



ANNUAL REPORT 2015



Our vision

An Australia free from extreme poverty and inequity.

Our strategy

To create a new reality with communities devastated by intergenerational disadvantage: an environment where families realise their aspirations for the next generation of children to be free from trauma and suffering, enjoy equity and safety, be able to grow into adulthood happy and healthy and have agency over their social, cultural, political and economic future.



JOEWINA, KEITH, AILENA, DIONDRE AND KAYLESS

Our values

Our work is guided and informed by our commitment to:

Equity: Power, knowledge and opportunity should be shared by all people regardless of race, age, gender, sexuality, income or location.

Ability: All children enter the world with vulnerability, talent and the need for safety and love. All children can acquire the skills for life in an ever-changing world and become healthy, independent adults.

Agency: We strive, in all our decisions and communications, to support, reinforce and strengthen people's power over themselves and their lives.

Openness: We honour all the people with whom we work by striving for honesty, transparency and accountability in our work to fulfil our own and our partners' aspirations.

Love: We respect all human beings and we care deeply about the wellbeing of all individuals and communities.

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Children's Ground acknowledges and honours First Nations peoples, paying respect to Elders past and present as custodians of this land. In Melbourne we live and work on the land of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation and in Jabiru on the land of the Mirarr People. Always is, always was, always will be Aboriginal land.



WILLIAM TILMOUTH



JANE VADIVELLOO

‘I want to see the next generation getting the fire in their bellies and fighting for change. We don’t need to accept the status quo.’

William Tilmouth, Chair

CEO and Chair report

Here, our CEO Jane Vadivelloo is in conversation with our Chair, William Tilmouth, as they reflect on the first 18 months of our 25-year vision of change.



Jane: How do you think things have gone this year?

William: We have found our feet, we have got accountability and security in our accountability. I feel extremely proud of our achievements.

When I look at Roxanne’s 2015 Community Report I feel good inside. I look at the photos and I see people are having fun – look at their faces, the kids learning, the families. I see people. The pictures tell the story. That’s what I feel proud about – getting to this stage.

I keep turning to the back. To see those 50-odd Bininj (Aboriginal) people employed, be it part time or full time, excites me. That’s statistics, that’s evidence – it speaks volumes. This is what we are about. Making the path that people can walk on to find a new future. At the same time, we are still just getting started.

I am waiting on the evaluation report. That is where we will see proof in the pudding. I want to see the benefits. People taking care of their health, kids going to school, families getting involved.

We will get the first evaluation report next April. I know we won’t see big changes for a while yet, but we should start to see things moving in the right direction.

We have not tasted the full fruits of our labours. These will come many years down the track. But we are tasting the sweet notes of success – albeit partially.

How do you feel we are going?

Jane: I agree we have found our feet. I think we have built the foundation for a wonderful organisation with a great Board, staff and partners.

We have focused on establishing the organisation over the past 18 months and we have got a lot of work ahead this coming year. We have grown quickly. We now need to give our attention to the quality and depth of our delivery.

We also need to get the evaluation process right so that we can build a strong evidence base and refine our operations as we develop.

We have been able to attract fabulous dedicated and experienced staff. We have also had a few challenges with some staff and ironing out some early issues.

The teams in Kakadu West Arnhem and in the shared office in Melbourne are an inspirational bunch, all of whom are passionate about the change we are creating.

William: The Board members have also been outstanding this year, providing guidance, expertise and direction. I would like to thank all current and past Board members for their guidance and energy.

Jane: How are you feeling about the future?

William: I’m feeling elated and confident but also cautious and reserved, as we are facing uncharted waters. I am hesitant about the work that we still have to do. We have to open the doors. What I visualise may be unrealistic, but I hope the ripple effect of Children’s Ground will resonate more widely. If it was a natural phenomenon with no restrictions it would spread through communities. You would throw the pebble in the middle and the ripples would just spread.

But there are things that get in the way, that we have to deal with if that ripple is going to grow – money, personalities, Government, community, family – a myriad of things have to be in the right place.

It is a big effort to sustain what we have for 25 years and expand to other communities. The work is going to grow and we have to grow with integrity and certainty. How can you be descriptive about something you dread and are excited about at the same time?



KAYLESS, ROXANNE NABORLBORLH, JANE VADIVELLOO AND RAYHA WITH SUGARBAG (NATIVE HONEY)

Jane: I am cautiously optimistic. We have seen the impact in such a short time in West Arnhem. We have people in community and Government very interested in what we are achieving. We now have key funding partners who believe in long term investment and long term change. I feel that we are ready to move to the next stage of our development and to reach out to other communities as we discussed in our Board strategic planning recently.

I know you get tired William, but what keeps you going?

William: Well I’m trying to retire!! [laughs]. Sometimes I feel despair – not with Children’s Ground but when I see what is happening in our communities. I feel sad about what I see.

I want to see the next generation getting the fire in their bellies and fighting for change. We don’t need to accept the status quo. I can see how hard our job is. It is tiring being Aboriginal.

You live it each day, in your family, in your home with your relatives. You never escape it. I lost my brother this year. I have lost too many of my family over recent years.

Sometimes I have to deal with wanting to be conservative or just wanting to stop. But if we don’t keep going we won’t find the gold that is out there. We can’t sit back and rest on our laurels. I really think Children’s Ground is the best chance we have.

Jane: William, we were all ready to nominate you for Australian of the Year and for an Order of Australia Medal for your incredible contribution and leadership. You stopped us from nominating you. Why?

William: Well as I said, this is not why I do what I do. It is not about individual accolades. Children’s Ground is about the people. You don’t look up to see what you can get or what people think about you. You look at who and what is in front of you and what needs to happen. I am not interested in those things. I am interested in seeing everyone have a voice.

There are heroes we work with every day. They are silent, quiet and will never be seen by others. In Aboriginal life a single person never stands on a podium, they stand alongside many and together we are responsible – to our families, to our law, to our future.

Jane: We try to hold these values in the organisation: to recognise everyone’s role.

William: Exactly. It’s really important to pass on our thanks and regards to the Board of Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) for their leadership and vision. They are role models.

The community members, who are voting with their feet. Our funders and partners for trying something different when many others are comfortable with staying with what they know – the status quo. The status quo is killing us.

People throw their money at football and sports or into scholarship – but for children who are not sporty, who don’t fit in and are left behind, there’s nothing. People don’t throw money at the hard, long term work that is not sexy.

Now we are seeing what can happen when lots of people commit funding together. We can achieve so much more. It has allowed us to do what I dreamed of – to give control

to people, to give kids everything they need for a decent future and to support families – and look, we are seeing change.

I always think of Roxanne saying, ‘Before Children’s Ground there was nothing.’ Now kids have early childhood classes, kids who were struggling with school have another option, they have things to do after school and on holidays.

They can talk about health, talk through problems with people they trust. We are honouring culture, people are working and families are doing things together. It is amazing to see.

Jane: We have a great extended family at Children’s Ground. There are so many people to celebrate this year.

In particular I would like to thank Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, the Chair Annie Ngalmirama and the CEO Justin O’Brien. They are leaders and change makers and it is an honour working with them. I would also like to thank Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust and the Chair, David Ward, for committing to an innovative strategic long term change agenda and breaking the mould for a new future.

We talk about Children’s Ground as a family that includes community, staff, funders and supporters. To all of our family I extend a very big thank you.

William as always I’d like to thank you, for your leadership of this organisation and for keeping our aspirations anchored in the reality of day-to-day life.

William: Thanks Jane. Here’s to another year of success for everyone involved with Children’s Ground.



WILLIAM TILMOUTH AND DAVID JAMES



JANE VADIVELOO AND WILLIAM TILMOUTH (FIFTH FROM LEFT) WITH THE CHILDREN'S GROUND FAMILY



Our achievements are made possible by the collective efforts of many people. We depend on strong relationships with a range of partners to achieve our work – we do not work in isolation.

On behalf of the Board and the communities we serve we would like to extend our personal thanks to all of our partners.

The community

Firstly, we recognise the leadership of and thank our major partner, the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation and the Kakadu West Arnhem community.

Financial partners and investors

We thank our major funders, the Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust and the Australian Government.

We welcome Gandel Philanthropy, the PMF Foundation and the Ian Potter Foundation who join ThirdLink Investment Managers as our major philanthropists.

We extend our ongoing appreciation and thanks to our long term philanthropic families: the Limb Family Foundation; the English Family Foundation; the Eureka Benevolent Foundation; the Ryan Cooper Family Foundation; the Donkey Wheel Foundation; the Gailey Lazarus Foundation; and, the Duggan Family Foundation. This year, we were also delighted to welcome the Ramses Foundation and the Whitbread Foundation as significant new members of our family.

We welcome our new corporate partner BioRevive and thank Igniting Change and Oxfam for their continued partnership.

Finally, we thank our valued private donors, and the many people who have contributed to our financial appeals.

Collective investment enables us to achieve excellence and innovation. We can deliver upon a major change agenda, working outside of the box. We can defeat extreme poverty and inequity. Collectively we can create a new future that honours all children and families and celebrates our First Nations peoples and diverse cultures of this great land.

Partner organisations and deliverers

Achieving sustained, intergenerational change requires the support of, and collaboration with, key service providers.

We would like to thank the following organisations within Jabiru: the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation; the Northern Territory Department of Education and the Jabiru Area School; Djidbidjibdi Residential College; Bininj Kunwok; the Djabulukgu Association; Parks Australia; West Arnhem Shire; the Jabiru Health Clinic; the Gunbang Action Group; and, the Warnbi Aboriginal Corporation.

A number of partners are located outside of Jabiru. We have worked with: the North Australian Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service (NAAFVLS); the Volatile Substance Abuse Team; visiting mental health officers from the Adult and Child and Youth teams based at Top End Mental Health in Darwin; Centrelink; and, NT Children & Families Child Protection Case Workers.

Advisors and mentors

We are fortunate to have generous, talented people who provide their professional and personal experiences to guide, advise and support our work. We recognise the Australian Government Community of Practice network, our Research Advisory Group, our Ambassadors, our critical friends and our families.

Our commitment to First Nations people

We commit to the respect and promotion of the inherent rights of Australia's First Nations people. This includes but is not limited to political, economic and social structures, knowledge systems, traditions, histories and philosophies, including the rights to their lands, territories and resources.



PADDY AND AILENA



MAY NANGO, CECILY DJANDJOMERR, ROXANNE NABORLBORLH, ROSEMARY AND MARY CAMERON

Children's Ground recognises that First Nations communities in Australia and across the world have suffered from invasion and genocide, dispossession of their lands, territories and resources. The trauma that has been experienced is profound and generational, and continues to be experienced today.

Children's Ground will be guided by First Nations communities and by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples.

We are convinced that control by First Nations peoples over matters affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs. We are also convinced that by achieving this, Australia and the world will benefit.

First Nations cultures are sophisticated and the most successful in human history. Refined for over 60,000 years, they have achieved deeply sustainable social, environmental, political knowledge and lore.

It is the unwavering right and desire of First Nations peoples to continue their cultures. We will do our best to honour and support this wish.

“Only by respecting the language, culture and knowledge of the learner can we together build literate, schooled and educated societies, where lifelong learning is the norm.”

UNESCO 2001 Education and Cultural Diversity (www.unesco.org/education)

‘Young people need to learn what the land is called ... how they are related to the land, what they are to the land and what the land is to them. The dreaming for that place, which skin group they are, who is the owner of the land and the keeper of the land. You’ve got to tell the right story. It is important to get this right. It has to start with the Elders. If we don’t do it now, it will all be lost.’

MK Turner OAM, Arrernte Elder

Highlights: Kakadu West Arnhem 2015

Children are getting a great start to life...



71%

Children aged 0–8 in Kakadu West Arnhem who participated in family and learning activities

5

Days a week of culture and play-based learning in both English and Kunwinjku for children aged 0–8 years

85

Mobile learning sessions to support children living in outstations

53

Learning On Country days with family and Elders

Families want the best for their children...



68

Bininj (Aboriginal people) employed by Children's Ground in flexible employment

76%

Staff retention rate – people want to work in meaningful employment

24

Yawarinj (young men) working with the Morle Boys team, teaching children, supporting cultural and On Country activities and doing maintenance work

19

Yauk Yauk (teenage and young women), engaged in wellbeing program, arts, music, and On Country trips and camps

Community is alive and there is lots to celebrate...



33

Bininj Gunborrk (singing and dancing) sessions, reflecting cultural strength and renewal

33

Artists paid for work sold, following establishment of the arts enterprise Bininj Kunwaral (Our Spirit)

1st

Time in 15 years that local dancers performed at the annual Mahbilil festival in Jabiru

1st

Birthday celebration, with large concert, cake and community activities in November 2014

Children's Ground is about change

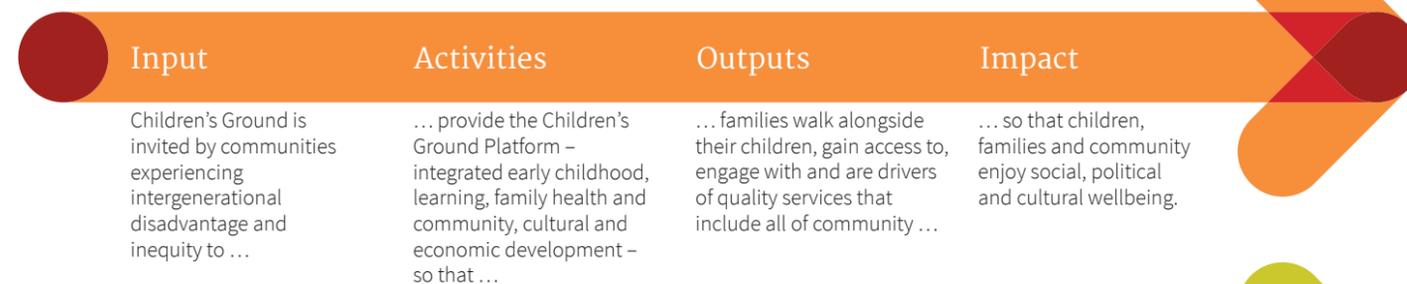
General theory of change

Our general theory of change recognises that change at the community level depends on systemic reform and society valuing everyone.



Specific theories of change

Community



System



Society





BELINDA MORTON LEADS A STORY SESSION



MELANIE ELGREGBUD LEADS LEARNING ON COUNTRY TO ANLARR



MALCOLM WITH A SARATOGA AT MADUGAL



ELIZABETH PETERSSON TALKS TO CHILDREN ON A WALK TO NOURLANGIE

‘What is required are comprehensive place-based strategies that simultaneously address families’ immediate needs for support (the foreground factors) and the broader conditions under which families are raising young children (the background factors).’

Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Research Institute, *Review of the evidence base in relation to early childhood approaches to support children in highly disadvantaged communities for the Children’s Ground project*, October 2011, p.27.

Our approach

At Children’s Ground we decided that the status quo was unacceptable.

The health, education and wellbeing of children requires a radically new approach. For our most vulnerable children, the status quo is frightening. They will become statistics of child protection, prison, school failure, early death and disease, mental health and welfare.

To allow this to happen is unforgivable. They are our beautiful children, brimming with talent and joy and open to all the possibilities the world might deliver.

So, we undertook a radical rethink.

We devised a 25-year, intergenerational approach that focuses on both children and the communities within which they live.

We tackle the social, structural and economic determinants and inequities that combine to underpin the devastating life experiences of children living in communities of extreme poverty.

How do we do this?

We don’t pretend that this is a quick fix.

We engage diverse knowledge and expertise, both locally and internationally, to deliver a model that meets a child where they are. We work with the child and their whole family, within the whole of their community, to achieve academic, social, family, cultural, economic and emotional wellbeing. Education and opportunity are at the heart of our approach.

Children’s Ground places people as fundamental agents and leaders of their own change. They become Children’s Ground, not only as users but as designers and deliverers.

Children’s Ground provides the program design with flexibility for local relevance and governance. We deliver and connect up what to date has been a complex system into a responsive, accessible and empowering integrated system of services for children and families.



The big picture

Children’s Ground is ambitious and our approach is as radical as it is common sense.

Our strategy is to disrupt the status quo – to refuse to accept conditions that lead to childhood trauma, poverty and generational inequity. We demand that every child enjoys a quality education, good health and a secure environment that will lead to opportunity, while at the same time securing their cultural identity and life.

This is what First Nations parents and grandparents have been asking for and working to achieve – for decades. This is what we demand of ourselves to deliver, in partnership with many, until that future is secure for all children in our country.

We back people. We believe in people. We love. We build relationships. We respect and value culture, place and heritage.

Partnerships and principles

With our partner communities, we define the geographic boundaries and work with a critical mass of children and families to create change for the whole of the community. Together we apply the above principles.



MARTEL AND JOSEPH AT A MOBILE PLAYGROUP AT MAMUKALA

Achieving long term impact

We have reformed five key areas to redress existing failings in the system. We aim to evidence a new system that achieves long term impact. These reform areas are:

Governance: Blending robust corporate governance with strong community ownership.

Workforce: Local and sustainable, with cultural, community and sector experts.

Evidence: 25-year longitudinal evaluation.

Investment: Collective, outcomes-based investment.

Children’s Ground Platform: Integrated services based on excellence and leading practice.

Work in relation to these five reform areas are considered in turn, in the following pages.

Governance

Children's Ground maintains that local governance is the single most important principle and practice in our approach. To that end, we acknowledge our key partner, the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, and the Mirarr people for their leadership and vision in Kakadu West Arnhem.

Community members lead, guided by their own ambitions and aspirations – and we support them. It is only by securing the consent, direction, support and active involvement of the community in governance, design, delivery and evaluation that enduring change will be achieved.

Our Board of Directors provides leadership and accountability. The Board members are skilled, experienced and qualified in their respective fields. They possess the capacity and tenacity to pioneer an ambitious change agenda.

The Board includes community leaders with expertise in the social, health and education sectors, as well as fundraising, financial management, human rights, Government, social innovation, research and evaluation, entrepreneurship and stakeholder relations.

Rosemary Addis resigned from the Board in December 2014 due to the demands of her social impact and investment work and became a Strategic Advisor to the Board.

Our young community leaders

There are a number of young leaders who are emerging and are supported within Children's Ground. Many are working for the first time, progressing from casual to permanent roles in the organisation. They are challenged in their roles to look at the history and current situation for their families and community and to make key decisions regarding the direction, policies and procedures of Children's Ground.

Many are the parents of the children participating in our early years activities and they are determining the future path for their children through the development and delivery of Children's Ground. Others are showing leadership in their work and contribution. Over the past 12 months the leadership group has included: Kesti Djandjomerr, Roxanne Naborlhborlh, Darlene Thorn, Ritchie Nabarlambarl, Robbie Goodman, Christine Alangale, Shirely Brown, Loretta Djandjomerr, Dwayne Djandjomerr, Jasmine Nabobbob, Marlene Badwana, Sarah Bilis and Belinda Djandjomerr.



KAMAHL HUNTER, RICHIE NABARLAMBARL, SAMPSON HENRY, FRANCIS XAVIER KURRUPUWU MLA FOR ARAFURA, DARLENE THORN AND ROXANNE NABORLHBORLH

Our Board



William Tilmouth

Founding Chair of Children's Ground. Board Chair and Co-Chair of Research Advisory Group.

William is president of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. He is of Arrernte descent and a member of the 'stolen generation'. William was elected the Central Australian ATSIC Regional Chair in the 1980s. From 1988 to 2010 he was the Executive Director of Tangentyere Council.



Adrian Appo, OAM

BTeach – Board Member

Adrian is a Gureng Gureng man from south-east Queensland. Adrian was Founding CEO of Ganbina and is a recognised social entrepreneur. Adrian has gathered a raft of accolades including a Defence Service Medal, Centenary Medal and Order of Australia medal.



Kon Karapanagiotidis, OAM

LLB, BSW, BBSC, MED, MDevStuds – Board Member

Kon is a lawyer, social worker and teacher. He is CEO and Founder of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. He was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2010 and an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2011.



Josie Rizza

CA, BEc, GDipAppFinInv, GAICD – Board Member, Member of the Finance Committee

Josie is a Chartered Accountant with extensive experience in accounting and strategic financial management.



Clive Ringler

BEc, MCom, ASX Accredited Adviser, Level 1 & 2 – Board Deputy Chair, Chair of Finance Committee

Clive Ringler is a Portfolio Manager and Financial Adviser with Morgan Stanley. He has more than 25 years of experience in the financial markets and covers global and Australian investments across all asset classes.



Jane Vadiveloo

BSc, MPsych(Forensic) – CEO, Member of the Finance Committee and Co-Chair of the Research Advisory Group

Jane Vadiveloo has a 20-year history leading reform and services provision in communities experiencing extreme disadvantage and trauma.

Jane was announced as one of The Australian Financial Review & Westpac 100 Women of Influence in October 2014.



Rosemary Addis

LLB (Hons 1st Class), New York Bar, Company Directors' Diploma, AICD – Strategic Advisor

Rosemary is the Executive Director of Impact Investing and has worked for more than 20 years as a strategist. She left the Board and became a Strategic Advisor in December 2014.

Our community leaders



Mark Djandjomerr

Co-Director, West Arnhem

Mark's skin name is Na-bangardi. He is a member of the Bolmo clan from Marlgawo. He is a recognised senior cultural man for his clan, many of whom live in Kakadu and are part of Children's Ground. He is recognised in the region for his cultural knowledge and leadership. Key operational matters are discussed with Mark on a fortnightly basis and when issues arise.



May Nango

Co-Director, West Arnhem

May's skin name is Ngal-wamud. She is from the Mirarr clan in Kakadu. Her traditional lands are in and around the Jabiru region and Mudjinbardi. She is a recognised Custodian and sits on the Board of Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation. Key operational matters are discussed with May on a fortnightly basis and when issues arise.

Our inspiring ambassadors



Dr Jan Owen AM

Jan Owen is the CEO of the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA).

In March 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 and in 1999 received a fellowship for leadership and innovation to the Peter Drucker Foundation in the US.

Before joining FYA, Jan was Executive Director of Social Ventures Australia, which aims to increase the impact of the Australian social sector. Prior to this, Jan founded the Create Foundation, the national consumer body for children and young people in out of home care.



MK Turner

M. Kemarre Turner is an Eastern Arrernte elder, cultural adviser, translator, teacher, social justice champion, artist and author. She was born in the Harts Range region, north-east of Alice Springs and is a 'Professor' – a holder of customary law, practice and knowledge.

Ms Turner was a founder of Irrkelantye Learning Centre, focusing on intergenerational learning for Arrernte people. She is an elder to the board of Akeyulerre, a Healing Centre in Alice Springs dedicated to Arrernte wellbeing culture and practice.

She is Anangkere (Traditional Healer), law woman and leader. In 1997 she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to the Aboriginal community of Central Australia.



THE CHILDREN'S GROUND FAMILY IN THEIR UNIFORMS

Workforce

Our long term aim is to recruit cultural and sector experts to build a sustainable local workforce. In Kakadu West Arnhem 72% (68) of our staff have been local Bininj people. We recognise that while there are lots of talented people living locally, employment opportunities have previously been scarce. In fact, many Bininj in the region have never worked or have not been formally employed for decades.

No barrier to employment for Bininj

We have a flexible 'no barrier to employment' approach for local Bininj people. Our soft entry allows people to engage in employment with choice and flexibility, with a deliberate approach to remove 'failure'. People are working in the areas of nutrition, early childhood, administration, data and evaluation, arts, teaching, communications, HR, community development, health and after hours care. All staff have training plans in place and 11 Bininj staff moved this year from casual to contract employment.

The right people for the right job

We engage custodians across different clan groups as teachers or consultants (only the right people can speak and teach for an area of Country, meaning that there needs to be flexible work engagement based on our activities).

Key staff movements as we continued our growth this year included the appointment of a new Operations Manager in Kakadu West Arnhem. In our Melbourne office we welcomed a Director of People and Culture and a new Director of Communications.

Evidence

Our longitudinal evaluation is a critical element of the Children's Ground approach. Significant and long term positive impacts will take time.

As we are progressing, we will track the quality, integrity and impact of our work. This will allow us to report back to the community, our investors and partners, and to build evidence towards an approach that will address extreme disadvantage in the long term.

Outcomes are being monitored and assessed in nine key areas across children, family and community. Our evaluation is informed by:

- » Regular monitoring and data capture
- » Analysing administrative data sets for the region
- » Participatory processes with community input in design, and
- » Creating individualised learning and wellbeing plans

We will conduct topic-specific research including 'nested' studies to support development of our approach. Our first detailed outcomes report will be published in April 2016.



YOUNG LEADER KESTIANNA DJANDJOMERR AT A COMMUNITY MEETING



CHRISTINE ALANGALE, ERICA FLENTJE, JACQUI STEWART AND RICHIE NABARLAMBARL WORK ON A POPULATION MAP OF JABIRU

The key evaluation activities during the year were:

- » Commencement of implementation of a data monitoring system
- » Refinement of the evaluation framework to support the longitudinal evaluation
- » Conducting of workshops and training for the local community research team to build their skills and experience in interviewing and analysing data
- » Establishment of the Research Advisory Group in November 2014
- » Ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Northern Territory Department of Health and Menzies School of Health Education, for implementation of the first two years of the evaluation framework

Advice from respected researchers

Our Research Advisory Group is made up of respected researchers and academics with extensive experience conducting research and evaluation projects in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community settings. Their areas of expertise include child development, early years and primary school education, health and wellbeing, family wellbeing and community led research and development.

Research Advisory Group

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

Dr Shona Bass, Director, Early Life Foundations

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

Mr Matthew James, Branch Manager, Evidence and Evaluation, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

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

Professor Mark Moran (until June 2015), Professor of Development Effectiveness, Institute for Social Science Research, University of Queensland

Professor Sven Silburn, Director, Centre for Child Development and Education, Menzies School of Health Research

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

Professor Komla Tsey, Research Professor, Centre for Research and Innovation in Sustainability Education, Cairns Institute, College of Arts Social Science and Education, James Cook University



MAY NANGO AND MARK DJANDJOMERR AT MAGELA CREEK

‘The Limb Family Foundation is proud to be a partner in Children’s Ground’s ambitious plans. We have seen the positive outcomes of the program first hand. It is the high standards, long term vision and commitment to a generation that gives us confidence that lasting change is possible.’

Ali Limb, Limb Family Foundation

‘Mahni mandjewk arri-yakwong kamak rowk. Ngarri-djarrkdurrkmirri dja kunmak rowk wanjh kayimerron.’

‘It has been a great year. Bininj have led the way in bringing about positive change.’

Roxanne Naborlhborlh, Coordinator, Family Engagement and Media, Children’s Ground

Investment

We combine community investment with Government, philanthropic and corporate investment, enabling excellence, flexibility and innovation.

Our investors want to see their contribution and commitment achieve wide impact in the long term. They have the courage to back ambitious change and innovation – and accept that the change will be generational, rather than a quick fix. Our collective approach has allowed investors to achieve significant impact in a very short period of time.

Mirarr people are leading the way

Our lead investor is the community itself, the Mirarr people, who established the Kakadu West Arnhem Trust (KWAAT) to invest in the social, cultural and economic future of the region. The Trust has an independent Chair and members from the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation and Energy Resources of Australia.

The decision of KWAAT to invest in and establish Children’s Ground in Kakadu West Arnhem was a watershed moment – an example of long term vision and commitment by the community and the mining industry in a rare partnership.

Partners enabling inspiring change

Our family of investors have provided \$20.3 million in funding and commitments from community, Government, corporations and philanthropists from FY14 to FY19. These funds allow us to focus on outcomes and provide the very best in key areas of education, health, culture, economy and community. We are seeing inspiring changes because of this support from our partners.



MAKAYLA, JOEWINA, KEITH, KAYLESS AND MAHALIA

‘Gandel Philanthropy has chosen Children’s Ground as one of its major grant partners, based on several key factors, the most important being the significant potential for long term impact on the wellbeing of the children and the broader community. This was strengthened by the emphasis on a sustainable approach to funding, ensuring the appropriate mix of different sources of support including the Government and local Aboriginal authority. We look forward to working with Children’s Ground and to witnessing tangible, positive and lasting change.’

Vedran Drakulic, CEO, Gandel Philanthropy



JINEISHA, MAKAYLA AND TAHLIA AT MARLKAWO



URIAH DJANDJOMERR AND GEORGE

The Children's Ground Platform

Children's Ground addresses the social, structural and economic factors needed to eradicate extreme poverty and create a positive and enjoyable life for the members of a community. We do this by responding to the influences on children's development from pre-birth to 25 years, including the child as an individual, their family and their community.

The Children's Ground Platform celebrates the Aboriginal worldview that connects the development of the person to the land and the people in a sophisticated system. It combines education, health, wellbeing, society, law, philosophy, environment and culture.

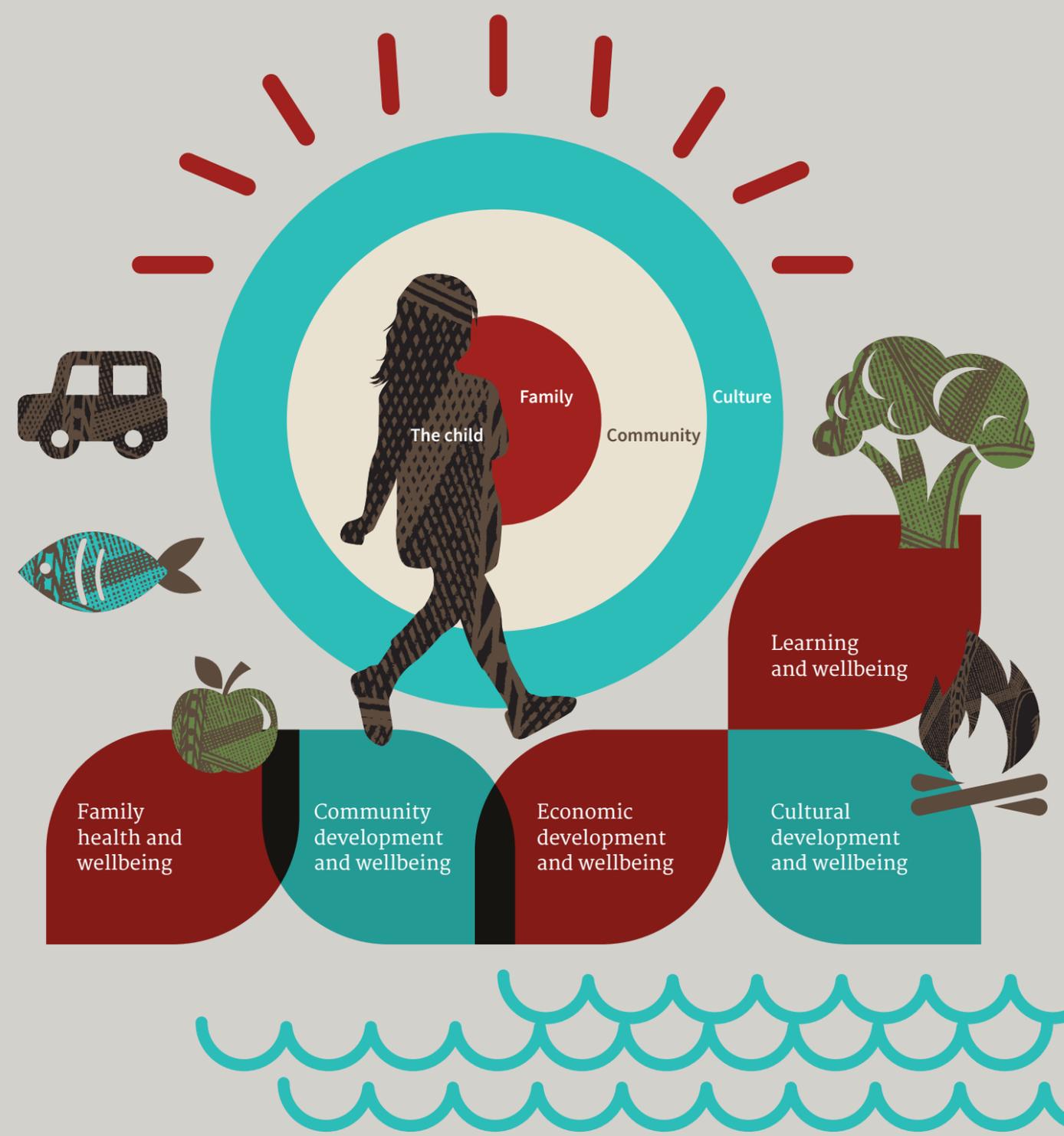
As shown in the graphic to the right, the Children's Ground Platform addresses five operational areas.

- Learning and wellbeing**
- Family health and wellbeing**
- Community development and wellbeing**
- Economic development and wellbeing**
- Cultural development and wellbeing**

In practice, these areas overlap and are interdependent. Wellbeing relates to the cultural, social and emotional wellbeing of the child, family and community in each area.

The activities and developments in Kakadu West Arnhem this year are highlighted on page six of this report, and examined in more detail from page 18.

The Children's Ground Platform





KAYLESS, JINEISHA, JIMMY, AMANDA AND NICOLE ALANGALE PREPARE MAGPIE GOOSE AT MULA

Kakadu West Arnhem: The past year

Learning and wellbeing

Children around the world enter education in their own culture and language.

In Australia, however, the mainstream education system is foreign for many First Nations children. In Kakadu West Arnhem, more than 90% of the children attending Children's Ground speak English as a second language.

Compounding the cultural dissonance in the learning environment are the impacts of overcrowding, health, social stress, trauma and inequity. The current education system disadvantages First Nations children.

A culture of opportunity

Over the past year we have built an exciting learning environment with children and families in Kakadu West Arnhem.

The families want their children to be proficient in their First Language and culture as well as mainstream literacy, numeracy and knowledge. The Children's Ground learning and wellbeing activities combine First Nations, global and 21st century education approaches and knowledge.

Early years – starting young

To date we have focused our learning and wellbeing on children aged 0–8 to make sure they have a wonderful start to life, rich with opportunities, fun and play.

The early years are critical, laying the foundation for future learning and wellbeing. This year we have experienced babies being born, children growing, laughter filling the air, wonder, curiosity and times of pure joy and hilarity.

We have provided five days a week of centre-based and mobile early childhood learning, as well as primary class, evening, after school hours and holiday activities. Children have lots of points of contact as we build a culture of learning and opportunity.

Learning happens in the Community Centre, On Country, in outstations and at home. We have Western and First Culture teaching specialists and educators and have maintained our 1:4 teacher: learner ratio. Through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Jabiru Area School we work with the Department of Education, towards a shared commitment to improve educational outcomes in the region.

“A wonderful start to life, rich with opportunities, fun and play.”



MAHALIA, KEITH, SARAH BILIS, LIZ NEWELL AND KAYLESS IN A PRIMARY CLASS READING SESSION

‘Gorrogoni dabbarrabolk ngadberre bindi-bukkani wurdurd bedberre bindi-bengyolyolmi.’



MAHALIA AND JOEWINA LEARN PRINTING

‘From the dawn of time our people have passed on knowledge by Elders talking to the children.’

Mark Djandjomerr, Co-Director, West Arnhem, Children's Ground

First Language, First Culture knowledge

- > Bicultural learning – Centre-based and mobile outreach
- > First Language teachers
- > Weekly learning On Country with family
- > Bininj Gunborrk – traditional song and dance
- > Cultural teachers in art, story, Morle (didgeridoo), music
- > On Country camps – children learn from each clan area with family and cultural connection
- > English curriculum resources created from cultural knowledge
- > Written First Language development
- > School holiday program and cultural activities
- > Learning begins with the land, kinship and lore
- > Learning is experiential. Key mediums include story, song, painting, place and dance
- > Learning occurs across generations with Wurdurd (children) and Dabbarrabolk (adults and old people) connected

English language and global knowledge

- > Daily play-based early childhood learning
- > Daily English learning through books, games, activities
- > Intensive English and numeracy for school-aged children and after-hours tutoring for children attending the local school
- > Digital based curriculum and learning tools TESOL (English as a second language) specialist
- > Creative arts, music and circus
- > Nutrition, health and wellbeing
- > Bininj support person in the local school to support children 6–8 years (part of the year)
- > After-hours program for school-aged children aged 5–8
- > Re-engagement support for young people not attending school
- > Counselling support for school-aged children and young people
- > Health integration in learning



SUSAN AND PADDY



BOB AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE



JAVAN WATCHES MARK DJANDJOMERR TEST A MORLE (DIDGERIDOO)



Key achievements in learning and wellbeing

» Engaging with majority of 0–8 year olds and creating access to quality early learning

In Kakadu West Arnhem, 80 (71%) of children aged 0–8 are involved in Children’s Ground’s family and learning activities. Of these 40 (53%) aged 0–5 years attended Children’s Ground’s Early Years Learning and Wellbeing program. Our Head of Early Years Learning and Wellbeing has overseen the development of activities, led mobile playgroups, created relationships and supported a great staff team. Early childhood learning has come to life for many families.

» First Language and cultural foundation for learning

We engage diverse cultural knowledge with a dry and a wet season learning plan, maximising On Country learning in the dry season. There has been a lack of First Language teachers and resources, but our outstanding Bininj First Language teacher has enabled a rich learning context for children.

» English numeracy and literacy program and digital-based learning

We have a dedicated Early Childhood Educator and experienced English as a Second Language Primary Educator. Children who were not attending school or making limited progress are engaged in literacy, building problem-solving skills and engaging with digital technologies.

» Strong creative and cultural environment for children

A range of activities have been established including Bininj Gunborrk (singing and dancing), On Country learning, mentoring by senior artists, visiting performers and artists, art and music classes, after-school walks with Traditional Owners and Yauk Yauk (young women) and Yawurrinj (young men) creative arts and music sessions.

» Intergenerational environment of learning

The Community Centre provides a space for families to engage with children in their learning. Wurdurd (children) are surrounded by families working, creating art and supporting education.

» Training of local Bininj staff in early years educational approaches

Day-to-day support and mentoring is provided for Bininj staff, four of whom are undertaking their Certificate III training in early childhood, teaching assistance and community services.



JOSEPH AND MARTEL AT A MOBILE PLAYGROUP AT MAMUKALA



DARIUS CAMERON, MICK, IAN DJANDJOMERR, KEITH AND JACK NAMARNYILK DANCE AT MADUGAL

Extended hours program

The extended hours program includes after school hours activities, evening events including discos and Biniñ Gunborrk (singing and dancing), school holiday activities and camps. The extended hours component of our work is designed to create year-round after-hours opportunities to access and build on culture, wellbeing and opportunity for children, young people and families.

The after school hours program started in Term 1, 2015, and operates from 3pm–5.30pm Monday to Friday, for children aged 6–9 years. More than 20 children attend daily from Jabiru, Manaburduma, Madjinbardi, Kurrajong, Cannon Hill, East Alligator, Mamukala, Bowali, Djirrbiyuk and Jim Jim.

With children coming fresh from the classroom, the afternoon usually starts with a physical program, then moves onto cultural, educational or arts activities.

Key extended hours activities

- » Art and craft activities including visual arts, painting and lino prints
- » Cultural excursions led by traditional owners on bush walks and to rock art sites
- » After school sports run in conjunction with West Arnhem Shire and Clontarf Boys Academy
- » Inflatable obstacle course at Jabiru swimming pool run by Children’s Ground and West Arnhem Shire staff
- » Guided reading program to support literacy
- » Free time, play, iPads and games

During the year we have been holding weekly evening activities on outstations as well as community disco nights every few months.

Each school holiday the team provides a range of activities for children of all ages and their families. These include day trips around Kakadu National Park, trips to Darwin and week-long camps On Country. The holiday programs provide an opportunity to share memorable experiences with their children and grandchildren.

There is always lots of fun, laughter, dancing and good times On Country, sitting with family and getting away from the stresses of town. The camp highlights have been the combination of Biniñ Gunborrk (singing and dancing) and fluoro-discos out on some of the most beautiful country in the world.

Family health and wellbeing

Over the past year the community has faced one death nearly every month. In a small community, people passing away effects everyone.

This is what we must change in a generation.

Health is collective, not individual

The family health and wellbeing team works with all the other Children’s Ground areas. We start with the child but we look at health in the context of the whole family. Health is not individual for Biniñ people – it is collective.

What do we do differently? Every family is struggling with health issues, so we sit with them and talk about their health. We don’t wait for people to come to a clinic with an acute problem. We build relationships and work together to increase people’s control over their own wellbeing.



BRAM WITH BABY



MAHALIA, KAYLESS, TYLAR, KEITH AND CHRISTIANNA DJANDJOMERR



EMILY PETERSON AND PERLIN SIMON COOKING IN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Key family health and wellbeing activities

- » Health education and promotion (integrating with learning and culture)
- » Family health planning and support, including maternal and early childhood health
- » Nutrition
- » Social and emotional wellbeing services with a focus on responding to trauma
- » First Nations health and wellbeing practices
- » Environmental health
- » Consumer control and health literacy

Our Social and Emotional Wellbeing Counsellor started in August 2014 and our Public Health Specialist in January 2015.

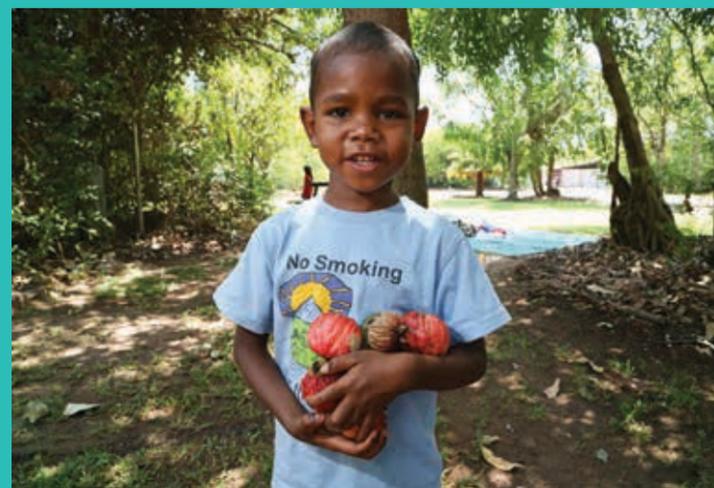
Everything is connected in health

Health relates to people’s physical, social and emotional wellbeing in the context of their culture, connections with environment, people and place and the cycles of life and death.

We recognise Biniñ health and wellbeing practices including connection to land, language, dance, bush foods, bush medicines, story, ceremony, relationships and responsibility. We continue to work with members of the community as they define the scope of our role in these areas.



MARY KOLKIWARRA NADJAMERREK TEACHES CHILDREN'S GROUND MEMBERS ABOUT THE STONE QUARRY AT MARLKAWO



MALIQUE WITH RED APPLES AT COOINDA



CLEETON, TAHLIA AND MICK PLAY TIN TIN AT AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Supporting mothers and children

Maternal and early childhood health occurs through our daily early childhood learning and wellbeing activities at the Community Centre. The family health team provides weekly health focus sessions within the learning environment.

The team support with monitoring of hearing, nutrition, physical health and emotional health. The team collaborates with the clinic for school screening, supporting family clinic visits, continuity of care and liaising with hospitals and specialists. The team supports young mothers and pregnant mothers, with the Yauk Yauk (teenage girls) initiative stemming from Bininj concerns over sexual health and early pregnancy.

Family health talks

We aim to place Bininj understanding of health and wellbeing at the centre of conversations and family health plans. To enable this, we engage in 'knowledge talks' which give people the space to discuss and reflect in First Language.

Western health and medical matters are addressed and responded to in this context, enabling a pathway that privileges people's ability to manage their health in a way that is meaningful to them.

Nutrition program: Bush foods on the menu

The nutrition team provide daily breakfast, lunch and snacks for the early years children in the Centre. The menu follows the children's nutritional needs as they grow and incorporates local bush foods.

A big community lunch every Wednesday brings everyone together.

Grief and trauma, strength and resistance

We recognise the devastating impact of genocide and generations of trauma and disadvantage. We identify the strengths, values and capabilities people have to live with and endure trauma and bring about change. We support the cultural practices that are so important to dealing with grief and loss and create other environments that promote healing and wellbeing.

This includes our many regular family health and wellbeing activities as well as a dedicated counsellor. Since September many individuals and families have sought support. From September 2014 to June 2015, 208 individual, 55 family and 33 group counselling sessions or strengths-based therapeutic conversations were held. The Yauk Yauk program emerged.

Yauk Yauk program for teenage girls

This year, the Yauk Yauk program for female adolescents was developed. Weekly On Country trips and music sessions began during after school hours, enabling a safe environment to discuss worries and hopes for the future through conversations in language about family and identity. The program helps the girls deal with community conflict and 'jealousing', relationships and responsibility. It explore issues around family, alcohol, culture and safety.

Our Family Engagement and Media Worker began the program with the Yauk Yauk and reports that its value for the young women is that it is theirs.



SIAH, KINA AND LETISHA MAKE THEIR BAGS

Sports, culture camps and environmental health

There have been a range of other community-related health activities.

- » Regular games of 'tin tin' and two netball teams playing in a weekly competition
- » Support in preparation and logistics for funerals
- » Cultural camps and supporting chronically ill people to attend with family
- » Morle Boys cleaning houses for people at risk from infection after returning from hospital
- » Working with the Morle Boys in relation to health for the young men
- » Weekly community lunches emphasising balanced diets for health and wellbeing



ABEL NABORLBORLH TEACHES BASS LINES TO ALFIE NABORLBORLH WHILE NEVILLE NAMARNYILK PLAYS GUITAR



KAYLESS, EZERIAH, ABEL NABORLBORLH AND KEITH WITH RICHIE NABARLAMBARL AT A MORNING BININJ GUNBORRK AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE



MORLE BOYS DWAYNE DAKGALAWUY, DARREN MARIMOWA, SHANNON NANGO AND PETER DJANDJOMERR WITH THE BARK SHELTER THEY CONSTRUCTED

Community development and wellbeing

A child’s environment is the biggest determinant of their wellbeing. We create environments where opportunity, safety and wellbeing are the norm. We are part of the community.

Our users are our staff, directors, leaders and critics. We adjust, respond and work to lift long term social, cultural and economic capital. Community development and wellbeing underpins our work in all areas.

Key community development activities:

- » A multigenerational Community Centre
- » Community governance and engagement
- » Morle Boys supporting the role of men in strengthening community wellbeing
- » Celebrations
- » Events that strengthen the social fabric, promoting safety and wellbeing

Our community development is driven through our multigenerational Community Centre – an inclusive, respectful and safe space. The Centre provides opportunities for learning, governance, arts, culture, healing and innovation. Generations connect, children are learning and surrounded by energy, talent and activity. This energy spreads into our outreach and On Country activities.

What happens at our Community Centre each day?

Each day the Centre comes to life with cars and buses going out for pickups at 8am, early morning staff check ins, people setting up, having breakfast, chatting, making tea and coffee, laughing, tired, grumpy, hungry, excited – we get it all, every day. Some people are passing through, others are coming in for work – and by 9am formal learning begins.

The Centre stays alive all day – the learning environment chugs along, while community meetings happen and office doors open and shut as people go about their day. The Centre is the hub of governance and leadership, creating the environment for local decision-making, community meetings and young leadership development.

The marvellous Morle Boys

The Morle Boys are the key community development team who maintain connections with people across the community. The team is made up of young men who were previously unemployed and who requested we create work for them. Their role is to provide leadership to the next generation, establishing a positive role for men which is at the heart of the wellbeing of the community.

The team is looked up to and loved by Wurdurd (children) and families. They lead weekly On Country learning for Wurdurd and support community engagement, including liaising with senior men and women. They organise monthly discos, weekly Bininj Gunborrk sessions On Country, camping trips, funeral support and collect materials for cultural activities. They also maintain the Centre and vehicles and are actively involved in community evaluation.

‘We work together with families from all communities within the Kakadu National Park, with a focus on all children from 0–8 years of age, supporting the early years team with On Country learning. We work with young people, to encourage continuation of learning and education. We also provide support to the nutrition and wellbeing team with the supply of bush tucker, and maintenance to the Community Centre and its fleet of vehicles.

Our other focus is to support cultural learning, working with Bininj Elders and Traditional Owners to ensure that Bininj culture is kept alive by facilitating Bininj Gunborrk, collection of various materials that are used by the artists for painting, weaving, spear crafting, didgeridoo and clap sticks making.’

The Morle Boys



PETER DJANDJOMERR AND MARK DJANDJOMERR CUT BARK FROM A STRINGY BARK TREE

Economic development and wellbeing

Our aim is to build the foundation for long term economic independence for the next generation.

This will be achieved through education and skills development, relevant to local economic opportunities and opportunities further afield. We work with individuals to collaboratively develop immediate and long term strategies for employment, training, enterprise development, curriculum relevance, local employment and financial and consumer literacy.

People have an appetite for work

Over the past 12 months one of our key achievements has been in employment. The appetite for work in the community has not changed. Although people have competing demands that can make work difficult to sustain, we have seen an increase in the number of employed local Bininj staff to 68 in 2014-15. We've also seen a retention rate of 76%. The emerging local workforce is not only empowering for the staff, but children are also growing up watching their parents work and seeing a different future for themselves.

This is occurring in a climate where the Government is seeking Aboriginal employment outcomes and solutions. Our flexible employment approach – that provides no barriers to employment and backs this with mentoring and training – is proving successful.



ROXANNE NABORLBORLH, JANE VADIVELOO, MARLENE BADWANA AND DARLENE THORN WITH CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT IN COMMUNITY RESEARCH



ABEL NABORLBORLH AT WORK



First Nations and Western training

All staff members are encouraged to undertake training in both cultural and Western knowledge. Balanda staff learn Kunwinkju and sessions are held regularly by a local language teacher, while others have been undertaking training in areas of compliance (eg. first aid, 4WD training) and professional development. Fourteen staff now have white cards which allow them to work on construction sites, while a further four staff are undertaking Certificate III training in early childhood education and community services.

New arts enterprise

Enterprise development has begun! The arts enterprise, Bininj Kunwaral (Our Spirit) is in its early stages and is exciting for artists and community alike. Scoping of a café business has occurred and ideas are bubbling away about future enterprises. Larger enterprises run by Aboriginal organisations will be supported by the experience and skills people acquire through their engagement with the Children's Ground Platform.



MAHALIA, ANDREW BLAKE AND KAYLESS DOING A PRINTMAKING WORKSHOP



MALCOLM DISPLAYS A PRINT HE MADE AT THE CENTRE

“Workshops continue to focus on training and the expansion of printing techniques whilst creating marketable artworks. We worked with senior artists and linked with the Jabiru Area School Culture First class, Djidbidjidbi College, Children’s Ground’s early learning pupils and children participating in after school activities. The outcomes for this six-week workshop were 67 images printed and editioned for sales at the Mahbilil Festival, Marrawuddi Gallery at the Bowali Visitors Centre in Kakadu and the Children’s Ground office.”

Andrew and Dianne Blake, regular visiting printmakers and artists

Cultural development and wellbeing

The identity of the child as they grow is the most important foundation for wellbeing. First Nations people have had their cultural identity and rights denied since colonisation.

This generation of children must be able to grow with a deep sense of cultural legitimacy and be allowed to enjoy cultural learning and wellbeing without discrimination.

Cultural knowledge and practice arises in all of our operational areas. The creative arts team promotes both traditional and contemporary practice – on any given day, artists are painting on bark, paper or morles (didgeridoos), as well as spear-making, print-making, weaving, making music, making string, telling stories and teaching.

The creative arts team works closely with all of our operational areas. Exciting things are happening as a result.

Exploring creativity and learning

First Nations teaching has a strong creative and experiential foundation. These practices include song, dance, art, paint, story – On Country as well as at the Centre. People are surrounded by learning opportunities in their First Culture, as well as opportunities to explore contemporary creative concepts and skill development.

Making art for sale

Bininj Kunwaral (Our Spirit) is our emerging arts enterprise providing talented local artists with an economic platform. This enterprise has the potential to branch into a range of cultural activities capturing the tourist market.

Art for therapy and healing

Providing space and opportunity for people to explore the creative process is a powerful healing tool. We have witnessed the power of creativity in supporting people experiencing trauma, affirming the extraordinary healing capabilities of the longest living culture in human history.

Creative arts highlights

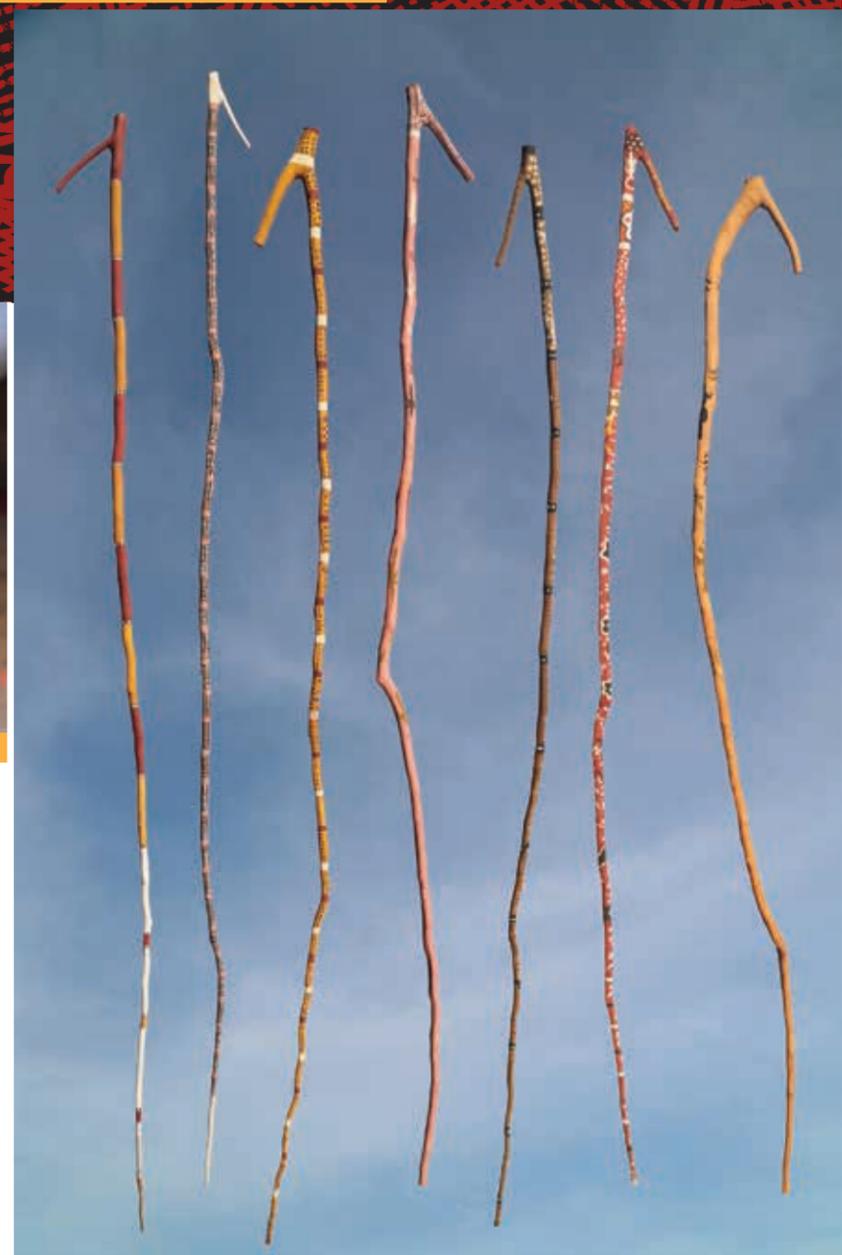
- » Mahbilil Festival, where for the first time in 15 years, dancers performed Bininj Gunborrk. This arose from weekly community sessions in community and was considered the standout from the festival director.
- » Bininj Kunwaral (Our Spirit), our arts enterprise, is emerging as a result of workshops and planning with local artists.
- » The Munmalih Sisters, a collaborative artwork, was selected as a finalist in the 2015 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award (NATSIAA).
- » Regular cultural happenings including Bininj Gunborrk, On Country learning, mentoring by senior artists, art classes and after-school walks with Traditional Owners.
- » Yauk Yauk and Yawurrinj (young people) creative arts and music sessions.
- » Community-wide activities including the Children’s Ground’s first birthday, Christmas celebrations and Harmony Day.
- » Specialist learning through targeted programs including circus, weaving, spear making, music, sewing, art, hip-hop and dance.
- » Supporting extended hours and school holidays programs.



KEITH PAINTS WITH HIS GRANDFATHER ABEL NABORLHBORLH AT GUNUNGUL CREEK. IN THE BACKGROUND ARE JOEWINA AND GRAHAM ROSTRON



CECILY DJANDJOMERR PREPARING DYE FOR WEAVING



MUNMALIH SISTERS ARTWORK CHOSEN FOR THE 2015 NATSIAA EXHIBITION

Kakadu National Park West Arnhem

The Bininj (Aboriginal people) of Kakadu West Arnhem are the first community with whom Children's Ground is working. There are approximately 450 Bininj and 90 families in the region.

Children's Ground continues its long association with Alice Springs, where our approach was first designed, with the aim of securing funding to operationalise in its town camps in coming years.



LORETTA DJANDJOMERR, JANEISHA, MALIQUE AND GWENDOLYN DJANDJOMERR TURTLE HUNTING AT MAMUKALA

Tracking people's involvement with Children's Ground

As discussed earlier in the report on pages 12 and 13 in the Evidence section, we are constantly monitoring and assessing children, families and communities – it is one of our five key reform areas. Through this monitoring, we capture data, such as the numbers of 0-8 year old children and staff who are involved with Children's Ground, and where they are from in Kakadu National Park – as seen in the map to the left.

This process of data capture tracks the quality, integrity and impact of our work – and also produces lots of interesting figures, as per the below.

Participation in family and learning activities

Family and learning activities include early years learning (centre-based, mobile and learning on country), Bininj Gunborrk (singing and dancing) and extended hours (after school, school holiday, discos and movie nights).

- » There were an estimated 113 Bininj children aged 0-8 years old in Kakadu West Arnhem during 2014-15.
- » 80 (71%) of children aged 0-8 years participated in family and learning activities.
- » 56 (75%) of children aged 0-5 years participated in family and learning activities.
- » 24 (63%) of children aged 6-8 years participated in family and learning activities.

Participation in early years learning

Early years learning activities happen five days per week and include centre-based, mobile learning and learning On Country.

- » 40 (53%) of children aged 0-5 years participated in early years learning – nearly all of whom previously did not access any early childhood services.
- » 10 children aged 6-8 years participated in early years learning.

(Note: The estimated population of 0-8 year olds in Kakadu West Arnhem was determined by a local population count, which was reviewed by local Bininj researchers and cross-referenced with school data.)



Reflections

Hurry up and wait

This was a quote from one of our staff as part of our reflection and planning. It describes the tensions – the need and the desire from the community to hurry up and address the serious issues that they face each day, while at the same time waiting and being patient, respectful and making sure everyone is on the same page. Creating the space for people to fill requires time. We need to stop and be quiet and wait if we are to encourage local direction and leadership. There are also so many things that people would like to see change and happen. So we find ourselves ‘hurrying up and waiting.’

Collective investment creates real change

Having significant non-Government funding has provided stability and certainty through times of political and policy upheavals over the past two years, where changes of Government have resulted in uncertainty for many service providers and many communities

Relationships are everything

Relationships are at the heart of our work. Relationships with community, philanthropists, staff and Government must be healthy, respectful and meaningful. This takes time. Everyone has a different language, a different lens, a different focus. People look for different things, but we all have a shared vision.

Creating the path we are walking along

Explaining Children’s Ground in an ‘elevator pitch’ is hard. We are not simply a program. We are a system, a movement, an approach – we are many activities coordinated around the interests of children and families, across whole communities. It takes time to explain what we do and even longer for people to understand the layers. We are creating a new path as we walk.

Constantly in grief

Since we began in October 2014, there have been at least twenty deaths that have had a direct impact on people we work with. This is a small community, where everyone is connected. This is an average of one death per month. We know that there have been more deaths in families that are living further away. The losses include young people and children as well as mothers, fathers, grandparents. They are devastating. Somehow people continue, coming to work, to school, to gather. Some people disappear for a while. Some people come back and others are lost for longer.

Bininj-led education

This requires planning and spontaneity, adjustments for climate and the need for sensitivity and patience. We have developed a wet and a dry season plan. We are slowly finding our rhythm and connection with custodians from different clans to honour the cultural life and knowledge of the region.



Bringing people together

We have rolled out five On Country camps that have been attended by an average of 54 people (*figure based on average attendance for three camps in second half of financial year*). One camp had 100 Bininj people across all clans attend. They provide the important opportunity for people to come together, not for a funeral or a meeting, but on their traditional lands, with their children learning, laughing, dancing and talking. The camps create a space away from the day-to-day, allowing community connection and healing.

Stress and trauma

We work in a community devastated by the effects of colonisation and constantly changing Government policy. The resulting stressors on our staff and the community create a challenging environment. The stress impacts on both Balanda and Bininj staff. We need to support staff while at the same time staying flexible and responsive if we are to reach our generational goal.

Balancing the present with the future

The everyday operations, activities and unpredictable situations can overwhelm the ongoing need to build upon our strategic path. For example, we are one and a half years into our journey and the learning environment has still not been renovated to enable the quality of learning that we would like to see. This must be a priority amongst the many daily demands. We must keep an eye on and continue towards our long term strategic goal while delivering each day.

Staff stability

As a small team working in a community with a small population the loss of any staff member can impact greatly on our continuity. Relationships are built up over time and are central to engagement and trust. Supporting a high quality and stable team is critical.

Transitioning to success

After a successful trial last year we have established a new approach to transition students who were identified as not learning at school. The dedicated space with two teachers and responsive curriculum is meeting the student’s needs. It is a ‘whatever it takes’ approach to build deeply in two knowledge systems. Children who were last year seen as ‘non-learners’ are now early readers.

Housing as a foundation

We recognise that overcrowding and poor conditions are daily challenges faced by our staff. It is a critical issue that sits outside of Children’s Ground’s approach but impacts people’s health, education and employment outcomes.

What we are doing is working

It is exciting to see a new generation coming into the world in surroundings that honour their culture, language and family. They are seeing their families working, education is based in their own culture. They are learning to read, write, do maths, Bininj Gunborrk, learn Kunwinkju, moiety (skin names), land, art ... They laugh and have fun and their families are walking with them. If we continue on this path their reality may be one of possibility rather than despair when they hit their early teenage years and then enter adulthood.



MAKAYLA, TYLAR AND KIARA

Little Tylar: getting the best start

Tylar is two years old. His parents both work at Children's Ground. They want to create change for their young son, and they see that Children's Ground has the potential to do that.

Tylar loves coming to Children's Ground because his parents, his family and his community are all around him while he learns.

So how do the key areas in our Children's Ground Platform – learning and wellbeing, family health and wellbeing, cultural development and wellbeing, community development and wellbeing and economic development and wellbeing – support a child like Tylar (and his family and community)?

Confident, connected and happy

Little Tylar comes in to the Children's Ground Community Centre each day to join in our **learning and wellbeing** activities in the early years program. He has spent half of his life now coming to Children's Ground and is confident, happy and connected.

During a typical day in the early years program, Tylar is learning both in his First Language, Kunwinjku, and in English. The early years program has recently started looking at the local Kunwinjku alphabet, with both teachers and children learning how it works. The community recently agreed on a shared orthography for the Kunwinjku and Gundjeihmi languages following decades of work by the linguist Murray Garde. It is very early days in this journey, but one that is so important.

Each day Tylar is surrounded by people teaching him about food, art, play, songs, numbers, letters, games and socialisation in a play-based learning environment. Playdates with the local childcare centre children and library visits have been a hit.



TYLAR AT BININJ GUNBORRK AT MADJINBARDI

Weekly On Country learning excursions

Tylar and the rest of the children participate in weekly On Country learning across Kakadu, walking with family, as part of our **family health and wellbeing** activities. The learnings On Country are driven largely by the location that is visited and who is doing the teaching. Tylar and his friends look at rock art, fish and hunt for turtles.

They observe the changing seasons, find bush foods and prepare them and collect materials like pandanus and ochre from the bush for artwork and weaving. The children also go out with the Morle Boys – Tylar's dad Kamahl is actually one of the Morle Boys.

Bathing, breakfast and getting dressed

Tylar sometimes has his morning bath at the Centre, gets dressed and has breakfast prepared by our nutrition team. Often this is a cooked breakfast and he might have a chance to try new foods. The primary students and early years children all start their day after eating breakfast by singing together and listen to stories.

Special songs to learn skin names

Tylar loves music and has a great talent for playing the clapsticks. This term, Tylar and the other children are learning the skin names of everyone in the Centre and a special song is sung every day to help them learn these names. Tylar and the other children have music, dance, art and singing sessions through the year as part of our **cultural development and wellbeing** activities. In addition to the learning in the Centre, the children have been going to the pool and having playdates with the local childcare centre children.

Healthy start to life

Tylar's parents want him to have the best start to life. His early childhood learning includes family health and wellbeing with visits to the clinic for early childhood health checks, health related activities and education supported by the Children's Ground Family.

Family stability and security

The community life that Tylar is growing up in includes culture camps, sports and Bininj Gunborrk (regular singing and dancing nights). Tylar also often attends the netball games that his mum, Christine, loves playing in. These **community development and wellbeing** activities provide an environment that supports Tylar's own development and opportunities.

Tylar's mum Christine also works in the early years room and has become a permanent employee of Children's Ground. This means both parents are an integral part of Tylar's day while they are going about their work. Their time together is so important for them all. The fact that Tylar's parents have stable work and permanent housing means their **economic development and wellbeing** is improving, which has flow-on effects for Tylar and the community.



ACTIVE PHYSICAL PLAY



LEARNING AND LITERACY



DRESS UPS AND STORIES



MUSIC AND SINGING WITH ELDERS



INTERACTING WITH TECHNOLOGY



KUNWINJKU LANGUAGE LEARNING

Financials

Directors' Report

The Directors present their report on Children's Ground Limited for the financial year ended 30 June 2015. The following financial information is a summary of the audited general purpose financial report.

The names and details of the Company's Directors and Board members in office during the financial year and until the date of this report are as follows. Directors and Board members were in office for this entire period unless otherwise stated:

	Meetings Held	Meetings Attended
William Roy Tilmouth Chair	5	4
Kon Karapanagiotidis Non Executive Director	5	4
Josie Rizza Non Executive Director	5	5
Clive William Ringler Non Executive Director	5	4
Adrian John Appo Non Executive Director	5	3
Rosemary Therese Addis Strategic Advisor to the Board Resigned as a Board Member in December 2014 Advisor to the Board from February 2015	3	3
Jane Shanthini Vadiveloo Chief Executive Officer	5	5

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

Children's Ground Limited is currently dependent on the Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust (KWAST) to ensure the ongoing continuance of its program in Kakadu West Arnhem. KWAST's revenue is largely dependent on the Ranger uranium mine operated by Energy Resources Australia. At the date of this report the extension of the mine beyond 2021 is uncertain. Notwithstanding this, KWAST have committed to provide three years of funding at current levels from 1 July 2015. There will be ongoing discussion about future funding from KWAST beyond that date.

Principal activities

The principal activity of Children's Ground Limited during the financial year was to provide opportunities to help break the poverty cycle for disadvantaged First Nations families and supply significant aid to needy people in the community. Such activities included accommodation care, family support services, child care, aged care, youth and employment services.

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

Children's Ground's complete audited general purpose financial report is available for download on Children's Ground website www.childrensground.org.au/publications.

Auditor's independence declaration

The auditor's independence declaration for the year ended 30 June 2015 has been received and can be found on page 4 of the financial report.

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

Director: 
 William Roy Tilmouth
 Dated this 15th day of September, 2015

Director: 
 Jane Shanthini Vadiveloo
 Dated this 15th day of September, 2015

Financials continued

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Revenue	3,783,450	4,858,249
Employee benefits expense	(2,506,847)	(1,338,316)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(65,718)	(43,277)
Professional fees	(97,290)	(69,703)
Advertising and Promotion	(13,758)	(2,397)
Computer expenses	(87,052)	(35,555)
Asset Purchases < \$1,000	(64,682)	(41,196)
Program asset purchases	(104,855)	-
Insurance	(9,627)	(21,800)
Repairs and maintenance	(24,936)	(14,451)
Travel and accommodation	(123,899)	(74,883)
Utilities and cleaning	(60,541)	(24,502)
Motor Vehicle Expenses	(104,710)	(63,359)
Client Support Consumables	(82,150)	(37,959)
Children's Service Support	(103,602)	(18,416)
Rent	(35,778)	(25,750)
Printing and stationery	(56,271)	(41,214)
Training and development	(24,840)	(4,316)
Other expenses	(96,733)	(39,520)
Surplus before income tax	120,161	2,961,635
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus for the year	120,161	2,961,635
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax		
Total comprehensive income for the year	120,161	2,961,635

The accompanying notes are included in the financial statements.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,194,141	3,157,069
Trade and other receivables	191,546	7,752
Other financial assets	1,723,957	-
Other assets	36,198	2,801
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	3,145,842	3,167,622
NON CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	405,957	314,543
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	405,957	314,543
TOTAL ASSETS	3,551,799	3,482,165
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	274,622	360,575
Employee benefits	104,748	73,792
Other financial liabilities	4,470	-
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	383,840	434,367
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES		
TOTAL LIABILITIES	383,840	434,367
NET ASSETS	3,167,959	3,047,798
EQUITY		
Retained Earnings	3,167,959	3,047,798
TOTAL EQUITY	3,167,959	3,047,798

The accompanying notes are included in the financial statements.

Financials continued

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	Retained Earnings	Total
	\$	\$
2015		
Balance at 1 July 2014	3,047,798	3,047,798
Surplus for the year	120,161	120,161
Balance at 30 June 2015	3,167,959	3,167,959
	Retained Earnings	Total
	\$	\$
2014		
Balance at 1 July 2013	86,163	86,163
Surplus for the year	2,961,635	2,961,635
Balance at 30 June 2014	3,047,798	3,047,798

The accompanying notes are included in the financial statements.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Donations, grants and other income received	3,663,840	4,836,990
Interest Received	65,261	25,390
Payments to Suppliers and Employees	(3,810,940)	(1,490,813)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	(81,839)	3,371,567
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(157,132)	(351,850)
Placement of term deposits	(1,723,957)	-
Net cash used by investing activities	(1,881,089)	(351,850)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	(1,962,928)	3,019,717
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	3,157,069	137,352
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	1,194,141	3,157,069

The accompanying notes are included in the financial statements.

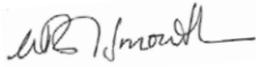
Financials continued

RESPONSIBLE ENTITIES' DECLARATION

In the opinion of the directors of Children's Ground Limited:

1. The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 6 to 21, are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Act 2012*, and;
 - (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards as stated in Note 1 and the *Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Regulations 2013*, and;
 - (b) give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2015 and of the performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policy described in Note 1 of the financial statements.
2. In the directors' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the directors.

Director: 

William Roy Tilmouth

Dated this 15th day of September, 2015

Director: 

Jane Shanthini Vadiveloo

Dated this 15th day of September, 2015

Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Statements to the Members of Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

The accompanying summary financial statements, which comprises the Director's report, Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2015, the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended, and the Responsible Entities Declaration are derived from the audited financial report of Children's Ground Limited for the year ended 30 June 2015. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on that financial report in our report dated 15 September 2015. That financial report, and the summary financial statements, do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on that financial report.

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Australian Accounting Standards and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act. Reading the summary financial statements, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report of Children's Ground Limited.

Management's Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of a summary of the audited financial report, in accordance with the financial report.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summary financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

Opinion

In our opinion, the summary financial statements derived from the audited financial report of Children's Ground Limited for the year ended 30 June 2015 are consistent, in all material respects, with that audited financial report.



SAWARD DAWSON
Chartered Accountants



Partner: Tim Flowers
Date: 15 September 2015
Blackburn, Victoria 3130

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contact@sawarddawson.com.au

PRINCIPALS: Bruce Saward FCA Peter Shields FCA
Tim Flowers CA Joshua Morse CA

ASSOCIATE: Cathy Braun CA
CONSULTANT: Cliff Dawson FCA

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FOUNDATION
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FOUNDATION



donkeywheel

Ramses Foundation



Whitbread
Foundation

Gailey Lazarus Foundation

The Duggan Foundation

CORPORATE AND NGO SUPPORTERS



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by combining extraordinary lives

bioRevive



OXFAM
Australia

Our valued staff

We thank all of our amazing staff members and consultants, past and present. You guys are awesome.

Abel Naborlhborlh

Alfie Naborlhborlh

Alfred Rotumah

Amalie Finlayson

Andrew Blake

Andrew Ralph

Anna Dempsey

Annie Cameron

Barry Bentley

Belinda Djandjomerr

Belinda Morton

Benita Alangale

Bram Morton

Cadell Goodman

Caroline Nesbitt

Cecily Djandjomerr

Christianna Djandjomerr

Christine Alangale

Clancy Allen

Clive Lane

Damien Kamholtz

Darius Cameron

Darlene Thorn

Darren Marimowa

David Cameron

David Dodd

David James

Dianne Blake

Dionn Heitmann

Dominic O'Brien

Dwayne Djandjomerr

Elizabeth Marabarli

Elizabeth Newell

Emily Petterson

Erica Flentje

Eva Petterson

Felicity Douglas

Ferdi Hepworth

Georgina Namarnyilk

Graham Rostron

Gwendolyn Djandjomerr

Harold (Robbie) Goodman

Helen Barr

Ian Djandjomerr

Jacqui Stewart

Jamie Siebert

Jane Shanthini Vadiveloo

Jarius Cameron

Jasmine Nabobbob

Jill Vizec

Joanne Ferguson

Joe Ashley

John Lemibanda

Josabella Cameron

Joy Nabegeyo

Julie Poloni

Justin Cooper

Kamahl Djandjomerr

Kaylene Djandjomerr

Kestianna Djandjomerr

Kimberlee Bashforth

Kimberley Namarnyilk

Lee Nabarlambarl

Lena Tan

Lenny Wood

Leonie Sheedy

Lisa Potter

Lisa Walker

Loretta Djandjomerr

Mark Djandjomerr

Marlene Badwana

May Nango

Nerisha Nabalwad

Neville Namarnyilk

Nicole Alangale

Patrick Ahwon

Paul Leary

Peace Wurrkgidj

Perlin Simon

Peter Djandjomerr

Rachel Price

Raylene Djandul

Rebekka Atz

Rhonda Henry

Rhonda Williams

Richie Nabarlambarl

Roxanne Naborlhborlh

Russell Haines

Sampson Henry

Sandra Djandjul

Sarah Bilis

Selone Djandjomerr

Shanice Looker

Shannon Nango

Shari Aluni

Shirely Brown

Shivanthi Perera

Sonya Nango

Sophie Waincymer

Stephanie Djandjul

Susan Indawanga

Susanne Haines

Tim Djandjomerr

Vaishali Sane

Vienna Wood / Buramura

Violet Lawson

OUR VOLUNTEERS

AJ Lark

Andrew Pascoe

Ben Rak

Cassandra Gill

Fiona McDonald

Haydn Robins

Jason Phu

Jess Ford

Julia Mitchell

Justin Rabbe

Kathryn Gibson

Maddie Towler-Lovell

Megan Olney

Prashanth Sivakumaran

Rosi Aryal

Organisational directory

ORGANISATION

Children's Ground Limited ACN 154 403 086

ORGANISATIONAL FORM

Company Limited by Guarantee

TAX STATUS

Public Benevolent Institution

Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR 1)

Tax Charity Concession

TRADING NAME

Children's Ground

DIRECTORS

William Tilmouth

Adrian Appo OAM

Clive Ringler

Josie Rizza

Rosemary Addis

Kon Karapanagiotidis OAM

Jane Vadiveloo (Executive Director)

MANAGING DIRECTOR

David James

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Instagram: instagram.com/childrensground/

Phone: +61 (0)447 903 804



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