate, community members from the Karlkurla Language and Culture Aboriginal Corporation with an aim to establish an Aboriginal owned and controlled radio station. The criteria specified it would be community based, culturally safe and culturally appropriate, and would provide an educational broadcasting service in the areas of current affairs, health, education and items of public interest, and in so doing attempt to increase awareness of issues within the Aboriginal community. It was also essential that it nurtured homegrown musicians and provided an opportunity to record and broadcast their music.

## About the storyteller...

Debbie is an Anangu woman who began broadcasting in 1984 with ABC radio in Kalgoorlie, Perth and Sydney - she left the ABC to work in Community Radio. Debbie enjoys working in Community Radio as it is relaxed and accessible to the local community. Debbie has a strong interest in the development of First Nation Radio in the Goldfields region, because it allows First Nation people a 'voice'.

## About Tjuma Pulka...

Tjuma Pulka Media Aboriginal Corporation - 96.3FM began broadcasting in October 2005. Tjuma Pulka First Nation Radio currently operates under a Temporary Community Broadcasting Licence. Our Governing Committee is made up of First Nation people from diverse backgrounds and experiences and we have good support from non-Indigenous people in the Goldfields Community. Tjuma Pulka relays their radio programs to 99.7FM Menzies, 92.1FM Leonora, and 96.5FM Laverton.



*Naomi Beck*



*Libby Carmody*

## And then one day...

the Karlkurla Committee wrote a funding submission, and in October 2005, secured funding from the Office for the Arts to establish an Aboriginal Radio Station which they called Tjuma Pulka Media Aboriginal Corporation, 96.3FM. The radio station became a separate organisation and moved into larger premises with support from the Office for the Arts.

Tjuma Pulka Media Aboriginal Corporation has developed into an organisation that relays its radio programming to Menzies – 99.7FM, Leonora – 92.1FM, and Laverton 96.5FM. This was funded by Minara Mining.

Tjuma Pulka Media Aboriginal Corporation has a music recording studio which allows us to work with local musicians recording their songs to be broadcast on-air. Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines have contributed to the development of the recording studio.

## And because of that...

Tjuma Pulka strongly supports artists and Australian musicians who are not signed to record labels. We focus on unearthing unsigned talent, developing strong relationships with musicians and providing artists with an opportunity to get their music on the radio. Tjuma Pulka Media broadcasts 24 hours per day. We cross to National Indigenous News every hour. Debbie presents the Current Affairs program, Libby the Lunch Time Roll and Naomi, Drivetime.

While all programs promote Aboriginal musicians, Libby's program specifically promotes Aboriginal and unsigned Australian musicians. Tjuma Pulka subscribes to Australian Music Radio Airplay Project (AMRAP) who distribute and promote new Australian music to community radio stations throughout Australia. Libby travels to music festivals to record interviews and sets up close working relationships with musicians. As a result Tjuma Pulka is able to sponsor musicians so they can perform within our community. At the Bridgetown Blues Festival, Libby made contact with Buddy Knox who is being sponsored to perform in Kalgoorlie-Boulder during 2013 NAIDOC Week through another local Aboriginal organisation.

Tjuma Pulka forms partnerships with local community and government organisations and departments to advocate health and wellbeing issues, along with employment and traineeships. For example, Tjuma Pulka formed a partnership with Ngunytyju Tjitji Pirni and the Institute for Child Health Research and produced a culturally appropriate CD called Pina Palya, Pina Kulilku which was about good ear health. The CDs were distributed to health organisations, such as Bega Garabirringu Health Services Aboriginal Organisation, and other health related groups, and local primary schools. These local community and government organisations and departments also come into Tjuma Pulka weekly to present programs that promote their services.



*Boulder Primary School students recording a song for the good ear health CD*



*Libby interviewing Buddy Knox,  
Bridgetown 2011*



*Debbie Carmody*

*"Tjuma Pulka plays  
a significant role in social  
and cultural activities by helping to  
maintain social networks through the  
broadcast of vital information services  
that are specifically for the local  
Aboriginal Community."*

Tjuma Pulka records language programs and presents them on-air. It is important for us to speak Wangkatja to promote our cultural wellbeing.

Tjuma Pulka 96.3FM has attracted a large audience in the Goldfields Region, including non-Indigenous listeners. We offer the community an alternative sound-a First Nations sound that is culturally diverse, and we support unsigned non-Indigenous Australian musicians, therefore the music tells stories that are uniquely Australian and not heard on mainstream radio. Our aim is to promote knowledge and understanding to the wider Goldfields community of Wongatha, and other people strongly connected to this land. We want to promote our culture and tradition through radio programs that showcase language, arts, lifestyle, and issues of importance for First Nation Peoples.

Tjuma Pulka 96.3FM streams from our website. Statistics from the website informs us that we have listeners from around the world, such as America, England, Afghanistan, New Zealand, and so on. Tjuma Pulka also has a Facebook page and we invite people to become our friends.

## And since that day...

although Tjuma Pulka 96.3FM operates under a Temporary Community Broadcasting Licence, the Australian Communications and Media Authority are currently processing our application for a 'permanent' licence. A permanent licence will allow Tjuma Pulka Media Aboriginal Corporation to design and build our own culturally appropriate building.

Tjuma Pulka has grown quickly over the short time it has been on-air which is a reflection on the community and its needs. Tjuma Pulka is a First Nations radio station that provides an important service to the local Aboriginal community. We play a significant role in social and cultural activities by helping to maintain social networks through the broadcast of vital information services that are specifically for the local Aboriginal Community.



*"Tjuma Pulka records  
language programs and presents  
them on-air. It is important for us to  
speak Wangkatja to promote our  
cultural wellbeing."*



# WALKING THE NGAANYATJARRA LANDS

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Ngaanyatjarra Health Service

## CONTACT PERSON:

Sue Bray

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## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Ngaanyatjarra Land and Culture

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Mrs Daisy Ward, Mr Ernest Bennett, Sue Bray, Thisbe Purich, Alex Knight, Stuart Kilby and Land and Culture staff

## KEY WORDS:

Health, culture, land, lore, environment

## About the storytellers...

This story was told by Warakurna Elders Mr. Bennett and Mrs Daisy Ward, Thisbe Purich who is the founder of Tjanpi Desert Weavers and long-time friend of Ngaanyatjarra people and Sue Bray who is the Public Health Manager at Ngaanyatjarra Health Service. The Ngaanyatjarra Land and Culture Team also contributed to this story.

## About the Community Walk...

The Ngaanyatjarra Community Walk is an event initiated by the Yarnangu people of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in the Central Desert of WA. It is supported by Ngaanyatjarra Health Service (NHS) and Ngaanyatjarra Council's Land and Culture team. NHS provides comprehensive primary health care to the 12 Ngaanyatjarra communities including clinics, healthy lifestyles programs, environmental health services, Home & Community Care (HACC) and Aged Care. Land and Culture supports traditional owners in traditional land management such as patch burning and encourages the handing down of traditional ecological knowledge and the Tjukurrpa (dreaming stories) to young people.



## Once upon a time...

all the people were saying you'll never get people to walk that far; they can't even walk to the clinic, they always have to hop in the car; how are you going to get them to walk 100kms? Little did they know that the people of Blackstone had a power too often ignored all these years. While everybody was trying to do all they could to stop diabetes one man was thinking another way. He thought "we always used to walk everywhere and we never got sick so maybe we should do it again." This old man was Cliff Reid and he was a very sick diabetic, and about to start dialysis but he held a vision and a memory of the strength his people could get from walking and hunting on their land again. This was an activity so simple but still so powerful. It was one which could give people exercise, nutrition, and spiritual sustenance as children and adults taught and visited sites, danced and retold stories. He then took his idea to two of his good friends, Diana Isgar and Thisbe and so the first walk soon began.

It was 2006 and the walk started at Blackstone and finished in Walu. A second walk occurred in 2008 from Blackstone to Wirmpul. In July 2011, it became an annual event with the walk beginning at Warakurna and ending at Old Wanarn which coincided with the Ngaanyatjarra Council celebrating its 30th anniversary. The walk had about 103 participants and took place over seven days. It was an opportunity for the people of the Ngaanyatjarra lands to reflect upon their successes over the 30 years. In particular, winning the 99 year leases giving them the ability to negotiate access to the lands, and then later the Ngaanyatjarra Native Title determination. In 2012, the walk returned to Blackstone and finished in Mamutjarra.

During the first couple of walks Diana got whatever money she could from the Blackstone Art Centre and later on Thisbe hunted around for money from funding bodies like Healthway.





*Having a rest under a shady tree*

Thisbe had the idea that the walk should be kept simple and community supported so it wouldn't cost too much and be easier to continue. If people really wanted this walk, then they would come along without it being a heavily supported event by whitefellas. It was a test really and it worked out very well. After that first walk not much has changed - just a few small things.

Every walk Thisbe goes to the community to talk about where they would like to walk. It is important that the track is near lots of bush tucker, and that it is not too long. It has to have firewood and go through some meaningful sacred sites and places that have stories for people. This means that lots of tracks have to be made before the right one is found. It's also a good chance for the Land and Culture staff to go out and do some patch burning, GPS training and rock hole monitoring. Then they go out and make the new track.

This year in 2013 the track was made by Thisbe's helper Stuart Kilby, and the Warakurna traditional owners. The main Aboriginal staff running the walk were Mr Bennet and Daisy Ward as they knew the country very well even though they hadn't taken a car right up close to the ranges for a long time. Every day they would go out and make a little bit more of the track until the road was just right and the campsites were all marked and ready. Then it was time to get the water trailers and food ready.

These days Ngaanyatjarra Land and Culture helps out on every walk by providing water trailers and staff and they head out weeks in advance to get eskies full of fresh low fat camel meat. Thisbe brings out fresh

groceries and special healthy foods such as organic flour and natural stevia sweetener powder from Alice Springs and a bit of camping equipment and beeswax and oil so the ladies can make bush medicine for all the walkers.

## And then one day...

this year about 60 people from the Ngaanyatjarra Lands communities of Blackstone, Warakurna, Wanarn, Warburton and Tjukurla came along and the walk went for eight days. It started near Warakurna and finished at the Tjukurla Rd near Punkulpiri. The water trailer went ahead first each day, followed later by all the walkers. Everybody travelled through beautiful landscape that was full of stories from everybody's childhood and powerful Tjukurpa stories that the older people would retell. Although the walk was a health walk, it was much more than that.

Everybody hunted for food, made arts and crafts, told stories and visited the very important Lirru sacred site that was so full of meaning and significance for Daisy Ward in particular. People also prepared healthy traditional organic food such as camel meat and vegetable stews, ate juicy red capsicums and lots of fruit and then at the end of each long day with very tired legs and bodies, everybody got to enjoy a wonderful sleep under the stars in magnificent expansive country; the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.



*Daisy Ward*



*Yarnangu women walking through country*

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Health Workers from Ngaanyatjarra Health Service also monitored the blood sugar levels of the large number of people with diabetes. They were tested first thing in the mornings before breakfast, and the connection between physical activity and eating wholesome food was evident in many of the results, with the levels being lower in the second, third or subsequent readings. This promoted a lot of discussion on preventive health, food intake and exercise. Several people commented they were keen to come off their medication because they had realised that they could manage their blood sugar levels without it.

## And because of that...

the walk was a fantastic two-way learning experience for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and staff. The health staff said that it was great to be able to develop relationships with people and gain an insight into cultural practices. From a health promotion perspective, the health staff were able to get a bigger picture of their client's health and use the opportunity to talk informally with people about the benefits of being on Country- walking and eating healthy food-bush tucker.

Culturally, the whitefellas also learnt a thing or two! They were shown how to catch goanna and the best way to cook and eat it. They were taught about the Tjukurpa (dreaming/lore of the area) and the history of Ngaanyatjarra people and their connection to Country. They were shown how to find bush foods and explained which bush medicines (prepared by the Warakurna women) could be used to treat certain health problems.

For Yarnangu, the Aboriginal people of Ngaanyatjarra Lands, it was a great opportunity to establish relationships with the people who were helping them to get their health back on track and be able to give cultural knowledge to improve common understanding. It was good for Yarnangu to be the holders of knowledge and show people the Malparara way. Building those relationships is important for everyone and it's very important for Aboriginal people to do so out on Country as it's where everybody feels most at home and empowered.

## And since that day...

there's so much that Daisy, the Warakurna women, Mr Bennet and all the families feel extremely proud of. They have improved their health. They have fulfilled their responsibilities to keep the Country alive and their connection to it strong. One especially big story from the walk was Daisy's story. Before the walk Daisy was about to be evacuated with the Royal Flying Doctor Service as she was getting pneumonia. She stayed though, as this was the first time she would be able to visit her totemic site.

Every day she would go out and help make the track and when the track finally reached her site, she was filled with strength and power and her lungs opened and she got well. She then returned to the community able to be a strong family and community leader for many people. The walks are such a positive experience for everyone who participates.

"Going out on Country together is the answer to so many problems - so let's hope this simple but powerful Aboriginal way will keep giving Yarnangu people from all over the Ngaanyatjarra Lands the opportunity to participate in this wonderful holistic experience."







*Walking through Ngaanyatjarra Country*

By the end of the walk people feel tired but also relaxed and happy. It seems there is no stopping these walks now and it's everybody's aim to continue to participate in these 'long' walks that were started by Blackstone community, at least once a year. Some communities have even talked about holding more than one walk per year. Already they have been having walks as far as Kintore and Mt Leibig.

Going out on Country together is the answer to so many problems - so let's hope this simple but powerful Aboriginal way will keep giving Yarnangu people from all over the Ngaanyatjarra Lands the opportunity to participate in this wonderful holistic experience.



*Testing blood sugar levels*



## The Warakurna Team...

"It was a really positive walk for the Warakurna Land and Culture staff. It is a great opportunity to engage with everyone, be it people who live on the lands or those who live off it, on a more in-depth, intimate level. We enjoy showing people our land, especially this year because the land that the walk travels on hasn't been accessed - certainly not easily - for a long time. We care for Country and it was good to see so many enjoying and seeing the land - and getting healthy from it - which we get to do so frequently."



# MUNGART BOODJA ART CENTRE

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Mungart Boodja Incorporated

## CONTACT PERSON:

Louise Allerton

## EMAIL AND WEBSITE:

<http://www.aachwa.com.au/our-members/mungart-boodja-art-centre>  
[arts@mungartboodja.com](mailto:arts@mungartboodja.com)  
Find us on Facebook

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

OFTA, AACHWA, DCA, GSDC, City of Albany

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Ezzard Flowers - Chair, Louise Allerton - Manager

## KEY WORDS:

Art, cultural maintenance, language maintenance

## About the storyteller...

Louise Allerton is the Manager of the Mungart Boodja Art Centre.

## About Mungart Boodja Art Centre...

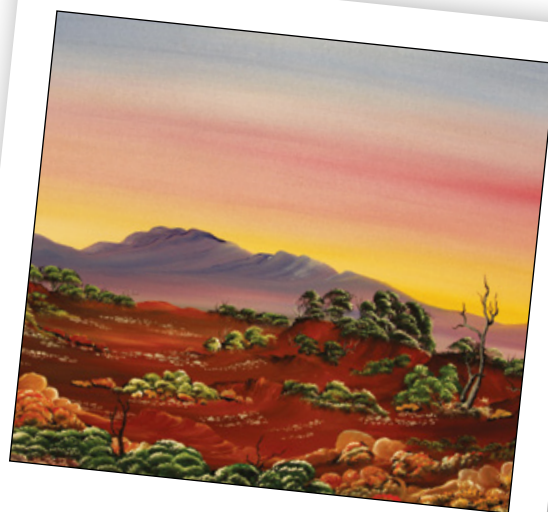
is the first Indigenous owned and operated art centre enterprise in Noongar Country. It is an incorporated, not for profit organisation which is working hard to develop a sustainable art centre and to develop the market for Noongar art within the broader Aboriginal arts industry. The Centre provides a distribution point, gallery, exhibition space and professional skill development workshops.



## Once upon a time...

in 2004 in Katanning, 200 km's north of Albany, a small arts centre was established by two Noongar artists. The artists, from the nearby Carrolup Native Settlement, had many beautiful pieces of landscape art that they wanted to display. They secured the use of a gallery at the Shire of Katanning to showcase their work and called it the Mungart Boodja Art Gallery. It became the first Indigenous owned and operated art centre in Noongar country.

In 2006, Mungart Boodja began evolving and became a separately incorporated, not for profit, Indigenous arts organisation managed by an Executive Committee and funded by the Office for the Arts (OFTA). However, in 2011 it started going downhill.



*Stirling Ranges by Errol Eades*

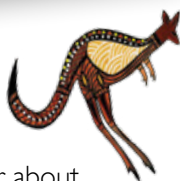
The gallery was not attracting enough clientele due to a lack of tourists visiting the town and many of the artists were based in Albany. So the Board made the decision to move the Centre to Albany at the end of 2012. With the assistance of Office for the Arts (OFTA) and the Aboriginal Art Centre Hub of Western Australia (AACHWA), a new premise was secured on Chesterpass Road and Mungart Boodja relocated and reopened as an artist's workshop with a studio/gallery. The vision for the Centre is to attract and support as many Noongar artists as possible from the Great Southern Region and promote their work.





*The Waychinicup Trip; Kelvin Penny,  
Elizabeth Smith, Errol Eades*

## And then one day...



artists and aspiring artists began to hear about Mungart Boodja through the Noongar grapevine and it started to grow again. Today, the Centre provides a workshop and exhibition space and is open to all Noongar people who are interested in utilising it and gaining professional development. Membership of the Centre is free and provides the opportunity to utilise professional quality materials, access services such as workshops and be involved in exhibitions.

We have a double shed space which is a brilliant workshop area for the artists. We now have about 25 members and of that number, 15 attend the Centre regularly. This core group of members range in age from 30 to 65 years old. We are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and sometimes on a Saturday for those who work business hours.

With a minimal budget we strive to up skill artists by employing professional artists to run targeted workshops. Recently we collaborated with a local 'Plein Air' artist to attend a painting trip out on Country to facilitate outdoor arts practice, specifically setting up on location. Going out on bush trips brings people together in a beautiful setting and enhances the artwork.

We also employed a local print-maker from Albany to facilitate artists to produce a new series of lino cuts. A beautiful body of work was produced.

## And because of that...

we had our first exhibition this year at the Albany Town Hall during NAIDOC week which was really successful. We exhibited a diverse range of work including paintings on canvas and miniature landscapes on paper as well as a new range of lino cut prints. We promoted the exhibition well and had a fantastic turn out, selling half of our paintings, which was a great result for our first showcase since reopening. The artists received 70 per cent from the sale of their paintings and 30 per cent went back into the Centre.

We took several of our artists to Darwin in August to the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair which was also a success. We sold one of the bigger works on canvas, some lino cut prints, lots of the small works and Mungart Boodja promotional t-shirts. We had travelled further than anyone else at the Art Fair and our work was remarkably different to the other artists. The Noongar people tend to paint landscapes in a more European style, which is distinct from most other Aboriginal art, but importantly, they are painting their Country.

The other exciting development recently is that the famous Carrolup paintings, containing more than 100 works of art, have been repatriated to the Noongar people, many of whom are artists at Mungart Boodja and descendants of the original Carrolup artists. The original Carrolup artists in the 1940's and 50's were Aboriginal 'child artists.' These children produced impressive paintings and drawings which were collected by British philanthropist Florence Rutter in 1951 who sent a collection of the works on a European tour where they were later purchased.

The collection was later gifted to Colgate University in New York and was recently discovered by visiting Australian academic Howard Morphy. These precious artworks finally now reside in Australia and are currently on display at the John Curtin Gallery in Perth. They will remain there until a safe keeping place is procured in the South West.



*"The artists find painting to be enjoyable form of self-expression which preserves the culture and history of the Noongar people and keeps them engaged."*



*Stirling View in pastel by Lynette Kelly*



*Early Days by Kelvin Penny*

## And since that day...

the artists will often say that the Centre brings people together in a supportive and artistic environment. The artists find painting to be an enjoyable form of self-expression which preserves the culture and history of the Noongar people and keeps them engaged.

A unique aspect of Mungart Boodja is that our range of art works and style is really diverse. The artwork ranges from very abstract to Carrolup inspired landscapes. The Centre gives the artists an opportunity to experiment and express themselves however they choose to.

The aim of the artists is to eventually have a studio/gallery in central Albany where Noongar art can be showcased at its best. It really is satisfying to see people striving for great work and steadily improving their arts practice. The artists are proud to see their work on show when we hold an exhibition, they enjoy praise from the community. Then they sell their beautiful works for others to enjoy, which is the ultimate accolade.



## Did you know?...

Artists who paint on location outdoors in natural light are called plein air artists? En plein air is a French expression which means 'in the open air'.

# FOLLOW THE DREAM

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Follow the Dream/Partnerships for Success

## CONTACT PERSON:

Helen Bell, Alison Gibbs

## EMAIL AND WEBSITE:

Helen.bell@education.wa.edu.au,  
Alison.Gibbs@education.wa.edu.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Graham Polly Farmer Foundation, Department of Education WA, John Willcock College, Geraldton Senior College

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Helen Bell, Alison Gibbs

## KEY WORDS:

Aspirant, achieve success, enhances educational achievements, increase post school choices

## About the storytellers...

Helen Bell is the Program Coordinator of Follow the Dream in Geraldton. Alison Gibbs is the Program Coordinator of Follow the Dream in Esperance.

## About Follow the Dream...

*Follow the Dream* is an aspirational program designed to help Aboriginal students to reach their career potential by graduating from high school and achieving university entrance. The program is currently being delivered to more than 600 students in 10 metropolitan and 15 regional centres in Western Australia.



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Aboriginal Affairs



## Once upon a time...

I realised that although there were many great initiatives for Indigenous students throughout secondary education schools in Western Australia, they were primarily sports-based programs. Academic programs to support the students who were already achieving well but wanted to excel, were virtually non-existent. However, in Karratha in 1997, the Senior High School implemented a program called the Gumula Mirnuwarni Program which targeted students who clearly had the potential to succeed and had the family support to do so.

The Gumula Mirnuwarni Program was evaluated after four years and the results showed it was having a remarkable impact on attendance rates and achievement levels in TEE (now WACE), university admission rates and post-secondary education employment numbers.



Artist: Richard Walley

## And then one day...

due to the positive outcomes of the Gumula Mirnuwarni Program, the Education Department established a similar initiative, based on this program and named it Follow the Dream. The program is co-funded by the Education Department and the Graham Polly Farmer Foundation through Partnerships for Success.

Three secondary Government schools in the Pilbara; Karratha, Tom Price and Hedland were the first to trial the program over a two-year period. Follow the Dream is a voluntary program for high-achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students.





*Government House. Alison Gibbs Follow the Dream Partnerships for Success Program Coordinator, His Excellency the Governor Australia Malcolm, Honourable Peter Collier, Honourable Robert Isaacs OAM CM JP, Graduate Zoe Moir, Jasmine Peucker Year 8 student (front)*

It aims to provide after-school tuition and individualised mentoring and case management to assist and support students to continue achieving excellent outcomes at school. The Follow the Dream programs' principle objectives are to improve Aboriginal students' attendance, literacy and numeracy, Year 12 completion rates and successful post-school opportunities and transition. In 2004, the two-year trial was deemed highly successful and the Follow the Dream program was expanded to 13 regional and 11 metropolitan schools across WA. The broader aims of Follow the Dream encompass a wide range of outcomes including increasing the proportion of Indigenous students who:

- achieve a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) and enter university;
- attend school regularly;
- achieve high school grades and have high levels of literacy and numeracy;
- have a broad range of post-school education, training, and employment options and opportunities;
- achieve a successful post-school transition, and
- have high self-expectations.

Although Follow the Dream is voluntary, there are particular criteria the students must meet to be eligible for the program. They are required to be at or above minimum standards for NAPLAN, and maintain a C grade average in their school report. It is also important that their effort, behaviour and attitude are excellent.

Once they are identified as being candidates, they are offered a place. The students are mentored on a trial basis for one term and if they are attending regularly and finding it useful, they can then elect to remain in the program.

During the term the staff generate a personal plan with each student which evaluates their academic and career aspirations. We determine what areas and subjects they need extra support in and what we need to target. The Year 11 and 12 students are provided with 'subject specific tutors' in all of their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) subjects, regardless of which ones (if any) they are struggling in. If the students are excelling in a particular subject they will still be tutored because it's not about being at a certain level, it's about extending and improving. Follow the Dream is a support program rather than an alternative education program and for that reason we hold the study sessions after school as opposed to during school hours.

## And because of that...

Follow the Dream is now established in 27 schools statewide and is the only academic program I am aware of which actually targets students who are high-achievers. The results of the program just keep on improving. Edith Cowan University conducted an evaluation of Follow the Dream in 2008, which showed that we are achieving excellent outcomes.



*The Worlds of Work Camp*





*Our fabulous students!*

Although we primarily target the students who want to attend university, as the program has evolved, we are now targeting the high achieving vocational education and training students as well. Follow the Dream is an extremely flexible program. We take family and sporting commitments and part-time jobs into account when structuring the program and we provide the service on an individual needs basis. Some students attend three days per week and some attend four; it really depends on what their needs are. The only thing we stipulate is that they do attend the class at least two days per week (four hours in total). If a student requests weekend tutoring then I will endeavor to provide an after-hours tutor. Currently, we have 13 teachers who work with the program.

I coordinate the Geraldton site and work across both the John Willcock College and Geraldton Senior College. Alison Gibbs coordinates the Esperance site as well as coordinating the program, and we are both

qualified teachers. We run the program five days per week and call the classes our 'study sessions' because it isn't a homework class. We either try to extend the students to excel or go over information they have missed to ensure they are coping in class. It's really important that the students have regular contact with one of us so they know we are available should they have any issues. As Follow the Dream is a voluntary program the students actually want to be there so that generally eliminates behavioural problems. The expectation is, as it is an aspirant program, students' behaviour should reflect that accordingly. In my opinion, the students are just awesome.

The funding for Follow the Dream funding is allocated in three year contracts, so unfortunately it isn't necessarily a long-term program, which is its only downfall. We wouldn't be able to run the program without the funding but because it gains momentum every year (which is measured through positive outcomes), the Education Department continue to fund it. We are lucky that we have passionate people in the Central Office who fight to keep it going. It's so important to support our Indigenous students who are willing to work hard to make the most of their opportunities. It is programs such as Follow the Dream which help to foster future leaders.



*"I find it an honour to work with such an amazing program, staff, students, families and community." Alison Gibbs*



*2012 Celebration Dinner*



*Braydon Dickerson, Helen Bell  
2012 Encouragement Award*



*Stanley Green Transfield Services Contract  
Manager, Yebble Isaacs 2012 Transfield Bursary  
Recipient, Sarah Callow 2012 Horizon Power  
Bursary Recipient, Rachel Clarke Community  
and Customer Relations Manager Horizon Power*

## And since that day...

we are always keen to continually provide the students with experiences which open them up to all the wonderful opportunities in the world. We organise cultural events, attend career exposition excursions and mark celebrations with events and dinners. I've always been passionate about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and I've worked in some capacity with either Aboriginal kids or on Aboriginal programs throughout my career. Previous to my current position as the Follow the Dream Coordinator, I taught in a remote community for five years. When I came back to Geraldton and I was asked to be involved in Follow the Dream, which I was already familiar with and extremely passionate about, I jumped at the chance.

It is extremely satisfying to see our student's accomplishments. When they realise that they are capable of pursuing and realising their dreams, it is a pretty special moment of clarity. The brilliant thing about the program is it allows the teenagers to understand they do have different options. They don't only just have to follow in the footsteps of family members' who may not have pursued their own education.

Being Indigenous makes it easier for me to establish a rapport with the students. I have photos around my office of my family which provides instant recognition of who I am and where I come from and my awareness and understanding of cultural matters helps things to run smoothly. I think Follow the Dream is an important program and the results really speak for themselves.

We have the privilege of witnessing our student's graduating from secondary school. I have one Year 11 student who is incredibly focussed and wants to be a doctor. She is supported by her parents, which, I believe, is as important as her determination to succeed. It will allow her to go anywhere she wants to go.

I don't credit the students' successes in Follow the Dream solely with the program because if they don't have their families supporting them, it's a much more challenging journey. With consistent family support they are more than half way there. We are only one part of the jigsaw puzzle helping the students to achieve their dreams.

*"It is programs such as  
Follow the Dream which help to  
foster future leaders."*



# BEGA GARNBIRRINGU HEALTH SERVICES

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Bega Garnbirringu Health Services

## CONTACT PERSON:

Wayne Johnson

## EMAIL AND WEBSITE:

<http://www.bega.org.au/>

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

The Board staff and the Aboriginal community of Kalgoorlie

## KEY WORDS:

Aboriginal Health

## About the storyteller...

Wayne Johnson is the CEO and Chair at Bega Garnbirringu-Health, Environment and Health and Prison Health.

## About Bega Garnbirringu Health Service...

Bega Garnbirringu Health Service was established in 1983 as a part time clinic in South Kalgoorlie and has grown exponentially since then. It now operates from premises at 16-18 MacDonald Street, Kalgoorlie. Bega Garnbirringu Health Service strives to provide a friendly holistic and culturally appropriate Primary Health Service to the people of the Goldfields Region. A significant feature of the service is the Aboriginal Health Workers. They are the first point of contact for clients. They assess the health needs of clients before either seeing a medical practitioner or registered nurse for further consultation and treatment.

“Bega  
Garnbirringu”  
means “sickness  
gets better”.



## Once upon a time...

In July 1983, Bega Garnbirringu Health Services Incorporated (formerly Kalgoorlie Aboriginal Medical Services) was established in South Kalgoorlie as a part-time clinic. Bega operated as a medical service for two decades but in 2007 it was underresourced and struggling to meet the demand for services. The Board of Bega knew drastic changes had to be made. I was recruited from NSW on a six-month-contract to help get Bega back on track due to my significant experience with Aboriginal community organisations.

When I took over as CEO of Bega, we set about rebuilding the organisation and focused our attention on changing the workplace culture and transforming attitudes, particularly around commitment.

I was immediately struck by the incredible response from the Aboriginal community; everyone wanted to see positive changes. The Board and the staff were really determined to develop the organisation into something which would serve the numerous health needs of the community appropriately.



*The Bega Garnbirringu Health Bus*





*Shelley Cooper, Irene Saunders  
and Sachin Khera*

## And then one day...

we got busy! I could see immediately that Bega had enormous potential and combined with a focussed and passionate Board, we embarked on a path of expansion and growth. We spent six long hard years building Bega into what it is today. We wanted to ensure that our Aboriginal Health Workers would always be the first point of contact for our clients. We expanded our General Practice and we now operate as a Holistic Health Care Service. Bega provides clinical services, health programs, social services and a mobile clinic.

We have around 20 Aboriginal health workers, eight GP's and two registered nurses, one of whom coordinates our mobile clinic services. We have about 8,500 registered clients who access our services annually across our nine premises. In total, Bega has 110 staff positions although we don't always manage to fill them all. We also provide registered training for our Aboriginal Health Workers through the Australian Qualifications Training Framework (AQTF).

Bega runs an Aboriginal Medical Service, which we term a 'community model of health', rather than a clinical model of health whereby our approach to treatment is holistic. The philosophy is to assess a client's physical ailment by also taking their social and emotional wellbeing or familial issues into account. We look at the whole person and their family.

We approach mental health issues similarly and don't perceive alcohol and drug problems as being separate matters when assessing the mental health of a client. We have developed a social support unit to support clients who are struggling with substance abuse.

We provide afternoon and night carers and a drug and alcohol counsellor to support the people who have substance use issues and to ensure they eat a decent meal and have a good nights sleep. Attached to this service is our Rough Sleeper Program which is aimed at breaking the cycle of homelessness. We have had some significant successes with this service, especially with clients who had previously been considered unsuitable as tenants. The Aboriginal Homeless and Fringe Dweller Support Service is an additional program we provide which is similar to the Rough Sleeper Program but has different objectives. Our main purpose is to offer nutrition, support and access to health services for homeless people.

We also run a maternal and child health service where we provide antenatal and postnatal education for parents, ultrasounds and child health checks. At the moment there are 40 families utilising this service. Recent statistics show that we are producing heavier, healthier babies which is fantastic news. Along with all our full-time staff, we are also very fortunate to have visiting specialists at Bega, including podiatrists, dentists, heart specialists, phrenologists and renal specialists.

## Gary Sambo, Deputy Chairperson of Bega...

"We have a lot of young people here now in Kalgoorlie as many people come in from the communities make this their base. We need to focus our resources on them. They are our future generation."



"The child care service is a culturally safe environment which has an emphasis on Aboriginal cultural education."



## And because of that...

we have almost tripled in size. At present, we are really interested in spreading our services across the region more effectively and that's where the future lies for Bega. We have also established mobile clinics across the region. By the end of the year we're hoping to redirect some of our resources to make these clinics more regular so we can establish a sense of continuity with our clients.

Under our health programs we operate a child care centre which greatly enhances our position as an employer of choice. Our staff can place their children in a creche while they are at work as can our clients while they see a doctor. The child care service is a culturally safe environment which has an emphasis on Aboriginal cultural education.

The Aboriginal people of this town and this organisation are amazing; they really championed the cause to reform Bega. The Aboriginal Health Workers similarly are the crux of Bega because they are the ones who break down the barriers between an Aboriginal client (who may use English as a second or third language) and the relationship with the GP or registered nurse. They are vital to the success of Bega.

## And since that day...

we now provide a holistic and culturally appropriate Health Care Service to the people of the Goldfields. Collectively, we have reinvigorated the organisation and have produced an outstanding Aboriginal Medical Service. We have won several awards and have progressed from 35 to 110 positions, and we've doubled our asset base. Bega now has a workplace culture and an attention to quality and customer service that I believe is second to none.

The organisations systems are excellent and continually improving. As we grew so quickly we had to rethink the foundations; we literally burst at the seams and we didn't have enough physical resources in terms of office space or technology. Our technology is now state of the art. Our Board, of which we have nine people, are all Aboriginal and has been stable for the past six years. There is a level of professional integrity and work ethic that's been injected into the organisation which has produced some stunning results. We recently advertised a couple of positions and there were 40 applicants which shows that we have developed ourselves into an employer of choice.



*One of our lovely clients!*

The reason for this is because we believe the most important person is the client and right along side them are the staff who deliver our services.

Bega provides lots of support and professional development opportunities for our staff and our terms and conditions of employment are very favourable and flexible. We are not subjected to the rigidity and beurocracy of other organisations so we are able to manage effectively with discretion and initiative.

The end result is a really healthy, vibrant organisation. Coming to Bega has been the pinnacle of my career but more importantly, the most rewarding six years I've had. It's been challenging and difficult at times but it's also a great example of a successful collective effort.



## Fabian Tucker, Chairperson of Bega...

"I like to focus on the young people. Our next project is focussed on trying to help the kids turn their lives around and get off substances and living on the streets. We want them to consider their futures and think about employment instead of taking one day at a time. Helping the young generation is what drives me."

# NGAANYATJARRA MEDIA

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Ngaanyatjarra Media (NG Media)

## CONTACT PERSON:

Chris Hobart, Alana Mahony

## PROGRAM/PROJECT PARTNERS:

Department of Broadband Communications and Digital Economy, Office of the Arts, Department of Regional Development, IRCA, AICA, ICTV, NITV, Community Broadcast Foundation, and various other non-government organisations

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Chris Hobart, Ira Bailey, Lorraine Bennet, NaanCassie Woods, Django Nanta Brown, Cynthia Burke, Simon Butler, Magdelene Cooke, Belle Davidson, Daisy O'byrne, Delwyn Davidson, Safia Desai, Brian Gordon, William Jackson, Jasmine Lawson, Matthew Lewis, Joy Lothian, Alana Mahony, Nigel Mervin, Winnie 'Jnr' Mitchell, Stewart Nelson, Solomon Paul, Noleen Peterman, Noeli Roberts, Sabine Rontji, Trevor 'Windy' Sharpe, Casey Shogrenm, Ananth Siluvaimichael, Mark Smerdon, Criselda Stevens, Lemih Thompson, Hinerangi Tukere, Heather Vanderwaal, Ron Vanderwaal, Nyukuti Watson, James Winwood, Phillip Williams, Rhys Winter, Darcy Woods, Winnie Woods

## KEY WORDS:

Pulse of the Yarnangu

## About the storytellers...

Chris Hobart is the General Manager of NG Media. Alana Mahony is the Radio Producer - coordinator of NG Media.

## About Ngaanyatjarra Media (NG Media)...

NG Media is an Independent Yarnangu Corporation that employs over 35 Yarnangu workers and we are looking to employ many more. We have a solid, talented and dedicated team of Producers, Coordinators, and Directors, from around Australia. NG Media's non-Indigenous staff are here to share their skills and passion for media with the Yarnangu people. We have 14 Yarnangu members on our Board of Directors who take a keen interest in everything we produce and every project we embark on. NG Media's vision is to empower Yarnangu to create and share their own stories through multi media.



*Pulse of the Yarnangu*  
ngmedia.org.au



NG Media  
is where the gap  
between cultures is  
filled with stories  
and shared across  
the nation.

## Once upon a time...

Ngaanyatjarra Media (NG Media) opened as a media centre in 1991 in the remote community of Irrunytju in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in Western Australia. At this time it was known as Irrunytju Media and serviced that community only with radio and small film projects. In 2001 it received only government funding to spread its wings as a media organisation and became Ngaanyatjarra Media Aboriginal Corporation servicing 15 communities across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands with predominantly radio broadcast.

Several years later in 2011, over the other side of the continent, I was busy working as a film and TV producer/ director in Sydney and I was keen to get involved in something that offered more creative input and was a little bit more meaningful both on a professional and personal level. When the position as General Manager/ Executive Producer at NG Media came up, I thought, 'what an opportunity'. I talked to a number of people who knew about the Ngaanyatjarra Lands to get a feel for the region and the organisation and they encouraged me to apply for it.



*Making Yarnangu Detective*



*Training our youth in Film and TV*

So I did, and I secured the job and moved myself and my family to the remote WA community of Irrunytju (Wingellina) in May 2011.

### And then one day...

I arrived in the middle of the Gibson Desert and experienced an immense learning curve as the job involved lots of different production elements; producing music and radio and online content as well as film and TV production. The role also involved coordinating 20 different budget lines and managing centres across the Lands which at the time also required fixing and refurbishing. When I first started there were a total of 14 Yarnangu employed by NG Media and there were only two non-Indigenous staff; a radio producer and an administrator and freelance producers and filmmakers would come in once a year for six weeks to do contractual film work. Those early days were really about having a clear vision and taking things step by step to bring the Yarnangu on board in terms of training and employment in a way which incorporated and understood their cultural needs. Yarnangu are some of the most remote people on the planet, let alone Australia and I could see so much potential in NG Media and what we could achieve and share with Australia, if not the world. It was definitely an exciting challenge and one that would require a good team and a lot of hard work.

### And because of that...

in two and half years, we have grown exponentially. In this time NG Media has had many staff – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous pass through its doors, and has grown into one of the largest and most productive Remote Indigenous Media Organisations in Australia. NG Media now broadcasts

nationally across Radio NGM, and on ICTV, NITV, Larakia TV, and on other broadcast station platforms around the country daily. We have 35 Yarnangu staff and 12 non-Indigenous staff who are all professionals within their field. My vision is to see the number of staff grow to 90 Yarnangu from all over the Lands. Whenever we work on a project we employ an extra five to 10 Yarnangu to work with us, so in a year we work easily with over 300 Yarnangu on all kinds of different creative projects. We have a multimillion dollar studio out in the desert which encompasses two radio studios, a media centre with 15 computers, three edit suites for film and TV, a music production studio and a music performance studio that doubles as a TV studio, and an IT office where we broadcast TV and radio to 15 communities across the Gibson and Great Victorian Deserts. All of our studios are interconnected and we are currently making those connections faster and more effective because we deal with a sizeable amount of content.

Altogether, NG Media works with 15 communities across 250,000<sup>2</sup> kms on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands that involves approximately 2500 Yarnangu. In the course of a year, we employ around 300 Yarnangu people on a project basis producing radio, film, TV programs, and music in Pitjantjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra and English. We tell stories, and celebrate music, language and culture through our content. We now have a fulltime film producer, media trainer and music producer, radio producer and assistant, IT technical person, Broadcast Technician, administrator, production manager, and financial manager and Technical maintenance person and of course a General Manager. We have Yarnangu staff in all these areas that work side by side our non-Indigenous staff learning technical skills and teaching culture.





*A scene from Yarnangu Detective*

We have 12 remote radio broadcast stations across the communities and two years ago only one of those was operating. Now, nine of those are operating every day and Radio NGM broadcasts 24 hours providing Yarnangu content daily. Each of the Yarnangu presenters do an hour show each in their own flavour and style of music whether gospel, pop or country music they present the genre that they love. We have eight bands on the Lands and the Yarnangu play their own music on their radio programs, which is produced in our studios. Several of the songs have been played on national broadcaster Triple J, and much of the music produced is distributed across community stations around Australia. The music produced also is used as sound tracks for our film and television projects.

Training and development is a huge element of NG Media. We operate 12 Community Resource Centres in 12 communities across the Lands. Each of these centres is equipped with new i5 computers, servers, LCD screens, photocopiers, scanners, printers, laminators, and we are developing an interlinked communication system – Visual Network System - to link our 12 media centres so that people can visually see their trainer and access content to enhance their training experience. We offer daily training in computing, photography, filmmaking and radio broadcasting.

One of the exciting things for us is the growth of the involvement from the Yarnangu. The level of interest and engagement is just fantastic. Alana, our radio producer/coordinator has just started a schools based radio program for the Senior High School students (12-18 years) so every school on the Lands is now responsible for a one hour show



*“Our strategy and our vision as a team is to give a voice to Yarnangu living in 15 remote communities across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and to give economic and social opportunities that have very clear and effecting outcomes.”*

a week which is centred on their curriculum. They are required to develop a storyline, write the script, work together as a team and present their program on radio, which gives them a chance to express their creativity through radio and be involved in a live broadcast.

## Unfortunately...

we regularly deal with power outages and internet failure. The conditions that we work in means that as soon as everything is working properly, inevitably things break down and you have to start all over again which is time consuming. Luckily, we have server systems which save, back up and archive our work. It's a unique set up because it's such a remote region. In order to transmit radio, it's a combination of either finding a telephone line or an internet line and trying to send a signal 900 km's which has to be picked up and broadcast to Alice Springs before being transmitted back to us via satellite.

## And since that day...

we are in the process of pitching our radio content to the BBC in the UK and hoping to get our TV series about healthy eating, 'Desert Kitchen' distributed through a Dutch distribution company. Our award winning radio documentary 'Warburton Story' has recently been aired on ABC National and we received good reviews from as far away as the east coast! It's a pretty remarkable time for NG Media at the moment. The myriad of projects that we have on the go are non-stop from February through to December each year and we are continually developing more. NG Media is a genuine career path for people on the Lands. The Yarnangu are very traditional people and their culture is very important to them, and it's not a culture that's very well-known let alone understood across Australia. To be able to provide them with a voice is particularly empowering and beneficial for not only the individuals but their families and their culture as well.

The great thing about NG Media is it offers the Yarnangu an opportunity to document and preserve their unique culture and simultaneously allows people outside the Lands to learn about it which is really important. One of the slogans we are using is 'Our Culture, Our Music, Our Stories.' Ownership of these things is important to Yarnangu as a whole people not just as individuals.

What we've witnessed and one of the reasons we keep doing this is a real sense of excitement about not only the end product but the process and the personal outcomes. Whether it's a radio story or a short film or an album, Yarnangu love it and they watch and listen to it over and over; their sense of pride is enormous. Particularly now that our content is broadcast nationally on NITV and they know that others are watching their work, work that is of a very high quality. Darcy and Cassie, two of our Indigenous film people are just brilliant at what they do, and recently won awards for their work. In fact we recently won awards for our radio as well, so we are all very proud.

I love working in the community, it's challenging at times but that's why I love it, I am learning a lot and I work with beautiful people. Our strategy and our vision as a team is to give a voice to Yarnangu living in 15 remote communities across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and to provide economic and social opportunities that have very clear and effecting outcomes. At the same time, it's a two way learning process, and as a non-Indigenous team we are challenged, and our personal growth and enjoyment is immense. We have been invited into this culture that is really quite private and close to the Yarnangus' hearts and we have the opportunity to learn about the oldest culture in the world which we feel is a great privilege.

You can find us online at <http://ngmedia.org.au/>



*"The great thing about NG Media is it offers the Yarnangu an opportunity to document and preserve their unique culture and simultaneously allows people outside the Lands to learn about it which is really important."*



*School students broadcasting on Radio NGM*



*Broadcasting-Radio NGM*



*Blackstone Band*

# WONGUTHA CAPS

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Wongutha CAPS

## CONTACT PERSON:

Harry Graham, Shane Meyer

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## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Harry Graham, Shane Meyer, The CAPS Board,  
The Wongutha team

## KEY WORDS:

Training for life

## About the storytellers...

Harry Graham is a teacher and mentor at Wongutha CAPS. Shane Meyer is the Principal of Wongutha CAPS.

## About Wongutha CAPS...

Wongutha CAPS is a non-government, Year 11 and 12 vocational education school situated on a farm 27 kilometres from Esperance. The school has both boys and girls hostels and accepts students from all over Western Australia. The school commenced operating in 1990 by the Christian Aboriginal Parent-directed school Inc. (CAPS).



**Wongutha CAPS**  
CHRISTIAN ABORIGINAL PARENT-DIRECTED SCHOOL

This story was told by Harry Graham (Teacher and Mentor at Wongutha CAPS) and Shane Meyer (Principal of Wongutha CAPS).

## Once upon a time...

the Christian Aboriginal Parent-directed School (CAPS) was established in the St Anthony's Convent building in Coolgardie in 1981 and offered boarding accommodation for Aboriginal secondary students who travelled from the NT, Qld and all throughout WA to attend the school. A couple of decades prior to this, way down south in Esperance, the Wongutha Mission Training Farm was established and trained Aboriginal students in agricultural and pre-trade courses.

Then in 1990, the Wongutha Board invited CAPS to take over their training program and in 1993, the Wongutha Board deeded the land and all its assets to the CAPS board. When the CAPS Board members identified a gap in the post compulsory vocational programs for Aboriginal students, they decided to establish a vocationally orientated program for Aboriginal students in Esperance at the Mission Training Farm.



*Zaidehn McCarthy*

## And then one day...

Wongutha CAPS was born! When it first opened, Wongutha CAPS only catered for 12 male students but once the girls' hostel commenced in 1993, the student enrolment numbers grew rapidly. Today the school has 70 students and there is a substantial waiting list. Wongutha CAPS is open to students between 15 and 18 years of age. The school has two hostels and can accommodate 72 students and as we are co-ed, it is our policy to enrol an even amount of female and male students. The students are housed in two separate dormitories which are equipped with fitness gyms, games rooms and kitchens.





*Wongutha CAPS Students*



*"We are extremely proud that Aboriginal people are making decisions for themselves."*

Wongutha has over 30 staff including boarding and hostel staff, grounds staff, administration staff, teaching staff, support staff, mentors and hostel supervisors. We employ 12 teaching staff in total (including three Aboriginal teachers), of which several are part time. Three of our teaching staff also reside on the site permanently.

We offer a range of vocational courses including Automotive, Building and Construction, Hospitality and Tourism, Conservation and Land Management, Stock and Station, Driver training and more. Our courses are a mix of Curriculum Council courses, school based subjects and Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) modules.

The students need to be 15 years old to be eligible to apply to Wongutha. We seek to enrol students who are committed to their education and training. To do this we find out the maximum amount of information about a student before we accept them. Once they complete an application form, we follow up with reference checks, past schooling history, talk to a community member and then make a decision as to whether Wongutha is the right place for them to be.

We are an educational institution and we are focused on preparing students for work and we aim to give as many opportunities as we can. However, we don't take on students we are not equipped to deal with, as they can have a detrimental effect on other students. Our students come from all over Western Australia.

Our biggest catchment area is the Kimberley region. As we are connected to the Aboriginal Independent Community Schools (AICS), (of which several are based in the Kimberley region), we get a lot of their former students. We also have students from the Pilbara, Goldfields, Perth and a few from the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

We often get asked; why Esperance and not Broome or Kununurra? However, I think the reason this school works so well is because the students are away from some of the challenges and distractions they face at home and they can focus on their education in a really supportive environment. We have a strong mentoring program and we ensure our students are mentored closely in a stable, safe learning environment, where they can thrive. (Shane)

Many of our students have siblings or cousins at Wongutha, which really helps to combat feelings of homesickness. Although homesickness does occur, it helps that the students are a bit older (15 and over). There are not a lot of opportunities in their communities and when they come along they need to take them. They are aware they have been presented with an excellent opportunity in Wongutha CAPS - one not to be wasted. (Harry)

## And because of that...

going back 10 or so years, a lot of the students were returning to their communities and staying fairly local. But recently, with the opportunities from the mining boom in WA, a lot of our past students are now FIFO workers in top mining jobs.

Many of our students are doing really well in the workplace once they graduate from Wongutha. I went to the Kimberley region at the end of last year and ran into around 80 former students. I was happy to see the majority of them employed. They stood out as really confident people, which is incredibly encouraging to see. A lot of them now have families and are happy, productive members of their communities. They have such good memories of their time here.



*Harry Graham, Zaidehn McCarthy,  
Gavin Butt*

Many of them said that without the guidance they received, they don't know where they would be today. It really does provide such a good, positive foundation. (Shane)

One of our primary foci is to try to get students to stay for the two full years at Wongutha because we know that in two years we can make a real difference in their lives. They can become suitably qualified in that time, attain their driver's licence, learn about the workplace and what's required, improve their confidence, develop communication skills, be able to 'code switch' (go between Aboriginal culture and white culture) so they can function in a work place and be able to engage and communicate in that context.

Code switching is probably the biggest challenge we face with the students. They are experts in their own language because they are taught by the Elders in their communities but using the English language correctly does not always come naturally. One of the key points the Elders tell us is to teach the kids Gudja (white fella) way so they can move between both worlds smoothly. It makes sense. If they want to get a job, they need to know how to communicate with people from all walks of life.

A lot of the students respond quite well to code switching but it does require some training. For example, we have to teach them to look at people in the eye when speaking because it's not a cultural norm for us.

In Aboriginal culture, if you look at someone in the eye it's actually a show of disrespect. In white culture if you don't look at someone in the eye it is perceived that you are lying, weak or hiding something so it's a significant contrast and a totally different way of communicating for many of these kids. (Harry)

We often get asked; why don't you have an Aboriginal language program? With 70 students, there are many different language groups amongst them and it would be virtually impossible to cater for everyone. We also believe the best people to teach languages are families and communities.

We value both traditional languages and English equally at Wongutha and feel that using either is appropriate and relevant, depending on the context. (Shane)

## Unfortunately...

the biggest challenge is that more frequently, we are being required to provide wrap around support services that we are not funded for. We are funded to provide education and training but we simply don't have the resources to facilitate other services.

For example, we are not funded for the driving program so we have to allocate a certain amount of school funding to the training as we feel it's a really important for the kids to attain their driver's licence while they are here. It goes a long way to enhance their work prospects. Unfortunately, due to lack of funding, it's not as effective as it could be.

We try to support the students with their medical needs as well. The Bega Health Clinic van comes to the school once every four to six weeks to provide medical care to the students. We have a nurse 20 hours per week which is great but unfortunately, a lot of her time is lost transporting students back and forth to appointments.

Trying to meet all the needs of the students is an area which has been quite challenging as we are limited in what we can provide.



## And since that day...

Wongutha CAPS continues to thrive and we are producing prepared and grounded students ready for the workplace. Our school is not just about education. Life for our students is fun on the weekends too!

We run a range of activity programs and lots of the students are involved in sporting clubs and football teams. They are often involved in basketball tournaments and will spend time in Esperance on the weekend attending these. They also go into town to go shopping and socialise.

We receive a lot of support from the Esperance community, mainly through our work experience placements, which we are grateful for. It's also good for the community to see Aboriginal faces in shops and workplaces. The work experience program is very valuable for the students and we think it's been really positive for the town itself. Initially, it can be difficult for some of the students to settle into a routine when they first begin in their placements, especially for the students for whom work is not a familiar facet of life.

Some of these students may not have seen their mum or dad get up and go to work so it's a completely different way of life. However, once they settle in, they really thrive in the working environment. We provide a mentor teacher for all the work experience students who monitor their progress and provide ongoing support while they complete their placements.

The beauty of Wongutha CAPS is it gives our young people an opportunity. Once they leave here, they are able to participate positively in their communities and in the workplace. They walk out of here with an armful of new skills and experience. The real measure of success for Wongutha is that students keep coming back and parents continue to enrol their kids. We are extremely proud that Aboriginal people are making decisions for themselves.

Our vision for the future of Wongutha is that ultimately this school is run entirely by Aboriginal people; we want to be out of a job. That would be the ideal scenario. And you never know, one day some of our students may come back to Wongutha as teachers!



*Noreen Gerrard, Bianca Bamba,  
Maureen Hall*

"Our vision for the future of Wongutha is that ultimately this school is run entirely by Aboriginal people; we want to be out of a job."



*Principal Shane Meyer with several  
Wongutha students*



# CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

## ORGANISATION NAME:

South Coast Natural Resource Management

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## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Australian Government, State Government, Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation, Esperance Nyungar Aboriginal Corporation, City of Albany, Shire of Esperance, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Fitzgerald Biosphere Group, Oyster Harbour Catchment Group, Department of Housing, Albany Aboriginal Corporation, Denmark Weed Action Group, Wilson Inlet Catchment Group, Kalgan River Progress Association, Torbay Catchment Group, Albany Environment Centre, Culham Inlet Management Group

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Karen Ireland, Graeme Simpson, Shandell Cummings

## KEY WORDS:

Engagement, environment, cultural heritage, youth, Elders, partnerships, community



## Once upon a time...

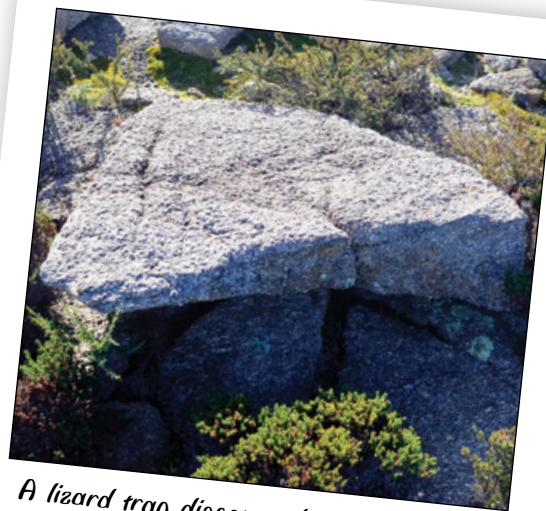
in 2004, the South Coast Natural Resource Management Inc. was founded. We have offices in Albany and Esperance. We are one of 54 Australian natural resource management (NRM) groups, all of which came into being through generous Federal Government funding during 2004. Our role as an Australian natural resource management organisation is to protect, restore and enhance biodiversity, land, freshwater, coastal and marine and cultural heritage, with a particular focus on how this management affects the quality of life for present and future generations.

## About the storytellers...

This story was written by Media and Public Relations Coordinator Peter Morris with information supplied by Community and Cultural Program Leader Karen Ireland.

## About South Coast Natural Resource Management...

South Coast NRM is a not-for-profit community-based organisation successfully managing the natural resources of the South Coast region of WA. We have regional offices in Albany and Esperance employing more than 40 dedicated staff, whose commitment to the environment helps preserve and protect our unique native flora and fauna, coastline, land and waterways, as well as restoring connections between Indigenous people and country.



*A lizard trap discovered during cultural mapping of the Quaranup Peninsula*

NRM is all about managing the long-term implications of our actions and how they affect the environment - it's planning for the future and not just the present. Before the 2004 creation of NRM organisations, Aboriginals were not actively encouraged to take on roles which involved protecting the natural environment, nor was cultural heritage seen as an integral component of environmental management.



*The Indigenous team who worked at Quagie Beach*



*Elder Lynette Knapp talking about Aboriginal heritage to a group of Chinese students*

However, when the Federal Government made its decision to recognise and fund the country's NRM groups, one of its stipulations was that Aboriginal people should be employed to carry out important cultural work. This employment includes positions of consultation and engagement with Indigenous communities as well as on-the-ground work which is practiced through traditional caring for Country methods, which is a fundamental component of NRM. This inclusivity of Aboriginals in environmental work demonstrated that the government had recognised that a combination of traditional land management and modern day scientific processes was necessary, and could work together, to create a holistic and harmonious environmental marriage.

In 2004, South Coast NRM created an inaugural plan for its region, which included cultural heritage as one of its five main themes of focus – the others were biodiversity, coastal and marine, land and water. After this plan received government approval, it became our initial five-year strategy and we called it the "Southern Prospects 2004 – 2009." This strategy recognised that a number of cultural heritage sites on the South Coast were at a high risk of being permanently damaged by degrading processes. These ancient sites included stone fish-traps, corroboree and camping grounds and places of former Aboriginal occupation which displayed significant scatters of artefacts, such as stone tools. To ensure we could carry out the work necessary to protect and restore the sites, we created partnerships with several Aboriginal groups and built an Indigenous consultation network. We also developed and ran awareness workshops to promote and raise the profiles of Indigenous groups to other community organisations.

This created a process for recording traditional ecological knowledge and land practices sensitive to intellectual property rights. Then, in 2005 we created our Indigenous flagship program, called Restoring Connections. This important program aimed to reconnect Aboriginal people to Country.

### And then one day...

in recognition of the pioneering work that the South Coast NRM and the local Aboriginal community had completed in the three short years of working together, Restoring Connections won the National Landcare Award. Receiving the award gained the organisation much respect in the wider community as an organisation which "walks it like it talks it". It was a great honour. In 2010, we updated the Southern Prospects Strategy, adding much of what we had learnt through the Restoring Connections project. This enabled us to build upon our relationship with the Aboriginal community and empower more Indigenous South Coast people through consultation and employment.



*"The trips allow Elders to replenish their cultural soul and allow time to reconnect once more with the spiritual aspect of country which gives them a sense of belonging."*



*"It may have taken a few hundred years, but the program is one of the first steps towards a cultural shift in understanding and caring for Country."*

## And because of that...

rather than just recording useful data, the new strategy allowed us to move forward and apply this information by supporting the establishment on a range of Indigenous related enterprises based on NRM principles. These included looking at the potential of farming Boronia for its essential oil, which could be then used as a product in the international perfumery industry and conducting a feasibility study into whether the bush radish (*Platysace deflexa*) could be a serious contender for wide-scale cropping. In recognition of a change in government funding, Restoring Connections was renamed Cultural Connections and its first major project was to remove and control invasive plant species using an Aboriginal work team at the historically significant Moir Homestead, located in the Stokes National Park near Esperance. This year has seen the completion and continuation of several major cultural projects. Most notably we commissioned a heritage assessment of Albany's Quaranup Peninsula using CoastWest funding, in partnership with the Albany Heritage Reference Group, Aboriginal Corporation and the City of Albany.

There is plenty known about the European history of Quaranup – the first known place where Europeans (Captain George Vancouver) and Aboriginal people met in Western Australia, but we knew very little about its Indigenous past. So in February, we began culturally mapping the peninsula - an exercise which created an identity profile of the community which highlighted problems that needed to be solved and strengths which could be built upon. The mapping process enabled several local Elders to guide and direct archaeologists, while simultaneously mentoring young people as part of the cultural protocol and practice associated with caring for Country. The cultural mapping exercise resulted in the collection of important information about the many layers of heritage associated with the peninsula. This will allow us to develop and place interpretive signage at the peninsula.

Another important project was at Esperance's Quagie Beach, where an Indigenous work team erected bollards and planted native species to stabilise areas of the beach which had blown out due to uncontrolled vehicle and pedestrian access. It was a great team effort that saw the erection of 25 bollards to restrict vehicle and camping access, 500 square metres of brush applied to eroded areas and the planting of 1500 seedlings. The young Noongar workers gained invaluable experience at working in a coastal environment and developed ownership of the site they were protecting.

They also became aware that irresponsible human behaviour does significant damage to the environment and rather than become annoyed by Esperance's wet weather, they appreciated that it assisted the seedlings they had planted to get a great start.

## And since that day...

as part of reconnecting people to Country, we recently completed a series of cultural trips with local Elders. Elder Aden Eades recently visited a site on the Pallinup River, of which he has fond memories. He said the trips to various sites has been beneficial to him and other Noongars involved as it has helped them to reconnect with their land, history and culture. He told me that the last time he had visited the spot on the Pallinup River was 50 years ago. Mr Eades went on to explain that as young children they used to travel and camp along the Pallinup River with their great grandparents - a tradition they had followed for generations. Elder Carol Pettersen said the trips allowed Elders to replenish their cultural soul and allow time to reconnect once more with the spiritual aspect of Country which gives them a sense of belonging. Mrs Pettersen told me that her oral history was based on cultural connections to Country that dramatically enrich Noongar pictures of the past.

She said "it allows those of us to speak for ourselves, through the stories that have been told and will continue to be told, by those passing on the tradition through the generations. This was a cultural obligation of our Elders. However, with too many of our old people passing on, we are at risk of losing aspects of our valuable cultural heritage." Elder Treasy Woods also acknowledged the significance of the work and the importance for Aboriginal people to care for Country saying "first and foremost, inviting Elders to be involved in field visits, brings with it recognition of occupancy, it provides a forum which celebrates and acknowledges our respect to the land to the environment and to the spiritual links we have." South Coast NRM is very proud of Restoring Connections and Cultural Connections. We truly believe it has engaged Aboriginal people by using their traditional knowledge of Country to protect cultural sites of significance. It may have taken a few hundred years, but the program is one of the first steps towards a cultural shift in understanding and caring for Country.



# VIOLET EVANS: A PERSONAL JOURNEY



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## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Violet Evans

## KEY WORDS:

Mental health, wellbeing, traditional practice



Government of Western Australia  
WA Country Health Service

## Once upon a time...

when I was seven years old, I was taken away from my family by the Aboriginal Protection Board (APB) under the White Australia and Assimilation policy. I was sent to a home in Geraldton for two years called Nazarius House in Geraldton. I have clear memories of that time even though I was so young. There were two big dormitories full of Aboriginal children in this new home of mine. I remember the nuns being cruel to the children. We were treated like inferior people, like slaves. It was a frightening and confusing experience, especially as I didn't have any family members with me. Lots of the kids had siblings with them but I was by myself. It wasn't a great experience by any stretch.

I was one of the lucky ones though as my mother was determined to come and get me and bring me home. She fought hard to make this happen and after two years we were reunited. I was nine years old. Many other children from the home were eventually adopted out by white families. My life after that was a life mainly lived on cattle stations as my mother was a shearers' cook. Although she always worked, she was a part of the stolen wages generation. She was never paid - she worked for food rations.

We never had any money to spend at Christmas time or other special occasions. We moved around when I was growing up so I did a lot of my education with School of the Air on the stations. Station life had its benefits. I was riding horses from a young age and became a registered jockey at the age of 16. There were a couple of other women, but I was the only Aboriginal woman on the track. I even had the opportunity to compete in a camel race and I finished second!

## About the storyteller...

Violet Evans is a Noongar, Yamaji and Wongai woman from Carnarvon. Her father is from the Hill family from the Busselton/Bunbury area. Her grandfather is a Wongai man from the Laverton/Leonora area and her grandmother is a Gumula woman from Tom Price, as is her mother. She works as an Aboriginal Mental Health Worker in Esperance while completing a Bachelor of Health and Science in Mental Health online through Charles Sturt University in NSW.

When I reached high school age, I attended Carnarvon Senior High School. In my last year of high school I fell pregnant which made it particularly tough to remain focussed, but I was determined to finish my education. I completed Year 12 and I was the very first Indigenous person to do so in Carnarvon! Hopefully I left a trend for others to follow. Not long after I had my first child, I went to university and completed three years of an education degree at Edith Cowan University. Unfortunately I fell just short of completing the degree because I was raising a child and struggling financially so I needed to work.

## And then one day...

I decided to move from Carnarvon to Perth after living there for 18 years and moved to Esperance for a sea change nine years ago. My first job in Esperance was with Australia Post. During my second year of employment I won the Esperance Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Customer Service Award which was a lovely surprise. Prior to this position, I worked throughout Western Australia for a variety of Government organisations including Centrelink known as the Department of Society back then (for nine years), Family Children's Services (in various prisons tutoring Indigenous children) and also as a carer. I was also a Court Officer for the Aboriginal Legal Service for two years. I've been in Esperance now for nearly a decade and I'm happy here. I now work as a full-time Aboriginal Mental Health Worker. My job description is varied which makes it interesting. Primarily I see myself as an advocate for our clients. I am responsible for liaising with Government Departments such as Centrelink and booking my clients' appointments for them.



*Violet Evans*

If I am required to source food vouchers for people who are struggling and can't afford to buy food, I will also organise that. Part of our role as an Aboriginal Mental Health Worker is to deliver the Closing the Gap Strategy (and program) to the community once a year. Last year we held the forum at the Esperance Cultural Agricultural show. I am also required to arrange cultural awareness training for the staff and I work hand in hand with Esperance Community Health and other community agencies to provide our services and help with our client's recovery. At present I am the only Aboriginal Mental Health Worker in Esperance, but I am hoping we will be able to employ a male staff member to assist me in the near future. It's important and culturally appropriate that our male clients have the opportunity to be looked after by a male Aboriginal Health Worker.

As an Aboriginal Mental Health Worker, our contract stipulates that we complete a health qualification so I am currently in my second year of a Bachelor of Health and Science in Mental Health at Charles Sturt University in NSW. It's an online degree but we do travel to the university in Wagga Wagga three times a year to attend residential school. Once I complete my degree in 2014, I will be qualified.

## And because of that...

I think the Aboriginal Mental Health Workers provide a really important service for our people. Generally speaking, the majority of Indigenous families refuse to engage because of previous experiences and past consequences. Since I've been in this role, I've seen a subtle shift. I think the presence of another Aboriginal person who has the ability and resources to help has really changed that level of engagement.

This position has enabled me to become very familiar with many of the families. I can approach them easily and I'm welcomed into their homes. They look at the colour of my skin and say, "come in sister". There is an immediate recognition and a level of trust. I can walk in both worlds.

However, Aboriginal people will only access this service when they are in crisis. There are a couple of people who will voluntarily visit the Health Service but the community overall will only access our services when their circumstances are dire. An example of this is when a client has been admitted to hospital and the doctor calls requesting our attendance. Once they are discharged, I will monitor them at home and endeavour to connect them to agencies such as the Bay of Isles Community Outreach (BOICO) and Centrecare so they have access to extra support. To be able to work with these agencies to support people is fantastic because they don't necessarily have the solutions either. There are ongoing challenges in how to approach people and get them to engage so we can face the issues together. We witness a lot of hardship and sadness in this job. There is a lot of substance abuse, alcohol abuse, and unemployment-the same old problems that many Aboriginal people face every day.

*"Violet is a credit to her people and certainly doesn't fit into any stereotype. I think that Violet walks successfully amongst both cultures. I don't mean to sound condescending but Violet doesn't have a chip on her shoulder even though she has every right to. That's what makes her so special. And she's fun to work with."*  
Co-worker, Darryl Nettleton (Senior Mental Health Professional).





*Community Unity*



*"I believe it's really important to incorporate our traditional medicines and our traditional healings into the way we treat Aboriginal people. For us, this means going out to country because if you spend time in country you will heal."*

## And since that day...

one of the other things I am involved in is facilitating the Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid Course, and discussions are currently in place with the police and the hospital to run the course once every two months. The focus of this course is to generate awareness about mental illness within the community and discuss how to approach and deal with people who may be in a particularly vulnerable space. I enjoy being active in the local community.

I love sport and care very much about the youth and believe it's important to mentor young people wherever I can. I coach both softball and basketball in my spare time and have recently volunteered to join the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) at Nulsen Primary School. I have also been approached to sit on a position on the Board of BOICO.

It makes sense that I have ended up working in the mental health field. I have always had a strong sense of social justice and I want to do what I can to help my people. I am very passionate about incorporating traditional ways into western practice when treating Aboriginal people with mental health issues. When you're culturally bound, you can't easily change to western ways, I really don't believe 200 years is long enough. Non-Aboriginal people working in this area need to be mindful of how to approach particular issues. For instance, you can't incorporate traditional methods with western medicine to treat an Aboriginal person who is having hallucinations. If one of our people is seeing things and hearing voices, it's not considered a mental health issue in a western sense, it's a cultural matter which needs to be approached accordingly.

I also believe it's really important to incorporate our traditional medicines and our traditional healings into the way we treat Aboriginal people. For us, this means going out to Country because if you spend time in Country you will heal. It really is the most successful way for our people to regain their emotional, spiritual and mental health, which in turn informs their physical health.

There is a big push in the Goldfields region towards this way of thinking. Proposed legislation to allow more scope in this area has recently been presented to state parliament by Sid Carruth who is the Coordinator for the Aboriginal Mental Health Team in the Goldfields region. I am excited about the outcome of this legislation because if it is passed, it will mean we can practice a more holistic approach to treatment which will have a remarkable impact on the mental health of our people.



## Did you know?...

It is estimated that 100,000 Indigenous children were taken from their families and raised in homes or adopted by white families, up until the 1960s. The policy was designed to 'assimilate' or 'breed out' Indigenous people. These children became known as the 'Stolen Generations'.



# THE NGADJU DANCERS

## ORGANISATION NAME:

The Ngadju Dancers

## CONTACT PERSON:

James and Valma Schulz

## EMAIL AND WEBSITE:

ngadjudancers@hotmail.com

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Lion Ore Resources (Johnston Lake Operations)

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

James and Valma Schulz

## KEY WORDS:

Dance, custom, culture, performance, education, history

## About the storytellers...

James and Valma Schulz are traditional Ngadju people from Norseman. They are the coordinators of the Ngadju Dance Company.

## About The Ngadju Dancers...

The Ngadju Dancers of the Norseman Ngadju people are a traditional dance group who have been together for 12 years. They are the first and only traditional Aboriginal dance group from the Norseman, Esperance, and surrounding southern Goldfields region (of Western Australia) to perform in public.



## Once upon a time...

around 12 years ago in Norseman, a local Aboriginal dancer named Kevin Rule decided to get a traditional dance group together.

There were no traditional Aboriginal dance groups in Norseman at all, yet there was a rich cultural history to share through the ritual of dance. He also noticed that at events in Norseman, such as gallery openings or community events, dance was the one element that was missing.

As dance was such a vital aspect of his culture, he felt a strong need to share this custom with people so he put the word out to gauge the interest in the community. The first thing he did was to contact the local schools to get some dance students on board and recruited several school aged students to join the group. He then recruited senior dancers.

People thought it was a great idea and something that was way overdue in our community so it wasn't difficult to get them involved; everyone was really keen, including me! I jumped at the chance to become one of the dancers in Kevin's new group.

## And then one day...

the group was named The Ngadju Dancers and we were the first and only traditional dance group from the Norseman, Esperance and surrounding southern Goldfields region of WA to perform publicly. Our members consist of 6-8 adults (depending on availability) and 16 students aged from 3 to 16 years old. We have now been together for 12 years.

Our first public dance performance was at the Midland Gate Shopping Centre in Perth. We then began performing at venues and schools throughout WA initially, and later on, both nationally and internationally. Two years after The Ngadju Dancers formed, we sadly lost our Founder and Coordinator Kevin Rule, who passed away.

*"School students are our future leaders and we think it's very important that they are educated about our ancient culture."*



As I didn't want to see the company close, my wife Valma and I took over as Owners/Coordinators of The Ngadju Dancers. Our dancers have many years of experience between them, both collectively and individually.

We have been fortunate to inherit our song and dance skills from our Ngadju Elders and we offer traditional Aboriginal dance performances, dreamtime stories narrated and portrayed in Aboriginal dance and professional cross cultural awareness packages for school students. This package is designed to share Indigenous culture through demonstrations of craftsmanship and uses of traditional tools and weapons.

We also teach the students how to do dot paintings. Through this comprehensive package, we aim to equip students with knowledge about the laws and customs of Australian Aboriginal people. The other service we offer is traditional dancing lessons for school students which involve 4 x 1.5 hour lessons.

The aim of these lessons is to provide students with the necessary skills to perform a traditional dance at their school assembly or other events. Valma and I do all the choreography for the dances along with Valma's brother, Jeffrey Wickerd.



Although the majority of our performances are traditional, sometimes the younger dancers mix things up a bit with different styles which is always entertaining and we love the variety!

Many of The Ngadju Dance members are related to each other and it's pretty special to be able to work closely with family.

## And because of that...

the Ngadju Dancers have now performed in front of more than 100,000 students Australia wide! The school package that we offer keeps us the busiest but we acquire a lot of other work through our website and by word of mouth.

Luckily, as word of mouth is such an effective promotional tool for us, we don't have to spend too much money on promoting the business. However, we do a bit of promotion and advertising by emailing schools and festivals with our website details which brings in a lot of business. We work throughout the whole year and will accommodate our clients as much as possible.

Not everyone is always available to travel, especially the younger members, so sometimes we have to perform without them. However, when we perform in the Goldfields region, we have an additional 20 student dancers who join the main group.



We love to perform at ceremonies and in 2006, we were lucky enough to participate in the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, an event which attracted a global audience of 1.2 billion people.

We were sponsored and funded by Lion Ore Resources to attend this event. We also recently returned from the 2012 London Olympic Games!

Although we were not able to perform as we couldn't commit to spending three months in London rehearsing, we did lots of networking, and visited Olympic Park and watched performing artists along the Southbank.

It was a spectacular, unforgettable experience and we are very keen to go back in the near future, this time to dance! We get invited to open new facilities and perform at international festivals and we are hoping to travel to both Africa and Canada in the next few months.

One of my goals is to one day dance for the President of the United States and I can see no reason why this can't happen!

## And since that day...

we are very happy with how our company is travelling at the moment. We love performing but we don't want to get too busy as we want things to remain stress free for the performers.

We will continue delivering our cultural package in schools so students can learn about Aboriginal culture. School students are our future leaders and we think it's very important that they are educated about our ancient culture.

The more they understand, the more they will respect us and our history and the closer we can move towards establishing reconciliation. That's the message we aim to convey through our dance performances and that's why we love to dance.

It's a non-confrontational way to teach people about who we are and why our culture is important. We want to keep our culture strong and carry on what our Elders taught us.

If we can share our culture through our performances with people everywhere to help keep it alive for another 40 thousand years then it's a pretty joyful way to do it.



*"If we can share our culture through our performances with people everywhere to help keep it alive for another 40 thousand years then it's a pretty joyful way to do it."*





# TJITJIKU MIRRKA PALYALPAYI

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Mirlirrjarra Kuurl Mirrka Palyalpayi (Making Good Food at Warburton School)

## CONTACT PERSON:

Olive Lawson, Lynette Smith

## EMAIL AND WEBSITE:

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## PROGRAM/PROJECT PARTNERS:

WA Department of Child Protection and Family Support, Ngaanyatjarra Council, Foodbank WA, Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku, Warburton Community, Community Development Foundation, Warburton School, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Ngaanyatjarra Health Service, Lotterywest, FaHCSIA

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Warburton Breakfast Minyma (women), Rosalind Beadle (Youth and Family Support Worker, Department for Child Protection and Family Support)

## KEY WORDS:

Warburton, Ngaanyatjarra, school breakfast, remote, Minyma, community development, training, engagement

## About the storytellers...

The Warburton Breakfast Minyma are a group of Ngaanyatjarra women in the remote community of Warburton in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands of WA – 1600 km inland from Perth. They work out of the Family Place which is a community building at the local school and their program is called Mirlirrjarra Kuurl Mirrka Palyalpayi Program (Making Good Food at Warburton School).

## About the Warburton Breakfast Program...

The Warburton Breakfast Program commenced five years ago in response to community concerns about low school attendance. It is run and guided by the Warburton Breakfast Minyma, a group of Ngaanyatjarra grandmothers, mothers and aunts of the children. The women believe breakfast is important as it encourages the children to come to school and gives them a full belly which helps them to learn.

They said, "We want our kids to go to school and stay in class". Later that month, several counsellors from the Ngaanyatjarra Council and local community members had a meeting with the School Principal and it was decided, that with support from the school, four local grandmothers would start a school breakfast program. This was to try to encourage the tjitji (kids) to come to school where there would be a healthy and tasty breakfast for them. *Minyma pirliluya palyapayi breakfast pa tjilku piri ko (the women would make a breakfast for the children).*

A few days later the Warburton School Breakfast Program began and five years later it is still running. It is supported by a range of agencies and with the help of Ros Beadle, the Youth & Family Support Worker for Child Protection & Family Support (CPFS). From the early days of the program, the women have called themselves the Warburton Breakfast Minyma (women).

## And then one day...

the school breakfast program first took place in the home economics room, a building where some of the Minyma had classes in sewing and cooking when they were kids themselves.



By The Warburton Breakfast Minyma (women) and Rosalind Beadle (YFSW, CPFS). The direct quotes (in italics) are by the women who run the Warburton Breakfast Program.

## Once upon a time...

there was no school breakfast program in Warburton, the biggest community of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in Western Australia. In November 2008, families from the community started talking about their concerns about the low attendance rates at the school.



*"From a small thing, it got bigger": the different activities that emerged from the Warburton Breakfast Program*



*The Mirlirtjarra Kuurl Mirrka Palyalpayi Program logo showing all the kids from different parts of the community coming to school for their breakfast with the Breakfast Minyma*

The breakfast program is mainly for kids who come to school but sometimes the grandmothers and mothers who work on the program have younger karparli (granddaughter), tjamu (grandson), yurntalpa (daughter) and katja (son) who they bring with them to school for a feed.

*So breakfast is for little ones, like playgroup kids, right up to high school kids. They come as a team, like a little family, a group. Big kids bring their marlanypa (little sisters or brothers) to look after them and help make breakfast. They are purkurlpa (happy) kids with their healthy breakfast. And when they finish they go out and play sports in a happy way and then go to class. They feel free and healthy after a good breakfast. The mirrka (food) keeps them going all day in school, keep their brains working and gives them good energies, walykumunu breakfast pa (breakfast is good). When they don't have breakfast they get tired and sleepy and they don't have enough energy in their body to work and learn, they need breakfast to keep them busy working.*

Over the years it has been running, the program has received lots of support from different people and organisations. The mirrka (food) was first provided by the school with help from the Warburton Community Office. Since early 2009, FoodBank WA has generously supported the program and they send up non-perishable food once a term. This continues to be subsidized by the Community Office that pays for food items for the Minyma. When the women did their Certificate I in Kitchen Operations in Perth, they visited the Foodbank warehouse and did some cooking and nutrition classes with the Foodbank staff. The Foodbank staff have also visited the Minyma in Warburton and run activities for the community.

## And because of that...

as well as being good for the kids, the school breakfast has been great for the Minyma who have worked on the program. After a little while, the four grandmothers decided they needed some help. They started to train some younger girls like their daughters, nieces or daughters-in-law to do the work. This meant that if something came up that prevented the women from working, there was always someone around to help prepare school breakfast. Since the program started over 40 women from lots of different families have worked on it. Working makes the Minyma feel proud and happy. The work keeps them busy and gives them a bit of extra money for mirrka (food) and to buy clothes for their kids and their grandkids. The kids are really happy and proud about their grandmothers and mothers working in the Family Place.

*We count the number of kids that come to breakfast every day and it's usually about 10-20. Sometimes it's a little bit less, but it's ok cos lots of tjitji (kids) are now getting their breakfast at home. School breakfast is also good for the teachers. The Minyma help tell the kids to go to school and if the kids are not behaving in a good way in school, the teachers can find one of the Minyma to come and help. Last year, with the Parent and Community Engagement (PACE) program the ladies go into the classroom and talk to the kids - talk in Ngaanyatjarra, our language - and then translate to the teacher what we were saying. We tell them stories about our work. They get happy the kids; they feel good when they see the photos. They say, "Oh, that's my mum working". Nyakula kulira nintirringkukitjaku (watching and listening to us they are learning).*

In 2010, the community requested a new building with the purpose of increasing community





*Kiesha West, Timmy Brown and Kieran Jones having their breakfast in the Family Place*

engagement in the school. It arrived at the school shortly after and became known as the Family Place and community activities are now held there. The women also shifted their breakfast program to the Family Place. It was good timing, as not long after, the home economics room was demolished! Over time, the women started undertaking other activities that were emerging as an extension to their program. Some of these activities were initiated by the women and others were requests from agencies in the region to utilise the womens' new skills and services. They named their program *Mirlirtjarra Kuurl Mirrka Palyalpayi* (Making Good Food at Warburton School) and every Monday morning they have a meeting to make plans and talk about their work. *The Family Place is a good place, the kids come in, have things to do and be close to their families. They can look after themselves here, brush their hair, look in the mirror. Some kids have showers if they come in sleepy and need to wake up. The parents and the kids meet up and it's like a magnet for the tjitji (kids) it make the kids stay in the school cos they've got their families here, instead of running home. They feel purkurlpa (happy) having their families close up.*

## And since that day...

the Minyma pirni (women) have been busy! We did training for cooking and taught each other to do the cooking. Seven Minyma got their Certificate in Kitchen Operations at Polytechnic West in Perth. We did presentations in Perth and Alice Springs about our *waarka* (work) and did catering for lots of different things: school events, Dust Up, meetings and fundraisers at discos and football festivals. For a few years, the Minyma also cooked and delivered the HACC *mirrka* (meals) for the old people in the community. We have been making things like *The Breakfast Story Book* for the kids and presentations to show the government people in Perth. We have made posters for the Family Place,



*The Warburton Breakfast Minyma in their uniforms*

and DVDs about our work that we like to show people. In May 2011, we started doing *Kungka* (Girls) Nights with Ros; a teenage girls support program where girls come and do things like cooking, art, craft, hair and makeup and the Minyma talk to them about being safe and looking after themselves. This year we are going to celebrate the program running for five years - we are going to have a party to celebrate in November. The program started small with just breakfast, but now the Minyma do lots of different things for their work but they still call themselves the Warburton Breakfast Minyma. We hope that in the future the program gets better and bigger. We'd like to find more money to help pay for cooking equipment, things for *kungka* nights and so we can travel and tell more people about our work. We do work for a long time for little wages; we should have a salary for working here, not just CDEP. Cos we are working for the kids, feeding the kids. We have a hard job, waking up really early and coming here, getting up from sleep.

We like to tell people about our work, it makes us proud speaking out about our community in a good way. We want to tell other Minyma about our work. We can teach the young girls, the High School girls and the *kungkas*. They can come and learn and be like the Breakfast Minyma, get a job when they get big. One day, we might go out to the other communities and show them how to do school breakfast for their families. It's good for families to work-they can show the kids how to do things the right way. Before school breakfast started the *tjitji* used to wag. No school cos no breakfast was there. No kids were coming to school, *wiyartu, ngurrangka nyinapayi* (nothing, they stayed at home). This still happens sometimes but now the kids have a good reason to come to school early and get a good feed so they can stay in class. We'd like to thank all the people and organisations that have supported the program. We want to especially thank the grandmothers who started the School Breakfast and those that have worked all the way through like Olive Lawson and Lynette Smith.



# KUNGKAKU YANGUPALAKU HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS PROJECT

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Ngaanyatjarra Health Service

## CONTACT PERSON:

Annie Tangey

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## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

The Department of Health and Ageing, OATSIH, The Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku, Ngaanyatjarra Council, Ngaanyatjarra Land and Culture, Wilurarra Creative, Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council, Centre for Sexual Health, FPWA and DCP

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Annie Tangey, Lida Curran, Cameron McDonald, Callum Clyde-Smith, Carlton Reid, Nathan Smith, Elsa Porter, Delissa West, Lisa Nelson, Miriam Pickard, Tashka Urban and Xavier Masson-Leach

## KEY WORDS:

Sexual health, young people, health promotion, community

## About the storyteller...

Annie Tangey is the Coordinator of Ngaanyatjarra Health Service's Sexual Health Programme. Ngaanyatjarra Health Service (NHS) is a Community controlled Health organisation that provides primary health services to 12 remote communities located over 250,000 sq kms of the Central Desert region in WA.

## About the Kungkaku Yangupalaku Healthy Relationships Project ...

The Kungkaku Yangupalaku Healthy Relationships Project (KYHRP) was a two and a half year Improving Sexual Health in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Demonstration Project funded by OATSIH. With this funding NHS implemented a comprehensive community based sexual health education and access project for young people across the 12 Ngaanyatjarra communities.



## Once upon a time...

back in 2004/05, Ngaanyatjarra Health Services (NHS), conducted an assessment and consultation process to determine what was required for young people's sexual health education. The assessment revealed that young Aboriginal people, predominately aged 15-25 years, had limited access to education and culturally appropriate information about sexual health. The assessment also identified a process for culturally appropriate planning and developed a sexual health education plan model for young people aged 10-19 years and for their community.

In 2009, an opportunity arose for funding called 'Improving Sexual Health in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Demonstration Projects' and from 2009 through to 2011 NHS implemented the Kungkaku Yangupalaku Healthy Relationships Project (KYHRP).



The aims of the KYHRP project was to improve the sexual health of young people aged 10–24 years on the Ngaanyatjarra lands by increasing their ability to make informed decisions, enable healthy relationships, reduce risk taking behaviour and improve access to sexual health care and related services. Our youth health educators worked with peer workers to provide activities to increase young people's access to information through workshops, camps, training and collaborating with other youth agencies.



*Travelling to the women's camp*



*Girls on their way to camp*



## And then one day...

we wanted to work on our second aim of improving access to services through health seeking behaviours by making a story based resource. It was identified through the needs assessment project that young people were not confident in health seeking behaviours and needed knowledge on how to access health services both on the Lands and when travelling off the Lands.

We all agreed the best way to educate people would be through music and visual arts. So together we developed a series of shorts films, using the young people as the actors in the films. To do this we needed facilitators to workshop the ideas and do basic animation, so we engaged a filmmaker named Miriam Pickard and a musician named Tashka Urban who had both previously been involved in community workshops.

Xavier Masson-Leach, a film maker, actor and theatre producer who had also previously worked with the young men developing story lines, joined our team to produce the film clips. Callum Smith, our male youth health educator and Lida Curran, our female youth health educator worked with Aboriginal Health Workers Carlton Reid and Jock Nelson, and peer workers Elsa Porter, Delissa West, Lisa Nelson and Nathan Smith.

*"What emerged from developing these short film clip resources was the strength of the young people and how well they support each other and receive support within their communities."*

We put up posters in the communities to advertise the workshops and promoted them as a fun and engaging activity rather than being heavily focussed on health promotion. The posters were an effective starting point to open up the dialogue about the project with peer workers and youth health educators.

Miriam and Tashka introduced themselves to young people by joining in the community discos and fashion parades and performing a story shadow puppet show. We also held a couple of barbeques for the young people who had expressed an interest in the project and showed some examples of previous film projects. Then we spread the word about getting involved in an enjoyable, skills-based learning experience where they would have an opportunity to be the creative directors of their own films.

## And because of that...

it didn't take long for word to spread and between 10 and 20 young people from the two communities jumped on board. In Warburton we had a core group of eight young men and seven young women with another 10 people who came and went as they were available. In Warakurna we had about seven young men and women. In Warburton they identified the clinic as the place they wanted to hold the workshops and they nominated the weekends as their preferred timeframe.

So, we spent two days developing the themes and storylines for the two short films we wanted to make. As part of the aim was to improve access to health services, we thought we would approach things a bit differently. Instead of telling people they had to use the clinics, we thought the best way to get our message across was to highlight the sorts of situations where they would actually need to utilise the clinics.

We set the boys and girls up in separate rooms with some interactive activities using the cameras, instruments, dress up props and plasticine for animation. We did a body mapping activity which linked how our bodies related to what we were doing or feeling. This provided a framework to create step by step story board scenarios. As the stories developed we introduced the concept of health seeking behaviour and how to access services and created the storyline for our first two films, Lost Zac and Kungkaku Yangapalaku around these ideas.



### Did you know?

The Ngaanyatjarra Lands comprise 250,000km<sup>2</sup> between the Gibson and Great Victoria Deserts in Western Australia. Regional centres are up to 1,000km's away from the many communities on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

We had a lot of fun during this process and encouraged everyone to have a go at filming each other and recording a song. We then developed a schedule and discussed a timeline and locations, which were chosen by the young people.

Next stop, making the films. This involved doing animations, writing and recording songs and writing scripts which included voice-overs and English subtitles. As we had done so much ground work in the workshops, the filming process ran pretty smoothly and was really enjoyable for the young people. After filming, we did a basic edit on the raw footage and then went into post-production once we were off site. We encountered a few technical issues in the post-production stage but we got through them.



*Warakurna shoot*





*Kuruala trip (the women's camp)*

One lovely outcome of the roads being closed in Warakurna due to heavy rain was that the young people, who were engaged in song writing after a workshop, wrote a song about their identity and culture and called it Kulila Kangyima.

Later on, the young men wanted to do more work on a story and song that they had started, so Xavier and Callum returned in early 2012 to work with The Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPY) youth worker and the boys to complete their powerful and thoughtful work that shows men supporting each other and expressing their feelings. The film clip is called Carlston's Love Song.

Since we had completed the basic edit of the films, we were able to hold film nights at the Warburton Youth Centre and at Warakurna to showcase our work to the community. It was also the perfect opportunity to seek approval and feedback from the Elders and wider community prior to the post production final edit. The films were extremely well received and celebrated.

People absolutely loved seeing themselves on film, and it was especially significant that their films were made in language. It also highlighted the importance of having a finished product, and one that everyone was extremely proud of. It was a big accomplishment. As the grandmothers (Elders) wanted the young girls to learn traditional ways, a beautiful and powerful experience to emerge from the KYHR project was the two-way education learning that transpired between the senior women and the young women and girls. As the senior women were involved in the ongoing consultation process throughout the project, they had a great idea.



*Playing music at Warakurna*

They identified a significant site where they wanted to take a group of young women to teach them about growing up in both the traditional way as well as the western way. Working collaboratively with Ngaanyatjarra Council and Land and Culture as well as local schools, around 50 women and young girls came on the camp. Although it was logistically challenging as it was so remote and hot, it was a memorable and important experience. The young women, girls and staff learned important things about women's health through tjukurpa.

There was storytelling and re-enactments with songs and dancing associated with the significant sites. The young women and girls were able to experience a two-way learning process from their grandmothers and also about western ways from the NHS health workers. They witnessed everyone learning and working together which was powerful and culturally meaningful.



*"The fantastic thing about this project was that the young people were involved and engaged in every single step of the way from consultation, workshops and script writing right through to post production."*

## And since that day...

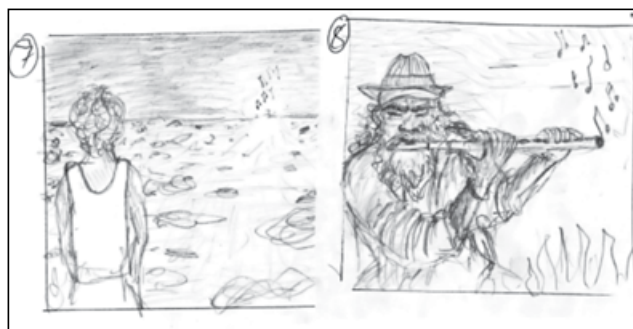
the processes of working in a culturally appropriate way made this project highly successful. The experience was enriched enormously through ongoing consultation with Elders, peer workers and young people, focus groups, mapping and community profiling. We used creative ways of learning and had flexible learning environments such as bush camps, separate male and female groups, and health workshops which were all guided by the Elders. We had various activities to keep the young people engaged such as movie nights, swimming, using interactive keypad surveys, hairdressing, bush day trips, football trips, barbeques, MP3 player competitions, and band/music and school workshops.

On our journey together we learnt that using music and storytelling was a relevant and fun way to convey our health promotion messages, rather than standing in front of people and talking. The fantastic thing about making the film clips was that young people were involved and engaged in every single step of the way from consultation, workshops and script writing right through to post production.

What emerged from developing the short film clip resources was the strength of the young people and how well they support each other and receive support within their communities. As well as becoming more aware of how to access the clinics and services, not just on the Lands but outside the Lands, they learned that there are lots of people who can support them to look after themselves and one another. That theme came through beautifully in the videos.

We are pleased that we developed a resource in language which was culturally, socially and contextually appropriate that people could relate to and had ownership over.

We've had great feedback about the finished film clips and many case stories in terms of people gaining a great deal from the film clip production process. The filmmaking was just the medium to facilitate the message about accessing services and how to have positive, respectful relationships and it was a highly successful way to do it. The other feedback we received was that it was a particularly enjoyable medium for that age group to work with and that they were keen to make more films. We have now distributed our films far and wide and we would love to have an ongoing opportunity to be able to employ youth health educators to continue this important project into the future.



*Images from the storyboard of Carlston's Love Song, art work by Xavier Masson Leach*



*KungkaYungapalaku Image*



## Watch...

You can watch the four short clips on  
<http://vimeo.com/user10430060>

*Have you  
got a great  
story?*

*Would you like  
to contribute to the  
next Indigenous  
Storybook?*

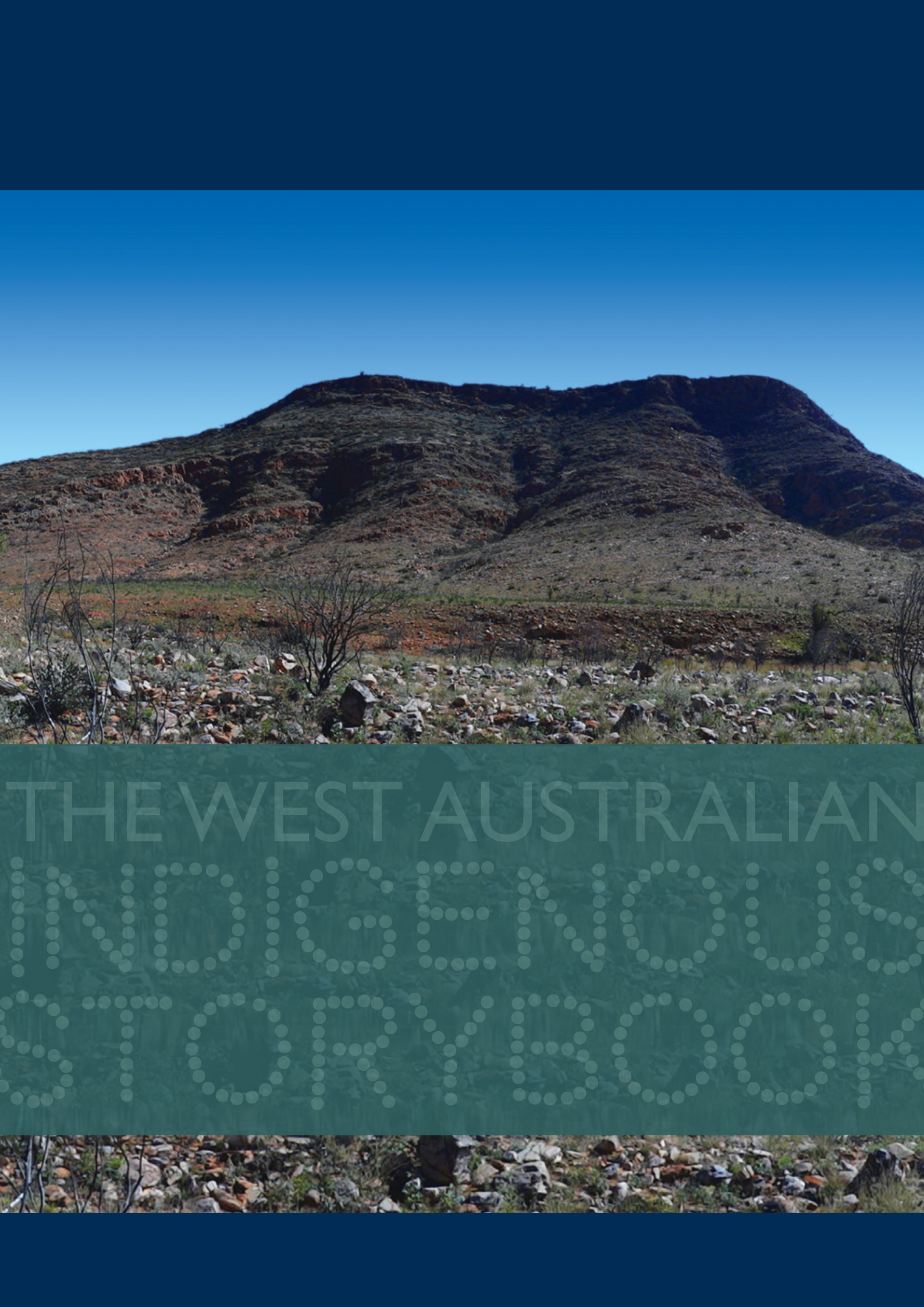
*If so, contact PHAIWA on;  
(08) 9266 2344 or  
email: [phaiwa@curtin.edu.au](mailto:phaiwa@curtin.edu.au)*

*For more information  
on the Storybook, including  
framework and guidelines visit  
the Indigenous Storybook  
webpage at:*

*<http://www.phaiwa.org.au/index.php/other-projects-mainmenu-146/308-indigenous-storybook>*

*Stories from all over  
Western Australia are welcome  
and encouraged.*





THE WEST AUSTRALIAN  
INDIGENOUS  
STORYBOOK