



# Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort (Our Children, Our Heart) Project



## 2019 Update for Elders

**Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort** began as a five-year research project working together with the Aboriginal community(s) of Perth to improve outcomes for young Aboriginal children and their families. Local Aboriginal community members are actively involved in all stages of the project and direct the focus of the research. An inaugural Elders meeting attended by 51 Elders from across the Perth metropolitan region in 2016 provided unanimous support for the project. The second annual meeting of Elders from across the Perth metropolitan region was hosted on the 17th of October 2017 at Altone Park, Beechboro. This meeting was attended by 60 Elders who endorsed what the project has done so far and emphasised the need to make sure that the project's research findings are translated into changes to policies and services.

### Talking to Community

The first stage of the research in 2016 and 2017 involved a range of Community Forums and Focus Groups with Aboriginal Elders, parents and other community members to develop a better understanding of early childhood development from Aboriginal perspectives. There have been a number of discussions with the community(s) to talk about the important things that make Aboriginal children strong, protect young Aboriginal children, and what is needed to support Aboriginal children.

### The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Framework

This framework represents the things that the Aboriginal people of Perth identified as critical for growing strong and solid Koolunga. The first diagram is an important reflection of the strengths and positive values of Noongar/Aboriginal ways of raising kids.

**Acknowledging  
our ways of raising  
strong, solid  
Koolunga**



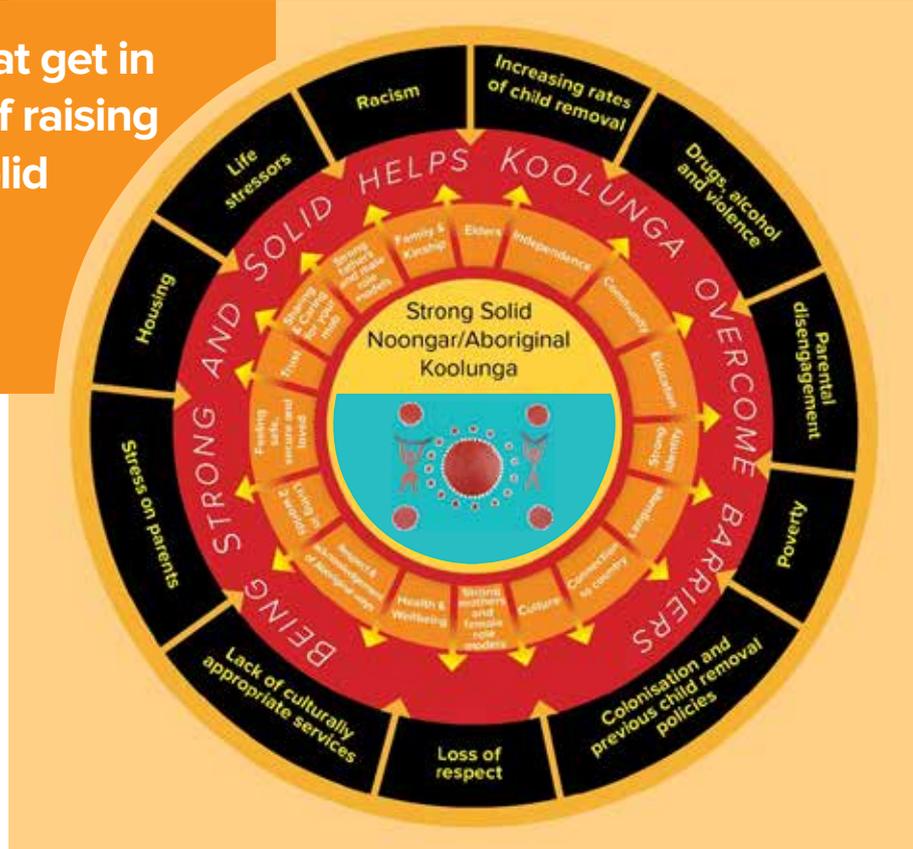


# Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort (Our Children, Our Heart) Project



The second diagram includes all the main issues people at the forums and focus groups raised as the issues and problems that many Aboriginal families have to deal with. These often stop children and their families being strong and solid.

## Things that get in the way of raising strong, solid Koolunga



### 2018 Research Translation Activities

The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Project has identified and prioritised issues of child protection/removal and housing and homelessness among Aboriginal families as critical areas requiring urgent attention and change. In relation to child protection/removal, our work has been directed at supporting Aboriginal community-controlled organisations working in this area including the Family Matters campaign and the Noongar Child Protection Council as well as participating in relevant consultations processes and forums. The Elder/Co-researchers and project team want to ensure a unified voice among the community with regard to the issue of child protection/removal and ensure that Aboriginal led solutions are appropriately funded and supported by government.

In relation to housing and homelessness, our work has been directed at aligning the project with relevant housing organisations and advocacy groups, as well as participating in consultations processes and forums and contributing to the development and implementation of strategies. The Elder/Co-researchers and project team have sought to ensure issues specifically impacting on Aboriginal children are given prominence and consideration and the need for Aboriginal-led solutions. The project will continue to seek to build connections within the sector and identify opportunities for advocating for change and to ensure the voices, values and priorities of Aboriginal children and their families are heard and considered.

The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers and the project team representatives have attended and participated in the following activities:

- ▶ **Elder/Co-researcher Meeting: Tuesday 13th February:** Primary focus of this meeting was child protection/removal. Dawn Wallam (Noongar Child Protection Council) presented to the meeting about the Noongar Child Protection Council and welcomed the support of the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers.
- ▶ **Mother-Bub Nurture/PlaygroupWA Yarning Circle: Wednesday 7th February - Wednesday 27th June (18 sessions):** Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researcher Aunty Muriel was employed to co-facilitate, with Sharon Cooke, a mum and bub 3hour programme each week for terms 1 and 2 at the Koongamia Child and Family Centre.





# Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort (Our Children, Our Heart) Project



- ▶ **2018 Values Impact Forum: Tuesday 20th – Friday 23rd February:** The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers presented on the project's findings and activities to date to the Values Impact Forum. They outlined the views and concerns of the Perth Aboriginal community and the principles and practice recommendations regarding the project's 3 priority areas: Child protection/removal, Early childhood education and care, and Housing.
- ▶ **Elder/Co-researcher Meeting: Wednesday 28th February:** A focus of this meeting was on the issue of housing and homelessness. Stephen Hall (Shelter WA) and Mark Hardwick (RUAH) presented. Shelter WA proposed the need for a focus on these issues for Aboriginal families in the metropolitan area as there is too much focus on remote communities. It was proposed that a forum be hosted to develop some key strategies and policy demands to address the issues of urban homelessness. Another focus of this meeting was child protection/removal among Aboriginal families in Perth. William Hayward (Family Matters) and Rhonda Marriott (Murdoch University) presented to the Elder/Co-researchers about their work seeking to address this issue and keep children safe and with their families. The Elder/Co-researchers support the work of the Family Matters campaign and its policies.
- ▶ **Presentation by Dr Michelle Stewart hosted by Family Matters & Kinship Connections WA: Tuesday 20th March:** Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers attended and provided advice/input.
- ▶ **WACCOSS Conference 2018 Making Place: Tuesday 1st – Wednesday 3rd May:** The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers were invited to attend the conference. Aunty Millie and Aunty Charmaine attended in their capacity with the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort project and as the Elders in residence with WACOSS. There were a number of presentations directly related to the work of the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort project including child protection/removal as well as homelessness and housing instability and the impact these have on Aboriginal families.
- ▶ **CCYP Forum: The Role of Services Assisting Vulnerable Children & Young People: Thursday 17th May:** Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers attended and provided advice/input.
- ▶ **Southwest Partnership Forum and Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Presentation: Friday 25th May:** Aunty Doris and Aunty Millie attended a meeting of the multi-stakeholders forum. One of the focus areas of the collective is working collaboratively to address issues impacting negatively on children's engagement at school. The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort project is undertaking a dedicated research project to explore children's experiences and insights of school (Year 6 and Years 8 & 9) and identify strategies to support their engagement.
- ▶ **Shelter WA and Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Aboriginal Housing Planning Forum: Wednesday 30th May with Stakeholders and the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers:** Representatives included Shelter WA, Mission Australia, and Ebenezer House. The discussion involved the need to ensure the government recognises the critical issue of housing and homelessness on urban Aboriginal people and the need to develop strategies and to present these to government as a positive way forward. The issue of hosting a larger Metropolitan Aboriginal housing forum was raised as one way of developing some community led ideas and presenting these to Government.
- ▶ **Homelessness Week (ShelterWA) – Sector Update: Wednesday 8th August:** One of the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers delivered the Welcome to Country then Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers participated, provided lived experience and input, and engaged with other stakeholders (Department of Communities, West Australian End Homelessness Alliance, Western Australian Child Health) and Minister McGurk who were present.
- ▶ **Homelessness Week (ShelterWA) – Ethical Landlords, Theme "There's always something landlords can do": Thursday 9th August:** Landlords were invited to hear about a range of things and discuss being part of helping to end homelessness, provide safe, affordable housing, and to make a difference when their tenants are experiencing a tough time. One of the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers delivered the



# Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort (Our Children, Our Heart) Project



Welcome to Country and then Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers participated, provided lived experience and engaged with other stake holders (Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Equal Opportunity Commission, Tenancy WA, Western Australian Council of Social Service, Real Estate Institute of Western Australia, and private rental-market landlords).

- ▶ **Submission to WA Government proposal: An office for advocacy and accountability in Aboriginal Affairs in Western Australia: September 2018:** The Elder/Co-researchers made a submission outlining their views on the WA Government's proposal for an office of advocacy and accountability in Aboriginal Affairs. The group expressed the importance that if this role is just an agency of Government like any other, then its legitimacy in the eyes of the Aboriginal community would be undermined. Furthermore, the existence of such an office could not excuse the government from its need to consult with community about programs and services. The group also stressed the importance of recognising the role of Elders in the composition of such an entity.

- ▶ **Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Aboriginal Housing Forum: Wednesday 22nd August:**

Representatives from Shelter WA, Noongar Mia Mia, WA Aboriginal Legal Services, Moorditj Koort, Wungening Aboriginal Corporation, Yorgum and Yorganup attended a meeting with the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort project team to discuss ways to address the number of Aboriginal people without a home and who do not have stable tenancy arrangements across metropolitan Perth and many areas of



the South West. Issues raised included supply of housing and expense of private market; poor maintenance of housing; length of waitlists (5000 on list for over 5 years); maintaining tenancies (evictions, 3 strike policy); trauma manifesting itself in so many areas that impact on housing and ability to keep a house; Lack of income security.

- ▶ **Commissioner for Children and Young People Vulnerability Speaker Series Aboriginal Forum: Thursday 23rd August:** This event was part of the Vulnerability Speaker Series with an invite from the Commissioner for Children and Young People Colin Pettit to be part of a closed-session forum for Aboriginal stakeholders including a number of prominent Aboriginal leaders. Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers attended and provided advice/input.

- ▶ **Improving the Wellbeing of Aboriginal Children Commissioner for Children & Young People WA: Friday 24th August:** Members of the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort project team attended to listen to the presenters Mick Gooda, Professor Helen Milroy, the Aboriginal forum Co-facilitators and the young people from the Commissioner's Aboriginal Leadership Cross-cultural solutions program.



# Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort (Our Children, Our Heart) Project



- ▶ **Seminar Presentation to Telethon Kids Institute and Perth Children's Hospital staff: Friday 21st September:** The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers presented on the project's findings and activities to date to a group of staff from Telethon Kids Institute and Perth Children's Hospital. They outlined the views and concerns of community regarding the project's 3 priority areas: Child protection/removal, Early childhood education and care, and Housing.
- ▶ **Department of Communities 10-Yr Strategy on Homelessness Consultation sessions: Wednesday 10th, Thursday 11th and Friday 12th October:** The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers attended and provided advice/input.

- ▶ **Meeting with Dougie Nelson, Noongar Children Protection Council Manager: Wednesday 17th October:** The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort project team met to discuss the ongoing engagement and involvement of the Elder/Co-researchers and the project.
- ▶ **Co-Lab Early Intervention: Evidence based decision making for public services: 19th October:** Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers attended and provided advice/input.
- ▶ **WA Family Matters Jurisdictional Working Group Meeting: Wednesday 31st October:** Family Matters aims to eliminate the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care within a generation. Family Matters is led by SNAICC. Carol was invited to represent Telethon Kids Institute and the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort project.

- ▶ **Shelter WA and Telethon Kids Institute/Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Metropolitan Aboriginal Housing Forum: Thursday 8th November:** The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers all attended the forum where there were a number of presentations from different stakeholders (NGO and Government) associated with the issue of Aboriginal people's experience of housing and homelessness in Metropolitan Perth. A report from this forum is currently being finalised including recommendations and actions.





# Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort (Our Children, Our Heart) Project



**2nd National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference: Tuesday 20th – Wednesday 21st November:** The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers presented on the project's findings and activities to date. They outlined the views and concerns of the Perth Aboriginal community and the principles and practice recommendations regarding the project's 3 priority areas: Child protection/removal, Early childhood education and care, and Housing.



- ▶ **WA Alliance to End Homelessness 'Pulse Meeting': 21 November 2018:** Members of the project team attended this meeting that was designed to consult widely with stakeholders regarding how the Alliance should proceed with governing the implementation of its End Homelessness Strategy and maximising the outcomes that can be achieved.
- ▶ **St. Patrick's Imagined Housing, Lived Experience Workshop of Homelessness and Housing Crisis: Tuesday 4th December:** The Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers attended and provided advice/input.
- ▶ **Imagined Futures Collective (Formerly Southwest Partnership Forum): 7th December:** Aunty Doris attended the meeting of the collective that are designed to update all stakeholders on activities and planned events focused on children and young people at risk in the Perth metro south west communities.



## Contact



If you would like more information please contact:

**Carol Michie**

**M: 0417 996 540**

**E: [carol.michie@telethonkids.org.au](mailto:carol.michie@telethonkids.org.au)**