

October 2007



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"

Statement for Reconciliation
Page 3

Patron farewells footy
Page 9

Telethon raises \$6.5 m
Page 10

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 **Signing of Statement of Commitment during NAIDOC Week 2007**
Picture of Associate Professor Colleen Hayward, Professor Fiona Stanley and Bob Ginbey
Story on page 3

Message from the Manager

Welcome to the next edition of *commUNITY*.

I am very excited to be welcoming new staff members to the Kulunga family. It wasn't that long ago that Kulunga was a four person operation that has now flourished into a team of fourteen.

There is no shortage of work at the moment, so it has been important for Kulunga to grow and build capacity to meet these challenges and opportunities.

We are looking forward to continuing to build Kulunga as a leader in Aboriginal research to ensure that we continue to have a significant impact on improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.



Colleen W.

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

Making a commitment to Australian Reconciliation

NAIDOC Week 2007 was a huge success at the Institute with more staff across the Institute actively participating in a range of activities coordinated by the Kulunga Research Network.

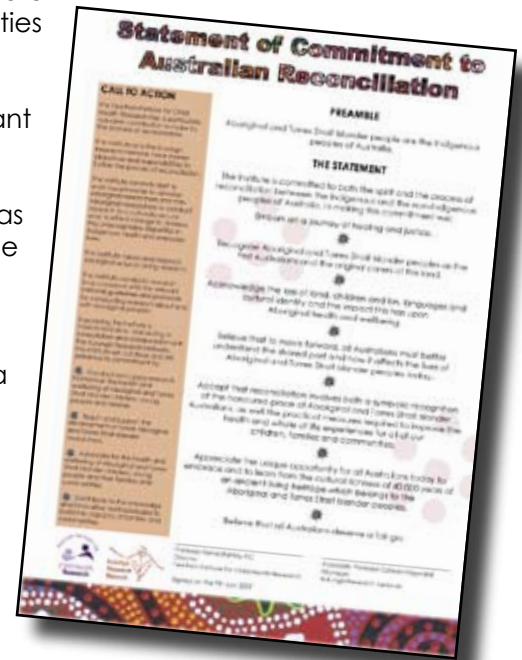
A major highlight to start the week was the signing of an important statement of commitment.

A Statement of Commitment to Australian Reconciliation was developed by the Institute to reflect the organisational support for the process of reconciliation between the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous peoples of Australia.

The Statement was signed by Director Fiona Stanley and Kulunga Manager Associate Professor Colleen Hayward on the 9 July 2007.

You can read the full Statement at:
www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/about/reconciliation.

2007 has been a significant year in Indigenous Affairs, commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Referendum and the 50th anniversary of NAIDOC.



NOTE: NAIDOC stands for the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee

Garma 2007 focuses on Indigenous Health

The Garma Festival is regarded as one of Australia's most significant Indigenous festivals. In recent times, it has also become an international event, with some visitors travelling all the way from New Zealand and Canada to attend. The festival is a focal point for activities of the Garma Cultural Studies Institute. An academic forum has been held at each Garma Festival since 1999.

These forums have covered a wide range of topics and have been attended by many highly regarded academics from Australia and beyond. These forums have aimed to develop the profile of the Garma Cultural Studies Institute, and to draw attention to some of the pressing issues faced by Yolngu and other Indigenous communities. Law, education, and natural and cultural resource management are a few of the forum topics that have been covered.

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 were given the opportunity to attend the festival, which was held on Friday 3 to Tuesday 7 August 2007, at the Garma Festival site at Gulkula, near Nhulunbuy in north-east Arnhem Land.

This year's Key Forum theme was **Indigenous Health: Real solutions for a chronic problem**.

Kulunga Manager Associate Professor Colleen Hayward was invited to speak on *Building cultural security into health delivery services*.

In her presentation, Colleen made specific reference to the outcomes of the 2007 Rio Tinto Child Health Partnership symposium, **ENHANCING INDIGENOUS CAPACITY: Building a Sustainable Future** held earlier in the year. Staff from the Institute and Kulunga who attended Garma, stood out by wearing the 2007 symposium t-shirts and hats.



Above: At the Garma Festival 2007

New Kulunga Team Members Profiles



Marita Smith
Research Assistant

Marita has recently completed a Bachelor of Behavioural Science, majoring in Politics from the University of Notre Dame.

Prior to joining Kulunga, Marita's role was as the Human Resources Officer at the Department for Planning and Infrastructure

Marita is particularly interested in learning more about Aboriginal people and their cultures and doing Indigenous research in the areas of employment, mental health and family functioning.



Sharon Clews
Research Assistant

Sharon has come back to live in Western Australia after four years in Melbourne.

Her background has been in Aboriginal community control working for the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) and mainstream community health as an Aboriginal Liaison and Access worker.

Her education background is Health Promotion and Public Health policy.

Sharon is a Wongatha woman and her mother's family are from the Goldfields in WA.



Elizabeth Cromie
Research Assistant

Elizabeth comes from a Nutrition and Health Promotion background, having finished her studies last year through Curtin University.

Since working at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research since October 2006, Elizabeth has been a Research Assistant on the Healthy Neighbourhoods and Roots of Empathy project, the Western Australian Pregnancy Cohort (Raine) Study and now works in Kulunga on the I-AEDI project.

Elizabeth has a keen interest in Indigenous health and culture, which stems from living in Darwin in 2004 while on sabbatical from her studies. On returning to Perth to continue her education, this interest was expanded to include Indigenous cultures from around the globe, through her study in units such as International Health and Nutrition for Developing Countries.

By working for Kulunga, she hopes to develop her skills in conducting research that is culturally appropriate, and to contribute to the health and well-being of Australian Indigenous communities.

Kulunga welcomes new Steering Committee Chair



Recently, Kulunga won the support of Dennis Eggington, when he agreed to become the Chairperson of the Kulunga Research Network Steering Committee.

Kulunga's research agenda will be overseen by the Steering Committee, which will be made up of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members from the community, government and relevant health related organisations, both state and national.

The Kulunga Steering Committee will be available to assist with, support and advise on work beyond Kulunga's research agenda. This is one of the ways Kulunga supports the broader work of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research.

Membership of the Kulunga Steering Committee is currently being reviewed and more information about their role and its members will soon be available.

Mr Eggington is the Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia (Inc), a role that he has held since 1995. A Noongar man, Mr Eggington brings a wealth of experience to ALSWA gained through his widespread involvement with a number of Aboriginal organisations and government departments throughout his working life. He is known throughout Australia for his work within the justice system and is proud to be part of such an important organisation which advocates for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

With a background in education, management and community development, he holds a Diploma of Teaching (Armidale NSW 1976), a Bachelor of Applied Science (Curtin University of Technology WA 1991) and is currently completing his Masters in Human Rights at Curtin University.

Having held numerous executive positions on community based and controlled Aboriginal organisations, Mr Eggington also represents ALSWA on a number of committees including the National Aboriginal Justice Council and the nation's Aboriginal Legal Services. Mr Eggington maintains strong links with his community and country. He is a proud family man who has two sons, a daughter and three grandchildren. He and his wife Louella also spend as much time as possible maintaining links with Louella's family in Bourke NSW.

Kulunga is looking forward to formally starting work with Dennis and the rest of the Steering Committee in the new year.

Kulunga Manager a finalist in Telstra Awards



Above: Colleen Hayward with IBM WA State Manager Bill Stewart

Congratulations to Colleen on this wonderful achievement. You continue to inspire us everyday.

On the 16th October 2007, Kulunga Manager Colleen Hayward was celebrated as a finalist of the Telstra Business Women's Awards in the WA IBM Community & Government category.

Now in its 13th year, the Telstra Business Women's Awards recognises and rewards the ingenuity and innovation of Australia's most outstanding business women. With each passing year, the Awards have grown considerably in both size and stature, and the logo represents a symbol of personal and business excellence.



Alcohol and Pregnancy Project Update

The Alcohol and Pregnancy Project at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research aims to support Western Australian health professionals' knowledge and advice to women through the provision of evidence-based health promotion resources about alcohol use in pregnancy.

The Project is based on previous research which identified the need to provide health professionals in Western Australia (WA) 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 involving abnormal facial appearance, central nervous system abnormality or dysfunction, growth retardation and confirmed alcohol exposure in pregnancy.

Our research found that most health professionals in WA 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.

In order to provide these resources, health promotion material for health professionals have been produced through consultation with the community and health professionals.

The resources, Alcohol and Pregnancy: Health Professionals Making a Difference include a 38 page booklet, an A4 fact-sheet, a box of wallet cards for health professionals to hand to women, and a desk calendar. These were distributed to over 3500 Western Australian health professionals in April 2007.

The resources can be viewed and downloaded at www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/alcoholandpregnancy

Following the distribution of resources, a Symposium and a series of Westlink satellite broadcasts titled Health Professionals Making a Difference: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Alcohol and Substance Use in Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding were conducted in July, August and September 2007. State and national experts provided health professionals with information about alcohol use in pregnancy, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and the role that health professionals play in supporting women and providing them with information about the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy.

In October 2007, health professionals in WA will be surveyed to determine if the provision of evidence-based health promotion resources has supported their knowledge and practice around the issue of alcohol and pregnancy.

The Alcohol and Pregnancy Project has been made possible by funding from Healthway. The Symposium and Westlink satellite broadcasts were supported by the Statewide Policy and Planning Directorate, Child and Adolescent Health Service.

National Think Tank on Indigenous Education

Kulunga and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) co-hosted a National Indigenous Education Think Tank on September 27, at Canberra's Old Parliament House. The Think Tank brought together a select group of twenty participants with the aim of developing an agreement for action in the priority area of improving educational opportunities for Indigenous children.

Associate Professor Colleen Hayward facilitated the day. Kulunga staff also prepared a focusing document, titled "An Overview of Issues, Policies and the Evidence Base", as pre-reading for the Think Tank participants.

The Think Tank provided an opportunity to focus on the sharing of knowledge, wisdom and practical experience across sectors and boundaries to address the educational disadvantage experienced by Indigenous children.

The Think Tank report and the focusing document will soon be available on the ARACY website at: www.aracy.org.au. The report will be used to develop a future plan of action.

Strong Women, Strong Babies, Strong Culture

This evaluation project undertaken by Dr Clair Scrine and Mr Daniel McAullay sought to measure the effectiveness and impact of the Strong Women, Strong Babies, Strong Culture (SWSBSC) program in different sites across the Pilbara, and to identify opportunities to enhance the provision of the program.

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analysed to determine to what extent and how the program has impacted on the health status of pregnant Indigenous women and the ensuing impact of this on a number of neonatal health outcomes. The evaluation also sought to investigate the antenatal, postnatal and child health care experiences of those women linked to the program.

The SWSBSC program supports pregnant Indigenous women to have healthy babies and currently operates in the North West of Western Australia including Derby, the Fitzroy Valley and in three sites across the Pilbara. The SWSBSC program is a major initiative within **St John of God Healthcare's Aboriginal Health Strategy** and is consistent with the organization's heritage of providing services to those most in need.

The SWSBSC program focuses on five key areas of maternal, fetal and infant health:

- Improved nutrition during pregnancy through diet (including bush tucker) exercise and hygiene;
- Targeting potential dangers to pregnant women and the foetus – poor weight gain, alcohol and tobacco use, diabetes, injury;
- Prevention and protection of mothers against these potential dangers through individual and community action using traditional values and customs combined with western clinical-based medical knowledge;
- Sharing of information between Aboriginal women and community health nurses;
- Sharing of knowledge from senior women of the community to younger women, especially teenage girls, so that the community can care for mothers of future generations.

The research involved the investigators travelling to the sites of Hedland, Roebourne and Yandeyarra to speak with program participants, providers and relevant stakeholders to understand and document the different experiences of accessing and providing the SWSBSC program. The evaluation of each site also enabled the different needs and circumstances within each community to be incorporated into the assessment of the effectiveness or otherwise of aspects of the program and the different periods of time that program initiatives have been underway.

Evidence shows that among Aboriginal women there is often a lot of resistance to seeking antenatal care especially in the first trimester, with many women having fewer episodes of antenatal care or presenting very late in the pregnancy.

The SWSBSC program is working to break down these barriers and to ensure that women understand the importance of the first trimester and other issues related to a healthy pregnancy including the impact of alcohol and tobacco consumption.

Overall, the evaluation found that the strengths of the SWSBSC program include its sense of control, community-based service delivery approach, provision of a welcoming, flexible and safe environment facilitated by staff with a focus on communication, relationship building, development of trust and respect. The continuity of care and commitment of staff involved in the delivery of the program is significant and working to ensure widespread support for the program.

New report on Australian Indigenous Health

A new report titled: **Australian Indigenous Health: Within an International Context**, considers published peer reviewed and government accounts of health outcomes for Aboriginal people over the past decade, with a focus on Aboriginal people from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America.

The Aboriginal populations of these countries share many commonalities, including an appalling health status despite living in countries who boast first class health systems.

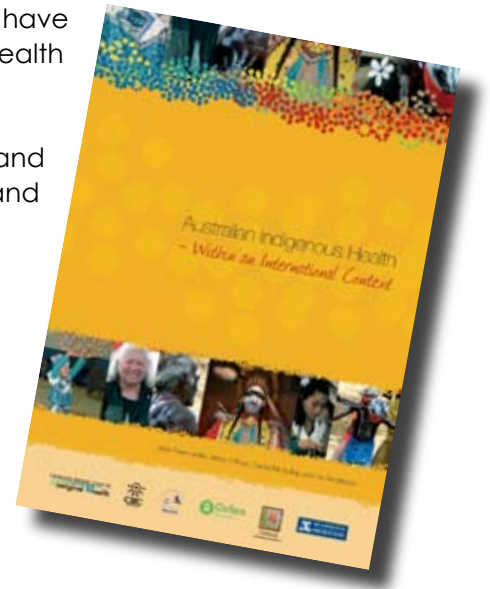
The report also highlights a number of successful initiatives that have demonstrated significant and sustainable improvement in the health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

This major report was auspiced by the Kulunga Research Network and authored by Dr Jane Freemantle, Daniel McAullay, Kirsty Officer and Professor Ian Anderson.

The report is available in electronic form on the Kulunga website at www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/kulunga/resources/publications.

Should you require additional copies or have any further enquiries regarding this report, please don't hesitate to contact us at:

Email: enquire-kulunga@ichr.uwa.edu.au or
Phone: 08 9489 7777



Job aspirations for young people in the Kimberley

Kulunga was engaged by the Wunan Foundation Inc., to engage with Indigenous young people in the East Kimberley region to identify their aspirations, motivators, barriers and overall views toward employment, both locally and out of the region.

This project was a result of the Wunan Foundation identifying the need for urgent action to increase sustainable employment outcomes to address high rates of unemployment among young Indigenous people across the East Kimberley - despite the long-term employment opportunities across a wide range of local industries.

The aim of the research project was to understand why Indigenous young people experience difficulties in accessing employment.

The Project Team (Dr Roz Walker, Mr Carrington Shepherd & Dr Clair Scrine) undertook extensive consultations in the communities of Kununurra, Halls Creek, Warmun, Wyndham and Kalbarbaru which provided an invaluable source of qualitative data on the views and experiences of many young Indigenous people.

Among its many findings and recommendations, the project found that many factors impact on Indigenous young people's job aspirations and attitudes to employment and training such as cultural and family pressures, low self-esteem, the welfare system, low-level academic outcomes and racism.

It also identified a need for Indigenous young people to be presented with employment and training opportunities that accommodate their many and diverse interests, including cultural and land based activities, and enable them to meet their obligations to family and community.

Kulunga Patron says farewell to footy



On the 24th August this year, Troy Cook announced that season 2007 will be his last in the AFL.

Originally from WAFL club Perth, an outstanding 1996 season saw Cook finish second in the Sandover Medal that year and make the move to the Sydney Swans,

drafted in the 1996 draft at Selection 27. He made his AFL debut in Round 3 1997 against Melbourne at the SCG and went on to play 43 games for Sydney before returning back to WA at the end of the 1999 season to join Fremantle. He received a Rising Star nomination in 1997.

He made his debut for Fremantle in round 1 against Geelong at Subiaco Oval in 2000 and played 150 games for the club. He won the club's Best and Fairest, the Doig Medal, in 2000 in a stellar debut season for Fremantle and in 2005 he received the Best Clubman Award. A noted hard-man around the contests, Troy was the club's leading tackler in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2005, finishing in the top 10 in the AFL for tackles on three occasions (2000, 2002 and 2003).

Fremantle Chief Executive Officer Cameron Schwab paid tribute to Troy saying that he has given everything he could possibly give each and every time he took the field. "Troy set an example every time he took the field," Mr Schwab said.

"He has made the most of his capabilities to etch out a (193-game career...) and he should be proud of what he has achieved over his 11 year career. "He

has put his body on the line at every opportunity and has become a crowd favourite as everyone admired the way he continually was hard at the ball, at times showing no regard for his own safety.

"Troy has been a great person for our club and I am sure that he will approach his post football career with the same fierce determination to succeed as he showed on the football field. "He has so much to offer," Mr Schwab said.

Troy has been an outstanding representative of the club both on and off the field, making an outstanding contribution to the Western Australian community. Troy has given selflessly of his time to assist numerous school, Indigenous and charity organisations. He is a fantastic contributor to the club's Community Development Programme assisting junior football clubs and schools. Troy also works with AFL SportsReady as a Field Officer, a position he has occupied for more than five years. His work with Indigenous youth through SportsReady has been outstanding. In addition, Troy also assists Indigenous youth at the Clontarf Academy on an as-needs basis.

Troy was an Ambassador for the Cerebral Palsy Association of WA in 2005. In 2006 he took on a role as an Ambassador for Be Active WA as well as with the Department of Indigenous Affairs PALS Project (Partnership, Acceptance, Learning and Sharing). Since 2005, Troy has been the Patron of the Kulunga Research Network and will continue this important role into the future.

Kulunga is very excited to be working more closely with Troy and congratulates him on his fantastic career and wishes him well in all his future endeavours outside football.

New look Kulunga and WAACHS websites

In late July, the new look Kulunga (example to the right) and WAACHS web sites went live. These web sites have been redesigned and updated to coincide with the Institute's overhaul of the main web site. These sites are designed to be more user friendly, with easy navigation and more graphics and images.

The Kulunga web site address is: www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/kulunga

The WAACHS web site address is: www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/waachs



Kulunga Chair awarded prestigious medal

Dennis Eggington, Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia (ALSWA) and Chair of Kulunga's Steering Committee, has been honoured for his tireless work and leadership in the Aboriginal Community.

One of two recipients awarded this year's prestigious 'John Curtin Medal', Mr Eggington received his award at a presentation held on Tuesday, 9 October 2007 at the Curtin University of Technology in Bentley.

The 'John Curtin Medal' is awarded to people who have made a significant contribution to their chosen field and displayed the qualities of vision, leadership and community service.

In accepting his Award, Mr Eggington compared the journey of working in Aboriginal Affairs to a roller coaster ride, "with pride and fulfilment at the end of the day, and the depths of despair the next".

"This is tough work. remaining compassionate in striving for a better quality of life for our people, that is no easy task. But there are also times when you recognise that you would not want anything else. Nothing else is as worthwhile".

With a long history of striving for a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples Mr Eggington, a Noongar man, is highly regarded and widely respected for his work.

For a more detailed background of Dennis, please see story on page 5.

Kulunga congratulates Dennis on this outstanding achievement.

Kulunga Research Network

100 Roberts Road
SUBIACO WA 6008

PO Box 855
WEST PERTH WA 6872

T 08 9489 7777
F 08 9489 7700

www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/kulunga

If you would like to subscribe to our newsletter or to obtain further information, please contact us on:

enquire-kulunga@ichr.uwa.edu.au

\$6.5 million for Telethon

Celebrating its 40th year, Telethon is one of the world's longest running and most successful television fundraising events with the money raised supporting children's medical research as well as funding the purchase of new medical equipment.

This year's Telethon Weekend, held on the 13th -14th October 2007 at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, raised a record breaking \$6,527,576 for the sick children of Western Australia.

A surprise announcement by Seven Network's Executive Chairman Kerry Stokes saw a grant of \$1 million dollars from his company, Australian Capital Equity, going towards Kulunga's Aboriginal research and Environmental child health research at the Institute.

Some members of the Kulunga team volunteered over the weekend at the Telethon Home Building Society Kids Carnival and in the Sunday Times Telethon Phone Room.

A big thank you to all of the Western Australians who donated and supported Telethon 2007.

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