



Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort

(Our Children, Our Heart) Project



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Community Update

The story of the Ngulluk Koolunga Ngulluk Koort art work

The Coolamon in the middle of the art work depicts a sacred woman's tool and is symbolic of women's business and of gathering food, nurturing our children, and becoming a community – it is a community tool. The figurines on the Coolamon represent the researchers sitting together, listening and gathering information. The nine figures holding the Coolamon are the nine Elder co-researchers on the *Ngulluk Koolunga*, *Ngulluk Koort* research project and who are working in partnership with the project team based at the Telethon Kids Institute.

The Elders ensure that the knowledge from the project is culturally appropriate, correct and that the project is following cultural protocols. The four circles on the corners of the artwork represent the Elders' groups from the four regions of our Nyoongar metropolitan area of Perth. The U signs outside of the circle represent the Elder co-researchers working with the researchers at the Institute to take the questions to the community and to have community input in the future of our children. This art seeks to capture the essence of how important this project is to the community. The colours that are used are ochre - to represent our land, and aqua to represent the ocean and to reflect that our land is surrounded by the ocean. The artist is Mrs Millie Penny.



Project Aims

This five year research project is 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 and agreed that the metro area could be approached as four regions: South East (Belmont to Armadale), North East (Midland/Swan Area), North West (Perth City to Two Rocks), and South West (Fremantle to Rockingham).

Project Elders

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



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

Talking to Community

The first stage of the project has involved developing 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.

Community Forums

Each of the project's four metro regions hosted a community forum. These took place from November 2016 - April 2017. Aboriginal Elders, parents and other community members were all encouraged to attend and share their views, experiences and opinions regarding these issues.

Focus Groups

There have also been 7 focus groups. These were designed to attract the participation of young parents as well as other members of the communities who may not have been able to attend one of the forums or felt more comfortable in a smaller sized group. So far we have spoken with 131 people through the forums and focus groups. The 7 focus groups were held at –

- ▶ Wadjak Centre, Balga (1/06/2017)
- ▶ Mums & Bubs program, Champion Centre, Seville Grove (13/06/2017)
- ▶ Save the Children Playgroup, Champion Centre, Seville Grove (28/06/2017)
- ▶ Kindilinks, Hilton Primary School (29/06/2017)
- ▶ Armadale Men's Shed (23/8/2017)
- ▶ Langford Aboriginal Association (24/08/2017)
- ▶ Kindilinks, Mooditj Noongar Community College (1/09/2017)

What we asked community

Participants at the forums and focus groups were asked: **What are the moorditj things that are important in raising strong, solid young kids (under 6 years of age); What things might get in the way of Aboriginal kids (under 6 years of age) growing up solid in Perth; Thinking about kids under the age of 6 years, what things help Aboriginal kids grow up solid?**

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).

The project is also supported by

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

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



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

Carol Michie
M: 9489 7760
E: carol.michie@telethonkids.org.au



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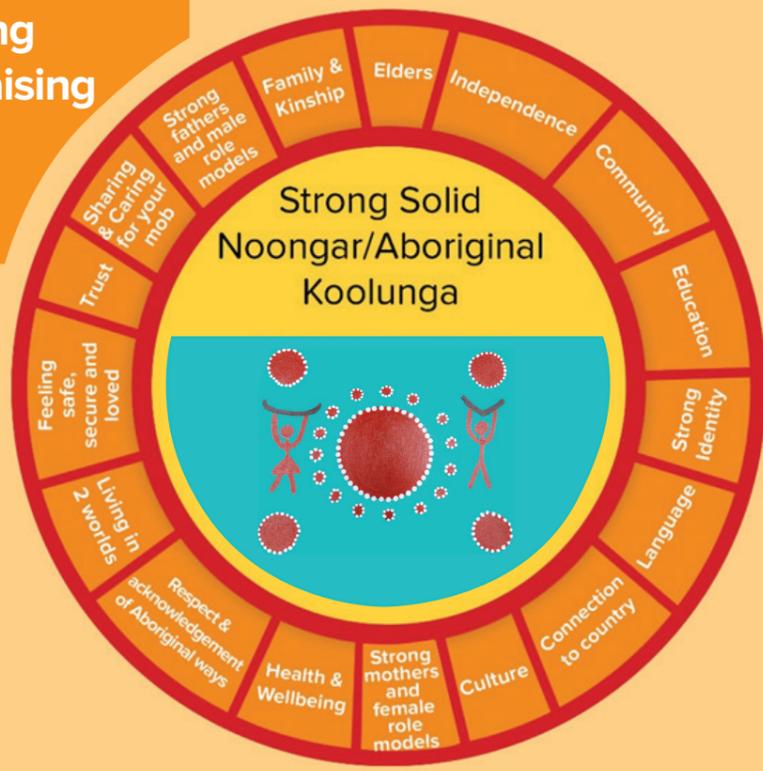
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What the community told us about raising solid kids

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.

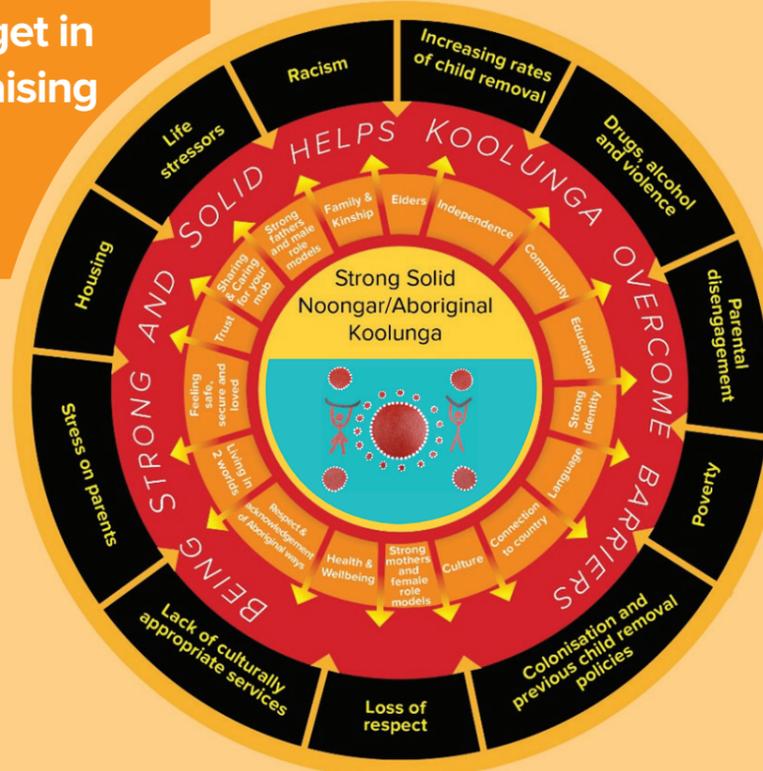
Acknowledging our ways of raising strong, solid Koolunga



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.

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



Report back to Community Elders

The second annual meeting of Elders from across the Perth metropolitan region was hosted on the 17th of October at Altone Park, Beechboro. This meeting was attended by 60 Elders who endorsed what the project has done so far and are keen to be involved in the ongoing work of the project.



Community Forum at Champion Centre, Seville Grove (3/11/2016)



Community Forum at Jandakot Hall, South Lakes (6/04/2017)



Community Forum at Herb Graham Rec Centre, Mirrabooka (23/3/2017)

Next Steps for the project

The next round of community engagement will commence in 2018 and will seek to develop further commitment from the community to work with the project and develop a deeper understanding of, and explore possible solutions to, the areas of need in early childhood development. Translation of the research via engagement with stakeholders including Aboriginal community controlled organisations, service providers and policy makers is a critical aspect of the project and will be a major focus in 2018.



Community Forum at Altone Park Leisure Centre, Beechboro (29/3/2017)