



**Commissioner for Children and Young People**  
Western Australia

## **Summary Report from Aboriginal Forum**

**23 August 2018**

**Perth**

**Published 2 October 2018**

## **Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People WA acknowledges the unique culture and heritage of our Aboriginal peoples and the contributions Aboriginal peoples have made and continue to make to Western Australian society. For the purposes of this publication, the term 'Aboriginal' is intended to encompass Western Australia's diverse cultures and identities of the First Peoples of Western Australia and also recognises those of Torres Strait Islander descent who call Western Australia home.

### **Suggested citation**

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### **Partners**

The forum was part of a wider program of events coordinated by the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA in 2018. These events, called the *Vulnerability Speaker Series*, focused on vulnerable children and young people in WA and was proudly supported by Rio Tinto.



*Rio Tinto is proud supporter of the Vulnerability Speaker Series.*

### **Alternative formats**

On request, large print or alternative format copies of this report can be obtained from the Commissioner for Children and Young People at:

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## Purpose of the Aboriginal forum

The Commissioner's Aboriginal forum was held on 23 August 2018 at The RISE, in Maylands. It was a closed-session, one-day forum to provide an opportunity to actively involve Aboriginal leaders in workshop discussions about creating Aboriginal-led solutions in WA to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people.

The current trends in poor outcomes among the most vulnerable children and young people in WA, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, highlights a systematic failure to meet their needs and calls for an urgent need for things to be done better so all children and young people in WA can achieve their potential.

By hosting this event the Commissioner aimed to support the empowerment of Aboriginal people and ensure Aboriginal voices and Aboriginal-led solutions are heard and become a standard way of working in WA to better support the wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people.

The forum was part of a wider program of events held during 2018 focused on vulnerable children and young people, called the *Vulnerability Speaker Series*. Previous events held earlier this year were:

- A March seminar and executive roundtable "*Understanding vulnerability in children and young people*"
- A May seminar and executive roundtable "*Role of government in responding to vulnerable children and young people*".

The key question explored at the Aboriginal Forum was:

***What needs to happen to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people in WA?***



## Who attended the forum

Seventy-two people participated in the Forum. The Forum was facilitated by two young Aboriginal leaders: Krista Dunstan, a Nyoongar woman; and Rhys Paddick, a Budimia/Yamatji man.

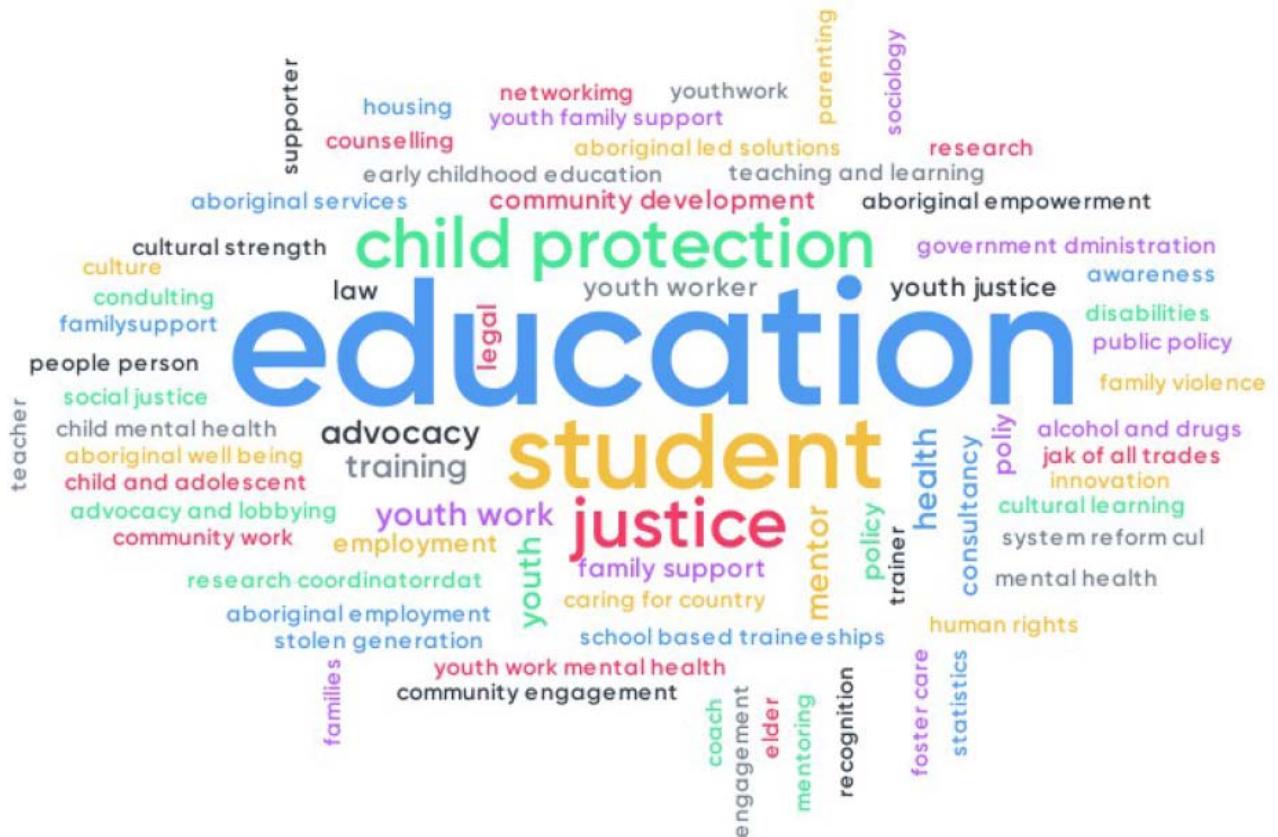
The list of attendees can be found in **Appendix One**. Ten students from Karratha Senior High School, Narrogin Senior High School and Girrawheen Senior High School attended the forum as part of the Commissioner's Aboriginal Leadership Cross-Cultural Solutions Program. The program provides opportunities for the students to develop their leadership and advocacy skills, and engage with decision makers as well as their community leaders and role models about how to include young people in conversations about their communities and to develop and empower cross-cultural solutions to the issues they identify in their communities.

Using live interactive technology, attendees were asked three questions to get to know who was in the room. The questions and responses are presented below.

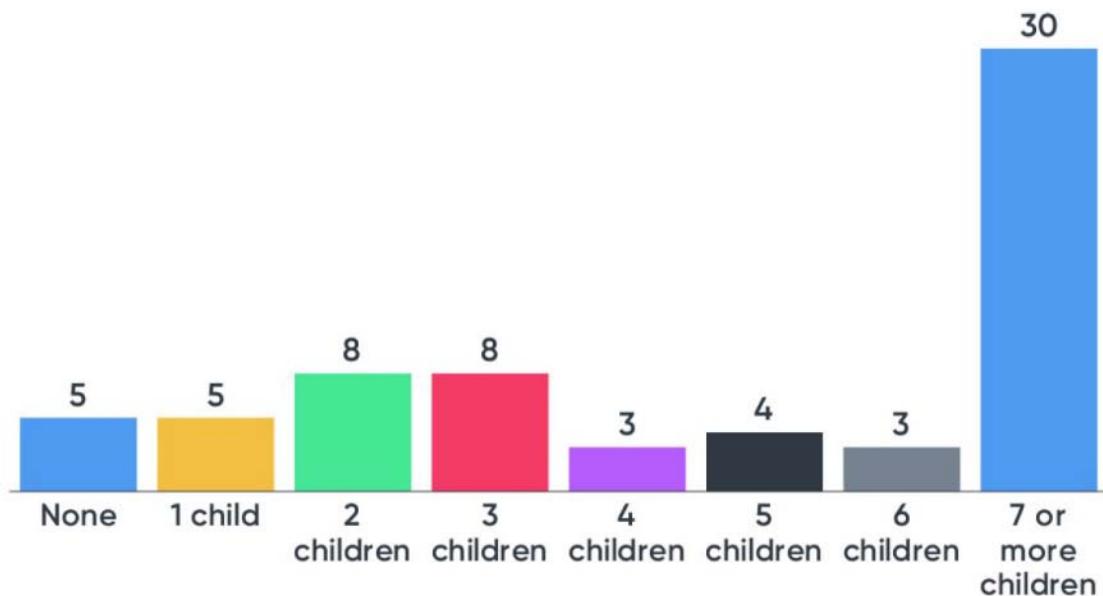
## Question one: Who is your mob? (92 responses)



**Question two: What is your main area of experience? e.g. youth work, justice, Elder, carer, education (66 responses)**



**Question three: How many children do you or have you cared for? (66 responses)**



# **Summary of presentations**

## **Marie Taylor**

Marie Taylor gave a Welcome to Country. Marie is a Noongar Elder, a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She taught Noongar cultural workshops to schools across Perth and prior to retiring was a lecturer at Murdoch University's Kulbardi Aboriginal Centre and an Aboriginal Teachers' Assistant with Catholic Education of WA.

## **Winthrop Professor Helen Milroy**

Professor Milroy is a descendant of the Palyku people of the Pilbara and was raised in Perth. She was a Commissioner for the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and has been on state and national mental health advisory committees and boards with a particular focus on the wellbeing of children. Professor Milroy is currently a Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, and Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health at the University of Western Australia.

### *Summary of presentation*

Professor Milroy discussed the importance recognizing and understanding the true magnitude of the impact of intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal people. She explored the question of how to address vulnerability among Aboriginal children and young people by highlighting the need to draw on the value and strength of family and community, culture, Aboriginal knowledge systems and healing practices. In the context of building a stronger future for all Aboriginal communities, Professor Milroy talked about strong relationships, trauma informed and competent care, responsive service systems and a compassionate society as some of the core foundations.



## **Jodie Sizer**

Ms Sizer is a Djap Wurrung/Gunditjmara woman and co-owner to PwC Indigenous Consulting, a majority Indigenous owned, led and staffed consulting firm. She uses her expertise and the resources of PricewaterhouseCoopers to partner with corporates and government to improve outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

### *Summary of presentation*

Ms Sizer described PwC's Indigenous Consulting's (PIC) work to lead meaningful change for Aboriginal communities by drawing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, experience and vision. Jodie discussed PIC's Inquiry into Systemic Compliance with the Intent of the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (ACPP) in Victoria which was commissioned by the Victorian Aboriginal Commissioner for Children and Young People in 2014. She also spoke about the importance of knowing your role, owning it, measuring your impact and accountability.

## **Mick Gooda**

Mr Gooda, a Gangulu person from Central Queensland, served as the Australian Human Rights Commission's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner from 2009-2016. As Social Justice Commissioner, he advocated for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia and sought to promote respect and understanding of these rights among the broader Australian community. In 2016, he was appointed as co-Commissioner for the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

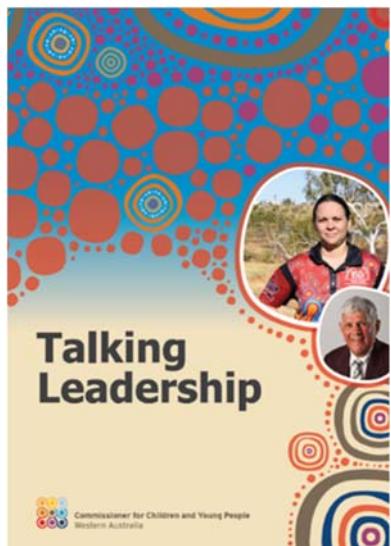
### *Summary of presentation*

Mr Gooda discussed the importance of re-setting relations between government and Aboriginal people in order to create change and move forward. He outlined the challenges in measuring outcomes and the problems with current funding and tendering processes which have led to fragmentation of the service system, and called instead for authority to be handed back to local Aboriginal people and organisations to lead the design and delivery of services. He talked about the need for place-based approaches to most effectively address complex human services

work, to ensure the strengths and capacities of each community is utilised to develop solutions. He also described the experience of Bourke Community as an example of good practice in the way partnerships between the community and programs/services are based on mutual trust, respect and commitment and build the capacity of local Bourke Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **Dr Robert Isaacs AM, OAM, PhD**

Dr Isaacs is from the Whadjuk-Bibilmum Wardandi Noongar language group. He played a key role in setting up Australia's first Indigenous school, Clontarf Aboriginal College. He is currently employed by Keystart where his policies have led to significant improvements for Aboriginal housing in WA and is a current member of the State Government's Aboriginal Advisory Council.



Dr Isaacs launched the Commissioner's new 'Talking Leadership' publication at the forum. It contains the stories, quotes and messages of support from seventeen Aboriginal leaders and demonstrates the breadth of Aboriginal leadership and cross-cultural solutions within WA communities. This project will be continued by publishing more leadership stories online, **please contact us if you would like to share your story.**

### **Young people**

Ten students from Karratha Senior High School, Narrogin Senior High School and Girrawheen Senior High School who are participating in the Commissioner's Aboriginal Leadership Cross-Cultural Solutions Program attended the forum. The students presented on the issues young people experience in their communities and their ideas on what needs to happen to create positive change for young people. Ideas included having more opportunities to engage and speak up in their communities, to receive appropriate support when they needed it, to have positive role models in their lives, and to help build safe, inclusive communities where Aboriginal culture is celebrated.

# Issues, barriers and challenges

Participants were asked to discuss and write down the issues, barriers and challenges they experience in their area of work in relation to the topics within each of the guest speaker presentations, as well as generally regarding improving the wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people. Below are the issues, barriers and challenges participants identified, sorted into broad themes. Photos of participants' notes are provided in **Appendix two**.

## Aboriginal leadership and self determination

- Lack of senior Aboriginal voices
- Government don't include Aboriginal voices in decision making
- Western solutions for Aboriginal people
- Lack of empowerment
- Minimal decision makers at the table of Aboriginal-led policies
- Enforced dependency – fear to let go from government
- Lack of Aboriginal staff, input and leadership
- Aboriginal people need to be leading what happens in our communities. Too many non-Aboriginal have decision making power and have voice where we should be leading those spaces
- Not allowed to do an Aboriginal response
- Lack of self-determination
- Not celebrating/recognising Aboriginal-led solutions
- No control of our lives – where is Noongar land. Owned by Noongar people
- Knowledge is power – we need the knowledge
- Skills that are here today – professionals/workers we are parents, grandparents, uncles, aunties. Government needs to see this as needed and resource our Aboriginal-led initiatives – not [have to] beg for the support
- We have learned how to work with/in the public sector, allow us to use those skills to develop better options
- Aboriginal professionals are not elevated to leadership/management/CEO roles
- Lack of empowerment

- Not enough Aboriginal people at corp exec. level in Government – can't break through and have a leadership voice to influence/develop policies
- Give the power back to Aboriginal people – let them design and implement programs and services. Stop bringing in overseas programs that simply don't work here
- Aboriginal voices who are not in the room (i.e. AEIO).

## Systems and funding

- Sharing information between agencies/working together – can't share info about kids in care
- Change the justice system
- Funding (to Aboriginal owned/led/established agencies)
- Different values in the system
- WA is behind Victoria in Aboriginal empowerment – very visible (Treaty purposes)
- Lack of sustainable funding and self-determination with programs/services/communities
- Lack of support across the board
- Institutional integrity: higher education (some) out of touch with contemporary views/issues/success
- Funding programs (e.g. Roebourne experience):
  - Too many consultations – not enough action as place-based
  - Government and not for profit – don't listen deeply
  - Too many partnerships – others don't understand issues
  - Silo thinking – "ego" - ecological system
- Money/funding is tied to outcomes – design by people not experiencing or [who] have experienced the reality
- Too many missionaries, mercenaries and misfit
- Institutional incarceration – what are we doing – system issues
- Fear of government agencies – families have no communication
- One person from a government agency, not lots
- All systems valuing Aboriginal professionals/expertise

- Too many silos – people on the ground know what to do but management don't listen "needs to be driven from the ground up"
- When do we move from think tank to ACTION?
- Power is held with government but implementation is never done well
- Contracts are onerous and have no flexibility on how ground-level services are run – people looking at contract provisions of service have no on the ground experience
- Fly in fly out CEOs
- State government not interested in Aboriginal designed and Aboriginal-led.

## **Service design, delivery and workforce**

- Lack of co-designing – [should be] initial conversation at the beginning (our mob)
- Diversity of our community means one service program doesn't fit all
- Not enough mental health services available – services only available when situation has declined significantly
- Interpreter services
- Staff – numbers/staff levels
- Need more support for Aboriginal workers (often working in isolation)
- Lack of recognition of education qualifications
- Service/care providers not identifying at-risk kids early enough (held to a different standard)
- Service providers acting in isolation
- Lack of interaction from the resourced agencies
- Need to have localised, regional input and engagement
- Lack of services to regional/remote areas – the money all gets spent in Perth
- When does the community get to design the programs to move forward?  
When do we go beyond borders?
- Overrepresentation of services (silos)
- Why don't we have services in community areas that need [it] the most?
- Designing models without discussing with Aboriginal people – no buy in from the community, community has no voice.

## Culture and identity

- Language needs to be taught in schools
- Loss of identity
- Loss of connection
- How do we reinforce identity? Get it back to what it was?
- Kids are losing their cultural identity (American influence)
- De-identifying identity
- Exposure to Elders – sense of community – what happens for this that are from low socioeconomic families – where are our voices, our place/representation at these forums
- How do we provide opportunities for young people to connect to their spirituality of our culture
- Young people in the system – how and when do they connect with their family/culture/community? There must be a better way, it should be cultural continuity
- NAIDOC celebrations in schools are too short, often only one day a year and a bit superficial
- Not enough focus on valuing of cultural expertise
- Learning traditional cultural protocols – lost opportunities to learn. It needs to be ongoing.

## Understanding history, trauma

- Understanding previous trauma that has affected young people today from generations (policy, programs, research) – ‘get over it’ comments, understanding history
- Lack of support tool
- Our mob – lateral violence between our own people
- Lack of education for the wider community – truth telling needs to happen
- Little recognition or understanding that the way our community grieves is different
- Normalisation of trauma
- Family trauma/self trauma – management of the loss and the grief

- Not enough understanding in relation to genocide
- Trust – truth telling
- Fragmented communities
- How much do you know about your history? How does your language/culture hear our trauma?
- More trauma education in the education system
- Police (community) still present as “police” wearing their belts – undo relationships quickly with aggressive interaction.

## **Lack of support for young people and families**

- No places for young people
- How do we create a space for young people to connect?
- What tools we give to our young people?
- High suicide rate – age of kids is getting younger. Cutting is a real issue
- Young people’s relationships with agencies should not be negative – there should be respectful/positive interactions – ways and style of communication
- Need better/stronger support for parents
- What tools we give to parents? Educators?
- Better support systems
- Better support Elders/grannies looking after kids
- Identifying role models for young people in our communities
- Being able to finish school
- Peer pressure – bullying; easily influenced kids get dragged down; lack of resilience; disempowered
- When are they going to break down the stereotype that men can’t raise children – more men working with kids in out of home care?
- How do we work with families on the ground – needs to change
- Accommodation/housing.

## **Racism**

- White patriarchal values
- Racism, stereotypes, discrimination
- White privilege

- Systemic racism across the board
- Racism – lack of understanding and safety.

## **Children in care**

- Initial investigation of child safety done by non-Aboriginal staff and Aboriginal workers are involved later/place child in care
- Not enough Aboriginal families to care for our kids
- [Need more] support/training for carers
- Kids in care – reunification is sometimes at the end of the process
- Hard to find/locate/identify family for kids in the child protection system – not even necessarily as carers
- Aboriginal Practice Leader's agree genograms are of critical importance in child protection
- Why are there so many barriers for kids to have access/relationships with family in out of home care?
- Kids being placed with non-Aboriginal carers.

## **Drugs and alcohol, FASD, justice**

- Lack of support for kids with FASD
- Substance abuse
- High imprisonment rate of youth and adults
- Drugs and alcohol – no services.



# Solutions

Participants were invited to discuss and share the changes they believe are needed and the solutions to the key issues, barriers and challenges they identified in the earlier sessions. Participants were encouraged to consider solutions in three categories:

1. What does the Aboriginal community need to do?
2. What does government need to do?
3. What does the not for profit sector need to do?

The section below provides a summary of participants' written notes, identified priority solutions and the whole group discussion on solutions from the forum.

## Aboriginal leadership and self-determination

- The time of other people speaking for us is over, we want to speak for ourselves
- Follow through on the implementation of the Uluru Statement and treaty discussions at a state and federal level to transfer power/control and responsibility to the community
- We want to see Aboriginal leadership at the very top of government, we want our own Aboriginal Commissioner
- Every state should appoint an Aboriginal Children's Commissioner to provide monitoring, oversight mechanisms and national and parliamentary reporting
- Aboriginal people need to be represented in all departments
- Senior Aboriginal people in all departments need direct reporting lines within their areas to the Director Generals to be able to communicate their ideas and solutions so that we can work together and influence government decisions to create better outcomes
- In addition to having access to decision makers and decision-making power/influence, Aboriginal communities need access to the information – the data and the resources to back up the issues being prioritised and the solutions being identified

- Aboriginal communities need representative groups working across the state to obtain information, identify issues and solutions at a local level, and ensure policies and programs recognise the differences in urban, regional and remote contexts
- Grow our leadership and recognise the value of Elders
- Recognition of Aboriginal people (First People)
- Owning your role requires knowing what your role actually is and knowing who can help achieve outcomes – identify the support you need.

## **Cultural context – identity, history, trauma and cultural differences**

- Services and programs need to be premised on addressing children and young people in the context of their family, community and culture. The current approach, particularly in the child protection space, fails to include families in discussions and intervene early to support families and provide them with the skills and assistance they need to provide the best environments for their young people. Aboriginal families are not seen as a resource to support their children and young people
- Aboriginal people would like to see increased opportunities fostered for intergenerational /transgenerational communication so that the voices and experiences of our Elders and our young people are included and valued as a part of the process
- Aboriginal young people must have access to culture as a resource – we want our young people to grow up strong in language, in our song lines and dance and in practicing our culture. Connection to culture supports the strength and resilience of our young people, who are our future



- We must have culturally responsive educators, policy makers, politicians
- Make services accountable for cultural care needs
- Drug and alcohol treatment services need to be developed with an Aboriginal lens and include healing
- Support kids to connect with culture - take kids onto country, opportunities to connect with Elders/role models.
- Education needs to be available to assist with understanding previous trauma that has affected young people today from generations (policy, programs, research) and appropriate supports to heal the trauma.

## **Funding and bi-partisan support (long term solutions)**

- What short term policy and funding cycles fail to do is recognise and address the magnitude of the trauma and the complexity of the issues that social policy is trying to address. We need long term commitment from both sides of government to ensure that we are all in it for the long haul – Aboriginal community members and staff don't finish at 5pm and they don't have an exit plan – these are their families and their communities so they need support and capacity building to create sustainable positive change
- Funding should be proportionate to the need of children and young people and their families. Complex issues require resources and complex solutions, with a focus on trauma informed practice and action
- Funding should reflect the service user – where there is high representation of Aboriginal people, funding and resources need to be put into Aboriginal organisations, programs and services
- Early intervention and prevention is essential. Crisis response is not enough and won't drive long term solutions.

## **Using positive language**

- Our children and young people need the resources and supports around them to see something positive in being Aboriginal. We keep reinforcing negative stereotypes and negative relationships and these are the expectations that we set for our young people
- The deficit approach feeds stereotypes, discrimination and racism

- Remember to celebrate our successes
- Have optimism – things can change
- Young people's relationships with agencies should not be negative – there should be respectful/positive interactions – ways and style of communication.

## **Our roles – Aboriginal community, government and not-for-profits**

- We need to come together, as Aboriginal community members, with government and with the sector and collaborate on what's next – Aboriginal people need to be resourced to lead the design, planning, development, funding, implementation and evaluation processes that create programs and service delivery in communities because it isn't enough to have policy makers decide these things for us – it doesn't work!
- Government and the sector need to be willing to unlearn the current ways of doing things and re-learn better ways together with the community, we can't keep trying to adapt broken systems. Aboriginal people need to determine the process and outcomes
- Organisations providing services must reflect their client base to achieve positive outcomes – if most of your clients are Aboriginal then that needs to be reflected in the workforce and this will create culturally secure and safe environments for both the staff and the clients
- We want to see more Aboriginal community controlled organisations being resources, supported, and funded to capacity build and deliver services to the community and families
- What we most need from government and the sector is support to give the power and the responsibility back to Aboriginal people to manage Aboriginal affairs and to demonstrate Aboriginal leadership in action, but to also work in genuine partnerships, because the current lack of support is impacting our ability to achieve positive outcomes
- More networking between NGOs, government and Aboriginal community will help to support these steps.

## Systems and services - design and focus

- Programs and services working in the Aboriginal community must be:
  - Aboriginal led – self determination
  - Rights-based – rights of the child and Aboriginal rights
  - Client centred – child at the centre
  - Place-based – local identification of issues and local solutions
  - Evaluated and appropriately resourced.
- We need to think about how we measure programs and legislation to ensure that they are meeting our intent and achieving positive outcomes.  
Understanding where one person or organisation's role ends and the other starts is important in being able to hold people to account. Currently Aboriginal community don't have the decision-making power, control of the resources or the responsibility to ensure that this is happening
- Simplify the compliance process and focus on transparency and measurable outcomes – Aboriginal organisations have much stricter reporting requirements than other organisations and this reporting often isn't used to assist in assessing outcomes. While the need to spend public monies appropriately is acknowledged, there needs to be a balance between what is necessary and allowing organisations to carry out their work.
- Use the evidence already gathered from all of the reports and inquiries into the issues and the solutions to develop and adopt our framework and systems and our terms of reference to achieve transformational "with us not to us" change - we become the champions.



## **Students' feedback on their experience at the forum**

The students from Karratha Senior High School, Narrogin Senior High School and Girrawheen Senior High School provided feedback on their experience of attending the Aboriginal forum and what they learned.

*[I enjoyed] going to the forum to meet Aboriginal leaders from around Australia and having the honour to listen to what they had to say.*

*I really enjoyed the forum on Thursday and meeting and listening to Aboriginal Elders.*

*I enjoyed speaking at the forum and being able to speak to the leaders and role models who are making a difference and hearing their ideas.*

*I'm very happy with the progress we've been making and I thought it was an emotional and beautiful thing to witness the wise Aboriginal men and women have their say and have significant contribution to our process of making a difference.*

*As a student I found out a lot more about the problems cross-cultural people face that turn out they both have some similarities in what they want for their younger people.*

*There needs to be Aboriginal-led and run organisations to make change and empower our mob and give knowledge to grassroots mobs.*

*Before the Parliament creates and decides on a new law, it NEEDS to be approved by the Aboriginal Elders who form the group.*

*I believe there needs to be an Aboriginal-led group to directly influence the government and the decisions it makes.*

*I have learnt that Aboriginal people feel very very strongly about their culture and the problems the effect their young very negatively.*

*I've learnt that despite the government being stingy with us, we have incredible integrity and resilience, which is starting to pay off.*

*I have learnt that our voices and opinions are valued, listened and appreciated just as much as the adults.*

*I have learned that we must work together and that our voices have to be listened to and that we must set high expectations and rise to meet them.*



## **What will be done with the information and solutions raised at the forum**

The solutions that emerged at the forum were presented by the forum facilitators on Friday 24 August to a roundtable of executive decision makers – to provide the opportunity to have a strategic, cross-sector discussion with the highest levels of WA government and non-government – and at a free public seminar for an audience of approximately 180 government and non-government stakeholders.

The key themes and solutions that arose from the forum will be included in a final *Vulnerability Speaker Series* report that will be released at the end of 2018.

The information and solutions raised at the forum have been collated and summarised in this report for use by attendees as well as the general public in progressing Aboriginal-led solutions and ways of working across the state.

The Commissioner will also be using this report, and key messages from the Aboriginal forum, to assist his office in advocating for the Aboriginal-led solutions that are needed to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people across Western Australia. As the Commissioner progresses these actions, updates and information will be provided on the Commissioner's website [ccyp.wa.gov.au](http://ccyp.wa.gov.au).

## Appendix One: List of Forum guests

<b>First Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Sharla	Abdullah	Centrecare
Isabelle	Adams	Ngala
Steve	Austin	Indigenous Affairs Group, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Lawford	Benning	MG Corp
Daniela	Borg	Department of Education
Ashley	Brown	Aboriginal Family Legal Service
Tony	Calgaret	Key Assets
Nicole	Casley	Ombudsman of Western Australia
Rod	Caton	Committee Member, Langford Aboriginal Association
Juli	Coffin	Notre Dame University
Anthony	Colbung	Centrecare
Margaret	Colbung	Elder
Bradley	Collard	Anglicare WA
Venis	Collard	Jacaranda Community Centre
Troy	Cook	Wirrpanda Foundation
Wendy	Cope	Department of Communities
Greg	Cross	Jacaranda Community Centre
Lucy	Dann	Centrecare
Krista	Dunstan	Commissioner for Children and Young People
Josie	Ford	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
Ashley	Garlett	SMYL Community Services
Kate	George	Pricewaterhouse Indigenous Consulting

Alison	Gibson	Ombudsman of Western Australia
Ron	Gidgup	Fiona Stanley Hospital
Mick	Gooda	Former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner
Gordon	Gray	Western Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council
Sasha	Greenoff	Youth Engagement Program, Aboriginal Legal Service
Josey	Hansen	UnitingCareWest
Tony	Hansen	Parkerville
Liz	Hayden	Elder
Shaye	Hayden	Aboriginal Policy and Coordination Unit, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
Bonnie	Hayward	Kinship Connections
William	Hayward	SNAICC
Trish	Heath	Commissioner for Children and Young People
Lisa	Hirini	Senior Learning Development Facilitator, CPFS
Carol	Innes	Reconciliation WA
Robert	Isaacs	Keystart
Jade	Maddox	Ngangk Yira Aboriginal Health and Social Equality Research Group
Evelyn	McKay	Be My Koorda
Sherry	McLaughlin	South East Metro Community Alcohol and Drug Service
Carol	Michie	Telethon Kids Institute
Helen	Milroy	The University of Western Australia
Paulina	Motlop	Statewide Services
Storm	Motohata	Wisdom in Your Life
Shaun	Nannup	Wisdom in Your Life

Derek	Nannup	Wesley College
Donna	Nelson	Family Matters
Tracey	Ninyette	Department of Communities
Shane	Ninyette	WhiteLion (Balga)
Maureen	O'Meara	Aarnja
Hector	O'Laughlin	Department of Communities
Rhys	Paddick	Facilitator
Jordin	Payne	Murdoch University
Rachel	Pearson	
Millie	Penny	Elder, Telethon Kids Institute
Colin	Pettit	Commissioner for Children and Young People
Leon	Ridgeway	CEWA
Shahna	Rind	Aboriginal Engagement, City of Melville
Melanie	Robinson	The Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives
Christine	Ross	Christine Ross Consultancy
Carol	Ryder	Ngala
Debra	Singh	Child and Adolescent Community Health
Jodie	Sizer	PwC Indigenous Consulting
Glenice	Smith	Department of Communities
Lou	Tatasciore	Midwest Aboriginal Organisation Alliance
Marie	Taylor	Elder
Jade	Thompson	Reconciliation WA
Pamela	Thorley	Indigenous Employment Officer, Curtin University
Joseph	Wallam	Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services

## Appendix Two: Photos of attendees' notes on the issues, barriers and challenges

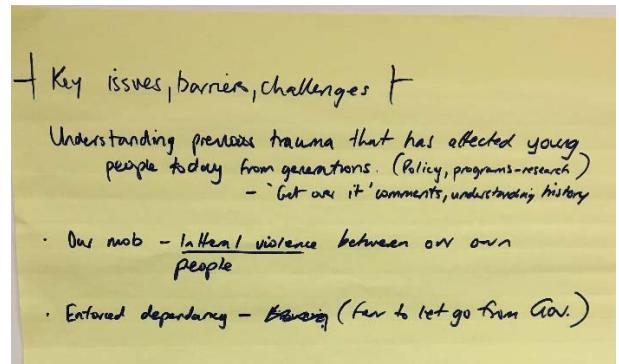
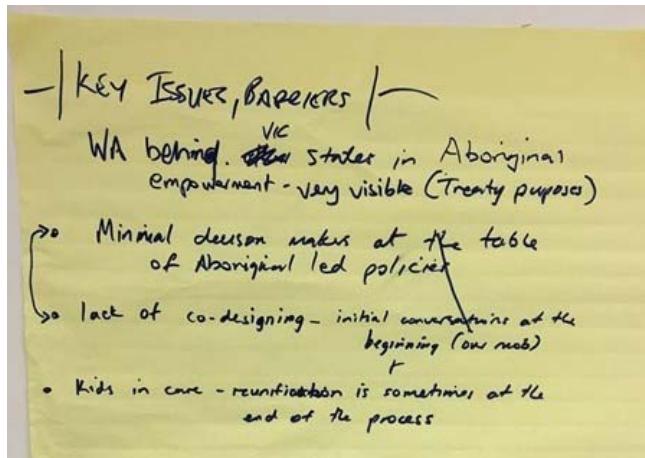
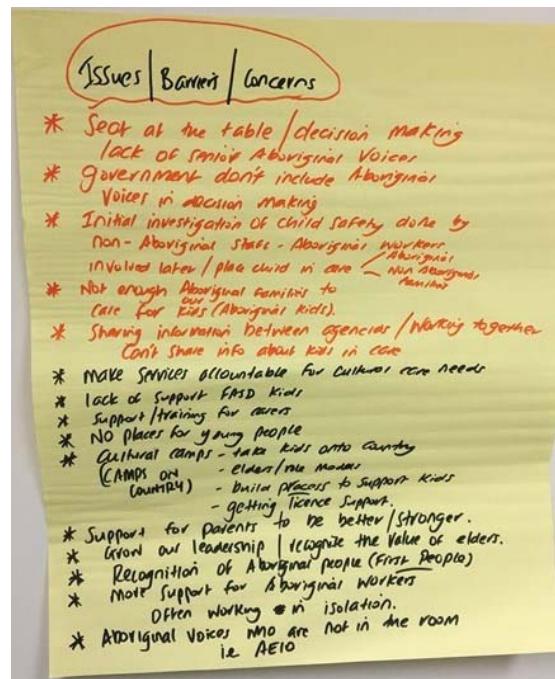
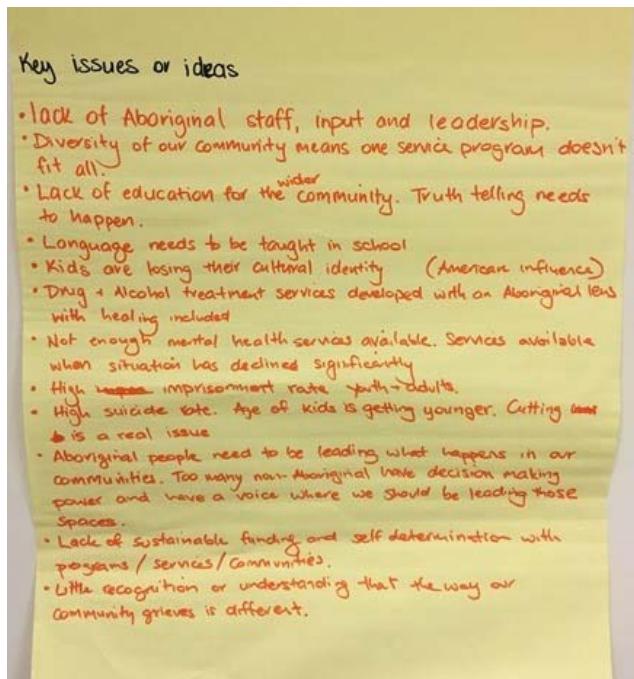


Table #8.

Challenges + Barriers—

- family trauma → management the loss and grief.
- self trauma
- funding programs - Roebourne experience.
  - + too many consultations - not enough action as place based.
  - + govt and NP - don't listen deeply.
  - + too many partnerships - others don't understand issues
  - + silo thinking - "eg" → ecological system
- ← Not enough understanding in relation to genocide.
  - trust - truth telling.
  - is tied to outcomes - design by practice not experiencing or have experienced the reality.
- too many missionaries, mercenaries and misfit -
- Culturally responsive educators, policymakers, politicians
- Institutional incarceration - what are we doing
  - system issues

BARRIERS, ISSUES, CONCERNs.

- FUNDING: to Aboriginal owned/led/est. agencies
- STAFF — NUMBERS - STAFF LEVELS.
- LACK OF SELF-DETERMINATION
- LACK OF SUPPORT ACROSS THE BOARD
- SYSTEMIC RACISM ACROSS THE BOARD
- LACK OF RECOGNITION OF EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS.
- Racism: lack of understanding + Safety
  - Service/Care providers not identifying at risk kids early enough (held to a different standard).
- Not celebrating/recognising Aboriginal led solutions.
- Service providers acting in isolation
- Institutional Integrity: Higher Education (some) out of touch with contemporary views/issues/success.

- Fragmented communities
- Owing your role requires knowing what your role actually is, and knowing who can help achieve outcomes - Identifying support
- Too many silos.
- People on the ground know what to do, but the management don't listen.
  - Needs to be driven from the ground up
- Aboriginal professionals are not elevated to leadership/management/CEO roles.
- Lack of empowerment.
- Not enough Aboriginal people at Corp Ex. level in Government
  - Can't break through and have a leadership voice to influence/develop policies.
- Need to have localised, regional input and engagement.
- Lack of services to regional/remote areas.
- The money all gets spent in per Perth.
- 



- Drugs and alcohol - No services
- Being able to finish school.
- Peer pressure
  - Bullying
  - Easily influenced kids get dragged down
  - Lack of resilience
  - Disempowered.
- Learning traditional cultural protocols #Lost opportunities to learn.

- De-identifying Identity.
- Normalisation of Trauma
- Not afraid to do an Aboriginal Response
- Interpreter Services

## Table 7

- Living - accommodation
- No control of our lives - where is Noongar land.  
- owned by Noongar people
- Exposure to Elders - sense of community - what happens for those that are from low socio-economic families - where are our voices - our place / representation at those forums
- The old processes of Sir people negotiating for families.
- Lack of interaction from the resource agencies.
- Fear of gov agencies - families have no communication
- Knowledge is power - we need the knowledge
- 1 person from a gov agency, not lots
- Young peoples relationships with agencies should not be negative - there should be respectful/positive interaction.
- ↳ ways + style of communication.
- Police (community) still present as "Police" wearing their biffs.
- Undo relationships quickly with aggressive interaction.
- Skills that are here today - professionals/workers we are parents, grandparents, Uncles & Auntes Gov needs to see this as needed + resource our Aboriginal initiatives - not buy for the supp.
- How do we provide opps for young people to connect to their spirituality of our culture.
- We have learnt how to work with the public sector. Allow us to use those skills to develop better options

- Better support systems
- Hard to find / locate / identify family for kids in the child protection system
  - Not even necessarily as carers.
- Better support for elders / grannies looking after kids.
- APL's agree genograms are of critical importance in child protection.
- Identifying role models for young people in our communities
- RACISM and DISCRIMINATION
- Young people in the system: How and when do they connect with their family / culture / community
  - There must be a better way, it should be cultural continuity
- NAIDOC celebrations in schools are too short, often only 1 day a year and a bit superficial.
- All systems valuing Aboriginal professionals/expertise.
- Not enough focus on or valuing of cultural expertise.

## BARRIERS

~~Take~~

When do we move from think~~to~~ to Action?

How much do you know about your History?

How does our language/culture heal our trauma?

When does the community get to design the programs to move forward?

When do we go beyond borders

When are they going to break down the Stereotype that men can't raise the children - More men working with kids in out of home care?

Why are there so many barriers for kids to have access/relationship with family in out of home care. Systemic Racism.

Not Aboriginal led

Why don't we have services in community areas that they need most.

Overrepresentation of Services (SILO)

Power is held w government but implementation is never done well

Contracts are onerous & have no flexibility on how grand level services are run.

People looking @ contract provisions of service have no on the ground experience.

How do we work with families on the ground? Needs to change.

More trauma education in the education system  
Give the power back to Aboriginal People. Let them design & implement programs & services. Stop bringing in overseas programs that simply don't work here  
fly in fly out CEO's

Design Aboriginal led parenting programs

Learn from the community  
Designing models w/o discussing with Aboriginal People  
No say in their Community - Community has no voice  
State government not interested in Aboriginal designed & Aboriginal led.

Kids being placed with non-Aboriginal Carers

### ( Issues, barriers & concerns )

- \* Support each other. - lack of support.
- \* Accountability - not government
  - Aboriginal Elected.
- \* Cultural Appropriateness - holistic approach.
- \* Funds aren't filtering down to the underprivileged.
- (\* Unafraid of the grey space. ↗ potential solution.)
- \* Aboriginal Specific - Children to young people lead organisation, ↗ own Potential Solution.
- \* Trust - lack of.  
Respect - lack of.  
Asset
- \* Asset based community development. (ABCD).
- \* Making a sense of belonging = nonplace  
- Identify it comes differently for Aboriginal kids.

K

- Acceptance of stereotypes and continuation of oppressive ideologies by decision makers and institutions
- Allowance of the 'Status Quo' (Norm) if your "White your Right - If your black you're wrong"
- What would the non-Alan sector do if our solutions were implemented and successful - Where would they work - IS THIS WHY.
- No commitment to transfer power and responsibility for children and YP to Aboriginal led processes/programs.
- Constitutional responsibilities of Commonwealth and state for Aboriginal people and families. Lacks coordination.
- Institutional Racism.

### Key Issues

- 1) Non Abil carers maintain their culture -  
Keep but don't know how!  
what do we (Aboriginal Carers) do to help.
- 2) Cultural Reconnection Plan in place.
- 3) Health Dept/Welfare Dept needs action.
- 4) Kinship Caregivers because BUT is not funded.
- 5) Why are our kids in white care?
- 6) Not enough Abil Carers.
- 7) Lack of Abil Services for intercar kids.
- 8) ONLY Child Protection
- 9) Community Development is lacking.
- 10) C.D. will build up behaviours and family.
- 11) Training of Parents as parents.
- 12) ~~too~~ Many children not taught parenting.
- 13) Lack of Family Support in some families.
- 14) Families take responsibilities for families (non carers)
- 15) Lack of financial support for families (no benefit)
- 16) Unnecessary standards of assessment for Aboriginal carers? - too long - too difficult
- 17) Need time out for healing of carers.
- 18) Imposition of Social Workers Standards on all families.

### Issues / Challenges

#### Barriers

##### Not Heard

Actively and Aggressively blocked

Intellectual Property - used.

Lack of Trust for our ideas, concepts & Solutions.

'White Privilege' / Privilege of not knowing  
'Do they want to?'

Aboriginal Despair is a commodity / Industry which is maintained because of organisational/industry interest which impacts any system reform.

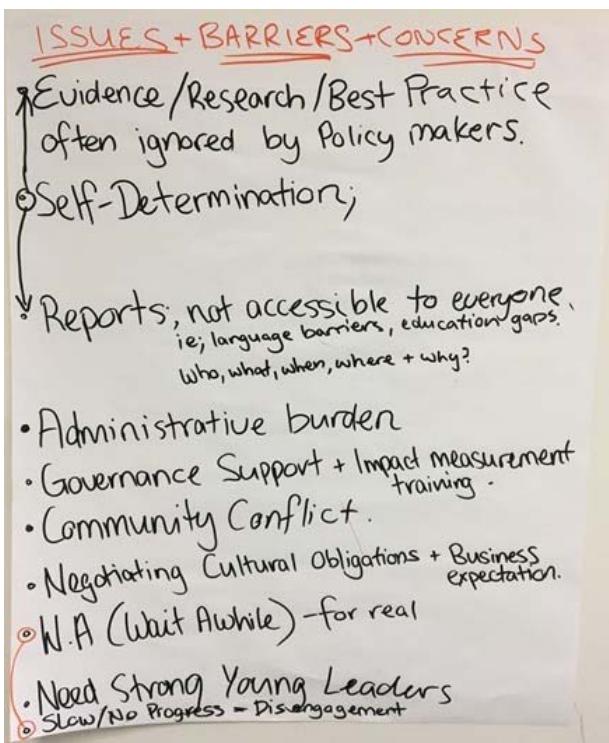
Tokenistic commitment to fundamental reform.

Tendering / Govt Procurement and design fails to respond and <sup>not</sup> responsive to our needs

Governance Versus Outcomes

More worried about governance  
than real outcomes

for our CYP



- Cultural competency of the funded sector (non-Abn).
- Failure of Policy Implementation
- ACPP - not fully implemented. Childs voice NEVER Heard.
  - Clear | measurable | Outcomes
  - Legislation, No ability for non-govt to develop esp
  - Development commitment to Aboriginal Org's to do the work in an Aboriginal Evidence way.
  - Acceptance of myths of capacity for Abn orgs to develop and implement programs, Abn led services
  - Abn culture and practices seen as a deficit not a strength.
  - No trust by Abn people to Govt/Depts and no mediation/advocacy to address the mistrust.
  - Poor | negative relationships between Abn communities and Government.
  - It is an adversarial complex system that cont. control and perpetuate, continue to demean and label victims of the system.

Monitoring and greater accountability fails to look at outcomes - (Financial focus)

Need to look at discrimination between Aboriginal v non-Aboriginal programs / organisations

Institutional Racism still exists

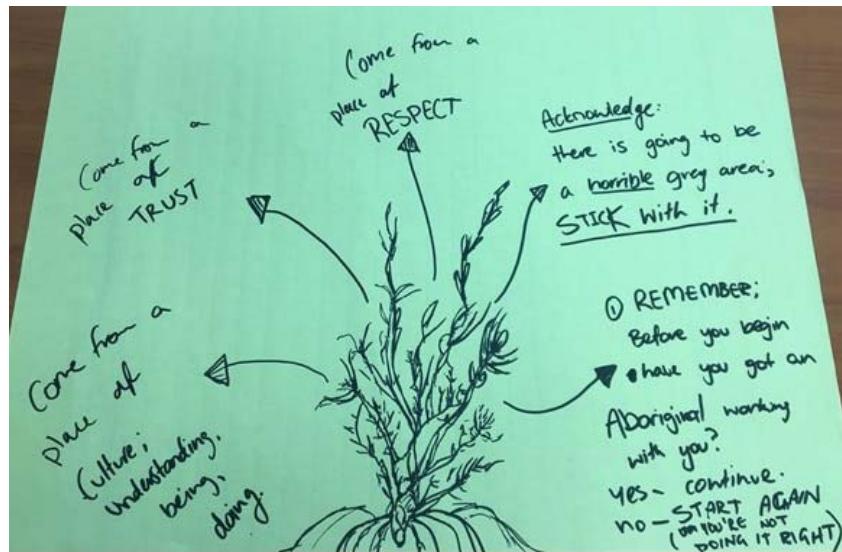
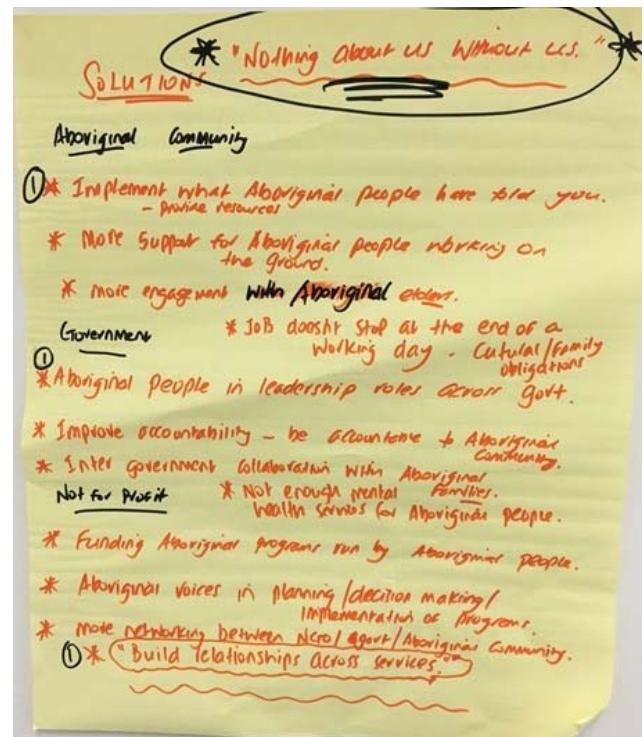
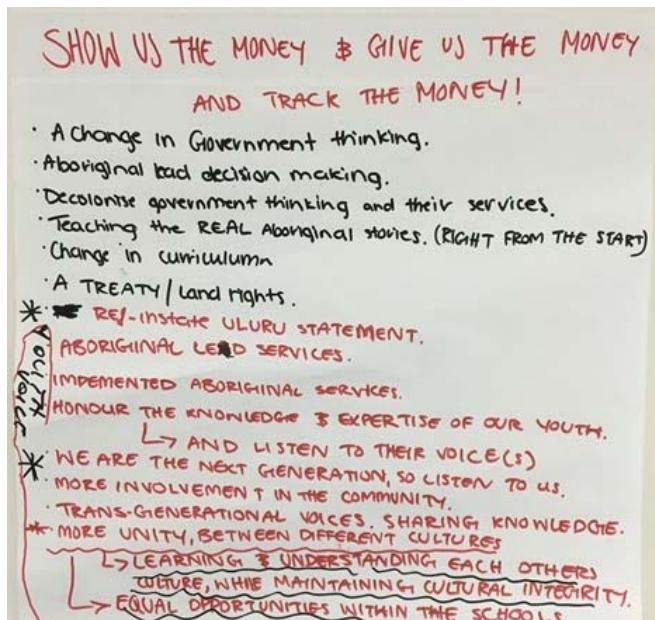
Aboriginal Funding given to non-Aboriginal organisations

Lack of understanding Child Dev Stages / Trauma informed approaches.

Ab Evidence based approach dismissed for non-Abn orginal programs / services with no cultural lens.



## Appendix Three: Photos of attendees' notes on the solutions



## Solutions

- Identify true leadership to form delegates and inform the gov → develop a unified action plan.
- Local solutions from local identification of issues.
- Bourke principles - rules of engagement and disengagement - communication.
- Aboriginal led discussions with government like today - with
- More exposure for young Aborig. people to be informed and provide the foundation for future leadership - our young people are our FUTURE
- Access to the information for advertise these forums to ensure our young people are able to participate and be heard.

8-\*

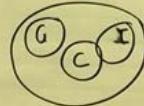
No more <sup>inquiries</sup> reports! Use the evidence already gathered.  
to develop and adopt our framework and systems, our terms of reference

to achieve transformational change.  
(with us, not to us)

language - vocabulary

\* No more <sup>inquiries</sup> reports, use the evidence already gathered to develop and adopt our framework and systems, our terms of reference to achieve transformational, "with us, not to us," change. but by us

We become the champions.



## Solutions #1

### Government

- In each of the main departments, have a senior Aboriginal person, similar to D-G, to feed ideas / expertise up. Need people in Decision making roles across Government.
- Office of Aboriginal advocacy to be informed by those leaders
- Bipartisan support to ensure continuity of care and effective service delivery and outcomes.

### Not-For-Profit Sector

- Transparent, vigorous funding that is fair and equitable.
- Should be doing above the minimum to secure funding
  - Needs to be more than just employing one Aboriginal person.
- Overgoverned + audited - needs to be simplified.
- Move away from short, time-limited funding, to give more sustainable service delivery.

### Aboriginal Community

- Self development programs for children / teens

## SOLUTIONS Recruitment - involve local Natives.

\* Homelessness - accommodation shortages  
- impact on health / well-being  
Housing, Debt, HOMELNESS / Support accommodation / units  
youth / mentor health / disability  
support workers on site

\* Child Protection (Dept. Communities)  
- overrepresentation Aboriginal kids  
\* grow the Aboriginal workforce  
\* employ elders / family members  
build capacity of community  
\* Pay carers to look after our kids

\* Address skill gap - role models  
- homemaker program  
- Address gaps (literacy, skills, generations)  
- passing on language / culture

\* Jails - reintegration into cultural ways / language  
- culturally appropriate programs  
- something to work toward when released  
- connection to community  
- keep them out of jail  
- link up to outside services  
- consult with Aboriginal peoples (not white way) ongoing. it

## Solutions .

# 11

Every State appoint <sup>Abn.</sup> Children's Commissioner  
National Aboriginal Children's Commission with  
Monitoring and oversight mechanisms and Parliamentary  
Reporting.

(com) State Treaty Framework with full and partial  
transfer of powers and responsibilities in the  
space of families, Chn and YIP.

- Non-discriminatory Funding proportionate to the need of  
Chn and YIP, families across intervention, prevention and  
statutory.
- In the absence of the above mentioned - Class Action  
to demonstrate the disproportionate funding between  
non-Abn orgs and Abn orgs demonstrating institutional  
racism and Govt procurement perpetuating ~~non~~ outcomes  
in addressing socio economic dispair and continuing status  
quo.

Prioritise Abn funding to all Aboriginal orgs, programs and  
services (secure funding stream)\*

25 mins

## SOLUTIONS

Are there any solutions/programs that AREN'T WORKING?  
Identify the solutions.  
What are our solutions?

- community
- government
- N.F.P.

Ideas: (1) to be the PRIORITY SOLUTION /

# Aboriginal Family Support (EMPHASIS) \*

- More alcohol & drug awareness on the ground.
- Remember to celebrate our successes.
- Aboriginal People Making decisions about themselves.
- Use language that engages and clearly communicates with Aboriginal / health & well-being.
- Allow a space for Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal people to Learn.
- Change the narrative / the way we speak.
- Collective Cultural Education in Primary Schools of Aboriginal children - strengthen their identity, their culture, their heritage - empowerment of our children.
- Generational Solution - No YEAR CONTRACT
- De-evaluation Counselling.
- Being in charge of yourself.
- It starts with you; Share it and pass it forward in time.
- OWNERSHIP - give it back to Aboriginal People.
- Everyone understanding the ground they need walk on.

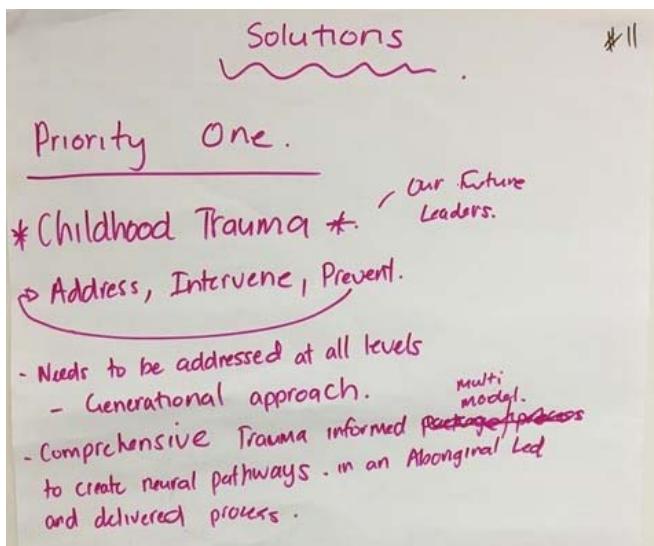
Get rid of STATE  
AND FEDERAL PARLIAMENT -  
Put HONEST AND COMMITTED PEOPLE,  
# To Drive THE ABORIGINAL AGENDA  
PEOPLE.  
THIS INCLUDING ABORIGINAL AND non-ABORIGINAL  
PEOPLE.

Implement THE ULURU  
STATEMENT - 2018!!!

(16)

## SOLUTIONS

- Gov - Buy in to empowered communities as per agreement & framework w com government using West Kimberley family empowerment framework under Kimberley futures.
- Gov CPS/families - More funding into early prevention. Families to be able to access services without referrals from departments to Aboriginal led programs & services
- WORK - Longer contracts/Funding with successful programs
- WORK AS A COLLECTIVE GROUP
- Aboriginal Led decision Making
- Lateral Lateral Violence & how we deal with it?
- Unite & Stand up
- More funding
- Aboriginal people need to be recognised in the constitution.
- We want a treaty
- CHANGE THE SYSTEM
- STOP GOV PPL WITH NO UNDERSTANDING OF OUR CULTURE & COMMUNITY HAVING A FINAL SAY & APPROVAL OF OUR FUTURE
- Localised decision Making



Aboriginal Led Decision Making across all #11 levels of Govt - Local, regional and state for leadership management, governance, front line service delivery across all levels of the continuum in the socio economic service delivery.

'Treaty' - Transfer of responsibility (full and/or partial) for Families, Chn and YIP.

- All families have access to quality culturally proficient services that are universal and targeted.
- Abn people and our organisations have control over and deliver the actions which impact and affect our chn.

That there is significant law, policy and practice reform which creates culturally safe systems across the continuum. National Inquiry into Child Protection led by communities and accepted by The State which holds govt/ services accountable in Child Protection who is a National Disaster.

- Solutions #7
- More Abn' workers in govt to make the ~~it~~ work for Abn' people. + common organisations.
  - Ld in positions in of influence and power
  - Develop strategies that address structural disadvantage and poverty
  - Accountability for the resources being provided to the sector agencies → outcomes led.
  - More Abn' run + managed agencies - centre for support.
  - ↳ Housing and co-ordinated support, that supports long term change.
  - Coming together - Abn' Leadership we need to unite and get behind Abn' led ideas/plans Unite
  - We aspire to the same things strong healthy kids, strong in culture, strong families.
  - Breaking stereotypes relationship workshops, ~~FOV~~, incarceration rates, teaching our young people about strength. → not normalising all the negatives.
  - Re-energising + supporting our men and their roles in the family, community. → Mens groups, developing strategies.
  - Supporting single fathers to parent + support their families - eg FOV supports - what exists for men.

Solutions #7

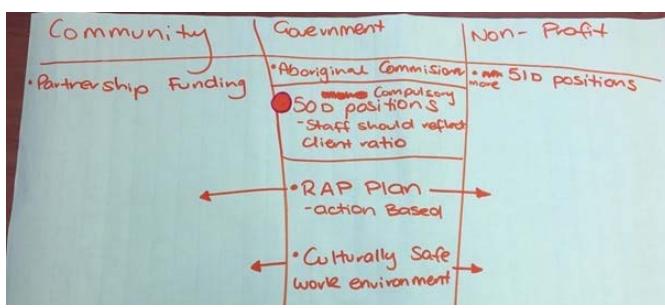
Resource the Abn' family to ~~keep~~ children with their family - the family system exists, value this first.

Investing Early Intervention - needs more traction

- Coordinated response - strategically planned - communication accountability of services.

Expectation of that it takes as long as it takes not restricted timeframes - multiple issues need time + resources

Independent entity which can apply child placement principles - Victoria has VACCA. P  
WA policies need overhauling  
Following traditional + western protocols - engagement risks that privilege Abn' voices.



- Lack of Self-Determination
- Communication
- Policy into Practice
- Investment in Research & Report and the sustainability of them.
- Who are the policy makers & where are they getting their information.
- Better Evaluation (Culturally Sensitive).

## 5 SOLUTIONS....?

- GIVE BACK

SUPPORT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

LEGISLATION TO EFFECT THAT

- RECOGNIZE DIVERSE SOCIETY.

- REMOTE / RURAL

GET GOVERNMENT DEPT TO

- MONITOR THE

- REVIEW

- REPORT FEDERAL / STATE GOV

SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

- CONTRACT AB BUSINESS TO PROVIDE SUPPORT

- DEVELOP / PLAN / IMPLEMENT / - PROGRAM -> ASSIST SERVICES

- PARTNERSHIP WITH SUPPORT NOT CONTROLLED  
Leadership succession plan.

Solutions #1

# ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

B = rave

E = educate / education

H = heart

A = accountable

V = value

E = endure

- Localize Community solutions
- Children + young people's voices NEED to be heard
- Gather local knowledge for local solutions
- Government needs to interact with Aboriginal people's issues and act upon them
- Promoting opportunities to provide community input and feedback
- Youth council to advocate for youth issues and concerns
- Understanding of local issues and history
- Decisions for small towns aren't flexible and can't make adjustments.
- Integration of Aboriginal culture and knowledge for community + appreciation
- Decolonize and revive.

Solutions

= #3

- RAP's ENDORSED across all agencies / employer

// 1) Aboriginal members at policy levels (decision making)

- Respecting & valuing Aboriginal people & issues

- Freedom to explore & execute

- Access to high level quality info & resources



- Social Reinvestment - Aboriginal Lead.
- Relationship - Abn Australian - non Abn.  
Grass Roots → Regional → State - National
- Regional Authorities ?? Eg TERRA.
  - Resourced Authority
  - Autonomous
- Conscious shift with Aust Institutions
  - Comm state
  - both internal & external in terms of the relationship between Abn and non-Abn.
- Aboriginal Governance in non-Aboriginal structures  
Govt, NGOs, Institutions.
- Aboriginal leadership needs to be entrenched/embedded in Govt - Ensure, Authority, cultural secure/safe.
- Shift towards a positive narrative - not negative deficit

- ( Issues, barriers & concerns.)
- \* Support each other. - lack of support.
  - \* Accountability - not Government
    - Aboriginal Elected.
  - \* Cultural Appropriateness - holistic approach.
  - \* Funds aren't filtering down to the underprivileged.
  - (\* Unafraid of the grey space. ← potential solution.
  - \* Aboriginal Specific - Children to young people lead Organisation, ← best Potential Solution.
  - \* Trust - lack of.
    - Respect - lack of.
    - Asset
  - \* ~~Market~~ based community development. (ABCD).
  - \* Making <sup>a</sup> sense of belonging ← <sup>home place</sup> community
    - Identify it comes differently for Aboriginal lines.

- Aboriginal solutions in Aboriginal hands.
- Over researched (Aboriginal People)
  - hold governments accountable
  - use government evidence to utilise services/outcomes
  - de colonisation of language of services and outcomes.
  - KNOW YOUR OWN CULTURE FIRST.
    - need to know answers
    - knowledge from this generation
    - this generation has more opportunities & knowledge.
    - Other generations have help to get to where we are today.
    - Because of her we can.
    - . we have supports others don't.
- Scope of the Youth Sector*
- To Get THE SAME for OTHER Young people.  
we must see a process of decolonisation.  
of the mainstream service providers  
STRENGTH BASED from deficit based.
- ABORIGINAL PEOPLE MUST CHANGE their  
THINKING ABOUT education  
OUTCOMES OF EDUCATION...  
*see education as key to life.*

- Table #8.
- Jodie Sizer.
- 
- still  
stabs a silo approach. - "ego"  
needs to move to "eco"
- too many reports ← \$  $\xrightarrow{\text{evidence}}$  now need a framework to synthesise all the reports.
- Govt - not understanding Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing  
seeing and being.  
epistemology, ontology and axiology.
- Culture is the key - do the gov't, policy report writers - know what is meant by culture!