



West Kimberley Futures
EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES

EC-WEST OUR FIRST PRIORITIES

MARCH 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

EC-West acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Owners of the West Kimberley region. We are based in Broome and respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land on which our office is based, Yawuru Country. It is a privilege to work on Yawuru Country.

TERMINOLOGY

We use the term Aboriginal in preference to 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' or 'Indigenous', in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of the West Kimberley. No disrespect is intended to Torres Strait Islander people.

COMPILATION

This document was compiled by EC-West with input from West Kimberley Aboriginal individuals, families, communities and organisations.

VERSION CONTROL

This version: 23 February 2023

PURPOSE

EC-WEST (West Kimberley Futures – Empowered Communities) was established by West Kimberley Aboriginal leaders in June 2021. We are the neutral ‘backbone’ organisation for Empowered Communities in the West Kimberley region of Western Australia.

We hear the call of West Kimberley Aboriginal people and are passionate about collectively achieving better systems-level visibility and accessibility of services and programs, according to their priorities and needs, so that everyone can be better supported.

This is our inaugural Regional Development Agenda, which we will refer to as ‘*Our First Priorities*’. West Kimberley communities are diverse, although they face many similar challenges. This document reflects the common reform priorities for empowerment which are based on the voices of West Kimberley Aboriginal people.

We are passionate and dedicated to acting as an effective conduit across funding bodies and the community to support *Our First Priorities*. Funding bodies include governments (Australian Government, Western Australian Government, the Shire of Broome, and the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley), as well as corporate and philanthropic entities and investors.

We will use this document as our point of reference to influence and advocate for positive social reform. It will be used by West Kimberley Aboriginal people, our members, our collaborators, our partners, our Directors and our team.



Photo Credit: Tobias Titz



Figure 1: West Kimberley Aboriginal people includes individuals, families, communities and organisations within the same footprint as the Shire of Broome and the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley

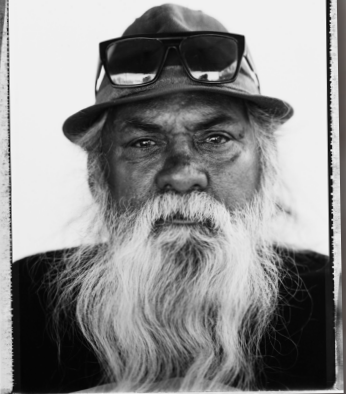
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Failure encourages
Resilience, Positivity
and Growth if we
are strong.
Lets be strong as
a community to
empower our
young people.



We need to be
better examples
for our young
ones.
parenting has
to start again



Rosie Mulligan
born at the creek near
the horse yard
Noonkanbah Station
home stead
full blood Walmajarri
& Nyikina women.



We Know what
we want
Just come and
ask us
How do we
tap into these
services

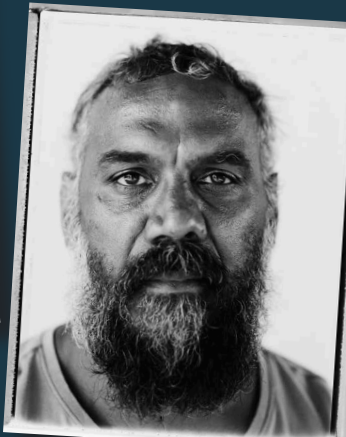
Raise your
voice not
your hand.
It's rain that
grows flowers,
not thunder.



I LIKE MY GRAND
CHILDREN STOP
CLOSE TO ME.
THEY ARE ALWAYS
WORRIED FOR ME.
THEY KEEP ME
HAPPY WHEN
I COME BACK
HOME FROM
DIALYSIS



Young mob
need their
elders to
guide them



DRIVE IN DRIVE
OUT SERVICES ARE
NEITHER
THERAPEUTICALLY
ADEQUATE OR
CULTURALLY
APPROPRIATE

INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal leaders from ten regions across Australia have joined forces to drive a common reform agenda for **Aboriginal empowerment**.

Their aim is to shift the Aboriginal affairs paradigm to increase the amount of influence and control that Aboriginal people have over decision making. The reform is about tipping the power balance between Aboriginal people and funding bodies, making funding bodies work with and for Aboriginal people. This is based on the premise that Aboriginal people have a right to development, which includes economic, social and cultural development as families, individuals and communities, and as Indigenous peoples¹.

Currently, many services and programs delivered in the West Kimberley are not resulting in clear outcomes that benefit Aboriginal people. Existing systems and processes are not fit-for-purpose, in part because communities have not been appropriately involved in identifying their priorities and needs and designing the solutions.

Development that fosters empowerment is central to structural reform, supported by getting greater value and outcomes from critical investment in Aboriginal affairs. This requires successfully elevating the voices of West Kimberley Aboriginal people to funding bodies. It has to be done in a way that puts Aboriginal people in the driver's seat, with responsibility for decision making over the decisions that impact their own lives – rather than as passive recipients of services.

Aboriginal empowerment is about:

1. Aboriginal people empowering ourselves by taking all appropriate and necessary powers and responsibilities for our own lives and futures.
2. Governments sharing, and in some cases relinquishing, certain powers and responsibilities, and supporting Aboriginal people with resources and capability building.

Source: Wunan Foundation (2015) Empowered Communities: Empowered Peoples Design Report, p.97

[1] Source: Wunan Foundation (2015) Empowered Communities: Empowered Peoples Design Report, p.iii

OUR VISION

Our vision is to empower all West Kimberley Aboriginal People, both at the structural and individual level, to **lead generational change**.

Our purpose is to empower **individuals, families** and **communities** in the West Kimberley. We work together with our **members, collaborators** and **partners** to advocate and influence positive change for West Kimberley Aboriginal People.

From a thriving and sustainable values-based Aboriginal cultural foundation, we aspire to achieve our vision by:

- Creating **governance** structures which empower communities to decide local priorities and needs
- Building strong **human, social** and **economic capital** for communities to thrive
- Developing an **evidence base** from which to measure impact

Our **role** is to:

- **Elevate** the priorities and needs of communities
- **Facilitate** joint decision making around funding for Aboriginal affairs in the West Kimberley
- **Influence** strategic policy initiatives and reforms across all levels of government
- **Connect** government implementation approaches to local and regional governance mechanisms
- **Access** a range of communication channels to advocate and influence funding bodies
- **Engage** in Aboriginal-led strategic initiatives at all levels

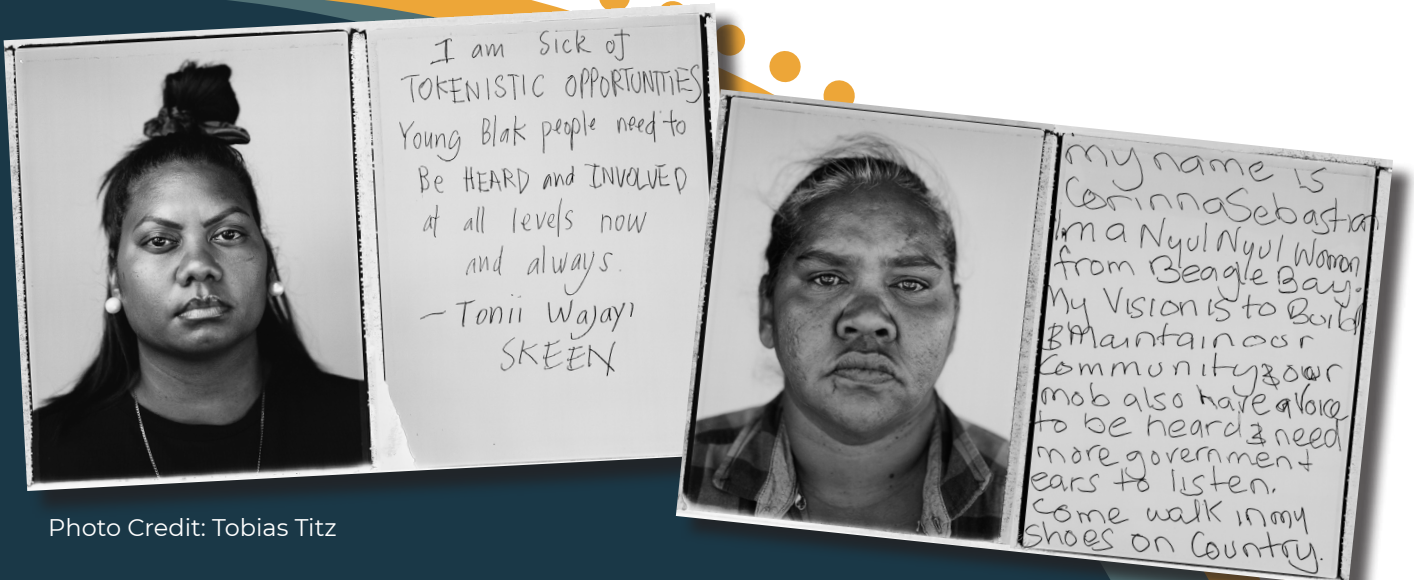


Photo Credit: Tobias Titz

OUR PEOPLE

Through our base of members, collaborators, and partners, we have ongoing mechanisms in place to engage and understand the voices of West Kimberley Aboriginal people. This is so that we can elevate their priorities and needs to funding bodies.

Our Directors actively drive *Our First Priorities*. Collectively, they possess decades of experience and expertise in a broad range of Aboriginal organisations and governance bodies with responsibility for policies, programs and services that relate to the self-determination and advancement of Aboriginal people. Our Directors are elected by our members and they come from the communities that we serve.

Our team comprises strategy and implementation staff. They are passionate leaders and change-makers that bring a diverse range of skills and knowledge. Our team is dedicated to driving transformational reform, and influencing and advocating for positive change.

We support **Empowered Young Leaders** (EYL) to ensure that young Aboriginal people in the Kimberley have a voice for engaging with funding bodies. This enables young people to make contributions to decisions that directly affect them, and to become leaders of change on behalf of their own and future generations.

EC-West Directors

- Daniel Roe
- Duane Tang Wei
- Gordon Marshall
- Janella Isaac
- Peter Murray
- Raymond Christophers
- Shelley Kneebone
- Sonia Tait (Chair)
- Tyrone Garstone

EC-West Team

- Mala Haji-Ali, Chief Operations Officer
- Martin Sibosado, Chief Strategy Officer
- Aaila Cox-Tanaka, Administration Officer
- Tonii Skeen, EYL Lead
- Mirrin Edgar, EYL Project Officer
- Esah Coffin, Project Coordinator
- Hazali D'Anna, Data Coordinator
- Erina Tanaka, Corporate Services Manager
- Jawun Secondees

Recruitment in process:

- EYL Coordinator East Kimberley
- Coordinator – Aboriginal Centre of Excellence
- Engagement Officer, Dampier Peninsula and Derby
- Engagement Officer, Fitzroy Valley

REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Empowering communities to decide local priorities and needs

Our regional governance framework enables us to elevate the **voices of West Kimberley Aboriginal people** so that they can partner and have a formal role in decision making with funding bodies according to their priorities and needs. Ultimately, we want to operate as a cohesive, strategic group in the interests of communities.

We support and engage with **Local Management Committees** (LMCs) and **local EYL networks**. These local governance bodies work with their communities to identify, understand and elevate their place-based priorities and needs. These governance bodies are under establishment.

Two-way communication between EC-West Directors, LMCs and local EYL networks is ongoing, open and transparent. This enables the exchange of information and ideas, and ensures that decision making is informed by the priorities and needs of West Kimberley Aboriginal people.

Our **'Negotiation Table'** provides the core partnership structure/interface between West Kimberley Aboriginal people and funding bodies. Through a process of **joint decision making**, a range of matters may be agreed at the Negotiation Table, including the way in which services for Aboriginal people will be funded, provided, and the outcomes expected to be achieved. Local Aboriginal stakeholders, members, collaborators, and partners are able to participate as relevant.

Our First Priorities articulates the priorities and needs of West Kimberley Aboriginal people and is a key point of reference to our governance. It provides a coherent basis for us to facilitate effective and robust dialogue between stakeholders.

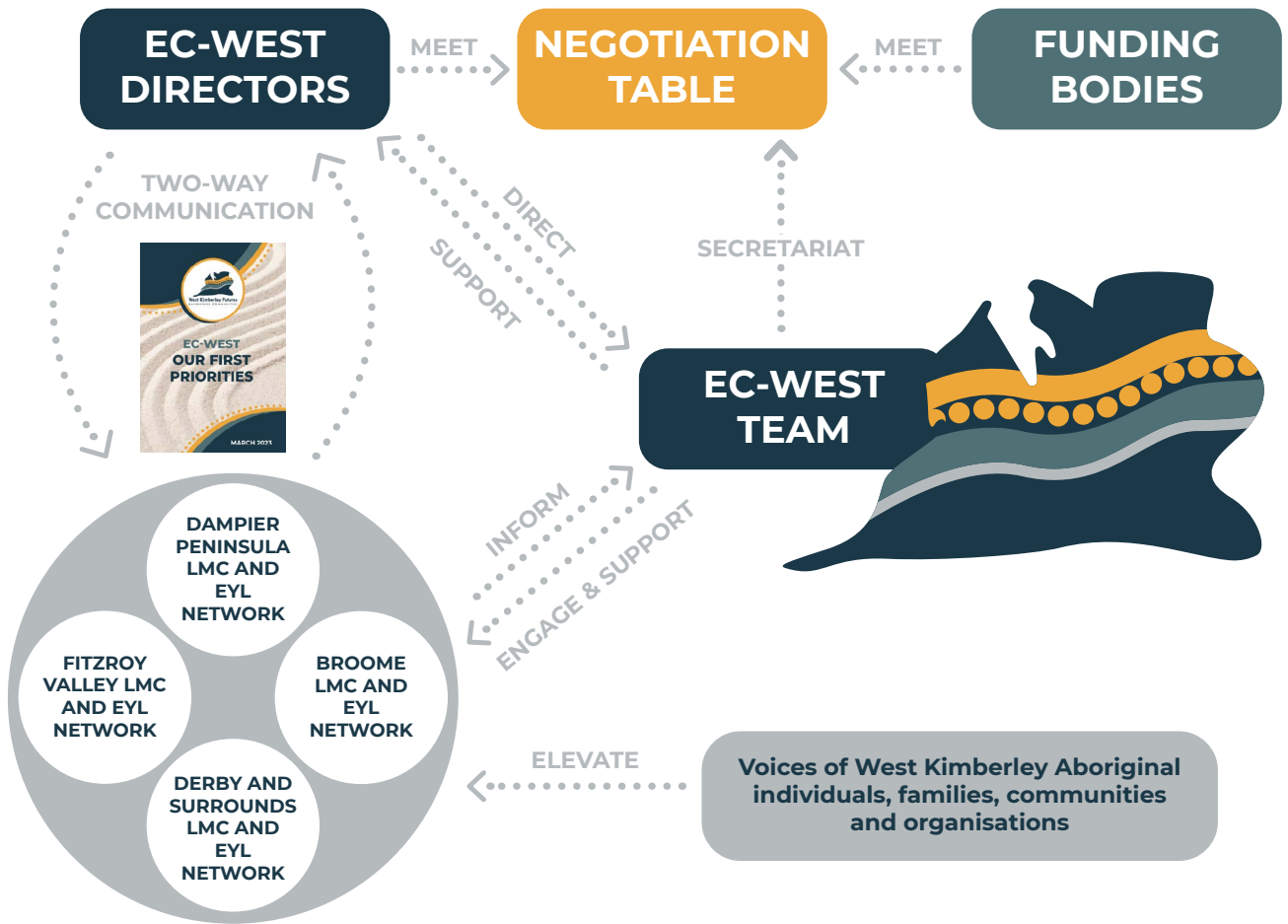


Figure 2: EC-West Regional Governance Structure (December 2022)

OUR APPROACH

Building strong human, social and economic capital for communities to thrive

Our approach is to learn from the past and then to listen, inform, engage and seek direction. We believe that in order for any reform to effectively meet the priorities and needs of West Kimberley Aboriginal people, it must be led by West Kimberley Aboriginal people.

Our ongoing consultations have told us that we want **family empowerment** to be our top shared priority for the West Kimberley region. Sitting alongside this are four others: **Empowered Young Leaders; Employment; Housing; and Safe Spaces for Young People**. These are fundamental to individual, family and community wellbeing – and all five must be addressed to achieve full realisation of *Our First Priorities*.

As a relatively young entity, an additional shared priority is to collaborate to establish regional and local **governance structures** in accordance with our Regional Governance Framework (Figure 2).



**FAMILY
EMPOWERMENT**



**EMPOWERED
YOUNG LEADERS**



EMPLOYMENT



HOUSING



**SAFE SPACES FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE**



**GOVERNANCE
STRUCTURES**

² This includes, but is not limited to, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, the WA Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy.

Our approach is characterised by **five principles**, which provide a minimum standard for implementation of *Our First Priorities* in order to achieve sustained and effective outcomes. These five principles are:

- **Place-based** – although communities may face similar challenges, initiatives must reflect local priorities and needs
- **Co-design and co-delivery** – strategies must be co-designed and co-delivered to ensure that they are culturally appropriate
- **Capability building** – sustained change and flow-on effects will be achieved by building capabilities
- **Economic development** opportunities must be leveraged by engaging local organisations in service and program delivery
- **Systems reform** is required across policy development and implementation and across all levels of government

We will use *Our First Priorities* at the Negotiation Table and through other forums to advocate and to influence decision making. We're cognisant of local, regional, state and national contexts and are confident that the work that we do will add value to these. Through our work we expect to achieve a well-integrated approach for collaborative impact; and that productivities will be gained.

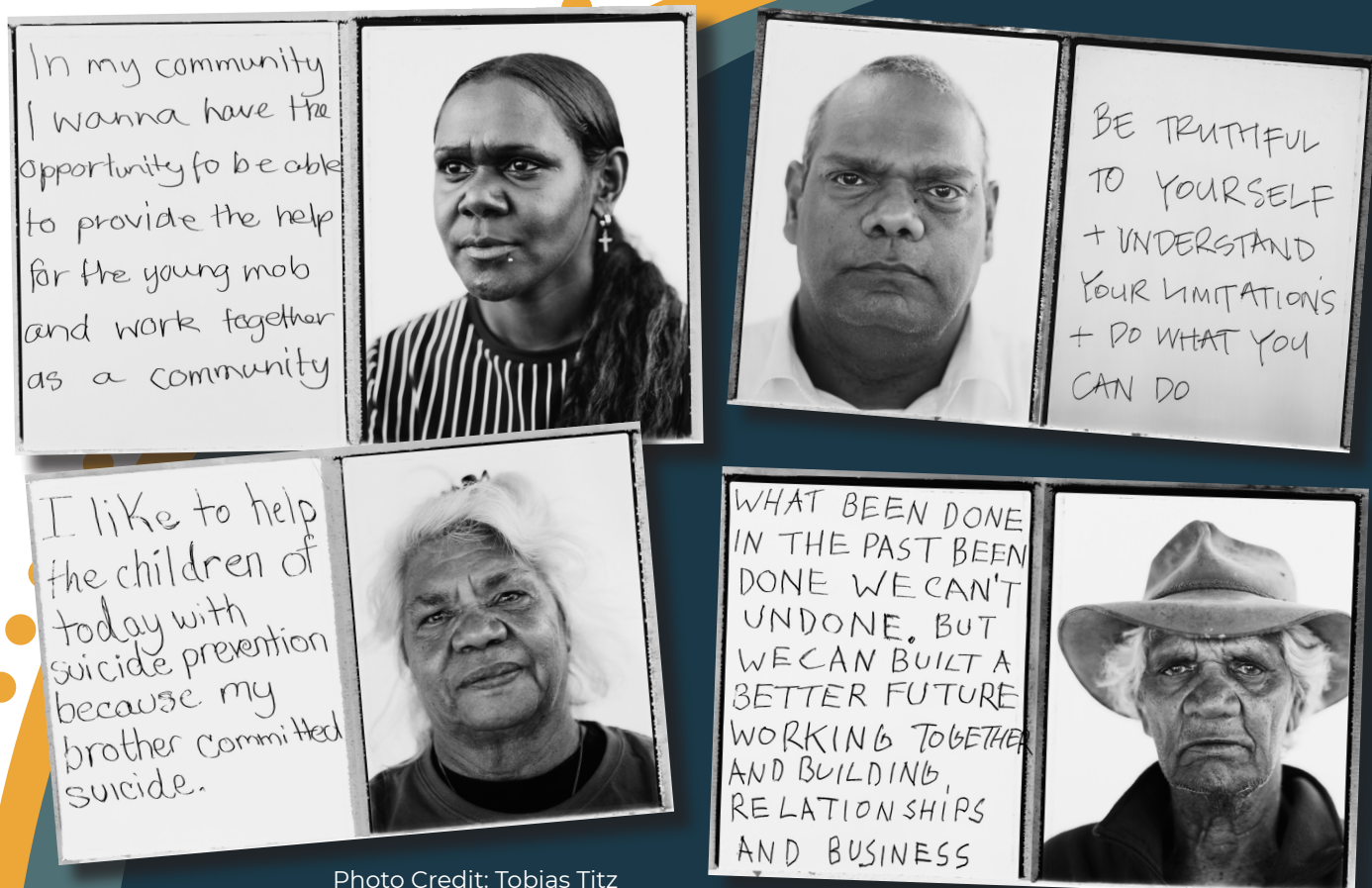


Photo Credit: Tobias Titz

OUR FIRST PRIORITIES

Our **vision, aspirations, purpose, role, principles** and **priorities** provide the guiding framework (figure 3) for *Our First Priorities*. This section describes the shared priorities for the West Kimberley region, Derby and Surrounds, the Fitzroy Valley, Broome and the Dampier Peninsula.

Our First Priorities has been informed by those with experience, that is, West Kimberley Aboriginal individuals, families, communities and organisations. Their input has been received through engagement with our members, our collaborators, our partners, our Directors and our team.

There is alignment with other efforts in the West Kimberley region and known priorities, that already have an escalation mechanism, have been excluded. A desktop review has been conducted of relevant reports, plans, policies and processes, as well as stated priorities of local and regional governance groups.

This is a 'living' document that will be reviewed and updated as we continue to listen, engage and respond to the voices of West Kimberley Aboriginal people. Continuous engagement with individuals, families, communities and organisations is essential to ensure that we remain focussed on their priorities and needs.

EC-WEST OUR FIRST PRIORITIES

Our vision is to empower all West Kimberley Aboriginal People, both at the structural and individual level, to

lead generational change

Our purpose is to empower **individuals**, **families**, and **communities** in the West Kimberley. We work together with our **members**, **collaborators** and **partners** to advocate and influence positive change for West Kimberley Aboriginal people.



GOVERNANCE

HUMAN, SOCIAL,
ECONOMIC CAPITAL

EVIDENCE BASE

Figure 3: EC-West – Guiding Framework of Our First Priorities



SHARED PRIORITY: FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

Rationale

West Kimberley Aboriginal people consistently tell us about their hopes, dreams and aspirations for children, young people, and families, both now and into the future. This is why we want to build upon the strengths and successes of innovative family empowerment models that are already in place, or which are under development, across the region.

There is a need for Aboriginal-led, trauma-informed, culturally appropriate and responsive services. Aboriginal organisations have said that in order to promote and foster generational change, services need to proactively engage with families to build confidence, resilience and pathways to trusted support. This requires a strong understanding of cultural factors, flexibility and local knowledge.

Place	Initiative
West Kimberley Region	Advocate for increased funding and resourcing for Aboriginal-led family empowerment services and programs through joint decision making
West Kimberley Region	Undertake a feasibility study for an Aboriginal Early Learning and Parenting Centre of Excellence
West Kimberley Region	Continue the Woombooriny Amboon Angarriya Partnership Initiative and expand this to other sites
Derby	Operationalise the Men's Wellness Centre
Fitzroy Crossing	Establish a safe space for men to use and seek support
Fitzroy Valley	Expand early learning mobile playgroups to Fitzroy Valley communities
Broome	Advocate for the implementation of alternative education options for children aged 14 and under



Rationale

EC-West is the ‘backbone’ supporting the EYL Project, , under a memorandum of understanding with the EYL Design Committee, Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services, Binarrri-binyja yarrowoo (BBY) (Empowered Communities East Kimberley), and the Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group.

EYL is the representative body for young Aboriginal People in the Kimberley region. They advocate and lead informed decisions by actively engaging and partnering with stakeholders that are involved in decision making and service delivery, enabling authentic co-design and collaboration.

EYL are shaping young mob in the Kimberley into leaders, improving outcomes across psychosocial determinants of health and wellbeing whilst also providing opportunities for leadership, peer-support, connection and sharing.

Place	Initiative
Kimberley Region	Undertake foundational activities so that EYL can evolve as a standalone organisation and then implement EYL activities as ‘business as usual’
Kimberley Region	Expand EYL Network membership and establish place-based EYL committees
Broome	Expand EYL Network membership and establish place-based EYL committees
Fitzroy Valley	Expand EYL Network membership and establish place-based EYL committees
Derby and Surrounds	Expand EYL Network membership and establish place-based EYL committees
Dampier Peninsula	Expand EYL Network membership and establish place-based EYL committees



SHARED PRIORITY: **EMPLOYMENT**

Rationale

There are untapped opportunities for West Kimberley Aboriginal people to create wealth and earn income through economic participation. Strengthening the local workforce and encouraging healthy relationships with business and community is essential for place-based development and community prosperity. Increasing the share of contracts for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in the West Kimberley will boost Aboriginal employment and culturally-secure service delivery.

Place	Initiative
West Kimberley Region	Implement joint decision-making to build the ACCO sector to employ more Aboriginal people.
Derby and Surrounds	Determine local place-based priority in collaboration with LMC
Fitzroy Valley	Determine local place-based priority in collaboration with LMC
Broome	Determine local place-based priority in collaboration with LMC



Rationale

Investing in safe, secure and healthy homes can have a positive return on investment in other areas such as health, disability, mental health, education and employment. Aboriginal housing needs vary across the region however there is a common need to improve housing choices and access to suitable and affordable homes.

Place	Initiative
West Kimberley Region	Examine the feasibility of establishing an Aboriginal Housing Entity for the region
Derby and Surrounds	Explore opportunities to partner with stakeholders to deliver place-based approaches
Fitzroy Valley	Support locally-led flood recovery efforts which include getting residents back to their homes and addressing their housing needs.
Broome	Establish the Broome Youth Housing Project



SHARED PRIORITY:

SAFE SPACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Rationale

West Kimberley Aboriginal people have told us that there is a need for culturally safe spaces for young people to access across the region. These spaces will enable the delivery of a range of culturally appropriate services and programs and are vital to empower Aboriginal children and young people.

Place	Initiative
West Kimberley Region	Advocate for safe spaces for young people across the region
Derby	Operationalise the Derby Safe Space
Fitzroy Crossing	Establish a youth alcohol and other drug service
Broome	Implement the Collab Project based on the healing and supportive qualities of 'Bandarrang'



Rationale

Our work is informed by an understanding of community priorities and needs, based on engagement with local Aboriginal people whereby they have a genuine opportunity to inform local priorities. Our mandate is to bring decision making closer to communities through the establishment of local and regional voice governance structures. It is vital that West Kimberley Aboriginal people have a formal role in decision making to articulate local priorities and needs, and to ensure that these are addressed.

Place	Initiative
Kimberley Region	Collaborate to establish the Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Body
Fitzroy Valley	Establish Fitzroy Valley LMC to include the Central and West Kimberley region (not including Shire of Halls Creek)
Broome	Provide secretariat to the Broome Regional Youth and Families Council
Broome	Establish LMC for Broome
Derby and Surrounds	Establish LMC for Derby and Surrounds
Dampier Peninsula	Establish LMC for the Dampier Peninsula
West Kimberley Region	Establish additional LMCs on request

WHAT'S NEXT

Monitoring and Evaluation

The EC-West Monitoring and Evaluation Plan outlines how we will **develop an evidence base from which to measure impact** of EC-West and specifically, *Our First Priorities*. We need to understand how West Kimberley Aboriginal people are impacted by our work and to learn lessons from implementation of *Our First Priorities*.

The empowerment that we are envisioning for West Kimberley Aboriginal people is ongoing and long term. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan sets out how EC-West will:

- Track, record and report on progress of implementing the Empowered Communities model in the West Kimberley, in order to demonstrate the contribution of EC-West to West Kimberley Aboriginal people and to funding bodies
- Establish processes to embed regular monitoring and adaptation activities to improve implementation within the EC-West backbone organisation
- Establish a baseline to measure outcomes and impact of EC-West and *Our First Priorities* in the long-term

The Empowered Communities model represents a **place-based collective impact** approach. Success can be difficult to observe and measure, and it can also be a challenge to isolate the contribution of EC-West from the other factors that influence progress. We will use participatory evaluation methods to ensure that the people affected by our work are actively involved in the process of defining success; and are able to provide views on progress.

Monitoring and evaluation under a collective impact approach is not a 'set and forget' practice: place-based initiatives need to be tailored to local circumstances, and so effective implementation requires an ongoing and reflective approach. We are also able to learn from other backbone organisations – we draw from national Empowered Communities guidance, as well as the work of BBY, in the East Kimberley.



Our Data


EC-West has a responsibility to collect, collate, and, as necessary, report relevant and meaningful data to West Kimberley Aboriginal people and funding bodies. We are working to establish our baseline data. This is vital to *Our First Priorities* to ensure that we are able to build and report on the priorities and needs of communities.

For example, through **systems design** we've mapped the West Kimberley service system to gain a 'bird's eye' view over child and family wellbeing, and youth wellbeing services in Broome, Bidjardanga, the Dampier Peninsula, Derby, and the Fitzroy Valley. The purpose of this is to provide greater visibility of services and what is available according to community priorities and needs. These data will support joint decision-making processes; and support greater collaboration between communities, service providers and other stakeholders.



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