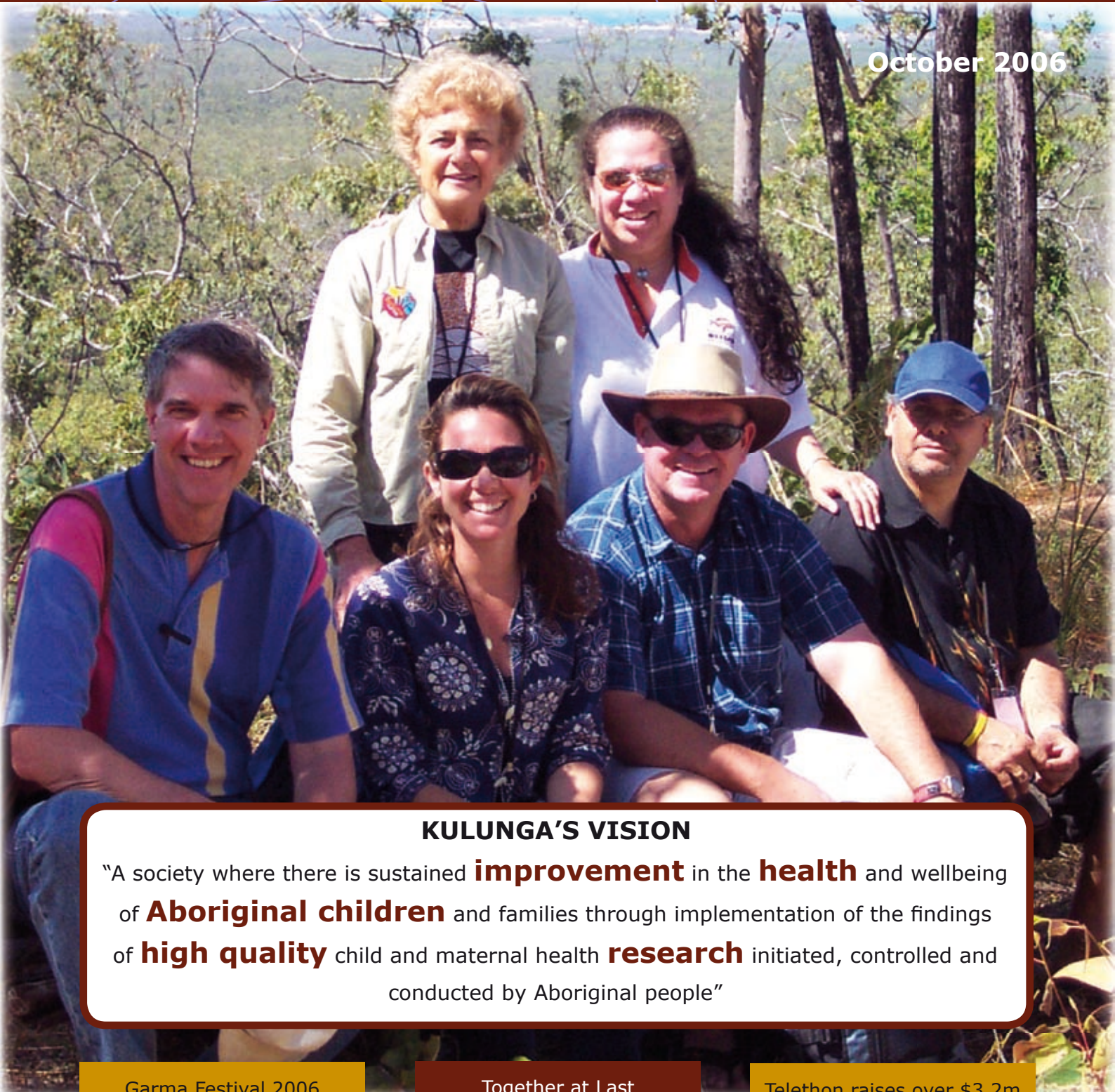


October 2006



## 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"

Garma Festival 2006  
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Telethon raises over \$3.2m  
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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 Noongar 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.' The design is by artist Peter Cameron.

## Kulunga Patron

The Kulunga Research Network Patron is Troy Cook from the Fremantle Football Club.

### FRONT COVER

Photo taken at Garma Festival 2006

Left to right - Front Row: Professor Steve Zubrick, Dr Clair Scrine, Jason Barrow and Glenn Pearson

Back Row: Professor Fiona Stanley and Associate Professor Colleen Hayward

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

## New Kulunga Team Member Profile



**Karina Aiberti**  
Research Assistant

Karina has recently joined Kulunga as a Research Assistant to support Indigenous Research through a program grant held by population sciences. She has worked at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research on several projects since 2004, including social inequalities in health, the Raine study, and developmental and intellectual disability.

After studying social anthropology and psychology Karina completed a Masters in Public Health through the School of Population Health at the University of Western Australia in 2005. Her dissertation considered health and safety in long day care childcare centres and in particular the role of child carers.

# Garma Festival 2006

Regarded as one of Australia's most significant Indigenous festivals, the Garma Festival attracts around 20 clan groups from north east Arnhem Land, as well as representatives from clan groups and neighbouring Indigenous peoples throughout Arnhem Land, the Northern Territory and Australia.

Garma implies many things for Yolngu (Aboriginal people of northeast Arnhem Land), as a practice and as a place. Garma happens when people with different ideas and values come together and negotiate knowledge in a respectful learning environment.

The Garma Festival is a celebration of the Yolngu cultural inheritance. The Garma ceremony is aimed at sharing knowledge and culture, and opening people's hearts to the message of the land at Gulkula. The site at Gulkula has profound meaning for Yolngu.

Kulunga staff attended the 8<sup>th</sup> Garma Festival which featured visual art, dance and music as well as other important cultural livelihood issues such as tourism, trade and craft, and was held from 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> August 2006.

A feature of this year's Garma Festival was the Key Forum on Indigenous Education and Training co-ordinated by Charles Darwin University on 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> August, with focus on past and present education policy and practice to examine ways to build non-Indigenous and Indigenous capacities to learn together, celebrating what works and how success can be adapted to other contexts.

The Telethon Institute for Child Health Research Director, Professor Fiona Stanley, was invited to speak as part of a workshop on 'Education beyond the school: Joined up thinking in health and education'.

Professor Stanley's presentation titled 'Lessons from the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey' focused on the findings from the third volume on *Improving the Educational Experiences of Aboriginal Children and Young People*, which highlighted the appalling state of Aboriginal child and maternal health and the links between education and health.

Professor Stanley said "There must be early intervention programs to close the gap in opportunities between black and white society."

Kulunga's Manager Colleen Hayward said the event represented an opportunity for cultural exchange, and commended the Yothu Yindi Foundation on its achievement in bringing together people from all over Australia to celebrate Yolgnu culture.



Above: Preparing for Bunggul



Above: Bunggul (ceremonial performance)



Above: Professor Steve Zubrick, Kulung's Colleen Hayward with Jackie Huggins from Reconciliation Australia, who is joining the Institute's Board.

Photos reproduced with permission from Yothu Yindi Foundation

# Rio Tinto Child Health Partnership meet in Darwin

In early October, members of Kulunga travelled to Darwin to coordinate and participate in the meeting of the Rio Tinto Child Health Partnership's National Advisory Committee (NAC). The meeting was especially productive with a number of proposals endorsed and a range of activities progressed.



Above: Some members of the Rio Tinto Child Health Partnership NAC in Darwin.

Of particular note is the Partnership's Travel Scholarships that will fund four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates to attend an International conference in 2007. (*See article below for more information.*)

The Committee also agreed to host another national symposium in Perth in 2007, following the success of **START OUT STRONG: A healthy beginning in life**, earlier this year. The focus of the '07' symposium will be addressing workforce development in Indigenous maternal and child health services with a particular focus on maternal tobacco use. More information on this will be available in early December 2006.

In addition to the NAC, Kulunga staff attended a meeting with members of the Communication team and the CEO of the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health in Darwin. Ideas that were discussed included the potential for the two organisations to assist researchers to engage media to advocate their work and research outcomes including the development of a media-training package designed specifically for the Aboriginal health sector.

Members of the Kulunga Team also met with representatives of the Department of Health and Community Services, NT to discuss possible ways in which Kulunga can progress the development of an Indigenous recruitment strategy within the Institute.

Whilst in Darwin, members of the Kulunga team took the opportunity to visit the 23rd Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait art award at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory which included outstanding pieces by local Noongar artists Shane Pickett and Lance Chadd.

## New Travel Scholarships on offer in 2007

The Rio Tinto Child Health Partnership is pleased to announce it will be offering travel scholarships in 2007. Each scholarship is designed to provide assistance with national/international air fares, living expenses and conference attendance fees to attend national or international meetings/conferences to progress their research and/or related work experience.

The aim of the scholarship is to increase knowledge and understanding of maternal alcohol and tobacco use and/or workforce development in maternal and child health, and to translate such information into practical outcomes in Australia. The scholarship will be open to all Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who are either:

- working in a relevant community based organisation;
- working towards a degree equivalent to a postgraduate qualification in the Health Sciences, Social Sciences or the Humanities; or
- have demonstrated research and/or work experience in Indigenous maternal and child health.

More information will be posted on the Kulunga website shortly: [www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/kulunga](http://www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/kulunga)

## Together at Last - ICBG Workshop

On the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> October 2006, the Indigenous Capacity Building Grant (ICBG) held its second workshop for the year at the fantastic Lakeside Country Resort in Bedfordale, WA.

During the course of the two days, some 40 people associated with the ICBG gathered to see each of the ten Team Investigators present on various aspects of their works.

It was the first time in the life of the ICBG that all ten of the Team Investigators had gathered together to showcase their excellence in each of their chosen domains. The gathered 'brains trust' in the audience, comprising various Lead Applicants for the ICBG, Supervisors, Mentors and other Aboriginal researchers provided greatly appreciated feedback and comments over the course of the workshop.

Whilst the workshop was a great celebration of people's works to date and the coming together of the whole team, it was also unfortunately Dr Helen Milroy's last ICBG presentation. Helen and her research assistant, Nola D'Antoine, will be leaving the ICBG at the end of the year and we wish both Helen and Nola every success for their future endeavours.

Kulunga would also like to acknowledge ICBG Coordinator Jason Barrow for all his efforts in organising such a productive and successful workshop.

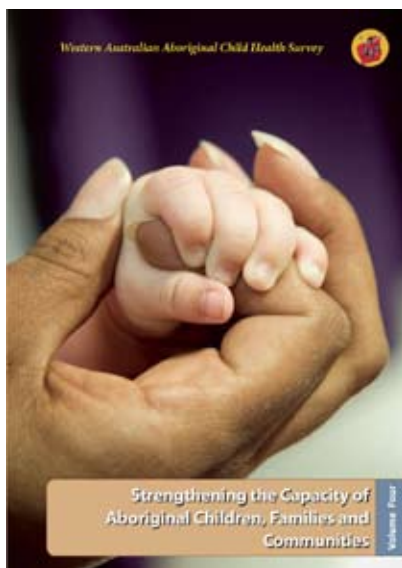


Above: ICBG's ten Indigenous Team Investigators at the workshop



Above: Dr Helen Milroy

## Next WAACHS Volume to be launched in November



Late November will see the launch of the next volume in the WA Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS). Volume Four is titled: ***Strengthening the Capacity of Aboriginal Children, Families and Communities.***

The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS) looked into the health, wellbeing and education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It was a very large survey, involving more than 5000 Aboriginal children, aged 0 to 17 years.

It was carried out by the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and the Kulunga Research Network between 2000 and 2002.

The aim of the survey was to collect information which would help plan ways to improve the health, wellbeing, education and work opportunities of Aboriginal children.

Information on WAACHS can be found at [www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/waachs](http://www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/waachs)

# Statesman to help drive vision to increase Aboriginal opportunity in Western Australia

The former Western Australian Governor, Lieutenant General John Sanderson, has been appointed to assist the Carpenter Government in identifying long-term strategies to strengthen the participation of Aboriginal people in the State's development.

On September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006, Premier Alan Carpenter announced Lt-Gen Sanderson would use his wealth of experience to help build the resilience and sustainability of communities and the ability of Aboriginal people to participate in WA's social and economic progress.

"Lieutenant General Sanderson will work with Aboriginal communities, Government departments, the business sector and non-Government agencies to identify strategic areas for action that will address the priority needs of Aboriginal families," Mr Carpenter said.

"He will travel the State meeting Aboriginal people and building partnerships which will take advantage of programs that have worked, help foster new approaches and identify areas of need, so resources can be used more effectively.

"He will also help develop a training and leadership program to bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders together to sustain action across government and out in the communities."

Lt-Gen Sanderson's dynamic role would also aim to build greater appreciation of the importance of Aboriginal culture to Australia's long-term development.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Sheila McHale said she shared the frustration of many Aboriginal people about those factors which continued to lead to the breakdown in the social and economic fabric of communities.

"This unique opportunity is about helping Aboriginal people to take greater control of their own destiny and build a more optimistic and inclusive future for all Western Australians," Ms McHale said.

Lt-Gen Sanderson said he welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of the lives and opportunity of Aboriginal people.

"There are many positive initiatives across the State and much goodwill in the community that needs to be focussed," he said.

"The time is ripe to harness the desire of many individuals and organisations to make a difference.

"I have a passionate belief in the potential of our State to make a powerful contribution to the future of this nation and the region around us.

"But we cannot do that unless we build a creative future for all our people - one that gives every child hope and opportunity."

Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia (ALSWA) CEO Dennis Eggington said he welcomed any initiative that addressed the social disadvantage associated with the denial of human rights experienced by indigenous people in this State.

"We hope this process will play a significant role in eliminating obstacles against Aboriginal people who are locked out of power and privilege," Mr Eggington said.

"ALSWA research has already identified a number of strategies in legal areas, and I hope very much we can work on these strategies together."

Ms McHale said Lt-Gen Sanderson had had a highly distinguished career as a military commander, engineer, United Nations peace builder in Cambodia, and as State Governor.

"The Carpenter Government is fortunate to have secured the services of such a highly regarded and high-calibre statesman for this role," she said.

"He has embraced the role and is fully supportive of the Carpenter Government's commitment to indigenous communities."



Above: Dennis Eggington, Sheila McHale, Alan Carpenter, Colleen Hayward, Lt-Gen John Sanderson at the announcement function

# Alcohol and Pregnancy Project Update

The Alcohol and Pregnancy Project aims to develop 'best practice' health promotion material for health professionals to use when advising women on alcohol use and its effects during pregnancy.

The Project is based on previous research which identified the need to provide health professionals with information on advising women about alcohol use in pregnancy and about the diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

The consequences of alcohol use in pregnancy may include physical, mental, behavioural, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong effects. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome represents a specific range of abnormalities which may result from alcohol use in pregnancy.

Our research found that most health professionals do not enquire about or provide women with information on the consequences of alcohol use during pregnancy, and most reported their need for resources such as written material for themselves and for distribution to clients.

Consultation with the community and health professionals and the collection of information and materials about alcohol use in pregnancy are key components of the Alcohol and Pregnancy Project. Since the Alcohol and Pregnancy Project commenced in January, our Aboriginal Community Reference Group and a Consumer and Community Reference Group have met several times. These groups offer a valuable perspective and have provided important input into several areas of the project.

Qualitative data has been collected through interviews and focus groups with a range of health professionals and women in the metropolitan area, the Kimberley and the Goldfields. The aim of this data collection has been to explore the experiences of health professionals in communicating about alcohol use in pregnancy and its effects, and gain insight into what materials may further support their knowledge and advice. In speaking with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women, the project has sought to explore issues relating to the communication on alcohol use during pregnancy and its effects on the unborn child.

The findings from these interviews and focus groups will inform the production of evidence-based health promotion material for health professionals and for health professionals to give to women to supplement their advice. In the coming months, these materials will be pre-tested as we seek feedback from a range of health professionals and women in the community.

The Alcohol and Pregnancy Project has been made possible by funding from Healthway and is a collaboration between researchers at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Edith Cowan University, Curtin University of Technology, University of Sydney and the WA Department of Health.

## Kulunga Team meet the US Ambassador



Above: US Consul General Robin McClellan and US Ambassador Robert D McCallum Jr

On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2006, the Kulunga team were invited to the Consulate of the United States - Perth, to meet with US Ambassador Robert D McCallum, Jr and Perth Consul General Robin McClellan.

The meeting was an exciting opportunity to provide the Ambassador with his first briefing on a range of issues within Indigenous Affairs, but more specifically health issues that face the Indigenous population in Western Australia.

The Ambassador was particularly interested in the findings of the three volumes of the WA Aboriginal Child Health Survey.

It was the Ambassador's first briefing on Indigenous Australia and he expressed a keen desire to learn and understand more about the many issues faced by and the cultural practices of Aboriginal people.

## Dinner at Parliament House

On the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2006, members of the Kulunga team were invited to have dinner at Parliament House with the Hon. Shelley Archer MLC.

It was an opportunity for the team to meet and discuss issues related to Ms Archer's work as the Member for Mining and Pastoral Region, as well as highlight some of the work that Kulunga is undertaking within her electorate.



Above: Kulunga Team with Hon Shelley Archer MP (centre) at Parliament House

## Telethon raises over \$3.2million in 2006

Telethon is one of Western Australia's most loved children's charities. Since its inception in 1968, Telethon has raised over \$70 million for children and young people throughout the State.

As a major beneficiary of the Telethon weekend, we were thrilled to see that Telethon 2006 raised a record amount of \$3,217,437. This year's tally surpassed the 2005 total by approximately \$200,000!

The Telethon Weekend was held over the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2006 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.



Above: Kulunga's Tracey-Lee with Ashlee, aged 9, at the TICHR stall

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## New Kulunga Fact Sheets



Above: Sample fact sheet for the Rio Tinto Child Health Partnership

By the end of the year, Kulunga will be releasing a series of facts sheets that will highlight each of its current research projects.

These facts sheets will assist in informing community, organisations and government of the important work that the Kulunga Research Network undertakes.

The facts sheets will soon be available electronically on the Kulunga website.

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

**Australian Government  
Department of Health and Ageing  
WA Department of Health  
Child Health Research Foundation**