



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



## 2019 Community Update

**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 Elders and other community members are actively involved in all stages of the project and direct the focus of the research.

### 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.

### Working with Elders

An inaugural Elders meeting attended by 51 Elders from across the Perth metropolitan region in 2016 provided unanimous support for the project. The second 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. The third meeting was held on the 26th of February 2019 at Burswood on Swan.

This meeting was attended by 65 Elders who heard presentations from the Noongar Family Safety and Wellbeing Council, Noongar Mia Mia, and Shelter WA. **The Elders endorsed the following:**

#### 1. Noongar Family Safety and Wellbeing Council:

- ▶ That the Elders give in principle support for the establishment of the Noongar Family Safety and Wellbeing Council.
- ▶ That the Elders Work with the Council to ensure the appropriate and effective Cultural Governance of the Council.

#### 2. Noongar Mia Mia Recommendations:

- ▶ Noongar Mia Mia is recognised as the peak body for Noongar and Aboriginal people.
- ▶ That the Elders develop a Housing Standards Code of Conduct of what is expected for all tenants that occupy a Noongar Mia Mia property. This will be included as part of the conditions of the Residential Tenancy Agreement that all tenants sign when taking a Noongar Mia Mia property.
- ▶ That Noongar Mia Mia and the Elders meet quarterly or when practical to provide an update on the progress of housing matters as Identified.





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## 3. The Next Steps from the Metropolitan Aboriginal Housing Forum

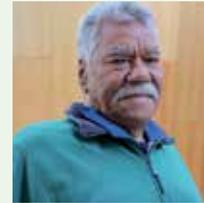
- ▶ Shelter WA in partnership with Telethon Kids Institute develop a working group with the Elders as a platform for an Aboriginal voice into Noongar housing policy and to develop an Aboriginal housing policy and framework to measure progress
- ▶ Shelter WA to discuss with Noongar Mia Mia, the development of a Noongar Community Housing Strategy to build on the value proposition of Noongar managed housing, to address the lack of safe, secure and culturally appropriate housing supply and to capitalise on new opportunities.
- ▶ Shelter WA to develop, in partnership with Noongar Mia Mia, other agencies as appropriate and the Department of Communities, new models for affordable home ownership schemes – i.e. rent to buy option with long term rental payments to become shared equity in ownership.
- ▶ Shelter WA to ensure Aboriginal people are central to the review of the Residential Tenancies Act 1987.
- ▶ Shelter WA in partnership with the Aboriginal community, increase advocacy for:
  - ▶ The abolishment of the 3 strikes policy.
  - ▶ Aboriginal advocates to support people and liaise with the Department of Communities on housing issues.
  - ▶ The Department of Communities to simplify housing jargon.
  - ▶ The Department of Communities to undertake a cultural audit of current government housing policies and practice.
  - ▶ A review of the negative impact of employment outcomes on social housing eligibility and the development of affordable and secure housing transition options.
  - ▶ Policy to ensure that safe and stable housing and support is provided immediately for people being released from government institutions.

## Project Elders

The project is led by an Elder Co-Researcher Group that is made up of nine local Aboriginal Elders. The Elders are:



Aunty Muriel Bowie



Uncle Allan Kickett Snr



Uncle Albert McNamara



Aunty Oriel Green



Aunty Millie Penny



Aunty Doris Hill



Aunty Charmaine Pell



Kerry Hunt



Rev Sealin Garlett

The Elders provide cultural advice and direction to the project team on all aspects of the research.

## Three Priority Areas

In addition to the framework, the community consultations highlighted 3 main priority areas of concern to the community. These are:

- 1 The impact of child removal;
- 2 The importance of education across the early years (early childhood education and care and early schooling); and
- 3 The lack of housing security for many Aboriginal families.

## Research Translation Activities

Throughout 2018 the focus was working with stakeholders to translate the research findings into

changes to policy and practice. 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 consultation 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 the child protection/removal space, the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers and the project team have attended and participated in the activities including those represented in this diagram:



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 consultation 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. In the housing and homelessness space, the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers and the project team have attended and participated in the activities including those represented in this diagram:



## Acknowledging our ways of raising strong, solid Koolunga

### What the community told us about raising solid kids

At the community forums and focus groups, parents and grandparents talked about many things. The following diagram presents the things that people identified as critical for growing strong and solid Koolunga. The picture is an important reflection of the strengths and positive values of Noongar/Aboriginal ways of raising kids.



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

### What the community are worried about for their Koolunga

People also talked about many things that get in the way of raising strong, solid Koolunga. The second diagram depicts 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.



### Some of the highlights of the activities that the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort Elder/Co-researchers and the project team have attended and participated in include:

- ▶ **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.



► **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.



► **Shelter WA and 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 has been released and is available at: [http://www.shelterwa.org.au/aboriginal\\_housing\\_forum\\_report](http://www.shelterwa.org.au/aboriginal_housing_forum_report)



- ▶ **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.



## Next Steps for the project

Working with stakeholders including Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, service providers and policy makers to translate the research findings into changes to policies and services continues to be the major focus of our work in 2019.

## Project Team

The Project Team is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the project and consists of:

- ▶ Dr Brad Farrant (Researcher);
- ▶ Carol Michie (Project Officer);
- ▶ Dr Clair Scrine (Researcher)
- ▶ Nicole Ilich (Researcher) and
- ▶ Larissa Perry (Researcher).

## The project is also supported by

- ▶ Mr Glenn Pearson,
- ▶ Dr Michael Wright,
- ▶ Professor Cheryl Kickett-Tucker,
- ▶ Dr Carrington Shepherd and
- ▶ Professor Stephen Zubrick.

This group has overall responsibility for driving the vision of the project and the delivery of the project outcomes.



If you would like more information or to become involved in the project please get in touch with:

**Carol Michie**  
**M: 0417 996 540**  
**E: carol.michie@telethonkids.org.au**