

Children's Ground Quarterly Report: Q4 2022



Sharing our growth, reach and impact over time





We've had an incredible year at Children's Ground. There are learnings for us everywhere – challenges, roadblocks, solutions and outstanding achievements. We end 2022 by celebrating the undeniable passion and commitment all our Elders, young people, staff, supporters, and followers bring to Children's Ground. Together, we are a family. Thank you for walking this journey with us.

At Children's Ground, we know the answers to the challenges our communities face. They lie in our families and through our power, voice, and leadership. The answers are in our culture and our strength as First Nations people. We are seeing the results. We can achieve change when we have real control over our lives, respect for our knowledge and culture. This is how we are creating justice and dignity. We want to share our work with all governments and work in real partnership with Government.

We have amazing systems of knowledge and practice. We live and learn on our Country. We are teaching our children language, culture and identity. We are teaching them critical western and global skills. We are focused on health and wellbeing from babies to Elders. We are creating economic empowerment through employment and enterprise. We are creating amazing environments where kids thrive, families connect and communities walk confidently in a global world.

“There is hope and belief and change - even through the most difficult times. We are laying the foundations for justice and rights that are long overdue. As we centre 65,000+ years of knowledge systems we are creating pathways for the future. I recognise and honour our Elders, past and present, and thank them for sharing their knowledge and providing the leadership that drives Children's ”

Jane Vadiveloo, Children's Ground CEO

Progress: Growth, Reach and Impact

KPI: Q4 2022 access, delivery and engagement

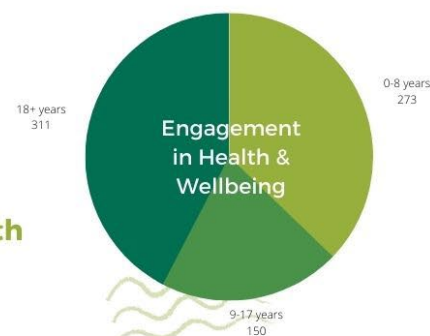
119

learning sessions delivered with integrated health promotion



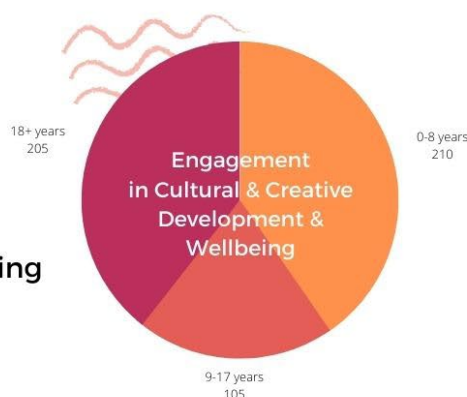
336

occasions of targeted **health** promotion and support



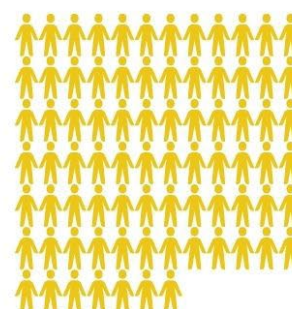
7

First Nations **languages** being preserved or revitalised



79

First Nations people engaged in **employment**

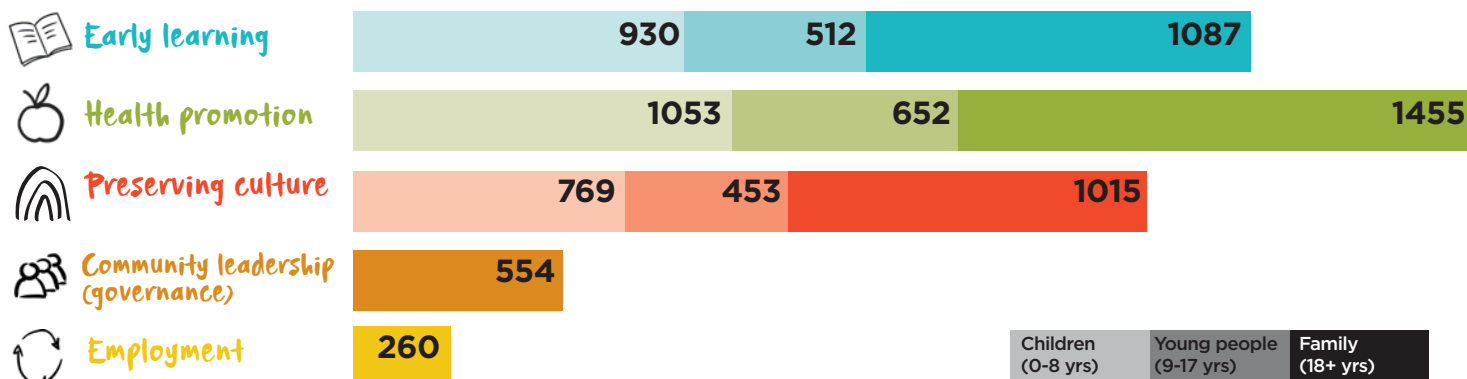


91

First Nations people engaged in **governance** and local decision-making



KPI: Reach over time (2014-2022)



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

Progress: Growth, Reach and Impact

KPI Growth: Proportion of full Children's Ground Approach (CGA) delivery

The CGA is being delivered and evaluated in three regions across the Northern Territory. Each is at a different stage of the 25-year Approach. Development and growth in delivery are based on available resources. We work towards implementing the full CGA in each community as resources increase and enable growth. The graphic below presents % of delivery against the full CGA by the end of Quarter 4 2022, including resource and growth targets for the next five years.



The CGA requires all key elements to be implemented fully to achieve long term change. Children's Ground is a developing organisation. It is expected that being fully operational in three regions will take a further 3-5 years as funding resources are secured. From the beginning of 2022, we saw the Darwin region moving from Walk & Talk Community Engagement & Planning into small scale growth model delivery. We saw Central Australia extending the Children's Ground Approach in Learning, Health, Community Development and Economic Development. It is now a strong and stable operation with quality staff, First Nations leadership and emerging young First Nations leaders.



The Children's Ground Approach in Action

Learning & Wellbeing



Learning Culture, Learning Literacy

Children are growing both their cultural and literacy skills by learning to read and write their skin names. In our families, every individual belongs to a skin group. These relationships define people's associations with Country and each other.

We connect literacy development to cultural knowledge and identity. This way children are engaged. They are learning their letters, how to read, how to write while connecting this to who they are.

At the Burt Creek Learning and Health Hub, families and educators have created a skin name map on the wall to teach the ampe (children) about kinship and connection. The use of this visual aid has proved highly effective in supporting our ampe to begin their early years' learning journey into the depth of the Arrernte kinship system – a key element of the Arrerntenhe Angkentye (Curriculum of Arrernte Learning).

During a learning session this quarter, Cathy and Ellarisha found their skin name (Kngwarraye) on the skin name map on the wall. They practised saying it and learnt how to write it. Cathy pointed out all her kakes (brothers), yayes (sisters) and altyele and ankele (cousins), noticing what their skin names were.

Impact: At Children's Ground, learning about skin names and how children relate to their family is a fundamental cultural learning goal. And, we are seeing inspiring results, as Arrernte Early Years Educator Cassandra (Bambi) explains:

"We're seeing lots of big changes for our kids through coming to Children's Ground, like their skin names. Some children didn't know what their skin names were before. Parents were starting to forget how to connect them to their kinship. Now they know what bush medicine is, where their Homeland is. They feel more comfortable in who they are and where they come from. They're not getting pushed aside. It's changed their little lives."

Growing Confidence and Communication Skills

Senior Arrernte Educator Susan has seen first-hand the impact Children's Ground is having on the health and wellbeing of her grandchildren Joaquin and Alphonses. Prior to attending Children's Ground, both children were perceived to be non-verbal, finding it challenging to communicate their needs and wants. Now, when Joaquin and Alphonses attend learning sessions, they are speaking in their First Language (Arrernte) and learning to use English as a second language.

Impact: This shows at Children's Ground, we can create a safe and supportive space for children to learn to engage with others and express their thoughts and feelings. Joaquin and Alphonses now comfortably participate in activities such as sport and play. We are noticing an increase in their motor skills as they watch and learn from adults in the group.



The Children's Ground Approach in Action

Health & Wellbeing

Learning on Country and in the Kitchen

Families in Marlkawo have taken advantage of the year-ending seasons of Kurung (September/October) and Kunumeleng (November/December) to teach the wurdurd (children) about bush manme (food). Kurung is the time when many plants begin flowering, which then go on to fruit in Kunumeleng. Wurdurd have been learning where to find this manme, when it is ready to be eaten, and how it is used. Popular bush manme found around Marlkawo are manwodberr and mandudjmi (two types of green plum), mandjarduk (red apple) and manboyberre (white apple). Wurdurd and adults are learning the therapeutic uses of these manmak manme (delicious foods) and how they can improve their own health.

In conjunction with deep learning about traditional manme, families are also participating in Western-style nutrition workshops. Here, families are loving learning how to make healthy, affordable and simple meals. We are working on a simple recipe book so children and families can continue this learning at home, using both Western-style and bush manme.

Impact: Food insecurity is a daily challenge for families at Marlkawo. Supermarkets in surrounding remote communities are a minimum three hours' drive away and only accessible in the dry season, where food is at least double the standard price. Working with families to support the collection of traditional foods on Country, and learning how to cook nutritious, affordable meals is so important for the wellbeing of the community. Eating healthy is not easy when very remote, however Marlkawo families are determined to make this possible for themselves so they keep living on their Homeland.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing Team Update

At Ampe-Kenhe Ahelhe we know that Social and Emotional Wellbeing is the foundation for physical and mental health for our families and communities.

This year in Central Australia, our Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) team expanded to two counsellors who worked with staff, families and little ones across all our communities both one-on-one and during early years learning sessions. SEWB counsellors hold space for emotional check-ins where parents and children are encouraged to use Arrernte or English to share with the others around them about how they are feeling. Counsellors provide gentle follow-up and prompting to encourage adults to model emotional responsiveness with each other and to children. Children and their families are showing vast improvements in wellbeing from the culturally safe and emotionally grounded spaces that we create during early years learning.

When families identify areas of need, we support them to connect to a range of organisations for support, collaborating with Congress, Waltja, Uniting Care, Lutheran Community care and housing service providers.

Impact: We are building upon the strengths that exist in communities, by offering children and their families the language and secure space to explore their own emotional experiences and experiment with emotional expression. This is serving as a stepping stone towards families recognising and responding to the lived experience of trauma.



The Children's Ground Approach in Action

Creative & Cultural Development & Wellbeing



Arrernte Language Pop Songs

Our music team has been busy recording the final tracks for five new Arrernte songs: Merne Mwerre (Good Food), Eight Skin Names, Aherre Atere, Alkere (Sky) and Werte (Hello/What's Up?). They sound mwerre anthurre (very good) and have been sent off for mixing and mastering. These tracks will join a growing body of Children's Ground Arrernte language songs for kids to be used as educational resources and an emerging cultural and creative enterprise.

Our debut track 'Tyerrtye Atyinhe (My Body)' will be released in 2023, alongside a vibrant video clip co-produced with NT Music School featuring Children's Ground kids, families and Elders.

This quarter, the Children's Ground music team and more than 100 children and families from our communities in Central Australia welcomed The Wiggles to Arrernte Country. Before their performance in Mparntwe, we taught the well-loved children's group how to sing 'Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' in Arrernte: Akaperte, Pwerlepe, Ampere, Ingke.

Impact: Creativity is integral to our societies, and it has always been expressed in learning through music, art, storytelling and song. Creating songs for our kids in our own First Language is not only important for their learning and wellbeing but sharing our language and culture with the world. We are creating cultural and economic opportunities for our communities.

The Children's Ground Approach in Action



Economic Development and Wellbeing



Community Development and Wellbeing



New Cultural Knowledge Products for the Children's Ground Store

During Quarter 4, First Nations educators fostered skills in cultural preservation, art, design and business development through the release of two new Children's Ground products – a 2023 Arrernte seasons calendar and a set of gift cards.

Recording cultural ecological knowledge about the seasons, climate and animals of Arrernte Country was an important first step in building a new First Nations enterprise product. Educators engaged in several creative workshops to learn new illustration and print-making skills that would inform product development. The cultural and creative workshops culminated in Ilengare? (When?) a 2023 calendar that celebrates the Arrernte seasons and all the animals, plants, weather and Country that change with them.

"Tyerrtye Arrernte mape apele pipe-ke arrangkwe aneke anwerne alkere aremele akatye -irreme ilengare Arne atherrke thiye aherre-ke arratintyeme. Arrernte people don't need a paper calendar, our calendar is the sky and the weather, the plants and the animals. But you should use this calendar if you ever need to keep track of things and ask 'Ilengare? When?'" – Felicity Hayes, Senior Arrernte Educator and Co-Director of Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe

Impact: Educators and Enterprise staff nurtured their emerging skills in marketing, sales and customer service by selling these new products at two market stalls in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) this quarter. This is contributing to the development of culturally and creatively based economic opportunities for our communities.

Men's Wellbeing, Community Wellbeing

We've seen exciting progress this quarter with the emergence of a men's group connected to Irrkerlantye (Whitegate), coming together to discuss issues important to men and how they can lead change in our communities.

Health promotion has been a prominent issue of discussion, which culminated in a Men's Health BBQ. This community event brought men together to yarn about their health and engage in cultural art and craft activities to support mental health and wellbeing. Harry shared his skills in wire sculpture art by designing a piece from scratch, while Laurence began designing some new leather wristbands. It was fantastic to see Laurence's face light up as soon as he saw the new leather and tools waiting to be used.

Impact: Community Development at Children's Ground is all about celebrating and fostering the talents that already exist within our communities. By creating the Irrkerlantye Men's Group we've seen the impact of providing access to spaces where people feel welcome and valued. Men are valuing the opportunity to engage in nurturing positive community experiences and the strengthening of social bonds. These initial sessions have laid the foundations for the development of a sustained men's program in 2023 run by the Irrkerlantye community.



Young People Leading First Language Preservation

During Quarter 4, four inspiring young Arrernte people from Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe: Edmond, Myles and Mitchell, spoke at the First Languages Youth Forum in Adelaide. The trio delivered a presentation about why language is integral to their understanding of their Country, culture and identity as Arrernte people.

"It was a great opportunity to be part of – all young First Nations people getting together and talking about how to keep language strong. It was great to hear about what other young leaders had been doing for their communities and get some new ideas of what we can do here [at Children's Ground]." – Edmond Doolan, Men's and Youth Team



Standing Up For Human Rights

Dignity, Freedom, and Justice For All – three important themes that laid the foundation for 2022's United Nations Human Rights Day, which coincides each year with Children's Ground's birthday. December 10 marks the day the United Nations General Assembly first adopted the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This seminal document states: "all human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights."

This includes our First Nations kids having the freedom to access education in First Language and culture.

Children's Ground marked UN Human Rights Day 2022 with a virtual event, bringing a panel of First Nations educators together to discuss First Nations education, language, culture and self-determination.

We created and we lead Children's Ground so that our communities have the right to self-determination and agency in everything we do.

We are proud to be an organisation that lives these values daily.

