

# Peer led parent support: Strength-based practice using Indigenous methods and models

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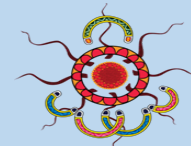
A/Professor Christine Toye - PhD supervisor

Professor Desley Hegney – PhD supervisor

Professor Marion Kickett – PhD supervisor

Professor Rhonda Marriott – PhD supervisor

A/Professor Roz Walker – PhD supervisor

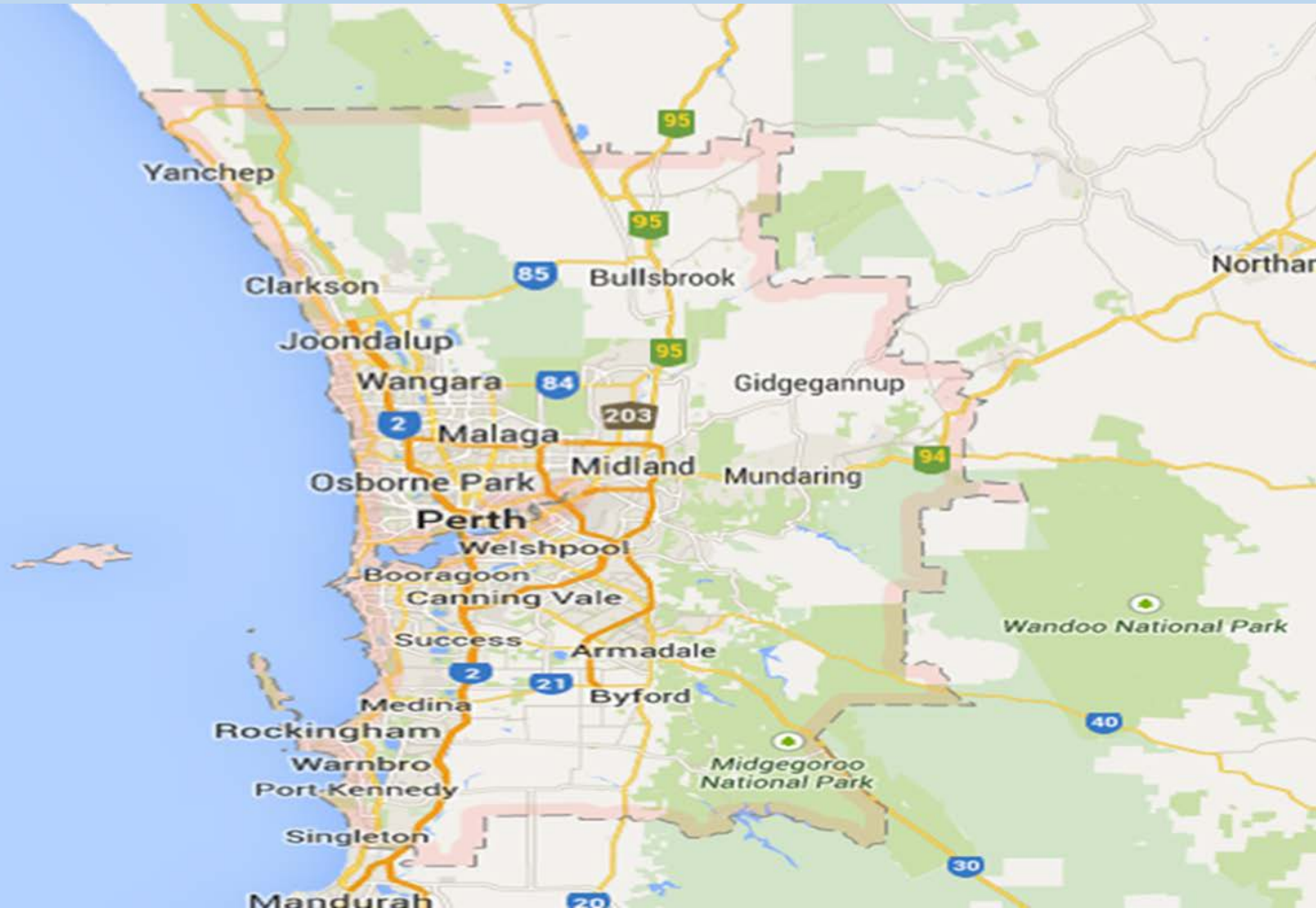


I acknowledge the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Owners of the land on which this conference is held.

# The Project

- Development, implementation and evaluation of a peer led home visiting support program for Aboriginal parents with children in the early years.
- Outer metropolitan area of Western Australia





Source: Google Maps

Perth and Midland Western Australia

# What is Known

- Lifelong health and wellbeing of Aboriginal children are strongly influenced by family and community environments.
- Parenting approaches are critical to positive long term outcomes.
- Culturally relevant strategies for supporting parents are needed.
- For effective and sustainable support, these strategies need to be informed by the voices of Aboriginal parents and community members.

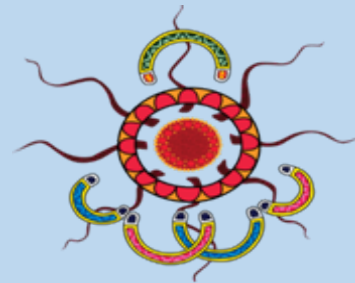
# Project Development

## Participants

- Aboriginal peer support workers, project officer, education support officer
- Aboriginal parents
- Community support agencies

## Community family support agency

- Employed staff
- Provided infrastructure



# Project Development: Methodology

- Participatory Action Research
- Able to explore and facilitate the program's suitability, feasibility, acceptability and effectiveness.
- Yarning a key communication strategy.
- Allows psychosocial and psychocultural viewpoints.
- Peer support workers, parents and community agencies able to identify **needs** and **aspirations** to inform future planning.
- Facilitates culturally relevant and acceptable peer led home visiting parent support.

# Project Development: Methodology

- Action Learning Sets facilitated the participatory action research.
- A structured process allowing a group of people to meet regularly, collectively developing strategies for issues faced in their area of work (ODI, 2009).
- Enabled participants to meet regularly in focus groups to review program strengths, challenges and strategies.
- Ten action learning sets were undertaken four to six weekly over 13 months.



# Methodological Strengths

- Facilitates regular, planned meetings.
- In a safe space, participants are able to present ideas, clarify issues, and develop systematic, creative steps for change which can be tested, reviewed and incorporated into practice strategies (Vince, 2008; Munns et al., 2016).
- The voices, world view beliefs and understandings of Aboriginal support workers and parents can be heard and incorporated into practice (Denzin & Lincoln 2011).
- Flexible approach enabling program change where needed.

# Methodological Strengths

- Researcher able to work in partnership with all participants. Who is the leader?
- Enables safe communication spaces.
- Long term relationships building trust.
- Facilitates staff development.

# Methodological Challenges

- Engaging program participants for the program and data collection
- Need for flexible engagement processes to accommodate differing social, cultural and economic life experiences.
- Management support for long term funding, staffing, transport, resources. Sustainability.

# Methodological Challenges

- Meaningful partnerships and relationships dependent on
  - researcher expertise and reflexivity
  - conflict resolution
  - peer support worker stability
- Time constraints
- Shared realistic goals
- Issues for parents and peer support workers living in same community

# Conclusion

- Participatory action research can affect positive change for parent support.
- Challenges are complex and long standing, **but**
- Participatory action research enables a partnership approach to explore and facilitate the most appropriate methodology for Aboriginal family support program development.

# Acknowledgements

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# References

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