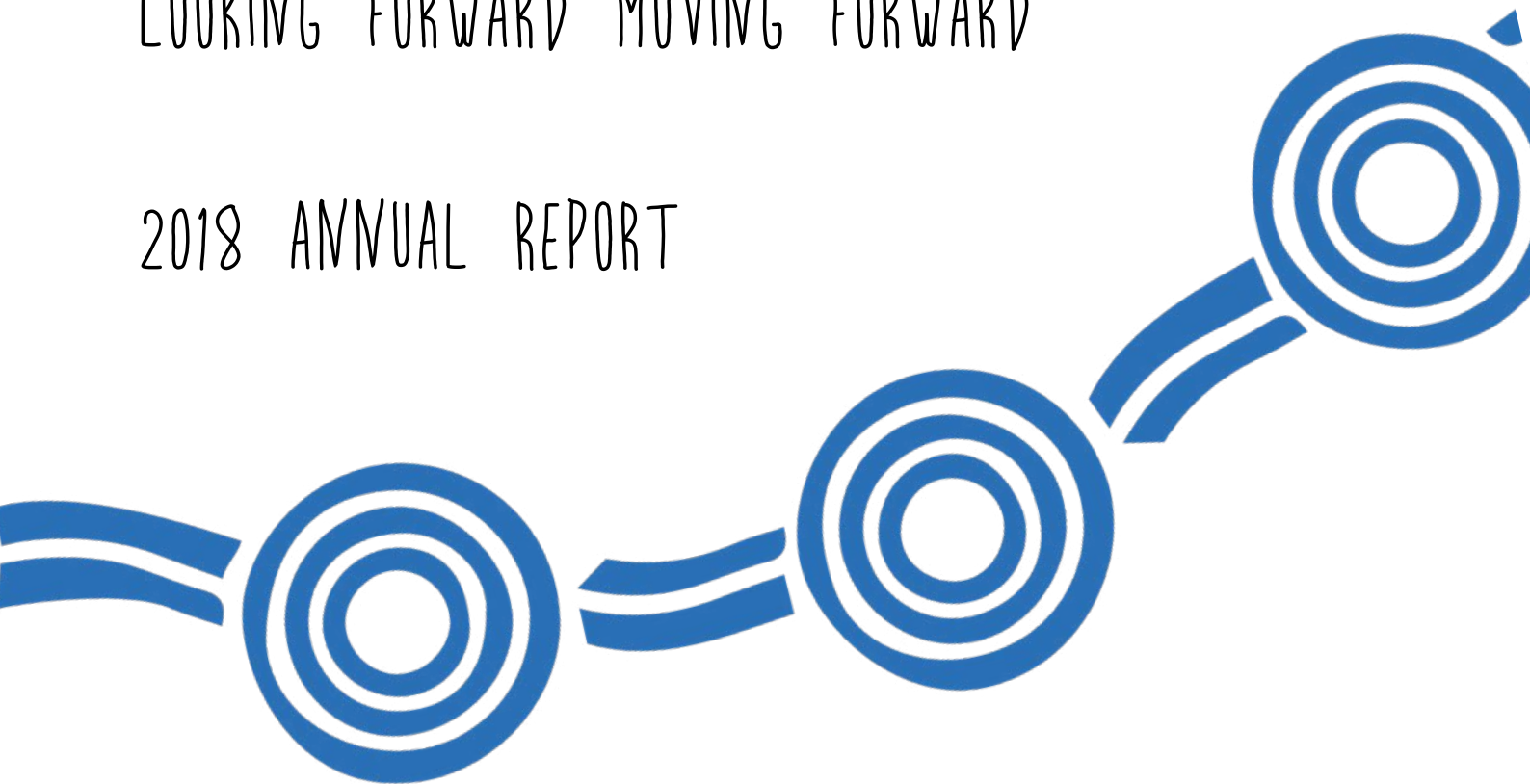


LOOKING FORWARD MOVING FORWARD

2018 ANNUAL REPORT





The featured artwork was created by the talented artist **Kamsani Bin Salleh** for the Looking Forward Moving Forward Project. Kamsani descended from the Noongar Ballardong people in the south west region of Western Australia, and the Banuba, Yawuru and Nimunburr peoples of the Kimberley.

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**LOOKING
FORWARD**
MOVING FORWARD



Curtin University

KAYA, WELCOME
WADJUK NYOONGAR BOODJA

The Looking Forward Moving Forward Project is based in Perth, Western Australia, on Wadjuk Nyoongar Boodja. Wadjuk is one of fourteen clan groups that make up the Nyoongar Nation in Western Australia's southwest. We pay our respects to the Wadjuk Nyoongar people on whose land we undertake this project and acknowledge their Elders past, present and future.



Aunty Helen, Uncle Albert and Aunty Cheryl - Looking Forward Moving Forward Community Forum



Nikayla, Tiana, Rachael - Looking Forward Moving Forward Community Forum

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Aunty Oriel and Michael, Looking Forward Moving Forward Community Forum 2018



Uncle Fred and Michael, Looking Forward Moving Forward Community Forum, 2018

NYOONGAR TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF TERMS

Please note there are various ways to spell Nyoongar words. Our spelling is based on advice received from Nyoongar Elders with whom we have worked throughout the Project to date, as well as the First Noongar Dictionary (Whitehurst, 1992).

Ballardong	A clan of the Nyoongar nation based east of Northam taking in the township of Merredin
Biddi	Path, trail
Budiya	Boss, leader
Boodja	Country, Land
Debakarn	Steady, go along steady
Derbarl Yerrigan	Swan River, Perth WA
Kaart	Head
Koorliny	Walking
Koort	Heart
Minditj	Sick
Moorditj	Good, strong
Moorny	Non-Aboriginal person of non-Anglo Saxon descent
Moort	Family
Nidja	Here, look, what's over there
Nyoongar, Noongar	The collective name for clans or family groups of Aboriginal people living in the Southwest of Western Australia
Wadjella, Nyidiyang	Non-Aboriginal person of Anglo-Saxon descent
Wadjuk	A clan of the Nyoongar nation, living in the Perth metropolitan area
Warra	Bad
Wandju, Kiah, Kaya	Welcome, hello
Wangkiny	Talking
Wirrin	Spirit

GLOSSARY

Boodja	A Nyoongar word meaning 'Country' or 'Land'. For Nyoongar people, Boodja is more than a geographical location; it is a spiritual connection to, and relationship with the Mother, the Land.
Colonisation	The ideology of colonisation, through the use of power, enforces a rule of living that oppresses, excludes and silences those who are dispossessed of their land.
Co-Design	A process that engages all stakeholders in equal power sharing to develop and implement solutions that most benefit end users.
Culture	A way of life, complete with systems, values and histories that describe a group of people.
Cultural Security	[A]n environment that is safe for people: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening ¹ .
Decolonisation	Decolonisation is a process, not an outcome; it involves ongoing dialogue between those who are beneficiaries of colonialist practices and those who have been impacted by colonisation. One of the key objectives of decolonisation is to reconstruct and rewrite the discourses and practices that characterise colonisation, to reinstate those once-silenced voices and shift the power balance through critical and collaborative inquiry ² .
Nyoongar Elder	Nyoongar Elders are recognized as the traditional holders of culture and lore, and they are important custodians of that history and spirituality. Through the Elders people are introduced to the kinship system and the land. Through storytelling the Elders reveal the relationships people need to have if they are to experience the land in a spiritual way. The Elders are the link with the past to help bridge into the future.
Nyoongar Spirituality ³	Nyoongar spirituality refers to the deep and personal relationships that Nyoongar people have developed with the Land, Boodja, over many generations. These relationships draw people beyond human experience and are nurtured by the Elders
Nyoongar Storytelling	Nyoongar storytelling is often a circular process that reinforces messages and learning through repetition. It emphasizes the importance of relationships that link people and the land across generations and across time and space. It values the human relationship in this link and it strengthens the use of oral history through memory.
Storying	Storying involves non-Aboriginal people regularly coming together with Aboriginal Elders to share their personal histories and backgrounds. Each person introduces him/herself by telling a story about who they are and what experiences shaped them. Elders advise, "Only tell as much as you want" – there is no obligation to disclose more than a person feels comfortable to share with colleagues and Elders.

¹ Australian Human Rights Commission. Chapter 4: Cultural safety and security: Tools to address lateral violence - Social Justice Report 2011.

² Tiffin H, 2006, 'Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse', in The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd Edn, Eds Ashcroft B, Griffiths G & H Tiffin, Routledge, London, pp. 99-101.

³ We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Brian McCoy.

INTRODUCTION

The Looking Forward, Moving Forward (LFMF) project has been very productive and has achieved its stated research outcomes and outputs set for this year. The research team have been inspired and impressed with the energy and commitment shown by the Elders and partner organisations in their engagement with the project. Key to the project's ongoing success is the **ongoing involvement of the Elders and staff from the partner organisations** and we look forward to their continued support in 2019.

Working with the Elders can be, and is often, **transformative**. Yet, the transformative work is not always immediately recognisable, for it occurs on many levels. Service leaders have commented on this change being hard to pinpoint, yet the change is profound and significant. It is immersive and **imbued by shared experiences** between colleagues, with Elders, and on a personal level.

Our findings have shown that as staff have more frequent and meaningful engagement with the Elders, their confidence and capacity to work with a degree of uncertainty is increased, as they are challenged by and engage in robust discussions. There have been five meetings with each of the three thematic sub-groups which were set up in 2018, and **our findings show that the presence of the Elders has greatly impacted on the quality of the outcomes and outputs from the three groups**. The work of the sub-groups is explained later in this report.

The **Elders insist on action** that will improve service experiences for Aboriginal people, and reciprocity is a key principle for moving into the space for action. Reciprocity demonstrates the commitment of organisations in their approach to financial recompense to the Elders in recognition of their unique cultural expertise and status. For example, this year, **the Mental Health Commission engaged two Elders** as Elders in residence. The Elders spend one day a month at the Commission and their role is to advise both staff and the Commissioner on Aboriginal issues. This is a major achievement in forging relationships between the Aboriginal community and a key Government entity.

The commitment to the deepening work between the Elders and service staff continues to produce positive results. There has been a noticeable increase in the capacity and confidence of both the Elders and agency staff. This **shared confidence and capacity is building the foundations of trust** that will forge both robust and sustainable relationships, moving forward.

..commitment to
the deepening work
between the Elders and
service staff continues
to produce positive
results...



Community Members leaves from the forum, 2018.

PROJECT AIMS

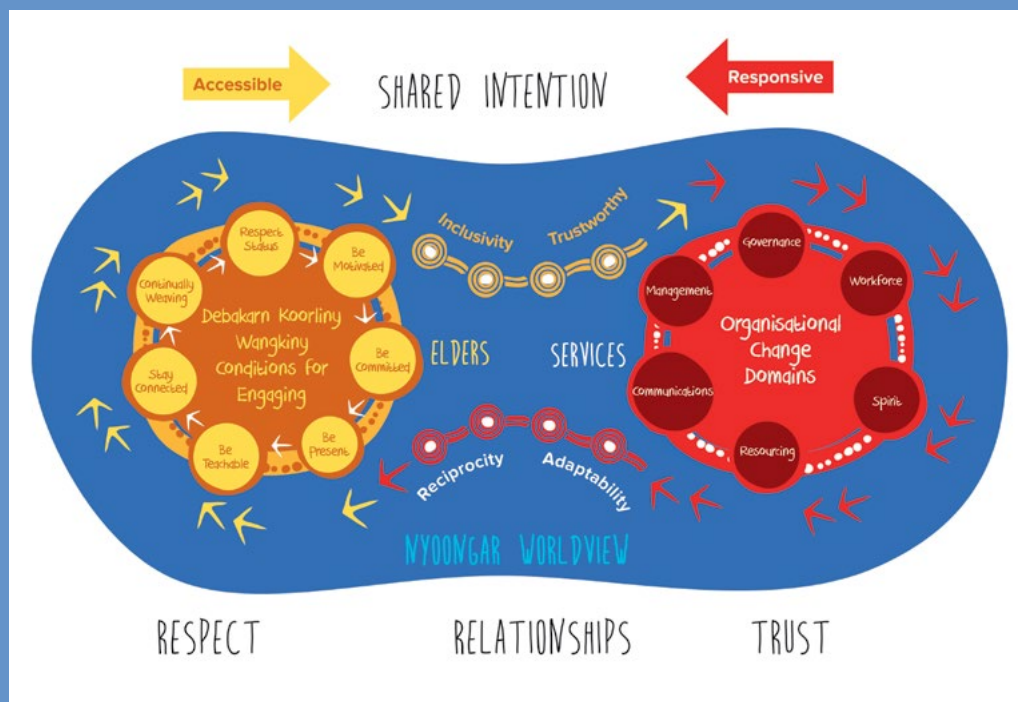
The implementation of more **culturally secure ways of working** will result in increased numbers of Aboriginal people **accessing** mental health and drug and alcohol services; improved Aboriginal community perceptions of these services; and **better health and wellbeing outcomes** for Aboriginal clients and their families.

Changes to organisational policies and practices will be sustained through **direct engagement with Aboriginal Elders** during the project and beyond.



Aunty Margaret, Uncle Peter and Brittney Looking Forward Moving Forward Community Forum, 2018

Minditj-Kaart-Moorditj-Kaart Framework Evaluation Aims



2018 saw the progression of the Evaluation, whereby activities consisted of **baseline analysis, sub-group meetings, in-depth interviews** and **translation strategy co-design** with the peak agency partners.

2018 HIGHLIGHTS

**16 +
sub-group
meetings**

Members of the research team, CEOs of 10 partnered services, and Elders met and discussed topics around cultural security, workforce, building an organisation and sharing power, and how Aboriginal staff get support in the workplace, and non-Aboriginal staff can learn.

**Over 13
presentations
including 3
keynote talks**

We presented our findings at over 13 conferences, including 3 key note speeches, and 10 conference talks and panel discussions.

**3
translation
meetings**

Members of the research team and the 10 partner organisations discussed how to translate research findings of 2019 into practice



Verity presenting to Curtin staff



Aunty Margaret, Britta and Uncle Albert, Community Forum, 2018

**We collected
272 survey
responses
from health
services**

**We collected
42 survey
responses from
the Aboriginal
community**

**We engaged
with over 100
community
members**



Michael and Uncle Fred, Community Forum, 2018




Aunty Charmaine, Aunty Millie and Helen, subgroup meeting, 2018.

PROGRESSING THE EVALUATION

How the Elders are key to the intervention

The research team has linked Aboriginal Elders with the Executive team in each Service Partner organisation. The Elders felt it was crucial to pair boordiya with boordiya (bosses with bosses) to maximise the impact of any changes on the organisation. They guide and mentor the leadership of each service to gain a deeper appreciation of Aboriginal culture and to better understand the impact of colonisation on individuals, families and communities. Service leaders develop a decolonising practice by building their capacity to work with Aboriginal people in a more culturally secure and safe way.

A sustained and transparent relationship between the service leaders and local Elders (in addition to cultural consultants or senior Aboriginal staff) is crucial. Transparency in a relationship recognises the authority of the Elders in their community, and the legitimacy through which they provide cultural advice. Their knowledge of local kinship connections and their ability to vouch for the service within the community is both unique and critical to the success of the partnership.



..gives you that position of Eldership and authority for the younger staff members to say, 'Yeah, they know what they're talking about and they will bat for us' and we need that, that is absolutely crucial" (Elder, subgroup member, 2018)

"Working with Elders in the community to do some groundwork is obviously I think quite important" (Senior manager, subgroup member, 2018)

"Before we did anything, we were vouched for by one particular Elder who was connected to staff and she then said to the community, 'Look, [this agency] is okay, you can trust them in building relationship', so vouching was right there from the start" (CEO, subgroup member, 2018)



Aunty Irene, Looking Forward Moving Forward Community Forum, 2018



Aunty Millie. Photo Credit: 2nd National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Conference, 2018

Impact of the Elders within an organisation can vary according to differences between the Elders and the leadership in each organisation. Nevertheless, there are some key attributes in undertaking a successful working relationship with the Elders despite these differences. These attributes, described below, emerged from the baseline data collected in 2017 and analysed in 2018.

The key to a successful working relationship between Elders and Service Leaders is the **mutual respect for each other's authority and status**.

- The **engagement** of a service, with Elders and the local Aboriginal community, can either begin to build trust and mutual understanding, or can confirm that the service is untrustworthy.
- A **storying process** and On-Country events are immersive learning experiences used to take this relationship from a strictly business one to something deeper and much more personal.
- **Building a relationship takes time**, and the mutual learning is a circular rather than a linear process.

Respecting status

Respecting the value and leadership status of the Elders means to engage them with people of their equivalent status within the organisation, that is, **boordiya to boordiya** (*Leader to Leader; Elder to Executive*).

Developing genuine, committed relationships between Aboriginal Elders and organisational leaders can enable sufficient mutual understanding of their different worldviews to allow positive change to happen. When this is successful, Elders tend to describe this as being **“like family”**, and service leaders describe the relationships as being **“transformative”**. While there can be some discomfort and uncertainty at the beginning of such a relationship, a growing mutual trust can mean that service leaders reflect and act on advice given by Elders even when it differs from or contradicts their usual ways of thinking and doing. As one service Executive advises, **“Just allow yourself to imagine they’re right, and go from there”**.

"The Elders are at the heart of our organisation", (Program manager, subgroup member, 2018).

"One thing I've learnt is that it's making sense of what Aboriginal people regard, what the Elders have certainly taught me, that the relationship is not just about boordiya to boordiya but it's personal", (Service leader, 2017).



Uncle Charlie and Aunty Helen at a Cultural Security subgroup meeting, 2018.

"We're talking with senior management, before they would send out a rep. Right they'd just send a rep out could be level one, level two, level five, whatever. It's not the senior management that we were talking to before. Now, we're talking to the people who make the decisions about what their staff do and that's gotta be a step forward",
(Elder, 2017).



Aunty Charmaine and Aunty Millie, 2018

"I think that's really significant to actually bring the Elders to the table of senior management, that's huge; senior management are prepared to listen to what the Elders are saying",
(Elder, 2017).

"If they [services] want to plan something with Aboriginal cultural stuff in it, then we as Elders need to be involved from the start. That's one of the reasons why we asked at the beginning to Mike [Michael Wright, LFME Chief Investigator] that we work with the bosses, not with the foot soldiers, so we work with bosses, so that everything can be filtered down, because it's easier to be filtered down than trying to push it up, because it doesn't succeed, we've done that for many years",
(Elder, subgroup member, 2018).



Engagement is the key

The baseline interviews with Elders conducted in late 2017 highlighted:

- how critical consistent and frequent contact between them and the Service Partners was, and
- that engaging with the service leaders was more meaningful if trust had developed over time to communicate openly and constructively.

When the research team thematically analysed service staff and Elders' interview transcripts, the following themes emerged:

- Consistency with engaging
- Engagement as reciprocity
- Valuing engagement as an organisational change process
- Valuing engagement through staff roles (for example, community engagement officers, executive and senior decision makers, Aboriginal workers, Aboriginal engagement officer)
- Witnessing positive behaviours depicting engagement (in service staff)
- Including significant others in the engagement process, which is two-fold:
 - Engaging family and friends when interacting with service
 - Service leaders engaging internal organisational champions in work with Elders and Aboriginal community
- Engagement as learning about the community and who the community are
- Increased presence of the organisation in the community providing a feedback loop to assess the level of engagement

Consistency and **reciprocity** were necessary for deepening **authentic engagement** between Elders and service staff. Additionally, an ongoing and **regular presence** of the organisation in the community was also considered very important, and viewed as a **critical factor** by the Elders for measuring the level of commitment by the organisation to the wider community.

Over 50% of staff involved with the LFMF project...

...said they interact daily with Aboriginal people within their professional life.

Almost 20%...

...said they interact daily with Aboriginal people outside their professional life, and only a small percentage in this group was Aboriginal.

Almost 24%...

...said they interact weekly with Aboriginal people outside their professional life, and only a small percentage in this group was Aboriginal.

Immersive learning: On-Country events

Most Service Partners had the privilege to engage in at least one immersive learning experience known as 'Going On Country'. This involved the Elders taking staff to locations of cultural or historical importance. Through immersive activities such as dance, art, preparing traditional foods and walks through the bush, participants had an opportunity to experience firsthand the deep connection Aboriginal people have with 'boodja' (country) and how crucial it is to their identity.

Over 90 percent of staff involved indicated that it is important on a personal level to have sufficient time, information and training to better understand Aboriginal history and culture.

Over 70 percent of participating staff indicated that it is important that their organisation provides them with sufficient time, information and training to learn more about Aboriginal history and culture.



Occupational Therapy students on On Country Day, 2019




Storying

When Elders are introduced to the leaders of a service by the research team, the first step in building the relationship between them is a process called “**storying**”. Storying involves staff coming together with Elders to share personal histories and backgrounds. Shared storying is a unique relationship building method that facilitates deeper understanding and respect for the shared histories of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants. Storying is a **culturally accepted practice for Aboriginal people**, and is a technique non-Aboriginal people can develop; it embodies **inclusivity** and **reciprocity**, and is a critical component for **deepening relationships**.

The Elders sit together with the service leaders and staff usually over food and drink. Each person introduces him/herself by telling a story about who they are and what experiences shaped them into that person. Elders advise, “**Only tell as much as you want**” – there is no **obligation to disclose** more than a person **feels comfortable to share** with colleagues and Elders. However, storying is markedly different from typical organisational introductions limited to name, organisation and work role. The **aim is to get to know individuals** prior to developing an understanding of people as professionals in the sector and what the organisation itself does.

Stories from the Elders about their backgrounds, and some of the experiences that have shaped their lives, have a powerful effect on staff who attend the sessions. Information they have perhaps never heard, or have only read about, is suddenly presented from the point of view of a person they know. The same story may be re-told later in different contexts, giving additional detail but also giving participants another opportunity to reflect on how situations might be viewed from a Nyoongar point of view.

Mutual (and iterative) attempts to **understand each other’s worldview** is hoped to **lead to a level of trust** that will allow participants to be **open without fearing** that something they say will be misunderstood and lead to conflict.



Over 15% of new staff valued the storying sessions with Elders in their workplace (see Sector Survey section).

“Our entire management team including our CEO sat in a circle with the Elders for two years and told stories and that put us in a position, where we could even think up the idea that they would accept [an invitation for a new public role with the organisation],”
(Peak staff member, 2017).

Service leaders have demonstrated an openness to sharing of themselves through the storying process. This is not always easy as it involves a level of personal disclosure that may at first be uncomfortable in a work setting and may lead to participants feeling or expressing emotion that they would reserve for more private settings. The **discomfort and vulnerability are part of inviting participants to question their own 'worldview'** and to open the space for re-interpretations and understanding. The Elders maintain the safety of the storying space in order for all participants to trust the process, as three Elders describe:

"...some of them now come up and they'll have a good yarn, but at first they'll have to know that they were respected and that what they told us was safe. We told them they could say anything, but they had to feel comfortable with it and that they didn't have to say things they didn't want to say."

...We spell that out at the beginning or every time. You only tell us what you want us to hear, and then I don't know if we open the gates or what, but they started telling us things that they've never ever revealed before to anybody."

"It's a reciprocal thing, you know. We're telling them our story and they're telling us theirs. And I say, "Oh well, that's good you fellows told us all that, now we've got something over you. So now you've going to tell them what we said and we're going to tell them what you said, and it's just we're laughing. There's a lot of laughter and we lighten it up."

"..they feel comfortable that they've come out and talked about things that they would never have talked about, we feel, if we hadn't just made them feel that comfortable," (Three Elders in conversation together, 2017).

The use and emphasis of humour was significant in the working together space. Humour opens the space/s to deeper discussions about difficult issues that can often arise in conversations. **Humour has been a constant theme with the Elder interactions**, and it is used sometimes to shock, but more often to lessen the emotional impact of traumatic stories, and most frequently to promote a sense of joining between themselves and the service participants.



Mutual learning is circular, not linear

Through storying sessions, staff experience a **different learning style that is indirect, circular, and cumulative** – a series of stories that build layers of a picture over time rather than a linear list of imperatives. This aspect of a Nyoongar worldview can help in working with Aboriginal clients but may have wider implications across other aspects of an organisation's work, as two senior service staff discuss:

"For some of them, that's challenging, because you need patience to sit with [the Elders] as well..."

"The joy of that reality is its complete overlap with the needs of people who are recovering and in recovery with mental health issues and bringing yeah, you know, moving towards social justice and inclusion, it's all about acknowledgement and the hearing of stories and the real offering and precisely the quality..."

"It's a human need and I think this concept of expertise, I'm picking up your point is the human expertise of their own story and we accompany people with our own expertise alongside their own expertise." (two Executive staff, 2017).

As the preparations for the evaluation have progressed (2017-2018), service staff have described how their confidence has increased through the engagement with Elders. This is evident in a number of quotes from staff when asked about their key learnings in working with the Elders. For example:

"I remember at a previous job in [location] and going out and sitting at these Elders' place and was trying to invite them back into a process that they had disengaged from and just feeling so totally incompetent but persevering with it, to now getting somewhere, to now feeling pretty comfortable in my own skin in that kind of environment and a lot of that has been in that experience of learning in this project that has offered that is unlike any other cultural learning experience that I've ever been involved in and the chance to work through over the years to ask some of those questions that you can't ask in other spaces," (Manager, 2017).



Aunty Cheryl, Helen and Rachael at the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Conference, 2018

Many staff – including Aboriginal staff – also commented on **how this level of engagement in their work life has overlapped with their personal life**. Senior staff have taken steps to acknowledge and, where appropriate, support staff to continue their efforts to better understand Nyoongar culture and history and take some time to investigate their own histories as a result.

Elders too are learning in these interactions. A number of Elders described the potential difficulty of engaging meaningfully without some clarity about the organisation, its services and its role. Elders had asked service leaders to provide them with information about services and programs before they could give any advice or guidance (Elder baseline interviews, 2017). One Elder commented in a subgroup meeting (2018) that some Elders may have been out of the workforce for a time, so may also need training, updates on the sector more broadly, and time to better understand how systems work.



Aunty Oriell, MercyCare Christmas Lunch, 2018



Uncle Albert, Aunty Irene, Aunty Cheryl and Michael, Community Forum, 2018




Planning for continuity

By the end of 2018, all 10 partners had been paired with Elders, including the Mental Health Commission, and continue to develop their relationships. Where the relationship is new, the areas in which Elders might contribute to the organisation, and how that might look, are still being explored.

Several partner organisations have had significant changes to their staff, with **three having recruited a new Chief Executive Officer**; this has required establishing relationships between the Elders and these individuals. The service staff and the Elders continue to learn from the transition and so far have realised the need to ensure timely handover between outgoing the CEO (or an executive representative), an overview of the relationship and its development thus far, and a re-commitment to ongoing engagement with the Elders. These considerations are seen as necessary to mitigate the disruptions on occasions where a significant change in service leadership occurs.

Another aspect of the long-term relationship between services and Elders will be a **succession strategy for the move to the next generation of Elders**. This has been raised in 2017 by both services and the Elders, and will be discussed further in 2019. Elders are very conscious of the need to implement a succession strategy and are identifying possible successors. One example occurring in one of the partner organisations shows how the current Elders have been mentoring other Elders into the service. The project is observing the process as it will offer insights and guidance on how this could be applied in other services when making the transition. The project team hope to conduct reflective interviews to capture this transition in more detail. Recruitment of Elders is a priority for the project, for increasing the number of senior Aboriginal voices in the service delivery space is essential for the sustainability of the initiative.



Moving Elders into a new space

In 2018, six Elders were recruited to work with senior service staff on **three interagency working subgroups; Governance, Workforce and Cultural Security**. The subgroup meeting structure was different from the usual 'working together' space employed within each of the partner services in that subgroup members met **every second month at a service location**.

The project team took on a secretariat role for each group. Discussions in the subgroup meetings were at times wide-ranging and somewhat fragmented, for the topics discussed were quite abstract and not directly related to the lived reality of Aboriginal people.

Based on feedback from the subgroup Elders and service staff, it was thought that members were not provided enough opportunity to get to know one another in order to develop a clear shared intention across each of the subgroups. Thus, the project team will undertake that future meetings include the "Storying" process, to facilitate trust and mutual understanding and enable members to negotiate goals and address subject matter more openly and effectively.

Despite the lack of storying, the process of collaboration in the sub-groups has **built capacity** for multiple services and Elders to **work together, to build links and deepen shared understandings**. These findings are explained in the next section, and will inform the co-design workshops scheduled for mid-2019.



Uncle Charlie, Aunty Helen, Aunty Louise, Canning River Eco Centre, 2018

ESTABLISHING PROJECT SUBGROUPS

In 2017, the Service Partners co-designed and agreed to a “Statement of Intent” that included the following commitments:

- Engage in a process of experiential learning and to integrate the learnings across each organisation;
- Develop and share ideas and provide support to each other
- Identify strategies (including mapping spheres of influence) for wider impact;
- Bring service delivery issues and feedback to the group for discussion, and take insights and recommendations from the group back to their respective service for integration and implementation.

This shared commitment was demonstrated through the formation of the following three working subgroups:



Cultural Security



Governance



Workforce

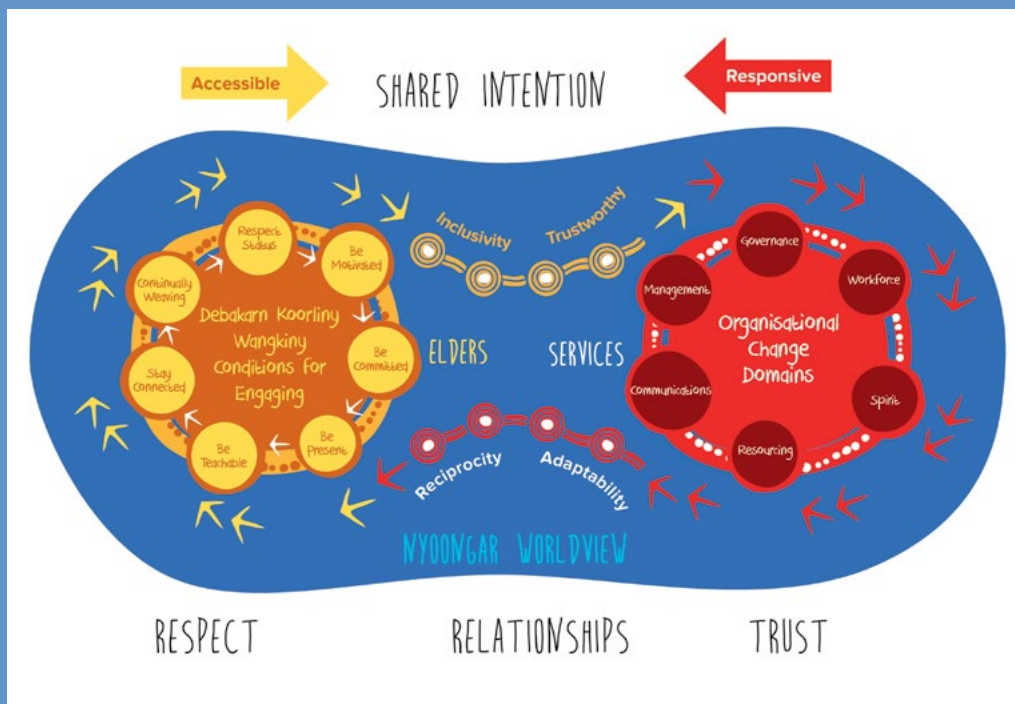


Figure 1: The Minditj Kaart-Moorditj Kaart (MK-MK) framework that was co-designed with Elders in the previous Looking Forward project

The three subgroup themes were identified by the Elders and service managers as being essential to **driving organisational change**. Whilst these themes are interrelated, each subgroup explored and shared their experiences of and discussed factors they thought characterised each. Having frequent meetings promoted greater awareness and insight and also deepened relationships between group members, developing **cross-organisation opportunities to learn and change**.

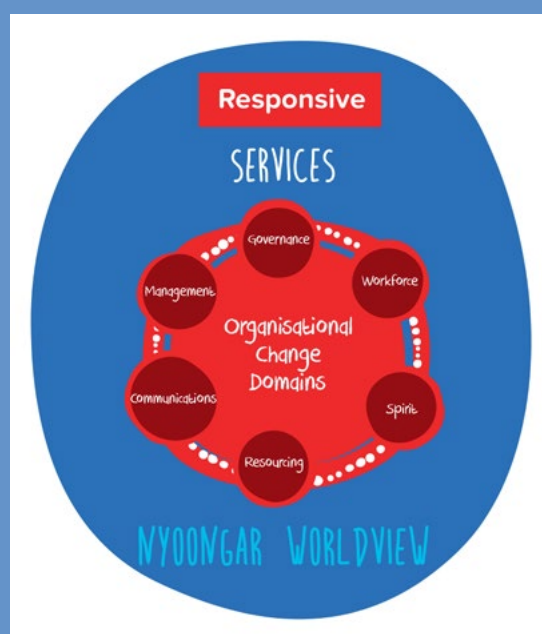


Figure 2: From the framework - the domains in which organisational change is expected to occur.

Structure of the subgroups

Participation on any one of the subgroups was restricted to staff employed in one of the ten partner organisations. Participants included executive and senior Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff. Two Elders sat on each subgroup to ensure the community's voice remained strong.

The aims of the subgroups were:

- To enable peer learning around the complexities of applying the 'Minditj-Kaart-Moorditj-Kaart' framework to enhance their services' response to Aboriginal people;
- Develop key principles, strategies and actions around each of the subgroup themes, taking account of differences between Service Partners, but identifying what needed to be common to all; and
- Identify strategies for translating findings from the project through service leaders' influence in the sector to bring about change beyond their own organisations.



Figure 3: Subgroup meetings and structure of sub-group meetings held in 2018

Records of the meetings

Progressive records of the subgroup discussions were captured in a flow diagram. The discussions from each subgroup meeting provided data for the next iteration of the diagram. Member checking occurred through consultation with the subgroup chairs between meetings and then reported back to the subgroup at the following meeting.

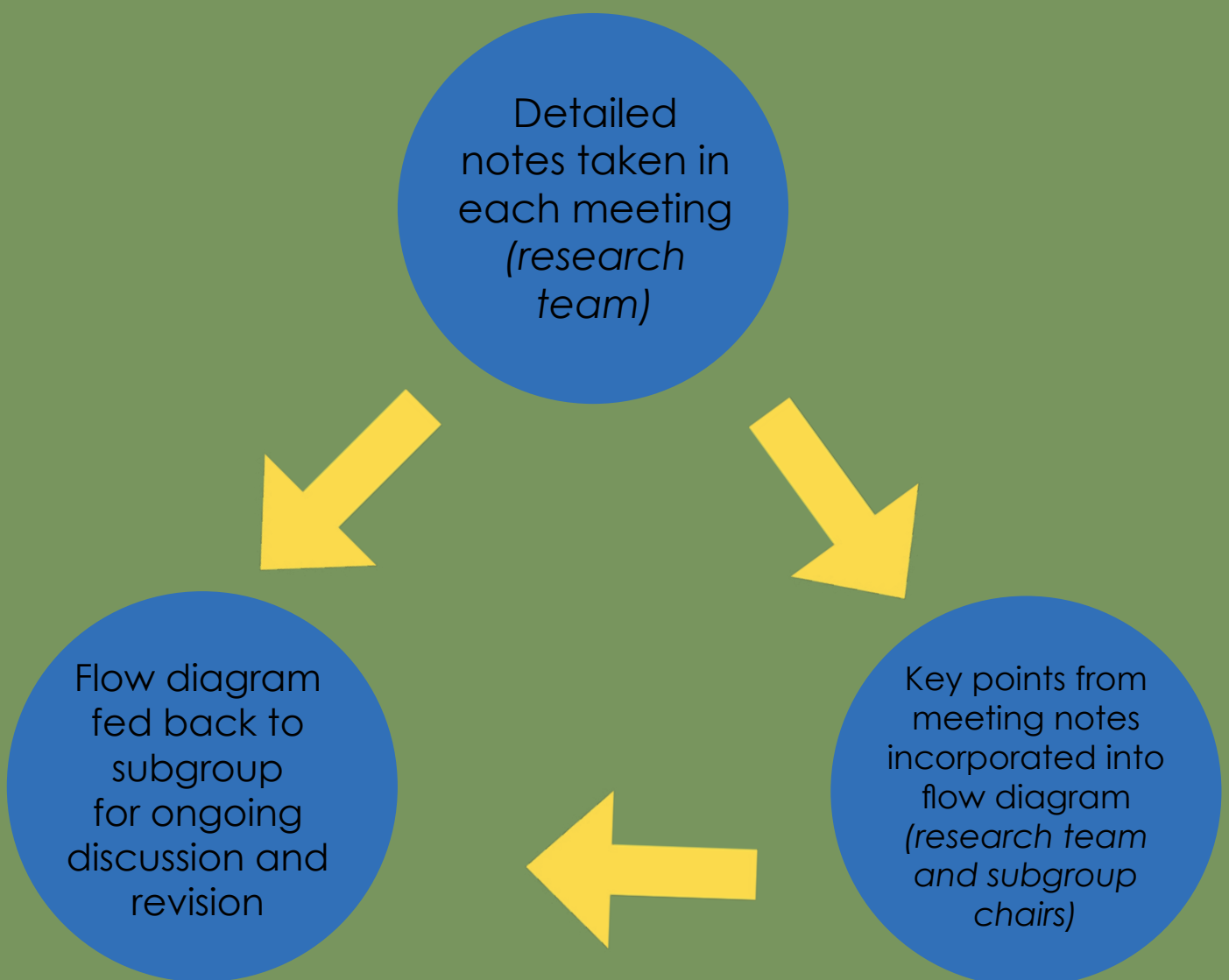


Figure 4: The reflection cycle within subgroup meetings

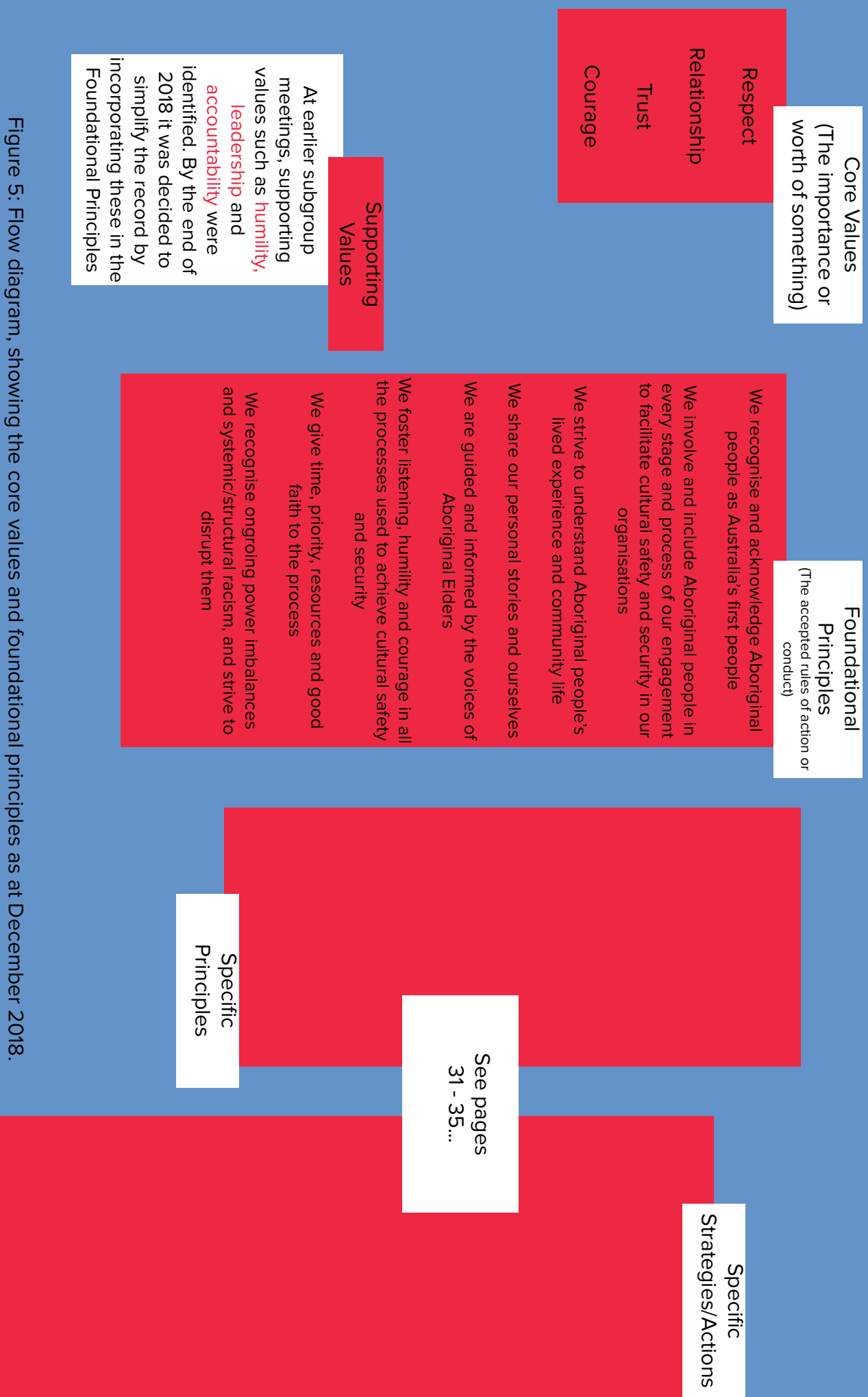


Figure 5: Flow diagram, showing the core values and foundational principles as at December 2018.

As shown in the following pages, the diagrams included core values that match those of the 'Minditj- Kaart-Moorditj-Kaart' framework, but that had also arisen spontaneously in the groups' early discussions. **Core values, Supporting Values and Foundational Principles were common to all groups.** Key themes of each subgroup (not detailed here) appeared under headings of Principles and Strategies/Actions. The specific Principles were regarded as crucial for any organisation, but not all specific Strategies and Actions were regarded as relevant. It is intended that a comprehensive draft of the subgroup flow diagrams will be presented to all subgroup members and Elders, and endorsed in early 2019.

The diagram shown is still in draft form, reflecting subgroup deliberations up to the final meeting in 2018, but ready for further discussion and development in 2019.



Michael, Meeting with St John of God Midland, 2019.

SUB-GROUP THEMES

Cultural Security

The Service Partners agreed that having a culturally secure organisation was fundamental when engaging with Aboriginal clients, as well as supporting Aboriginal staff. Beyond, it is also relevant to the Aboriginal community in general.

In November 2017, two key aims were agreed on, that is:


- 1) identify key components of a service that characterise it as a 'safe place' for Aboriginal staff, clients and community members, and
- 2) develop ways to embed these key components of 'feeling of safe' into organisations.

From a service provider's point of view, how to create such an environment involves a lot of reflection and consultation.

"I think there's a real, a breath of fresh air with this place and quite honourable that a lot of you know the attitude you have towards engaging more with Aboriginal people and at risk of being seen to be different and you know from the standard ways of operating. I think it's, 'cause there's tons of stuff on Aboriginal people out there like, that we're burdened with, and to come here is a bit of a respite sometimes you know, honestly 'cause those attitudes out there aren't in here. Somebody asked me the other day, if I felt any threatened or experienced any, any extreme behaviour here and I said nope" (Senior Aboriginal staff member, 2017).



Elders and community members, community forum, 2018



"We kind of got the sense that we need to listen more than anything else and we couldn't really assume that the services we provide are actually culturally appropriate, not at a non-culturally secure level but even at a more fundamental philosophical level and I think that that also resulted in a different way of working that sometimes doesn't force Aboriginal community members through the processes that we're accustomed to apply to other people,"
(Service leader, 2017).

"You're certainly worried about saying something which is speculative, which for some people might be even offensive because it's that ignorant, and so that's obviously a bit of a concern at the beginning, but look, you've just got to sort of then jump in the deep end at some point and make a comment", (Service CEO, 2018).

Subgroup conversations began by exploring what is meant by “cultural security”, using the experience of Elders and group members and two references supplied by the research team. The ongoing discussion moved between what participants saw as key principles and examples of actions that can be taken by organisations to embed cultural security. Initially, there was some hesitancy among those who were earlier in the journey to expose their lack of knowledge (or say the wrong thing) among their peers, but fortunately over the course of the meetings, participants became more open. By mid-December 2018, in the final meeting with the subgroup Chairs, a set of draft strategies and/or actions were tabled as promoting cultural security:

Cultural Security

- Organisations will provide ongoing workforce education opportunities on Aboriginal history, cultural awareness and trauma informed practices from Aboriginal worldview.
- Organisations will create safe places for yarning, learning and reflective practice.
- Organisational policies, procedures and decision processes are adjusted in consultation with the Elders to facilitate cultural safety and security.
- Organisational programs are co-designed and co-produced with Aboriginal people.
- Aboriginal employees are actively supported to contribute from their knowledge and connections within communities.
- Organisations will proactively engage and support Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations in their work.
- Organisations will foster processes to identify and support Aboriginal Leadership
- Organisations will initiate and resource Aboriginal employee career pathways and cultural guidance/supervision processes.

What do staff members think 'cultural security' means?

Supplementary to the activities of the Cultural Security subgroup, the research team administered a Sector survey over September/ October 2018 in which they asked staff members of organisations involved in the Looking Forward Moving Forward project to define Cultural Security. The word cloud below captures words that featured most prominently.



Coffin, J. (2007) Rising to the challenge in Aboriginal health by creating cultural security. *Aboriginal and Islander health worker journal* Vol. 31 No. 3 (2007 May/Jun) 22-24.

Walker, R., Schultz, C., & Sonn, C. (2014). Cultural competence—Transforming policy, services, programs and practice. Working together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing principles and practice, 195-220.



Governance

Service Partners, in particular CEO and Executive staff, saw that it was imperative to share with their peers some of their ideas and dilemmas about how their governance structures could best change to better incorporate a strong Aboriginal voice. **They valued the opportunity to gain fresh perspectives and see a variety of approaches to issues they were working with.**

By the final meeting with the subgroup Chairs in December 2018, a set of draft key strategies and/or actions that had been identified by this subgroup were as follows:

- Keep cultural security embedded in practice
- Change your language, be less corporate
- Engage with Elders in a storying process
- Decrease bureaucracy and hierarchy – delegate and share power
- Educate and build skills at all levels of the organisation including the Board, on importance of kin, culture, country and co-design
- Build pathways for Aboriginal community partnerships



Workforce

In the Workforce subgroup, Service Partners agreed on two main aims relating to workforce and that these were crucial to implementing the 'Minditj-Kaart-Moorditj-Kaart' framework, that is:

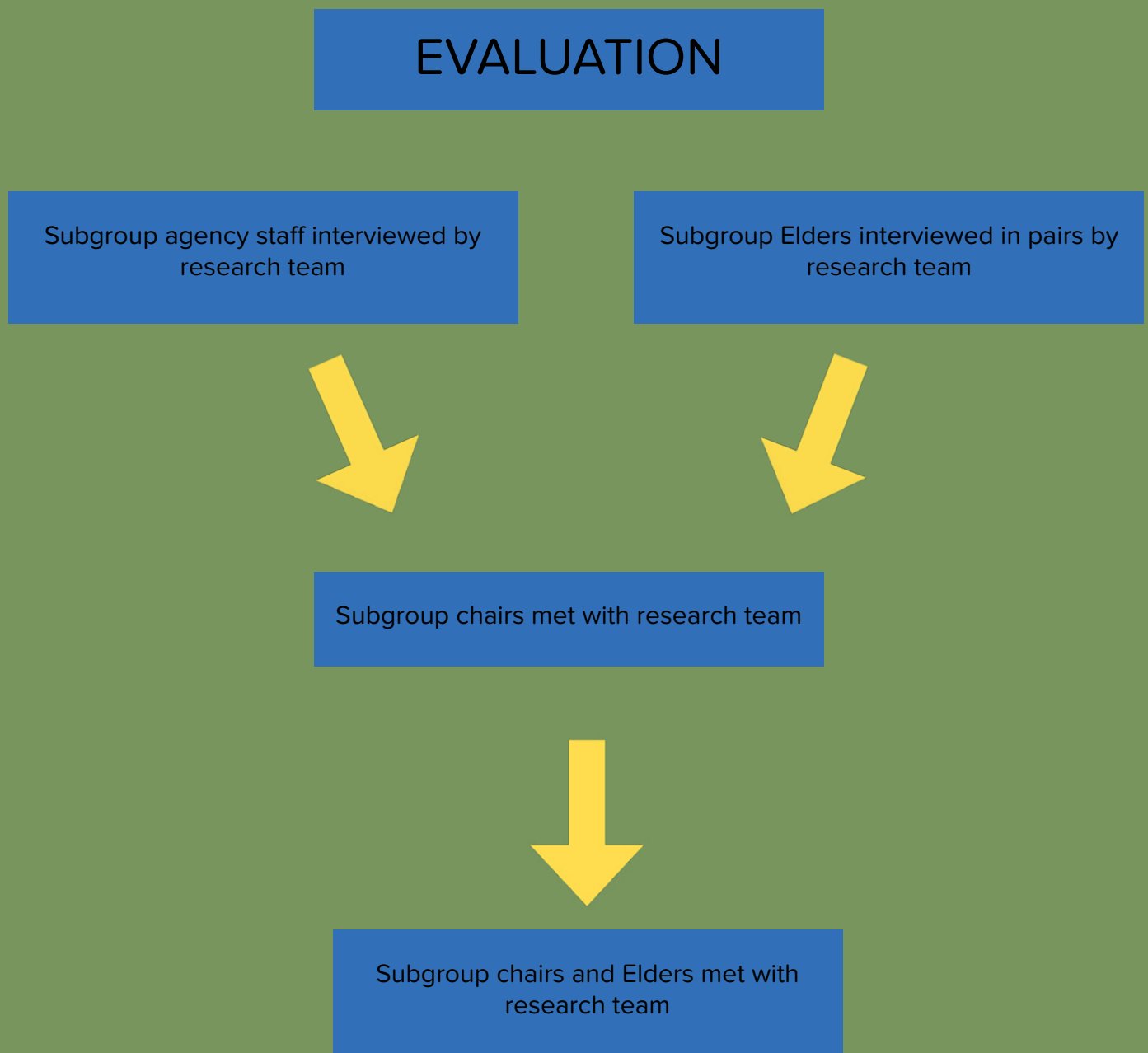
- increasing the number of Aboriginal workers across an organisation, and creating a supportive environment in which they are likely to thrive;
- enhancing non-Aboriginal workers' ability to work well with Aboriginal clients and colleagues.

In addition to the regular subgroup meetings, Elders and service subgroup members attended a presentation by Richmond Wellbeing executives about their experience of working with Elders to attract, retain and develop an Aboriginal workforce. This was a useful way to stimulate the ongoing discussions and by the final Chairs' meeting in December 2018, a draft set of Strategies/Actions had been identified as important ways to support Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff.

- Build flexibility in recruitment processes, such as background checks and tertiary qualifications
- Have local Aboriginal Elders on recruitment panels for Aboriginal employees
- Prepare and support all non-Aboriginal staff for employment of Aboriginal staff
- Employ and engage Aboriginal staff in internal cultural development roles
- Employ Aboriginal staff across the organisation – create strategic positions
- Ensure career pathways for Aboriginal staff where appropriate, supported by supervision and professional development
- Have stretch targets for Aboriginal employment that reflect service delivery
- Make provision for critical reflection, debriefing and peer support
- Designate time and opportunity for relationship building with Aboriginal staff
- Factor leave for cultural and community obligations into employment conditions


Evaluating the Subgroups

Whilst the research team took detailed meeting notes, it needs to be noted that no formal consensus-building process was in place, hence some dissent or minority views may not be reflected in the figure below. To capture those views, interviews with subgroup Elders, chairs and other participants were carried out in late 2018. The research team also sought feedback about the workings of the subgroups and whether the conversations led to any changes in participants' practice. The **subgroup evaluation approach reflects the inherent nature of participatory action research**, with a focus on **reflecting** on the work to date, and **collaborating with participants** to discern the best strategies to move forward.



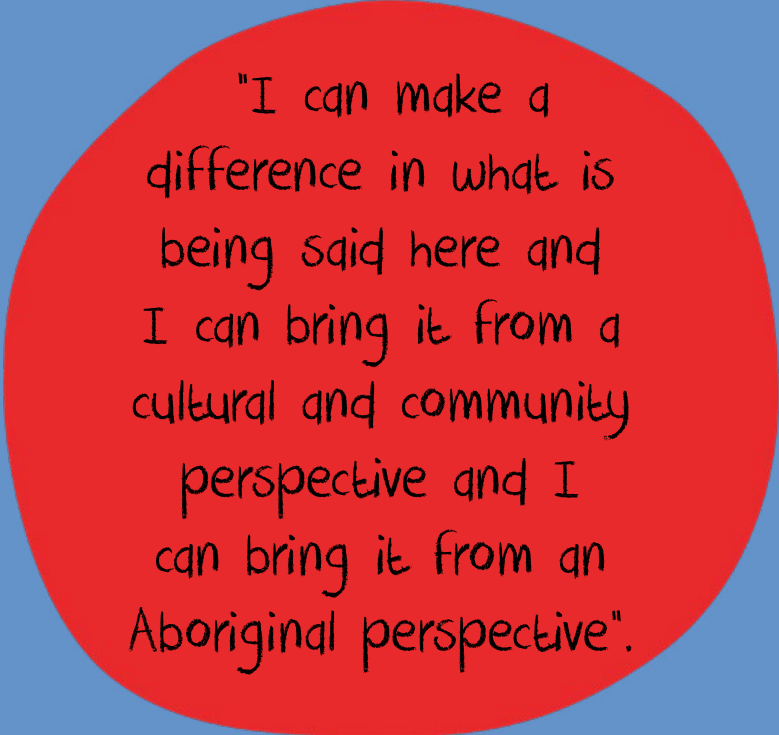
THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING ELDERS IN THE SUBGROUPS

Most of the service participants commented specifically on the importance of having Elders involved in the discussions, with comments such as:



"Aunty was amazing, and to hear it from them actually changed how you thought".

At meetings where Elders were not able to attend, **discomfort was expressed at holding a meeting without them.** The Elders themselves were pleased to have a voice, despite initially being unsure about their role in the process. One Elder commented:



"I can make a difference in what is being said here and I can bring it from a cultural and community perspective and I can bring it from an Aboriginal perspective".

Uncertainty

Service Partners (primarily CEOs) had initially agreed on the focus and purpose of the subgroups, however, those they sent to participate did not always know what to expect. The Elders too echoed this uncertainty. **Some early anxiety and discomfort was felt**, however, later in the process participants were describing how the group then developed aims and processes that were not what they had expected but that they were happy with. **This experience demonstrates the co-design process 'in action', as the process itself unfolds alongside the development of aims and outcomes.** Trusting the process was key for several participants. As one commented: *It's a little bit unclear but, you know, it's a process, so I'm not uncomfortable with it. I think it's such a new territory. It's evolving and uncovering before our eyes as we go along, that's part of the process."*

Working with strangers

Some service participants already knew each other, and the Elders working with each group already knew at least some of the participants, but many participants felt **they did not know enough about all the people in the group** or the organisations they represented. As one Elder commented: *"I didn't know the people and where they worked and didn't know what to expect you know, because they spoke words that you know... I didn't understand. They need to speak at our level"*.

The conversations must lead to action

Service and Elder participants agreed that the series of **meetings should lead to identifiable, practical actions that improve the service experience of Aboriginal people.** While the discussions tended to wind a path between values, principles and the possible strategies or actions, the Elders brought the focus back to defining practical steps forward that, in their view, would benefit the Aboriginal community.



Subgroup chairs and Elders, 2019.

"AHA" MOMENTS FOR SUBGROUP MEMBERS

Throughout the project epiphany moments have signalled points at which participants have been able to unlearn something from their own world view and relearn something from a Nyoongar perspective. Subgroup members from partner services reflected on some of their 'Aha' moments as such:

"If we don't walk in the same places as the Aboriginal community, we don't see them, and unless we go out to the places that they live within and exist within, then we don't see, we don't have the connection... So many of our people here, they're employed here but they don't live here, they aren't part of this community".

"[Moving from] the tendency to leap to solutions, like, 'Oh, we can do that,' without talking it through further and that's been a huge learning actually ... So, listening and actually listening for longer until it's all unpacked and then thinking about the resources you have and then saying, okay, this is what we have".

"We absolutely need to co-create, co-design, work with [Aboriginal Elders] in a whole different way".

"it is not a linear process, it is a circular process, and part of that I think is learning how to truly listen and that's a real skill set"

"I just sometimes find it hard not to get overwhelmed by the gap [laughs] of how far we've got to go, but then sometimes I'm being really inspired as well by the depth of some of the people's understandings in this area, and also their willingness to be open and look for different ways."

"So it wasn't specific insights, it was more like being part of those things, just to help me read the situation, think about what I'm doing here. You know, I had a reference that was bigger than [my own organisation] and bigger than myself, so that was really significant for me in my leadership role".

KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE SUBGROUP PROCESS



“Storying” is a keystone of the Looking Forward Moving Forward process of relationship-building, allowing Elders and service providers to get to know each other and develop trust and relationships. Such a process could helpfully be incorporated into the work of the subgroups, allowing each of the participants to have a better, more direct understanding of each other's contexts (both as individuals and as representatives of organisations).



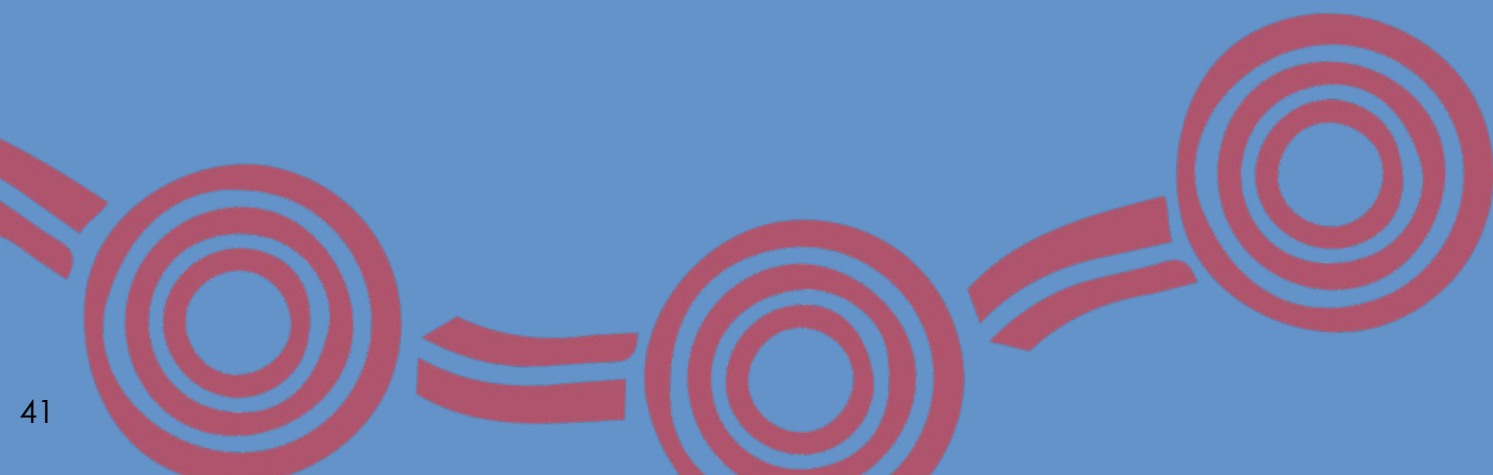
The Elders remind us that there is no point to this work if it doesn't result in improvements for their communities. To keep this foremost, it is proposed that for future subgroup meetings, members reflect on what has changed since the last meeting in their workplaces, and what, if any, impact this has had on Aboriginal people.

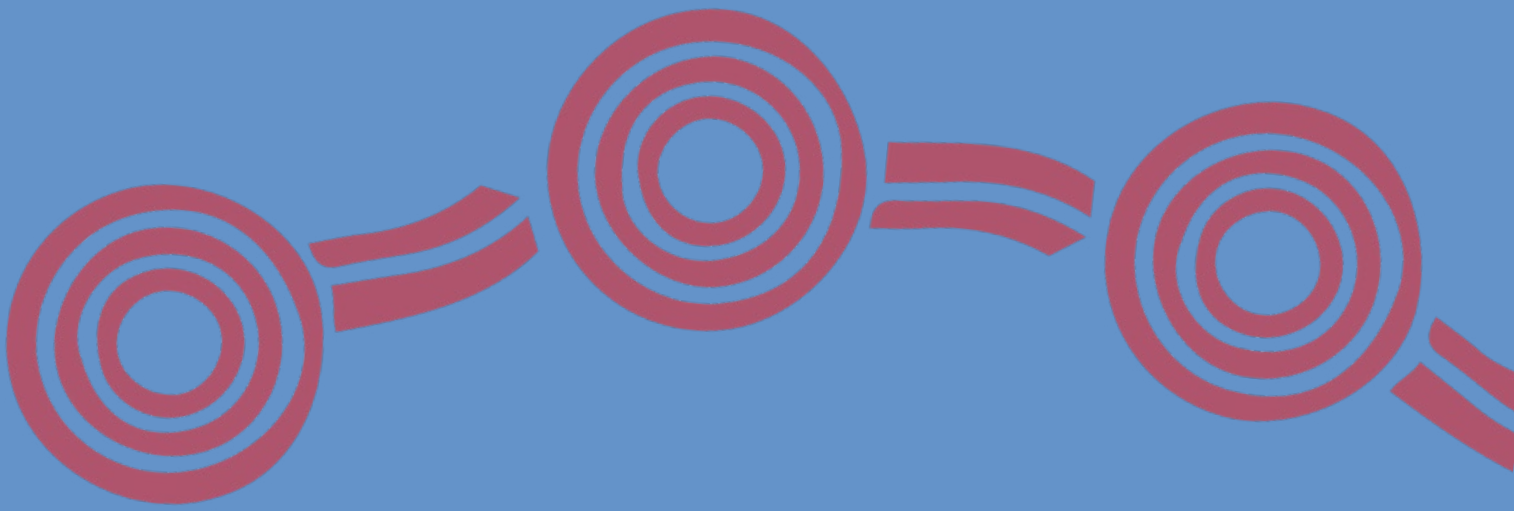


Invest in time to build trust, so that Aboriginal people can trust mainstream organisations (based on the history of government and other colonial interventions into Aboriginal people's self-determination), and so that service representatives can trust each other (particularly in the current competitive funding context) to expose their challenges and blind spots. During the time this takes, we have learned the importance of trusting the relationship building process through principles of respect, courage and deep listening.



Role of project team: Currently the research team fulfils the practical roles of scheduling and keeping records of meetings, but also works with subgroup chairs between meetings to reflect on progress and to plan next steps. Participants have commented that without the team it might be difficult to maintain the momentum, allocate the record-keeping roles, and thus keep the group accountable to each other and to the Elders for progressing their learnings in their organisations. **The team will consider strategies that may promote sustainable activity into the future, especially where subgroups indicate a desire to maintain their cross-organisational collaborations.**





Aunty Millie, Aunty Oriel, Aunty Moya, Subgroup chairs meeting, 2019.



Aunty Irene, Elders Race, Richmond Wellbeing Day, 2018.

WHERE TO NEXT? SUSTAINING THE WORK..



In 2019, the subgroups have agreed to meet together to share their findings and to decide their focus for 2019. Outcomes will be co-presented by subgroup Chairs and Elders in early 2019 in order to develop a co-design approach that will form the basis for the development of the service evaluation. In addition, members may also build on the relationships and mutual understandings that the subgroups have begun to generate, forming a separate group of Elders and service leaders whose task is to co-design measures that will evaluate the implementation of the *Minditj-Kaart-Moorditj-Kaart* framework within the partner organisations.

The evaluation will capture the process of change within the service organisations, as well as the influence of the Elders on driving the change.

It will assess whether and how this change positively impacts on the way families access services and the way services respond to families and their needs.

Guiding questions for the evaluation:

1. How does the *Minditj-Kaart-Moorditj-Kaart Framework* improve the engagement and relationships between the Aboriginal community and mental health and drug and alcohol service providers?
2. How do these relationships help improve mental health outcomes for Aboriginal families?
3. How can the *Minditj-Kaart-Moorditj-Kaart Framework* be effectively translated into other communities and locations?



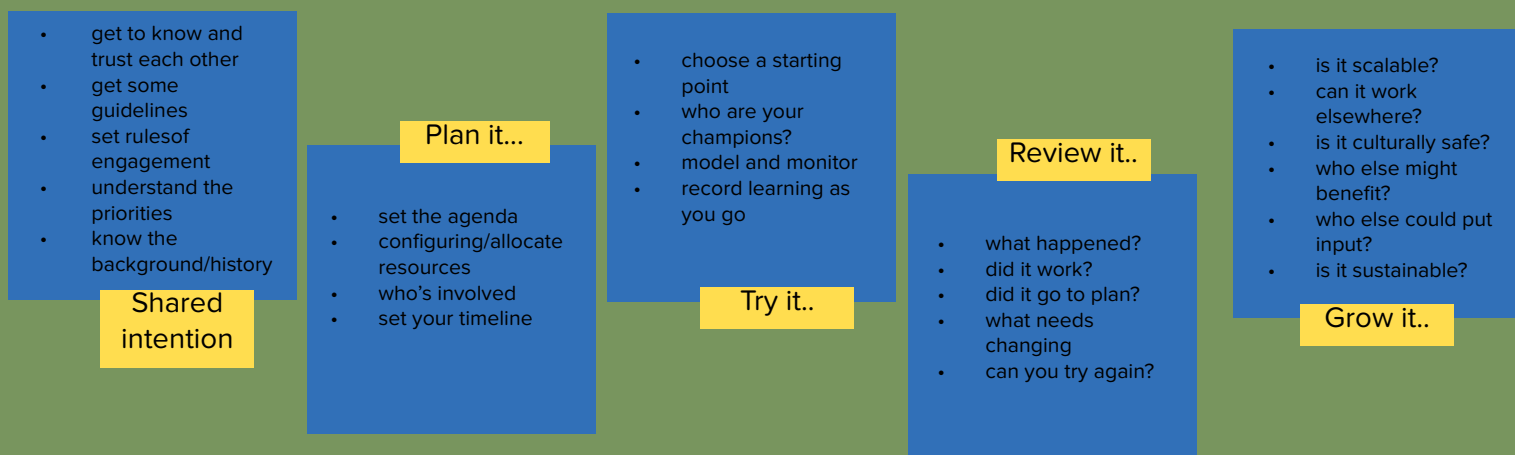
Co-designing our evaluation

Co-design is an important factor for these engagements. **The key principles for working with Elders in the co-design space include humility, courage, transparency and reciprocity.** Being humble shows recognition of the unique status of the Elders and of the immense value of the expertise they bring to the co-design space. Being courageous requires service leaders and researchers to take the risk of letting go of their own worldview, so they can respond directly and respectfully when challenged by Elders. The result is greater transparency if leaders' willingness to be challenged enables the creation of an open, truthful and inclusive dialogue when co-designing ways to work with Aboriginal people.

Subgroup chairs and Elders will present a set of draft strategies to subgroup members and invited guests and the actions and strategies will be endorsed by participants in early 2019. Following this, the Elders, Service Partners, and the research team will participate in co-design workshops, aimed at developing measures to capture organisational change and the impact of this change on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal families seeking help. These workshops will be informed by the subgroup actions and strategies.

A quick overview: What do we mean by 'co-design'?

Citizens and professionals share power to co-create solutions and where real change occurs when resources are shifted to service users and those at the frontline of service delivery.



KEY TRANSLATION ACTIVITIES FOR 2018

This year saw team members involved in **almost forty external meetings** at which they presented the Framework, discussed engagement proposals, or facilitated engagement approaches for new service providers or government bodies. Three such engagements in particular have proved fruitful this year, with a focus on both learning and evaluation.

What is translation?

Translation is a combination of strategies, resources and actions aimed at creating impact by sharing research findings across diverse stakeholder groups. As an intervention research project, the project's key objective is to intervene into existing systems and operations to initiate change. It does this through the engagement of Elders.

Masters of Social Work placement: Verity Roennfeldt

Verity is Director Cultural Practice Development, Therapeutic Care Services in the WA Department of Communities (formerly Child Protection and Family Support). Verity joined the team from February to June as part of her Social Work Masters placement to explore the use of the 'Minditj-Kaart-Moorditj-Kaart' engagement framework together with 'Story Animals' (handmade soft animals) as a mechanism for engagement with Aboriginal families in child protection services, that can precipitate systems change. Verity has now completed her Masters through Flinders University, South Australia.

During her placement Verity co-facilitated a workshop with local Elders, Auntie Cheryl Phillips and Auntie Carmel Culbong for the School of OTSWSP staff. The workshop aimed to encourage staff to engage with Elders and to co-create a handmade quilt that represents the joining of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal spaces.

Verity reflected on her Masters placement at the conclusion of her Masters course recently.

"... it's hard to go past 'Debakarn, debakarn...Steady...steady...' really. Before I started my final Masters of Social Work placement, I knew what it meant on paper and had heard it said a lot. But after spending time with the Elders, I truly discovered what it meant to let go of my western 'anxiety' when things 'don't go to (MY) plan'. I learned what it meant to trust and respect the process; not my notion of a linear step-by-step process, but that old way, that old earth connection process that holds us all. I feel like the Elders gave me a gift of belonging. The 'Minditj- Kaart-Moorditj- Kaart' framework explains how we can actively create working environments where we can feel safe to be who we genuinely are, while we grow and learn. The Elders reminded me that I am an important part of the system 'fabric' that is being continually woven as we work to make our lives better, together."

Following her placement, Verity presented her work with Story Animals at the International Suicide Prevention Conference, alongside Albany Elder, Eliza Woods. Verity continues to embed this work within child protection and family support systems in WA and most recently has connected with Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women to develop the engagement with the Story Animals.



Elders and Services at Kings Park Meeting, 2018.

'Nyin-iny Kadadjiny Boordiya' Aboriginal Engagement Family Support Network pilot program

Team members, Michael and Helen facilitated a small pilot project involving **Family Support Network** staff in Mirrabooka, including **Department of Communities** staff and local Elders. The **Nyin-iny Kadadjiny Boordiya ('Sitting and Learning with Elders')** Aboriginal Engagement project used the 'Minditj-Kaart-Moorditj-Kaart' engagement Framework to engage local Elders in the Mirrabooka area with the full team of the **Mirrabooka Family Support Network (FSN)** lead agency, with the aim to:

- build Network's capacity to effectively relate to the Aboriginal community;
- increase numbers of Aboriginal families engaging with the Network; and
- explore the model of service provision to the benefit of Aboriginal families.

"Individuals are confidently developing creative solutions to engage with clients with whom they had formerly struggled to keep connected, and the service model as a whole is changing."

While engagement during this pilot project was with the lead agency, it was hoped their learning would generate beneficial changes in processes of the wider network.

"The deepening relationship between the team and Elders and the growing sophistication in the language and framing of how client situations were discussed, the increasing confidence expressed in reflection sessions, and the responses of most participants interviewed both individually and in small groups, demonstrate that this project has had strong and beneficial effects on participants' ability to engage with Aboriginal community members. Individuals are confidently developing creative solutions to engage with clients with whom they had formerly struggled to keep connected, and the service model as a whole is changing" ('Nyin-iny Kadadjiny Boordiya' Report 2018).

As with our own translation challenges, the project participants were concerned about how best to translate their experiences for the benefit of others in the FSN:

“Group members were anxious to find an appropriate way to convey their learning. Presenting “facts” or “information” would not have the impact that this process of relationship-building and experiential learning, and of sometimes sitting with some discomfort, has had on group members. It was agreed that some component of shifting people from their comfort zones, and of some experiential learning, would be required” (ibid, p.22).

The Nyin-iny Kadadjiny Boordiya team is now moving forward with the findings from the pilot phase in an attempt to spread the projects’ benefits by engaging Elders in activities both of the broader FSN network and in other collaborations in the community.

Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference (national and international) – Keynote and committee work

Michael joined the *National and International Indigenous Suicide Prevention conference committee* in early 2018. The conference hosted numerous Indigenous scholars, health workers and community members, including a large number of local, regional, interstate and international Elders. Michael delivered a *keynote* presentation about the impact of the Elders on mental health and alcohol and other drug agencies, alongside Elder Uncle Charlie Kickett. **The project Elders featured strongly amongst the esteemed group of Elders that attended the conference.** The conference took place in late November at the Rendezvous Hotel in Scarborough, Western Australia.

Conference Presentations

Michael was an invited keynote at the Hot North Broome conference, where he presented on the WA Mental Health Act and strategies for working with Elders. He was also a member of a co-design panel discussion and supported local Elders attending the WACOSS Conference in May. Other presentations include the Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum (Perth WA), and The Mental Health Society conference (Adelaide SA).

Community Presentations and Forums

Presentations to the service sector and government policy entities: co-presenting at WAPHA with Service Partners, Richmond Wellbeing, meeting with the Magistrates Association and presenting a research skills seminar at Perth Children’s Hospital for hospital research staff. One participant shared the following learning in their evaluation of the research seminar:

“Engaging with Elders and the concept of engaging with a Nyoongar person involves engaging not just with the person, but with the whole culture” (Seminar participant, 2018).

School of Occupational Therapy, Social Work and Speech Pathology, Curtin University

Elders, Aunty Louise and Uncle Percy Hansen and Aunty Joanna Corbett are engaged in the School of OTSWSP to provide cultural guidance to Fourth Year **Occupational Therapy (OT) Field Placement students and Social Work students**. Their work within the School spans almost three years.

Occupational Therapy Field Placement

Sally Hunter, Lecturer and OT Field Placement Coordinator, stated that the key learning for her in engaging the Elders was understanding the way in which the relationship deepens with the experiences of each student cohort. Developing greater confidence to take the relationship further and understanding the crucial nature of consistency and continuity was also important. The little things that take time and thoughtfulness such as arranging travel, payments, introductions, debriefs and phone calls with Elders, are the most important aspect to this developing **confidence, consistency** and **continuity**.



Curtin Occupational Therapy On Country Day, 2019.



Social Work 4th Year Students

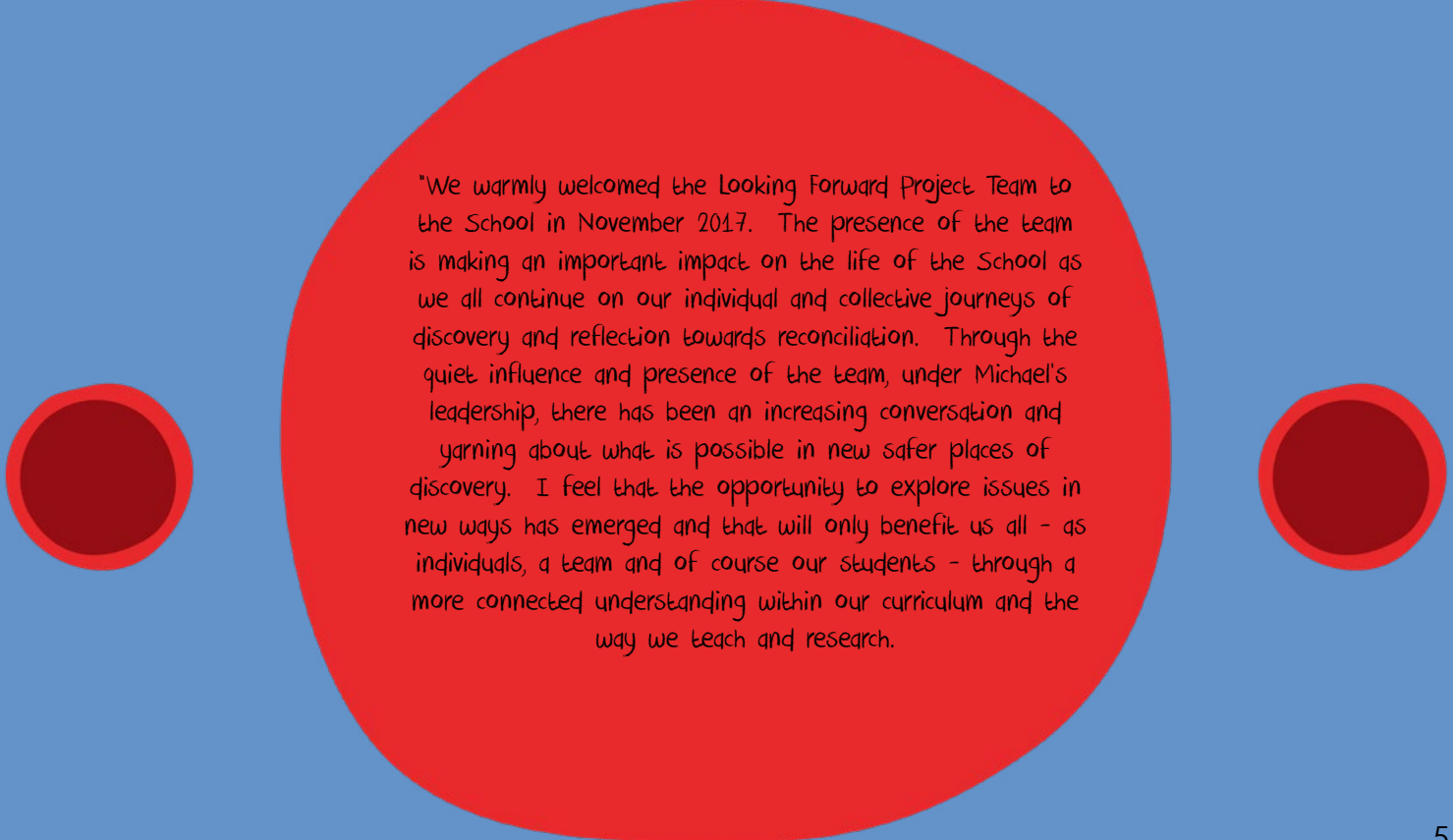
Social Work lecturer, Dr Antonia Hendrick, describes her ongoing commitment to working with the Elders as she has done for the past three years:

"[it's] the fact that the Elders remain engaged, willing to travel to meetings, wanting to progress the work – that's what drives me to commit. What enables me, is the School to trust I will do my work allocated and allow me to undertake tasks relevant to the work with the Elders – even if it is in addition to workload allocation."

The Elders were pleased to have been involved with the students and saw the need for funding as being critical to continue the engagement within the School:

"The other thing I liked is ...we brought the students out from Curtin. There was a day organised with Antonia. They come out bush with us just outside Armadale there, ...enough there to see all the fauna and flora that's around that they could tap into. We had people showing them around and they really enjoyed that. That's another sort of thing where you need to take them out of their comfort zone because we're the ones going into their comfort zone, aren't we, but they are taken out of their comfort zone up there and they absolutely enjoyed themselves, and I think that's the way to go. If the bodies that we work with can find the funding to do things like that, that would give them a better perspective because we had little fellers all the way through family members, all the way through and they really appreciated that because they could see how the whole family cares for the those littlies" (Elder, 2017).

These words from Head of School, Angus Buchanan sum up the spirit through which teaching and research staff – and students alike – have committed to engaging more meaningfully with the Aboriginal community by building relationships with local Elders:



"We warmly welcomed the Looking Forward Project Team to the School in November 2017. The presence of the team is making an important impact on the life of the School as we all continue on our individual and collective journeys of discovery and reflection towards reconciliation. Through the quiet influence and presence of the team, under Michael's leadership, there has been an increasing conversation and yarning about what is possible in new safer places of discovery. I feel that the opportunity to explore issues in new ways has emerged and that will only benefit us all – as individuals, a team and of course our students – through a more connected understanding within our curriculum and the way we teach and research."

Higher Degree Research Supervision: Student Projects

The opportunity for students from different disciplines to engage with the project team ensures that the dissemination and translation of new knowledge positively impacts early career researchers both with or without Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

With Dr Britta Biedermann joining the team in early 2018, we've seen the inclusion of Honours student Brittney Pollard (Psychology) and Graduate Masters student Siobhan Finn (Speech Pathology), progressing the research in regards to better understanding the role of Elders and their engagement with service staff.

Brittney Pollard (Honours, Psych): What are the key characteristics for a sustainable relationship between Nyoongar Elders and Mental Health, Alcohol and other Drug Service Providers? (Successfully completed, December 2018).

Siobhan Finn (GEMS, Speech Path): Indicators of Strength and Hope: Strength-Based Attributes in the Words of Nyoongar Aboriginal Elders. (Successfully completed, December 2018).

In addition, Michael and the team are currently co-supervising a further three students, Rosemary Walley on experiences of Otitis Media on urban Aboriginal communities (Masters by Research, National Drug Research Institute), and Megan Rudman and Samantha Dearden (Honours, School of OTSWSP) on the incorporation of an Aboriginal worldview into the accreditation and curriculum processes across Australian OT schools. All three projects will continue in 2019.



Brittney Pollard's Graduation Ceremony with supervisors Dr. Britta Biedermann and Dr. Mark Boyes



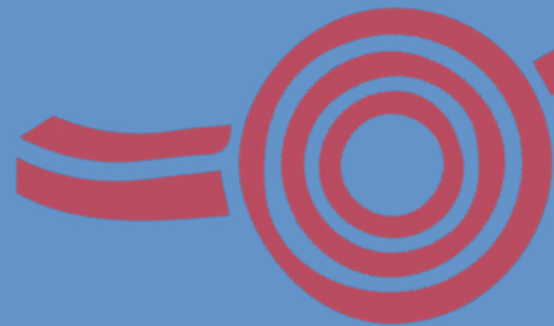
Britta and Marg at the Social Policy Symposium, Curtin University, 2018

From October to December 2018, **the project team gave international PhD candidate from Germany, Mareike Moormann, an opportunity to learn about co-design and translation strategies.** Exposure to this methodology altered Mareike's PhD proposal from a solely quantitative approach to a mixed method approach, incorporating co-design as a guiding principle for two of her four studies within her PhD project. This is a solid example of how the research team disseminates not only the research findings but also the project's methodological knowledge.

2019 HDR offerings will include several Honours and Masters topics including '*Understanding the Nyoongar Worldview*' and '*Barriers that prevent Aboriginal clients to access mental health services*'. Here is a brief snapshot of topics:

- Measuring Attitude Change over Time in non-Aboriginal Health Service Staff
- Validation of a Health Service Survey on Engagement with the Aboriginal Community
- Mental Health Measures that incorporate a Nyoongar world view and cultural security
- Health economic and evaluating the cost effectiveness of service provision.

SERVICE SECTOR SURVEY

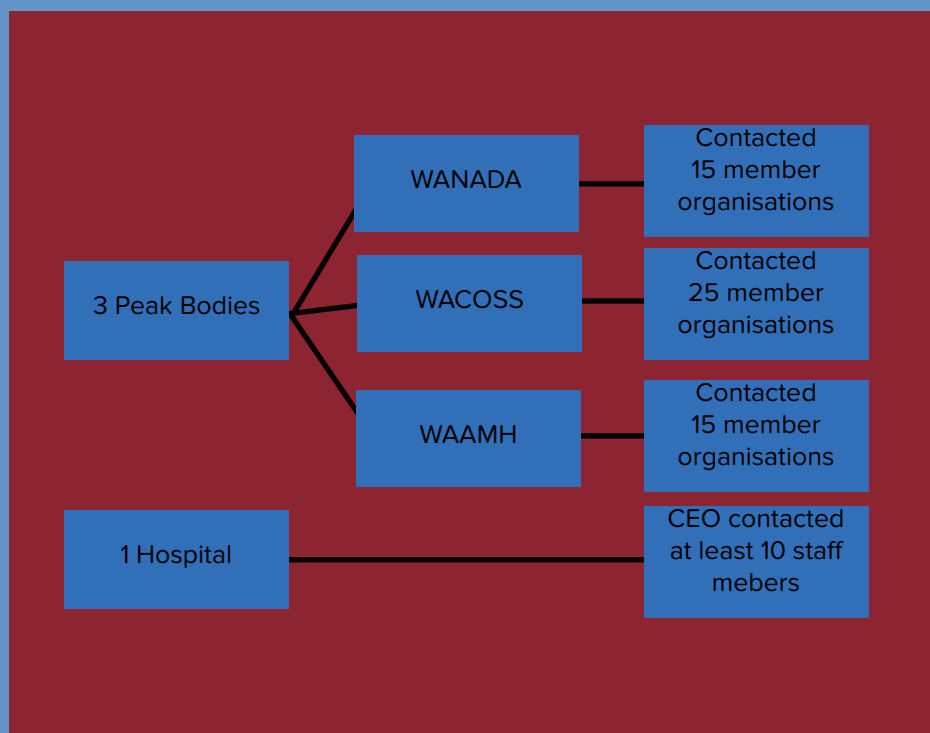


In 2018, a survey was distributed across the Health and Community Service Sector in the Perth metro area.

The aim of the survey was to capture current engagement of the health and community service staff with the local Aboriginal community and, in particular, any experience they had of working with Elders.

The sector survey will be distributed two more times in 2019 and 2020. The outcomes of the survey will enable us to identify whether engagement with Elders makes a difference to access and responsiveness of service providers to the local Aboriginal community.

Distribution Strategy: The Survey was distributed to service organisations via three Peak Bodies: WA Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies(WANADA); WA Council of Social Services(WACOSS); WA Association of Mental Health Services(WAAMH).



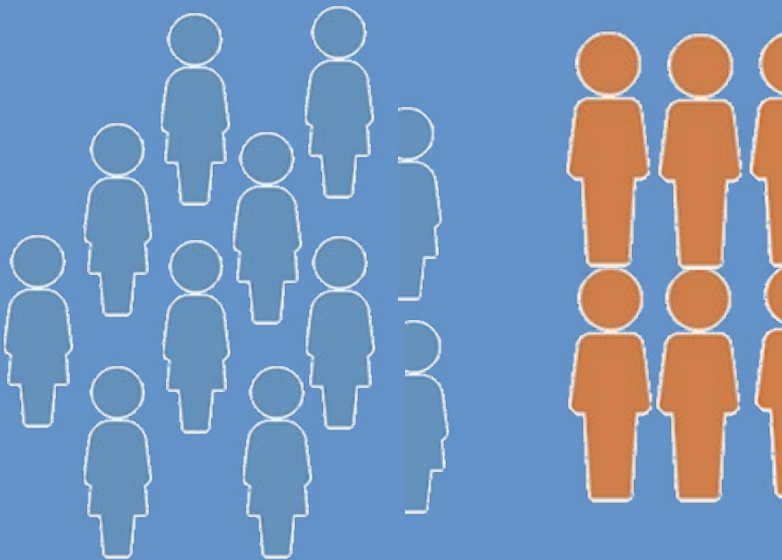
The survey was distributed to organisations who:

- are participating in the project
- are not participating in the project
- have service sites in the Perth metro area
- have more than 25 staff members
- offer face-to-face client services
- are not primarily an Aboriginal Community Controlled service

Figure 1: Survey Distribution Strategy

Who Responded?

We had a total of 272 responses.



Gender

78%
female

22.5%
male

0.5%
non-
binary

Age

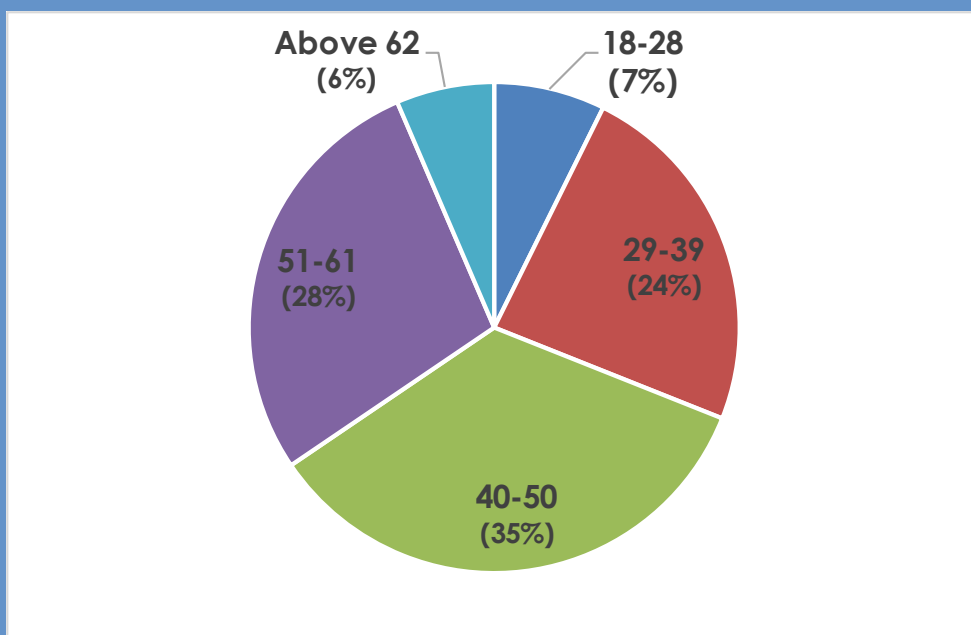


Figure 2: Age of participants

A surprising finding....

Our survey revealed that a high rate of staff were not sure whether their organisation participated in the LFMF project.

Is your organisation a partner of the Looking Forward Moving Forward Project?

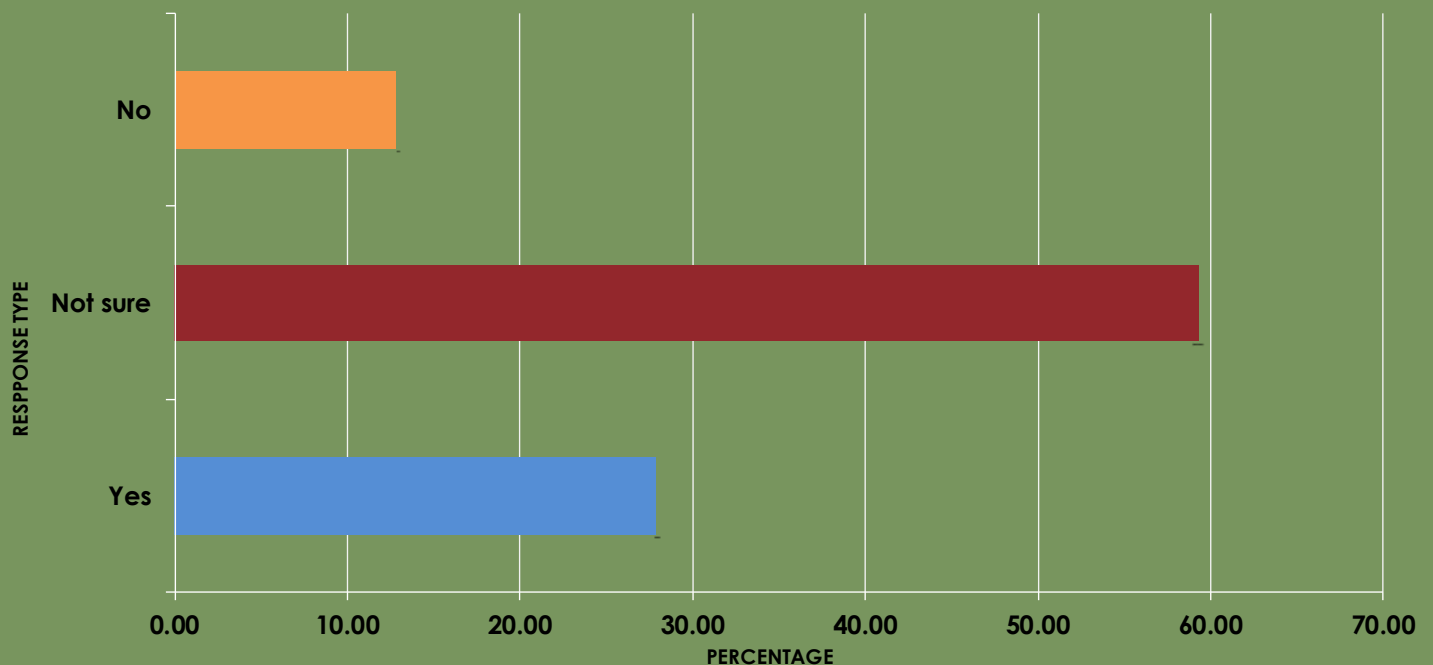


Figure 3: Responders belonging to different categories

Therefore, we took out the 'not sure' group and only looked at those who indicated whether they were 'Participating' or 'Not Participating'.

Is your organisation a partner of the Looking Forward Moving Forward Project?

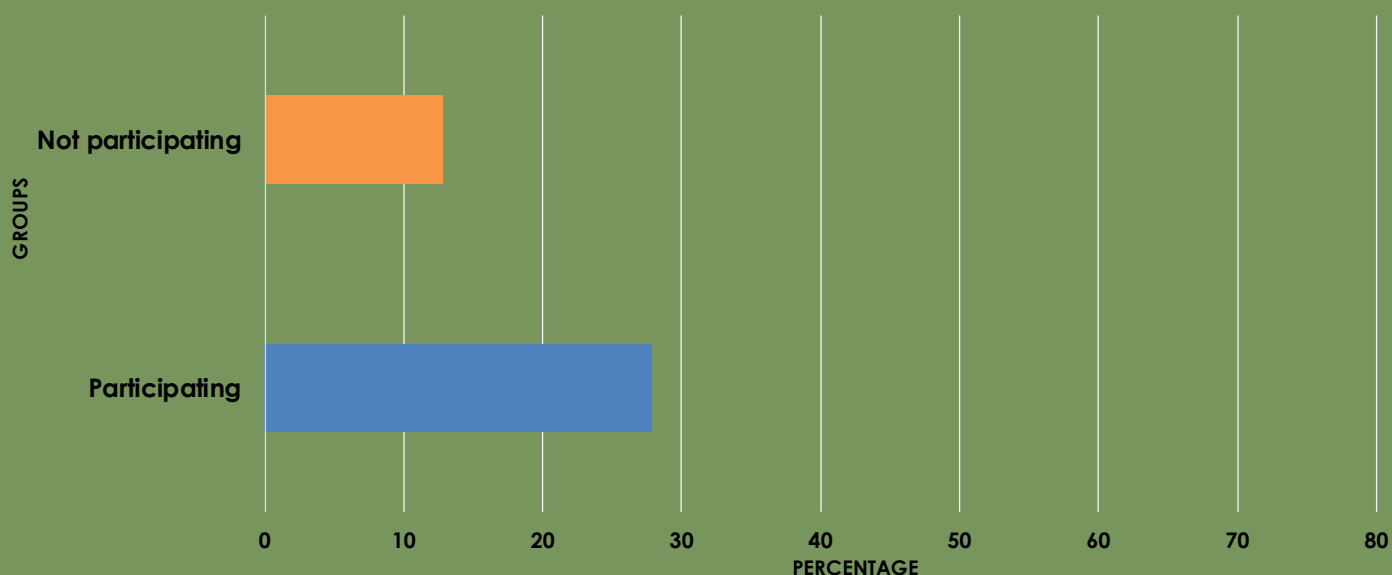


Figure 4: Responders who were certain of their organisations participation or non participation

12.82%
indicated
that they are
not
participating

Staff knowing that they are not participating work predominantly as Executives/ Managers (23 out of 37)

59.34%
indicated
that they are
not sure

Staff not knowing whether they participate work predominantly as Health workers (67 out of 114)

27.84%
indicated
that they are
participating

Staff knowing that they participate work predominantly as Executives/ Managers (26 out of 77)

How Long Have You Worked In Your Current Organisation?

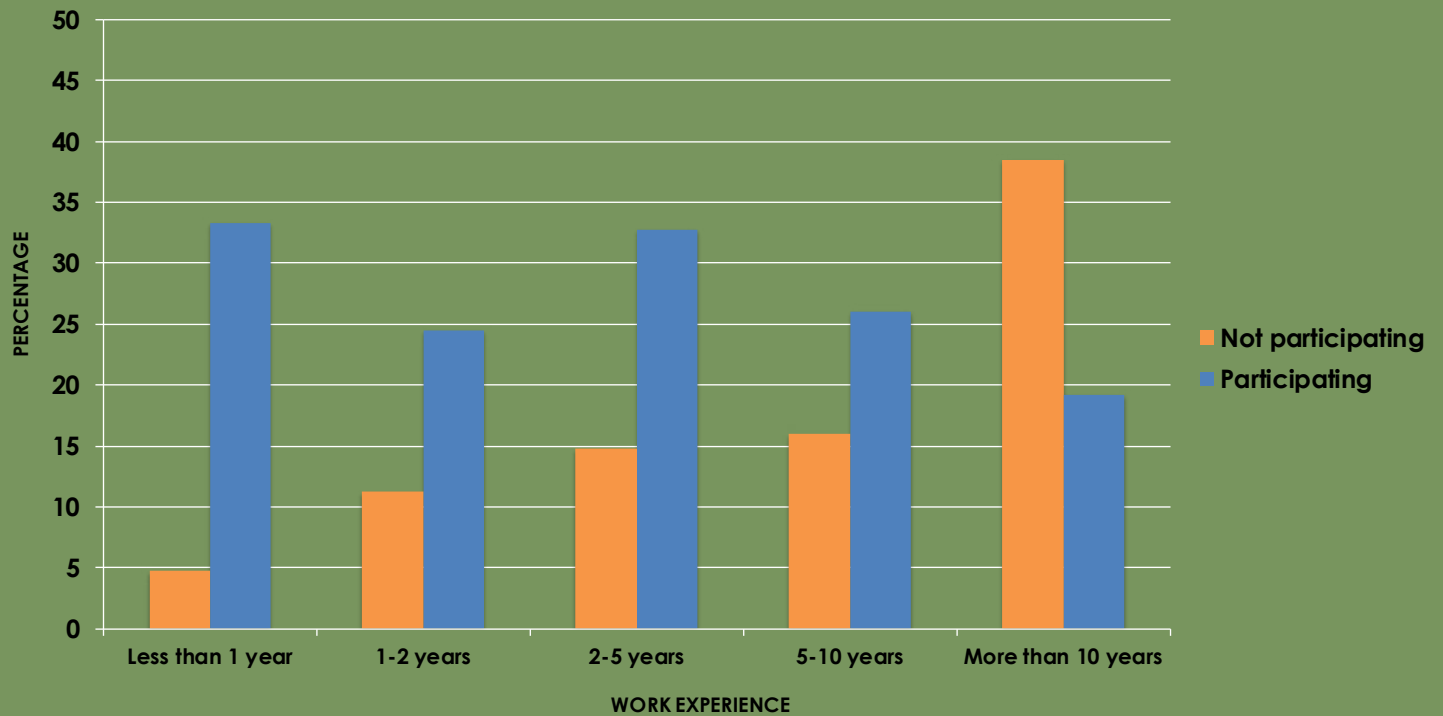


Figure 5: Work experience across staff

Do You Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

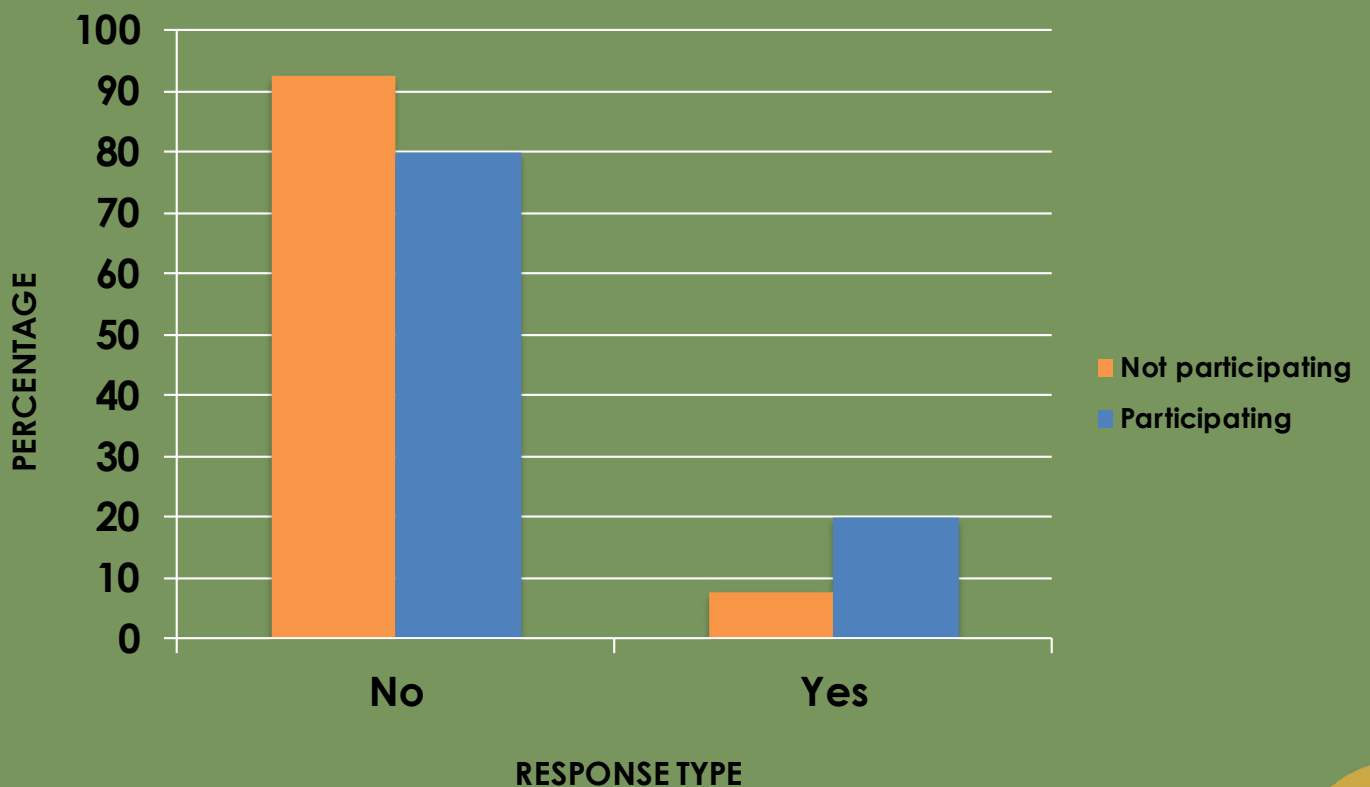


Figure 6: Most responders, regardless of category, indicated that their organisation works with Elders



Does your organisation work directly with Elders?

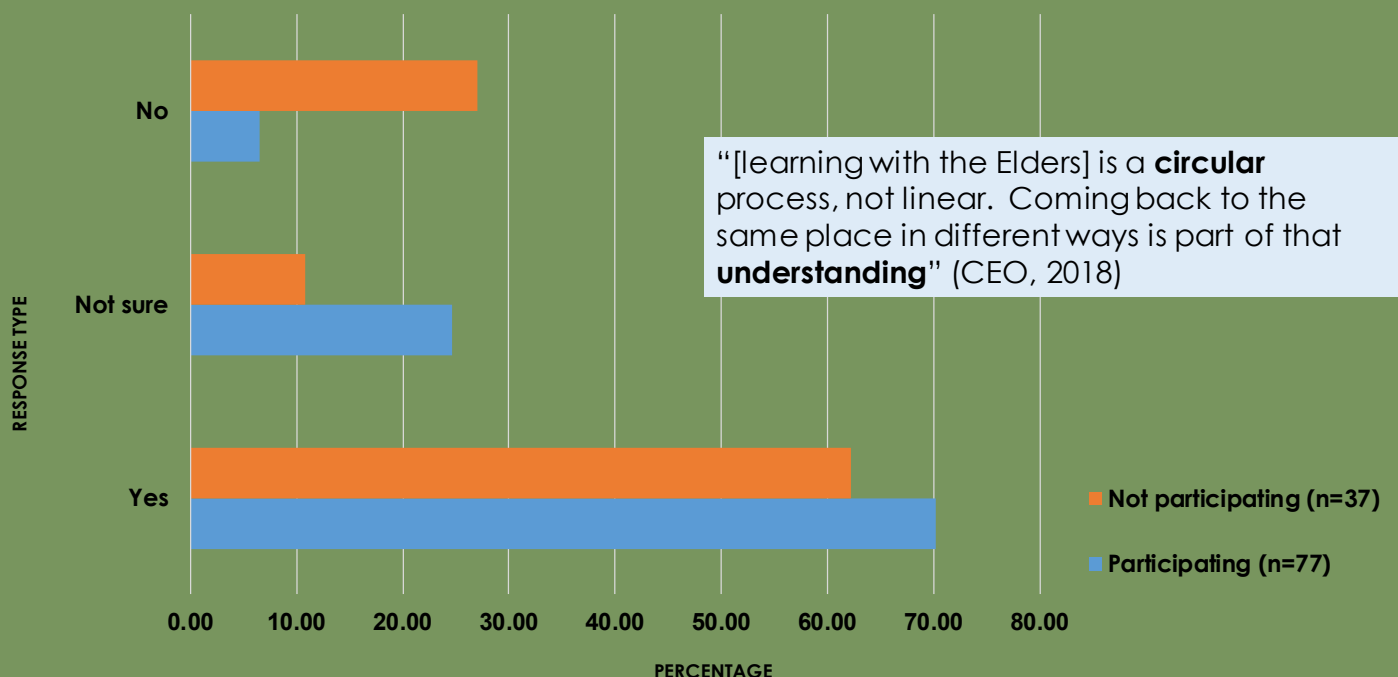


Figure 7: Most responders, regardless of category, indicated that their organisation works with Elders

My organisation's work with Aboriginal Elders has improved our presence within the Aboriginal community.

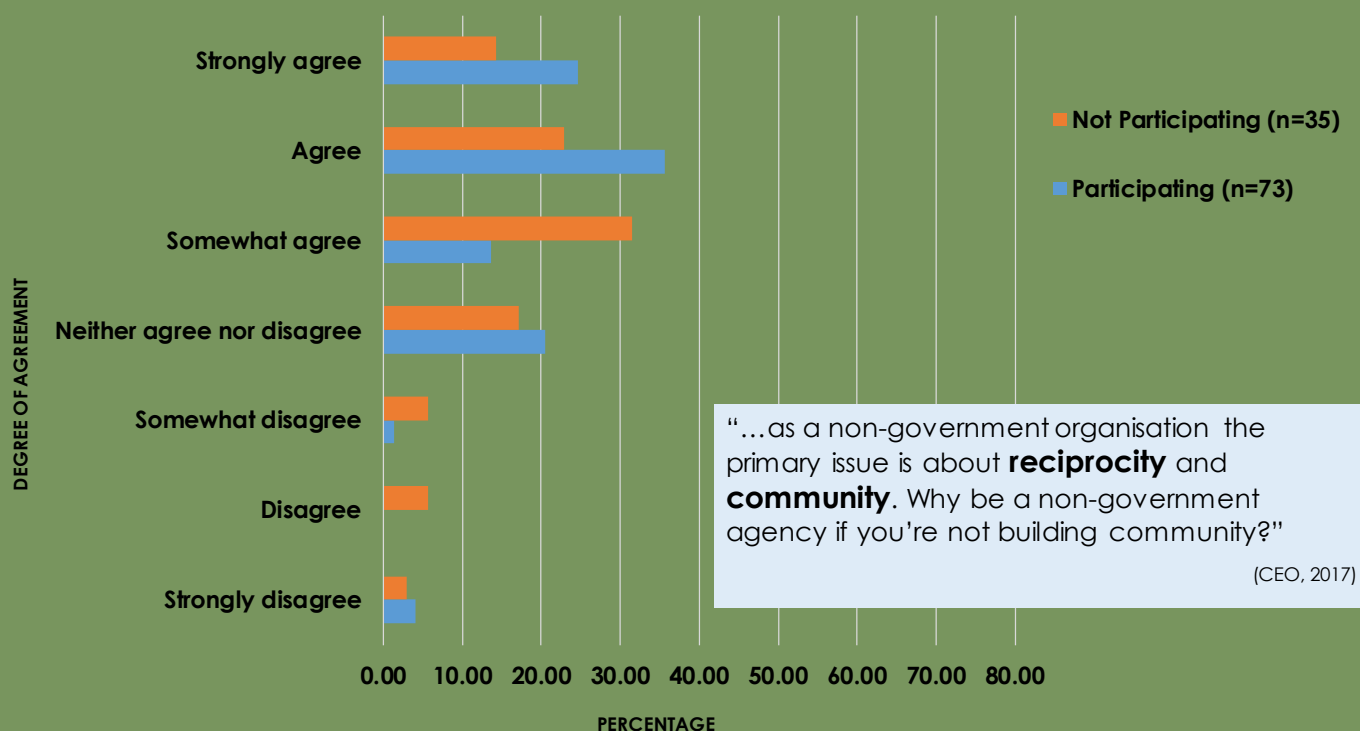


Figure 8: Staff indicating whether their work with Elders improved their presence in the community

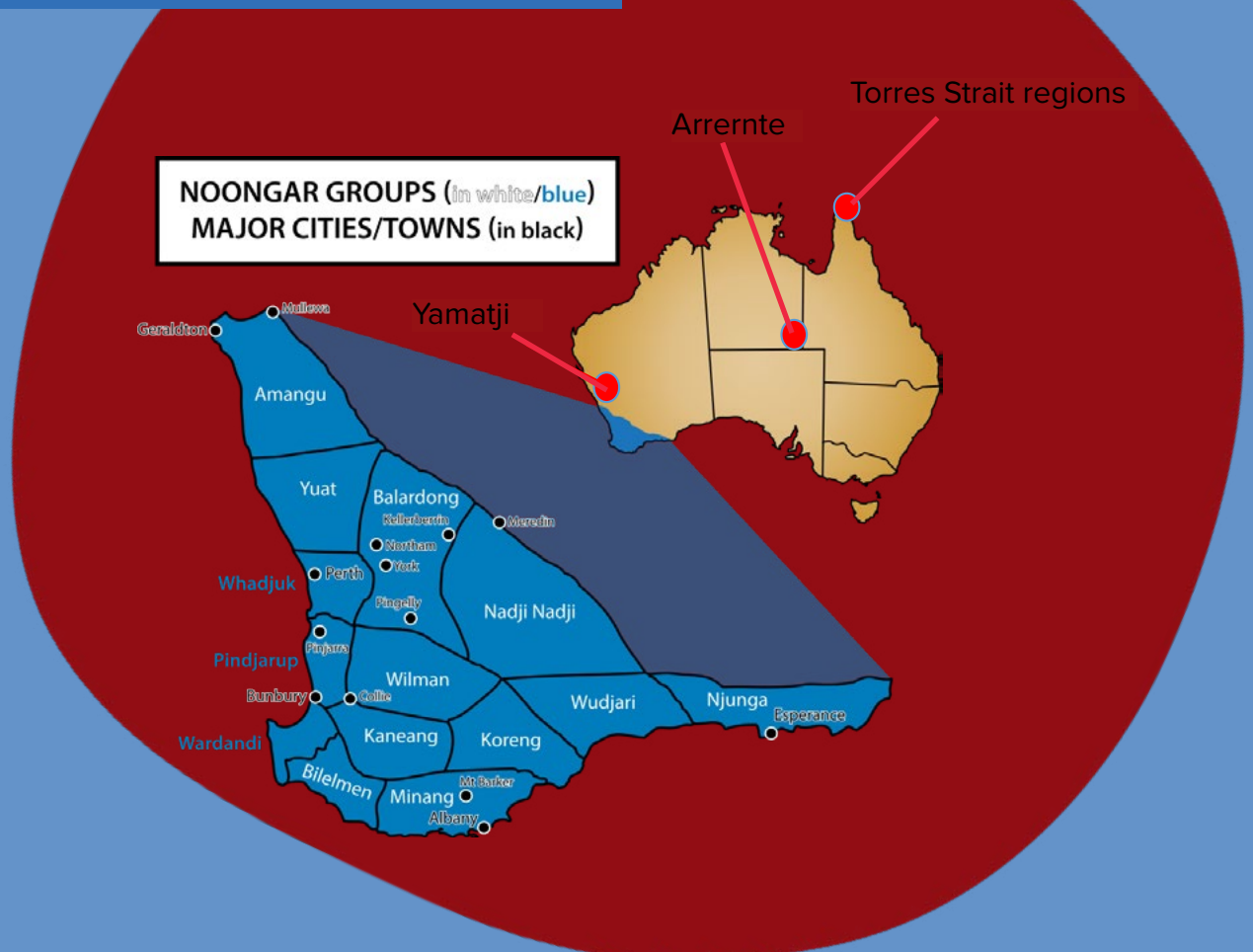
COMMUNITY SURVEY

In 2018, we asked 42 people who belong to the Aboriginal Community about their experience of seeking help from mainstream support services. Our aim was to better understand what makes a service feel more *culturally safe*. A community survey will be distributed again in 2019 and 2020 with the aim to capture how:

- Do services become more *culturally secure* over time when working with Elders and will this be felt in the community?; and,
- Will the community endorse these services more frequently to family and friends over time?

Who participated in this survey?

The majority of participants were Nyoongar (47.6%, more specifically: Yuat (5.88%)) > Yamatji (11.76%) > Arrernte (5.88%) > Torres Strait Islander (5.88%).





- Total of 42 responses
- 27 valid responses

Gender

70.4%
female

22.2%
male

7.4% not
disclosed

Age

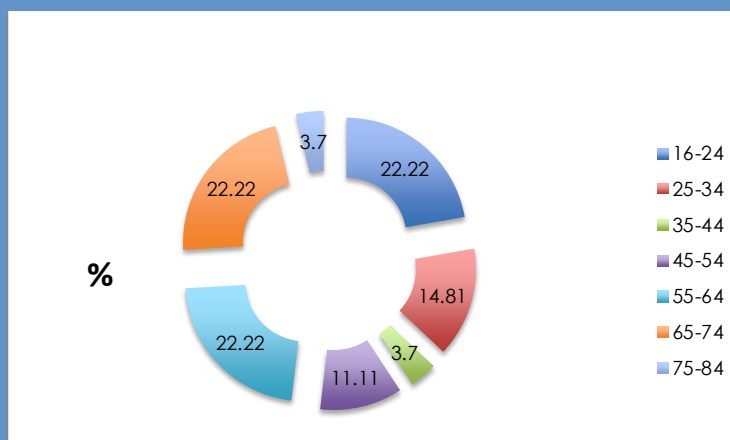


Figure 9: Age of Participants

Aboriginal community members would turn to partners or parents in the first instance, followed by other relatives and friends. In **41%** of the responses, the person that the community member would turn to was also **a health worker**.

The four top explanations as to why that person was a 'go-to-person' were:

1. I can trust them.
2. They understand what I need.
3. They help to make it easier for me to access the service.
4. They know who to talk to in this service.

We asked:

"If you feel unwell, who would you go to in your community for help?"

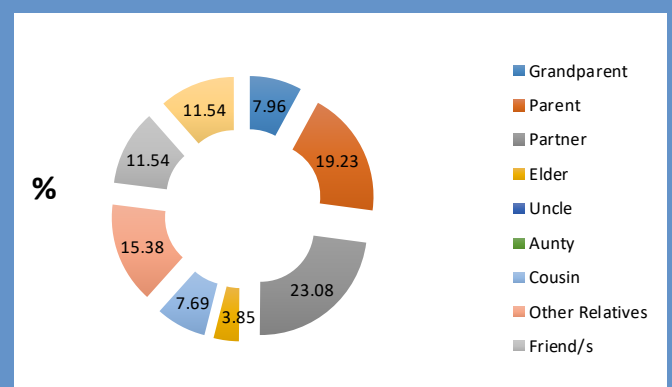


Figure 10: Go-to-person responders would turn to for help

We asked...

Is there a mental health or alcohol and other drug support service, or both, that you would contact if you needed help?

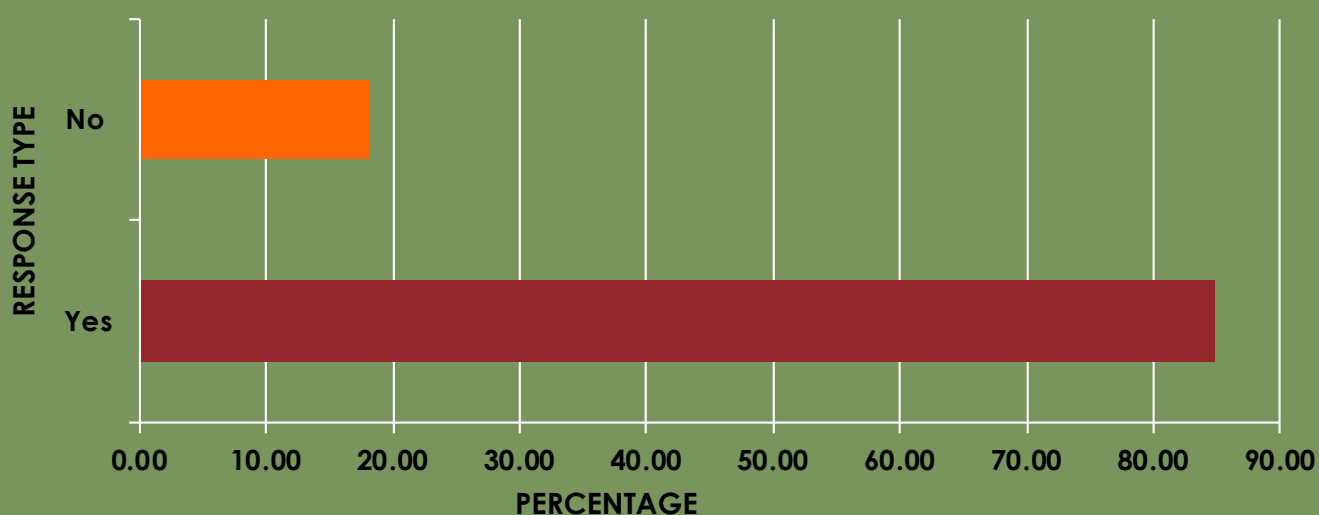


Figure 11: Indication of support when seeking help

Breakdown of Yes Responses

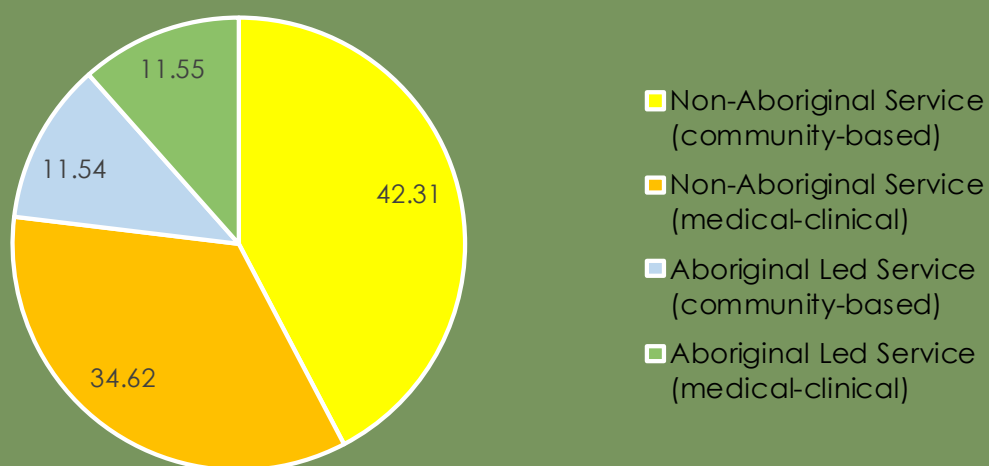
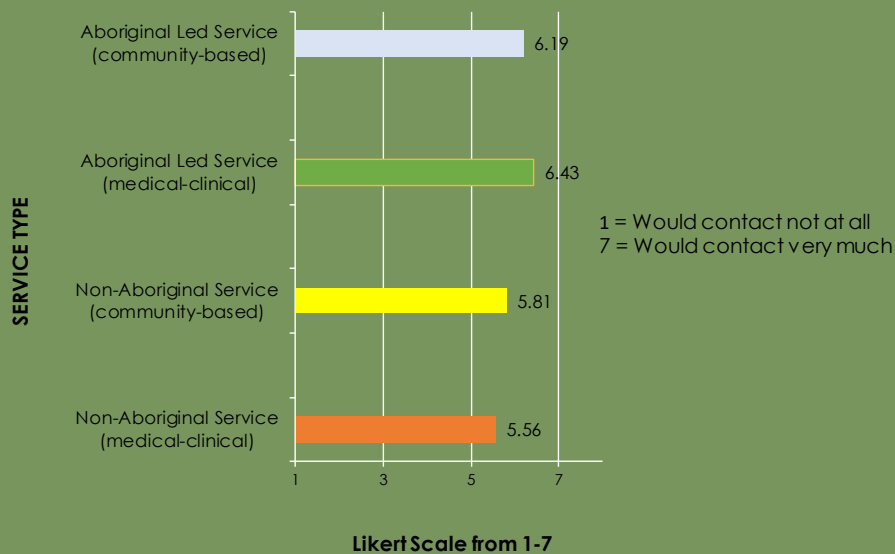


Figure 12: Percentage of YES responses

Average Satisfaction Score about Services that are either Aboriginal-led or not Aboriginal-led and either community-based or medical-clinical.



We asked whether the services the community would contact were:

- Supportive
- Safe
- Caring
- Listening
- Respectful
- Trustworthy
- Helpful
- Welcoming

And further asked whether they were Aboriginal-led or not.

Surprisingly, only a small advantage was found for Aboriginal-led Services as a contact preference.

Figure 13: Average Satisfaction Score (based on n= 27) for Being a Service that is: Supportive, Safe, Caring, Listening, Respectful, Trustworthy, Helpful, and Welcoming

Next steps...

We are mindful of the level of distrust community members may have with research projects. While a survey provides one form of gathering data, it is sometimes an imposition on community members, who are willing to share their story in other, more relevant ways. The project team will re-consider using a survey and seek to involve community members and supporters earlier in the evaluation process.



Uncle Fred and friend performing at Richmond Wellbeing Community Day, 2018.

OUTLOOK FOR 2019

In early 2019, the project team will convene a series of co-design workshops with the Elders and staff from each of the ten partner organisations, informed by this year's work across the three sub-groups. The purpose of these workshops is to **co-design the methodology and the methods for the evaluation of the ten partner agencies**. In addition, as mentioned in earlier sections of this report, the sector survey and community evaluation methods will be repeated (as a time series) to capture service change and shifts in perceptions and experiences of service provision.

Single Case Experimental Design

A method known as the Single Case Experimental Design will be piloted in 2019 to capture organisational change. Single Case Design takes into consideration a variety of factors within one participant (i.e. 'case') over time. A large range of items are used to provide an in-depth measure that can track changes experienced by a staff member within an organisation over time. In this context, it is the engagement with the Elders that will influence change in staff. The Single Case method also acknowledges individual change experiences that are captured in depth, rather than averaged across a range of service staff. Change is complex and multilayered. This means that the different ways people change and how their change experiences impact others (especially in their organisation) can be recorded in detail. The 'power' of this kind of data comes from the number of questions asked, rather than the number of people responding. It also means that participants feel listened to when they disclose their experiences of change, which is most often related to their reflective decolonising practice, guided by the Elders.





Uncle Charlie and Michael speaking at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference, 2018. Credit to ISPC, 2018.

Evaluating the Framework's implementation + impact

We will:

- ➔ Measure how well the Framework has been implemented in the partner organisations.
- ➔ Measure the impact of the Framework through the evaluation phase.
- ➔ Evaluate community perceptions of service access + responsiveness.
- ➔ Evaluate organisational change + cultural competence

TIMELINE

2017

Getting started

- Establish Project Team
- Set up project governance structures
- Conduct preparation meeting with Elders' stakeholder group
- Engage Service Partners + set up Statement of Intent
- Conduct baseline interviews with Elders + service staff
- Establish Translation Group
- Commence baseline data analysis + literature review

2018

Co-design the Minditj Kaart-Moorditj Kaart Framework evaluation

- Complete baseline data analysis + literature review
- Co-design the evaluation (outcome and fidelity measures) with Elders + partner organisations
- Co-design the evaluation implementation strategy + conduct training + orientation with service staff + Elders
- Implement the evaluation in partner organisations

2019

Evaluate the Framework's implementation + impact

- Measure how well the Framework has been implemented in the partner organisations
- Measure the impact of the Framework through the evaluation phase
- Evaluate community perceptions of service access + responsiveness
- Evaluate organisational change + cultural competence

2020

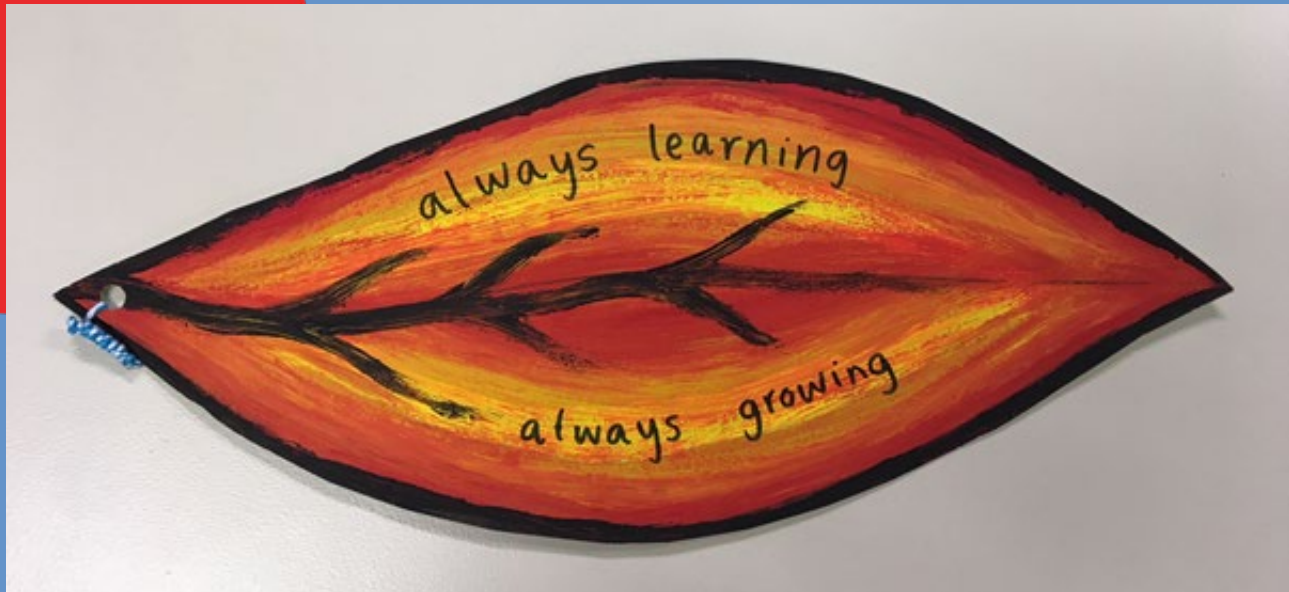
Analyse the data + develop findings

- Undertake data analysis + develop findings
- Share the findings with the community + partner organisations

2021

Report on, disseminate + translate the findings

- Collate and report on the evaluation results
- Assess the implications of the findings for the broader Aboriginal community in WA
- Assess the implications of the findings for the WA mental health + drug and alcohol sector



Leaves from the Community Forum, 2018



Leaves from the Community Forum, 2018

THANKS

We, the project team, extend our gratitude and appreciation to the service leaders and staff, and to the Elders in particular, who have participated in the sub-group meetings throughout 2018. This required significant time and commitment to actively engage in the meetings, preparation and debriefing with each meeting and follow up with the team to record feedback through an interview process. Without these substantial efforts, the project would not have progressed in the focussed way that it has to date and move us into the next stage.

In addition, we sincerely thank all the Elders for maintaining their trust in the team – and in the service staff – to continue to drive the priorities they had set for us at the outset of the project. We recognise that throughout the year there have been many diverse experiences we have attempted to capture, and as such, we hope we have done justice to your sharing of stories and wisdom, in a true and meaningful way.

We thank, as always, our funders and supporters, the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia, the WA Mental Health Commission and the partner organisations for your continued engagement with and support for the project. We also thank the School of Occupational Therapy, Social Work and Speech Pathology, Curtin University for their continuing support for the project team and our activities.

A special thank you to the Nyoongar community for continuing to show us the way in this research. We remain deeply committed to this journey with a strong vision to make a real difference in the lives of those experiencing mental ill-health and drug and alcohol concerns. We walk this journey alongside you and your families.

FUNDING

The Looking Forward Moving Forward Project is funded by a National Health and Medical Research Council Partnership Project Grant with financial and in-kind support also committed by the 10 service partners.

ETHICS

The Looking Forward Moving Forward Project has been approved by the Western Australian Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee (772) and the Human Research Ethics Committee at Curtin University (HRE2017-0446).

SERVICE PARTNERS



OUR TEAM



MICHAEL WRIGHT

Lead Researcher

Michael's research is based on his PhD which investigated the service experiences of Aboriginal families.



MARGARET O'CONNELL

Research fellow

Margaret's role with the project is to support the research team with her action research experience.



TIANA CULBONG

Research Associate

Tiana brings her community development and engagement experience to the project.



HELEN LETTE

Research Fellow

Helen supports the research team with her experience in evaluation and background in mental health nursing.



BRITTA BIEDERMANN

Research Fellow

Britta offers quantitative support to the research team with her background in Cognitive Neuropsychology.



RACHAEL PEARSON

Project Officer

Rachael supports the team to manage the Elder, community and service engagements.

KEEN TO TALK ABOUT ENGAGING ELDERS WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES?

Start with these questions:



Are we ready to step out of our comfort zones?



Are we prepared to listen longer and more deeply than we have done before?



Are we prepared to explore our own histories, privilege and positions of power in conversation with Aboriginal Elders and the community?



Are we prepared to resource these engagements regularly, and can we do so sustainably?



Is the service leadership committed, courageous and keen to build the organisation's capacity to work meaningfully with Elders, for the benefit of our clients?

For further advice contact:
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The Looking Forward Moving Forward Project (2017-2021) is a participatory action research project that aims to implement and evaluate more culturally secure ways of working in mental health, alcohol and other drug support services in Western Australia.

Service leaders engage directly with local Aboriginal Elders to drive changes in policy and practice and improve Aboriginal Community perceptions and experiences of these services.

