

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN  
INDIGENOUS  
STORYBOOK

CELEBRATING & SHARING GOOD NEWS STORIES  
The Pilbara Edition



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- Lyn Dimer
- Juli Coffin
- Dave Pigram

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

## Cover photo - Photo credit: Sunni Wilson

This photo was taken at Fern Pool - Jubura in Karijini National Park. Fern Pool is a special place and a significant Aboriginal site.

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# INTRODUCTION

In Aboriginal Australian culture, storytelling makes up a large part of everyday life. For thousands of years Aboriginal knowledge, heritage and laws have been passed on through stories and songs. The West Australian (WA) Indigenous Storybook goes some way to retaining and disseminating some of these stories, which can now be read in our books as opposed to the more traditional stories that were once only spoken. The stories we tell in our Books are diverse and include biographies of local champions, song and drama productions, cultural tourism, sporting ventures and health and healing stories. Every story is always told by, or comes from an Aboriginal person. Documenting these stories in writing goes some way to enable many Australians to understand the past, present and future of our Aboriginal communities and their culture.



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

The other important aspect of the WA Indigenous Storybook is the sharing of positive stories. Given the well-documented poor health and despair in many Aboriginal communities, it is important that positive stories of hope and resilience are documented, discussed and shared.

This edition ticks all of these boxes. We are showcasing 14 unique stories - from a personal journey which describes the hardships and challenges of studying a degree, to a community driven garden that brings a small community together, through to large scale celebrations of Aboriginal heritage and culture such as the Karijini Experience.

The WA Indigenous Storybook places Aboriginal people at the centre of each story - the individuals tell their story, they have full editorial rights, they select the images to be used, they give the final tick of approval before the print run. As such, the stories become mediums for Aboriginal people to have a voice. Each story carries with it a mix of Aboriginal philosophies, epistemologies and theories within the narrative. Some are not easy to read, often reminding us of the struggles and tensions that the Aboriginal Australians have endured. Others are joyous and transformational, highlighting the resilience and commitment in communities. Whatever the content, all of the stories help to keep the Aboriginal culture alive - they are organic, dynamic and transformative.

The Public Health Advocacy Institute of Western Australia is genuinely proud to be the editors of this Storybook. As of the 10th Edition, we will be integrating some digital components into each book, which will bring another dimension to the stories. Stay tuned for those changes but in the meantime, enjoy reading through our 9th Edition, which features the beautiful Pilbara region of Western Australia.

Melissa Stoneham

# ABOUT THE PILBARA REGION

- The Pilbara is located in the north of the state, bordered by the Indian Ocean to the west and extending across the Great Sandy Desert to the Northern Territory border in the east. One of the largest regions in Western Australia, the Pilbara covers 507,896 square kilometres of unique and breathtaking natural landscape.

- The region offers an abundance of rugged gorges, secluded waterfalls and isolated rivers and billabongs within its three national parks; Millstream-Chichester, Karlamilyi and Karijini. In addition to its magnificent inland attractions, the Pilbara's coastal plain is home to National Heritage listed Dampier Archipelago and the Montebello and Mackerel islands.

- The estimated population of the Pilbara was 65,900 in 2015, with the median age being 25 years. The fly in, fly out employees also boosts the population further however trends indicate there has been a decrease in population in the Pilbara since 2014. By 2035, the region is expected to have a resident population of more than 140,000, based on the growth and diversification of the economy.

- Most of the inhabitants are located in the western third, whereas the eastern third is largely desert with few inhabitants.

The region has four local government areas - the Shires of Ashburton, East Pilbara, Roebourne and the Town of Port Hedland.

- The major towns of the region are Port Hedland and Karratha. Other towns are Roebourne, Dampier, Onslow, Pannawonica, Paraburdoo, Tom Price, Wickham, Newman, Marble Bar and Nullagine.

- The Pilbara came to national and international prominence during the 1960s when the go-ahead was given to extract iron ore deposits in the region. Today the Pilbara economy is crucial to the State, providing two of the State's largest export revenue earners - iron ore and liquefied natural gas.



Reference: <http://www.dr.d.wa.gov.au/regions/Pages/Pilbara.aspx>

# KANYIRNINPA JUKURRPA

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa

## CONTACT PERSON:

Zan King

## EMAIL / WEBSITE:

zan.king@kj.org.au / www.kj.org.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Martu Leadership program

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Sue Davenport, Peter Johnson, Muuki Taylor

## KEY WORDS:

Working two ways, rangers, leaders, culture, Country

## About Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa...

Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (KJ) was established in 2005 to assist Martu in looking after culture and heritage and to ensure that Martu's ongoing connection with Country would remain strong. Over time KJ has broadened its scope to focus on working with Martu to build strong, sustainable communities with the following core objectives: to support Martu to look after culture and Country; to build a sustainable economy in the Martu communities and to build pathways for young Martu to a healthy future.

To meet these objectives, KJ has developed an integrated suite of programs including culture and heritage, land management, communications and social programs.

## About the Storytellers...

### Muuki Taylor

Muuki was born in 1945 at Wayinkurungu, a soak on the side of the Percival Lakes. His family walked across the entire Great Sandy Desert, north to Joanna Springs and south to Parnngurr. He particularly walked around the Karlamilyi National Park area between Parnngurr and Punmu and the Kiriwirri area on the Percival Lakes. His family group was large - his father having three wives. His siblings include Nola and Waka Taylor who live with Muuki in Parnngurr. Muuki is a very senior Law man and has encyclopaedic knowledge of Martu Law, songs and customs, waterholes and Martu walking tracks, flora and fauna of the desert, and Martu family histories. Muuki works as the Senior Cultural Advisor for KJ providing invaluable cultural advice and guidance.

### Sue Davenport

Sue Davenport has been working with the Martu people of the Western Desert since 1987. She trained as an anthropologist and has been chiefly working since then to help Martu preserve many forms of cultural knowledge and facilitate cultural knowledge transfer to young Martu. She has a deep knowledge of Martu history and a broad knowledge of Martu society, culture and Country.

### Peter Johnson

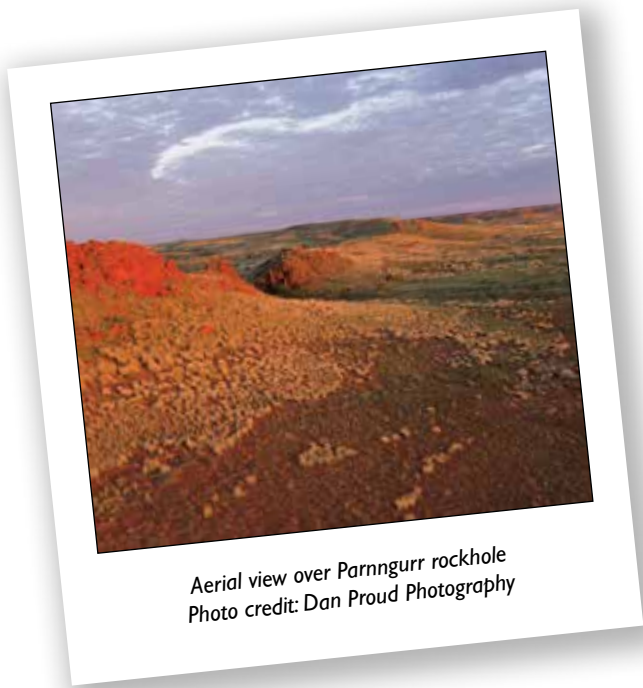
Peter has been working with Martu since 2003. He was the founding CEO of KJ. With Muuki Taylor and KJ's Martu Board of Directors, he and Sue oversaw its growth from foundation to its current scale. He is chiefly involved in its governance and social programs, including the Martu Leadership Program, as well as its cultural programs.



Punmu rangers Karen Rogers, Michelle Thomas and Reena Rogers (RR) ready for their inspection flight to assess where to conduct the next burn



Minyawu Miller, Punmu Elder and ranger, putting fire into Country using jangi (fire) sticks. Fire is used to keep Country healthy



**Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa**  
**Martu Cultural Knowledge Program**  
Building Sustainable Martu Communities

## Once upon a time...

Martu lived a completely traditional desert life in a vast area of the Great Sandy, Little Sandy and Gibson Deserts in the east Pilbara. They are among the last of Australia's Aboriginal people to make contact with the European world. Martu started to leave their desert homeland in the 1930s and 1940s going to the Jigalong depot on the rabbit proof fence. However many Martu remained living in the desert further to the north and east. These people did not move into stations and missions until the 1950s and 1960s.

In the early 1980s, Martu people returned to their desert homeland, starting the communities of Parnngurr, Punmu and Kunawarritji. The first building in each community was a school. Both Martu and English were taught. By the 1990s each community had built a number of houses for families to live in. The Martu people fought hard to get their land rights recognised and in 2002 Martu won Native Title over their Country.

The desert communities offer Martu the opportunity to live on their traditional lands, allowing them to

look after their Country, fulfil cultural and social obligations, speak their own language and live a life that is singularly Martu.

In the short space of two generations, Martu have had to adapt from living a traditional way of life in the desert to engaging with modern Australia. Subsequently, Martu have had to face many challenges as they integrate Martu traditional life with modern 'whitefella' existence in both the towns and the desert communities.

## And then one day...

in 2005 Martu started an organisation called Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (KJ), whose aim was to work towards the vision of the Martu Elders – to look after culture, language and Country for the future generations.

KJ began as a small organisation with two main programs: the collection of old photos, film, oral histories and genealogies, and return to Country trips.

The collection of oral histories continues to be an important part of KJ's work. These recordings capture important perspectives of what it was like to live in pujiman (bushman) and missionary times and record sophisticated Martu language. They are an important way for Martu Elders to share and record their stories with their families before these memories are lost to time.



*"Martu are strong.  
Martu have the knowledge.  
With KJ, Martu are looking after  
their Country the right way. We should  
keep going. When the old people are  
finished, the young people must keep going,  
looking after Country. All the future generations  
should be working to look after Country,  
burning the right way, looking after rock  
wallabies and digging out waterholes."  
Muuki Taylor, Martu Elder and KJ's  
senior cultural advisor.*



*'Right-way' waru is important in keeping Martu Country healthy. Traditional Martu burning practices are an essential part of Martu management of their ngurra (Country)*

These stories, as well as photos and films, are stored in the Martu archive. The archive began with 3000 items and today has grown to over 53,000 items. Martu can access the archive in Punmu, Parnngurr, Jigalong, Kunawarritji, Warralong and Bidyadanga communities, as well as Newman, Hedland and Roebourne. Martu genealogies have been collected over the past 12 years and Martu can now look at their family trees and see information as far back as four generations. Martu hold one of the biggest and most detailed family tree databases of Aboriginal people in Australia.

Return to Country trips involve taking Elders and young people back to their Country. In 2006, the first return to Country was to an important rain-making site in the Percival Lakes region in the north of the Martu determination. Since then there have been over 20 trips taking over 600 Martu back to remote parts of their Country.

In 2009 KJ began to grow. A ranger program was started in Jigalong with three older men and three younger men being the first rangers. The rangers' work is to burn Country in the right way, combining traditional knowledge with modern burning techniques. They also look after threatened and endangered animals such as the black-flanked rock wallaby and bilby, make sure that tourists are safe and doing the right thing on the Canning Stock Route, and map and record waterholes. There are now seven men's and women's ranger teams, based in Jigalong, Kunawarritji, Parnngurr and Punmu, employing over 300 Martu annually.

In 2014 the Martu Leadership Program (MLP) began, with the aim of building the capacity of younger Martu to be capable leaders, particularly at the interface between the mainstream and Martu worlds. This provided a new platform for Martu to collectively discuss and address social issues, build their governance capacity, plan economic development and engage with mainstream stakeholders. The program started with six participants chosen by Martu Elders. Today there are over 50 Martu men and women participating in the program. They are becoming strong leaders for the future.



*Rangers find and record the location of grinding stones left behind by their grandparents*





*Martu rangers used both traditional knowledge and contemporary natural resource management to look after their Country, an area about twice the size of Tasmania*

## And because of that...

Martu remain a strong and distinctive Aboriginal community, with a proud identity and history. They continue to live on Country, practice traditional hunting and burning, and fulfil their cultural and social obligations. They are gaining an understanding and experience of how mainstream Australia works, how it affects their communities and lives, and how to engage and partner with mainstream institutions to shape a new future for Martu. They have created strong and happy communities - communities that bridge the Martu and mainstream worlds.

## And since that day...

KJ continues to grow and work with Martu to build strong, sustainable communities. It continues the vision of the Martu Elders who started the communities over 30 years ago. Martu culture and language remains strong, and Martu Country remains healthy.



*KJ Martu ranger teams use waru (fire) to keep Country healthy. Waru has been central to the way Martu have managed their Country for thousands of years*



*Elder Minyawu Miller with ranger Lewis Williams at a waterhole found during the yintakaja (waterhole) mapping program. Elders take rangers back to waterholes, many of which have not been visited since pujiman (bushman) days*

## Did you know?

Martu Country is 13.5 million hectares - about twice the size of Tasmania.

# THE KARIJINI EXPERIENCE

## ORGANISATION NAME:

The Karijini Experience

## CONTACT PERSON:

Sonia Powell, Amy Neville

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Sonia.powell@nintirri.org.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

The Nintirri Centre

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Sonia Powell, Amy Neville, James Jarvis and Sylvia Kramara

## KEY WORDS:

Culture, Country, experience, history, Karijini National Park, Pilbara region

## About the Storytellers...

Sonia Powell is the Event Manager of the Karijini Experience. Amy Neville is the Marketing Manager of the Karijini Experience.

## About the Karijini Experience...

This event offers a great platform for all people to come together in celebration of Aboriginal achievement. Many Aboriginal people and language groups are represented from diverse backgrounds throughout Australia. We believe the Karijini Experience will gain a reputation as being a celebration of reconciliation - a fusion of many cultures sharing in the beauty of our culture and Country.



*Cultural awareness workshop*



*The Pigram Brothers and Mark Atkins*

## Once upon a time...

the Karijini Experience started in 2013 with the inaugural Karijini Dinner Experience in the National Park for 75 people. The dinner was an initiative of The Pilbara Inland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Chair at the time Sarah Kemp, was the driver and the creator of the event. Sarah was also the CEO of the The Nintirri Centre in Tom Price and when the event outgrew the Chamber of Commerce, it was taken over by The Nintirri Centre. The Nintirri Centre has six service areas of which "Creative" is one. The Karijini Experience falls under this service area.

The dinner naturally evolved into a six day event. We've gone from a dinner to a weekend event to four days to eight days! Eight days was a touch too long so we scaled back to five and then decided we needed one extra day. It now runs over six days and we hold about 40 events in that time. It's timed to coincide with the April school holidays each year. The Karijini Experience is run through the Tom Price Community Resource Centre and their focus is economic development, particularly Aboriginal businesses. The event is entirely funded by grants and sponsorship without funding assistance from resource companies. This choice was made because the project is about long term sustainability and life after mining. We want to help Aboriginal businesses to survive and thrive after all the big guys have left town. It's also, importantly, about caring for Country.



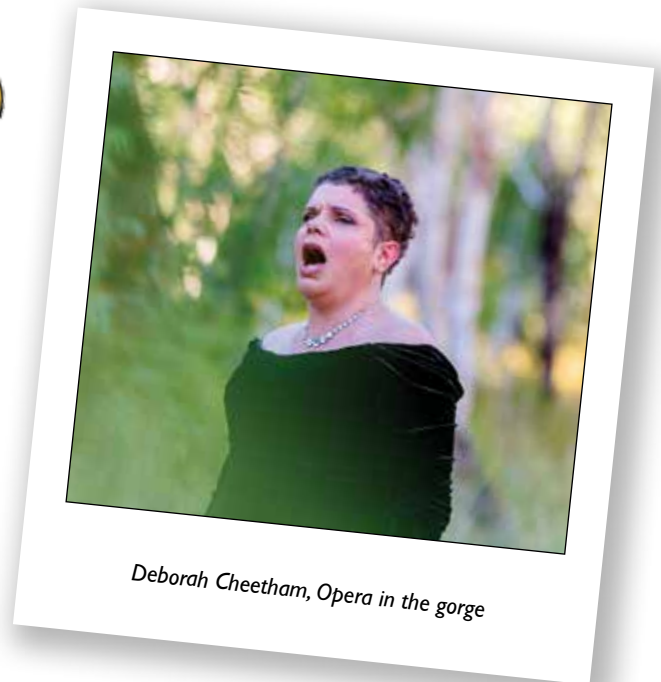
*“Our key vision is an intimate and authentic experience and growing too big isn’t going to allow that story telling between locals, traditional owners and visitors and at the same time, for everyone to be respectful of Country.”*

## And then one day...

as the event evolved from a dinner to a more substantial experience, its core vision also developed to be one that significantly raises the profile of the inland Pilbara and the very special environmental and cultural assets that the region has to offer. The narrative of the 2018 Karijini Experience is to tell stories. On a cultural level, the Karijini Experience is a platform from which to celebrate the history and heritage of the inland Pilbara and a provision for the expression of traditional Aboriginal culture and contemporary arts in a remote region of WA.

2017 was the event’s biggest year yet. 2017 saw visitors grow from 75 to 1235 (in five years) and 3250 unique points of contact. The majority of the day events are free and family friendly, and we offer a few free events in the evening too. We also offer high end events, for example, the Moonrise Lounge is a concert held on the last evening with Archie Roach. We offer two high end dinner options; a three course meal including refreshments and entertainment or a ten course degustation meal.

We offer free walking tours through the gorges, a geology walk, a Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW) walk, cultural awareness walks, landscape photography workshops in the gorges and a cultural walk leaving from the Visitor’s Centre. We were successful this year in securing a grant to pay for cultural activities so Karlayura Tours, who are an Aboriginal Pilbara based tourism company,



*Deborah Cheetham, Opera in the gorge*

could provide a bush tucker cooking workshop, corroborees and cultural awareness workshops.

## And because of that...

there were many highlights this year. One of our prominent performers Archie Roach came out to the Park to join us for breakfast on our long breakfast table in the Red Room. Josie Alec, a local Roebourne lady had the opportunity to sit and jam with him. Josie was then supported on stage by Nancy Bates and Craig Pilkington, who are musicians in Archie Roach’s band, and now they want to record some music with her. For a girl from Roebourne, this was a dream come true. It was a beautiful thing to witness.

There were lots of little stories like this throughout this year’s event - unplanned collaborations that took place spontaneously. The Pigram Brothers also performed, and Mark Atkins, an old friend of theirs, was playing didgeridoo and they all ended up doing an impromptu collaboration. We also had an aerial performer who knew Mark so as he played didgeridoo, the aerialist performed at the same time. It was pretty magical to have all the guests entertained by Aboriginal artists in a culturally significant environment under the evening stars.

The event is opened and closed by a corroboree ceremony which the guests absolutely love. It’s a really raw experience for performers and guests alike. The local performers were bursting with pride because



*Corobooree ceremony*

the audience was so engaged by their performance. All the children in the audience got up and danced with them too which was pretty special.

Another highlight was the Yarning with Elders session. One of our platinum sponsors IBN Aboriginal Corporation organised this event with their Elders members group. The Elders just loved getting on the microphone and talking and sharing their stories and people were really engaged and captivated. There was one Elder who was pretty sick and on dialysis prior to attending. She had been refusing treatment and wanting to turn her dialysis machine off. However, after coming to this event and being part of the yarning group, she said that she wanted to come back and share her knowledge and stories next year. She actually started her treatment again which is such a beautiful, life affirming story to evolve from the Karijini Experience.

The Culinary Experience and Degustation were catered for by Fervor, a pop-up dining company producing high quality food using only native ingredients. They have been the event's primary caterers for the last few years and they're returning next year. They've spent time with local traditional owners to learn more about traditional foods to cater the event accordingly.

We have discovered that people really love the Aboriginal cultural experience and they are hungry for more. There was one person who participated in the cultural walk with Brian Tucker and Maitland Parker who said he'd lived in Australia for 25 years

and never had the chance to talk one on one about culture and Country with an Aboriginal person. This shows us that people are crying out for cultural, meaningful experiences.



*Josie Alec supported by Nancy Bates and Craig Pilkington*



*“The narrative of the 2018 Karijini Experience is to tell stories.”*



*Bush Tucker Cooking*

## And since that day...

we've recently engaged a media company from Perth who do a lot of work in the Pilbara region, to promote our event. At the moment our promotion is targeted on the South West of WA. For the first time this year we had more intrastate visitors than local which was quite impressive for us. We are aiming to extend our promotional activities Australia wide and in the future, we will try to tap into an international market.

Although the event is growing each year, we can only grow so big because of the size of the Park. Our key vision is an intimate and authentic experience and growing too big isn't going to allow that story telling between locals, traditional owners and visitors and at the same time, for everyone to remain respectful of Country. We don't refer to ourselves as a festival - rather, it's an experience.

The line-up for this year is looking excellent already. Archie Roach is coming back and Gina Williams has confirmed. Deborah Cheetham who owns the company Short Black Opera, will perform a recital in the Kalamina Gorge, along with Jessie Lloyd from the Mission Song Project and Mark Atkins who is a fabulous didgeridoo player and storyteller. We will be offering Bush Tucker high tea and a choral workshop, and that is just the start!

There is an exciting difference for the event next year. We've always held it around the full moon, and

in April 2018 it will be a completely new moon so although it will be quite dark, the sky will be full of stars. It's also world Astronomy Day on the 21st April and Earth Day on the 22nd for our last two days. A big focus of the event is on astronomy and how Aboriginal culture aligns with astronomy. Aboriginal people traditionally used stars for mapping and many of their stories are connected to the stars so we want to facilitate opportunities for Aboriginal people to share that information with guests.

We are very much looking forward to another wonderful, culturally rich, unforgettable Karijini Experience in 2018!



**For more information or to book for 2018, visit:**

<http://karijiniexperience.com/>

# ONslow KIDS KITCHEN GARDEN

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Onslow Kids Kitchen Garden

## CONTACT PERSON:

Bell Harding

## EMAIL:

Kristine.Harding@ashburton.wa.gov.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Shire of Ashburton, Chevron, Onslow School

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Bell Harding

## KEY WORDS:

Healthy eating, nutrition, fresh produce, school engagement, collaboration, education

## About the Storyteller...

Bell Harding is Onslow Kids Kitchen Garden Coordinator.

## About the Onslow Kids Kitchen Garden...

Since it was opened in 2007, Chevron-operated Wheatstone Project employees and contractors have volunteered at the Onslow Kids Kitchen Garden (OKKG). In 2014 the Shire of Ashburton and the Chevron-operated Wheatstone Project formed a community partnership to support the continued success of the garden and its associated educational program. The OKKG program delivers health and wellbeing outcomes for local students through weekly gardening and cooking classes. It enhances learning at the school through tactile experiences and provides local kids with a chance to connect with and learn about nature.

[www.chevronaustralia.com/community/education-partnerships/onslow-kids-kitchen-garden](http://www.chevronaustralia.com/community/education-partnerships/onslow-kids-kitchen-garden)



## Once upon a time...

the Onslow Kids Kitchen Garden was officially opened on 23rd May 2007 at the Onslow School, which is a combined primary/high school. It was the brainchild of Marcelle Coakley who was running the school canteen at the time. She initiated the Kids Kitchen Garden Program (then known as Leaping Lizards) and a breakfast club which still runs informally today.

The garden is now funded by the Chevron operated Wheatstone Project, managed by the Shire of Ashburton and implemented by Onslow Primary School - but the original ethos of garden to table and the importance of teaching children that healthy home grown food is delicious, remains unchanged.

The program is modelled on Stephanie Alexander's Kitchen Garden Foundation, a food education program that teaches Australian children positive food habits through fun, hands-on learning.



*Bell Harding, Imogen Ryan and Jaxon Ryan - making green smoothies for the Passion of the Pilbara event*



*Our yummy fresh vegetables*

When I took the role I was already extremely passionate about nutrition and the school gave me free rein to implement the program using my own approach. I knew I wanted to focus on teaching the children to make meals from scratch with whole foods they had grown in our garden so they could understand where food comes from and why it is important to eat fresh produce.

### And then one day...

we got busy growing delicious vegetables in our garden. There are five classes at the school ranging from pre-primary through to high school and I take each class for an hour per week. We alternate fortnightly between the garden and the kitchen. One week we will harvest and the next we will cook the fresh produce. The Stephanie Alexander program recommends two hours to harvest and cook but as I have one hour with the children, I will often do the harvesting in the morning, then take the produce to the kitchen so we can all cook together.

Depending on what's growing and what the children want to cook, we structure the program accordingly. We try to tailor the meals that we prepare with foods the children are already familiar with such as spaghetti bolognese. However, we will cook a healthier version with veggies instead of mincemeat.

Due to the recent purchase of a Vitamix by the school, the children pick kale and we make and drink healthy green smoothies during every lesson. Over time we've slowly reduced the fruit and upped the greens! They all love it, except for one of our kindy students who is four years old, but I insist that she tries a little bit each time. It is a process of exposing the children to the different types of foods and if they don't like something that is okay, but it is important that they always try it.



*“Simple tasks such as picking spinach or kale from the garden and drizzling it in olive oil to eat is so important because it not only teaches children about the source of food and where it comes from, but it provides a connection with the food.”*



*Qwentis Parker, making bird feeders to hang in the garden*

Education is a big part of the program. As well as learning about positive nutrition, we discuss poor outcomes of eating unhealthy food. Food is something that has become quite convenience based, and because of many children's diets, they are heading for diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, which is a direct result of their food choices and how they are being taught to eat. I try to teach them that unhealthy foods are doing a massive disservice to their bodies and get them used to the idea that their feelings and moods are largely steered by their food choices. We have noticed that most of the bad behaviour cards are sent out after lunch, when there has been a big sugar spike. So, our focus is to make children aware of the impact of foods (and particularly sugar) on their bodies and brains.

The children are taught to read labels to gain an understanding of the sugar content in foods. We measure out sugar portions and write up the results to stick on our notice board so we can refer to them and understand how much hidden sugar there is in foods.

I have found making meals the students like and tweaking them nutritionally is a really successful strategy. You can't change a whole culture of the way parents shop unfortunately but you can educate at a young age through hands-on experience.



*"The process of growing their own vegetables and being able to see what they have cultivated is very exciting and they really love being involved."*

I tailor the program a little differently to the high school students and appeal to their vanity by explaining there is a high vitamin content in healthy foods, and the positive effect healthy eating can have on skin.

## And because of that...

my students show a great willingness to participate in this program which makes my job delightful. They always arrive in a good mood, their enthusiasm for the program is fantastic and they leave the lesson excited and happy.

The process of growing their own vegetables and being able to see what they have cultivated is very exciting and they really love being involved. Simple tasks such as picking spinach or kale from the garden and drizzling it in olive oil to eat is so important. It not only teaches children about the source of food and where it comes from, but it provides a connection with the food. We can't place enough importance on doing this for children. The children's cooking skills and confidence have grown exponentially which is really heartening as there are some children who have never been allowed in a kitchen because they make a mess.

The Onslow School children are a great group; all ages respond positively to this program. Even the ones who have behavioural problems become quite nurturing once they get involved in the garden.

## And since that day...

the program has been hugely successful, more so than I could have imagined. There have been some really great wins such as students asking their parents not to put Up and Go in their lunch boxes anymore.



Some of the education and information is hitting its target, and that is shown on occasions where they come and ask me how much sugar is in a Milo.

I would love to say I've had a really positive impact on the way the children eat and I'm really hoping that the small changes we are making now will lead to bigger changes in the future.

The Kitchen Garden program will be taken over and run by the school in 2018. The Ashburton Shire have done a wonderful job with this program by focusing strongly on community engagement and the three partners in this program have collectively made it very successful. Although I won't be in the role next year, I envisage this initiative as a continuum; that someone else will step into the role and this space will really flourish. I hope that they continue to make the green smoothies ... I'll be leaving that in my handover notes!



*The chook pen*



*"I love coming to the garden with Bell because it's fun and yummy and we get to make stuff."  
Laney Brown. Age 6*



*"I love coming to the garden because we can create stuff, have a fun time and get together."  
Finlay Kerr. Age 7*



*"I love gardening because we get to have green smoothies and we make play dough."  
Jesse Holton. Age 7*



*Here is an action shot of sitting down to our fare of spaghetti bolognese which had been nutritionally boosted with lots of fresh vegetables from the garden*

# HEALTHY HEARING FOR LIFE

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Chevron Ear Health Program

## CONTACT PERSON:

Amelia Scheele

## EMAIL:

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## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Chevron Australia

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Amelia Scheele, Tracey Green, Dr Aanand Acharya

## KEY WORDS:

Hearing, ear health, children, prevention, advocacy, community



Tracey Green, Latoya Wingo, Krisaleah Wingo and Amelia Scheele

## Once upon a time...

Telethon Speech & Hearing (TSH) began operating a Mobile Ear Health Program via modified vehicles in 2009. In 2011 a partnership between Telethon Speech & Hearing and Chevron saw the development of the Chevron Ear Health Program. Its aim was to provide ear health prevention and education services aimed at "Closing the Gap", along with regular ear health checks, and Audiology, Nurse Practitioner, and Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist services at no cost. The program was established in response to the Australian Department of Health and World Health Organisation (WHO)

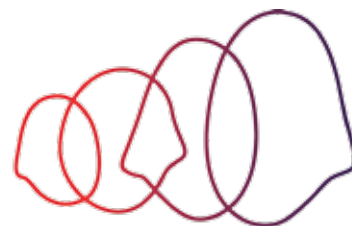
## About the Storytellers...

Amelia Scheele is the Pilbara Ear Health Coordinator at Telethon Speech and Hearing. Tracey Green is the Community Liaison Officer at Telethon Speech and Hearing.

## About the Chevron Ear Health program...

The Chevron Pilbara Ear Health Program provides mobile ear health services to children in the West Pilbara via a modified bus that visits participating schools.

The program provides free ear health checks, including otoscopy (examination of the ear with a light), tympanometry (a pressure test to establish how well the eardrum is moving and whether there is fluid behind the eardrum) and a hearing screening. The Ear Screeners work closely with Aboriginal and Indigenous Education Officers (AIEOs), Community Liaison Officers (CLO) and School Nurses to identify children who are at risk or require referrals for medical treatment or a full hearing assessment.



## Telethon Speech & Hearing

highlighting Otitis Media as a significant health issue, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Studies have suggested up to 91 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in remote communities present with Otitis Media. The 2006 Australian Census identified that there were 5636 Aboriginal people living in the Pilbara of which 1895 were under 14 years of age.

We acquired a bus to run this program, fitted with ear health screening equipment. In 2014 we established our own premises, home to our very



Sheneil Wally and Allana Mack

*“We have one little girl in Roebourne who had her ears treated last year and the Principal told us that since she has new eardrums and can hear properly again, she’s sitting in class listening, she’s engaged and learning and has had a remarkable turnaround at school and influence on her peers.”*



## And then one day...

own audio booth, along with the introduction of our MAPAR (Mobile Advanced Paediatric Audiology Remote) vehicle, an Australian first. Our MAPAR is a mobile audiology booth able to test children of all ages and accessible to the remote communities that would otherwise have to travel for services. Although we originally focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children only, we now screen all children up to Year 7 in the West Pilbara region and accept referrals up to the age of 18. Our focus remains on Aboriginal ear health and Closing the Gap. The Chevron Ear Health program employs two full time employees - a Program Manager and Community Liaison Officer who are both accredited in Otitis Media Management.

we identified that we needed to visit all 11 primary schools from Wickham through to Onslow to screen the children for hearing and ear health. During a school term we normally spend four days screening in Roebourne, depending on the requirement. There is a large percentage of children in Roebourne who need to be seen and this is also becoming more notable in Karratha. In conducting the screening we knew that we may screen the children in Term 1 but by Term 2 the same child’s status may be completely different.

We started day clinics with our visiting Audiologist and Nurse Practitioner in Roebourne (facilitated by Mawarnkarra Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS)), Karratha and Onslow. In Onslow our clinic is shared between the local school and Bindi Bindi Community. We run a combined ENT day clinic in Roebourne/ Karratha and a twice yearly theatre day. Anand, our amazing ENT specialist and surgeon, allows children in our program access to minor ear surgery at Nickol Bay Hospital - the only program and service providing this pathway in Karratha.

All other children are required to travel to Perth. Although there is a waitlist for minor surgery, it’s looking more promising at the moment because of the intervention and management provided by our program. The amount of children needing surgery is decreasing which is really positive. Reviewing children on a regular basis is also an essential component



The bus on the road



The MAPAR vehicle

of our program because it defines who requires specialist intervention and who doesn't. When we review the children, if they haven't seen the doctor at that stage, we put them through a clinic to make sure that they are seen or we take them to the doctors ourselves. Our service is all face to face along with text messages to remind people of the upcoming clinics. We door knock to explain our services to people and arrange a time to pick them up for their appointments. A lot of people don't have access

to transport so this ensures they attend the clinic. Through the program, we also work closely with a lot of the other stakeholders around the region and in Perth. As hearing loss has touched Tracey's family personally, she has a huge passion for hearing health and has established a very close relationship with Australian Hearing. The wonderful outcome of this is we now have a large number of children going through the process of getting hearing devices fitted. This means that the percentage of children who are able to hear properly again has greatly improved. When our children attend an Australian Hearing appointment to be fitted with a hearing device their entire face lights up.

### And because of that...

at the commencement of our program, the percentage of parents who took their children to see the doctor to get their ears checked was very minimal, but as we are well respected and received within the community, we have seen clinic attendances go up 90 per cent from about 20 or 30 per cent since 2014. Attendances have now evened out to about 85 per cent, which is a very high rate for a clinic in this region.

The ear health prevention work we do also contributes to these excellent results. We engage in substantial prevention education by attending the local kindies, playgroups and schools to talk to the children and hand out resource packs. Our education



Krisaleah Wingo, Latoya Wingo and Priscilla Hill,  
- the children's Aunty

extends to all the school principals in the Pilbara region and we run yarn groups for the local people, and upskill workshops for doctors, nurses and health professionals.

As well as prevention education, the most important thing about implementing this program is early intervention. Hearing loss is like a hidden disability - you can't see it. Without early diagnosis, Otitis Media can cause life-long hearing loss and learning difficulties. The younger we can screen these children to pick up any issues and get them treated to stop more damage occurring, the better. They may have to have a hearing device fitted for several years while they are waiting to have surgery which means continual monitoring, but it's worth it.

The child that misses out on hearing testing doesn't stand a chance. If they do have a chronic infection and have lost their ear drums and can't hear, then they won't learn to speak properly, they won't be engaged in the classroom, and they won't learn. Unfortunately, for many of us working with these children it is hard to pick up that they can't hear.

There is a strong correlation between having Otitis Media when young, and getting into trouble with the law when older. That's why early intervention is so important, even if it's only one out of 20 children. We are trying to obtain local numbers in our region, but in the NT and Alice Springs, 98 per cent of all Aboriginal adults who are incarcerated are hearing impaired and this is caused by chronic infection. They can't hold down jobs because they have missed out on their education.

## And since that day...

we know our program is making a difference. We have one little girl in Roebourne who had her ears treated last year and the principal told us that since she has new eardrums and can hear properly again, she's sitting in class listening, she's engaged and learning, and has had a remarkable turnaround at school and influence on her peers. We love hearing stories like this. This is the reason our program is so important. We want to give every child the same opportunity to have normal hearing so they can learn to their full capacity.

As a result of our program we now get called upon for more than ear health. At the moment, Tracey is working with one of the Elders in the community who has eight children in her care. She has limited



*Sheneil Wally and Allana Mack*

hearing and multiple health issues so Tracey is trying to secure her an invalid pension. It's really important that we are adaptable and extend our help to people who may be struggling with other issues because everyone needs help at some point.

Due to recent evaluation results conducted by TSH and Curtin University showing the program is working, we are looking to secure another three year round of funding from Chevron starting in 2019. The evaluation showed a significant decrease in the incidence of middle ear disease (18.6%) for participants in the TSH program which is fantastic, and will enable us to continue the vital work of improving the ear health and lives of children throughout the west Pilbara region.

*"We want to give every child the same opportunity to have normal hearing so they can learn to their full capacity."*



# DOING IT MY WAY: ZACKARIAH GRAHAM

## STORYTELLER'S NAME:

Zackariah Graham

## CONTACT PERSON:

Zackariah Graham, Joe Manning

## EMAIL:

Joe.manning@education.wa.edu.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Follow the Dream Partnerships for Success, The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation, Department of Education Western Australia, Tom Price Enrichment Centre, Tom Price Senior High School, Rio Tinto, Gumala Aboriginal Corporation

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Zackariah Graham, Joe Manning

## KEY WORDS:

Education, leadership, mentorship, university, aspire, role model

## About the Storyteller...

Zackariah Graham is a successful graduate of Tom Price Senior High School who will begin his University education at UWA in February 2018. Zack is crazy about sports and is an avid football, basketball and soccer player, and at times has umpired and coached in all three sports. Zack is a proud Kimberley/Pilbara boy who comes from a big, tight-knit family and has been initiated into Lore and Culture.

## About the Tom Price Enrichment Centre...

The Tom Price Enrichment Centre (TPEC) is the home of the Tom Price Follow the Dream/Partnerships for Success program, which is an innovative education project that began operation in Tom Price in 2002. This project is a joint initiative of the Department of Education of Western Australia, the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation, Tom Price Senior High School, Rio Tinto, Gumala Aboriginal Corporation, and the Aboriginal communities of Tom Price and Paraburdoo. The centre is designed to provide educational support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students so they can succeed in their education, with the aim of gaining employment or progressing to further education. This is achieved through the support of an Enrichment Centre where students work on their school studies with the assistance of tutors after school hours. Students' progress is monitored and additional assistance is provided for students who require this.



## Once upon a time...

even though I've lived in the Pilbara most of my life, I was born in Broome and that's where my heart is. My Nan is originally from Collie but spent a lot of her life in Broome and loved living in the town. My dad grew up in Broome although he's originally from Carnarvon. My mum and her family are from Kalgoorlie. When I was in primary school, we moved quite frequently because my dad's work in the mining industry placed him in different locations. He worked for Argyle and Rio Tinto, which took us to Merriwa, Karratha and Tom Price. After his mining contracts

finished he secured a job in Broome working for the Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation where he was employed doing cultural awareness work. I attended Saint Mary's College for the first couple of years of my high schooling in Broome. My six siblings and I then moved back to Tom Price and we've been here for the past three and a half years. I started at Tom Price Senior High School at the beginning of Term two in Year nine. As you can see, we keep coming back to Tom Price! I would consider Tom Price home as I've been here most of my life,



Zack with former Tom Price SHS Principal Trevor Henderson at his end of Year 11 ceremony



Year 12 Tom Price Enrichment Centre graduates

I know a lot of people and I love the town and the people. It's a great place to be.

**And then one day...**

I knew I wanted to focus on my education and succeed. In Year 11, I was top of my year in vocational studies so I was pretty happy about that. Year 12 was a bit more challenging as I missed the first term because of personal issues. My Nan passed away so our extended family spent quite a bit of time together in Perth as it was mourning time for the family. However, I returned to Tom Price in Term two and resumed my studies. I decided to take the vocational pathway during my high school education. My subjects in Year 12 were English, Maths, Physical Education, Certificate 2 in Sport and Recreation, General Health Studies and Careers.

Mr Joe Manning, who is the Program Coordinator at the Tom Price Enrichment Centre suggested I apply for the WA Training Awards late last year. These awards recognise and reward outstanding achievements of apprentices, trainees and vocational students. I had initially chosen not to be involved but after a lot of encouragement from Mr Manning, I applied. I'm glad I did as I made it to the semi-finals. I had interviews in Perth with a panel of three judges, including a Project Manager of the Polly Farmer Foundation and the Sport and Recreation Director. The interview process went for 40 minutes and

it was really daunting. The panel asked me a lot of different questions about the sports and recreation industry in relation to Aboriginal people and their educational outcomes.

Prior to the interview, I did a lot of preparation at the Enrichment Centre with Mr Manning who helped me to prepare with mock interview questions. Resources were also provided by the Sports and Recreation Director which helped with the preparation process. I'm glad I was well prepared going into the interview. There were eight semi-finalists and I was the youngest participant and the only person that was in high school at the time. Although I didn't reach the final stage, it was an excellent experience and I was happy with how my interview went.

*"I've been able to do well with my education because I have very supportive parents and a large supportive extended family including brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles."*





*The 2015 TPEC Year 12 graduates - the largest year group of TPEC students to graduate from TPSHS in the TPEC programs history*

Outside of my school life, I've been employed for the past three years, doing night fill at Coles. I'm very active and sports orientated and I play football, basketball and soccer and at times have volunteered as an umpire and coach in all three sports. I've been pretty busy these past few years! Two years ago I was initiated a man through Lore and Culture, so along with my brother and father, I have earned a lot of respect in the community, which I'm proud of.

Now that I've finished high school, life is going to change for me. I'll be leaving Tom Price mid-November to attend my interview at UWA and hopefully be accepted into the School of Indigenous Studies Aboriginal Orientation Course. This is a bridging course that starts on 26 February, 2018, runs for a year, and will be my pathway into a university degree. I haven't been officially accepted yet but it's likely I will be. If I do get accepted I'll live on campus at the University Hall. I am currently trying to secure a scholarship to pay for my course.

I'll be taking the science pathway, which means I need to complete a Bachelor of Science preparation course involving subjects such as psychics, chemistry, sports, Aboriginal Voices and University Foundations. Sports Science is my first preference, Environmental Science my second and Environmental Engineering is my third. UWA is my first choice because my sister studied Criminology there and she had a great experience.

I'd also like to try out for the UWA football (AFL) team if I attend UWA. I am a midfielder and played for the V Swans in the Pilbara in 2015. I am pretty

passionate about football. I am also keen to apply to the University of Melbourne. I've been to Melbourne once for a footy trip and just loved it, I really fell in love with the city; it has a great vibe. It's a lot different to Perth, it's a lot bigger, has lot more people and is more diverse.

## And because of that...

I've been able to do well with my education because I have very supportive parents and a large supportive extended family including brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles. Both my sister and aunty have been to university and they have been really encouraging. I ask them for advice frequently. My dad has been through a lot in his life and imparted a great deal of advice, as has my mum. My Nan has been a massive role model and influence on how I have turned out. She was loving, caring and kind. She taught me a lot of good values which I'll carry with me for the rest of my life.

Mr Manning at the Enrichment Centre has been awesome, he has helped me throughout my entire high school education. Without his help and being able to utilise the Enrichment Centre, I'm not sure I would have done so well. I have six siblings and share a room with two of my brothers so it's not always easy to study. Every day after school I've attended the Enrichment Centre and Mr Manning has opened it up on weekends to help me out whenever he can. My connection with the Centre has opened up so many opportunities for me. I've toured all the universities in Perth and was given an extensive tour of the School of Indigenous Studies at UWA - their team was incredibly supportive. Without that exposure





Former Tom Price SHS Principal Trevor Henderson, Zack and Joe Manning



Zack with his parents, Nathane and Melissa Graham

from the Enrichment Centre, I don't think I'd be able to take the university pathway. I'll continue to keep in contact with Mr Manning for years to come, through university camps and the Enrichment Centre.

## And since that day...

now that I've finished high school, I'll start working more. Around mid-way through November I'll head to Perth to live with my brother. I've already lined up a position in Perth at Coles which is a direct transfer so that's handy. While I am working there I'll prepare for my university interview at UWA. A lot of people say it's crazy to go straight from school to university as I've been studying for the past 14 years and I'm about to go and do more. I know if I have a break, I'll be less motivated to go back so I'm diving straight in! It's the best thing for me I think.

I'll always have a connection to Tom Price, but my heart is in Broome so I'd like to end up back there in the future. My parents are currently trying to purchase a block of land for the family out at 12 Mile in Broome. I want to work as hard as I can so I can help pay for the block of land. My parents have supported me for 18 years and I feel it's time for me to support them now, and for the rest of my life.



## About Follow the Dream Partnerships for Success...

Follow the Dream: Partnerships for Success (FTD:PFS) is a voluntary program for aspirant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students in WA public schools. The program provides after-school tuition and individualised mentoring, support and case management to assist and support these students to continue achieving excellent outcomes at school, complete Year 12 and obtain university entry. The program can also include high-achieving and motivated students undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools pathways.

## About the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation...

The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation's first education project, Gumala Mirnuwarni (Coming Together to Learn), was established in Karratha in 1997. After 20 years, it has been successfully replicated across Australia in 33 communities in Western Australia, South Australia, the Northern Territory and New South Wales. More than 1300 Aboriginal students have graduated from the programs and there are currently around 1750 Aboriginal students participating in one of the Foundation's 44 programs.

In addition to the Follow the Dream/ Partnerships for Success program, the Foundation has established primary school Learning Clubs and Maths and Science Centres of Excellence, which accelerate the educational readiness of students to enter the secondary program.

# ROEBOURNE ART GROUP

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Roebourne Art Group

## CONTACT PERSON:

Rex Widerstrom

## EMAIL:

rex@roebourneart.com.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Rio Tinto, Australian Government, Ministry for the Arts, Woodside Energy, Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation, Museum of Contemporary Art, Aboriginal Arts Centre Hub of WA and Artsource

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Rex Widerstrom, Violet Samson, Pansy Hicks

## KEY WORDS:

Painting, art, culture, Country, hope, healing, collaboration

## About the Storyteller...

Rex Widerstorm is the CEO at Roebourne Art Group.

## About the Roebourne Art Group...

Roebourne Art Group is based in the Pilbara Region of WA. With a membership of around 70 artists of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, RAG is the region's only inclusive art group. In common with Aboriginal artists from other parts of Australia, our artists paint their stories from "when the world was soft" before creation, to contemporary pieces reflecting the reality of life today in one of the country's toughest, most remote locations. Roebourne Art Group represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists working in an area that is home to many different language groups.



*Hands painting*

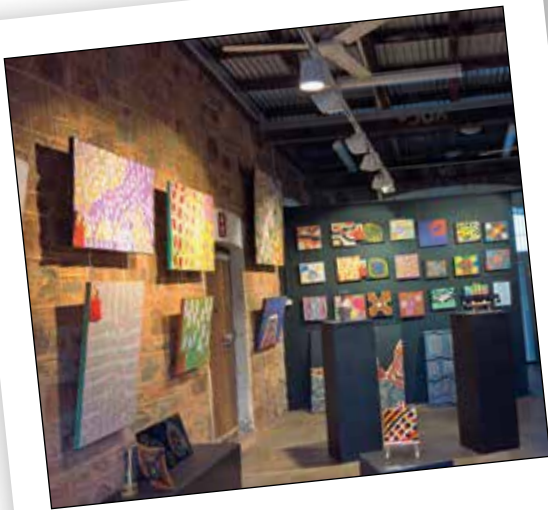
## Once upon a time...

Roebourne Art Group (RAG) formed in 2007. At the time, local artists were painting independently in small clusters but all joined together under one roof which eventually became the Roebourne Art Group. In June 2017 we had the opportunity to move into the Roebourne Visitors Centre which is our current premises. This is the old Roebourne gaol and the building, which was built in 1886, has a sad history

which our people had to come to terms with. Some of our artists were a little bit wary when we were first offered this space, so I asked our Elders how they felt about it. One of our Elders, Aunty Violet said, "Well, if there are ghosts up there then they'll keep people away from stealing our art!" So we accepted that and it became our new home.

When we first moved in, there were a few issues to iron out before we could start functioning properly as an art space. As the building is historically listed, it had certain restrictions. We weren't allowed to put in fixtures of any kind in the interior. That ruled out picture hooks on the walls or in the beams in the ceilings. Although we were grateful to be provided with the space, without being able to fix our art work to the walls or hang it from the ceiling, we were faced with a dilemma.

However, this provided an opportunity for a community call to arms! We put the word out to local businesses and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) came forward and offered to help. They enlisted the help of several firms that were working on various projects in the Pilbara who collectively got on board - Brookfield Multiplex/Cooper and Oxley Joint Venture and



RAG gallery interior

Ceiling and Wall Pty Ltd. They installed a false beam ceiling made of aluminium to hang the lighting fixtures and our paintings from. In addition to this, we had severe plumbing issues and although we were quoted \$10,000 to get the plumbing fixed, the work was done by a local plumbing firm, Mako Plumbing, as were the electrics (by another local firm, Everett-Smith Electrical) free of charge. Needless to say, we were very lucky to have people believe in us and what we were setting out to achieve.

### And then one day...

as there was already a core group of artists, having a brand new, well organised space helped us to attract more talent to our gallery. We are open to artists of all language groups, including Torres Strait Islanders, as long as they live in the Pilbara region. The majority of our artists are from the Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi language groups but we have people from all over the Pilbara. We have four generations of one family painting with us, from Aunty Violet Samson, who is the family matriarch, right down to several of her great grandchildren and her nephews and nieces. Gilby Samson, Violet's great grandson, who is still in primary school, just sold his first piece for \$120! My feeling is that he will be a very talented artist if he chooses to go down that path.

We also take people on who have never painted before and showcase their work at exhibitions, particularly the Revealed WA Aboriginal Art Market



RAG gallery opening, June 2017 in front of invited guests

RAG Chairperson Josie Samson, senior artists and Elders Pansy Hicks and Violet Samson, and senior artists Kathy Samson, Janine Samson and Alice Guinness, along with two members of the RAG children's art group

at the Fremantle Arts Centre which is especially for emerging artists. The sales always make the artist feel that their work is worthy and it encourages and inspires them to keep painting.

We encourage people as much as possible to submit their art. Anytime I meet an Aboriginal person I always ask if they paint, and if they do, I encourage them to join us.

We are provided with funding by the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support Program (IVAIS) through the Ministry for the Arts. This funding employs one staff member to work in the gallery for 20 hours per week. We have also had funding support from Rio Tinto for the last five years which has just been renewed for another three years. This money covers my salary and most of our operating costs. Our artists receive 60 per cent of profits for each piece of art they sell and the other 40 per cent of the sale goes into purchasing more materials and professional development for the artists.

The gallery area, although beautiful, is quite small. Given this, we have set up a marquee outside for our artists to paint under, which is utilised more in winter than in summer, when the heat (and sometimes cyclonic conditions) keeps people inside under the air conditioning. Fortunately winter is also tourist season so when the tourists are in town, the artists paint under the marquee and the tourists can come and view their work. Many of our artists prefer painting in the marquee than in the gallery as they love being outside.



## And because of that...

we actively seek public art commissions and have just won one for the Pilbara Health Campus. Part of this contract involves works on canvas to hang in the campus and also includes commissioned work to produce signage. Commissioned work is something we are looking to take on more of, as it continues to generate income for our artists through three different streams; selling their work, copyright and public art.

The two major selling opportunities for our artists are exhibitions which are both sponsored by resource companies and held in Perth. They are Colours of our Country (Rio Tinto) and Ngurra Nyingu (Woodside). Our artists also regularly enter (and sometimes win) the Cossack Art Awards and some have done well in other award shows too.

We also hold our own exhibition once a year which is a pre-Christmas art sale. As we now have a new premises, we will be focusing on promoting our space for the community to utilise. Rather than a "pop up" shop in Karratha as we have done in previous years, in 2017 we held a "Community Day" where community organisations made use of our campus and ran a range of activities such as children's face painting. This is a great way to showcase our artists' work and share our space with the public. As a community orientated organisation, the other important event we are involved with is Mental Health Week and we have a great partnership with Lesley Murray from Act-Belong-Commit. We recently collaborated on Healing Out On Country which is a day of healing to promote family togetherness and keeping people strong in mind, body and spirit. We provided the boards, paints and brushes, and asked

*"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is one of the oldest, richest and most complex forms of creative expression on the planet and a wonderful cultural gift to the world. We are happy to be able to facilitate this form of expression and contribute beautiful, unique art."*

people to bring their lunch, come along and enjoy a day of painting.

## And since that day...

we are currently in a period of consolidation to try to get back on stable financial footing. Although we are very lucky to have another three years of funding support from Rio Tinto, it is reducing year by year so we will need to start looking into alternative funding opportunities. We are aware that resource companies are winding down their funding support to other community groups operating in the Pilbara so we are possibly in for some precarious times. RAG is a registered charity and deductible gift recipient, so any support we receive is tax deductible. Hopefully another company, or companies, will step in to make sure our work can continue.

We remain positive about our longevity as there are many benefits to having an art centre in Roebourne. One of the most important things, aside from an income stream, is integration and inclusiveness. At the moment the Yindjibarndi people are split over a Fortescue Metal Group mine claim but when they come in to paint at our centre, all those issues get



RAG moving - In June 2017, Roebourne Art Group moved to new premises in the historic Old Roebourne Gaol, built in 1886

left at the door. Our Yindjibarndi artists paint stories together and often remark that this is one of the few organisations in town where they can spend time without the stress of politics. We always welcome visitors to the centre. It's best if people make an appointment by emailing [info@roebourneart.com.au](mailto:info@roebourneart.com.au) as we're often away. For instance, during NAIDOC Week 2017, we were invited by Chevron and Bechtel to live and work at the Wheatstone gas plant in Onslow, and in 2015 attended the Karijini Experience to paint with visitors.

Our Elders believe that the process of painting art is healing for many of their people. It also impacts positively on others and contributes to reconciliation. We've had resource company employees who are big, tough miners come in to the centre in their high visibility gear to listen to our artists speak about why they paint. The miners hear our artist's ancient stories and about their connection to their ancestors and to Country. They are always visibly moved by these stories and walk away with a deeper understanding.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is one of the oldest, richest and most complex forms of creative expression on the planet and a wonderful cultural gift to the world. We are happy to be able to facilitate this form of expression and contribute beautiful, unique art.



*Public Art - The Group feels very strongly that people should understand that they stand on Aboriginal land, and are eager to communicate the stories with which they have been entrusted by their ancestors, for this reason they are active in completing a range of public art projects. Left: a series of poles designed by RAG senior artist and Elder Violet Samson, which stand outside The Quarter. Top right: RAG artists work on a series of panels at the Gap Ridge mining camp. Bottom right: a series of poles created in partnership with Aboriginal artist Brian Robinson, in Saylor Park, Wickham*



*Community Outreach - Above, from top: former manager Loreen Samson (left) with staff and students from Roebourne District High School, RAG artists deliver the Healing Art on Country program with Act Belong Commit during Mental Health Week 2017, and RAG artist Gavin Snook and Elder Pansy Samson work with students from St Lukes High School*

*“Our Elders believe that the process of painting art is healing for many of their people. It also impacts positively on others and contributes to reconciliation.”*



**For more information about the Roebourne Art Group, visit the website...**

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

# PILBARA ABORIGINAL HEART HEALTH PROGRAM

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Pilbara Aboriginal Heart Health Program

## CONTACT PERSON:

Gina Turangi

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## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

The Heart Foundation, Chevron Australia

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Gina Turangi, Anne Hayes, Shirley Hayes

## KEY WORDS:

Heart health, physical activity, nutrition, education, collaboration, community, consultation

## About the Storyteller...

Gina Turangi is the Pilbara Aboriginal Health Program (PAHHP) Coordinator based in Karratha.

## About the Pilbara Aboriginal Heart Health Program...

The Pilbara Aboriginal Heart Health Program aims to provide comprehensive, coordinated, integrated and culturally appropriate health education services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the areas of Karratha, Roebourne and Onslow.



## Once upon a time...

the Pilbara Aboriginal Heart Health Program (PAHHP) is a partnership between the Heart Foundation WA and Chevron Australia. The program is based in three Pilbara towns; Karratha, Onslow and Roebourne. The program started in 2014 with a thorough process of community consultation. The consultation with community members and existing health providers was extensive and several priority areas were identified in each location, including nutrition, physical activity, supporting young people, health literacy and education, and improved access to heart health services.

It was also highlighted that there was a disconnect when people presented to the specialist at the cardiac clinics or visited their GP, and a lack of understanding of what took place upon returning home or back to their community. This can be attributed to people's level of education, health literacy or English being their second or third language. Appointment times with GP's are limited which makes adequate education with patients quite challenging. The community also noted they wanted us to reach all age groups and not just focus on adults, but extend the focus to children of all ages and our Elders.

The funding for the program was provided by Chevron Australia for three years initially, and has since been extended for a further 18 months until 31st December, 2018. The first three years of funding included the 10-12 months of community consultation.



Onslow - healthy snacks for NAIDOC week celebrations with One Tree kids and community members

## And then one day...

after the community consultation process was complete, the Heart Foundation rolled out The Pilbara Aboriginal Heart Health Program in Karratha, Roebourne and Onslow. The program aims to provide comprehensive coordinated, integrated and culturally appropriate health education services to all community members, with a key focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Each town runs their programs slightly differently. In Roebourne, PAHHP collaborates with several organisations to add support and value to programs that are already running with an emphasis on education and prevention. These organisations include Yaandina Family Support, Act-Belong-Commit and One Tree Community Service (Gurlu Gurlu Maya Children's Service) who come together under a banner called the Yirramagardu Community Program, and work closely with EPIC (Empowering People In Communities) supporting clients and workers, PCYC and Yaandina Youth.

In Onslow our key areas are nutrition, healthy eating and holistic heart health education. We hold a program twice a month and wind down to once a month during Lore and Culture. We invite guest speakers to attend the program, which is incredibly beneficial. Community members are able to listen to health service providers speak and gain an understanding of what their role is. For example, Monica from the Western Australian Centre for Rural Health (WACRH) whose background is in



*Onslow - healthy snacks for NAIDOC week celebrations with One Tree kids and community members*

Occupational Therapy came along to our program to share what an OT does and how they can support people to regain their lifestyle after a stroke. She also discussed mobilisation and home assessments. The benefit of health professionals participating in the program is it gives them the opportunity to speak to the community directly. They advise what services and assistance they can provide and how often they are in Onslow.

In Karratha, where a majority of the health service providers in the region are based, the focus is a little



*Karratha - walking with mums and bubs groups*



Gina Turangi

different. The health services support Onslow and Roebourne therefore part of my role is networking and strategic partnerships, as well as running programs. I link in with The City of Karratha and Youth Services, whether it be attending the after school programs and providing nutrition education, or adding value to one of their major events. For example, in April during national Youth Week, we supported the physical activity events with nutrition education, and merchandising.

We link in with Gumala and IF Foundation's mums and bubs play groups, who are excellent at collaborating and bringing groups together. Gumala's coordinator Suzie Powell delivers practical education and emphasises nutritious, economical and easy to prepare foods at home. She focuses on healthy breakfasts and snack food options that don't involve stopping at the drive-through. The aim is to empower people to take care of themselves and their families through better lifestyle choices.

Mawarnkarra Health Services and their clinical team, and Karratha Central Healthcare's allied health team travel to Onslow periodically to deliver a full service to the community. My role is to build relationships and assist in getting people with referrals to attend the clinics. I also ensure that service providers can connect with the community so people have an awareness of what they offer and receive the care they need. We aim to ensure that support, advocacy and education is a huge part of our focus as well

as running programs within the community, for the community.

### And because of that...

there have been many little wins. When people feel comfortable enough to come up to me and say, "Gina, since I've been coming to the program, I'm snacking better, I'm eating fresh fruit, I'm not stopping by the general store or the petrol station up the road and grabbing deep fried foods as much," then the program is purposeful.

When the younger children start repeating the information to their parents and siblings at home, this keeps the conversation going within their family unit. Small things like this mean a lot.

Although we do conduct traditional evaluation such as recording attendance numbers at programs, the majority of our evaluation is obtained through case studies or is anecdotal. People will often share stories about their journeys and what they have gained from the program. Chevron finds a lot of value in this as it's the real-life stories of how we are impacting people's lives, not just statistics on paper. Stories can then be shared to encourage and empower others, and that person can own their story which gives them a sense of pride. When they have learned something new and understand what's going on with themselves, they are then very proactive in encouraging their people to seek assistance from the service providers. Our





Karratha - walking with mums and bubs groups

aim is to be inclusive which means it's not just about delivering programs for Aboriginal people, we extend our services to non-Aboriginal people too.

## Unfortunately...

there are several challenges to getting our messages out. It can be too hot to attend a program, or too cold for others in the winter, particularly our older people. The environment can be a huge barrier, as can transportation. There is limited public transport in remote locations and if people don't have a car they have to rely on others for transport. As there is no licensing centre in Onslow people either have to wait several weeks until the Dept. of Transportation come to town or go to Karratha. So, if there is an opportunity to get a ride to Karratha, then they'll go and not attend the program. There are limited banking services, therefore if people do not have a computer, access to Wi-Fi or utilise internet banking, that can also be a barrier to attending one of our programs. It's often normal, everyday things that we take for granted that are barriers for others.

## And since that day...

the key to this role is continuing to build relationships and partnerships first and foremost to ensure PAHHP is working more effectively with local organisations and our communities. On a personal level it is very important to give back to the community which means being there for the people



Onslow - PAHHP yarning session with the community and special guests - Mission Australia and WA Centre for Rural Health (WACRH) pharmacy students

and listening to their needs, ensuring my work is purposeful and meaningful, and seeing the positive changes unfold within our communities.

The Pilbara Aboriginal Heart Health Program will continue to support, advocate and educate our local communities in collaboration with our current partners. PAHHP will continue to build on our rapport within community, and seek to develop more working partnerships with other organisations and service providers to ensure we are reaching all age groups, through preventative health and post-care needs as per our initial community consultation outcomes.

As we work towards achieving healthier communities, this means taking a leadership role to advocate and support community as a collective and collaborative group. I am pleased PAHHP sits on several networking groups who work together to inform decisions to ensure we are putting community needs at the forefront.



*"There have been many little wins. When people feel comfortable enough to come up to me and say, 'Gina, since I've been coming to the program, I've noticed that I've made myself snack better, I'm eating fresh fruit, I'm not stopping by the general store or the petrol station up the road and grabbing deep fried foods as much,' then the program is purposeful."*

# SQUEAKY CLEAN KIDS

## ORGANISATION NAME:

The Public Health Advocacy Institute of WA (PHAIWA)

## CONTACT PERSON:

Dr Melissa Stoneham

## EMAIL:

m.stoneham@curtin.edu.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

The WA Country Health Service, SoapAid, the Department of Health's Environmental Health Directorate, the Aboriginal Health Council of WA, regional Aboriginal corporations, regional schools and local governments

## KEY WORDS:

Aboriginal health, environment and health, community empowerment

## About the Storyteller...

Melissa Stoneham is the Director at the Public Health Advocacy Institute of WA.

## About the Squeaky Clean Kids Project...

This program aims to help reduce the incidences of trachoma in regional Western Australian (WA) Aboriginal communities.

This program is supported by a range of organisations including PHAIWA, with technical input and evaluation provided by PHAIWA's Director, Melissa Stoneham. The soap for this program has been donated by SoapAid, an Australian not-for-profit organisation that collects, sorts, cleans and reprocesses soap from hotels into new bars.

The WA Country Health Service has partnered with SoapAid, the Department of Health's Environmental Health Directorate, the Aboriginal Health Council of WA, PHAIWA, regional Aboriginal corporations, regional schools and local governments to deliver the program in the four health regions.



The adapted sticker for the Squeaky Clean Kids project

## Once upon a time...

it was decided that as Australia is the only developed country to have endemic trachoma, something needed to be done.

Trachoma is a leading infectious cause of blindness. It is responsible for the blindness or visual impairment of about 1.8 million people worldwide, and remains a public health problem in 42 countries. Of these 42 countries, Australia is the only developed country and almost 100 per cent of our trachoma cases occur in Aboriginal communities.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has set a target to eliminate trachoma worldwide by 2020, and to assist with this, developed the SAFE strategy. The SAFE Strategy uses a comprehensive approach including surgery, antibiotic treatment, facial cleanliness and environmental improvement.

In Western Australia, the WA Trachoma Program has traditionally focused on reducing trachoma prevalence by screening school children and providing treatment in accordance with the national guidelines, as well as addressing behavioural barriers and raising

*“The AEHWs are the most important part of the Squeaky Clean Kids project. Their jobs are to provide advice on where the soap should be stored in each community, locations for the soap to be distributed in community, provide advice on how much soap is being given out in each community, to conduct the bathroom audits and give face and hand hygiene messages.”*



awareness of facial cleanliness (such as promotion of trachoma and the “clean faces” concept in schools). This approach has been effective in reducing trachoma to a point, but without changing the environmental conditions, such as having a functional bathroom in people’s homes, it was felt that we would never eradicate the disease in WA.

## And then one day...

we developed the “Squeaky Clean Kids” (SCK) project. This health promotion program focuses just on the F and the E from the SAFE strategy, so



Bucket sink



Minister Roger Cook at the Kalgoorlie launch

all activities are centred on facial cleanliness and environmental improvements in bathrooms. The SCK project has three main strategies which include the provision of soap to homes and community facilities in remote communities, the provision of health education and health promotion key messages to school students and adults, and the improvement of bathrooms in people’s homes.

The soap for the project is being provided free to communities and is donated by SoapAid. Put simply, this organisation collects and recycles soap from hotel rooms, then melts it down, sanitises it and makes it into bars. In the Squeaky Clean Kids project, homes in remote Aboriginal communities get the bar soap, and community facilities such as Women’s Centres, schools and Community Offices are offered liquid soap.

The health promotion messages that are being used in all communities focus on existing resources that have been developed with Aboriginal people. These include the Milpa and the No Germs on Me resources. We have also developed some tailored resources for different regions to ensure the message gets traction. An important development was tailoring of the existing No Germs on Me hand washing sticker to ensure we included face washing as an important step in preventing trachoma.

The bathroom audits are one of the most important elements of this project. The Aboriginal Environmental Health Worker (AEHW) workforce, which consists



A sink in one of the communities



Kimberley workshop



Pilbara workshop

of around 70 practitioners located in regional and remote locations across WA, has been instrumental in making sure these bathroom audits are conducted within communities. A bathroom audit tool has been developed and the AEHWs, who are well respected within their communities, conduct these audits inside people's homes. It involves inspecting the bathrooms and repairing minor plumbing issues, such as replacing spindles or fixing leaky taps. They also have a chat to the householder about the importance of hand and face washing, provide free soap bars, fit a soap holder or provide a soap sock, and install one of our new hand and face washing stickers above the wash hand basin in every household bathroom.

The AEHWs are the most important part of the Squeaky Clean Kids project. Their jobs are to provide advice on where the soap should be stored in each community, locations for the soap to be distributed in the community and provide advice on how much soap is being given out in each community. They also conduct the bathroom audits and give face and hand hygiene messages.

To support the AEHWs in this important work, we ran some workshops that looked at the importance of messages within the Squeaky Clean Kids project and some training on the bathroom audits. A total of 11 workshops were run in remote communities with

over 60 AEHWs attending. They really appreciated the fact that we took the workshops to their communities and provided the training and resources they needed to make Squeaky Clean Kids a reality.

### And because of that...

we now have 63 communities across WA which are participating in the Squeaky Clean Kids Project. The Goldfields region hosted a state-wide event and the Minister for Health, the Hon. Roger Cook officially launched the project. It was a great day at the East Kalgoorlie Primary School. The Goldfields Public Health Unit also ran a short handwashing activity with the students.

During the roll out of the project we have seen some really great initiatives like the bucket sink. The bucket sink is easy to transport and allows community members to wash their hands and face anywhere, provided there is water available.

### And since that day...

we have started to evaluate the project. As we have the AHCWA as a partner, we have been provided with some clinic data to compare pre and post presentations. We also have evaluation from community based health promotion activities with the school students and community members, data

on the amount of soap provided to communities and the bathroom audit checklists to compare over time. There are many challenges associated with measuring the outcomes from this project. Yet the benefits far outweigh the challenges. One of the most unexpected outcomes was the building of relationships between the AEHWs and the Public Health Unit staff. It is really wonderful to see the partnerships and friendships that have been forged through the project.

I am not sure whether we will be successful in eliminating trachoma in WA by 2020, but with comprehensive projects such as the Squeaky Clean Kids which work alongside the successful trachoma screening project, we know we are at least having an impact. It is never easy developing a truly comprehensive health promotion program, especially when you have the challenge of entering people's homes to help them maintain a functioning bathroom. This strategy is really the key to the success of this project. So the last word I would like to say is how much I value and appreciate the incredibly important work of the WA AEHW workforce, which is supported by the Environmental Health Directorate of WA Health Department.



*Pilbara children using the buckets*



*The Goldfields kids*



*Goldfields children doing exercises*



*Kalgoorlie launch with Mr Germ*

# A CONVERSATION WITH ANNE HAYES

## STORYTELLER'S NAME:

Anne Hayes

## CONTACT PERSON:

Anne Hayes

## EMAIL:

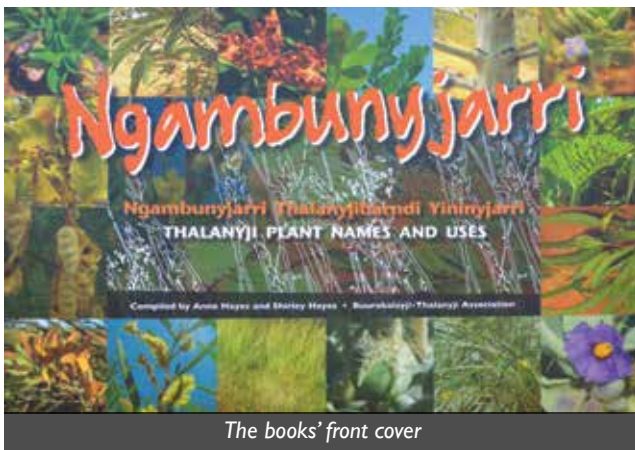
dallas.hayes@thalanyji.com.au

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Anne Hayes, Shirley Hayes

## KEY WORDS:

Culture, language, heritage, history, community, art



The books' front cover

## Once upon a time...

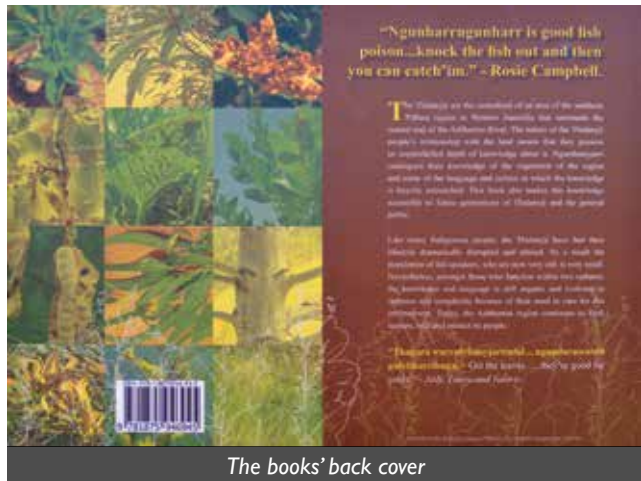
I was born in Onslow, where the fancy new skate park is now and I have lived here most of my life. When I was six years old my mum and dad sent me to the Carnarvon Mission for ten years to complete my primary school education. In 1967 I left and went to work at Yanrey Station as a housemaid where I worked for several years.

I moved around a lot in those early years after leaving the station. I lived in Port Hedland with my husband at the time and worked on different stations at various places around the Gascoyne region, but Onslow is my home. It's where I have raised my four sons. I have a large family; 23 grandchildren and one great grandson.

I currently work for The Heart Foundation as a Project Officer with Shirley Hayes running the Pilbara Aboriginal Heart Health Program every first and third Tuesday of each month. Our aim is to improve the heart health of Aboriginal people in Onslow. I have been involved in various other work

## About the Storyteller...

Anne Hayes is a Thalanyji woman who has spent most of her life living in Onslow. Anne works at The Heart Foundation as a Project Officer in Onslow, is a Thalanyji language worker and has been involved in producing two books.



The books' back cover

too over the years. I host Thalanyji language classes for the Onslow community on Tuesdays as I feel it is important for our younger generation to learn language so it can be maintained and passed on. At present there are only six or seven people who can speak Thalanyji language fluently.

## And then one day...

as well as working to maintain the Thalanyji language, Shirley Hayes and I were also involved in a book project. We worked as part of a team with our Elders to collect information about Thalanyji Plant names and uses for a book called Ngambunyjarri. This project was made possible by Buurabalayji Thalanyji Association Inc. (now known as Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation) and BHP Billiton (Petroleum) who provided funding for the project. Buurabalayji Thalanyji Association Inc. then worked with Pilbara Wangka Maya Aboriginal Language Centre who managed the project. Funding for the printing of the books was provided by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA).

The book was written in both English and language and explains the scientific and common names for the plants as well as the names in language with a photo of each plant. It also describes the locations



Gina Turangi, Anne Hayes



Anne's hand, used in the digitally printed mural of handprints art installation for the new hospital hub

of where the various plants are found on Thalanyji Country in the Pilbara. We wanted to be involved in this book so our children could learn about plants and learn to speak Thalanyji language.

We launched the book in 2008 which was the same year we got our Native Title determination. Native Title was awarded to over 11,120 sqkm of land in the West Pilbara on September 18th, 2008 including Onslow. It was a historical day for our people and 2018 marks ten years since this occurred. Shirley and I were also involved in collating another book about our Elders' childhood stories which is currently being edited and will be published in the near future. We only have three Elders left in our community – Aunty Valerie, Aunty Judy and Aunty Maudie.

### And because of that...

In August 2017 a WA artist called Simon Gilby was commissioned to create a major art installation for the town's re-developed hospital hub. The installation is a digitally printed mural of handprints. I helped Simon with the hand imprints. It was a process of putting our hands on the soil and then having them cast in salt. Our hands were then photographed and developed into a mural called Images of Hand Stencils. Lots of local people from the community got involved. We went to the Bindi Bindi community, to big girl's house (Margaret Parker) and there were a lot of people there. We also went to the school so we had both children's and adult's hands. There were hundreds of hands in the end which was great. The handprint mural will be put up on the inside of the curved roof at the hospital's eastern end.

Simon also made a clay sculpture with my hand imprint, although it's not finished yet but he will put a tree with little branches through the fingers on the sculpture. It's very important that local art is up in the hospital and that the community can see the work they have been involved in creating. There will be a special opening of the art installation in the near future which will be filmed.

### And since that day...

We take our grandkids out bush and teach them about Lore and Culture. We teach them about various plants, their uses and also how to cook damper. We cook foods such as kangaroo tails, fish and crabs on the open coals, to pass on our knowledge so we can keep our traditions and culture alive for future generations.



*"We take our grandkids out bush and teach them about lore and culture. We teach them about various different plants and how to cook Damper. We cook our foods on the open coals such as Kangaroo tails, fish and crabs, to pass on our knowledge so we can keep our traditions and culture alive for future generations."*

# YA GOTTA WASH YA FACE TO COME TO MY PLACE

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Kimberley Population Health Unit

## CONTACT PERSON:

Timothy Bond

## EMAIL:

Timothy.Bond@health.wa.gov.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Shire of Derby West Kimberley, PHAIWA, Nirrumbuk Environmental Health Service (NEHS)

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

- Timothy Bond - Environmental Health Coordinator, KPHU
- Sonny Mckay - Environmental Health Officer
- Iris Prouse - Aboriginal Environmental Health Manager, KPHU
- Clayton Bell - Environmental Health Officer, KPHU
- Sarah Macnee - Public Health Manager, KPHU
- Pippa Broughton - Health Promotion Coordinator, KPHU
- Georgie Kelly - Public Health Liaison Officer, KPHU
- Troy Edwards, Senior Public Health Nurse, KPHU
- Dr Melissa Stoneham - Director, Public Health Advocacy Institute WA
- Melinda Edmunds - Senior Coordinator, Public Health Advocacy Institute WA

## KEY WORDS:

Aboriginal health, environment and health, community empowerment, healthy skin

## About the Storytellers...

Tim Bond is the A/Coordinator of the Aboriginal Environmental Health Program for Kimberley Population Health Unit and is based in Kununurra. Tim and the Environmental Health team have established good working relationships with the community of Kalumburu over several years through delivering dog health programs and other environmental health services.

Sonny Mckay is an Aboriginal Environmental Health Program Coordinator for the Shire of Derby West Kimberley and has been in Environmental Health for four years.

## About Ya gotta wash ya face to come to my place...

Kalumburu Skin and Sexual Health initiative was developed to creatively engage 16-35 year olds after identifying that there was a gap in education and awareness of personal hygiene and skin health issues in this target group. The events that took place over a one week period included local artists painting a new community laundry, women's soap and body scrub making activities, men's and women's foot spas, haircuts and pop-up clothes shop, school education and poster competition, and a community dinner and awards night with a Kimberley celebrity and band which was catered for by the Kalumburu Catering Group. The project was a collaborative effort between health professionals, local shire, non-government services, Kalumburu community organisations and the school coming together to deliver events and was made possible through funding from WA Primary Health Alliance.

## Once upon a time...

in 2014 the community of Kalumburu in Western Australia experienced an outbreak of Acute Post Streptococcal Glomerulonephritis (APSGN), a rare condition in developed countries, however like rheumatic heart disease, one that is prevalent in remote Aboriginal communities. Skin infections in







Women's pamper session



Community dinner and awards night



The extensive wardrobe!

the Kimberley, in particular those caused by group A streptococcus, underpin a number of significant chronic health conditions if not detected and treated with early intervention, some of which cause permanent kidney and heart disease. As a result of this outbreak and in an effort to educate the community about health risks and the importance of preventative measures such as hygiene and environmental factors, focus was brought to the issue by bringing all key community and service provider stakeholders together. The result of this initiative was a reduction in one major skin infection (scabies) in children, from 9.5 per cent to 2.2 per cent as recorded by clinic presentations. (APSGN outbreak, Scabies, MRSA, Australian Indigenous Health Bulletin Vol 16 No 4, October - December 2016).

Whilst educating children and parents during this outbreak, it was evident that falling through the gaps was the key demographic of 16 to 35 year olds. Additionally, the Kimberley has the highest rate of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Western Australia with over 1,000 WA STI notifications in 2016. Those at highest risk and the most represented group are 15-35 year olds, aligning well with our target group and the inclusion of sexual health education in this project. An innovative approach was designed to engage this group, typically not well engaged with health care, with the Ya gotta wash ya face to come to my place - Kalumburu Skin and Sexual Health Community Initiative project proposal.

## And then one day...

during a two day workshop for Environmental Health staff across the Kimberley, held in Halls Creek in 2016, Tim Bond, Sonny McKay and two other Environmental Health Officers conceptualised the project. The project focused on educating young people from the Kalumburu community on personal hygiene, skin health and sexual health and how this relates to improved health outcomes, disease prevention, finding a partner and living a happy and healthy life. While having a strong message on personal hygiene it also incorporated sexual health and self-respect in a light, fun and culturally appropriate way. An additional key aspect of this initiative was providing targeted skin health and sexual health education to school staff, clinic staff and community members to support workforce capacity. Skin health sessions were also run in the Kalumburu School and a poster competition as a way to discuss important health messages.

It was only a matter of time before the word spread and people wanted to be involved. A working group of staff was then established with representatives from KPHU's Environmental Health, Health Promotion and Public Health teams, PHAIWA and the Shire of Derby West Kimberley. Other key partners joined the project with the principle sponsor Western Australian Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) funding the project, the Environmental Health Directorate donating basketballs and other

resources, and not least Share the Dignity donating three pallets of personal hygiene products. Staff from Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service, Nirrumbuk, two amazing hairdressers volunteering three days of their time to cut hair, Australian actress Ningali Lawford volunteering as Master of Ceremonies, a local photographer and many more volunteers and staff committing valuable resources and time to the project.

The project ran over a one week period with key events commencing with a mural painted by Kalumburu artists on the newly commissioned community laundry and a formal 'opening' for the whole of community. Children at the school were also involved by designing posters around personal hygiene and happy healthy homes that were displayed and presented at the main event and dinner. Children were further engaged with a bouncy castle and soap making activities that ran over several days. For the target audience of 16-35 year olds, young people were invited to participate in a week long program. Head lice treatments and skin checks were undertaken, followed by haircuts, beauty and make up sessions, foot spas and gift bags containing hygiene products and key skin and sexual health messages. Donated free clothes for the celebration event were set up in a pop-up shop for participants to choose a new outfit for the community dinner.

The week of activities provided a platform for staff to engage in small group and one-on-one settings to convey key health information and education on self-care, personal grooming, self-esteem, suicide prevention and mental well-being. Similar sessions were held for both male and female participants with the women's yarnning sessions centering on soap and body scrub making workshops, and a fishing trip for the men. The week of events culminated with



Tim Bond and Sonny Mckay



Ningali Lawford and the band boys

a community dinner provided by the Kalumburu Strong Women's Centre (with emphasis on healthy food). The evening featured a local band and a high profile 'Master of Ceremonies'. Project participants' achievements were celebrated and an emphasis on key health messages were showcased in a photography slideshow of the week's activities. Both the Chairman of the Kalumburu Community and Strong Women's Group spoke of the value to community of the event.

## And because of that...

for a very small community the overwhelming support and contribution from individuals and agencies was amazing. The Kalumburu Strong Women's Group hosted the women's sessions for the week long project and catered for the 200 person community dinner and awards night. East Kimberley Job Pathways set to work building tables for the community dinner and awards night and providing transport for the men's fishing trip. Kalumburu Remote Community School participated in education sessions, the poster competition, soap making workshops and a bouncy castle for the kids. The Kalumburu Clinic, Resource Centre, HACC centre and the Kalumburu Mission all contributed resources and support over the week of the project. The staff who came together to work tirelessly over the week of events and the contribution from so many agencies was a truly collaborative effort. One

*"The empowerment and enthusiasm of the community in getting involved and taking ownership of the project was a highlight of the project. Establishing strong partnerships with community organisations and stakeholders across a range of sectors was another of the project's success stories."*





*“The week’s activities created a strong community feeling of community and connectedness both between the community and service providers in Kalumburu.”*

*“I noticed a number of women who don’t regularly come to the Strong Women’s Centre also came to events at the centre that week and had the opportunity to access health education which is really positive.”*

*Fi Sproule, Coordinator Strong Women’s Centre*

of the greatest challenges in undertaking this project was the remoteness and isolation of the community of Kalumburu with limited access by road for many months of the year. Most of the resources and equipment were driven up on the back of four wheel drive vehicles, which was a two day drive over rough terrain. The remaining luggage including suitcases of donated clothes, musical equipment, bulk food for catering, and the majority of staff were chartered in by small aircraft. Once in Kalumburu there was no mobile phone or internet coverage, with staff relying on satellite phones and the local clinic’s goodwill to use their office. This meant that every last detail of the project needed to be in place before the events began, a considerable feat of coordination from all members of the working group not least Tim Bond who was the project lead.

As a result, the response to the project from the community was overwhelmingly positive with community requesting for the events to take place every year. The empowerment and enthusiasm of the

community in getting involved and taking ownership of the project was a highlight. Establishing strong partnerships with community organisations and stakeholders across a range of sectors was another of the project’s success stories.

## And since that day...

the project has gained much momentum since it took place last June and the plans for 2018 events are shaping up to be bigger and better: Kalumburu community have proposed a date and all community agencies are keen to participate again in 2018. Emphasis will be placed on the community taking a more leading role from the initial planning stages through to the main event. Tim and the team at KPHU have been approached by several health agency staff to be a part of this year’s event building on the key themes of skin health and sexual health with additional health themes including drug and alcohol, mental health, and more men’s health yarning.



Welcome to Kalumburu



Selecting outfits for the community dinner



Having fun trying on different outfits



Community Laundry Mural



Men’s pamper session

# FOOD SENSATIONS AT YANDEYARRA

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Foodbank WA's Food Sensations initiative at Yandeyarra Remote Community School

## CONTACT PERSON:

Jessica Albers, Leisha Aberle

## EMAIL AND WEBSITES:

leisha.aberle@foodbankwa.org.au  
www.foodbankwa.org.au/pilbara  
www.healthyfoodforall.com.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Yandeyarra Remote Community School, Foodbank WA and BHP

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Jessica Albers, Leisha Aberle

## KEY WORDS:

Nutrition education, healthy eating, collaboration, partnerships and cooking

## About Yandeyarra Remote Community School...

Yandeyarra Remote Community School is in the Pilbara, approximately 150kms from the nearest town, Port Hedland. The community is on an Aboriginal Reserve, and located on the bank of the Yule River so becomes isolated when the river is in flood. The school has approximately 35 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 12. Students enjoy living and going to school in Yandeyarra.

## About the Storytellers...

Jessica Albers is a teacher at Yandeyarra Remote Community School. Jessica has been at the school since 2009, and is the School's Breakfast and Nutrition Coordinator.

Leisha Aberle is a Public Health Nutritionist at Foodbank WA. Since joining Foodbank WA in 2013, Leisha has travelled across the state to regional and remote schools delivering the Food Sensations® Schools Program. From 2016, Leisha has led her project team in their implementation of Foodbank WA's Food Sensations® initiative in the Pilbara region, as Pilbara Team Lead.

## About Food Sensations®...

The Food Sensations initiative encompasses all nutrition education and cooking programs delivered in the Pilbara which include the following programs; Food Sensations in Schools, Fuel Your Future, Food Sensations for Parents and Educator Training. Depending on the target audience and setting, the appropriate program is selected. All Food Sensations sessions are hands-on, interactive and tailored to suit the needs of the target group, covering the Australian Dietary Guidelines, food budgeting, meal planning, food purchasing, as well as safe food preparation and handling literacy topics.



Food Sensations for Schools program in action, older kids teaching little kids

Proudly supported by

**BHP**



## Once upon a time...

Yandeyarra Remote Community School has a long standing breakfast program, which in 2010 became part of Foodbank WA's Food Sensations pilot initiative in the Pilbara, thanks to the support of BHP. The purpose of the Food Sensations program is to increase students' knowledge, skills and confidence to select and prepare healthy foods, equipping them with lifelong skills to make healthy choices. The school Principal Graham and teacher Jessica Albers thought the Food Sensations program would be an excellent way to further engage students and the community in healthy cooking and eating.



*Food Sensations for Parents program –  
parents cooking with little ones*



*Yandeyarra Remote Community School and  
Foodbank WA Partnership*

## And then one day...

as the school is so remote, access to fresh fruit and vegetables is not consistent, so the school decided to grow their own by creating their own kitchen garden. This fresh produce is used as part of the school's Whole Nutrition program which provides recess and lunch for the children every day.

In 2011, two Yandeyarra students, Jessica and Jahmarley Gordon were lucky enough to be selected as part of the top 30 finalists in WA for the Kitchen Whiz Kid's Cook Off competition. Both students along with their teacher Miss Jess, flew to Perth to compete in the kitchen competition. The students had to apply by selecting a healthy meal to create and also write about the importance of nutrition for health. Jessica created a red curry chicken with jasmine rice and Jahmarley prepared beef noodle stir-fry – all the judges loved their dishes and gave glowing reviews. The students even had their recipes shared in the IGA Kitchen Whiz cookbook! Although the students felt anxious whilst competing, they both had the confidence to create and cook a healthy meal due to the nutrition and cooking lessons they participated in at school, and also by the recent visit from Foodbank WA.

The school also runs a weekly mini 'Masterchef' style competition as part of their curriculum delivery. The

students work in groups and compete against each other to produce a particular recipe. The dishes are then served to the Principal who does a taste test and provides feedback. There are a number of different criteria the students have to meet and they are ranked from first to last place to determine the winning group. The students absolutely love it! It's the highlight of their week. Everyone enjoys eating what they have made but it's also the production process that they love, which involves picking fresh produce from the garden and creating delicious meals.

There have been other fantastic opportunities as a result of the student's participation in Foodbank WA's programs and the other programs implemented at Yandeyarra. In 2012 several students participated in the Healthy Children's Festival – Cook-off event which was an interschool cooking competition where students had to provide nutrition advice and prepare healthy meals. Then in 2015 several students were invited to the Margaret River Gourmet Escape to work in the World Skills cooking competition at the event. In 2016 students were also involved in the EON Foundation interschool cooking competition, a collaborative partnership event hosted by EON Foundation, Foodbank WA, WA Country Health Service, Earbus Foundation and Youth Involvement Council based in Hedland.



*Food Sensations Schools program in action, high school students teaching the lower primaries important cooking skills*



*“The anecdotal results are really positive and people love when they hear Foodbank is coming to Yandeyarra for a visit. The programs are fun, engaging and encourage positive learning to enhance knowledge and skills in nutrition and cooking.”*

been a real spark in healthy cooking interest and it encourages people in a positive way to try new foods and adapt their taste buds.

Learning how to prepare food and having regular opportunities to make meals that are healthy, tasty and inexpensive to prepare is a lifelong skill. Other Yandeyarra students have gone on to complete a Certificate I in Hospitality and work at a number of different events in WA. Currently there are no job opportunities in the Yandeyarra community, so for a student to know they have a skill set that can be used and transferred in the wider world, no matter where they go, is incredibly valuable.

## And because of that...

although Foodbank WA's programs were initially targeted at the school students and community members, they are now able to provide a greater level of support by targeting parents through the Food Sensations for Parents of 0 – 5 year olds and disengaged youth with the Fuel Your Future program, with thanks to continued funding from BHP. A great example of this is how students, who receive the Food Sensations program in school, have also accessed the youth program and parents program with children of their own. It is our hope that everyone in the community will benefit and it will continue to impact positively on the next generation of children. These programs equip children with the knowledge to make informed decisions about what they are eating and they come away with the resources and capability to prepare a really delicious meal for their families at home.

Foodbank WA have run several highly successful community sessions including a men's session aimed at engaging with those who work mustering on the community stations. As a result of this, there has

## And since that day...

several more partnerships have continued to strengthen and support the variety of initiatives already occurring in the school environment all providing sustainability to continue the healthy eating messages. The anecdotal results are really positive and people love when they hear Foodbank WA is coming to Yandeyarra for a visit. The programs are fun, engaging and encourage positive learning to enhance knowledge and skills in nutrition and cooking.

It is our hope that these programs collectively will continue to improve knowledge, skills and attitudes towards choosing healthier options when cooking and purchasing foods. School staff are also able to build their knowledge and skills in nutrition and healthy eating, through the Educator Training Foodbank WA provides to teachers, as well as the suite of curriculum linked resources to support the continued reinforcement of healthy eating messages in the classroom. Long term, we also hope that it helps to open doors to employment opportunities for all our students and community members who participate.



*Food Sensations Community session - educating station workers on healthy food choices*



*Teaching nutrition and healthy eating across generations (Jess with bub in the middle has participated in all of Foodbank's programs including the parents program)*



*Food Sensations Community session - men's cooking*



*Fuel Your Future program in action, cooking skill demonstration – the secrets to a great pizza base*



*Food Sensations for Schools program in action*

# ON SLOW BASKETBALL CARNIVAL

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Onslow Basketball Carnival

## CONTACT PEOPLE:

Dallas Hayes, Glenys Hayes

## EMAIL:

onslow@thalanyji.com.au  
perthoffice@thalanyji.com.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation,  
The Shire of Ashburton

## KEY STAFF/PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Dallas Hayes, Glenys Hayes,  
Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation,  
The Shire of Ashburton staff, Inspired Living  
Foundation staff

## KEY WORDS:

Basketball, competition, community, sports,  
healthy lifestyles, sportsmanship

## About the Storytellers...

Dallas Hayes is the Receptionist and Member Contact at Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation. Dallas, along with being part of the team that organises the carnival, also coaches a junior team.

Glenys Hayes is a local Thalanyji community member who has been part of the team that organises the basketball carnival since 2009, with a focus on communication and protocols.

## About the Onslow Basketball Carnival...

The annual Onslow Basketball Carnival is a highlight of the Pilbara sporting and community calendar. It is supported by Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation and the Shire of Ashburton. BHP Billiton have also supported the carnival for a number of years. The objective of the weekend is to promote great sportsmanship and healthy lifestyle choices.



## Once upon a time...

In 2009, The Shire of Ashburton organised a basketball competition in Onslow. The competition proved to be popular which led the Shire to expand the team pools to include more regional towns the following year. The Shire formed a partnership with Buurabalayji Thalanyji Association Inc. (now known as Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation or BTAC) and the event subsequently became known as the annual "Onslow Basketball Carnival". The partnership between the Shire and Buurabalayji

Thalanyji Association Inc. was formed with the vision that Buurabalayji Thalanyji Association Inc. would take over the running of the carnival. Over time, this has eventuated and in 2018 BTAC will run the carnival with support from the Shire.

The main objective of the carnival is to promote good sportsmanship, healthy lifestyle choices combined with community spirit. Registrations are open to groups from all over WA and comprise of





Onslow Thunder

four different divisions. These divisions are Junior Boys and Girls (under 13 years), Youth Girls (13 - 17 years), Senior Women (over 17 years), Senior Men (over 17 years).

### And then one day...

after months of organisation, the carnival was held over the weekend of 26th - 27th August 2017. There were eight staff on the planning committee and approximately 19 staff/volunteers to run the event and we needed every single one of them!

There was a lot of preparation involved in organising and coordinating this year's event, we had weekly meetings leading up to the carnival. There is a lot to take into account when organising an event this size, particularly in regards to the budget, what needs to be purchased and where to order all the necessities from. Two months to organise everything was a stressful time frame but we pulled it off.

Although teams have to nominate a team umpire and a scorer, we spent time organising back up umpiring to help support the nominated umpires as well as providing support to the teams. It was great to have support from the Inspired Living Foundation who were engaged by BTAC as in previous years, to help with organising the fixtures and setting up the carnival. They have been a great help with this event and we value their support. This year we had sponsors for each category for the Most Valuable

Player and all our sponsors were local Aboriginal businesses from Onslow.

There were 17 teams involved across the four categories. This year we had two mixed teams competing; the under 13's and the under 17's. Teams travelled from Port Hedland and Meekatharra, and several from Roebourne and Karratha to play in the carnival. Onslow had a number of teams across the various divisions.

Many of the teams have been playing together since the Carnival started in 2009. One of the teams started in the Under 13 Junior division and are still attending the carnival nine years on but now compete together in the Senior Men's division instead of the Junior's.

### And because of that...

there were many special moments this year. It was wonderful to kick the carnival off with the relaxed welcome BBQ on the Friday night at the Onslow Skate Park. This meet and greet event was the first time it had been a part of the carnival and it really got everyone into the spirit of the weekend.

This year for the first time the committee also organised a program of activities to be run on the indoor courts for the under aged children. That was really successful as they were able to play inside in the cool and remain occupied and engaged while family members were either playing in or watching the competition.



Pardoo Cats



*The men in action*



*Onslow Thunder and Mayaga Majik*



*Onslow Thunderbolts and J7A with former Wildcats players*

This carnival is invaluable for the community as it brings people together for an action packed weekend of fun. It's a healthy, positive event that people really enjoy at a fantastic basketball facility. The wonderful thing about it is it showcases the talented basketballers in our community. Everyone has a different skillset and their own unique style and it is great to see so many basketballers competing. Sometimes the competition gets pretty fierce and as always, everyone was so impressed with the high standard of player's skill and team spirit. It was also great to have the event covered by the Pilbara News.

*“With the installation of the new undercover courts in Onslow in 2016 which was funded by BHP Billiton, we have a world class facility in our little town and the possibilities for this carnival are endless.”*



The Onslow Basketball Carnival has a lot of support and it just keeps growing. This carnival has made a name for itself in the Pilbara as a “must do” event. People tell us they really enjoy it because of the fantastic atmosphere. It's very family friendly and we try to cater for everyone with several fun community activities over the weekend. We also offer coaching workshops for coaches to hone their skills so a lot happens in two days! There is something for everyone.

### **And since that day...**

we met up after the event to celebrate the successes and also to discuss and evaluate the carnival and look at what we can do better the following year. We are also thinking about the possibility of running the competition over three days instead of two, maybe over a long weekend. This would give people more time to travel.

With the installation of the new undercover courts in Onslow in 2016 which was funded by BHP Billiton, we have a world class facility in our little town and the possibilities for this carnival are endless. We can't wait for the carnival this year which will hopefully be bigger and better!

Photo credits: Paul Ventouras

# HEALING OUT ON COUNTRY

## ORGANISATION NAME:

Healing Out On Country

## CONTACT PERSON:

Lesley Murray

## EMAIL:

lesley.murray@curtin.edu.au

## PROGRAM / PROJECT PARTNERS:

Standing Strong Together Act-Belong-Commit Campaign in Roebourne, Chevron Australia, Roebourne Social and Emotional Wellbeing Network, City of Karratha - Northwest Shelf Project, One Tree Community Services, Yaandina Community Services, Roebourne PCYC, Pilbara Aboriginal Heart Health, Yirramagardu Community Association, Val and Kathy's Crafty Kitchen, Wirlu-Murra Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation, Yirramagardu Community Program

## KEY STAFF / PEOPLE INVOLVED:

Lesley Murray, Shenara Smith, Ian Wally, Gloria Newland, Lynette Wilson, Professor Robert Donovan, Amberlee Nicholas, Caroline Jackson Pierce and Julia Anwar McHenry

## KEY WORDS:

Healing Out On Country Project - Families bereaved by suicide and tragic loss



*Ian Wally - a well-known respected man. New stories, new family and a big heart*

## Once upon a time...

back in August 2014, when Act-Belong-Commit first opened its doors in Roebourne, I had a conversation with long term resident Beth Smith. She asked if I would help her to take a family out on Country. This particular family had recently experienced a loss and Beth thought it would be a good healing process for them to get away from town and spend the day in Country. I thought, "Why not?" Beth and local Roebourne man Ian Wally had come up with the idea previously but this was the first opportunity to do it. So, we took the family out to Harding Dam for the day as they had fond memories of the area. We lit a

## About the Storyteller...

Lesley Murray is a proud Anaiwan woman and the Aboriginal Project Manager for Standing Strong Together Roebourne Act-Belong-Commit Campaign.

## About the Healing Out On Country Project...

The Healing Out On Country Project is a partnership with Mentally Healthy WA's Roebourne Act-Belong-Commit, One Tree Community Services, Yaandina Family Services and the Roebourne Social Emotional Wellbeing Network. The aim of the project is to build social and emotional wellbeing for families who are bereaved by suicide and tragic loss.



*Running for Gardangu (Bush Lolly), with Elders, family and children coming together and having fun*

fire, cooked Johnny cakes, made a stew and spent a great day on Country. The family and their children had such a wonderful day.

However, the Healing Out On Country project didn't officially begin until 2016. It came about from a consultation with the Roebourne Aboriginal community who were calling out for help as they were mourning the loss of family members, predominantly due to suicide. For a small town, Roebourne has a high level of suicide and tragic losses in the community. This consultation identified what the community needed to help them to build their social and emotional wellbeing and contribute to their healing process. It was clear that good social and emotional wellbeing depended on being out on Country with family, involvement in community



*Walking on Country, Country inspires the children to be happy and to respect culture and land and their Elders*

activities, connecting to Country and culture and teaching children about the land. They told us that doing this would bring strength and healing to the families. We heard their call and the phrase Healing Out On Country came to mind.

### And then one day...

in order to be able to achieve this objective to take families out on Country, we applied to the City of Karratha for a \$5000 grant. We were only provided with \$1500 so I had to scale the project back and prioritise the families who were most in need of our support. To identify those particular families, I called upon the Roebourne Social and Emotional Wellbeing Network who helped with this process. We also had support from One Tree Community Services staff (our main partner), and Shenara Smith suggested we start with one family who were personally touched by suicide. This family were Ian Wally and his partner Gloria Newland. Ian had recently lost his son to suicide and he wanted to do something to support his family and the wider community. Their involvement in the first trip helped us to develop the Healing Out On Country project.

The aim of this project is to provide support to grieving families as part of putting the overall Aboriginal Act-Belong-Commit messages into action. As we only had a limited budget, supported by Chevron and One Tree Community Services, we started by taking families out just for the day. Because of the limitations with vehicles we couldn't go on traditional Country (4WD Country), but we were still able to do a day trip. They were quite happy to have the opportunity to go to the beach, or out to

5 mile or 40 mile. The families are an integral part of the planning process and have complete ownership over the day. They make all the decisions including who comes out with them, where they want to go and what food they want to eat. The aim is to go somewhere that brings them happy memories and makes them feel closer to their loved one who they have lost. Before we leave Country, I get everyone together to do a healing art banner which is a wonderful way to end the day. Afterwards we all get together for a feed and create storybooks with photos taken on the day and yarn about what extra support the families feel they need.

### And because of that...

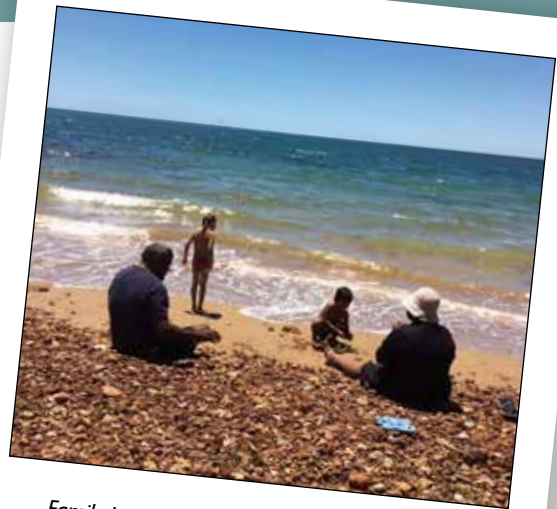
we have now taken five families out on Country. The key to this project is when the family is ready and open to going out on Country. For example, with local man Ian Wally's family, it was a year after his son's suicide. At that point he was ready. One of the things the families say is that the day out helps them to free their minds from the stresses of town. For Ian's family in particular, they were used to seeing the familiar sight of their son walking down the laneway in town so being out on Country helped them accept that he was not coming back. This was an incredible healing experience for the family.



*Jasminda Stevens, her mum Melinda Churnside and Karella Walker - inspiring day at the launch of the Aboriginal Act-Belong-Commit Logo designed by Jasminda*



*Friendship and healing, a day of learning and sharing special moments and telling stories*



*Family healing, storytelling with family, sharing time together through loss*

Each family has had a similar healing experience. One of our families who lost their daughter to suicide a few years ago were able to come together and laugh and remember the funny things that their sister and daughter did. They remembered how they laughed when they saw a goanna chasing her and were able to laugh again at the happy memory. One of the men who came was a daily drinker but after the day out with his family he didn't touch alcohol for three days. This shows the positive impact that being out on Country, even for a day, can have on a person's wellbeing. The children will often start attending school regularly as well which is another positive outcome.

The beauty of these camps is that all the families chip in and help with cooking and with the children; there is a real feeling of togetherness which is amazing to see. They are able to cook kangaroo on the fire and make damper and stew, and it's an opportunity for people to be away from their everyday problems. It takes a fair bit of organisation but once we get everyone there it's worth it. We can clearly see from this project that Country energises people, and being in nature and reconnecting to Country substantially improves people's mental health.

## And since that day...

the five families (which equates to about 100 individuals) are really keen to continue this project and the ultimate aim is to extend the one-day trips to two or three day camps. We have been provided with \$21,000 from the City of Karratha's annual grant, which is part of the North West Shelf Project, to fund the hire of 4WD buses and bus drivers in order to

get right out on Country. I had hoped to start soon and facilitate four or five camps in the next month or so but we are waiting for Lore and Culture that is currently happening in Roebourne to finish. The aim is not to take the children out of school so we would instead commence the trips on a Friday and be back by Sunday. We know a lot of the children aren't going to school regularly so doing this over a weekend would be an incentive for them to come along so they are refreshed to go back to school.

We are currently running an evaluation of the impact of the overall Act-Belong-Commit program in Roebourne to date. We have a draft report of interviews with 15 of our key stakeholder partners, and we are also conducting interviews with the community so we can show what difference the Aboriginal Act-Belong-Commit program makes and what more needs to be done. Although the Healing Out On Country project is supported by the Act-Belong-Commit campaign and Mentally



*Nana Pansy Hicks - Healing Art on Country with Roebourne Art Group*



*Shenara Smith - a kind gentle person who played an integral role in the development of the project*



Gloria Newland, Lynette Wilson and Lesley Murray

Healthy WA, the work over the last four years has been possible because of Chevron, our primary funder. Unfortunately, they won't be refunding the program after July 2018, but we are very grateful for their support. We are currently in the process of trying to find a replacement to continue the fantastic work that is having such a positive impact on the community. We think this is a really important initiative and we want to keep it going.

Last year at The WA Mental Health Conference, I did a presentation on the Healing Out On Country project. A lady in the audience named Chelsea from Hope Community Services in Kalgoorlie was so moved by our story that she was inspired to get her organisation to partner with us in the hope of rolling it out in Kalgoorlie. If this happens, it will be an excellent outcome and hopefully the beginning of the growth of the Aboriginal Act-Belong-Commit program in other regions of WA.

Apparently there wasn't a dry eye in the room, especially when I showed the videos of people who had participated in the Healing Out On Country project talking about their experiences. Of course I made sure that the people and families involved with this project were happy to share their experiences. Although the families have been through an extreme grieving process and continue to grieve for their loved ones, they really want to share the positive impacts of this project in the hope that it will help others with their healing process.

Photo credits: Lesley Murray, Julia Anwar McHenry, Tyson Mowarin, Keran Kramme, Shenara Smith



*"We try and help families, take them out on Country. And it helps us to take our children, because we feel their pain and the struggles that they go through too. But as we get out it's different. Because when you're in town there's a lot of problems, but as you go out bush or on Country your spirit is free, your spirit is good." Ian Wally*



*"Last year at The WA Mental Health Conference, I did a presentation on the Healing Out On Country project, and a lady named Chelsea from Hope Community Services in Kalgoorlie was so moved by our story she was inspired to get her organisation to partner with us in the hope of rolling it out in Kalgoorlie. If this happens, it will be an excellent outcome and hopefully the beginning of the growth of the Aboriginal Act-Belong-Commit program in other regions of WA." Lesley Murray*



*"We can clearly see from this project that Country energises people, and being in nature and reconnecting to Country substantially improves people's mental health." Caroline Jackson Pierce*



*"At the end of the day Lesley (Project Manager) asks the family to contribute to a collaborative banner (a technique Lesley uses frequently with family and community groups to promote healing through self-expression and working together). Then the family can take this home to remember their day and know they are loved and cared about." Shenara Smith*

## The Roebourne Social & Emotional Wellbeing Network are...

We acknowledge the long term and ongoing work of the Roebourne Social and Emotional Wellbeing Network with Roebourne Standing Strong Together Act-Belong-Commit - Mentally Healthy WA.

- One Tree Community Services - Roebourne Child and Parent Centre - Gurlu Gurlu Maya
- Roebourne PCYC
- The Ngarluma Yindjibarndi Foundation (NYFL)
- Ngarliyarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation (NBAC)
- Yaandina Community Services
- Pilbara Aboriginal Church
- City of Karratha
- Chevron Australia
- WA Country Health Service-Pilbara
- Heart Foundation's Pilbara Aboriginal Heart Health Program - Roebourne
- Roebourne Art Group
- Wirlu-murra Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation
- Pilbara Community Legal Service - Roebourne
- EPIC - Roebourne
- Mawarnkarra Health Services Aboriginal Corporation
- Roebourne District High School

Most of all, we'd like to acknowledge the commitment from Ian Wally and his wife Gloria Newland, Shenara Smith, Lynette Wilson and Beth Smith, and the Roebourne Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities who support this journey together.



Lesley Murray - proud Anaiwan woman



Healing Art on Country with Roebourne Art Group, children inspired to be on Country, learning and sharing

*“For many families, these trips are the first time since the loss that they have spent time together laughing, relaxing, and enjoying each other’s company. The ‘Out On Country’ program helps us to reach families and build stronger and more meaningful relationships with them. This helps us to identify what support and services we can offer them. These families are often running on empty, which affects the whole family structure. If we are able to provide support and a shoulder to lean on through these times of struggle, we may be able to provide the hope that one day they can prioritise education and normal family structures in life.” Shenara Smith, Coordinator Gurlu Gurlu Maya – One Tree Child & Parent Centre Roebourne*

# TROY HILL - A PERSONAL JOURNEY

NAME:

Troy Hill

CONTACT PERSON:

Troy Hill

EMAIL:

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KEY WORDS:

Environmental health, education, empowerment

## About Troy Hill...

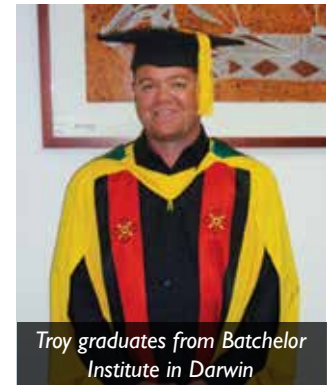
Troy Hill is the only fully qualified Aboriginal Environmental Health Officer in Western Australia. He currently lives in Carnarvon.



Dog Health program



Troy with Burringurrah Elder



Troy graduates from Bachelor Institute in Darwin



Recycling tyres

## Once upon a time...

during the mid-1970s in Perth, Troy Hill was born. Troy is the youngest of six children but he is the first to admit that his childhood was challenging. He remembers his younger years as going "house to house, party to party, taxi to taxi." He recalls always waking up in someone else's house. When he was around 14 years old, Troy decided that if he was to move ahead in life, he needed to live with his Aunt Mary Layland. He did that and that is when his life started to turn around. Yet, despite Troy's tumultuous upbringing, he has managed to excel in his career and is the only fully qualified Aboriginal Environmental Health Officer in Western Australia.

Although graduating from Lockridge High School in Perth, Troy has lived most of his life in places outside of Perth - in Meekatharra, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Port Hedland. He considers Meekatharra to be a very special place to live.

Throughout his childhood, Troy can recall a number of people who influenced him positively and gave

him hope. His father and several other supporting family members with good work ethics including his uncle Graeme Sisson from Meekatharra, who was a registered builder, taught him construction and maintenance skills. Troy earned money by helping his uncle complete odd jobs around "Meeka" and learning the value of money was an important life lesson for Troy. A couple of teachers from Troy's high school also took an interest in him and offered opportunities where he could "use his hands." His mates from the Bassendean Football club were very important to Troy and he "made friends for life from that mob - they were like a big family."

## And then one day...

in 1993, Troy moved back to Meekatharra to live with his cousin Andrew Binsiar. As an older brother, it was Andrew who gave Troy some valuable lifelong lessons. Troy began a training program linked with the Meekatharra Shire "LEAP" (Land, Environment Action Program) which aimed to beautify the town leading up to the centenary celebrations. It was during this time that Troy started to think about how





Troy Hill at the Kalgoorlie Health Expo, 2011



Controlled burning on Country

he could give back to the community. In 1994, Troy started working for Yulella Aboriginal Corporation on the CDEP Program where "Linno Gilla" taught Troy how to weld. It was during his CDEP days he was then introduced to the environmental health arena by Tim Riley. Tim pulled up in a car and said, "There's an environmental health job available you should apply for." Troy applied and got the position as an Environmental Health Worker with Yulella. He completed a Certificate 2 in Aboriginal Environmental Health with Pundulmurra College over two years (1995-1997).

### And because of that...

In 1995 Troy's son Kristian Kyanga was born in Meekatharra hospital. The birth of his first son was joyous but Troy was determined to keep his career moving. Under instruction and guidance from Greg McConkey, who he describes as "his mentor", he completed a Certificate 3 qualification in 2001. This training and his practical experience allowed Troy to be employed as a Field Support Officer with Yulella.

In 2002, while living in Meekatharra, Troy "stole" his partner Corrina from Yulga Jinna community and they had a son together. However, Troy felt he was trapped in a vicious cycle in Meekatharra - his professional life was rewarding but his social life was still full of challenges - Troy was drinking heavily, partying hard and always playing up on weekends.

In 2003, Troy wanted to break that cycle, and moved to Kalgoorlie where he started working as a Field Support Officer with the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. He was enjoying this position but then life dealt a

hard blow and in 2005 Troy lost his mother due to throat cancer. Not to be deterred, in 2006 Troy began his study with Batchelor Institute in Darwin.

In 2009, while studying and working for the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Troy suffered another blow. His eldest son Kristian, who was born in 1995 with epilepsy, underwent 13 hours of surgery on his brain to eliminate his drop attack seizures. He then had to overcome some unexpected swelling on the brain two weeks later. This was serious for Troy. Devastation kicked in as he was not prepared to lose his oldest son. The strength of character of the Hill family shone though and after four long months of learning to walk and talk again, Kristian was released from hospital.

Troy continued his study at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education course in Environmental Health. He found the academic work extremely difficult, but he was stimulated and committed to completing his degree and making the most of the opportunities he had created.

Troy received valuable support from staff at the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, as well as funding and support from the Office of Aboriginal Health at the WA Health Department. He describes his experience at Batchelor as one of the "best things he ever did."

While studying at Batchelor, Troy was introduced to some family members who he had never met. They were close relatives on his dad's side. Troy had waited his whole life just to meet this side of the family. It was a proud moment.



*“My motivation to complete my studies as an Aboriginal EHO came from wanting to understand the bigger picture around people, and particularly around Aboriginal families. I could see Aboriginal people attending far too many funerals and the cause of death was almost always linked to environmental health risk factors. Sometimes I felt like shouting - and asking my people to stop, look around and ask themselves - why are we always burying our mob? I wanted my people to acknowledge that this ‘is not normal.’”*

Despite all of his challenges, Troy completed his tertiary degree course in 2012, combining part-time study with full-time work at the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. While he was studying, he said that being the first fully qualified Aboriginal EHO in WA never entered his mind, it just unfolded that way. Troy says his motivation was wanting to understand the bigger picture around people, and particularly around Aboriginal families. He knew that Aboriginal people attended far too many funerals and the cause of death was almost always linked to environmental health risk factors. Troy says he sometimes felt like shouting - and asking his people to stop and look around and ask themselves - why are we always burying our mob? He wanted Aboriginal people to acknowledge that this “is not normal.”

One of the important life choices that Troy made while working in Kalgoorlie was to purchase a home of his own. Given his unstable childhood, it was an aim of Troy’s to ensure he had a safe and stable home for his partner and kids. He wanted to ensure they had somewhere that they could call home.

After an eight year career at the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Troy started work with the Ngaanyatjarra Health Services as the Environmental Health Coordinator. He was responsible for delivering services across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands area of WA, in 12 communities in the Central Desert near the SA/NT border. During this time, Troy was also the National WA Aboriginal representative on the Working Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health (WGATSIEH), which

is responsible for organising the national Aboriginal Environmental Health conferences.

## Unfortunately...

while studying at Batchelor, he lost many of his friends and family, partially from the impact of environmental health conditions, and this made him very determined to complete his degree.

## And since that day...

Troy has moved to the Gascoyne Region to work as the Environmental Health Coordinator for the Carnarvon Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation. He continues to study and is currently completing his Certificate 4 Primary Health Care Work. His rationale for this is his desire to have knowledge right across the health spectrum from environmental health prevention to clinical treatment, because this will make him more of an asset.

This dedication seems to be rubbing off on his family members, as his youngest son Sebastian was recently awarded the prestigious Edmund Rice Medallion in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Christian Service Learning Program at the Clontarf School.

In his personal life, Troy enjoys spending time with the kids and taking them out on trips fishing, hunting and camping, cooking on an open fire and taking the time to talk about things in life, provide them guidance in life or discuss whatever they may have on their minds. It’s bonding time. Troy talks to them not only as a father, but as a friend.



Minor plumbing works in Mungallah Community

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