

November 2005



KULUNGA'S VISION

"A society where there is sustained **improvement** in the **health** and wellbeing of **Aboriginal children** and families through implementation of the findings of **high quality** child and maternal health **research** initiated, controlled and conducted by Aboriginal people"

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About Kulunga

The Kulunga Research Network is the Institute's Indigenous research arm.

It was established in 1999 as a joint initiative between the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and the WA Aboriginal community (through WA Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, now known as the Aboriginal Health Council of WA).

The aim of Kulunga is to build capacity in Aboriginal research. A team of Aboriginal researchers and staff oversee the Aboriginal child and maternal health research programs of the Institute.

Kulunga aspires to a model of research and practice that is of the highest value in bringing the ideas and experiences of Aboriginal communities and the research expertise of Aboriginal people together in a world class, multi-disciplinary research setting. Our firm belief is that improvements to the lives of Aboriginal children through sustainable, community owned research effort will have far-reaching impacts on the lives of our families and future generations.

Kulunga Logo

Kulunga is a Nyoongar word for "children's".

'The design represents a joyful child, nurtured by the land and the family. The heart shape represents the love surrounding the child and the nurturing, the child emerging as if a beautiful flower. The wavy line could be thought of as the life course of the child, as she/he moves to adulthood, the open petals symbolising the flexibility of the young child's personality.'

Design is by artist Peter Cameron.

FRONT COVER

Photo taken at Kulunga Patron Launch

Top left to right: Malati Angus, Taya Parfitt,

Troy Cook, Tré Jackman, Ashley Parfitt

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Newsletter produced by the
Kulunga Research Network of the
Telethon Institute for Child Health Research

Stronger ties with Aboriginal training body

Aboriginal Health Worker students at Perth-based Marr Mooditj Aboriginal Health College recently enjoyed a morning at the Institute where they learned about some of the Institute's research and findings.

Students attended a lecture on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people in WA as part of the child health block of their course.

The relationship between the two organisations is set to strengthen, with Marr Mooditj requesting Kulunga provide similar lectures to its two student intakes in 2006.

Kulunga's Rani Param said this was a great opportunity for the Institute to see its research findings taken up in health worker curriculum, and ultimately into clinical practice.

"This is an exciting venture for Kulunga and the Institute, and we look forward to working closely with Marr Mooditj to develop a more structured program for students around Aboriginal child health and early years," she said.

The next rounds of students are expected in May and July next year, so stay tuned for more information.

Kulunga welcomes Troy on board



Above: Kulunga's Manager Colleen Hayward with Troy Cook, receiving his plaque.

On Thursday 8th December 2005, the Institute welcomed Troy Cook as the new Patron for the Kulunga Research Network.

Troy takes over the patronage of Kulunga from Professor Lowitja O'Donoghue and Cathy Freeman.

On considering the new patron, Kulunga's Manager, Colleen Hayward said "We knew that we wanted someone who is strong of character, well regarded in the community and would be able to help Kulunga take our important messages to the community."

"We were thrilled when Troy accepted our invitation to become Patron of Kulunga"

"The absolute bonus for us is that Troy has expressed a strong desire to be involved, especially where that involvement includes community interactions," Colleen said.

"To be asked to become Patron of such a fantastic initiative as Kulunga is a great honour," Troy said.

"I am really looking forward to helping Kulunga get the key messages out to the communities throughout the state."

Troy was presented with a plaque to mark the occasion and commences his role in the new year.



Above: Troy Cook and Institute Director, Professor Fiona Stanley with baby Tyreece Mogridge.

New Kulunga Team Members Profiles



Jason Barrow
Coordinator
Indigenous Capacity
Building Grant

Jason was recently recruited from the WA Department of Conservation and Land

Management (CALM), where he was the Education Coordinator for the Swan Coastal District.

He has an extensive background and first hand working knowledge of the principles and practices of Cultural and Environmental Tourism practices at work in the protection and conservation of our natural estates here in WA. During his time with CALM, Jason has overseen and managed several major natural resource destinations including Yanchep National Park and Penguin Island.

Jason is a Noongar man with extensive family ties throughout the south-west of WA.



Tracey-Lee Edwards
Communications Officer

Tracey-Lee was recently recruited from the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services

(FACS) and was previously the WA Information Officer with the Aboriginal and Torres Islander Commission (ATSIC).

She has an extensive public relations and event management background, predominately in Indigenous Affairs and has been involved with the delivery of public information campaigns such as NAIDOC Week.

Tracey-Lee's family are from Bourke and surrounding areas in NSW, but was born and raised in Perth.

Kulunga Project Updates

WA ABORIGINAL CHILD HEALTH SURVEY

The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS) team have now completed regional visits for the Communication and Dissemination Strategy for Volume Two - *The Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Aboriginal Children & Young People*.

Staff presented research findings back to Aboriginal organisations, communities and government departments throughout Western Australian.

Towns visited included Kalgoorlie, South Hedland, Karratha, Narrogin, Perth, Katanning, Albany, Geraldton, Broome, Kununurra, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek.

An analysis and writing for Volume Three of the survey has almost been completed. This volume is titled, *Improving Educational experiences of Aboriginal Children & Young People* and is expected to be launched in March 2006.

The WAACHS team would like to thank participants who attended the WAACHS Volume Two presentations.

For more information on the survey or other resources including regional profiles, please go to this web link:

www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/waachs

ABORIGINAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICE

The Kulunga Research Network has been contracted by the Health Department of WA to seek feedback in relation to a proposed "Aboriginal Mental Health Support Service" model developed by the North Area Metropolitan Health Service.

The proposed model seeks to address some of the many difficulties and issues that arise in relation to Aboriginal people and the families accessing mainstream mental health services.

This consultancy and proposed model has arisen out of the Department's Western Australian Mental Health Strategy 2004-2007, with a Project Planning Group established to oversee the project until its conclusion in December 2005.

INDIGENOUS CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT

As the Indigenous Capacity Building Grant nears the end of its first year, all the Team Investigators are busily compiling their lists of achievements in readiness for the end of year report back to the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Planning is underway for the next workshop which will take place on the 6th to 8th February 2006. This workshop is set to be held at Yalgorup Eco Park, near Mandurah. A draft agenda is out for comment and will be finalised in January 2006

RIO TINTO CHILD HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

The Kulunga Research Network now has responsibility for managing the Rio Tinto Child Health Partnership project.

Kulunga Manager, Colleen Hayward has assumed the role of Partnership Manager, and leads a team comprising Rani Param as Coordinator of the Partnership, and Tracey-Lee Edwards as Communications Officer.

The next six to 12 months promise to be exciting times for the Partnership with many events on the horizon.

In May 2006, we will host a two day national symposium. See page five for more detail.

Partnership Leader Ted Wilkes and Partnership Manager Colleen Hayward will take to the road to visit the jurisdictions, in particular the project sites.

Further information on current research projects can be found on our website.

Innovative collaboration to host national symposium

The Rio Tinto Child Health Partnership, an innovative collaboration between Rio Tinto, Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation, Kulunga and the governments of Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory will host a two day national symposium at the Institute in May next year.

The symposium will showcase success stories in community-based programs that promote healthy pregnancy and fetal growth.

The symposium will link up community workers with researchers and policy makers to strengthen policy and practice in Indigenous early years.

A program of events and speakers is being finalised, and will be available shortly. Keep a look out in our next newsletter.



Above: A budding young researcher with Kulunga's Tracey-Lee Edwards at the State West Credit Society Telethon Kids Carnival.

Kulunga staff at Ministerial launch

Kulunga's Shardé Lee attended the recent launch of Data Linkage Australia by WA Science Minister, the Hon. Dr Judy Edwards MLA. Shardé joined UWA health science students and prominent health researchers at the launch, and took the opportunity to promote the WA Aboriginal Child Health Survey, one of Kulunga's flagship research projects.

Data Linkage Australia is a collaboration between the Institute, UWA, Curtin University and the WA Department of Health. Dr Edwards launched the collaboration by awarding it a prestigious WA Centres of Excellence grant over the next five years.



Above: Kulunga's Shardé Lee (centre) with Science Minister, the Hon. Dr Judy Edwards MLA and health researchers.

Telethon Weekend a huge success

As a major beneficiary of the Telethon weekend, we were thrilled to see that Telethon 2005 raised a record amount of \$3.017 million!

The Telethon Weekend was held over the 12th to 13th November 2005 at the Perth Convention Exhibition Centre.

A big thank you to all of the Western Australians that donated - your support of Telethon enables our important research to continue.

Kalgoorlie researcher receives Fiona Stanley Medal

Annette Stokes is a respected and much-loved senior woman of the Wongutha Tribe of the Eastern Goldfields.

She is a trained childhood education worker, a trained Aboriginal health worker and has been involved in many important health initiatives including the development of Nggunytju Tjitji Pirni Aboriginal Corporation and was a key member of the Institute's Otitis Media project, which is based in Kalgoorlie, .

It was therefore with no hesitation, that Professor Fiona Stanley chose Annette as the recipient of the 2005 Fiona Stanley Medal, which was established in 1999 to acknowledge those who have made an outstanding commitment to health and medical research.

"Annette is a valued member of the Telethon Institute and much of our research in the Goldfields region depends on the important cultural link Annette provides between the research team and members of her community," said Professor Stanley.

"As a senior Aboriginal woman, her standing in the community and the respect that the community has for her, was extended to the study team allowing our projects to succeed."

As part of the Otitis Media project team, Annette has presented some of the findings of the study locally, nationally and internationally, including in Amsterdam. She is currently involved in writing up the findings and ensuring they are culturally appropriate and acceptable to the Goldfields Aboriginal community.

Annette said she was able to get people involved in the studies knowing that they would help her people in the long run.

"We have a lot of ear health problems here in the Goldfields, and it's to help with treatment and prevention, and to get information out to people," she said.

Annette said she was surprised to receive the medal recently at the Ear Health Conference in Kalgoorlie.

For many years, Annette has played a critical role assisting with the cross-cultural education of medical students and Institute staff. She is a mentor and advisor to the Ninga Mia Christian Fellowship in Kalgoorlie and is also an artist, an accomplished musician and mother of three.

"Annette is always giving selflessly of her time, her skills, and her heart. She thoroughly deserves some recognition for all the work she does and I'm very pleased to present the Fiona Stanley Medal to her," Professor Stanley said.

Annette Stokes (right) examines Syretta's ear, with the help of Dr Deborah Lehmann.

Photo courtesy The Kalgoorlie Miner



NSW Aboriginal Health Research Conference

Partnerships for Aboriginal Health Research

Staff from the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research attended the NSW Aboriginal Health Research Conference: Partnerships for Aboriginal Health Research held in Sydney on the 18th to 19th October 2005.

The conference was an initiative of the Coalition for Research to Improve Aboriginal Health (CRIAHA).

CRIAHA is a collaboration between the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council (AHMRC) and The Sax Institute. CRIAHA develops programs in areas important to Aboriginal communities and builds capacity among Aboriginal health researchers.

Professor Fiona Stanley and Associate Professor Ted Wilkes were invited to be the guest keynote speakers at the Conference. The duo delivered a joint presentation titled, "A Decade of Aboriginal Health Research in Western Australia: The Highs and Lows".

This presentation focused on the history and development of the Telethon Institute for Child Health and the establishment of the Kulunga Research Network with a showcase of research projects.

Dr Deborah Lehman, Jacinta Johnston and Kylie Carville presented papers in the Otitis Media and other infectious diseases proffered session.

Jacinta Johnston presented on the swimming pool study looking at the impact swimming pools had on reducing the burden of ear and skin disease in remote communities and the impact they had on improved educational and social outcomes.

Dr Lehmann presented on Otitis Media in Kalgoorlie looking at Aboriginal perspectives on middle ear disease.

Former Institute student Kylie Carville presented on hospital admissions of Aboriginal children in their first two years of life from 1990-2000.

Kylie gave an insight into the overall admissions of children with a specific focus on the high number of child admissions for infectious diseases.

Daniel McAullay presented on the Bunbury Dental Health Project which was conducted in conjunction with the South West Aboriginal Medical Service and the Kulunga Research Network.

The presentation highlighted two main aspects of the research project-identifying the importance of dental health of children in the Bunbury district and the importance of building the capacity of Aboriginal researchers involved in the project.



Above: (Left-Right) Chris Lawrence, Daniel McAullay, Jacinta Johnson, Kylie Carville, Professor Fiona Stanley, Professor Sandra Eades and Paul Ishiguchi

The conference was a great opportunity for Aboriginal community members and researchers to showcase and share information and establish new collaborations with those who work in or have a specific interest in child health and chronic disease.

Farewell Jacinta

It is with sadness that we farewell one of our colleagues, Jacinta Johnson.

Jacinta (affectionally known as JJ) has been on staff at the Institute for seven years. JJ leaves us to finish her study and pursue opportunities in the community sector.

We'd like to thank JJ for her contribution to the Institute and Kulunga and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.



Flag Raising at the Institute

An Aboriginal Flag now flies proudly outside the Institute building after a ceremony held on Tuesday 25th October 2005.



Above: (left) Professor Fiona Stanley and Kulunga Manager, Colleen Hayward raising the flags, with staff member Gary Wilson looking on.

The Institute's Director, Professor Fiona Stanley and Kulunga's Manager, Associate Professor Colleen Hayward raised the Australian and Aboriginal flags together, to symbolise the strong community spirit of the Institute.

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enquire-kulunga@ichr.uwa.edu.au

National Indigenous Sports Carnival in Darwin

On the 25th to 27th October 2005, the Charles Perkins Indigenous Football and Netball carnival took place in Darwin, NT, with teams competing from all around Australia.

The carnival is an annual sporting event named after inspirational Aboriginal Leader Dr Charles Perkins. It was not only his recognition and contribution to the Aboriginal cause, but also his support of Indigenous youth sporting carnivals, that led this carnival to bear his name.

Kulunga's Tracey-Lee Edwards travelled as the Team Official for netball with a WA contingent, consisting of a football Team, two netball squads and an official party.

The WA teams competed well under the hot and humid Darwin conditions and finished 4th and 5th in the netball competition and 3rd in the football competition.

Kulunga's new website

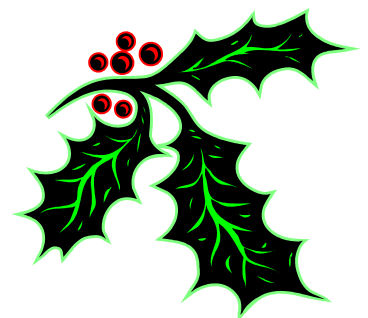
The Kulunga Research network now has a new website after being launched on the 2nd December 2005.

For further information such as current research projects, visit www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/kulunga

Christmas shut-down

The Kulunga Research Network will be closed from the 27th December 2005 to 6th January 2006.

We wish everyone a safe and happy festive season and a prosperous New Year.



*The Kulunga Research Network would like to thank our contributors:
Australian Government
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