

West Kimberly
Service System //
Child and Family
Wellbeing & Youth
Justice &
Wellbeing

**Addendum:
Fieldwork insights**



Project objective

How can we create better **systems level visibility and accessibility** of CFW and YWS services and programs according to the needs of children, young people and families in the the West Kimberley so that **everyone can be better supported?**





Introduction



Fieldwork insights

The insights in this report were gathered and synthesised from design research conducted during Phase 2 of the West Kimberley Service System project in July 2022, across seven location - Broome, Derby, Pandanus Park, Fitzroy Crossing, Wangkatjungka, Bidyadanga, Beagle Bay. These insights were then cross checked and validated within a series of codesign workshops completed in August-September 2022 and through the development of the systems maps.

This is an addendum that documents the voices we have heard that contribute to the systems maps. Further investigation and synthesis is recommended and would be valuable to deep dive further into the experiences shared and support further understanding of relational dynamics.

70+ one on one and group sessions - 120 people.
70+ polaroids. Seven group workshops with over 80 people attending.



Fieldwork insights

Seven overarching themes emerged from the West Kimberley fieldwork. We've included a synthesis of each theme with supporting quotes from community members. Themes have been tagged with the location(s) relevant to the insight.

Themes can be explored in further detail in [this Miro board](#).

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Locations

- BI** Bidyadanga
- BR** Broome
- DP** Dampier Peninsula
- DE** Derby
- FC** Fitzroy Crossing
- WJ** Wangkatjunka

Engagement approach

Engagement Principles

- Local understanding and culture is the core foundation
- Work with community members and service providers
- Deeply listen, acknowledge, and integrate people's experience, views, and embed their decisions
- Evaluate the services available according to the above needs, views and decisions
- Together visually weave a 'systems map' of the safety net
- Develop a usable shared decision making tool that is accessible to everyone to inform their decisions.

Considerations

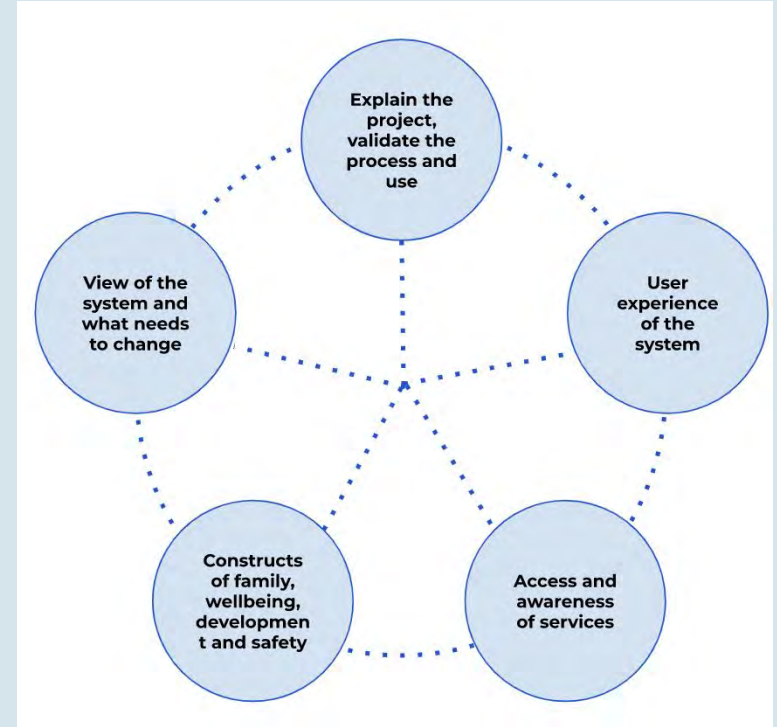
- There are deep personal and community scars, ongoing violence and trauma, extreme disempowerment and intergenerational trauma - listen to and respect the experience of this
- Deeply respect that service providers have spent years building relationships and whilst independent in the research that we are doing, we represent EC West and their partners
- Acknowledge that community and service providers have been over engaged
- For some we may represent the 'system'
- Traits of engagement include building rapport, informality and flexibility, place based and fitting into local dynamics and sensitivities.



Design research method

The sessions were run as flexible yarning sessions that were adapted to fit different circumstances, people and ways of navigating community dynamics, time available, the sensitivity of issues and what naturally came up within the conversation dynamic within place.

The structure of the sessions was circular and utilised journey mapping as a key technique to map the individual experience of the system, crossing over the key aspects identified in this diagram.



Design research method

Systems design: Research Method

When we developed the West Kimberley System Design, we engaged participants that give us the **most amount of variance of experience across the whole system - a breadth view - that can then be layered with more detail over time.** By doing this we gathered many different experiences and then overlay them to surface patterns and commonalities across peoples experience, and to access different views across a wide range of cohorts. We integrated this with collected information about services to structure the maps.

Please note, design research, particularly systems level design research builds experience based research into shared identification of action based responses and shared decision making. It is not in substitute of academic research.

Key support methods and techniques

- Collective impact
- IAP2 model
- Participatory design (co-design)
- Service design / Customer journey mapping.

Synthesis method

- Ecosystem mapping of relationships and connections of themes
- Journey mapping and affinity mapping
- Key insights distilled and relationally understood across cohorts
- Re-interrogated from a system view by blocker/gap/strength/enabler

Design research method

Limitations

- *Time to deepdive into the synthesis process - this gives a snapshot of the insights provided*
- *Randomisation of participants within system design gives a whole of system view however does not provide depth into archetypal or cohort specific insights*
- *Weighting to service providers (many of who were locals) in Bidyadanga*
- *Weighting to community members (and no outreach service providers) within Wangkatjunka*



Service model

The way in which service models and programs are designed directly impacts the experience of the system of communities and frontline workers. There are key aspects that were raised across the fieldwork that are identified as lacking or key to further service delivery and shifting systemic issues.

- **Locally led solutions**
- **Place based approach**
- **Centralised versus outreach**
- **Cultural safety and appropriateness**
- **Social Emotional Wellbeing + Mental Health**
- **Regional policy and funding**



WJ

We have the vision.
We need support to implement.

The community have an informed strategic view of the system and their collective experience of it however do not feel supported and empowered to take action. Community-led decision making involves everyone listening, reflecting and acting upon local voices and turning the system upon its head. The community are clear about what they need and want, with a desire to build back the region and develop into the future.

Identified needs included:

- kids infrastructure and related programs
- public free bus to town
- access to funding pathways for housing and remote service provision
- training and local employment
- fix and maintain the housing (and provide more)
- easier accreditation for on the job training and real wages (not CDP)
- Build and enable enterprise off local skills, initiatives and activities

DP

Community wants to engage and contribute to issues they care about, but lack the resources to.

The system is spending money on reactive services instead of supporting or backing locally-led approaches and innovations. 5 out of 5 participants in Beagle Bay rolled off a long list of innovative ideas they had to make the community better, however lacked support and resourcing to do so. This was echoed within a workshop with 20+ WAAP members around clear, strategic and innovative ways forward.



“We don't need the government. We need resources and support to make our own way.”

WJ

FC

Family want to take part in designing services within their community and are clear on how to do so.

Community want to, and are able to, design their wrap-around services with the family and children at the centre. They know how to, are ready to, and want support to do so.

The community were clear in stating that the solution to effective service delivery is being family-centred, rather than focusing on individual-centred care. Family offer the ongoing wellbeing, safety, connection, and home that services cannot provide.

There is an alternative and it is locally-led. It is well articulated and a strong voice as to how to deal with the problems going forward, services [and government] just need to listen and act accordingly.

WJ

Strength // Community action to get the health clinic was an effective measure

The Wangkatjunka Health Clinic provides an example of the significant difference local service provision can make. The community acted on their own behalf and engaged with the media to publicise health issues and lack of services and bring about the recent allocation of the health clinic to Wangkatjunka.

Simultaneously it is an example of how difficult it is for remote communities to be heard - 'it takes Aboriginal people dying' was the way in which the lack of remote services was described.

“We are so lucky to have now got two nurses based here permanently. Before that we had one doctor or nurse coming 2 or maybe 3 times but only for limited hours, so after 2pm you couldn't get any emergency support. Even when here it was often to see patients who had booked in.”





& Projects

We know what
we want

Just come and
ask us

How do we
tap into these
services



FC

Recognition of Fitzroy Pride is needed to make space for local, strengths-based solutions.

Fitzroy is a strong and proud town - yet there is no focus on its strengths. These strengths include cultural identity, a strong and clear local voice and vision, capacity to build local solutions, understanding of issues, and ability to walk in both indigenous and western constructing ('walking in two worlds') to develop solutions.

Beyond this participants from Fitzroy Crossing often feel their wings are clipped when building locally led solutions..

“People come here, services and politicians and they don’t see the strength of this town and these communities...Whole lot of really valuable things about how Aboriginal people connect, look after each other, connect with Country...Kimberley people walked to the beat of their own drum for a long time, that’s why community is so strong, it has strong governance.”
[Fitzroy Crossing]



FC

Flexible, informal and place-based approaches are effective in creating greater access to services and maintaining relationships with community members.

Individuals are forced to access services within formal/structural service models such as medical centres, formal structures or scheduled appointments in offices, significant admin expectations and secondary aspects such as overcoming barriers such as transport.

Flexible informal engagement centred around practical needs, children, creative hobbies or livelihood within welcoming shared spaces is more effective, builds trust and relationships, and opens pathways to discuss needs based issues or support. This is exemplified in Mankaja Arts Centre and Women's Resource Centre (MWRC), however it is often underutilised. Further informal place based approaches are needed to ensure accessibility and effectiveness.

"We act as liaisons for our artists to connect into other services. This can often go unforeseen, it is informal and that is the aspect of it that works"

BI

Service providers are demonstrating value of the place-based approach and creating momentum for effective wrap around care.

In Bidyadanga, there is a sense of momentum around service delivery and a shared service model within a place-based approach. There is a spectrum of integration and coordination of service providers (in town and from out of town) including drive in drive out providers building partnerships with local community organisations.

Organisations are starting to support each other by sharing resources, aligning approaches, supporting each other's outcomes and leveraging each other to deliver wrap-around support. This approach demonstrates the value of place-based collaboration and increases the effectiveness of service delivery

EXAMPLES

- *Service providers signing in at the admin office*
- *Outreach providers using the Family Centre*
- *Embedded in the day to day workings and family's practical needs (mobile laundry service)*
- *Drive in drive out services practicing effective collaboration.*



Centralised vs outreach

BR

Service providers that were working flexibly in community were seeing the benefit.

Services that often go to where people are or provide flexible outreach options instead of expecting individuals to come to the service location were seeing the benefits of this approach.

Positive outreach and shared community spaces where services visit and engage people informally or 'where they are at' and help to build trust and service relationships also were an evidenced strength.

Services that commit to visiting remote communities consistently and regularly were seeing results despite the perceived 'extra time'. This is particularly true for statutory services.

WJ

Service providers are taking a cookie-cutter approach to outreach, rather than designing for the remote context.

The ability to get support out in Wangkatjunka is very limited and the models are not built to serve this context, the needs of the community, or the reality of the situation. This is true on a spectrum of services, from NDIS access to housing management. This contributes to corruption and mismanagement of funds and resources, especially with the lack of service visibility and monitoring.

"All funding goes to all services however they don't come out. We don't get any services."

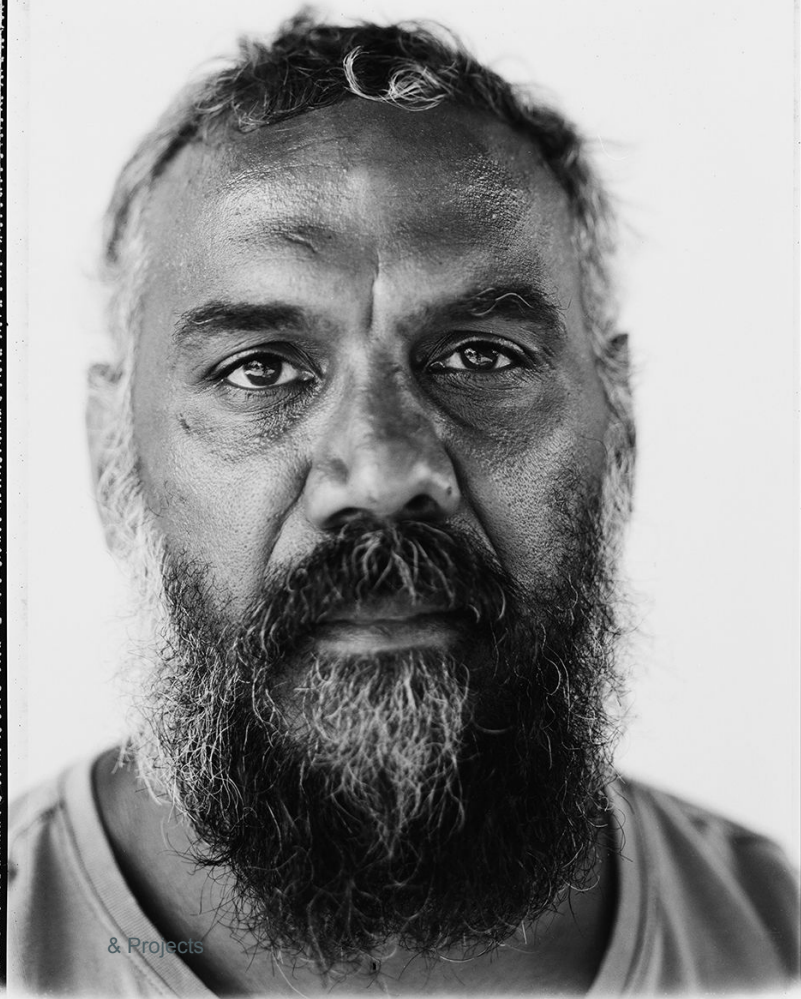
BI

Lack of accessible, consistent and/or culturally appropriate drive-in drive-out service provision.

Drive-in drive-out service providers have good intentions but are often ineffective due to lack of holistic consideration of community needs. Common accessibility issues include lack of understanding of local culture, lack of relationships with the community, inadequate communication channels, limited scheduling, and distant planning structures.

The consequences are significant and hinder kids development, worsen individual's issues due to limited access, or have significant financial or structural consequence on the community.





& Projects

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



Centralised vs outreach

SERVICE MODEL

BI

Mobility of people is at odds with the generally fixed structure of service providers centralised and outreach models - this isn't best suited to their needs or conducive to beneficial outcomes.

Due to multiple factors (cultural, social habits, housing circumstances, changes in relationships or service needs), individuals are moving back and forth between Bidgi, larger towns and smaller communities. Transience becomes a significant factor in the ability to provide or access consistent services due to aspects such as changing addresses, difficulty in contacting, don't have a phone, change numbers, or miss appointments.

There are multiple consequences at the individual level (care plans are difficult to implement) and the community level (with people visiting from outstations or smaller towns putting pressure on local services) and for service providers being able to address issues or meet service outcomes effectively.

DP

BR

Attending centralised services have significant impact on where people live and significant consequence for family and wellbeing.

The centralisation of services coupled with the lack of 'seats' in a service, then combined with the lack of transport options makes services significantly inaccessible and impacts the life decisions and wider family. This was particularly prevalent for many people's experience of dialysis.

“Our mum has to live in Broome because that's where dialysis is. This breaks my heart.

*She is just there in a room waiting to die. She wants to be here, on Country”
[Dampier Peninsula]*

SERVICE MODEL



Centralised vs outreach

SERVICE MODEL

BI

Informal communication dynamics can make it difficult for external service providers to effectively coordinate and deliver support.

Communication dynamics in the community and between service providers are fluid and sometimes invisible. This has many strengths in how people engage within the community and work more informally together, however also makes it difficult to navigate service provision as an external provider, particularly within traditional structural approaches to service delivery.

Building off the place-based model and resourcing these effectively supports familiar engagement models. This builds local relationships whilst supporting external services and expertise to engage with the community effectively.

“There is no one way. You need a variety; you need to know who the audience is. Sometimes you have to go door knocking. Advertising on FB pages or promoting it at the store. We also have community champions model too. Informally. There are a few people who have good power within the community. Posters on wall, community board. Not one size fits all”

WJ

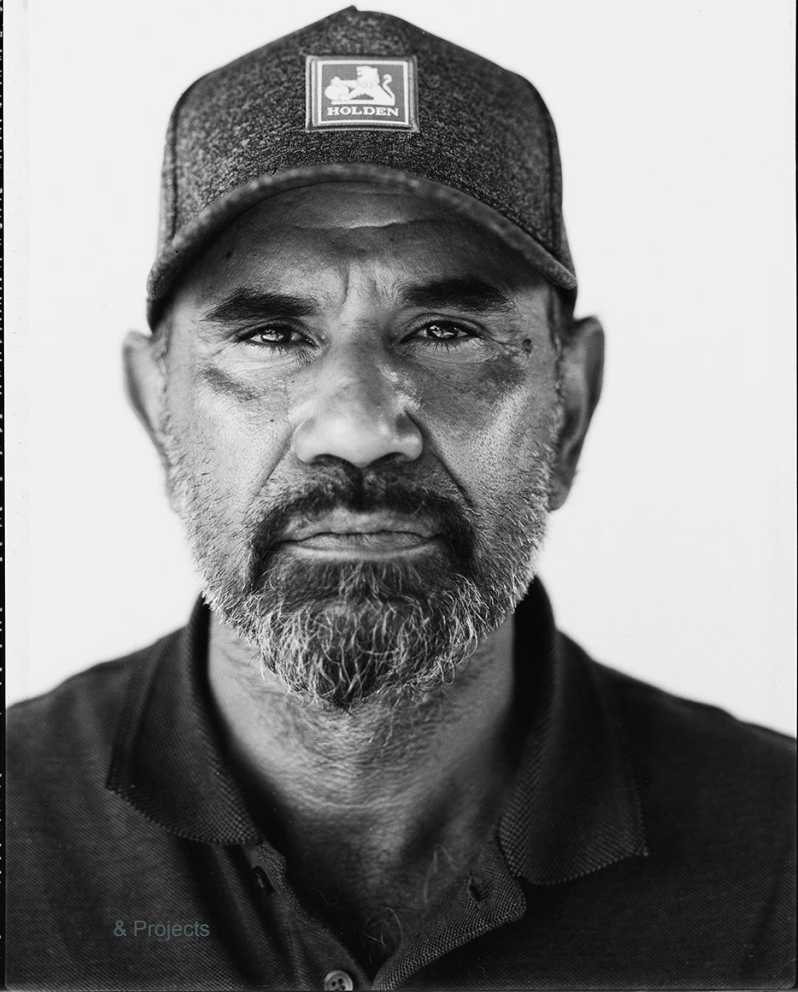
Service visibility is especially critical for visiting services. Without access, the consequence is compounding and ripple through the community.

There are compounding effects due to lack of visibility of key services. Visiting service providers often have unclear protocols and processes on how to access them which limit their ability to engage respectfully and effectively with communities. This is exacerbated for visiting services due to both cultural and logistical factors and complexity of delivering services in remote communities. Individuals lack clarity on when service providers will be in the community, how to access them, and how to maintain ongoing contact. As this is cumulative over many services the impacts compound and escalate for communities.

“They come to make themselves look good here - come and look pretty - we need actual help”

SERVICE MODEL





& Projects

I UNDERSTAND YOU
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ME
DON'T TALK ABOUT US
JUST TALK TO US



BR

Cultural safety is a barrier to service access and provision.

One organisation described cultural awareness as the 'safety to be seen'. Many participants noted that a lack of cultural understanding negatively impacts service access, delivery and decision-making. Culture is nuanced, not always visible and takes time to understand. Beyond respecting culture, culture needs to be embedded into service design, delivery and engagement methods. If people do not feel culturally safe they will not access services.

While some Western run services had a good reputation working within cultural frameworks, it was often due to a single individual's capacity, approach and personal relationships. High staff turnover coupled with time needed to understand cultural factors exaggerates these issues as the depth of cultural understanding and development of personal relationships is diminished every time someone leaves.

The lack of cultural understanding and safety contributes to resentment towards non-Aboriginal run services and workers.

BR

Even when culture is acknowledged, there is a lack of depth and commitment to fully integrated service models and delivery.

Many service providers claim they are committed to develop culturally appropriate services yet there is still an expectation that this augments a Western paradigm. This approach involves boxing Aboriginal culture, protocol, social and economic structures and ways of managing situations and community into a western model rather than allowing it to lead and guide service provision.

Furthermore, this often does not take into account differences in language, mob, and cultural protocols across the Kimberley, different communities and the way in which they interact, songlines or connected/disconnected issues facing different communities. This contributes to smaller towns and communities experience a homogenisation of service delivery that is neither culturally safe or relevant.

"The culturally appropriate program delivers better outcomes, yet they are not the mandated program even though 80% of our clients are Aboriginal"



Cultural safety and appropriateness

DE

Community liaisons bridge two worlds however often are not fully supported or representative of the community.

Community liaison roles bridge two worlds by helping community access services and embed cultural understanding into mainstream service. However, although local knowledge is deemed essential, there is a distinct lack of funding, training and financial support for it.

The other perpetuated myth about Aboriginal liaison roles is that they can speak for all Aboriginal people. Some non-Aboriginal-run organisations employ ALOs and this can be a 'tick the box' scenario as opposed to necessarily embedding cultural understanding and safety into service design and delivery or acknowledging, honouring and embedding the cultural diversity across the Kimberley.

"I became a community liaison officer and was doing locally led programming. I began to explore traditional healers and western medicine, wondering how we incorporate this. I tried to bring these together through programming"

EXAMPLE

Some services will use an Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO) as the default go-to for cultural engagement. Many ALOs are unable to effectively communicate in the correct language or understand the cultural dynamics related to an individual or communities issues.





Cultural safety and appropriateness

SERVICE MODEL

FC

More culturally integrated education is a missing link in the Fitzroy Valley.

While education is seen as a vital link out of poverty, and as important to navigating 'white man's world', the experience of mainstream education in the Fitzroy Valley is not culturally integrated or safe and leaves kids feeling unseen, alienated, stupid, or incapable. One example of this is kids having to tell their story over and over again (i.e having to explain kinship) to a teacher or being given visual aptitude tests based on Western visual icons (from urban environments they have never been to or cultures they have never experienced). This is disempowering and adds to kids looking for other options to engage or socialise, disassociating from the school model and losing access to education and child development supports.

There are programs such as Yiramalay and Yiramin that are proving alternative culture based models can be highly successful.

“Kids are drilled every term on what kinship is, they have to explain over and over [to the new teacher] and absorb the shock and wonder of the white person”

SERVICE MODEL

BR

The education system alienates and disempowers kids from an early age.

Low number and literacy levels are often referred to in the Kimberley as a failing of the education system. This is talked about as a point of shame and pain for people. The education system often assesses children within Western paradigms of learning without taking into account other forms of knowledge, other ways of learning, natural brilliance or celebrating their rich culture and history. This disengages children inside a system that is constantly reflecting failure back at them.

In secondary school they are channelled through easy and basic programs, and are rarely encouraged to set their sights on University. Furthermore, kids are often taught that if they want to succeed they must learn white man ways and are encouraged to 'code switch', or unlearn their way of speaking and relating. This environment perpetuates shame through racism and discrimination.

“I left (education profession) because of systemic issues – the curriculum is irrelevant to our mob”





Cultural safety and appropriateness

SERVICE MODEL

BI

More consideration is needed to understand and navigate the diverse cultural dynamics and needs of communities.

Service providers acknowledged the importance of culturally integrated service provision through aspects such as trips on country, cultural education and community-based activities. However barriers remain around a lack of understanding of skin groups and other social and cultural dynamics that may affect definitions of support or appropriate ways in which support is given.

Additionally, work is needed to understand and embed the strengths in local frameworks of wellbeing, the diversity of culture, and how to navigate these dynamics and support mechanisms.

*"I have found it tricky - what is health?
Blended and community led. 34% of
[the gap between indigenous and non
indigenous] people in terms of social
determinants of health. Health status
= education, income, and employment.*

*[However these are] Inherent white
constructs.*

*Can you improve health from a
cultural lens?"*

SERVICE MODEL



Mental health vs SEWB

SERVICE MODEL

BR

FC

WJ

The perception of mental health and wellbeing as distinctly different results in inadequate treatment that is not culturally appropriate.

Mental health and wellbeing were commonly seen as distinctly different in Broome, Fitzroy Crossing and Wangkatjunka. Mental health was seen through a Western structure requiring individual diagnosis, leaning on prescribed medication and disruptive triage processes. The common approach involves treating the individual symptoms rather than root cause, the causal environmental and social factors. Meanwhile, wellbeing was seen as more accessible and through a cultural lens with thanks to programs like Social Emotional Wellbeing and the 'Wheel'.

The lack of a family-integrated and culturally connected approach, coupled with shame, contributes to people only accessing treatment in crisis situations when options and autonomy are greatly reduced.

If support is finally received at the acute stage it can feel like a cultural juxtaposition to the family approach, stigmatising mental health within the community. This increases the likely experience of trauma in the system and continuation of crisis 'service loops'.

“There is a real blinkered view of what mental health is or isn't.

The person's mental health doesn't get in the way, the mental health system gets in the way”
[Broome]

SERVICE MODEL





my name is
Corinna Sebastian
I'm a Nyul Nyul Woman
from Beagle Bay.
My vision is to Build
& Maintain our
Community & our
mob also have a voice
to be heard & need
more government
ears to listen.
Come walk in my
shoes on Country.

Regional policy and funding

SERVICE MODEL

FC

A top down approach is undermining the local economy and isn't aligned with the community's needs.

Many local people are passionately invested in the future of Fitzroy Crossing and are active in collaborating and building networks to support local investment, capacity building and empowerment. However, government policy was seen to undermine these local efforts through regional representative bodies and funding structures that do not engage locally and are seen as arbitrary. .

Channelling funding through to external resourcing and initiatives in Broome and Perth reduces social and economic participation at a local level, and was seen as deteriorating the social fabric. Many people in Fitzroy Crossing can recall times when they had access to better programs and services within local models. The community are frustrated that this was taken away and want this back.

EXAMPLE: ATSIC, CDEP policy changes, alcohol restriction laws, the intervention, and disbanding Fitzroy Futures are locally associated with rates of poverty, addiction and other social issues increasing.

SERVICE MODEL

WJ

The system worked before and empowered local access and economy.

A common view is that services and opportunities used to exist and supported the local economy, however, services were taken away and the whole service system has deteriorated significantly.

With the removal of decision making power, CDEP structure, inability to apply directly for funding or develop solutions, participants felt the community no longer has autonomy and the local economy suffered.

A key driving factor is the external regulation (from Broome, Perth, and Canberra) and 'drip down' decision making, and non-local service providers being awarded contracts in the community. A consequence is continued dismantling of the local socio-economic fabric and stretching the community's resilience.

"They used to have services in community like plumbing, maintenance and repairing. Some young men were working in that. Now we must wait for MWW they take forever"



FC

Services centred out of Broome are not meeting the needs of the Fitzroy Valley region or being managed distributed effectively through local organisations

The centralised service delivery model is seen to be failing the Fitzroy Valley. Funding is being filtered through Broome - which is 4.5 hours away (and a world away culturally) this is compounded by the externalisation of local policy and strategic decision making.

There was a clear message from locally-based services in Fitzroy that the region is not adequately funded or resourced to meet the needs of the town and surrounding communities and that funding should be distributed directly to the region, not through centralised services in Broome.

This was compounded by the lack of efficient management resourcing, service coordination, local training and employment opportunities for people by key local ACCHOs and external services delivery that is not grounded in local context, community and cultural understanding.

This impacts the quality of relationships between centralised and locally based services in Fitzroy Valley. With locally based services and community feeling alienated from the DiDo services, and DiDo services not feeling well connected to Fitzroy Crossing.

*“Support the services who are HERE.
Supporting those guys on the ground not
those that drive in and out.*

*Who gets funded to service Fitzroy?
We don't know”*



BR

External funding structures inhibit service collaboration and further perpetuate 'siloes working' and inefficient overlap in service delivery.

Insecure and inadequate funding streams combined with high staff turnover results in service providers focusing on maintaining cyclical funding rather than delivering high impact services and/or outcomes. One service noted that funding multiple individual services absorbs funding dollars through CEO/admin and head office expenses, as opposed to this money being spent on the ground.

Unsustainable funding models create competition between service providers, rather than collaboration, and hinders long term progress.

BR

The structure of requirements for service delivery puts more pressure on individuals and informal support mechanisms. This prevents reaching longer term outcomes.

A number of statutory and non-statutory services had ways of working around the system that were seen as gentler, more patient and tailored to the individual user. This required more time, energy and resourcing which was almost always outside the scope of that service.

Informal relationships and work arounds create dependencies on individuals and increases the chance of staff burnout and turnover. When relationships are lost, so are those informal support mechanisms and trust in the organisation.



WJ

Access to funding and other resources is unknown and so the community's hands are tied.

There is no clear access to funding or service accountability to the community for funds received. No new houses (that were promised) or a working waitlist means the community miss out on upgrades and the community's needs are not addressed. This is exacerbated by existing houses not being maintained.

"Housing - we miss out on it. We hear other communities got 20 more houses. All these things - you need to tap into these services."

BI

Funding structures are not supporting locally appropriate or strength-based service provision.

Funding structures often do not support service collaboration, perpetuate band-aid approaches, and can add to competitiveness or service ambiguity. As service providers try to fill the gaps and go beyond their scope of funding, support becomes less visible (and therefore not measurable) to acquittal processes, continued funding and impact measurement - despite it working well. This puts strain on services, can make reaching long term outcomes difficult and limits holistic support for the community.

"Success doesn't mean that you get more money"



Service delivery

Service delivery issues were common across locations that created significant barriers to service users being able to access services and get the support they need.

- **Empowerment**
- **Service accessibility**
- **Relevant support**
- **Service blockers**
- **Staffing**





Empowerment

BI

BR

DP

FC

WJ

DE

Past experiences and the lack of trust developed through these experiences hinder future access.

People are used to being let down by the system. They have seen programs and people come and go, they have been promised things that have not come to fruition too many times. There is an expectation that they will be taken advantage of, not listened to or disappointed.

This creates distance between community and services. It reduces trust in any service or individual who are part of the system and reduces engagement and therefore wellbeing.

There are examples of locally led solutions that have developed alternatives and acknowledge the baseline is a point of distrust of services. This has fuelled the grassroots organisation WAAPI who have established a family-led approach that has been well evidenced on the Dampier Peninsula and is currently scaling.

“They get given a million dollars to hand out a million dollars. They make their money whether there is an outcome or not.”



Empowerment

BR

Legal education is needed to help people understand their rights.

There is a distinct lack of legal education, people do not know their rights and therefore become easy targets and victims of the system. Lack of legal education contributes to manipulation of legal powers such as letting police to enter homes (when they don't need to) or giving over mobile phones (when not required to).

Other examples include signing statutory declarations without understanding what they are signing or why; giving over parental duties to the state without realising the long term nature of this, agreeing to crimes or confirming situations that were false. Beyond this accepting harassment, discrimination and brutal behaviour as 'normal' and without recourse.

This increases the power divide between Indigenous and non Indigenous people and perpetuates systemic discrimination.

*“They say hand over your phone
they do, let me into your home,
they do.*

They don't know their rights.

*That would just not happen to
white people”*



DORA ST

GUY ST

← YOUTH CENTRE

← BROOME STATE
EMERGENCY SERVICE

← TENDERSPOT BUTCHER

← OFFICE STAR



Empowerment

W3

Access to funding and other resources is unknown and so the community's hands are tied.

There is no clear access to funding or service accountability to the community for funds received. No new houses (that were promised) or a working waitlist means the community miss out on upgrades and the community's needs are not addressed. This is exacerbated by existing houses not being maintained.

“Housing - we miss out on it. We hear other communities got 20 more houses. All these things - you need to tap into these services.”





Service accessibility

BR

Stigma and shame is a common barrier to accessing services.

Shame was often cited as a barrier to accessing services and an important factor to overcome. This was seen predominantly in kids over 10 years old and continues right through to adulthood.

There are many examples of how negative perceptions of Indigenous people are repeatedly reflected back to them and that there are a lack of opportunities for kids to feel proud of who they are and their experience.

Peer support, peer to peer education and community based models were identified by participants as a positive way to engage with young people and provide strong role models that can demonstrate positive behaviours such as being vulnerable, working with mental health and overcoming barriers.

BR

Insufficient preventative services perpetuates the perception of mental health as a crisis service, and does not build family capability.

Mental health services are generally provided and accessed at the acute stage, however access to those services can be hindered by long waitlists.

There is limited investment in providing formal preventative services, thereby consolidating the perception of mental health sector as an apex service that is only accessed in crisis.

More support and training is needed to build family and community capability to resolve mental health issues within the family, rather than relying on formal services to intervene at a crisis point or in an inappropriate structural manner.

“Safety is a barrier that can stop people accessing a service. They may not approach the service because of who works there, or they may feel too much shame to approach the topic.”



Service accessibility

BR

Lack of phones, data and internet access has significant compounding effect particularly when combined with low digital literacy.

Lack of wifi/internet or phone access impacts people's ability to access services and services being able to deliver - this has significant consequences. For people living in rural communities this issue is intensified as wifi connection is less stable, and the reliance on drive-in, drive-out services means there is often no way to stay connected between visits.

Another consideration is the low technical literacy of the community. Services are often designed based on the assumption of moderate-high technical literacy, creating systemic injustice due to inability to access or use essential services (that are more and more online). Accessibility issues have a domino effect as alerts and appointments get missed, issues do not get raised, and crises intensify.

EXAMPLE : Lack of wifi access has an impact in the use of a suicide prevention app because it needs data to run.

BR

Comprehension needs are not being properly assessed and accounted for in service provision effectively.

When individuals need to make an informed decision or complete an assessment, there is limited capacity to comprehend the information (specifically language) and limited culturally appropriate support to do so.

Hearing, disability (FASD), autism, literacy and writing difficulties, and dropping behind in formal education are often under assessed and estimated in the community, resulting in lack of diagnosis, awareness of these issues and appropriate response across services and often requires individuals to self report accessibility needs. This puts individuals at further disadvantage.

“The client also gets sent a letter in high English, in a language which is completely inaccessible – which we complain about regularly to HO - it states that the client has been appointed a private lawyer and states the fee for that lawyer – even though it says that it is covered, it can be misunderstood. That person then may not engage, or think they have to pay.”



Service accessibility

BI

Administrative barriers are hindering access to essential services, and puts the onus on service providers to fill the gaps.

Paperwork is a barrier to accessing many services and creates a compounding effect that ripples across housing, financial support, employment and wellbeing. For instance, many services require ID, birth certificate and proof of address which many individuals do not have. In addition to this paperwork, individuals are expected to have digital access, reading and writing literacy to understand what is needed from them. The significance of these service barriers becomes discriminatory as people cannot access their right to support.

This contributes to the load put on to staff that is unaccounted for as paperwork and administrative support can be hefty for service providers. Some organisations are developing methods to better include the background support needed through collaboration, wrap-around support and fixing the problem at the source.

“The whole money story is unbelievable. We don’t have a bank in the community and people cannot transfer money without online banking”

SERVICE DELIVERY

FC

Lack of ID and basic service access creates barriers across many services and severely impacts people's lives.

Lack of identification is inflated due to cultural barriers and practical inaccessibility of paperwork and bureaucratic processes. The impacts are far-reaching and can contribute to cycles of poverty making it hard for people to access banking, medical services, employment, utilities, appropriate legal intervention or the ability to provide kinship care.

Once people have ID and other service access (such as log in details) there are also issues in keeping track of it - this can be due to losing it, not remembering a password, or losing access to the original phone number or email account it was linked to.

“CDP will come out once a month or once every two months to help people do those registrations, sometimes with BDM, DoT and Legal Aid. They help people with bulk applications and help print certificates on the day. But that's not enough, they need extra support. It would be good if someone had funding to do just those applications”



Service accessibility

BI

Informal communication dynamics can make it difficult for external service providers to effectively coordinate and deliver support.

Communication dynamics in the community and between service providers are fluid and sometimes invisible. This has many strengths in how people engage within the community and work more informally together, however also makes it difficult to navigate service provision as an external provider and particularly for traditional structural approaches to service delivery.

Building off the place-based model and resourcing it effectively will support familiar engagement models. This will build local relationships whilst supporting external services and expertise to engage with the community effectively.

“There is no one way. You need a variety; you need to know who the audience is. Sometimes you have to go door knocking. Advertising on FB pages or promoting it at the store. We also have community champions model too. Informally. There are a few people who have good power within the community. Posters on wall, community board. Not one size fits all”

WJ

Service visibility is especially critical for visiting services. Without access, impacts are compounding and ripple throughout the community.

There are compounding effects due to lack of visibility of key services. Visiting service providers often have unclear protocols and processes on how to access them which limit their ability to engage respectfully and effectively with communities. This is exacerbated for visiting services due to both cultural and logistical factors and complexity of delivering services in remote communities.

Individuals lack clarity on when service providers will be in the community, how to access them, and how to maintain ongoing contact. As this is cumulative over many services the impacts compound and escalate for communities.

“They come to make themselves look good here - come and look pretty - we need actual help”



Service accessibility

DP

Limited transport options reduces accessibility to services and programs.

The Dampier Peninsula is located 2 hrs away from Broome with no public transport system. People need to rely on their own means of transport which is difficult with the rising cost of petrol and limited access to drivers, cars and mechanics. This not only limits access to essential services like health and food, but also personal empowerment needs such as employment and training opportunities.

WJ

It is stacked against kids to get to school with the lack of support and transport infrastructure.

Inadequate infrastructure and support for schooling has a significant impact on the likelihood of kids getting to school. The distance, early bus schedule, bus unreliability, limited other transport options, no breakfast, and no money for food are all compounding factors that make it difficult for kids to engage. Additionally, irrelevant education contributes to negative attitude and declining interest and motivation to get to school.

***“There is no public transport.
It's each man for themselves.”
[Dampier Peninsula]***

***“Have to wake up at 5am, have
breakfast, get ready, drive to bus stop in
morning. Kids tired, can't concentrate,
long day. Miss bus cos they are
sleeping....”
[Bawooroolga]***





Relevant support

DE

No crisis support for kids in Derby means they are in a constant state of vulnerability.

There is no crisis support that is reliable enough for kids in Derby. When coupled with stigma around accessing services and inadequate resources, kids are not getting the help they need even when they seek it. Additionally, kids may know a friend or relative who works at the service and shame prevents them from accessing the service.

When kids don't access support early or often enough they are more likely to find other ways of managing their wellbeing such as self-medicating; risk taking, attention seeking behaviour; suicidal ideation and suicidality.

These are seen as normalised coping mechanisms reinforced within the community which amplifies the consequence.

“The Nyl Nyl Rangers are good, they should do activities with the kids. They can take them out and learn about bush foods, plants and medicine. Sharing stories with them. That would be good. They don't do this right now. Maybe not enough time to do that. Not enough people working there.”
[Derby]

“Kids get stuck in a trauma loop. Abuse becomes normalised for kids”



Service blockers

DE

BI

Service loops and band-aid solutions create invisible workloads that inhibit the current model, and prevent community-led innovation.

When service users are stuck in reactive 'service loops' or are providing 'band-aid solutions' service providers become less able to provide proactive services or delivery on long term outcomes that can address root cause issues. This is evidenced in both Derby and Bidyadanga however was also observed across the Kimberley.

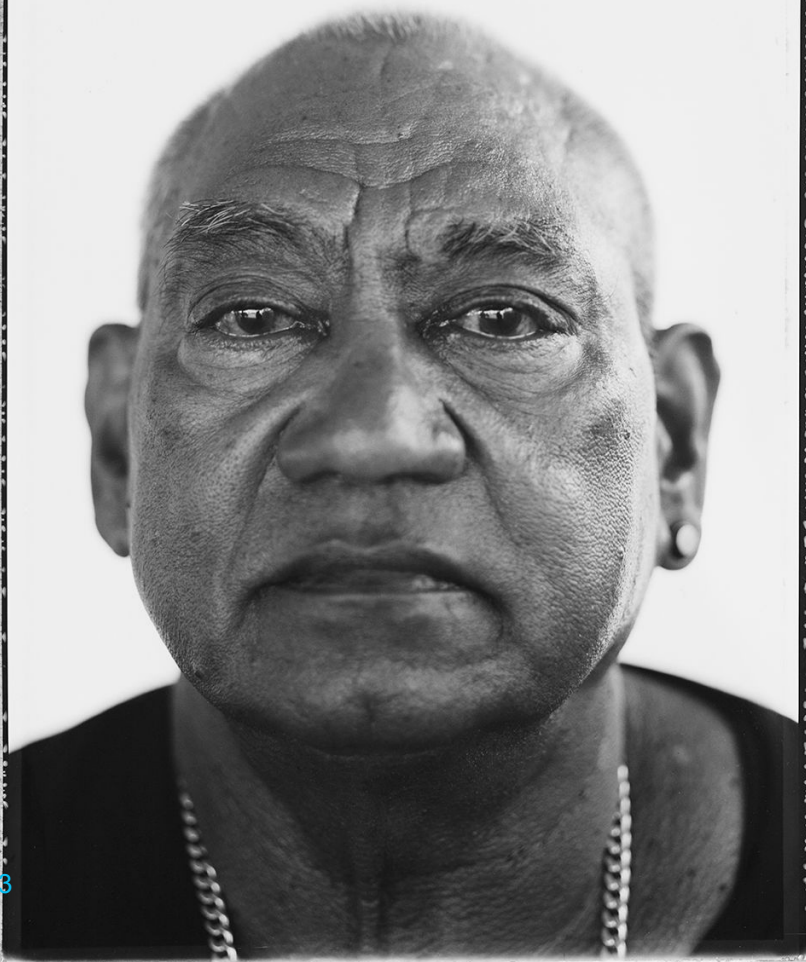
Due to getting stuck in 'service loops' many service providers are unlikely to have the time to provide core services, let alone place-based approaches or capability build through training and mentoring local staff and community.

These activities are perceived as being harder to measure and thus harder to fund. Service providers in Derby commented that what does get funded are 'tick box' activities like medical screening or scanning because they are easier to measure and produce impressive data.

Higher rates of burnout and staff turnover are related to this. On top of this many service providers and community commented on untapped opportunities for locally-led solutions that have potential to multi-solve by creating motivation, purpose and self determination.

“Staff here are often translators and have to help people communicate with the white world”
[Bidyadanga]





It is good to understand how the existence of social issues for indigenous people are created through systemic constraints that have been years in the making

Service blockers

BR

Waitlists and services at capacity create bottlenecks in the system.

Services are often full or at capacity, and therefore knock back referrals, put people on long waiting lists or do not provide the service they are accountable (and funded) for. This pushes the client further into more serious issues due to needs being unmet, can impact the future confidence/reliability of the agency being referred to, and burdens other services to find alternatives. There is one service in particular which five other services quoted as having a six month waitlist, however no other short/mid term service solution had been developed for people needing this support.

Flexible drop-in services are one model that address this issue by encouraging self-referrals and being clear in how to access their services.

“Referral loops: we call woop woop (Melbourne) Woop Woop (Perth) woop woop (Broome) - nothing happens”

BI

COVID lockdowns disrupted service provision whilst also creating new opportunities for service models.

COVID lockdowns led to significant disruptions for service provision with many services not accessing or visiting remote communities for long periods, the impact of this was felt more strongly due to the dependence on drive-in drive-out services.

For some sectors, it created new opportunities for service delivery and community resilience through increased uptake in tele-health, meaning less travel time for patients. COVID restrictions also gave some space for the community to try out a different place-based service model and reorganise the way in which services were accessing Bidyadanga.

“The family centre is a new building the outdoor area was recently completed...became the virtual link for external services during covid. Services were able to continue via Telehealth. People liked it because it saved 400km round trip just to pick up a few people. Covid was a way to reset how services were doing outreach”



Service blockers

DE

Working in silos and a lack of interagency coordination impacts negatively on end users.

Services often rely on referring, advocating, and liaising with other services in order to get their jobs done. This elevates the effectiveness of service provision, creating a clear connection to long term outcomes and positive impact within communities.

Many service providers expressed frustration about working in silos and lack of quality collaboration, making it hard to properly service an individual who needs to engage with multiple services for support.

BI

Service providers are working together to build open communication channels and improve service coordination.

In Bidadanga collaboration across service providers and community organisations is proving to be an effective mechanism for solving shared issues, building community and delivering on shared outcomes through a place based approach (within the community centres). Open communication and effective/innovative management of the centre has supported wraparound supportive mechanisms and growing service collaboration.

Other models of collaboration are also being demonstrated through interagency meetings in both Broome and Derby.

“KAMSC come out every 3-4 weeks and they have a good triage model - initial shared case management with them, rapport building with family and constancy of care. So family doesn't repeat themselves over and again.”

“We do try to link in with other services and look at handing over to them if they are better placed to service”



“Children can’t be immunised if they’re not registered through Medicare; cannot support someone to improve their living environment if you are waiting several months for Homes West to fix a leak that is breeding mould; child’s hearing can’t be tested unless you have a referral signed off from the Principal; fines can’t be collected from the post office without photo ID and the post box key; child can’t be assessed for an NDIS disability without doctor’s records, assessment and consent forms signed.”

Service blockers

WJ

Wangkatjunka identified many gaps in services that meant the community cannot function.

Significant gaps in services, programs and infrastructure were identified in Wangkatjunka including childcare, home and community maintenance, community building, community decision making, safe houses, police, MWW/housing management, training, HACC, centre and sports facilities for young people, and waste management (now done by KRSP).

Lack of external support and services means participants felt Wangkatjunka is always in crisis. The lack of services based in town and lack of services access from and to Fitzroy Crossing results in the community having to put out their own fires which can also exaggerate family dynamics and community issues. One participant spoke of extreme violence and having no access to police so family members having to step in.

The community are in a constant state of worsening crisis due to this lack of prevention, early needs and crisis support. This is common to other remote communities

*"Police only come
when there is a
suicide"*



Staffing

FC

Local employment is an important missing step to personal and community empowerment.

Employment is acknowledged locally as a key necessary step to empowerment through building strength, meaning and purpose which is a foundation to many other issues - tackling destructive habits, rebuilding local economy and supporting community led solutions to current issues. While many report there are plenty of job opportunities, there is a lack of support to get local people in those jobs. This is largely due to a lack of job readiness programs, lack of training and courses that link into actual jobs, and issues with the management of larger organisations and the perceived capability of local community.

“They need to be funding the people who are here servicing the area, not some service in Broome.”

Centralised services have taken away local jobs such as trades; centralised contractual agreements coupled with mismanagement of local services exaggerates the issues; and policy changes such as CDEP being removed and ATSIC being disbanded further these blockers to local employment.

The consequences can clearly be seen within reduced job opportunities, weakened local economy and the ongoing impacts of fundamental disempowerment including substance use, mental health and wellbeing issues and

“We could employ more people to help with running the youth programs, or to work more deeply with communities.”



Capturing the
unheard voices
is a first step
to empowerment!



Staffing

DP

Services and supports that are run/staffed by locals may act as a connector and/or as a barrier to going to a service.

While the community agree that having locally-based services is important, some have also identified local community (especially family) working at services can further complicate the process of accessing formal and informal help. Some factors within this were the nature of living in a small community, the risk of everyone knowing your business, shame, and cultural factors.

EXAMPLE

Safe houses are hard to access due to cultural barriers or community connections. For instance, family working at the safe house amplified by the nature of a small community

SERVICE DELIVERY

BI

Delivery of an ongoing place-based model can be quite labour intensive, even though the long term outcomes are known.

With the new place-based model emerging there are some challenges for ongoing coordination. There are differing views regarding drive in drive out providers lacking personal connection with service users. To achieve a client-centred approach, local service providers are investing additional resources to support coordination efforts.

Although the benefit for service users and long term community outcomes is significant and known, local service providers recognise the capacity gap that needs to be filled to maintain a place-based approach that also supports effective outreach and access to specialist expertise.

“We had a service who came last year and let families know by writing a letter to them! Where is that mail going to go? So they think they have communicated their arrival and they come and their trip is often wasted”



Staffing

DE

BR

The bulk of the work requires service staff to go beyond delivering on KPIs.

Staff have said that KPIs are not reflective of the bulk of the work, which is overcoming barriers and is often unseen and unmeasured. All health services reported that the extra work needed to address barriers was never captured in their KPIs thus often requiring staff to go above and beyond their scope. People spoke about doing these extra activities because they care and it being necessary to be able to access service users.

Community members who have the highest need do not often present for self referrals but require the most support (admin/transport/proactive engagement) to attend or engage with services.

“Without staff going above their funded duties people are falling through the cracks”





Staffing

BI

High staff turnover results in the loss of trust in providers and 'engagement fatigue'.

High staff turnover both in external and local services compromises trust and relationships. It results in more time spent on building back trust, building collaboration, creating relationships, and introducing new staff to the community.

From the community's side, high staff turnover (both in external services and local services) compromise trust and relationships, can create service fatigue and over time lowers engagement and trust with any service. Greater collaboration between services and community organisations is helping to bridge the gap between staff and community.

FC

High staff turnover is a common challenge that leads to a cycle of burnout and disrupts service delivery.

High turnover of staff is a common issue in Fitzroy Crossing. Lack of funding impacts resourcing which then impacts staff workload. It was also mentioned that the reputation of Fitzroy Crossing being a dangerous place to live creates added staffing issues.

When skilled staff leave, organisations are stuck in a cycle of re-training, and front line workers filling system gaps and operating outside of their funded role. This can lead to staff burnout creating a loop that acts as a barrier to delivery, disrupts continuity of programs (such as TAFE courses, youth programs and ranger programs) and hinders collaborative service provision.

DE

Short term funding, short term staff.

Many people reported a number of reasons why attracting staff to Derby has become so difficult including lack of housing; Broome is now the central service access point and head offices are moving there along with their staff; there is no housing in Derby, or childcare to attract and support workers; negative crime perception.

Another reason which was regularly heard was short term contracts. Some believed this was due to the short term funding streams, making it hard to plan for and attract staff because they cannot offer long term contracts or stable employment.



Staffing

BI

"We know people rather than service providers". Staff tenure, shortage, burn out and location make this a tenuous situation

Provision and access to services is underpinned by personal relationships between service employees and community, rather than between organisations and community. These trust based relationships and understanding of context supports organisations working with community effectively. This enables services to work better by overcoming communication barriers, by understanding how communication and information sharing occurs, (word of mouth, community champions, house visits / pickups), understanding local barriers to access (sorry business, medical drop interpersonal info, ID barriers, scheduling issues), and being able to better navigate services working together.

However, trust in the person rather than the organisation creates an unstable foundation for long term outcomes due to staff tenure, staff burnout, staff shortages, housing shortages and other external factors in terms of program longevity. This trust is necessary and valuable to provide access and delivery of support however commonly creates service dependency (on a person) and a lack of service consistency in terms of long term outcomes.

When these relationships are embedded within a largely outsourced workforce such issues are exacerbated and can lead to burnout and a continuing repetitive cycle.

"Someone comes in, they create a bond with the community and patients, their contract is up, they hold critical information, we lose that all. Building a trust bond its hard with community. They can lead us to a dead end."





Living environments



Housing services

BR

As a service hub, Broome requires a variety of housing options to meet community needs.

Broome is a transient and central town with people coming in and out to access healthcare, employment, education, services, or family. Many participants commented on the lack of housing in Broome, the impacts of this are seen through issues with overcrowding and homelessness, as well as contributing to staffing shortages (as staff cannot find houses to live in and remain in the area).

BASSA (and DASSA) are relatively recent and much-loved service that provides short term accommodation. Some have criticised that the current booking process meant that it was often booked out with people using it as semi-permanent accommodation.

Beyond this, there is a need for a range of flexible accommodation options - this is not currently not being met. This includes for students studying; respite for men during family violence events; short stay safe spaces for young people; people who may be drug and alcohol dependent and ineligible for BASSA.

FC

The housing issue is threefold: existing needs to be maintained, there needs to be more, and they need to be culturally and environmentally appropriate.

It is not just a lack of housing that people experience, it is a lack of culturally and environmentally appropriate housing that is built for the needs of Aboriginal families. When combined with overcrowding, and lack of maintenance, housing becomes a significant problem, consequential social and health issues and therefore overall wellbeing is severely impacted.

“Build houses not to accommodate the city style but the way of life out here”



Housing

WJ

Disempowerment is perpetuated through a lack of transparency, service accessibility, visibility, and navigability.

The whole housing system is difficult to navigate and creates baseline insecurity. There lacks a clear structure or service model, and it is unclear what services are available, who is eligible for services and how to access them.

Having a safe home for family is a clear priority for the community. Removing that safety creates ongoing insecurity and is disempowering for the community.

“We had housing but the housing was built in the wrong community.

*All I want is my children to come back and have somewhere to live, my children are everywhere. I want my children to come here and have shelter, somewhere proper to live”
[Wangkatjunka]*





BROOME
ABORIGINAL SHORT STAY
ACCOMMODATION

Housing services

WJ

Lack of housing and maintenance services creates structural disadvantage. Overcrowding then amplifies this.

There is a nexus between lack of housing, overcrowding, and the maintenance service model which results in things not getting fixed and falling into long term disrepair.

Lack of maintenance causes damage or issues to get worse; overcrowding accelerates the deterioration (and there are less houses that are in good condition) and things break faster. There is no long term solution to resolving it within the community - this is incredibly disempowering.

BI

The ongoing cycle of housing service issues has a compounding effect on long term wellbeing.

Issues raised regarding housing were long waitlists, complex service provision, lack of available housing, overcrowding, and the follow on impact on long term wellbeing outcomes for support and people.

“There is a shortage of housing which means there is overcrowding. Lots of people are living with too many people in their house. People are missing out on housing”



Housing services

DP

FC

DE

BI

The maintenance service model is broken with multiple health and empowerment consequences.

The service model for housing maintenance is not working effectively. Repairs in communities take a long time to fix, are often left unfixed and are prohibitively expensive to get contractors to come out. Beyond this the maintenance contracts are not supporting locally led solutions.

By the time a reported issue is seen to, the matter has become worse increasing environmental and health issues in homes. Some situations are known to perpetuate or create chronic health conditions, thus family members cannot live there as their condition may get worse, or cannot stay in the house when they return from out-of-town treatments.

FC

WJ

Issues with maintenance servicing and contract set up has multiple negative consequences.

The implementation and mismanagement of housing maintenance contracts by MWW has created a centralised system that is not providing adequate services to remote communities, including not having timely access to repairs resulting in the exacerbation of housing issues and thus compounding the state of disrepair.

There is a significant dependency in the Fitzroy Valley on outsourced maintenance services that are expensive, inadequate and inconsistent. Beyond this there is no longer local industry, trades and employment or the ability to solve housing issues and fix housing issues locally.



Environmental health

DE

Environmental health has a significant consequence for children's development.

Centralised services for housing repairs are slow, expensive and cause health and living standards to spiral. The impacts of this are significant and can be traced right through a person's life from foetus to older adult such as skin infections leading to antibiotic resistance leading to kidney failure or hearing loss.

For instance, middle ear infections are a common issue that is caused by environmental issues in the home. This can cause hearing loss which impacts a child's ability to engage at school. This leads unengaged kids into being more likely to act out and cause consequential issues.

We also heard from one community member that a middle ear infection caused him permanent hearing damage in his early adult years which impacted his music career and caused depression and suicidal ideation. Community Child Health nurse also said that regular infections such as middle ear infections were linked to kidney failure later in life.

DE

WJ

FC

BI

Simple untreated health issues cause ongoing behavioural issues with significant consequences.

Simple health issues can be commonly passed off as a behavioural issue, instead of getting a referral to a community health clinic. This has a domino effect - it may cause the child to fully disengage from school or increase behavioural issues. Kids who disengage from school and community are then more likely to have further consequential behavioural issues.

Health issues called out were hearing loss, eyesight, skin conditions, literacy and learning difficulty, nutrition and un-assessed psychological and behavioural issues such as FasD and post traumatic stress disorders.

"Overcrowding can mean people are passing on diseases and infections like skin sores or scabies easier and impacts people's health. This can impact kids getting to school, or people getting to a job."





Cost of living

BI

High cost of living and food prices restricts health outcomes.

Limited food options, supply chain factors, in conjunction with the high cost of food severely restricts the community's agency in making healthy decisions.

When coupled with the high cost of living (fuel costs, for example), there is a direct impact on health outcomes and the impact of health interventions is reduced.

“They run programs like healthy homes – but cleaning products are not a reality for lots of people.”





Young people



Targeting

BR

DE

Aboriginal kids are often perceived as "bad" and therefore targeted (or avoided).

The reputation of "troubled youth" is commonly applied to Indigenous kids and has significant consequences including perpetuating and justifying racist behaviour and creating safety issues for kids. Vigilantism was confirmed as being prevalent across Broome and Derby where 'citizens' were patrolling the streets with dogs or weapons to keep the streets "safe". Parents were significantly concerned about their children being out at night and being the target of racism or violent attacks.

This also further perpetuates shame, trauma, anger and alienation for families. Kids begin to embody the identity of being "bad" which then perpetuates the cycle of behaviour. This also hinders trust and engagement with Indigenous youths, preventing accurate insight into the systemic issues they face (or potential solutions needed) and limiting appropriate support or accessible support channels.

"My dad didn't want me growing up in the Kimberley the way everyone else grows up, so I was sent to boarding school"

YOUNG PEOPLE

DE

Kids keep getting attention for negative behaviours, however there are examples of strength based approaches.

Kids get used to getting attention for negative behaviours and often the behaviour of one or two individuals becomes a generalisation of the whole age group. A common response from services is to reprimand, punish and target children and young people with a lack of diversionary approaches and treating as children.

Positive approaches to negative behaviour such as the Derby Impact Group have been shown to engage and connect with kids through positive actions like washing cars and picking up rubbish. This gives kids a sense of belonging, gives them attention for positive behaviour, and changes community perceptions of young people.

"Don't make assumptions that they will do bad things, look at them as kids"



Trauma & safety

BR

Lack of safety and insufficient programs addressing trauma results in kids meeting needs in other ways.

There are limited support options wrapping around statutory services or to help young people deal with trauma. Of the services that do exist, supply does not come close to the demand.

When kids lack safety or support, both at home and in the community, they are more likely to engage in risky behaviour as a coping mechanism or dissociation from their trauma. This contributes to the insight around suicidality.

“Because we are not addressing generational trauma the cycle keeps going, we need to talk to young people.”

DP

WJ

Trauma cycle needs to be addressed at an individual and systemic level.

Trauma is not being addressed at an individual or systemic level and this perpetuates the cycle of removal of children from families. Community members gave specific examples of how this was true within their own family. They described not having appropriate support for young people dealing with mental health issues. A more proactive model is needed so kids have access to support early on.

Strong local leadership from WAAPPI is challenging this with their community-led practice that embeds cultural kinship models.

“We have WAPPI here. They teach family empowerment. They are a good thing, but they are not getting good money. They have 2 youth engagement officers and one community navigator. That is not enough staff.”



No safe spaces

FC

Young people need options for a safe space to sleep and options for reprieve from their home life.

The lack of a safe home environment is seen as a key reason to why young people are choosing to be out at night. While programs like Night Patrol and the interagency youth evening program are helping to deter criminal activity at night, they do not solve for children that are going back to unsafe homes (or choosing to stay out on the street).

“If these things are fixed our next generation and generation after that will be less dysfunctional than we are now. Rates of poverty, homelessness, alcohol and drug addiction will decrease significantly”

DE

Nowhere for kids to feel safe.

Kids and young people have limited spaces to feel safe in Derby. A lack of safe spaces for kids to feel a sense of belonging, be themselves, and express worry means they are more likely to find this in alternative ways which may be less safe - such as staying out late at night, finding others who have similar experience, trying drugs and alcohol and getting involved in trouble and unsafe behaviour.

This is due to a combination of factors such as households that are overcrowded, drugs and alcohol, domestic violence and other unsafe factors; vigilantism occurring where by Aboriginal kids (and parents) feel unsafe being on the street as are targeted; police targeting Aboriginal children and young people who are out at night; there are limited programs available for children or young people and everything in Derby is shut by 8pm.

“The system that was supposed to be helping them has failed them and the kids think ‘I was right all along, nobody cares for me”



Risky behaviour

BI

DE

FC

WJ

BR

Daybreaking is a gateway for youth to engage in various risky behaviours. Breaking this cycle is challenging as it sits in the nexus of multiple issues.

Young people are seen as hard to engage (or don't know how to engage) by both parents and service providers, and there is deep concern for their wellbeing.

Parents expressed unease about their kids not attending school and walking around at night, which is a commonly regarded entry point into risk taking behaviour and more serious crime however it is also a behaviour created by social norms and young people culture, unsafe home environments and boredom. This is perpetuated by lack of preventative and early needs support and community mechanisms and is the consequence of systematic failure of housing, education, health, parental supports and other service systems.

Parents feel ill equipped to break this cycle due to a lack of understanding of how to navigate these issues and schooling, support and extracurricular activities are absent or fall short.

YOUNG PEOPLE

DP

Young people get sent to small communities so that they can be removed from trouble in the towns.

One participant said that it is common for young kids to be sent to the community/homelands in order to remove them from causing trouble/or being influenced in towns.

That can put strain on remote communities especially when there are no support mechanisms available (and therefore) in place for the family.

"Some kids get sent to stay with relatives in Beagle Bay from towns like Broome when their parents want to keep them out of trouble. This becomes a gap stop for kids. That also means that there are lots of kids running around Beagle Bay who have problems and it's not always easy for these to be addressed by family members."





Relevant support

FC

Youth crime is a problem linked to lack of safety, boredom and undiagnosed health, social and wellbeing issues. The solution needs to be culturally appropriate and locally based.

Criminal activity amongst young people is seen as an ongoing problem in Fitzroy. There are a multitude of personal and external factors contributing to this behaviour.

Personal factors include FASD and trauma which influences decision making ability and contributes to 'rationalising the crime' or not understanding the consequence. There may also be a disconnect between 'behaviour, respect and punishment' and the desire for attention. External factors include unsafe home environments, being influenced by the lifestyles of parents, and the absence of positive role models.

"Watch that kid, he's come out [of juvenile detention]...translates to them believing it. So have a "fuck the world" vision..."if everyone sees me as that i am that"



Relevant support

DP

Lack of activities and engagement for young people creates boredom and resorting to risky behaviour.

No programs or community spaces for young people was the most commonly expressed concern. People use this as an explanation for youth crime and expresses a real fear that bored kids are more likely to be at risk of engaging in activities which can get them into trouble.

BI

The lack of youth programs puts greater pressure on parents and community members to guide, support, and discipline.

Young people are at a critical time when they need positive role models in both the family and community. Youth programming is lacking in Bidadanga and there are few organised activities outside of basketball and football.

Multiple service providers mentioned a greater need for parent involvement in guiding and supporting kids through health and statutory services. However, parents don't feel confident or supported in doing so, and the community feel ill prepared to embed discipline, elders influence or lore into their parenting.



Youth justice

BR

Lack of prevention and diversion programs put a strain on statutory services and trap kids in the justice system.

There were many comments about the lack of prevention and diversion programs for young people. This meant that kids were being sent to juvenile justice (Banksia) and entering “the system” early and unnecessarily. Often this was without understanding that their actions could lead to, and without having prior access to services or support that could help them to not end up in the situation.

There is also a lack of reintegration services to help that child understand and put strategies in place to change or manage the behaviour post incarceration. Young and Deadly program is a great example of a program that is working to this however needs greater support to wrap around kids and be embedded in further in youth justice services.

Beyond this there is a cultural normalising of Banksia or detention centres as a rite of passage or a ‘break’ to be fed and have a place to sleep. This further perpetuates unnecessary incarceration.

YOUNG PEOPLE

WJ

An impetus to access and support young people now is to avoid generational effects in the future.

There is concern for this generation of young people and not 'losing them'. The community acknowledge there is a key window of opportunity to support young people. If missed, there are generational consequences that are difficult to come back from.

“When he finishes he can go back to the same cycle unless he has support... I worry about young men when they come out, they need help to change their cycles. They need jobs, and opportunity to work in something meaningful. There are no jobs available here. So then they have to leave home. They go to big towns and then they get in trouble.”



Youth justice

DE

BI

FC

BR

The current approach to youth justice needs structural rethinking.

The current approach to the legal system lacks a cultural and trauma-informed lens by being punitive, and lack child-centred, community or family-led approaches. Many community members stated or signalled that this approach is not only damaging for the individuals but worsens the problem.

There were mixed views on how this should be approached. Some community members suggested that there needs to be a shift towards lore based responses that involve kids, parents and community leaders; Others said that elders would create more shame if they were involved; one teacher said we need more youth police who can relate to these kids.

“Approaching it with a western system, but the people don't understand, they don't grasp it, you have to approach it in another way.”

DE

BR

WJ

Limited awareness of warning signs and symptoms combined with low service capacity results in limited early needs identification.

Services identified a need to deliver preventative health promotion programs that help kids understand situations and self identify the need for early support. This is needed to avoid kids accessing services only at the crisis point and supports a peer to peer approach.

A key reason for why this is not being delivered is that services are caught in reactive service loops and the current service model can not handle more service demand with many at full capacity or under resourced.



Suicide

BR

FC

Suicide has become normalised for young people.

The high rate of suicide has become socially and culturally normalised for young people, and has been abstracted from the finality of death and its effect on family and community. This sentiment was evidenced throughout engagement with young people, service providers, and community members in both Broome and Fitzroy Crossing. Suicide is perceived as a side effect to kids' irrational behaviour, a normalisation of the consequence and a lack of adequate and appropriate wrap around support - mentally, socially and within the home, school, community and across services.

Existing suicide prevention programs are not enough and not timely. In fact, there were no programs mentioned in Fitzroy Crossing targeting the prevention of youth suicide. Rather, there is an overrepresentation of programs that target the aftermath of a suicide event. Community and family are desperately searching for effective ways to understand, intervene and support earlier.

*“Suicide is so common now.
It’s a fashion, it’s a trend”
[Fitzroy Crossing]*

*“Suicide response is overrepresented.
But there is NO prevention!”
[Fitzroy Crossing]*



Family relationships





eiders

Kinship support

FC

Many informal carers do not get support from the system financial or otherwise as cannot (or do not) register to become a carer. This has multiple implications.

For children who cannot be with their parents (either temporarily or long term) community find other family or community members to provide support whilst avoiding the Child Protection system and associated government policies. This is a key strength of community.

However to access government support or formalise guardianship (to support child effectively) , requirements such as a Working with Children Check, police checks or applications are a barrier. This results in a service loop of trying to access identification and bounce between services. This is disempowering and can be retraumatising. Informal carers then end up avoiding these processes, however are unable to access support (financial and otherwise) due to no formal recognition of their carer duties.

Child Protection Support is often seen to be directed at children and away from wider families rendering the families irrelevant, or incapable of caring for their children and normalising the system.

*“Rather be with family,
live in mistake and be
seen culturally”*



Safety and stability

BR

Family-centred models and integrating cultural dynamics shield families from experiencing the trauma of the Western system and provides a way forward.

Proactive services that engage with whole-of-family approaches to build confidence, resilience, and pathways to trusted support were more commonly mentioned as helping create better outcomes. They expressed an understanding of how shame and fear prevents access and therefore engage with families in a way that acknowledges and strengthens their family system. When services bypass the family it breaks down social fabrics and builds unhealthy reliance on services and support workers.

Family-centred and strength-based models were used by services such as Alive and Kicking, Kularri Patrol, and WAPPI who mentioned the ability to identify 'natural' helpers in the community who could help care for or be a positive role model for a child or family. This required a strong understanding of cultural factors, flexibility, and local knowledge that many Western-run organisations do not have.

BR

The many barriers for a woman to access support means she is unlikely to do so until she reaches crisis.

In Aboriginal families, women are seen as the actor who keeps the family together. Yet, in instances of domestic violence, there are only services for her to leave the family house (as opposed to the husband) and a lack of early services before it reaches crisis. There are also limited options available to help make the decision or access support or address issues such as alcohol and drug dependency, finding alternative living arrangements or pressing charges.

When women are not able to access vital support, it increases the likelihood of children being taken away, experiencing trauma, harm, or death.

EXAMPLE

If a mother wants to go to rehab, she has to organise rental assistance – via a form that gets sent to Housing West, a health exam, and someone to look after her kids – especially if they are over 12. This all must line up with a space being available to her



Safety & stability

BI

The absence of a women's refuge acts as a barrier to women's safety.

The absence of a women's refuge is a significant gap in Bidyadanga, and some women cannot get transport to the closest safe space in Broome. This results in remaining unsafe, unsupported and at risk while remaining in the home with the perpetrator. Temporary relief has been provided in private rooms at the Women's Resource Centre however is not considered safe or appropriate.

The community are dependent on centralised and outreach services from Broome, including short-stay accommodation, women's refuge and crisis care, alcohol and other drugs prevention, counselling and rehabilitation. This puts added pressure on these services, the families and other community based services.

"Big refuge in Broome, I want to go. I got no car otherwise I'd go all the time"

FC

Women are viewed as empowered leaders, positive role models and matriarchs.

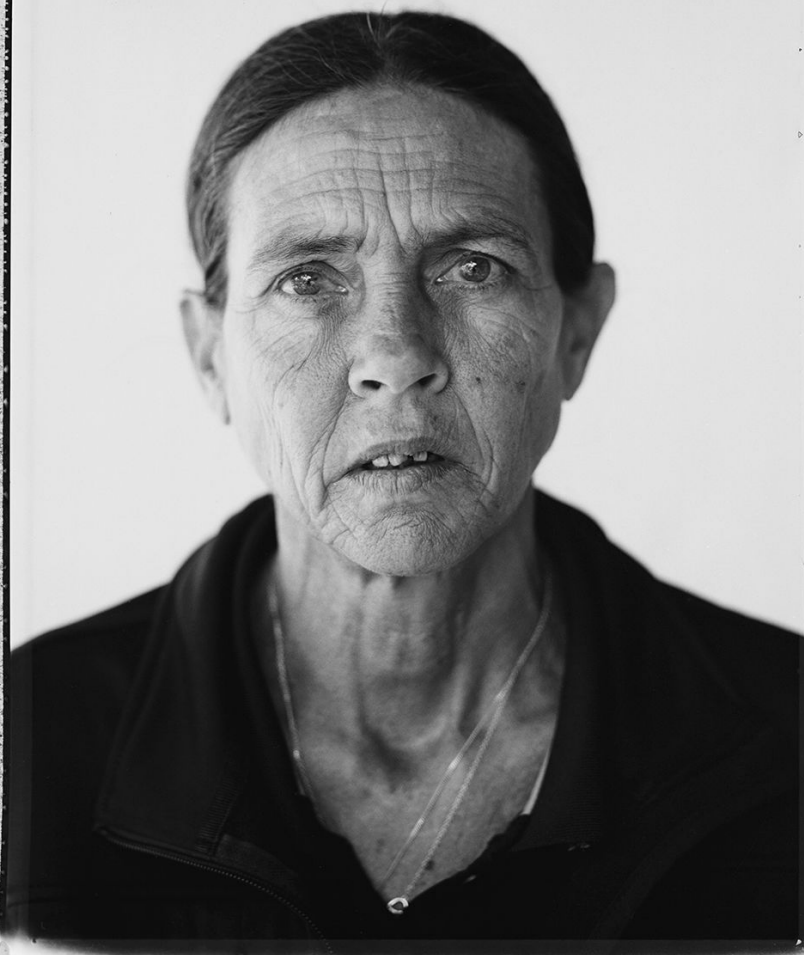
Women in Fitzroy Crossing are viewed as empowered leaders, positive role models and matriarchs.

Generational advocacy and support within a locally led holistic model has demonstrated to be effective for long term outcomes for women.

"Mother in law was an extremely strong individual - she would stand up to government, push back, you're going to treat me as a human being, and someone who is an equal, or, wiser than you are."



MY
FAMILY
IS LIKE MY
GARDEN
I WATER
IT WELL



Domestic violence

BI

There are vastly different views on whether family violence is a significant issue in the community.

Although family violence was discussed, some participants, including the police, suggested it was not a significant issue (or that they could not see it). Others in the community assumed it was being underreported.

DE

The window for engaging during the early needs phase is relatively short.

The window for engaging with people experiencing domestic violence is very small. Behaviours escalate quickly, the person needs to be able to recognise the signs and put into place a safety plan in order to de-escalate the situation, keep safe, or get help. Once people are in the middle of a domestic violence situation accessing support can be difficult.

EXAMPLE

*Two community members discussed experiences of domestic abuse and indicated wider issues with family violence and whether it is significantly under-reported.
[Bidyadanga]*



Domestic violence

BR

Proactive services are needed to build healthy coping strategies and address DV behaviours.

Service providers recognise the need to speak to kids ranging between the ages of 8-16 years about topics such as healthy relationships, sexual health, and safety. This was seen as a window of opportunity to intervene before a child has developed unhealthy coping strategies to manage their potential exposure to violence, unsafe housing situations, or neglect.

However, there are limited opportunities to engage young people as it has been widely reported that there is a lack of youth programs and activities. No service provider reported having the resourcing or funding capacity to proactively target behaviours around domestic violence with younger children.

“Unless you're addressing family violence and safety in housing you are not preventing those kids from entering the justice system”



Childcare

BI

No childcare options means no respite for mothers, and impacts livelihood.

The lack of childcare options means that some women are unable to work and others do not have respite outside of their caring responsibilities. The only option available is playgroups where the focus is on mother-child connection and connecting with other mothers, therefore the women need to stay on site.

There are various rationale for this model, with one service provider stating that they're waiting for the community to identify the need for childcare services. Another service provider claims mothers are not needed onsite and it would reduce opportunity for natural parenting.

*“No daycare. means no parent respite.
Parent can't work.”*

Gender

FC

There is a gender divide in the way that young girls and young boys are growing up.

There is a gender divide in the way that young girls and young boys are growing up, with girls seen to benefit from their female role models and boys associated with trouble making.

However, boys are also recognised to have benefitted from female caregivers and leaders with some noting this as underpinning their sense of empowerment. Girls were spoken about as not having this empowerment reciprocity from father figures or male relatives as they are 'caught up in the justice system or dead'.

*“Boys grow up with the matriarch, kids
being raised by grandparents. Dads are in
jail or dead.”*



Men's behaviour

FC

A lack of support for men and targeting of men's issues/root causes is compounding the perception of them as 'the problem'.

Many family programs and services are focused on the mother and children however are not augmented with focused support for men. Coupled with the lack of empowerment programs and compounded by men often being seen as "the problem". This further compounds the male experience of shame, reduces the opportunities for young men to access help early, and normalises toxic behaviours and identities associated with men to empower.

Men expressed a desire to improve the wellbeing of the younger generation and deal with issues facing young people. They're doing so by creating empowerment strategies and building the capacity for mens leadership and mens support systems through programs for healing, livelihood, and other supports.

“Men need just as much support as women. We grow up in toxic shame”



Men's behaviour

BI

Fathers are not active or absent in parenting their children.

Dads are considered a missing link within the family support system in Bidyadanga, and this is a priority issue for women.

A number of women mentioned the absence of dads or their lack of involvement in parenting their kids. The consequence of this is needing help with kid's behaviour, frustration due to dads being absent (and not knowing where they are), or concern about dads coming home intoxicated after dark. Participants linked this to consequential engagement with the justice system and family violence.

BI

Men's 'bad' behaviour and support affects the whole family. It is a root cause of generational bad behaviour.

Men were associated with alcoholism, women feeling unsafe at home, family violence and abuse, being disengaged in parenting, and being in and out of the justice system. This was also linked to 'not having anything to do'.

Men were seen as the root cause of a lot of the community issues, and the generational impact this has on young people's behaviour.

"Don't feel safe at home when he drinking, can't be around drunk."

BI

Men's services are few and far between. Those that exist are inaccessible and ineffective.

Support services are geared to supporting women with men having less opportunities to engage. Women in the community agree there is a need to support men better and recognise the lack of services available. Of those that are available, they are not always effective and community-centred in their design. Access to and attendance in men's programs is seen as difficult and unrealistic.



Culture & community



Lucy Walgarie
born in Noonkambah
Down by the creek
near the horse yard
Full blood
Walumajarni &
Nyikina women

& Projects



Two worlds

WJ

Walking in two worlds is an ongoing personal dialogue.

'Walking in two worlds' was a common phrase used by community to explain the disparity between the Aboriginal and western paradigms that they were constantly balancing. It is up to the family, individual and community to decide how much to be within each 'world' as there is a spectrum of ways this can be navigated. Often it was seen as coming at a price of what an individual or community was giving up and that maintaining one end of the spectrum or the other, or both, added significant strain.

“People have been living out bush since the beginning of time, mothers read their own bodies too. We have to respect that and work within their systems instead of pushing white mans medical system - pushed on to people.”

On Country

FC

Further integrating Country trips/programs with young people was seen as a key opportunity.

Connection with Country is highly valued and acknowledged to have significant social and cultural benefits. It was seen as an effective way to re-engage youth and when integrated with youth justice diversion processes or within the preventative space to build identity, support mental health, learn culture and tradition and keep kids busy.

Service providers and local community are focused on addressing this opportunity and gap in the system with programs such as Yirramen and ranger programs.

“On Country works - no alcohol, no drugs, no phone, no service”





Destruction of Country

FC

Exercising the right to protect Country is limited.

The ability to protect and preserve Country from mining, water use and agriculture is limited (even under Native Title) due to the way in which these industries target communities and take advantage of extreme poverty within the Fitzroy Valley. Additionally, these industries are not held accountable for the long term ecological impact and disruption to the region.

To preserve the community's heritage and connection to Country, existing agreements involving generational contracts should be revisited to enable access to, and protection of, Country.

"Community is being worn down - worry that a little bit (of Country) is being given away at a time"

Restoring social life

FC

Investing in more community events can repair the social fabric of Fitzroy.

Social, cultural and music events are seen as a key factor to reinvigorating social wellbeing within the community. Events help build pride in the community, integrate culture and identity, keep youth occupied, connect families through positive activities, and keep future leaders in Fitzroy.

Investing in more social events was seen as having the potential to strengthen the current fragile social fabric and to combat the community's reliance on wellbeing service providers, and create a platform for local empowerment and investment through cultural identity.

"A school friend of mine said to me the other day when he was in town, "when did the music die- there is no soul in this town anymore"





Lore and law

BI

The dry zone has its benefits, but may lead to under-reporting of alcohol-related issues.

It is widely accepted that drinking and associated behaviour happens outside the community (and dry zone boundaries) either at the local beach or in Broome. It is a common view that keeping alcohol out of the town is a good thing.

However, the ambiguity and inconsistency of the local bylaw is creating challenges within the community. Rules such as teachers allowed to drink in their rooms (which is seen as discriminatory) contributes to the social norm of drinking behind closed doors (or sly groggin'). There is a concern that community are 'turning a blind eye' and this behaviour is perpetuating under-reporting. There may be an unknown cohort left unsupported by the impacts of alcohol, drugs, and violence.

“Teachers accommodation can drink there. Locals read it as a White person can drink and not us”



Local employment & livelihood





& Projects

We must be the
voice.
for our young
people!
Nothing about
us without
us!



Employment structures

BI

There are many strengths and positive indicators of training, employment and local economy developing. However, there is still work to be done around work arrangements, on the job training and redesigning system structures.

Many local providers employ local people, however further development of flexible employment structures and on the job training are viewed as key to increasing local employment.

Beyond this is the need to overhaul structural supports, unsupportive funding arrangements, CDP and greater access to work and integrated training opportunities.

Flexible and casual employment arrangements were viewed widely as beneficial for local people. Flexibility provides space for people to engage in a way that works for them while accommodating their mobility, cultural, and other responsibilities. At its core, this model is about not setting people up to fail.

Notably, there were a number of outlier comments that were seen as barriers to work such as work ethic, local dynamics and jealousy.

“Working is not a reward in the way the system is set up. It’s not great for casual work, because their Centrelink goes down when they report, and they may not have the same hours next week.”

“People need to eat, they need money. We need to support people to be work ready. We need programs that allow flex and casual employment to build confidence.”



Job opportunities

WJ

Jobs and training is necessary for local economy and to keep people in the community.

The key to rebuilding in small communities is providing training, jobs and building the local economy. Individuals want job opportunities that develop their skills and allow them to give back to the community. It goes beyond the desire for personal fulfilment; it is about helping the community thrive.

“We don't want you to come and do it. We want to do it. Takes away jobs for young people makes us look stupid.”

DP

Lack of employment initiatives set community up for failure.

While the community have identified a clear benefit and opportunities to hire local Aboriginal people, there is no support or incentive to do so. This means people are out of work and reliant on a CDP system that provides no motivation, opportunities, or practical support to access employment. People are left with more time and less purpose which contributes to unhealthy coping strategies and further breakdown of social fabric.

“These handouts and services are creating a dependency. They are not set up to help people succeed.”

BI

Strength // Bidgi is creating training and employment opportunities that are embraced by the community

There were multiple demonstrated opportunities for local people to gain training and employment, and they have been stepping into this space. Places of employment mentioned were Shamrock, Rangers, KAMS Clinic and Bidgi Corp.

“We also have a careers coordinator here who makes connections with possible employers like the rangers and shamrock gardens.”



This insights report forms an addendum to the work completed for the West Kimberley Systems Redesign project for West Kimberley Futures: Empowered Communities.

Mala Haji-Ali JP
Chief Operations Officer



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Kimberley*

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