

children's
ground

Community
Report 2019

Ampe-kenhe Ahehe

Ayeye apmere anwerne-kenhe akerte



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Our Directors + Elders



"We've been following government nearly all our lives - this is a new beginning. We are following a new path, our own path as First Nations people for the future of our children.

At Children's Ground, the community are taking the lead. We are very proud of that. We are the government of ourselves."

MK Turner OAM,
Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe Director



"Akaltye-le anthentye-nenhe the anteme akweke ingkernenye mape-ke itne itelaretyeke.

I'm leaving this for the younger generations to learn and remember."

Therese Ryder,
Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe
Director





Ingkerrekele Arntarnte-areme

Everyone Being Responsible: Governance Committee

Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe (Children's Ground - Central Australia) is directed by us – the community, the families, the people. Our Governance structure is determined by Arrernte kinship across four sites in Central Australia: Irrkerlantye (Whitegate Town Camp), Yarrenyty Arltere (Larapinta Valley Town Camp), Mpwerkingke Anapipe (Northern Outstations) and Ewyenper Atwatye (Hidden Valley Town Camp).

We follow the leadership and guidance of our Elders and cultural leaders, while supporting the younger generation to come up behind us and find their voices.

We come together weekly for *Ingkerrekele Arntarnte-areme* Governance meetings. The photo above shows some of our Governance Committee. All the families that work with Children's Ground are welcome at our meetings, as we all work together to make decisions. We know that everyone has something to say - we have to listen to the quiet voices, just as much as the loud ones.

We, as *Ingkerrekele Arntarnte-areme* are governing, designing, delivering and evaluating our work at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe. We work alongside

the Children's Ground Board, which oversees the financial viability, corporate responsibilities and legal requirements to ensure our sustainability long term. We are one part of the bigger Children's Ground story: every nation can hold their future in their own hands. We govern from the local level, make recommendations across to the Board, and they come back to us with recommendations and/or advice. Together we make decisions regarding strategy and integrity to the Children's Ground model. We learn from the Board and they learn from us. It's a special way of working and it recognises that we as First Nations people are the ones that have the solutions for our families and communities.

Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe grew out of the same vision and passion of families who started Akeyulerre (the Arrernte Healing Centre) from the grassroots. As our key partner, we share governance and regularly hold dual governance meetings. Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe and Akeyulerre are walking together on the same journey to create a new future for Arrernte families.

Since we started Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe in 2016 we have all grown stronger. Our families have been apart for a really long time - now we are coming together as a family and finding our way back. We don't want our little ones growing up apart like we did. Before, the only time we came together was for ceremony or funerals. Now, we are meeting every week and making a plan for our children - making sure they are growing up connected, knowing each other.

We're not struggling now; we are getting somewhere. We have a vision to keep growing with these kids. We want them to know everything – about culture and country and language, as well as the Western way. We want to see our children succeed – to live a healthy life and maybe even run the place! If we see their dreams come true, our dreams will come true too. We want our children to write a new story for themselves; a good story.

As we move forward with Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe, we will continue to design, deliver and evaluate a learning and wellbeing system that empowers us to make decisions, rather than suffer prescribed solutions imposed by others. To help us do this and to guide us in our work we follow these 9 principles:



Anwerne-kenhe Angkentye, Iterrentye

Our Principles

1 Iwenheke apeke unte lyernpenge unte anthetyeke

Expect the best and deliver the best.
This is what our kids and families deserve.

2 Akweke anthurre mapenge urrke arne mpwaremele urrkapetyeke

Start early with the little ones.
This is when their brains are developing, so good health and wellbeing is so important. If we start early we have the best chance for getting our kids on the right track.

3 Akweke itnekenge akwete anetyeke itnenhenhe amangkelle-ilenhemele

Stay with the children and grow with them until they are big.
It will take 25 years to see the changes we want to make. We want to follow the children we are working with now every step of the way and make sure they have every opportunity made available to them.

4 Tyerrtye ingkerrenyekenge urrkapetyeke

Work with everyone.
It is our aim to work with every child and family in our communities. If all families are supported and included, this will strengthen the whole community.

5 Mwarrentye arle arne mpwareme renhe tnaketyeke

Use and celebrate people's ability.
We celebrate people's abilities and their capacity to contribute, whether they are artists, translators, authors, healers, teachers or advisors. There is a wealth of talent and knowledge in our communities. We see the ability in people, not the deficits.

6 Arne ingkerrenyekenge anyentelhe iletyeke: tyerrtye ngwenhe mwerre anetyeke, akaltye irremele, tyerrtye ngwenge artweye mapenge

Connect everything – education, health, culture, identity, economic wellbeing. They are all connected, in the way that Aboriginal lore and society is connected.

7 Arne mpwaretyeke arrurle arle mpwarewarretyarte ante nthakenhe arle lyete arne mpwarewarreme arteke

Always think about old ways and new ways of doing things.
You have to know your history to go forward – so we never forget the old ways – but we integrate new knowledge to make sure we are delivering the very best. This is innovation.

8 Anwenehe Ampe-kenhe Ahelhele iwerre arratyete alhetyeke akwete community-ele arke apentetyeke

We are led by the children, their families and community.
We are the directors, designers, deliverers and evaluators.

9 Ingkerrenyekenge apmerenye apurte-irreme apmerenye

Whole of community in community.
We are delivering where people live, building upon the social, cultural and economic capital for the whole community. We are making our communities places where kids are safe, with things to do, learn and be involved with, where they are happy and we as families are proud.



Message from our Chairperson

William Tilmouth

This year I have thought a great deal about what it means to have a voice. It has been my primary focus over all of my years of public life, to create the conditions and the rights for my people to have a voice. A voice can mean many things - a voice to parliament, a voice in the constitution, a voice in daily lives. A voice in one does not necessarily give a voice in another. Each are important.

I have been both applauded and punished for exercising my voice - by both the white and black community. Actively silenced. Which I find hurtful and bemusing. I have never been one to seek accolades or power. I have just spoken to the same belief. It is the people who must be heard - those with lived experience - those who know the answers to their issues but too rarely have the opportunity to speak their truth. We have too many people lost in the hospital or in prison or sitting in Don Dale - lost in a system where community voice is never heard. It is community agency that is critical - no matter who you are, no matter what your circumstances, your voice is important. This report is about our families, it is about the people who lead Children's Ground, your achievements and your strengths. This is your voice.

This year at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe I have watched you, people I have known all my life grow more in confidence and have seen new people finding their voice and be given a platform to be heard. We have a powerful Governance Committee, *Ingkerrekele Arntarnte-areme*, here in Central Australia. This is our governance - where we recognise our elders and senior cultural knowledge holders as well as the next generation of leaders. You have spoken to a range of visitors including the Secretary General of Amnesty International Kumi Naidoo, Northern Territory Treaty Commissioner Mick Dodson, Federal and Territory Ministers and Opposition Shadow Minister, the Productivity Commission and others when they came to see our work and understand how we can change the system. When I sit in these meetings with you I am inspired by your passion, vision and knowledge. We have had multiple visits from philanthropic supporters - those who make our work in Central Australia possible - and you greet them and love them as family. We have had staff present at a number of conferences around the country and the response has been outstanding. You have also visited Canberra to meet with politicians and bureaucrats.

My health has not been the best this year. I live with the pressure that so many of our families live with - the pressure of a body that is tired from years of high levels of stress and trauma, the pressure of family, the pressure of money, the pressure of my own mental health. I was born into stress - and it has stayed with me - from the days of being stolen, to a lifetime of threats, survival and resistance. Those who haven't had to worry about a roof over their head, food in their belly, or being under threat just because you are Aboriginal, won't understand our stress - and that it comes daily in different forms. It is the dignity of the old people that keeps me clear in my vision. While their voice was not always heard by others it was always strong and remains strong.

I am proud to be the Chair of Children's Ground and to watch what we have always dreamed of come to life. I congratulate the Governance Committee *Ingkerrekele Arntarnte-areme* for your outstanding leadership. Ultimately our success is heard in the laughter of children, the peace in their eyes and the joy in their spirits - and that is what I see at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe.



Message from our CEO

Jane Vadiveloo

As the CEO of Children's Ground, my responsibility is to our two boards who govern our operations at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe - the Children's Ground Ltd (CGL) Board and the Governance Committee *Ingkerrekele Arntarnte-areme*. Earlier this month, Elder MK Turner was passionate in her review of the year speaking so highly of what is happening. Her comment, "We have never had this opportunity to do this before" stays with me.

I celebrate the Governance Committee and the staff in your amazing year - and the CGL Board in guiding the organisation and ensuring we are robust, accountable and strategic in our development.

It has been a year where we have had to gently grow. We haven't had all the money to put the full Children's Ground approach in place, nor do everything that the community are asking for. I know people are still worried about the young people and are really wanting more support for school aged kids. But we are getting closer. It has been exciting to watch Ewyenper Atwatye has come to life and there are new horizons dawning in other locations.

I thank the community for your guidance and direction, your voice and your inspiration. I love working for you and together we are seeing the change. This quote from a recent evaluation interview of one young mother says so much: "It [Children's Ground] makes me feel free. And my daughter too." You are creating the spaces for your children - to be free in their spirit - to not have to question who they are, their identity or their place. This freedom allows them to be engaged, happy and curious learners. They are safe - emotionally and culturally because of your leadership. I can't wait until 2020!

As always, William and I would like to thank our incredible supporters, families and funders - this is a big family and it takes everyone to make it possible.

"You are creating the spaces for your children - to be free in their spirit - to not have to question who they are, their identity or their place."





Message from our Director

Mel Kean

'Hurry Up and Slow Down' was the catch cry at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe this year. *Hurry up* because there is so much we want to do and achieve; *slow down*, so we don't leave anyone behind.

This Community Report is a reflection of the achievements, the experience and the story behind Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe, 2019. This is our third Central Australian focused Community Report and each year there are more stories to report on and more faces to include. When I look at the photos of the children, some are new to me and some are just, well new. Families or staff call out "Come and see the new Children's Ground baby!", and as we see a new life being born into the Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe family, being embraced and loved up, we think about the next 25 years and what leading this approach will mean for this new life.

For the kids who have been participating since we started, both those that still come and others that have transitioned to school and we still see, there is a little light within them that glows when they are on country, in one of the learning centres or here at the Central Hub. The routine has been set, they know what to expect, they know the places, they are learning the stories and visiting country they are connected to. They are surrounded by family – families that are leading the way

In our first year, only one child that came to Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe had been to an Early Years learning session before. Family started to come with their children for connection; they kept coming because they were connected, because families were talking about Children's Ground, because we were doing something no one else was – we were privileging First Nations language, First Nations culture, First Nations decision making, and backing First Nations leadership. It was evident in our actions and in their voice. After all, ACTION was our number one outcome as voted by the *Ingkerrekele Arntarnte-areme* in 2017. Kids that are coming now are coming because it is their families' first choice.

The Australian Government has recognised how important Early Childhood learning is in determining long term outcomes of a population. There is recognition that family members are a child's best first teachers, yet there remains a lag in truly honouring a First Nations led approach. We can demonstrate engagement, we can demonstrate learning and we can demonstrate outcomes – and not just in early childhood, also in employment and in leadership. And we are only just beginning.

Seeing kids on country continues to be the ultimate outcome. Everyone observes how happy and relaxed they are when they are on country: how full and free in their minds they are – how learning is everywhere and opportunities are endless and led by a child's interest. While they move between older siblings and parents and grandparents and extended family, the opportunity to be together is cherished. Cultural learning is immersive; it happens subliminally as well as intentionally. It's the repetition that pays respect to the natural ways of learning. An 'on country' trip once a term, or once a year, does not have the same immersive capability and in the early years where repetition is everything to learning, weekly on country learning is key. At Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe we can do this, we commit to this, this guides us.

The growth of our Health Platform over 2019 is providing further integration of Health into the Early Years. Understanding that good health is a family responsibility, not just mum's or dad's, further recognises a different system being privileged and how it actually works. Shifting the pressure of one or two people being responsible for a little person or even an older person back to 'we can all do this together and support each other to do it' is incredibly empowering for people experiencing the pressures of life further affected by

poverty, overcrowding, unemployment, disempowerment and the oppression of stereotyping and systemic racism. Visibly promoting the importance of health each day, in the context of culture, language and daily life is empowering people through both knowledge and behaviour. Good nutrition, regular hearing tests and follow up, repeated dental checks and fluoride treatments are just a start on what is developing. Listening to families, deeply listening, takes commitment and patience. Our principle 'Expect and deliver the best' ensures this is done with quality.

Kids are born perfect – that's where we start. It's the opportunities placed in front of them that help to nurture who they become. When I watch the kids looking after the dolls, and boys and girls love them alike, I see a care that is innate. The place that we create around children in the Early Years has an effect on life long outcomes. We don't look for the deficits in families, we see the strengths and the opportunities. This is what makes me proud of what we are achieving here.

Our move this year to build in more overnight camps as part of weekly learning is a leadership response to ongoing requests to spend more time on country. As a non-First Nations person I love to camp. However, loving camping is not why our team is working towards building this methodology in to our weekly planning. When MK says "It's not a picnic, it's learning on country" she's not being funny; this is a serious comment that speaks to colonisation. It is her responsibility to retain the systems of education, governance, law and culture that Arrernte people hold strong. She knows that these are fundamental to life and the wellbeing of Arrernte children. Acting on this request, this need, is not only acting outside the Western box of Early Years thinking, but also recognising that to empower people is to truly listen and be prepared to act on the response you get when you ask 'What is it you want for your children?'

Children's Ground, though, is not just about children. Our reform agenda has a much greater focus. It is about the ground upon which children walk and live, grow and develop. For Irrkerlantye this has been focused on securing tenure for Mparntwe Apmereke artweye (Traditional Owner) Felicity Hayes and family so that they can build homes, get security over

water and power supply and move their families out of tin sheds. We have been meeting regularly with the family's lawyer, Dept of Chief Minister's staff and others who are involved in progressing a commitment made by the Chief Minister in 2018 to overcoming issues surrounding Irrkerlantye. Immediate water security issues are being overcome with the installation of three new water tanks, with funds committed by the NT Government. Families are ever closer to getting some traction on the land they have been fighting for over the last 40 years – since well before Native Title was granted in 2000. Human rights, as always, are at the heart of our approach.

Throughout this report you will see and read about the many different ways we are working and how we have grown over 2019. The leadership responsibilities of presenting at conferences, preparing for Government visits and getting everybody on board for filming commitments and social media posts have been widespread and incredibly celebratory. This year, over 60 people have worked with or provided services to Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe. Currently 35 people are on contracts, with Arrernte staff members making up more than half of this total. This is evidence of massive growth since July 2016 when we only employed three people. Workforce is an important part of our systemic reform agenda and we continue to work towards further employment and leadership opportunities for First Nations people. At the same time, we are prioritising existing governance structures in our locations and working to strengthen them, evaluating our work, expanding our collective investment and growing into the full Children's Ground model.

Our work has the constant companion of grief and loss and the need to walk gently. While the achievements have been high this year, it has been a hard year for many, and for others just another hard year. The summer months saw the town in mourning over the loss of several young people to suicide – a stark reminder of how precious life is and how tenuous our hold. We also said goodbye to two very senior Arrernte elders: Mrs Palmer (the mother of our director Leonie Palmer) and Mrs Abbott Perrurle, a central leader at Akeyulerre, a senior law woman and knowledge holder, a teacher and a contributor to the development and implementation of the Children's Ground Approach. The passing of these two women

has deeply affected many people connected to Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe and Akeyulerre and will be felt for years to come. The knowledge that is gone with these women, like so many others before them, is irretrievable. Family members have also been lost to sickness and accidents through the year. Too many people gone too soon. Two deaths in custody have directly affected our families this year. The most recent, the death of Kwementyaye Walker in Yuendumu, magnifies the grief alongside the deep fear of, and challenges with, the criminal justice system. MK explains it "Many broken hearts, deeply inside. *Atnerte akune awelheme*. People feel it deeply, like where they carried their child inside." The protests here and across Australia amplify these deeply felt emotions and the widespread discontent with a system that continues to fail First Nations people.

Next year brings the release of *In My Blood It Runs*, a film that Children's Ground has worked closely with over the last few years. William, Felicity and Jane have all worked as advisors on the film. This year, as it has screened around the world and at festivals across Australia, it is raising conversation amongst a broader community about the inequities, particularly in education and justice, experienced by First Nations people both here and around the world. Its launch will shine a light on the experiences of many as it explores an education system that is not designed for First Nations children.

This report is a celebration of the ongoing hard work and participation of many – families, staff, volunteers, supporters. It is recognition of those who worked late or on weekends, of those who have travelled far and wide to share the story, of those who work from afar, of those who overcome hardships or disability to get to work and of those who are fighting to overcome a system that oppresses and disempowers people. Lastly it is also for all of you who support us, in whatever way you can.

We want to do more of this work. We want to work with more little people and more families – ensuring that we work with thought, with love, with respect and at the pace of the kids, families and communities we are travelling alongside. 'Hurry Up and Slow Down', is likely to be our mantra in 2020 as well. *Hurry up* because there is no time to be wasted; *slow down* to make certain we have time to celebrate along the way!

Ampe Mape Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe

Children's Ground Children 2019



Constance
Yarrenyty Arltere



Cadyn
Yarrenyty Arltere



Connolly
Yarrenyty Arltere



Zena
Yarrenyty Arltere



Kaylahni
Yarrenyty Arltere



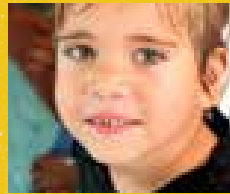
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Yarrenyty Arltere



Edwina
Yarrenyty Arltere



Anton
Yarrenyty Arltere



Irick
Yarrenyty Arltere



Clarice
Yarrenyty Arltere



Neveah
Yarrenyty Arltere



Zoe
Yarrenyty Arltere



Jacob
Yarrenyty Arltere



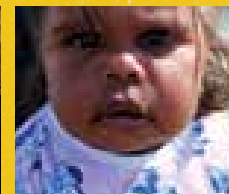
Jazelle
Yarrenyty Arltere



Kileera
Yarrenyty Arltere



Gertrude
Yarrenyty Arltere



Lakisha
Yarrenyty Arltere



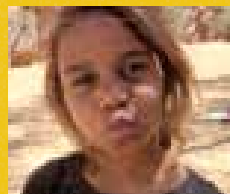
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Yulanda
Yarrenyty Arltere



Alyeesha
Yarrenyty Arltere



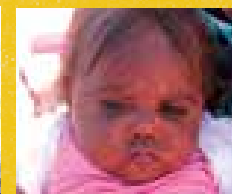
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Yarrenyty Arltere



Jesiah
Yarrenyty Arltere



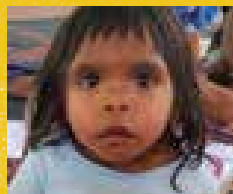
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Yarrenyty Arltere



Tashina
Yarrenyty Arltere



James
Yarrenyty Arltere



Desmond
Irrkerlantye



Gwenisha
Irrkerlantye



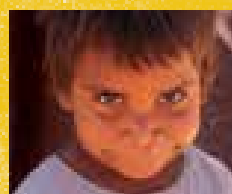
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Irrkerlantye



Tahlia
Irrkerlantye



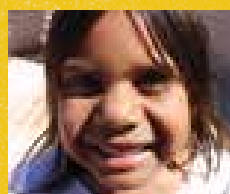
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Irrkerlantye



Karen
Irrkerlantye



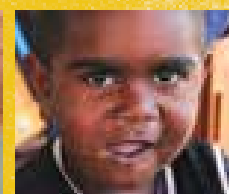
Richard
Irrkerlantye



Liliana
Irrkerlantye



Sharmarnie
Irrkerlantye



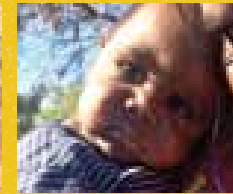
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Emrick
Irrkerlantye



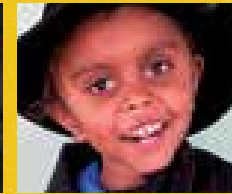
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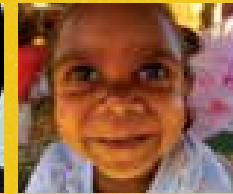
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Irrkerlantye



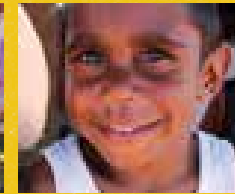
Aaliyah
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Declan
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Anna Marie
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Winston
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Kamille (Angale)
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



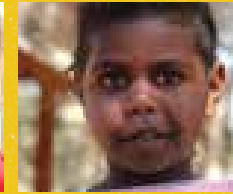
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Montannah
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Ellarisha
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Rekiah
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



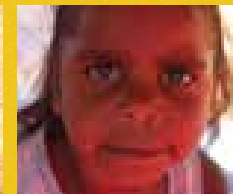
Cathy
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Delina
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Mikalea
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



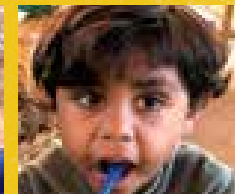
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Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Andre
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Kiah
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Braxton
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



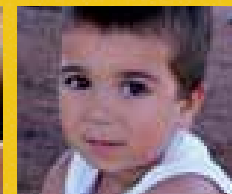
Dominic (Penangke)
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



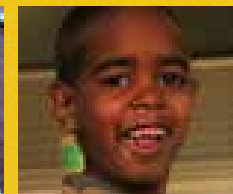
Frankie
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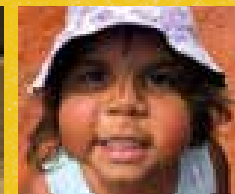
Shanti (Kemarre)
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Logan
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Cletus
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Shahana (Penangke)
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Maria
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Jayla
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



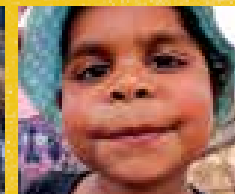
Stephen
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Marthalias
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Thomasina (Penangke)
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Laykin (Penangke)
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Jahvontae
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Matthais
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Francisca
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



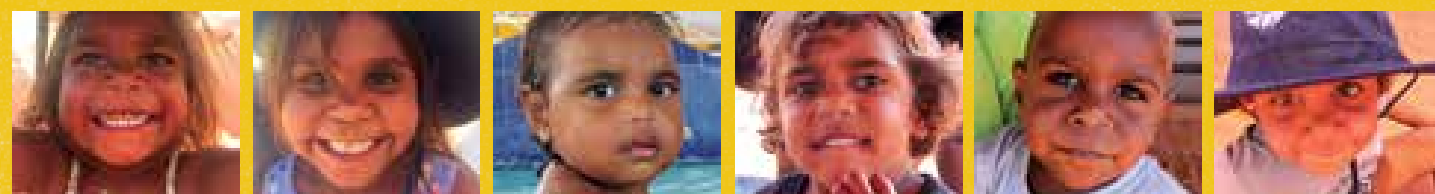
Kelvin Jr (Penangke)
Mpwerkingke Anapipe



Shenika
Ewyenper Atwatye



Jaybon (Kemarre)
Ewyenper Atwatye



Ronica
Ewyenper Atwatye

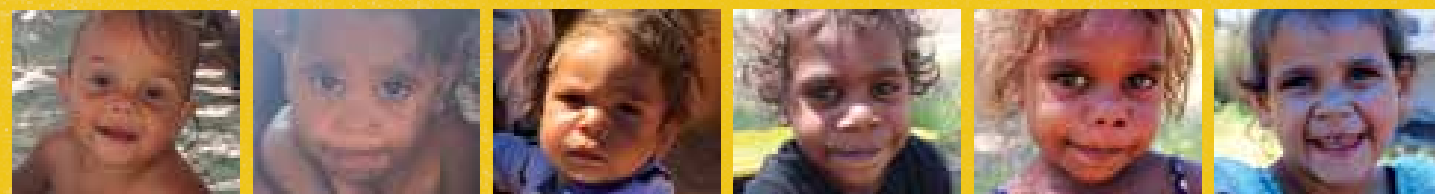
Verelda
Ewyenper Atwatye

Nyiesha (Kemarre)
Ewyenper Atwatye

Clevone (Kemarre)
Ewyenper Atwatye

Thompson
Ewyenper Atwatye

Zavahna
Ewyenper Atwatye



Deondre
Ewyenper Atwatye

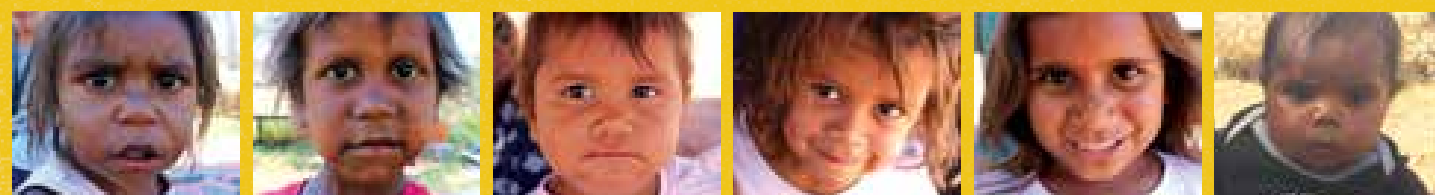
Olivia
Ewyenper Atwatye

Killan
Ewyenper Atwatye

Natalie
Ewyenper Atwatye

Akiesha
Ewyenper Atwatye

Tayaleah
Ewyenper Atwatye



Helen
Ewyenper Atwatye

Ashley
Ewyenper Atwatye

Florence
Ewyenper Atwatye

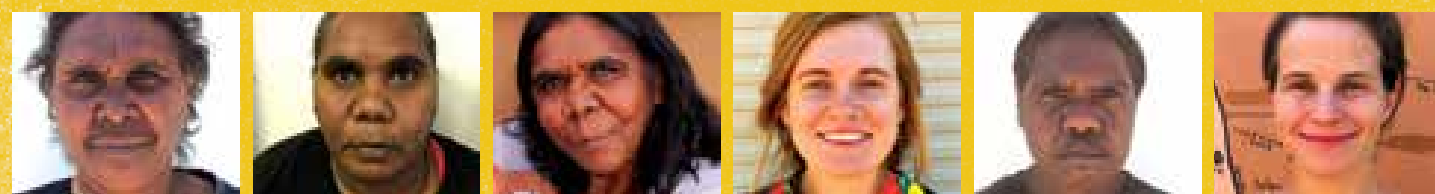
Joaquin
Ewyenper Atwatye

Tameisha
Ewyenper Atwatye

Tristyanna
Ewyenper Atwatye

Mape Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe

Children's Ground Staff 2019



Alison

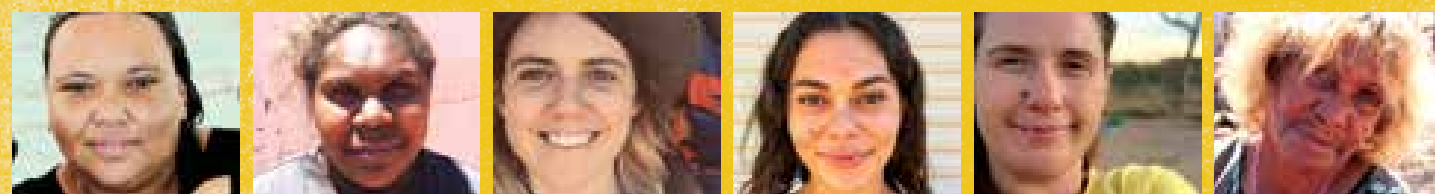
Annamaria

Amanda

Amber

Angelina

Anna



Annette

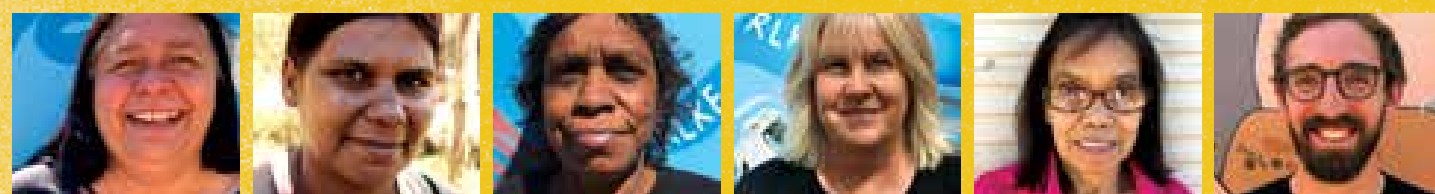
Antoinette

Ash

Ava

Bethan

Blanche



Camille

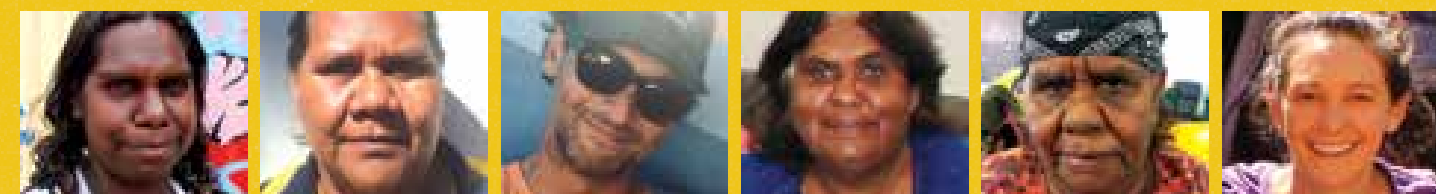
Cassandra

Cathy

Claire

Crissy

Dave



Delvena

Dianne

Dom

Dulcie R

Dulcie S

Emily



Emma

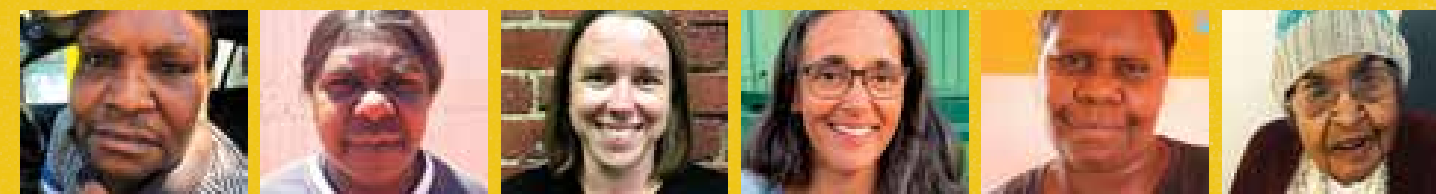
Felicity

Greg

Helen

Jamie

Jasmine



Janella

Jeannie

Jen

Jane

Kaylene

Leonie P



Leonie S

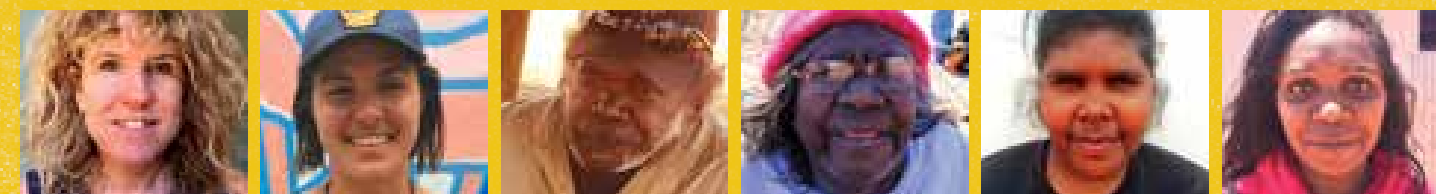
Lilly

Lorrayne

Marita

Marlene

Megan



Mel K

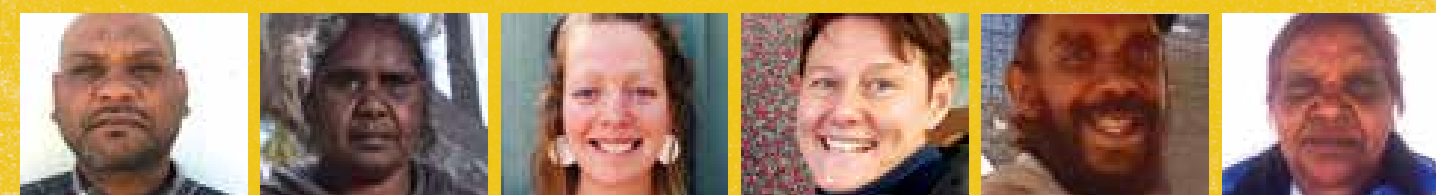
Mel T

Michael

MK

Nakita

Natassia



Nookie

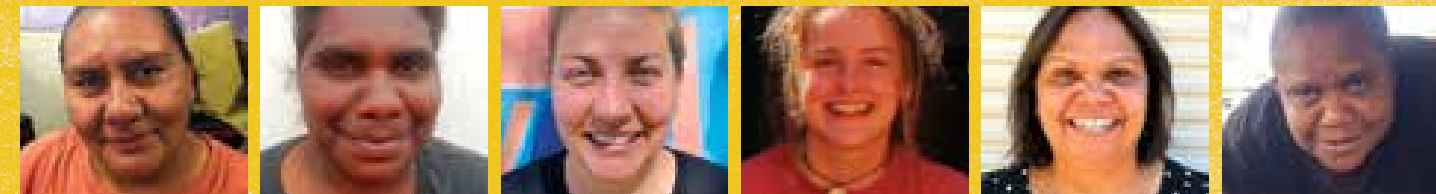
Noreen

Rachel P

Rachel W

Riley

Rosario



Roxanne

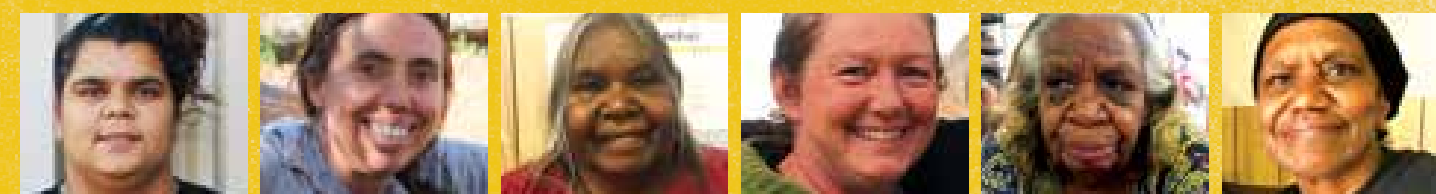
Savannah

Sarah L

Sarah M

Shirleen

Shirley



Sioban


Tamara

Theresa

Tiff

Trudy

Veronica



“Anwerne akweke anwerne-
kenhe mape akaltye-le antheme
ahelhe anwerne-kenhenge.”

“We run our education sessions on country so the children can learn the stories for each place. These stories are part of their identity and culture - learning will help them to grow strong in spirit and mind. Here, during an Early Years Learning on Country session, I am telling a story to Sharmarnie and Liliana by drawing in the sand. See the people sleeping here. See the windbreak. See the tracks. Liliana is trying to draw the story too.”

Anna Maria Palmer, Arrernte Early Years Educator



Akaltye-irreme Unte Mwerre Anetyeke

Learning and Wellbeing

We are celebrating 2019 as a big year of growth for our Learning and Wellbeing team, as we continue to walk alongside all the children and families in our communities. Everything is growing - more learning sessions, more First Nations and Western educators joining the team, as well as the beginnings of delivering Early Years learning in a new location: Ewyenper Atwatye (Hidden Valley Town Camp). We have seen girls performing anthepe (girls dance) and boys performing Itharte (boys dance). We have run multiple overnight learning sessions, integrating Health and Wellbeing, and youth and men's projects.

There is an interconnectedness in everything we do at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe - just as First Nations culture is all about connection. We base our learning sessions on country where children and families can connect with their Homelands and each other. The land is our greatest teacher and gives rise to knowledge across all contemporary curriculum areas as well as nurturing social, cognitive, physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing. Education cannot be separated from health and culture, identity, economic wellbeing - so we integrate health promotion into all our learning sessions and support families to access employment at every level of Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe.

We are walking side by side with the Western trained educators, walking and talking together and growing our delivery. At Ewyenper Atwatye we have learning sessions at the Hidden Valley Community Centre and on country. Families and staff from the community centre have worked with the team to develop the learning space at the centre.

"We have good strong families there helping us. They help out a lot. They don't let the educators do everything themselves, they're supporting us, getting Ewyenper Atwatye stronger and stronger," said Cassandra and Marita.

The new learning space at Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre has become a hub of fun and creative learning. The kids are especially proud of the space they call their own. *"Now we can go inside if it's too hot or windy so the children always have a place to play",* comments Zora, who's three-year-old daughter attends Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe three times a week. *"My favourite part is seeing the kids running towards the play area to get started in the morning and watching them sitting in a circle singing then eating their lunch,"* says First Nations educator Kaylene, whose two children also attend. Children and families have enjoyed regular Early Years sessions at Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre two days per week and they continue to go on country every Friday.

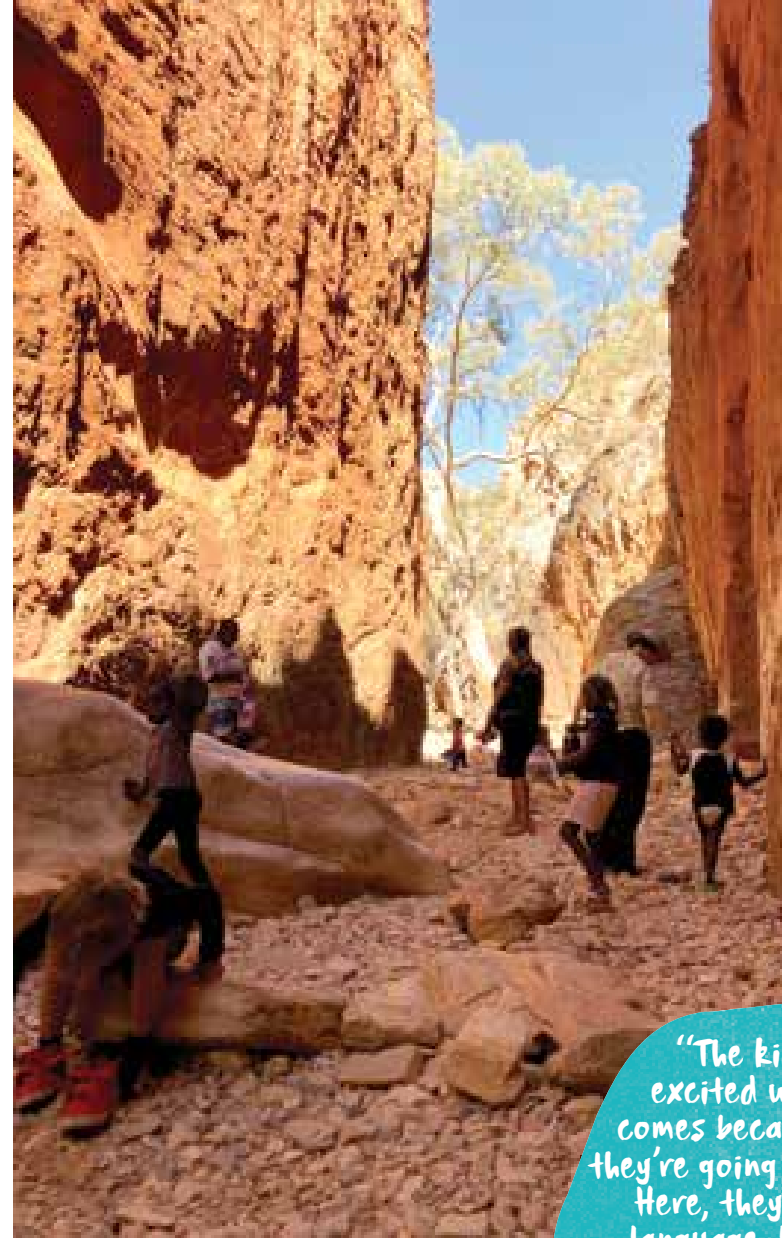
Irrkerlantye and Mpwerkingke Anapipe run Learning on Country sessions twice a week and continue to use the Central Hub once a week. We held extended overnight Learning on Country trips in the second half of the year for both groups. When it's dark the children see the kwerralye (stars); we talk about the Amiwarre (Milky Way) and the Arrarkwe (Seven Sisters). At night time we tell stories to the kids. Children are really calm when they wake up on country, Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles all come and get involved too. That's the most important thing for us - Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe is an intergenerational learning hub.

"Our Educators are dedicated to sitting with our families, talking about strengths and working together with families on individual children's learning goals."

Dave Holmes, Head of Learning

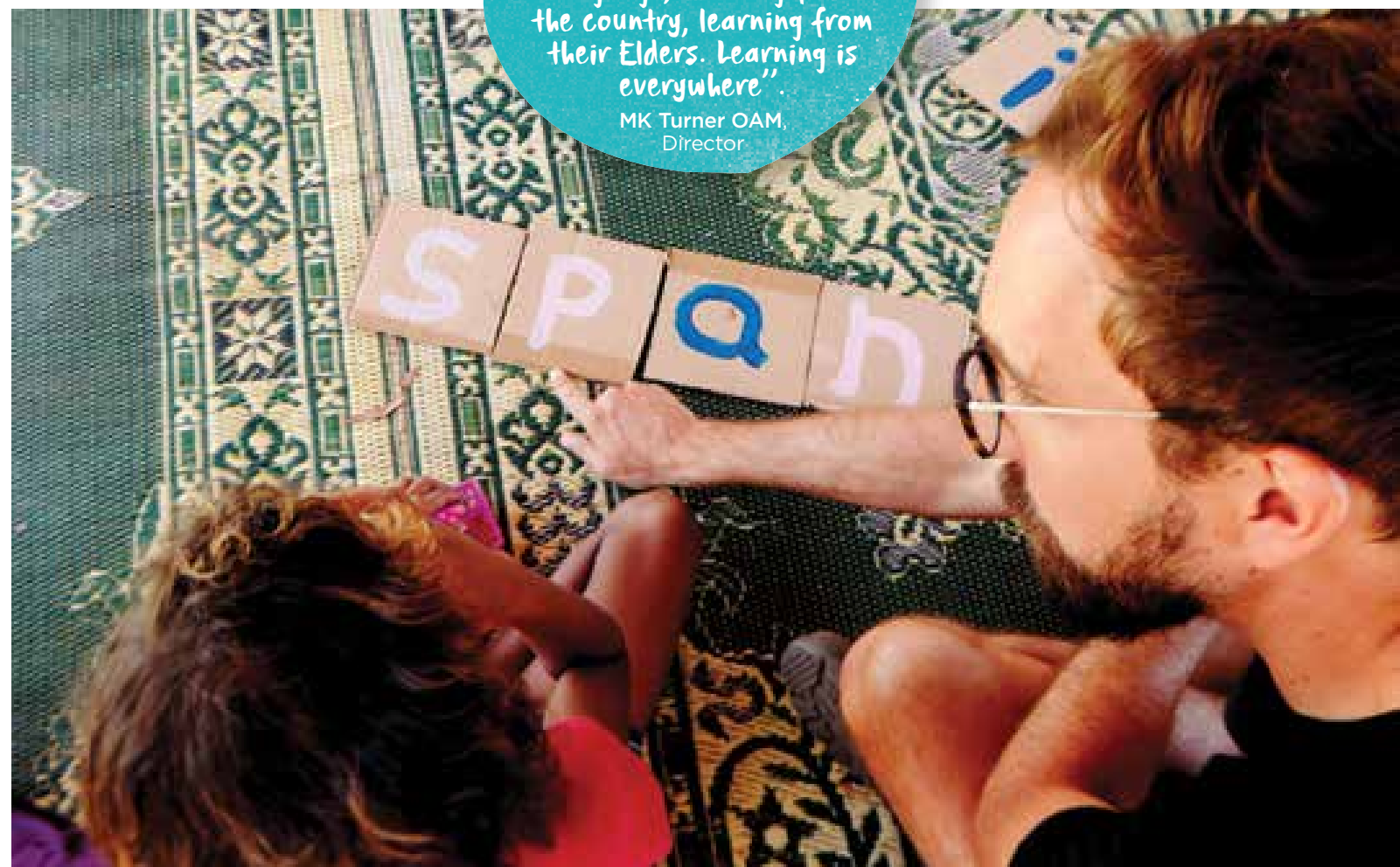
All the kids love Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe, whether they are on country, at their learning centres or at the Central Hub, jumping off the bus and running to their play spaces. They feel an attachment and familiarity with these places that the Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe teams have created with families, increasing their sense of belonging and security. Families sit with the children, guiding and prompting their imaginations. Educators continue the cultural learning that occurs on country, teaching language and participating in hands on learning activities with the children and adults.

All our learning sessions are based on the Arrernte-kenhe Angkentye (Arrernte curriculum) we developed. This is a culturally appropriate way to teach our children that will provide the richest and deepest learning for them as First Nations children participating in a global world. At Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe, Arrernte educators work alongside Western trained educators, everyone bringing knowledge and experience that enhances the skills of the overall team. Children are coming through Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe with their cultural identity prioritised, while getting the benefits of Early Years learning in both Arrernte and English. Arrernte educators are in Senior positions with support roles and trainees learning from them. Western-trained educators and Arrernte educators mentor each other. We are working for our children's future together.



"The kids get so excited when the bus comes because they know they're going out on country. Here, they are learning language, learning from the country, learning from their Elders. Learning is everywhere"

MK Turner OAM,
Director



Arrernte-kenhe Angkentye

We have always been told that the Western way is the better way than what we already had. We have never been validated for our knowledge. We are writing it down so you can see that we can teach our children our way, the way we have been doing for generations. We are writing about a very deep and rich way of learning which is so important for us and our children.

Below you can see our Arrernte curriculum. It shows the:

5 Arrernte Practices of Teaching

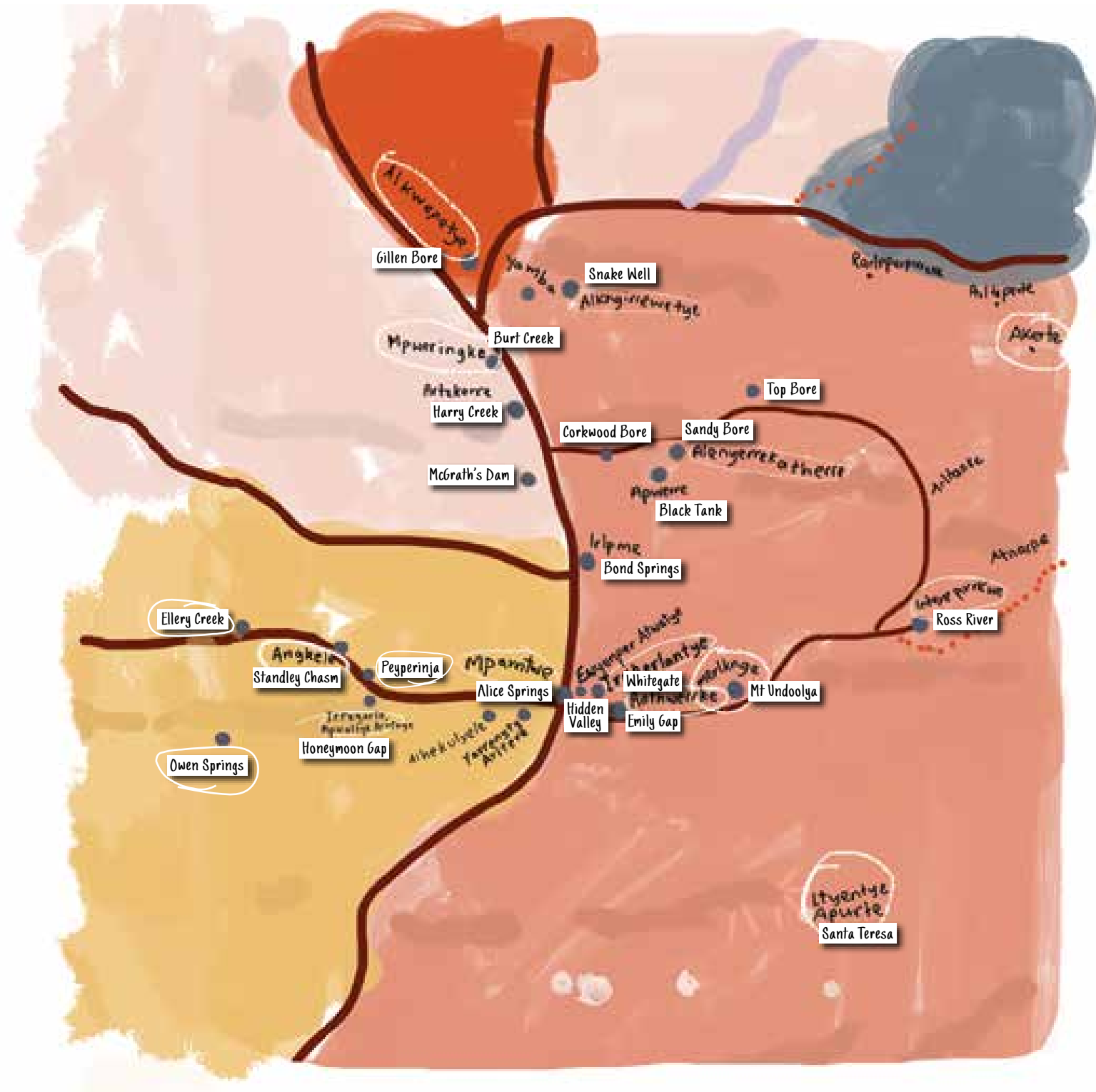
8 Arrernte Principles of Learning

9 Arrernte Strengths of the Child's Learning



Akaltje-irreme Apmerele

Learning on country is important for our children because they are our future generation who will carry on our language and culture. This map circles some of the places that we have visited for Learning on Country trips this year across our four communities: Yarrenty Arltiere, Mpweringke Anapipe, Irrkerlantye and Ewenger Atwatye.



Mpweringke Anapipe 2019

This year we have been...

- Focusing our learning activities on artweyenhenge (kinship) and anpernirrentye (skin groups)
- Holding overnight camps to extend Learning on Country sessions
- Teaching the children about our Native Title story: the years of protest and activism
- Expanding health and Early Years activities at Burt Creek and employing more local people



Nthakenhe irreme?
What's happening?



Alison and Cathy are leading an anpernirrentye (skin groups) game during an Early Years activity at Burt Creek.



"We take children out on country and they learn a lot. We teach them that if we respect the land, the land respects us."
- Marita McMillan, Senior Arrernte Educator

Creative + cultural activities are embedded into all our learning sessions - it's important our young girls learn anthepe (women's dance) + our young boys learn ltharte (men's dance).



We teach the children how to look for bush foods on country like galke (bush onion).



"This country is for all you little kids to hold on to. It belonged to your great-great grandfathers. They walked this land. They survived all the years. This paper here is from whitefella law to show that your country has a land title. Whitefellas use papers to recognise who belongs to each country. But us, we already know the boundaries of our country from the old people. It's up to you mob to look after this place when we're gone. Hold it. Share it with other people who come to this country. You mob have to be the boss now."
- Sugar, Sandy Bore

Irrkerlantye 2019

Nthakenhe irreme? What's happening?

This year we have been...

- Teaching the children healthy routines like brushing their teeth, keeping their faces clean and eating nutritious food
- Creating books and language resources for children to use during Early Years activities
- Taking children on country to learn about the plants, animals, bush foods + stories of the land



Ampe-akweke areye amangkemele itne akaltye-irreme rlterrke akwete anetyenenge. (As our little kids get bigger, they're learning and growing strong).



We held an overnight Learning on Country session for our children at Trepina Gorge.



"Our language is so important to us. We know that if children learn in their first language, they will become more able to acquire English. This is leading educational practice. We want our kids to be strong both in Arrernte and English, mastering both languages. We are making sure our children have culturally appropriate educational resources they can relate to."
- Felicity Hayes, Senior Arrernte Educator



Akaltyereme, nthenhele apeke (Learning is everywhere).

Anna Maria is reading one of the Arrernte books we published this year to teach children about the animals on their country.



Yarrenyty Arltere 2019

Nthakenhe irreme? What's happening?

This year we have been...

- Setting up our own space at Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre for Early Years activities by listening to what families + children want
- Delivering Early Years activities two days per week at the learning centre, and one day on country
- Focusing on creative, imaginative play and embedding healthy routines
- Visiting different important places for our intergenerational Learning on Country trips
- Working with kids to settle their spirits and look after their emotional wellbeing



The children love exploring their environment when we go out on country.



"I really like coming to work at Children's Ground - in my community, with my daughter around me."
- Kaylene, Early Years Support Worker



"The kids are happy here, they are learning language. They learn about being safe, the food is really good and healthy, the kids are learning through playing"
- Anna Rubuntja



Children love visiting their talented grandparents in the art centre!



We went to Owen Springs + practiced traditional dance with the young ones.

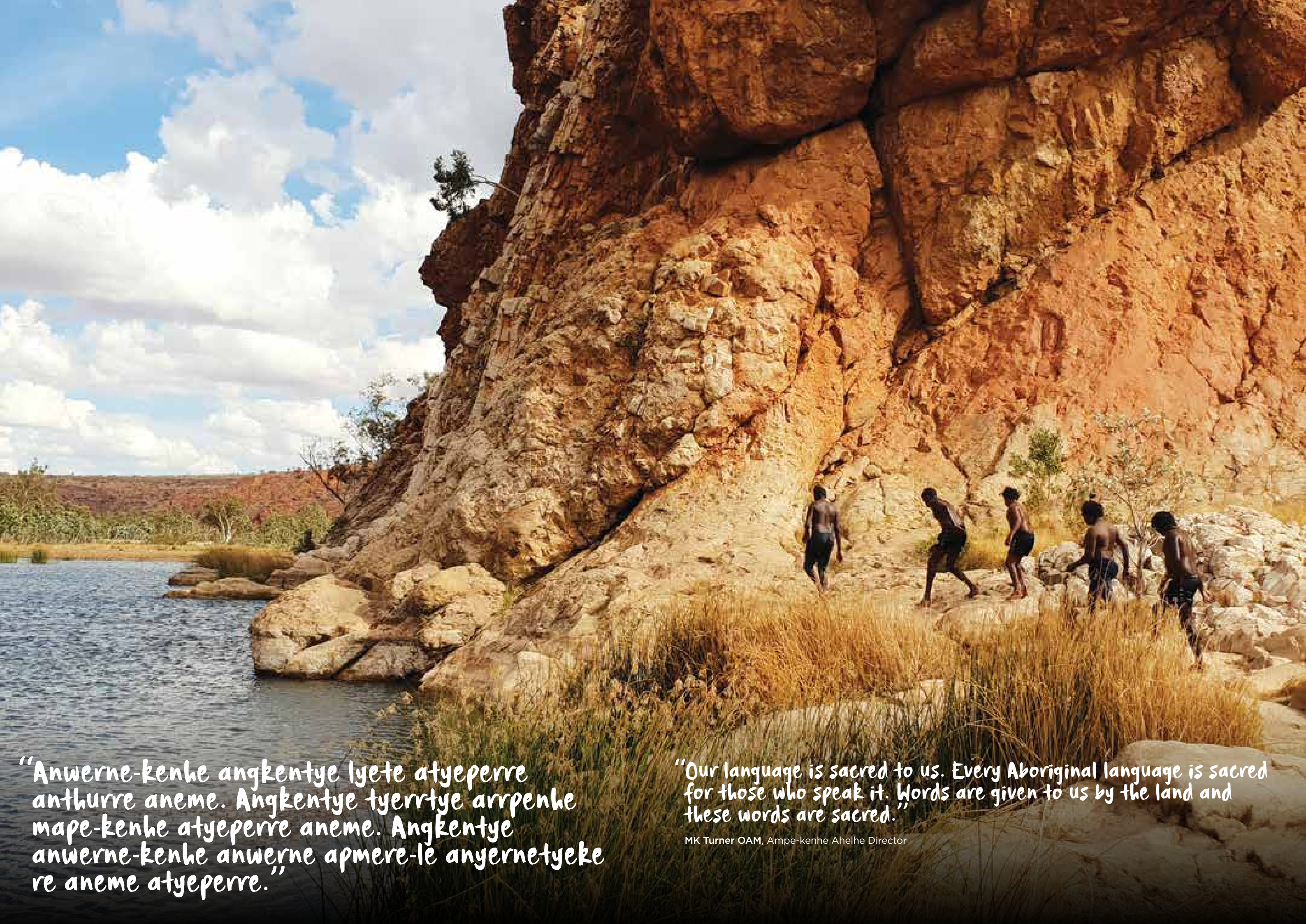


Look at the beautiful space we have created for our Early Years activities at our centre!



We went to the Desert Mob Symposium so children could see aunties, uncles and grandparents showcase their artworks. They are role-modelling enormous leadership and confidence for their children.





"Anwerne-kenhe angkentye lyete atyeperre
anthurre aneme. Angkentye tyerrtye arrpenhe
mape-kenhe atyeperre aneme. Angkentye
anwerne-kenhe anwerne apmere-le anyernetyeke
re aneme atyeperre."

"Our language is sacred to us. Every Aboriginal language is sacred
for those who speak it. Words are given to us by the land and
these words are sacred."

MK Turner OAM, Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe Director

Ewyenper Atwatye 2019

Nthakenhe irreme? What's happening?

This year we have been...

- Walking + talking with families to understand what they would like to see for their children
- Holding meetings + working bees with the community to set up a space for Early Years activities
- Starting delivery of Early Years activities at Hidden Valley Community Centre in Term 3
- Learning + growing! Children + families are requesting more activities, so we have now started weekly Learning on Country activities too

"It's a good space we got out there. We have a strong team and strong families helping us at Ewyenper Atwatye. We all work together and we support each other."
- Marita McMillan, Senior Arrernte Educator



"I really like working at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe. I'm learning a lot here. It's great to be employed in my own community. I can bring my own kids and work at the same time."
- Bambi, Early Years Support Worker

"Ashley is learning to take responsibility now since coming along to Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe. He's changed at home as well. He is putting plates in the sink and tells his sister to do the same."
- Bambi, Early Years Support Worker



For our first Learning on Country trip we took the kids to Ellery Creek + taught them how to find and crush ochre at the ochre pits. We told them the stories for both these places.



"It's really important for the kids to learn their culture from their grandparents, aunts and uncles - and they need to learn this in the right place: on their country."
- Tim, Ewyenper Atwatye

We built this humpy for the little kids in their Early Years space. We collected the right materials from out on country + brought them back to our community centre to build the humpy like our Elders did in the old days.





"Everything is connected: music, dance, songs, stories, language, country. That's how it is for First Nations people, so this is the way we teach at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe"

Felicity Hayes,
Senior Arrernte Educator



Arne Mpwaretyeke, Mwantyele Antirrkwetyke

Creative and Cultural Development and Wellbeing

In First Nations societies, art, music and dance all form part of and are interconnected with culture. Knowledge comes in the form of stories, song and dance about land, kinship, language, totems and law. This knowledge gives us our identity and culture.

This year in our Early Years activities, we have been really focusing on teaching anthepe (girls dance) and ltharte (boys dance) to the little ones. When we go out on Learning on Country activities we show the children how to collect ochre from the riverbed and how to apply it to their bodies, and how to fit the headdresses. They listen to their grandparents sing the right songs for that country and watch their aunts and uncles show them the dance. Men and women are working together to pass on these important cultural practices.

We know that creative activities make learning fun for our children, and can be healing for them and the rest of the family. Painting, drawing, making things and working with clay gives our children the chance to express themselves and experiment through being creative. During Learning on Country sessions the children engage in imaginative play with sticks, leaves, stones and whatever else they can find on the land. We often bring these materials back to our Central Hub to use in Early Years sessions there.

This year children and families came together at our Central Hub during NAIDOC week to create a series of murals, exploring the seasons and changes in our country throughout the year. Children painted plants and animals while parents, aunts and uncles added Arrernte words. These murals have really livened our intergenerational hub here at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe!

"We know that the creative arts are a powerful avenue for social and emotional wellbeing and healing. Play-based, creative learning is the way that First Nations people have always approached education, and it is finally being recognised as international best practice."

Anna Satharasinghe, Early Years Educator (Creative Arts) and Social and Emotional wellbeing

Our resource development enterprise project was really driven by our cultural knowledge and creativity. We are teaching our language and culture through art and design - this is the best way for our children to learn. We are ensuring our children grow up with a strong understanding of their culture and identity so they will have the confidence to thrive in a global world. They will know who they are and where they come from.



"Apmere utnengenge-ntyale
anwerne ampe anwerne-kenhe
mape akaltye-le antheme."

"We are teaching our kids on sacred ground. We are all working together, working proudly to teach our children in two ways - in their first language first, and then English. We are teaching them to read their country - to learn about it, write about it and draw it. Children have so much creativity in their minds - the country is helping them bring that out."

Leonie Palmer, Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe Director



"I feel really empowered working as part of the Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe health team. We can actually make a difference for families when we listen to what people want."

Shirleen McLaughlin,
First Nations
Health Promotion



Tyerrtye Mwerre Anetyeke

Health and Wellbeing

This has been an exciting year at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe in the Health and Wellbeing space. We have been focusing on growing our team and reaching more Arrernte families across our communities.

Health is embedded into everything we do at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe, prioritising First Nations health systems and incorporating Western knowledge. We have positions that focus on child and maternal health, nutrition, social and emotional wellbeing, environmental health and health promotion.

Cultural health and safety is very important. To keep the spirits of our children strong, we know they need to be learning on their country from the right cultural educators in their families. They need to learn their language, their kinship, their country, their history – so they know where they belong. This will keep them healthy and strong. Our First Nations health system comes from the land, so just being on country is good for a child's development. Here they have access to nutritious food and bush medicines and we incorporate learning about finding and identifying these into our Early Years activities.

This year we have held two cultural camps, including one healing camp with our key partner Akeyulerre, as well as overnight Learning on Country

camp. Being on country for extended periods in a calm, intergenerational environment is so valuable for the health of our children and families.

Working alongside and supporting the work of Akeyulerre means there is access to Angangkere – traditional healers – for our families and kids. We want to build on this work in our Early Years sessions so kids can experience traditional healing practices more.

When we look at the health of the child, it's not just about that one person – but all the people and factors that surround that child. So this means thinking about the health of the whole family. Ensuring health promotion activities are incorporated into every Early Years learning session supports not only that child's knowledge of their own health, but it also empowers the family to make educated, healthy choices.

We know that if the spirits of our kids are healthy and strong, they will be able to learn. Our kids have a lot they have to deal with – there is a lot of stress in their lives. We make sure we create safe places in their learning environment that will settle their spirits. We also do this through play-based learning and regular on-Country learning.

For First Nations people, health is connected intergenerationally – so we support all the family that surround

"I'm really happy when I'm working in the kitchen. Since being employed at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe I've been learning more about nutrition and making healthier food for my kids back home."

Annette Robinson, Nutrition Team

each child to be empowered in their own health. Families tell us what their health aspirations are so we can work from a strengths-based approach, while our health promotion work focuses more on community level health. Our Elders are so important to us, and they often have complex health needs – so at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe we make the time to ensure they are being supported.

Our nutrition team has really grown this year and our kitchen has had some major improvements! Nutrition and Early Years staff have benefited from more training and learning around food handling and expanding their knowledge of healthy food. Families are telling us that their children are asking for the healthy foods they are introduced to at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe back at home – like carrot sticks, celery and hummus or different fruits. For families that experience food insecurity it's good for them to know nutritious, nourishing meals are available at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe.



Mwerrentye Warrke Irretyeke

Economic Development and Wellbeing

Our Economic Development and Wellbeing platform expanded further in 2019, with great achievements in workforce development and enterprise. We secured an Indigenous Languages and Arts grant which helped us expand our resource development work and strengthen our digital skills by creating illustrations on iPads. We have also increased our knowledge about business, licencing and ownership through workshops in intellectual and cultural property rights.

This is the third time we have applied for this grant and the first time we have been successful. Our work over the last few years developing our books was key to our success. Assisted by the ILA grant we developed our first social enterprise project *Anwerne Ingkerrekele Mpwareke: By Us, For Us*. Over the last few years we moved from laminating our own resources, to self publishing and this year to professionally published books with individual International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs). This means our books can be found in databases around the world. You can read more about this project over the page.

We are excited to see what other enterprise opportunities will arise as we keep going forward with Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe. Working out different ways to share our language and culture with

the wider community is one way we can make the most of our knowledge and our strengths to achieve this. Recently we employed two staff to share the Enterprise Coordinator role, now with a broader focus on business development – an exciting opportunity for us. The many ideas that we have talked about over the last few years now may have the opportunity to grow.

Over time we hope that we can start increasing financial security for families through the development of micro-enterprises that either bring money back into Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe to continue funding a project and employment of staff, or enterprises that raise funds that can go straight back to the people.

Off the back of the *Anwerne Ingkerrekele Mpwareke* project two staff members contracted their skills directly to ICTV who contacted them through Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe seeking illustration work for their website. Our books had the look and feel of what ICTV were looking for and staff took this extra work on with the money going straight to the artists. We've also been approached by several media organisations keen to animate our books for television. These are just some of the examples of what may come through the grassroots beginnings of our Enterprise platform.

At Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe we recognise the wealth of talent in our communities; we are surrounded by cultural professors, healers, teachers, law people, directors, artists, linguists. Children's Ground provides culturally appropriate and supported employment that works with our strengths. We want to create employment for many people in our communities: young people, parents, elders, men and women – not just one person. This will build up our families and communities to be safe spaces. We want to create economic opportunities for our families that enable our communities to grow and strengthen.

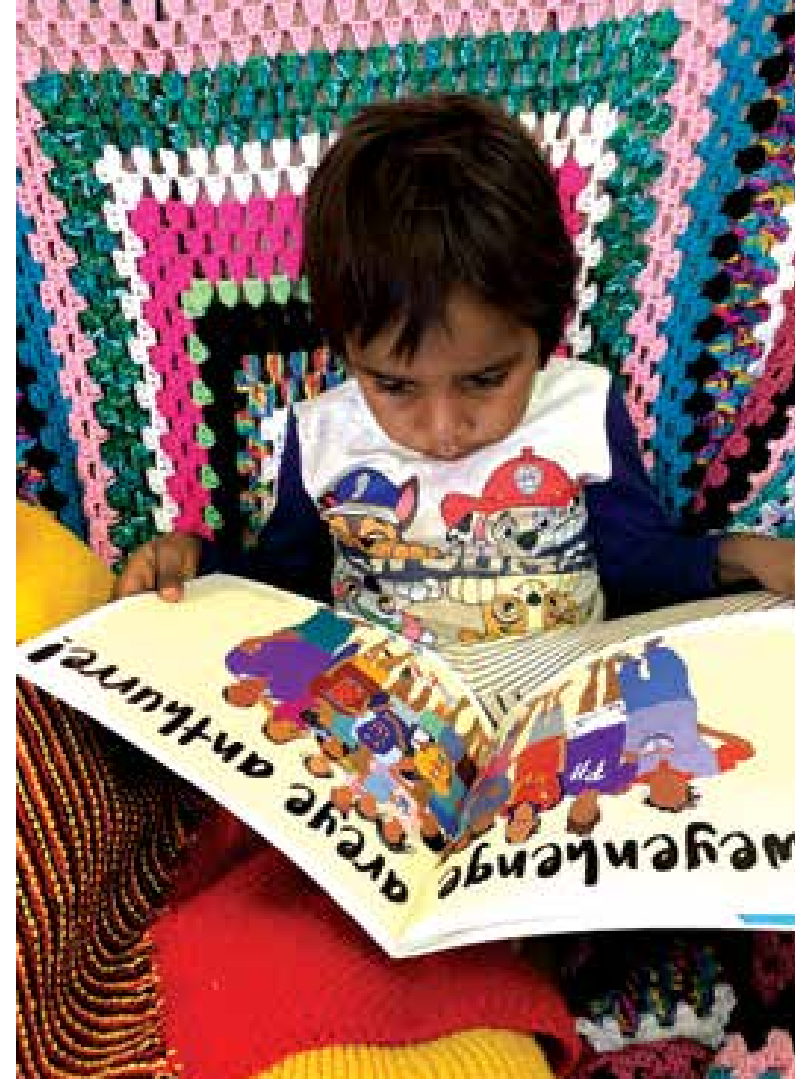
At Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe, everyone is a teacher and everyone is a learner. We all have knowledge and skills to share, regardless of whether this is the first time you have been employed or the first time you have worked with First Nations people. Working within a First Cultural framework means non-First Nations people are not the only ones with all the power and knowledge. Together we are working to shift the power imbalance that you see in a lot of other workplaces. The important thing is that we are always learning so we can grow.





Anwerne Ingkerrekele Mpwareke

By Us, For Us: First Languages Resource Development



This article was originally published in *Imprint: Northern Territory Writers' Centre Journal*, December 2019

Contributors: Felicity Hayes, Veronica Turner, Lorraine Gorey, MK Turner, Amanda Turner and Anna Maria Palmer

Anwerne Ingkerrekele Mpwareke means 'By Us, For Us'. It is a project that backs First Nations people to determine our kids' education, and demonstrates what can be achieved when our creativity, cultural wealth, and knowledge are given a voice.

We started Children's Ground on the ground in Mparntwe in 2016 and have been creating our own educational resources, in our First Languages, for our children and families ever since. In 2019, what started with humble beginnings laminating photos and print outs in the office, has progressed to the *Anwerne Ingkerrekele Mpwareke: By Us, For Us* enterprise. We are writing, illustrating and publishing First Language picture books for our kids, and for the broader Australian community.

As First Nations people we have a lot of cultural wealth and knowledge, handed down to us over many thousands of years by our ancestors. This knowledge

gives us our identity. We want our kids to grow up with books that reflect this culture – books that can help them learn to respect, speak, read and write their First Language – something that was denied to many of us and our elders in the past.

The stories we are writing are not new. Our elders have been telling them to our families for generations: How we make the rain come, the warnings in nature, what comes out at night, which creatures to watch out for, and how to read the seasons' signs. But now we have the chance to write them down in our First Language, for our children and for future generations.

We started off documenting our early years learning on country, recording and writing stories in Arrernte, typing it up on the computer, then printing, laminating and making little booklets at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe. We made these books as a record of the work we were doing, and to teach our kids about their country and language.

These first little books were about the names of important places we visited and their significance to our families, the animals we saw, the bush tucker we ate, skin names, and the Arrernte words for the trees, plants, birds, and animals that live on our country.

Next, we found a website that could help us design and print books, so we tried that too. We made books called *Iwenhe Nhakwe*, which means *What's Over There?*, *Mpwaltye*, about the frog, *Awengkere* about the ducks, and *Iwenheke Unte Akaltye-Irreme Apmere Ngkwinhenge*, which means *What are you learning on your country?*

Over time we talked a lot about what we wanted our books to look like, and how we could best teach our kids. We thought about using simple language, repetition, and strong colours to make it easy and interesting for our kids to learn. We developed stories based on the things we believe are important for our kids to know – like kinship, country, lore, history and survival.

We started experimenting with iPads and learning how to create illustrations using digital drawing programs. Many of us have been painting for years, but using the iPads has been a whole new learning process.

A key Children's Ground Principle is '*Arne mpwaretyeke arrurle arle mpwarewarreyarte ante nthakenhe arle lyete arne mpwarewarreme arteke*'. This means '*always think about old ways and new ways of doing things*'. We are working with the old and the new. Old stories, with new ways of telling.

During the last year we have written books in Eastern Arrernte, Western Aranda and Luritja, with grandparents, mums, aunties and kids all taking part. At Yarrenyty Arltere, families and artists are working on a book that celebrates the 9 different languages spoken in the town camp – Luritja, Western Aranda, Eastern Arrernte, Gurindji, Warlpiri, Pitjantjatjara, Alyawarr, Anmatyerr, and English. Our kids are growing up in multi-lingual communities, rich in language.

These books are for our families to learn together, and for any people who want to learn about First Nations ways of doing things and seeing the world. We want to keep our language and culture strong for our kids, and we are proud to share our stories with other people too.

Many of us working at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe have been fighting for the right to speak and teach our language in mainstream classrooms our whole lives. Time and again the education system has banned or forbidden our children from learning their language and culture at school. But we have never given up the fight. Many of us also have a long history of working as educators

and advocates and we are incredibly passionate about our children's education and wellbeing.

While the government has started to recognise the importance of teaching First Nations language in classrooms as a subject, there is a long way to go. Our children still have to leave their culture at the school gates when they go to a mainstream school.

Article 14 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states:

"Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning."

That's why our program, *Anwerne Ingkerrekele Mpwareke*, is so important. It is a chance for us to be the ones making the decisions about what our kids are learning – what stories and histories they are told, what knowledge they are given, and what language they speak.

"You've got to have your identity to learn. That's why our book project is really important. We want to help our young people to speak, read and write their language, to hold up our community, and grow up with their identity strong."

MK Turner, OAM, Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe Director

We are really proud of what we have achieved in the last few years. At the core of all our work at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe, we are fighting for the right to teach our children, our way with all the knowledge that has been taught for generations and generations by our great leaders – our Elders and Ancestors.

Books from the *Anwerne Ingkerrekele Mpwareke* project can be purchased from our Children's Ground online store.



Tyerrtye Areye Mwerre Anetyeke

Community Development and Wellbeing

Community development sits under everything we do. Each community has its own leadership, governance structures, resources and strengths. Each has a unique vision for the future. We listen and back people's vision with cultural governance prioritised at every step of the journey.

'Working with community, in community' is a key Children's Ground principle. Our aim is to support communities to be amazing places for kids and families – safe and culturally, socially and economically strong.

We are working with and supporting the existing governance structures to create intergenerational, inclusive spaces of safety, learning and celebration. In partnership with families and staff at Yarrenyty Arltère we have increased delivery to 3 days a week and have had over 80% of children 0-5 involved in Early years sessions, at their own learning centre in their town camp. Over the last year the community have now turned an unused demountable into an active learning environment complete with a shade structure, sand pit, windbreak and mural. We are all really proud of what has been achieved at Yarrenyty Arltère. Men from the community have been meeting to discuss and develop a Men's and Youth group and taken young people on country bush trips.

Another exciting development for Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe this year has been our progress with Ewyenper Atwatye.

A lot of these families were involved at the beginning and requested Children's Ground back in 2011; we have just not had the resources to get going until this year. Governance at Ewyenper Atwatye has brought it to life. They have been designing and delivering Early Years activities, holding working bees to restore spaces with direction and knowledge from the old people on how to make Ilthe (shade structures).

We were all deeply saddened by the passing of Kwementyaye Abbott. She was a senior Arrernte Elder who lived at Ewyenper Atwatye. She dedicated her life to the teaching of children, young people and adults. We keep her life's work close to all that we do. We are forever grateful for everything she gave to Ampe-kenhe Alhehe.

Mpweringke Anapipe families continue to request a school for kids who are not engaged in education. This has been the main vision identified by the community since we began. 2020 will see exciting developments towards achieving this long-held goal.

This year Burt Creek families have been delivering Early Years and created dedicated health sessions in their community. Senior men and young people have been involved in learning. When we think back to the beginning we remember that Burt Creek had no access to any Early Years learning and very limited outreach health services. Now kids and families are enjoying early years, health promotion, employment opportunities and are wanting to increase this in 2020.

Irrkerlantye has had a huge year fighting for their sovereign rights to live and work on their traditional country in Mparntwe. Led by Felicity Hayes, there have been regular meetings with government to resolve tenure issues and infrastructure to secure basic water security. After 40 years her family are still living in tin sheds with no permanent water supply. This year was significant, however, with the Government agreeing to work with the community to resolve this 40-year battle. The Chief Minister came to Irrkerlantye to discuss the situation and offer his support. We hope that in the near future we will have resolved this long-standing human rights violation.

We have worked with Akeyulerre this year as part of our joint work in supporting the wellbeing of the whole community. This included a healing camp that was a testament to the power of intergenerational wellbeing and bringing people together.

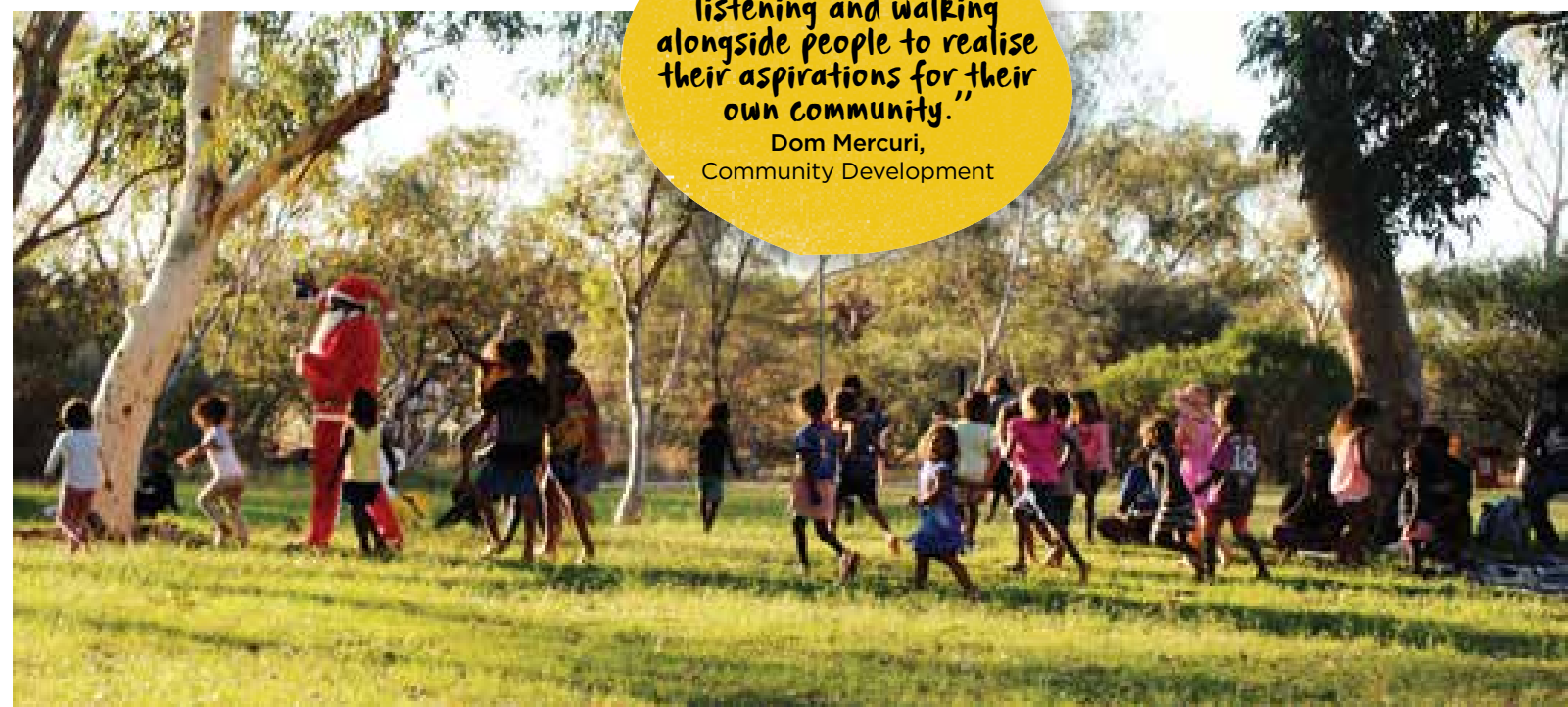
Celebrating is an important part of Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe. Throughout the year there have been many things to celebrate, from major milestones to birthdays and daily wins. Over 380 children and families celebrated their achievements at our Christmas party with Akeyulerre last year.

We have seen each community grow stronger in their voice, their leadership and their confidence. Children, adults and elders are connected and building a new future and celebrating where they live.



"It's all about listening and walking alongside people to realise their aspirations for their own community."

Dom Mercuri,
Community Development





"Anwerne akngerre angkeme nthakenhe anwerne-kenhe ampe akweke anwerne-kenhe mape anwerne akaltyele anthetyeke. Anwerne arrule akaltyele antheke anwerneke artweye mapele nthakenhe - nthakenhe akaltye-irremele anetyeke."

"At the core of all our work at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe we are fighting for the right to teach our children our way, with all the knowledge that has been taught for generations and generations by our great leaders - our Elders and Ancestors."

Felicity Hayes, Senior Arrernte Educator



"It was such a special weekend. Going back to my atyemeye's (grandfather's) country felt like going home. I haven't been there since I was a little kid. For some children this was their first visit to their great-grandfather's country."

**Veronica Turner,
Senior Arrernte
Educator**



Anwerne Ingkerreke Apurte Irretyeme

We All Get Together: Camps on Country



Being on country is so important for our families and our kids. Being on country relaxes our spirits and gives us time to connect with country, with stories and with each other. This year we grew our Early Years sessions into overnight trips to extend learning and to increase the benefits we feel when we are away from the troubles of town and we are reconnecting with country.

We've been talking about doing this for a long time and almost every time we go out for family nights once it starts getting cool we start wishing we had all our swags and blankets so we could stay out under the stars all together. The day we had Miriam Margolyse visit (remember she played Professor Sprout in the Harry Potter movies) we had planned to camp and then plans changed. That night we really wished we'd stuck to our original plan and brought all our camping gear. So, the next week we just did it. We organised all the gear and food and went back to Little Harry's Creek with the Mpwerkingke Anapipe families and had the most beautiful night; all the families together. The next day was lovely and cool and we would have stayed out all day except that we didn't bring lunch. See, we are learning all the time and now we take enough food for the next day so we can stay until we are ready to come back home.

We've now had three of these overnight camps. Learning is happening all the time while we are camping.

During Term One we held our first cultural healing camp at the birthplace of one of our directors MK Turner OAM. Children, young people, parents and Elders spent three days and nights at Spotted Tiger, visiting important cultural sites, picking bush medicine, hunting for bush foods and exchanging stories – this is our intergenerational learning environment. On the final night, over 50 young people and adults from the nearby community of Atitjere joined our family on the camp for a big cook up and celebration.

In October, together with our key partner Akeyulerre, we held a Healing Camp – Angkwerre-Iweteyeke at Inteye Arrkwe (Ross River). This camp focused on healing and the many ways that healing can happen, through relationships, through connecting with people and country, through language, law, creative arts and traditional knowledge, and through both quiet times and fun times. Over the five days at Inteye Arrkwe, over 120 First Nations adults and young people spent time engaging in and teaching cultural health and wellbeing practices including: smoking ceremonies, traditional dance, painting, site visits, collecting and preparing bush medicine and storytelling.

"This Healing Camp was muerre anthurre (really good). You can feel the presence of the apmere-arenge mape (the old people of this land) and the spirits of the land. It's riterrke anthurre (really strong). I haven't felt that calm for a long time. All those kids, they really liked the camp. I felt like staying another week."

Lorraine Gorey, Senior Arrernte Educator

"I just loved every bit of it! I was so happy to be walking on my country again! This is where I used to walk with my parents, and now I am back here passing on the stories to the next generation."

MK Turner OAM, Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe Director

We told the young people about the country – how the ochres came from the top of the hill and fall into the creek bed when it rains. We collected the ochre, just as our old people had done to use in ceremonies. At night, that's when the painting and dancing happened.

Next year we hope to be able to report on many more camps as we keep up these important trips with our families.



Ampe Akweke Mape-kenhe Ayeye

Children's Stories



**Marthalias
Scrutton**



Written by Lorraine Gorey, Senior Arrernte Educator and Grandmother to Marthalias

Marthalias has been coming to Children's Ground since the very beginning! From her earliest years as a little baby, Marthalias has been attending Children's Ground learning activities alongside her two sisters and brother, supported by her Nannas who work as Senior Arrernte Educators.

Marthalias has never been to any other Early Years programs - we wouldn't dream of sending her anywhere else! We need her to learn from us: from her family, her Elders, the Arrernte educators and the Western educators too.

At only three years old, Marthalias is already learning to speak three languages. At Children's Ground she is given the opportunity to learn in Arrernte, Anmatyerre and English. It's really strong for her identity and

spirit to grow up learning all her languages - to be shown that they are all important, not just English.

Marthalias knows it's time for learning when the Children's Ground bus arrives at her door. She's been learning a lot over these last three years - both in cultural knowledge and the Western way.

Marthalias has learnt about kinship and her family relationships, so she knows how to address people properly in Arrernte. She's been getting stronger and more confident in Arrernte dance through practice during Children's Ground Learning on Country activities. During these country trips Marthalias has developed her knowledge of bush medicine - where to find it and how to crush it.

She's happy, healthy and active when out on country and loves to run around, which keeps her body strong.

Through the Early Years activities at our Central Hub, Marthalias is learning how to look after herself and care for others. Teeth-brushing, hand washing and face washing are all part of her routine now.

We have seen Marthalias progress and improve her vocabulary in both English and Arrernte. Marthalias has improved her comprehension of standard Australian English, listening and responding to others when greeting, asking questions or listening to instructions. She has begun imitating counting behaviour using number names when pointing to objects, an important milestone in her understanding of numbers and numeracy.

Children's Ground is her place and she feels comfortable and happy here.



**Karen
Kumantjara**



Written by Felicity Hayes, Senior Arrernte Educator

Karen apetyeke August 18th 2017
Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe-werne, re apetyamele akaltye-irreke nthakenhe behave-irreme arrpenhe mape arrkene-irretyeke. Karen arratyte akaltye-irreke. Merne mwerre arlkwetyeke, urlkernelteke healthy routine mpwaretyeke, artitye ikwerenhe urlkernelteyeke, alhe ikwerenhe rputernetyeke.

Karen has grown to be a confident, energetic learner over the two years she has been attending Children's Ground Early Years activities both at our Central Hub and on her country. At only five years old she already speaks four languages: Luritja, Pitjantjatjara, Western Arrernte and English.

Before Children's Ground, Karen went to another Early Years centre - but she had to stay in the classroom all day and they only taught in English. Children's Ground supports Karen to develop her skills across all her

languages by being surrounded by educators who are teaching with a multilingual approach.

Karen came to learning activities at Children's Ground so her identity and spirit as a First Nations child could be recognised and celebrated. Here, she is surrounded by family - learning alongside her brother Adrian and taught by aunties, uncles and grandparents. We could tell she was a bit shy and nervous at first, but over time she has become more confident. Karen feels comfortable when supported by her family in a learning environment that reflects her language and culture.

Karen is getting stronger in her cultural knowledge. She loves going out bush and learning on country: looking for tyape (witchetty grub), yalke (bush onion), collecting bush medicine and learning about all the plants and animals. Karen is learning about cultural safety too: how to behave on other people's country and be respectful.

We've noticed that Karen is taking the healthy routines she's learning at Children's Ground back home with her. She loves brushing her teeth now and wants to eat healthy food like carrot sticks and cucumbers. Karen has learnt to take care of herself - to blow her own nose and keep her ears clean. All these routines she has learnt at Children's Ground. She's now even starting to write her name and read.

At Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe, Western educators model conversation and questioning in standard Australian English, helping children to develop their oral language. Karen is progressing her oral communication and has begun to construct a whole sentence with correct syntax and grammar, recently asking for help saying "Can you help me wash my hands please?"

We are so proud of Karen growing into a healthy, confident child, strong in her language and culture.



Ayeye Anwerne-kenhe Ileme

Sharing Our Story

Every year we get better at telling our story and every year we meet more people to share our story with. Our story is a good one because we are talking about how we are leading the way and how we are building on the work of our Elders who worked hard through many organisations to change the future for us. We always say that what we are doing is not new; this is just a new chance to grow the work that came before us with a different level of support. We couldn't have done it if it wasn't for those people who have taught us.

We presented at four conferences this year and repeated our two presentations from SNAICC here in Mparntwe for all those people who didn't get to see us down in Adelaide. Felicity and Lowlee spoke with Jane at the Progress 2019 conference in June/July. That was a really different experience for us as we had to give a lightning talk which was only 10 minutes long as part of a panel. We then had a question each and facilitated a discussion session. Felicity also spoke with Jane and Maya Newell about *In My Blood It Runs* at this conference. Jane and Lowlee were then part of the final keynote session.

Dave, Amanda, Felicity, Lowlee and Emma presented at SNAICC with two papers – one on the development of Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe over the last two years and one about the *Anwerne Ingkerrekele Mpwareke: By Us, For Us* enterprise. Mel and Felicity spoke at the Collaborative Action Forum presented by APONT and the Community of Practice (CoP), Central Australia about governance and Jen, Lowlee and Felicity spoke at the Red Dirt Knowledge from the Heart: 2019 Knowledge Intersections Symposium about evaluation.

A big group of our writers and illustrators spoke at the NT Writers' Festival to launch the books we made as part of *Anwerne Ingkerrekele Mpwareke: By Us, For Us*. Amanda and Veronica also spoke up at the Children's Ground fundraising event in Melbourne in May.

We share our story with Philanthropists and people of influence, with Government Ministers, Senators, Dignitaries and departmental staff, sports people, musicians, actors, advocates for social justice and many other interested parties.

“There is real power when we all come together as First Nations people, because we all have a story to share and united we hope we can really change education for the future.”

We take visitors out with us on country whenever we can and we love giving opportunities to present to our younger staff or those who don't feel confident so they can practice and get better at public speaking.

This year we facilitated two meetings of the First Nations Educators' Network. Here, every person or group presented their story or their journey through education. It was so moving to hear everyone talk and while there were many different stories, we all had the same battles to face. There is real power when we all come together as First Nations people, because we all have a story to share and united we hope we can really change education for the future. You can read more about this on the next page.



First Nations Educators' Network

This year we hosted the first two meetings of the First Nations Educators' Network here on Arrernte country. These meetings were held over three days each and will continue next year and after that as we grow stronger as a First Nations collaborative and with more people getting involved.

We gathered and connected First Nations Educators from over 15 different nations over the two meetings to discuss the state of education for our children. It was our First Cultural Educators who led the discussion.

Through these meetings we have developed a clear path forward: to create a quality First Nations-led education system that recognises the oldest learning framework in the world.

We are behind other countries in the world. Other countries have their education run by their First People from kindergarten to University. It is time for us to have this same opportunity. This is our right under Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

3. States shall, in conjunction with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, take effective measures, in order for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

We are working as a network to create this change. These are some of the messages from our October draft statement:

"We have come together as 15 different nations on Arrernte country. We are first cultural educators and leaders. We are inspired to share our knowledge. We recognise the laws of our lands. We belong to the land and the land belongs to us. We are here because we hold knowledge that has been passed on through generations. We hold the learnings and the ways of teaching from our ancestors. We are here for our future generations. We recognise our systems of teaching and education as leading practice. We recognise the role of our elders and our ancestors. We recognise the importance of families and communities in educating our children. We recognise the importance of our languages, to strengthen them and to revive them. Our curriculum needs to be determined by us. We want to build on the great work of our educators who have developed First Nations curriculum in communities and in

the departments. We want to set standards for our own communities and for mainstream education. We want to protect our knowledge systems and laws. We want to ensure that our intellectual and cultural property rights are secure.

The Government invests in our despair - in locking up our children, placing them in welfare, dealing with our illnesses, keeping us on Centrelink. We want this investment to be in education and the future of our children.

Education is healing. It is a place that we want our children to feel valued, loved and safe in their spirit. Where their knowledge will grow."

As a Network we are strengthened by each other. We learnt from each other and we were inspired by each other. This is some of the feedback from the meeting:

"I've been blown away by the last 3 days."

"Best, best conference I have ever been to in my entire education experiences."

"This has been such a joyous workshop. I haven't heard a single negative thing said and this is really unusual. It will go down as my favourite workshop."

"...the most awesome thing I've been to in all my professional life."

"...so honoured to be here....This workshop has fed my soul and spirit... Thank you."

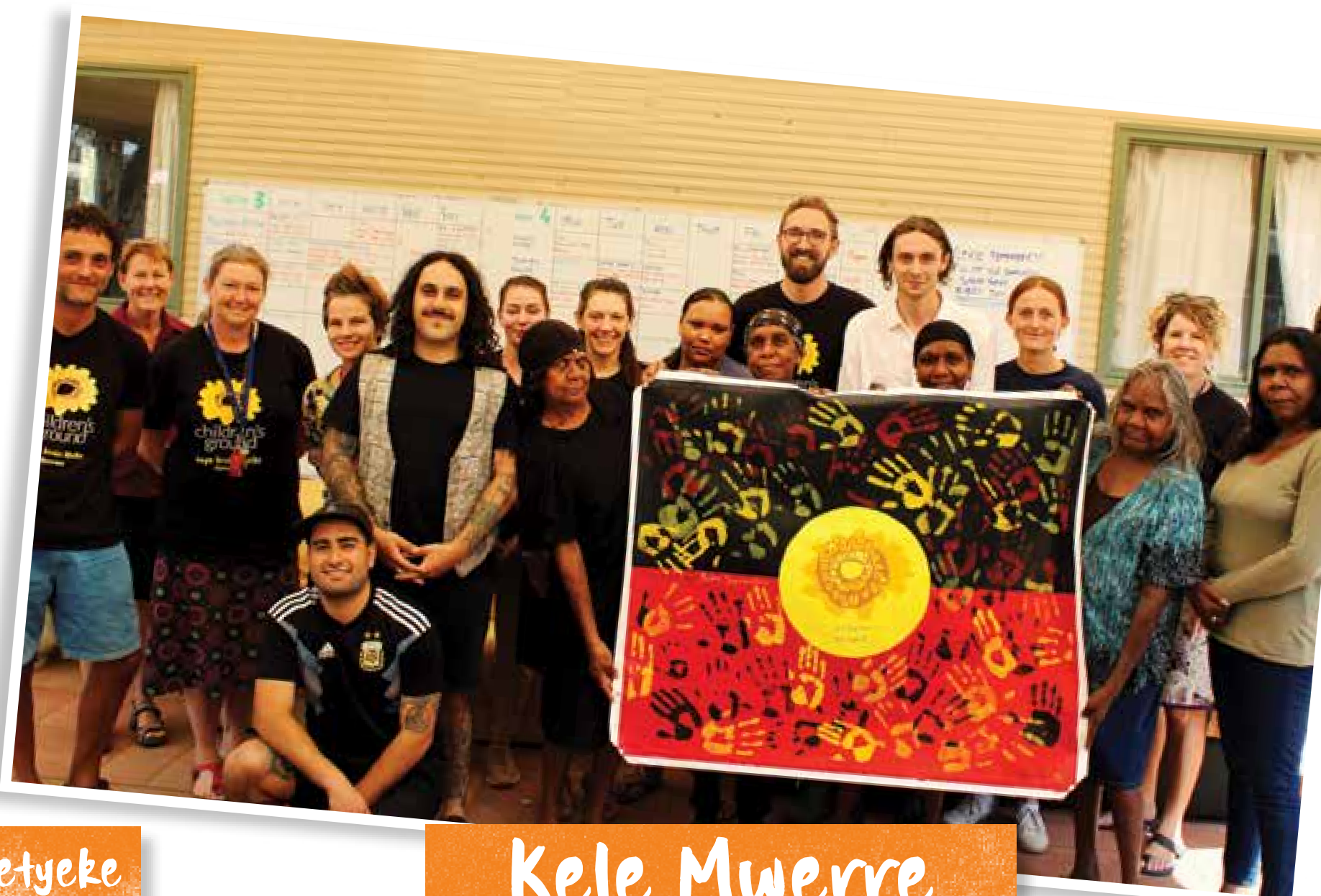
We are all looking forward to 2020.



"This has been the best conference I have ever been to in my entire education experience. There is something really special happening here. We need to keep going, keep working for our children's education. I know we can't give up now."

Judi, First Nations Educators' Network





Ampe Anwerne-kenhe Rlherrke Ingkerre Atnyenetyeke

Stronger Communities for Children

2019 marks Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe's first full year working with Atitjere and Engawala communities as part of Stronger Communities for Children (SCfC).

SCfC is a community development program funded by the Australian Government that puts decision-making in the hands of First Nations people in remote communities in the NT. In both communities, it is Children's Ground's job to work alongside and support a decision-making group who decide what they want to see for children and families in their community, and how they want to use SCfC funding to realise their aspirations.

Atitjere and Engawala are two hours north-east of Mparntwe along the Plenty Highway. Atitjere is the country of Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe Director, MK Turner, and Engawala is the country

of our Chair, William Tilmouth. Both communities are part of the Arrernte Nation. Our families are all connected.

In Engawala, SCfC has been funding a playgroup for children and their families, run by Central Desert Regional Council. The program runs out of the women's centre and is led by two local First Nations early years workers. In Atitjere, SCfC has been supporting the Youth Sports and Rec program for young people, a child safety education program, cultural activities and bush trips, as well as community events and celebrations.

Highlights this year include a whole-of-community event that brought all families together in Atitjere, as well as a young women's cultural knowledge camp with a focus on health and wellbeing. This year we have also

attended two SCfC Knowledge Sharing Seminars: conferences that bring together representatives from all 11 SCfC communities to share what they've been doing, learn from each other and plan for the future.

We want to make SCfC stronger in Atitjere and Engawala. We want to see funding stay in the community and go towards local training and employment opportunities. We want to see more programs and services delivered and supported by local people. We want to see a future where it is local people who decide what is best for their children, families and communities.

Kele mwerre.

Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe came to life because of the generosity and leadership of philanthropy. Throughout 2019 we have continued to exist because of the innovation of philanthropy, community support, the backing of government, our volunteers and our partners.

Philanthropic supporters:

PMF Foundation, Third Link, Gandel Philanthropy, Igniting Change, Ian Potter Foundation, Ryan Cooper Family Foundation, English Family Foundation, Limb Family Foundation, Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies, John and Myriam Wylie Foundation, Virgin Unite, The Brunner Family, Ramses Foundation, Beverly Jackson Foundation, The Duggan Foundation, Lightfolk Foundation, Bennelong Foundation, The Rogers Family, Salt (Wilson Family Foundation), Centrecorp, John and Betty Laidlaw Legacy, Armour Family Endowment, Liberman and Rozenes Family, The Bonnici Family, Perpetual, Collier Charitable Fund, Paul & Jane Hallam,

Kele Mwerre

Thank you

The Yanni Sarantis Legacy, Scanlon Foundation, Moose Toys, Ausmed Education, Jason & Anna Karas, Orloff Family Charitable Trust, Stening Charitable Trust, Magellan Logistics, The Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation, The Hoffman Foundation, Estate of the Late Annette Walker, Equity Trustees, Stephen Farrell, Rachel Nolan and Family, Australian Communities Foundation

Government support:

Australian Government | NIAA
Australian Government | Department of Health
NT Government
Australian Government | Department of Communication and the Arts

Pro bono:

Clayton Utz
Davies Collison Cave Law
Sean Bowden, Holding Redlich Lawyers
Light Warrior

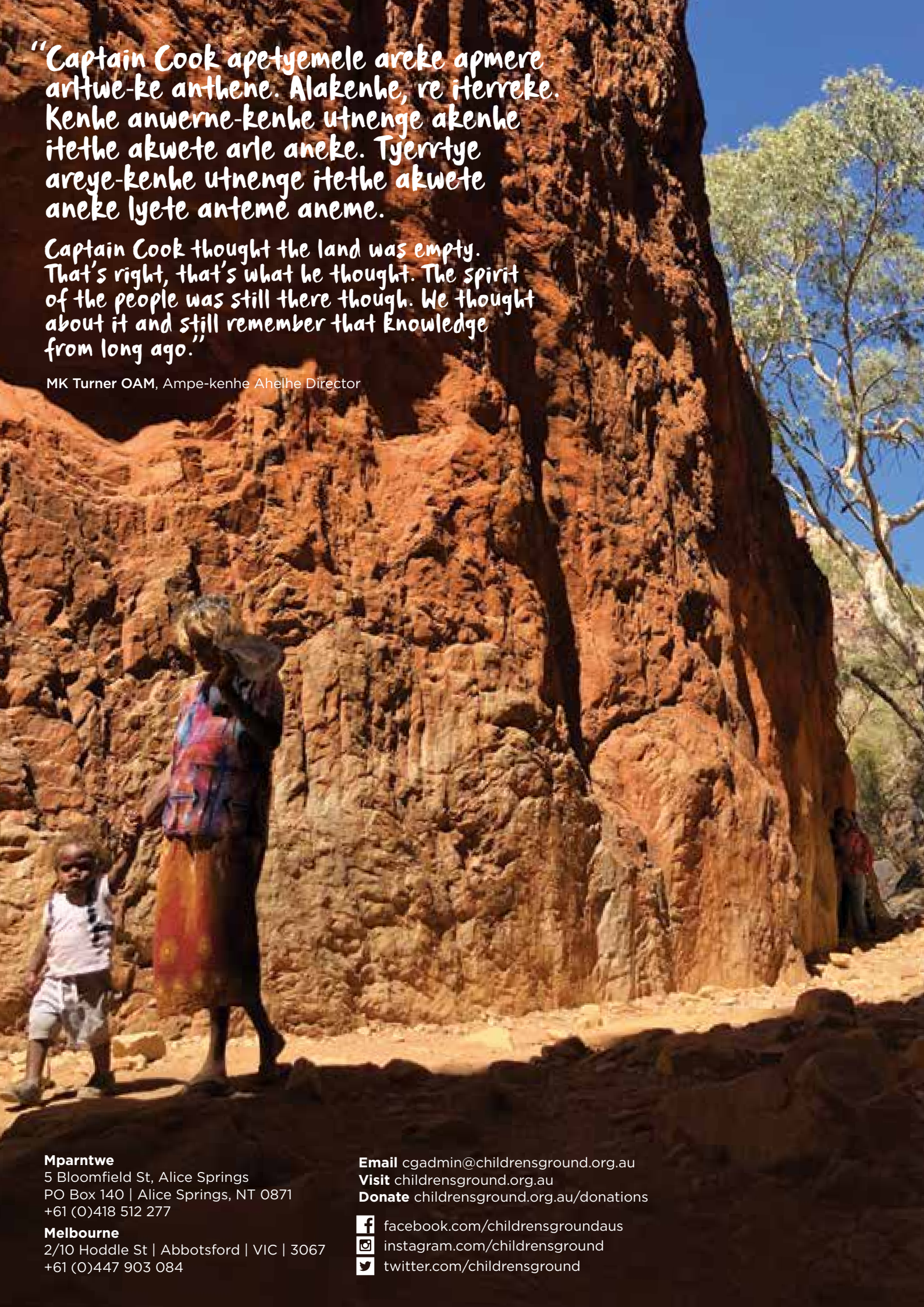
Volunteers: Sarah Milford, Ella Du Ve, Fiona Ryan, Genevieve Schulz, Elisabeth Storer

Key organisations we work with:

Akeyulerre, Arrernte Language Centre, Batchelor Institute, Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation, Tangentyere Council, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Red Cross, Child Friendly Alice, ICTV, Connected Beginnings, Purple House, Alice Springs Language Centre, St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre, Larapinta Child and Family Centre, Yipirinya School, Yarrenyty Arlttere Artists

Ambassadors, Elders and Friends:

MK Turner OAM, Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin AO, Pat Cash, The Cat Empire, Rachel Naninaaq Edwardson, Dr Jan Owen AM, The Teskey Brothers, *In My Blood it Runs* the film, Maya Newell, Apmere Angkentye-kenhe, Josef Egger, Black Rock Band, Jessica Frid, March Studios, Kogo, Deborah Wilson, Louise Dorrat, Helen Miller, Margaret Carew, Irene Nangala, Mike Bowden, Ross Hunter, Hume Contracting, Rod Moss, Mary Flynn, Julia Mitchell and everyone who has given their support, time and skills to walk with us on this journey so far.



"Captain Cook apetyemele areke apmere
artwe-ke anthe. Alakenhe, re iterreke.
Kenhe anwerne-kenhe utnenge akenhe
itethe akwete arle aneke. Tyerrtye
areye-kenhe utnenge itethe akwete
anek lyete anteme aneme.

Captain Cook thought the land was empty.
That's right, that's what he thought. The spirit
of the people was still there though. We thought
about it and still remember that knowledge
from long ago."

MK Turner OAM, Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe Director

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