

December 2008



## 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 and non-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 "child".

'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, life member of the Fremantle Football Club.

### FRONT COVER

Photo taken at the Kulunga Corporate Function on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Pictured: Kulunga Team with Patron Troy Cook

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## Message from the Manager

Welcome to next edition of commUNITY and my last one as Kulunga Manager.

Some of you will know that I am soon to commence a new appointment at Edith Cowan University as Head of the Kurongkurl Katitjin Centre – home of the Indigenous HealthInfoNet – providing increased opportunities to expand horizons beyond – but still including Health – to Education as well.

When I started at Kulunga 4 years ago, we had one soon-to-conclude contract, no money and very few staff. It has been variously exciting, scary and frustrating in growing Kulunga to what it has become – mostly, though, it's been fun and immensely rewarding.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our business partners, many of whom are now friends who have been part of this journey. I hope to collaborate with the Institute and to keep working in some way with the outstanding Kulunga team and with you all.

I like to think of life as an adventure – and believe the paths of good people will continue to cross – especially in Western Australia. On that basis, I thank you for your role in the journey so far and I look forward to the next steps I know we'll take together in our collective work progressing the life circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here and across the country – as well as even more broadly.



Colleen W.

This newsletter is produced by the Kulunga Research Network of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research

# New Beginnings: Kulunga Research Network

On Friday 12 December 2008, the Kulunga Research Network hosted its second corporate event titled 'New Beginnings'.

The event reflected the next steps of the exciting journey of Kulunga's growth and reputation, particularly as we are now regarded as one of the principal Aboriginal research organisations in Australia.

It was also an opportunity to acknowledge and thank our partners and supporters for their ongoing commitment in assisting our work to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal children, families and communities across Western Australia.

Situated in a marquee at Matilda Bay, overlooking the Swan River, Mr Shaun Nannup performed an powerful Welcome to Country.

Another major highlight of the day was the didgeridoo and dance displays by Mr Brendon Clinch and his dance group, of which guests were invited to participate.

Guests were given mini banksia plants to represent our theme new beginnings.

Overall, the day was an outstanding success and most enjoyable for both staff and guests.

Kulunga would like to acknowledge the students of 'Kartajin Danjoo' - Challis Early Childhood Education Centre for the decorations especially hand made for our function.



*Above: Male guests participating in the dance activity*



*Above: Its the ladies turn at the dancing*



*Above: Kulunga christmas tree*



*Above: Boys of the dance group*



*Above: Audience of the dance performance*

## Christmas and New Year Shut Down

The Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and the Kulunga Research Network will be closing down for the festive season between the 24 December 2008 and 2 January 2009. We will be open for business again on the 5 January 2009.

Whilst there will be some staff on annual leave throughout January, there will be staff available for any queries or business arising during his time.

We take this opportunity to wish you and your families a happy and safe Christmas and best wishes for 2009. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



# Appointment of Head, Kurongkurl Katitjin at ECU

Edith Cowan University (ECU) has appointed current Kulunga Manager, Professor Colleen Hayward, as head of the University's Kurongkurl Katitjin Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research.

Professor Hayward has extensive experience in community, education, research and policy work. She is an accomplished teacher, researcher and manager in community, education and government sectors and has worked as Manager of the Kulunga Research Network within the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research for the past 4 years.

Professor Hayward's experience includes senior management roles with ATSIC in three states, and in the legal, health and education fields. She has held memberships of many boards and committees in each of these areas and currently is Deputy Chair, Aboriginal Advisory Committee to the Centre of Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University and a member of the Leadership WA Board.

Professor Hayward joins ECU in February 2009.

The Kulunga team congratulates Professor Hayward on her new position at ECU and wishes her all the best. In addition, we acknowledge and sincerely thank Colleen for her strong leadership, passion and commitment in building our team to better work in improving the health outcomes for Aboriginal children and families.

## Goodbye and Good luck

In addition to the Kulunga Manager, a few Kulunga staff are also off on new adventures of their own.

Marita Smith (pictured top right) will take up further study in Melbourne to complete a Master of Social Work at the University of Melbourne. She hopes to stay linked in with the work that Kulunga is doing in the future



Carrington (pictured bottom right) will be undertaking a PhD research project in 2009. His research interests remain in the area of Indigenous health and wellbeing, and he will be exploring some of the social determinants of the health of Indigenous children with the aim of enabling a better understanding of the key predictors of poor physical and mental health among Indigenous children.



He was recently awarded a prestigious Sidney Myer Health Scholarship to support this venture over the next 3 years.

We'd like to thank Marita and Carrington for their contribution to Kulunga and wish them both well in their future endeavours.

## More baby Kulungas in the team

Kulunga is pleased to announce the arrival of two more new Kulungas.

Kulunga's Patron Troy Cook and partner Tamara welcomed Xavier Brett Cook into the world on 7 November 2008.

Most recently, Juliette Grace Barrow (pictured right) was born on the 23 November 2008 to Kulunga's Jason Barrow and wife Claire.



Both Kulungas are doing well and so are the very proud parents.

# World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education

The World Indigenous Peoples Conference: Education (WIPC:E) is a triennial conference of international significance that attracts peoples from around the globe to celebrate and share diverse cultures, traditions and knowledge with a focus on world Indigenous education.

The purpose of WIPC:E is to provide a forum to come together, share and learn and promote best practice in Indigenous education policies, programs and practice.

Held on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation, Melbourne from 7 - 11 December, WIPC:E 2008 was a celebration of diverse Indigenous cultures, traditions and knowledge.

Previous conferences have been held in New Zealand, Canada, Hawaii, New Mexico and the conference was last held in Australia in 1993.

The conference officially kicked off with a traditional Welcome to Country Ceremony, with a full day of cultural celebration.

After the traditional Welcome to Country by representatives of the Kulin Nation, the custodians of the Melbourne region, Indigenous groups and individual delegates from across the world had the opportunity to respond, either through speech, dance, song or other forms of cultural expression.

The conference on the days following, held at the Rod Laver Arena were based around the central theme: **Indigenous Education in the 21st Century - Respecting Tradition, Shaping the Future.**

The Kulunga Research Network were the official satchel sponsors for the event, which attracted over 3100 participants from all around the world. Communities from throughout Australia, New Zealand, the Americas, the Pacific, Asia, Africa and Northern Europe were represented at the Conference.

Kulunga' Manager Colleen Hayward was a Keynote speaker and also presented with Sue Ferguson-Hill and Gail Barrow on the Indigenous-Australian Early Development Index project.

WIPC:E 2011 will be held in Cusco, Peru, South America.

More information on WIPC:E 2008 can be found at [www.wipce2008.com](http://www.wipce2008.com)



*Above: Colleen during her keynote presentation*



*Above: Kulunga's Sue Ferguson-Hill presented on the I-AEDI project with Colleen Hayward and Gail Barrow*



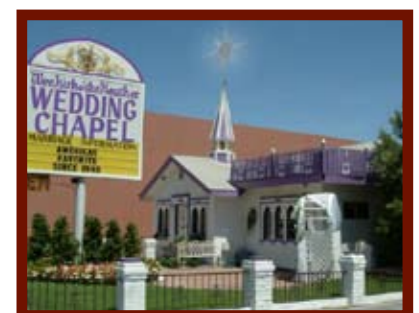
*Above: Kulunga's Sue Ferguson-Hill, Colleen Hayward and Gail Barrow in front of the I-AEDI conference poster at WIPC:E*

## Kulunga team member ties the knot in Vegas

Kulunga's Terry Boyle surprised everyone when he married his partner Alexis Rockett in Las Vegas. Terry and his partner Alexis tied the knot at the Wee Kirk O' the Heather chapel (pictured right) on 25 November 2008.

Aside from eloping in Vegas, they enjoyed some time in Vancouver and Tokyo.

Congratulations Terry and Alexis on your wonderful news and all the best for your future together.



# Strong Foundations, Sustainable Futures

A new partnership between the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, through the Kulunga Research Network and Rio Tinto is now in full swing.

Building on the success of a previous five year Aboriginal maternal and child health partnership, *the Rio Tinto Aboriginal Health Partnership: Strong Foundations, Sustainable Futures* responds to a call from Aboriginal community health workers for greater training, development and support opportunities in the area of maternal and child health.

Based on research and community consultation in the Pilbara, Kimberley and Kwinana, this two year project will provide practical tools and activities to help close the gap in Aboriginal health outcomes.



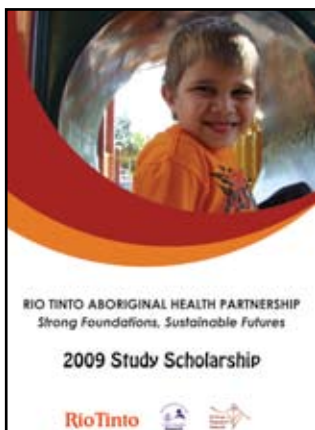
*Above: Project Booklet*

Overall, this Partnership aims to:

- Further build the capacity of Aboriginal Health Workers, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and the Aboriginal community to bring about improvements in the area of Aboriginal maternal and child health;
- Provide professional development opportunities for Aboriginal community health workers;
- Assist WA Aboriginal community based health organisations to work towards sustainability; and
- Develop an evidence base on the effects of targeted capacity building on Indigenous workforce development.

Initial consultations have already commenced in the Pilbara, Kimberley and Kwinana, with further consultation to recommence in February 2009. More information on this project can be found at our website: [www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/kulunga](http://www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/kulunga)

## 2009 Rio Tinto Aboriginal Health Partnership Study Scholarships



*Above: Scholarship Application*

As part of the Rio Tinto Aboriginal Health Partnership, eight (8) scholarships will be offered of up to \$5,000 each for study commencing in 2009.

The 2009 Study Scholarships will provide Aboriginal Health Workers the opportunity for further study at Marr Mooditj Aboriginal Health College in Perth, or the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council, School of Health Studies in Broome, to undertake the **Diploma of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health care (Practice)**.

Scholarship funding will assist students with payment of course fees, uniform, related study expenses and some employment costs.

Three of the eight scholarships will be awarded to eligible applicants from regions participating in the Rio Tinto Aboriginal Health Partnership; the Pilbara, Kimberley and Kwinana.

For an application form or to find out about the Scholarship's terms and conditions, visit our website: [www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/kulunga](http://www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/kulunga) or contact Heather Monteiro on 08 9489 7760 or [heatherm@ichr.uwa.edu.au](mailto:heatherm@ichr.uwa.edu.au)

**Applications close 6 February 2009.**

## Telethon 2008 raises over 7.5 million

Telethon 2008 has broken last year's record total of \$6.5 million to raise over \$7.5 million.

The grand total was \$7,535,678.

Held over the weekend of 4 and 5 October 2008, the 26-hour broadcast featured Channel 7 personalities and entertainers including Vanessa Amorosi, Carl Riseley, Jessica Mauboy, David Campbell and American Idol finalist Michael Johns. Suburban shopping centres were also part of the action, with people swarming to Centro Galleria in Morley to meet Home and Away and All Saints stars and watch Amy Pearson perform her hit song Ready to Fly.

The fundraiser culminated in Chris Mainwaring Tribute Match at Subiaco Oval last night, which saw more than 25,000 people attend the showdown between the Eagles and Dockers legend teams, which featured Dean Kemp, Peter Sumich, Stephen O'Reilly and Shaun McManus.

Thanks to everyone who donated to the 2008 Telethon.

## Buddy Walk 2008

Buddy Walk was established in 1995 in the USA by the National Down Syndrome Society to celebrate Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October.

Buddy Walk has grown from 17 walks in 1995 to more than 260 in 2007 across the US and around the world. More than 1.5million people have taken part since 1995.

Buddy Walk - Australia is now a national event held in cities and towns across the country to raise the level of understanding and inclusion of people with Down syndrome in all aspects of social and family life.

On 12 October 2008, the Down Syndrome Association of WA hosted its own Buddy Walk from the Perth Bell Tower around the Swan River to Matilda Bay Reserve, which was then followed by a family fun day.

Kulunga's Tracey-Lee Edwards and her family took part in the Buddy Walk for her nephew raising \$500 in support of the Down Syndrome Association of WA. All monies raised go towards a range of programs and services to help make a difference for people with Down Syndrome and their families.



For more information about the Down Syndrome Association WA, please visit their website at: [www.dsawa.asn.au](http://www.dsawa.asn.au)

down syndrome WA

## Indigenous Student Leaders visit Kulunga

On the 29 October 2008, a group of Indigenous student leaders from St Brigid's College visited the Kulunga Research Network to get an insight into the Aboriginal research being undertaken within the Institute.

The students, many from regional towns in the Pilbara and Kimberley's, undertook a brief interactive tour of the Institute and then heard about some of Kulunga's current projects.

It was a great opportunity for students to meet some of the Kulunga staff and hear about some of the work being done towards improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and families.



*Above: St Brigid's students with Kulunga's Tracey-Lee Edwards*

# Colleen's Cambridge adventure concludes

The Postgraduate Certificate in Cross-Sector Partnership (PCCP) is considered the leading cross-sector partnering qualification. It has received significant international acclaim from all sectors – from previous participants and from their sponsoring organisations.

The mission of the Programme is to provide intellectual challenge and practical engagement for those who are leading their organisations, strategically or operationally, in the development of cross-sector partnerships anywhere in the world.

The PCCP is a demanding course, but one which brings considerable benefits to those who participate and to their supporting organisations. This Programme has a critical role to play in setting the benchmark for cross-sector partnership worldwide by exploring partnership theory and analysing good partnering practice.

Congratulations to Colleen on completing her studies and we look forward to hearing about your results in the New Year.

## The First Research Report: Communicating the findings to Aboriginal communities

The findings of *The First Research Report: Patterns and Trends in Mortality of WA Infants, Children and Young People* (Freemantle 2004) indicate that each year in Western Australia infants, children and young people (up to the age of 23 years) are dying from preventable deaths such as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and accident and injury at levels much higher than their non-Aboriginal peers.

The Kulunga Research Network (Kulunga) was approached by the Advisory Council on the Prevention of Deaths of Children and Young People' (ACPDCYP) to put forward a proposal to communicate the findings of The First Research Report, to the WA Aboriginal community.

This project involved the development of a culturally appropriate communication and dissemination strategy in order to disseminate the information from the Report, with the materials produced specifically targeting the Aboriginal community.

A series of fact sheets for service providers, Aboriginal community groups, families and individuals were developed in consultation with the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA) and specifically with Aboriginal Health Promotion Development Officers from across the state.

The fact sheets were then disseminated to the community through a series of workshops held by the Kulunga project team in Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Perth. The fact sheets are intended to be used as an evidence base for the development of resources and programs by communities to address the most critical issue/s in their own community. The overall response from the Aboriginal health services to the information presented in the facts sheets has been positive. The health services have also reported that this report has the potential to provide the support and direction for a number of health promotion and education initiatives.

Importantly, this project has provided the Aboriginal health professionals with the information to develop evidence based strategies and policies to address the unacceptable high rates of potentially preventable deaths occurring in Western Australian Aboriginal infants, children and young people.

A Second Research Report is planned for release in the second half of 2009. Currently, the review and classification of the deaths that have occurred between the years 2002 and 2006 are being finalised. The Second Research Report will extend the data reported in *The First Research Report* and build on the work that has been accomplished through *The First Research Report*.



Above: The folder of fact sheets

# Alcohol and Pregnancy Project Update

*The Alcohol and Pregnancy: Health Promotion for Health Professionals* project that was funded by Healthway will be completed at the end of 2008.

*The Health Professionals Making a Difference Resources* (a 38 page booklet, A4 fact sheet, wallet cards to give to women and desk-top calendar) were produced by synthesising existing material for health professionals and conducting formative research with health professionals and women. The resources were distributed to 3,507 health professionals (Aboriginal health workers, allied health professionals, community nurses, general practitioners, obstetricians and paediatricians) throughout Western Australia (WA) in April 2007. An evaluation questionnaire was mailed to a representative sample of 1,867 health professionals in October 2007.

*The Alcohol and Pregnancy: Health Promotion for Health Professionals* project has demonstrated the importance of sustaining the resources beyond the term of the project and making them available to health professionals throughout Australia. It is important to continue to raise health professionals' awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and have resources available that will impact on their knowledge, attitudes and practice in the prevention of prenatal exposure to alcohol and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. The resources can be viewed and downloaded at [www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/alcoholandpregnancy](http://www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/alcoholandpregnancy).

***The Alcohol and Pregnancy: Aboriginal women's, knowledge, attitudes and practice*** that also is funded by Healthway aimed to

- Describe the knowledge and attitudes of Aboriginal women living in the Kimberley and Goldfields regions in WA about alcohol use in pregnancy and its effects on the unborn child
- Gain insight into current practice of alcohol consumption during pregnancy for Aboriginal women
- Ascertain support for initiatives to provide women of childbearing age with information about the risks of alcohol consumption in pregnancy
- Identify the preferred modes of delivery of educational messages

We conducted seven focus groups (four in the Goldfields and three in the Kimberley) with 32 Aboriginal women. The preliminary results show that:

- Aboriginal women have sound knowledge of what is needed to have a healthy pregnancy.
- Not all Aboriginal women had heard of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, but they had some knowledge of the long-term affects on the child of drinking alcohol in pregnancy.
- Most of the women did not approve of women drinking alcohol in pregnancy, but some felt it was the women's choice.
- A number of reasons were given for why some Aboriginal women would drink in pregnancy which highlights the need for multiple strategies in addressing alcohol and pregnancy.

The results have been reported back to the Aboriginal community in both the Goldfields and the Kimberley region.

In 2009, we will commence research that we hope will support the development of effective communication and awareness raising within the community. The new project, ***Alcohol and Pregnancy: Health Promotion Messages that Work*** will run for two years and is funded by Healthway. It will develop and test messages about alcohol use in pregnancy suitable for a communication campaign. While the project will not get to the point where it will run a campaign, it is envisaged that the results will underpin the development of a future health promotion in the area.

*The Alcohol and Pregnancy Projects* thank all the women and health professionals who have participated in the projects.

## 2008 Deadly Award Winners Announced

Winners of the 14th annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander awards were announced at a spectacular star-studded ceremony held at the Sydney Opera House on Thursday, October 9, 2008.

A who's who of black Australia dazzled on the red carpet before joining hundreds of excited audience members in the Concert Hall for a celebration of Indigenous excellence in music, sport, entertainment and community achievement.

Hosted by AFI award-winning actor Luke Carroll, the Deadlys 2008 was an unforgettable night of entertainment featuring the angelic voice of internationally acclaimed singer/songwriter Gurrumul Yunupingu. Also wowing the crowds with their vocals were the captivating Jessica Mauboy and the glamorous Ursula Yovich, while the legendary Jimmy Little also showed Australia he's still got it with an impressive performance of his original hit, Royal Telephone.

But Deadlys night is all about the winners, and this year saw some of the most accomplished award winners yet seen on a Deadlys stage. The big winner across the music categories was folk singer Gurrumul Yunupingu. He won *Artist of the Year*, *Album of the Year* and *Single of the Year* for the song *History (I Was Born Blind)*.

Also of particular note was the winner of *Outstanding Achievement in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health*, Dr Noel Hayman of the Inala Indigenous Health Service in Queensland, recognised for his dedication and commitment to Indigenous Health in Queensland.

A full list of winners and more information about the Deadly Awards is available at: [www.vibe.com.au/deadlys](http://www.vibe.com.au/deadlys)



*Above: Kulunga's Tracey-Lee Edwards, Colleen Hayward and Jason Barrow styling up at the Deadlys.*

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## Survey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Men's Research Council

Following the success of a men's health gathering in Alice Springs in February 2008, another gathering is planned for February 2009 again in Alice Springs.

Leading up to this event the newly formed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council is conducting a survey to gauge how many Indigenous male researchers there are, what type of projects they are involved in, and how they can be better supported.

A copy of this survey has been circulated and can also be obtained by contacting:

Scott Winch on [scott.winch@menzies.edu.au](mailto:scott.winch@menzies.edu.au) or  
Jack Bulman on [jack.bulman@crcah.org.au](mailto:jack.bulman@crcah.org.au)

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