

2019 Kimberley Empowered Young Leaders Forums

2019

Report

Broome: Thursday, 28th March

Kununurra: Thursday, 16th May

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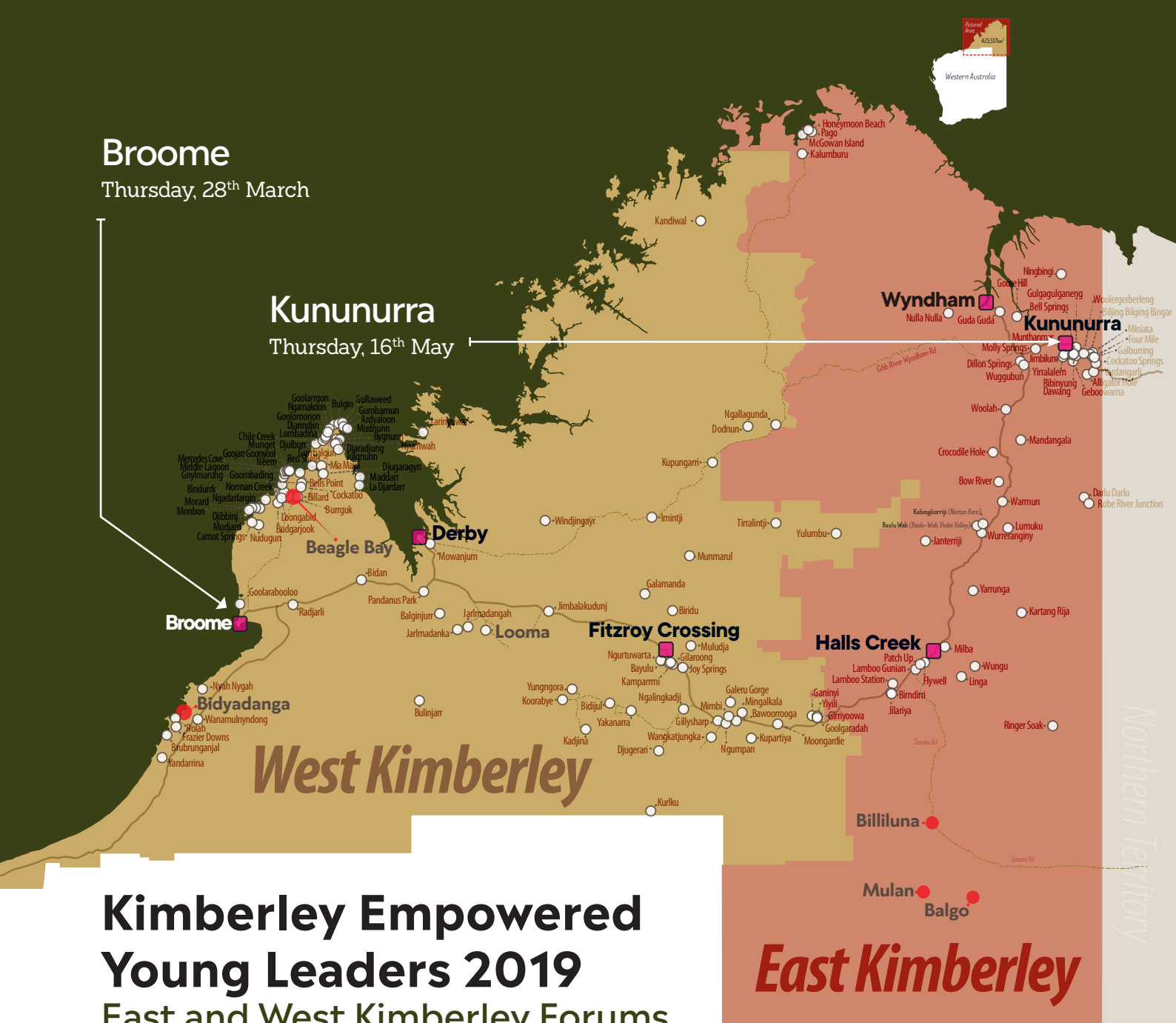
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Broome

Thursday, 28th March

Kununurra

Thursday, 16th May



Kimberley Empowered Young Leaders 2019 East and West Kimberley Forums

In 2017 Aarnja Ltd as the Empowered Communities backbone for the West Kimberley, held a youth suicide prevention forum – run by Kimberley Aboriginal young people for Kimberley Aboriginal young people.

The work undertaken by this group of emerging young leaders produced a report to the Commonwealth outlining the views and recommendations of Kimberley young people, including the nomination of youth representatives elected to drive the work forward.

The report was presented to the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial Working Group where it was agreed that separate follow up forums would be held in the West and East Kimberley. In addition, the young people engaged through these follow up forums would form part of an ongoing Kimberley Aboriginal youth peer to peer network.

This Empowered Young Leaders (EYL) project report is a summary of the two forums and includes recommended actions identified by young emerging Kimberley Aboriginal leaders.

The forums were made possible with support from the following organisations:



EYL FORUM *overview*

The Empowered Young Leaders project exists in response to the significant rates of Aboriginal youth suicide in the Kimberley region. The main objective of holding the two forums in Broome and Kununurra was to build the skills, responsibility, confidence and capacity in young people. The youth who attended the 2017 Aarnja forum wanted a follow up forum and they didn't want to have a talk fest, they wanted action, including real recommendations to amplify their voice.

Elected front-line representative Jacob Smith was one of four facilitators of the first forum recently held at Notre Dame, Broome, 26th-28th March 2019. Jacob along with Soleil White, Scott Wilson and Cherie Sibosado co-facilitated the forum attended by 25 local Broome, Beagle Bay, One Arm Point, Djarindjin and Derby young people.

This was then replicated in the second forum which was held at the Kimberley Grand, in Kununurra from 14th -16th of May 2019.



"We wanted real recommendations to come out of the Forum, to amplify our voice" - Jacob Smith

Facilitated by Kara Farrell, Scott Wilson, Jacob Smith and Natasha Short, the second forum was attended by 17 young people from Kununurra, Halls Creek, Wyndham, Kulumburu, Fitzroy and Warmun. Over the three days, these dynamic groups achieved outcomes that far exceeded their own expectations.

The key facilitators of the Forums were young people, who immersed their fellow young attendees, in team building and role playing activities and extensive empowered leadership sessions. They were inspired by key note speakers, in the West Kimberley we had Soleil White and Pablo Lane and in the East Kimberley we had Darrylin Gordon. Panel discussions included Pepita Wilson, Scott Wilson, Liam Bedford, Carolyn McAdam and Senator Patrick Dodson. The forums delivered a strong focus on self-care and the resilience of young people in the Kimberley, and also contributed to the building of the trial sites' overall social media campaign.

The group was also one of the first to receive the "Alive and Kicking goals" Life Promotion program. Broome based "Alive and kicking goals" ran their workshops over the three days, launching their Life Promotion program which has been six years in the making. Being one of the first groups to trial the Life Promotion program meant the Forum participants had an input into how "Alive and Kicking Goals" will deliver the program to other young people around the Kimberley in the future. A team of local young people presenting at the forum to local young people was a great opportunity and emphasised the strength of young people conducting peer to peer mentoring.

Co-facilitator Scott Wilson, a Gooniyandi and Gajerrong man originally from Broome and currently living in Sydney as an entrepreneur and facilitator, brought his renowned energy, motivation and strong facilitation skills to the Forums with activities including the "Ball of life"; a blow up beach ball with words describing what the Empowered Young Leaders want to achieve in life written on the ball.

They juggled the ball of life in a big circle, quickly realising it went all over the place and they couldn't keep the "Ball of Life" up too long



Scott's awesome facilitating skills quickly lifted the mood and got everyone in the zone and contributed to the Forum that is constantly referred to as an "amazing three days".

from a distance; until Scott brought them in closer, showing if they come together and tap the ball slowly and be as one then they can keep the ball up – highlighting the positives of working together and teamwork.

So as to not 'drop the ball' after the forum, 10 recommendations were developed and formally documented by the interactive groups, to ensure the Empowered Young Leaders consistently move forward.

Facilitators for the West Kimberley Cherie Sibosado and East Kimberley Natasha Short coordinated the development of recommendations, which the group found most exciting, especially when they achieved strong recommendations in such a short time frame.

Led by Cherie and Natasha, the Empowered Young Leaders split into groups and brainstormed all the issues that they face as young people in their community, then prioritised them and came up with possible solutions and together they developed 7 priorities and 28 strong recommendations.

The most powerful outcome of the Empowered Young Leaders Forum was the development of the Collective Impact Statement.

Formalised behind the scenes during the West Kimberley forum by Cherie Sibosado, this outcome was almost unforeseen. The result, however, is a powerful statement written and signed by Empowered Young Leaders of the West Kimberley and endorsed by Empowered Young Leaders of the East Kimberley.

2019 Kimberley Young Leaders

Collective Impact Statement

“

On behalf of our families and communities, We, the next generation of Kimberley Leaders and descendants of First Nations people from across the region, gathered on Yawuru, and Miriuwung and Gajerrng country to attend the Empowered Young Leaders Forums held in 2019. As a result of these Forums, we now present this document as Our Collective Impact Statement to amplify our voices and assure our place in leading change to address youth suicide in our region.

We have lost too many loved ones to suicide. Through our own lived experience, we bear witness, to the heavy burden our families and communities endure in grappling with the never ending cycle of grief and loss. We no longer accept the normalisation of suicide. We no longer choose to be disempowered by the issues that continue to impact on us as a result of intergenerational trauma. The lives of our children and grandchildren are in our hands.

As Empowered Young Leaders, we commit to lead and action positive change to improve our future and the future of our next generations; and, in doing so, we acknowledge and accept our inherent obligation being passed onto us.

We represent a Generation of Change and Action. We accept this responsibility on behalf of our families and communities. The path laid before us by our Elders and Leaders past and present, has enabled us to become Actionist who walk proudly as Empowered Young Leaders in Two Worlds.

We stand together in solidarity, to ensure We Are Included; Our Voices Are Heard and We Are supported and given opportunities to Lead and take Action on behalf of the West Kimberley Young People.

With passion and determination, we seek your support to walk alongside us as we pave a new way forward into our future.

”

In hope, strength and solidarity.

Empowered Young Leaders Forum Delegates

Broome. Thursday, 28th March 2019

Kununurra. Thursday 16th May 2019

Recommendations

The following recommendations form the list of actions for the Kimberley Empowered Young Leaders project to consistently move forward.



Priority 1:

Youth Informed, Place Based, Indigenous lead Collective Impact Initiatives.

Rationale

Youth delegates identified the need to increase the participation and involvement of young Aboriginal people to co-design and lead place based suicide prevention/intervention initiatives underpinned by a collective impact approach within communities, service providers and key agencies.

Discussion

Youth delegates discussed the gap in consultation and the lack of direct inclusion of young Aboriginal people in the co-designing and service delivery of youth programs and services across the West Kimberley region, especially in remote towns and communities outside of Broome.

Youth delegates also discussed the need to build up the confidence of young people in communities and identified that there is limited information sharing between services and communities

- 1.1** Allocate funding for resources and support to assist young Aboriginal people establish and sustain Local Aboriginal Youth Action Committees (LAYAC) in each town and/or community across the West Kimberley region.
- 1.2** Allocate funding for training and development as identified by the LAYAC to increase their capacity to lead, govern and self-manage their core business.
- 1.3** Key community stakeholders in the youth services sector to acknowledge, recognise, consult and work in partnership with the appropriate LAYAC to advise and direct the implementation of youth suicide prevention/intervention and response programs and services within the West Kimberley region.
- 1.4** Allocate funding for future forums in the East and West Kimberley so that more remote communities can be included.

Priority 2:

Holistic & Life Long Education

Rationale

Youth delegates identified the central role education has in a person's whole life journey, especially increasing knowledge and awareness of early intervention, prevention and response strategies for at risk behaviours associated with suicide and self-harm.

Discussion

Youth delegates discussed:

1. The lack of culturally and age appropriate education programs, resources and materials for young people to inform them of social & emotional health and wellbeing, self-care, crisis response and support services, especially in remote communities.
2. The need for early intervention and prevention programs to be accessible through multiple avenues.
3. The effectiveness of education and awareness programs to assist with early intervention, prevention and response strategies to suicide and self-harming behaviours.
4. The effectiveness of young people as natural supporters and educators to their peers and family members, especially when they are adequately equipped and have access to age and culturally secure information, resources and support networks.

Recommendations

- 2.1 Increase funding, resources and access to formal and informal training and development opportunities to build the capability and ongoing upskilling of young Aboriginal people across the West Kimberley region to enable them to become natural supporters to their peers or family members presenting with at risk behaviours such as suicide ideation and/ or self-harm.
- 2.2 Increase funding, resources and access to information related to suicide and self-harm, self-care and social, emotional health & wellbeing that is age and culturally appropriate for young people in a local context.
- 2.3 Embed SEWB education programs into the school curriculum; and ensure teaching staff are adequately trained to deliver content/ information within their lesson program.
- 2.4 Engage more young Aboriginal people in the co-designing and implementation of youth suicide prevention programs and/or health promotions initiatives.
- 2.5 Increase positive media coverage, advertising and campaigns, including education/health promotion apps on social media.

Priority 3:

Accountability of service providers & agencies

Rationale

Youth delegates identified the urgent need for service providers and agencies to work more collaboratively to enhance the successful delivery of services and programs to young people, especially when a young person is seeking support due to at risk behaviour, such as suicidal ideation or self-harm.

The delegates also identified the need for service providers and agencies to be transparent and accountable to the community in all aspects of their respective services/programs, especially with a change, restructure, transfer or cessation of a service, program or staffing.

Discussion

Youth delegates discussed the central role service providers and agencies have in the service provision and response to youth suicide, self-harm and grief and loss within their communities.

They expressed their frustration at the lack of a coordinated response and due diligence by service providers and agencies to support a young person gain access to the correct support when presenting with at risk behaviour.

Youth delegates identified the urgent need for service providers and agencies to reduce the duplication and silo servicing that occurs within their communities, as it is a significant systemic issue that deters young people from seeking and accessing intervention/prevention support when at risk of self harm and suicide ideation.

Recommendations

- 3.1** Service providers and agencies to work collaboratively together when engaging and providing a service or program with and/or for young Aboriginal people across the West Kimberley region..
- 3.2** Service providers and agencies uphold and maintain a transparent and accountable service when working with young Aboriginal people across the West Kimberley region.
- 3.3** Service providers and agencies adopt practices and systems to streamline access to support services to ensure holistic support is being provided when an at risk young Aboriginal person and/or community is seeking support.
- 3.4** Increase the support between organisations when working collaboratively on joint initiatives.

Priority 4:

Community services & planning (youth services & programs)

Rationale

Youth delegates identified the need for young people to be included in all forms of consultation and planning associated with servicing the needs of local Aboriginal young people in the West Kimberley region.

Discussion

Youth delegates discussed the underrepresentation and exclusion of young people in consultation and planning processes associated with designing and implementing youth services and/or programs. They also identified the lack of local content, the maintenance of culturally safe practice, age appropriate services (especially for minors); and, employment and training of local Aboriginal people.

Recommendations

- 4.1** Ensure all youth programs, services and initiatives are adequately promoted through media readily accessible by youth, to strengthen their awareness and knowledge of how, who and where to access support and training, where applicable.
- 4.2** All SEWB resources and/or material (including promotional) to be age appropriate and contain localised content/language.
- 4.3** Key community stakeholders in the youth services sector increase the involvement of young Aboriginal people in consultation processes when planning and developing youth services or programs to ensure young Aboriginal people have the opportunity to co-design youth based initiatives being delivered across the West Kimberley region.
- 4.4** Key community stakeholders in the youth services sector involve young Aboriginal people when undertaking program reviews to ensure the opportunity to co-design youth based initiatives are being maintained across the West Kimberley region.
- 4.5** Key community stakeholders in the youth services sector to provide reports to the community, especially young Aboriginal people ensure accountability and transparency of services are being maintained across the West Kimberley region.

Priority 5:

Services for youth

Rationale

Youth delegates identified the need to increase funding and resources to improve the provision of adequate age appropriate services for young Aboriginal people across the West Kimberley region, especially with early intervention, prevention and diversion support services and programs.

Discussion

Youth delegates discussed the inadequate and inconsistent provision of youth services and programs across the West Kimberley region, especially the lack of accessible and age appropriate afterhours services for young Aboriginal people who are at higher risk during these times. They also expressed their frustration at lack of local training and employment opportunities for local Aboriginal people, especially young people, in the youth services sector; and the lack of cultural and community connection mainstream services had with local Aboriginal families and communities across the region.

Recommendations

- 5.1** Increase funding for local youth response services to provide afterhours crisis support to at risk youth.
- 5.2** Increase funding to for 24/7 Safe Houses, Alcohol & Substance Rehabilitation Centres and Mental Health Unit for youth across the West Kimberley region.
- 5.3** Increase funding to train and employ local Aboriginal people within the youth services sector across the West Kimberley region, especially in crisis response and support.
- 5.4** Increase funding for youth empowerment and Social, Emotional Health and Wellbeing programs, especially cultural and on country programs, activities and outings.
- 5.5** Increase funding for education and research on the adverse impact of intergenerational trauma on Aboriginal families in the West Kimberley region.

Priority 6:

Re-Establishing Cultural Structures

Rationale

Youth delegates identified the need to increase funding, resources and support to reconnect young Aboriginal people to their culture, country and heritage across the West Kimberley region.

Discussion

Youth delegates discussed the generational gap and the breakdown of traditional cultural structures and practices within families and communities across the West Kimberley region; and, the adverse impact of western society. They also recognised the multiple social issues being experienced by young Aboriginal people such as anti-social behaviour, youth crime, family violence and alcohol and substance misuse.

Recommendations

- 6.1** Embed local Aboriginal culture into the school curriculum and ensure teaching staff complete cultural immersion training.
- 6.2** Increase funding and support for on country and cultural camps, activities and education and mentor programs.
- 6.3** Embed local Aboriginal culture into family empowerment and Social, Emotional Health & Wellbeing programs and support services.
- 6.4** Ensure youth services and programs are culturally inclusive and safe for local Aboriginal youth to access.
- 6.5** Increase engagement of community Elders to provide cultural advice and support.



West Kimberley
Recommendations

Priority 7:

Intergenerational Trauma

Rationale

Youth delegates identified the need to increase funding, resources and programs for youth specific healing, education and family support programs and services to redress the adverse impact and lived experience of intergenerational trauma in young Aboriginal people across the West Kimberley region.

Discussion

Youth delegates discussed the lack of culturally secure and age appropriate healing and education services and programs for young Aboriginal people across the West Kimberley region. They also identified the adverse impact of normalisation directly associated with trauma, suicide and grief and loss. Youth delegates expressed their frustration with the compounding and ongoing cycle of oppression, disadvantage and hopelessness.

Recommendations

- 7.1** Embed healing and Social, Emotional Health & Wellbeing programs into the school curriculum.
- 7.2** Increase funding and support for on country healing and recovery camps, activities and support programs.
- 7.3** Embed healing and recovery into family empowerment and Social, Emotional Health & Wellbeing programs and support services.
- 7.4** Increase funding for healing and recovery youth facilities across the West Kimberley region, including youth counsellors.



The Empowered Young Leaders Forums provided a huge opportunity, an indigenous voice, producing strong recommendations and statements. The Forums were not just talk and activities, the Forums achieved everything the group had planned for and more.

The Collective Impact Statement wasn't in the sights of the Empowered Young Leaders when they embarked on the first Forum in the West Kimberley. The group wanted to present back to the Ministers who have invested in the project. They intended to present recommendations, but they ended up with more, and along with a strongly documented direction, the Empowered Young Leaders also proudly present the Kimberley Empowered Young Leaders Collective Impact Statement.

