



Children's Ground Quarterly Report: Q3 2021

Sharing our growth, reach and impact over time



At Children's Ground, we are seeing incredible growth in the leadership skills of our young people. These talented young people are the formidable next generation who are learning from their Elders and emerging into role models and leaders. In Children's Ground communities, young people are taking on roles and responsibilities as teachers, mentors, support workers, cultural health specialists and so much more. But the journey hasn't always been easy. Young Arrernte leader Edmond gives us an insight into some of his challenges and inspirations:

"Talking to my older cousin gave me a clear path of where I should go. I looked at my younger siblings and thought 'I don't want to be this bad person for them... making wrong decisions.' I want them to look up to me, like how I looked up to my older cousin. I want to help kids keep their language and culture strong. So my message to the young people of today is: just keep your head up. Keep going to school. Don't make wrong decisions. Don't be a follower, be a leader."

– Edmond Doolan



Highlights for this quarter



Family Health and Wellbeing Course Graduation

We have 12 new graduates on the Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe (Children's Ground Central Australia) team! Congratulations to the Children's Ground staff members who were recently awarded a Certificate 2 in Family Health and Wellbeing from Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education.

"I was so happy that I was able to graduate from the Family and Wellbeing course along with many other First Nations staff at Children's Ground. It was hard along the way but doing the course here at Children's Ground helped a lot. We could support each other to complete the training. We learned about how to communicate with someone who is upset and to solve problems with families in a safe way. We also learned ways of looking after ourselves. These skills will help me do my work here at Children's Ground and live up to the principle of Expect and Deliver the Best."

– Edmond Doolan

Well done Nakita, Dianne, Larissa, Natassia, Rory, Cassandra, Edmond, Mitchell, Michael, Laurel, Genise and Blair – we are all so proud of you!

Bringing Arrernte children's books to life

This quarter, musicians Harry Jane Angus (The Cat Empire) and Emily Lubitz (Tinpan Orange) collaborated with First Nations educators, artists and children at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe.

The pair joined us on several Learning on Country trips, where they supported children to engage in musical play and experimentation, encouraging creativity and mindfulness. Educator Lee explains, "Once they started playing, everyone was transfixed! It was so lovely seeing the power of music and its ability to make everyone so calm. Some children had turns of the instruments and Stephen found his new favourite thing, the trumpet! We can't wait to see little Stephen on stage one day performing! He's a natural!"

Using the First Nations language resources published by Children's Ground, Harry and Emily worked with Arrernte musicians, children and resource development staff, Carol, Amanda and Siobhan to record four Arrernte children's songs including *Akaperte*, *Pwerlerpe*, *Ampere*, *Ingke (Heads Shoulders Knees and Toes)*!

This collection of First Nations songs for children will be released in 2022.



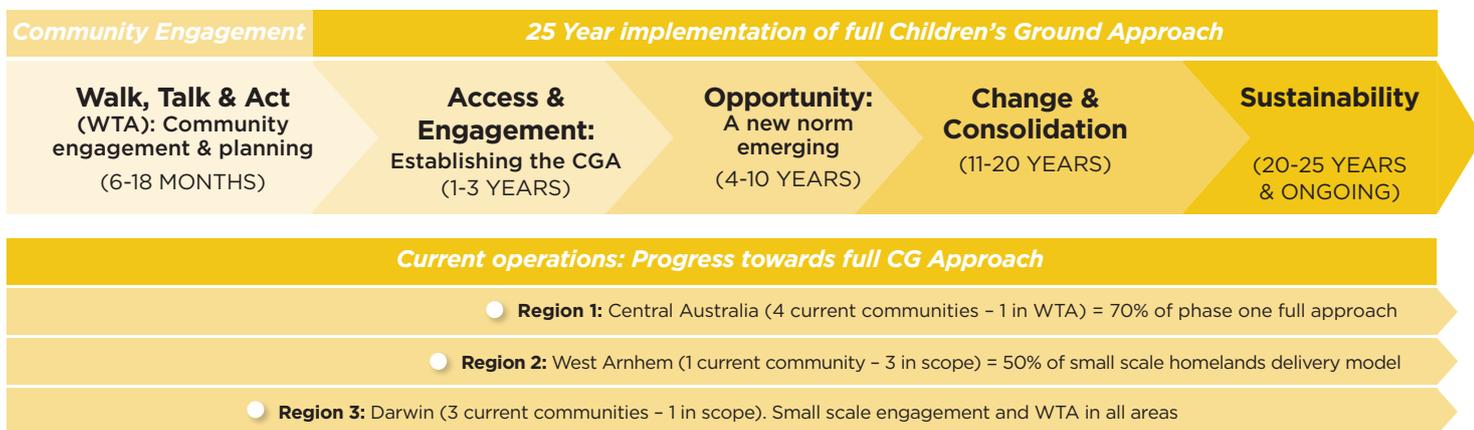
Celebrating Arrernte educators this NAIDOC Week

Children's Ground is so proud to celebrate the incredible achievements of Senior Arrernte Educator and cultural leader Alison Ferber. Alison won the Education award in the NAIDOC Mparntwe Awards for her contributions to teaching cultural knowledge through her work at Children's Ground. It is fantastic to see Alison recognised for her dedication to language preservation and passing on cultural knowledge to the next generation. Congratulations Alison!

Progress: growth, reach and impact

KPI Growth: Proportion of full CG Approach delivery

The CG Approach continues to be delivered and evaluated in three regions - each is at a different stage of the 25-year Approach. As at quarter three 2021, this happened to the extent shown below. In this quarter, there has been no change in the number of communities Children's Ground is working alongside.



The CG Approach requires all key elements to be implemented fully to achieve long term change. Children's Ground is a developing organisation. It is expected to take a further 3-5 years to be fully operational in three regions, as funding resources are secured. These quarterly reports will present progress across key performance indicators (KPIs) and measures of the CG Approach.

How we are tracking against full implementation	WTA	< 25%	35-50%	50-75%	75-100%
	CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	WEST ARNHEM	DARWIN		
Learning & Wellbeing					
Family Health & Wellbeing					
Economic Development & Wellbeing					
Cultural & Creative Development & Wellbeing					
Community Development & Wellbeing					

KPI: Quarter three 2021 access, delivery and engagement

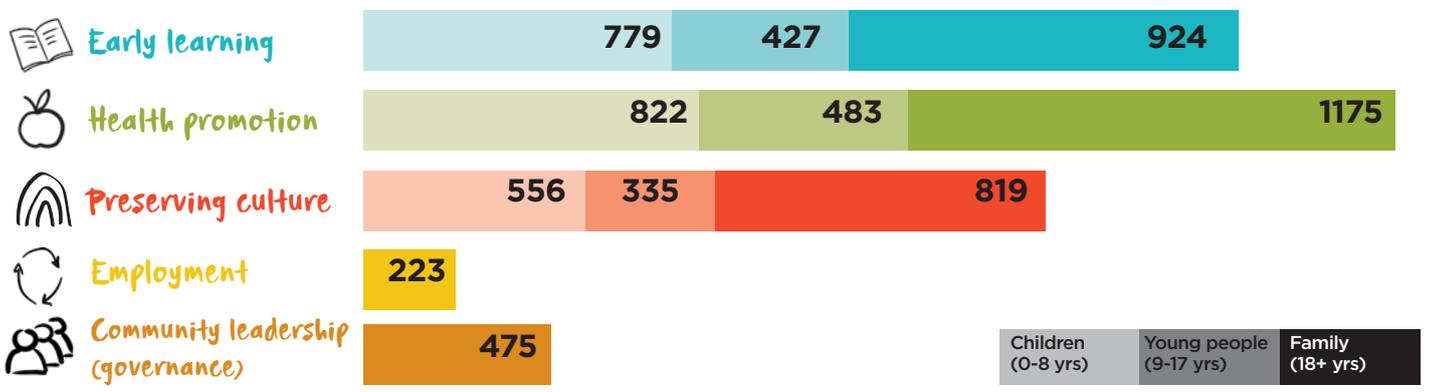
In Q3 2021, **722** people of all ages engaged in the CG Approach and Walk, Talk & Act community engagement and planning including: early learning, health promotion, cultural preservation, employment and governance.



Progress: growth, reach and impact



KPI: Reach over time



Note: Data is subject to slight changes as we continue to work with communities to obtain accurate birthdates

The Children's Ground Approach in Action

Learning & Wellbeing

Gregory's learning journey

In his homeland community of Marlkwawo in West Arnhem Land, Gregory (2 years old) is supported by his mother Christine and surrounded by his family. He has been coming to Children's Ground early learning in Marlkwawo since he was born. His learning is delivered on his country, in his first language and English, alongside his family. This culturally responsive education ensures that Gregory is learning about his language, identity and cultural practices, as well as developing English pre-literacy and numeracy skills. Through play, Gregory is learning about his body and how to keep it healthy. He cooks up delicious manme (food) for his family and dolls, using dramatic play skills to act out scenes.

Gregory is developing a kind and caring nature, transferring knowledge from his own experiences of being nurtured by his family into his doll play. Gregory is also showing strong pre-literacy foundations. He is making his own decisions about the types of books he wants to read, when to turn the pages and when to pause and explain what he can see on each page. By engaging in consistent, supported early years activities with Children's Ground in his community, we are seeing Gregory grow into a confident and happy young learner.

Learning through imaginative play

At Children's Ground, we foster safe and inspiring learning environments. Children love to engage in imaginative play and this is used for critical learning such as health literacy and health behaviour.

Children in Central Australia enjoy learning about how to take care of themselves and each other by setting up a pretend medical clinic in their community. Children learn how a clinic works and why hygienic practices such as hand washing, nose blowing and teeth brushing promote health. Educators see children deepen their capacity for imaginative play by creating a nurturing space of healing and wellbeing. While playing, educators observed early learner Myer ask her patient "How is your heart? How do you feel?". At Children's Ground, we are noticing the positive effects of embedding social and emotional wellbeing in every learning session.

"We are seeing children understand that our health isn't just about our physical body, but our emotional and cultural health as well," said Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe educator Lee.



Impact: How everything is connected for the child, family and community

"We see the children learning: not only learning literacy and numeracy but also learning about their culture; learning on country. Children are developing healthy routines and eating nutritious meals every day. On top of this, the children are seeing more and more of their families working at Children's Ground. This encourages more families to get involved, which brings everyone together and connected with everything the children are learning. It is important we hold our standards high to show our families that they deserve the best." – Edmond Doolan

Family Health & Wellbeing

Supporting First Nations health practices

Long-standing Children's Ground staff member Roxanne shares a story of how important cultural practices are for the health and wellbeing of First Nations children:

"My name is Roxanne Naborlhborlh. My clan name is Burdoh, and my Country is Manmoyi. Doing this traditional smoking ceremony on our children, on our wurdurd, is very important. It is about welcoming a child into their four clan names so they can recognise who they are and where they are really from. My djedje (daughter) Talitha Nabalwad got her traditional smoking ceremony from her doydoy (great-grandmother), Margaret Nabalwad. Her doydoy put her hands in the smoke to warm them and then put them on Talitha's chest to warm her heart. This will help her to not think about me (her mum) when I am away from her. Margaret puts her warm hands on Talitha's eyes and forehead, so she will sleep through the night and let me rest. Then she puts her hands on Talitha's hands, so she does not steal, and then on her feet and legs so that she is strong. Lastly, we hold her over the smoke and the ceremony is completed. We have inherited this ceremony from the old people. We are still carrying it out for Talitha's next generation, so when she becomes a woman she can teach her children."



Covid-19 health promotion is seeing results in the Top End

Children's Ground is supporting First Nations families in the Top End and Central Australia to develop Covid-safe plans which include access to vaccination. During this stressful time, young people, adults and Elders are stepping up to support and protect each other by getting vaccinated. Our staff and community leaders walk alongside every person in every community to ensure widespread access to accurate information and the opportunity to receive Covid-19 vaccinations in a supportive environment.

Service collaboration is also key to this. In Central Australia, we are working with Central Australian Aboriginal Congress to hold vaccination days at Children's Ground for staff and families. In Marlkawo, the community has now reached 100% vaccination thanks to the hard work of the Top End team in their Covid-19 health promotion and the NT Health Vaccination teams. We had vaccination teams visit and kept the conversation going with those who were not yet confident to get vaccinated. People felt more confident and informed about the best way to protect ourselves and our Elders; families decided to jump in the troopy and make the 3-hour drive to Maningrida to get vaccinated!



Impact: By supporting and promoting both First Nations cultural health and Western health practices, we ensure that our families can enjoy the full spectrum of health and wellbeing. We know that being on Country and practicing culture is just as important as engaging in Western health practices. Children's Ground's Utnenge, Tyerrtye, Mwerre Atnyenetyeke Iltye Tyerrtye Urrperle-kenhenge **Family Health and Wellbeing framework** shows how we promote access to holistic First Cultural and Western health and wellbeing.

The Children's Ground Approach in Action



Creative & Cultural Development & Wellbeing

Healing Camp promotes cultural wellbeing

This quarter, Children's Ground partnered with Akeyulerre Healing Centre to deliver the Arrernte Angkwerre-Iwetyeke at Inteye Arrkwe (Healing Camp at Ross River). Over eighty children, young people and adults came along to spend time on their country and to teach the next generation of cultural leaders. Arrernte educators Marita and Veronica share their experiences:

"It was great to have so many families and children together talking about who they are, where they belong in their families, what is their skin name and where their Country is. We played an arnpernrrentye (relationships) game with the kids, using different colours of wool for each skin group. Everyone wore these around their wrists, so we could see how we are related. It's really important for kids to learn about who they are."

– Veronica Turner, Senior Arrernte Educator

"We used this time to walk side-by-side with the little ones out on Country. We've taught them about bush tucker: how to recognise the plants and gather them. These kids know all the bush medicine plants and how to crush them so well now from the learning they do with us at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe (Children's Ground). They are really clever now."

– Marita Macmillan, Senior Arrernte Educator

Impact: Being on Country is integral to wellbeing. We create opportunities for children and families to reconnect with the land, cultural practices, history and kinship relations. Children's Ground has a positive impact on the social and emotional wellbeing and healing of children and families.



Community Development & Wellbeing

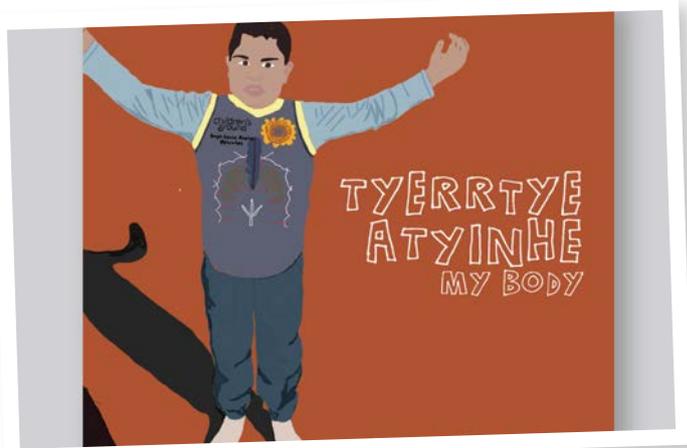
Community plans come to life

Children's Ground is brought to life by each community. This quarter in Central Australia, we have been focusing on developing and strengthening our Community Plans. These plans showcase each community's vision for Children's Ground and the values, aspirations, governance and activities for their children and families.

Each community decides how to capture and present their plans; some chose to this in the form of a painting. For some communities, this is a more appropriate way to capture the interconnectedness of aspirations and goals, and how they focus on every part of every child (Cultural and Western teaching and learning, physical and emotional health, environmental health and economic wellbeing).

Impact: These vibrant, living plans capture the goals and aspirations of each community. The community uses these as an important accountability tool for tracking progress. The plans are presented in formats that enable effective and widespread communication to all families - and each community is different. These community plans aim to include everyone and engage a critical mass (at least 75%) in each community to achieve long-term change.

The Children's Ground Approach in Action



Economic Development & Wellbeing

Three new books in the works for Arrernte language enterprise

Supported by the Australian Government's Indigenous Languages and Arts Program, First Nations educators at Children's Ground worked towards the release of three more Arrernte educational resources this quarter. Resource development is important for protecting First Nations languages and to ensure children can learn in their first language. It is also an economic development opportunity for the authors and illustrators who, as a part of Children's Ground enterprise, receive a percentage of the revenue from the sale of resources. The new resources include:

'Tyerrtye Atyinhe (My Body)': a vibrant children's book that teaches the Arrernte names for body parts. "We want our children to learn about the different parts of their body in their own language," said a Children's Ground First Nations educator. "The illustrations are based on pictures of our families, so our little ones can see themselves reflected while they learn."

'Althateme (McGrath's Dam)': an Arrernte picture book that explores themes of family, history and connection to Country. "Althateme is a special place for our families," says author Shirley Turner. "This is the place where we sat down and protested to get our land back. We all lived here in tin sheds and humpies, walking around with our parents, and hunting for bush foods. I wrote this poem because Althateme is the place we all call home. It's important to all our families, and to the history of Land Rights."

'Intelhiletyeke (First Nations Colouring Book)': a wellbeing resource, designed to promote mindfulness and creativity. The activity book contains thirty striking works by prominent Arrernte artist Amunda Gorey. Children and their families colour in the books which feature Arrernte language quotes about creativity and wellbeing.

Impact: Not only will these new books contribute to improving literacy for First Nations children, they also contribute to the development of culturally based economic opportunities. They add to a growing body of resources that celebrate First Nations language and identity. Children's Ground's vision is for an Australia that truly acknowledges and recognises the brilliance of First Nations culture.



September 2021 meeting of Utyerre Apanpe in Mparntwe (Alice Springs)

A commitment to First Nations education systems in their own right

Utyerre Apanpe is a network of diverse and determined First Nations educators from Nations across Australia who are leading reform for our national education system.

Utyerre Apanpe is a place for our educational systems and language expertise to be reclaimed. Our aim is to inform the systems change required to make First Nations voices, knowledge, systems and actions visible. We are an independent, collective membership.

The Utyerre Apanpe 2021 forums took place under Covid restrictions in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in April and September with only limited physical attendance. A virtual engagement opportunity was provided for members who could not travel to continue the development of the next stages of reform.

Utyerre Apanpe is about connecting to country and each other and sharing our practice and knowledge systems. These gatherings are for our professional, cultural, familial and personal development. They provide nourishment in the knowledge we own and share through our kinship systems and cultural responsibilities. The Utyerre Apanpe forums provide the much needed space and time to renew and review how, who and what we share across our Nations. We were honoured to hear from Professor Graham Hingangaroa Smith and Dr. Elizabeth Marrkilyi Giles Ellis and their respective transformational work in first cultural education, leadership and reform.



*Utyerre is an Arrernte word which describes describing the relationship and connection between people and land (pronounced oo-cherra) from Turner M.K. (2010) Iwenhe Tyerrtye; What it means to be an Aboriginal Person; compiler BAgarry McDonald; IAD Press. Apanpe (pronounced a-parn-pa) means everywhere. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation 2013; UNESCO 2012 Turner M.K. (2010) Iwenhe Tyerrtye; What it means to be an Aboriginal Person; compiler Barry McDonald; IAD Press.

Showcasing leadership in the Australian Women's Weekly

Children's Ground families in Central Australia generously welcomed journalist Alley Pascoe to write a feature story in the Australian Women's Weekly magazine. Titled 'School of the Desert', the six-page spread highlighted the female visionaries leading Children's Ground's work and how their lived experiences shape their plans and aspirations for the future.

Having grown up in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Pascoe had developed a deep respect for the Children's Ground Approach and understood the importance of communicating our work to a wide audience. Felicity Hayes, MK Turner and Larissa Meneri generously contributed insight into what a day at Ampe-Kenhe Ahelhe looks like.

This was an opportunity to show the leadership and vision of the community to new audiences. The public reaction to the piece was overwhelmingly positive.

Indigenous Literacy Day

This September, Children's Ground celebrated First Nations language and storytelling with the help of our ambassadors. Our national literacy campaign was bookended by Indigenous Literacy Day and UNESCO International Literacy Day. We shared our vital work in strengthening First Languages with new audiences via ambassador-created videos on social media.

Felix Riebl from The Cat Empire and newest Children's Ground ambassador Missy Higgins both shared videos of themselves reading the Arrernte children's book *Iwenhe Arratinyeme Ingwele* (*What Comes Out at Night?*) to their daughters.

Sam Teskey of The Teskey Brothers shared a reading of *Athakwere Akweke Angkethakwe* (*The Thirsty Little Mouse*) with his son. With social media audiences reaching 50,000 to 123,000 viewers, our ambassadors' promotion of Children's Ground's First Nations literacy work expands our reach and impact.

In a celebration of First Language literacy in West Arnhem, Children's Ground early learners Susan and Raya shared a story in their first language, Kunwinjku, about what it's like living on Country at Marlkawo. The video was included in the [Indigenous Literacy Foundation's story collection](#) on Indigenous Literacy Day.

