

STORIES FROM OUR
**DREAM IT
FORWARD**
PROGRAM



info@connectgroups.org.au
www.connectgroups.org.au

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Kindly supported by Mental Health Commission
Government of Western Australia
Mental Health Commission

AN INNOVATIVE SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM
FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA



ConnectGroups
helping support groups & individuals



Kindly supported by Mental Health Commission
Government of Western Australia
Mental Health Commission



Dream it Forward supports people working at the coalface in Aboriginal communities who “see it, taste it, touch it, smell it, and hear it” every day and know where the funding is needed to affect change. Dream it Forward empowers community to implement solutions that are local, appropriate and needed for their mob.

Shaun Nannup –
Dream it Forward partner



Thank You:

The Mental Health Commission’s David Axworthy, Gino Marinucci, Sarah Green, Michael Lenney, Andrew Brock, Damian Parke, and Russell Butler for their steadfast support.

The Nyoongar people of the southwest region of WA, the Kuwarra people of the Goldfields, and the Yawuru, Kwini (Pela), Miriwoong, Jaru, Kija, Gooniyandi, Alawa, and Wardaman people in the Kimberley region.

Shaun Nannup for continuing to share his knowledge and teachings.

ConnectGroups Support Groups Association WA Inc.

Antonella Segre, CEO
Christine Hendricks, Project Coordinator
Danielle Kroonenburg, Outreach Project Support Officer

Kudos: The Dream it Forward Program was a finalist for the Innovation Award in the 2017 WAAMH Mental Health Awards

ConnectGroups Support Groups Association WA Inc. was a finalist in the WACOSS 2016 Community Services Excellence Awards for its small grants programs: Pay it Forward, Dream it Forward, and Live it Forward together.



ConnectGroups is a Mental Health First Aid Gold Skilled Workplace.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE DREAM IT FORWARD PROGRAM - ISSUE #2

The **Dream it Forward** Program (DIF) is a ConnectGroups small grants program focused on strengthening, sustaining or adding value to community-led projects, and a partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Western Australia.

Dream it Forward is a healing-focused grassroots initiative that brokers funding based on needs identified *by the community for the community*, and focuses on positively impacting the social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families, and communities.

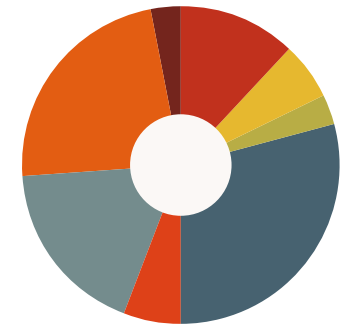
Engagement with Elders and community leaders has informed the program that concepts of country, and connection to country and culture, are cornerstones of Aboriginal identity. To lose connection to country is to lose one's Aboriginal identity and all the associated spiritual connections to land, culture, community, and family. A person's country is the traditional lands where their ancestors came from, and connecting to country means that a person knows the stories, the songs, the dances, the language, the lore and the spirit of that country; it is to know who they are. This link strengthens cultural identity, and is intrinsic to building connections with community and family, and improving social and emotional wellbeing.

The strength of **Dream it Forward** is recognition of the importance of these connections to holistic healing, and gives communities benefiting from **Dream it Forward** funding, a **voice** in their own healing and recovery. Projects were place-based, embedded cultural understanding into the design and delivery of activities, and implemented a range of methodologies to strengthen capacity, reduce risk factors of psychological distress, and increase community protective factors.

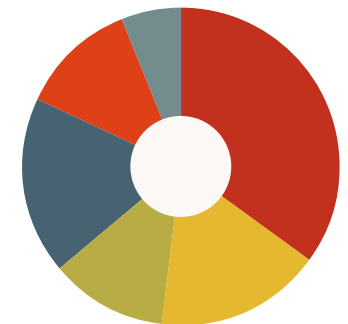
SUMMARY – Grants awarded in 2015–16 and completed in 2017

1. 66 submissions received in one funding round
2. 17 grants awarded
3. \$601,870 total amount requested from 66 submissions
4. \$85,000 funds allocated across 17 grants representing 26% of all submissions and 14% of all funds requested
5. Regional distribution:

Region	Submitted	Awarded
Metro	32%	12%
Armadale	4%	6%
South West	5%	3%
Great Southern	15%	29%
Goldfields	5%	6%
West Kimberley	11%	18%
East Kimberley	12%	23%
Wheatbelt	9%	3%
Pilbara	1%	0
Mid-West	6%	0



Submission Category	Submitted	Awarded
On-Country Camps	24%	35%
Women's Groups	11%	17%
Men's Groups	12%	12%
Sport/Dance/Music	9%	18%
Art Projects	14%	12%
Youth	10%	0
Other	20%	6%



A key objective of the **Dream it Forward** Program is to add to the evidence that grassroots programs are a complement to mainstream services and encourage a “ground shift” toward local solutions and local ownership. Additionally, the model supports “The 2015–25 Plan” recommendation that “local partnerships between government agencies and non-government organisations will drive continuous improvement at the local level.”¹

These are just some of their stories:

¹ Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and other Drug Services Plan 2015–2025, Mental Health Commission

STORY 1

Koolkuna – Eastern Region Domestic Violence Network: Early intervention with children at-risk of family and domestic violence in Swan region

Region: Perth metro

Category: Art Project

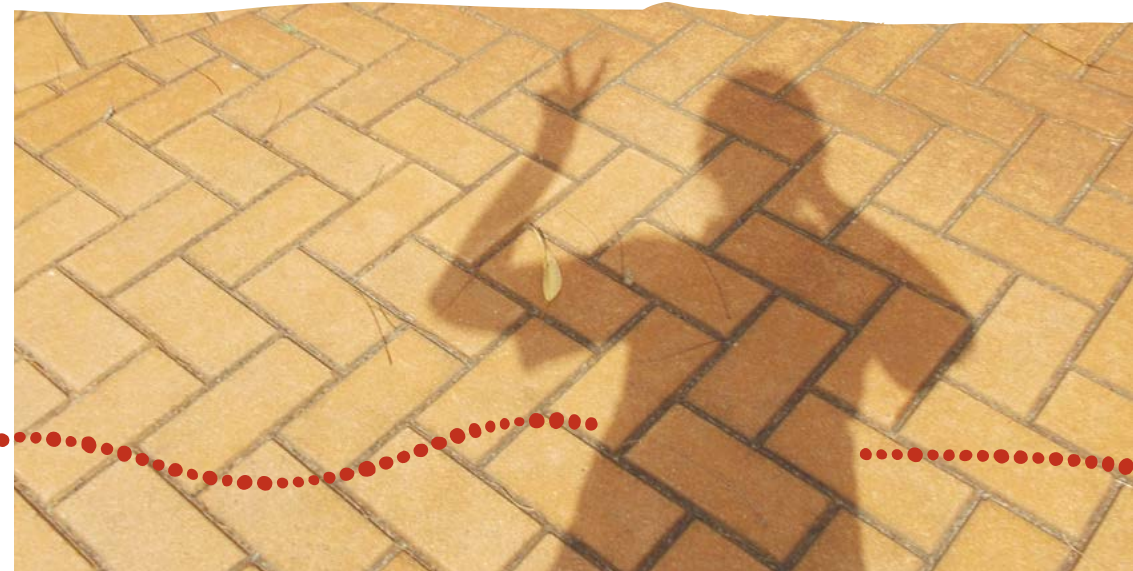
- Impact:**
- Recovery and Hope
 - Connection to Country
 - Strengthening of Connection to Culture
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress
 - Improved people's access to other services

Koolkuna, an Aboriginal term meaning safe place, provides crisis accommodation and support services to individuals affected by and living with domestic violence in the North East metropolitan region of Perth. Consultation and mapping with local Elders, the City of Swan, police, and the Swan Alliance revealed the Swan region as a high-risk area for family and domestic violence, crime, violence, drugs, and alcohol. Children indicated their primary concern as feeling unsafe when asked to identify what worried them most about their community.

Dream it Forward supported the design and trial of an afterschool program at Midvale Primary School and West Beechboro Primary School for children to focus on safe people and places in their lives through the medium of photography. The program was supported by Elders and children's advocates. Each child in the program was provided the use of a camera, taught photography skills by a local and well-known Aboriginal photographer, supported to create personal photobooks, and had their photos featured in an exhibition as part of a celebration of family. Through the program, children learned about healthy respectful relationships and protective behaviours. Further, the children were able to express that knowledge through photography and associated creative writing.

The project demonstrated a measurable increase in children's knowledge of safety, strategies for keeping safe, and ability to identify safe people in their lives. It better informed school safety priorities by highlighting school as a positive and safe environment for children affected by or at-risk of family violence. Referral and support pathways to Koolkuna and other service providers were extended and increased as a result of the program.

koolkuna
[safe place]



STORY 2

Danjoo Yorga Walbrin (Together Women Heal) Community Group: Women's yarning retreat model for women of Gosnells

Region: Perth metro

Category: On-Country Camp

Impact:

- Recovery and Hope
- Connection to Country
- Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
- Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing

This project was initiated by a community member, Joanne Della Bona alongside a team of volunteer facilitators. Through her long relationship with the Coolabaroo Centre's Aboriginal Early Years Service, Joanne became aware that there were few supports in the Gosnells area for women to come together for healing and sharing. The Gosnells area has been identified by the ABS as an area of high socio-economic disadvantage, and many of the families utilising the services at Coolabaroo were experiencing complex social disadvantage. Their struggles led to a recognition that the women were carrying the burdens for their families. Joanne's concept was to nurture the body, mind, and spirit of these women in a culturally safe environment.

Dream it Forward funded a pilot women's camp to connect women with country, culture and community through facilitated workshops, meditation, art, music, and a safe place to be heard. The camp was facilitated by volunteers, and organised around themes associated with the six Nyoongar seasons which had been discussed and permitted by community Elders.

The model involved twenty-five (25) participants including local Elders as well as a respected Elder from the adjacent language group (Yamatji) invited to attend the camp in order to introduce the concept to the closest neighbouring Aboriginal community in the Gascoyne region. Building capacity for the Elder to work with the emerging Danjoo Yorga Walbrin yarning circle to design and conduct a similar culturally-appropriate initiative for Yamatji women demonstrated project scalability.

The Danjoo Yorga Walbrin yarning circle have continued to meet since the retreat to connect and share. Additionally, the group have formed a closed Facebook community to remain connected.



"I enrolled in 2 online units with Deakin today, which can go towards both a Psychology art or science degree. I guess it can be attributed towards the growth we are all going through post the retreat."

"Last weekend was one of the most significant things I have ever been offered. It has had a profound effect on me in the best possible way towards self compassion. Haven't really processed it all yet, but know it has! My self acceptance has sky rocketed, I think what you and the others have done will have a ripple effect now. It was so so good."



STORY 3

Tambellup Aboriginal Progress Association: Community Healing Camp

Region: Great Southern

Category: On-Country Camp

- Impact:**
- Recovery and Hope
 - Strengthening of Connection to Culture
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress
 - Improved people's access to other services

Tambellup Aboriginal Progress Association has been in operation for over 40 years. Tambellup is a small town approximately three hours south-east of Perth in an isolated rural area, and home to an Aboriginal community of approximately 160 people. The Association runs youth and community programs, Grief and Loss Days, and is supported by Great Southern Aboriginal Health Service, Relationships Australia, Southern AgCare and Palmerston to divert youth away from at-risk behaviours, to reconnect family and community to country, to promote social and emotional wellbeing, and to deliver health services.

Dream it Forward funded, for a second year, a whole-of-community camp supported by Relationships Australia and local Elders. This on-country camp built on the outcomes of a successful camp in 2014/15 and the benefits and positive outcomes continue to be felt throughout the community. The community has identified the benefit of healing and hope in camps away from Tambellup where families can holistically reconnect with each other, strengthen resilience and spirit, yarn, participate in grief and loss counselling, eat healthy and nutritious food, and be together away from the distractions of stress, alcohol and other drugs. Additionally, participants are encouraged to identify ways of absorbing the strength from the boodja (land), boom (trees), maambakoort (sea/ocean), and djerap (birds).

74% of the community participated across the three days, and benefited from the cultural transmission from Elders, provided support for struggling community members, and joined an Elder-led yarning workshop on health and wellbeing. An important outcome of the camp is improved engagement with natural supports and services on community including the indigenous Menshed, yorga day programs, yarning circles, Palmerston, Amity Health, and the local Community Resource Centre.



“The whole community came together as a whole group. This was a wonderful time to get together as there was a loss which had affected some community members. By being together, we had good support emotionally. The camp revived our spirits.”



STORY 4

Katanning All Stars Grassroots Netball Program: Support of the Katanning grassroots netball program as a diversionary intervention

Region: Great Southern

Category: Sport/Dance/Music

Impact:

- Strengthening of Connection to Culture
- Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
- Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
- Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress

Katanning is a multicultural community located 295 kilometres from Perth. The Katanning All Stars Grassroots Netball Program was established in 2012 as an initiative of Netball WA. The program runs for 10 –12 weeks, and seeks to engage young Aboriginal girls in living a healthy and active lifestyle, and build resilience and leadership skills. Girls who have been in the program for several years have assumed leadership and mentoring roles to support the younger girls.

Dream it Forward funded 19 girls to participate in the 2016 ‘Smarter Than Smoking’ Association Championships. Attending carnivals increases opportunities for the girls to participate and develop skills in playing netball. However, these events also celebrate sportsmanship, cultural diversity, friendship and a sense of belonging and pride in family and community. Yarning happened throughout the weekend between the girls and their mentors. Participation in the carnival also forged ongoing connections with other grassroots teams.

Participation in the netball program builds relationships with mentors in and out of school. Mentors provide individual support where needed and encourage school attendance and behaviour. Through the netball program’s duty of care, some mentors have been upskilled in One Life suicide prevention training to identify and recognise flags for adolescent depression and anxiety. Mentoring through the netball program has a positive impact on the social and emotional aspect of each girl by developing self-confidence and resilience.

Being connected to the Katanning All Stars Grassroots Netball Program instils a sense of belonging and respect in the players who grow confidently and positively. The program’s success has been supported by a strong group of mothers, grandmothers and aunties who are now coaches and umpires.



“The grassroots program in Katanning has been the most positive and successful engagement project with numbers increasing that enhance quality of life. This program is the only sense of belonging to many of our young Noongar girls. It is the perfect opportunity for these girls of various ages to come together and to learn to respect each other, share and care for each other through the love of netball. The bonding that they form together as friends has been amazing.”

“This program has empowered our younger girls to take on roles of coaching and umpire and giving them overall confidence.”



STORY 5

Tambellup Grassroots Netball Program: Support of the Tambellup grassroots netball program as a diversionary intervention

Region: Great Southern

Category: Sport/Dance/Music

- Impact:**
- Strengthening of Connection to Culture
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress

The Tambellup Grassroots Aboriginal Netball organisation is an emerging association tasked with encouraging participation by Aboriginal youth to participate in sport to strengthen their cultural identity, and create a sense of belonging and purpose. The program supports the social and emotional wellbeing of the girls by diverting and discouraging them away from potentially at-risk or sedentary behaviours, provides mentoring, and creates natural opportunities to yarn about health, family, and positive choices.

Dream it Forward funded, for a second year, 17 girls to participate in the 2016 NAIDOC Netball Carnival in Perth, one of the most important indigenous tournaments. Tournament travel provided the girls with a healthy and empowering experience, reinforced pride in their culture and community, strengthened their self-esteem, and afforded the opportunity for families to be together in a positive environment. Participation in the carnival also encouraged ongoing connections with other grassroots teams.

Research suggests that active involvement in sport contributes to improvements in school retention, attitudes towards learning, social and cognitive skills, increased social inclusion and cohesion; increased validation of and connection to culture. Additionally “the evidence suggests that providing locally relevant sports and recreation programs can be useful in building a sense of purpose, hope and belonging in these communities (Ruhanen & Whitford 2011; Stojanovski 2010).² Other benefits of the Tambellup Grassroots Netball Program include community socialisation and through example, encouraging other members of the community to become more active.



2 AIHW/AIFS Closing the Gap clearinghouse; Supporting healthy communities through sports and recreation programs, resource sheet #26, December 2013

STORY 6

The Dreamtime Committee: Supporting the retention and performance of Aboriginal students at Mount Lockyer Primary

Region: Great Southern

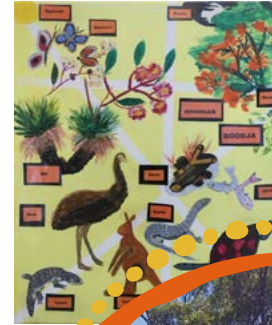
Category: On-country Camps

- Impact:**
- Connection to Country
 - Strengthening of Connection to Culture
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress

The Dreamtime Committee started in 2009 at Mount Lockyer Primary School in Albany. The Committee works towards supporting and developing Noongar students as they move toward secondary school. The Committee supports 60–70 students and their families each year. In 2015, the school came fourth in the State Excellence in Aboriginal Education awards. The Committee operates under a Community Partnership Agreement and includes Noongar community members, teaching staff, and community service groups.

Dream it Forward supported the Dreamtime Committee to resource on-country trips. The connection between the initiatives run by the Dreamtime Committee in collaboration with the Mount Lockyer Primary School and the camps keeps the children engaged in academic pursuit while strengthening their identity and confidence in who they are and what they can achieve. The programs instil pride in them as young Noongar men and women, and a sense of belonging.

Funding was also allocated to support the Elders Circle and Scrapbooking initiative which is a collaboration between Elders, community members, parents and children based around scrapbooking and storytelling run over 30 weeks and included field trips to connect children to country. Having the Elders within the school environment gives students a sense of pride and motivates them to achieve. Opportunities for Elders to help and encourage the children is invaluable and helps break the cycle of disadvantage through education. This collaborative and strengths-based approach prepares the children for scholarship opportunities, and full engagement with secondary education and beyond.



STORY 7

Borden Development Group: Borden Sharing Stories Day

Region: Great Southern

Category: Other

- Impact:**
- Connection to Country
 - Strengthening of Connection to Culture
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress

The Borden Development Group, in the Shire of Gnowangerup, responds to the specific needs of the community including addressing social issues, cultural events, and purposeful community gatherings. The Group identified that the younger generation of Noongars, as well as the broader community, lacked an understanding and connection to the land which led to an effort to develop greater community awareness and cultural exploration through shared oral and visual stories.

Dream it Forward contributed to the project providing an opportunity to reflect on cultural identity. The 'Sharing Stories' day provided a renewed sense of belonging through the identification of significant sites, discussions of places of traditional interest, tasting local bush tucker and relevant local artefacts from the Borden district. The day also provided acknowledgement of past custodians and the role they played and continue to play in looking after the land. Local Noongar people were encouraged to share their knowledge of the area with the broader Borden community.

Talking of past ill treatment is hard but sharing those stories was an important part of the healing that followed. The Noongar community felt validated and valued as part of the broader Borden community. Local knowledge was respected and resulted in the North Pallinup Landcare officers connecting with local Noongars to support future land care projects. Many of the photos sourced for the event (with permission from the owners) are now part of the permanent local history collection. New friendships were forged, and old contacts renewed. The day represented an opportunity for reconciliation, encouraged a sense of belonging for all members of the community, and symbolised progress toward an optimistic and respectful future for the community.



"Just wanted to let you know – YOU ROCK!! Thank you all so very much for making this event so much fun to be involved in and for your amazing commitment to your community."

"A big thank you to Tanya for facilitating the opportunity for this noongar event. We (the Minter's) enjoyed the day and evening. Got to meet some of the Barrow's, Moir's, Rout's & Trappitt's who we went to school with all the aunties and uncles, and all said they were pleased the Minter's came. Heard stories of back in there day and had a few laughs which were great. Patrick Trappit said he also has some photos with Minter family members as kids and will email through (can't wait!). Thanks again for the lovely event for us all."



STORY 8

Nyunnga–Gu (Women Belong) Community Group: On country healing camps for women and support of yarning group in Leonora

Region: Goldfields

Category: On-country Camps

Impact:

- Connection to Country
- Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
- Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
- Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress

Nyunnga–Gu (Women Belong) is a group of more than 20 Aboriginal women based in Leonora in the Goldfields region of WA, approximately 830km northeast of Perth. The town has a population of 1,500, of whom 24% are of Aboriginal descent. Nyunnga–Gu has grown steadily, building engagement within the community. Nyunnga–Gu came together with the objectives to provide opportunities for skills and leadership development, improved social and emotional wellbeing of women by building confidence and willingness to engage in the group, and the development of micro–enterprises on community.

Dream it Forward funded practical support for Nyunnga–Gu to further their goal of connecting to culture through on–country healing camps. Camps are also important to bring the women closer together and assist in breaking down family feuding and social dysfunction. Cultural knowledge transmission from Elders and shared skills are important components of the camps. With the funding of equipment for the group, the women participated in the Warakurna Law and Culture gathering attended by over 250 women from Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) lands, and they expect many more healing camps to take place.

Nyunnga–Gu has supported and encouraged women’s wellbeing in the wider Aboriginal community through its facilitation of service provision from CentreCare, WACHS, Hope Community Services, and 360 Health and Community. Services include suicide prevention, domestic and family violence, and alcohol and other drugs workshops as well as healthy eating, diabetes, and smoking cessation sessions. Their work has promoted service accessibility in the community, encouraged a strengths–based practice from service providers, and created a strong support and yarning network.



SHIRE OF LEONORA

“To make a better change for themselves, health-wise, and to look after their children, because the children are important, they’re our future.”

STORY 9

Tramulla Strong Women's Group: Practical camping and technology support to further the work of the Group in Kalumburu

Region: East Kimberley

Category: Women's Group

- Impact:**
- Recovery and Hope
 - Connection to Country
 - Strengthening of Connection to Culture
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing

"Respect our Past. Dream our Future" The Tramulla Strong Women's Group provides a yarning and healing space for women in the far north remote community of Kalumburu. Active since 2007, the Group focuses on protecting women and children from domestic violence and sexual abuse, supporting strong parenting and cultural values in the community. The members are volunteers and provide opportunities for vulnerable people to yarn, heal, connect, and to seek relief and guidance while they fish, hunt and camp together. A key focus of the group is addressing health and wellbeing by keeping culture strong.

The Tramulla Strong Women's Group offers hope and support for families facing challenges with mental health, grief and loss, and psychosocial stress.

Dream It Forward funded the practical needs of the group with the purchase of camping equipment for on-country cultural healing activities. The equipment facilitated the Strong Women's Group to provide social and emotional wellbeing support to at-risk individuals and families, and strengthened their capacity as a community Support Group. The grant also provided digital equipment to record and share storytelling sessions, cultural knowledge, and healing activities with others in the region.

The project further supported capacity-building the governance of the group to engage with service providers, other NGOs, and government. This grant was the first the women have applied for, and the experience encouraged group confidence and knowledge. Members learned how to: use email, upload photographs, create flyers for activities, and increased computer literacy. Digitally documenting time spent on country supports families to revisit good memories during hard times and loss.

"No to borrow gear, decide to go out bush and make it happen and not rely on others, that's what it's really all about."

Doreen Unghango

"It's good for us to have the camping gear for the women, we can take charge of our own stuff and we can take healing camps with women and children and also for sorry business, we can take them out when they feel sad and make them forget worries and sadness."

Member of Tramulla Strong Women's Group



STORY 10

Kururrungku Catholic Education Centre: Women's yarning group in Billiluna

Region: East Kimberley

Category: Women's Group

- Impact:**
- Connection to Country
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress
 - Improved people's access to other services

Kururrungku Catholic Education Centre (CEC) is in Billiluna, a remote Aboriginal Community with a population of 180 people, approximately 150km south east of Halls Creek. The centre has a fluctuating school enrolment of 60–80 students from kindy to Year 10.

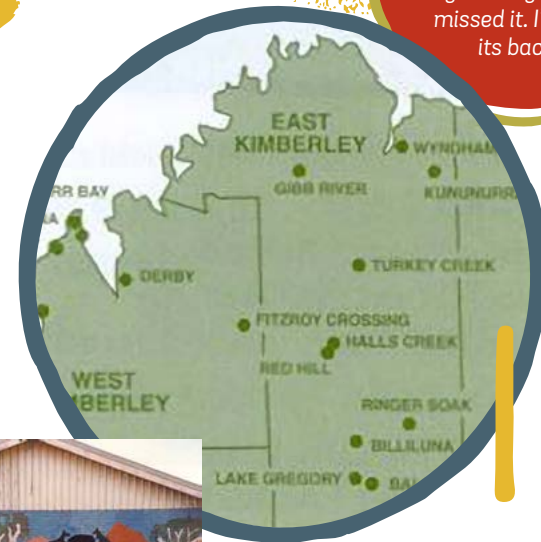
Kururrungku CEC's vision is to encourage and respect community involvement and aims to help people reach their full potential. The centre offers programs to cultivate strong minds, bodies and spirits, and to develop literacy, numeracy, religious education, integrated studies and culture, to prepare students for continuing education.

Dream It Forward funded rebuilding the Women's Yarning Group through provision of a venue to meet and materials to create art. This Group offered women in the community an opportunity to build social networks within a safe environment, and build engagement with the local health clinic which will continue to support the group post-grant. The women were able to yarn while sewing or making arts and crafts to raise funds for school excursions.

The project generated renewed interest in the Women's Yarning Group and represented a positive community opportunity. The women felt a sense of improved self-worth, confidence and pride when sharing skills with each other. Positive relationships were fostered among the participants in a socially and emotionally supportive environment.



"It's good to be able to yarn. We used to have this a long time ago and I've missed it. I'm glad it's back."



STORY 11

Waringarri Aboriginal Arts: ARTHEAL Workshops – therapeutic art therapy in Kununurra

Region: East Kimberley

Category: Art Projects

- Impact:**
- Recovery and Hope
 - Connection to Country
 - Strengthening of Connection to Culture
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Improved people’s access to other services

Waringarri Aboriginal Arts (WAA) is located in Kununurra, in Miriwoong country. Established in the 1970s as a centre for arts and culture, Waringarri also supports the wellbeing of artists and their families. Offering employment, skills and leadership development programs, Waringarri supports more than 50 artists and employs 10 local Aboriginal people to run daily operations.

Dream it Forward funded WAA to engage an art therapist to facilitate a series of community-based ARTHEAL workshops with the support of local professional practitioners. The ARTHEAL participants were Aboriginal arts workers, youth workers and community members training to become art therapy leaders. They learned how to use art therapy to address the impact of grief and trauma, how to identify the warning signs of suicide, how to approach a person in crisis, and how to use calming and grounding techniques in a culturally sensitive manner.

ARTHEAL is a community-initiated response to the high number of suicides and associated grief and trauma experienced by families and communities in the Kimberley. The art therapy environment was safe, non-confrontational and culturally appropriate for individuals to express strong feelings through art therapy. As well as finding new ways to express and deal with emotions, individuals were gently encouraged to yarn about their trauma and grief, and seek support from counsellors if needed.

The ARTHEAL project built referral pathways to professional assistance by developing a program that is run by local community members. The project received overwhelming community support. Workshops were developed in partnership with Boab Health, Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service, Save the Children, and Art Therapist Toni Jackson.



STORY 12

Lilman Saints Football Club: On country camps and suicide prevention activities for Aboriginal players in Halls Creek

Region: East Kimberley

Category: On-Country Camps

- Impact:**
- Connection to Country
 - Strengthening of Connection to Culture
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress
 - Improved people's access to other services

Lilman Saints Football Club was established in 2013 in response to the suicide of a promising young Halls Creek AFL player and includes players from Halls Creek and Warmun Community. The team helps Aboriginal youth from the region address personal problems and encourages them to participate in football as a diversion from risk-taking behaviours. The club supports members to access programs around suicide prevention, alcohol and other drugs prevention, mental health support, and education about domestic violence.

Dream it Forward funded two on-country camps for young men from the Lilman Saints Football Club who are at-risk or are struggling with school, family or work. Elders supported the camps and provided cultural transmission through knowledge of country, building boomerangs and didgeridoo, fishing, bushwalking, as well as yarning circles around the campfire. Strengthening culture is an important protective factor. Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaM) workers also participated and encouraged awareness about supportive programs and services.

In this safe, culturally-strong environment, the young men were able to speak openly about problems and seek support from service providers. Activities about suicide prevention were well received and supported behavioural and attitudinal change. During Suicide Prevention Week, the club organised a special football match, community expo. Community service providers attended in large numbers to demonstrate their support and concern about suicide risk in the community.

This project was about building resilience, promoting self-esteem and self-awareness through a more connected community. Cultural transmission strengthened intergenerational, family and peer support, and demonstrated a positive future for the young men of the region.



"It was great to see so many people being involved and showing their concerns about the issues our communities face now and in the future."

Rowena Cox

"It was a good camp, taking the men out bush and teaching them how to make boomerang and didgeridoo. Talking to them about my life and their life."

Traditional Elder



STORY 13

Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service (KMHDS): Support of the Men's Group, Women's Group, Child and Adolescent Program

Region: West Kimberley

Category: Men's Group/Women's Group

- Impact:**
- Recovery and Hope
 - Connection to Country
 - Strengthening of Connection to Culture
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress
 - Improved people's access to other services

The Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service – Derby (KMHDS) provides specialist mental health, alcohol and other drug services in the West Kimberley region. The service delivers a comprehensive range of high quality, community-focused mental health and drug services to residents of and visitors in the region.

Dream it Forward supported the KMHDS in Derby to grow their Men's Group, Women's Group, and to deliver a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Program targeted to at-risk boys in the community. The weekly Groups provided an opportunity to yarn about life, appreciate country, and build connections. The Men's Group fished and hunted on-country, and organised monthly BBQs and cooking sessions. The Group also organised workshops from service providers including podiatrists, diabetes and kidney disease educators, and the Red Cross. The Women's Group offered a space to yarn about issues impacting them, made arts and crafts, and organised service providers to deliver education on key issues.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) Program identified at-risk indigenous boys to participate in an on-country camp with Elders, representatives from the Derby Youth Centre and an Aboriginal mental health worker. The camp provided an opportunity to strengthen cultural identity, engage in bush activities and promoted wellbeing and resilience. The camp supported the boys to better understand their history, and their place now.

These activities allowed a space for participants to explore culture, kinship and identity. KMHDS staff were also better able to build bonds with participants making future contact easier and comfortable for their clients.



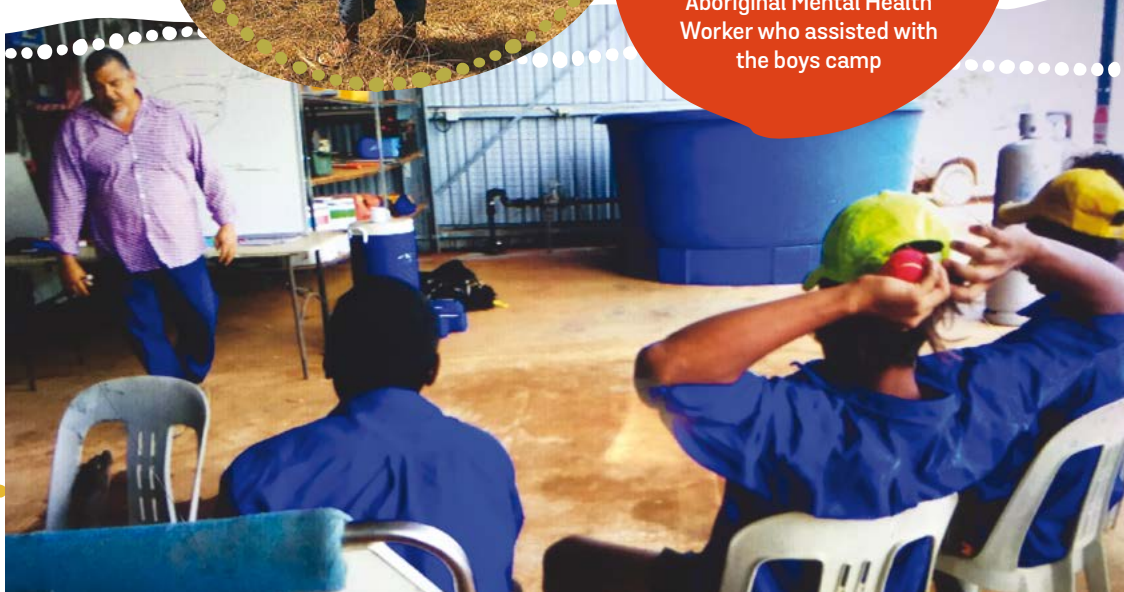
Government of Western Australia
WA Country Health Service



"This was really worthwhile. I enjoyed the relaxation and the break from all the stress at home and to have a nice feed and cup of tea."
Member of the Women's Group



"A lot of the boys seem confident and brighter, all positive and oozing with enthusiasm, had a really good time and participated well."
Aboriginal Mental Health Worker who assisted with the boys camp



STORY 14

Nyoongar Wellbeing & Sports Aboriginal Corporation: Nyoongar Resilience Physical Wellbeing Project

Region: Wheatbelt/South West/Great Southern

Category: Sport/Dance/Music

- Impact:**
- Recovery and Hope
 - Connection to Country
 - Strengthening of Connection to Culture
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress
 - Improved people's access to other services

Nyoongar Wellbeing and Sports (NWS) is an Aboriginal Corporation and health promotion charity providing healthy lifestyle programs based around physical game-based exercise in community settings. NWS's goal is to build health and wellbeing in Nyoongar communities while also promoting positive educational, social, emotional, and spiritual outcomes.

Dream it Forward funded the Nyoongar Resilience Hiking Project, a series of bush walks, traditional Indigenous games, and cultural history workshops in Bunbury, Northam, and Narrogin. The project was informed by community as well as evidence that improving emotional and physical wellbeing, and cultural transmission positively impacts attitudinal and behavioural change, and community cohesion. The hikes and games were targeted at men's and women's groups running out of partner organisations including KAARDA in Narrogin, SWAMS in Bunbury, and Avon Youth and Family Services in Northam.

Many project participants, who joined in the Indigenous games had previously never had an opportunity to play a traditional game. Men and women both expressed a sense of pride, and excitement which positively impacted on each of them. A healthy tucker cooking workshop allowed participants to gain knowledge about managing their health, leading a healthier lifestyle, and yarning about current community issues. Elders led the bush walks and provided information on local bush tucker, Nyoongar names for local fauna and flora, and cultural heritage. Cultural workshops led by local Elders included Aboriginal history, women's and men's past and present roles in the community and family, and resilience-building.



STORY 15

Centacare Kimberley Association Inc: “Cooking Up Good Tucker” Program in partnership with the Broome Recovery Centre

Region: West Kimberley

Category: Women’s Group

- Impact:**
- Recovery and Hope
 - Connection to Country
 - Strengthening of Connection to Culture
 - Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
 - Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress
 - Improved people’s access to other services

Centacare Kimberley is a Broome-based association that is the social welfare arm of the Catholic Diocese of Kimberley. Centacare delivers emergency relief and homelessness support services across the Kimberley and has extensive experience working in partnership with other service providers to achieve outcomes. The association delivers services to over 3,000 people throughout the Kimberley, of whom 95% are Aboriginal people.

Dream it Forward funded, in part, the piloting of the Cooking Up Good Tucker project. The Cooking Up Good Tucker project was developed on the advice of women Aboriginal Elders that younger Aboriginal women experiencing social and emotional wellbeing problems could benefit from support but were reluctant to approach services due to lack of trust, and concern about child protection issues, particularly the risk of child removal. A practical program about cooking healthful family meals was proposed for these women to yarn, seek help, and learn life skills in a culturally appropriate setting supported by grandmothers and aunties in the community. A local health care provider from Boab Health supported the project providing the services of a dietitian and diabetes educator.

The project encouraged increased self-esteem, resilience, confidence, and life skills including shopping and budgeting in an environment that also provided access to the knowledge, wisdom and life experience of respected local Elders. Simultaneously, the project supported Elders in their role as community leaders and educators, and provided an avenue for services to connect with at-risk young women.



“I enjoyed the cooking group. I enjoyed making different kinds of foods and coming to the group. There wasn’t anything I didn’t like because it was fun.”
Antonia Wiggan.



STORY 16

Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre/Marnin Studio: "Learning You Mob" community outreach project

Region: West Kimberley

Category: Other

Impact:

- Recovery and Hope
- Connection to Country
- Strengthening of Connection to Culture
- Strengthening Individual, Family, Kinship and Community Wellbeing
- Improvement in Social and Emotional Wellbeing
- Prevention and Early Intervention of Psychological Distress

Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Resource Centre (MWRC) is a place where women lead social change locally, nationally, and internationally. The centre supports women and families in the Fitzroy Valley by encouraging their safety and wellbeing, and fostering leadership and financial independence. Marnin Studio, operating as part of MWRC, is a safe place for local women to develop strength-based, community led sustainable microenterprises. Local women learn and share skills, build confidence, and receive support for their social, emotional and physical wellbeing.

Dream it Forward funded the practical support to engage two communities in the Fitzroy Valley with the "Learning You Mob" community outreach pilot project. Participants in Bayulu and Bungardi participated in workshops about textile design and production, including making and using natural bush dyes, fabric printing, basket weaving and techniques for making traditional toys and jewellery. These skills will support therapeutic and cultural economies, and a broader understanding of enterprise. An important feature of these sessions in addition to the artistic skillset development was the opportunity for local women to participate in facilitated therapeutic yarning to exchange stories, and reflect shared experiences, challenges and their roles building strong and healthy communities.

The "Learning You Mob" outreach program supported knowledge and skills transfer in the broader Fitzroy Valley, and strengthened social connectedness. The social, emotional and spiritual awareness from the program led to increased life potential for participants and opportunity to begin the first steps in healing unaddressed trauma.



MARNIN STUDIO
SHARING CULTURE | CONNECTING WOMEN



"I feel proud when our designs go overseas and around Australia. It makes us feel proud for who we are and what we've done."

June Smith, artist at Marnin Studio



THE UNIVERSAL TRUTH OF HEALING WORKSHOP

As part of the Dream it Forward Program, ConnectGroups, in partnership with “WISDOM in Your Life”, again offered ‘*The Universal Truth of Healing*’ a **FREE** workshop to members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The healing workshop was facilitated by Shaun Nannup and Roslyn Snyder and addressed culturally-safe approaches to healing and transformation using the experiences of art, storytelling, writing and poetry. The workshop was attended by 35 community members including one who travelled all the way from Halls Creek for one day just to participate!

The following are observations from the facilitators:

We entered the room in anticipation of the day, we were surprised to see so many faces waiting for us, downcast faces, lost and sad faces, the emotional pain in the room was palpable. We had four generations of Aboriginal people, many had been taken from their homes as young children, many had trauma, family deaths, suicides and abuse and they were all here to find out how to heal their emotional pain. An easy three-step process: acknowledge, express and let go, but oh so hard to do.

Over the course of the day, slowly people came to life. Eyes made contact, ears were pricked, people volunteered to participate, people started to understand the patterns of their life. People wrote or painted their truth, their life, people shared and connected, gently and subtly. Touching moments occurred, a woman shared her journey through her paintings and a younger girl looked up for the first time, their stories started the same. Or when Auntie spoke of some long held shame, and people touched her, the many whispers in my ears of their pain, their sorrow. Then the joy of voices heard, an elderly uncle taken from his family long ago, spoke in a quavering voice, Shaun stood behind him, holding his shoulders and thanking him, Uncle then joked and laughed and the whole room laughed with him. A magical transformation occurred, the room changed from despair to hope.

In the last session of the day, sometimes the hardest, letting go. An Auntie rose to her feet and in a strong voice said **“I am letting go of being a victim of the stolen generation!”**

Finally on reading the evaluations, someone had written that they learned “The strengths of transgenerational hearts”. This was the power of the generations of people in this room.



WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Welcome to Country ceremonies show awareness of and respect for the traditional owners of the land where an event is being held. The acknowledgement pays respect to the continuing cultural and spiritual practices of a particular region or area. Further it provides an awareness and recognition of Australia's Aboriginal peoples and cultures. It is an acknowledgement of the past and provides safe passage for visitors.

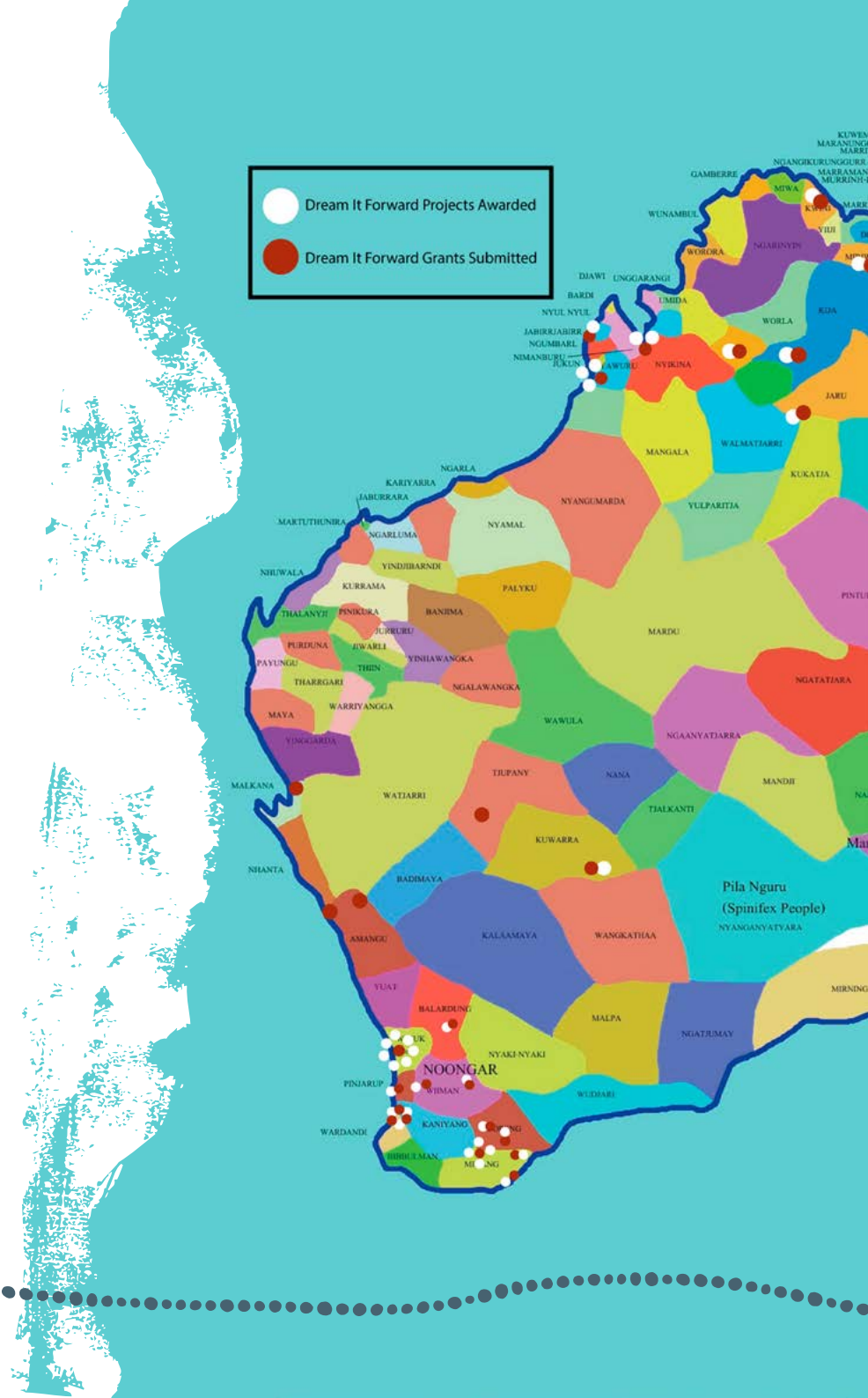
*Ngalluk jurapiny wanju nunnuk
ngallah Noongar Boodja
Nitjah ngallah moorts Boodja
koorah koorah
Nitjah ngallah karllah Boodja
koorah waanginy gaany ngallah
jurapiny moort ngallah boodja
Koorah waanginy kedala,
Ngallah yaakingy ngallak Noongar
Nyitiyang
Ngallak, Ngallak-a gaany*


*We are pleased to welcome you to our
Noongar country | This is our ancestor's
land from the dreamtime | This is our
homeland of history | And as one we
are proud people of our land | Through
history till today, we stand together
black and white | We are, we are one
(Translation)*

Written by Noongar Elders and Ngallak Koort Boodja Group members:
Doolan-Leisha Eatts, Yuraleen Dorothy Winmar, and Frederick Joseph Pickett

ConnectGroups acknowledges the Bibbulmun people as the Traditional Carers of the land on which our offices stand today and pays its respects to the Noongar people, and their Elders past and present.

The map on the right attempts to represent the range of Aboriginal language groups engaged in *Dream it Forward* projects across the two cycles of the program.





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