

Other research activity



Elders' Community Meeting, 28th February 2024

We would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Elders who have passed and thank them for leaving their knowledge and wisdom for the next generation.

➤ An Elders' community meeting was held at Burswood on Swan on Wednesday, 28th February 2024.

- Beginning with a beautiful Welcome to Country by Aunty Liz Hayden, the day was facilitated by Carol Innes AM, followed by Aunty Millie Penny AM, Aunty Charmaine Pell and Larissa Jones presenting an overview on the Ngulluk Moort, Ngulluk Boodja, Ngulluk Wirin OOHC study.
- The audience included 57 Elders from the Perth metropolitan area, OOHC advisory group members, and representatives from Yorganop, Kinship Connections, Key Assets Australia, Life Without Barriers and MacKillop Family Services.

➤ Interviews were conducted with the agency workers and non-Aboriginal foster carers from the partner agencies, to ascertain what cultural connections, activities and resources these children have, and what they might need.

➤ A scale of cultural connectedness for Aboriginal children living in OOHC will collect information to gain a better understanding of the cultural connections, activities and resources possessed by Aboriginal children living with non-Aboriginal foster carers.

- The scale will be applied twice to measure the whether the research activity has had an impact on children's access to cultural connection and resources.

➤ The partner agencies have invited the research team to a Board meeting, festive celebrations, office openings and children's days. The research team have connected agency workers and non-Aboriginal foster carers with Aboriginal Elders and community members for the benefit of Aboriginal children in OOHC.

➤ Over the course of the project, we have engaged with a range of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and service providers, and we will continue to build these networks and relationships.



Contact us:

For more information about the study, please visit:
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• The research was formerly known as *Changing the Paradigm to Improve Outcomes for Aboriginal Children in OOHC*.

Ethics: Western Australian Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee (WAAHEC)
Approval No. #1137

Research Team:

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Ngulluk Moort, Ngulluk Boodja, Ngulluk Wirin

(Our Family, Our Country, Our Spirit)

Out-of-Home Care Study

Community Update Report 2023 - 2024

Background

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (hereafter, respectfully termed Aboriginal) are overrepresented in the out-of-home care (OOHC) sector, and many are placed in the care of mainstream OOHC organisations with non-Aboriginal foster families which can affect their connection to family, culture and Country.
- The Ngulluk Moort, Ngulluk Boodja, Ngulluk Wirin (Our Family, Our Country, Our Spirit) OOHC study is in response to ongoing calls from Aboriginal Elders and community who have been voicing for decades the need for better cultural connection for Aboriginal children in OOHC.
- We are working with the leadership and staff (agency workers) and non-Aboriginal foster carers from three mainstream OOHC agencies: Key Assets Australia, Life Without Barriers and MacKillop Family Services to provide information about cultural connections, and cultural activity and resources for Aboriginal children living in non-Aboriginal foster care arrangements.
- We are providing support and opportunities to engage in cultural activities and provide agency workers and non-Aboriginal foster carers with culturally secure and evaluated training opportunities. We wish to acknowledge the agencies commitment to this partnership.

Cultural governance

- The research is Elder and community led, designed, and delivered. Cultural governance leadership, advice and direction for the life of the research is provided by the Child Protection and Child Removal Elder Co-researchers, Aunty Millie Penny AM and Aunty Charmaine Pell.



Aunty Millie Penny AM
Elder Co-researcher



Aunty Charmaine Pell
Elder Co-researcher

In memoriam of Pop Allan Kickett Snr (RIP). With permission from family, the Ngulluk Moort, Ngulluk Boodja, Ngulluk Wirin team would like to pay our respects to and acknowledge Pop Allan Kickett Snr's (RIP) invaluable contributions to the OOHC study as an Elder Co-researcher.

- An Aboriginal Community Advisory Group and Professional Aboriginal Advisory Group provide cultural guidance and advice on the research design and direction, and input into the co-design of research tools and materials. Both groups have members who are Stolen Generation survivors.
- In addition, the Aboriginal Community Advisory Group is comprised of Aboriginal family, kin and community members with lived experience of the child protection system, and the Professional Aboriginal Advisory Group includes Aboriginal community members with expertise and extensive networks in the out-of-home and kinship care sectors.
- Community consultation and identifying community priorities and research outcomes is a central focus of its co-design. The co-design process means this research may take different, and exciting directions.

Research activity

- Between November 2022 and March 2023, the research team led focus group workshops involving the agency workers from Key Assets Australia, Life Without Barriers and MacKillop Family Services:
 - To understand more about the facilitators and barriers for agency workers, to connecting Aboriginal children living with non-Aboriginal foster carers, with their kin, culture, community and Country.



The Truth Of Our Stories, 22nd April 2024

- On 20th May 2024, staff from Yokai - Healing Our Spirit led a day tour on Country in Boorloo (Perth) with 35 agency workers and non-Aboriginal foster carers.

We started at the Moort-ak Waadiny's (Wellington Square) Stolen Generation Memorial, followed by a tour through the 57 Murray Street building, and finished with the screening of the Stolen Generation documentary, 'Genocide in the Wildflower State'.

- In November 2023, a collective focus group workshop with the three agencies was conducted to discuss the findings from the focus groups.
 - These discussions were then used to inform a cultural training program. Following an extensive, Elder-led co-design process, a cultural training program was established for agency workers and non-Aboriginal foster carers to attend during 2024.
- The cultural training program began with exploring colonisation and the shaping of child protection policy and practice through 'The Truth Of Our Stories' presentation.
 - Held on 22nd April 2024 at Nedlands Yacht Club, the day began with Aboriginal community members sharing their Stolen Generation and Child Protection lived experiences to forty-two agency workers and foster carers from the partner agencies.
 - Followed by a research presentation linking the connections between historical and contemporary child removal, and a comprehensive overview of cultural activities and resources available in Western Australia to support the cultural needs of Aboriginal children in OOHC.
 - Agency workers and foster carers completed pre- and post-training evaluation surveys to determine whether the days' presentations helped to increase their level of cultural confidence, knowledge, and practices. Overwhelmingly the evaluation comments were positive as captured by these participants:



Day tour on Country, Boorloo by Yokai, 20th May 2024



Natasha Kickett and Renee Ronan from Kaarla Baabpa Consulting facilitated their Cultural Responsiveness: Building Cultural Awareness and Rivers Reconnect Training.

"So grateful to have been able to listen to the stories shared today. It's so important to be reminded of how the system that we work in, and our actions impact lives. It has been another opportunity to reflect on how we can work in ways to best listen to children and their families, and support connection".

"Very powerful presentations that bring reality to an often only professional conversation ... need more of these with a wider audience".

"This was one of the most powerful presentations I have been to. I appreciate the opportunity to attend and participate in this journey".

"Very powerful and impactful training. I hope we can achieve change for all mob and Koolunga's".



During September 2024, the Elder Co-researchers led art workshops, 'The Visual Art of Our Stories' with agency workers.