



THE WEST AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS STORYBOOK



CELEBRATING & SHARING
GOOD NEWS STORIES



The Goldfields Edition



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Cover Photo - Photo Credit : Sunni Wilson

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INTRODUCTION

The West Australian Indigenous Storybook really has been one of PHAIWA's successes. We are very proud to be presenting our eighth edition, and as always we have more stories than we have room to print them! It is our pleasure every edition, to showcase the positive, innovative and life changing stories of Aboriginal people, communities, services and organisations. We never tire of telling a good story and this edition is all about the Goldfields region.

One of the main aims of the Storybook has been to try to change the poor perception that many non-Indigenous people hold about our Aboriginal people, which is often formed by what they see on the evening news or read in the newspaper. This perpetuating of stereotypes is something we fight hard to stop. There is such diversity in our

Aboriginal population, and although they only make up 3% of our population, given they are Australia's First People and the oldest living civilisation, they are a very important 3%. To further illustrate the diversity within our Aboriginal populations, the map shown here indicates the language or tribal groups of Australia. Although there are countless statistics that frame Aboriginal people, they are anything but a homogenous group. As Luke Pearson recently wrote: "If we see a white drunk on one show, it doesn't impact on the wider perception of whiteness, because on another show we see a white doctor, a white Prime Minister, and an endless array of white heroes, villains, and 'everyday' people on our screens. So much so, that no one white character, or one show, is expected to bear the weight of responsibility of accurate and meaningful portrayals of whiteness. For Aboriginal characters on our screen however, the challenge is far greater given the historical and contemporary lack of representation of Indigenous peoples, cultures and lived experiences."¹

It was disappointing to read in the 2016 Australian Reconciliation Barometer², which measures attitudes and perceptions towards reconciliation, and maps our progress towards the five dimensions of reconciliation, that 39% of Australians in the general community agree that Australia is a racist country (4% higher than 2014). This upward trend is worrying, and the framing effect – which is the way that the media and political discourse affects the way opinions are formed – could be one of the underlying causes. Which leads me to why PHAIWA will continue so strongly to advocate for the dissemination of rich and positive stories that are so valuable, appreciated and readily available from our WA Aboriginal communities and people. These stories embrace and cherish our Aboriginal heritage and culture – and we hope these Storybooks will keep this cultural heritage alive by passing on these wonderfully optimistic and affirmative stories both within and outside of our Aboriginal communities.

Melissa Stoneham



Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/>

1. NITV (2017) Being the first Indigenous anything by Luke Pearson. Available at <http://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2017/05/02/comment-being-first-indigenous-anything>

2. Reconciliation Australia (2016) 2016 Australian Reconciliation Barometer. Available at https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/RA_ARB-2016_Overview-brochure_web.pdf.

ABOUT THE GOLDFIELDS REGION

- 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 km².

- 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'.



Reference: <https://pediaview.com/openpedia/Goldfields-Esperance>

FOOD SENSATIONS AT SPINFEX SPORTS

ORGANISATION NAME:

Foodbank WA

CONTACT PERSON:

Louise Thorne, Charlie Klein

WEBSITE:

www.foodbankwa.org.au

www.healthyfoodforall.com.au

PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Tjuntjuntjara Remote Community School

KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Louise Thorne, Charlie Klein

KEY WORDS:

Healthy eating, collaboration, cooking, strong together

About the storytellers...

Louise Thorne is a Public Health Nutritionist at Foodbank WA and Charlie Klein is the Principal at Tjuntjuntjara Remote Community School.

About Food Sensations...

Food Sensations is a hands on nutrition and cooking program that is provided by Foodbank WA to schools who are registered for the School Breakfast Program throughout WA.



Once upon a time...

Foodbank WA was provided with funding from the Department of Education, Department of Health and Royalties for Regions to run Food Sensations®, which is implemented in School Breakfast Program schools in WA. Foodbank WA have 434 School Breakfast Program registered schools right across the state, including throughout metropolitan Perth, remote and regional areas. The School Breakfast Program started in 2001 and all schools who register for the program are provided with seven core pantry foods to feed school children who come to school without having eaten breakfast. These particular schools then have access to Food Sensations which is a hands on nutrition and cooking program. One of the schools that is registered, Tjuntjuntjara Remote Community School, which is situated in The Great Victoria Desert in WA, called us at Foodbank WA to express their interest in having us visit their community to run the program. They were keen for us to time our visit with their three yearly sports carnival, Spinifex Sports, which they were facilitating with two South Australian schools. So we looked into the logistics of travel (as the community is so remote and we had never been there before), and decided we definitely wanted to take up the offer as we do try to go to the most

remote places that other service providers can't go to. We planned the trip for September 2016 to go and implement Food Sensations with the local school and community.

And then one day...

it was such a great opportunity to be invited and the school was incredibly helpful with planning and travel requirements. They generously arranged the charter flights and provided accommodation for the two of us from Foodbank and Andy the clown. The principal, Charlie, also gave us lots of insight into the community, the school, the local food supply and specific nutrition issues so that we could make sure the Food Sensations sessions were relevant and suitable for Tjuntjuntjara. When we arrived we were welcomed with a warm greeting and anticipated excitement for all the activities that were planned for Spinifex Sports!

Tjuntjuntjara is so remote, and not many people travel that far so we wanted to make sure our visit was worthwhile for the community as a whole. We planned our sessions with the school, Women's Centre and Spinifex Health clinic, packing in as much as we could during our three day visit.



Christal and Louise, Ninti palka – strong together at Spinifex

After many long hours of travel from South Australia, Yalata and Oak Valley schools arrived in Tjuntjuntjara ready for the carnival to begin. We were all ready for Spinifex Sports! It started with a bang with the Parade Ceremony where all the schools showed-off their school banners. After some athletic races and sports, it was time for the Food Sensations student sessions. In the first part of Food Sensations, students were introduced to the Superhero Foods – an engaging nutrition education resource that teaches that 'everyday foods' are actually 'Superhero Foods' in disguise. 'Superhero Foods', are foods that are going to provide a strong mind and healthy body but the 'Zombie Foods' (or the discretionary foods) are foods high in fat, salt and sugar which will destroy our healthy way of life and bring the 'Body Monsters' such as obesity, decay and illness, into our lives. The Superhero Foods and Zombie Foods concepts are the main teaching tools we use in our curriculum-linked lesson plans which are based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. We aim to impart an understanding of the five food groups and what foods are in each group, why we need to eat each food group and what functions the foods have in our bodies. We also discuss which foods are 'every day'

foods and how many foods are actually 'sometimes' foods as opposed to 'everyday' foods. The Superhero Food resources such as the storybook have been so valuable as they can teach the kids about nutrition and healthy eating in a way that is fun and helps them to relate to the benefits of healthy foods.

After an important message about knife and kitchen safety, the students then got to cook in the Food Sensations session, as a way to embed the students' understanding of Superhero Foods. The children did all the cooking themselves making recipes such as crazy corn dip, beef stew, flat bread, rice salad and apple crumble. All the recipes were made with locally available ingredients from the local Tjuntjuntjara store. During the cooking, the children loved getting their hands dirty and getting stuck into it. Some students can be a bit apprehensive about the healthier ingredients they may not be familiar with but if they are reluctant, we just try and be really positive and encourage them to try all the foods. We tell them it's about being adventurous and brave. It's fun chaos which is loud, crazy and messy as the children are always so excited when they're cooking. We give the children a Superhero Foods recipe book to take home which features the Superhero Food characters which they love. Our meals are very vegetable based with a smaller meat component and contain all the Superhero Foods from the five food groups. We try to make meals that can be cooked quickly and aren't really expensive.

In our sessions we can also focus on food budgeting, label reading and looking at take away foods versus home-made food and the differences in fat, salt and sugar content. During the cooking we teach knife safety, hand washing skills and increasing the children's awareness of healthy foods, through food tasting.



"Our primary focus is to convey the message that healthy food can be fun and taste good and to leave the children with memories of healthy food. We want to make sure the lessons are always a fun and positive experience, building on participants' nutrition knowledge, cooking skills and attitudes, and hopefully encouraging healthier home cooking."

And because of that...

news spread so fast of all the fun the school were having in Food Sensations that everyone wanted to get in on the action. Luckily we had already arranged to work with the women at the Women's Centre and nurses at the Clinic. We really enjoyed meeting everyone and learning from each other about food, health and life out at Tjuntjuntjara. The women came and cooked recipes with us and are hoping to use the recipes in the community café which runs once a week.

The Tjuntjuntjara Rangers were also keen to get involved with Food Sensations. We were very excited when the 10 male rangers invited us to come and talk about nutrition at their workshop. We enjoyed yarning together about the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and discussed some healthier foods that they might change for their trips in future.

Having such great opportunities to work with lots of people across different parts of the community made the trip extremely worthwhile and was a real highlight on the regional travel calendar in 2016.

Unfortunately...

our funding is limited just to WA and Spinifex Sports is only held in WA once every three years, so it's going to be a long while before we can go back to Tjuntjuntjara. One of the biggest challenges we face is the limited capacity we have to visit all of our remote schools that are really crying out for nutrition education. To create some sustainability, when visiting regional and remote towns we always offer training for teachers and local health professionals, so they can continue to promote healthy eating and cooking after the visit has passed. Thankfully we had the opportunity to work with five of the local staff at Spinifex Health clinic for the continued promotion of nutrition and healthy eating in Tjuntjuntjara. The clinic were very thankful to receive lesson plans and nutrition education resources from our Superhero Foods HQ website (www.superherofoodshq.org.au) to use around the community after our visit.

And since that day...

during our jam-packed three days, the 47 students who attended Spinifex Sports were able to participate in Food Sensations. The students who attended were aged from 5-15 years. Our primary focus was to convey the message that healthy food can be fun and taste good and to leave the



Students were very engrossed by the Superhero Foods story book

children with memories of healthy food. We want to make sure the lessons are always a fun and positive experience, building on participants' nutrition knowledge, cooking skills and attitudes, and hopefully encouraging healthier home cooking.

The Tjuntjuntjara community was amazing, their level of engagement with our program was really high. Charlie (the school Principal) was really grateful that we'd gone to so much effort to get to the community, and expressed that throughout the trip. We definitely felt appreciated and valued. During our visit, we were very grateful to get the opportunity to not only work with the school, but to visit the health clinic, and the Women's Centre and to be invited into a Men's Shed in a remote community was a big deal for us. We felt very welcomed and were impressed with the whole community and loved collaborating with such a receptive group of people. We would absolutely love the opportunity to visit Tjuntjuntjara again in 2019 for the next Spinifex Sports carnival, and continue the partnership between Foodbank WA and the school, and the wider community.




"The Tjuntjuntjara community was amazing, their level of engagement with our program was really high."

In Charlie's words...

I was familiar with Foodbank's work in Warburton at the annual Desert Dust Up festival (which has been going for over 25 years). I contacted them and asked if they would like to come and facilitate their educational and healthy eating program with our students to coincide with our annual three-day sporting carnival. We proposed to help with the travel costs and funded the charter plane to get them here. It was never a case of, "C'mon Foodbank, get out here and help us" - it was, "Let's work together on this", because we know funds can be scarce in all organisations. So we shared the costs and I think that's the strength of the collaboration between our community and Foodbank, as opposed to, "Come and provide a service."

The theme for the overall event was 'strong together' encompassing strong body, culture and language and we wanted the healthy eating workshops to run in the same week as the sporting event to complement the physical activity (and strong, healthy body) component. A lot of the event's success can be attributed to this theme; being strong together.

The preparation by Louise and Christal from Foodbank was quite exceptional and we had a strong mutual understanding of what was expected. Their capacity to be independent and facilitate the program and interact with the children was fantastic. They were really enthusiastic and infectious to be around and engaged the children to make nutritious, healthy meals, in a very quick time frame, with limited resources, and the impact was positive all-round.

Programs such as Food Sensations have positive long term implications. Having people come in to work with the community on a well-focused, hands-on, engaging program as the one Louise and Christal provided, has a flow on effect  everyone in the community. Although I wasn't at the sessions, the feedback I received from the Women's Centre was that Louise and Christal were incredibly professional and open and built relationships quickly due to their approach and level of enthusiasm. There is recent research that shows in remote Aboriginal communities where programs are implemented, it's who people are, rather than what they teach, that has the greatest impact.



Choosing Superhero Foods for lunch!



TJUNTJUNTJARA REMOTE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

ORGANISATION NAME:

Tjuntjuntjara Remote Community School

CONTACT PERSON:

Wilbur 'Charlie' Klein

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PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Notre Dame University Fremantle

KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Wilbur 'Charlie' Klein, Notre Dame University, Fremantle teaching students

KEY WORDS:

Reciprocity, culture, learning, community, teacher education, understanding, children

About the Storyteller...

Wilbur Klein is the Principal at Tjuntjuntjara Remote Community School and has been in this role for the past four and a half years.

About Tjuntjuntjara Remote Community School...

Tjuntjuntjara Remote Community School is located in the Tjuntjuntjara Community, home of the Spinifex people (Pila Nguru). The Tjuntjuntjara Community is in the Great Victoria Desert close to the SA border, north of the Nullarbor Plain and 680 kilometres north-east of Kalgoorlie. Maintaining traditional culture whilst preparing their children for a rapidly changing world is a key community priority and the school works closely with the Tjuntjuntjara community to address these issues.



Once upon a time...

about five years ago, Tjuntjuntjara Remote Community School and Notre Dame University in Fremantle put an annual agreement in place with a group of teaching students as part of the University's Bachelor of Education unit stream. As the students are required to complete 12 hours of an Education, Service and Community Engagement unit, they were offered the option to do the unit in an Aboriginal community. The placement unit prepares pre-service teachers to experience real-world situations, both educationally and in the wider society. It is called a service immersion experience and its aim is to prepare pre-service teachers with hands on

experiences in an area that is potentially outside of their comfort zone.

The idea to complete the placement in a remote community is so teachers can gain firsthand experience and understanding of remote Indigenous Australia so when they do teach Aboriginal students or take up a teaching post in a remote community, they'll have a deeper understanding of cultural protocols and more confidence to teach in a culturally appropriate way. If they end up teaching in the city, they will be more confident to teach Aboriginal studies based on real experience.

The Tjuntjuntjara Community School has been open for 19 years and caters for a 0-4 playgroup, kindergarten, primary and secondary children and we currently have 27 students enrolled. Last year we had six pre-teachers from Notre Dame come to our school and stay for a week to complete their placements.

And then one day...

the pre-service teachers assist in classroom settings in the morning and provide support to the students with their daily lessons. It's great to have new energy in the classrooms and the students are really responsive and ask lots of questions. In the

afternoons, the teachers interact with the wider community and have the opportunity to learn about Aboriginal culture. We all go out Maku (witchetty grub) hunting in small groups and spend time in the bush which is an excellent opportunity for the children to share their culture and language and their way of life with the teachers. It's a fantastic experience for everyone involved. It provides the children with self-esteem and it contributes to the teachers' understanding. It's a "ngapartji ngapartji" (reciprocal, cooperative) relationship. It's such a positive process for our children to be able to share their culture and language as it helps to develop their unique strength and identity as Spinifex People. The visitors often say, 'Wow, your language is amazing', or 'Your Country is amazing'. This is such empowering, positive reinforcement.

On a practical level, having the visitors here is very beneficial for the school as they participate in work that needs completing such as classroom renovations which is a huge help and saves us a lot of money. In the past, they have helped empty, paint and renovate two classrooms and install an entire playground. This year they completed our Home Economics/ composite/cook room and another classroom and helped with other much needed maintenance jobs around the school. They have also played a big part in developing a basic garden using rock, wood and cement and together with the students they made a

'welcome' cement mat out the front of our school in language which means 'come in'. These things really enhance our school environment visually and give the school a flavour of its own. Our school community reciprocates by providing hospitality, logistical support, lots of fun, and a unique culture and language learning experience. The visitors often acquire new maintenance skills.

And because of that...

our school community agreement is about cultural connections, engagement, working together, and learning. Under those four headings comes the expectations that we agree on in regard to our students' learning outcomes, with a particular focus on learning standard Australian English and Math. From that we formulate a plan with families to ensure they keep their children's school attendance at high levels. We normally run between 80% and 90% attendance of the children in the community but today we had 100% school attendance. We've worked really hard on ensuring that our school has ownership over our educational outcomes and Notre Dame University are now a part of this. Notre Dame is well respected by our community and we've had lecturers who have now been here four times and speak with authority in regard to the reciprocal program that we have in place. Their knowledge as lecturers of our people and the program has



Teachers and students happy out on Country



Learning from each other

increased as has their understanding. It's not a one-off thing. After four years it's a collaboration that continues to support shared learning and a reconciled Australia in its own small way.

The positive impact that this arrangement has on the children was demonstrated when we travelled down to Perth to visit Notre Dame with the students recently for the first time. When the 2016 visitors were here we started a "Punu" (wood, artefact) collaboration between Notre Dame and Tjuntjuntjara. Between their visit to Tjuntjuntjara and our visit to Perth, the school community completed the work resulting in an outstanding piece of Punu that reflects the country of the Spinifex people. We wrapped it very carefully and transported it to Perth 1250km away on a bed of swags. The Punu is one piece that could resemble an octopus as its old branches entwine and twist showing its golden outer and its dark inner core. People view it with awe! The children presented it to the university as a gift to remind them of the wonderful collaboration and relationship we share as a school and university, both places of learning.

Unfortunately...

for all the positive tangible outcomes, there is also a lot of hard work to be done in our community. We have a generation of young people right now who are using a lot of marijuana which is having a really negative impact on the wider community. However, we are trying to address this and our Rangers group

is very active as is the Women's Centre. Many of the families are committed to being involved in reinforcing positive messages to the children and helping to build strong relationships with the wider community.

And since that day...

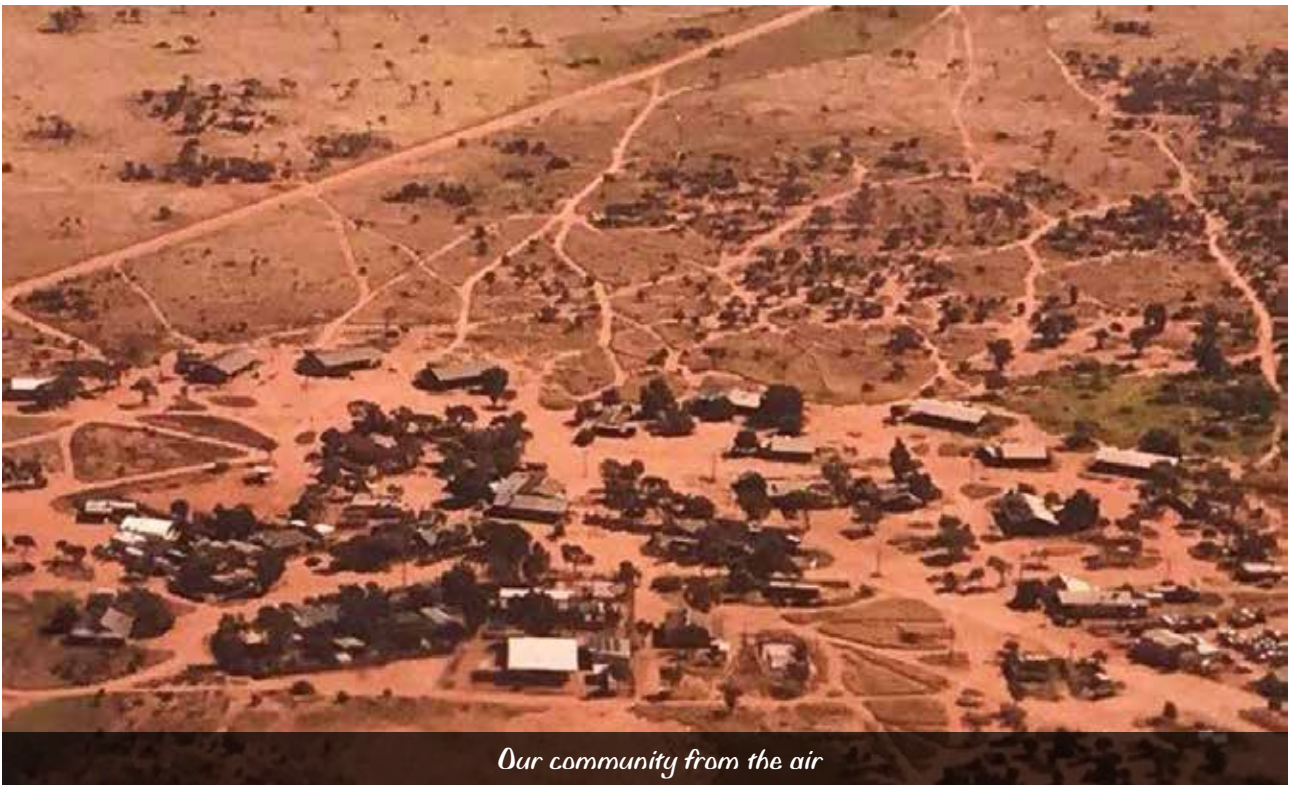
it has now been five years since we have been hosting the Notre Dame students with each year having the same positive impact for all involved. In the first year we did some active research to ascertain the effect of these visits on the pre-service teachers. The feedback is that it has a profound impact on their world view. One of the teaching students this year said, "I didn't realise/think I was racist but I actually am, I'm actually quite critical." So completing this placement can have the effect of challenging the teachers' values and how they view themselves, and this kind of self-reflection can only be a positive thing.

If the only gain is that we have teachers leaving our community with a better knowledge of Aboriginal history and Aboriginal Australia in a remote context then we are happy with that. We've had now three teachers that have participated in this program who teach, or have taught, in a remote location, which is a brilliant outcome. We've already set next year's date with Notre Dame and have a program in place for them.

It takes a while to build really strong, deep relationships and a mutual understanding and it only bears fruit after a period of time. What amazes me about working with Aboriginal people over an extended period of time, is the sense of history and knowledge of Country they possess, their resilience and their sense of humour; they're just incredible people.



"It's such a positive process for our children to be able to share their culture and language as it helps to develop their unique strength and identity as Spinifex People."



Our community from the air

The six goals of the agreement

The six specific goals of the Remote Aboriginal community service-learning immersion were negotiated between the participating university staff and the remote Aboriginal community through the school principal. These were: (a) to increase firsthand knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal history, culture and the contemporary situation with a specific focus on the 'Spinifex People' from the remote Aboriginal community; (b) to increase knowledge and understanding of living and working in a remote Indigenous community; (c) to increase knowledge and understanding of teaching in a remote Indigenous community; (d) to support the learning of The Remote Aboriginal community children; (e) to enhance the physical development of the Remote Aboriginal Community School; and (f) to provide a positive and enjoyable experience for the pre-service teachers in a remote community.

Source: http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1154&context=edu_article

“For the teachers it can be a life changing experience as they are immersed in the remotest community in Australia where language and culture is strong.”



Our school

THE WANALA ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES CONFERENCE

ORGANISATION NAME:

Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre

CONTACT PERSON:

Susan Hanson

WEBSITE:

www.wangka.com.au

PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

The project is funded by the Federal Government's Indigenous Language Support (ILS) program. The National Trust (WA) is the grant recipient and manages the funding of the project

KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Sue Hanson, Language speakers in the Goldfields region

KEY WORDS:

Language, culture, history, strong community, resilience, identity, intellect, strength, partnerships, empowerment, wellbeing, future generations



Once upon a time...

seven independent Aboriginal language centres were established in WA, one in each region. The centres began being developed 34 years ago, and their primary purpose is to record, analyse and preserve the 85 Aboriginal languages in Western Australia. The Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre was established most recently and it is responsible for several languages from the region.

Every second year the independent language centres from WA and the Northern Territory gather to hold a language conference. This year, which was the seventh time it had been held, the Goldfields were nominated to hold it in their region. The theme of the Western and Northern Aboriginal Languages Alliance (WANALA) conference was building resilience. It was titled; 'Building Resilience: Identity, intellect and the role of languages' and explored how language

About the storyteller...

Sue Hanson is the Senior Linguist and Project Coordinator at the Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre and she is supported by field linguists, technical linguists and Aboriginal language workers.

About The Goldfields Aboriginal Languages Project...

The Goldfields Aboriginal Languages Project was developed to preserve the Goldfields Aboriginal languages. The Project commenced in July 2011. The initial focus was to work on two of the Goldfield's languages, Ngalia and Tjupan. However, this was expanded to include the Kuwarra language, the Kaalamaya language of the Kubrun people in Kalgoorlie, Ngaju, Cundelee Wangka and Ngalia.

In 2015, The Project was successful in obtaining four years funding enabling it to provide linguistic support and services to all the languages of the Goldfields region. It is estimated there are 12-14 languages in the region, however the work remains to be done and the exact number resolved. The Project was awarded four years of Commonwealth funds in order to ensure all language groups of the Goldfields received support and for the establishment of a Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre.



Beverley Rebbeck, Kado Muir, Ghil'ad Zuckermann, Dee Lightfoot



Rosemary Boomba, Ghil'ad Zuckermann, Madeleine Jadei, Rosie Munro, Maureen Yanawana



learning builds resilience within people, culture and community.

The conference is designed for people who work in Aboriginal language centres and those who work on language projects, schools with Aboriginal language courses and Aboriginal language speakers, linguists, researchers, teachers and educators. The conference is an excellent opportunity for the language centres to get together and share information, knowledge and peer assistance.

And then one day...

over 160 people attended the conference which was held on June 16-18th in Kalgoorlie at the Goldfields Arts Centre and organised by the Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre. A variety of people from outside the network also attended as did several representatives from both the Northern Territory and Victorian language centres. We shared linguistic information, social information, cultural processes, theories and a wide variety of information which enabled everyone to work better.

The welcome ceremony was given by the Tjupan people and several children performed a song, with some of the lyrics translated into Tjupan language which meant that the children were singing in their language for the first time. Keynote presentations

were given by Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann, Kado Muir and Dr. Richard Walley. The conference agenda ran from 8.30am into the evening. Each day the proceedings ran overtime as there were so many people who wanted to share with one another. The delegates established a strong sense of comradery early on, which is just one of the positive flow-on effects of sharing the journeys and challenges of language learning.

The conference was an extraordinary event with dozens of people from different language groups coming together. It was an opportunity for people to share their stories and the work they were doing and to realise that they are all doing the same language preservation work, just in different regions! It made people feel supported and less isolated in their language journey.

And because of that...

researching, collecting and archiving languages is a long and complex process and it can take anywhere between 10 and 20 years to adequately record and preserve each language. It begins by looking through old records and archives at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra and the State Library which provides an idea of what languages are in the region and the language names. The language work in the Goldfields region is very new. We are working with six distinct languages but investigating another eight possible languages which could either be languages or dialects.

This work is usually directed by Elders who we take our lead from which often starts from a conversation. Someone will contact the language centre and ask us



"Keeping language alive is extraordinarily critical for personal resilience, self-esteem, self-identity, and for finding one's place in society-which is why we need to ensure the work we are doing is continued."



The Conference Group

to come and work on our language, or let us know that their Granny speaks a particular language. We then begin work with the Elders from that group who are the language speakers. We don't just collect all the language information and take the data away, we work with people to ensure that it is an honest journey and that people are developing skills in linguistics throughout the process.

For example, the language speakers are very involved in the process and help to analyse how verbs work or people are trained. We work closely with them and try to get people speaking naturally. Natural speech provides all the little indicators which help us to analyse language. We record and transcribe natural speech and linguistically analyse and break it down into its small themes. We then enter that into specialist data bases, such as Toolbox, and we then create dictionaries and eventually write grammars.

We also ensure we are producing resources along the way that enable the language speakers to enjoy their languages, to teach their children, and record the languages in publications, books and audio resources. We receive a minimal amount of funding to produce resources so once we have a product we sell it so we have the funds to produce more resources. These resources are then sold through the Goldfields Language Centre.

And since that day...

the most important thing when we are collecting language information is to ensure that young people

are joining us on the journey and listening in. The work we do with Elders encourages young people to learn the languages and to speak them with their Elders. We also try to ensure that our language speakers are recognised in the community so we take every opportunity to get media coverage for them. For instance, many of our language speakers were recently featured in an ABC Open series sharing their stories about the power of language. It's important that the wider community understand that these people are the language champions and holders of all of this knowledge. We want our young people to look up to our knowledge carriers, emulate them and learn the languages. Language learning is vital to maintaining and continuing culture.

In some instances the languages are already being actively passed down. For example the Pilbara has very strong language speaking communities, and



"We want our young people to look up to our knowledge carriers, emulate them and learn the languages. Language learning is vital to maintaining and continuing culture."



Tjupan singers with Richard Hookway

there are a few in the Goldfields. However, as the English language is so prevalent in society, in schools and in the media, it does make language learning and the transfer of knowledge and information more challenging for our young ones. That's why it's so vital to give the languages status and prominence so the children have language heroes to look up to. The languages are not museum pieces, they are an active means of communication that describe the land and the activities and culture of the people. English can't do that.

Each Aboriginal language in Australia comes from a plot of land that it developed on. This land contains within it a huge amount of information about the seasons, the people, the Country, the stories, the water places and the history of the land. Aboriginal languages are like a library of information. If you lose a language, you lose all the information that's been accumulated for many thousands of years and it's gone forever so each language is essential to culture. If we lose a language, it's equivalent to burning down a library of information.

As an Aboriginal person, your language is an expression of yourself, your cognition and your identity. If that no longer exists then an Aboriginal person's means of expressing themselves and who they are is lost. Keeping language alive is extraordinarily critical for personal resilience, self-esteem, self-identity, and for finding one's place in society - which is why we need to ensure the work we are doing is continued.



THE WILURARRA CREATIVE FASHION EVENT

ORGANISATION NAME:

Ngaanyatjarra Health Service, Wilurarra Creative

CONTACT PERSON:

Alex Walton, Silvano Giordano

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PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Personal Helpers and Mentors Service, Tackling Indigenous Smoking Program

KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Silvano Giordano, Alex Walton

KEY WORDS:

Fashion, creativity, culture, strong community, partnerships, empowerment, wellbeing, innovation, celebration, social inclusion, social emotional wellbeing

About the storytellers...

Alex Walton works in the Personal Helpers and Mentors program at Ngaanyatjarra Health Service in the Warburton Community. Silvano Giordano is the Director of Wilurarra Creative.

About Wilurarra Creative...

Wilurarra Creative supports young adults aged 17-30 to build strong communities and strong artistic practices in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. Wilurarra Creative's vision is to create a wider horizon for young people and support their cultural and creative well-being.



Personal Helpers
& Mentors

An Australian Government Initiative



young adults building strong communities, artistic practices & wider networks.



"I don't do fashion, I am fashion" Baby Equanella channels her inner Coco Chanel during a family photo shoot session

Once upon a time...

in 2016, Wilurarra Creative, an arts based community development project based in Warburton aimed at 16 to 30 year olds, joined forces with Ngaanyatjarra Health Service (NHS) to collaborate on a month long fashion project. It was a fun, inclusive and creative project that involved fashion, performance, photography, styling and hairdressing. The collaborative month long project ended with Warburton Fashion Week – the highlight of which was a colourful fashion parade. Wilurarra Creative has been running annual fashion projects for the past 12 years, often linking in with health promotion messages around self care, sexual health, scalp care and trachoma, however 2016 was the first time NHS have been official partners. The fashion show event was held on the evening of the 27th July 2016 at Warburton Park.

The Fashion Project took place over four weeks and required a lot of planning. We had our first team meeting at the beginning of May which included NHS Personal Helpers and Mentors Service (PHaMs)



“It’s so important to have positive outcomes and stories, and highlight the strengths in communities. You hear the negative stories getting a lot of airplay but there are a lot of positive stories that happen frequently in our region and it’s good to celebrate them and have positive media attention.”

team, the Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) team and also Ngaanyatjarra workers/staff from Wilurarra Creative and a group of Yarnangu community members. Discussions were held about holding fashion week and what people wanted the event to look like. After the initial meeting, everyone who attended spent the next fortnight spreading the word around the community to discuss ideas with friends and family. We also approached senior women at the local women’s group for their input which helped to generate more interest and ideas on what should be included. The first meeting planted the seeds of ideas but the feedback and the subsequent meetings were important in motivating people to be involved, creating excitement in the community around upcoming fashion month and tapping into ideas.

It was clear from the first meeting that people wanted this year’s fashion event to be different to previous years. People were keen to see the focus be a whole of community event involving all ages from babies to old people and everyone in between, and to include non-Ngaanyatjarra staff too. We decided this year’s theme would be “Team” so those involved in walking on the catwalk could walk with their team such as a sports team, a school class, their friends, family members or work colleagues.

Wilurarra Creative has a long history of working with visiting artists who come to Warburton to deliver creative and artistic projects. They also have a 12 year history of delivering fashion projects in the



Top Event Pics strutting their thing soaking up the limelight!

Ngaanyatjarra Lands. Wilurarra Creative thus have an excellent formula for culturally appropriate and inclusive event planning that has been developed over time with Yarnangu people. Given the history of this project, and the familiarity of it in the community, it was very easy to engage people. People are always excited and keen to be involved in fashion events. All projects that Wilurarra Creative undertake, particularly when partnered with other organisations like NHS, are a professional development opportunity for staff and volunteers. As such, all projects provide a great opportunity to engage with community members and build skills and confidence in a fun and inclusive environment.

And then one day...

in the weeks leading up to the fashion show, a fashion space was set up so people could choose their outfits, do professional photoshoots and practice their catwalks. The fashion space was divided into outfits and styling, and also a social change hair salon to train and up-skill people in delivering hair dressing services in exchange for getting their hair done. This fashion space was set up to ensure there was a safe and supportive environment where people could experiment with different looks for the catwalk, practice poses and build up confidence for their catwalk performance.

The project team held daily high fashion shoots in the weeks leading up to the fashion show and styled



Painting banners

baby/family photoshoots in the final days of the Fashion Project. Along with Wilurarra Creative and NHS staff, visiting artists (who Wilurarra Creative had previously worked with) including a hairdresser and a male fashion facilitator (to engage the young men) also formed part of our project staff. They assisted with styling and building people's confidence in performance. We also had a Project Coordinator who facilitated photo shoots, liaised with local organisations for their involvement and contacted local and regional media to cover the event.

We held two workshop sessions per day and each session involved five to ten people. People of all ages were involved as we wanted to ensure that as many people from different sectors of the community had the opportunity to be involved. Several high school students participated in the fashion space for work experience and older community members, both male and female, came in to have their hair cut and styled and participate in photo shoots - it was all very fabulous. The long term investment of annual fashion events in the Warburton community have developed people's skills and there is a high level of hairdressing and fashion styling skills that now exist because of it.

Throughout the duration of the Fashion Project, NHS incorporated health promotion messages and activities in a variety of creative and engaging ways. Applying makeup opens up conversations around trachoma prevention (clean faces, don't share towels or make-up brushes) and hairdressing gives opportunity for scalp care/lice treatments. Family photoshoots were co-facilitated by a child health

nurse so young children could have a make over with their parents while also getting eyes and ears checked, heights and weights measured and fluoride treatments on teeth. All aspects of the event were promoted and advertised as smoke free and Tackling Indigenous Smoking workers helped to facilitate the fashion space and were also available to offer advice and support on quitting tobacco. Culturally



Travis Lane representing the Wati (men) at Warburton Fashion Week 2016



Next generation getting inspiration for future desert styles: Warburton Fashion Week 2016

appropriate information on sexual health was dispersed amongst the hair and fashion magazines.

The positive impact the Fashion Project has on people's mental health and wellbeing is difficult to measure. The project created a dynamic environment for all community members to come together and experiment with different looks, develop strengths and skills, and celebrate the art of self expression.

The Fashion Project works on many different levels and there are lots of different elements for people to get involved in such as training, community development, performance, photography, image production, and design. The project is intentionally structured to be multi layered and holistic so there are many positive outcomes for people involved including personal wellbeing, empowerment, self-esteem, positive self-image, community connections and belonging. As this project was run over several weeks, it brought different people in the community together who normally don't interact in this capacity. To watch people work together for a common, positive, community goal is very inspiring.

And because of that...

we had an amazing fashion event! Young people were by far the most excited to get on the catwalk and service providers from the local clinic, school, CDP and Ngaanyatjarra Media got up to strut their stuff. The school teachers organised catwalks for each of their classes and CDP helped on the day to set up the stage and to source firewood which was used in

fire pits throughout the park to keep the audience warm during the evening of the fashion event.

The catwalk itself looked spectacular. It was made by using an old structure, some repurposed pallets and chopped up wood. It was decorated with fairy lights, and the back drop comprised of painted artwork such as a Warburton fashion week banner and various other beautiful locally painted Ngaanyatjarra styled art banners. It was a big, colourful, and spectacular back drop that everyone was proud of.

In the lead up to the catwalk event, there were a lot of behind the scenes contributions by different organisations to make the stage look fabulous and unique. On the night, we screened a slide show of photos on the projector from the photo shoots over the month of workshops and past fashion events. Not only was it visually beautiful but it represented our entire approach to this project; collaboration, inclusiveness and community.

Whether you had a go at styling, participated in hair dressing services, had your photo taken, were involved in putting the stage together or created the music play list, there were lots of ways to get involved. There are many different elements in bringing an event like this together and all are just as important as each other. It's not just who gets to walk the catwalk, it's everything that takes place in the lead up to the main event. All together there were about 60 people involved behind the scenes and at least 50 people strutted their stuff on the catwalk.



“The flow on effects of the community having ownership over such a positive event like this are vast. It creates individual self-worth and community wellbeing and pride.”

And since that day...

what made this event so meaningful were all the different elements that came together. The fashion show started as the sun was setting and was opened by several senior women with traditional singing and dancing. Their pride, strength and grace set the tone for the night. The parade kicked off with contemporary fashion with young women dressed in high glamour with beautiful hair styles, makeup, gorgeous dresses and of course, lots of bling. The younger fellas then came out looking hip and having a lot of fun on stage. We had catwalks from the Warburton Clinic staff, the CDP fellas dressed in

their hi-vis and carrying whipper snippers, Wilurarra staff and the school children and teachers of the school. We had shop staff involved in styling and helping get people ready and someone even dressed up and paraded their dog. Right at the end we had a Warburton fashion first of families walking the catwalk together – brothers, sisters and family “teams” walked together. It was a fantastic way to end the catwalks.

After the catwalks Wilurarra Creative launched ‘Alanya: Ngaanyatjarra Culture, Life, Health, Design, Fashion, Beauty, Art and Music’ - a nearly 100-page book that has been produced by younger Ngaanyatjarra people. It is a ‘youth culture’ book from this region and focusses on young people’s stories and fashion over the years. Wendy Duncan MP also attended to support fashion week and she brought people involved in the Kimberley Girl project with her as well. The event was covered by ABC Kalgoorlie and the Kalgoorlie Miner. NG Media took the official photos and did several radio interviews. The event ran from 5pm until 8.30pm and around 300 people attended, including family from other communities and people from all over the Ngaanyatjarra region.

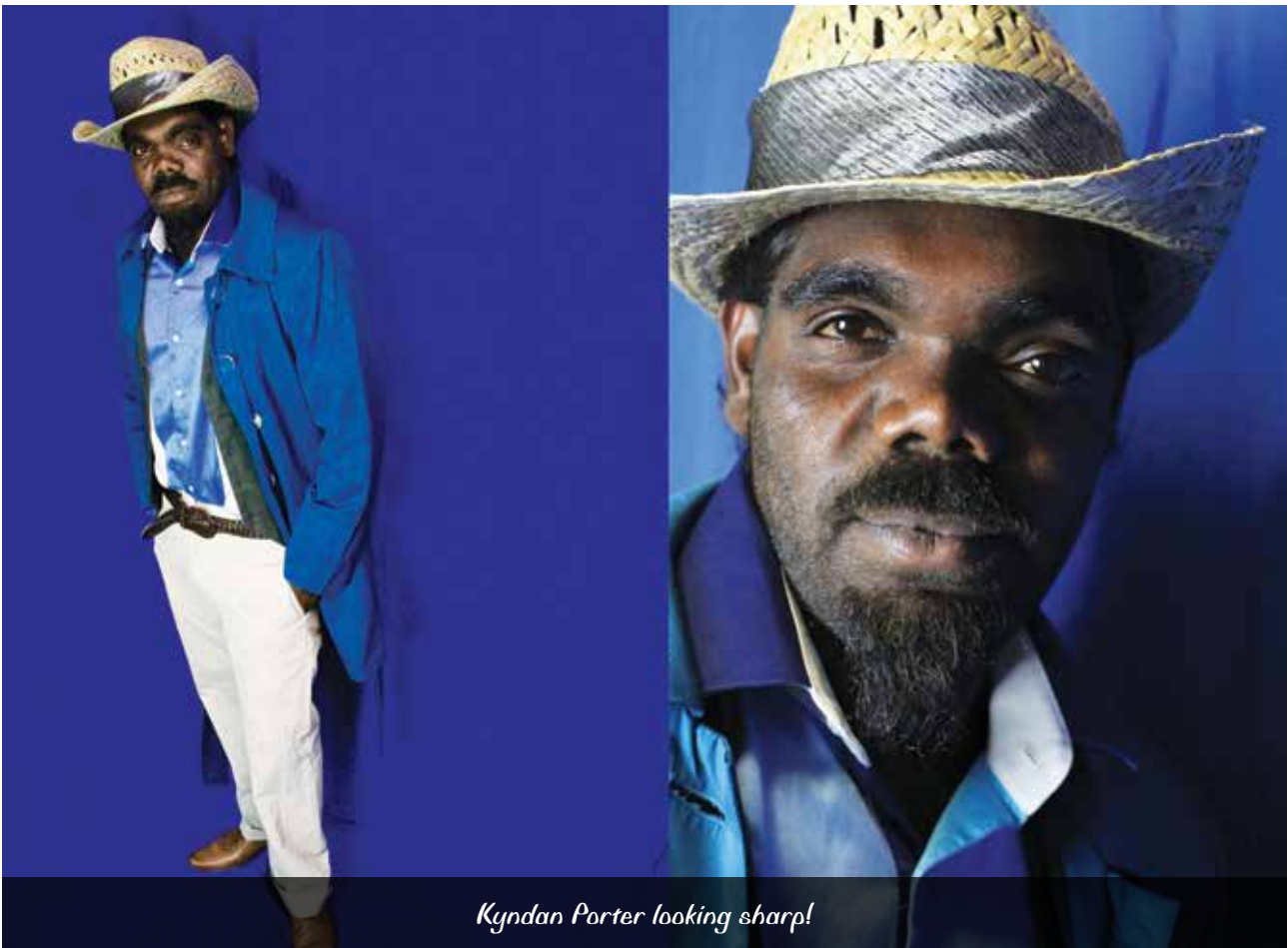
In the days that followed, we visited people and organisations that were involved. We wanted to



reconnect after such an incredible event, particularly with the older women who had opened the night with singing and dancing. They spoke about making young people feel strong and proud of their culture which was one of the most significant outcomes of this whole process.

It's so important to have positive outcomes and stories, and highlight the strengths in communities. You hear the negative stories getting a lot of airplay but there are a lot of positive stories that happen frequently in our region and it's good to celebrate them and have positive media attention. We were thrilled with the resulting news stories published by ABC Goldfields and the Kalgoorlie Miner.

The flow-on effects of the community ownership over such a positive event like this are vast. It creates individual self-worth and community wellbeing and pride. People are still talking about the fashion project months later; the role they played, how they helped to bring it into being and how much they loved being involved. They are already talking about big ideas for the next one.



Kyndan Porter looking sharp!

GARY COOPER - MY STORY

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KEY WORDS:

Acting, the arts, performance, creativity, culture, producing, directing



Gary Cooper

Once upon a time...

the regional town of Kalgoorlie in the Goldfields is my place of birth. My great grandmother is from the Muddawonga tribe in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands which is about 100 km's from Kalgoorlie. When I was a child we lived in Menzies and I grew up going out bush and enjoying Country. I attended school in Laverton, Menzies, Mount Margaret and Esperance. I also went to boarding school for a period of time at the Christian Aboriginal Parent Directed School (CAPS) in Coolgardie because my parents were school board members and I was the first head prefect. My high school years were completed in Perth where I lived with my sister.

About the storyteller...

Gary Cooper was born in Kalgoorlie and raised in the Goldfields, is a member of the Wongutha people and speaks the Wongutha language. Kalgoorlie is home to Gary's great grandmother and her people. Gary was the first Aboriginal to graduate in Theatre at the WA Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) and has had a successful career as a film, television and theatre actor in Australia and overseas. Gary is also an award winning film maker in directing.

Gary has previously worked as the Multi Media Coordinator for the Bega Garnbirringu Health Service, the First Nations Creative Producer for the Regional Arts Australia Summit "Arts & Edges" and the Creative Producer for Tjuma Pulka. Gary is currently working in a freelance capacity.



I then returned to Kalgoorlie to complete two years of general studies to work out what I wanted to do with my life. At the age of 18, I got a job as a used car salesman but I realised that I would more likely be detailing and washing the cars than actually selling them! I didn't pursue that option but decided to stay in Kalgoorlie and do a bit of extra study until I figured out what I wanted to do. Not long after this, I accompanied my cousin to an audition for the Christmas Show at the Repertory Club. The Director asked me if I could act and I said no but they encouraged me to read for the play anyway. They offered me a role in their production on the spot! So I did it and this performance led onto another play about the Goldfields at the Boulder Town Hall written by local playwright Heather Nimmo.

Heather had written a part specifically for me. Performing in these plays gave me a real taste for acting and I was asked if I'd considered auditioning for the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). I remember saying no way, that's where Mel Gibson

"I graduated from WAAPA as the first Aboriginal theatre actor to complete the theatre course and the first to go through any recognised drama school in Australia. At the time I wasn't aware of the significance of this or how rare or special it was. I remember being told I had some raw talent but I certainly didn't feel special."



went and I didn't think I had what it took. However, I thought I'd try out for Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) as it would be easier than NIDA. At the time, I really had no idea how competitive it was. I didn't know that 3000 people had auditioned for a place and only 22 students were accepted. So, I went into my audition pretty green and when I got there I was paired up with a girl and I thought to myself, "This girl is insane." Her name was Sophia Hall and as part of the audition we had to talk in a non-existent language and then she sat on my head and all over my body. I was really shy at the time and I thought- if this is how you've got to act to get into drama school, well none of my friends or my family can see what I'm doing so I'll just act like everybody else! On the back of that crazy audition I received a letter saying I had a call back. I was accepted on the first intake. I was 19 years old turning 20 and I am really glad that at that young age I was able to identify exactly what I wanted to do in life, which was to train as an actor.

And then one day...

starting my WAAPA journey was insightful and at times tough for a young, naïve fella. The pressure was getting to me as the workload was immense. Not only did you have to do performances but you had to hold classes as well, which means you were required to give lectures on the history of art, music and acting to your peers. It was incredibly involved and as we were required to sign contracts, we were on call 24 hours and they practically owned you. We were not allowed to be involved in any outside work during those three years or entitled to any sick days unless they deemed you unwell enough. So it was an enormous journey of discipline, learning, self-

reflection and growth.

By the end of second year I wasn't sure I could continue. I talked with my lecturers and expressed my thoughts that I didn't think I had what it took to complete the third year. I wanted them to be honest with me and tell me what they really thought about my chances of seeing it through. They just said if we thought that you didn't have what it takes, you wouldn't be here. Their advice was to just hang in there. I took their advice on board and I'm happy I stuck it out as the course was a lot more performance based in the third year which I really loved.

The WAAPA course covered absolutely everything in the performing arts space. We were required to complete units in Media Studies and Arts Administration and that intensive training has held me in good stead for the work I currently do today. I graduated from WAAPA as the first Aboriginal theatre actor to do so. There was another Aboriginal lady called Amanda Charoma who was studying stage management but I was the first to complete the theatre course and the first to go through any recognised drama school in Australia. At the time I wasn't aware of the significance of this or how rare or special it was.

I remember being told I had some raw talent but I certainly didn't feel special. After graduating I acquired an agent in Sydney through the WAAPA audition tour and moved to the big smoke. I had just turned 23. Sydney is a challenging, fun, big city which became home for me. I started off acting in education training videos which then led onto some theatre work. The first film/TV work I secured was a role in E-Street



Merlin, Gary's dog and star of the film Stone Bros.



which was an Australian soap opera, set in a tough fictional inner-city district called Westside that ran from 1989-1993. I was employed to appear in 16 episodes which was a "Wow" moment for me.

I was straight out of drama school and onto a top rating TV drama. It was a fantastic experience and really set me up to do other television shows. Following this, there were times I didn't need to audition because the casting director was already familiar with my work. When filming for E-Street wrapped, I did a feature film called "No Worries", which won best children's film in Berlin.

And because of that...

my next step was tossing up whether to do a theatre piece that I had been offered which was unpaid. I wasn't overly keen but was advised to take the work. I'm glad I did as John Bell was in the audience one night and this led to an opportunity to firstly audition and then land a residency with the Bell Shakespeare Company. After signing an exclusive contract with Bell Shakespeare I became one of their primary actors and the first Aboriginal person to work with the company.

The first year into my contract, we performed Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet and Richard the Third. In the second year we did The Taming of the Shrew and Macbeth. Coming from a theatre background, it was great to be involved with such an exceptional theatre company. I learned a lot in my time with Bell. My career as an actor continued to flourish and was very rewarding. Acting took me touring throughout Germany, working with the National Playwright Conference and acting at the Sydney Theatre Festival among many other endeavours. Over this period of time I was involved in several other productions collaborating with actors and directors. I played

the part of Larry on Corrugation Road (Australian musical written by Aboriginal playwright Jimmy Chi) which toured nationally. When this wrapped, I was at a stage where I was wanting more opportunities to work with my own people.

I had a wonderful, interesting, exciting time in Sydney over many years but I came to a point where home was calling me. My dad had passed away and my mum was getting older. I hadn't seen my family for a long time apart from just flying in and out briefly over many years. So, I decided to come home to Kalgoorlie. I got involved pretty quickly in film making through the Deadly Yarns Initiative which is a partnership between Screenwest, the Film and Television Institute (FTI) and the ABC (in terms of the registered programming). I had only planned to come back for a few months and that was over a decade ago now!

A lot has happened in my career during the time I have been back home. I have worked steadily in the arts space with a shift away from acting to focusing more on directing and producing. I have written and directed TV commercials and media and marketing campaigns for Bega Gamibirringu Health Service and worked as an attachment director on The Circuit which was a six part TV series filmed in Broome and aired on SBS in 2007. This led onto work on the feature film Stone Bros. which was released in 2009 and stars my little dog Merlin!

And since that day...

there have been so many highlights in my career. Winning Best Documentary Director at the WA Screen Awards in 2005 for my film Sugar Bag is an achievement I'm very proud of. I wrote the play when I was 18 which was published by Penguin as a short story called Brown Skin Child. It focussed

on the removal of my mum when she was in the mission. When the submissions opened and I heard they were looking for short films I decided to enter it after renaming it Sugar Bag and reworking it into a screenplay.

I have met and worked alongside incredible actors throughout my career. Actors such as John Hargreaves, Geoff Morrell, Justine Saunders, Kevin Smith, Marcus Graham, Richard Haggert, Sunny Bennett and Penny Cook to name a few. Having a role in E-Street and being a part of that family which was at that time the most popular show on TV, was quite an experience for me. I was young and surrounded by seasoned professionals and I remember being star struck by Penny Cook early on. We had to do a scene together and I'm never one for losing words but I completely dried up and couldn't remember my lines.

I remember saying to her, "I've watched you growing up and here I am acting with you and she said, leave all that aside and just treat me as Penny and this character in this moment." Then later on after I'd been on the show for several episodes I remember somebody asking me what it was like being a television star. I just said, "Look I don't really know because I'm just doing a job and being me and what you see is what you get." I wasn't aware that people viewed me that way but I guess with all the publicity and having your face appear in the paper and magazines then that's the perception people had.

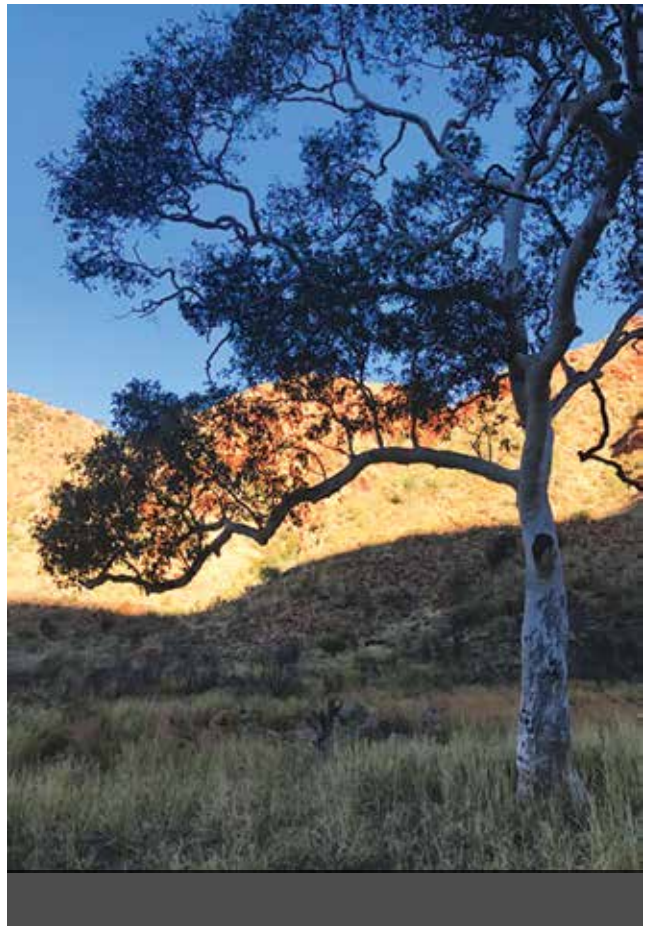
Another highlight would have to be my brother and other family members being in the audience to see one of my Bell Shakespeare performances in

Melbourne. I said to him afterwards (I was fishing to see what he thought), "Did you like the show?" And he said, "Yeah it was good, you did alright. I couldn't really understand it but you did alright!" It was great for me to have him and my cousins there to see me acting.

These days I still continue to be blessed with many professional opportunities, including working with a lot of young local people. It has been great for me to realise I can still live in Kalgoorlie and continue to do what I love. More recently I have been working as the Creative Producer at the Tjuma Pulka Media Aboriginal Corporation but I decided that taking the freelance path was the way forward for me. I have several projects in the process. I am currently completing a documentary and writing both a screenplay and a theatre play, and developing a TV show too, so there are many things in the pipeline. Being freelance is great as I have the artistic freedom to be creative, generate my own employment and pursue artistic options that will be beneficial not just for myself but for many others in my community as well.



"These days I still continue to be blessed with many professional opportunities, including working with a lot of young local people. It has been great for me realise I can still live in Kalgoorlie and continue to do what I love."



THE RIGHT TRACK

ORGANISATION NAME:

The Carey Right Foundation

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PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Carey Right Track Foundation, Ranger Drilling, Canning Districts Athletics Club, Matt Izett

KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Chris Punch, Graeme Watson

KEY WORDS:

Athletics, sports, communities, children, community engagement, partnerships, leadership, discipline, healthy holistic lifestyle

About the Storytellers...

Graeme Watson is a teacher at Carey Baptist College and CCATS Coach. Chris Punch is a 4th Class Firefighter at DFES in Kalgoorlie. Chris is also a multiple state medalist in the 400m and 800m and he regularly competes at nationals. He is also the President of Canning Districts Athletics Club.

About the Carey Right Track Foundation...

The Right Track Foundation is an aspirational program to create relationships between metro, rural, remote Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people through their common gifting of athletics.



Yalgoo Primary School



Once upon a time...

about five years ago, Graeme Watson from Carey Baptist School took several of his high school students and an Indigenous athlete from the Midwest to Stanford University in the USA to attend the Stanford Track and Field summer camp. This was an opportunity for the students to gain knowledge, skills and experiences to share with their local and wider

community. When Graeme returned to Australia, he consulted with several people about the idea of taking a similar initiative into remote Indigenous communities.

Indigenous youth possess a lot of raw talent when it comes to physical ability and athleticism and we were keen to tap into that. We were also aware that children in remote communities are not provided with the same opportunities and resources as children in larger towns and regions. We realised there was an excellent opportunity to provide athletics clinics to young people.

Our first connection was with an Indigenous coach named Jacko in Geraldton who we started working closely with to deliver the athletics program. We then began to expand into Meekatharra and the surrounding regions and as we did this, more opportunities started to present themselves. At this point we realised we needed some structure in place and thus the Carey Right Track Foundation was born and we became a formal foundation. The aim of the Foundation is to empower remote and Indigenous communities through athletics. We strive to build community, purpose and opportunities by running remote school and community clinics, athletics camps, mentoring programs and provide a holistic service that encompasses education, health, fitness, teaching the values of commitment and making healthy lifestyle choices.

Chris Punch from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) in Kalgoorlie who is also an athlete and coach, came on board to help deliver the program to remote communities in the Goldfields region.

The program is now in its sixth year. It has been entirely volunteer based. Matt and Julie Izett from Ranger Drilling provide financial support as well as business practices to support the stability and ongoing work of this wonderful volunteer team. Although the program is aimed primarily at young Indigenous people, there are often many disadvantaged non-Indigenous young people who live in the communities we visit as well, and we are inclusive of everyone.

And then one day...

our teams are all volunteer coaches and athletes who have completed coaching courses. We travel in three teams to target communities in three different areas. One team (consisting of 3 or 4 volunteer coaches) will start in Meekatharra, head to Mt Magnet, Cue, back down to Yalgoo and then back to Geraldton. We have another crew who stay in Geraldton and target the local primary and high schools. The trips usually last four or five days depending on how involved the program is and how many communities we intend to visit.

Implementing the program is relatively straight forward. We take all the equipment with us and do an hour session with different age groups; middle and upper primary school and then high school students which makes the day packed to the brim. On average we visit five or six schools each, so between the three teams, anywhere from 12 – 18 schools altogether. The students love it when we come out to see them, especially those in the more remote areas. Many Indigenous youth living in the remote communities don't have a lot of external connections. They also don't have many positive role models or strong influences so it is great to be able to provide that; we make the most of our time with them and try to have a lasting impact.

On our first trip to visit the communities around the Murchison, we inform the schools that we will be focusing on identifying talented athletes. We then return to Geraldton a month or two later to run an athletics specific camp just out of town over a weekend. We invite the young people from the communities to participate in a whole weekend rather than just an hour or two hour session which provides the opportunity to really harness their skill set.

It's important to make the students understand that the world is much bigger than the community they grew up in and to discuss their options and



opportunities once they finish school. They have very little concept of what else is out there. We often ask the question, "Who knows where Kalgoorlie is?" Half of them put up their hand and say, "Yeah, I know where Kalgoorlie is. I went there once." Not to mention Perth! Many of them have probably never seen the beach. They often have no concept of University or TAFE so whether they are interested in pursuing a trade or doing further study, we find if we share our own stories about work and study, it makes it more relatable.

The most successful long term approach for the communities is for their young people to leave and gain their education or training and then return as skilled workers, as opposed to having service providers coming from the outside who don't stay long enough to provide continuity.

And because of that...

we receive a lot of positive feedback. People who have come on the trips, or have heard about our program comment that they'd love to do something similar. There's more to an athletics career than being an athlete, competing and then retiring. For us, it's about using sports as a tool, taking it to the people, sharing our knowledge and skills and giving back to communities.

Young people, both boys and girls can connect with athletics. The good thing about athletics is it encompasses many different facets. Throwing and



Remote school trip to Meekatharra

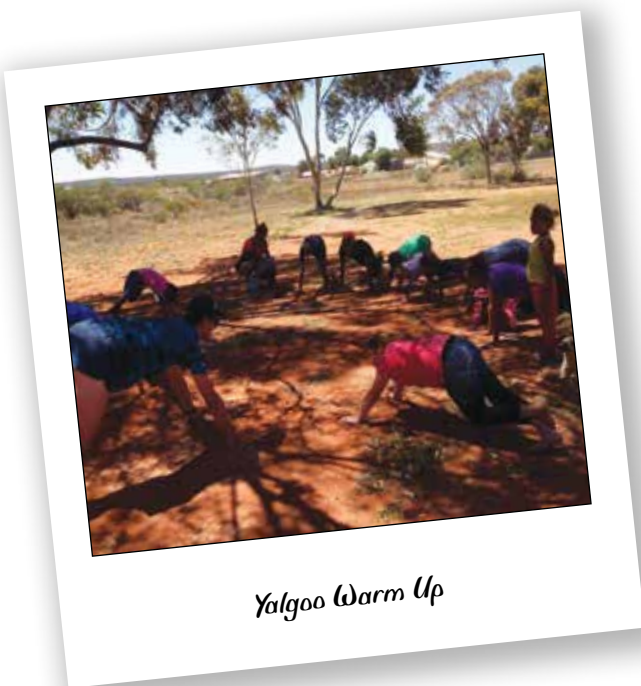
running and jumping are the three main ones, but the youth that are a little bit bigger, or aren't going to be the star athlete at running, are normally quite good at throwing (javelin, discuss, shotput), which is great because it covers all bases and each person finds something that they're good at. It's important for them to excel at something. In this sense athletics is a positive way to connect with remote youth and provide them with a sense of purpose and community.

We also aim to educate about nutrition and healthy lifestyles too. On the Geraldton weekend-long camp, Graeme does information sessions for parents. He'll invite parents to come and listen to a one to two hour presentation on nutrition, staying hydrated and sleeping well so they understand that being an athlete is about adopting a healthy lifestyle. As athletes you're forced to make healthy choices!

And since that day...

the Foundation is continually growing and going from strength to strength. Our ultimate goal is to empower leaders and future leaders to make a difference in their own communities and to provide opportunities based on commitment and hard work rather than socio-economic standing. We want to show young Indigenous people living in remote areas of the opportunities that are out there.

Our main focus this year is to empower communities through coaching courses, education clinics, and to mentor and develop future leaders through athletics. Implementing our program twice a year is not regularly enough to have a big impact on young people's everyday lives. Although what we do is important, what is much more sustainable is to put the ownership of the program onto local people so they pick it up and develop their own athletics programs. A big aspect of this is to build relationships



Yalgoo Warm Up

with local Elders. We try to partner with local people on the ground, and empower them through coaching courses and clinics and mentor them as they start up their own squad, or join a local training volunteer's service.

Long term, we are hoping to partner with Elders and communities to support their young people to fulfil their potential. Although we are still working out what this looks like, it may mean running camps in Perth to help young people see opportunities or supporting and running educational courses. It could also mean setting up homes to support Indigenous students to complete their secondary education. We envisage having a youth worker/parent figure to live with around five students and mentor them. This type of set up would reduce the issues associated with children who come from small communities into a full boarding house of primarily white, non-Indigenous children and sometimes struggle to assimilate. It would be a much more supportive transition for them.

In the meantime, we are focused on continuing to implement our vision for remote Indigenous communities to learn the skills necessary to become self-sufficient and facilitate their own athletics programs.

We also run a 10 week mentoring and athletics program for the young people in Banksia Hill Detention Centre. We recognise that although our past shapes us, it doesn't dictate our future. It is an honour to teach, guide and mentor a group of very talented young people, many of whom are from incredibly difficult family and or community circumstances and to see them grow as they gain skills and knowledge. It is our hope that once they are released they can use their skill set and become productive members of their own communities.



Instructing the Yalgoo students



Athletics Clinics in Newman

We plan to support communities through a process of modelling, empowering and mentoring leaders and future leaders and ultimately end up with lifelong friends who catch up and share stories about how our athletes are going, share coaching information and simply 'do' life together.

If you wish to partner with us please check us out at righttrack.asn.au and get in touch.

"Our ultimate goal is to empower leaders and future leaders to make a difference in their own community and to provide opportunities based on commitment and hard work rather than socio-economic standing."



EVERY VOICE - THE EAST KALGOORLIE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHOIR

ORGANISATION NAME:

East Kalgoorlie Primary School

CONTACT PERSON:

Judith King, Lynette Keleher  Bernadette Delaney

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PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Guildford Grammar Choir


KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Lynette Keleher

KEY WORDS:

Choir, children, singing, collaboration, performing, language

About the storytellers...

Lynette Keleher is the choir leader and music specialist at East Kalgoorlie Primary School. Judith King is the Principal at East Kalgoorlie Primary School. 

About the East Kalgoorlie Primary School Choir...

The school runs a very successful choir and drumbeat program that is open to students of all ages.



The East Kalgoorlie Primary School Choir

Once upon a time...

several of our music students had been participating in public speaking at school and really enjoying being up on stage. Public speaking was an excellent way to improve their confidence when speaking in front of people. The idea to form a school choir evolved naturally from those public speaking sessions and the process was started in 2013 by a teacher named Alison Brown. Many of our students were excited by the idea and were really keen to be

involved. The beginning of the choir journey at East Kalgoorlie Primary was a collaborative approach with community members. We wanted to ensure that the songs were sung in both Wangkatha language and English, so our LOTE teacher at the time taught the students to sing several songs in Wangkatha. Alison had them listen regularly to the local Indigenous group The Yabu Band and local musician Delson Stokes also got involved and went through the language to ensure the songs were being sung correctly, particularly the song, "We are Australian". While the choir was being established, we spent a lot of time practicing singing. We started out with just a handful of students and we now have 45 involved; a mix of both girls and boys. The choir is open to all students at the school and we always welcome and encourage new students to join.

The school choir is a team effort. Lynette Keleher, who is our music specialist and choir leader, runs the majority of the lessons and our teacher's aides assist with running the classes and all the logistical aspects involved. The choir practices twice a week for an hour. When a big performance is impending, we practice every day for half an hour.

We get the students to listen to a lot of different music so they can form a sense of what they like and what they enjoy singing. We build a repertoire of music and have lots of discussions about which songs are appropriate and which songs suit our choir. We



then choose the songs via a voting system so the students have input throughout the entire process. As long as they can contribute to the choices and we sing songs that they really like, they remain engaged in the process.

We are continually learning and singing new songs. The songs need to be in child appropriate language, and Lynette will usually listen to the beat, the rhythm and the dynamics of the song, and try to source a mixture of genres as well. We explain to the students that when they perform, one of our aims is to engage our audience so they have an emotional response when they listen to us sing, and this influences what songs we ultimately choose too.

And then one day...

the East Kalgoorlie Primary School Choir has now been performing for the past three years at different events throughout the state. The choir perform two to three times a term and sing at around 10 to 15 events per year. We get invited to perform all the time and sometimes have to knock back requests because there are too many for us to fulfil.

We are involved in promoting Aboriginal health and wellbeing by participating in positive events for the Aboriginal community. We recently opened for Relay for Life, the national Closing the Gap day event and the Smoking No Way event and we perform at many of Bega's events throughout the year.

The biggest performance for the choir to date took place late last year when we were invited to perform at Telethon with the Guildford Grammar orchestra. This collaboration came about through an established

relationship with Guildford Grammar school who visit our school annually to perform with their orchestra. On the first visit they all sang together and this year the students made such strong connections with the Guildford Grammar students that the school's Director of Music Kieran Hurley thought it would be great to extend that relationship into performing together. Kieran and Lynette then liaised with each other and did most of the song collaboration via the internet. We practised our songs for weeks, however we didn't actually all sing together until we got to Perth. Five of our staff, Delson Stokes and 23 students headed down to Perth to stay at Guildford Grammar school to continue working on the songs. We then went to a recording studio to record them. The students were so excited at the prospect of performing on Telethon and their parents and extended family were so proud and couldn't wait to see them on live TV.

"The choir has such a positive impact on our students. It provides the opportunity to contribute, be creative, and have their ideas and voices heard. It builds confidence, performance skills and makes them feel proud and appreciated."



Weeks of practice culminated in a four minute performance consisting of more than 20 students, aged 6 -13, alongside the Guildford Grammar Orchestra and Delson Stokes singing, "We are Australian" in Wangkatha language. They performed so well and were not at all intimidated by the TV cameras, the bright lights or the sense of occasion. They were in their element and absolutely loved it. Their team effort was excellent and they were actually shocked as to how good they sounded. The students have such beautiful voices and together they sound absolutely amazing. It was a wonderful experience for the students and for all of the staff and Kieran Hurley was fantastic to work with, he is very clever and innovative.

And because of that...

the students who are in the choir at present have been performing since they were quite young and being a part of this choir continues to have an incredibly positive effect on them. In particular we have seen their confidence levels grow exponentially

which is wonderful to see. They are now at a point where they are performing Welcome to Country ceremonies at many local events. One child in particular can perform really well and has been cast in several plays since being involved in the choir and another child has an amazing ear for music and can pick up any musical instrument and play it by ear. The choir has really helped to develop their public speaking skills and they are not at all afraid of being on stage, which is just one of the positive outcomes from performing.

The opportunity to be a part of the choir broadens the students' horizons as to what they can achieve in life. There are not many primary school aged students that have had the opportunity to perform at such a big event as Telethon and for some of our students it was their first visit to Perth. Many of them had never experienced being away from their parents either. It really brings our school community together in a lovely way - working with one another and being a part of an extended team. These are life skills that the students are developing.



Performing on Telethon!

Being involved in the choir also helps the students on their educational outcomes as well. When we teach the songs, we read a great deal and there is a lot of repetition which helps develop their confidence with literacy, reading, writing and speech.

And since that day...

we take a holistic approach with the choir and aim to help the students feel more connected with their wider community on lots of different levels so they are not isolated as they get older. For example, when they leave school and are out working and someone says, "Let's join a Relay for Life team," they will immediately connect that back to when they sang at the event with the choir. It helps bring the community together as all the local families attend the events to watch their children perform.

We are also blessed to have local musician Delson Stokes be so involved with the choir. Delson is an Aboriginal man who makes a living from music and he is a great role model who inspires our students. A lot of the families in Kalgoorlie are quite musical and once Delson came on board, many of the older students were keen to get involved again so they could learn from him.

The choir has such a positive impact on our students. It provides the opportunity to contribute, be creative and have their ideas and voices heard. It builds confidence, performance skills and makes them feel proud and appreciated.

We are happy with all that we have achieved with our choir and we plan to continue performing at community events, and hopefully keep improving and getting bigger and better! We are always aiming to get more students involved and we'd love the opportunity to go back to Guilford Grammar to do another cool collaboration with them.



Lynette...

"I love working with the East Kalgoorlie students. The best part about East Kalgoorlie Choir is the vibe and presence that they give off when they sing. The choir has had a gruelling year. Public performances, travel, weekend events and in school performances. Every event was executed with pride and enthusiasm. The children have a genuine love for their teachers and they create many moments in your day that make you smile. I remember my birthday at East Kalgoorlie very clearly. The juniors sang happy birthday to me every time they saw me, for the entire day. I look forward to continuing on with the East Kalgoorlie Choir and their incredible journey."



If you would like to watch the performance you can view it here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmLLSJBW9QI>

TJINA MAALA

ORGANISATION NAME:

Ability Centre – Kalgoorlie ‘Tjina Maala Centre’

CONTACT PERSON:

Dr Jillian Pearsall-Jones

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Jillian.Pearsall-Jones@abilitycentre.com.au

PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Non-Government Centre Support; generous donations from a Trust Foundation that wishes to remain anonymous

KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Deanne Williams, Penny Evans, Caris Jalla, Dr Jillian Pearsall-Jones

KEY WORDS:

Disability, children, services, community, families, culture, support, language



Once upon a time...

the Country Resource Program therapy team at Ability Centre was aware that referrals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (hereafter Aboriginal) with disabilities were disproportionately low compared to those for non-Aboriginal people. This despite the fact that in Western Australia, rates of disability in Aboriginal people is approximately twice as high as that in the non-Aboriginal population. In 2010, Ability Centre's Research and Development team applied for project funding to explore and address this imbalance. Seed funding from Non-Government Centre Support (NGCS) enabled us to explore and address this disproportion.

And then one day...

a team of therapists and researchers travelled to Kalgoorlie to meet and speak with Aboriginal Elders in the community, and families of children

About the storytellers...

Deanne Williams and Penny Evans are Community Engagement Officers at the Tjina Maala Centre in Kalgoorlie. Dr Jillian Pearsall-Jones is the Clinical and Forensic Psychologist Lead Researcher at the Ability Centre.

About the Tjina Maala Centre...

The Tjina Maala Centre (Wongi for 'going on a journey') which is part of the Ability Centre, is an initiative that aims to provide assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in Western Australia (WA) who care for someone with a disability. The Centre aims to raise the awareness of services and funding available for families, and provide assistance in understanding information around caring for people with a disability.

The Centre was developed as an outcome of the Pika Wiya Kuthupa Project (Wongi 'not sick, different one'), which aims to investigate the needs of Aboriginal families caring for a child with a disability in the Goldfields region of WA.

and adolescents with disabilities in the Goldfields. We also met with staff at both government and private schools, medical, therapy and other staff at Bega Gambirringu Health Services, Kalgoorlie Hospital, Kalgoorlie Disability Service Commission and Ngunyntju Tjitji Pirmi. The initial aim of the project was to form a Community Reference Group and a consultation group of disability service providers in Kalgoorlie – and via these to assess and address the needs of the community – as identified by the community. Our first meeting with the Community Reference Group was remarkable. Within minutes, they named the project 'Pika Wiya Kuthupa', Wongatha for 'Not sick, different one'. Meaningfully, 'Wongatha' language of Aboriginal people of the North-Eastern Goldfields – has its origins in a word meaning "speaker". They named the Community Reference Group 'Tjina Maala', which is Wongatha for 'Going on a Journey'. By 2014, Tjina Maala was going strong as a Goldfields based initiative providing support and advocacy for Aboriginal families in the



Penny Evans



*Deanne Williams, Jillian Pearsall-Jones,
Lenice Forman*

Goldfields who care for a child or adolescent with a disability. We engaged a Community Engagement Officer who conducted community consultations (or story-telling circles) to ascertain community needs. We very soon recognised that many in the community did not know what services were available, nor how to access those that were. To address this need for information and support, we produced a resource, the Message Book for Families.

The aim was, to provide families with information about the types of services and funding sources that were available to them, and to help them navigate the system. We also produced a Message Book for Service Providers. This provides insights into Aboriginal views of disability, communication and language, means to empower families and other topics of holistic health. We also created two colouring in books for children to address unmet needs. Remembering my Family is for Aboriginal children who have suffered of a family member. Going to Hospital is to help prepare Aboriginal children in the Lands who travel to Kalgoorlie Hospital for medical or surgical procedures. It is also for Aboriginal children from Kalgoorlie who travel to Perth or other regional areas for medical or surgical procedures. Our most recent publication Why Can't I Hear You? is a storybook on otitis media (Glue Ear) and currently in production. In the near future we would like to write and publish further resources e.g. story books on autism, FASD and cerebral palsy.

And because of that...

during 2015, the project expanded to mentoring of students in Education Support Centres, an area of need identified by the community. During school Term 4 of 2015 a Tjina Maala Community Engagement Officer began providing services to

students in Years 8, 9 and 10 attending Kalgoorlie Boulder Community High School Education Support Centre. She provided craft activities and mentoring. This mentoring role continued in 2016 at Eastern Goldfields College Education Support Centre. Two Community Engagement Officers, Deanne Williams and Penny Evans, currently mentor all attending students in Years 11 and 12, regardless of race or culture. They work primarily with students at the school one morning per week, and attend work experience with them another morning per week.

Mentoring encourages students with special needs to complete their schooling and acquire the necessary skills to gain employment when they complete their education. The Community Engagement Officers also continue to link people to services and explain what support is available. They also assist people with filling out forms, such as Foodbank and Centrelink. They assist with letters of support for needed services such as health and medical appointments. The Community Engagement Officers work together to do activities with the students, and have designed and published the Tjina Maala Going on a Journey Activity Book. Hands on contact and support by Community Engagement Officers is extremely beneficial to adolescents and young adults with disabilities, as it is well recognised that they experience more mental health difficulties than children without disabilities.



Tjina Maala Message Books

Both Penny and Deanne also work two half-days a week in the office located at Lotteries House, Kalgoorlie. Although they cannot provide a comprehensive service, they assist Aboriginal people who come in by redirecting them to organisations such as the Australian Red Cross, who might have certain facilities that we do not. They redirect families to advocacy services if there are things that they cannot help with, and they listen to anybody who has a story. The service is predominately used by people who feel most comfortable to speak to another Aboriginal person. It is a service that is manned on the ground by local Wongai woman and that is one of the essential aspects of it.

And since that day...

the funding body and Trust Foundation have been most gracious about supporting the project. We have developed an excellent mutual and reciprocal relationship and kept them updated on our progress and outcomes. At this stage we do not want to widely advertise a service that is only manned by two people two mornings a week. We are considering appointing a third Community Engagement Officer so that we can expand into other schools. The issue at the moment is how find a way to transition the project into a sustainable program. We have had positive feedback from many people about our services and resources. A small number of service users were surveyed, and results indicated that the children enjoy interacting with Penny and Deanne. One cannot quantify those sorts of changes and influences on the community. We know that there is definitely a need for our school engagement service and we are keen to look at whether there has been any effect on school attendance, even if it's just on the days that Penny and Deanne are at the school. When Penny and Deanne are out in the community, the children they support often come running up to them and call out excitedly to them. This is a great sign that the children feel comfortable enough to approach them outside of the school setting. It shows that they are reaching these children, which is one of our main objectives!

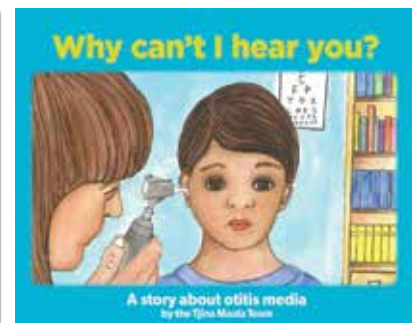


In Deanne's words...

"We go to the school and we do activities with the children but each week we need to figure out what to do. We know the children. We figured out what they like and what they enjoy. We thought why we don't put an activity book together. We do the quizzes and it's really challenging for them. They get really excited about it. Then they decided they wanted to learn Aboriginal lingo so we taught them a few words. Each time we found an activity we'd put it together and make our own little book so they can have it and sit down and do activities to learn the Aboriginal language. You wouldn't believe these children now. We've got a really good understanding with these children in and out of school. When they see us they wave and shout "Tjina Maala ladies"."

Our ongoing aims are to:

- » continue to foster reconciliation between all children and adolescents with disabilities, regardless of race or culture;
- » persist in our role as mentor, to build resilience and self-confidence, and to boost self-esteem and motivation;
- » improve school attendance and completion of schooling to graduation;
- » support transition into the workforce by providing a workplace for undertaking work experience;
- » further up-skill staff by providing opportunities for professional development.



RAISING THE BAR

About the storyteller...

Danae Clarke is a Kimberley girl who grew up in Broome, a mum to four children and a lawyer who works as a Graduate Project Officer at the Housing Authority in Perth.

Once upon a time...



when I was in Year 9 at Broome Senior High School, as part of Social Studies we studied the Lindy Chamberlain case and the events leading up to the trial which really piqued my interest in law and it was the first time the idea of studying law had occurred to me. Several years later my sister started studying law at UWA and my interest in the area increased. Having not completed High School, I completed the Aboriginal Bridging Course at Curtin University as a year 11/12 equivalent and my sister encouraged me to enrol in the Aboriginal Pre-Law Programme. This is an intensive 4-5 week programme run by UWA which determines your eligibility for entry into the Bachelor of Laws undergraduate degree. So I completed that with good results and commenced studying law at UWA, at 19 years of age.

My first 18 years were spent predominately in the North West of WA, specifically Broome where I was born and where my mother's family comes from. My maternal grandmother is from Lombadina which is a community on the Dampier Peninsula north of Broome. Her heritage is Aboriginal, Japanese and Filipino and my mum's father was Indonesian and Chinese. My father is non Aboriginal and is originally from Adelaide. My Dad met my mum in Broome and never left the town! I have four siblings, an older sister and a younger brother from the same union. I also have a younger sister from my mum's second marriage and a younger brother from my father's subsequent marriage.

I attended primary school in Broome and was given the Highest Achiever award in Year seven which was presented by the then Education Minister Carmen Lawrence. I enjoyed learning and did quite well early on however high school was a different story and my focus waned. I moved to South Hedland to complete Years 11 and 12 of high school. I had a boyfriend during this time but he sadly passed away and his sudden death had a profound effect on my life. I stayed in Hedland for a while after and continued



Danae Clarke, Leah Holdsworth

to live with his family but I wasn't able to finish high school. Education was always important to me, but when that happened, I lost my way for a while. I did go back to study later on-starting a course at Edith Cowan University in Broome but was still in limbo and unsure of my direction. I eventually moved to Perth and enrolled in the Aboriginal Bridging Course offered by Curtin University which was the equivalent of completing Year 11 and 12. After I completed that I enrolled in the pre-law course at UWA.

And then one day...

when I was 21, and studying law at UWA I had my first child, a little boy. Studying and looking after a baby was challenging particularly as my partner and I struggled financially and didn't have a lot of family support in the city. So after having our second child two years later, I decided to defer my course and we left Perth and moved to the Wickham/Roeboorne area where my Dad was living at the time. I started working for the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) as a Court Officer and really enjoyed working in the courts and working with Aboriginal people. I felt quite fortunate to be able to represent people in court even though I hadn't finished my law degree. I was really happy to be working at this point and I knew I'd eventually return to study in the future, I just wasn't sure when.



Kaylen, Taneisha, Brayden, Danae, Xavier

Several colleagues encouraged me to return to study and complete my degree and one of the lawyers at Legal Aid in Hedland suggested that I enquire at Charles Darwin University about the possibility of studying externally. As it turned out, he ended up being one of my Lecturers. This time, I had been out of study for too long to receive any credit for the units I had previously completed and so I started the course again from scratch.

Charles Darwin offered an excellent program which enabled people with family and work commitments to participate in online lectures and tutorials predominantly during the evening and this suited me perfectly. I found external study and the flexibility it offered enabled me to really embrace learning again and studying as a mature age student. Online lectures and tutorials were extremely interactive and I found my learning was enriched by the varied backgrounds and experiences of other students who were based all over Australia and some even overseas. People would share different areas of work and expertise in law, making it a rich and interesting discussion. One of the students in my Human Rights class worked for Amnesty International so that was extremely insightful.

We lived in Darwin for a year and I did take some of my exams at the Darwin campus but I was mostly external because I had three children by this stage, two at school and one at home. I had my fourth child during my final year of law school in the middle of the semester and I remember bringing my law text books to the hospital! My son was later diagnosed as autistic which added another dimension to motherhood. By this time, we were living in Perth and

my partner was a FIFO worker working roster of two weeks on, one week off. Of course, there were days where I would think "Why am I doing this it's too hard, how I am going to get through this?" But I just took it one day at a time, one unit at a time ... of course there were times when I wanted to throw it all in but I was determined to finish what I had started and just had to manage my workload and family commitments as best I could.

And because of that...

people would say, "How do you do it?" but I don't think of it as particularly remarkable-lots of people do it. There is strength in everyone and for me, going back to study the second time was a lot easier as I was a bit older and more determined to finish it. Also, having worked at the ALS gave me a much better understanding of law and its practical application. I knew that my previous work experience combined with the theoretical knowledge from the law degree would hold me in good stead once I returned to work.

Finishing my law degree was a natural choice. My work at the ALS was rewarding and I always did the best I could and although people appreciate any sort of help-I didn't want to be doing a disservice to anyone I represented. I wanted to ensure I was assisting people as best I could and thought that by acquiring the knowledge that a degree provides, it would allow me to be of greater service to others.



"Finishing my law degree was a natural choice. My work at the ALS was rewarding and I always did the best I could and although people appreciate any sort of help-I didn't want to be doing a disservice to anyone I represented. I wanted to ensure I was providing the best help possible and by acquiring the knowledge that a degree provides, it would also give me a better understanding of all the ways in which I could help people."

I started my degree in 2009- it took me roughly four years to complete and I graduated with First Class Honours in 2014. In 2015, I started working at the Housing Authority in the graduate program which is a two-year program that offers graduates the opportunity to undertake placements in each of the four divisions of Housing (Commercial Operations, Strategy and Policy, Organisational Transformation and Service Delivery) and increase their knowledge of the Organisation as a whole. In addition to completing a Bachelor of Laws, I had to complete the Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice through the College of Law in order to be admitted as a Legal Practitioner in the Supreme Court. This involved the completion of set coursework and 120 days of supervised legal work experience. Fortunately, I was able to undertake one of my graduate placements in the Legal and Legislative Services branch towards the end of the first year of the graduate program and fulfil these requirements. On May 2nd 2016, I was finally admitted as a lawyer in the Supreme Court which was a great feeling of relief and a sense of accomplishment. Many of the lawyers from Housing also came in support which was really nice.

And since that day...

I worked in the Legal section for approximately ten months and learned a lot during that time. In October 2016, I moved across to Service Delivery Central and commended working in the Service Planning (Service Design) team initially as a graduate but was offered a contract as a Policy and Practice Officer shortly after. I really enjoy working in this team, the people are very forward thinking and supportive and the work is varied and interesting. I also have the support of the manager to work flexible hours which has been really wonderful in terms of providing work-life balance. Although I am no longer undertaking legal work, I find that my legal background comes in handy in this area. There is a lot of opportunity to identify potential risks and utilise the skills of analysis, interpretation etc. in my day to day work. I also believe it's really important to build and maintain relationships so am extremely grateful that the Graduate Program enabled me to meet people in all areas of the Department.

I really enjoy working for the Housing Authority, of course with the recent Government announcements, we are to become the Department of Communities as of 1 July 2017 and I look forward to seeing what opportunities will come from this. I am just relieved more than anything that I got to the end of the



Brayden, Danae, Xavier, Taneisha, Kaylen

degree because it can seem never ending when you're in the thick of it. But, there is light at the end of the tunnel and I'm proof of that! My only regret is I wish I could have enjoyed it a lot more – it really is about the journey not the destination but it's sometimes difficult to appreciate that when you just want to finish. Outside of work, life is full too. I started increasing my financial literacy and learning about different investment products several years ago and now regularly trade options in my spare time, and have done pretty well out of that. The investing gives me more freedom of choice in my life which is a great benefit as it's something I really enjoy! I also encourage family and friends to learn about investing and would like to teach my kids if they are interested because I think financial literacy is just as important as educating yourself in other areas.

I am extremely proud of my children, they each have their individual personalities and are confident in themselves, sensible and respectful of others and importantly are very close as siblings. My eldest son Brayden recently graduated from High School and received the Law and Politics Award in both Year 11 and 12. He is still uncertain as to what he wants to do at this stage and I have no idea if he wants to go down that road but I have no doubt he will be successful in whatever he puts his mind to.

My partner and I would like to live back in Broome in the future. We love the unique lifestyle that it offers, particularly the opportunity to go out bush and go fishing and camping. As much as we love working and living in the city, we are country people at heart and down the track, probably when the kids have finished their studies, that's where we would like to end up.

BLAST (BUILDING LIVES AROUND SOUND TRUTHS)

ORGANISATION NAME:

BLAST Youth Group (Building Lives Around Sound Truths)

CONTACT PERSON:

Stephen Morrison

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dalamomo@gmail.com

PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Bega Garnbirringu Health Service

KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Stephen Morrison, Pastor Dala – Momo, Linden Brownley

KEY WORDS:

Youth, empowerment, unity, leadership, community, mentorship, strong together

About the Storytellers...

Stephen Morrison, Pastor Dala – Momo and Linden Brownley are the founders and mentors of Building Lives around Sound Truths (BLAST) in Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

About BLAST (Building Lives Around Sound Truths)...

BLAST is a volunteer based youth organisation in Kalgoorlie that provides mentoring, support and spiritual guidance for children in a safe, fun, inclusive environment.



Pastor Dala – Momo and Stephen Morrison

Once upon a time...

around eight years, ago three of us; myself (Stephen) Pastor Dala – Momo and Linden Brownley got talking about the youth in our town of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. With youth services severely lacking, we were concerned about our young people not having enough to keep them occupied outside of the school curriculum. We felt that they were crying out for a

facility that was positive and fun to engage with but also provided support and guidance in a safe learning environment. So we set up a youth group called BLAST which stands for 'Building Lives Around Sound Truths' and opened it up to children of all ages in the area. We are now based at the Maku Stadium in Boulder which we lease. BLAST is run entirely on a volunteer basis, so we are responsible for paying for all the resources - it all comes from our own pockets. We use our own vehicles to pick up and drop off the children, we pay for fuel and provide all the food.

And then one day...

word about BLAST grew pretty quickly and children starting turning up in droves on Friday nights. We have now been running for eight years every Friday night and our evenings are divided into two sessions. The first session is for children 11 years and under and runs from 5:30pm to 6:30pm and the second session is 6:30pm until 10pm for the older children. We have around 15 to 20 children in the under 11 age group and approximately 50 children in the older group. We offer two sessions to facilitate the volume of youth who attend. When we first started, there were so many children showing up that it was getting too crowded to be able to cater for everyone effectively, so we decided to run two sessions. Overall

we get around 80 children attending and we aim to have everyone home by 10pm. As we don't own a bus, we all put our money together and rent a van or a bus to transport the children.

We pack a lot into our Friday night sessions and our evenings are very structured. We meet during the week to review the previous session and make a plan for the upcoming one so we can improve. We play games, quizzes and do lots of team building and ice breaking activities to get the children out of their comfort zones.

We have roughly around 13 volunteers who take care of everything; providing healthy meals, facilitating the games and all the activities and transport. We try to provide an inclusive environment where the children can get their minds off their daily lives.

However, a big element of our program is to provide our children with the spiritual guidance that we feel is missing in society and ultimately in these children's lives. We identify what is ripping our people and communities apart; substances like alcohol and drugs, and take a strong stance on these issues. We talk about the importance of positive relationships and strong family values. We discuss suicide, and ensure the children know there are safe spaces, and help and support available. Our main message to the children is that there are people who care for and value them and if they are feeling stressed or depressed, they need to reach out.

The program is designed to build relationships and by observation, we evaluate who shows leadership qualities. Our aim is to develop young leaders so we provide the opportunity for both our male and female youth to become captains which involves mentoring them for three years. We have young boys and girls who were once participants who are now leaders and are supervising the activities and leading the discussions with the young people which is fantastic to see.

And because of that...

we divide the children into two teams throughout the school term. This gives people an opportunity to identify who has bought a friend, and who remembers what we spoke about. We then recap and revisit what they have learned. We have those vital conversations and then move outside to play some sport. After this we come back to the groups to have our discussions. Our topics are all relevant

and necessary and are influenced by the Bible. We discuss topics that we know won't be addressed out there such as; authority, fear, suicide, relationships, loneliness. We tie these discussions in with their day to day lives. People ask us how we can discuss suicide as it's such a sensitive subject but many of these children have been hurt and exposed to trauma and lots of negative things. You can't shock this generation of children unfortunately, they have seen a lot, it's in their environment and it needs to be discussed.

Through the mentoring and discussions, we try to instil the notion that their environment, experiences and surroundings does not have to define them or be their destiny. This way of thinking empowers young people, because it tells them they have a choice to make and that they are the masters of their own destiny. There is empowerment and awakening of consciousness of thought within these young people through what we are teaching them.

We try to help them socially, and educate them to make better choices and if we can help them while they are young, they can hopefully have a better life. Some of us draw on life experiences and the wise choices we have made in life to be able to encourage good, healthy moral choices. As we are Aboriginal, we know the heartbeat of our people. We know what they need so we try our best to provide hope. Much of what we are doing is not a textbook winning

"We volunteer our time, our talent, our hearts and we know what we are doing on Friday nights by providing young people with healthy options, mentoring and a safe space where they can be themselves, is having a great impact. The real testament to the success of this program are tangible; they are alive, they are real, they are breathing and they are right there in our young leaders."





Several of BLAST's youth leaders

formula, it has been developed from experience, observation and reality and we have to apply that experience and do our best to communicate it.

The children really confide in us. Sometimes they have no one else to talk to. They talk, they laugh, they cry, we get all those emotional reactions. We want to have a positive affect on one life at a time, and hopefully one life will affect one home at a time, and in the long term we can affect the community. It is a long process but we are patient people and we believe in these children. We are continually looking at our processes and how to take the children to the next level.

And since that day...

for the last three weeks, we've had over a 100 young people attending on a Friday night which speaks volumes for the program, its effectiveness, and the child's perception of the program. If it wasn't working or addressing their needs they wouldn't use this service.

This program has been a constant over the years and despite the fact that we've had to move location several times, the children have stuck with us and found a way to attend. For example, if we had to meet at a park, they would make their way all the way across Kalgoorlie-Boulder to be there and although this is a big city for a young person, they always make the effort to attend.

One of the things we are aiming to implement this term is to bring both a male Elder and a female Elder in to talk to the children and further help reinforce what we are teaching them. We'd also like to find a permanent premises for our program and are considering after school sessions to incorporate a safe place for counselling as an extension of the program.

We get a lot of positive feedback from the children's parents and caregivers and also from wider community members. We had a lady (whose niece attends our program) say that she has seen a big change in several of the children's behaviour; they don't swear anymore, they are acting very respectfully and that what we are doing is obviously working.

We are aware that we are not the only group who is trying to help reach young people. There are lots of other non-Government organisations who are doing their best to do their part. We also have a close partnership with Bega Gambirringu Health Service so any other support that the children need, outside of the youth group, we will liaise with Bega to facilitate that.

Rick Wilson MP and Angel Scullion MP were in town recently with their advisors and local members from Kalgoorlie and they came to visit us. They had been discussing our program without our knowledge and wanted to check it out so they did, and they watched the program until the end. They sat down with us, helped with the cooking and one of the MP's wives helped lead the cooking team. They were so moved



"The children really confide in us. Sometimes they have no one else to talk to. They talk, they laugh, they cry, we get all those emotional reactions. We want to have a positive affect on one life at a time, and hopefully one life will affect one home at a time and in the long term we can affect the community."

that we were doing all of this on a volunteer basis without any support. At the end of the night, Nigel Scullion picked up his phone and we don't know who he called but in less than ten minutes he said, "Listen guys, I've arranged for a brand new 22 seater bus for you." No strings attached, which was a huge surprise and a great boost for us. We can't wait to be able to use it. He also discussed using the Youth Group as a model for what works in Aboriginal communities. It was really nice to hear him say that.

We volunteer our time, our talent, our hearts and we know what we are doing on Friday nights by providing young people with healthy options, mentoring and a safe space where they can be themselves, is having a great impact. We could give you numbers and stats but the real testament to the success of this program are tangible; they are alive, they are real, they are breathing and they are right there in our young leaders. We have lots of children who were once just attending Friday nights who are now supervising other children which is evidence of leadership and succession. It's encouraging to see the new blood coming through as we are getting older. These young people are taking on everything they have learned, they're running with it and you can see the results in their attitude and the way they are living their lives.



Stephen Morrison taking some of our younger youth through a group study



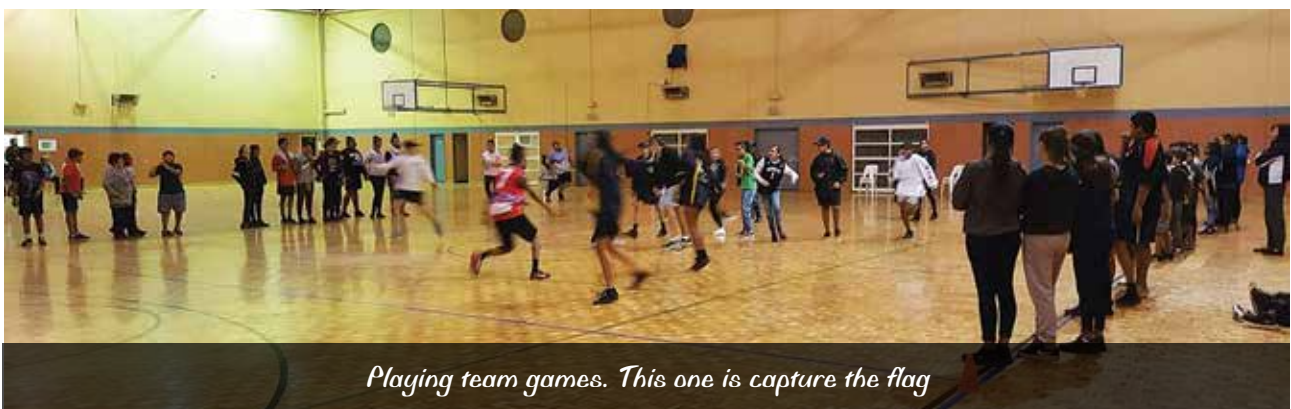
Our leadership retreat/camp in Esperance



Paster Momo taking a session with our youth group



One of our youth leaders running some team games



Playing team games. This one is capture the flag

AN AM AWARD FOR GERALDINE HOGARTH

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PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

WACHS, Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre

KEY WORDS:

Order of Australia, culture, heritage, language preservation, ear health, health promotion, community, children, leadership, learning

About the storyteller...

Geraldine Hogarth is a Kuwarra Pini Tjalkadjar woman. She works as a Senior Aboriginal Health Worker at Leonora Community Health in the Goldfields. She also works on a project with her mother Luxie Hogarth to preserve the language of the Kuwarra (sometimes spelt as Koara) tribal group. This language preservation work is in conjunction with Sue Hanson, a Kalgoorlie based linguist at the Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre.



Shire of Leonora President Peter Craig, Luxie Hogarth, Geraldine Hogarth and Governor Kerry Sanderson

Once upon a time...



~~I am a Kuwarra Pini Tjalkadjar woman who was raised in Leonora in the Goldfields.~~ I spent a lot of my childhood living on the outback stations around Leonora. My ancestors were all born in the bush and my aunty and nanna were taken to Moore River by the authorities. When my nanna and pop met each other and wanted to get married they had to seek permission from Mr Neville, who was at the time the 'chief protector' of Aboriginal people. My nanna gave birth to my mum in Moore River when she was visiting her daughter who was taken away as part of the Stolen Generation but all her relatives were born in the bush. My nanna and pop eventually moved back to the Goldfields. ~~In 1959 I was born in the Leonora hospital.~~

My large extended family all lived and worked on the stations together including my mum and my step dad, my grandparents, my great grandparents and my dad's grandfather. They participated in all sorts of different work including gardening, cooking, and helping out with the animals. I lived on a station called Mount Keith station and went to school at a little place called Albion Downs station which is just up from Leonora.

In 1967 when the Aboriginal hostel was built in Leonora I started boarding at the hostel to attend school in town along with many other children. I also attended school in both Meekatharra and Kalgoorlie. In the 1970's my old people were starting to leave

the station to move into town because the work was becoming scarce and the station couldn't continue paying their wages.

When I finished school I went and worked as a domestic at Nabberu Hostel in Leonora where I lived as a child, and then later on at the Leonora District Hospital where I enjoyed working as a nursing assistant. We worked alongside both the enrolled nurses and registered nurses which was really good.

There were many other Aboriginal people working at the hospital too such as the matron Sadie Canning who was WA's first Aboriginal nurse. 90 per cent of the staff at the time were Aboriginal and Matron Sadie Canning employed the staff in different roles such as cleaners, cooks, orderlies and laundry and gardening staff. Many staff started out cleaning and then progressed onto other roles and there were lots of opportunities for people to learn and develop their skills. Sadie Canning was an inspiration to the staff and so well respected. She taught us many values including the importance of communication skills, having a strong work ethic, ensuring our hygiene and appearance was of a good standard and always being respectful. It was such an important step in my working life. I then went to live in Warburton on and off for eight years where I worked picking up rubbish in the community and taking food stocks out to the older people who were working constructing the road from Warakuna to Warburton. This road is still in  today and it runs from Warakuna past Wannari  community to Warburton. My Thumu's and Kapalies (the Holland families) constructed the road. When we moved back to Leonora my husband and I started to move my old people from Darlot to Wilson's Patch to be close to medical attention and our extended families.

And then one day...

I started working in the health field on the 28th of January 1983 as an Aboriginal Health Worker. I was primarily a liaison between my people and the nurses and doctors. My role was to link people to services and ensure their health issues were taken care of. I progressed from this to focusing more on ear health because I had some personal experience in my family as my sister's daughter had ear issues. I learnt a lot about ear health from the nurses. Once I was trained, my job was to ensure people were staying on top of their infections by cleaning their ears, teaching them how to clean their own ears and monitoring their grommets to ensure they were healing. I would treat

both children and adults. When I started working in community health I knew straight away there was a connection between hearing, learning and culture as without good hearing you can't learn properly.

I'm grateful to the nurses I worked with as they trusted me and the people who I was treating trusted me as well. I learned a lot from the nurses and also the parents and the children themselves. I remember teaching one of my nephews who was six years old at the time how to syringe his own ears. He is nearly in his 20's now and he still gives me a hug when I see him and says, "Mum I still clean my ears like you taught me." So that's a good story, I taught him all those years ago and now he teaches all his brothers and sisters, cousins and their children.

We used the Breathe, Blow and Cough program (BBC) which we brought in from the Northern Territory. Dr Lannigan, who is the ear, nose and throat doctor, visits Leonora twice a year and I coordinate the Goldfields towns of Laverton, Leonora, Mount Margaret and Linster to arrange times for families to bring their children into the clinic when he is here. This clinic with Dr Lannigan has been running for seven years now and we are really happy about this service and the fact that the ENT specialist actually comes out to little old Leonora and sees our children!

And because of that...

my work in the area of ear health and ear health research has now spanned 33 years. However, I have also been working on something else for several years that is close to my heart; language preservation. Alongside my mother Luxie Hogarth and other family members, we have been working on a project to preserve the language of the Kuwarra (sometimes spelt as Koara) tribal group. This work is in conjunction with a lady called Sue Hanson, a

"I am hopeful that my medal inspires others to work hard towards something they believe in and know that if they do, they can make a difference."



Kalgoorlie based linguist at the Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre. We are in the process of putting a dictionary together which will include the Kuwarra language and many other languages from this region. As my mother has four sets of grandparents we say our families' languages are Kuwarra/ Tjalkadjara. My mum and aunty speak both languages and we all speak in language together.

Within Aboriginal Australia, ~~we've got~~ lots of different tribes with their own unique dialect. If Aboriginal people go to another region we have to respect and acknowledge other people and their languages. Sometimes words in different areas cross over and they are the same or they might be used differently. It's good to be multilingual and to learn about other languages. If we travel to other areas then we change the language we are speaking and then we change back. Although the primary use of language is communication, it holds more meaning than this for Aboriginal people. Language is like our own individual DNA that represents our tribe, our family and where we come from. Everybody should be proud of their language heritage.

Working with Sue to get all our language recorded in the dictionary in an ongoing process as languages are complex. We do a lot of talking, filling in paperwork and editing the dictionary together. My aunty, who has now passed away, would always remember vital information about languages. Unfortunately most of the older people are now gone too and with them the languages go. This is why it is so important to get it all down while we can so our children and future generations have a resource to refer to. This will help them to learn about who they are and where they come from. My mum and aunty Gay and I are all still speaking in Kuwarra and Tjupan language and there are other Elders that still speak the language too so that's good.

And since that day...

last year I got a phone call informing me I was to be the recipient of a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia for my work in ear health research and language preservation. The medal was to be awarded to me to represent education, inspiration and research. I had no idea I was going to receive an award and I was so frightened. When the lady rang me she said I wasn't to tell anyone and I didn't know what to do. I called up my good friend Marg Lundy who was my teacher when I was younger and told her what I was required to do

and she was there to guide me. I was supposed to attend the official ceremony in Perth to receive the award with the other recipients but as we had lots of funerals at that time and I ~~and I~~ didn't go as it would have been dishonourable if I did.

Luckily for me, the Governor of Western Australia the Honourable Kerry Sanderson had to come to Leonora for something else so I got the award here at home. She was accompanied by her assistant whose grandfather was buried in Leonora which gave her the opportunity to go and pay her respects at her grandfather's grave. She was really happy to have the opportunity to do this and so we felt like her trip to Leonora was meant to be. I attended a lunch function at the Shire in May last year and was presented with the medal. I was so overwhelmed that I became breathless and cried.

What I have done is gifted my medal to the Leonora Shire and my community so people can view it. I am hopeful that the medal inspires others to work hard towards something they believe in and know that if they do, they can make a difference. I feel that without the people around me supporting me, the medal wouldn't have been mine. It's because of the children, their parents and the people in my community. My friend Marg Lundy said at the time that she had never heard of anyone gifting their medal to the community before.

When it's my time to leave this earth, I'm happy for it to be there for others to know that you can do anything if you put your mind to it. Everyone has their own special talents. I particularly hope it inspires young people to understand if you choose something that you love to do then you know you'll get 100 per cent out of it because that's what it's all about.

"Although the primary use of language is communication, it holds more meaning than this for Aboriginal people. Language is like our own individual DNA that represents our tribe, our family and where we come from. Everybody should be proud of their language heritage."



DESERT GEM: WHEN A DREAM BECOMES A VISION

ORGANISATION NAME:

Desert Gem

CONTACT PERSON:

Vattessa Colbung

WEBSITE:

<http://www.desertgem.com.au/>

KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Joseph Coleman, Shonaye Sambo, Keesha Coleman

KEY WORDS:

Design, art, culture, heritage, Country, future generations

About Desert Gem ...

Desert Gem showcases the many features of Aboriginal design philosophy, which is derived from the foundations of Aboriginal knowledge and history. Desert Gem creates a diverse range of highly valued contemporary designs. Many of Desert Gem's creative artwork ideas and colours originate from the visual and personal experiences captured from Country, the endless landscape and richness of Aboriginal people and culture.

Desert Gem is a 100% Aboriginal owned family business with a range of authentic products which are made in Australia. Desert Gem supports local, Aboriginal, Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander artists, businesses sourcing artwork materials, fabrics and products. Wherever the business is represented it is highly respectful of Aboriginal culture and heritage from which we draw inspiration.

About the storyteller...

Vattessa Colbung is the Co-founder and Manager of Desert Gem. Vattessa Colbung's enthusiasm to start a business arose from her association with the many role models she grew up with. Vattessa's formative years of learning came from family, friends and community which helped her gain the knowledge needed.

Born in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, Vattessa's Aboriginal heritage is of Wangkatja and Noongar. She appreciated her younger years living amongst the Wirrungu people of Ceduna in the far west coast of South Australia. In her mid-20s Vattessa returned to Kalgoorlie with her children, where she continues to live with family, friends and continues to reconnect with community and Country.



The Landscape of the Goldfields

Once upon a time...

back in 2009 I was working in the Government sector at Population Health and I really wanted to do something different. I had been thinking about starting a business for a while but it never really progressed beyond that. I got as far as registering the trademark in 2009 and although I'd registered it, at this stage I hadn't fully committed to starting the business. I was busy with my children and being a single mum meant I didn't have a lot of time. I was trying to juggle

everything in my life and it was already challenging, so making a decision to run a business and still be working was a bit daunting, so I put it on the wayside, but it was always in the back of my mind. Then throughout 2010 and 2011 I slowly started to design the business. In 2012 I got some assistance from CDEP (when it was still implemented) and Wayne Combo from Nooda Ngulegoo Aboriginal Corporation supported me to get the business off the ground. I was introduced to a variety of software



Desert Gem Designs



Dattessa Colbung

programs such as Adobe Creative Suite 4, Bamboo Fun Pen Tablet Driver and MYOB. I also went through channels such as Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) for support and Many Rivers Microfinance who successfully supported me to apply for a business loan.

The beginning was a roller coaster ride and there was a lot of forward and backward steps while I was setting it up. When there are things going on within Aboriginal communities it is important to be flexible and available to deal with culturally sensitive issues. A lot of the time my focus had to be there and because of these factors, the business had many slow starts. Over time I gradually worked on establishing it and taking things step by step. I learned how to run my own business. My children have seen the struggles and joys of the business and have been a source of extra strength in a lot of areas throughout this journey. In those early days I had my business assessed by business doctors and got a lot of advice from different people who had commerce knowledge.

However, I found it very challenging as an Aboriginal woman. I had spoken to some non-Indigenous women who said when they had started businesses they found it difficult and competitive particularly as a woman. My response was yes, I was aware it was going to be hard as sometimes you just don't get recognised or there is not enough support for an Aboriginal woman trying to get a business off the ground. People will introduce themselves to you but it can stop there and if you're trying to look for avenues of donations, sponsorship and funding it can be tricky if you don't know what channels to go

through or even where to start looking. However, I was determined to do it and felt positive the support would come if I looked in the right places. One of the positive things that transpired in those initial stages were a couple of family members who were encouraged by what I was doing, decided they wanted to start their own businesses too. So it was good to see business inspiration from other family members!

And then one day...

financially, I was able to get things moving with support from my children as well as putting my own funds into the business. I started with a small amount of stock and initially sourced from overseas as I wasn't able to source locally at that stage. Nooda provided support with trademarking, and I had voluntary support from a young Aboriginal woman in the Kalgoorlie community who I acknowledge as a Gubrun custodian named Danielle Champion who was very helpful and supportive. She assisted with transferring my designs onto products. Danielle provided me with a lot of support and inspired me as she was young, talented and possessed a lot of design, artwork skills and knowledge.

In 2012, I launched a retail and design business and named it Desert Gem. Desert Gem was to be a 100 per cent Aboriginal owned family business selling authentic products. At this stage I didn't have a website but I did have a Facebook page which is how I initially spread the word. I displayed the first pair of thongs I designed on my FB page and that style hadn't been done before so essentially I put a different spin on the thong industry. In the months

following launching my first product, I noticed that other companies and manufacturers started to do a similar style and design with flip flops. It was a great compliment that people noticed that I had a different style and liked my product.

And because of that...

I wanted my business to reflect my culture and heritage through art and design and be an expression of the unique culture I had grown up with. I also wanted to be my own boss. I knew that I was artistic as a young child but I didn't have the full vision until I got older and started to design and create artwork pieces. As the primary designer for Desert Gem I am now drawing on that artistic flair I had as a child. I have taken the colours of the Aboriginal flag and designed unique thongs with dot artwork printed on them bringing a modern concept to Aboriginal art. The dots and the flag colours combined represent Aboriginal culture.

Other products include 100 per cent cotton tote bags, wine coolers and quongdong necklaces. We have also just introduced an exfoliating body scrub made with Australian native ingredients which are soaked in Australia's fine sea salt. All of our contemporary products showcase the many features of Aboriginal design philosophy. My products are all available to purchase on my website and I also have quite a few distributors in different areas, both locally and regionally including Ceduna in South Australia. The websites Showcase of Aussie Products and



"I wanted my business to reflect my culture and heritage through art and design and be an expression of the unique culture I had grown up with."

Dreamtime have links to my website.

I have had media coverage predominately through the Kalgoorlie Miner which usually comes after Desert Gem has either been nominated for, or been fortunate enough to receive an award. In 2015 Desert Gem won the Best Aboriginal Business award from The Kalgoorlie-Boulder Chamber of Commerce and in 2016 we were highly commended for an Aboriginal Business Award. Moorditj Design, which is another Aboriginal business, won the same award in 2016 alongside Desert Gem. Morditj Design was previously located in Coolgardie but are now based in Perth. I didn't look at Moorditj Design as a competitor. I was just so impressed that another Aboriginal business in the Goldfields whose style and products I really liked were being recognised.

I'm thankful that Desert Gem has received awards as it shows that hard work does pay off in the long run. For me, it's also an acknowledgement of my grandmothers, grandfathers and mother and father's side of the family which is Wangkatja and Noongar.

I mainly approach the marketing of Desert Gem through word of mouth in the community. My family and I will often do the rounds in our community and talk to people about what we are doing to promote the business and the products. If we have events happening in Kalgoorlie such as Aboriginal week or a carnival, in the past I have donated our flip flops to the Red Cross's Short Stay facility and to the Bega Shelter for people who are transient and or homeless.

And since that day...

I'm currently looking to add more authentic Australian products and sourcing other Aboriginal artists like Beryl Hocke of Hocke Designs who hand



Downtown Kalgoorlie

made the tote bags for me. Beryl is a textile artist from the Torres Strait who is based in Cairns. I am hoping to source two textile artists to come up with a design for clothing or another piece of fashion apparel or a souvenir.

I've recently designed three dresses in contemporary Aboriginal design. They will be worn by young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls who attend the Goldfields Boulder Community High School and the Eastern Goldfields College. They will model these designs at Kalgoorlie Fashion Week on the 6th - 12th of August 2017. I have approached an artist named Jenny Gray from Ceduna, South Australia who has agreed to come up with an art piece that will complement two of the dresses so that's exciting and I'm looking forward to seeing the joy it will bring to the girls involved.

The other project I am involved in at present is writing a children's education book called the "Life of a Witchetty Grub" written in English and translated to the "Wangkatja Language." The main character is an animated Bardi character who tells the story to the children. The book is dedicated to my grandmother who passed away in late 2016 and I am hoping to have the book launched late this year. This book is important in keeping our language going for future generations.

Building Desert Gem from scratch was a journey and a huge learning experience but I wouldn't change anything. You learn by getting in and just doing it and then you learn how to balance things out as you come through areas that initially were a struggle. You can only improve more as you progress and I believe that I will keep improving and meet more people who are entrepreneurs that can provide me with further support. It has been an achievement from where I have come from to where I am now and where I am heading into the future.

My family has been a big inspiration for me. My mother and her sisters made dresses for their family in their younger years. My father was a singer and guitarist and is artistically talented so in a lot of ways deciding to start a business and focusing on art, textiles and clothing seemed very natural.

There were many times where I thought I wanted to give up and just go back to regular work, but then my inner spirit would inspire me to change my way of thinking and the next thought would be, "No, I'm going to stick it out." I'm glad I did.

"There were many times where I thought I wanted to give up and just go back to regular work, but then my inner spirit would inspire me to change my way of thinking and the next thought would be, no, I'm going to stick it out."



For more information and to look at the designs visit:

www.desertgem.com.au



GULLIAH TJOOKOOR (THE EMU DANCE)

ORGANISATION NAME:

Gulliah Tjookoor (The Emu Dance)

CONTACT PERSON:

Gary Cooper

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dhoonbun@hotmail.com

PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Country Arts WA, AngloGold Ashanti Mining

KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Gary Cooper, Michael Leslie and Elders Bruce Smith and Janice Scott

KEY WORDS:

Dance, performance, creativity, culture, community, youth

About Gulliah Tjookoor (The Emu Dance)...

The Emu Dance is a contemporary dance piece inspired by an ancient corroboree dance. It was developed by Gary Cooper under the guidance of Laverton Elders Janice Smith and Bruce Scott and choreographed by internationally renowned choreographer Michael Leslie. The Emu Dance was performed by Laverton and Kalgoorlie-Boulder school children at several festivals.

About the storyteller...

Gary Cooper was born in Kalgoorlie and raised in the Goldfields, is a member of the Wonguthi people and speaks the Wonguthi language. Kalgoorlie is home to Gary's great grandmother and her people. Gary was the first Aboriginal to graduate in Theatre at the WA Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) and has had a successful career as a film, television and theatre actor in Australia and overseas. Gary is also an award winning film maker in directing.

Gary has previously worked as the Multi Media Coordinator for the Bega Garnbirringu Health Service, the First Nations Creative Producer for the Regional Arts Australia Summit "Arts & Edges" and the Creative Producer for Tjuma Pulka. Gary is currently working in a freelance capacity.



Once upon a time...

as the then Creative Producer for media organisation Tjuma Pulka and as an actor/director with a long history of working in the arts, many of the First Nations arts projects in the Goldfields region fall on me to facilitate. This includes sourcing artists and collaborators and overseeing all the aspects of producing projects, shows and performances. In 2014, I was appointed the First Nation's Creative Producer for the Regional Arts Australia Summit "Arts and Edges" held in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. With the assistance of Jacqui Spurling from Kalgoorlie Boulder Community High School, we organised a performance for the opening of the Summit. The performance involved a group of high school students who co-performed with a traditional song man from this region. The song was an ancient Corroboree song and it was pretty special for these young people to perform on this culturally important song. The

performance reaffirmed the necessity for our young people to engage in our cultural history and it also provided a fantastic opportunity for them to enjoy the excitement of performing live on stage.

Laverton law and culture Elders Bruce Smith and Janice Scott were really happy with how well the children performed and thought performance was a great way to engage them in culture and tradition. They approached me and posed the question, "How do you think we would go contemporising the Gulliah Tjookorr (or the Emu Dreaming dance)?" The Emu Dance is an ancient corroboree dance which tells the Dreamtime story of the Emu and has only ever been performed by men. The message of the dance looks at the crucial role of a father raising healthy children using the father Emu's relationship with his chicks as a metaphor.



“Every child deserves an opportunity to learn from professional people and find out what they are capable of achieving. My ultimate goal is to bring highly trained people in their field and the many artistic youth in our town together to collaborate on training and performing in a creative space.”

So, I threw the idea around and spoke with Jessica Machin who was the CEO of Country Arts at the time. Jessica advised that we could access funding to get the project off the ground so I went back to Bruce and Janice to explore the concept further. As this dance is historically performed by men only, we had to find a way of getting the girls involved as well.

We really wanted to involve the children who had already performed at the Summit opening in 2014 but as it had been two years earlier, they had either moved or had started Years 11 or 12 so that unfortunately ruled them out. However, we decided to go with it anyway and bring in some new faces. We extended the opportunity to children from both Laverton and Kalgoorlie to be involved.

And then one day...

we had a meeting with the Deputy Principal of the Laverton school and arranged for Michael Leslie who is a world renowned choreographer and an old friend of mine, to come in and run a class to determine who was interested in dance. We invited anyone who was keen to participate and although none of these children had danced before, we discovered a lot of potential in this group.

We had a three week period to workshop and rehearse; the first week we worked with the children

in Laverton and then the second week with the children in Kalgoorlie. During the third week we brought all 30 of them together to rehearse for the performance.

Producing this dance was a group effort and would not have happened without the exceptional partnerships that were formed during the process. Michael Leslie was the choreographer and provided much input into the production. Elders Bruce and Janice provided excellent guidance and advice on all matters regarding cultural protocols, performance and the care of the young people. We didn't make any decisions without their consultation on many of





NAIDOC Day performance-Gulliah Gundala

the visual aspects which affect the performance, such as costumes, whether or not the boys would perform bare chested or wear singlets, or whether the dancers should use feathers in their performance, which can be a culturally sensitive issue. We also worked with Martine Perret who is a talented professional photo journalist who taught the young people the art of documenting, and I drew on my acting and directing skills to break our performance down into scenes, to ensure each scene told a story.

The entire process to develop and produce this performance was really quite special. The students were doing something that they loved. They felt safe and cared for; they had boundaries and discipline and they were being treated as professional performers. They understood early on that we expected and required a high standard from them. As well as learning about performance and taking artistic direction, this process was also an opportunity to introduce other skills to the dance group. Michael had discussions with them to try to identify what they were interested in doing career wise after completing high school. He introduced them to potential prospects such as the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) and WAAPA.

And because of that...

the Gulliah Tjookorr dancers performed for the opening of NAIDOC Festival week in July last year at the Goldfields Arts Centre. It was the first time they had ever performed in a professional capacity and they enthralled the audience of over 300 people with their contemporary take on a traditional corroboree dance. The performance went for 15 to 20 minutes, and the dancers absolutely loved performing, they came off stage feeling ten foot tall and none of them washed their paint off for the rest of the day. The dancers were featured in *The Kalgoorlie Miner* who are always supportive in showcasing positive stories and our young people got to see themselves in the newspaper which was another highlight for them!

Following this initial performance they performed the Emu Dance for the Ochre Contemporary Dance Company a couple of months later and then Phil Thompson and Mark Hewlett from the Ochre Dance Company asked if the dancers would open their KAYA tour for the Kalgoorlie-Boulder season. Even though the performance coincided with the school holidays the dancers were really keen so we had more rehearsals to brush up on their skills and take them to the next level.



Performing at NAIDOC Day-Gulliah Gundala

And since that day...

we are now in the process of planning for the future and discussions are being had for further performances. Funding and support for the Gulliah Tjookorr Dance Project came through Country Arts WA, CANWA Catalyst fund, the Australia Council for the Arts and AngloGold Ashanti.

We are also in discussions with the schools in the Goldfields region to look at the possibility of a partnership to start an in-school program. Our aim is to work with the drama and dance teachers to complement their existing program as well as running our own program within that.

Another long term goal under negotiation is to open a Centre of Excellence in Performing Arts in Kalgoorlie. This centre would be open to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and provide opportunities to learn skills in all aspects of performing arts, depending on what they choose to excel in. ~~The centre would offer all aspects of the performing arts including production.~~ There are lots of exciting options for this proposed Centre of Excellence so watch this space! Every child deserves an opportunity to learn from professional people

and find out what they are capable of achieving. My ultimate goal is to bring highly trained people in their field and the many artistic youth in our town together to collaborate on training and performing in a creative space.



“The entire process to develop and produce this performance was really quite special as they were doing something that they loved, they felt safe and cared for, they had boundaries and discipline and they were being treated as professional performers.”

JAMARL-VIDA LOCA (CRAZY LIFE)

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KEY WORDS:

Dance, hip hop, choreography, performance, travel, family, environmental health



Jamarl Sambo

Once upon a time...

Jamarl Sambo was born in the South Australian town of Port Lincoln. When his parents separated, Jamarl was only two years of age. His mum moved the family to Kalgoorlie and that is where Jamarl spent his childhood. He had an uneventful but happy youth and attended the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Secondary College. Jamarl describes himself as an average student and during Year 11 he decided to leave school to take up a traineeship with a local signwriting business. The traineeship led to an apprenticeship but after 18 months, Jamarl left the position to follow a girl to Perth. He says this time in his life was about being "young and dumb". Unfortunately that relationship did not work and after 12 months, Jamarl found himself back in Kalgoorlie.

About the storyteller...

Jamarl Sambo is an Environmental Health Worker at Bega Garnbirringu, the local Aboriginal Medical Service in Kalgoorlie but he did many other things before he landed this role. You can read all about his life here!



And then one day...

Jamarl was looking for something a little different. Something that "gave meaning to his life". He got involved with the Vibe Alive group which was a travelling two day Youth Festival that involved Indigenous games and art workshops. At first, Jamarl volunteered to help with Vibe, erecting tents and stages. However, throughout the festival, Jamarl got involved in a few hip hop and rap workshops. It was at one of these events that he caught the eye of Michael Farah who is co-founder of Indigenous Hip Hop (IHHP). IHHP is a unique team of talented artists who perform in all elements of hip hop, media, entertainment and performing arts and reach out to Indigenous young people to promote relevant messages through dance. Michael encouraged Jamarl to perform solo on stage at the Festival, which he accepted. He must have been fabulous, because Michael and Jamarl started talking and before long, 18 year old Jamarl was on a plane to Melbourne to attend a full week of intensive dancing and choreography studies.

And because of that...

the world started to open up for Jamarl and opportunities began coming his way. Jamarl was almost immediately learning Latino dancing as well as a suite of hip hop and rap moves. He started performing solo at Latin and Cuban nightclubs. He also worked with the IHHP crew as a casual dancer. On a trip home to Kalgoorlie where he was performing in an IHHP workshop, he met up with a mate and decided to spend some time in Sydney. Now unemployed and in the big city, Jamarl made ends meet by street performing. During one street performance, Jamarl was "discovered" by an American dance producer, who discussed the possibility of Jamarl moving to Los Angeles to be one



Jamarl in his Environmental Health worker role

of the dance choreographers at his dance studio. Without too much delay, Jamarl packed his bag and boarded a plane for LA, all paid for by the American Dance Producer. For three and a half years, Jamarl worked as a choreographer and performer at the studio. He commuted between Los Angeles which was where the production occurred, and New York which was where many of the performances occurred. During 2007 and 2008, Jamarl was one of the dance choreographers (uncredited) for the movie Step Up 2, working with the likes of Jamal Sims and Dave Scott. This movie Step Up 2, for those who may not have seen it, tells the story of a rebellious street dancer who enrolls at a high class School of Arts but finds it difficult to adapt. She joins forces with the hottest dancer at the School and finds a way to merge her old life and new one by forming a team of misfit classmates who train to compete in an underground dance contest.

In 2008, while working with the actors on the Step Up 2 set, Jamarl was approached by some professional dancers whose job involved back-up dancing for celebrities such as Lady Ga Ga, Beyoncé and Chris Brown. At the time, Chris Brown was planning an Australian tour. Jamarl was approached to join the back-up dance team due to his talent and because he was a young Australian Indigenous man. He went to the auditions with a wish – a wish that came true. He was soon practicing with the dancers and joined the crew to tour every capital city in Australia. This tour was the start of a personal

friendship between Jamarl and Chris, who remain friends today and visit each other from time to time.

But life continued to get better as in late 2008, Jamarl was again approached to join the back-up dance troupe for Beyoncé's Australia and France tour. Beyoncé expressed interest in having Jamarl join the team ~~as he was a talented, young Australian Indigenous man.~~ Jamarl remembers one time in Perth when Beyoncé asked him to accompany her shopping because "he was from the area and would know all the good shops." Of course, Jamarl happily accepted and escorted Beyoncé through the Perth Mall, closely followed by three burly body guards!

Unfortunately...

not long after, Jamarl needed to return home to Kalgoorlie for family reasons and settled into life with a young lady and a job in the Iron Ore industry. However, an opportunity to live in South Africa presented itself and Jamarl moved to Durban and started dancing again. After around 12 months, Jamarl's life again changed direction. He and his girlfriend parted ways and he found himself back in Kalgoorlie, once again employed in the mining industry.

For the next couple of years, Jamarl's life journey was a roller coaster. He left his job in mining and moved to Perth, where he met a young lady Jacki, who is now his partner. Their first child was born in Perth




"Beyoncé had expressed interest in having Jamarl join the team as he was a talented, young Australian Indigenous man. Jamarl remembers one time in Perth when Beyoncé asked him to accompany her shopping because "he was from the area and would know all the good shops."

in 2012 and not long after the family moved to Port Hedland to be closer to Jacki's family, Jamarl was unemployed during this time and Jacki was pregnant with their second child. They made the decision to move to Carnarvon to seek work, but after a few months, realised that the best opportunities were back in Kalgoorlie.

And since that day...

when Jamarl arrived back in Kalgoorlie, his grandfather told him about a job going at Bega Garnbirringu, the local Aboriginal Medical Service. He had no idea what the job was for but he applied and was offered an interview. It has been four years since Jamarl started as an Environmental Health Worker with Bega and he says he is "loving it". Jamarl says the job has "been a real eye opener where he has seen many challenging health problems, but can actually see the positive changes happening." He really enjoys travelling to regional and remote Aboriginal communities and is aware that many people will never see parts of Australia that he has. Jamarl is now the Environmental Health Worker who works with the schools in his area and provides education and public health messages and support. He is also involved in the state-wide Squeaky Clean Kids project that aims to reduce trachoma in remote Aboriginal communities by providing free soap, bathroom audits and prevention messages.

For a 29 year old man, Jamarl has had an interesting life. He says he might get back into dancing one day, but it would be more in a teaching or mentoring role.

 For now, the tattoo on Jamarl's knuckles really says –Vida Loca – which translates into Crazy Life!



The Squeaky Clean Kids troupe including Jamarl at one of the remote community airstrips



Rob Mullane, Jamarl, Melissa Stoneham, EJ



STANDING STRONG TOGETHER

OUR NEXT EDITION WILL BE ON THE PILBARA REGION,
HERE IS A SNEAK PEEK OF ONE OF THE STORIES FROM ROEBOURNE.

ORGANISATION NAME:

Mentally Healthy WA, Curtin University

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PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Chevron

KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Lesley Murray, Professor Robert Donovan

KEY WORDS:


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and
Emotional Wellbeing – Adaptation of the Act-
Belong-Commit Campaign in Roebourne, WA

About the storytellers...

Lesley Murray is the Aboriginal Project Manager
in Roebourne for The Act-Belong-Commit
Campaign, Mentally Healthy WA, Curtin
University

About Act-Belong-Commit in an Aboriginal context...

Act: Keep mentally, socially, spiritually,
physically and culturally active.

Belong: Build and maintain a strong
Aboriginal identity by keeping connected
to family and language group, and by getting
together with others at cultural events and
visits to country 

Commit: Commit to caring for country;
to teaching the young ones about culture and
language or re-learning culture and language
yourself, keep up obligations to family and
community, take part in cultural ceremonies
and express culture in song, music, dance or
stories. 

It's everyone's interpretation of the message.
It's not telling everyone to go out and do
everything; it's just whatever works for you
and whatever makes you happy in a healthy
way.



Launch of the Aboriginal Act-Belong-Commit New Logo and Program

Once upon a time...

Mentally Healthy WA, in partnership with Chevron
Australia, launched a unique approach to building
social and emotional wellbeing in Aboriginal
communities in Roebourne on 18 March 2016.
Although Aboriginal people participate in Act-Belong-

Commit events and activities in various localities in
WA, we always wanted to have a more culturally
appropriate adaptation of the campaign that would
resonate with Aboriginal people at a community
level. Given Chevron's interest in the Pilbara and their
commitment to the wellbeing of all people in the
region, a partnership with Chevron made it possible
to test a pilot adaptation in Roebourne.

The pilot program began with extensive qualitative
research and consultation with key stakeholders in



Jasminda's family standing strong and proud together on Country

the community. Group discussions and individual in-depth interviews were held with Elders, members of Aboriginal organisations, and members of the community, along with a number of face-to-face brief, intercept interviews with community members over a six month period.

Aboriginal people in Roebourne explained that good social and emotional wellbeing depends very much on interacting with family, involvement in community activities and connecting to Country and culture. That is why, when framed in a cultural context, the Act-Belong-Commit message resonates well with Aboriginal people in Roebourne.

Aboriginal people in Roebourne also told us that the community didn't need any more programs, but they did need to bring all these and other groups in Roebourne together more. The Elders told us they wanted 'action, no more talk'. Thus the Act-Belong-Commit Aboriginal Project Manager began the task of facilitating bringing groups together and helping to organise community events.

And then one day...

we put the call out for a community-wide competition for an adaptation of the campaign logo to target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Due to people's awareness and acceptance of the need for a social and emotional wellbeing campaign in Roebourne, we had a great response. Local primary school girl Jasminda Stevens of Roebourne developed

the winning logo which is a drawing that depicts the Roebourne communities standing together proud and strong. It also reflects the underlying strengths and capacities of Aboriginal communities in Roebourne which the project aims to harness and strengthen.

Around 180 locals attended the campaign launch and celebration event at Roebourne Pool, with entertainment by local artists, activities for children, giveaways and kangaroo stew. Elders shared with the audience what they do to Act, Belong and Commit to staying healthy and strong, and highlighted the importance of the program for their families and the future of the Roebourne community. The event was supported by over a dozen volunteers as well as the Roebourne Social and Emotional Wellbeing Network, representing a range of service providers in town.

The event was a great example of community and agencies working together. Alongside the local community volunteers, the event was supported by Yaandina Youth Services, The Heart Foundation Pilbara Heart Health Program, One Tree Community Services, NBAC, Yaandina Frail Aged Care, Yirramargadu Crew, PCYC, Yaandina Family Support, City of Karratha Aquatic Centre, Volunteering WA, Pilbara Community Legal Service and The Pilbara Aboriginal Church.



Chevron Australia's partnership with Mentally Healthy WA is improving mental health in Western Australia

We created social media posts and radio advertisements with Ngaarda Media and asked community to spread the word. The Pilbara News featured an article and after the event took place, The West Australian newspaper featured the project in their Health and Medicine section in May 2016.

And because of that...

Lesley Murray has been busy getting groups together, organising trips out to Country for people who are needing to heal, and generally facilitating community togetherness. For example, Lesley has built a Roebourne social and emotional wellbeing network that meets regularly to swap information and ideas, and, more recently is helping organise collaborative projects like the 'Healing Out On Country – Building Social and Emotional Wellbeing with a strong partnership with One Tree Community Services and community members. This is pilot project initially funded by a small grant for the City of Karratha – Northwest Shelf Project with in-kind support from One Tree. The project aims to support families bereaved by suicide and tragic loss. This project has been shaped strongly by Ian Wally, Gloria Newland, Shenara Smith, Lynette Wilson and Beth Smith as well as the families involved so far. Lesley is also helping groups apply for grants and organising events that increase people's social and emotional wellbeing.

Other events include NAIDOC Week's 'Family Camp' stall, a highly successful partnership with One Tree and The Heart Foundation's Pilbara Aboriginal Heart Program. Lesley has also helped to form the Yirramagardu Community Program which is a coordinated approach with agencies to support



Jasminda Stevens

young children and their families. The agencies are One Tree Community Services, Yaandina Family Support, Pilbara Aboriginal Heart Health Program and Kindilink which is a Teddy Bears picnic with over 150 people attending. We have gone on to hold successful events such as National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day and 'Art for your SEWB Day' for Mental Health Week.

And since that day...

the lessons learned in Roebourne can help Aboriginal communities in the West Pilbara and around Australia develop positive social and emotional wellbeing campaigns that build on their communities' strengths. Most importantly, we learned that the Act-Belong-Commit campaign messages are well understood by Aboriginal people. They are good for social and emotional wellbeing, and particularly in the context of bringing groups in the community together and maintaining strong links to family, culture and Country. Communities, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, where people stand together proud and strong, are better equipped to deal with their problems more effectively and improve their quality of life.




"The lessons learned in Roebourne can help Aboriginal communities in the West Pilbara and around Australia develop positive social and emotional wellbeing campaigns that build on their communities' strengths."

*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*

*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

NOISE
STORY