

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Please note that this report could contain images and/or the names of people who have passed away.





Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe (Children's Ground Central Australia) Co-director MK Turner OAM with her great-granddaughter Nyiesha

---

## Our Vision

- A world where all children and families are free from economic poverty and live with dignity and justice.
- A world where First Nations families realise their aspirations for the next generation of children and have agency over their social, cultural, political and economic future.
- A world where children are raised free from trauma, discrimination and suffering, enjoy equity and safety, and grow into adulthood feeling happy and healthy.
- An Australia that celebrates our First Nations history, culture and future.

---

## Mission Statement

Children's Ground strives to end complex and extreme injustice and disadvantage by transforming the system and evidencing a new approach that is designed with First Nations people, celebrating First People's culture and knowledge. Together we address the key social, cultural and economic determinants to ensure every child born in that community today can enjoy a life of opportunity and wellbeing. This 25-year approach aspires to excellence, recognising that children, families and communities who need the most deserve the best, that they are the experts in their own lives and that it is their voice and talent that will create change.

*"Anwerne Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe-nge warrke mwerre anthurre mpwareke year-nhengenge. Utnenge atyenhe nhenhe ikwerele aneme. Anwerne-kenhe iwerele aneme. Anwerne-kenhe iwerrele arratye anetyeke. Iwerre anwerneke-nhenge akaltye-irreme. Anwerne ingkerreke, apurte warrke-irretyeke. Iwerre anyentele alhetyeke."*

*"We've been going really well at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe this year. I love it here. This is where my heart is. We are doing it our way. This is where the wheels are turning around. We will stay on this straight road. We are recognising the pathway forward and learning from where we've been. We all work together and walk together on the same track."*

**MK Turner OAM, Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe Director**

# Contents

<b>2018 Highlights</b> .....	4
<b>Chair’s Report</b> .....	6
<b>CEO Report</b> .....	7
<b>Changing the system</b> .....	8
The Children’s Ground Approach.....	9
Theory of change.....	9
<b>Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe – Children’s Ground, Central Australia</b> .....	10
Community leading the way.....	10
Activity and progress in 2018.....	11
Key achievements and events.....	14
Kaylahni’s Story.....	16
<b>Wurdurd Garriyigarrmerren – Children’s Ground, West Arnhem Land</b> .....	18
Community leading the way.....	18
Activity and progress in 2018.....	19
Key achievements and events.....	22
Mahalia’s Story.....	24
<b>Governance</b> .....	27
Our Community and Cultural Governance.....	27
Our Board.....	28
<b>Research Advisory Group</b> .....	29
<b>Our Inspiring Ambassadors</b> .....	29
<b>Financials</b> .....	30
<b>Our Supporters</b> .....	40
<b>Our Staff &amp; Volunteers</b> .....	41

## Our Commitment to First Nations Peoples

Children’s Ground acknowledges and honours First Nations peoples, and pays respect to Elders past and present, as the traditional custodians of this land. In Melbourne we live and work on the land of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation, in West Arnhem on the lands of the Bolmo People and in Central Australia on the lands of the Arrernte People. We recognise that these lands were never ceded by the First Nations.

Photography by Children’s Ground staff and families

© All photographs, filming and recordings of First Nations people and country is owned by First Nations people and used by Children’s Ground with their permission.

**Front cover image:** Children from Mpweringke Anapipe, Anna Marie and Winston, on country at Burt Creek, Central Australia

**Back cover image:** Children from Irrkerlantye on country at Mt Undoolya Creek, Central Australia



Zacarias and Sandy are strengthening their literacy skills on country at Marlkwao

# 2018 Highlights

Children are learning through playing, creating, storytelling, dancing, reading, writing, art and much more.

**125** children aged 0-5 years engaged in early learning with Children's Ground.

**92** children 0-5 years also engaged in nutrition and health promotion in early learning sessions.

**201** children aged 0-8 years engaged in family/community learning and cultural activities and events.

In Central Australia, 20 First Nations language and cultural learning resources were developed by cultural educators and families.

In the Top End, children and their families had daily access to early learning in very remote NT, with integrated health promotion and support.

Children are learning in their first language and in English. They are enjoying their education system - on their country, surrounded by their family and learning from their cultural perspective. They are also learning to have agency over their health and wellbeing.



Families are creating places of safety and opportunity for their children and grandchildren that honour their culture, language and future.

**215** family members (adults 18+ years) engaged in early years and primary school learning alongside their children - as parents, family and educators.

**91** First Nations family and community members employed in leadership, education, health promotion, nutrition, community and environmental health and wellbeing and enterprise.

In the Top End, families have re-established their community on their traditional lands to continue delivery of the Children's Ground Approach to achieve their aspirations for their children's future.

In Central Australia, five generations are engaged in early learning together.

As early learning delivery increased in 2018, so did the number of children and families engaging in formal learning, extended hours and informal learning at family nights, community events and school holiday programs.



Communities are leading, planning and making decisions to achieve their aspirations for their children, now and for the future.

**610** children, young people and families of all ages engaged with Children's Ground, in either early learning, primary learning, family and community cultural events and/or health promotion and wellbeing.

**70+** people were involved in First Nations community governance and decision making about the direction and operations of Children's Ground.

In Central Australia, the Arrernte Nation coming together to celebrate the strength of their culture, families and communities - hosting the first Arrernte led Reconciliation Day in Alice Springs

In the Top End, the vision, planning and action by the community to continue the Children's Ground journey in Marlkawo became a reality for families and community leaders.

Community governance has created First Nations ownership over Children's Ground - First Nations leaders and families continue to plan, deliver, evaluate and drive strategy to create a different future for their children.



We were honoured to have **MLK III** visit - thanks to Igniting Change - and be part of a special Reconciliation Day event led by the Arrernte Nation in Alice Springs.

# Chair Report

It has been a strong year for Children's Ground. One that has breathed hope into the lives of Aboriginal people. I have been waiting a lifetime to see our people empowered and believing in themselves.

At times I have wondered if it was possible to break the shackles. The national story is frightening. Our young people are killing themselves. Their hope is diminished. Our family members pass away and our lives are getting more and more difficult as the new generations find themselves without economic, political or cultural influence. A few Aboriginal people have managed to break through, but the majority are left with little. The 11 years of Closing the Gap is the evidence of this. Nationally we are not closing the gap on unemployment, school attendance, numeracy and literacy and early death.

But, I am hopeful. We began Children's Ground because we live with this reality and we were determined to shift the status quo - and I can see it happening before my eyes. It is small and it is early days but it is real.

This year I spoke at Garma. After years of resisting the public gaze I shared my truth. A truth born from injustice. I stated amongst other things that, "Our kids don't need to be fixed. Our kids need to grow up as Aboriginal children with rights and opportunities, with a voice and the ability to control their own destination." At Children's Ground we are creating the space that allows our children to be children, without judgment. To express themselves in a place of safety with their families and to explore the incredible world around them. Imagine if we can hold this space long enough that their life experience is about possibilities and creativity and learning and opportunity - not poverty and exclusion and racism. This is my dream and it is alive.



This year Central Australia has become stronger and in the Top End, the courage of the people saw them relocate to their traditional lands to continue their work with Children's Ground. And what has happened is nothing short of magic. Children thirsty to learn, on their traditional lands, without distraction, surrounded by family and country.

This year we honour again our fearless philanthropists who are true leaders. We also welcomed the important backing of the Australian Government with renewed investment through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy and new investment from the Health Department. We look towards strengthening a bipartisan partnership with all arms of Government to drive deep systems change. This approach is working. As I have always said, it could work in the back blocks of Sydney - it is about empowerment, equity and local voice and talent. We can lift the burden of extreme disadvantage and injustice in this country, for all children.

We were honoured this year to have Martin Luther King III visit us in Alice Springs. To have someone of his calibre, capacity and with the memory of his father inspired us. He came with an open heart and reminded us "that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice

everywhere. It is incumbent upon those of us who have a voice - regardless of age, background and economic standing - to use that voice to stand up for that which is unjust."

I welcome Amunda Gorey, a young Arrernte woman and a next generation leader, to the Board. She joins a wonderful Board who I thank for its dedication and support. At Children's Ground we combine the best of Western governance with the integrity of cultural governance. I thank our Board members who have incredible experience, an eye for detail and are thorough in their interrogation as they manage strategy, risk and financial accountability. They allow us to deliver on the direction from the people. Their business and financial acumen sits alongside our cultural governance and this expertise makes us who we are. We are run by the people, for the people, backed by the best.

I want to acknowledge the relentless hard work of our CEO, Jane Vadiveloo, the staff, the communities and the children.

We look forward to next year and sharing with you the ongoing stories of change.

**William Tilmouth**  
Chairperson

# CEO Report

2018 was a year to celebrate! We knew when we started that challenging the status quo meant disrupting every part of the current system - and that we would face a range of barriers, risks and challenges. But greater than these has been the determination, hope and action of so many people who make Children's Ground possible - the children, families, communities, philanthropists, Government, partners and the general public. There is an appetite for change and as we continue our journey, the reality that this change can be achieved becomes more and more tangible.

We ended the year with multi-year agreements from both Philanthropy and the Government that allow us to look forward and grow. We increased our capacity towards the full operations in Central Australia and hope to progress this so that we can fully implement the Children's Ground Approach beyond 2019. The leadership by key Arrernte elders and senior staff has been outstanding as they negotiated the many challenges that arise in community life, inducted new non-Aboriginal staff and maintained and grew consistency in delivery to children and families.

The determination of the Top End families to reconnect to their traditional lands has been one of the most humbling journeys this year. The old people said that the land and the ancestors were waiting. After decades of trying, the families of Marlkwaw returned to their traditional lands at their small outstation to continue their Children's Ground work. The children came and the learning, cultural strength and family life was stunning. This is empowerment in action and for the next generation it has created a new opportunity that the families want to grow in the coming years.

One of the exciting developments is the increasing appetite for microenterprise - this year enterprise activity has included educational resources, the arts, culture and music. In the face of national crisis facing young people who are suiciding and at

risk, I want to shout out to the Black Rock Band and their music enterprise - this group of young men is trying to 'Make a Change'. They toured across Australia after being invited to some of the largest festivals, to share their music and their stories. We want all children and young people to know that they are valued and loved and to have opportunities as they grow through life.

This year we have started new partnerships and strengthened old in both Central Australia and the Top End. We recognise the work of many organisations who share this path with us.

As we continue we will focus on delivering where people live, building upon the social, cultural and economic capital for future generations.

Nationally, recognition of our work is growing, with key presentations at a number of national conferences, sharing First Nations systems of learning and development and the dynamic fusion of this with Western learning.

Our work in early years and education is known, however our family health work was recognised through a major grant from the Department of Health and Minister Ken Wyatt. *Health in the Hands of the People* articulates our family health promotion framework and will be implemented and evaluated over coming years.

I must thank our stunning ambassadors and supporters, the voice they give to our work and recognition to the people. I must thank in particular both Pat Cash and Martin Luther King III, who spoke passionately about the ongoing injustices facing the Whitegate community who still live with no running water or secure power, on their traditional lands in Alice Springs. Their voices helped amplify this situation; the community is now in discussions with the Northern Territory Government.

We were honoured to announce Aunty Joy Murphy, Wurundjeri elder and Traditional owner for the lands in and around Melbourne, as an Ambassador



this year. We recognise her Nation's losses and thank her for celebrating our work and for our office in Melbourne on her beautiful lands.

This organisation is made up from extraordinary individuals who work together as an incredible team. I want to acknowledge our Governance - the Cultural Governance in each location and the Board, our sub-committees and the Research Advisory Group. Our philanthropic family give money, time, love and advice and together we are creating magic. To our staff and volunteers, you are endlessly giving and committed. I thank all of you.

We are at the beginning of a long journey and the early indications for change are very positive. But I can't emphasise enough that we need long term commitments. Over the next year we need to significantly increase our income to deliver the whole approach and build the evidence of this important work.

I close with the words from our newsletter at the end of last year. I continue to love Children's Ground - the kids, the families, the staff, our supporters, our Board and our amazing Chair William Tilmouth. If you haven't heard his speech from Garma, I encourage you to seek it out. It is an amazing privilege to be part of this journey. I particularly want to honour the team; I am in absolute awe of them - they really do create magic. The families and children lead and we follow.

With you, I celebrate the work of Children's Ground and look forward to 2019.

**Jane Vadiveloo**  
CEO

# Changing the System

Children's Ground believes that the design and implementation of current systems creates barriers to service access for communities experiencing social and economic inequity. After 11 years of national Closing the Gap policy and funding, the 2019 report tabled by the Prime Minister showed no significant gains or progress in key areas of education, employment, health and life expectancy. The Northern Territory continues to have the greatest gaps and poorest outcomes for First Nations Australians.

The following table is a snapshot of the reality facing First Nations children and families. It does not present the full picture in relation to health, wellbeing, overcrowding and economic poverty.

## National Closing the Gap: Eleven Year Report Card 2019

Not on target in key areas of education and employment

The target to halve the gap in child mortality rates by 2018 *is not on track.*

The target to have 95% of Indigenous four year olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025 *is on track*

The target to close the gap in school attendance by 2018 *is not on track*

The target to close the gap in life expectancy by 2031 *is not on track*

The target to halve the gap in reading and numeracy by 2018 *is not on track*

The target to halve the gap in employment by 2018 *is not on track*

The target to halve the gap in Year 12 attainment or equivalent by 2020 *is on track*

## Northern Territory

The NT has the highest Indigenous mortality rate as well as the largest gap with non-Indigenous Australians

The NT has consistently had the lowest proportion of Indigenous students at or above the national minimum standards

The Indigenous school attendance rate fell from 2014 to 2017 (70.2 % - 66.2 %)

84% of the adult prisoner population Aboriginal (2018)  
100% of young people in prison were Aboriginal children (2018)

## Nationally

**Suicide**  
There was a 32% increase in the First Nations suicide rate from 1998 and 2015

**Child protection**  
The rate of First Nations children in out-of-home care was almost 10 times the rate for non-Indigenous children (AIHW, 2016).

**Indigenous incarceration**  
1991: 14% of the prisoner population  
2017: 27% of the prisoner population  
2% of adult population

**Indigenous incarceration**  
PWC economic modelling shows the cost to the Australian economy of Indigenous incarceration is almost \$8 billion (\$7.9 billion) per year and rising

In the face of the above, First Nations people continue their work to protect their first languages and cultures and to fight for a better future for their children  
Of the more than 250 known First Nations languages, about 120 were still spoken in 2012. In 2005, 145 Indigenous languages were spoken

For too long, policies and program focus on First Nations families are a problem to be solved. Funding is typically inadequate, project spans are short and can often weaken the cultural capital and life of communities. International human rights standards are often contravened.

It is not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are the problem. It is the system. Aboriginal children do not need to be fixed. They need the same opportunities and rights as other Australians. We know that lives change if we create the right conditions. Children being born today must enjoy dignity, equity and opportunity into adulthood. Enough children need to experience this for whole of community and societal change to be embedded.

# The Children's Ground Approach

The Children's Ground Approach is designed to overcome the systemic exclusion that has contributed to the unacceptable differences in outcomes between First Nations and non-First Nations children, families and communities. There are many children and families who are not being reached by the current system - they face the greatest exclusion and hardship. They are the people we work with and the people who are leading Children's Ground.

Children's Ground is addressing 'what' and 'how' services are delivered. This includes ensuring systems are enablers rather than barriers to access an engagement. Our longitudinal evaluation is critical to evidencing the impact of this reform.

The CG Approach is about restoring agency - the ability to make decisions and have control over your life. The CG Approach creates the space for local leadership, the strategic platform for action and the resources for excellence. It is designed to eradicate intergenerational inequity and allow all children, families and communities to enjoy social, cultural, political and economic wellbeing.

Through decades of experience we know what works and what doesn't. We started by identifying key failings in the existing system and redress these through our five systemic reforms:

- Governance:** Blending robust corporate governance with strong community ownership
- Workforce:** Local and sustainable, with cultural, community and sector experts.
- Investment:** Collective, outcomes-based investment
- Evidence:** Ongoing monitoring, supported by a 25-year longitudinal evaluation
- Service Delivery:** Integrated services based on excellence and leading practice.

Five service areas are integrated to form our Learning, Wellbeing & Development Platform:

- Learning & Wellbeing
- Family Health & Wellbeing
- Economic Development & Wellbeing
- Community Development & Wellbeing
- Creative & Cultural Development & Wellbeing



In 25 years we will see...

Children are healthy, happy, confident in their cultures and have the knowledge and skills for life and learning.

Families are involved in their children's learning and development and are socially and economically strong.

The community values its place and heritage, enjoys economic prosperity and is safe and inclusive.

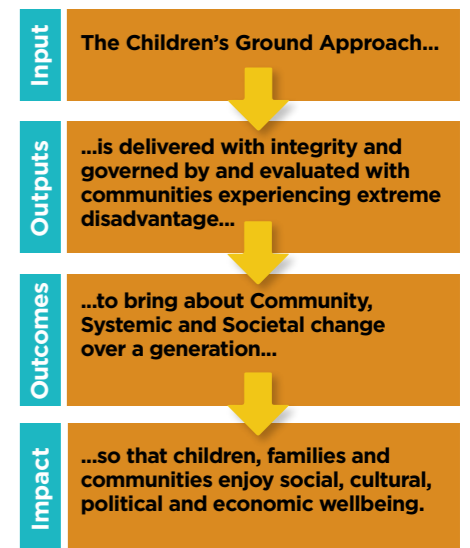
It's not just *what* we do to achieve change, it's *how* we do it. The design, delivery, governance and evaluation of our service delivery is underpinned by nine strategic principles, all of which are key to creating and sustaining change with First Nations communities.

1. **Expect the best and deliver the best**
2. **Start early with the little ones**
3. **Stay with the children and grow with them until they are big**
4. **Work with everyone (a critical mass)**
5. **Use and celebrate people's ability**
6. **Connect everything - education, health, culture, identity, economic wellbeing**
7. **Always think about old ways and new ways of doing things**
8. **We are led by the children, their families and community**
9. **Whole of community in community**

Community leadership and agency is the most important principle and practice of the CG Approach. It is only by securing the consent, support, active involvement and leadership of the community that enduring change will be achieved. Community leadership in governance, design, delivery and evaluation protects and enables the key driver for change: Respect for first culture.

This is the full CG Approach. It will take long-term investment at scale to to shift the status quo for First Nations communities. Where we work, Children's Ground starts with or builds resources for implementation of the full CG Approach - backing communities to deliver excellence for the next generation.

## Our theory of change



# Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe

## Children's Ground Central Australia

# Activity and progress in 2018

In 2018 we grew our delivery to mid-level operations at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe (Children's Ground, Central Australia). It was a year of excitement, change and, as always, challenge. Arrernte families continue to lead delivery to three sites in Central Australia: Irrkerlantye (Whitegate Town Camp), Mpwerkingke Anapipe (northern outstations) and Yarrenyty Arltere (Larapinta Valley Town Camp). Towards the end of the year, the plans to extend to Ewyenper Atwatye (Hidden Valley Town Camp) were progressed by the community. Delivering to Ewyenper Atwatye was part of our original strategic plan for Central Australia.

In Central Australia we started small, only increasing our delivery as our resources and capacity to deliver increased. With a focus on the little ones and their learning, wellbeing and development, we created an early learning environment where children learn alongside their family, both in the central hub and on their country, learning in their first language and culture. In 2018, with stable funding, we gradually built our capacity with the recruitment of permanent Western educators now working alongside the First Nations team. The Learning and Wellbeing team are now joined by a small but growing team of Family Health, Economic Development, Cultural Development and Community Development staff, all working together to support the needs and aspirations of Arrernte children and families in Central Australia.

Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe has continued to be a place of safety, strength and celebration for all families.



Yarrenyty Arltere families lead a Learning on Country early years session at Simpson's Gap

## Community leading the way

Children's Ground is about relinquishing control and giving agency to people who have long been disempowered. We are stepping away from the top-down system of government and instead making sure it is First Nations people, the families and communities we work with, who are in control of matters affecting their lives.

In Central Australia we are governed by a group of strong and passionate Arrernte women, many of whom were instrumental in the original design of Children's Ground. Governance of our operations sits within each family and community group, with their experience, cultural knowledge and aspirations informing the way forward. Representatives from each of the four sites sit on a central Arrernte Governance Committee which sets the strategic direction of Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe across the Central Australian region.

The Governance Committee continued to meet weekly throughout 2018, working closely with Operational Directors and staff across all areas of service delivery

as well as communications, investment and fundraising, government relations, research and evaluation and human resources. They have guided Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe through organisational growth and change. They have steered us through times of hardship, stress and grief, which has a constant presence in the lives of every family we work with. All the while they have ensured we do not compromise the cultural standards and integrity of our work, nor their vision for their next generation.

**"As First Nations people, we are the ones that have the solutions for our families and communities."**  
Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe Governance Committee

## Learning & Wellbeing

- Early years learning continues with On-country and Centre-based delivery, with delivery increasing from two days to three days a week per family/community group.
- 115 children aged 0-5 years engaged in early years learning
- Two communities deliver over 50% of early years learning on country.
- 172 family members aged 18+ years participated in early years learning surrounding the little ones while they learn.
- Five generations in one family came together during a Learning on Country early years session with Mpwerkingke Anapipe families
- 20 cultural resources produced, building foundations for early literacy in first language and English. Books include: *Ivenhe Nhakwe? (What's Over There?)* and *Alkere areme ampe mape akaltye-irreme: Seeing the sky through the children's eyes.*

• **A presentation about Children's Ground by Arrernte leaders and senior educators at the Early Childhood Australia conference received a standing ovation!**

**"The children have been learning a lot this year. They are really listening, watching and talking more Arrernte. Now I'm stepping up teaching the little ones too. They are strong when they are on Country. They are learning a lot about their culture and their story and it makes me so proud."**

Amanda Turner, Governance Committee and Arrernte Educator

**"As a Western Educator, I support, teach, listen and mentor, working in partnership with First Nations educators as we ensure the children are receiving a holistic education that equips them to walk confidently in all worlds."**

Dave Holmes, Senior Western Educator



Educators Dave and Anna Maria read a book to the children in both Arrernte and English

## Family Health & Wellbeing

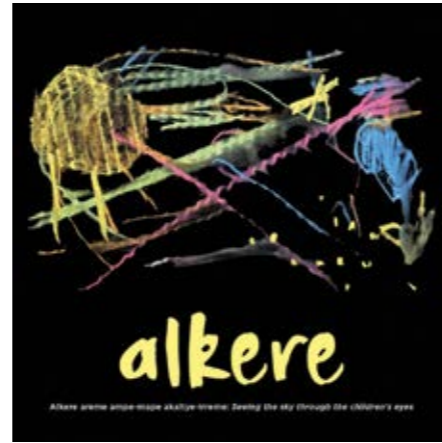
- Nutritious meals for children and families provided daily as part of early years and governance activities
- Partnership with Akeyulerre (Arrernte Healing Centre), embedding Arrernte health practices into early years learning environment
- Recruitment of dedicated child and maternal health promotion worker
- Visits by specialists including audiologists and dental health workers, integrating health promotion into early years learning with families
- Follow up support for children and families to attend specialist appointments
- Health in the Hands of the People: Children's Ground's Family Health & Wellbeing Framework, gets Federal investment for growth in Central Australia and the Top End.
- Establishment of men's group at Yarrenyty Arltere with focus on health and wellbeing.

**"When you respect the land, the land respects you. Country has eyes - just like us. Every hill, tree and rock is watching. Every hill, tree and rock is sacred. We don't own the land, the land owns us. We are teaching our children to respect the country. They are the next generation who will look after this place."**

Marita MacMillan, Senior Cultural Adviser & Arrernte Educator, Ewyenper Atwatye/Mpwerkingke Anapipe

## Economic Development & Wellbeing

- 41 First Nations people employed across early years, nutrition, monitoring and evaluation, governance, resource development, community development and administration
- 15 First Nations employees using Children's Ground's financial management and savings mechanisms/supports
- Skills development for First Nations staff across digital illustration, digital archiving, social media, book-making and screen-printing
- Growth of Economic Development & Wellbeing platform to include a Social Enterprise Coordinator, dedicated to exploring skills and building capacity with First Nations staff and families
- Production of a number of educational resources and T-shirt designs, *Alkere areme ampe mape akaltye-irreme: Seeing the sky through the children's eyes*. Available at our online store.



## Community Development & Wellbeing

- Ingkerrekele Arntarnte-areme Governance Committee continue to meet weekly – defining our direction in Central Australia, overseeing operations and monitoring progress
- Invitation to work in the Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre. This was a decision made by community members who want to see place-based early years and family support within the community, creating a place of safety and building on the social and cultural capital where people live
- Men's and Youth Services team in development, working with men in communities to lead projects with young people and families
- Children's Ground continues as a place of safety and inclusion for all families in the region
- 6 family nights and 3 end of term events held throughout the year, opportunities for different families to come together, to celebrate, reflect and be proud of their children and their achievements
- Almost 400 children and families attended joint Christmas party between Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe and Akeyulerre at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station.

**“Celebrations and Family Nights are an important part of what we do. They are a chance for everyone to come together and be proud of what we're achieving.”**  
Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe Governance Committee



### Irrkerlantye

Children's Ground has been supporting Traditional Owner of Alice Springs, Felicity Hayes, to negotiate with the Northern Territory Government to resolve the land tenure issues for her family. For 40 years, her family has been living in tin sheds on the edge of Alice Springs with no power or water security. They are determined to resolve this longstanding request for recognition and basic access to water infrastructure so that they can build homes for the next generation.

Despite securing Native Title and being recognised as Traditional Owners over the second biggest town in the Northern Territory, Felicity, and her Aunt before her, have been unsuccessful in their negotiations with Government to date. This year, for the first time, the Chief Minister provided correspondence that his Government is intending to address this request for basic human rights and dignity. We await the formal resolution of these negotiations.

## Cultural Development & Wellbeing

- First Nations cultural practice and expertise embedded across all areas of our work
- Learning on Country trips continued weekly
- Improved knowledge of kinship, land, bush medicines, bush foods and identity (where and who you belong to and are responsible for)
- Improved first language
- Visits to important sites, the stories and significance of these places is integral to the identity and wellbeing of Arrernte children and their families in Central Australia – and embedded in the early learning curriculum
- Support for old people and families to get out onto country, supporting families to meet cultural obligations while also providing a high quality learning experience for the little ones.



MK is teaching Logan how to use music sticks

**“All our kids need to learn their own language first. If we put their language first it will keep their culture strong. I don't want our children to grow up lost and to not know where they come from. They've got to know where they come from, and their skin name. The Elders need to tell them their story so they know.”**

Marlene Rubuntja, Senior Cultural Advisor

## Ampe Anwernekenhe Rlterrke Ingkerre Atnyenetyeke - Stronger Communities for Children

In June 2018, Children's Ground was invited by the Federal Government to become a facilitating partner for the Stronger Communities for Children (SCfC) program at Engawala and Atitjere. SCfC is a community development program that emphasises local control over child and family services in remote NT communities. Engawala and Atitjere both sit within the Arrernte Nation and there are strong links between families in those communities and those that lead and deliver Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe in Central Australia.

Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe Governance Committee has provided oversight and direction to the SCfC program this year. This includes working with decision-making groups in each community to map local priorities and facilitate the development of projects using government funding. These community projects focus on using the skills and talents that exist in communities, increasing opportunities for local employment and leadership

across services, as well as encouraging greater service coordination in remote communities.

In Engawala, the decision-making group has committed funding to continuing a playgroup for children aged 0-5 and their families, run by Central Desert Regional Council. In Atitjere, funding is allocated across activities that includes a youth afterhours program (also run by Central Desert Regional Council), cultural practices for young parents and babies, health promotion, on-country learning, and community events and celebrations.

Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe, as the facilitating partner, is responsible for empowering local decision-making groups and ensuring service providers deliver projects according to the aspirations and expectations of the community. We are working with local community members and organisations to better coordinate services to meet the needs of local people.

### We want to thank our key organisational partners who make this work possible:

- Akeyulerre
- Arrernte Language Centre
- Batchelor Institute
- Lhere Artepe Aboriginal Corporation
- Lhere Artepe Enterprises
- Tangentyere Council
- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
- Connected Beginnings
- Red Cross
- Anglicare
- Purple House
- Alice Springs Language Centre
- Alice Springs Dental Clinic
- St. Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre
- Larapinta Child and Family Centre
- Yipirinya School
- Central Desert Regional Council
- My Pathway
- Ninti One



# Key achievements and events



- School holiday program with support from **Black Rock Band** and **Mau Power** culminating in Sorry Day event
- In January alone, three people passed away from families we work with. Families are closely connected and the grief and loss impacted everyone. For many the repercussions affected them throughout the year. Children's Ground has walked gently alongside families through these periods, maintaining our centre as a place of safety and love for all and supporting the cultural practices that are so important in dealing with grief.

- Term One begins, **increase delivery of early years learning** from 2 days – 3 days a week for each site.



January      February      March      April      May      June      July      August      September      October      November      December



- Visit by **Martin Luther King III** to Mparntwe which culminated in a **Reconciliation Day Event** *Anwerne ingkerreke apurte irreyeke apmere nhenhele iwerre nthenhele alhetyeke angkerretyeke ingwenhe.* (We all get together to talk about the future of this land and which way we're going) - in partnership with Lhere Artepe and Akeyulerre.



- Children's Ground **Stronger Communities for Children Program** for Atitjere and Engawala begins and Lilly Alexander in her new role as coordinator.



- Economic and Wellbeing platform growth
- Felicity Hayes, Mel Kean, Veronica Turner and Jen Lorains facilitate symposium at the **Australian Institute of Family Studies conference**

- **Early Childhood Australia** presentation by Senior Arrernte Educators in Sydney. Veronica Turner, Felicity Hayes and Ash Steel receive a standing ovation



- **Department of Health and Ken Wyatt** announce 3-year partnership to support Health and Wellbeing platform across Central Australia and the Top End.
- **Alkere** children's book published and commercially available
- **Five generations attended Learning on Country** together at Mpweringke Anapipe

- **William Tilmouth** delivers powerful speech at **Garma Festival**
- **Felicity Hayes** and **Veronica Turner** travel to Garma to take part in Children's Ground presentation and proceedings

- First official Yarrenyty Arltere Children's Ground activity is held at Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre.



- **2018 Community Report** published with input and direction from all families
- Workshop/presentation by senior Arrernte educators at **National Child Protection Summit** in Adelaide
- Almost **400 children and families** come together at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station for the Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe and Akeyulerre joint Christmas party!

# Kaylahni's Story



## Kaylahni's learning and wellbeing journey so far

Kaylahni is two years old and lives in Yarrenyty Arltere (Larapinta Valley Town Camp). She has been coming to Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe (Children's Ground) since 2016, when she was just a baby.

Kaylahni comes to Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe for early years learning with her sister, Kileera (4), her mother, grandmother, and other family members. Her mum, Roxanne, is one of the lead early years educators for Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe at Yarrenyty-Arltere and her grandmother, Dulcie, is a senior Arrernte educator, advisory and community governance leader. Her older sister, Keleisha (7), used to come to Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe early learning and has now transitioned to a local primary school.

At Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe, Kaylahni is taught by both Western and Arrernte early years educators, who are delivering a curriculum that privileges her first language and cultural learning as well as Western learning in line with the national Early Years Learning Framework. For Kaylahni and her mum, it is important that she can engage in learning in her first language (Luritja), while also learning Western Arrernte and Anmatyerre at home, and English as her fourth language.

Living in town can make it difficult for many families to reconnect with their traditional lands and this can have an impact on children's cultural knowledge, identity and wellbeing. Roxanne "wanted to take [her] kids out on Country" and this is why she is now an educational leader at Children's Ground.

Kaylahni comes to early years learning three days a week: one day is on country learning at culturally important places in and west of Mparntwe, and until recently two days were based at Children's Ground's Central Hub in Alice Springs. In 2018, senior educators and community members of Yarrenyty Arltere decided they wanted Children's Ground early learning delivered at the Yarrenyty Arltere Learning Centre. Now, one day a week, sessions happen in their community where they live in a wonderful, intergenerational environment.

Kaylahni loves learning. She gets excited and she runs into early learning environments. She learns through play, arts, music, yoga and running and jumping with both cultural and Western specialists.

A highlight for Kaylahni in 2018 was a day visiting Peyperinja, a creek bed near Standley Chasm, West of Mparntwe. On this day, Roxanne led the children on a walk through the Country, stopping frequently to look for tyape/maku (witchetty grubs) and encouraging them to help dig for the bush food. While the children were doing and exploring, support staff made a fire and prepared damper as part of lunch. Dulcie, Kaylahni's grandmother, and Roxanne shared stories with the children of their own childhoods and histories growing up on Country. Dulcie led a traditional healing and wellbeing practice. She collected emu bush to build a 'smoking fire' for the youngest children. The 'smoking' of children, the right way, by the right people, is an important part of their development. Dulcie prepared the smoking so she could "grow them up healthy" and "to make their spirits strong." Watching the three generations working together within the Arrernte system of learning and wellbeing is powerful.

Roxanne is dedicated to her children's education and their health. She combines traditional healing with other health promotion and nutrition that is integrated into early learning sessions. Kaylahni is engaging in and learning about health routines like teeth cleaning, hand washing, checking for sores and cleaning her ears. Children's Ground's Health Promotion practitioner has worked closely with Kaylahni and her family, supporting them to get to healthy kids check-ups and immunisations at the local clinic. They also have conversations about nutrition for children and babies.

Like her older sister, Kaylahni is a bright and creative child who loves to learn. This year she has grown in her spirit, body and mind. She loves books and is developing her pre-literacy and numeracy while at the same time creating the cultural foundations for language and identity.



*"When we're out on country with Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe, Kileera and Kaylahni are learning from me... It's really good to come to a place where I can work and still be with my kids."*

Roxanne Sharpe, 2018

Roxanne and her family have experienced many barriers to being able to spend time on country and at important cultural sites. It is important to Roxanne and Dulcie that Kaylahni and her sister can go on to succeed at school with the knowledge of their language, culture and country.

# Wurdurd Garriygarrmerren

## Children's Ground West Arnhem Land

## Activity and progress in 2018

When Children's Ground left Kakadu in 2017, Cecily Djandjomerr and Roxanne Naborlborlh led a family discussion to continue their Children's Ground journey. To do this, they wanted to return to their traditional lands in Marlkawo, West Arnhem Land. Mark Djandjomerr Snr, the traditional owner and older brother to Cecily, supported the move. The old people had said that the country was waiting for them to return. Families wanted to make sure their work in educating their children within their culture and family was kept alive. Returning to Marlkawo has been a dream of the family for many decades.

Children's Ground is owned by the people. With this request, the Board faced a hard decision. We wanted to keep our commitment to these incredible community leaders who achieved so much in Kakadu. We also wanted to maintain a robust strategic

and financial position. With support from philanthropy, it was decided that we undertake the Community Engagement and Planning phase and through this, support the family to return and to try to live back on their homelands to continue their Children's Ground journey.

The honouring of a commitment to the community was only one part of the decision. The second was the strategic importance. There are over 500 homelands/outstations of less than 200 people across the Northern Territory. Many do not have access to basic services such as health and education. Marlkawo is situated in the middle of West Arnhem Land and is one of approximately 30-40 outstations in the region. Children's Ground is trialling a cluster model, smaller than the larger Children's Ground model for places like

Alice Springs. The intention is delivering to a group of outstations and achieving an economy of scale that is both cost-effective and provides basic service access for children and families. 2018 was the first step in families returning to their traditional lands to determine the viability of delivery over the long term and to begin monitoring and evaluating the smaller model.

2018 involved extensive planning and scoping for sustained operations in Marlkawo and surrounds. Families have returned and they want to stay. Families want Children's Ground to stay. Community engagement in the region showed there is interest from other homelands, making the cluster model potentially viable. In addition, the development of relationships with key organisations in the region has raised potential partnership delivery into the future.

### Community leading the way

Community Governance and voice has been the foundation of and a key enabler for Children's Ground operations in the Top End.

Throughout the feasibility scoping and Community Engagement and Planning phase for Children's Ground operations in Marlkawo, a core group of leaders continued to identify homelands where cultural and family connections exist and have led engagement with some close by. These discussions feed into the ongoing development of Children's Ground's Hub & Spoke outstation delivery model locally and at an organisational level.

Throughout 2018, Community Governance has included all families staying at Marlkawo. They guide the implementation of the Children's Ground Approach and local strategy for Marlkawo delivery.



Family gather for a Governance meeting at Marlkawo

Governance meetings in the first half of 2018 focused on learning content and delivery and health support, which includes social and emotional wellbeing support. With the return to their homeland, community development occurred and included community design, power, food and

water security, communications, environmental health and shelter. In the latter part of 2018, in addition to operational governance, planning focused on continued engagement with surrounding outstations and wet season delivery.

### Learning & Wellbeing:

Engagement in learning at Marlkawo is unlike anything we have seen at Children's Ground to date; it is out bush, without the distractions and related trauma and stress of town life. Learning occurs across multiple sessions throughout each day. This model of delivery has engaged children in learning for extended periods - on some days, children have engaged in over nine hours of learning, excluding breaks in between sessions.



A learning session at Marlkawo

- 28 children aged 0-15 years have engaged in early learning and primary school learning at Marlkawo
- All learning occurs on Country because people are living on their traditional lands
- Construction of a learning shelter by young men
- 6 day a week dry season intensive learning/schooling (at times 7 days per week)
- Dedicated Western learning occurs in the morning - a decision by families who want to ensure robust numeracy and literacy.
- Cultural learning occurs in the afternoon, evening and weekends at the outstation, on bush trips and at culturally important sites
- All children regularly engaging have an individual Learning & Wellbeing plan, developed by Western and Bininj educators with each child's family
- Continued the MoU with the Jabiru Area School (JAS) for primary school aged children living in Marlkawo.

**“Every morning we go for a walk through the bush and collect items that represent the two describing words that are our focus for the learning session. The items we collect are then used in our numeracy and literacy for the session. One day the children were interested in collecting buffalo bones as their ‘natural’ objects. After counting and measuring the bones, the younger children enjoyed oral storytelling while the older children wrote stories about the bones they had collected. The children’s interest in the bones was then embedded in the afternoon cultural learning session. Bininj educators supported the children to collect and make the paint for the bones. One of the children initiated using the bones as masks that then led to an afternoon of dramatisation and dancing.”**

### Family Health & Wellbeing

Individual, family and community health and wellbeing planning has been a hallmark of this year's work.

- 34 children and young people aged 0-17 years and 44 adults engaged in health promotion
- Health promotion is integrated into daily learning, including nutrition, skin and oral health, eye and ear wellbeing, and physical activity
- 62 people engaged with family health promotion and wellbeing planning and support
- 64 children, young people and adults engaged in social and emotional wellbeing therapeutic support
- Health promotion is integrated into learning daily, including nutrition, skin and dental wellbeing, physical health.

As this is a small community, community and environmental health and wellbeing has involved all residents, with actions including community clean ups, planning and construction of Balabbalas (permanent shelters/living areas) to address overcrowding, ablution and rubbish management and maintaining a clean water supply.

Marlkawo was the site of a serious traumatic incident 20 years ago that affected many families. This event along with other complex grief and trauma impacts children and families. The counsellor has been critical in working with families and individuals in relation to their social and emotional wellbeing.



Stewart keeps his body active and healthy by swimming in the river at Marlkawo

## Economic Development & Wellbeing

- 35 Bininj people employed by Children's Ground in the Top End, working across early years delivery, community development and governance.
- The enterprise focus for the year was the continued support of the Black Rock Band while scoping other community enterprise opportunities within outstations.



Black Rock Band on the Sand Tracks tour

### Black Rock Band (music enterprise)

#### 2018 was a big year for the Black Rock Band - these young men:

- Released their second film clip 'Struggle' and their debut album of the same name, with performances in every state including Sydney and Melbourne to launch the album
- Won the Northern Territory Song of the Year in the rock category for Bininj Kunborrk
- Returned to Mparntwe for their second time at Bush Bands Bash as music mentors, and were selected to support Saltwater Band on the Sand Tracks Tour, a two-week tour through six communities in the remote central desert of NT, SA and WA
- Had media appearances on Triple J Hack, NITV News and The Point, ABC news and community radio.
- Played country-wide performances at Mona Foma (TAS), Woodford Folk Festival (QLD), Barunga Festival (NT), Nannup Festival (WA), Mahbilil Festival (Jabiru, NT), a week-long artist-in-residency program at St Ignatius' College Riverview (NSW) and local performances around the Top End.
- Raised \$51K through performances, workshops and royalties - this provided income to six young men and contributed to transport and band costs.



Stewart and his father Selone walk on country together at Markkawa

## Community Development & Wellbeing

Community development and empowerment underpins all operations at Markkawa and the return of families to their traditional lands at Markkawa, a place where they had not lived or frequently visited for over 20 years. Key achievements include:

- Strong local leadership
- Building community life and sustainability
- Creating a place of safety and inclusion for all families
- Supporting families who wanted to remove themselves from Jabiru, the uncertainty of the mine closure and the negative influences that come with being in a town centre.
- Power, water and food security including facilitated discussions with other services to support infrastructure, service delivery, land management, etc.



One of the balabbalas constructed by the community for learning sessions

## Cultural Development & Wellbeing

- First Nations cultural practice and expertise embedded across all areas of our work
- Every day, children are learning about their country, their identity, their culture and traditions - in first language, on their country
- Cultural learning is embedded in formal learning and is constantly led by families outside of formal learning hours
- Tracks to significant cultural sites have been regenerated so that families can access them as part of the transfer of cultural knowledge, teaching children what they need to know at age and culturally appropriate times
- Supporting the continued practice of Bininj Kunborrk (traditional song and dance).

### We want to thank our key organisational partners who make this work possible:

- JAS - Jabiru Area School
- West Arnhem Regional Council
- Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC)
- Red Lily Health Board
- Mala'la Health Service
- Gagadju Association
- Northern Land Council
- Warnbi Aboriginal Corporation
- Jabiru Clinic
- Gunbalanya Clinic
- Maningrida Clinic
- Warddeken Land Management
- Demed
- Adjumarllar Aboriginal Corporation
- Northern Territory Government Departments of Education, Health, Territory Families, Housing and Community Development.
- Maningrida Progress Association
- N.T. Community police, Community Liaison Officer

# Key achievements and events

- Black Rock Band perform at Mona Foma Tasmania
- Preparation with Bininj traditional owners to return to traditional lands and country to begin/continue Children's Ground.
- Planning and logistics for relocation: transport, infrastructure including toilets and balabbalas (shelters), water and food security, telecommunications
- An extended Wet Season delays relocation



- Preparation and support for family funeral

- Black Rock Band perform at Bush Bash Bands ahead of a three week Sand Tracks Tour of remote communities in SA and WA



- Using the land around us - objects are used for English numeracy and literacy learning



- Three Balabbalas constructed in community for housing for families, education space and accommodation for Children's Ground staff.

January February March April May June July August September October November December



- Bininj families returned to their traditional lands of Marlkawo with the support of Children's Ground, ready to lead and deliver Children's Ground for their children and community.

*"We have wanted to go home for a long time. This country is my life. Everybody is happy we came home. We will stay now for a long time for our wurdurd (children)"*

- Learning sessions delivered in first language and English, on country with children learning alongside their families.



- St Ignatius College Riverview students visit Marlkawo:

*"A life altering experience for the young men"*  
Suzanne Silk, teacher

- Children are introduced to their traditional lands, stories and ancestors
- Kids are engaged in intensive learning 6-7 days a week through the dry season



- Environmental Health Audit conducted by community

- Early engagement with a new surrounding community as part of building outstation cluster approach
- Wet season delivery and support plans in place
- Black Rock Band perform at Woodford Folk Festival

# Mahalia's Story



## Mahalia's learning journey continues at Marlkawo

When Mahalia started learning at Children's Ground in Kakadu she was five years old. She is now 10.

In 2018 Mahalia and her family moved back to their traditional homelands at Marlkawo in West Arnhem Land to continue their journey with Children's Ground.

Mahalia's mothers, Christianna and Annie are educators in the learning sessions and now have four years of teaching under their belt. With other family and Bininj educators, Christianna and Annie work alongside Western-trained teachers to target age-appropriate learning experiences for both Western and cultural learning.

During her learning journey with Children's Ground in Kakadu from 2014-2017 (term one), Mahalia became an engaged learner with strong problem solving skills, curiosity, and creativity. She learned to read and she developed a sound understanding of number and place value with a particular interest in learning about money and financial mathematics.

Mahalia's Children's Ground teachers supported her to link this interest into everyday experiences including saving money, going to the shops and working out the cost and change of items. During term one of 2017 Children's Ground worked with the Jabiru Area School to support primary age students to make the transition. Mahalia was independent and confident to engage in Jabiru Area School. She was able to get on the bus and attend school on her own. In 2018, Mahalia moved to Marlkawo to continue her learning journey with Children's Ground in the dry season.

Mahalia was again engaging in learning regularly at Children's Ground, in her first language (Kunwinjku) and English. She has been learning alongside her family in a culturally rich environment and on her mother's country. Formal learning and wellbeing sessions were delivered six days a week and Mahalia engaged enthusiastically.

Mahalia made significant progress in all areas of her learning. She was encouraged to challenge her own

knowledge and skills. An example of her love for learning was evident during a numeracy experience in which the group of children were using dice to complete addition and subtraction problems. Mahalia self-assessed her learning and recognised the problems were too simple for her, so she changed her dice to hundreds. Mahalia was able to use a range of strategies to complete addition with hundreds and then progress to thousands. By the end of 2018 Mahalia demonstrated an impressive increase in her ability in numeracy and literacy. Importantly during this time, her emotional wellbeing also improved with her ability to self-regulate, express her emotions, and to have strong trusting bonds with close family and adults.

A typical day of learning for Mahalia (and all other children) starts before 8am with a run along the air strip or a walk through the country before heading to the shelter (classroom). Morning sessions focus on English literacy and numeracy until lunch time at the direction of families. The afternoon sessions focus on first

language, culture, creative arts and physical and emotional wellbeing. Mahalia's favourite learning days are those when she can begin her morning reading with the other children before beginning her story writing. Mahalia particularly loves to write recounts of her weekends exploring on country with her family. She enjoys trying different time connectives throughout her writing.

She is happy and healthy and shows peer and cultural leadership, helping younger children with all areas of their learning such as reading, writing, counting, measuring, problem solving and investigating.

During her time at Marlkawo in 2018, Mahalia progressed to be able to publish her stories on the computer. Linking Mahalia's strong cultural knowledge and her Western learning allows her to enjoy and meaningfully engage in all learning experiences. One afternoon Mahalia went learning on country with her mum Shirley, who told important dreaming stories to Mahalia and the other children. Mahalia was so excited to retell the stories in detail to her Western teacher the next morning. Shirley supported Mahalia in Kunwinjku and in English to write out her story. This led to an arts session of creating artworks of the characters. Mahalia was so proud of her knowledge of the story and her ability to share it with family and teachers.

After a lunch break learning continues and often includes a bush trip to a special place on country where learning is led by Bininj educators and families. Often learning sessions also occur during late afternoons and night time when the weather is cooler and families are all together. Children often sit in a group and listen to the elders tell stories in first language.

Children regularly learn health promotion through nutritional cooking experiences. Group games and experiences are implemented and often involve all generations of family. Families from neighbouring communities also come and enjoy the learning.

When Mahalia's family lived in Kakadu there were often daily stressors and distractions that impacted Mahalia's engagement in learning and her family's engagement in work. At Marlkawo, the families have created a safe place for their children without those distractions and daily life stressors.

Mahalia has shown so much pride in what she has learned over the past year. In addition to progressing in Western learning, she is learning about Marlkawo and nearby country from the elders every day.

Mahalia's mum Christianna proudly shares:

**"Mahalia is strong at speaking Kunwinjku, maths and adding, reading, writing sentences, she can write stories about what she has been doing, and she is good at dancing and singing."**

Mahalia's goals and her families' goals for her in 2019 are learn to write more Kunwinjku words, develop her knowledge of Yekke season bush foods, talk strong Kunwinjku (like the adults in her life), learn shapes in

mathematics, move up levels in her readers, and create and write more of her own songs.

The return of Bininj families to live on their traditional homelands at Marlkawo was the next chapter in their journey with Children's Ground. It supported their rights and determination to lead the change in creating a different future for their children.

Both children and families come alive on their traditional lands and the quality of learning and wellbeing is exceptional.



“The land, the people, the story - that’s our governance.”

MK Turner OAM, Director, Central Australia



Staff and families on country at Marlkawo

# Governance

Children’s Ground has a unique, two-tiered governance structure, which balances cultural and corporate governance. This ensures we have the organisational quality and standards, cultural integrity and community leadership to achieve real change with First Nations people leading the way.

Children’s Ground is stepping away from the top-down system of governance and instead makes sure it is First Nations people, the families and communities we work with, who are in control of matters affecting their lives. The Board backs this vision and direction with strategic, financial, legal and risk management.



## Our Community and Cultural Governance

### Central Australia

In Central Australia, our operations are directed and governed by our Arrernte Governance Committee. This group is comprised of Traditional Owners and leading representatives for each community/family group.

#### Mpweringke Anapipe:

- MK Turner
- Leonie Palmer
- Alison Ferber
- Veronica Turner
- Lorryne Gorey
- Cathy Turner
- Marita McMillan
- Amanda Turner

#### Irkerlantye:

- Felicity Hayes
- Anna Maria Palmer
- Therese Ryder

#### Yarrenyty-Arltere:

- Blanche Ebatarinja
- Dulcie Sharpe
- Marlene Rubuntja

### West Arnhem Land

In West Arnhem, our operations are directed and governed by traditional owners and caretakers for the outstations we work with.

Key Governance Members in 2018 include:

- Cecily Djandjomerr
- Shirley Djandjomerr
- Raymond Guymala
- Kaylene Djandjomerr
- Roxanne Naborlhborlh
- Annie Cameron
- Mark Djandjomerr
- May Nango



Some of the Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe and Akeyulerre Governance Committee in Central Australia

## Our Board

Our Board of Directors is a skilled group of people, highly qualified in their respective fields and with the commitment and passion required to lead Children's Ground alongside our First Nations Governance structures. They bring with them a wealth of experience across the health, education and social sectors, Government, financial management, human rights, investment and fundraising, enterprise and business development.

In 2017 we farewelled Robert Griew and welcomed Amunda Gorey, an Arrernte woman and next generation leader.



**William Tilmouth**  
Founding Chair of Children's Ground, Board Chair and Co-Chair of Research Advisory Group.



**Adrian Appo, OAM**  
BTeach – Board Member and Member of the Investment Subcommittee



**Amunda Gorey**  
Board member and member of the People and Culture Subcommittee



**Kon Karapanagiotidis, OAM**  
LLB, BSW, BBSC, MED, MDevStuds – Board Member, Member of the Investment sub-Committee, and member of the People and Culture Subcommittee



**Tony Lawler**  
BPharm, JP Member of Pharmacy Guild of Australia Nonvoting Board member



**Amy Poynton**  
BA, MBA Board Member, Chair of the People and Culture Subcommittee



**Clive Ringler**  
BEc, MCom, ASX Accredited Adviser, Level 1 & 2 – Board Deputy Chair, Chair of the Finance, Audit & Risk sub-Committee and Member of the Investment Subcommittee



**Josie Rizza**  
CA, BEc, GradDipAppFinInv, GAICD – Board Member, Member of the Finance, Audit & Risk sub-Committee and Member of the Investment Subcommittee



**Jane Vadivello**  
BSc, MPsych(Forensic) - CEO, Member of the Finance, Audit & Risk sub-Committee, Member of the Investment Subcommittee and Co-Chair of the Research Advisory Group



**Rosemary Addis**  
LLB (Hons 1st Class), New York Bar, Company Directors' Diploma, AICD - Strategic Adviser. Investment Subcommittee Member, Former Board Member

## Research Advisory Group

Our Research Advisory Group is made up of respected researchers and academics with extensive experience. They provide valuable guidance to our monitoring and evaluation activities carried out by our Director of Research and Evaluation together with our community researchers in each site. Our 25-year longitudinal evaluation enables us to build the evidence base to influence policy aimed at ending intergenerational disadvantage in the long term.

Our Research Advisors are:

**Professor Komla Tsey** Research Professor, Centre for Research and Innovation in Sustainability Education, The Cairns Institute, James Cook University

**Associate Professor David Thomas** Head, Wellbeing and Preventable. Chronic Disease, Menzies School of Health Research

**Associate Professor Sally Brinkman** Co-Director, Fraser Mustard Centre. Senior Research Fellow, Telethon Kids Institute

**Mr Matthew James** Senior Executive, Housing and Specialised Services Group and Deputy Director, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

**Dr Tim Moore** Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne

**Professor Sven Silburn** (ret. previously) Director, Centre for Child Development and Education, Menzies School of Health Research

**Professor Fiona Arney** Director, Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia

## Our Inspiring Ambassadors

It is our privilege to have the inspiration and backing of our ambassadors: Jan Owen AM, Margaret Kemarre Turner OAM, Pat Cash and Rachel Naninaaq Edwardson. We continue to recognise the late honourable Malcolm Fraser as a past Ambassador and Elder of Children's Ground.



**MK Turner, OAM**  
MK Turner is an Eastern Arrernte elder, cultural adviser, translator, teacher, social justice champion, artist and author. Born in the Harts Range region, north east of Alice Springs, she is also Anangkere (traditional healer) and 'professor' – a holder of customary law, practice and knowledge. In 1997 she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to the Aboriginal community of Central Australia. In 2017, MK was a finalist in the NT Australian of the Year Awards.



**Dr Jan Owen AM**  
Jan Owen AM is the CEO of the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA). In 2014 Jan received a Doctor of Letters from the University of Sydney in recognition of her contribution to young people and policy. In 2012 she was named the inaugural Australian Financial Review & Westpac Group 'Woman of Influence 2012'. In 2000 she was awarded membership of the Order of Australia for services to children and young people.



**Pat Cash**  
Pat Cash is an Australian tennis champion, having won the men's singles at Wimbledon and achieved a world ranking of No.4. Pat is the co-founder of social impact and environmental organisations Planet Ark and Do Something. He lives in the UK and has been travelling the world coaching, competing and commentating for the past 30 years. Pat has emerged as a passionate advocate for social justice for First Nations peoples, particularly Arrernte Elders he has spent time with in Alice Springs.



**Rachel Naninaaq Edwardson**  
Rachel Naninaaq Edwardson is an Iñupiaq filmmaker and educator whose work has been critically acclaimed in the US, Canada, Australia, and Europe. Her History of the Iñupiaq documentary series is the first Native produced and directed documentary series in Alaska. Since 2007 Rachel has been an adviser and program designer of educational initiatives and reforms in Australia and Alaska.



**Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin AO**  
Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin is a Senior Wurundjeri Elder of the Kulin Nation. Born in Healesville, Aunty Joy's family never left Wurundjeri land. She is the senior custodian of these lands and is the great-great niece to William Barak, Ngurungaeta of the Wurundjeri-Willam clan. Aunty Joy has had numerous government appointments including as a member of the Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria and of the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal. In 2006 she was made an officer of the Order of Australia for her service to the community through significant contributions in the fields of social justice, land rights, equal opportunity, the arts and reconciliation.

**Children's Ground is honoured to welcome Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin as a patron in 2018!**

## Our Patron



# Financial Report

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

### Directors' Report

For the Year Ended 31 December 2018

The Directors present their Report on Children's Ground Limited for the financial year ended 31 December 2018.

#### 1. General information

##### Directors

The names of the Directors in office at any time during, or since the end of the year are:

Names	Position	Appointed/Resigned
William Roy Tilmouth	Chair	
Kon Karapanagiotidis	Non-Executive Director	
Clive William Ringler	Non-Executive Director	
Adrian John Appo	Non-Executive Director	
Josie Rizza	Non-Executive Director	
Robert Griew	Non-Executive Director	Resigned 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2018
Amy Poynton	Non-Executive Director	
Amunda Gorey	Non-Executive Director	Appointed 17 <sup>th</sup> August 2018
Jane Shanthini Vadiveloo	Chief Executive Officer	

All other Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this Report unless otherwise stated.

##### Principal activities

The principal activities of Children's Ground Limited during the financial period were to provide opportunities to help break the poverty cycle for disadvantaged indigenous families and supply significant aid to needy people in the community. Such activities included early years learning and care, family health, community development, cultural development and economic development services and activities.

No significant changes in the nature of the Company's activities occurred during the financial year.

## Directors' Report

For the Year Ended 31 December 2018

#### Meetings of Directors

During the financial year, 7 meetings of Directors were held. Attendances by each director during the year were as follows:

	Directors' Meetings	
	Number eligible to attend	Number attended
William Roy Tilmouth	7	6
Kon Karapanagiotidis	7	3
Clive William Ringler	7	6
Adrian John Appo	7	5
Josie Rizza	7	7
Robert Griew	0	0*
Jane Shanthini Vadiveloo	7	7
Amy Poynton	7	6
Amunda Gorey	3	3*

\*Amunda Gorey commenced 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018

\* Robert Griew resigned 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2018.

#### Auditor's independence declaration

The auditor's independence declaration for the year ended 31 December 2018 has been received and can be found on page 5 of the financial report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:

Director: 

Director: 

Dated: 7<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2019

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

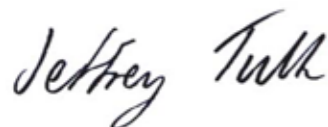
### Auditor's Independence Declaration

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 31 December 2018, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in Division 60.40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



Seward Dawson



Jeffrey Tulk  
Partner

Blackburn

Dated: 7 March 2019

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

### Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 31 December 2018

	Note	2018 \$	2017 \$
Revenue	2	3,751,995	1,893,598
Employee benefits expense		(2,683,466)	(2,828,426)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(118,288)	(197,328)
Travel and accommodation		(103,154)	(151,111)
Motor Vehicle Expenses		(122,045)	(113,790)
Client Support Consumables		(63,290)	(88,564)
Rent		(91,877)	(81,329)
Professional fees		(40,401)	(72,782)
Utilities and cleaning		(24,918)	(56,469)
Computer expenses		(22,446)	(34,206)
Children's Service Support		(144,418)	(32,772)
Printing and stationery		(26,321)	(29,725)
Repairs and maintenance		(5,481)	(29,029)
Asset Purchases < \$1,000		(27,756)	(18,973)
Insurance		(10,372)	(8,648)
Training and development		(7,791)	(12,678)
Advertising and Promotion		(3,605)	(9,364)
Program asset purchases		-	(2,402)
Other expenses		(131,726)	(104,277)
KWA site closure expense	1(n)	-	(406,993)
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>		<b>124,640</b>	<b>(2,385,268)</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>124,640</b>	<b>(2,385,268)</b>

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

### Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2018

	Note	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	1,614,067	1,607,616
Trade and other receivables	5	132,420	71,789
Other financial assets	6	433,987	30,613
Other assets	7	37,130	31,305
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>2,217,604</b>	<b>1,741,323</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Plant and equipment	8	270,183	208,868
Intangible assets	9	6,658	33,292
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>276,841</b>	<b>242,160</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>2,494,445</b>	<b>1,983,483</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	10	308,799	214,252
Other liabilities	11	274,283	50,000
Employee benefits	12	235,978	159,021
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>819,060</b>	<b>423,273</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Employee benefits	12	41,311	50,776
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>41,311</b>	<b>50,776</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>860,371</b>	<b>474,049</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>1,634,074</b>	<b>1,509,434</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained surplus		1,575,250	1,450,610
Reserves	21	58,824	58,824
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>1,634,074</b>	<b>1,509,434</b>

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

### Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 31 December 2018

#### 2018

Balance at 1 January 2018	
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	
<b>Balance at 31 December 2018</b>	

#### 2017

Balance at 1 January 2017	
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	
Transfers to reserve	
<b>Balance at 31 December 2017</b>	

Retained Surplus \$	General Reserve \$	Total \$
1,450,610	58,824	1,509,434
124,640	-	124,640
<b>1,575,250</b>	<b>58,824</b>	<b>1,634,074</b>

Retained Surplus \$	General Reserve \$	Total \$
3,831,458	63,244	3,894,702
(2,385,268)	-	(2,385,268)
4,420	(4,420)	-
1,450,610	58,824	1,509,434

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

### Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 31 December 2018

Note	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Donations, grants and other income received	4,108,001	1,937,506
Interest received	25,797	62,373
Payments to suppliers and employees	(3,571,004)	(4,059,671)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	15 <u>562,794</u>	<u>(2,059,792)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Purchase of plant and equipment	(152,969)	(49,074)
Redemption (Placement) of term deposits	(403,374)	2,894,673
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	<u>(556,343)</u>	<u>2,845,599</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	6,451	785,807
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	<u>1,607,616</u>	<u>821,809</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	4 <u><u>1,614,067</u></u>	<u>1,607,616</u>

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

### Directors' Declaration

In the opinion of the Directors, the financial report as set out on pages 4 - 25:

- (i) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable, and;
- (ii) the financial statements and notes are in accordance with Accounting Standards and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.

Director 

Director 

Dated 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

### Independent Audit Report to the Members of Children's Ground Limited

#### Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Children's Ground Limited (the Company), which comprises the Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2018, the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Changes in Equity and the Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended, and notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant Accounting Policies, and the Directors' Declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Company has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 31 December 2018 and of its financial performance for the year ended; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

#### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those Standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Corporations Act 2001* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

### Independent Audit Report to the Members of Children's Ground Limited

#### Responsibilities of Directors for the Financial Report

The Directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the ACNC Act and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Directors are responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Directors either intend to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditor's Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our Auditor's Report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our Auditor's Report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the Directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Saward Dawson

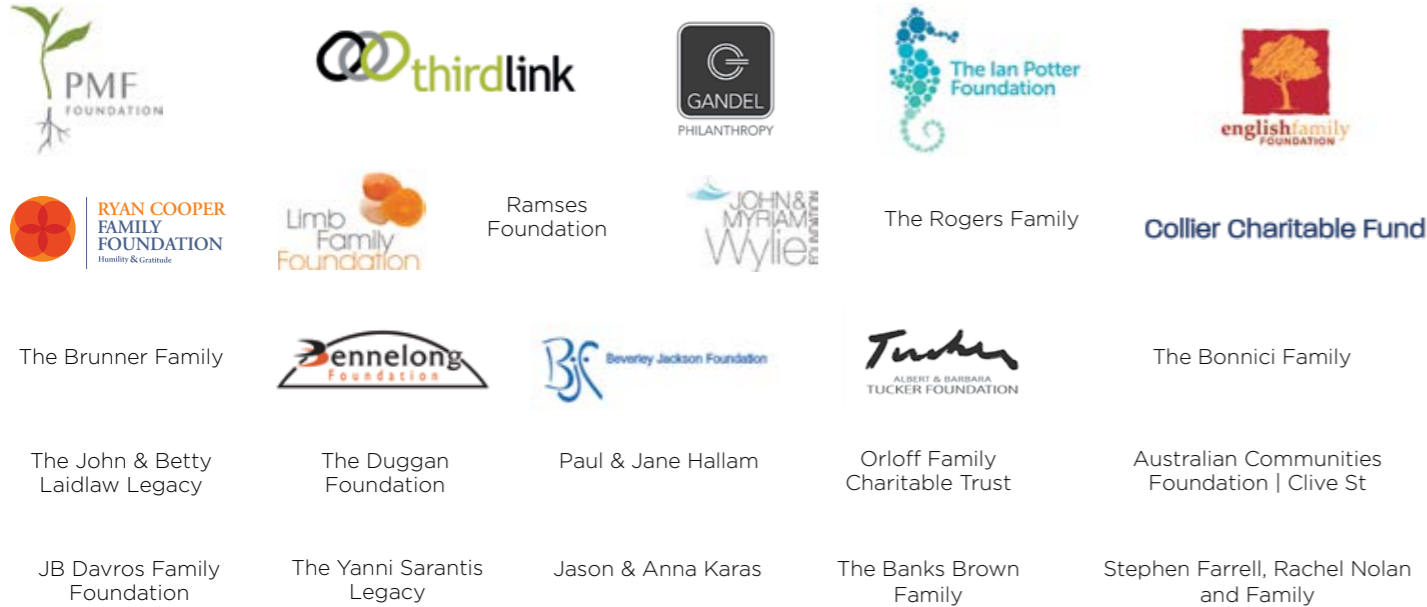
Jeffrey Tulk  
Partner

Blackburn  
Dated: 7 March 2019

# Our Supporters

We thank all the amazing individuals and families, in Australia and overseas, for their generosity and support, enabling First Nations families to break the cycle of disadvantage and create hope and opportunity for the next generation.

## Philanthropy



## Government



## Corporate and NGO Supporters



## School Supporters



# Our Staff and Volunteers

## Staff

Alison Ebatarinja  
Annette Robinson  
Basil Hayes  
Beth Palmer  
Blanche Ebatarinja  
Dulcie Raggett  
Dulcie Sharpe  
Kaylene Splinter  
Marlene Rubuntja  
Michael Gorey  
Noreen Hayes  
Noreen Palmer  
Phillip Fly  
Roxanne Sharpe  
Shirley Turner  
Siobhan Turner  
Theresa Ryder  
Thomas Gorey  
William Lowah  
Janella Ebatarinja  
Valerie Sharpe  
Andrena Webb  
Devika Webb  
Jacinta Bush  
Kaylah Webb  
Raymond Webb  
Richelle Webb  
Tanya Kunoth  
Brenda Tilmouth  
Cecilia Schaber  
Doris Bundy  
Joy Turner  
Mary Tilmouth  
Maxine Mills  
Patsy Tilmouth  
Alison Ferber  
Amanda Turner  
Angelina Hayes  
Anna Satharasinghe  
Annamaria Palmer  
Annette Robinson

Ashleigh Steel  
Ava Watkins  
Bethan Rees  
Caitlin Anderson  
Cathy Turner  
Cristina Nobleza  
David Holmes  
Diane DeVere  
Dianne Williams  
Dominique Mercuri  
Emily Ades  
Emma Franklin  
Estefania Fernandez Diaz  
Felicity Hayes  
Gregory Kopp  
Helen Fitzgerald  
Janine Turner  
Kristen Wormald  
Leonie Palmer  
Leonie Sheedy  
Lorrayne Gorey  
Mairead Murphy  
Margaret Turner  
Marita McMillan  
Melissa Kean  
Rachel Powell  
Roxanne Sharpe  
Samantha Eagle  
Sioban Turner  
Tiffany Lohs  
Veronica Turner  
Yvette Kirk  
Bernadette Wheeler  
Giulia Frattaroli  
Grace Anthony  
Jane Vadiveloo  
Jasper Brown  
Abel Naborlhborlh  
Alio Djandjomerr  
Annie Cameron  
Belinda Djandjomerr  
Caitlin Anthony

## Volunteers

Cecily Djandjomerr  
Christianna Djandjomerr  
Damien Kamholtz  
Darius Cameron  
Dillon Brennan  
Duane Djandjomerr  
Ethan Nabalwad  
Felicity Douglas  
Gavin Phillips  
Graham Rostron  
Ian Djandjomerr  
Jack Namarnyilk  
Janine Morton  
Jasmine Nabobbob  
Joanne Ferguson  
John Anderson  
Joshua Wurrkidj  
Kamahl Djandjomerr  
Karius Cameron  
Kaylene Djandjomerr  
Lee Naborlambarl  
Lindsay Whitehurst  
Raymond Guymala  
Richie Naborlambarl  
Romeo Jambulwanga  
Roxanne Naborlhborlh  
Russell Haines  
Selone Djandjomerr  
Sharna Dakgalawuy  
Shirley Djandjomerr  
Sonya Nango  
Susanne Haines  
Uriah Djandjomerr  
Vienna Wood / Buramura  
Jason Butcher  
Annalee Stearne  
Jennifer Lorains  
Lillian Alexander  
Sally Young  
Bill Pheasant  
Shon Close

## Pro bono support

Clayton Utz  
Davies Collison Cave Law  
DLA Piper Australia  
Margaret Carew  
David Caple  
Susan Dugdale & Associates  
Sullivan Rees  
Light Warrior

Steph Boadle  
Alex Reid  
Tiffany Lohs  
Majella Bowden  
Lili Favrel  
Lyn Price  
Geoff Price  
Caitlin Anderson  
Mairead Murphy  
Rachel Powell  
Emily Ades  
Dom Mercuri  
Cara Nolan  
Julia Mitchell  
Sophie Noone  
Daisy Murdoch  
Carole Fox  
Melanie Bird  
Belinda Postill  
Patrick Pheasant  
Ben Tardrew  
Julia Munday  
Julie Ferry  
Lisabel Link  
Amber Coupe  
Ester Koelle  
Sarah Milford  
Ruby Huzzey  
Shannon McLeod  
Callisha Gregg-Rowan  
Alex Sayer  
Isabel Lee





**Melbourne, VIC**

2/10 Hoddle St | Abbotsford | VIC | 3067  
+61 (0)447 903 084

**Central Australia, NT**

5 Bloomfield St, Alice Springs  
PO Box 140 | Alice Springs, NT 0871  
+61 (0)417 257 198

**Top End, NT**

GPO Box 138 | Darwin | NT | 0801  
Ph: (08) 8988 6987

**Email** [cgadmin@childrensground.org.au](mailto:cgadmin@childrensground.org.au)

**Visit** [childrensground.org.au](http://childrensground.org.au)

**Donate** [childrensground.org.au/donations](http://childrensground.org.au/donations)

 [facebook.com/childrensgroundaus](https://facebook.com/childrensgroundaus)

 [instagram.com/childrensground](https://instagram.com/childrensground)

 [twitter.com/ChildrensGround](https://twitter.com/ChildrensGround)