



**STRONGER  
COMMUNITIES  
OF CHILDREN**

# STORYBOOK

**Snapshot**



**NINTI STRONGER  
ONE COMMUNITIES  
OF CHILDREN**

This abridged Storybook, or 'snapshot', provides an insight into the Stronger Communities for Children (SCfC) program. The snapshot highlights both the approach taken to measuring local change, and the tangible outcomes of the SCfC program within community.

In this snapshot, we identify the three-pronged approach to measuring impact, governed by a strategy that supports strategic learning, systems change, and mission outcomes.

In addition, we highlight the successes of six sites: Galiwin'ku, Ngukurr, Ntaria and Tjuwanpa Outstations, Ltyentye Apurte, Maningrida, and Gunbalanya.

The full version of the Storybook is available from Ninti One, as well as individual chapters for each participating community.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material. Ninti One sincerely apologises for any distress, sadness and/or offence this may cause.

## Acknowledgements

The production of this Storybook was a collaborative effort involving many people. We appreciate the contributions of everyone who shared their experiences, their knowledge and their stories.

We would like to give special thanks to the members of the Local Community Boards for each community featured in the publication and to the staff of those organisations that work as Facilitating Partners for Stronger Communities for Children.

We also wish to thank staff of the National Indigenous Australians Agency for their support, especially Linda Ivatts (NT Strategy and Policy Branch, Central Group).

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NINTI ONE STRONGER  
COMMUNITIES  
FOR CHILDREN

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# What is Stronger Communities for Children?

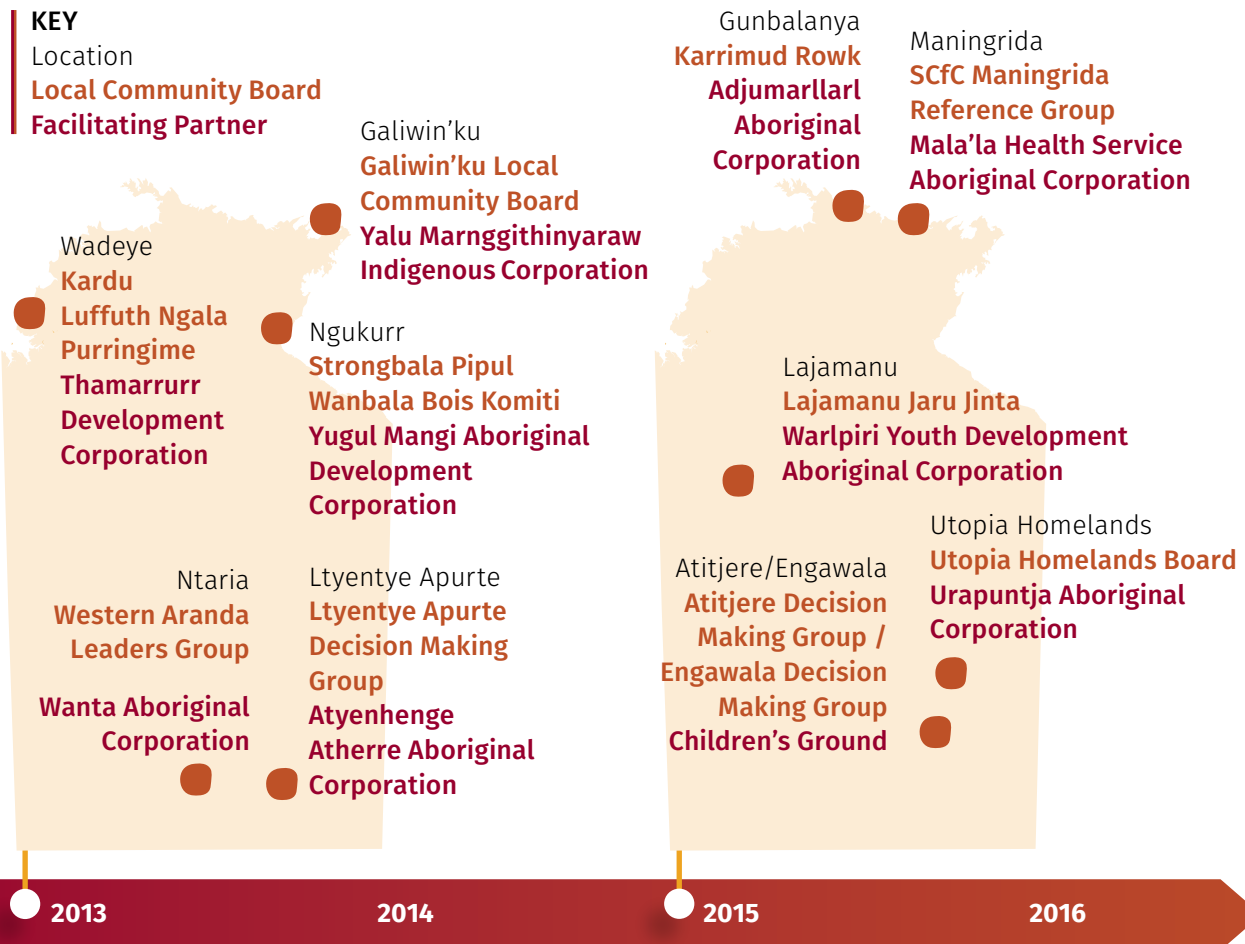


Stronger Communities for Children (SCfC) is a community development program in 10 sites in the Northern Territory.

It supports safe and healthy communities, families and children. It ensures that local people are in control of local decision making.

SCfC aims to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people the best possible start in life through safer families and communities, nurturing educational environments, positive participation opportunities and cultural events. Our approach has been to ensure that local communities have a real say in local decision making, including what services they need and how they are delivered.

Locally led impact measurement has been key to this approach. Local Community Boards (LCBs) for SCfC invest their time and use their knowledge and experience to improve services and activities for families and children. They make decisions that reflect the choices they feel are best for the community, and recognise that assessing the impact of those choices is essential to the program's success. By engaging in continual learning and improvement, LCB members demonstrate strong commitment to being accountable to their community.



As of  
**August**  
**2021**

# Statistical overview of SCfC for the period 2019-20

**16,388+**

participants in

**198**

activities  
involving

**97**

organisations.

**93%**

of stakeholders  
reported  
satisfaction with  
service delivery



**Activities**

**675**

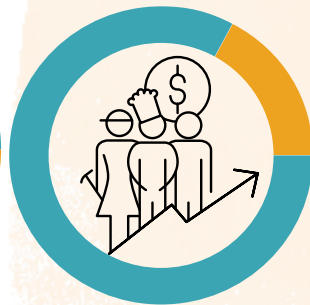
Indigenous  
people worked

**101,929**

hours,  
making up

**83%**

of the  
workforce  
for SCfC



**Workforce**

**49**

training  
and study  
opportunities  
for SCfC  
staff and LCB  
members plus

**17**

for other  
community  
members



**Training**

## Limitations

The figures are based on 18 months reports from 9 communities and 6 months report from 1 community between January 2019 and December 2020 to NIAA.

All statistics are aggregated from reports by Facilitating Partners to the NIAA. Additional details outside the standard report format are not available.

The definitions of 'workshop', 'activity' and 'number of participants' vary between communities.

Restrictions due to COVID-19 led to a significant fall in the number of activities and participants, especially during the second half of the period covered by these statistics.



# The SCfC Approach to Measuring Impact

As a place-based community development program, SCfC aims to generate deep and durable systemic changes that will empower local people to give children the best possible start in life. The SCfC approach to impact assessment revolves around supporting people in participating communities to measure local changes resulting from the program. This approach enables local people to determine what a successful SCfC program looks like in their community, and directly addresses Closing the Gap Priority Reform Area 4 by building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expertise in collecting, using and interpreting data in a meaningful way.<sup>1</sup>

The difficulty involved with measuring the results of systems change initiatives like SCfC has been noted by experts such as Mark Cabaj, who puts forward an Inquiry Framework to identify three broad types of results:

## Mission outcomes

The extent to which our efforts help to make lives better



- Outcomes for individuals
- Outcomes for targeted geography/groups
- Outcomes for populations

## Systems change

The extent to which efforts change the systems underlying complex issues



- Changes in drivers of the system behaviours
- Changes in behaviours drivers of system actors
- Changes in overall system behaviour/s

## Strategic learning

The extent to which efforts to uncover insights become key to future progress



- Learning about what we are doing
- Learning about what we are thinking
- Learning about how we are being

SCfC has achieved all three types of results, to varying degrees, across its ten participating communities.

## Strategic Learning

The creation of the Storybook, as well as the information it contains, are prime examples of strategic learning at the program level. The Storybook idea and contents were developed collaboratively between SCfC Communities and Ninti One. Many important steps in this collaborative process took place at SCfC Knowledge Sharing Seminars, another key mechanism for strategic learning built into the program.

At the March 2019 Knowledge Sharing Seminar, Ninti One presented a suite of draft program measures it developed for participants to consider as a framework for SCfC sites to collect evidence and assess impact. These measures were developed to capture changes resulting from the program according to its target outcomes, namely:

1. Safer families and communities;
2. Support the nurturing of young children;
3. Provide children, young people and families opportunities for participation in cultural events;
4. Support children to be school ready;
5. Support young people to attend school and gain an education;
6. Build community capacity to lead, plan and prioritise services that children and families need; and
7. Build the capacity of Indigenous organisations to deliver these services.

Source: Cabaj, M. (2019) 'Evaluating systems change results: an Inquiry Framework', The Tamarack Institute.

<sup>1</sup> National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020) Priority Reform Area 4: Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level, Data and information sharing elements, <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/priority-reforms>

## SCfC Community Perspectives: Knowledge Sharing Seminars



**I come to this program from listening to my Elders, there were only a few people then. We didn't know much about the program; but we were learning. It's very important, our children are the future, we must educate them, talk to them about being a good role model. You never know in the future they might be in the office as a CEO. Its good the ten communities come together, talk about the future, specifically our children, talk to them, encourage them to understand the two worlds we live in, teach them to be leaders.**

Valda Bokmakarray, Maningrida

Discussion and feedback from across the SCfC communities contributed to refining the draft and determining the final set of program measures.

These final measures align with the Inquiry Framework for evaluating systems change initiatives, as illustrated below. SCfC measures 1, 4, and 5 are examples of mission outcomes, while measures 2 and 6 are examples of systems change. Measure 3, which focuses on workforce and human capacity, can be seen as both a mission outcome and an element of systems change.

## Systems Change

The most important example of systems change achieved by SCfC at the program level has been a shift in leadership that has put decision making about early childhood interventions firmly in the hands of local people. This shift is described as follows by the 2020 Productivity Commission report on Expenditure on Children in the NT:

*In a single year, [local SCfC] boards have often chosen to support activities in education, employment, community development, early childhood development, health, nutrition and other service areas. These decisions have been framed by a local community plan that sets priorities. The point we make is that there is evidence in SCfC work in each community of a healthy breaching of the boundaries between services that are often so impenetrable at a macro or departmental level, enabling a more responsive approach to meeting local needs. (sub. DR41, pp. 1–2)<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> Australian Government Productivity Commission (2020) Expenditure on Children in the Northern Territory, p. 145

## Mission Outcomes

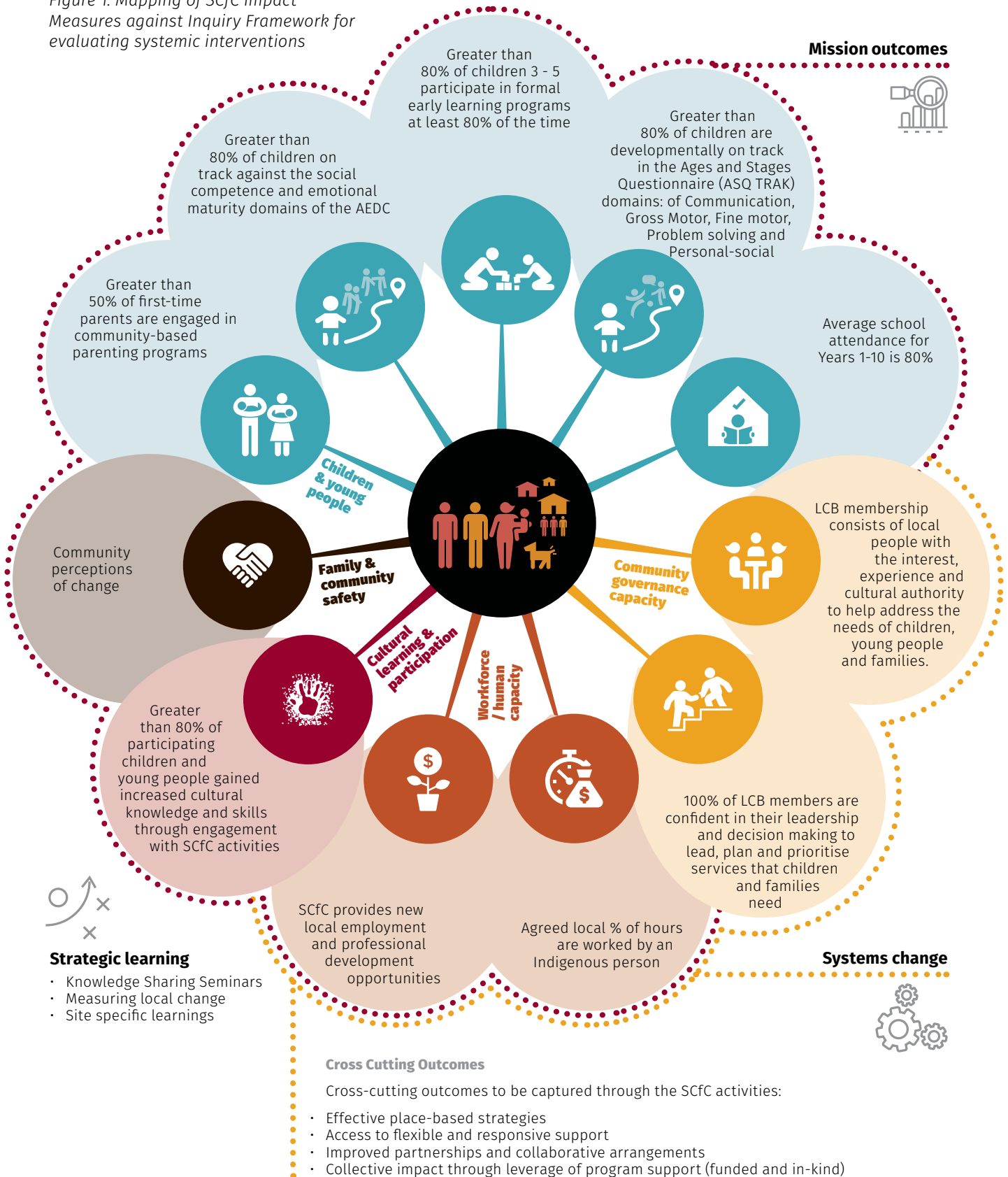
Mission outcomes refer to the population-wide changes that collective impact programs like SCfC ultimately seek to achieve. When it comes to addressing the types of complex systemic challenges that prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from thriving, a well-established evidence base has shown place-based, community-wide interventions to be more durable and effective than fragmented projects or services.<sup>3</sup>

With five SCfC sites beginning their work in 2013 and another five in 2015, a very early picture of its mission outcomes is only just beginning to emerge. The majority of these results have been achieved at the local level.

At the program level, SCfC has generated mission outcome results by creating new professional development activities for young people living in the ten participating communities. For example, young people are increasingly taking up positions on LCBs and participating in Knowledge Sharing Seminars. Ninti One has also provided hands-on training and ongoing support for young people working on SCfC activities to develop their community research skills.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example: Moore, T. G., McHugh-Dillon, H., Bull, K., Fry, R., Laidlaw, B., & West, S. (2014). "The evidence: What we know about place-based approaches to support children's well-being". Collaborate for Children Scoping Project. Melbourne: Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health.

Figure 1: Mapping of SCfC Impact Measures against Inquiry Framework for evaluating systemic interventions



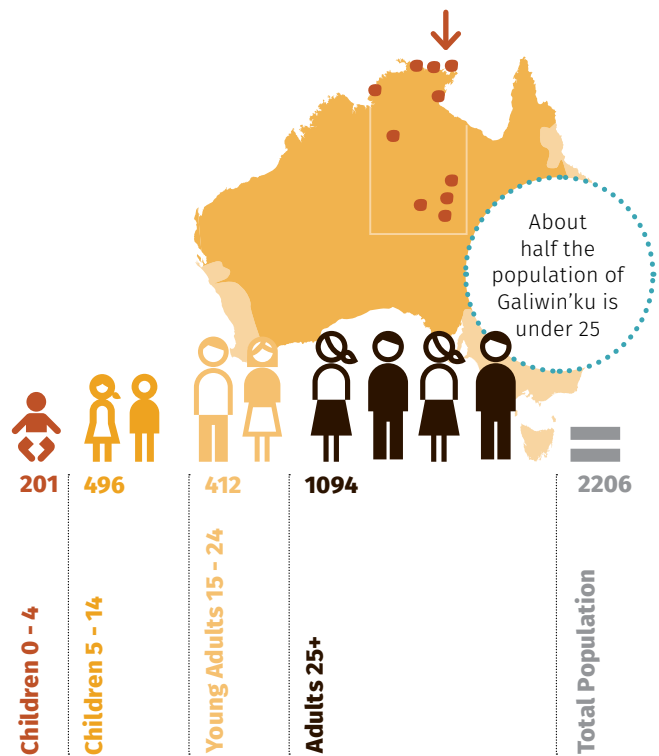


# Galiwin'ku

Galiwin'ku is an island off the coast of Arnhem Land. It is sometimes called Elcho Island. According to the 2016 Census, there were 2,206 people in Galiwin'ku. Of this number, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 94.0% of the population. Regarding the age profile, 42.2% of the population is under 20 years of age, with 14% over 50.

This region has been inhabited by Aboriginal people for over 40,000 years. Galiwin'ku is now the largest Aboriginal community in north East Arnhem Land. It is home to eighteen connected clan groups who have close cultural ties with mainland Arnhem Land clans and language groups. The communal language is Yolŋu Matha, however numerous dialects are used daily in Galiwin'ku between families. Many Yolŋu people speak six or more of these dialects.<sup>1</sup>

Galiwin'ku is one of the most remote communities in Australia<sup>2</sup> and travel to the community is almost exclusively by plane. Many services, like medical specialists, veterinarians and lawyers fly in and out of the community. The island has a church, a school (preschool to year 12), two supermarkets, two takeaway stores, a clinic (and another for the homelands), a mechanic, an aged and disability care centre, a football oval and a sport and recreation hall. In 2017, the community had 529 jobs.<sup>1</sup>



**Key Activities in Galiwin'ku**

- Galiwin'ku Women's Space
- Djalkiri Program
- Yalu Employment Strategy



<sup>1</sup> Yolŋu Wanganhamirr Mitj, Yalu and Australian Red Cross Society (2018) Dhatum, [https://Yoljuwanganhamirrimitj.com.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/dhatam\\_final2018.pdf](https://Yoljuwanganhamirrimitj.com.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/dhatam_final2018.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Department of Health (2015), National Priority Locations, <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ruralhealth-vos-locations-2012#nt>

## Governance for SCfC in Galiwin'ku

When SCfC was initially set up in Galiwin'ku the Yolŋu Wanganhirr Mitj (YWM) acted as the Local Community Board alongside Yalu Marngithinyaraw Indigenous Corporation (Yalu). Their role was to discuss and understand all the different needs Galiwin'ku families have and identify ways to embed cultural values in service provision.

In 2013 YWM learnt of the SCfC Program and put forward a model that joined Yalu and the Australian Red Cross as Facilitating Partners. Yalu was respected for their heavy involvement in community-led research, cultural expertise, and their well established role in guiding programs and services to nurture Yolŋu (Aboriginal) children and families. This partnering to facilitate SCfC offered great potential for Galiwin'ku to have direct impact to programs within the community. Yalu and Red Cross worked together to manage the contract and report on the progress of SCfC funded programs and activities, alongside the YWM up until 2018.



## SCfC Activities Making a Difference

Over the years, many important initiatives have been funded by SCfC in Galiwin'ku. In March 2020, Yalu Indigenous Corporation invited Ninti One to work with their staff to measure the changes that have resulted from these investments. Yalu chose two activities to be assessed; the Djalkiri Program and the Yalu Employment Strategy.

Community surveys were conducted by a team of twelve Yalu staff who received training from Ninti One to explain the theory and structure of the survey, discuss how to make survey questions easy for local people to understand, and practice asking the questions.

A strong majority of those surveyed reported that the activities are working well or very well (85-95% depending on the activity). Many people appreciate and value the work of Yalu and the role it plays in Galiwin'ku. The focus of the organisation on children and young people learning about lore and culture are especially important to people.

Creation of the Galiwin'ku Women's Space (GWS) is another important example of work that began with seed funding from SCfC. GWS has grown into a thriving independent organisation with secure funding in its own right, developed with local decision making at its heart.





## Closing the Gap Targets

**3. Children are engaged in high quality culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years.**

**Yolŋu Seasons** supports parents and children to be strong in their culture by integrating cultural learning into existing early learning settings such as playgroup and preschool.

**7. Youth are engaged in employment or education.**

**Employing young people** is key to Yalu's strategy. Yalu sees young people as leaders of the future, and supports their pursuit of training and certifications as part of employment.

**2. Children are born healthy and strong.**

**Ngurruninygu Dhukkarr workshops** support young people to make healthy decisions about their future before they become parents. Thirty young people participated in 8 day-long workshops across the year.

**4. Children thrive in their early years.**

**A cultural educator** supports 140 children and their families each term at playgroup. Having a local Yolŋu man in this role is valuable for accurately measuring children's progress using the Abecedarian Approach Australia.

**8. Strong economic participation and development.**

**Meaningful employment** for over 30 Yolŋu people has been generated. Local capacity-building and opportunities for microbusiness development are also key to Yalu's employment strategy.

**11. Young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.**

**Men's and youth programs** funded by SCfC work to divert people away from the criminal justice system, and towards cultural supports such as Sunset School and senior members of their family or community.

**13. Families and households are safe.**

**Galiwin'ku Women's Space** has grown from SCfC seeding grant into a successful local Yolŋu organisation.

**14. People enjoy high levels of social and emotional well-being.**

**Women's programs** support social practices that improve well-being, such as collection of bush medicine and cooperative creation of opportunities for women to profit from crafts that strengthen connection to culture.

**15. People maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters.**

**Engaging and learning about culture** is central to all SCfC activities in Galiwin'ku, creating opportunities in school, in community and on country.

**16. Cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.**

**All SCfC activities** support Yolŋu members of the community to participate and learn in their own languages.

# Galiwin'ku: Summary of community-level outcomes and thematic analysis

**SCfC Community:** Galiwin'ku

**Governance:** Yolŋu Wanganhirr Mitj (YWM) · Yalu Marnggithinyaraw Indigenous Corporation (Yalu)

**Assessed activities in the Storybook:** Galiwin'ku Women's Space

· Djalkiri Program · Yalu Employment Strategy

	<b>Program Measures</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Strategic learning</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<b>Mission Outcomes</b>	Children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people are supported to engage with school</li> </ul>	<p>SCfC activities that focus on children and young people learning about lore and culture are especially important to people in Galiwin'ku.</p> <p>Language and culture are deeply valued in the community and there is a commitment to work towards keeping this strong.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsive and culturally located support for SEWB</li> <li>Supportive learning environments</li> <li>Increased collaboration between Aboriginal people, organisations and schools</li> </ul>
	Cultural learning and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people gained cultural knowledge and skills</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language</li> <li>Intergenerational relationship building</li> </ul>
	Workforce / human capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased hours worked by Yolŋu people from Galiwin'ku</li> <li>New work and professional development opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>SCfC funding allowed the governance of local Yolŋu led organisations to develop, which in turn has allowed them to seek ongoing funding from other sources. This has resulted in more support for the community overall.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaningful paid employment</li> <li>Shadowing</li> </ul>
	Community governance capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LCB members have interest, experience and cultural authority</li> <li>LCB members are confident in their leadership, decision making, and planning</li> </ul>	<p>SCfC has strengthened partnerships between Yolŋu led organisations and Government, other service providers, and the community itself. This has laid important groundwork for advancing the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural authority</li> <li>'Two worlds' capacity</li> </ul>
<b>Systems Change</b>	Cross-cutting outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved partnerships and collaborative arrangements</li> <li>Leverage of program support</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing funding has enabled programs to establish and refine their content and delivery, and has allowed the sustainability of the programs to develop.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthened partnerships between Aboriginal-led organisations, Government, service providers, and community</li> <li>Leverage for culturally-located services.</li> </ul>

# Ngukurr

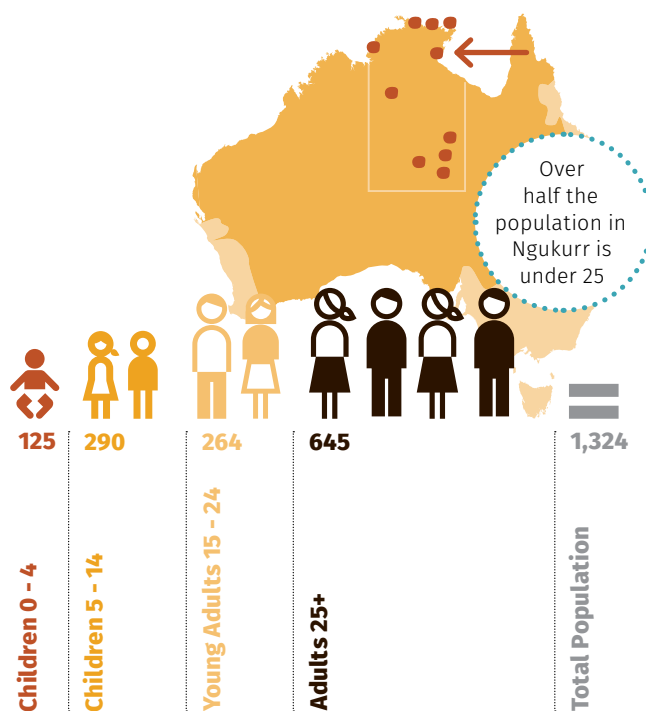
Ngukurr is located on the Roper River in south East Arnhem Land about 330km south east of Katherine. Ngukurr is home to around 1,324 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.<sup>1</sup>

The main language spoken is Kriol. English is used as a second/foreign language and is the main language of government and service providers.

The Yugul Mangi people come from seven traditional language groups. These languages are Alawa, Marra, Ngalakgan, Ngandi, Wandarrang, Nunggubuyu and Ritharrangu but these languages are now endangered due to the forces of colonisation. Their four semi-moieties (totems) of Mambali, Murrungurn, Goyal, and Burdal show their deep connection to the animals, seasons, weather and land.

In response to the 2007 Northern Territory Emergency Response (the Intervention) and local government reform, 2008 saw clan leaders develop the Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation (YMDAC) in 2008 to hold on to local decision making throughout the multiple changes to legislation, policy and programs invoked by ever-changing politicians. The YMDAC continues to represent the seven clans economically, politically, social and culturally across the region and as a progression of the Governance in Ngukurr:

- YMDAC board adopted a Cultural Governance Model based on the age-old cultural governance structure
- YMDAC was established as the Local Decision Making Board on the 5th of August 2020.
- YMDAC adopted a new Logo combining SPWBK into the YMDAC logo.
- A Cultural Governance Team was developed and led by Ian Gumbula to deliver on the communities priorities and deeply align programs to cultural and social well-being.



**Key Activities in Ngukurr**

- Governance Mapping Project**
- School Holiday Cultural Program**
- Meigim Kriol Strongbala (Making Kriol Strong)**



<sup>1</sup> Remote Towns Job Profile (2017) [https://nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/570950/ngukurr-remote-towns-jobs-profile.pdf](https://nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/570950/ngukurr-remote-towns-jobs-profile.pdf)

# Governance for SCfC in Ngukurr

Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation (YMDAC) has developed a strong Cultural Governance Board that represents the leaders of the seven clans. Underneath this sits the Strongbala Pipul Wanbala Bois Komiti (SPWBK). This committee identify the community's social needs, priorities, opportunities and solutions including those that support programs such the SCfC (referred to in Ngukurr as the Stronger Communities Program). The SPWBK then make recommendations to the YMDAC Board for approval. Representation on the SPWBK is a cross-section of the community from Elders to young people of the four semi-moities and seven clans.

## A voice for Yugul Mangi people

In 2018, YMDAC, under the guidance of the SPWBK, conducted a Community Engagement Study for the YMDAC Stronger Communities.

The Chair of the SPWBK, Daphne Daniels, explains that:



**We wanted to listen to our people, hear their voices and their views. To do this we developed the Community Engagement Study and [shared the results with the community]...**

**We want to stop service providers from continuing to create division and disempower community through the creation of many boards or committees that do not have proper representation from all clans and semi-moieties and aren't working together with other Boards. We want to work with governments so that control and decisions remain with the community...**

**We want to achieve this through the development of a governance model based on the traditional Yugul Mangi way. We want to see more and more services handed to the community so that they are guided by strong local decision making and where local people are employed and [supported] to become the program managers and service providers.**

# SCfC Activities Making a Difference

## Community-led research in Ngukurr

Over a six-month period, more than 100 Yugul Mangi people contributed their views on needs and priorities to strengthen the community, particularly for children, youth and families. The research was entirely community driven and community controlled throughout the process - from the proposal at the concept stage, to governing the study, planning, determining the objectives and questions, employing and training local researchers, transcribing interviews and interpreting data.

The results of the study were presented back to the people of Ngukurr in the form of a comprehensive Community Engagement Study & Plan, a unique document that provides the community, service providers, and agencies with a detailed description of the priorities of residents of Ngukurr.

**It's very important [to read and write in Kriol] because by the time they get older and don't know how to spell you will struggle because I know I struggle doing that [reading and writing in my own language].**

Survey participant

**Things that taught at school inim [aren't] interesting. They're not talking about themselves. They're talking about something else [i.e. The content isn't relevant]. First you got to build up your knowledge of yourself then familywise. That's why...instead of explaining the white man way we should have two way education...[kids runaway from school] because, maybe they feel out of place. Nothing there interesting. You gotta make sure they learning about themselves.**

Survey participant

**Culture is important because if don't have culture in your life you're nobody...If you don't have culture you don't know who you are.**

Survey participant

# Ngukurr: Summary of community-level outcomes and thematic analysis

**SCfC Community:** Ngukurr

**Governance:** Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation (YMDAC)

• Strongbala Pipul Wanbala Bois Komiti (SPWBK)

**Assessed activities in the Storybook:** Governance Mapping Project • School Holiday Cultural Program

• Meigim Kriol Strongbala (Making Kriol Strong)

	<b>Program Measures</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Strategic learning</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<b>Mission Outcomes</b>	Children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased school attendance and engagement</li> <li>Children and young people gain social and emotional maturity</li> </ul>	Developing community-based and driven education, training and resourcing programs for the Kriol language is fostering pride and an increased capacity in Kriol literacy. This works to increase community engagement in the school and workplace; improve communication between community and service providers; and increase student attendance and engagement at school by developing localised and culturally appropriate curricula.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play and fun</li> <li>Increased collaboration between Aboriginal people, organisations and schools</li> <li>Responsive and culturally located support for SEWB</li> </ul>
	Cultural learning and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people gained cultural knowledge and skills</li> </ul>	Cultural Programs for young people are vital to their social and emotional well-being and their sense of identity and belonging. Youth in Ngukurr are dealing with a complex range of emotional, social, health, and economic problems. Guided by the SPWBK, the Stronger Communities' Youth Cultural and Well-being Programs, School Holiday Cultural Programs, Youth Diversion and others have provided the support, mentorship and connection to culture that youth need. In collaboration with a diverse range of organisations, and community leaders, the YMDAC Stronger Communities Program has made Ngukurr a safer and happier place for young people and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language</li> <li>Pride</li> </ul>
	Family and community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community perceptions of change</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intergenerational relationship building</li> </ul>
	Workforce / human capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased hours worked by local people</li> <li>New work and professional development opportunities</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaningful paid employment</li> </ul>
	Community governance capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LCB members have interest, experience and cultural authority</li> <li>LCB members are confident in their leadership, decision making, and planning</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural authority</li> <li>Participatory and transparent decision making</li> </ul>
<b>Systems Change</b>				Strengthening cultural authority that is representative of the Yugul Mangi people, reflects traditional clan systems, respects the Elders of the past and the present, strengthens the foundations for community governance for the generations to come.

Program Measures	Outcomes	Strategic learning	Themes
<p>Cross-cutting outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved partnerships and collaborative arrangements</li> <li>Leverage of program support</li> <li>Effective place-based strategies</li> </ul>	<p>Conducting successful consultations such as the Community Engagement Study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a way for the SPWBK to listen to residents across the different clans, genders, age groups and different roles and perspectives to make informed decisions.</li> <li>Give residents a chance to raise their voice confidentially.</li> <li>Bring confidence to the decision making process by the SPWBK in their recommendations to YMDAC Board of Directors.</li> <li>Provide solid evidence for supporting the plans developed out of the process. (Prompts shared vision and 'buy-in' from boards, community, service providers and governments}</li> <li>Are viewed as a win for everyone, so long as the leaders have oversight and control, the consultations are conducted by local people and the participants are paid for their contribution of knowledge and time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthened partnerships between Aboriginal-led organisations, Government, service providers, and community</li> </ul>

Systems Change





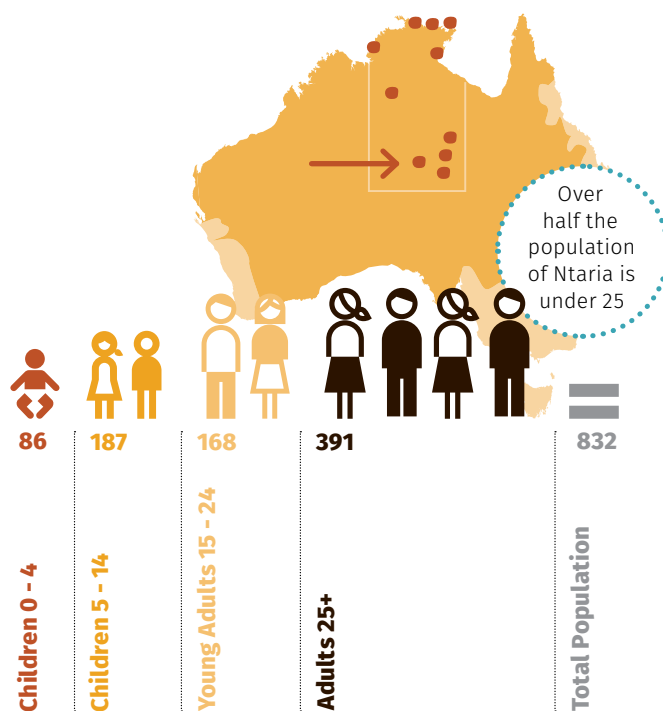
# Ntaria and Tjuwanpa Outstations

Ntaria sits at the foothills of Tjoritja (the West MacDonnell Ranges), on the banks of Lhere Pinte (Finke River), and within the traditional land of the Western Aranda people. The township, located 130km west of Alice Springs, is home to around 832 people.<sup>1</sup> It is also the hub for 37 regional outstations, which spread across 4,500km of the Central Desert and are home to around 300 Western Aranda people.<sup>2</sup>

The current settlement at Ntaria began in 1877 when Lutheran missionaries travelled from South Australia to establish a mission, which they named Hermannsburg after the German town where they had trained. At that time, European sheep and cattle stations increasingly occupied the land, prompting rapid social and economic changes across the region. The decade that followed was marked by trauma and violence.

Arts were encouraged at the mission, and the people of Ntaria have developed distinctive styles of art that feature strongly in community life. Their internationally renowned pottery, for example, translates Western Aranda cultural heritage using terracotta clay and vibrant glazes to hand-create distinctive ceramic pots.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the former mission precinct and galleries, which host around 10,000 visitors each year, the township of Ntaria has two stores, a school, a clinic and a sports and recreation centre.



## Key Activities in Ntaria

**Kids Club**

**Young Women's Place**

**Swimming and Water Safety Program**

**Ride for Pride**



1 Hermannsburg Potters Aboriginal Corporation (2020) 'History of Hermannsburg', <https://hermannsburgpotters.com.au/about/history-of-hermannsburg/>  
 2 National Indigenous Australians Agency (2012) Tjuwanpa outstations welcome ten-year Government funding for essential service deliveries, <https://www.indigenous.gov.au/tjuwanpa-outstations-welcome-ten-year-government-funding-for-essential-service-deliveries>  
 3 Hermannsburg Potters Aboriginal Corporation (2020) 'The Hermannsburg Potters', <https://hermannsburgpotters.com.au/about/the-hermannsburg-potters/>



# Governance for SCfC in Ntaria

## Western Aranda people leading in two worlds

Ntaria SCfC has made a substantial contribution to expanding leadership opportunities for Western Aranda people. Monthly meetings provide a forum for the Leaders Group to think critically about issues; learn about project planning and budgeting through discussion and approval of project proposals; and learn about the impact and effectiveness of their investments through project monitoring. Involvement in SCfC meetings has increased members' knowledge of government systems and processes, and developed their confidence to assess project costings in relation to the expected benefits to children resulting from projects. Increasingly members are playing an advocacy role on behalf of Ntaria's children and young people.

As one Leaders Group member commented:

**This program put kids in the middle and now it is getting stronger and stronger. Before, everything was dropping down because kids were having children young. They just need a bit of help to know how to look after children.**



## Accountable and transparent decision making

Leaders Group members are always on the lookout for how the projects are working. Consciousness has been raised about what to look for in a good program including administrative and governance issues. A two-step process of project approval enhances opportunities for discussions with families. Complex or larger investments are usually approved in principle before community planning discussions are held. Once these are completed and there is agreement about design, a full proposal comes to the Group for approval.

Leaders Group members are confident to report funding decisions to community members. One comments, for example, that:

**Kids are the future of the community and they need to learn both ways. It's a changing world, and education is the key. I let the community and the Department know what the Leaders Group is doing. They discuss things that we can fund. For example, [they] funded kids in the school to go on the Anzac Ride and it made more kids go to school... It is helping the community. The Leaders Group discussed the problem and they are trying to resolve things, so I am hoping in the future it will get stronger.**

## Challenges

Despite the overall progress made, SCfC governance at Ntaria is not without its challenges. For example, the Leaders Group has representatives from most Western Aranda family groups, but not all. Members and SCfC staff continue to encourage families not represented to become involved in the program. There are, however, a number of barriers to new people coming onto the Group. These include skin relationships, fear of shame in not understanding the program, lack of confidence about their ability to communicate in English and the discomfort of coming into an already established group.

With only four men participating, members would like more men to join the group. Considerable energy has been directed to bringing men onto the Group, but strongly gendered roles, in which children are seen as women's business, result in men not coming forward.

# SCfC Activities Making a Difference

Over the years many activities have been supported in Ntaria by SCfC under the direction of the Leaders Group. These include, but are not limited to, a Kids Club to address SEWB needs of children in the community, a young women's program, the Ride for Pride horse trek and a water safety program.

## Swimming and Water Safety Program

When the rains come to Ntaria, the rivers flow. With no swimming pool in town there are few opportunities for children to learn about water safety. In 2018, the Leaders Group responded to community concerns about this by supporting the Swimming and Water Safety Program.

The program brings children aged 4-16 to Alice Springs Aquatic and Leisure Centre where they participate in fortnightly learn-to-swim lessons and a water fun day over the course of a school term. Local people are employed to supervise travel and lessons. Children are provided with bathers, towels and a backpack, which they wear to school with pride and excitement when turning up early on swim days. In Term 1 of 2020, the program engaged 130 children.

Key outcomes of the Swimming and Water Safety Program have included:

- **Children are safer in and around water** – increased confidence in the water and greater knowledge about water safety
- **Children participating are healthier** – regular opportunities to develop fitness in the water during the warmer months of the year, and benefits to eye and ear health
- **Attendance at school increased** – classes are held on Fridays and provide incentive to come to school regularly



# Ntaria: Summary of community-level outcomes and thematic analysis

**SCfC Community:** Ntaria

**Governance:** Western Aranda Leaders Group

**Assessed activities in the Storybook:** Kids Club · Young Women’s Place

· Swimming and Water Safety Program · Ride for Pride

	<b>Program Measures</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Strategic learning</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<b>Mission Outcomes</b>	Children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased school attendance</li> <li>Personal and social development</li> </ul>	<p>Factors that have been critical to providing successful support for the social and emotional well-being of children include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play and fun</li> <li>Age appropriate spaces</li> <li>Communicating about healing through Western Aranda language and worldview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age-appropriate spaces</li> <li>Play and fun</li> <li>Responsive and culturally located support for social and emotional well-being (SEWB)</li> <li>Supportive learning environments</li> </ul>
	Cultural learning and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people gained cultural knowledge and skills</li> </ul>	<p>Learning about ‘the brain story’ has helped teachers better understand and respond to challenging behaviours. This has created a more supportive learning environment at Ntaria school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language</li> <li>Pride</li> <li>Connection to country</li> </ul>
	Family and community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are safer when the rivers flood</li> </ul>		
	Workforce / human capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased hours worked by Western Aranda people</li> <li>New work and professional development opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Inclusion of kin relations in LCB membership criteria has increased its ability to engage the community and facilitate participatory planning and transparent decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaningful paid employment</li> <li>Training in locally relevant skills</li> <li>Shadowing</li> </ul>
	Community governance capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LCB members have interest, experience and cultural authority</li> <li>LCB members are confident in their leadership, decision making, and planning</li> </ul>	<p>Linkages with service agencies and organisations through Leaders Group members’ employment or membership on other community boards have enabled SCfC to leverage program support, build strong partnerships, and add value to existing government services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural authority</li> <li>Participatory and transparent</li> </ul>
<b>Systems Change</b>	Cross-cutting outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to flexible and responsive support</li> <li>Improved partnerships and collaborative arrangements</li> <li>Leverage of program support</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased collaboration between Aboriginal people and schools</li> </ul>

# Ltyentye Apurte

## “Anetyeke”: Stay strong, live long

Ltyentye Apurte (jih-n-jah-pur-ah), “stand of beefwood trees”, is an Eastern Arrernte community, also known as Santa Teresa, located 85km south-east of Alice Springs in semi-desert country. Its population is estimated to be 555 people of which 90.5% are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.<sup>1</sup> The land surrounding Ltyentye Apurte is rich in rock art, artefacts and ceremonial sites.

The history of the community began in the 1920s when local Arrernte people moved in from the bush, and settled in Alice Springs near Anzac Hill. In 1937, the Catholic Marist Brothers established a school for Aboriginal children. By 1953, Ltyentye Apurte was established as a Catholic Mission. It became home to people from Alice Springs and the Catholic Mission from the former gold mining town of Arltunga. In the 1970s the community became part of an Aboriginal land trust.

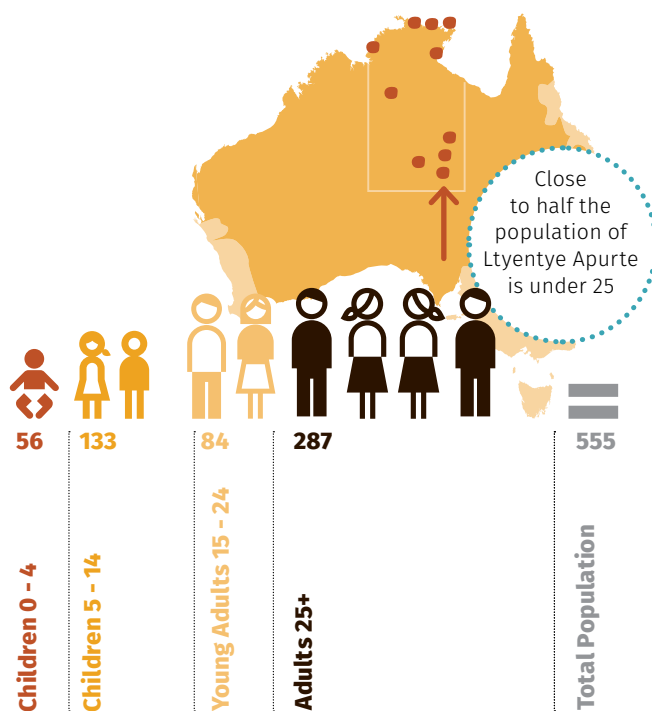
**It was a big move but we settled in alright. Our ancestors always looked after the country around here**

Phillip Alice (RIBS Broadcaster)<sup>2</sup>

The town has four areas: East Side, New Houses, Old Village and Across the Fence. These areas are used by different family groups in accordance with cultural practices. Essential services such as power, water and sewage are provided by the MacDonnell Regional Council. Ltyentye Apurte also has a general store, fuel station, school, church, art and craft centre, health clinic, police station, post office and community library.<sup>3</sup>

There is also an indoor sports centre, swimming pool, football oval, softball oval and children’s playground. The community defines itself as Indigenous Catholic, and going to church on Sundays is an important activity. Eastern/Central Arrernte, Western Arrernte and English are spoken in the community.

1 <https://www.macdonnell.nt.gov.au/communities/santa-teresa>  
 2 <https://vimeo.com/320718843>  
 3 <https://www.macdonnell.nt.gov.au/communities/santa-teresa>



### Key Activities in Ltyentye Apurte

**Spinifex Skateboards**

**The Ltyentye Apurte Hair Salon**

**Horse Program**



Ltyentye Apurte is a vibrant community and people are proud of their town. In 2019, the community won the Australia Tidy Towns award, recognising their sustainability achievements, and was also named Australia’s most sustainable community.



## Governance for SCfC in Ltyentye Apurte

The Atyenhenge-Atherre Aboriginal Corporation (AAAC) is the SCfC facilitating partner in Ltyentye Apurte. AAAC is a not-for-profit established in 2010 to represent Ltyentye Apurte community members in decision making about the future of their community. Its name, Atyenhenge-Atherre reflects its mission, “from Grandfather to Grandson”.

The Local Community Board that guides SCfC is called the Decision Making Group. They meet to suggest, discuss and make decisions on projects put forward by community members and agencies. Membership of the Decision Making Group was initially open to all who wanted to be involved. Over time, membership decreased. As members dropped off, the Decision Making Group was left with the right people for the job. Today, the membership is a mix of men and women across all ages who are focused on children’s outcomes.

The long-term commitment of board members makes the group function well:

**“If we want change, we need to be committed. Even if funding stops, we need to find other funding streams to continue what we are doing”**  
Decision Making Group member

The Decision Making Group prioritises local knowledge, using people that already have skills in the community, and building programs around those skills. This is why local employment has risen as a result of the programs implemented.



## SCfC Activities Making a Difference

There is a range of SCfC activities in Ltyentye Apurte. New businesses have been set up, including a furniture store, coffee cart, Spinifex Skateboards skate park and enterprise, a traditional craft centre and a hair salon. Alongside these businesses are children and youth focused programs such as the Music and Drumming program, Horse Program, Kids Care Coaching, Start Right/Eat Right, babyFAST, Cyber Safety, Child Safety, Holiday Program, an eco school program and Your Voice Strong Voice. There are also on-going Indigenous Ecological Learning Camps, a Community Cultural Heritage project and a BushWok Nutrition Program.

### Horse Program

**Kids that went behaved better. Kids that was going to court and stuff learnt how to better towards people and Elders**  
Community member

The Ltyentye Apurte Horse Program was developed in response to a series of community break-ins. Within a fortnight, needs were identified and the Horse Program was designed and ready to start.

The program design was based on research on the positive impact working with large animals can have on children experiencing trauma. With support from the local stockman, two camps for young boys to learn about horsemanship were developed. There was a rewards camp for students with high school attendance and a diversionary camp for young people engaging in high risk behaviour. Both camps involved practicing the respect and patience needed to work with a large, wild animal. However, the diversionary camp required harder work. Difficult, hands-on work gave disengaged young people the positive experience of fatigue and pride after a job well done.

Community members have seen the change in behaviour of the young boys that attended the Horse Program, particularly towards other people and the Elders. It has kept them out of trouble and some have noted that the young boys are able to move forward after the program. The program has taught young boys new skills that can be passed onto the next generation.

# Ltyentye Apurte: Summary of community-level outcomes and thematic analysis

**SCfC Community:** Ltyentye Apurte

**Governance:** SCfC Decision Making Group • Atyenhenge-Atherre Aboriginal Corporation (AAAC)

**Assessed activities in the Storybook:** Spinifex Skateboards • The Ltyentye Apurte Hair Salon • Horse Program

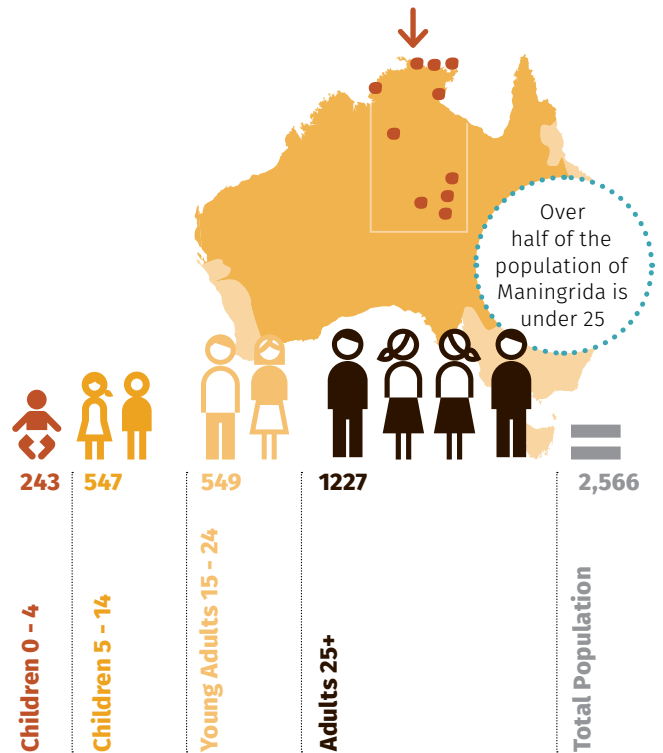
	Program Measures	Outcomes	Strategic learning	Themes
<b>Mission Outcomes</b>	Children and young people	Children develop communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving and personal-social skills	<p>Bringing new activities- such as skating- that combine traditional aspects (such as art) with elements from mainstream Australia, turn into good opportunities for children to explore. Besides this intercultural strength, skating has also enhanced skills development, peer support and having fun! The fact that it is led by an Indigenous local man has also been a success factor. Thanks to Nicky Hayes!</p> <p>Enhancing the development of local businesses supports empowerment and self-determination processes in the community. It brings good opportunities both for people that offer the service, since they get the chance to have local work, as well as for people accessing the services, since they might feel more comfortable and do not have to go into town. Some community members express the need to revise prices, since some people still can't afford these services, and other people suggest revising the number and gender of staff working in the businesses.</p> <p>Having a strong Aboriginal corporation as the facilitating partner, has been a key element for business development and having control "about local development". The impacts described here show the important role that the AAAC plays. Although people recognise 'it was once broken', AAAC is now strong again and say "we learnt from those days". For people in Ltyentye Apurte, AAAC represents community, and as a local Aboriginal organisation they 'help a lot' and support community development.</p> <p>Analysis of local impacts from SCfC indicate that making Ltyentye Apurte a better place requires commitment from all community members. Besides having AAAC as a strong support, success depends on the participation of children, young people, adults and Elders. It is the joint work and the understanding of the relation between individual well-being and community well-being that has enabled Ltyentye Apurte to achieve their current state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play and fun</li> </ul>
	Cultural learning and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people gained cultural knowledge and skills</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pride</li> </ul>
	Family and community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community perceptions of change</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inter-generational relationship building</li> </ul>
	Workforce / human capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased hours worked by local people</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful paid employment</li> </ul>
	Community governance capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New work and professional development opportunities</li> <li>• LCB members have interest, experience and cultural authority</li> <li>• LCB members are confident in their leadership, decision making, and planning</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural authority</li> <li>• Participatory and transparent decision making</li> </ul>
	Cross-cutting outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved partnerships and collaborative arrangements</li> <li>• Effective place-based strategies</li> <li>• Benefits from businesses</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Two worlds' capacity</li> </ul>
<b>Systems Change</b>				

# Maningrida

Maningrida is located approximately 500km east of Darwin and 300km northeast of Jabiru in Arnhem Land at the mouth of what is now known as the Liverpool River. It was established as a permanent settlement in 1949, originally as a trading post to enable settlers and outsiders to trade with Aboriginal people living in the area.<sup>1</sup>

The Kunibídjí people, who are the traditional owners of the area, call it Manayingkarírra, the name of a little spring near the current barge landing. According to the Northern Territory Place Names Committee, the name Maningrida is an Anglicised version of Manayingkarírra, from the phrase “Mane djang karirra”, meaning “the place where the Dreaming changed shape.”

Maningrida is now one of the largest remote towns in the Northern Territory, with a population of approximately 3,000-3,500 people. It is the major service centre for the local population as well as more than 30 outstations or homelands, with a school, health clinic, multiple food outlets, two supermarkets, service station, arts centre, crèche and a tarmac airport with daily commercial flights to Darwin.

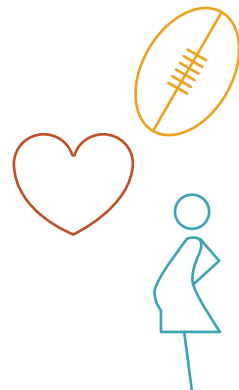


## Key Activities in Maningrida

**Australian Football League (AFL) Programs**

**Rheumatic Heart Disease Community Awareness Project**

**Preconception Health and Education Program**



<sup>1</sup> West Arnhem Regional Council (2020) 'Our communities: Maningrida', <https://www.westarnhem.nt.gov.au/our-communities/maningrida>



# Governance for SCfC in Maningrida

Respect is about reflecting on our people in the community and our Elders, we need to talk and show love and respect to our people for a better place.

**Charlie Gunabarra**  
Chair  
SCfC Reference Group



Mala'la Health Service Aboriginal Corporation has been the Facilitating Partner for the Stronger Communities for Children program in Maningrida since the community joined the program in 2015. The organisation is governed by eight community-elected directors who represent local tribes and language groups, plus two independent directors. Each director brings specific knowledge and experience in various subjects including community health, traditional ownership, community history and culture. Mala'la provides a range of primary health care services, youth services and residential and community care and disability services.

The local community board that guides the program in Maningrida is called the SCfC Reference Group. Bringing together the people and processes needed for an effective local board for SCfC took some coordination at the outset. Mala'la provided guidance on the key people to invite initially. The first board members then discussed who else could be invited to ensure the right mix of people to include, for example, a younger person and someone to represent the school.



# SCfC Activities Making a Difference: A Case Study

## Preconception Health and Education Program

### Background

The Preconception Program grew from concerns expressed by the SCfC Local Community Board on behalf of the community about the number of young girls, some still at school, who were having babies. They expressed concern that the girls were often leaving school early, didn't know what to feed their babies or how to look after them.

This initiative was started to encourage young women to attend the health clinic, have regular health checks and make good and informed health and life choices.

A group of girls aged between 12 and 18 years of age was prioritised, based on their most recent presentation at the clinic, the high number of pregnancies in this age group, and their level of engagement. Over a period of a year, every effort was made to engage with the girls with the support of a highly motivated local Community Worker, Treprena Taylor, who was not only very familiar with family relationships, but she had a high level of literacy and was well accepted more broadly in the community.

### Impacts of the program

The program was first proposed in 2016, a year during which there were seven teenage pregnancies. The program commenced in 2017, helping to achieve a decrease to five pregnancies. It has continued through to 2020. There has not been a teenage pregnancy in Maningrida since February 2019.

The change in numbers of pregnancies to girls under eighteen years of age dating from January 2014 is shown below.

Of course, one important factor that has led to the reduction in levels of pregnancies has been a corresponding increase in visits to health services by girls in the 12-18 age group.

The success of the program has largely been due to the presence of the same staff throughout this period, except when the Community Worker was on maternity leave. However, since relationships were well established between the girls and the School Nurse and Doctor, the program has continued to run very successfully during her absence.

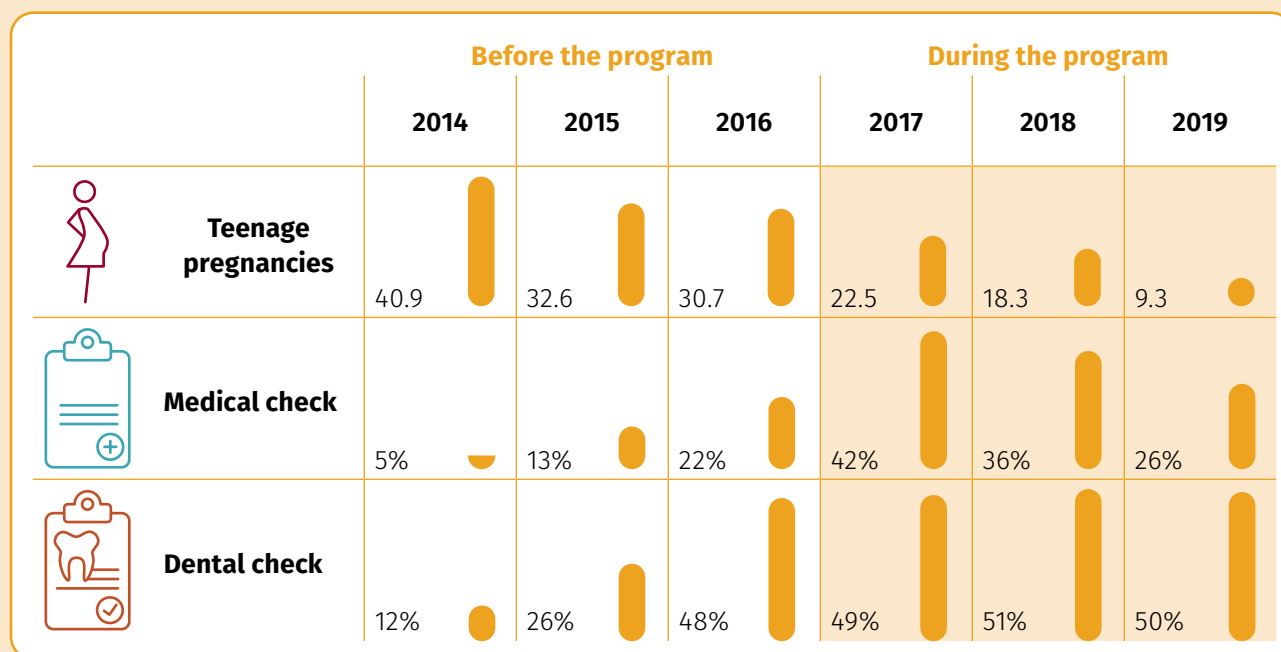


Figure 7: Data for girls in Maningrida aged 12-18 years during the period 2014 to 2019 inclusive: pregnancy rates per 1000 and attendance at health checks

# Maningrida: Summary of community-level outcomes and thematic analysis

**SCfC Community:** Maningrida

**Governance:** Mala'la Health Service Aboriginal Corporation • Maningrida SCfC Reference Group

**Assessed activities in the Storybook:** Australian Football League (AFL) Programs

• Rheumatic Heart Disease Community Awareness Project • Preconception Health and Education Program

	Program Measures	Outcomes	Strategic learning	Themes
<b>Mission Outcomes</b>	Children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health gains</li> <li>• Parents engaged in community-based parenting programs</li> <li>• Social and emotional gains</li> </ul>	<p>The Rheumatic Heart Disease project showed the importance of learning in first language, with people gaining a much better understanding of RHD, resulting in an increased number of people undertaking regular health checks and actively seeking treatment.</p> <p>Being a community-led program is instrumental in achieving the best possible outcomes for each community and is highly rewarding. Having identified specific concerns and seeing the improvement over the duration of the activities, gives not only the LCB, but the whole community, a sense of achievement and pride.</p> <p>Working collaboratively with other services in the community has been vital in achieving outcomes set by the LCB and ensuring activities are reaching their best potential.</p> <p>Having a varied Local Community Board in terms of gender and ages, has ensured the community is well-represented and community concerns identified are a true representation of the community as a whole.</p> <p>A strong partnership with Ninti One has been crucial for the survival of the SCfC Program and its future funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play and fun</li> <li>• Responsive and culturally located support for SEWB</li> </ul>
	Cultural learning and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people gained cultural knowledge and skills</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pride</li> <li>• Language</li> </ul>
	Family and community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community perceptions of change</li> </ul>		
	Workforce / human capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased hours worked by local people</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful paid employment</li> </ul>
	Community governance capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New work and professional development opportunities</li> <li>• LCB members have interest, experience and cultural authority</li> <li>• LCB members are confident in their leadership, decision making, and planning</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural authority</li> </ul>
<b>Systems Change</b>	Cross-cutting outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved partnerships and collaborative arrangements</li> <li>• Leverage of program support</li> <li>• Effective place-based strategies</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Two worlds' capacity</li> <li>• Increased collaboration between Aboriginal people, organisations and schools</li> <li>• Strengthened partnerships between Aboriginal-led organisations, Government, service providers, and community</li> <li>• Leverage for culturally-located services</li> </ul>

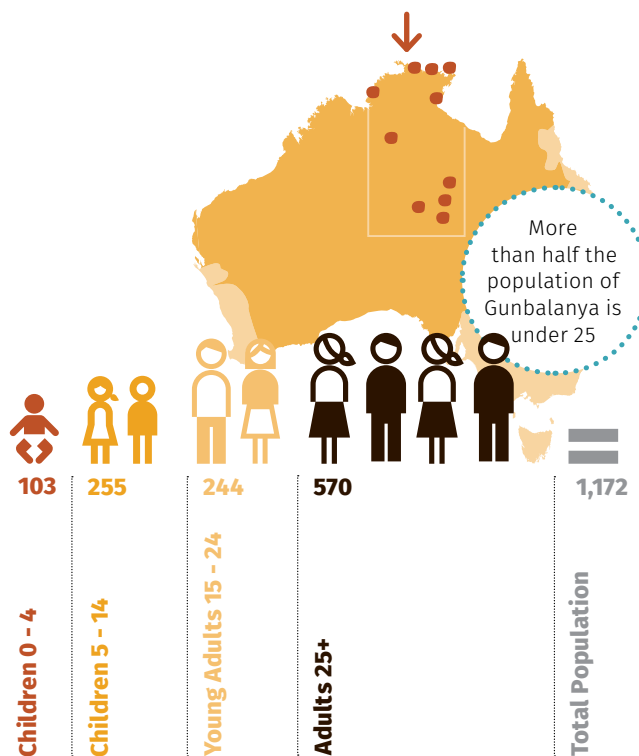
# Gunbalanya

Gunbalanya, also known as Oenpelli, is located 60km north east of Jabiru, across the East Alligator River in Arnhem Land. Around 1,200 people live there, many of whom speak Kunwinjku.<sup>1</sup> Burarra and Kriol are also spoken. Aboriginal people have inhabited the region for over 40,000 years and there are now 25 clan groups in the area, including the Maung, Ngumbur, Dangbon, Gundjehmi, Karik as well as the Mandjurlngunj clan, who are the traditional owners of the land on which Gunbalanya sits.<sup>2</sup>

Children in Gunbalanya learn the dreaming of Two Dogs, one male and one female, as taught by local Elders.<sup>3</sup>

Europeans first arrived in the 1880s, when Paddy Cahill built a cattle station that was later bought by the Commonwealth and shut down in 1919. Six years later, Anglican missionaries established a church and a school.

The Gunbalanya Community School educates children from preschool to Year 12. Children also learn and play at creche facilities, a youth centre, sports club and a swimming pool. Injalak Arts, a community owned arts centre, incorporates over 200 members from Gunbalanya and surrounding outstations. West Arnhem Regional Council provides sport, recreation and youth programs, employment programs, community safety, and other local government services.



## Key Activities in Gunbalanya

**Junior Rangers**

**Music Program**

**Bush Tucker Cook Up**

**Hang Out Nights**



1 West Arnhem Regional Council (n.d.) Gunbalanya, <https://www.westarnhem.nt.gov.au/our-communities/gunbalanya>

2 Remote Area Health Corps (n.d.) Community Profile: Gunbalanya (Oenpelli), Top End Region, [https://www.rahc.com.au/sites/default/files/pictures/RAHCMF20%20Community%20Profile\\_OENPELLI.pdf](https://www.rahc.com.au/sites/default/files/pictures/RAHCMF20%20Community%20Profile_OENPELLI.pdf)

3 Interviews with Gabriella Maralngurra, 21 October 2020 and Andrew Maralngurra, 4 February 2021

## Governance for SCfC in Gunbalanya

The Stronger Communities for Children (SCfC) Program in Gunbalanya is governed by a local community board (LCB) set up for the purpose, called Karrimud Rowk. Translated to English, Karrimud Rowk means 'we are all together'. The facilitating partner (FP) for the program is the Adjumarllarl Aboriginal Corporation (AAC), which has its own board. The Adjumarllarl board has processes and procedures that are firmly established and so Karrimud Rowk operates within the existing governance culture of AAC.

### 'Right way' decision making

Where decisions might be sensitive, such as affecting outstations associated with certain families or relating to activities in which some family members work, then the FP Coordinator visits each LCB member individually. This enables any differing views to be expressed outside a group setting, which is preferable for LCB members. In other words, individual voting is then anonymous. Decisions are therefore made in the 'right way', according to local practice.

Another example of local governance processes relates to financial management. Financial reports on the program are considered by AAC, and they then advise Karrimud Rowk as to the affordability of ideas and proposals that are being considered for SCfC. AAC focuses on the money and keeping within budget, while Karrimud Rowk takes responsibility for the implementation of the program.

## SCfC Activities Making a Difference

In choosing activities to fund in Gunbalanya, Karrimud Rowk has focused keenly on three community priorities: employment, recreation and culture. The combination of these three criteria are proving to be powerful conduits for engaging children, young people, and families in positive change.

SCfC activities align with the education programs of the Gunbalanya Community School by supporting after hours participation in structured activity to promote well-being and participation of Gunbalanya students. SCfC also support the school with programs designed to improve school attendance and the broader participation of community members and adults to engage and be part of the school curriculum.

Reported program benefits include:

- Kids learned more respect for culture and country
- There was a passing on of traditional lore and culture
- Kids learned more Binninji
- Elders got involved
- Kids learned and also taught each other
- The program motivated kids to go to school

Some community members also noted the importance of this program in role modelling the potential of future jobs with Njanjma Wurdurd Rangers for the Junior Rangers.



# Gunbalanya: Summary of community-level outcomes and thematic analysis

**SCfC Community:** Gunbalanya

**Governance:** Karrimud Rowk (We Are All Together) · Adjumarllarl Aboriginal Corporation (AAC)

**Assessed activities in the Storybook:** Junior Rangers · Music Program · Bush Tucker Cook Up

· Hang Out Nights

	Program Measures	Outcomes	Strategic learning	Themes
<b>Mission Outcomes</b>	Children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are more engaged in learning</li> <li>Increased social and emotional maturity</li> </ul>	Recreation can serve as a powerful conduit of positive change, especially when combined with local employment and cultural heritage. These have formed the main criteria for decisions about which activities SCfC supports in Gunbalanya.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play and fun</li> <li>Responsive and culturally located support for SEWB</li> </ul>
	Cultural learning and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people gained cultural knowledge and skills</li> </ul>	Meaningful jobs have been created for local people to cultivate fun and safe spaces for children, families and Elders to come together on country. These opportunities for social connection have generated important wins, such as intergenerational knowledge sharing, pride in community, confident participation and children engaging in healthy activities that were not accessible to them before SCfC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connection to country</li> <li>Pride</li> </ul>
	Family and community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community perceptions of change</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intergenerational relationship building</li> </ul>
	Workforce / human capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased hours worked by local people</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaningful paid employment</li> <li>Shadowing</li> </ul>
	Community governance capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New work and professional development opportunities</li> <li>LCB members have interest, experience and cultural authority</li> <li>LCB members are confident in their leadership, decision making, and planning</li> </ul>	<p>'Right-way' decision making has emerged in Gunbalanya through governance arrangements that build on the strengths and experiences of both the Local Community Board and the Aboriginal-controlled Facilitating Partner organisation.</p> <p>Achieving ownership and active participation of young people involves relinquishing power and understanding the perspectives of the young people who are attending the activities. Young people need to have trust that ideas they have will be followed through. Young people in community can feel when their interests are being overridden by the interests of adults. It's important to make clear that young people are given the flexibility and access to ensure they can participate during decision making. For example the Local Community Board has been reaching out to recruit more suitable young people to join the board, and making sure the facilitator gives them room to speak.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural authority</li> </ul>
<b>Systems Change</b>	Cross-cutting outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved partnerships and collaborative arrangements</li> <li>Access to flexible and responsive support</li> </ul>	<p>Cultural authority has been key to achieving high levels of community participation and engagement across multiple SCfC activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthened partnerships between Aboriginal-led organisations, Government, service providers, and community</li> </ul>

# Analysis of program impact

## Strategic learning

The extent to which efforts to uncover insights become key to future progress



- Learning about what we are doing
- Learning about what we are thinking
- Learning about how we are being

Source: Cabaj, M. (2019) 'Evaluating systems change results: an Inquiry Framework', The Tamarack Institute.

There are rich contextual narratives provided in this Storybook. This section will identify key insights that emerge from across all these communities to inform future work towards Closing the Gap Targets and, more specifically, towards ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have the best possible start in life.

**22%**

**of services are new or innovative**



### Lesson One:

**Collaborative cultural activities can produce a wide range of important benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and communities.**



SCfC demonstrates the far-reaching impact of cultural learning and participation. All six communities featured in this Storybook have chosen to invest in activities that connect children, families and young people with their culture, language and country.

These investments have been paying off in terms of:

- Social and emotional well-being
- Knowledge and skills
- Intergenerational relationships
- Increased engagement with school
- More supportive learning environments
- Improved collaboration between community members, service providers and government agencies
- Opportunities for local people to apply their specialised cultural knowledge and skills in the course of paid employment
- Reductions in violence and crime
- Pride in identity and community

The value of cultural learning and participation, in and of itself, was acknowledged by Local Community Boards and Facilitating Partners when they determined this as a measure for program success. The evidence now emerging from communities shows that cultural activities can also be instrumental in achieving additional outcomes.

In some cases, activities designed specifically to increase cultural knowledge and skills produced unexpected social and emotional benefits.

**One example is the Meigim Kriol Strongbala program in Ngukurr, which focuses on enhancing Kriol literacy. Focus groups with Assistant Teachers at Ngukurr School found unexpected outcomes from the program, most notably that students are better able to express their emotions and manage aggression since the introduction of Kriol lessons.**

The experiences of these communities suggest that service providers and government agencies should consider cultural learning and participation as a way of preserving the rich heritage of this country, boosting social and emotional well-being, and advancing progress towards multiple Closing the Gap targets.

### Lesson Two:

**Setting up effective community governance takes time, but can produce rapid and profound impact once achieved.**



The experience of implementing SCfC in remote Northern Territory communities shows the importance of being realistic about the amount of time needed to build strong mechanisms for participatory planning and decision making. This is consistent with international research, which stresses that collective impact is a 'long-term proposition' that requires significant investment to lay a strong foundation for deep and durable change.

**In Ngukurr, one result has been a collaborative Youth Cultural Program that garners active participation by a large proportion of community members in turning around the lives of young people and producing a rapid and sharp reduction of crime.**

**In Galiwin'ku, transitioning implementation of SCfC to an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation has built skills and capacity that enable strong Yolŋu voice in the design and delivery of local services. This has resulted in stronger partnerships with service providers, operational contracts for culturally located services and creation of meaningful employment for local people.**

### Lesson Three:

**Cultural authority is a crucial enabler for establishing shared vision and achieving positive change.**



At the SCfC Knowledge Sharing Seminar held in October 2019, cultural authority was defined as the ability to make decisions and provide leadership based on cultural and historical knowledge. Evidence from across all SCfC sites shows that cultural authority is a crucial factor that enables both development of a shared vision and effective implementation of programs and services.

**Knowing the history and culture of a community makes it possible to engage the right people in the right ways to bring a diversity of voices into decision making. In Ntaria, this has meant including kin relations in the membership criteria of the LCB to facilitate planning and information sharing with all local family groups.**

Strengthening the capacity of local people to lead and make decisions about how resources are invested has been an important and potentially long-lasting achievement in multiple SCfC communities. **One example is Galiwin'ku, where Yalu Indigenous Corporation has provided high-quality support for local employees to build the skills needed for the next generation to lead in 'two worlds'. In Ngukurr, SCfC partners reflect that 'Strengthening cultural authority that is representative of the Yugul Mangi people, reflects traditional clan systems, respects the Elders of the past and the present, strengthens the foundations for community governance for the generations to come'.**

Impact assessments at multiple SCfC communities point to the importance of embedding cultural knowledge and skills in a variety of services including health (Maningrida) and education (Ngukurr, Galiwin'ku, Ntaria) to achieve better outcomes for children and families. Cultural authority has also facilitated community participation in recreational activities that strengthen social relationships (Gunbalanya) and the establishment of social enterprises that enable economic participation and preserve traditional skills and crafts (Ltyentye Apurte).

Strengthening the capacity of local people to lead and make decisions about how resources are invested is a sound strategy for achieving impact. Government agencies should also note that this strategy aligns firmly with Priority Reforms 1, 2 and 3 of the 2020 National Agreement on Closing the Gap.



#### Lesson Four:

**Meaningful paid employment and professional development opportunities are highly valued by remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.**



The process of measuring change in SCfC has drawn attention to the high value implementing communities place on creating local employment and professional development opportunities. Workforce and human capacity was determined by Local Community Boards and Facilitating Partners to be one of six key measures of program success, and impact assessments have consistently shown that community members see the employment of local people as a high priority.

**The ways in which people talked about employment during impact assessments are revealing. The only mention of income was to point out that the SCfC gave local people opportunities to 'earn good money, not just government money'. Across the board, people talked about jobs in terms of pride, involvement, empowerment, healthier pathways toward the future and placing due value on cultural knowledge and skills.**

All six SCfC communities in this Storybook have created opportunities for Aboriginal people to apply their specialised cultural knowledge and skills in the course of paid employment.

**Multiple LCBs have made intentional decisions to ensure that SCfC builds local workforce and human capacity. One example is Karrimud Rowk, which has made local employment a key criterion for deciding which activities will receive SCfC funding in Gunbalanya. There and in Ntaria, the LCBs ensure that all specialists brought into community are paired with a paid local assistant who provides cultural perspective and gains skills and experience.**

#### Lesson Five:

**Local people are well positioned to deliver responsive, culturally located support for social and emotional well-being.**



The impact assessments reported in this Storybook show that children and families are benefitting from social and emotional gains in multiple communities. The narrative accounts of how communities are achieving this demonstrate a variety of approaches that have been carefully tailored to the needs, priorities and aspirations of particular populations.

The importance of responsive and culturally located support for social and emotional well-being cannot be stressed enough. Impact assessments of activities that produced social and emotional gains also found early signs of:

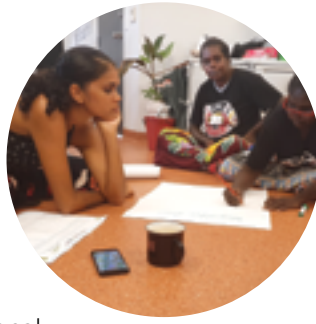
- Children and young people becoming more engaged in learning and school
- Less aggressive behaviour, fighting and crime
- Stronger and more respectful relationships across generations

**As pointed out in Lesson 1, the examples of Meigim Kriol Strongbala in Ngukurr, the Djalkiri Program in Galiwin'ku, Kids Club in Ntaria and Bush Tucker Cook Ups in Gunbalanya demonstrate how applying specialised cultural knowledge can produce social and emotional gains. Other activities, such as the AFL program in Maningrida and Young Women's Place in Ntaria, rely less on cultural knowledge and more on deep understanding of what local people want and need.**

One over-arching theme across this variety of approaches is that creating fun and safe spaces for children, young people and families can be a powerful conduit for building relationships that support social and emotional development. No one is better positioned to do this than local people.

## Lesson Six:

**Measuring local change can produce valuable insight into what works for specific communities and reinforce their achievements.**



The process of measuring local change, assessing impact and creating this Storybook has prompted LCB members and FP staff to examine their communities' experiences implementing SCfC. When Ninti One has been invited to support impact assessment in these communities, the focus has been squarely placed on learning. We aim to collect 'data that tells a story', meaning information that helps local teams figure out what works well and what steps they will take next to continuously strive for better outcomes in their community.

Setting up shared measurement for assessing collective impact has been a challenge in many communities. It is normal for this to take time, as establishing mechanisms for community governance and engagement often take precedence.

This was the case in Ngukurr, which offers an example of how valuable learning and insight can be gained from sharing data with a wide range of partners. **When the School Holiday Cultural Program corresponded with a sharp drop in local crime, the Ngukurr Police Sergeant took notice and began communicating with the Stronger Communities team about crime statistics. The clear pattern that emerged showed the diverse range of organisations delivering the program that their efforts were making Ngukurr a safer place. Community participation in the program has grown rapidly, and Ngukurr Police continue to share insights from crime statistics that shed light on the program's efficacy. This systematic sharing of data, paired with the Stronger Communities team's avid participation in telling their story, enables us to understand and celebrate their achievements. More importantly, it enables them and their community to recognise and take pride in what they have achieved.**

Celebrating achievements is particularly powerful when decision making is led by community. The SCfC team in Maningrida have reflected on the sense of pride that has resulted from identifying specific local concerns, taking action to address them, and then observing positive changes in the community. Measuring those changes and reflecting them back to community enables SCfC teams to acknowledge and give credit to the full range of local people who engage with the program to make it a success.

**During Jan  
2019 to  
Dec 2020**

**49**

**training  
and study  
opportunities  
for SCfC  
staff and LCB  
members plus**

**17**

**for other  
community  
members**



# The future story of Stronger Communities for Children

This Storybook has painted an early picture of what six remote Northern Territory communities have achieved by implementing Stronger Communities for Children. It will be years before it is possible to measure the full extent of these achievements, as the program's collective impact approach aims for deep and durable systemic changes that take time to accomplish and assess.

Early measures of change are crucial, however, to improve understanding of what works and guide the direction of the program in future. SCfC has produced a wealth of strategic learning that will enable communities, service providers and government agencies to make more informed choices about how to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have the best possible start in life.

**Based on these early measures, we recommend that:**

**Communities should be supported to lay a firm foundation for change**

Building mechanisms for deep engagement and community-led governance takes time, but once established produce clearer pathways toward a better future. Short-term funding cycles pose barriers to the long-term partnerships, shared vision and planning required for achieving sustainable change. Finding ways to address these barriers and strengthen community capacity to lead and make decisions informed by local cultural and historical knowledge are worthwhile challenges to pursue for all agencies and organisations wishing to achieve better outcomes for children and families.

**Government agencies, service providers and communities should make the most of strategic learning produced by SCfC**

When SCfC was first implemented, very little was known about how to achieve collective impact in remote Australian communities. The local and program-wide lessons documented in this Storybook represent substantial gains. Local Community Boards, Facilitating Partners, service providers and government agencies across all sectors can leverage these gains by engaging with these stories and learning from these Aboriginal-led initiatives.

**Efforts to create a better future for children living in remote communities should incorporate paid employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply their specialised cultural knowledge and skills.**

The data emerging from SCfC provides sound evidence that this is an effective strategy for progress towards multiple Closing the Gap targets. Evidence for the value of cultural learning and participation for improving social and emotional well-being is especially strong, but can only be led by people with the appropriate cultural knowledge and skills.

The Storybook does not end here. Communities continue in their work to change early childhood support systems so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to give emerging generations the best possible start in life. As they learn from their experiences, this Storybook will grow and change along with understanding of the program's impact.



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**ONE • COMMUNITIES**  
**FOR CHILDREN**

