

FAMILY WELLBEING [FWB] NEWSLETTER

Issue 3

April 2017

Establishing a National Centre for Family Wellbeing

We are very proud to announce that with the formation of our Indigenous-led Advisory Group chaired by Professor Yvonne Cadet-James, we are on our way to establishing a National Centre for Family Wellbeing. The National Centre for Family Wellbeing, led by the inaugural CEO, Mr Leslie Baird, will be a national, inclusive, hub and spokes model network committed to facilitating, establishing and bringing together training providers, facilitators and end users of the Aboriginal-developed Family Wellbeing program.

Since the Lowitja Institute's Family Wellbeing Roundtable, in Adelaide in March 2014 much work has been done to address the recommendations from the event. The recommendations from the roundtable are described by five key themes, or calls for action to take Family Wellbeing forward:

- strengthen the evidence base
- strengthen links to policy
- coordinate the program
- promote and advocate Family Wellbeing
- connect the Family Wellbeing family.

Funding applications have successfully secured a Lowitja grant so we have commenced establishing the National Centre for Family Wellbeing which will assist in bringing these recommendations to fruition. The Centre has been generously given a space at The Cairns Institute, James Cook University, Cairns Campus.

Recent activities

Activities to date include the employment of four part-time staff [75% Indigenous] who are working passionately and feverishly to bring the Centre to life. The advisory group has been meeting over the last year to address priorities. Our CEO, Mr Leslie Baird, is advocating and spreading the Family Wellbeing message far

(Continued on page 2)



In This Issue

National Centre for FWB	1
Things that work	2
Gjingkalbaeibiya Women's Group	3
FWB for the Kimberley Region	4
Act for Kids & JCU	5
Central Coast Primary Care	6
FWB at La Trobe	7
Making the wheel turn	8
Making it REAL	10
FWB at Southern Cross	11
South Australia FWB	12
FWB Central Coast	13
FWB in Indigenous communities	14
FWB in PNG	15
Australasian Mental Health & Higher Education Conference	17
Publications & links	18
Contact Us	18



Image adapted from Spiritual Connection by Senimelia Kingsburra

Establishing a National Centre for Family Wellbeing cont.

(Continued from page 1)

and wide, addressing the high demand for social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) programs. We are working on securing partners, funding applications and advocacy strategies including a conference forum this year and evaluations.

The Family Wellbeing newsletter is up and running, with this its 3rd issue. This newsletter will help the Family Wellbeing family to stay connected so please continue to share your stories with the rest of the Family Wellbeing family.

There will be a lot more activity over the coming months and we look forward to sharing more about the National Centre for Family Wellbeing.



Stay tuned for more exciting activities and events.

Professor Yvonne Cadet-James
Chair, National Centre for Family Wellbeing Advisory

Things that work

For many people, individual wellbeing is closely tied to the wellbeing of their community as a whole.

Whilst there is no overall measure of community functioning, outcomes for 2014-15 are not significantly different to those for 2008, for the six themes that make up community functioning: connectedness to country; land and history; culture and identity; resilience; leadership; having a role, structure and routine; feeling safe; and vitality.

The Family Wellbeing Program (northern Australia) is a cultural healing program that aims to enhance participants' capacity to deal with day-to-day stresses and to help others. It uses a group format, in which the experiences of the facilitators and participants are the main learning resource. A 2010 review of seven formative evaluations of the program concluded that it increased the capacity of participants to exert greater control over their health and wellbeing (see box 11.5.3 in main report for further detail).

This story is an extract from [Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2016: Report](#), (p. 46). Produced by the Productivity Commission for the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (2016).



Image courtesy of Family Wellbeing Program, Central Coast Primary Care (Ngurrumpa Culture Camp)

Gjingkalbaeibiya Women's Group – Maningrida

Introducing Marcianne Kala Kala. This exceptionally talented woman and mother is the leader of this newly formed, Gjingkalbaeibiya (She) Women Group in Maningrida.

Marcianne started her journey with the program back in 2015, her ultimate objective is to act as a bridge between two cultures teaching Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people how to live and work within Aboriginal society, and improving the social, emotional and mental wellbeing of families, especially the children and youth of Maningrida.

She embarked on completing her Training, Evaluation and Assessment (TAE) with Batchelor Institute, and Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation offered her the role of supervisor within their team to work with women in the community.

This opportunity enabled Marcianne to establish her own program, *GURRUDITJU* (Barada word for wellbeing) which allowed her to work closely with Batchelor Institute, Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation and the Uniting Church of Maningrida in co-facilitating the FWB Program for 20 local women.

Through the FWB Program, the women identify the need to establish a women's group to work with local women and families, community members and other stakeholders to strengthen working partnerships for a common goal—improving health, education and wellbeing of community people.

The women voiced their concern in regards to dealing and resolving issues that are detrimental to Aboriginal people and communities, such as domestic violence, child abuse, drugs and alcohol, lack of education – (Western and Traditional), removal of children, suicide, under age pregnancies, gainful employment.

The Gjingkalbaeibiya women's group will combine the skills and knowledge that they acquired from their studies with traditional methods – visible strings that connects everyone and everything: lore, moieties, identity, song lines, dreaming and cultural obligations.

The women are working collectively on strategies to empower, inspire and transform lives for the next generations to follow the Gurrutju way in Maningrida.

Karen Khan

Lecturer - Family Wellbeing
Batchelor Institute



Left: Marcianne Kala Kala



Gjingkalbaeibiya Women's Group

Possible FWB Program for the Kimberley Region

In April 2016 on behalf of the [Lowitja Institute](#) I attended the Kimberley Aboriginal Child Care Forum in the Goolarri Media Building in Broome on the West Kimberley Coast.

I gave a presentation on the Family Wellbeing program and there were several organisations in Broome who were interested, such as, Kimberley Aboriginal Medical services, Kimberley Child Care Agencies and Kullarri Regional CEDP.

I provided an overview of the FWB Program with history dating back to 1993. As an interactive group training course the FWB seeks to address:

- personal wellbeing and empowerment
- individual and family issues through addressing grief and trauma.
- empowerment opportunities in a supported group environment

Videos of testimonies from participants were screened demonstrating the Aboriginal led and run support for Aboriginal people to be empowered and take control of their lives.

The presentation also highlighted the importance of quality research and evidence.

I was sharing with those interested that I was working with Dr Komla Tsey who was working with a group of researchers that use participatory action research and community development approaches to support Aboriginal organisations to implement the FWB Program to strengthen family and community capacity to address local priority issues as defined by the community.

Although the FWB has achieved a lot in many communities over the past 18 years, there is a major gap:

- how to overcome short-term funding so that the program can be introduced and supported in one community over a longer period; and
- how can the outcomes be carefully researched and documented to show policy makers that investing in local Aboriginal community empowerment and development is a good return on investment.

The Lowitja Institute has recognised the potential of FWB and has given our team some seed funding to enable us to build relationships with organisations to work out how best to develop long-term partnerships so that we can introduce and support communities to build the FWB approach into their core business.

I suggested that one way we can start is for Dr Komla Tsey and myself to visit and introduce the key community leaders and service providers to a two-day FWB topic so that they can work out whether this meets their needs. If it does, then we can all work out a longer plan as to how to introduce, support and evaluate outcomes, who will do what, and ownership and use of evaluation reports.

Rev Leslie Baird

Wontup Bi-Buya College
& Australian Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Centre,
James Cook University



Bradley Gordon and Rev Leslie Baird talking Family Wellbeing



Kimberley Aboriginal Child Care Forum April 2016

Central Coast Primary Care

Central Coast Primary Care Family Wellbeing Program finished off with a bang for last year's Term 4 Group 9 High School Boys.

On the 21st of October 2016, FWB commenced with a total of 17 young Korri men ranging from 14- 17 years of age. We saw a large range of diversity within personal backgrounds, education, and various learning challenges. Session 1 took the boys through a journey of cultural discovery and that chance to connect with one another with the sharing of each other's life journey. With emotions running high, and tears in the room, young men connected on a whole new level setting the foundation for what was a successful and positive term.

Prior to the commencement of our Group 9 Program, myself and Coordinator [Nigel Millgate](#) connected with local Coastal Not for Profit Filming organisation [Films 4 Change](#) who loved the idea and what we brought to the Community here on the Coast. This meeting created the start of the Family Wellbeing Documentary which follows the journey of Group 9, and even the journey that Nigel and myself share along the way. Films 4 Change committed to FWB 150%, and were sure to capture every emotion, and event that we took part in. With a total bill of \$20,000+ for production, FWB have been kindly supported and donated a portion of that amount with still high hopes that we will get allocated funding to pay for the rest of the film to be finalised and released into our Community. This doesn't stop the kindness of Films 4 Change working tirelessly to film and follow our journey. Watch this space!

The Term flowed smoothly with boys completing the FWB content, and even getting positive feedback that the messages we deliver are being applied with their homes, community, and school. The Young Men experienced what life is like within a Drug and Alcohol Rehab, marched against Domestic Violence, visited local Aboriginal Sites, engaged in physical activity at the local sports centre, and attended a two day Culture Camp at the completion of their program.

Although we started with 17 Participants, 12 Participants finished the program with a 80% or more attendance rate, the impact that has been made for these young fulla's has continued to secure our reputation and results here on the Coast. Here's to FWB, and the success it brings to our people on a national level.

[Ben Cheniart](#)
[Central Coast Primary Care](#)
Family Wellbeing Project Officer



Smoking Ceremony at The Glen Drug and Alcohol Rehab



Wollombi Culture Camp Corroboree



Central Coast Walk a Mile Koori Style
(Walk against DV)



Central Coast Walk a Mile Koori Style
(Walk against DV)



Central Coast Walk a Mile Koori Style
(Walk against DV)

Taking Family Wellbeing to social work students at La Trobe University

FWB has been adapted and delivered to university students in Australia and Papua New Guinea. This was partly in response to calls by Indigenous FWB participants to ensure that professionals such as teachers, doctors, social workers and others workers with Indigenous people are introduced to FWB principles and approaches. One of the tertiary sector programs has been with first year social work students at La Trobe University metropolitan and regional campuses across Victoria. The initiative has been a great success! A recently published paper documents the first year the program was run at La Trobe. The authors are Mary Whiteside, Emma Bould, Annie Venville and Meg Morris from La Trobe University; and Komla Tsey and Yvonne Cadet-James from James Cook University.

The program was adapted so that it could be integrated into an introductory social work subject. Students were taken through the topics of Group Agreement, Human Qualities; Basic Human Needs; Understanding Relationships; Life Journey; Conflict Resolution; Understanding Emotions and Crisis; Grief and Loss; Beliefs and Attitudes; Managing Change; and Self Care. In addition to the FWB program handouts, students were provided with online facilitation demonstration videos and academic literature.

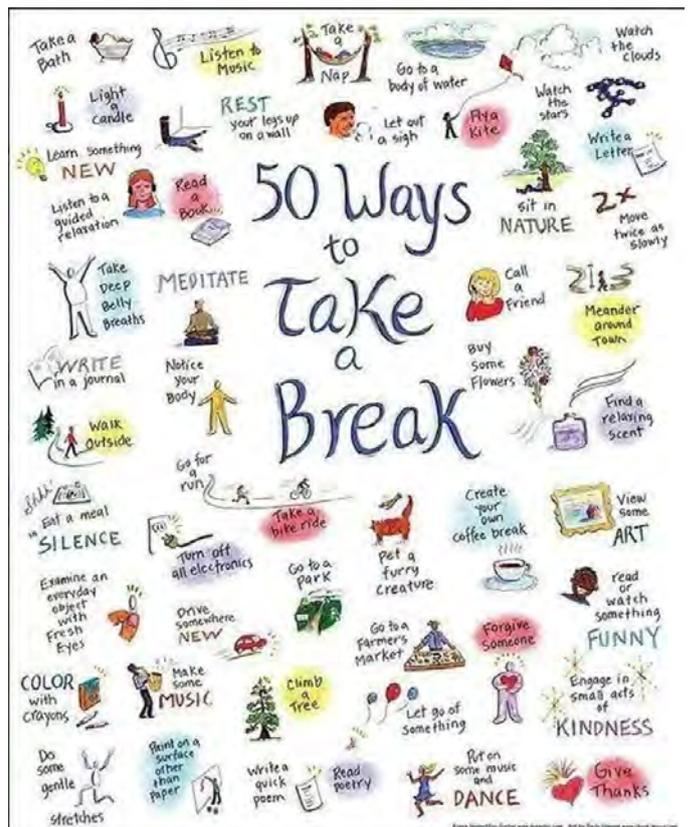
The subject tutors were all professionally qualified social workers who received training in FWB facilitation before the subject started. As part of the subject, students were also provided with training in group work facilitation and given opportunities to facilitate program topics in small class groups. One of the subject assessment tasks asked the students to run a topic with friends or family and to write a report of their experience. Another task was to develop creative materials for FWB – the '50 Examples to Take a Break' (right) is one of the resources students produced.

Sixty-four students participated in the pilot study of this delivery. They filled in a questionnaire before and immediately after completing the subject. The findings showed that FWB can be used to assist social work students with many aspects of their life associated with wellbeing. The program promoted the skills needed for problem solving and adapting to a changing world, such as self-awareness, self-confidence and relationship-building skills. They saw the FWB as very relevant for social work practice. Student and tutor feedback was so positive that FWB has become an ongoing part of the social work program at La Trobe.

The published paper can be found at the following link:
www.tandfonline.com/eprint/x3F2RUrHQFhHG82N8luB/full

The full reference is:

Whiteside, M., Bould, E., Tsey, K., Cadet-James, Y., Venville, A., & Morris, M. (2017). [Promoting twenty-first century student competencies: A wellbeing approach](#). *Australian Social Work*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1080/0312407X.2016.1263351



Mary Whiteside
College of Science, Health and Engineering
La Trobe University

It's not about reinventing the wheel, it's about making the wheel turn

During the second FWB workshop at Act for Kids in February 2017, Robyn showed Komla the presentation to management that they (Robyn, the Cultural Mentor and Victoria, the Training Coordinator) had created and wanted to know whether he thought it was good. Robyn, even made a joke, 'there are a few plagiarism from your papers there'. When Komla read it, he said that it is timely because as researchers, when we publish papers we are happy to see organisations using the evidence to influence decisions. The government now require researchers to show evidence of how we engage our partners and the impact that our research is making. Komla said that it would be wonderful if Robyn and Victoria could write up a story for the FWB newsletter about how they have used the FWB research to influence decision making in their organisation. Komla explained that other organisations are also struggling with how to embed FWB into their core business and will learn from Robyn and Victoria's experience. Leigh-ann added that as researchers, we love to see that our work is used to help people to make a case for programs that they see as valuable for themselves, their communities and their organisations. We are very pleased that Robyn and Victoria have chosen to share their FWB story.

Over the past 7 years Kieran Smith (Regional Director at Act for Kids FNQ) has travelled to the Cape Communities. In his time spent in Communities Kieran noticed Traditional Owners and staff demonstrating quality leadership. Kieran recognised that people in some Communities had participated in some form of training. Kieran made enquiries and discovered that it was Family Well Being Training. Kieran continued to hear ideas and concepts being used in Doomadgee where one participant told Kieran, The Family Well Being Program really "helped me come out of myself". Other communities who have embraced the Family Wellbeing Program are Aurukun, Yarrabah and Pormpuraaw where the Family Wellbeing language and concepts are still being communicated.

In 2011 Kieran applied to the Healing Foundation for funding to enable Act for Kids to deliver the Family Wellbeing Program to local staff in the 5 Safe Houses in Napranum, Pormpuraaw, Kowanyama, Aurukun and Doomadgee, taking into account the transference of language, ideas and concepts that are already known to the Communities. The program addressed some of our workforce challenges stemming from transgenerational trauma and brought a common language to staff to understand and respond to their own trauma.

Last year Komla from JCU and Act for Kids began building on that initial training with remote staff to embed the FWB Program in our practice across all our programs in the Far North.

Kieran asked Victoria (training co-ordinator for the Cape Safe Houses) and I (Cultural Advisor) to give a presentation to the Senior Management team about the benefits of the FWB Program and how it could assist their staff and the families they work with. In this context we felt it would be very important to present the research.



Kieran Smith, Regional Director FNQ, Act for Kids

We felt that we really needed to focus on what the research says about the FWB Program and link it to how it would value add to the Intensive Family Support team. This was a daunting task for Victoria and I. Where to start? Where can we find information? What did we need to do? After some conversations Victoria and I began by first finding what information was around, and contacted Komla from JCU to see if he had some results of research on the program.

Not knowing how we would be received by professionals who work from their own frameworks we relied heavily on the research which shows that evaluations of the FWB Program over the last 10 years demonstrate that program participants experienced improvement in domestic violence, alcohol and drug misuse, suicide prevention, school absenteeism, education, welfare dependence and employment.

Community specific evaluations of FWB delivered in different sites revealed that participation in the program enhanced people's capacity to take control of their lives.

(Continued on page 9)

Making the wheel turn cont.

(Continued from page 8)

And at an individual level, empowerment manifested through attributes such as hope, goal setting, communication skills, empathy, a strong desire to help others, perseverance and a belief that the social environment can change. (Source: *Family Wellbeing Policy Brief* by Lowitja Institute)

So in the presentation to the Senior Management team we highlighted the fact that the program was designed by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people, and how this Aboriginal knowledge about life and being human has universal application across cultures. We highlighted how the tools of the FWB Program help us to understand ourselves and others as well as give us tools to make changes. We also focused on the FWB Programs capacity to improve the self-care of our workforce and thus have a flow on effect to improve outcomes for children and families.

The presentation went over well and managers then went off to consider how the FWB Program could be used, embedded and sustained in our everyday work. Ideas that have put forward to make this happen are:

- The training of trainers in the FWB program (We have already applied for a received \$50k grant from QLD Health to train trainers in FWB from Napranum, Aurukun, Pompuuaw, Kowanyama and Doomadgee)
- Using the Program as part of PDPs
- Developing FWB visuals and graphics for the office walls etc.
- Using people's testimonies to spread the word
- Partner with TAFE to provide accredited training in the FWB
- Provide tailor made sessions for staff wellbeing and self-care.

We have already delivered some FWB sessions for staff on their Planning and Wellbeing day. Feedback has been very positive so far.

Robyn Moylan & Victoria Drew
Act for Kids



Komla Tsey (JCU) & Robyn Moylan (Act for Kids)



L-R: Victoria Drew & Robyn Moylan (Act for Kids)

MAKING IT REAL: Learning-as-doing with FWB

Student workshop experience Act for Kids 2016

In November 2016 I had the privilege and the pleasure of participating in the Stage One: Foundations in Counselling Family Wellbeing (FWB) workshop with Act for Kids here in Cairns facilitated by Komla Tsey. This article is a brief description of how an academic endeavour became a real life, ground-level FWB experience.

As a student of the JCU post graduate *Empowerment and Change* subject I was required to experience FWB in real time and gain an understanding of topics, tools and 'delivery style' of the FWB Program. Students were required to seek an opportunity to independently facilitate a session of the FWB Program, evaluate its role in empowering people to make change, and write a report based on the findings from the session.

In my role as a social worker I had been aware of FWB as a powerful intervention for change in communities across the country, however, this would be my first 'insider' insight to the process of program delivery. I did not feel ready to run a workshop! Also as a non-Indigenous person I recognised the need to seek some cultural mentoring and guidance. Where to next?

Being given some 'creative scope' for the assessment requirements by my Indigenous Studies Unit JCU supervisor, and an opportunistic meeting with Komla Tsey over a cup of tea, I established a connection with the excellent FWB Empowerment research team at The Cairns Institute. And an invitation to collaborate in the Act for Kids FWB workplace development project followed.

Act for Kids is on a change journey of their own, to embed FWB into a whole of organisation practice framework (see [December Issue](#) of the FWB Newsletter). As a contribution to their professional planning and development it was agreed



that I would capture and evaluate the groups' experience of the two day FWB workshop. This would also satisfy the requirements of my JCU assessment.

Questions arose: Where would I position myself in this process: as observer/researcher? As visiting outsider? Komla's response was, of course, "Oh no, you will be a participant!"

Being welcomed to participate as a workshop group member, with the consent of the Act for Kids team, was a testament to the strong relationship of trust and understanding between the JCU Empowerment research team and Act for Kids. This partnership reflects the importance of relationships and reciprocity that the FWB Program promotes. The process was organic and grew as I responded to the welcoming open door that is FWB, with my role as participant/researcher/learner, putting into practice the Participatory Action Research (PAR) learning cycle.

As a group we shared unique and intimate stories and learnings from real time work/life situations. We also explored alternatives of delivery styles and tools, modelling the FWB flexibility to respond to different locational settings and client groups. I took on the role of providing data analysis of the workshop feedback forms and a 'wrap up' of findings for the group. The material captured for my report would be made available to Act for Kids for professional practice and systems development going forward.

THE FEEDBACK

Participants' responses were overwhelmingly positive in terms of their learning experience, the content and the facilitation. The feedback indicated the material and exercises offered were 'very helpful', 'informative', 'meaningful and useful'. The sharing of 'on the ground' knowledge, "hearing others' professional wisdom and stories" was repeated positive feedback and emerged as a primary theme.

The FWB sessions guided workers to reflect on how they deal with change and conflict in their own lives, seek alternative ways of dealing with problems and what this means for their daily work practice. One participant saw this as an opportunity for 'continuous improvement', spotlighting the challenges of drawing on personal life experience, our ability to identify and name our own personal qualities and strengths and to understand how this relates to our practice.

The mixed mode of delivery, balancing organisational practice development and personal reflection, also emerged as a strong theme. One participant stated that the workshop was "a healthy way of evaluating work practices *and personal attributes*". The strengths focus of the FWB content and process was noted on three occasions in feedback. Basic human needs and human qualities were session topics singled out by workers as useful to apply in their clients' lives.

(Continued on page 11)

MAKING IT REAL cont.

(Continued from page 10)

The quality of facilitation emerged as a theme and was highly rated by the group. A distinctive and natural questioning style of facilitation was competently demonstrated by the facilitator. It was observed that the facilitator had the ability to 'lead by example' as a group member and he modelled the powerful tool of personal disclosure with a natural story-telling manner. It was also noted that the workshopped group agreement had been important in creating a safe place for telling stories, building trust, encouraging self-reflection and "for the challenging and personal nature of the FWB Program".

My experience reflects a practice example of the participatory 'learning as doing' process of FWB and demonstrates how evaluation is naturally built into this. Collaboratively, we worked this evaluation and feedback into a useful and meaningful resource for ongoing workforce and organisational planning and we also ensured participants had their roles and contributions recognised.

Through the FWB Program, Act for Kids is building skills and personal agency in team members to bring to their work with clients and communities, mirroring the flow-on, 'ripple effect' of the FWB train the trainer model.

Through the process we gathered evidence of growth and change in both personal and professional settings, and all took new confidence and competencies in FWB Program delivery back to our families, workplaces and academic endeavours.

Jane Simpson
JCU Masters student



FWB at Southern Cross University

Another way to spread the Family Wellbeing [FWB] message is advocating with other partners such as Southern Cross University [SCU]. I met with Dr Lynne McPherson this month to find some synergies with our work and the research she is doing with her team at Coolangatta. Lynne is a senior lecturer, social work and social welfare in the School of Arts and Social Sciences, SCU. Her publication and teaching interests are in the areas of child protection supervision, child, youth and family issues, post graduate learning and harm experienced by children in sport. And Lynne is also an Investigator on our Lowitja Project. We are collaborating on a future plan as to how to we can introduce FWB to students at SCU.



Lynne McPherson
Southern Cross University, Coolangatta



Southern Cross University courtesy vimeo.com/138479542

South Australia FWB

FWB in Ceduna

My name is Robyn Pedler and I am delivering Family Wellbeing certificate in South Australia, from the Port Lincoln TAFE campus. My previous work was in Alice Springs with Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education where Family Wellbeing was delivered to Central Australian communities.

In 2016 I travelled through semester 2 to deliver FWB at Ceduna in north-west South Australia at the start of the Nullarbor to a group of students who were from the local area. Over a period of six months the students attended workshops every other week to complete this certificate by December.

The workshops were attended by workers from a range of areas that included children's services, education and health services. This brought a wide range of life experiences brought to the group. The feedback from the students about the FWB Program was very positive and included 'appreciation of being able to share experiences and stories in a safe group' and an 'understanding of the basic needs we all have' and 'recognising the inner strengths we all have that we can draw on'. The group were keen to promote the course to other work colleagues and family members.

Ceduna has a strong and vibrant sense of family and community and this course was able to contribute in many ways to strengthen and improve the social and emotional wellbeing of the students who were able to undertake the Family Wellbeing training.

Sundri's retirement

The team from Aboriginal Access Centre bid farewell to Sundri Zwaan's who is retiring. Sundri has worked in Aboriginal education at TAFESA for more than 23 years and during this time she has delivered training in the Family Wellbeing program (FWB) in SA and also in NT. Sundri has made a significant contribution to the Family Wellbeing Sector, and has enjoyed the opportunity to make connections with the Aboriginal community.

The FWB certificates offer a process for self-empowerment through the gaining of skills in communication, conflict resolution and counselling, Sundri is well regarded as a facilitator by state and national FWB stakeholders; her name is synonymous with this relevant and meaningful course for Aboriginal people. During her many years in the program she has supported hundreds of students in their healing journey.

Sundri said it has been very satisfying to be involved in a program which has impacted positively on so many individuals, their families and communities. Students and staff agree she is inspiring woman who changes lives and futures.

We wish her all the very best life has to offer in the years to come.

Robyn Pedler

Lecturer, Family Wellbeing Aboriginal Access Centre
Port Lincoln



Robyn Pedler



Sundri Zwaan

Family Wellbeing, Central Coast NSW... the story so far

The Central Coast NSW Medicare Local (CCNSWML) saw an opportunity in late 2012 to commence a program that could support the mental health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in the Central Coast region.

The Federal government at the time had released the *Mental Health: Taking Action to Tackle Suicide (TATS) - Vulnerable populations, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Program*.

We knew that to be successful, whatever type of program we decided to deliver would need to meet the following criteria:

- be grounded in community, owned by the community, based on community needs and accountable to the community
- be based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander definitions of health incorporating spirituality, culture and healing
- be sustainable both in terms of building community capacity and in terms of not being "one-off"; they must endure until the community is empowered
- work in genuine partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and other providers to support and enhance existing local measures not duplicate or compete with them. Funding applications need to demonstrate a record of genuine community and stakeholder/provider consultations and a track record of community empowerment
- be delivered in a safe manner
- be built on learning's, try new and innovative approaches, share learning's, and improve the evidence base
- share learning's and these should be promoted in other communities.

CCNSWML contacted the local Aboriginal Medical Service to seek advice and a partnership arrangement. Together we also brought on Nunyara, the Aboriginal Health Unit within the Central Coast Local Health District (CCLHD) and our three organisations identified young Aboriginal men as the critical 'at risk' target group for suicide prevention and social and emotional wellbeing programs.

We were united in our view that young Aboriginal people are the community leaders and parents of tomorrow. Investment in their social and emotional wellbeing would support a stronger and brighter and more resilient Aboriginal community into the future.

Together and with the support of a tender consultant, Sarah Bradfield, we started to discuss and research program models that may fit. In researching our options, we came across an article in particular that guided our way forward: Tsey, K and Every, A. (2000). [Evaluating Aboriginal empowerment programs: The case of Family Wellbeing.](#) *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health.*



Recent FWB camp

Family Wellbeing (FWB) is a program that was created by Aboriginal people and through careful evaluation is now evidenced based, two key elements that would enable us to attain funding and run a program that would have a positive impact.

Sarah got in touch with Professor Komla Tsey who was able to mentor us through the beginning stages of implementing this and provide 'Train the trainer' sessions once we had recruited.

We were able to recruit 2 Aboriginal men who were passionate and committed to the program and population group and have grown excellent networks within our local Aboriginal communities.

Due to government reform in the Primary Health Care arena, the Central Coast Family Wellbeing Program was taken over by Central Coast Primary Care on the 1st July 2015 and is currently funded by the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network (HNECC PHN).

The Central Coasts' local version of FWB has now been running since July 2013. Originally funded up until June 2015, we have received a further two years of funding taking us up to June 2017 and are currently in negotiation with our local Primary Health Network for a further 12 months.

(Continued on page 14)

Family Wellbeing, Central Coast NSW... the story so far cont.

(Continued from page 13)

In that time, we have run 22 programs with young Aboriginal men inclusive of several programs within the Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre. Four intensive 'train the trainer' groups have been run with our Aboriginal colleagues and community members. One pilot group has been run with young Aboriginal women.

We now run a cultural camp at the end of each community group which consolidates the learnings and allows a time of bonding and reprieve from everyday life for the participants.

We have received ongoing evaluation and mentoring support from Professor Komla Tsey (James Cook University), Dr Sarah MacLean (La Trobe University), and Dr Mary Whiteside (La Trobe University).

Connecting and Strengthening Young Aboriginal Men: A Family Wellbeing Pilot Study based on the Central Coast Family Wellbeing Program was published in February 2016 and further evaluation is being undertaken.

We continue to be greatly encouraged by outcomes for individuals where we see improved participation in education and employment pathways as well as a reduction in drug use and interactions with police.

In current negotiations for further funding, it seems that we will have opportunity to work with young Aboriginal men and women in the coming financial year.

We are grateful for the ongoing support we receive from the Family Wellbeing National Round table and appreciate being able to contribute to the continued building of evidence for this program. We hope that, like us, published evaluations will help communities and organisations to choose a program that will greatly benefit our society.

Zona Gabriel

Program & Planning Manager, Central Coast Primary Care



Manglemid | <https://pixabay.com/photo-1132997/>

Addressing family violence in Indigenous communities: principles, practice and evaluation

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety has funded an evaluation of the Family Wellbeing Program (FWB) in the context of family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Researchers at the Australian National University, James Cook University, La Trobe University and UNSW Australia are involved in the research project. The evaluation will be conducted in partnership with three communities. The impact of FWB on gender inequality attitudes, empowerment, community safety, relationship quality,

psychological distress and experienced violence will be investigated. The project will run from January 2017–June 2019.

The researchers conducting this project include Dr Ray Lovett, Dr Anna Olsen, Dr Marisa Fogarty, Dr Bianca Calabria, Professor Komla Tsey, Professor Yvonne Cadet-James, Dr Mary Whiteside, Professor Anthony Shakeshaft and Dr Sarah McLean.

My simple story: how FWB came into PNG

My name is Russel Kitau and I am a lecturer at the Division of Public Health School of Medicine and Health Sciences at University of Papua New Guinea. I am currently doing my Doctor of Education program at James Cook University (JCU) under the Conjoint MOU agreement between JCU and UPNG.

It is indeed a great honour and privilege to share a simple story in your newsletter about how FWB came into PNG and why I got involved in it. For me it will be one way I can share my knowledge and experience with the Australian FWB community on why I chose this program. Before I got involved with FWB, many things happened at that time between 2008/2009. It was a period of change and shift in public health program and curriculum from block to integrated teaching approach at the SMHS, UPNG. At that time there were 20 students, 14 were doing the Diploma in Community Health (DCH), and 6 doing Masters in Public Health (MPH). Most of the teaching staff left and with the passing on of the chairman in 2008, I become the acting chairman. Personally, I think everything worked out for the good, in fact a blessing in disguise, which I failed to recognise at that time.

I never realised how relevant and important FWB was until I met Professor Sue McGinty who connected us with Professor Komla Tsey and the Research Empowerment team at JCU Cairns. She was invited to come to UPNG and teach the Qualitative Research Methods course from 2007- 2010. Since JCU was very close to Port Moresby, she suggested that I visit and meet Professor Komla Tsey and the Research Empowerment Team. So I came to JCU to see courses which could be adapted to DCH training at UPNG. One course which was identified as a gap and stood out as important was the support- empowerment change based on the Aboriginal developed Family Wellbeing program. So I visited JCU and spent few days with Professor Komla Tsey and the Research team in Cairns where I was introduced to the FWB Empowerment program. They also arranged a trip for me to visit Yarrabah to see how men's and women's groups were using FWB. I also had the privilege to spend another 3 days in Townsville with Professor Sue McGinty from the School of Indigenous Studies where I met Professor Yvonne Cadet-James and other academic staff.

A report which I read which convinced me that FWB may be relevant in the context of PNG was the report on ["No More Bandaid Solution": Yaba Bimbie Indigenous Men's Support Group Evaluation Report: January 2004-June 2005](#). James Cook University, Cairns, QLD, Australia (McCalman et al, 2005) This inspired me to adapt the FWB program into our Community Health course and curriculum.

Following this successful visit to JCU Cairns, Professor Komla Tsey, Dr Janya McCalman and Dr Mary Whiteside became my main mentors who took a couple trips between 2009 –2011 to facilitate and train me and my staff to facilitate the program.

In May 2009, I invited Professor Komla Tsey and Dr Janya McCalman to come to UPNG and run a one- week FWB empowerment workshop at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and a paper was published (["Bringing us back to our origin": adapting and transferring an Indigenous Australian values-based leadership capacity-building course for community development in Papua New Guinea](#), McCalman et al, 2012).

On 25 November 2009, the JCU Human Research Ethics Committee approved the research project from the School of Indigenous Australian Studies on Empowerment and wellbeing program. Our project was *UPNG: Students in the Masters of Public Health, Diploma of Community Health and Diploma of Community Nursing programs completed FWB/ Empowerment & Change course as a compulsory subject within our academic programs*.



The following year, 2010, I assisted Professor Komla Tsey to conduct the second workshop for over 50 participants and evaluated it and wrote and published a paper (Kitau et al, 2012). Between January and February 2010 we conducted FWB as part of the 6 week Summer School course for 20 students at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences. During this time our students assisted me as co-facilitators to conduct FWB Community Health course. The third workshop for the students was conducted in 2011 by Professor Komla Tsey and assisted by Dr Mary Whiteside from La Trobe University.

For the practical field work I took the students to Bereina Government station where we conducted awareness and training on FWB for to the community leaders. This resulted in the church leaders inviting us to conduct research and training for the youths to address the issue of unemployment, drug and substance abuse, interpersonal violence and start a rehabilitation program.

Between 2012 – 2013, we did the training on our own without the support from our Australian counterparts. We trained 28 DPH students as co-researchers and facilitators of FWB who then supported us teach FWB in the Division of Public Health. At the same time I used this opportunity to pilot FWB as a public health education intervention strategy for students in

(Continued on page 16)

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(Continued from page 15)

university and youths in community setting. You can see in the photos some of my students whom I trained as facilitators who assisted me in the one-day FWB workshop in Bereina.

Finally, I have found positive results in adapting the data from PNG situation to the transfer and implementation of the Indigenous Australian FWB program from the university to community settings in PNG. My findings highlight the real social challenges confronting PNG and the relevance and applicability of FWB at community levels.

Four themes have emerged from the data analysis: (1) Interpersonal violence prevention; (2) Wellbeing interventions; (3) Transferring programs from one setting to another; and (4) difficulties evaluating community empowerment/wellbeing interventions. I have already published three papers on the results and lessons learnt in international journals (see below).

The next step is to compile these three papers into a plausible thesis write-up for my Doctor of Education. I will be spending the next 5 months at JCU Cairns to write up and submit my thesis and graduate in 2018.

In closing, I'd like to thank Professor Komla and co-advisors for their support and contribution to ensuring FWB was successfully brought to PNG. I also acknowledge JCU who run the FWB program the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters where we operate our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present and future for sharing with us the FWB program in PNG and beyond their borders.

Russel Kitau
PhD student
UPNG lecturer

Kitau, Russel, Whiteside, Mary, Kinchin, Irina, Hane-Nou, Goru, and Tsey, Komla (2017). [Transferring the Aboriginal Australian Family Wellbeing Empowerment Program from a Papua New Guinea university context to broader community settings: a feasibility study.](#) *Pacific Journal of Medical Sciences*, 17(1). pp. 22-37.

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FWB workshop conducted in Bereina Government station in Kairuku-Hiri District Central Province in 2013

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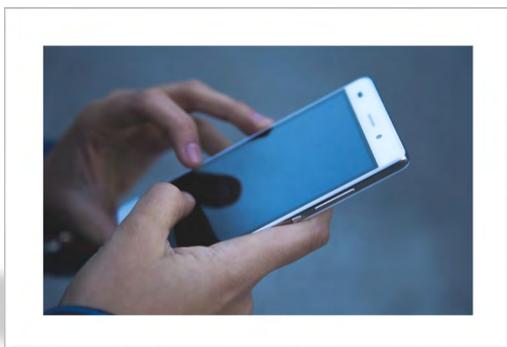
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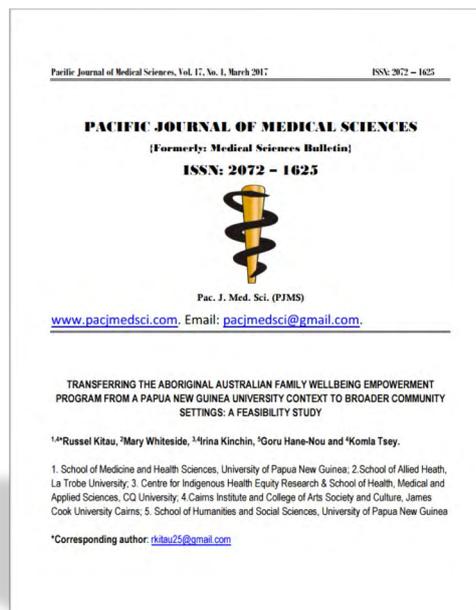
Kitau, Russel, Whiteside, Mary, Kinchin, Irina, Hane-Nou, Goru and Tsey, Komla. (2017). Transferring the Aboriginal Australian family wellbeing empowerment program from a Papua New Guinea University context to broader community settings: A feasibility study, *Pacific Journal of Medical Science*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 22-38.

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And for capturing the moment ...

Photo Tips: 10 Ways to Take Better Photos With Your Smartphone: A good photo is a good photo, no matter what device it's taken with by Stan Horaczek, October 11, 2012, *Popular Photography* <http://www.popphoto.com>



Contact Us

Give us a call to have a yarn about your FWB stories.

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Newsletter proudly made possible with [The Lowitja Institute](#) funding [The Family Wellbeing Program: Empowerment research](#)