



Leaders unite to drive change



The eighth meeting of the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial Working Group was held on 14 March in Broome. Topics discussed were the WA Coroner's Report into suicide deaths in the Kimberley and activities happening as part of the Trial.

The meeting was chaired by the Hon Ken Wyatt, Minister for Indigenous Health (Commonwealth) and attended by the Hon Roger Cook, Deputy Premier and Minister for Health (WA State Government), Senator the Hon Patrick Dodson (Commonwealth), and Member for the Kimberley, the Hon Josie Farrer MLC (WA State Government). Apologies were received from the Hon Ben Wyatt, Minister for Indigenous Affairs (WA State Government).

The meeting was also attended by over 40 representatives from communities, organisations and government agencies.

Key messages arising from the discussion included:

- Governments are listening to Aboriginal people to help communities stop suicide.
- Everyone will keep working together. There are community liaison officers working in Kimberley communities to develop projects like on-country camps, art competitions and language resources.
- The need to continue to make sure everyone knows what services are available was agreed. This means doctors, health workers and the community liaison officers will know where to get the best help for people who need it – and that those services are culturally safe.
- The need to help people with their wellbeing and not just mental health issues was highlighted.
- Community organisations are keen to work with the State and Commonwealth Governments on solutions that address the recommendations of the WA Coroner's Inquest Report, the Message Stick Report and all other reports.

The full communique is available on Minister Wyatt's online media hub at <https://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2019-wyatt047.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2019&mth=03>.



Eight community action plans approved

The recent approval of the Fitzroy Crossing project, *Mibbinbah* or *Be the Best You Can Be*, brings the total number of approved community action plans to eight. The program, also known as *Mad Bastards*, will see men come together in a healing and awareness program based on a film of the same name, which explores critical themes relevant to men's mental health, identity, family and cultural connections.

The activity will be closely integrated with the existing Men's Outreach Service and will target men in the Fitzroy Valley, focusing on men associated with the Ngurrara Rangers.

Benefits include strengthening and empowering men to help themselves and others, increasing awareness of men's role as fathers and caregivers, reducing violence (including family violence), dealing with issues of connection and identity and encouraging participants to become trained in this program and help deliver it to other men in the Fitzroy Valley.

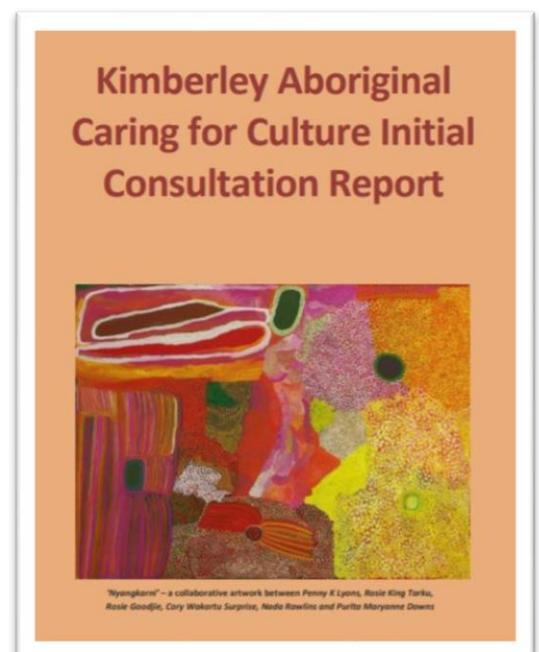
Caring for Culture Report

Following consultations with 61 Aboriginal organisations across the Kimberley, the Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Initial Consultation Report presents a number of preliminary observations and recommendations, including the two activities believed to have the best fit within the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial's mandate.

The *Wirnan Project* will see five Kimberley Art Centres continue a successful regional collaboration focused on promoting and sharing the diversity and richness of Aboriginal art, language and identity of the Kimberley region. The aim is to revitalise cultural connections and creative intersections between communities, ensuring the vitality of Kimberley cultures and the preservation of cultural knowledge and identity for future generations.

The second project is the development of a culturally-based project measurement and evaluation framework, which can then be applied to the Wirnan Project. Both projects have recently received in principle approval to proceed as part of the Trial.

The final Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Plan is due for release in June 2019. You can read the report on KALACC's website at <http://kalacc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Kimberley-Aboriginal-Caring-for-Culture-Consultation-Report.pdf>.





Young Aboriginal leaders driving change in the Kimberley

An Empowered Young Leaders forum was held in Broome in March aiming to change the story for young Aboriginal people in the region and increase their uptake of mental health and social and emotional wellbeing services.

The forum is part of the Empowered Young Leaders Project which was identified in response to the significant rates of Aboriginal youth suicide in the region, as part of the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial.



During the three-day forum, a series of guest speakers, workshops and skills development sessions took place, with about 25 young people attending.

Project coordinator, Jacob Smith, said he was hopeful that, as a result of this forum, more young people will feel empowered and comfortable to talk about their mental health and get help, if they need to.

“Just as importantly, they will be able to take away tools and techniques they can use for themselves and as youth leaders in their own communities,” Jacob said. Read the full story on WA Primary Health Alliance’s website at <https://www.wapha.org.au/young-aboriginal-leaders-driving-change-in-the-kimberley/>.

Yiriman Women to lead strong cultural practices



Bidyadanga Aboriginal Community has been selected alongside the Yiriman Women’s Project as a trial site for a traditional healers’ model. The project will involve the design and implementation of traditional healing modalities to complement and work alongside western approaches to treating mental health issues.

It will support the development of more practical, culturally relevant and community-led practice that will support individuals presenting with social and emotional wellbeing concerns. It will also help to build the evidence base for the role of traditional healers as part of a holistic approach to treatment.

Bidyadanga community members during an earlier consultation