

KNOWLEDGE INTERSECTIONS SYMPOSIUM 2019: RED DIRT KNOWLEDGE FROM THE HEART

ABSTRACTS

13 November 2019 at the DESERT KNOWLEDGE PRECINCT, ALICE SPRINGS

KEYNOTE, CORKWOOD ROOM

Leisa McCarthy and Zania Liddle: *Research at the intersections of health & education: How did we get here and how do we know where to go?*

Two Aboriginal early career researchers explore the intersections of their cultural background, professional and lived research experiences in finding the connections and disconnections framed by relationships to country, language, discipline, knowledge and critical thinking. Through this exploration, they challenge us to consider our positioning at the intersections of our own influences and how this drives our research and its application in central Australia.

STREAM 1A: RED DIRT DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY, CORKWOOD ROOM

Dan Tyson

Enlivening research coordination for Desert Australia

Desert Knowledge Australia is very pleased to share that its long-awaited foundation, the Desert Knowledge Research Institute (DKRI), has launched. From an idea sown more than eight years ago, the DKRI will grow into a new opportunity for research and researchers in desert knowledge.

The DKRI will act as a conduit and facilitator of desert research programs, funding and collaborations, working to support existing research as well as to identify and generate new research opportunities. As a registered charity, the DKRI can access funding for desert research and is in a great position to create connections and opportunities across remote and regional Australia.

The three focus areas for the DKRI align with the strategic direction of Desert Knowledge Australia: Place, People and Knowledge

DKRI will be able to serve as a coordinator and facilitator of research, and research collaborations in the desert. This is an opportunity to refresh our knowledge and understanding of the existing research outputs, and to work together to better meet the research needs of the desert. The DKRI is actively seeking new research collaborations in the themes of people, place and knowledge.

Deepika Mathur

Smart skips and the Internet of Things

This presentation is based on a project trialing Smart Skips', which use the Internet of Things technology to increase efficiency in onsite sorting, collecting, material recovery and disposal processes of construction waste. Construction projects typically operate their waste collection process with a skip placed on site during the construction and, once full, taken to the landfill by the skip operator. This has high economic and environmental costs. Smart Skips, ICT-linked to the waste collection operator through robust sensors, telecommunications and smart software solutions, read the onsite skip fill levels for different waste streams, forecast the future fill rates and enable the operator to define optimal collection time. The project is under trial in Alice Springs and is a demonstration of a university -industry collaboration. The main

learning was how real-world projects have to be nimble, quick to adapt and find solutions to problems that occur during the execution of such collaborations.

Ben Smede and John Guenther

Lessons from an evaluation of inDigiMOB

inDigiMOB is a project, funded by Telstra and managed through First Nations Media Australia, designed to support digital inclusion in remote First Nations communities. It develops activities in response to community need. The second year of the inDigiMOB project was evaluated by Batchelor Institute between August and November of 2018. One of the primary objectives being assessed was the effectiveness of employing local Indigenous Digital Mentors to support the project's digital workshops. The inDigiMOB project emphasises an employment model where Digital Access Workers, employed by community-based partner organisations, work alongside local Indigenous Digital Mentors to deliver digital technology and online safety training to other community participants. The Batchelor evaluation of inDigiMOB highlighted the value of the Digital Mentor model and clarified the benefits of the project to the local communities, partner organisations, and the mentors themselves. inDigiMOB will present these findings and some of the project's Digital Mentors will speak about what being a Digital Mentor means to them.

Tristan Simons

ALICE SPRINGS FUTURE GRID – unlocking the pathway to 50% solar energy in our town

The remote Australian town of Alice Springs is ideally positioned to demonstrate what the future power system may look like, being small enough to manage, and big enough to matter. The Intyalheme Centre for Future Energy is leading the transformative Alice Springs Future Grid Project—currently underway, is defining and demonstrating how a secure power system, with an increasingly high renewable energy fraction and strong consumer participation operates. Presently, Alice Springs has a renewable energy fraction of approximately 8%, consisting predominantly of residential, industrial and utility-scale solar. However, with the Northern Territory's renewable energy target of 50% by 2030, there is still a long way to go. Additionally, Alice Springs faces a more immediate challenge, with increased solar installations contributing to the minimum demand plummeting (expected to be negative by 2023), yet system services are still required to be met through several gas generators. With an already small (and reducing) demand, there is minimal immediate capacity to add more renewables amongst this. This presentation will articulate the current challenges experienced in Alice Springs, the relevance to larger power systems, the design of the Future Grid Project, and initial project challenges and opportunities.

Glenn Marshall

A Bamboo Raft Voyage from Timor to Australia. Testing a sea-going craft for deliberate voyaging 50,000 years ago

In February 2020 The First Mariners team is conducting an experimental archaeology voyage by bamboo raft from Timor to Darwin. We are testing a possible colonizing pathway into Australia by people who became Australia's Aboriginal population. It is our hypothesis that the cultural group who radiated across south-east Asia's islands were skilled mariners quite capable of making the 90km crossing to the exposed Sahul Banks Island chain south of Timor. From there it was a relatively straightforward island hop to Australia's Kimberley/top end coast.

The team will gather empirical data on wind, currents and paddling to understand relative propulsion contributions to the raft's passage. This, along with GPS surface drifters already released during 2019, will assist ground-truthing of existing ocean computer models by CSIRO, Bureau of Meteorology and others. This bamboo raft voyage will be an important contribution to the growing academic research and debate about how and where people arrived in Australia.

Angus Duguid and Steve Eldridge

Out of Sight Out of Mind—Wetlands in the Simpson Desert

Despite being the driest part of Australia, the Simpson Desert has a surprising number and diversity of wetlands. Most only fill episodically; either from local rains or from flow down rivers that head into the desert. The temporary nature of inundation and the extreme remoteness mean that public awareness of the Simpson’s wetlands is almost non-existent. They are indeed ‘out of sight – out of mind’. However, mapping completed in 2018 goes a long way to addressing this. The mapping covers all of the Northern Territory part of the Great Artesian Basin (Australia’s largest groundwater basin), which incorporates most of the Northern Territory part of the Simpson Desert. Wetland perimeters were digitised and information about wetland type was determined using various types of satellite imagery. We use the new mapping data in conjunction with biological survey data, to explore the significance of these hidden desert wetlands. The large inter-dune lakes of Snake Creek are arguably the most spectacular of these. Filled by major flows down the Finke River, some of these lakes are many kilometres long, can last for several years, and support the highest number of water bird species recorded for any natural wetland in the southern Northern Territory.

Jennifer Green

200 Signs Project

This presentation outlines an on-going investigation into variation and diversity in sign languages from across a range of Australian Indigenous language communities. Signing is used as an alternative to speech when speech is impractical, inappropriate, or disallowed for cultural reasons. There is significant variation in sign complexity and in the size of sign repertoires. In some regions, the number of conventionalised signs in everyday use may be less than 200. In others, the lexicon may extend to as many as 1400 signs, as Adam Kendon found for the Warlpiri of central Australia. But many questions remain. What drives similarities and differences in sign? Why do geographically distant communities sometimes come up with identical signs? What is the role of shared social practices and associated embodied actions, and of ecological and environmental factors in sign formation? The aims of the current research include developing a comparative corpus for a set of 200 commonly known signs in a range of central and northern Australian languages and developing a multimedia 200-sign sign dictionary and other community resources.

STREAM 1B: RED DIRT STORIES, BATCHELOR FUNCTION ROOM

Ros Beadle

Script writing to tell a story: participant-led data collection in a remote Aboriginal community

The accurate representation of the voice and perspectives of remote Indigenous Australians in research is commonly hampered by the application of non-Indigenous methodologies. In other words, where world views diverge, traditional academic approaches may largely be foreign to the context. In a study of the perspectives of remote Aboriginal women as workers, their decision to write a film script about their experiences created a novel form of ethnographic data collection. By using fictional characters, this scriptwriting afforded the women confidence and anonymity as they discussed and shared sensitive topics. How this participant-led methodology emerged and the important contribution it made to the findings is described. The barriers and challenges the women encountered in fulfilling their worker role within the social and cultural dimensions of their community lives is discussed.

Jeanette Millier

Presenting stories from a different perspective - a thesis journey

The 'red dirt' context is often at odds with the world of research and academia. What is authenticity and how are someone else's stories and perspectives as told through spoken word, song, actions and values, best expressed in a written format to reach into the academic world? What is the best way to pass on the message to those from a different worldview? These questions were a challenge in my thesis from start to finish. The design of the methodology, the collection of stories about children growing up in a remote Aboriginal community, and how to present these stories took many forms as I navigated how best to bridge two worlds and maintain the authenticity of different perspectives. An analysis of language(s) used, dominant cultural expectations, and the intersection between and within languages, cultures and perspectives, became integral components of the thesis journey.

Catherine Holmes and Jody Ward

'Baby Sharks' in the Western Desert

Building on my experience as an early childhood educator, as a researcher I came to this question: *what is a typical day for children in remote communities outside of the school environment?* Specifically, *how do cultural variations such as time, place, objects/toys, language, relationships and digital technology impact the everyday life and learning of children aged zero to six?* This presentation will provide an overview of my research findings related to digital technology, highlighting the intersection of contemporary digital life and family values and practices in a context where the traditional hunter gatherer ways of being are still within living memory. The term "technology" refers to *devices* such as mobile phones, tablets, computers and gaming consoles and to the *products* such as websites, DVDs, games, that are viewed from the device. The study follows thirty children aged between zero and six from three distinct and diverse remote communities in the Ngaanyatjarra and Pintupi Lands in Western Australia.

Angela Harrison and Veronica Dobson

Eastern Central Arrernte Online Learners list

This presentation introduces the new 750-word Eastern and Central Arrernte online Learners' Wordlist/Dictionary and the Pertame Learners' List being launched at this Symposium. This project makes a significant contribution to the preservation of Arrernte language as a wonderful accessible, free product enabling pronunciation of Eastern and Central Arrernte and Pertame words to be heard by learners and linking it with the written version of the language.

The product also offers a template to other language communities and as well as forming the basis of a larger project to develop a suite of online resources. We will describe the product features and how they are designed with the language learner in mind.

In collaboration with Institute for Aboriginal Development, the project has been funded through the Newman's Own Foundation, project managed by the Batchelor Institute's Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics, includes audio produced by a number of local language people and linguistic and technical work by John Henderson, University of Western Australia.

Carmel O’Shannessy, Jessie Bartlett and Alice Nelson

Children’s acquisition of First Nations languages in central Australia: First steps

To plan for language and educational development, we need to understand how children learn their languages, and to understand the kinds of language that children hear. Language skills are important for cognitive development and for learning. In order to evaluate children’s development and provide the best care, practitioners need to know the expected language development paths of the children in their home languages. But the paths of language development for young children learning First Nations languages as their home languages are largely unknown.

This project, that began in June 2019, aims to address this need through collaborative teams working together to understand children’s language development. We will document the spoken language, sign and gesture of children’s early interactions. We want to provide guides for people who work in health and early childhood, and for families, about children’s language development.

The parts of the project focus on the language development of children in Arrernte and Warlpiri families. In collaboration with Children’s Ground and Red Dust Role Models, teams of First Nations researchers and Australian National University researchers work together to document children’s interactions. We have so far recorded some children in Warlpiri families. We will discuss our methods and processes.

STREAM 2A: RED DIRT EDUCATION, CORKWOOD ROOM

Tania Liddle

School attendance through the eyes of Year Two Kalkarindji students

As part of a collaborative project on school attendance, Indigenous Community Volunteers used a variety of creative approaches to participatory monitoring—photos, video and audio recordings and drawings were all used to capture the change that took place. The design of the monitoring approach was kept simple, to capture any changes in attitudes about school attendance and to be adaptive to the direction the students took in the classes. Setting up permissions and expectations on the use of cameras left a lot of room for creativity.

At the start of the project, the students required prompting and lots of questions to reflect on their personal experiences of getting ready for school. At the end of the week, the children had an improved understanding on the importance of getting ready for school and when asked ‘how do you get ready for school’ would, unprompted, and excitedly recite the instructions: “Get out of bed, wash face, get dressed, brush hair, eat breakfast, brush teeth and walk or catch the bus”.

Andrew Lloyd

Interschool Partnerships: A study into effective partnership practices between an interstate boarding school community and a very remote Aboriginal Community

Access to secondary education for very remote Northern Territory Indigenous students is limited. Although many students attend distant boarding schools, very few stay to complete Year 12. Few families and communities are fully engaged in the whole transition process. However, one very remote Indigenous community has partnered with an interstate urban boarding College resulting in Indigenous students staying to complete Year 12. This presentation reports on a Masters study which investigates how the elements within this partnership work by asking three questions: 1) What is the nature and function of the communication practices and modes of communication between two diverse schools? 2) What practices keep students culturally safe whilst maximising the opportunities from a boarding school education? and; 3) How does each school community learn from the other and support the other in that learning? Using a qualitative methodology, eight adults were interviewed. Findings were summarised into thematic clusters: (1) Communication; (2) Relationships ;(3) Student Factors; (4) Learning; (5) Language and Culture; (6) Collaboration. This research offers the possibility to replicate some parts of this model.

Marissa Kelly

Experiences of remote school principals

The study which this presentation is based on, sought to understand the day-to-day experiences of school principals in remote, Indigenous communities and examined how they respond to this distinctive context. Comparative case studies were used to explore the professional practices of three non-local, non-Indigenous principals. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations and document analysis, and presented as narratives. Five themes were generated from the data analysis: 'encountering uncertainty', 'heightening sensitivity', 'developing confidence', 'tolerating ambiguity' and 'strengthening professional identity'. Collectively, the themes portray the trajectory of how these principals understand, adapt and respond to the context of remote, Indigenous community schools. The study confirms that schools in such contexts generate highly unconventional leadership circumstances due to a complex and dynamic interrelationship of idiosyncratic factors. Despite confirming the need for intercultural competencies, productive relationships with families and community members and a deep sensitivity to the needs of their students, compelling dilemmas emerge for leaders for which there are no known solutions.

STREAM 2B RED DIRT PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION 1, BATCHELOR FUNCTION ROOM

Lesley Martin

The sustainable elimination of trachoma from remote Indigenous communities in Australia

Trachoma is the leading cause of infectious blindness. Australia is the only developed country with active trachoma. In Australia, trachoma is found in some remote Indigenous communities and predominately occurs in communities with poor hygiene and living conditions. Trachoma can be eliminated with the World Health Organisation’s SAFE strategy:

- Surgery for trichiasis
- Antibiotic treatment
- Facial cleanliness
- Environmental improvements.

Indigenous Eye Health is working with numerous partners and communities to eliminate trachoma. Their focus is on the ‘Facial cleanliness’ and ‘Environmental improvements’ elements of the SAFE strategy. Indigenous Eye Health have developed comprehensive resources for clinics, schools and communities.

The ‘Six Steps for Stronger Bodies’ resource outlines hygiene activities that children should undertake to eliminate trachoma and other preventable infections. The ‘Safe Bathroom Checklist’ outlines bathroom requirements to facilitate the elimination of trachoma. These new resources will be the basis of interactive activities, games and multi-media to increase health literacy around trachoma and other infectious diseases. Since health promotion activities began in 2009, the prevalence of trachoma has decreased. There are, however, still some remote Indigenous communities in Australia where trachoma is prevalent.

Angee Ross

The importance of local language and culture in community engagement about trachoma and other hygiene-related infections

Indigenous Eye Health at the University of Melbourne is working with many partners towards the elimination of trachoma by 2020. This presentation will describe working in partnership with Preschools, early years schools and Families as First Teachers (FaFTs) in remote communities in the Northern Territory, the Department of Education and the Department of Health (Centre for Disease Control) on a combined Eyes and Ears Program. A new program has been providing education for local Aboriginal staff about basic systematic prevention practices common to hygiene-related infections. The steps to prepare, design and plan a training program for Aboriginal (and non-Aboriginal) staff and to educate children aged three months to four years and their families will be presented and the lessons learned from this training program will be discussed.

A key figure in the program is an experienced Arrernte teacher who incorporates language and culture into the sessions. This helps to bring everyone together in a comfortable learning environment and builds trust and rapport with teaching staff more easily. The importance of local language and culture in community engagement and involvement cannot be overstated. Further work is required to embed practices and strengthen community support and involvement.

Jonathan Pilbrow and Sarah Holder

Using Data to Drive Down Cost of Living: Food for Thought

Since 2013, NTCOSS has produced 25 quarterly Cost of Living (CoL) reports examining changes in the cost of living in the Northern Territory, with a focus on pressures for low-income and disadvantaged Territorians. Reports focus on price changes in key expenditure areas, using Darwin, regional Northern Territory, Northern Territory wide and national figures.

The reports assess whether household incomes are keeping up with cost of living changes. Two reports a year analysis of a specific expenditure area (e.g. food, transport, housing). While average figures for Darwin or the Northern Territory as a whole, represented through ABS Consumer Price Index or Household Expenditure Survey (HES) data can reflect a positive picture for the Northern Territory, given high average incomes, these averages mask the reality for low income (especially remote) households.

The July 2019 CoL food report showed while average food expenditure by Northern Territory households has decreased in real terms in recent years, there is a gap of 60% between healthy food prices in remote stores compared with major centre supermarkets. There are significant challenges in gathering and analysing data, given the vast expanses of the Northern Territory and structural differences between regional and remote areas and these will be canvassed in the presentation.

STREAM 3A: RED DIRT ETHICAL RESEARCH, CORKWOOD ROOM

Chris Perry:

Workshop: Ethical conduct: What's new?

Ethics processes and ethical conduct in research are concerns to everyone involved in research and evaluation processes. In the last year changes to guidelines and codes of conduct have been released. These changes are already having an impact on the way researchers and ethics committees are thinking about ethical conduct. Chris Perry from the Central Australian Human Research Ethics Committee, will outline some of the changes highlighting the key issues for ethical conduct and processes, with a focus on central Australia in relation to the National Health and Medical Research Council's [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#) and AITSIS's [Review of the Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies \(GERAIS\)](#). In particular this workshop will explore why changes are necessary and what they might mean for researchers conducting research and evaluation in central Australia.

STREAM 3B: RED DIRT PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION 2, BATCHELOR FUNCTION ROOM

Yash Srivastava

Working Together in the Northern Territory: Intersectoral partnerships for improving environmental conditions to prevent trachoma and other infectious diseases

The Ottawa Charter points to the importance of working with agencies outside the health sector to ensure positive health outcomes and the prevention of infectious diseases like trachoma. Environmental Health is one of several contributors to better health and wellbeing. In many remote Aboriginal communities, there are several actors and agencies contributing to the environmental conditions that impact on health and wellbeing. There are several ways to engage with these agencies to work towards a common goal. It is not always clear, however, the best way to coordinate efforts and reduce duplication and to make improvements. This presentation showcases the example of one jurisdiction, Northern Territory, of working jointly with multiple and diversely invested partners committed to the improvement of environmental conditions and infrastructure to eliminate trachoma and other infectious diseases. It highlights the

importance of aligning agencies towards a mutually defined purpose and shared mission. A Northern Territory Environmental health working group was established in February 2018 that meets bi-monthly.

Tania Liddle and Maddi Ginnevan

Collective wellbeing – is there a first step?

Indigenous Community Volunteers (ICV) has been working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for close to 20 years. Four years ago, we developed ICV's Story of Change – a theory that cements the patterns and themes of the steps many communities have taken towards holistic wellbeing. For many communities, improving community and organisational leadership, governance and capacity has been a key step to achieving longer term aspirations for collective wellbeing. We have developed an Action Research Project that asks the question, 'How does ICV's approach strengthen understanding and implementation of governance to empower communities to achieve their dream?' Fourteen communities have agreed to participate, and we are carefully considering how communities can benefit not just from the 'action' in the research (our ongoing community development activities with them), but also from the research. The research involves co-authoring case studies with each community; semi-structured interviews using a participatory tool we have developed; and our team spending time to understand the strengths of each communities' traditional governance structures: seeing with our eyes, our mind, body and spirit. We have received ethical approval from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) for the project.

Jan Fleming, Sarah Brittle and John Guenther

Child Friendly Alice Springs Community Profile—Why and How?

In 2018/19 the Child Friendly Alice Project Team worked with John Guenther to produce the first ever Community Profile about and for Alice Springs residents and its children. The Profile provides a snapshot in time of local publicly available data across the six Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) Nest areas of Wellbeing as well as insights into over 1000 Alice Springs residents' aspirations and hopes for the children living in the community. The development of the document was as important as the result. A considerable amount of thought and time went into deciding content such as the data it would contain, how it would be represented, how accessible it would be to the broad range of community members, and how it would value and highlight community voice alongside the population data. Consultation at every stage across the community helped the team reach their decisions. This presentation will outline the process and research methods employed that led to the development and publication of the Community Profile. It will explore what worked well, what didn't and where to from here.

STREAM 4A: WORKSHOP: PUBLISHING FROM THE RED DIRT, CORKWOOD ROOM

John Guenther

Workshop: Publication and dissemination strategies

For many post-graduate students, the thought of writing a Masters or PhD thesis is daunting enough, without having to think about writing journal articles or books. However, there are good reasons to publish, and it is not only about academic recognition. Firstly, for most post graduate students, while the finished product is something to be proud of, not many people read it. Journals are an important outlet for the valuable work that's been done. Secondly, for anyone wanting a career in academia either as a lecturer or an early career researcher, publications reflect to some extent the evidence of an academic's potential. But it is not just about journals. It is about confidence in writing and building a professional profile as well as sharing knowledge.

But how do you get started? And where are good places to publish? How can you increase your citation rates? This seminar will provide some practical guidance for those wanting to increase their publication

profile. John will suggest some proven strategies that work. There will also be opportunities for questions and answers.

Harold Furber, Evelyn Schaber and Kathryn Gilbey

Research at the Heart: The history of the Desert People's Centre

The Desert People's Centre's history of how and why it was created will be explored. The process for creation of the centre is deeply embedded within a red centre approach and practice. From the choosing of the site to the turning of the soil every step was done in consultation with Traditional Owners and local people. The process of creation sits as a best practice model for other initiatives - in particular approaches to research. The opening of the centre will be discussed as an example of First Nations knowledge and leadership exemplar, when we do these things right culturally only good things can come of it.

STREAM 4B: RED DIRT LANGUAGE AND METHODOLOGIES, BATCHELOR FUNCTION ROOM

Samantha Disbray

Language and the arts: New ways for documentation, research and expression

Language is a creative art, one of many modes of human expression. In Australia, Aboriginal people express, practice and transmit their cultures, histories and languages, and to raise public awareness for these through the arts. The visual arts are well established, locally and internationally. In a range of contemporary genres from the Warumpi Band's 1983 *Jailanguru Pakarnu!* to Deborah Cheetham's 2017 *Eumeralla, a war requiem for peace*, lyrical music has provided a further important stage. Similarly, audiences have heard languages and seen stories on mainstream screen (*Ten Canoes, Cleverman*), with digital media providing rich growing platform for production and viewing.

This presentation posits that the role of the arts in language research and documentation has moved beyond developing resources for communities, as important as such outputs are. Drawing on an innovative range of multimodal productions, and a current language revitalisation and repatriation project with Warumungu speakers and descendants in Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, the presentation shows ways that arts-based practices are incorporated into language research methods, in terms of data, data collection, analysis and outputs, how these may continue to expand in the future.

Sam Osborne, Karina Lester, Dan Bleby, Katrina Tjitayi, Rueben Burton and Makinti Minutjukur

Working from research to policy to practice: Red Dirt Thinking on first language and culturally responsive pedagogies in Anangu schools

Research conducted through the Remote Education Systems project within the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP) showed that Aboriginal people living in remote communities viewed first languages and culture as being central to a good education for their children. The Sydney Myer Lecture *Red Dirt Curriculum* and a subsequent research project *Centring Anangu Voices* provide further evidence relating specifically to Anangu (Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara) schools in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

In December 2018, the South Australian Education Minister launched a 10-year Aboriginal Education Strategy (2019-2029) featuring a commitment to bilingual instruction and culturally responsive pedagogies (CRP) in Anangu Schools by 2029. Moving from research to policy, the next phase is putting these elements into practice. Current work relating to first language instruction professional development, language and culture training for teachers and other professionals, and first language text production are underway to lay a foundation for future language development work in Anangu schools. An action research project is also now commencing for teachers to reflect on their own practice towards CRP. This presentation outlines key considerations for first language and CRP implementation in the current generation of Anangu schools.

Felicity Hayes, Veronica Turner, Lorraine Gorey and Jen Lorains

“Researching ourselves back to life”: First Nations communities leading and evidencing change.

“Aboriginal people have been researched to death. It’s now time to research ourselves back to life.” (William Tilmouth, Senior Arrernte man, Chair of Children’s Ground).

Structural, cultural and relational barriers mean many First Nations families are excluded from the social, economic and wellbeing systems that most Australian children and families can easily access. Children’s Ground is backing First Nations people in central Australia and the top end of the Northern Territory to change their status quo. At Children’s Ground First Nations cultural and community leaders are the decision-makers and are delivering and evaluating a new system and way of working with their children, families and communities. The Children’s Ground Approach integrates early childhood learning, health and wellbeing, working with families and the community in health promotion, social/emotional wellbeing, environmental health, employment, cultural wellbeing and community empowerment.

Children’s Ground is a 25-year approach and has a long-term evaluation in each community from the beginning. Together we are measuring the short, medium and long-term impact of privileging First Nations culture and empowerment. Early evidence from our longitudinal evaluation demonstrates that children and families who were systematically excluded from mainstream service systems are actively engaging in learning, health, employment, social and cultural life.