ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Empowering young Aboriginal parents and their children

GUNAWIRRA
Prevention through Early Intervention

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Our philosophy, our vision, our values

In Aboriginal mythology Gunawirra means the invisible seed of all creation.

Established in 2008, Gunawirra is a not-for-profit PBI organization comprised of indigenous and non-indigenous professionals working at the interface between health and education to "Close the Gap".

By developing innovative programs, models of excellence, that empower young indigenous parents and their children through pregnancy, infancy and preschool we seek to break the life cycle of suffering originating in loss of country, culture, family and community.

Our work is grounded in:

> A deep respect for Aboriginal culture with a concern to create ways of healing transgenerational trauma

> A Strong theoretical base in psychoanalytic thinking, attachment theory and early emotional, cognitive, healthy development of children

> A Use of highly skilled professionals in social work, psychology, art therapy and psychotherapy in shaping our clinical services at all levels

> A seeking of the highest levels of performance in governance, management

> A program design allowing for multi-layered service design thus respecting service user's free choice in levels of involvement

> A Commitment to research and evaluation

From this foundation we have developed key programs – (i) the *Five Big Ideas Program,* (ii) focus on art therapy as a core of healing trauma, (iii) supporting teachers, (iv) *Young Aboriginal Mother's* Groups, (v) Individual Assessment and Therapy Programs for small children and parents (vi) Special programs relating to community education on Aboriginal culture and trauma.

The beautiful Aboriginal artwork on the cover is by Graham Toomey, who we at Guawira are privileged to have as our artist and cultural advisor.

Gunawirra acknowledges the Aboriginal peoples as the past, present and future custodians of our country.

We are proud to have Norma Tracey and Cate Osborn as official Reconciliation Ambassadors on behalf of the Australian Association of Social Workers.

Founder Report for 2014-2015

It has been an extraordinary year for Gunawirra as I have moved from the role of CEO to welcome Joy Krahe as our new CEO. Joy's presence and sensitivity, not only to processes but to the needs of our organisation and its people have seen Gunawirra continually grow during this sensitive time, as we all explore what serves Gunawirra best. We have worked daily to see what vacuums my move after 6 years has created, how we fill these spaces and what work I will continue with clinically, while knowing I will always help with fundraising. Gunawirra and Joy have been well served by the Growth Project 12 month course, which has also provided personal mentoring to her.

After a year of experimentation as to what kind of Board fits Gunawirra best, we are endeavouring to have that fit now established as I write. It is a dream come true to be surviving well financially; our processes and administration developing well. I must acknowledge our hard working COO, Hans de Vriese whose loyalty to Gunawirra and its vision and close working relationship with Joy have been the mainstay of our survival during this transition period. He has carried the buffeting of a changing organisation and been the calm in the storm many times.

In keeping with our intrinsic vision of small models of excellence, well researched and worked at by specialists, we are now established in Minimbah Armidale, Dalaguir Kempsey, a cluster of preschools in the Gunnedah, Quirindi, Werris Creek area, to the south in Tilba and now next year to the North in five centres in Lismore. This intense work of individual and art therapy again fulfils a fundamental principle we had in envisioning Gunawirra. The dedication of the workers with Kate Keyzer as their leader means we will follow the path of intense work for a few needy children, while thinking always of the needs of many in our centres. We are excited to support four areas develop *Reggio Emilia* and *High Scope* to an enviable level. Perpetual's Frank Leyden Tot-Ed Trust has been the main contributor, along with Gandel and ABF. We have grown from a single worker last year to five workers in 2015, four of who fly up and back every week.

In the Inner Suburbs, Cate Osborn, our manager and clinical director, has been outstanding, extending the *Young Aboriginal Mother's Program* from two to four mothers groups – comprising pregnancy, newborns, babies and toddlers and pre-schoolers (now in it's fourth year). Baxter Health USA has been our major contributor and from three we now have five workers. We are honoured to be the supervisors of Yana Maru at their request in the next year. Our first book was published this year and chapters in two more publications in USA; Cate warns us of another book in the making.

Support from our overseas psychoanalytic supervisors is in the process of being powerfully augmented by the Institute of Psychoanalysis in Sydney with six of our therapists doing SIP basic course in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. Psychoanalysts and specialist child therapists supervise all our workers so that no worker is without supervision. Our special thanks to Jeff Eaton in the USA and Louise Gyler who have been with us from our beginning.

In all our work we daily confront the pain and suffering of a people whose history and ancient wisdom has been fractured and dismantled by our intrusion on their culture and peoples. Graham Toomey is our Aboriginal leader, spiritual advisor and worker in our centres. Within Gunawirra he is our soul. The work we do is heart breaking in its intensity and in what it exposes of a suffering people, struggling to maintain their identity and equilibrium in a world that demonstrates little sense of their being valued or even acknowledged.

None of us would survive this work were it not for the amazing support and care we give each other. Crucial to this is the support we receive from other analytic therapists – who see their value in acting as a scaffold to the healing of a trauma that may take generations to resolve. The amount of work, its depth, our respect for a wisdom that can be fathomed if we work in our analytic model to expose it, means we must refer back to and be secured by own internal vision. This includes the capacity to wait, and to then walk where others do not on the road of real reconciliation, with a real hand outstretched, not just empty words. Our identity as an organisation is being formed out of the chaos experienced by Aboriginal people, even as is the identity of our Aboriginal sisters and brothers.

As I move with a degree of satisfaction into a more backroom role, I thank every single person who by their donations, by their thinking, their work, their faith and their vision has contributed to the dream of this organisation becoming a reality. I feel we can say, “We did it!”

Thank you all,

Norma Tracey

Founder, Board Director, Clinician

CEO letter

The last 12 months has seen fantastic progress at Gunawirra. Our programs have expanded beyond what we could ever have imagined. Gunawirra's profile is continually growing, as word spreads of how we are unique in our field, offering innovative programs for Aboriginal families, both in Sydney and in regional preschools in remote NSW.

I believe this growth is solely due to our dedicated staff and management, who work with a level of knowledge, professionalism, commitment and reflection beyond any I have witnessed elsewhere.

So as the new CEO, I find it extremely humbling to lead an organisation whose staff are clearly amongst the best in their field.

I would also like to take this opportunity to share how I first became involved with Gunawirra.

Previously I had worked with another not for profit, part of a large public corporation. This was how I was introduced to Norma Tracey, Gunawirra and its programs. Norma showed me the consistent need of young Aboriginal families, especially preschool children, and how Gunawirra's programs improve and enrich their lives. Being involved with Aboriginal families was entirely new to me and I was thrilled to have the opportunity to help.

After 16 years in my previous position, restructure was taking place and I decided to leave. I took the opportunity to take time out to volunteer, with Gunawirra being one of my first choices. It was through volunteering at Gunawirra and assisting with fundraising that I was offered the position of Fundraiser Administrator/Event Coordinator. One year on I was offered the role of CEO.

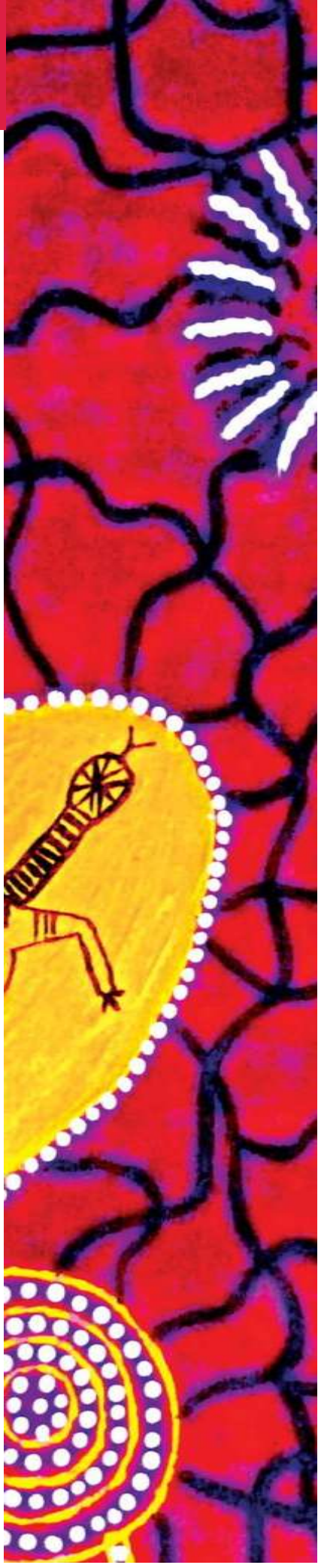
To Norma Tracey, thank you for all your continued support as I move forward in this position. Thank you too for making me aware of our Nation's first peoples and how through our work, can make such a difference to the lives of young Aboriginal families. Your passion and dedication are truly an inspiration for all of us.

To my wonderful staff and managers at Gunawirra, who work tirelessly and passionately with the programs that we offer - thank you. Thank you for making such a difference to these young children, and helping them grow, engage with their heritage and culture, and find their rightful place in society.

I'm incredibly excited to assist in furthering Gunawirra's transformative work with the help of our amazing staff and supporters, ensuring the legacy of Norma Tracey's work and the vision of Gunawirra.

Joy Krahe.

Chief Executive Officer



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris Commens
MB BS, FACD
Acting Director

Chris Commens was formally Director, Department of Dermatology at Westmead Hospital from 1980 till 2007 and Clinical Associate Professor, Western Clinical School, Faculty of Medicine at Sydney University. For over 30 years, he has worked as a consulting dermatologist, lecturer, and educator.

He has been a Director of the Skin and Cancer Foundation of Australia, federal councillor of the Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD), Chairman of the Ethics Committee ACD, Chairman of the Fellowship Training and Examination Committee ACD amongst many other positions. 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.

Norma Tracey
MAASW
Founder and Board Director

Norma Tracey is a member of the Australian Association of Social Work (MAASW) and had been a member of the New South Wales Institute of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (NSWIPP) for 31 years before retiring from that organization. Apart from her private practice of 25 years she has worked especially with Aboriginal mothers and infants and in the last twelve years.

She is the author of three books, several booklets and some 30 nationally and internationally published papers. She is the founder of Gunawirra, and specialises in the themes of trans-generational trauma and the psychic problems created by the dislocation from culture and history. She is the designer and supervisor with her professional colleagues of all Gunawirra programs and is the main funding seeker at this point in time.

Ursula Kim
Minimbah Director

I'm a local Kamarloi woman from the Northern Tableland. My passion is working with Aboriginal children.

I have worked in Early Childhood for 28 years and the last 5 years have been as Director of the local Aboriginal Preschool catering to 3-5 year olds, in my town of Minimbah. My goal is to make sure our children have a good educational start and give them every opportunity to be successful in whatever they do in the future. To do this I know it's crucial to help and support parents to be involved in their children's early years so that the children can be confident, proud and strong people. Gunawirra approached me to be part of their team and this gives me the opportunity to keep helping our children at another level again.

Joy Krahe
CEO

I come from a banking background, working for over 16 years with St George Bank. The last five years of my time there were spent working in the St George Foundation as the Community Engagement Manager. It was here that I was first introduced to Gunawirra and its wonderful programs.

Leading Gunawirra as the new CEO, and prior to that in my role as Fundraiser/Event Manager has been a truly rewarding experience. I love to watch how our programs make such a difference to the lives of young children.

I'm currently participating in The Growth Program – a one-year
leadership development course for non-profit organisations run by The Growth Project. The Growth Project helps small, successful non-profit organisations maximise their impact on the world through programs that help grow the knowledge, skills and potential of non-profit leaders. Central to The Growth Project is the concept of engaged giving – where supporters of the program share their time, knowledge and resources to help develop the future leaders of Australia's non-profit sector. For more information visit www.thegrowthproject.com.au

We thank all past members of our Boards and especially thank Paul Davis, our past Chairman of four years for his dedication and understanding of the work of Gunawirra. We miss him greatly.

We thank Carol Flanagan who played an important interim role as Chairperson, for her continuing contribution to the work of Gunawirra.

We welcome our new Board and our new advisory committees.

Committees to Board

Clinical Advisory Committee

Louise Gyler Chair

Kaye Nelson

Cate Osborn

Morna Nancarrow

Norma Tracey

Fundraising Committee

Chair: Joy Krahe

Fundraiser specialist: Marea Reed

Fund writers: Norma Tracey and Nathan Wratten

Secretary to committee: Hans der Vriese

Indigenous Advisory Board – Ursula Kim, Graham Toomey, Juli Morrison

Preschool Advisory Committee - Ursula Kim, Juli Morrison, Jan Car, Norma Tracey

Governance and Process

Gunawirra thanks the Growth Project for its support in this area, particularly Julie Hunter as mentor to Joy Krahe.

It thanks Gilbert and Tobin for their pre bono services

It thanks DLA Piper for their services.

For Annual Financial Audit 2015

Gunawirra thanks BDJ Partners for their services as our Accountants.

They are also our pro bono Auditors

For Research updates please check Gunawirra website www.gunawirra.org.au/publications

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR GUNAWIRRA OFFICE, PROCESS & CLINICAL WORK

Joy Krahe, Hans De Vriese, George Zorbas, Marea Reed

SUPERVISORS

Gunawirra relies on its supervisors of our staff for all our scaffolding that makes possible the work we do.

We thank supervisors: Louise Gyler, Jeff Eaton, Kaye Nelson, Pam Shein, Julie Meadows, Ruth Safier, Graham Toomey, Norma Tracey, Marilyn Charles, Ingo Lambrecht, Ionas Sapountsis, Tanya Stevenson, Rise Becker, Morna Nancarrow,

Mark Howard, Liz Kerr, Leonie Sullivan for PPC Training.

Leonie Sullivan – will trial Balint Groups with one of our teacher's groups next year. Ruth Mooney will do a weekend in our Country area. Marilyn Charles, Ingo Lambrecht and Ruth Weinstein will give us a weekend in Lismore in March 2016.

Gunawirra thanks Morna Nancarrow, Ron Speilman, Neville and Joan Symington, Louise Hird for their support of Gunawirra's work.

INNER SUBURBS

Director – Cate Osborn

Managers – Cate Osborn, Marc Chaussivert

Cultural Director – Graham Toomey

Mother's Groups – **Monday**: Norma Tracey**; Tuesday:** Donna Jacobs, Pam Lark;
Wednesday: Cate Osborn, Katherine Chew, Graham Toomey

Preschools and Schools – Poets Corner: Cate Osborn; Mt Carmel: Kate Keyzer

Individual Therapy – Cate Osborn, Marc Chaussivert, Norma Tracey, Katherine Chew, Sharini Samarakoon

Group Art Therapy – Graham Toomey, Julia Sideras, Kate Keyzer

COUNTRY PRESCHOOLS
Directors – Kate Keyzer Julia Sideras
Cultural Director – Graham Toomey
Care packs, Toys, Educational Equipment, Gardens – Joy Krahe, Hans De Vriese, Graham Toomey

KEMPSEY: (i) Individual Therapy - Anna Jane Lark **(ii) Art Therapy Groups Worker** – Kate Keyser
(iii) Parents (iv) Teachers Weekly Groups – Marilyn Charles, Norma Tracey, Graham Toomey

ARMIDALE: (i) Individual Therapy (ii) Art Therapy Groups Worker (iii) Parents (iv) Teachers – Julia Sideras, Sharini Samarakoon, Kate Keyzer; ***Here Comes the Chef!*** – Norma Tracey

LISMORE: (i) Individual Therapy (ii) Art Therapy Groups (iii) Parents (iv) Teachers Groups – Norma Tracey, Marc Chaussivert

GUNNEDAH CLUSTER, BOGABILLA, DARETON, TILBA, NOWRA – Norma Tracey
Care packs, Toys, Educational Equipment, Books, Gardens – Joy Krahe, Hans De Vriese
Cultural Director – Graham Toomey

Mother's Groups – **Monday:** Norma Tracey; **Tuesday:** Donna Jacobs, Pam Lark; **Wednesday:** Cate Osborn, Katherine Chew, Graham Toomey

Preschools and Schools – **Poets Corner:** Cate Osborn; **Mt Carmel:** Kate Keyser

Individual Therapy – Cate Osborn, Marc Chaussivert, Norma Tracey, Katherine Chew

Group Art Therapy – Graham Toomey, Julia Sideras

OUR PROGRAMS

Gunawirra designs unique, innovative and transformational programs to empower young Aboriginal parents with children aged 0 to 5 years to intervene early in their children's lives, breaking the life cycle of trauma caused by loss of country, community, culture and family.

All Gunawirra's programs are designed by a team of top level, experienced professionals to create models of excellence, which are subjected to rigorous evaluation by independent researchers and then disseminated at no cost. Professor Jane Usher of the University of Western Sydney has been commissioned to formally review the effectiveness of the Five Big Ideas program.

Gunawirra's signature programs are:

*1. The **Young Aboriginal Mothers Program, Five Big Ideas** individual and group **Art Therapy** for preschool children in Sydney (Poets Corner preschool) and at a number of rural and remote NSW preschools, as well as the **All In Together** art program for teachers and children in the playground.*

***2. Art Therapy** - individual and groups in Country.*

*3. We also run an **Assessment and Therapy Clinic** at our headquarters in Rozelle.*

4. Inner City Art Therapy

***5.** Our **Here Comes the Chef** program is a special nutrition program for children in the Minimbah pre and primary schools.*

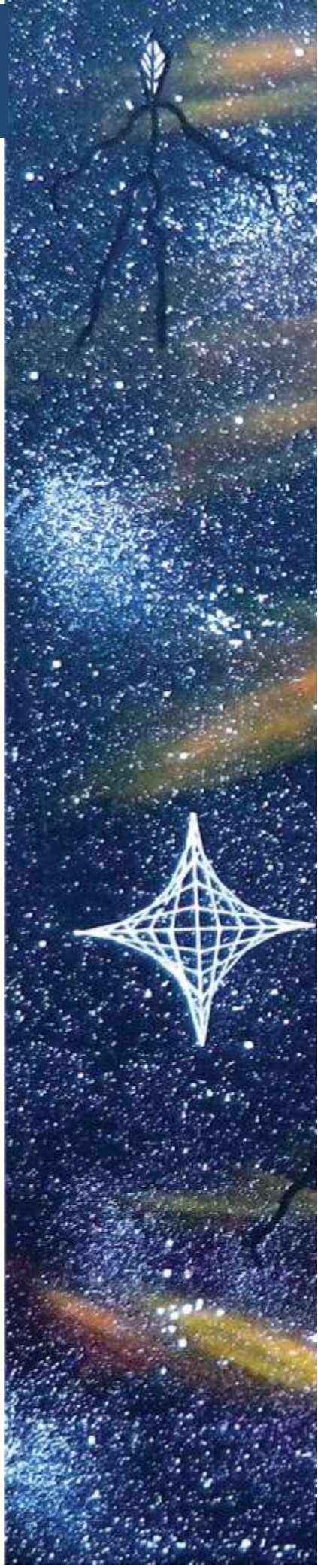
***6.** Our **Trauma and Culture Workshops** for teachers and health professionals, presented by Graham Toomey, our Aboriginal art and culture expert with weekly visits to several country centres.*

***7. Weekend Trauma and Culture Seminars** based on Reggio Emilia and High Scope due to the generosity of Frank Leyden tot ed. From Perpetual Trustees. This year these have been in Lismore, Dalaigur, Gunnedah. Up to 60 teachers from 20 preschools have attended these.*

*8. **Supervision** of Teachers of all programs is provided weekly, while the Dalaigur pre-school receives two Skype support consultations a week.*

*9. **Distribution**. Gunawirra distributes equipment, toys, clothes and care packs to over 40 preschools.*

All of these are practical, grass roots programs that impart living skills and much needed assistance in a supportive environment.



1. YOUNG ABORIGINAL MOTHERS PROGRAM – YAMP

The Young Aboriginal Mothers Program (YAMP), based in Gunawirra House, is an early intervention service for 4 groups of Aboriginal women from pregnancy through to their child starting school. It was formed in response to the need for mothers and their babies to be supported in building stronger, safer and healthier relationships.

The Project engages with, supports and holds the mothers through the first five years of their child's life. We provide a therapeutic space where Aboriginal women and teenagers have the opportunity to talk about and understand what has happened in their lives, to be understood and to begin to develop pride and confidence in themselves as women and as mothers. By focusing on and actively supporting the vital healthy links between mother and child, we aim to reduce the impact of intergenerational trauma in Aboriginal families.

The Young Aboriginal Mothers Program is now in its fourth year and 2014-15 has been a time of considerable growth. The first stage of a comprehensive evaluation of the project was completed in October 2014 and the program has expanded to include several new activities. This year we have added a further two mothers groups, taking the total to four.

Mothers of New Born Babies. Norma Tracey, Therapist; Kate Keyzer, Art Therapist; Anne Olds, Early Childhood Nurse

These mothers meet once a week. They have a therapy session for an hour and then an art therapy session, followed by a playtime baby-watching time with their children. A psychotherapist, an art therapist, an early childhood nurse and a social work student make up the team. All these mothers have mental health issues, issues with drug and alcohol; have been abused as children and abandoned by at least one parent or neglected by both parents. Two have older children in care, while another two are younger than 21 years of age. None have partners. All are devoted to their babies and come voluntarily wanting to give the best to their infants.

(b) Tuesday Mothers' Group 9 October 2015 - Babies to one year. Group Leaders Donna Jacobs (Clinical Psychologist and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist) and Pam Lark (Clinical Social Worker)

The Tuesday Mothers' Group, which began in February 2014, continues to run regularly every Tuesday. The group, which is held from 11am – 2pm, includes two group leaders and seven young Aboriginal mothers between the ages of 16 and 25, and their babies. The number of babies totals eight, and their ages range from 8 months to 2 years. The leaders are assisted by two volunteers, who prepare morning tea and lunch for the women. The membership of the group has remained stable over time; and has been consistent for 12 months now. Some mothers have been coming since the group's inception. Most mothers attend each week. Some art is done, if desired, when an artist from Beyond Empathy attends once a month. Otherwise, the women choose to sit and talk, and watch their babies. For many, this is a significant outing in the week with their infants, and we have observed their growing attachment to the group and to each other. We also witness the development of the infants in the group, as they each pass their milestones. Their relationships also develop over time. We often have the infant health nurses from Yana Maru (RPA-based) attend and provide input regarding baby and mother health. Furthermore, over the past few months, some of the mothers have begun studying. We now have five of the seven mothers enrolled or engaged in further study: one is still at school; three are doing a year-long TAFE course, and one is enrolled to begin a university degree in 2016.

Progress continues to be made at many levels, including relationship, development, attachment and identity formation (for mothers and babies alike). The mothers appear to value highly coming to the group.

(c) WEDNESDAY MOTHERS GROUP - Mothers with toddlers, 3 and 4 year olds.

The Wednesday Mothers Group continues to meet weekly with a membership of 8 women and 12 children. All the women are strongly attached to the group and they rarely miss a session.

Over the last 12 months the women have become more able to use the group in a therapeutic way, usually spending the first hour of the session sharing the difficulties and struggles in their lives. Very weighty issues to do with family violence, death, loss and isolation have emerged. The women are able to support each other in dealing with the difficulties of raising toddlers and pre-schoolers. They have also begun to explore the feelings of rage, disappointment and deprivation in their lives. A number of women are now engaged in individual therapy and some of the children are receiving play/art therapy. With the help of Graham

Toomey and Jo Davidson from BE, the group has taken on a number of art and cultural projects which are designed to bring them more in touch with traditional culture, build confidence and pride and to give creative outlets for self-expression. For example, plaster casting of pregnant bellies and children's hands and feet; a group mural project; bark painting and a celebration of Sorry Day with didgeridoo making and ochre face and body painting. The group has just begun a music program where the children are helped to make percussion instruments and introduced to a range of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal music. The cooking and nutrition program is ongoing and we are currently harvesting food from our beautiful veggie garden to make nutritious lunches. There are 2 students working within the group. An Art Therapy Masters student provides group art therapy for the children within the group as well as art therapy for the mother/child couple. A social work student assists with the planning and facilitation of the group and works with the children. There is an emphasis in the group on providing activities that bring mother and child together to play, be creative and form strong bonds. This emphasis was specifically requested by the women. Volunteers Gill Burrrows, Bella Douaihy and Lila Pierce provide invaluable assistance in the running of the group.

Thursday Group

Thanks to Baxter USA Gunawirra is now embarking on a fourth group. This is basically for mothers and infants from pregnancy up to 2nd year. We have just the beginnings here with a highly experienced ICAPP graduate Marc Chaussivert and he will be supported by Kat Chew in 2015–2016 as this group develops.

Mubali

Over the last 6 months, Gunawirra has worked in partnership with Beyond Empathy to conduct the Mubali Project. The artist, Jo Davidson, works with the women to make plaster casts of their pregnant bellies as well as casts of the children's hands or feet. These are then beautifully decorated by the women themselves. This project is a creative and culturally appropriate way of engaging otherwise marginalized and disengaged young mothers and helping them to be more connected to their growing babies and young children.

Gunawirra thanks Beyond Empathy and especially Kim McConville.

Community Connections

The program has worked closely with professionals from other organisations including: the Yana Maru Early Childhood nurses, from Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. A new program in which we at Gunawirra create a space to supervise all workers of Yana Maru is about to begin in early 2016.

Research and Evaluation

The program has continued to work in partnership with the University of Western Sydney to conduct an evaluation of the Wednesday group.

The *Five Big Ideas* program for preschools

The *Five Big Ideas* program starts from the understanding of the immense value of preschools as a place of healing. Preschools are a place where children are unthreatened and can recover their imagination and capacity to play. The program taps into the traditional idea of little children being healers. Self-care and community care are deeply embedded in Australian Aboriginal philosophies. We use Reggio Emilia and High Scope as our two main sources of philosophy that combine with Aboriginal culture to create areas of need defined by the teachers and ourselves called the Five Big ideas.

Our *Five Big Ideas* Training Program for preschools

In addition we provide Program training for the preschool teachers through seminars, workshops, service weekends, booklets, cost of equipment, toys, community days, gardens, first-aid kits and access to Gunawirra worker at all times It is a fun, interactive program, incorporating audio visual, art, stories, puppets and games for children to play

This program is broken into 5 Modules that can be used in the classroom as 20 to 30 minute lessons.

THESE MODULES ARE:

- **My Health & Hygiene**
- **Healing & Resilience**
- **Nutrition**
- **My Culture, My Identity –**
- **Handling trauma at home**
- **My Land, Our Environment**

The *Five Big Ideas* has this year homed into a whole area of specialized art therapy for children – for groups, for individuals and for teachers – as we realized the core of all our work needs to be based on healing trauma.

All In Together – special art program for teachers and children –

Minimbah pre-school

In-the-playground therapy!! *All in together* teachers and children!!

Each week I set up a couple of tables under the gum trees with materials collected through the week – gum nuts, twigs and leaves as well as clay, match sticks, paddle pop sticks etc. As an afterthought, I realized I had chosen materials that allowed an opportunity to connect with earth and land; so vital for Aboriginal people. The children dive in with great enthusiasm, making extraordinary creations which they share proudly, put 'on display' in the classroom or pack excitedly into their school bags to show their parents.

The teachers come in and out, watching the children, listening to their stories and even have their own stories to tell. They talk with me about the children and we notice things together. They are encouraged to join in with the children and work together side by side, sharing their stories and creations; and to simply enjoy the time spent together. Art is one of the few activities where children and adults can participate simultaneously, each at his/her own level, yet work together at joint projects – so this is providing an opportunity for the children and teachers to connect with each other in a joyful and fun way.

It sounds simple but I think these are the gentle beginnings.

2. ART THERAPY

Group therapy in Kempsey, Poets Corner, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Armidale. Five Lismore preschools to begin in 2016.

At the rural preschools all children are from homes where there is possible sexual abuse, domestic violence and drug and alcohol issues are prevalent.

As a consequence, the children we are working with have difficulty in most areas of their school life, social, learning, sleeping, eating, self-regulating and connecting and trusting adults. Most of the art therapy sessions involve play of some kind (hide and seek is a big favourite), sensory materials (playdoh, clay, water beads, shaving foam) painting and drawing. The group has gone from screaming at each other to screaming *with* each other, there is definite negotiation, and coming together to play and then playing/painting individually. It is quite extraordinary to watch 4 year olds negotiating this. The teachers have told us that the children transition between activities, and sleep and eat more easily. They are beginning to be able to express their needs more clearly and to actually self-regulate when feelings get too much.

Examples of two children in this group are:

C is 4 and quite large for his age; he is indiscriminate with his affections and also has poor language articulation. I believe he may be deaf and have requested a hearing test. He is very expressive, able to indicate most of his needs and engage in storytelling. Although frustrated, he is quite patient with his explanations and mostly waits until he is understood. C was unable to let anyone enter his space when he first started and is now able to allow someone from the group approach his table and to engage with him about his art making, which is thoughtful, precise and becoming more interesting and creative.

P is very slight and has just turned 4; she is angry, fearful and disruptive. At first she was unable to share and play with the other children. She would snarl and hit. P liked to scream – a very shrill, loud scream and quite disconcerting. P now screams but not at anyone in particular, it is more about expressing her difficult, angry feelings and is not as frequent now. She settles and transitions more quickly and can calm faster when anxious or excited.

3. THE ASSESSMENT AND THERAPY CLINIC

This program is part of the early intervention services that Gunawirra provides for Aboriginal children and families. The clinic's purpose is to support pre-school children aged 0 to 5 by providing assessment and individual or group art-play therapy. In addition, we provide assessment and counselling/therapy for their parents and carers when needed. The program also provides work-related mentoring sessions and/or therapy for the staff and teachers who work with traumatised children and are burnt out.

4. INNER SUBURBS ART THERAPY

In Waterloo at Poets Corner Preschool the four children this year have been seen by Graham Toomey and Miss Julia. All four children already have a lived experience of complex trauma – coming families that have drug and alcohol issues and are also, possibly, exposed to sexual abuse and domestic violence as everyday events. These children are learning to express their concerns and worries through art making and sometimes this expression is verbal. From being distracted and disruptive, the teachers now report that all the children are able to settle more easily in class, and transitioning from activity to activity is a little easier. The children included:

S – a girl who was over eager to help, very needy and competitive for adult connection, has begun to show a greater range of emotions. She is also beginning to be able to allow the adults in her world to come and go more easily, easing her high levels of anxiety.

W - a boy who was struggling with his identity, to explore who he was in his family, the preschool and the group. Initially he only painted himself and found it difficult to apply the paint to paper and be part of the group. A face painting ceremony was made part of the session. W no longer paints himself and is more able to stay and be part of the group.

At **Mount Carmel primary school** Kate Keyser has been seeing four Grade 2 children since mid 2015. They look forward to the sessions every Thursday, which Kate observes, “provide a place where they can share difficult material and where they feel their communications are heard and witnessed through the imagery.” “As our relationship develops the children are able to tell me more about themselves and their lives. They are beginning to explore more deeply through the art. The sessions also provide a place where the children can practice interacting and negotiating social/peer relationships.”

5. HERE COMES THE CHEF!

A special nutrition program in Minimbah Pre and Primary school and in Dalaigur at Kempsey

Minimbah school in Armidale comprises two schools; a pre and primary school for approximately 150 children. According to the Director of the pre-school, 90 % of the children come from deprived backgrounds with significant issues around domestic violence, drug and alcohol use, poverty and unemployment.

The children rarely eat home cooked meals and often eat fast food seven days a week. The school buys sandwiches for lunch every day. This is all about to change.

The children and teachers have been thrilled by the arrival of the Happy Chef in their Nutrition House in Term 4 2015. They are learning to cook nutritious meals and about the importance of eating good foods. Best of all the children and teachers are now eating hot meals for lunch every day!

The Nutrition House had been kitted out with a new fridge and stove and various cooking appliances and 10 families have signed up to help the newly appointed Chef in the kitchen. The link between school and the community is vital and aims to educate children and parents about

the benefits of eating nutritious meals; how to make a pizza without going to the pizza shop; how to cook home-made hamburgers; how to make mashed potatoes. Parents have already been involved in creating a veggie garden at Minimbah for use in the kitchen!

6. TRAUMA AND CULTURE WORKSHOPS, VISITS WITH OUR ABORIGINAL IN-HOUSE ARTIST AND CULTURAL EXPERT GRAHAM TOOMEY.

- **Gunawirra's Aboriginal Culture and Art Country Tour Facilitator:** Graham Toomey – Gunawirra's Senior Cultural Manager and Artist
- **Kempsey Pre School Centres :** Dalaigur and Scribbly Gum
- **Lismore area Pre School Centres:** Goonellabah, Jarjum, Lismore, Evans Head, Coraki
- **What Graham did with the children:**
- To spend time with children talking about Aboriginal Culture and Art.
- The telling of Aboriginal Dreamtime Stories.
- The showing and telling of Aboriginal tools and artefacts, (Boomerangs, Clap Sticks, Stones).
- Showing and guiding in how to use the Aboriginal Symbols Blocks for telling of stories.
- Showing and guiding in using the animal wooden stencils.

Two Aboriginal Cultural sessions with teachers, staff and volunteers at Dalaigur Pre School and Goonellabah Pre School Centres by Graham Toomey

Delivered donated care packs to over 400 hundred children

Children's Sessions (90 minutes)

I would begin my sessions with a group of children talking about how Aboriginal people used to live in the bush. I showed them special sticks that the Aboriginal people would use to build a fire, while being very careful with fire because it is dangerous. I told the children that there were no supermarkets or shops back then and that the bush was their supermarket. Aboriginal people would hunt and fish and pick fruits and foods from the trees and bushes.

I told the children that the animals and birds were our friends and we only hunted or fished when we were hungry and not for fun. I showed them special stones and stone tools that the people would use to cut up food because there was no knives, forks or spoons back then. I showed them Boomerangs, Clap Sticks and a Coolamon in which the Aboriginal mothers carried their babies. Later some little girls were seen carrying the Coolamon around with dolls in it.

I then told the children some very old Dreamtime stories and showed them colour in stencils they could use later to colour in about the story I would tell. One story was about why the whales swim up and down the coast. Another was about why the frogs sing in the ponds and another story told how all the birds got their colours.

I then showed the children the Aboriginal symbols blocks we had created and I told them a story using the blocks. I then asked the children to create their *own* stories using the blocks – which they did very enthusiastically while some children built houses and made tracks using the blocks. Lastly, I showed the children wooden animal stencils and demonstrated how they can trace around them and colour them in while they think about how the animals are our friends and that we should be kind to all the animals.

Teachers, Staff and Volunteers Cultural Awareness Sessions (Dalaigur and Goonellabah)

90 Minutes. (Up to 25 people in each of these discussions)

PowerPoint Presentation and open Discussion

These sessions are about teaching and guiding participants through Aboriginal Culture and its people. I talk about how to be respectful when meeting an Aboriginal person and tips on using appropriate language and things to be mindful about when talking to Aboriginal people. In these sessions I try to encourage the participants to open up and discuss queries.

Some of the issues I talk about are:

- Using the word ‘Aboriginal’ rather then ‘Indigenous’
- Being mindful that Aboriginal Identity is important and it’s not just about our family names, but also places, our homelands along with our spirituality, beliefs and values.
- We are not ‘part-Aboriginal’ but ‘Aboriginal’
- Elders, Aunties and Uncles
- Sorry Business

I also talk about traditional and modern Aboriginal Art and why it has always been a very important part of our culture. I talk about Aboriginal peoples connection and belonging to the land and to all living things, about the 'Dreamtime' and our 'Dreamings”.

Summary

This special week and the journey I took to some of the most deprived pre schools I have seen, can be best described as “Unforgettable”.

I will never forget the smiles on all the children's faces – particularly the Aboriginal children I spent time with. Many children you can tell come from very poor backgrounds by the clothes they wear and by their physical make up. I could tell right from the beginning of my children's sessions, that when I asked the children, “If you’re Aboriginal raise your hands,” all of the Aboriginal children held their hands up so proudly and those looks on their faces, well, it was priceless. To see all the children spellbound with what I was saying was so special and rewarding and I mean all the children, not just the Aboriginal children, but the non-Aboriginal children as well.

To tell and share Dreamtime stories that are dated back centuries and to watch children become fascinated with those stories is amazing. To show sticks, stones, stone tools, Boomerangs and other artefacts, which enabled Aboriginal people to survive and live in the bush, to me is so important for Australia's future with understanding the first peoples of this country.

The Cultural sessions with the teachers, staff and volunteers are just as unforgettable. These people who can still find the energy and the desire to came to these evening sessions after working all day in a incredible hard field is amazing. To me its shows that these dedicated and passionate people want to know more about this ancient culture and its people. They want to feel they are guiding and teaching children in the correct, respectful and appropriate way and that is outstanding. I could not thank them enough. I look forward to my next journey and hope it’s not to far away.

7. WEEKEND TRAUMA AND CULTURE SEMINARS - Lismore, Dalaigur, Gunnedah

Directors, teachers and childcare workers from Dalaigur and Scribbly Gum (Kempsey), Minimbah (Armidale), Quirindi and Gunnedah met at Gunnedah pre-school over a weekend to discuss the struggles their children experience in the classroom.

Professor Ionas Spazountis talked about how fear is central to our lives and shared stories that highlighted that fear impacts all ages, individuals, families, communities and crosses all cultures.

The focus of Ionas' talk was about the fear of children in the classroom and how fear is central to many of the symptoms and behaviours we witness in our children. If one begins to scratch the surface of what might be perceived as 'difficult', 'disobedient', 'angry' or 'controlling' as examples, you will find there is a lot of fear.

Our work is to try and look not only at the symptoms and behaviours but to also think about how the child feels and experiences him or her self. The goodness of the child is there; it is important to find it, to give voice to what Ionas' calls the 'promise'. This is the possibility of the child.

When a child is acting out in anger, it can be very difficult for staff – who may feel inadequate, confused and frustrated. We discussed how vital it is to recognise these feelings and thus understand the child's experience which they communicate through being overwhelmed, confused and angry themselves. We discussed how our role is to hold fast to faith in the promise.

8. SUPERVISION - Special Skype weekly consultation program for teachers

Every week Graham and Norma Tracey speak with the preschool teachers at Dalaigur by Skype. Out great support Marilyn Charles talks to her group at Dalaigur all the way from Massachusetts, USA. The teachers bring a particular child they find challenging or a worry. They might talk about a project they want to create. We are currently planning a cookbook of the children's recipes, and a program for boys – as so many do not have dads and so need attention. The teachers also have a special section, called 'private time' and in which they can ask for ten minutes at the end of the Skype session to discuss something they are worried about personally or can't share with the other teachers/staff.

9. DISTRIBUTION – Equipment, clothes, toys for our Preschools and most importantly our care packs.

The care packs are a huge hit and make such a difference to the children's self-care.

Thank you to Terry Aizen, Dr. Lynn Joffe, Ruth Weinstein and all those other teachers who have made these care packs of soap washer, tooth brush, tooth paste, underwear, socks, pyjamas, available for every single one of our children.

Place	Toys New 5 toys in each bag	Toys Second Hand	Equipment: wooden alphabets and symbol blocks, bassinets, etc.	Care packs	Clothes Second Hand	Books	Funding for gardens	Hot dinner at lunch time
NOWRA	BAGS			0				
WALLAGA LAKE	BAGS	BAGS	boxes	0	BAGS			
GUNNEDAH	BAGS	BAGS	boxes	0				50 daily
PEAK HILL	BAGS	BAGS		0				
INVERELL	BAGS	BAGS		0	BAG			
KOOTINGAL	BAGS	BAGS		0	BAG			
CORAKI	BAGS			0			500	
ARMIDALE	BAGS	BAGS	boxes	0		BOX	500	200 daily
JARJUM EAST LISMORE	BAGS	BAGS	boxes	0	BAGS	BOX		
WERRIS CREEK	BAGS							
DALAIGUR	BAGS		boxes	0				
ENNGONIA	BAGS							
BOGGABILLA	BAGS		boxes	0		BOX		
MOREE	BAGS							
NGINDI	BAGS							
TOTAL	**2 BAGS**	**9 BAGS**	**0 BOXES**	**10 CARE PACKS**	**BAGS**	**BOXES**	**1,000**	

STATISTICS

Projects	Place	Activity Reported October 2015	Mums	Children	Teachers	Other
MUMS GROUPS						
Mother's Group Monday	Rozelle	46 groups (3 mothers x 3 babies)	138	138		
Mother's Group Tuesday	Rozelle	46 groups (7 mothers, 7 infants)	329	329		
Mother's Group Wednesday	Rozelle	48 groups (8 mothersX12 toddlers)	384	576		
Mother's Group Wednesday, Art Therapy	Rozelle	40 groups (7 children, 1 mother & child, 2 mothers)	120	280		
Mother's Group Wednesday, Art and Culture	Rozelle	48x8 mums	384			
INNER SUBURBS Group and Individual Therapy						
Art therapy Group Poets Corner	Poets Corner	40 groups (5 children each session)		200		
Individual therapy Child -IS	Poets Corner	38 sess X 2 children		76		
Individual Child Poets Corner	Poets Corner	38Direct discussions with teacher			38	
Art Therapy Group Mount Carmel	Mount Carmel	16 sessions x 4 children		64		
Individual Adult therapy	Rozelle	280 sessions x individual mothers x children and mothers	280			
Consultation with teachers	Mount Carmel	8 sessions x teachers			8	
COUNTRY						
Director weekly support	Gunnedah	40 sessions			40	
Nutrition- breakfasts	Gunnedah	20 childrenx280 breakfasts		5,600		
Teacher training discussion group 2	Kempsey	18 groups x 5 teachers			90	
Teacher's Training Discussion Group 1	Kempsey	35 groups X 4 teachers			140	
Therapy - Parent - child teacher	Kempsey	20 sessions	20	20	20	
Teacher Art Therapy sessions	Kempsey	10 sessions			40	
Art Therapy -Individual	Kempsey	20 sess (3 individual children)		60		
Play ground + Art Therapy	Armidale	12 sessions, children, teachers		280	40	
Nutrition - Here comes the Chef	Armidale	200 meals x 120 children		5000		
Child art therapy group - primary	Armidale	40 sessions x 4 children		160		
Child art therapy group - preschool	Armidale	40 sessions x 2 children		80		
Indiv. Child country	Armidale	40sessions x individual therapy		40		
SEMINARS						
Weekend regional Seminars	Gunnedah Narooma	Gunnedah 20, Lismore 110, Narooma 20			150	
Trauma and Culture seminar Redfern series	Redfern Community	4 sessions x 30 people each session				300
Country Visits by our cultural expert	Gunnedah, Armidale, Lismore, Narooma, Kempsey	28 preschool centres with 280 staff		500	280	
Aboriginal Culture Gunawirra staff seminar	Rozelle	8 sessions x 8 workers				64
SUPERVISION						
Supervision staff mum group Wednesday	Rozelle	26 sess x 1 worker				26
Supervision students	Rozelle	40 sessions x 4 workers				160
Supervision (Tuesday Group)	Rozelle	46 sessions x 2 workers				92
Supervision staff country work	Rozelle	40 sessions x 2 workers (Lismore)				80
Supervision Gunawirra workers	Rozelle	45 sessions x 8 workers				360

RESEARCH

Please see our separate Research document detailing the evaluation and findings on our *Five Big Ideas* program.

Research – Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Reggio Emilia Art Therapy Program for Aboriginal Children (Aged 4-7)

Project Coordinator – Denise Lynch BSW (UNSW), MCrim (USYD), Faculty of Education and Social Work (Honorary) University of Sydney

Executive Summary

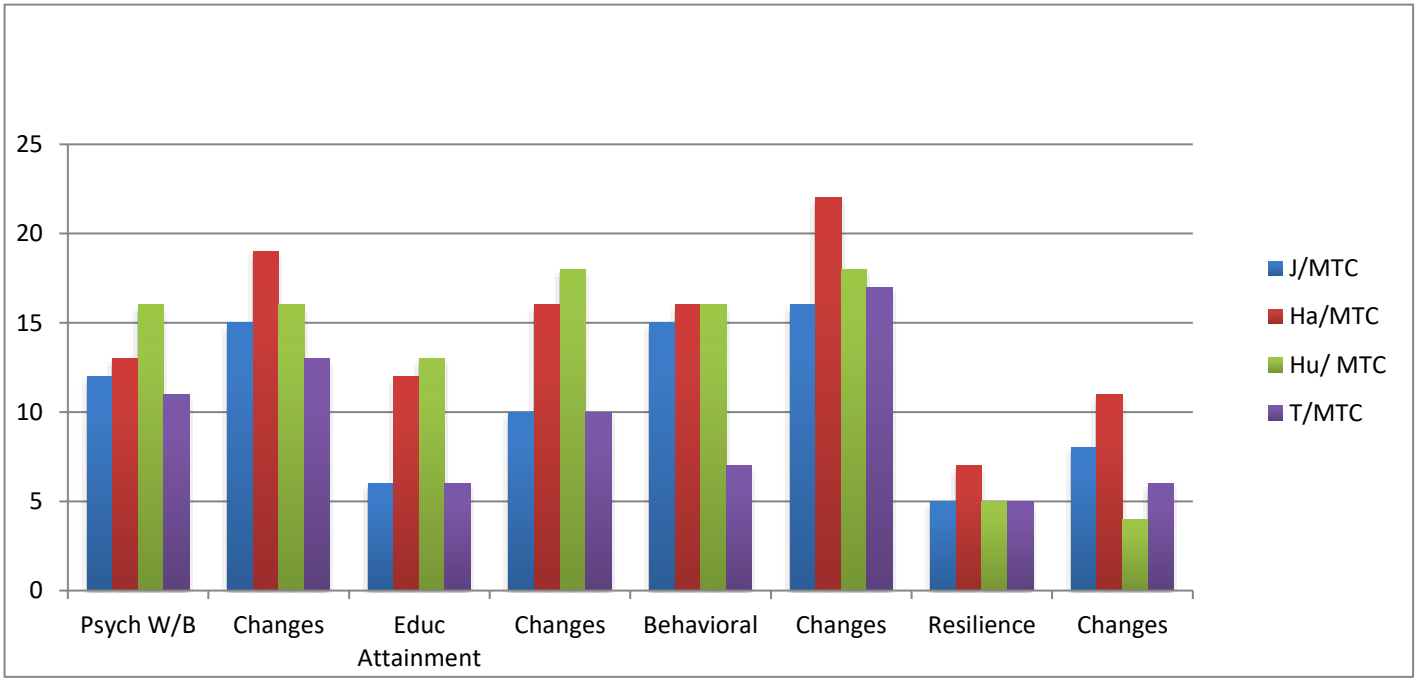
The Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Art Therapy Program for Aboriginal children examines whether art therapy, underpinned by a psychoanalytic theoretical foundation, proceeds to positive change for Aboriginal children. While there is acknowledgement of the 'brief' of the study, the evaluation cannot be conducted in a historical or social vacuum.

The goals of this evaluation are to assess the effectiveness of the art therapy program conducted by Gunawirra. There are a number of secondary goals addressing structural factors influencing the children, such as home situations and the role of the school and community. These factors are often less direct but can have tangible effects on programs.

The evaluation is conducted in 5 locations in NSW. (2 in metropolitan Sydney, 3 in rural areas. (2 in Armidale and 1 in Kempsey).

The methodology is a combination of quantitative and qualitative elements. These elements include an observation sheet of children engaged in group or individual art therapy, across a spectrum of psychological, educational, behavioural and resilience factors. These sheets are completed at the beginning of the observation time and at the completion with a minimum of 10 weeks, with children being given a rating from 1-5.

Mt Carmel Results (Table)



Gunawirra thanks all its Funders, its private donors, its corporate sponsors, pro bono service providers and its volunteers. We attempted to list all of our supporters, of every kind, but they would fill a booklet. We are grateful to each and every one of you, knowing that without your support, Gunawirra would not have the healthy, thriving programs and life that it has.

Our Board thanks you

Our Members thank you

Our professional staff thanks you

Our Administration thanks you

Our teachers, parents and little children thank you

Artwork by Graham Toomey