

ANNUAL REPORT  
2015-16



## Our vision

An Australia free from poverty and inequity.

For families to 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 with agency over their social, cultural, political and economic future.



SARAH BILLIS TEACHING THE WURDURD HOW TO STRIP THE PAPERBARK DURING LEARNING ON COUNTRY

## Values

Our work is guided and informed by our commitment to:

**Equity:** We believe that power, knowledge and opportunity are shared by all people.

**Agency:** We support, reinforce and honour people's power over themselves and their lives.

**Creativity:** We celebrate and harness the spark of imagination to create change in all our work.

**Love:** We respect and care deeply about the wellbeing of all individuals, families and communities.

**Openness:** We value honesty, transparency and accountability in all our work.

**Family:** We prioritise family and consider everyone touching us as family.

Images: Dominic O'Brien and Children's Ground Communications Staff

Cover Image: Mena in the Community Centre, Jabiru

Images copyright Children's Ground

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“We’ve got our own language and teaching standards in our own ways for our children. Every nation of people have got their own teaching methods and qualifications. We teach by our own knowledge and our own training with our own minds in our own homeland.”

MK Turner, OAM,  
Children’s Ground Ambassador

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## OUR COMMITMENT TO FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

The Children’s Ground model was developed to address extreme poverty and inequity in communities experiencing disadvantage. We acknowledge that First Nations communities in Australia, and across the world, have suffered grave historical injustices and experience disadvantage and trauma at a disproportionately higher rate than the general population. It is these communities with which we are making our first partnerships.

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 uphold the rights of First Nations families and communities to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, training, education and wellbeing of their children, consistent with the rights of the child.

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 believe that by achieving this, Australia and the world will benefit.

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 Jabiru on the land of the Mirarr People and in Alice Springs on the land of the Arrernte People.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



WILLIAM TILMOUTH

## William Tilmouth, Chair

I am proud to be the current Chair of Children's Ground. I have spent my entire life waiting to see what will happen if our people are given choice and real agency in their everyday lives; to determine how they would like to live their lives and to have ownership over the direction they take. Aboriginal people deserve that right as responsible free agents.

Aboriginal people don't desire to have poor health, to have diseases that have been eradicated in other parts of the world. Aboriginal people don't desire overcrowding because of poor housing design and second rate building practices. My people don't desire to be second class citizens and drift with the currents of prescribed solutions. My people don't desire educational failure because education is not designed for them.

The way that things are done has led to Aboriginal people being disadvantaged, disempowered at every corner of every street. The odds are stacked against them. They are expected to participate in things that they have not worked on or have not designed themselves; this is a fundamental failure of the past and present.

Give our people choice and the means. Let them vote with their feet. They will participate, they will develop, they will grow and the whole community will flourish with them. The ripple effect is wide felt.

We believed Children's Ground would work. Now I see it works. I have watched in Kakadu and in Alice Springs the awakening of hope, refreshed voices, real engagement and participation, and a real zest for life.

We are seeing young leaders, young mothers, children, grandparents walking together and creating change. We are working alongside families, as we take the first steps in our 25-year journey of intergenerational change. Our first evaluation report shows that we are moving in the right direction. The next generation is on a new path.

This is collective impact – a success we share with the community, the local school, local organisations and the partnerships we have built.

Our supporters have been generous not only in their money but in their commitment and belief. This has been so important for a young organisation. We live and work in environments that are always changeable. Our aim is to create certainty for the future.

I see Children's Ground as stacking the odds in favour of Aboriginal people. The fundamental idea of empowering people happens by simply listening. I remember Roxanne saying, "before Children's Ground there was nothing" and listening to the senior Grandmothers in Alice Springs crying for the future of their grandchildren.

Now there is a new reality, supported by Children's Ground but created by the community. They are devising solutions that are practical and pragmatic and that achieve safety, education, good health and employment while protecting our cultures. Let's work with them and empower them to have choice and to feel proud about the decisions they make and the outcomes they achieve.

I would like to especially thank the Research Advisory Group. This group has guided us through the first steps of our longitudinal evaluation, providing invaluable advice and confidence that we can build the evidence base needed for whole scale change.

On behalf of the Board I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all our supporters, on whose generous commitment of time, money and expertise, we depend. Most especially, I express my gratitude and respect to Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation and its Chair, Annie Ngalmirama.

I would like to recognise the leadership and vision of the Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust and its Chair, David Ward, our outstanding philanthropic supporters and the Australian Government for creating the conditions to allow a new generation to be heard and allowed to flourish.

I give special thanks to our staff, led by Jane Vadivelloo. They not only work with vision and empathy, they continue to perform above and beyond. They are driven by their passion for the change we are creating.

Finally, to the people, the communities. We believe in what you believe in; a better and stronger future for everyone. You are why we exist. Children's Ground is yours and you have made it yours. Thank you, one and all.

Thank you for your interest in Children's Ground and, most importantly, for sharing our conviction that the status quo is unacceptable, and that deep, enduring change is possible. I invite you to read this report, and I look forward to another year of resounding success for everyone involved in Children's Ground.

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



JANE VADIVELOO

## Jane Vadiveloo, Chief Executive Officer

Something special is happening. I have worked with William Tilmouth, our Chair, for over 15 years. He has always led with the resolve that the fundamental truth lies in the agency and voice of the people, from whom we find the answers. This has guided the creation of Children's Ground: the relentless leadership and vision of local people. It is simple, but it takes time, patience, and responsiveness.

Children's Ground was created with the Australian Government as an approach of social innovation. The development and implementation of the Children's Ground Approach over the past few years has been made possible by funding provided by Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust, our amazing philanthropic family and the Australian Government. It has allowed us to put in place a clear strategic path that responds flexibly to community passion and realities.

The impact has been outstanding. This year, the pursuit of this vision has yielded a wealth of opportunities with children and families in Kakadu West Arnhem – from early childhood and primary learning, to employment, arts and culture; people looking after their minds, bodies and spirits. Days, evenings, weekends, holidays – a hive of activity is taking place, some of it visible and some of it quiet, more hidden work that occurs in private conversation and actions.

In partnership with the Jabiru Area School, all children aged 4-5 years of age in the region are now engaged in early childhood education and wellbeing. Together we have achieved universal access, doubling the number of children engaged since the beginning of Children's Ground.

Long term unemployed people are working regularly and the community is mobilised around the future of their children. The status quo has been disrupted and the odds are shifting in favour of First Nations people. It is a privilege to be part of this.

At the same time, the environment in which we work is ever changing – from Government to community. Over the past 12 months the impending closure of the Ranger uranium mine in Kakadu has been of particular importance as this is the key source of income for our key partner, Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC), and the trust fund they established, the Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust. Children's Ground expects minimal further funding from KWAAT as a result of these circumstances. Correspondence received from GAC states that they will not be supporting Children's Ground operations beyond September 2018.

Our strategic investment plan has always been to support our early stage delivery through local community funds (KWAAT) as we built our philanthropic family and began to evidence outcomes towards increased Government funding. The unexpected change in the mining forecast means that we are diversifying our risk from a dependence on a single source of funds to a broader collective base. Children's Ground remains committed to supporting Bininj families and children in the region and is exploring with the community and GAC the most effective ways to continue to do this into the long term.

At the call of the grandmothers, we have returned to Alice Springs with excitement as we begin a new path with the next generation. At the same time we are

progressing plans for a partnership with a third community. As per our strategic plan, our aim is to be working with three communities in our first five years to evidence the approach and build the practice and learnings from each to inform leading innovation in this arena.

I would like to thank the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation and its Chair, Annie Ngalmirama and CEO, Justin O'Brien for a groundbreaking partnership and the Board of the Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust for its bold leadership. Our key philanthropists, Gandel Philanthropy, Third Link, the PMF Foundation and the Ian Potter Foundation have been magnificent in their support. To the wonderful families and to Igniting Change all of whom give not only their money but their love and encouragement. To the Australian Government for its continued support for this innovation. This is collective investment at its very best.

It is an honour to work with the staff of Children's Ground, our Board and our ambassadors. They are extraordinary individuals who commit their time, talent and passion to demand and deliver a new reality. Finally to the children, the adults and the grandparents – you light our path. We walk with you.

Children's Ground – the Ground upon which Children live – their sovereign ground, their cultural ground, their playground, their identity, their home and family, their place of love, safety, and opportunity.

# HIGHLIGHTS: KAKADU WEST ARNHEM 2015–16

The Annual Report 2015–16 for Children’s Ground provides an update on the past year’s activities and finances, and complements two other reports: the 2016 Community Report and the Progress and Evaluation Report 2016.

For further information visit [www.childrensground.org.au](http://www.childrensground.org.au)

Together they represent our accountability to the communities with whom we work, our funders, staff and other partner organisations.

The Bininj community of Kakadu West Arnhem is mobilised towards the future of their children. We have witnessed wonderful things happening for children, families and the community through the year.

Children are getting a great start to life...



83%

of children (62 of 75 Bininj children aged 0–8) who participated in learning activities

70

early childhood health sessions

123

days of after-school activities with an average attendance of more than 12 children

1st

Children’s Ground early childhood sessions in 3 communities in Alice Springs.

Families are striving for the best for their children...



74

Bininj (Aboriginal) staff in Kakadu West Arnhem in flexible employment (with an average engagement of 50 employees per month)

89%

staff retention rate showing a consistent desire for meaningful employment

154

individuals engaged with Children’s Ground’s counsellor

1st

local Arrernte educators and grandmothers employed in delivery of early childhood education in Alice Springs

Community is engaged with a lot to celebrate...



249

community members of all ages engaged with Children’s Ground in 2015

107

individual artists across all ages engaged in Bininj Kunwaral creative arts enterprise

33

number of Bininj Kunborrk sessions during 2015, more than doubled from 2014

1st

walk, talk and act in Alice Springs region, with early childhood delivery led by grandmothers

# HOW WE CREATE CHANGE

## THE CHILDREN'S GROUND APPROACH

The status quo for First Nations communities in Australia is unacceptable. Children who are most vulnerable are at profound risk of becoming statistics in child protection, prison, school failure, welfare dependency, avoidable disease, and mental health systems, culminating in premature death. This is despite more than three decades of high aspirations, huge effort and a great deal of money, expended by governments, philanthropists, non-government organisations (NGOs) and communities themselves.

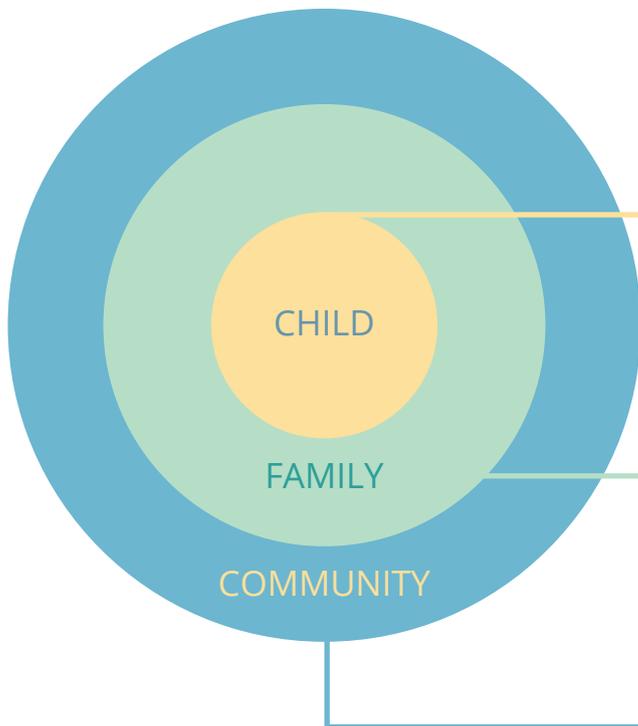
The Children's Ground Approach (CGA) is about restoring agency – the ability to make decisions and have control over your life. At Children's Ground, we believe the problem is the structure of the system in which service responses have been designed, funded and delivered.

Most service responses are siloed, problem/deficit focussed, inadequately funded over short periods, and consequently suffer from low aspirations or capacity for excellence. Moreover, services are rarely provided in people's first language, generally lack local voice and agency, and are underpinned by law and policy that fails the equity and dignity test, and often even contravene international agreements to protect human rights.

The CGA was devised as an alternative to the current piecemeal 'services delivery' system. It is a 25-year, intergenerational model that tackles the social, structural and economic determinants and inequities that combine to shape the devastating life experiences of children living in communities of extreme poverty and inequity.

We work with each child, their family, and the whole community, with a priority on valuing their culture, to achieve academic, social, family, cultural, economic and emotional wellbeing.

## Our Child-Centred Integrated Approach



### Aspiration

Children and young people are thriving – engaged in life, brimming with laughter, pride, confidence and opportunities.



### Aspiration

Families are strong, respectful, value each other and support their children to grow, learn and thrive.



### Aspiration

Communities care for each other and provide a safe environment for every child. They lead their cultural, social and economic future.



# CHILDREN'S GROUND THEORY OF CHANGE



Children's Ground's Theory of Change – how we believe change should happen – operates at three levels: Community, Systems, and Society. We measure our impact through the Children's Ground outcomes framework, and as our partnership develops over 25 years, we anticipate meeting the aspirations of the community for its children's and families' futures. See section Measuring Impact (p.18) for more information.

## Community Change

Children's Ground works with communities experiencing intergenerational disadvantage and inequity to build the Children's Ground service platform (see overpage) so that families walk alongside their children, gain access to, engage with and are drivers of quality services that include all of community.

## System Change

The evidence of the effectiveness of the Children's Ground Approach helps its implementation in policy and practice across governments and service providers to create an integrated system which meets the needs and builds on the strengths of communities.

## Societal Change

Children's Ground amplifies community voices, lives, achievements and identities through social and mainstream media, to build respect for people, cultures, histories and aspirations, so that all people in our society are valued and First Nations history and future is celebrated. Public support helps underpin System Change.

The CGA 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.

The Children's Ground Approach has distilled Aspirations articulated by families, in community settings, for a future focussed on their children with opportunities grounded in a sure sense of identity, language and culture, and supported by educational excellence in First Language and English.

The Children's Ground Approach addresses existing systems failings through our **five key reform areas**:

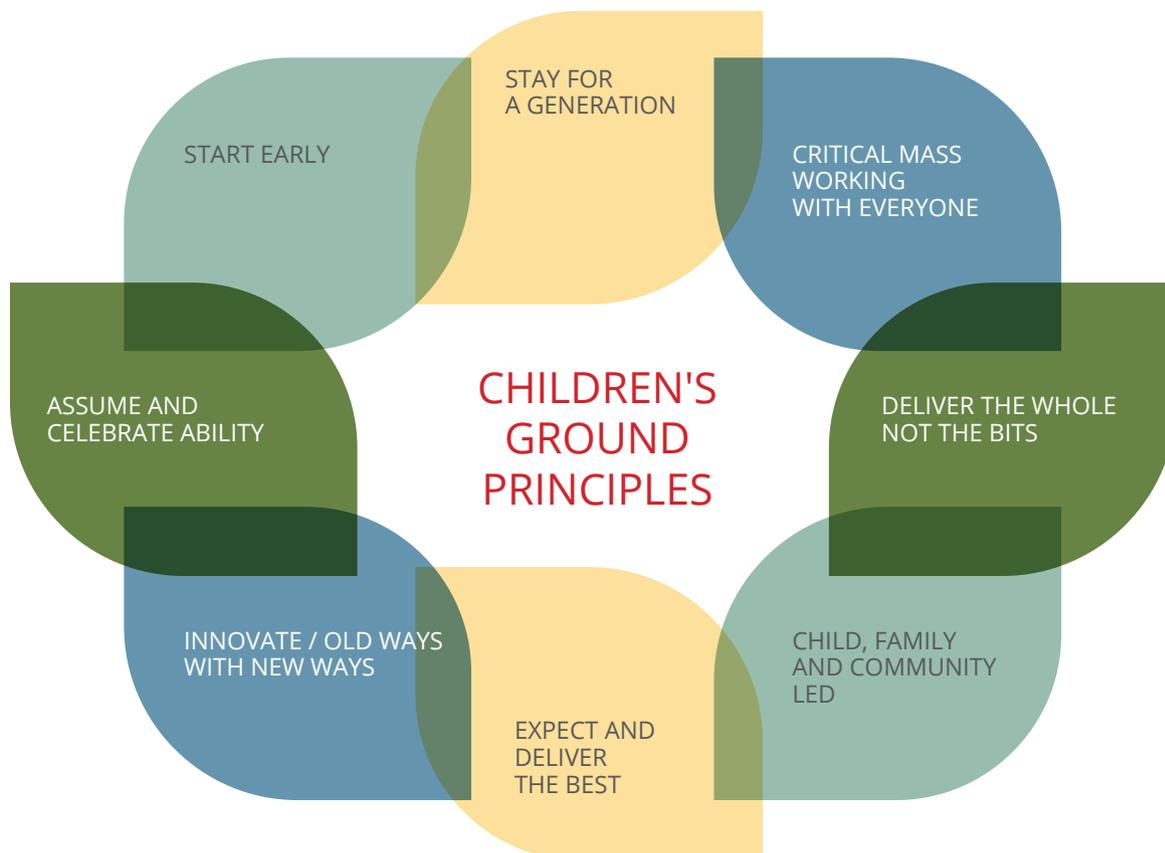
- > **Governance:** Blending robust corporate governance with strong community ownership
- > **Investment:** Collective, outcomes-based investment
- > **Workforce:** Local and sustainable, with cultural, community and sector experts
- > **Evidence:** Ongoing monitoring and evaluation, supported by a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

**The Children's Ground Platform** integrates five operational areas.

- > Learning and wellbeing
- > Family health and wellbeing
- > Community development and wellbeing
- > Economic development and wellbeing
- > Cultural development and wellbeing.

We believe it is critical that the work we do is based on evidence. Our longitudinal evaluation will provide essential evidence in determining the effectiveness of the Children's Ground Approach. It is helping refine and improve our approach as we learn through action research.

The Children's Ground Platform is underpinned by our eight principles that inform the delivery of our integrated services.



# KAKADU WEST ARNHEM



MARK DJANDJOMERR DANCING AT MAHBILIL FESTIVAL

Children's Ground's first partnership was with the Mirarr people of Kakadu/West Arnhem (KWA). In 2013 they partnered with us with a bold vision, along with a number of philanthropic funders and the Australian Government, towards the future of Bininj (Aboriginal) children in the region of Jabiru, Northern Territory.

Led by the families in the community, we provide early learning and primary education; nutrition, family health and wellbeing; creative arts; employment; community and economic development. Governance of activities and their priorities are founded on and maintained through community meetings. The activities are based at our multigenerational Community Centre, delivered on country as well as through outstations across the region. The delivery prioritises first culture and language, and it is upon this foundation that contemporary Western and global learning opportunities are provided.

Our Co-Directors, Mark Djandjomerr and May Nango, have continued to provide sound and consistent leadership to the Director, staff and the entire community. Working closely with the Director, Mark and May provide guidance on strategic and operational matters as they arise. This year we have seen the emergence of new leaders, with an increasing commitment to the work of Children's Ground and to fulfil their vision for the future of Bininj children in the region.

Kaylene Djandjomerr, Annie Cameron and Sonya Nango are dedicated to early childhood and learning. Graham Rostron is dedicated to cultural development through the creative arts and Learning on Country. Abel Naborlhborlh and Cecily Djandjomerr are both senior artists and educators with grandchildren and young family members involved with Children's Ground. Together with the younger leaders they provide critical guidance and leadership across all of our operations, steering Children's Ground to operate in accordance with Bininj lore and community expectations.

## LEARNING & WELLBEING

We know from successive reports that educational outcomes for First Nations children in remote communities remains intolerably below those of non-Aboriginal children, including access to and participation in critical early childhood education. Children's Ground's focus has been on those children and families previously not engaged in early childhood and struggling in the mainstream educational system.

Placing the child at the centre of what we do, we provide holistic, quality, and individualised early year's education for each child. Local Bininj educators work with Western early childhood and primary trained staff to deliver a model of education that promotes first language and culture as well as the best in English literacy and numeracy.

We have continued to build strong foundations for this generation of children, creating access and encouraging increasing participation in early childhood activities. We have continued our focus on children aged 0-8 years through our Community Centre in Jabiru, Learning on Country, mobile outreach to outstations across the Kakadu region and after hours programs. We have continued to work closely with the local public Jabiru Area School and together we now provide early childhood education universally to all children in the region aged 4-5 years.



LEE NABARLAMBARL WITH CURTIS OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

“Our Bininj (Aboriginal) kids are learning the Balanda (non-Aboriginal) way too. We want them to be strong in both ways and grow up to be good parents and teach their children the right way. We want them to know in their mind and in their heart who they are.”

Mark Djandjomerr, Children’s Ground Co-Director

Along with the excitement of watching children grow, play and learn, we have had a number of challenges across the year with changes in our Western-trained early childhood and primary staff after our first two years of operation. Retention of non-Aboriginal staff is challenging for remote organisations. However, a new dynamic team has joined our stable local workforce of Bininj teachers and education support workers, with the stability of local staff remaining a consistent asset to our learning and wellbeing operations. Another challenge has arisen with an increasing number of primary aged students wishing to engage with Children’s Ground, highlighting a need to find alternative infrastructure to support the growth in numbers of this cohort of children into the future.

### Key Activities:

- > Delivery on a school-term basis of bi-cultural and bi-lingual early childhood education for children aged 0–5 through Centre-based, mobile outreach and on-country learning sessions
- > Learning on Country remains core to our cultural-based learning
- > Regular creative arts learning activities with senior artists at the Bininj Kunwaral creative arts space, co-located with the early years learning at the Community Centre
- > Primary years learning, at the request of mothers, for a growing cohort of children aged 6–8 years not engaging in mainstream primary education. Learning has an intense focus on English literacy and numeracy balanced with First language and culture learning and content
- > Transition to school and in-school support for a small cohort of children struggling with a mainstream/Western education model at the Jabiru Area School
- > Extended hours: after school care and holiday programs for children aged 6–15 and their families from across the community
- > Bininj Kunborrk (traditional song and dance), although with less regularity due to community matters
- > On-country camps and Bininj Munborrk (On-country walks)
- > Curriculum development, particularly in the cultural domain.

One of the highlights this year was the development of language resources created through local artist and young person Corben Nabanardi, with the guidance and support of art consultant Andrew Blake. This was a collaborative initiative between Community Prophets, Bininj Kunwok Language Project, Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, Blake Consultants, Djidbidjidbi Residential College and Children’s Ground. After decades of work, linguist Murray Garde finalised the orthography for the region with the Bininj people. This led to the development of a series of phonics books for the Bininj Kunwok languages through money from the Australian Government Indigenous Languages Support program. These resources are now being used in our learning program.



EARLY YEARS LEARNER BOB IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE



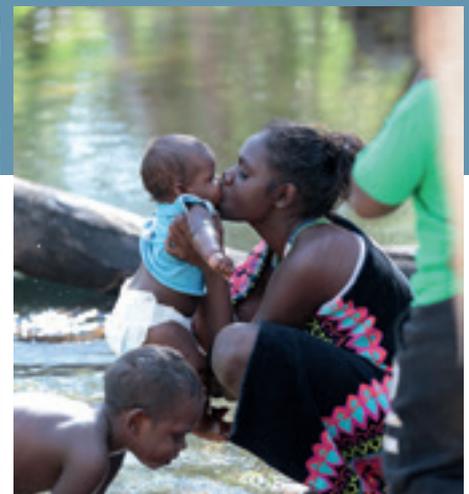
MALCOLM JNR IN THE PRIMARY CLASS



KEITH, KAYLESS AND MAHALIA ON A VISIT TO THE JABIRU CLINIC



KEZIA



URIAH DJANDJOMERR WITH BABY ZACINIAS

## FAMILY HEALTH & WELLBEING

The stark reality for each Biniŋ family is that at any time, one or more family members are suffering from ill-health and trauma. Furthermore, grief and loss have a persistent and pervasive presence for Biniŋ, with 17 deaths being recorded between October 2013 and December 2015 of people immediately connected to children and families involved with Children's Ground. Almost half of these were under the age of 50 and died prematurely. Ill-health, grief, loss and trauma have a direct impact on the learning and development of children and the wellbeing of the community.

Integrated into the Learning and Community Development platform areas, our Health and Wellbeing team work across primary health, maternal and child health, social and emotional wellbeing, nutrition and environmental health. Our approach is designed to support the strengthening and revitalisation of wellbeing practices with a focus on consumer control and improved agency over health. Counselling is geared towards exploring the devastating impacts of intergenerational trauma and disadvantage, grief and tremendous loss, identifying the inherent strengths, values and capabilities people have to endure these circumstances and bring about change.

Conversations around health and wellbeing occur with children, young people, adults and elders; with individuals, with families and in whole of community contexts.

**“[Health] is addressed as part of everyday life. It's not something special you go to the clinic or get the nurse for it's actually something that can be done as part of ordinary, everyday life which is so important.”**

Sue Haines, Director, Kakadu West Arnhem

### Key activities:

- > The development of a family health plan framework with Biniŋ people, via health talks and planning in the community
- > Integration of child health in the learning environment through individualised learning and wellbeing plans, weekly 'health sessions', physical health and exercise activities, and play and learning-based therapeutic sessions
- > Child health collaboration with the clinic including child health checks and dental care with community follow up
- > Attendance at clinic, hospital and specialist appointments with children and adults liaising with health services and professionals to support care continuity
- > Collaboration with key service providers through referrals and partnerships, with Jabiru Clinic, Jabiru Area School and the Gunbang (alcohol) Action Group
- > Working with community development, the Yawkyawk (young women) working team and the Morle Boys (young men's working team) around environmental health and looking after housing and home environments to the benefit of child, family and community health
- > Counselling to elders, adults and young people around physical health, alcohol and addiction, family safety, unresolved grief and loss, conflict, child safety and wellbeing, school attendance, work-related stress, housing and financial stress, and worry about loss of culture
- > Support for families with healthy food choices and cooking
- > Daily provision of nutritious meals to children, families and staff at the Centre and at on-country learning sessions.

One of the highlights this year was the Family Wellbeing Course delivered in partnership with Batchelor Institute. An Aboriginal-designed program, the Family Wellbeing Course is an intensive course run over 12 weeks that covers family violence, child safety, communication, behaviour and creating family wellbeing. More than 15 people were engaged at some point during the course, with nine people completing their Certificate II as part of their journey to become facilitators.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & WELLBEING

Our Community Development and Wellbeing approach acknowledges that a child's environment is the biggest determinant of their overall wellbeing. It also seeks to strengthen the social fabric of the community and encompasses a range of activities discussed in other operational areas.

Our multigenerational Community Centre is an inclusive, respectful and safe space. It forms the hub of community connection and engagement, bringing families together from across the Jabiru region with a focus on the future of their children. Generations connect, children are learning, surrounded by energy, talent, leadership and activity. Opportunities to celebrate and share in the strength and identity of the community are provided through birthday celebrations, Bininj Kunborrk (traditional song and dance), on-country camps and special events.

Celebrations are central to our work and our model. In a context where there is such hardship and grief, creating space to celebrate achievement, to laugh and bring people together for positive events creates new realities, shared joy and hope.'

In November 2015 a Community Development Coordinator joined our team in Kakadu. In partnership with a host of local organisations, plus the Fair Tradie Project from WA, the Coordinator has driven a powerful initiative to address the state of housing for Bininj children and families in the Jabiru region. From an audit conducted at Madjinbardi, where children, staff and our two co-directors live, all houses were identified as being overcrowded, having inadequate washing and showering facilities, inadequate food storage and cooking facilities, faulty and often dangerous electrical systems and all had reported issues with access to water. The audit was conducted with a view to addressing the most pressing needs of the community, to return all houses to a safe and healthy standard for the children and families that reside there in collaboration with the local housing association, Warnbi Aboriginal Corporation, as well as Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation.



BABY CURTIS WITH THE MORLE BOYS



THE YAWKYAWK TEAM: CORIANNE, GWENDOLYN, MARTINA, DAYNA AND KIMBERLEY WITH JANINE



KEZIA COLLECTING MANYILK (SEDE GRASS) TO MAKE A TRADITIONAL PAINTBRUSH



CHILDREN'S GROUND BININJ KUNBORRK DANCERS AT MAHBILIL FESTIVAL

“I had heard and read much about Children’s Ground over the past couple of years. The information provided appeared to be compelling, well thought out and quite different to the failed programs that had been tried over very many years. It was on this basis that my family personally made the decision to support Children’s Ground.

...I decided to visit Children’s Ground in September 2016 to assess its effectiveness and review the potential for further support going forward. What I found during my visit was nothing short of remarkable. The planning and philosophy that had been presented to me some time ago were in place and a reality... The success of the program is palpable.”

Richard Rogers, long-time private and family supporter

#### Key activities:

- > Community Development Coordinator extended operational area into environmental health and housing
- > Audit of housing at Madjinbardi in partnership with Fair Tradie Project, Warnbi and GAC
- > Interagency collaboration
- > Local workforce development with Morle Boys and Yawkyawk Team.

One of the highlights this year has been a renewed and increasing appetite in the yawkyawk (young women) and yawurrinj (young men) in the community development space. The Morle Boys support the early years learning activities of children with logistics, transport, vehicle and equipment maintenance, as well as preparing traditional manme (food) for Learning on Country. This year they have faced challenges as they sought to balance personal and community issues with work commitments.

The Morle Boys showed amazing growth, commitment and development this year and have become stronger and more focussed as a result of working through adversity and finding solutions for the future.

The Yawkyawk Team developed from a sense that the young women wanted a space and team of their own to work in conjunction with the yawurrinj (young men), supporting the learning, development and wellbeing of children through the creation of healthier home environments that engender a sense of pride and ownership in the young women as well as the residents.



KEZIA AND TYLAR PAINTING THE MURAL WALL AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE



ABEL NABORLHBORLH TEACHING HIS GRANDSON KEITH HOW TO MAKE A PAINTBRUSH DURING LEARNING ON COUNTRY

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & WELLBEING

High turnover of non-Aboriginal staff and limited options for employment for local people is typical in remote communities in Australia. Our Economic Development & Wellbeing approach addresses this by building the foundations for long-term economic independence for Bininj people. Aligned with our commitment to workforce reform, our vision is to nurture a permanent local, skilled and sustainable workforce. We achieve this through our 'no barriers to employment' approach met with the provision of targeted training, enterprise development, financial support and assistance and through delivering a model of education that builds a future skills base for the region.

### Key activities:

- > Workforce engagement – (74 Bininj staff members employed across the year with an average of 50 employees per quarter)
- > Professional development and training, both domestically and overseas
- > Arts enterprise development (see below)
- > Micro-financing and financial literacy (see Progress and Evaluation Report).

Key highlights this year have been the presentation of local staff at the national SNAICC conference in Perth, the NTCOSS conference and attendance at the second International Indigenous Early Childhood Education Gathering in Victoria, Canada.

## CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT & WELLBEING

The identity of the child as they grow is a critical foundation for wellbeing. Most First Nations people have had their cultural identity and rights denied since colonisation. It is our conviction that this generation of children must be able to grow into the future 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 and forms a key part in children's learning.

Bininj Kunwaral creative arts space has been established as an arts enterprise, building an economic base for the artists who work there, and their families. The arts space is co-located in our Community Centre and is integrated into children's learning through creative arts and cultural practice sessions both at the Centre and on country. Art making is balanced as a vehicle for education, deep healing and as a powerful tool for self-expression.

The Creative Arts team have also facilitated the development of the much celebrated Black Rock Band. This band consists of yawurrinj (young men) whose song writing is focussed on meaningful local and cultural content that engages the wurdurd (children) in confident cultural and creative expression.



KEITH, KAYLESS AND ABRIEL GET READY FOR BININJ KUNBORRK WITH SELONE DJANDJOMERR AND ALFIE NABORLHBORLH



KIMBERLEY NAMARNYILK TEACHING MAHALIA, KIARA AND SUSAN HOW TO MAKE DAMPER



ANNIE CAMERON AND JASMINE NABOBBOB WITH TWO FIRST NATIONS DANCERS AT THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS EARLY CHILDHOOD GATHERING IN VICTORIA, CANADA

### Key activities include:

- > First Nations knowledge and practice embedded in all key areas e.g. cultural-based learning; bush foods; connection to land, language, people and ceremony; governance
- > Emerging initiatives that support cultural identity and life e.g. Bininj Kunwaral, Black Rock Band
- > Collaborative mural projects
- > Cross-community partnerships to support learning and pursuits of young artist previously disengaged
- > Enterprise development and income generation for artists through local art sales with Warradjan Cultural Centre and Marrawuddi Gallery, licensing, education demonstrations and commissions from Kakadu National Park and the CSIRO
- > Recognition for artists with entries into the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award
- > Visiting artist program (dance, street art, textiles, printmaking).

Highlights this year have included supporting Ray Mudjandi, a sixteen year old artist struggling with schooling but with incredible talent and passion as an artist. Supported by Djidbidjidi Residential College, his mother, West Arnhem College, GAC and Children's Ground, he created a superhero series on bark that exhibited in Darwin, was bought for the Northern Territory Museum and Art Gallery and attracted national media attention, featured by the ABC and the National Indigenous Times. Another highlight has been the growth and leadership of senior artists Graham Rostron and Abel Naborlhborlh, working closely with and guiding the Creative Arts Coordinator across all operations and celebrations in the creative arts space.



EARLY YEARS LEARNER SUSAN



SUSAN, KEZIA, KAYLESS AND MENA LOOK AT THE ROCK ART AT RED LILLY



SUSAN WITH HER FATHER ROMEO

## SUSAN'S LEARNING JOURNEY

In August 2015, the early years program had a Learning on Country day to a place known as 'Red Lilly' near Gunbalanya. The Morle Boys went early to dig a ground oven to cook lunch. The wurdurd (children) came after breakfast and a 'Balanda' (Western) learning session at the Centre. Once at the location, there was a damper-making session incorporating the 'traditional' way of preparing damper and new recipes (with cheese, herbs and dried fruits). The group was then joined by Alfred Niangle, a Traditional Owner from Gunbalanya, and his family. Alfred told stories from that country and took the group to a special place where young warriors used to practice their spear skills – the rock still has visible spearheads – and to a rock art site. The site also houses the remains of some of his family members. Alfred talked of his wish to have his family buried in the 'right way', culturally.

Susan, aged 2, participated in the day. Her dad was part of the Morle Boys and helped to prepare the ground oven and spent the day alongside Susan as she listened to these stories. Her mum was also working with the children that day, helping to make damper and prepare the vegetables to be cooked for dinner. She was also alongside Susan as the stories of that country were told.

Back in the Centre, Susan is surrounded by family as part of her learning journey. Learning from the Western early childhood specialist staff and Bininj educators she enjoys a play-based learning experience in Kunwinjku and in English. Daily engagement at the Centre includes reading, play-based learning, social engagement and time to rest and eat. She sees her mother working, supporting the early childhood activities and working in the media space. She sees her father working with the Morle Boys, coming in and out of the Centre, and then watches as he creates music with the Black Rock Band and prepares for Bininj Kunborrk. Susan's grandmother works as an early childhood educator and her grandfather as an artist, leading creative arts sessions with the children at the Centre and on country. Susan's cultural, cognitive, physical, social, emotional, spiritual and family wellbeing is supported at Children's Ground, as she is surrounded by family and a community with a commitment to create the very best for her future.



ANNA-MARIA WITH SHANIA, LILIANA AND SEYMOUR AT JESSIE GAP

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PLANNING: WALK, TALK AND ACT

The unrelenting demands of Aboriginal people in Central Australia for a new approach, for greater respect and for agency over their lives after decades of failed policies forced upon them was the original inspiration behind Children's Ground.

In March 2016, at the request of Arrernte grandmothers determined to create a different future for their grandchildren, the Children's Ground Board agreed to undertake the Community Engagement Process with Arrernte families around Alice Springs. While a comprehensive engagement process had occurred in 2011, it was agreed that this be revisited to determine the current landscape, needs and strategic plan through Phase 1, Community Engagement Process (see graphic).

Children's Ground works with communities where members have a clear understanding of our approach, and welcome our involvement. To this end, Children's Ground engages in a three-phase process of dialogue, engagement and planning, before implementing the Children's Ground Approach with a community. These are the steps we are taking with families around Alice Springs.

The Community Engagement Process also known as 'Walk and Talk' builds on the work from 2011, which provided a comprehensive five-year plan for Children's Ground in Alice Springs. Children's Ground continues to liaise with the Australian and Northern Territory Governments in relation to the full model, however community elders were keen to see something begin in the meantime.

While entry at this level was not consistent with Children's Ground's approach to investment – which requires that there are sufficient funds in place at commencement – it was agreed that Children's Ground explore the viability of supporting a grassroots movement as requested by senior Arrernte educators and leaders while at the same time seeking additional funds for more comprehensive implementation of the model.

It is exciting to see Children's Ground come to life in Alice Springs, where it first began. The grandmothers set down a strategic action plan, identifying four key living areas with whom to first work. In each location they identified the right people to be leading the work and direction. Our 'Walk and Talk', and early action, is occurring gently and consistently with elders and families at Irrkerlantye (Whitegate), Yarrenyty Altere (Larapinta) and Hidden Valley town camps as well as at a cluster of outstations north of Alice Springs.

Part of this process has been the introduction of modest early childhood activities led by a number of local people. In essence this is similar to the movement of grandparents in New Zealand and Hawaii who established the successful immersion schooling starting from a grassroots movement 30 years ago to now celebrating first culture and language-based education from early childhood to University.

Traditional owner of Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Arrernte elder and grandmother, Felicity Hayes, was our first employee, joining Children's Ground as a Senior Cultural Adviser and Teacher. Excitingly, our team has now grown to include an early years educator, Arrernte support worker, a number of cultural consultants and a recently appointed Director of Children's Ground Alice Springs (joining the team in July 2016), all with rich experience and expertise.

A number of parents and grandmothers are educators in their own right and have been at the forefront of bilingual education for decades. They are disillusioned and distressed by the experiences of their children and grandchildren in mainstream schooling. Through Children's Ground they are leading a first language and cultural-based early childhood approach and are determined to ensure their grandchildren have a successful education rich in their first culture as well as equipped for the global environment.

“Our kids are learning on country, growing up proud and strong.”

Angelina Hayes, Arrernte mother

“We are so happy now there is something for our kids.”

Leonie Palmer, Arrernte Grandmother



NATASHA HAYES LEADING AN EARLY YEARS ACTIVITY ON COUNTRY AT IRRKERLANTYE (WHITEGATE)

Discussions are regularly held with elders and family involved to consider the design and delivery of language and culture activities. We are starting with a focus on early childhood. There is a strong desire from people to be able to learn from the elders before they lose important cultural knowledge and likewise the elders are keen to pass on their cultural knowledge and language so it will remain vibrant within the next generation.

It has been important to be able to manage expectations as well as talk about what people would like to do. Family members would like their children to be on country to learn, and also have the option of an indoor environment when the weather makes outside play untenable. Key themes for learning are family, kinship and country and together we have begun documenting what and how they want their kids to learn. Families also wish to see more comprehensive early years and primary school support, family and child health and wellbeing support, employment for young parents and a re-strengthening of families around their children.

Our first early childhood session was at Irrkerlantye (Whitegate) town camp led by Felicity Hayes, who teaches in both Arrernte (First Language) and in English. Weekly sessions now occur at Yarrenyty Arltere (Larapinta) and in the northern outstations based at Corkwood Bore.

We have a key relationship with Akeyulerre and developing relationships with Yipirinya school and the Arrernte Language Office at the Desert People’s Centre.

Over the next 12 months we will finalise our assessment of need, establish our monitoring system, formalise partnerships and finalise a five-year plan. From here we will assess viability and scope with the community. Pending the outcomes of the engagement phase and the decision of both the community leaders and the Children’s Ground Board, we aim to build upon our work, seeking additional funds through Government and philanthropy.

In a very short period of time momentum has grown, engagement has expanded and just as we saw in Jabiru, there is an awakening of possibility and hope.

### Children’s Ground’s Community Engagement Process



# MEASURING IMPACT

One of the significant gaps in many Government and organisational approaches working to alleviate disadvantage in First Nations communities has been the absence of evaluation of effectiveness and quantifiable measures of impact. Children's Ground is seeking to advance the evidence base for effective change by applying methodical data capture with analysis, and aligning outcomes with relevant national data sets to test what conclusions might be drawn. In 2016 we evaluated data collected during the first two full years of operations in Kakadu West Arnhem. Together with first-hand accounts of change captured on video, Children's Ground compiled its first Progress and Evaluation Report 2016.

## PROGRESS AND EVALUATION REPORT 2016

### What we set out to do

The evaluation and analysis of data, in collaboration with our external Research Advisory Group, sought to set a benchmark for our long-term outcomes and determine whether the records revealed any early evidence of changes within the community.

### What we did

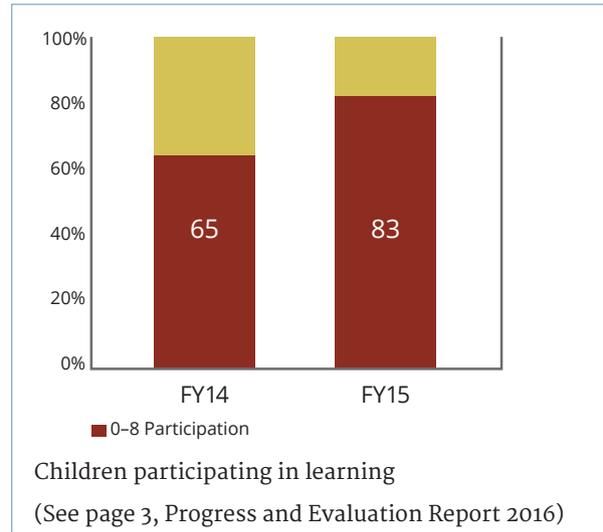
During 2015 we revised our processes for recording data, and entered early stage information in software recognised for its utility in reporting outcomes.

### What we learnt

The formal evaluation and our subsequent analysis of data has provided Children's Ground and our supporters with valuable baseline information as well as encouraging signs that the Children's Ground Approach is sound and effective. It has enabled further refining of our outcomes framework, and alignment of our data collection and analysis processes.

## PARTICIPATION

The number of children participating in learning activities – from classroom and Learning on Country to extended hours, camps and Bininj Kunborrk (song and dance) – increased from 65 in 2014 to 83 in 2015. It means more than 80 per cent of children aged 0–8 in the region are building foundations for future learning and wellbeing.



## EMPLOYMENT

The engagement of family and community members through our soft-entry employment approach has created the foundations for a local workforce with opportunities for people who have been chronically unemployed in roles based on their skills and knowledge, advancing the learning of their children and grandchildren.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

During 2015 Children's Ground's counsellor engaged with 154 individual Bininj people throughout the Kakadu West Arnhem region across a wide range of age groups.

The early impact in Kakadu West Arnhem has exceeded expectations and has established a platform upon which we hope to achieve deep and enduring change in the lives of children and families.

**“Children’s Ground was a thought, a seed, that was hard for me to envisage. A brave audacious and optimistic goal – and 3 years later there is a thriving busy happy community that is engaging so many families in Jabiru and living out that same audacious plan.”**

Tessa English, English Family Foundation

# REFLECTIONS ON CHANGE

## NUMBERS ALONE CAN NOT TELL THE STORY

First Nations' learning is experientially-based. The Children's Ground Approach – our practice and our outcomes – is best understood through experience. We are not simply an early childhood service or an education service or a family health service or a community development approach. We integrate key operational areas. We are defined not only by what we do but how it is delivered. We are committed to building evidence for what we do – proof of impact over time – but we are aware that evaluations are by nature reductive.

Evaluation can never tell the complete story. Over time key quantitative and qualitative measures will determine our impact in areas such as education and health. A major challenge is to tell the story of change from the experience of the people involved; firstly, so that they benefit and also so that it speaks directly to our supporters and funders. Our challenge is to present the complex realities, the systemic breadth and interconnectedness of our approach, the outcomes we are aiming to achieve, what we are learning and some of the surprising outcomes that are emerging.

## CHILDREN'S GROUND IS AN APPROACH THAT WORKS

It is not, however, a quick fix or silver bullet solution. It will take a generation before dramatic and sustainable change will be achieved across any community. Sustaining and building on the success of the first few years with this new generation of children is paramount.

## THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM... IT DEPENDS ON YOUR CULTURAL LENS

We sometimes have people ask why there are so many adults engaged at Children's Ground. With a small population there are at times as many adults as children in our learning environments. Not only is the answer related to our commitment to local employment, it is also about the difference between Western and First Nations learning approaches.

In a Western approach, formal early childhood learning is led by people who are not family members, in an independent environment away from home with unrelated children. For First Nations communities, the development and teaching of children in the early years is family dependent. As designed by the community, every child at Children's Ground has a family member directly involved in their care and learning each day. This supports the wellbeing, emotional and culture safety of the child.

The appropriate people need to teach and raise a child. This system of learning is consistent across the Northern Territory where Children's Ground has engaged directly with communities about their strategic and cultural approach to early childhood learning. What is also consistent is that children and older people are connected in society, learning and life.

The intergenerational nature of law, life and learning is translated into practice at Children's Ground by the community. Our Learning on Country sessions are delivered by the right person for the country. Our flexible employment approach allows us to engage the right people for the right country depending on where the children are learning. This complex cultural context viewed through a different cultural lens can influence perception, understanding and assumptions. We are delivering a system of learning to maximise outcomes for First Nations children and their families.

## COMMUNITIES ARE DYNAMIC. CHANGE IS CONSTANT, AND DEMANDS FLEXIBILITY AND INNOVATION

Over the past year we have experienced both expected and unexpected changes in a range of areas that impact our work including; the Australian Government administration, leadership and policy change, Northern Territory Government administrative change, local community incidents, mining changes affecting the broader community as well as future income for Children's Ground, staffing changes, growth and scaling.

All events present opportunities and risks. The key to Children's Ground is to be consistent. Overlaying the many other changes to our political, policy, funding and operational environment requires a flexible, responsive team who can strategise and adapt. The team has been outstanding in ensuring strategic and operational stability and focus while responding to key environmental changes.

# GOVERNANCE

Governance is one of our single most important principles and practices, as well as a key reform area, at Children's Ground. Community agency and control is at the heart of what we do.

Our community leaders provide guidance, leadership and inspiration for the governance, design, delivery and evaluation of our activities. It is their vision for the future we are supporting.

Our Board of Directors meet regularly and provide robust corporate governance and advice from their depth of professional experience in social, health and education sectors, as well as fundraising, financial management, human rights, Government, social innovation, research and evaluation, entrepreneurship and stakeholder relations.

Robert Griew joined the Board of Directors in 2015 – he comes with over 25 years experience in health, education, Indigenous policy and public administration.

## 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.



**Robert Griew**

BAppSc, MPH, GCEcP – Board Member

Robert has over 25 years of experience in health, education, Indigenous policy and public administration. Currently a Principal of Nous Group, he was previously Associate Secretary in the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training. Robert has degrees in education, public health and economics.



**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 Vadivelloo**

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

Jane Vadivelloo 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.

## 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 Marlawo. 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 Ngäl-wamud. She is from the Mirarr clan in Kakadu. Her traditional lands are in and around the Jabiru region and Madjinbardi. 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.



### The Grandmothers of Alice Springs

Senior Arrernte grandmothers have been the driving force behind Children's Ground's incubation and now community engagement process in Alice Springs. Their vision for the future is to create a place where their grandchildren and families can grow into a world strong in language and culture with the best in Western education.

Felicity Hayes is one grandmother whose vision we are supporting. Felicity is the recognised traditional owner of the Mparntwe estate upon which much of Alice Springs was built. She has campaigned for decades for social justice for her people and the right to live on her country. Felicity provides leadership across strategic and operational matters for Children's Ground's Community Engagement Process at Irrkerlantye (Whitegate) town camp.

## Our inspiring ambassadors

It is our privilege to have the inspiration and backing of our ambassadors: Jan Owen AM, Margaret Kemarre Turner OAM and Rachel Naninaaq Edwardson. We are excited to grow our family of ambassadors and influencers in the coming year.



### MK Turner

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 a nangkere (traditional healer) and 'professor' – a holder of customary law, practice and knowledge. Ms Turner was a founder of Irrkerlantye Learning Centre and is an elder to the Board of Akeyulerre healing centre in Alice Springs. In 1997 she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to the Aboriginal community of central Australia.



### Dr Jan Owen AM

Jane 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. She is the founder of the Create Foundation and before joining FYA Jan was executive director of Social Ventures Australia.



### 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 ongoing History of the Iñupiat documentary series, produced in partnership with the North Slope Borough School District, is the first Native produced and directed documentary series in Alaska, celebrating and validating the culture, land and strength of Iñupiaq people. Since 2007 Rachel has been an advisor and program designer of educational initiatives and reforms in Australia and Alaska.

# FINANCIAL REPORT 2015-16

## Directors' Report

The Directors present their report on Children's Ground Limited for the financial year ended 30 June 2016. 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
<b>William Roy Tilmouth</b> Chair	7	5
<b>Kon Karapanagiotidis</b> Non Executive Director	7	3
<b>Clive William Ringler</b> Non Executive Director	7	6
<b>Adrian John Appo</b> Non Executive Director	7	5
<b>Josie Rizza</b> Non Executive Director	7	7
<b>Robert Griew</b> Non Executive Director	7	5
<b>Jane Shanthini Vadiveloo</b> Chief Executive Officer	7	7

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

## Economic dependence

Children's Ground Limited (Children's Ground) has been reliant on the Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust (KAST) for its operational program in Kakadu West Arnhem. KAST receives royalties from Energy Resources Australia's uranium mine in Jabiru. KAST was established by Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC). The mine is due to cease operations and is in wind down mode and, accordingly, royalty payments are reducing and will cease. Children's Ground's current agreement with KAST is for the period to July 2018. KAST provided its standard payments in FY16 and for the first half of FY17 and it is anticipated that there will be minimal further funding from KAST. This development does not affect operations in Alice Springs or ongoing discussions currently occurring regarding new sites.

## Events Occurring After the Reporting Date

Subsequent to reporting date (after 30 June 2016) Children's Ground received correspondence from Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) advising that they do not support Children's Ground operations beyond September 2018. Children's Ground remains committed to supporting Bininj families and children in the region and is exploring with the community and GAC the most effective ways to continue to do this into the long term. This development does not affect operations in Alice Springs or ongoing discussions currently occurring regarding new sites.

## Principal activities

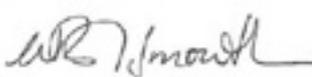
The principal activity of Children's Ground Limited during the financial year was to provide opportunities to help break the poverty cycle for disadvantaged indigenous families and supply significant aid to needy people in the community. Such activities included early years learning and care, family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

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

## Auditor's independence declaration

The auditor's independence declaration for the year ended 30 June 2016 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

  
Director: .....

Jane Shanthini Vadiveloo

Dated: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dated: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016

**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 30 June 2016, 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.

*Saward Dawson*

Saward Dawson Chartered Accountants

*Jeffrey Tulk*

Jeffrey Tulk  
Partner

Blackburn

Dated: 19 October 2016

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Blackburn Victoria 3130  
T: +61 3 9894 2500  
F: +61 3 9894 1622  
contact@sawarddawson.com.au

**PRINCIPALS:** Bruce Saward FCA Peter Shields FCA Tim Flowers CA  
Joshua Morse CA Jeff Tulk CA  
**Directors:** Cathy Braun CA Jeff Davey FCA  
Marie Ickeringill SSA Matthew Stokes CA  
Murray Nicholls CPA Vicki Adams FCA

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation



## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

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

For the Year Ended 30 June 2016

	Note	2016 \$	2015 \$
Revenue	2	5,104,660	3,783,450
Employee benefits expense		(3,104,247)	(2,506,847)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(117,932)	(65,718)
Professional fees		(68,979)	(97,290)
Advertising and Promotion		(562)	(13,758)
Computer expenses		(41,050)	(87,052)
Asset Purchases < \$1,000		(42,161)	(64,682)
Program asset purchases		(24,373)	(104,855)
Insurance		(10,009)	(9,627)
Repairs and maintenance		(18,105)	(24,936)
Travel and accommodation		(173,768)	(123,899)
Utilities and cleaning		(97,605)	(60,541)
Motor Vehicle Expenses		(128,490)	(104,710)
Client Support Consumables		(95,235)	(82,150)
Children's Service Support		(82,368)	(103,602)
Rent		(43,853)	(35,778)
Printing and stationery		(66,827)	(56,271)
Training and development		(3,270)	(24,840)
Other expenses		(89,002)	(96,733)
<b>Surplus before income tax</b>		<b>896,824</b>	<b>120,161</b>
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>896,824</b>	<b>120,161</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income, net of income tax</b>			
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>896,824</b>	<b>120,161</b>

The surplus of \$896,824, initially appears unusually high, but is predominantly due to:

1. Donations received just before the financial year end which under accounting standards must be included in income for the year ended 30 June 2016, but are specifically committed to expenditure in the year ending 30 June 2017; and
2. Employee salaries and wages expenditure which were budgeted for the year ended 30 June 2016, however remained unspent for that period due to the experiential learning nature of the Children's Ground model and the difficulty of recruiting to some positions in Jabiru.

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

### Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2016

	Note	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	681,477	1,194,141
Trade and other receivables	5	93,507	191,546
Other financial assets	6	3,384,873	1,723,957
Other assets	7	60,677	36,198
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>4,220,534</u>	<u>3,145,842</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Plant and equipment	8	391,376	405,957
Intangible assets	9	84,208	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		<u>475,584</u>	<u>405,957</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u><u>4,696,118</u></u>	<u><u>3,551,799</u></u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	10	462,117	274,622
Employee benefits	11	125,033	104,748
Other financial liabilities	12	-	4,470
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>587,150</u>	<u>383,840</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Employee benefits	11	44,185	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>44,185</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>631,335</u>	<u>383,840</u>
NET ASSETS		<u><u>4,064,783</u></u>	<u><u>3,167,959</u></u>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained earnings		<u>4,064,783</u>	<u>3,167,959</u>
TOTAL EQUITY		<u><u>4,064,783</u></u>	<u><u>3,167,959</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

### Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2016

#### 2016

	Retained Surpluses \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2015	3,167,959	3,167,959
Surplus for the year	896,824	896,824
Balance at 30 June 2016	<u>4,064,783</u>	<u>4,064,783</u>

#### 2015

	Retained Surpluses \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2014	3,047,798	3,047,798
Surplus for the year	120,161	120,161
Balance at 30 June 2015	<u>3,167,959</u>	<u>3,167,959</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

### Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Donations, grants and other income received	5,217,732	3,663,840
Interest received	93,087	65,261
Payments to suppliers and employees	(3,975,008)	(3,810,940)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	14 <u>1,335,811</u>	<u>(81,839)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Purchase of plant and equipment	(96,691)	(157,132)
Placement of term deposits	(1,660,916)	(1,723,957)
Acquisition of intangibles	(90,868)	-
Net cash used by investing activities	<u>(1,848,475)</u>	<u>(1,881,089)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	(512,664)	(1,962,928)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	1,194,141	3,157,069
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	4 <u>681,477</u>	<u>1,194,141</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## Children's Ground Limited

ABN 74 154 403 086

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

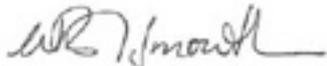
#### Director's Declaration

The directors of Children's Ground Ltd have determined that the Company is not a reporting entity and these general purpose financial statements should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies as outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the directors, the financial report as set out on pages 5 - 21:

- (i) give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2016 and of the performance for the year ended on that date, and;
- (ii) as at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they fall due, and;
- (iii) the financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2013*.

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

  
Director: .....

William Roy Tilmouth

Dated: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016

  
Director: .....

Jane Shanthini Vadiveloo

Dated: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016

**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 Directors Report, the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2016, the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income, Statement of Changes in Equity, the Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended and the Directors' Declaration are derived from the audited financial report of Children's Ground Limited for the year ended 30 June 2016. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on that financial report in our report dated 19 October 2016. 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 2012. 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, derived from the audited 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 2016 are consistent, in all material respects, with that audited financial report.

*Saward Dawson*

**Saward Dawson Chartered Accountants**

*Jeffrey Tulk*

Jeffrey Tulk  
Partner  
Blackburn

Date: 19 October 2016

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**PRINCIPALS:** Bruce Saward FCA Peter Shields FCA Tim Flowers CA  
Joshua Morse CA Jeff Tulk CA  
**Directors:** Cathy Braun CA Jeff Davey FCA  
Marie Ickeringill SSA Matthew Stokes CA  
Murray Nicholls CPA Vicki Adams FCA

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation



# OUR VALUED STAFF

We thank all of our amazing staff, consultants and volunteers who have worked with us over this past year and the years before. You have laid the foundations for hope and success.

Abel Naborlhborlh	Dionn Heitmann	Joy Nabegeyo	Rachel Price
Alfie Naborlhborlh	Dominic O'Brien	Joylene Cameron	Raphael Newell
Alfred Rotumah	Dwayne Djandjomerr	Julie Beer	Raylene Djandjul
Alicia Smith	Elizabeth Hills	Julia Mitchell	Rebekka Atz
Alio Djandjomerr	Elizabeth Marabarli	Julie Poloni	Rhonda Henry
Amalie Finlayson	Elizabeth Newell	Justin Cooper	Rhonda Williams
Andrew Blake	Emily Pettersson	Kamahl Djandjomerr	Richie Nabarlambarl
Andrew Ralph	Erica Flentje	Kaylene Djandjomerr	Romeo Jambulwanga
Anna Dempsey	Eva Petterson	Kestianna Djandjomerr	Roxanne Naborlhborlh
Annie Cameron	Felicity Douglas	Kieran Bulliwana	Russell Haines
Barry Bentley	Felicity Hayes	Kimberlee Bashforth	Sam Wade
Belinda Djandjomerr	Ferdi Hepworth	Kimberley Namarnyilk	Sampson Henry
Belinda Morton	Flint Djandjomerr	Larry Cunningham	Sandra Djandjul
Benita Alangale	Frances Loughrey	Leah Baker	Sarah Bilis
Bernadette Wheeler	Freida Baker	Lee Nabarlambarl	Selone Djandjomerr
Bonita Moss	Georgina Namarnyilk	Lena Tan	Sesha Whitehurst
Bram Morton	Grace Anthony	Lenny Wood	Shanice Looker
Cadell Goodman	Graham Rostron	Leonie Sheedy	Shannon McLeod
Caitlin Anthony	Gwendolyn Djandjomerr	Liesl Rockchild	Shannon Nango
Cara Goodman	Harold (Robbie) Goodman	Lillian Alexander	Shari Aluni
Caroline Nesbitt	Ian Djandjomerr	Lisa Potter	Shirley Brown
Cecily Djandjomeer	Isabella Vadiveloo	Lisa Walker	Shivanthi Perera
Christianna Djandjomerr	Jacqui Stewart	Loretta Djandjomerr	Sonya Nango
Christine Alangale	Jamie Siebert	Luke Passfield	Sophie Waincymer
Cianne McConville	Jane Shanthini Vadiveloo	Marcus Dempsey	Stephanie Djandjul
Clancy Allen	Janine Morton	Mark Djandjomerr	Susan Indawanga
Clive Lane	Jasmine Nabobbob	Marlene Badwana	Susanne Haines
Corianne Djandjomerr	Jason De Santis	May Nango	Tamika Cooper
Damien Kamholtz	Jeshua Djandjomerr	Natasha Clarke	Tim Djandjomerr
Darius Cameron	Jill Vizec	Nerisha Nabalwad	Tony Mogan
Darlene Thorn	Joanne Carroll	Neville Namarnyilk	Uriah Djandjomerr
Darren Marimowa	Joanne Ferguson	Patrick Ahwon	Vaishali Sane
David Cameron	JoBeth Nayidji	Paul Leary	Vienna Wood / Buramura
David Dodd	Jodi Gawuluru	Peace Wurrkgidj	Violet Lawson
David James	Joe Ashley	Perlin Simon	William Pheasant
Dayna Namarnyilk	John Lemibanda	Peter Djandjomerr	Winston Naborlhborlh
Dianne Blake	Josabella Cameron	Queenie Brennan	

# OUR VALUED SUPPORTERS

## MAJOR COMMUNITY PARTNER



## MAJOR FUNDERS



Australian Government



Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust

## MAJOR PHILANTHROPISTS



## FAMILY TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS



Ramses Foundation

The Duggan Foundation

## CORPORATE AND NGO SUPPORTERS



# ORGANISATIONAL DIRECTORY

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

### Donate to Children's Ground

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



LILIANA, SHONTARA AND SHANIA ON COUNTRY WITH FELICITY HAYES

