

Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Discussion Report

Version 2.1 (January 2020)



'Nyangkarni' – a collaborative artwork between Penny K Lyons, Rosie King Tarku, Rosie Goodjie, Cory Wakartu Surprise, Nada Rawlins and Purlta Maryanne Downs

Warning

*This document may contain names and pictures
of people who have passed away.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Compilation

This *Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Discussion Report* was compiled by Frank Davey, Merle Carter, Melissa Marshall, Wes Morris, Kate Golson, Maya Haviland, Pat Torres and Rowena O’Byrne-Bowland. This report provides analysis of the information reported in the *Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Consultation Report 1.2*, as provided through community workshops, participant surveys and one-on-one interviews from representatives of Aboriginal organisations featured in that document.

Foreword

We would like to sincerely thank June Oscar AO, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, for providing the foreword to this document.

Front Artwork

‘Nyangkarni’ is a collaborative artwork by Penny K Lyons, Rosie King Tarku, Rosie Goodjie, Cory Wakartu Surprise, Nada Rawlins and Purlita Maryanne Downs. It depicts significant desert sites from the women’s family Country, including *Yataru Jila*, *Parnta*, *Kurtal*, *Pirrmal*, *Kulijirti Jumu* and *Jilji* this side of *Kiriwirri*.

Used with generous permission from Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency, ‘Nyangkarni’ perfectly encapsulates one of the central threads behind the Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Project – collaboration and joint endeavour towards a common purpose.

Other Images

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Disclaimer

The information contained herein was current at the time of publication. While details may change, the overarching cultural domains, principles and practices remain strong throughout our region.

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FOREWORD

Culture underpins all of who we are. It is both what we learn, and the framework for how we live and engage with each other and our surrounds. Culture constructs our society and identities, our strength, self-worth and resilience, and in times of great sadness – of trauma, loss and grief – culture heals us. The Kimberley region is home to 30 distinct Aboriginal groups that practices culture in diverse and vibrant ways. Our traditions and languages that connect us to Country and each other come from a deep lineage of ancestral knowledge and strength.

The Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Initial Consultation Report captures this remarkable heritage. It reflects the powerful leadership that has always been present in the Kimberley in keeping our culture alive and protected. In 1984, our people from diverse traditions across the Kimberley gathered at Ngumpan. At this historic bush meeting, we recognised that alongside our rights to our land we must protect and practice our Law and culture. We stood for our rights to be on Country, to speak our languages, and to be in control of our knowledge and resources. As a result, we established the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre, the Kimberley Language Resource Centre, and Magabala Books, the first and now longest running Aboriginal publishing house in Australia.

Since then, we have been a part of achieving the extraordinary legal milestone of Native Title which destroyed the myth of Terra Nullius, and we have established and strengthened our many community-controlled organisations. **The Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Initial Consultation Report and the forthcoming Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Plan reminds us of these achievements and the ways in which we continue to thread culture into every aspect of our lives.**

This consultation report provides an overview of over 60 Kimberley community-controlled organisations that work across every sector from health, justice and education to arts, enterprise, women’s supports, childcare, land management and aged care, amongst many others. These organisations, led by our people and built on our cultural values and principles, deliver vital culturally-based services and programs designed to maintain, strengthen and revitalise our culture.

The forthcoming Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Plan is not for the shelf. It will sit alongside other major reports and recommendations which acknowledge that our people on the ground and our community organisations have the solutions. Central to our solutions is caring for our culture.

It is time that Governments and policy-makers work with us. We have to respond to these reports and this plan so we can invest in community-led solutions over the long-term. In being supported to practice and care for our culture in everything we do our distinct rights as Indigenous Peoples are realised. **When our culture is strong, we are strong.** We can maintain the transference of knowledge to all our children, and revitalise generational success, health and wellbeing.

Our culture, practiced in our homes, families and communities and supported by our organisations, brings about the future we all want – a future self-determined by our people.

Yaninyja.

Thank you.

June Oscar AO, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We have to let culture speak for itself.

– Rachel bin Salleh (*Magabala Books*)

In an area geographically larger than the state of Victoria, the Kimberley is home to the oldest living continuous culture on the planet and the primacy of culture is continuously and repeatedly asserted by Kimberley Aboriginal People.

The Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC) has been the Kimberley's peak Aboriginal body since we were established in 1985. We are mandated to protect, preserve and celebrate Law and Culture across the region.

Despite repeated calls for Government action, a 2016 *Medical Journal of Australia* article found that the suicide rate in the Kimberley region had not only doubled in five years, but it was among the highest in the world.

ABOUT THE KIMBERLEY ABORIGINAL CARING FOR CULTURE PROJECT

The Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Project (KACfC Project) is part of KALACC's effort to improve resource distribution; foster a collaborative approach between Aboriginal stakeholder organisations and the Government; and address the broader impact of intergenerational trauma and suicide that overwhelmingly grips our region.

It should be noted that the initial aim of this project was to produce a Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Plan. It is intended by KALACC that the combination of the three primary documents produced through this process provide the elements of a plan. However, while the process has resulted in a comprehensive illustration of Kimberley Aboriginal Culture, there remain other organisations who have not been included for varying reasons. Therefore, at the risk of inadvertently overlooking those not involved in this process, KALACC wants to ensure that these reports guide future investment in culture in the Kimberley rather than provide a detailed plan to follow step-by-step.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Map and gap the current service provision
- Foster collaboration and cohesion amongst Kimberley Aboriginal Non-Government Organisation (NGO) service providers
- Contribute to the development of macro Government policies and strategies
- Contribute to important research into and strategies towards improving Indigenous outcomes

PROJECT PROCESS

A total of 61 Aboriginal organisations participated in the Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Project, from a cross-section of key service areas regarding Aboriginal welfare and wellbeing. Organisations were given the option of contributing via surveys, workshops or one-on-one meetings or workshops. Several organisations chose to engage with more than one of these methods.

Stage 1: KACfC Regional Consultations and Consultation Report

The *Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Consultation Report (KACfC Consultation Report)* was released in March 2019 (v1.0); updated in July (v1.1) and August (v1.2); and finalised in January 2020 (v1.3). It reports on the year-long consultation process conducted by KALACC and:

- Summarises the information and materials gathered from the 61 Aboriginal organisations that participated in the consultations
- Provides a collective voice for these organisations
- Showcases their culturally-based activities, partnerships, achievements and aspirations

The information that was collected during the consultation process is organised within a framework of the five Kimberley cultural blocs (with the exception of the overarching regional organisations):

- **Southern Tradition** – from Broome and Bidyadanga across to the Tjurabalan
- **Western Tradition** – the Dampier Peninsula
- **Central Tradition** – Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and surrounds
- **Eastern Tradition** – Halls Creek, Warmun and Kununurra
- **Northern Tradition** – Wyndham, Kalumburu and the Gibb River Road
- **Regional Bodies** – organisations operating across the Kimberley region

Stage 2: Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Discussion Report

This present document, the *Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Discussion Report (KACfC Discussion Report)*, provides further analysis of the information gathered in the consultations. Initially released in October 2019 (v2.0) and finalised in January 2020 (v 2.1), the report:

- Explores and examines the cultural domains inherent across the region
- Provides a framework for Government and other supporting organisations to develop future policies, practices and strategies relating to Aboriginal people in the Kimberley region – one that ensures culture is at the core
- Identifies recommendations and opportunities for enhanced service provision
- Refers to additional information gathered during our consultations with schools in the Kimberley that offer culturally-based programs and initiatives.

Stage 3: Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Project – Final Steps

The final report produced through this process combines the information from the aforementioned previous two documents for dissemination within the Kimberley community and to participating organisations. Named the *Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Community Report (KACfC Community Report)*, it builds on the *KACfC Consultation Report* and the *KACfC Discussion Report* and was released in October 2019 (v3.0) before being finalised in January 2020 (v3.1).

Alongside these documents, the *Kimberley Schools Aboriginal Culture Program Mapping Project – Data and Analysis Report (2019)* was produced. This report details investigations that KALACC and the Australian National University (ANU) undertook on the incorporation of culture into school curriculums through case studies in the region.

The *Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Background Report (KACfC Background Report)* was also produced and provides a review of the relevant academic and Government policy literature on the relationship between Aboriginal culture and wellbeing.

CULTURAL DOMAINS OF ACTION

Following review of the information provided from the Kimberley Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) relating to culture and the various ways in which it is incorporated and underpins the respective organisations process from governance, through to processes and subsequent program delivery, three key elements were identified in the *KACfC Consultation Report*:

- Culturally-Embedded Principles
- Culturally-Embedded Practices and Components
- Culturally-Embedded Activities

The *KACfC Consultation Report* provides a detailed picture of the types and scope of the cultural activities that the people of the Kimberley are engaged in. It discusses the benefits of these activities for the communities who have led their development. While local and regional community organisations provide a wide range of formal services – from environmental management and research through to health and education – by their nature they also provide a myriad of activities and services that they do not receive funding for and that often go unrecognised by outsiders. These include aged care support, youth diversionary activities, community development, and advocacy for individuals, families and communities.



A deeper analysis of the consultation data collected was undertaken. Overwhelmingly apparent and cognisant with all organisations participating in this process, was that Culture and Language are not only integral to the ACCOs but fundamental and foundational. From this viewpoint, a series of interconnected cultural domains of action have been identified that form the basis of this second report in the series, the *KACfC Discussion Report*, which are discussed in detail in subsequent sections.

OVERVIEW OF THE KEY FINDINGS

Evidenced throughout the *KACfC Consultation Report* and substantiated in the present report is the empirical requirement to not only resource the externally-focused activities identified within the Cultural Domains of Activity diagram but to prioritise funding of its core – Culture and Language. Without reversing this trend, no amount of resourcing applied to the inner or outer circles will achieve their objectives if there is no cultural foundation.

Three key findings have been identified from our discussion of the KACfC Project materials. Each will need to be addressed in the short-, medium- and long-term in relation to the fundamental understanding of and investment in culture in the Kimberley for generations to come:

- **Strength of Regional Collaboration** – The isolation of and long distances between communities presents enormous challenges to Kimberley ACCOs undertaking cultural activities. A recurrent theme in the project is the importance of networking and forums through which people can come together, regionally and locally, to develop shared strategies, learn from and support each other, share information, advocate and so on.
- **Unrecognised Activities Crucial to Social Capital** – The participating organisations undertake an array of informal and unofficial activities, such as aged care and childcare responsibilities, which most often go unrecognised and unfunded, but that are essential to keeping the cultural ecology of the local and regional Kimberley Region alive.
- **Cultural Foundations Essential to Social, Cultural and Emotional Wellbeing** – The data collected on the value and impacts of cultural practice, identity, knowledge and connections in the consultations reaffirms and reinforces the many reports, statements and articulations of the past about the importance of culture to Indigenous health and wellbeing, as well as the research underway that is investigating the links between culture and wellbeing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consideration has been given to all stages of the KACfC Project process and, overwhelmingly, it has been observed that:

Culture and Language, as fundamental to the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs as it is, is rarely funded or resourced.

Countless recommendations to improve the welfare and prosperity of Aboriginal communities have been published previously – many of which the State and Federal Governments are yet to respond to. Acknowledging these many past reports, we have identified five recommendations through the KACfC Project process:

1. *Investment in Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations to maintain, celebrate and prioritise culture in all its forms*

2. Consolidated targeted investment in Aboriginal languages and language maintenance outcomes as a strategic priority area
3. Prioritised investment and support for Kimberley Aboriginal organisations to provide regular regional and local forums for the sharing of cultural knowledge and practice, the building of capability and to network in key areas of activity
4. Investment in the development of cultural outcome indicators and measures that Aboriginal people define, which would relate to such things as types of cultural participation and opportunities to connect with Country and family, and language maintenance and revival
5. A response by the WA Government to the gaps and opportunities identified in this report, and all those of the 2016 [Message Stick Report](#), KALACC’s 2017 *Cultural Solutions Position Paper* and State Coroner Fogliani’s 2019 [Coronial Inquest Findings Report](#)

Given the growing number of investigations such as this and those referenced by the KACfC Project, we have developed the table below to assist in the development and implementation of responsive actions for guidance of Government and funding bodies to work with ACCOs in delivery of these:

KIMBERLEY ABORIGINAL CARING FOR CULTURE PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIVE ACTIONS	
	Short-to-Medium Term Actions (1–5 years)	Medium-to-Long Term Actions (5–20 years)
1. Investment in Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations to maintain, celebrate and prioritise culture in all its forms	Establish cultural funding programs that are available to ACCOs only	Develop ACCOs driving agenda in relation to cultural investment across the region
2. Consolidated targeted investment in Aboriginal languages and language maintenance outcomes as a strategic priority area	Fund the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) to develop language resources with Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs) for schools	Provide language funds for all PBCs Fund the KLRC for sleeping languages and research
3. Prioritised investment and support for Kimberley Aboriginal organisations to provide regular regional and local forums for the sharing of cultural knowledge and practice, the building of capability and to network in key areas of activity	Resource KALACC and KLRC to collaborate to lead a cultural knowledge and practice exchange across the region	Invest in established cultural knowledge and practice exchange via Kimberley ACCOs
4. Investment in the development of cultural outcome indicators and measures that Aboriginal people define, which would relate to such things as types of cultural participation and opportunities to connect with Country and family, and language maintenance and revival	Utilise existing and established cultural governance mechanisms in the Kimberley to develop cultural outcome indicators and measures	Evaluate and continue improving cultural outcome indicators and measures via existing and established Kimberley cultural governance mechanisms
5. A response by the WA Government to the gaps and opportunities identified in this report, and <u>all</u> those of the 2016 Message Stick Report , KALACC’s 2017 <i>Cultural Solutions Position Paper</i> , and State Coroner Fogliani’s 2019 Coronial Inquest Findings Report	Provide a published response to all three reports with actions identified to address the specific individual recommendations	Implement the actions published in relation to recommendations in each of the reports

These recommendations will deliver on the potent words of the Kimberley Cultural Bosses on p6 of KALACC's 2017 *Cultural Solutions Position Paper*:

To heal our people, we must heal our families. To heal our families, we must heal our communities.

Culture is the key.

INTRODUCTION

The Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Project (KACfC Project) has been underway since 2017. This project was developed by the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC) to improve resource distribution; foster a collaborative approach between Aboriginal stakeholder organisations and the Government; and address the broader impact of intergenerational trauma and suicide that overwhelmingly grips our region.

THE KACFC PROJECT PROCESS

A total of 61 Aboriginal organisations participated in the KACfC Project, from a cross-section of key service areas regarding Aboriginal welfare and wellbeing (see *Appendix 1*). Organisations were given the option of contributing via surveys, workshops or one-on-one meetings or workshops. Several organisations chose to engage with more than one of these methods.

Stage 1: KACfC Regional Consultations and Consultation Report

Through a lengthy consultation process that spanned close to a year, two consultation teams mapped the ways in which culture – in its multi-faceted forms – is inherent within Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) across the vast Kimberley region.

Subsequently, the *Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Consultation Report (KACfC Consultation Report)* was released in March 2019 (v1.0); updated in July (v1.1) and August (v1.2); and finalised in January 2020 (v1.3). It reports on the year-long consultation process conducted by KALACC and:

- Summarises the information and materials gathered from the 61 Aboriginal organisations that participated in the consultations
- Provides a collective voice for these organisations
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- **Northern Tradition** – Wyndham, Kalumburu and the Gibb River Road
- **Regional Bodies** – organisations operating across the Kimberley region

See also below for further information on the content and outcomes of the *KACfC Consultation Report*.

Stage 2: Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Discussion Report

This present document, the *Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Discussion Report (KACfC Discussion Report)*, provides further analysis of the information gathered in the consultations. It was initially released in October 2019 (v2.0) and finalised in January 2020 (v 2.1). See below for further information on the purpose and structure of the *KACfC Discussion Report*.

Stage 3: Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Project – Final Steps

The final report produced through this process combines the information from the aforementioned previous two documents for dissemination within the Kimberley community and to participating organisations. Named the *Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Community Report (KACfC Community Report)*, it builds on the *KACfC Consultation Report* and the *KACfC Discussion Report* and was released in October 2019 (v3.0) before being finalised in January 2020 (v3.1).

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The *Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Background Report (KACfC Background Report)* was also produced and provides a review of the relevant academic and Government policy literature on the relationship between Aboriginal culture and wellbeing.

PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSION REPORT

The *KACfC Discussion Report*:

- Explores and examines the cultural domains inherent across the region
- Provides a framework for Government and other supporting organisations to develop future policies, practices and strategies relating to Aboriginal people in the Kimberley region – one that ensures culture is at the core
- Identifies recommendations and opportunities for enhanced service provision
- Refers to additional information gathered during our consultation with schools in the Kimberley that offer culturally-based programs and initiatives

DISCUSSION REPORT STRUCTURE

The *KACfC Discussion Report* builds on and expands the *KACfC Consultation Report's* analysis of Culturally-Embedded Principles; Culturally-Embedded Components and Practices; and Culturally-Embedded Activities (KALACC 2019:91–95). By further examining the practices and activities of the 61 participating organisations, we have subsequently developed the concept of 'Cultural Domains of Action'.

As part of our discussion, we have related these findings to the project's overarching objectives and to potential opportunities and remaining gaps in the discourse. Our findings and project recommendations then conclude this report.

CULTURAL DOMAINS OF ACTION

BACKGROUND – THE CONSULTATIONS

The consultations provided a detailed picture of the scope and types of cultural activities that Kimberley Aboriginal people are engaged in. The *KACfC Consultation Report*:

- Discusses the benefits of these activities for the communities who have led their development
- Describes the wide range of formal services – from environmental management and research through to health and education – they deliver and the many activities and services that they do not receive funding for, and that often go unrecognised (such as aged care support, youth diversionary activities, community development and advocacy)
- Outlines the critical role the organisations play in regional development, the diverse array of objectives they achieve across sectors (including in the visual arts and craft, dance, music, theatre, literature and cultural maintenance and renewal), the essential infrastructure and services they provide over vast distances, with remits at the local, regional, national and international levels
- Details the outputs and outcomes of these activities including:
 - Training and professional pathways for young people
 - Economic development
 - Inter-cultural collaboration
 - Strengthened capacity in governance and leadership
 - Audience development
 - Repatriation; intergenerational cultural transmission
 - Cultural performance and festivals
 - Cultural employment
 - Skills development
 - Social enterprise
 - Exhibitions
 - Mentoring
 - Engaging youth
 - Keeping First Nations culture strong
 - Sharing First Nations culture with other Australians and on a global stage

KEY ELEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN THE CONSULTATION REPORT

The *KACfC Consultation Report* analysis identified three key elements to the centrality of culture in and for Kimberley ACCOs:

- Culturally-Embedded Principles
- Culturally-Embedded Practices and Components
- Culturally-Embedded Activities

The essential points relating to each are illustrated below in *Table 1*.

ELEMENTS	DEFINITION	DESCRIPTION
Culturally-Embedded Principles	These principles underlie the cultural components and core activities of each ACCO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to Country must be maintained • Country, culture and language are inseparable • Aboriginal advancement and wellbeing through Aboriginal empowerment and self-determination • Senior people have the authority and are the Knowledge Holders
Culturally-Embedded Components and Practices	To allow for the principles to be incorporated into the organisation, these components and practices are implemented to assist in maintaining cultural protocols and processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Governance, which connects members and constituents of these organisations culturally and socially, whether it is Native Title, family group, people with shared histories and so on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aboriginal empowerment and ownership of initiatives, services and programs ○ Employment and retention of Aboriginal staff across all organisational levels • Cultural Knowledge and Practices, with foundations in Country, Language, art-making, storytelling, song, dance and/or performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aboriginal ways of sharing knowledge and working together, which consider kinship and complex relationship systems and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intergenerational transfer of knowledge ▪ Shared cultural and/or social identity among members • Celebration of Culture, Language and Country, which facilitates the sharing of and immersion in Cultural Knowledges to the wider public <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Production of cultural materials ○ Cultural elements being part of the physical setting (including artworks on display)
Culturally-Embedded Activities	Associated with one or more of these overarching components are the core culturally-embedded activities that the Aboriginal community organisations engage in and/or deliver.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going and being ‘on-Country’ (e.g. ‘back-to-Country’ trips) • Maintaining and teaching bush knowledge and skills (e.g. hunting, bush tucker and bush medicine) • Enabling young people to participate in cultural activities • Using Aboriginal Languages and art to convey information • Documenting, storing, archiving and sharing Cultural Knowledge and activities • Promoting Aboriginal culture, language, art and knowledge • Participating in cultural festivals, events and performances • Giving ‘Welcome to Country’ talks and acknowledgements of Traditional Owners • Mandating cultural awareness training for staff • Utilising Traditional cultural healing methods

Table 1: Culturally-Embedded Elements as analysed in the KACfC Consultation Report.

DEVELOPING THE CULTURAL DOMAINS OF ACTION

Building on this earlier analysis we have identified a series of interconnected Cultural Domains of Action (see *Figure 1*). It is readily apparent that Culture and Language are not only integral but fundamental and foundational to the Kimberley ACCOs, which is why they are featured at the centre of the model.

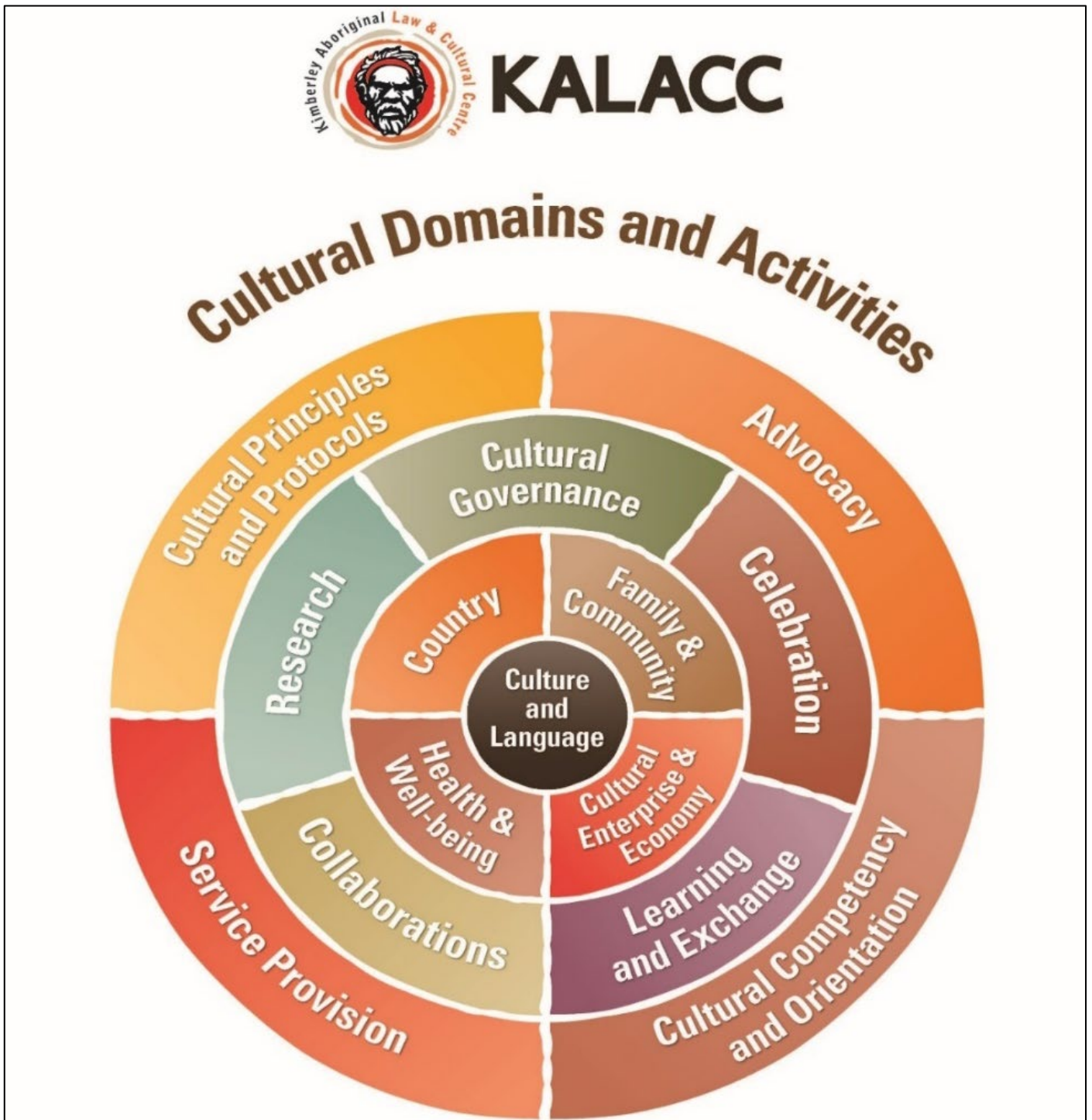


Figure 1: KALACC identified Cultural Domains and Activities

The nine Cultural Domains of Action are Country; Family & Community; Health & Wellbeing; Cultural Enterprise & Economy; Cultural Governance; Research; Celebration; Collaborations; and Learning & Exchange. Each overlaps considerably with others and should not be thought of as mutually exclusive. They can be divided into two categories:

- **More internally focussed** – activities that transmit and strengthen culture among Kimberley Aboriginal people and groups (see *Table 2*)
- **More externally focussed** – activities that assist external agencies to interact with and potentially resource ACCOs and Aboriginal people (see *Table 3*)

Encircling the cultural domains on the periphery of the model are a further four discrete activities that support inclusion of and engagement with culturally-embedded frameworks – Cultural Principles & Protocols; Advocacy; Service Provision; and Cultural Competency & Orientation. These are often used as conduits for external bodies to interact with ACCOs.

CULTURAL DOMAINS ACTIVE IN THE KIMBERLEY

An analysis of the Cultural Domains identified, their descriptive characteristics and associated activities are presented within the below tables, which are separated into internally-focussed activities vs externally-focussed activities (see *Table 2* and *Table 3* respectively).

We have also included examples of Kimberley ACCOs that embed these processes within their organisations, as discussed in full within the *KACfC Consultation Report*.

DOMAINS OF CULTURAL ACTION	INTERNALLY-FOCUSSED ACTIVITIES: Transmitting and strengthening Culture among Kimberley Aboriginal people and groups	
	Descriptive Characteristics	Examples of Activities
CULTURE & LANGUAGE	<p>Across the region, Aboriginal organisations are undertaking activities focused on revitalising and maintaining languages and cultural knowledge, beliefs and practices.</p> <p>In all these activities, Elders and knowledge holders guide cultural continuity, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, experience and skills are <i>key elements</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating, developing, producing and distributing arts and crafts, materials, publications, radio shows, videos, interpretative signage, catalogues, cultural guides and other resources • Performing, maintaining and revitalising songs, dance, music and story-telling in all forms • Protecting, conserving and repatriating of cultural heritage • Documenting, archiving and storing of cultural knowledge and heritage • Exhibiting, displaying and touring art works and performances • Promoting Kimberley cultural and language traditions and contemporary innovations and enabling visitors from all over the world to engage with them • Working with education and training providers to increase accessibility to language learning <p>[See KACfC Consultation Report p27, 37, 38, 40, 47–48, 50, 51, 54, 61–62, 62–63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 72, 73–74, 75, 76–77, 78, 80, 87, 83]</p>
COUNTRY	<p>A key element of these activities is to enable people to fulfil their cultural responsibilities to look after Country, and pass on the knowledge, experiences and skills to young people to do so.</p> <p>Elders in their role as custodians of knowledge and lore often support ACCOs as cultural advisors and Directors to fulfil these activities.</p>	<p>Activities to connect Kimberley Aboriginal people to Country, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting people to live on Country • Enabling people to access, use and look after their Country through • Native Title claims and agreements • Caring for Country activities (i.e. cultural and natural resource management and environmental stewardship activities, which are now increasingly delivered by ranger groups) • Organising and resourcing ‘on-Country’ trips for Law and ceremony, painting, language research, cultural mapping, hunting, fishing and gathering bush tucker, medicines and ochres, meetings and many other purposes – in so doing, organisations ensure that the right people are participating and bring young and old people together • Festivals, performances, exhibitions, workshops and other events held continuously across the region and further afield • Storytelling in books and on radio, film and TV <p>[See KACfC Consultation Report p28, 52, 53, 54, 61–62, 65, 66, 68, 69, 73–74, 75, 76, 77–78, 80, 87]</p>

<p>FAMILY & COMMUNITY</p>	<p>Family, kin and community are at the centre of all the activities that the organisations are engaged in.</p> <p>The bringing together of young and older family members and kin, the intergenerational transfer of knowledge, experiences and practices, and respect for elders are key elements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth programs that focus on restoring the pride of participants with cultural guidance and support provided by Elders and mentors, and that use culture, connection, and community, as well as practical work and life skills, to set young people up for a better future • Artistic mentoring programs with older practitioners together with young emerging creatives • Knowledge transfer between generations to maintain and celebrate identity and kinship • Workshops in traditional maternity health and young mothers support programs • Pathways to education • On-Country trips for Law and ceremony • Father-son days • Counselling and suicide prevention programs • Women’s law business • Women’s knowledge enterprises <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p56–57, 57–59, 66, 75, 76–77, 80, 89]</i></p>
<p>HEALTH & WELLBEING</p>	<p>Aboriginal views of health and wellbeing are holistic, encompassing the spiritual, emotional and cultural dimensions of a person’s life and connections to culture, family and land, as well as the absence of disease.</p> <p>Culture is a protector and enabler of health and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural healing • Spiritual health programs • Maternity health and young mothers support programs • Connecting to Country through visits to fish and hunt • Activities that strengthen cultural identity and pride while building resilience (e.g. story-telling, music-making), and other modes of creative expression that celebrate tradition and heritage • Services and programs based on an understanding of family relationships • Counselling and suicide prevention programs <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p24, 27, 35, 49, 52, 56–57, 57–59, 65, 70, 71, 81–82, 89–90]</i></p>
<p>ENTERPRISE & ECONOMY</p>	<p>These enterprises offer a range of training and mentoring programs in the creation, development, production and distribution of cultural works.</p> <p>They enable job creation, training and cultural/professional development and mentoring opportunities on-Country and in local communities, therefore generating considerable economic benefit and independence for communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural tourism • Caring for Country, natural and cultural resource management and environmental management • The production of bush medicines, bush foods and cosmetics • Fashion design • Arts and crafts development • Cultural events such as festivals • Writing and publishing • Music • Cultural awareness and orientation courses <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p27–30, 43–44,49, 53, 55–56, 56–57, 64, 65, 68, 76–77, 78–79, 80]</i></p>

<p>CULTURAL GOVERNANCE</p>	<p>Culture is at the heart of governance, informing the rules, structures, processes and values about the ‘right way’ for community-owned and -led organisations to make decisions and govern.</p> <p>Elders are core to these processes, which is dictated by their role as custodians of knowledge and lore. Cultural governance mechanisms often underpin and support Kimberley ACCOs with Elders playing central roles in the governance of the corporation – as both cultural advisors and Directors – to fulfil these activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing and maintaining culturally appropriate boards and other decision-making structures • Bringing the generations together through shared purpose and objectives • Enabling younger people to learn from their elders and for the young to provide support and guidance to their elders • Mentoring and advice from senior or ‘culturally strong’ people • Upholding cultural authority • Mentoring, training for young or emerging leaders <p>Providing mentoring to young Aboriginal people by Aboriginal mentors (in schools and individually):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transmitting cultural knowledge through the sharing of media, performance and art • Transmitting language through the media (e.g. Word of the Day radio) • Supporting the recording and archiving of stories, language and events • Touring contemporary arts and cultural performances to remote communities • Supporting artist and author mentoring programs between older practitioners and young emerging creatives • Supporting access to culturally relevant literature and media for Aboriginal young people <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p37, 66, 74, 75, 78–79, 80]</i></p>
<p>CELEBRATION</p>	<p>Kimberley Aboriginal organisations offer many opportunities for people to celebrate their cultural heritage and resilience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language learning in formal (e.g. language centre programs) and informal settings (e.g. social gatherings, on-Country trips) and the production of materials/resources in language centres, schools and community organisations and through social and other gatherings, events and activities that they hold regularly for families and communities (e.g. open days, on-Country trips) • Holding community events such as NAIDOC Week, as well as festivals, performances, exhibitions, concerts, films and radio shows • Culturally-based school programs and educational resources • Various books and other publications that have been written (e.g. local histories, dictionaries) • Recognising the achievements of emerging Aboriginal authors, performers, artists and language speakers • Documenting and sharing stories and events • Promoting cultural vitality • Supporting Stolen Generations and those impacted by colonisation to revitalise and maintain cultural knowledges, including dance, song and languages <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p33, 43–44, 50, 51, 62, 64, 65, 67, 71, 72]</i></p>

<p>LEARNING & EXCHANGE</p>	<p>Local and regional Aboriginal community organisations drive the creation, development, production and distribution of cultural works. These activities are underpinned by the intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge and practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documenting and transmitting all forms of cultural knowledge • Collecting, archiving, protecting and distributing information and materials for the community • Providing spaces for individuals, families and communities to gather together • Knowledge transfer relating to cultural identity, kinship and genealogies • Assisting with and/or facilitating the delivery of culturally-based programs in schools • Leading research and analysis in culture, language and Country <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p27, 33, 50, 51, 62–63, 64, 65]</i></p>
<p>COLLABORATION</p>	<p>Collaborations are an integral aspect of all cultural activities being undertaken by the participating ACCOs, who have been forging and extending these networks and relationships over many years. In doing so, they have been responsible for developing and overseeing cultural principles and protocols and securing agreements that ensure the cultural integrity of the works.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back-to-Country trips, often costly and complex to organise, are invariably collaborations between Kimberley community organisations such as art centres and ranger groups • PBCs and land and sea activities, in addition to long-term Caring for Country programs such as Indigenous Protected Areas and Ranger programs • Art, culture and language centres regularly collaborate in cross-cultural programs to achieve maximum benefit from meagre resources with multiple outputs • Women’s centres and groups and cultural health organisations regularly collaborate regarding programs specifically aimed at Indigenous women’s health and wellbeing <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p28, 33, 42, 45, 63–64, 64–65]</i></p>
<p>RESEARCH</p>	<p>Research and analysis are important parts of many of the cultural activities that organisations are engaged in. Native Title processes have led to an unprecedented research effort being undertaken by Kimberley Aboriginal communities to document their traditional laws and customs, which requires gathering and interpreting vast amounts of historical, ethnographic and archaeological information and materials.</p>	<p>Research is multifaceted and in relation to culture in the Kimberley – it can include demographic/population studies; economic development; employment (e.g. Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation, Wunan Foundation, Kimberley Land Council (KLC)); health (e.g. Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting research with and about Aboriginal people • Caring for Country activities bring Indigenous knowledge together with scientific knowledge, including cultural mapping (bringing together Aboriginal knowledge of peoples’ countries) and environmental management • Protecting cultural heritage – documenting campsites, archaeological and geological sites • Language centres are engaged in the production of dictionaries, word books and ethno-botanical resources, as well as other research such as the recording of traditional stories and oral histories, bush foods and bush medicines • The creation of Cultural Advisory Groups (CAGs) for specific programs • CAGs developing cultural awareness courses and cultural orientation packages and processes <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p28, 43–45, 88]</i></p>

Table 2: Internally-focused cultural domains

DOMAINS OF CULTURAL ACTION	EXTERNALLY-FOCUSSED ACTIVITIES: Aimed at non-Aboriginal people and mainstream systems and making them more culturally secure and sensitive	
	Descriptive Characteristics	Examples of Activities
CULTURAL PRINCIPLES & PROTOCOLS	Community organisations are main points of contact and provide advice and guidance on culturally appropriate processes, principles and procedures. This involves permission processes, negotiated guidelines, representation of Aboriginal people and application of intellectual property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and promoting cultural principles and protocols such as leadership from Elders or ‘culturally strong’ people in heritage protection • Facilitating, negotiating and overseeing the implementation of contracts, agreements and other documents that adhere to these principles and protocols • Developing, advocating and endorsing cultural security protocols • Representing the interests of their members/constituents/communities on numerous regional, state and national bodies, as well as cultural advisory and reference groups and steering committees for individual programs and projects • Delivering cultural awareness courses and cultural orientation packages <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p53, 61, 62, 64, 80, 88]</i></p>
ADVOCACY	Community organisations represent their members, constituents and communities across a broad range of areas, and advocacy for their rights and interests is one of their main roles. The Kimberley Aboriginal Coalition has been established late-2019 as an opt-in available to all Kimberley ACCOs and currently includes KALACC, KLC, KLRC, Aarnja Limited, Binarri-binyja yarrowoo (BBY) and Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service (KAMS).	<p>Advocate for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of culture and investment culture • The co-design and delivery of programs and services for Kimberley Aboriginal people by their own organisations • Recognition and support for community organisations in local, regional, national and international arenas and forums • Employment for Aboriginal people across a range of industries and sectors • Culturally secure meeting places (e.g. gardens or men’s sheds). <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p33, 34–35, 43, 46, 48, 53, 69]</i></p>
CULTURAL COMPETENCY & ORIENTATION	Increasingly, government agencies and non-government organisations understand that there are better ways for people to engage with each other in more culturally-appropriate, culturally-secure and considered ways. This type of training is being used at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Welcome to Country’ presentations and smoking ceremonies have become regular features at many public gatherings and other events • Cultural security, cultural safety and cultural awareness courses, as well as cultural orientation packages, are being delivered in most Kimberley towns, increasingly by ACCOs • Running platforms for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communication (e.g. media production) has become a valuable and common tool by which cultural transmission and cultural competency is delivered in an increasingly digital online world <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p27, 28, 37, 54, 62, 87, 90]</i></p>

<p>INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY</p>	<p>While not a cultural domain nor activity, the protection of Intellectual Property is a key consideration in all dealings with ACCOs, particularly in relation to service provision.</p>	<p>Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual Property is a priority for all of the organisations. These organisation help secure this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness about protecting Indigenous Knowledge and how this might be achieved • Developing appropriate ways to ensure that permissions are sought • Assessing proposals • Facilitating and securing agreements • Supporting artists and designers to know their Intellectual Property rights and how to maintain them • Re-establishing and maintaining ownership of Aboriginal Intellectual Property where there is currently non-Indigenous ownership of this (such as the current case with the Aboriginal flag; use of Wanjina or Gwion images in contemporary art by non-Indigenous artists; and so on) <p><i>[See KACfC Consultation Report p34–35, 40, 51, 46, 54, 88]</i></p>
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Table 3:Externally-focused cultural domains

CULTURAL DOMAIN SUMMARY

It is pertinent to understand that the nine cultural domains identified are internally-focused and thus have been placed in the inner part of the Cultural Domains of Action model (see *Figure 1*). These domains are often resourced indirectly, through resources ‘siphoned’ from the four externally-focused activities. Incorporation of these domains by ACCOs has been found to be primarily voluntary. Whilst the domain of ‘Country’ might seem to be debatable given the amount of resourcing provided to Working on Country (WOC) ranger teams and the establishment of Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA), the progress made to get to this point is the result of a great deal of evidence-based advocacy. Prior to this, many ranger teams were begun by volunteers using programs such as the former Community Development [Employment] Program (CD[E]P).

Without an understanding of and investment in the cultural core, all efforts remain tokenistic and hollow. Culture and language are integral to all of the projects and programs, yet rarely are these funded directly. For this reason, culture and language are the foundation that underpins it all and are illustrated at the core of our model rather than represented as a separate domain (see *Figure 1*).

The majority of participating organisations identified challenges with this situation in particular. Regional peak Aboriginal bodies including KALACC and KLRC play a central role in advocacy for language and culture, yet much of what both organisations have been able to achieve has come through service provision rather than direct funding for both cultural and language maintenance.

Men’s Outreach Service in Broome is another example – this ACCO undertakes numerous activities which facilitates their participants to engage in cultural programs and projects, all achieved with no funding for cultural maintenance. In this and other instances, projects and programs are reverse-engineered to align requests with funding criteria that then enable cultural maintenance and culturally-embedded principles, components, practices and activities to be indirectly resourced.

Examples in the educational sphere are evidenced through the current Closing the Gap Refresh process. In the Closing the Gap Refresh, both culture and education are seen as priorities and principles that influence everything. However, no direct support for cultural maintenance/transmission is identified. This highlights that at the national level additional work in understanding cultural nuance is overdue and needs to happen urgently.

Where resources are provided for cultural and language activities, much is either as a conduit for the mainstream of Australian society to understand or appreciate Indigenous culture better or, alternatively, to provide cultural people with access to everyday services.

Challenges such as this will continue to impact on the ability of Kimberley ACCOs to engage in and deliver the required programs, projects, activities and services that are underpinned by culture and language.

As awareness increases that culture and language are core components in all that is done, so too does recognition that investment and resourcing are necessary to ensure successful endeavours. Once this occurs at all levels of government, as well as NGOs who seek to collaborate with Kimberley ACCOs in meaningful partnerships, improvements will be observed and experienced exponentially.

DISCUSSION REPORT OUTCOMES

There remains in this report the need to address gaps, not from a deficit discourse but rather as opportunities for the future. Placing that then within a broader context as the overarching project objectives are met, key findings can then be extracted and shared for the future with all involved.

OPPORTUNITIES TO ADDRESS GAPS

As well as outlining the sorts of cultural activities being undertaken by the participating organisations, the consultations gathered information on the shortfalls or gaps in cultural activities in the region. This included the sorts of constraints on what organisations are able to deliver. It should be noted that this information was not assembled systematically, so what is presented here is far from exhaustive.

The following activities were identified by participating KACfC Project organisations as needing targeted investment and support:

Culture and Language

The interest in and demand for cultural and language activities outweighs what Kimberley organisations in many areas can deliver because of a lack of support and resourcing. The pervasive view that culture and language can be maintained without investment, available as elements in programs and projects in the nine cultural domains, is of paramount concern.

To assist in these endeavours, the following opportunities were presented during the KACfC Project process:

- Language programs in areas where none exist
- Capacity building for language workers, including formal teaching skills
- Development of language and cultural materials such as dictionaries, teaching resources and language resources
- Opportunities to learn traditional dance
- NAIDOC Week events *in places where these are not well-supported by local government*
- Youth justice programs with a cultural focus that are working closely with families and communities
- Regional cultural and language authorities and organisations (e.g. KALACC and KLRC)
- Increased opportunities for the participation of Elders and senior knowledgeable people in activities

Country

The broader understanding of the importance of Country to Aboriginal people and our wellbeing has been increasingly appreciated, with greater resources contributed in particular to Aboriginal ranger programs across Australia. Whilst this is applaudable and should continue, the reality is that the inclusion of 'back to Country' trips for ACCO driven programs and projects is an inherent methodology in itself. Through promoting and providing access to Country, increased success is assured. Two additional points were identified during the KACfC Project to foster greater opportunities in this space:

- Collaborative on-Country trips are an essential component to undertake cultural activities and, while time and resource intensive, this cost is substantiated through the results
- The capacity and activities of ranger groups, whose many benefits are widely documented

Wellbeing (and Health)

Investment in Aboriginal wellbeing (and health) has been increasing in recent decades, particularly in response to Closing the Gap. With further understanding of intergenerational trauma, colonisation and mental health, initiatives such as the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial have been developed. While all of this is required, much of what is currently provided is done so through a Western framework. Repeatedly throughout the KACfC Project process, calls were made for reorienting Aboriginal health and wellbeing resources to one through an Indigenous lens, such as those developed by the [Indigenous Psychology Services](#). A number of additional opportunities were specifically identified:

- Traditional medicine and Aboriginal healing policy and practices
- Partnerships between traditional healing, community clinics and allied health services
- Cultural health services such as traditional maternity health care

Cultural Enterprise and Economy

As with wellbeing, reorienting discussions around enterprise and economy to one through an Indigenous lens opens up opportunities for Aboriginal people to drive economic activities on our Country. This is more than employment or establishing a business (in partnership or otherwise). This is more than being consulted about what is happening or for offers to be engaged or participate. Cultural enterprise and economy recognises Aboriginal people as the initiators, instigators, drivers and developers of culturally-based opportunities for investment, partnership and negotiators to deliver meaningful opportunities for our people, as identified through the KACfC Project consultations:

- Investment in employment and training opportunities across vocations, such as an increase in Aboriginal arts workers in media
- Investment in culturally-driven enterprise such as cultural tourism, in addition to culturally-based economies that in turn support community development on remote communities
- Investigate cultural economic frameworks in parallel with environmental initiatives when investigating economic development of remote areas (e.g. the Mardoowarra (Fitzroy River))

Learning and Exchange

As discussed above, learning and exchange of knowledge is more than education – it is part of the way that Aboriginal culture supports all generations through knowledge building. Learning from each other and exchanging ideas is an inherent part of any program or project we engage in. Opportunities abound for improved ways of incorporating this into everything we do, as highlighted in the KACfC Project:

- Networking and the building of linkages between people to increase opportunities for learning and the sharing of information
- Forums for people to share cultural knowledge and practices and to build their capabilities
- Festivals, cultural gatherings and mobility for cultural networks
- Cultural orientation, awareness and competency for non-Indigenous people
- Production of local cultural content including traditional language radio programming
- Development of cultural policy in different organisations and cultural groups that is informed by the experiences of other organisations
- Paid mentorships between Elders and young people

PROJECT OBJECTIVES REVISITED

Returning now to the objectives proposed as part of this inclusive KACfC Project, we note that at its core there were four key objectives identified that have guided the overarching process. It is timely that as part of the outcomes identified in this report, we review each one in the context of the information analysed from the consultation process.

1. Map and gap the current service provision

The KACfCP contacted more than 80 ACCOs at the start of 2017 to gauge their interest in participating in this process. 61 organisations did so, which included a handful of programs delivered within Aboriginal methodological frameworks of NGOs (e.g. Enterprise Partnerships WA), as well as Government agencies (e.g. North Regional TAFE as part of the national training network).

The process involved mapping the existing service provision within nine key areas – Culture; Arts and Language Centres; Men’s and Women’s Centres; Native Title Bodies and Registered Native Title Prescribed Body Corporates; Rangers and Indigenous Protected Areas; Health Organisations and Programs; Media Organisations; Other Service Providers (e.g. Education, Enterprise and Employment); Other Youth, Cultural and Arts Organisations; and Supporting Programs and Organisations. As discussed in the *KACfC Consultation Report*, all three elements of this objective were met. This included identifying and describing:

- Culturally-based services that are currently provided across 35 or more service providers in the Kimberley
- A range of community interests and the gaps that exist between community aspirations and the current suite of services provided
- Opportunities for enhanced delivery of culturally-based services

Further to this process, research was conducted with community-based schools across the region, as reported in the *2019 Kimberley Schools Aboriginal Culture Program Mapping Project – Data and Analysis Report*. This document is a guide for all community-based and mainstream schools to facilitate and foster culture and language into the respective curriculums.

2. Foster collaboration and cohesion amongst Kimberley Aboriginal NGO service providers

While initially we intended to collate the information from the ACCOs to identify opportunities for ongoing collaboration between community organisations, this became an inherent part of the project’s process. Through the consultations that were conducted in workshops in the major towns and communities (which were selected to enable remote groups to participate), those involved heard from each other firsthand about existing activities and aspirational ones. What ensued were conversations throughout the process of potential partnerships and the cultivation and/or enhancement of existing relationships.

Simultaneously, discussions emerged about the creation of networks and consortiums within each of the towns and communities to collaborate on providing culturally-based services. This occurred between both Indigenous and non-Indigenous providers with a view to delivering holistic, whole-of-community outcomes.

Further to this, the importance of ACCO-based service delivery has now been recognised by all levels of Government and has become a core procedure in the provision of services by the WA Government.

Advocacy by groups such as the Kimberley Aboriginal Coalition are now calling for the implementation of exit strategies where funding is provided to non-Indigenous organisations in the first instance. These plans need to include the empowerment and capacity building of local ACCOs to deliver said services into the future.

3. Contribute to the development of macro Government policies and strategies

The KACfC consultation process and subsequent report capture and detail the many insights, demonstrated outcomes and lived experiences that can inform and improve Government policies and strategies. Kimberley ACCOs provided comprehensive information with a view to informing government processes, including those underway:

- Development of a National Framework for evaluating and measuring Aboriginal culture which is currently being led by Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)
- Development of the proposed National Indigenous Cultural Policy (Western Australia's Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Department of Culture and the Arts)
- Closing the Gap Refresh
- Implementation of the 2018 iteration of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013–2023
- Support for the development of National Indigenous Arts and Cultural Authority (NIACA)
- Contribute to improving delivery of the Regional Services Reform Unit (RSRU)
- Allocation of Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) funding or equivalent from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)

The series of KACfC Project reports will provide a lasting insight into the current potential and opportunities available through culturally-based investment in ACCOs across the region.

4. Inform important research into and strategies towards improving Indigenous outcomes

As with the previous objective, this project's long-term impacts on and contributions to research and the strategies developed to improve Indigenous outcomes will not be characterised for some time. Indeed, the legacy of the project will be assessed through the referencing afforded in the coming years to the series of documents that have been produced (which may prove to include those studies we sought to engage with), such as the ANU project [Mayi Kuwayu: The National Study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing](#); the Australia Council for the Arts [Living Culture: First Nations Arts Participation and Wellbeing](#); in addition to forthcoming government responses to State Coroner Fogliani's February 2019 [Inquest into the deaths of thirteen children and young persons in the Kimberley Region, Western Australia findings report](#).

That said, contributions have undoubtedly contributed to the commissioning phase of the Kimberley Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Trial (administered by the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA), who co-funded this project). The same can be said for the collective, collaborative and unified representation of Kimberley Aboriginal organisations to government-resourced service provision of culturally-based initiatives.

What can be unequivocally stated regarding all project objectives is that they have been resoundingly met and the voices of Aboriginal people, communities and organisations from across the Kimberley have been captured, articulating and demonstrating the importance of culture in everything we do.

KEY FINDINGS

Evidenced throughout the *KACfC Consultation Report* and substantiated in this *KACfC Discussion Report* is the empirical requirement to not only resource the externally-focused activities identified within the Cultural Domains of Activity diagram (see *Figure 1*) but to prioritise funding of its core – that is, Culture and Language. If this trend is not reversed, if there is no investment in the cultural foundation, no amount of resourcing applied to the cultural domains will achieve its objectives.

The KACfC Project provides evidence that participating organisations are supporting people in maintaining and revitalising Aboriginal cultural identity, heritage and traditions in the Kimberley. This is often being undertaken and resourced indirectly. Whilst some may view this as happening with varying degrees of success, others will argue that across the region, all are doing everything they can to both promote, protect and maintain culture through whatever means are available. In some places, and during periods when local organisations may be stretched, the importance of events such as NAIDOC Week take on an added significance.

Art centres have a peak body in the Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA) that provides coordination, engages all artists and arts organisations, bringing them all together for forums and to meet. In other spheres, organisations do not have this broader support and are reliant on the peak regional Aboriginal organisations such as KALACC, KLRC, KLC and Aarnja Limited.

These regional organisations are also undergoing change. For example, the role of KLRC, which in the past conducted many of the language initiatives in the region, is changing with the establishment of PBCs, some of whom like Yawuru have set up their own culture and language centres. KLRC continues to spearhead projects in other areas, but are having to adapt to a changing organisational landscape with fewer resources. That said, the importance of regional coordination for individual centres and ventures is recognised by all.

Three key findings have been identified through the KACfC process. Moving forward, each finding will need to be addressed in the short-, medium- and long-term in relation to the fundamental understanding and investment in culture in the Kimberley:

- **Strength of Regional Collaboration** – The isolation of and long distances between communities presents enormous challenges to Kimberley ACCOs that undertake cultural activities. A recurrent theme in the project is the importance of networking and forums through which people can come together, regionally and locally, to develop shared strategies; learn from and support each other; share information; advocate; and so on.
- **Unrecognised Activities Crucial to Social Capital** – The participating organisations undertake an array of informal and unofficial activities, such as aged care and childcare responsibilities, which most often go unrecognised and unfunded, but that are essential to keeping the cultural ecology of local and regional Kimberley alive.
- **Cultural Foundations Essential to Social, Cultural and Emotional Wellbeing** – The data collected on the value and impacts of cultural practice, identity, knowledge and connections reaffirms and reinforces the many reports, statements and articulations of the past about the importance of culture to Indigenous health and wellbeing, as well as the research underway that is investigating the links between culture and wellbeing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consideration has been given to the information provided in both the *KACfC Consultation Report*, the analysis of that information within this report and the accompanying *KACfC Background Report* literature review. Overwhelmingly, it has been observed that:

Culture and Language, as fundamental to the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs as it is, is rarely funded or resourced.

To seriously address many of the complex intricacies around intergenerational trauma, subsequent issues of drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm and suicide, this mandate needs to be reversed. Funding and resources must be released to ACCOs to fund the core of the Cultural Domains – Culture and Language (as opposed to other non-Indigenous organisations who also provide support services in this space). By doing so, impact will be delivered to the surrounding spheres of influence in a greater and more holistic way than the current siloed government processes.

Acknowledging the many past reports that have raised similar concerns and provided many detailed recommendations, which have resulted in little change, we make five recommendations. These are achievable in the short-, medium- and long-term and are both individually-focussed or addressed collectively:

- 1. Investment in Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations to maintain, celebrate and prioritise culture in all its forms*
- 2. Consolidated targeted investment in Aboriginal languages and language maintenance outcomes as a strategic priority area*
- 3. Prioritised investment and support for Kimberley Aboriginal organisations to provide regular regional and local forums for the sharing of cultural knowledge and practice, the building of capability and to network in key areas of activity*
- 4. Investment in the development of cultural outcome indicators and measures that Aboriginal people define, which would relate to such things as types of cultural participation and opportunities to connect with Country and family, and language maintenance and revival*
- 5. A response by the WA Government to the gaps and opportunities identified in this report, and all those of the 2016 [Message Stick Report](#), KALACC's 2017 Cultural Solutions Position Paper and State Coroner Fogliani's 2019 [Coronial Inquest Findings Report](#)*

Given the growing number of investigations such as this and those referenced by the KACfC Project, we have prepared a set of short- to long-term actions as set out in *Table 4* below to assist in the development and implementation of responsive actions by the Government and funding bodies. They are provided as a guide, as we all seek to positively and proactively inform all levels of Government and funding bodies while supporting ACCOs to continue to strengthen culture into the future.

KIMBERLEY ABORIGINAL CARING FOR CULTURE PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSIVE ACTIONS	
	Short-to-Medium Term Actions (1–5 years)	Medium-to-Long Term Actions (5–20 years)
1. Investment in Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations to maintain, celebrate and prioritise culture in all its forms	Establish cultural funding programs that are available to ACCOs only	Develop ACCOs driving agenda in relation to cultural investment across the region
2. Consolidated targeted investment in Aboriginal languages and language maintenance outcomes as a strategic priority area	Fund the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) to develop language resources with Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs) for schools	Provide language funds for all PBCs Fund the KLRC for sleeping languages and research
3. Prioritised investment and support for Kimberley Aboriginal organisations to provide regular regional and local forums for the sharing of cultural knowledge and practice, the building of capability and to network in key areas of activity	Resource KALACC and KLRC to collaborate to lead a cultural knowledge and practice exchange across the region	Invest in established cultural knowledge and practice exchange via Kimberley ACCOs
4. Investment in the development of cultural outcome indicators and measures that Aboriginal people define, which would relate to such things as types of cultural participation and opportunities to connect with Country and family, and language maintenance and revival	Utilise existing and established cultural governance mechanisms in the Kimberley to develop cultural outcome indicators and measures	Evaluate and continue improving cultural outcome indicators and measures via existing and established Kimberley cultural governance mechanisms
5. A response by the WA Government to the gaps and opportunities identified in this report, and <u>all</u> those of the 2016 Message Stick Report , KALACC’s 2017 Cultural Solutions Position Paper , and State Coroner Fogliani’s 2019 Coronial Inquest Findings Report	Provide a published response to all three reports with actions identified to address the specific individual recommendations	Implement the actions published in relation to recommendations in each of the reports

Table 4: Responsive actions to KACfC recommendations

At this point KALACC would like to acknowledge the growing body of work around the fifth recommendation, with the WA Government release of the *Statement of Intent on Aboriginal Youth Suicide* in May 2019 and the draft *WA Aboriginal Affairs Strategy* due for release in early 2020. Consideration has been given to key findings and recommendations articulated here and in previous reports in these documents, and the Kimberley Aboriginal community and ACCOs now eagerly await further co-design opportunities and the implementation of culturally-based initiatives.

Working towards developing and implementing these recommendations further will deliver on those words of the Kimberley Cultural Bosses on page 6 of KALACC’s *Cultural Solutions Position Paper*:

To heal our people, we must heal our families. To heal our families, we must heal our communities.

Culture is the key.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TABLE OF PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS IN THE KIMBERLEY ABORIGINAL CARING FOR CULTURE PROJECT

The following table has been extracted from the *KACfC Consultation Report*.

	Southern Tradition	Western Tradition	Central Tradition	Eastern Tradition	Northern Tradition	Regional Bodies
Cultural Centres						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC)
Arts Centres			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mowanjum Aboriginal Art and Culture Centre Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warmun Art Centre Waringarri Aboriginal Arts Yarliyil Art Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kira Kiro Art Centre 	
Language Centres			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Madjulla Incorporated Nyikina Incorporated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) Aboriginal Interpreting WA (AIWA)
Men’s Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broome Men’s Outreach Service 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Derby Men’s Shed 			
Women’s Centres		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Babagarra Aboriginal Incorporated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marninwarntakura Women’s Resource Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gawooleng Yawoodeng 		
Native Title Bodies						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kimberley Land Council (KLC)
Native Title Organisations – Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walalakoo Aboriginal Corporation Yanunijarra Aboriginal Corporation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miriuwung Gajerrong Corporation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation Wunambal Gaambera Aboriginal Corporation Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation 	

	Southern Tradition	Western Tradition	Central Tradition	Eastern Tradition	Northern Tradition	Regional Bodies
Rangers & Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nyikina Mangala Yimardoowarra Rangers Karajarri Rangers Karajarri IPA Ngurrara Rangers Ngurrara IPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bardi Jawi Rangers Bardi Jawi IPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bunuba Rangers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gija Rangers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dambimangari Rangers Dambimangari IPA Unguu Rangers Wunggurr Rangers Wilinggin IPA 	
Health Organisations & Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alive and Kicking Goals Bidyadanga Traditional Healers Group 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yira Yungi Medical Service Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service (KAMS)
Media Organisations			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6DBY Larrkardi Radio Wangki Yupurnanupurru Radio 936AM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6PRK Radio Halls Creek Waringarri Media Aboriginal Corporation 6WR 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goolarri Media Goolarri Radio
Other Service Providers (e.g. Education, Enterprise & Employment)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winun Ngari Aboriginal Corporation Winun Ngari Employment Service 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wunan Foundation
Other Youth, Cultural & Arts Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yiriman Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marrugeku Magabala Books 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halls Creek NAIDOC Week Organisers 		
Supporting Programs & Organisations			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal Training Support, North Regional TAFE 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enterprise Partnerships WA 	
Total: 61	11	6	14	12	10	8

Table 5: Organisations that participated in the Kimberley Aboriginal Caring for Culture Project consultation process, organised by Cultural Bloc.