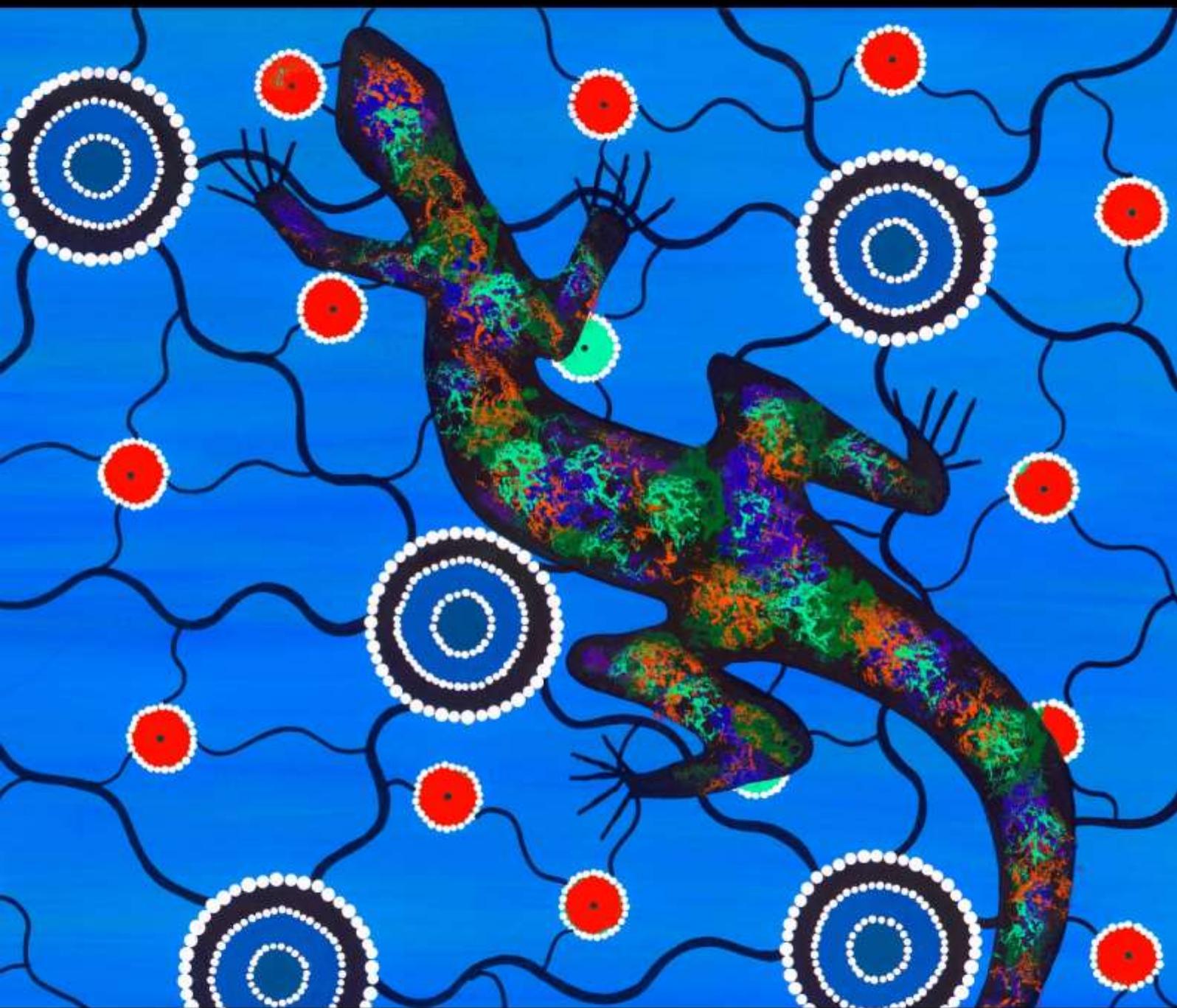




GUNAWIRRA

Prevention through Early Intervention



Annual Report 2015/2016

Empowering young Aboriginal parents and their children

OUR PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

Our Vision

We envision an Australia that deeply respects Aboriginal culture and history. It is an Australia in which Aboriginal people experience equality and respect and their children grow to their full and rightful place in Australian society as resilient, empowered adults having the kind of early childhood which allows them to develop to their full potential.

Purpose

Our purpose is to promote the best possible development for Aboriginal children aged 0-5 and to empower the Aboriginal parents of these children to intervene in their own lives, breaking the cycle of suffering caused by loss of culture, family, community, and country.

Philosophy and Values

We hold a:

- > Deep respect for Aboriginal culture and are concerned to redress the harm of past wrongs
- > Warmly welcome Aboriginal involvement and leadership in shaping our services at all levels from governance, management and program design to service users' initiatives and feedback
- > Have a strong theoretical base in psychoanalytic thinking and attachment theory, which builds an early capacity for healthy emotional, cognitive and physical development of children
- > Respect for service user's free choice in levels of involvement through our multilayered service design
- > Commitment to research, evaluation and the measurement of outcomes.

Strategic Direction

Gunawirra's strategic direction is grounded in the following principles:

- > Good enough emotional nurturing in pregnancy and early childhood is the critical preparation for stable, emotionally connected, resilient and productive adult life.
- > Helping Aboriginal parents deal with their own trauma is critical for them to develop better parenting skills and to negotiate their lives.
- > Professionally designed unique, innovative, transformational programs – small models of excellence that are fully evaluated - allow Gunawirra's work to be replicated in widening circles of effectiveness.
- > Helping Aboriginal professionals and pre-school teachers deal with the trauma in their own lives enhances their personal and professional effectiveness with children in their care.
- > Increasing understanding of trans-generational trauma and the effects of present day trauma on young Aboriginal children is vital.
- > Working at the interface of healing trauma and developing a capacity to learn is central to all Gunawirra's work.

"We choose to do this work of healing for this ancient people whose dreamtime stories are the precursors of all man's mythology, spirituality and faiths to the present day. They represent for us something of the whole human race that we need to understand in depth if any healing is to go on for all of us. We are dealing with something very intense here, it is to do with psychic death, despair of mankind and the restoration of meaning in our lives."

Gunawirra Founder
Norma Tracey

CONTENT

CHAIR'S LETTER	3
FOUNDER AND CEO LETTER	4
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	6
CULTURAL REPORT	7
OUR PROGRAMS	8
OUR PEOPLE	16
OUR RESEARCH	18
OUR DONORS	19
STATISTICS	20



CHAIR'S LETTER

The last few years have seen a number of significant challenges for Gunawirra.

Changes in the Board and the leadership team have generated uncertainty for both the staff and for donors.

Despite these challenges, the amazing work performed by the team at Gunawirra has expanded and improved.

So my first thanks go to the amazing team who work so hard and skillfully to transform the lives of young Aboriginal women and children. The transformation of these lives is what Gunawirra is all about! The joy that comes from generating these wonderful outcomes is what drives us all to solidify the foundations of the core Gunawirra expertise and look at ways we can continue to expand the reach of these wonderful programs.

My special thanks goes to the leader of this Gunawirra team - our founder Norma Tracey. Her unstoppable drive and feisty advocacy haven taken Gunawirra to the solid practice base that it now delivers.

It will be a Board priority this year to assist Norma in transitioning to a clinical management role within Gunawirra that will allow her to spend more time with her family.

My next thanks go to my predecessor, Dr Chris Commens. Chris stepped into the breach as Chair and held the ship steady during some of the more recent challenging times. His efforts are much appreciated and will be remembered.

I have great confidence that future will be bright for Gunawirra!

The establishment of a new Board with a strong commitment to the Gunawirra vision is already generating dividends. With seven new members, the Board now has nine Directors.

The Board is overseeing a review of the fundraising and administration processes of the organisation. This review will inform the process for the recruitment of a new CEO. The Board has also set up new sub-committees to provide detailed guidance and expertise to the areas of Finance and Clinical Practice. We will also review other areas to improve governance and management practices. The Board is also developing a concise 'Strategic Alliance' protocol to assist the management team in assessing the best organisations to partner with.

Recent meetings with the Federal and State levels of Government have also substantially raised Gunawirra's profile within government circles. We are currently working to develop new connections with the relevant departments, and formalise existing ones, utilising the Ministerial level connections that have been established.

My final thanks go to our generous donors. Your contributions are what make the wonderful work of Gunawirra possible. We hope that your belief in the Gunawirra mission is strengthened by the work we are doing to solidify the evidenced based practice that Gunawirra delivers, whilst looking at sustainable ways to expand the reach of the Gunawirra programs to even more indigenous mothers and children.

Bruce Manefield FAICD
Chair



FOUNDER & CEO LETTER

The year 2015 -2016 has seen our main professional projects surviving well. We:

- > Have increased the number of mothers' groups that we run from two to four.
- > Are beginning to contribute to world-wide thinking about interventions to address early childhood trauma and trans-generational trauma through research on the outcomes of these groups
- > Continue our in-depth work in several Aboriginal preschools - Minimbah Primary and Pre-School, Armidale, Dalaguir Preschool, Kempsey, Poet's Corner, Waterloo, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel school, Waterloo.
- > Have increased our individual weekly therapy sessions with mothers and their children as well as with individual children and mothers, which has become central to our work.
- > Continue to deliver educational seminars in country and city locations for teachers, increasing the provision of support using Skype, to regularly reach a growing number of preschool teachers.
- > Visited a number of country areas with work that cultivates a strong sense of pride in Aboriginal identity for both little children and their parents which assists non Aboriginal teachers feel more confident about understanding and teaching about Aboriginal history and culture. This work is done by our Aboriginal Cultural Advisor, Graham Toomey
- > Published chapters in three international books on transgenerational trauma. Our writing speaks to thinking that is developing in depth and vision and opening vastly important thinking on early childhood trauma and treatment.
- > Increased clinical support by deploying 11 psychoanalytic supervisors who weekly share our experiences with individual therapy with mothers and child psychotherapy, forming the scaffolding for our work and our thinking.
- > Formed a training program on Child Protection and a Committee to whom all cases needing discussion relating to Child Protection may be taken (professional staff guided by a senior social worker in social policy)

We are very grateful to all the generous private donors, family trusts and foundations that have contributed to our work in 2015- 2016. Although our income was adequate for the continuation and development of our projects, Gunawirra has struggled this year to fund its core management and administrative work, and this struggle continues.

Gunawirra thanks our now retired Chairman Chris Commens, acknowledging his enormous effort in helping get our Administration in order and in holding to our vision and our goals unrelentingly. Through his hard work, we are developing a more robust set of human resource management, administrative and accounting processes. We salute these efforts that were at the cost of his personal health.

Making the transition from a founder led organisation to a more sustainable self-directed organisation has proven to be a challenge. With the retirement of our Board Chair Chris Commens and the former CEO Joy Krahe, we have now sought and succeeded in establishing a new Board of 12 enthusiastic professional people, who can bring their skills and experience to develop this transition "People for Purpose", is giving us professional support in this task. We seek a new CEO, which People for Purpose will choose with us.

As the founder of Gunawirra responsible for both the development of its programs and fundraising since inception, I am very proud of our achievements. My hope now is that Gunawirra will add to the dedicated and amazing professional people at its center, a Board and Administrative structure deserving of this amazing organization as I transition to a less "hands on" role.

Finally, my thanks to all who work so hard to deliver our programs for our little ones and their parents, to these most in need and suffering the pain of trans generational trauma created by loss of land, culture and community. The work is often arduous, the vicarious trauma of exposure to immediate suffering, means the work requires great commitment and skill. Everything we do requires much thought, as we become the healers of generations of pain, creating small models of care so that many young women and children will we hope experience lifelong benefits from our professional interventions.

This will be Gunawirra's greatest legacy.

**Norma Tracey,
Founder & Acting CEO**

"Gunawirra is one of the international beacons of the World Awareness for Children in Trauma" programme. I am really proud of our collaboration".

Professor Panos Vostanis Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Department of Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour. University of Leicester, United Kingdom. Visiting Professor, University College London.

"It is indeed a joy to have observed the work of Gunawirra since its inception. There can be no doubt that Gunawirra, with its culturally sensitive and proud programs, has encouraged its young Aboriginal children and their mothers to take pride in their Identity, and aspire to achievements which would strengthen themselves as individuals, their community and our nation. All adults associated with Gunawirra consider it a privilege to support this inspirational initiative."

Professor Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO

"I have recently retired from Gunawirra, but remain utterly committed to the premise of early intervention in trying to address the situation of many indigenous Australians.

I would draw the reader to a report commissioned as part of the Stewardship Dialogues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Health, a project of the Lowitja Institute. The compelling economic benefits of early maternal and childhood intervention should make most government departments see that they get more benefit per dollar, the earlier the intervention. (see the Heckman Curve).

Gunawirra is one of the few NGOs devoted entirely to early intervention. The benefits however require long term measurements and the work requires committed trained professionals sometimes working one on one. Gunawirra is a model that should be expanded by creating a lot of similar small devoted units."

**Chris Commens
Gunawirra former Chairman 2015 - 2016**



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Name	Number eligible to attend	Number attended
Dr Chris Commens	6	4
Ursula Kim	4	4
Joy Krahe	4	4
Norma Tracey	6	4

Name	Role	Background
Dr Chris Commens (resigned June 2016)	Chair	Chris Commens was previously the Director, Department of Dermatology at Westmead Hospital and a Clinical Associate Professor, Faculty of Medicine at Sydney University. For over 30 years, he worked as a consulting dermatologist, lecturer, and educator and has held several Executive roles with the Australasian College of Dermatologists. He is the author of numerous articles published in Australian and international medical journals. His interest in early childhood development began when he was part of a small group who established a Montessori preschool in 1980.
Ursula Kim	Board Member	Ursula Kim is a proud Kamarloi woman from the Northern Tableland with a passion for working with Aboriginal children. She has worked in Early Childhood for 28 years and the last five years has been Director of the Minimbah Aboriginal Preschool.
Joy Krahe (resigned May 2016)	Executive Board Member	Joy Krahe has over 15 years' experience in the banking industry. Prior to commencing with Gunawirra initially in an administrative role, she was the Community Engagement Manager at the St George Foundation. Joy was CEO until her resignation in May 2016.
Norma Tracey	Executive Board Member	Norma Tracey is the Founder of Gunawirra. She is a member of the Australian Association of Social Work. She was also a member of the NSW Institute of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy for 31 years. She worked in private practice for over 25 years, and with Aboriginal mothers and infants for over a decade. She specialises in the themes of trans-generational trauma and the psychic problems created by the dislocation from culture and history. She is the author of three books, several booklets and some 30 nationally and internationally published papers.



CULTURAL REPORT

As part of our Five Big Ideas I conducted Aboriginal Culture educational sessions with children throughout the year. I tell and share Dreamtime stories that are date back many centuries and to watch how fascinated the children are by these is an amazing experience. To show them the stone tools, sticks, boomerangs and other artefacts which enabled Aboriginal people to survive in the bush is so important as it helps young Aboriginal kids feel proud of their culture and teaches non Aboriginal Australians about the first people of this country. I find it very rewarding to see all the children so spellbound with what I am sharing with them.

I use a specially made box of wooden materials in these sessions, which includes Story Blocks, which show traditional Aboriginal Art symbols, totem animals to trace a shape around, wooden clap sticks, Boomerangs, Aboriginal message sticks and ochre to paint and decorate the body in a traditional way. This kit, which I've developed is made for us by the Men's Shed in Gosford, and my thanks to the fellows there who do such a great job for us. There is also a booklet included in each kit which outlines activities that Pre School teachers can use to help their pupils engage with the kit positively.



I conduct Cultural Awareness sessions with Pre-School teachers. These sessions are to teach and guide participants about Aboriginal culture, how to best show respect when talking to Aboriginal people and how to engage with their pre-schoolers using the "Culture Box" kit of artefacts. Some important issues are use the word Aboriginal, rather than indigenous and to not say part Aboriginal, also that respect is shown by referring to Elders, Aunties and Uncles. It is important to encourage understanding that Aboriginal identity is not just about family but also about places, our homelands as well as spirituality, beliefs and values.

We are well on the way with developing "Our Journey to Learning" with the Aboriginal Culture Box.

I am looking forward to working with more children and teachers in coming year in a way that expresses through culture the soul of what Gunawirra is about – the finding of our identity and our respect for ourselves in this identity. It is the way this combines with the therapeutic work of my colleagues that adds and gives meaning to our work.

Graham Toomey
Artist and Designer, from Wiradjuri and
Wongaibon Nations





OUR PROGRAMS

1 The Young Aboriginal Mother's Project (YAMP)

The Young Aboriginal Mothers Project was formed in response to the need for indigenous mothers and their babies and young children to be supported in building stronger, safer and healthier relationships.

Many Indigenous people today bear the legacy of cultural erosion, removal from their traditional land, rupture of ties to their land and community and the forced removal of children from their families. The effects of the related trauma and sense of loss are evident across whole communities, within families and in the hearts of individuals. The high rates of mental illness, domestic violence, substance abuse and difficulties in parenting all have their roots in this history.



Gunawirra's Young Aboriginal Mother's Project works to engage with, support and hold young women through the first five years of their child's life. This is a time of extreme vulnerability for all mothers, but especially those who have not experienced stable and effective parenting themselves and are struggling with the historical legacy of past traumas. Nevertheless, it is a time of great opportunity and hope.

Aims

For the mothers who attend our aims are to:

- Improve the emotional health, personal development and confidence of mothers
- Improve the mother's capacity to positively bond with their infants and preschool children
- Increase awareness of and pride in indigenous heritage and culture
- Form and maintain mutually supportive groups
- Be more able to provide a safe environment for their children
- Be better equipped to provide good nutrition for themselves and their children

For their children we work to ensure they:

- Enjoy more secure, trusting and loving relationships with their mothers
- Attain their developmental milestones
- Remain in the safe care of their mothers
- Enjoy good self-esteem and emotional health

Process

Currently, there are four weekly mother's groups catering for a total of 21 women and 26 children. One of these groups is for very young mothers aged 15 years to 25 years. Transport to and from the groups at Rozelle is provided as well as a nutritious morning tea and lunch. Food parcels from OzHarvest are available and a cookbook of tasty nutritious meals has been created. Activities offered throughout the year include Aboriginal art, weaving, cultural celebrations as well as music, film and photography, infant massage, belly casting, craft, cooking and nutrition for self and baby.

Mothers are the core of each group talking together about the challenges and difficulties in their lives, their past traumas and losses and their hopes for the future. The skilled therapists hold and support this process, facilitating the building of relationships between the women so that they can forge supportive bonds with each other. The group therapist also looks for opportunities to focus on the relationships between mother and child, helping the women to develop the capacity to recognise and respond positively to a child's particular personality and needs.

As they become more aware of their own need for healing, many of the women have used the opportunity for individual psychotherapy provided at Gunawirra. Providing a nurturing space for the women frees them to offer their children the vital care, attention and love they need.

"I am 16 years of age. I am a young Aboriginal woman from who lives in Sydney. I used drugs and things for a while, but then I got pregnant. I knew that was not what you do when you have a baby growing inside you. My mother put me on a plane to my father in Adelaide when I was four and I never saw her again. My father loved me but he died in a Mental Hospital when I was fourteen from "Ice". I want a better life for my baby. Here in Gunawirra, I learn especially how to just be with my baby and now I am learning how to cook real food for him. I get really excited when he eats the food I cook. The best thing I am learning is how to like myself."

Positive outcome

The positive benefits of women attending the Young Aboriginal Mothers Program are as follows:

- None of the mothers are using drugs or alcohol
- All children have remained in the safe care of their mothers
- Physical and mental health have improved
- Mother-baby attachments are stronger
- Many women are engaged in further education
- The women don't have further unplanned pregnancies
- The children are meeting their developmental milestones
- The groups have stable membership and high retention rates

Case Study

Leanne came to the group with her little boy, David. She had two older children who had been placed in care due to very severe domestic violence. Leanne was unable to protect herself or them because of her own traumatic early life. She was determined to keep David safe with her and give him a better chance in life and had left the violent relationship. But she was struggling to form a good attachment with David because of her own experiences of abuse, loss and neglect as a child. She felt ashamed and frightened.

Little David was suffering too. His speech was delayed and, unable to express himself, he would lash out at others. There was even a concern that he could be autistic. But the group recognised the distress and pain behind this behaviour and helped Leanne to feel more confident in her potential as a protective mother and to understand what David might be trying to tell us.

As she came to feel better about herself, she was able to connect better with David and genuinely enjoy playful interactions with him. Along with the weekly mothers group, they have a weekly art therapy session together. David is flourishing under this caring attention. He has become a talkative and sociable little boy, caring of the younger ones in the group and creative and focused in his play. Leanne has become a "leader" in the group, actively supporting the other women and is undertaking further education. (NB names have been changed)

Quotes:

"I love coming here because I'm not forced to do anything. I can be myself and not have all the pressure".

"I like working out myself what's best for my baby instead of people trying to tell me what to do".

"I get lonely stuck at home all day. This is the only place I go each week".

"The kids always behave better here. Probably because I'm more relaxed".

2 The Five Big Ideas

Five Big Ideas is a practical, grass roots program designed to impart living skills to pre-school aged children and their families in a supportive environment.

The Five Big Ideas are:

1. Basic hygiene, respecting your body, healthy ears, blowing noses, washing hands, cleaning teeth and using Band-Aids and antiseptic cream from the care packs each child receives.
2. Nutrition, Financial and practical help with bush tucker, vegetable gardens and fruit trees at the preschool. Breakfast programs for children who arrive without food. Teaching good eating habits and limiting the use of fast-food.
3. Handling problems at home. The impact on children of drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence is responded to with six art therapists, specialist child therapists and adult therapists all with psychoanalytic training involved in this module. Four therapists fly up to country every week. It is here with very needy children and their families that most of our work takes place.
4. Identity - Self-respect, my totem, my mob. Our Aboriginal cultural advisor plays a significant role in bringing culture to the children, teachers, parents and community. Activities include developing a family tree with parents, telling stories of the Dreamtime and using the items in the Culture Box kit.
5. My environment, my land, myself – Activities include sitting together around the campfire and social evenings with parents and elders sharing good food and stories.



We currently work intensively in 10 Aboriginal preschools - eight in country areas that are mainly Aboriginal and two inner city preschools. We also work in another 25 Aboriginal preschools with our Five Big Ideas program.



3 Art Therapy

Art Therapy

Art therapy is traditionally based on psychoanalytic or psychodynamic principles, and most art and therapists use varied practice and evidence-based theoretical frameworks in their work. Art therapy differs from traditional art making in that the emphasis is on the process of creating and meaning-making, rather than on the end product. The therapist and client/s develop an interpersonal relationship through the arts process, with clear boundaries and shared intentions.¹

For children, art therapy offers a way of expressing feelings of anger, fear or anxiety or experiences they may not understand or have the words for. It also enables them to connect emotionally with a caring adult.

Aims

The aim of the Gunawirra Art Therapy Program is to help children who are likely to have been impacted by drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and sexual abuse to express their feelings and worries through art making activities. As a consequence of their trauma, the children have a range of emotional and behavioral problems which cause difficulty in their school and social relationships. Such behaviors include poor sleeping and eating habits, inability to learn, difficulty in regulating (self-regulation) and expressing thoughts and feelings as well as transitioning between activities and connecting with and trusting adults.

Regular art therapy sessions allow children to share their difficult experiences and fears and learn how to interact with others without expressing their anger, hurt and frustration in challenging ways.

Process

Gunawirra employs five experienced Art Therapists who work with pre- and primary school aged children in the following Sydney metropolitan and regional settings: Armidale, Kempsey, Lismore area, Our Lady of Mount Carmel primary school, Waterloo and Poets Corner Pre School, Waterloo.

Most sessions are play based using sensory materials (Play Doh, clay, water, shaving foam) as well as painting and drawing.

As an example, in Armidale, the art therapist works with and alongside the community of Minimbah School with a primary focus on the children but also engaging with the Principal of the primary school and director of the pre-school, teachers, parents, grandparents and immediate care givers. Art therapy sessions are held in group settings and as a one to one individual activity.

A new program Open Studio, aims is to create a safe space to play, to make art and to talk with the art therapist who acts as a facilitator. Held at lunchtime, the Open Studio enables the whole school to connect with the Art Therapists and each other. An average of 10-15 children ranging in age from 3 -5 come together in each of these groups. Children with particular issues, such as those known to have difficulty in socialising, or have been identified as bullies are welcomed as they become curious about the work being done by the Art Therapists.

¹ ANZATA professional association website <http://www.anzata.org/About-Arts-Therapy>

Positive outcomes

Children look forward to their regular weekly sessions held throughout each school term. Art therapists observe that as their relationships deepen, the children are more able to talk about themselves and their lives. Teachers report significant improvements in behaviour among the children who are engaged in art therapy including:

- > Being more settled in class and able to stay in the classroom
- > Coping better with transitions between activities
- > A greater capacity for listening and participating in class activities
- > Fewer outbursts of rage
- > More confident to put up their hand and answer questions
- > Improved reading and writing capabilities
- > More able to resolve issues

Case study

J is a middle child aged 5 and has a strong sense of himself as “being bad”. At present, his struggle is greater than usual as his father is in jail and as a consequence of this, his mother has sent him to stay with his cousins. He understands this circumstance as his fault. He desperately wants to be at home with his mother and his brothers.

How does a child this age reconcile these difficult things? I believe he is weathering these strong and overwhelming feelings a little easier as he knows he has a place. In the Art Therapy sessions and the therapeutic relationship, he has a place where he can bring his worries and concerns and they will be heard, a place where he is truly seen. Up until now his art making has been mostly mess making. In our sessions it is starting to take form, maybe this is the start of him being able to make sense of his world? In class when J makes something in art he then destroys it. His teacher is distressed by this. She tells me ‘he makes something beautiful and then he destroys it’. Helping her and J make sense of this is an important part of our work together.

“I’m four years old, my mum and dad fight at night and I hide under the blankets in my bed. The cops come and everyone knows. I hang my head because I am sad. Mum says I must never tell anyone or they will take me away and I will never see them again. My therapy lady lets me tell her and she listens and understands. She is getting a therapy lady to visit my mum and dad too. She tells them if they make me that unhappy I cannot learn. Now when they start to fight they say, “Remember J.!” It makes me feel important.”

Marlene Grey
Minimbah Preschool

We, the educators at Minimbah Preschool, value and appreciate the expertise that the Gunawirra art therapists, Sharini and Julia have contributed to the lives of the children at Minimbah Preschool.

The children they work with have come from traumatized backgrounds and have presented with behavioural issues. These children have been working with the art therapists for close to 2 years now and the children look forward to seeing them each week. We, as educators have noticed a change in the behaviour of these children. They are much calmer and able to concentrate better in group time and during focused activities, for example. They are also able to handle transition times more smoothly. Socially, they are able to interact more positively with their peers.

We believe that the art therapists have played an important role in bringing about these positive changes for our children.

Reflections of Art Therapy and the impact on children in the Echidnas Class, 2015 - 2016

Teacher: Jo Sherrin
Minimbah School

One of my students who struggles on a daily basis to self-regulate when confronted with challenging work explained to me that through art therapy he has learnt that drawing works as a calming strategy for him. He and I have negotiated to add that to his individual behaviour contract as another positive choice he can make when feeling frustrated and angry in the classroom.

Art therapy for two of my students is the highlight of their week and their emotional wellbeing on Wednesdays hits the top of the life is good for me thermometer. In fact, each of these children has commented on more than one occasion, "I didn't want to come to school today but I knew it was art therapy so I said, "Yep, I'm coming."

On days when one of my art therapy students is feeling down she requests to stay in the classroom with me at recess and lunch and make things, as she told me, like she does in art therapy which makes her feel busy and not so sad.

If only we had the availability of more places to meet the emotional needs of many children in my class could I then feel confident that each individual child in the room, who needed this support, was eligible to receive it. Indeed, many of the children themselves ask if they can be added to the group as they listen to their peers and see the reaction on Wednesdays and the sense of special me time with Ms Julia and Ms Sharini. I cannot provide this feeling in a classroom based setting.

The impact on my class when one of the art therapy students, who struggles to build positive relationships with her peers, attends the Wednesday sessions provides respite for us. Group work is feasible and calmness descends as her peers can relax and enjoy each other's company.

4 Journey to Learning

Graham Toomey, Gunawirra's Cultural Advisor has designed and delivers the Journey to Learning Program. The program is conducted in schools and preschools throughout NSW to guide children and educators in how Australian Aboriginal people lived and survived on the land. The program is designed to provide children and educators with knowledge and understanding on the ancient Australian Aboriginal culture.

The program is delivered using a unique learning kit, the Australian Aboriginal Learning Kit for Children or "culture box" designed by Graham Toomey. The kit allows children and educators to explore Aboriginal culture while understanding how the people lived off the land and available sources of water. Items included in the kit are Boomerangs, Clap Sticks, Story Blocks, wooden animal totems and ochre to paint on the face and body. Educators and children are



introduced to the items in the kits as well as other traditional tools such as Woomera's, Coolamons and stones used for cutting. Explanations about the hunting and the gathering of foods and traditional Dreamtime stories are shared. Art making and ancient Aboriginal symbols are also shared as a way to educate the children and their teachers about the meanings behind the symbols. Children are encouraged to paint, draw and colour in to create stories.

The sessions allow Indigenous children to connect to their culture and identity in a meaningful way and helps build a strong sense of pride in their indigenous heritage. The sessions also allow non-Indigenous children to better understand Australia's first peoples and their history. Cultural awareness training is also conducted with educators so that they can feel more knowledgeable and confident about teaching children about Australian Aboriginal culture.

Positive outcomes

- > Children benefit greatly from having the cultural knowledge and understanding of Australian Aboriginal culture.
- > Indigenous children connect to their heritage and culture while importantly, expressing their identity.
- > Allow children to be creative, imaginative while exploring with painting, drawing and colouring in.
- > Allows children to play with traditional Australian Aboriginal tools and resources that were used as a means for survival.
- > Educators learn and understand the Aboriginal culture and what is important to Aboriginal people
- > Educators can guide the children knowing that the knowledge they now have is culturally appropriate and respectful.

5 “Here Comes the Chef!”

Gunawirra has also initiated programs at specific schools to meet newly identified needs for example, a special nutrition program at pre-schools in both Armidale and Kempsey has been running 2015 – 2016. The “Here Comes the Chef” program teaches parents and teachers about the importance of good nutrition, provides lessons in healthy cooking and children get a nutritious cooked meal each day.

“Here Comes the little Chef” is a new initiative has begun in several pre-schools with mother’s cooking with their children. The aim is of creating the skills so that home cooking rather than buying fast take away food becomes the norm.



6 Care Packs



Equipment, special Care Packs, clothing and toys have been distributed to 25 pre-schools with each having from 25 to 200 children enrolled, throughout the year.

The aim of providing the Care Packs is to help children better understand that they can take care of themselves through good hygiene and wearing clean and clothing suitable for the season. With them come the puppets talking and singing about hygiene and a first aid small program suitable for their young age. The Care Packs are given to each child who completes the Five Big Ideas hygiene module.



OUR PEOPLE

Our Key Staff

Name	Position/Role
Norma Tracey	Acting CEO and Clinical Director
Graham Toomey	Aboriginal Cultural Advisor
Sharini Samarakoon	Art Therapist
Kate Keyzer	Country Clinical Director / Art Therapist
Julia Sideris	Art Therapist
Cate Osborn	Inner Suburbs Clinic Director / Social worker and psychoanalytic therapist.
Kat Chew	Art therapist
Marc Chaussivert	Psychologist and psychotherapist
Pam Lark	Social worker and psychotherapist
Donna Jacobs	Psychologist and Psychoanalytic psychotherapist
Denise Lynch	Social work lecturer and Research specialist

Our Supervisors

Name	Position/Role
Ruth Safier	Psychiatrist & Psychoanalyst
Morna Nancarrow	Psychiatrist
Kaye Nelson	Psychiatrist & Psychoanalyst
Louise Gyler	Social worker and Psychoanalyst
Rise Becker	Psychoanalyst
Julie Meadows	Psychoanalyst
Pam Shein	Psychologist Psychoanalyst
Jeff Eaton	Psychologist Psychoanalyst
Jyotsna Field	Psychologist Psychoanalyst
Marilyn Charles	President Chapter Psychoanalysis USA
Ionas Sapountzis	Adelphi University NY
Ingo Lambert	Psychoanalyst and Psychotherapist

Our Volunteers

Gunawirra could not achieve as much as it does without the many volunteers who support our work in so many ways.

Many often very highly skilled volunteers assist us each week with a wide range of administrative tasks. While we are sad to say goodbye to them, we are delighted that many secure paid employment after their time as a volunteer with us.

A wide variety of people volunteer to collect goods such as soaps and shampoo, toothbrushes and toothpaste, face washers and underwear for the Care Packs as well as new clothing and toys so that we can distribute them to the many children we work with.

Nearly every week, we have a group of loyal volunteers who put together the Care Packs and package up these and other goods securely into boxes so they can be delivered to children in the city and the regional areas.

Professional Development and therapeutic supervision for Gunawirra Staff

Gunawirra therapeutic staff are working with young women and children who have been exposed to abuse, neglect and traumatic events. Some of these personal narratives and events are harrowing and disturbing and our staff need exceptional levels of support to continue to do the work they do effectively and empathically. We are very grateful in particular to the highly experienced psychoanalysts who provide weekly support, at no cost, to each of our staff. Professional supervision and support for therapeutic staff is funded by Gunawirra and includes:

- > Weekly supervision in one on one sessions by a senior qualified psychoanalyst
- > Groups co-supervised weekly with world renowned psychoanalyst and child specialist Jeff Eaton once a week.
- > Groups co- supervised by Jyotsna Field a specialist in mother child work once a fortnight.
- > Attendance at PPC (Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy....) The fees for this are matched by Gunawirra and Sydney Institute of Psychoanalysis gave two scholarships this year to Gunawirra professional art therapists.
- > Funding where possible is attempted to be made available for staff to attend lectures by experts in the field and professional conferences annually.
- > Another important initiative has been the delivery of training on Child Protection responsibilities run by Ms Denise Lynch, Faculty of Education and Social Work (Honorary), University of Sydney.

Professional Development for Teachers

- > Supervision of teachers is provided weekly, with some schools engaging via Skype on a twice weekly basis.
- > We ran a number of seminars and workshops throughout 2015 -2016. This year, our main seminar program held monthly for all health professionals in Sydney, and attended by 40 to 60 workers each time, were funded by the City of Sydney Council. These seminars provided an opportunity for attendees to reflect on the challenges for professional health workers in engaging Aboriginal people and in delivering services that will help them deal with problems that have at their root cause, the unresolved trauma of their early life.
- > Dr Marilyn Charles, a renowned psychoanalyst, President of her Chapter from USA came for a week and worked with the Dalaguir centre and its staff to set up a program of weekly supervision with staff for two terms. Graham and Norma did another group of five staff over the same period. These seminars were weekly for a period of eight months.
- > Staff from five preschools in the Gunnedah spent two days with Professor Ionas of Adelphi University in New York discussing the meaning of early childhood trauma, specific cases they were dealing with. All attending acknowledged that this was a great success.
- > In the Lismore area, where there are five preschools, 60 preschool teachers attended a workshop with our guest speaker Ingo Lambert, a psychoanalyst working in a Maori setting in NZ. The key themes in this workshop were how to identify a traumatised child; how does trans-generational trauma impact on children? How do teachers and professionals working with traumatised children manage the impacts of vicarious trauma?
- > Weekly supervision is carried out by Skype with some Pre-Schools.
- > Supervision also given to Yana Maru early childhood nurses on a monthly basis has yet to develop but a good rapport is established with this important Department.

OUR RESEARCH

Conducted between September 2015 and September 2016

- 1. Development of Referral Template for Art Therapy Program.** The final draft, following a number of meetings and discussion with staff is completed.
- 2. Development of Child Protection Policy and Guidelines for Gunawirra Staff.** This has involved addressing government agencies, e.g., NSW Dept. of Health, and NSW

Community Services, NFP agencies, and beginning to create a document, that is relevant to necessary obligations and to the philosophy and work of Gunawirra. This has now been completed.

3. **Training Sessions in Child Protection Work.** Staff attended 3 sessions that addressed mandatory reporting, legal responsibilities, causes of abuse and neglect and child abuse dynamics and strategic intervention.
4. **There has been the formation of a Child Protection Committee** and ongoing education for staff and extended agencies working with Gunawirra. The first child protection committee meeting will be held on 16th September, 2016 with myself and others permanent staff.
5. **Development of a Child Protection Referral form and role of Child Protection Committee members.** This has been sent to all staff members.
6. **Consultations:** a) NSW Department of Health, NSW Family and Community Services, Catholic Care, consultation with Gunawirra staff, (4) and other NFP organisations. Consultations with a/CEO regarding development and progression of the above guidelines. There have been sessions with Senior art therapists including discussion of child protection strategies, and discussion with Norma Tracey, CEO, Clinical Director, about this research strategy, and others regarding this ongoing work. There have been ongoing consultations with other NFPs that engage in research.
7. **Evaluation:** Preparation of individual consultations, and development of research strategies for Mt Carmel. This is addressing the long term research with Mt Carmel, regarding long term effects of Art Therapy.
8. **Development of a research strategy for Mt Carmel.** There have been plans developed with Kate Keyser, Senior Art Therapist, about the most effective strategy to assess and evaluate the Art Therapy Program for Aboriginal primary school students at school. These are ongoing and involve discussions with Principal and teachers and development of the Ethics proposal at Sydney University.

This is an example of an evaluation Strategy developed with a meeting with David Jones. This consultation occurred and the meeting resulted in David Jones committing to the next 12 months funding for Mt Carmel, with the opportunity for further assistance and requesting copies of the Interim Report. (See attached Mt Carmel Interim Report).
9. **Development of Guidelines for Research for Gunawirra.** While ongoing evaluation and research of all programs at Gunawirra is a good direction, there needs to be a logical system of prioritizing action research which assists the Gunawirra staff but also assists the groups and schools and preschools with whom they work. There have been initial parameters set and the development of this guideline. There has been written consultation with relevant documents and literature for all programs with Gunawirra.

Denise Lynch
Research, Evaluation and Policy Development



OUR DONORS

Sponsors & Pro-Bono Supporters

We are particularly grateful to the Trusts and Foundations and other grant makers who have so generously supported our work in the past year.

Aboriginal Benefits Foundation
Awesome without Borders
Bennelong Foundation
Black Beckett Trust
Bowlers Club of NSW Club Grant
City of Sydney
City RSL Club Grants
City Tattersall's
Collier
Commonwealth Bank Staff Community Fund
Coopers Brewery
David Jones Staff Foundation
Fouress Foundation
FRRR
James N. Kirby Foundation
Marian and EH Flack
Northern Rivers Community Foundation
Sisters of Charity
St. George Bank
Sydney Myer Foundation
The Baxter International Foundation
The Mercy Foundation
The Millet Family Foundation
Todd Family Foundation
Whole Kids Small Seeds Community grants

Funders

Gunawirra relies on the support of several organisations that provide their services each year no cost.

ACT Grammar School
Barker College
Bauer Media
BDJ Partners
Books in Homes – Kim Kingston
City of Sydney Community Centre Redfern
Colin, Biggers & Paisley
DLA Piper
Emmanuel Synagogue
Gilbert and Tobin
Greg Sutcliffe
Main Freight
Oxanda Education - Melinda Harrington
Ross Freight
SCEGGS
St Josephs Men's workshop

The Australian Government has made Indigenous Affairs a significant national priority. The Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) is the way in which the Australian Government funds and delivers a range of programmes targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We are very grateful for the grant from this scheme that has been provided throughout 2015 – 2016 as part of a two and half year commitment. This has enabled us to extend the provision of several of our programs and more Aboriginal mothers and children are gaining the benefits.

DONATIONS

ALL DONATIONS ARE WELCOME

Please help us by donating to our work for Aboriginal families and their children.

Gunawirra is a Public Benevolent Institution and has DGR status.

All donations are tax deductible.

Ways of donating:

- > **Online:**
 - GiveNow portal: www.givenow.com.au/gunawirra

- > **Direct Transfer:**
 - Account Name: Gunawirra Business Transaction Account
BSB Number: 06 2156
Account Number: 10180211

- > **Cheque:**
 - Made out to:
Gunawirra
PO Box 827

Thank you for supporting the work of Gunawirra

STATISTICS

Projects	Location	Activity from 01/07/2015 - 30/06/2016
MUMS GROUPS		
Mother's Group Monday	Rozelle	46 groups - 20 groups with 1-4 mothers x 1 - 4 babies
Mother's Group Tuesday	Rozelle	46 groups (7 mothers, 7 infants)
Mother's Group Wednesday	Rozelle	48 groups (8 mothersX12 toddlers)
Mother's Group Wednesday, Art Therapy	Rozelle	40 groups (7 children, 1 mother & child, 2 mothers)
Mother's Group Wednesday, Art and Culture	Rozelle	20 x8 mums
Mother's Group Thursday,	Rozelle	28 groups
INNER SUBURBS Group and Individual Therapy		
Art therapy Group Poets Corner	Poets Corner	40 groups (5 children each session)
Individual therapy Child -IS	Poets Corner	38 sessions X 2 children
Individual Child Poets Corner	Poets Corner	38 Direct discussions with teachers
Individual child art therapy sessions	Poets Corner	1 x sessions weekly x 6 individual children
Art Therapy Group Mount Carmel	Mount Carmel	16 sessions x 4 children
Art Therapy Individual Mount Carmel	Mount Carmel	40 sessions with 2 children
Individual Adult therapy and therapy with mother- child	Rozelle	280 sessions x individual mothers x children
Consultation with workers from Yana Maru (RPA)	Rozelle	10 consultations
Consultation with teachers	Mount Carmel	8 consultations x teachers
COUNTRY		
Director weekly support	Gunnedah	30 sessions
Nutrition- breakfasts	Gunnedah	20 childrenx280 breakfasts
Teacher training discussion group 2	Kempsey	18 groups x 5 teachers
Teacher's Training Discussion Group 1	Kempsey	35 groups X 4 teachers
Therapy - Parent - child teacher	Kempsey	20 sessions
Teacher Art Therapy sessions	Kempsey	10 sessions
Art Therapy -Individual	Kempsey	20 sessions (3 individual children)
Playground + Art Therapy	Armidale	12 sessions, children, teachers
Nutrition - Here comes the Chef	Armidale	200 meals x 120 children
Child art therapy group - primary	Armidale	40 sessions x 4 children
Child art therapy group - preschool	Armidale	40 sessions x 2 children
Indiv. Child country	Armidale	40sessions x individual therapy
Teacher training discussion group 2	Goonellabah	30 sessions x 3 teachers
Skype session with Teachers	Kempsey	20 sessions x 4 teachers
Playground / Classroom + Art Therapy or Observation	Kempsey	20 sessions classroom work
Teacher discussion group	Armidale	40 teacher groups

Art Therapy sessions - School staff (Director, Principal, teacher)	Armidale	42 teachers group or single sessions
--	----------	--------------------------------------

SEMINARS

Weekend regional Seminars	Gunnedah Narooma	Gunnedah 20, Lismore 110, Narooma 20
Trauma and Culture seminar Redfern series	Redfern Community	4 sessions x 30 people each session
Country Visits by our cultural expert	Gunnedah, Armidale, Lismore, Narooma, Kempsey	28 preschool centres with 280 staff
Aboriginal Culture Gunawirra staff seminar	Rozelle	8 sessions x 8 workers
Special Aboriginal Culture Sessions	Mount Carmel	3 sessions involving 240 children
Child Protection workshops/ training	Rozelle	2x 8 Students / 1 x 5 Staff

SUPERVISION

Supervision staff mum group Wednesday	Rozelle	26 sessions x 1 worker
Supervision students	Rozelle	40 sessions x 4 workers
Supervision (Tuesday Group)	Rozelle	46 sessions x 2 workers
Supervision staff country work	Rozelle	40 sessions x 2 workers (Lismore)
Supervision Gunawirra workers	Skype	45 sessions x 8 workers
Aboriginal Cultural Supervision/Aboriginal Cultural Training	Rozelle	8 sessions x 6 - 10 staff and volunteers
Supervision Staff Individual.	All areas	4 sessions/ fortnightly supervision
Training staff	PPC Course	38 sessions/ 4 workers Attended Art Therapy
Research	All areas	8 x sessions x 10 workers
Supervision of projects	Rozelle	12 sessions X 2 workers
Development of Child Protection Policy and Guidelines for Gunawirra Staff	All areas	6 sessions with all staff involved.
Poets Corner group/filming	Poet's Corner	30 staff teachers and children
Poets Corner book giving	Poet's Corner	30 staff teachers and children

- 1640 mother's present at sessions. Please note many of these were the same mothers
- 3,428 children attendances. Please note on many occasions these were the same children
- 906 teacher involvements. Please note these were on some occasions the same teachers
- 1,570 Health professionals from other agencies and others involved in our work

- Over 2000 toys to individual children have been distributed.
- Clothes winter pajamas and underwear and socks over 2000 items distributed to 25 preschools.
- Care packs - soap, washer, disinfectant, band aids, tooth brush, tooth paste, and other personal care items to over 2000 children



19a Quirk Street (Cnr Quirk & Gordon St)
Rozelle
NSW 2039

T: 02 9810 2312
E: office@gunawirra.org.au
www.gunawirra.org.au

