

National Year of Reading 2012 Indigenous Literacy Initiative

Funded by the Australia Council for the Arts

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1 Acknowledgment

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Photos courtesy of Lyn Thompson of the State Library of Queensland

2 Disclaimer

The qualitative information and advice within this report is based solely on representations and information provided to us by stakeholders and other third parties working on early literacy with at risk and Indigenous communities. We therefore take no responsibility for any errors caused by the provision of inaccurate or deficient information. It is imperative that you ensure that all references in our advice to information provided by early literacy stakeholders and third parties are correct and complete. If not, you must bring this to our attention immediately so that the correct information can be considered and any required change to our advice made.

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3 Executive Summary

3.1 Background

This project was initiated by the National Year of Reading 2012 founding partners, with the Australian Library and Information Association as the auspice body. The project concept was prompted by recognition that there were many challenges being faced by providers of early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities. With vast distances involved, the cost and difficulty of travelling to remote communities, the small size of the population in each location, the different language groups, the shortage of experienced workers, the time to build up trust and intense competition for funds mean that work in remote communities creates many barriers to sharing and partnering.

The goal of the project was to facilitate input from service providers of early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities with a view to understanding what early literacy programs (outside of the formal education framework) are being delivered in remote Indigenous communities and to develop initial insight into the hallmarks of a good practice framework that can guide future government investment and non-government organisation (NGO) focus. It is intended that the outputs from this project will also encourage knowledge transfer, capacity building and collaboration across the early literacy sector.

3.2 Methodology

Literature scan

A fast tracked literature scan was undertaken. The purpose of the literature scan was to identify the key attributes of a good practice framework. The scope of this element of work was limited to reviewing an existing comprehensive literature review that had already been undertaken by the South Australian Department of Children's Services in 2007. This secondary literature scan was complemented by a review of a discussion paper (The Department of Education Employment and Training 2013) written to support the development of Queensland's current *Solid Partners Solid Futures Strategy* which reported on recurring themes from the consultation forums undertaken to inform the strategy. This provided a very recent and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused insight and an opportunity to 'reality check' the literature review and consultation findings.

It is recommended that a full literature review of the most recent literature would be an important investment prior to designing any further approaches to the development of early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities.

Community and sector consultations

Four community consultations were undertaken - one in Cairns, Queensland, one in Roebourne, Western Australia, and two in South Hedland, Western Australia.

The community consultations were complemented by face to face or telephone/Skype interviews. These interviews were prompted by key individuals who could not attend the community consultation sessions but were willing to contribute or were opportunistic – meaning we were afforded the opportunity to talk with key industry participants who were happy to give their time.

Mapping of program and services

Using a combination of desk top research and information gleaned from the consultations, a map of the organisations currently involved in delivering programs, services and/or resources was created. This map includes private individuals, emerging and established charities, government and non-government agencies. Due to time and budget limitations the mapping is not exhaustive but does give a sound snapshot of the type and breadth of programs and services being delivered around Australia.

3.3 The findings

The mapping and consultations undertaken as part of this project reveal quite clearly that there is no shortage of activity, goodwill and commitment within remote Indigenous communities and among government and non-government service providers.

The literature scan also shows us that there is much evidence available on what is good practice, that there is a growing set of population data to track performance and finally that there is emerging recognition by government at all levels of the need for action.

Despite positive movement in the right direction, in 2012 (The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) an Indigenous child was nearly three times more likely and a child (Indigenous or not) living in a remote community twice as likely

to be *Developmentally Vulnerable or at Risk* for language and cognitive skills. It is obvious from this population data that improving early literacy in remote Indigenous communities is throwing up challenges that have yet to be addressed. This project offers some key insights that can contribute to changing this situation.

Mapping of existing early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities shows that there are many early literacy projects being delivered by a broad range of government, community and not for profit agencies. While there are some exceptions most of these programs face funding, resource and capacity challenges. The result is varying levels of quality, depth, longevity, community involvement and capacity building.

The organic nature of these services means that communities do not necessarily receive services based on need or risk. Instead it may be based on arbitrary rationales such as the capacity of a community to advocate, the existence of a channel into that community (such as an Indigenous Knowledge Centre, a local health service or library), the ability to generate funding from fragmented sources or by the community having a fortuitous relationship with supporters who advocate on their behalf.

There is a lack of holistic national or state wide approaches to addressing early literacy skills and behaviours that start with building the capacity of the community and family as the foundation to developing early literacy. Further, despite the literature's consensus that early literacy development is a critical precursor to future literacy success there is a significant skew of programs that target school aged children. This is likely because schools provide accessibility and human resources to deliver that are unmatched in the remote early literacy sector.

However, there are indications that this is improving.

The National Early Childhood Development Strategy was developed in 2009 by Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations. It would appear that this is an ideal vehicle for the creation of state based partnerships to deliver coordinated good practice approaches. While reviewing the performance of this strategy is outside the scope of this project, it is possible to state that at the time of the consultations there was no practical evidence that the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations National Early Childhood Development Strategy was touching the lives of remote communities in Far North Queensland and the Pilbara in Western Australia in a systematic and rigorous way.

However, more recent state government programs such as the Northern Territory's Families as First Teachers-Indigenous Parenting Support Services Program, delivered by the Office of Children and Families, Northern Territory Government and funded in part by Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations and Queensland's Solid Partners Solid Futures Strategy are emerging programs that hold much promise. They appear to be making every attempt to be evidenced based and are adopting good practice principles as identified in this project. It will be exciting to monitor their progress over the coming years.

3.4 A proposed good practice framework

A thematic network (Figure 1) approach has been used to collate the findings from the community consultations, service mapping and literature scan to create an initial framework for good practice. This has been termed a proposed good practice framework as the limited scope of this project has not enabled the depth of research to build and recommend a definitive model for good practice. This proposed good practice framework provides the basis for further debate and testing.

This thematic analysis has grouped the findings into the *foundation family and community attributes* that are required to deliver good practice. These are placed in the middle circle. This is surrounded by an outer circle that outlines the *technical and functional attributes* that form part of the proposed good practice framework. The central *global theme* presented as the central circle seeks to unite all these elements as a catch all summary of the approach required to deliver all the good practice elements outlined in the framework.

Based on this proposed good practice framework, a remote Indigenous early literacy program would seek first to build a foundation of a strong community and family literacy culture and capacity. Only then will it be possible for the family and community to work in partnership with a variety of service delivery and resource providers to build the early literacy competencies of its pre-school children. All this needs to be delivered with strong partnerships with government to assure funding, equitable and repeatable access across all remote communities, systematic project management, quality control and a robust approach to the evaluation of local and population impacts.

Each attribute of the good practice framework is briefly summarised below.

Foundation family and community attributes

1. *Develop desirable family values and attitudes towards literacy*

A family's attitude towards education, early literature development and parent's expectations contributes most directly to reading achievement. Linked to this is the need for interventions to develop desirable family and community values and attitudes towards literacy and towards education in general.

2. *Enhance the quality of parent – child relationships*

Early literacy development is as much about relationships as knowledge and understandings. Early literacy competence begins with children and their parents, carers and family talking together, singing, reading, playing and observing the world around them (i.e. engaging in early literacy behaviours).

3. *Facilitate early literacy behaviours*

Where Indigenous parents have very low levels of literacy their ability to work with their children or have the confidence to attend group sessions held in the community is limited. Programs need to support families and communities to engage in early literacy behaviours in the home and community.

4. *Parent, family and community involvement in program development*

Parental, family and community involvement in program development, implementation and evaluation is an important means of ensuring that models of service delivery are sensitive to specific cultural, community and family needs and that practices are empowering families.

5. *Leverage family and community strengths - avoid a deficit focus*

Intervention needs to recognise and utilise the parent's strength, rather than focus on the deficit – thus supporting and affirming the family's role as their children's first literacy educators and equal partners in the process.

6. *Enhance home literacy environment*

The overall responsiveness and support of the home environment is a stronger predictor of children's early language and literacy skills than specific literacy practices such as shared book reading.

7. *Build communities which strengthen families*

There is a need to first build communities which strengthen families. Competent readers are more likely to emerge out of strong families and caring communities.

8. *Harness rich language and literacy traditions*

Support, recognise and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities and languages, particularly fostering learning environments that are culturally safe and supportive.

Technical and functional attributes

9. *0-3 years is a critical period*

There is consensus that literacy begins from birth with much of the learning taking place in the home.

10. *Phonological and orthographic awareness is critical*

Oral language proficiency and the interrelationship between print awareness and phonological awareness are identified as key foundation skills that must be acquired prior to school entry. Where these are missing, children are unable to access many activities in the kindergarten's literacy curriculum and they are more likely than other children to be poor readers in the long term.

11. *Attract more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work in the field*

The consultations indicated that there is a need to attract more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for positions with the various agencies to support the delivery of programs. Long term retention of workers is important as a strong relationship of trust between the outreach workers and the community is critical to success.

12. *Create reliable and consistent channels into communities – scalable model*

Communities that have a cooperative channel into the community such as a library service, health service, school or an Indigenous Knowledge Centre are more likely to receive programs, resources and services. The ideal would be to have a channel into remote communities delivering literacy programs with dedicated financial and human resources to avoid over loading already busy community and health services.

13. Integrate with health and community services

There is benefit for literacy programs to be run in conjunction with established services such as the Aboriginal Medical Services and Language Centres. Health and community services provide access to families and integration with their existing services will contribute to a holistic approach to literacy development.

14. Robust quality control and evaluation

Formal evaluation of one off local programs or resource provision tends to be undertaken only where programs are run by larger organisations. When evaluations are completed there is no central national repository to help build the evidence base across the sector.

15. Oral language proficiency is important

As mentioned already oral language proficiency and the interrelationship between print awareness and phonological awareness are identified as key foundation skills. While a number of studies support the conclusion that activities such as shared book reading are beneficial to early language and literacy development, research also supports that developing receptive and expressive language through effective adult-child interaction is also important.

16. Embrace technology – requires good internet access

The use of technology is a great opportunity to create scale but remote communities require reliable internet access to do this.

17. Implement English as an additional language or dialect

Where English is the second language, basing literacy programs around English will not produce good results. Programs should be implemented within *English as an Additional Language or Dialect* framework across early childhood to support the learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners who speak *English as an Additional Language or Dialect*. Feedback from communities also identifies that as the children are developing readiness for school there is benefit in having children's books and other print materials in Standard Australian English to support children's school readiness.

18. Government, NGO and community partnerships

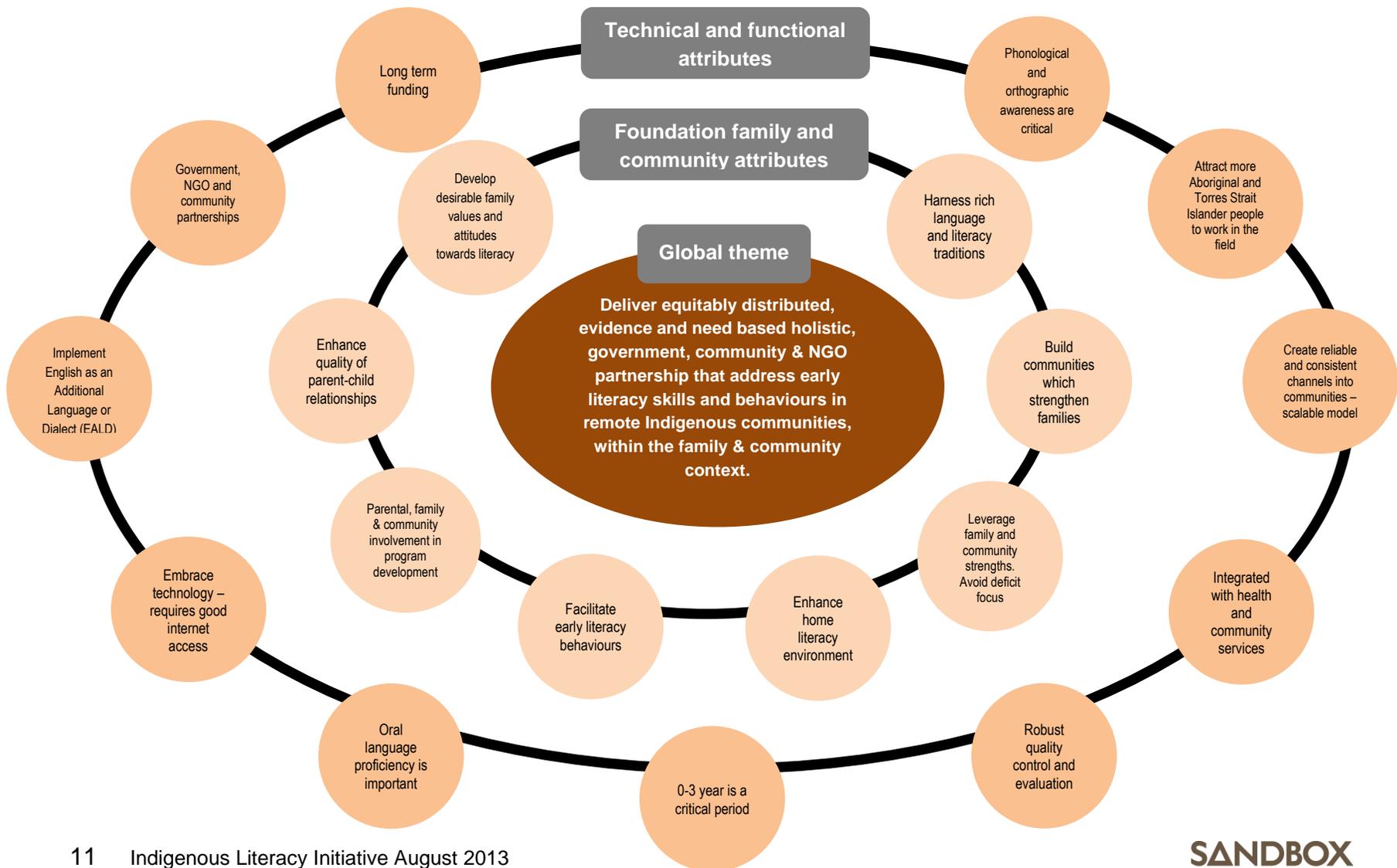
Mapping of existing early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities shows that there are many early literacy projects being delivered by a broad range of government, community and not for profit agencies. While there are some

exceptions most of these programs face funding, resource and capacity challenges. The result is varying levels of quality, depth, longevity, community involvement and capacity building. The preferred approach is coordinated and regulated partnerships of best in class providers coordinated and quality controlled at a community level. The literature supports this holistic approach to supporting children and families in their community with interventions differing from site to site and over time, evolving throughout the implementation. Holistic experiences which are based on expert (adult) and novice (child) jointly constructing meaning are central to this approach.

19. Long term funding

Most of the programs are dependent on one off funding streams or one off supply of resources and as such do not benefit from systemic follow up or a long term focus.

Figure 1: Attributes of a proposed good practice framework for early literacy in remote Indigenous communities informed by the community consultation, service mapping and literature scan



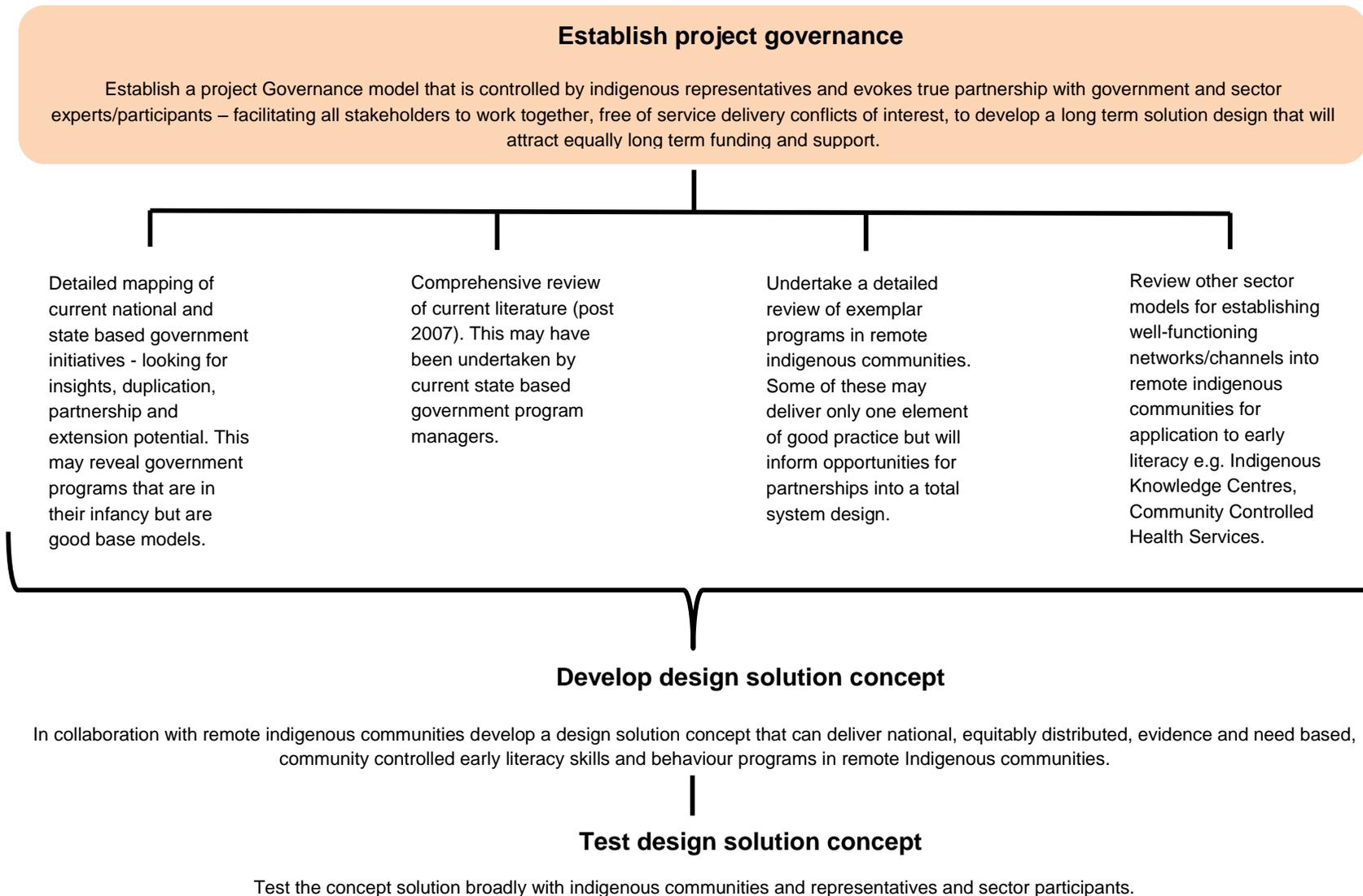
3.5 Next steps

This project clearly highlights that there is opportunity and indeed a need to improve Australia's performance in developing early literacy rates in remote Indigenous communities. Without a good practice focus on early literacy in the 0-3 years of age group, closing the Indigenous literacy gap in remote communities by addressing school age literacy in isolation is akin to closing the gate after the horse has bolted.

This project proposes a good practice framework that will deliver an equitably distributed, evidence and need based holistic, government, community and non-government organisation partnerships that address early literacy skills and behaviours in remote Indigenous communities, within the family and community context. While the good practice framework provides the key attributes for success there remains much to do to translate the good practice framework into a workable design solution and implementation plan.

Using the insights gained from this project, the high level next steps required to create a national design solution and implementation plan that will address early literacy deficits in remote indigenous communities has been developed. Figure 2 outlines these next steps for consideration by the Australia Council.

Figure 2: Summary of next steps



4 Purpose

The National Year of Reading 2012 founding partners, with the Australian Library and Information Association as the auspice body, engaged Jackie Huggins and Tricia Davis of SANDBOX to deliver an Indigenous literacy initiative.

There are a number of dedicated organisations delivering early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities. It has been identified that most operate on a local level, with few opportunities to pool knowledge and experiences. With vast distances involved, the cost and difficulty of travelling to remote communities, the small size of the population in each location, the different language groups, the shortage of experienced workers, the time to build up trust and intense competition for funds – work in remote communities creates many barriers to collaboration and sharing.

The goal of this project was to facilitate input from service providers of early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities with a view to understand what early literacy programs (outside of the formal education framework) are being delivered in remote Indigenous communities and to develop initial insight into the attributes of a good practice framework that can guide future government investment and non-government organisation (NGO) focus.

Specifically the objectives for the project were to:

1. map the early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities
2. identify initial insights into the attributes of a good practice framework via consultation with service providers
3. encourage knowledge transfer, capacity building and collaboration across the sector, and
4. inform government policy and support programs.

5 Scope

The scope of this project is early English **literacy** programs that sit outside the formal education framework, and which target Indigenous pre-school age children living in **remote** communities.

For the purpose of this project a definition of *literacy* from the *Belonging, Being and Becoming the Early Years Learning Framework* (2009) has been adopted. This framework defines early literacy as:

‘The capacity, confidence and disposition to use language in all its forms. Literacy incorporates a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, listening, viewing, reading and writing. Contemporary texts include electronic and print based media. In an increasingly technological world, the ability to critically analyse texts is a key component of literacy.’

6 Deliverables

This report delivers the following content.

1. A short summary of the findings of a fast tracked literature review on the key attributes of a good practice framework.
2. A map of the organisations involved in delivering Indigenous early literacy programs and/or resources, including private individuals, emerging and established charities, other government and non-government agencies.
3. A summary of the findings from community and individual consultations undertaken with sector participants experienced in delivering Indigenous early literacy programs in remote communities.
4. Informed by the research outlined above, the report provides a summary of insights around what is and is not working and use that to describe the attributes of a good practice framework that can guide future government investment and NGO focus.

7 Methodology

1. Literature scan

A fast tracked literature scan was undertaken. The purpose of the literature scan was to identify the key attributes of a good practice framework. The scope of this element of work was limited to reviewing an existing comprehensive literature review that had already been undertaken by the South Australian Department of Children's Services in 2007. This secondary literature scan was complemented by a review of a discussion paper (The Department of Education Employment and Training 2013) written to support the development of Queensland's current *Solid Partners Solid Futures Strategy* which reported on recurring themes from the consultation forums undertaken to inform the strategy. This provided a very recent and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused insight and an opportunity to 'reality check' the literature review and consultation findings.

2. Mapping of program and services

A map of the organisations currently involved in delivering programs, services and/or resources was created. This included private individuals, emerging and established charities, government and non-government agencies. Due to time and budget limitations the mapping was not exhaustive but did give a sound snapshot of the type and breath of programs and services being delivered around Australia.

Where the data was available the mapping process included:

- type and size of the organisation – governance, staffing, location, funding sources
- goals and objectives
- where they operate – states/territories, communities
- focus of their work – awareness raising, community impact, national impact
- programs and resources they create/deliver, and
- results – anecdotal and documented outcomes and delivery against goals.

The map was created through a combination of desk top research and consultations with participants in the Indigenous early literacy sector.

3. Community and sector consultations

Four community consultations were undertaken. One in Cairns on 24 June 2013 and one in Roebourne and two in South Hedland between the 1 – 4 July, 2013.

The community consultations were complemented by face to face or telephone/Skype interviews. These interviews were prompted by key individuals who could not attend the community consultation session but were willing to contribute or were opportunistic – meaning we were afforded the opportunity to talk with key industry participants who were happy to give of their time.

The consultations and interviews were semi structured and aimed to inform the mapping and development of a good practice framework. The consultations were guided by the following key questions:

- What remote early literacy programs are out there right now?
- What makes them work?
- What else needs to happen?
- What are the key messages for government policy makers in the early remote Indigenous literacy arena
- How can state based partnerships be developed?

The participants in these consultations are listed below.

- Face to face interviews:
 - Mary-Ruth Rendell and Kim Kelly, the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation
 - Janette Wright State Librarian and Dan Georgeson, Executive Manager, Literacy and Young People’s Service, State Library of Queensland
 - Margret James, Author of The Honey Ant Readers
 - Suzy Wilson, Founder and Board member of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation

- Nola Allen, Coordinator: Better Beginnings Family Literacy Program and Gemma Lyon, Regional Liaison Officer: Better Beginnings, the State Library of Western Australia
- Community Consultation – Cairns, Queensland:
 - Brendan Leishman, First Peoples Project Officer, Cairns Regional Council
 - Glen Martin, Youth Office, Cairns Regional Council
 - Robin Maxwell, Project Support Officer, Operations, Cairns Regional Operations Centre, Cape York Welfare Reform
 - Lyn Thompson, State Library Queensland, Cairns
 - Tanya Curtis, State Library Queensland, Cairns
 - Kerrie Still, Cairns Regional Council
 - Christine Stuckey, State Library Queensland
- Community Consultation - South Hedland Library
 - Sharon Groch, Coordinator Library Services, and
 - Anneke Scheepers, Young People’s Services Library Officer.
- Community Consultation - Pilbara Language Course - South Hedland
 - Andrea Leigh, Youth Justice Worker
 - Jenny Baraga, Health Promotions Officer, WA Country Health Service
 - Bruce Thomas, Chairperson; and
 - Julie Walker, Manager WankaMaya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre.
- Community Consultation – Roebourne
 - Ann Flynn, Aboriginal Health Service Manager

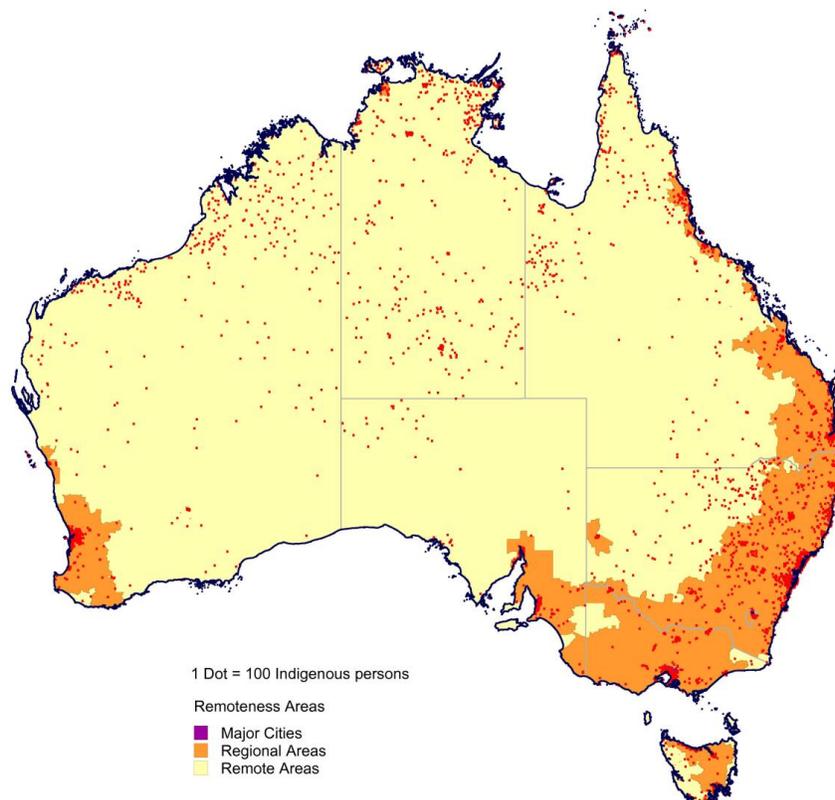
8 Population context

8.1 Indigenous population overview

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010) Indigenous Australians were projected to number just over 560,000, or three per cent of Australia's total population.

In 2008, 24 per cent of Indigenous peoples were living in remote (or very remote) areas while just over two-thirds (68 per cent) of Indigenous people lived outside the major cities, with 44 per cent living in regional areas. (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008). Figure 3 shows the Indigenous population distribution across remote Australia based on the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. This map clearly shows the challenge for access to and the delivery of effective literacy programs across the remote Indigenous population.

Figure 3: Indigenous population distribution and remoteness areas – 2006
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue. 2010



8.2 Age structure

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is relatively young. The Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue (2009) reports that the Indigenous population overall has a very young age profile with around half being aged less than 20 years in 2008. In contrast, only around one quarter of the total Australian population was aged under 20 in 2008.

Across Remoteness Areas, there were slight differences in the age structure of the Indigenous population. Remote Areas had a lower proportion aged under 20 years (45 per cent) than either the Regional Areas (50 per cent) or the Major Cities (49 per cent). This difference may be in part attributable to out-migration of younger people from Remote Areas.

8.3 Pre-school

According to the Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 3–5 years, who did not yet go to school, have a pre-school attendance rate of 49 per cent.

In comparison 72 per cent of Australian children generally aged 3–5 years who were not attending school, usually attended a pre-school or pre-school program in long day care. (Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue. 2009).

8.4 Indigenous language and cognitive skills

The Australian Early Development Index (2012) undertaken by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, is a population measure of children's development as they enter school that helps communities to know how their children are faring.

The results provide communities around Australia with information about local children across five domains of early childhood development covering:

- physical health and wellbeing
- social competence
- emotional maturity
- language and cognitive skills (school-based)
- communication skills and general knowledge.

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is the first ever national collection of such information. Between May and July 2009 the first AEDI data collection was undertaken. A follow-up data collection occurred in some small areas in 2010 to enable more communities to have access to their community level AEDI results. The second AEDI data collection occurred between May and August 2012.

The AEDI language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain measures children's basic literacy, interest in literacy, numeracy and memory, advanced literacy and basic numeracy. This domain mainly reflects teachers' scores for children's language and cognitive skills based on those necessary for school (with English as the language of instruction) and does not necessarily reflect children's proficiency in their home language.

The greatest difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children is on the language and cognitive skills domain, where 42 per cent of Indigenous children are defined as *Developmentally Vulnerable* (22.4 per cent) or *Developmentally at Risk* (19.5 per cent).

This is compared to 16 per cent of non-Indigenous children who are defined as *Developmentally Vulnerable* (5.9 per cent) or *Developmentally at Risk* (10.1 per cent).

The percentage of *Developmentally Vulnerable* Indigenous children has improved (i.e. decreased) by just over 20 per cent - from 28.6 per cent in 2009 to 22.4 per cent in 2012.

For remote children on the language and cognitive skills domain, 33 per cent of children are defined as *Developmentally Vulnerable* (17.4 per cent) or *Developmentally at Risk* (15.7 per cent). This is compared to 17 per cent of children in major cities who are defined as *Developmentally Vulnerable* (5.9 per cent) or *Developmentally at Risk* (10 per cent).

In other words, if you are an Indigenous child in 2012 you are nearly three times more likely to be *Developmental Vulnerable or at risk* for language and cognitive skills. If you are a child (Indigenous or not) living in a remote community you are twice as likely to be *Developmentally Vulnerable or at Risk*.

The AEDI (2012) defines *Developmentally Vulnerable* as:

'Do not have most of the basic literacy skills; they have problems with identifying letters or attaching sounds to them, rhyming, may not know the writing directions and how to write their own name.

May not show interest in books and reading, or maths and number games, or both, and may have difficulty remembering things.

Have only up to one of the advanced literacy skills; cannot read or write simple words or sentences, and rarely write voluntarily. Have marked difficulty with numbers, cannot count, compare or recognise numbers, may not be able to name all the shapes and may have difficulty with time concepts.

9 Literature scan

9.1 Overview of approach

The scope of this element of work was limited to reviewing an existing comprehensive literature review that had already been undertaken by the South Australian Department of Children's Services in 2007.

This secondary literature scan has been complemented by a review of a discussion paper (The Department of Education Employment and Training [DETE] 2013) written to support the development of the *Solid Partners Solid Future Strategy* which reported on recurring themes from the consultation forums undertaken to inform the strategy. This provides a very recent and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused insight and an opportunity to 'reality check' the literature review and consultation outputs.

Despite the limitations of this literature scan, it clearly shows there are consistent and distinct themes in the literature as to the attributes of good practice in early literacy. It also serves to show that there is an abundance of work undertaken that can guide the design of early literacy programs targeting at risk populations such as remote Indigenous communities.

It is recommended that a full literature review of the most recent literature would be an important investment prior to designing any further approaches to the development of early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities.

9.2 A summary of 'Investigating children's early literacy learning in family and community contexts'

A paper commissioned for the Learning Together Research Program in 2007, by the South Australian Department of Children's Services provides a comprehensive review of the national and international research into the relationship between family and community and children's early literacy learning. This paper titled '*Investigating children's early literacy learning in family and community contexts*' concludes that intervention in the vital birth to three years age group is critical. Children who are well nourished and thriving in safe homes and neighbourhoods, who are nurtured by strong families, who receive the

services they need from living in caring communities are most likely to become competent readers following the introduction of formal instruction on school entry. (Cited from the National Research Council in 1998 - pages 6-7). Oral language proficiency and the interrelationship between print awareness and phonological awareness are identified as key foundation skills that must be acquired prior to school entry. Where these are missing, children are unable to access many activities in the kindergarten's literacy curriculum and they are more likely than other children to be poor readers in the long term.

Within this report there was a small but specific and critical review of the literature on Australia's overall approach to Indigenous early literacy programs. The criticism was based on the view that many programs ignore the diversity within Indigenous cultures and seek conformity to a literacy agenda that reflects the dominant culture (page 16). It was observed that there is a tendency to deliver a 'one size fits all' approach that does not reflect the diversity of literacy practices between specific families and communities.

Other key themes that emerged are summarised below.

- There is consensus that literacy begins from birth with much of the learning taking place in the home. Literacy during this period is as much about relationships as knowledge and understandings. Early literacy competence begins with children and their parents, carers and family talking together, singing, reading, playing and observing the world round them (i.e. engaging in early literacy behaviours).
- For children considered 'at risk' a preventative model of developing early literacy behaviours is essential to encourage attainment of skills required as a foundation for latter literacy achievements.
- Frequent, informal and naturalistic interactions with written and oral language contextualised within the home or community environment and within a broader context of supportive, mediated opportunities with adult care givers is important (page 9).
- A number of studies support the conclusion that activities such as shared book reading are particularly beneficial to early language and literacy development. However it is concluded that not only book reading is important - with a growing body of research pointing to the importance of developing receptive and expressive language through effective adult-child interaction. (page 10)

- Children require access to a literacy rich environment and opportunities to engage in meaningful and enjoyable experiences on a regular basis. (page 14). The report challenges the concept that a literacy rich environment equates to shared storybook reading. The literature reveals that overall responsiveness and support of the home environment was a stronger predictor of children’s early language and literacy skills than were specific literacy practices such as shared book reading. Activities such as story telling have the potential to influence children’s interest in reading and development of early literacy skills (page 15). Linked to this was the need for interventions to develop desirable values and attitudes towards literacy and towards education in general.
- While poor early literacy is clearly linked to low social economic status, the research shows it is not socioeconomic status that contributes most directly to reading achievement but other family and community characteristics that are less than optimal for low socioeconomic backgrounds such as:
 - academic guidance
 - attitudes towards education
 - language used and opportunities for interaction
 - availability of reading and writing materials
 - parent expectations, and
 - cultural activities.

The paper concludes that ‘Access to literacy resources, including an adult to scaffold learning and quality literacy interactions and experiences are clearly key issues to be addressed if we are able to ensure that ‘at risk’ does not mean the same as destiny’ (page 11).

- Intervention needs to recognise and utilise the parent’s strength, rather than focus on the deficit – thus supporting and affirming the family’s role as their children’s first literacy educators and equal partners in the process.
- The provision of or access to resources will be insufficient alone, since it does not take into account contextual variables such as values and attitudes towards literacy and towards education in general or the cultural and economic circumstances. The literature supports a holistic approach to supporting children and families in their community with interventions differing from site to site and over time, evolving throughout the

implementation. This paper concludes that holistic experiences which are based on expert and novice jointly constructing meaning are central to this approach.

- There is a need to first build communities which strengthen families 'Children who are well nourished and thriving in safe homes and neighbourhoods who are nurtured by strong families, who receive the services they need from living in caring communities are most likely to become competent readers following the introduction of formal instruction on school entry' (page 7).
- Parental, family and community involvement in program development, implementation and evaluation is an important means of ensuring that models of service delivery are sensitive to specific cultural, community and family needs and that practices are empowering families (page 21).
- It is important to systematically evaluate interventions - something that is not being done well.

This paper also reviewed the quality of current early literacy programs. Most 'family' literacy programs were school based ignoring research that demonstrates that a formal school based curriculum is inappropriate for young children. It was also found that there was a lack of recognition of cultural differences with specific cultural practices imposed on families, ignoring their potentially rich forms of language, literacy and textual traditions. The competencies of children from bilingual backgrounds, multi-lingual or dialectal backgrounds, socioeconomically disadvantaged or geographically isolated communities and Indigenous communities were frequently ignored or the difference regarded as deficits (page 19).

One particular quote in this paper summarised the findings well:

'Perhaps the definition of what an effective program is not will provide a useful starting point .. No literacy program is effective if it marginalises some children, if it ignores the home experiences that children bring to early childhood programs or if it does not include the development of mutually reinforcing bonds with children's families' (page 26).

9.3 An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus

While the literature review discussed above was comprehensive and looked in detail at 'at risk' groups there seems to be limited commentary specifically addressing Indigenous early literacy - let alone remote Indigenous early literacy. This highlights a gap for either a dedicated literature review or the need for primary research into the area of remote Indigenous early literacy.

A discussion paper (The Department of Education Employment and Training 2013) written to support the development of the *Solid Partners Solid Futures Strategy* reported on recurring themes from the consultation forums undertaken to inform the strategy. These consultation forums were undertaken in partnership with key stakeholders including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, education providers from early childhood education to schooling and tertiary education, private industry and government agencies. This provides a very recent and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused insight and an opportunity to 'reality check' the literature review. Not surprisingly it supports and reinforces within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context the findings from the 2007 literature review summarised above.

The critical elements of an early literacy program as identified by the consultations are listed below.

- Partnerships with key stakeholders such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, government and non-government organisations, industry, job service providers, TAFEs, universities, corporate and philanthropic sectors are critical in the provision of an integrated service delivery model.
- Strong, meaningful and genuine partnerships with parents, family and community, particularly the need to put in place appropriate structures to support involvement in educational decision-making and building aspirations including identifying appropriate pathways, and the inclusion of mentoring and career development programs.
- Supporting, recognising and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities and languages, particularly fostering learning environments that are culturally safe and supportive.

- Community-based early year programs with integrated services connecting early childhood, health, family support, welfare and community services.
- Transition from home to early childhood education and care and formal schooling, with ongoing parent, family and community engagement, including supporting children in the early years to become ‘two-way strong’ as they move between their home and early learning program and school.
- More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in early childhood education and care, schools, training and tertiary education settings particularly in leadership positions.

The discussion paper suggested the following ‘ideas for action’ to address the recurring themes outlined above.

- Schools and kindergartens should work with their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to identify practical ways to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identity and language into the school and kindergarten environments.
- Provide online information about services available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in early childhood, school education, training, and tertiary education.
- Improve coordination and alignment of state and Commonwealth programs and resources, and develop joint approaches to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners.
- Build an evidence base to establish best practice and inform future directions through working closely with universities.
- Develop an integrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education strategy (0 to 8 years) that covers: access to quality culturally and linguistically appropriate programs, key transition points, workforce capacity and parent and community engagement.

- The Department of Education Employment and Training should coordinate and align early childhood, schooling and tertiary services that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the regional level through regional operational plans.
- Implement *English as an Additional Language or Dialect* (EALD) framework across early childhood, schooling and training services to support the learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners who speak EALD.
- Increase access to resources for early year services, pre-service and in-service teachers by creating a network of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resource centres linked to the DETE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library.

10 Consultation – key themes

The community and individual consultations undertaken as part of this project strongly reinforced the findings that emerged from the literature scan (refer to Section 9) providing practical insights to support the evidence base. These practical insights are summarised below.

- The use of technology is a great opportunity to create scale but remote communities require reliable internet access to do this.
- The current approach of one off funding limits the ability to collect evidence, learn over time and fractures services by creating competition for funds.
- There is uncoordinated engagement of the various funding agencies (local, state and federal government and NGO support) resulting in mostly once off piecemeal service delivery, a lack of strategic systematic programs with insufficient resources to ensure a holistic good practice program is delivered over the long term and a lack of funded rigorous evaluation and systematic improvement.
- There is a need to attract more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for positions with the various agencies to support the delivery of programs.
- Long term retention of workers is important as a strong relationship of trust between the outreach workers and the community is critical to success.
- Often the Aboriginal parents have very low levels of literacy limiting their ability to work with their children or have the confidence to attend group sessions held in the community.
- There is incredible good will, commitment and enthusiasm among workers delivering services in remote Indigenous communities. However they commonly report that many literacy programs are too competitive and the quality of service delivery is inconsistent. There are a number of programs that come to their areas. The libraries, schools and health services are often the channels through which they seek to enter the community. Without a holistic and coordinated approach it can stretch resources too far.

“Why are we competing? There is a desire to have a literate community and we need a holistic approach”.

- In most cases English is the second language so basing literacy programs around English will not produce good results. While it is recognised that literacy programs should start with first language, feedback from communities participating in Better Beginnings consistently identifies the need for children’s books and other print materials in Standard Australian English to support children’s school readiness.
- There is an absolute need for literacy programs to be run in conjunction with Aboriginal Medical Services and Language Centres.

For a detailed record of the consultations records refer to Appendix 1
Consultation records

11 Mapping - summary of key insights

This project mapped the early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities within Australia. The budget and timeframe allocated has limited the community based research to Western Australia and Far North Queensland. Additional consultation with sector experts and desk top research has been undertaken to complement this. The Western Australia and Far North Queensland focus of the local research undertaken creates a bias in the visibility of local initiatives.

While all care has been taken to identify as many early literacy programs being undertaken or recently undertaken in remote Indigenous communities across Australia, the limited direct community research and time allocated due to timeframe and budget constraints, means that the mapping cannot claim to be exhaustive. There is every reason to expect that there are many more programs being delivered than has been mapped by this project.

The mapping process undertaken for this project has shown that to exhaustively map all early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities within Australia would require systematic region by region visits and contact as many of these programs are happening locally and do not necessarily hit the mainstream radar. This would be an expensive exercise and ultimately is unlikely to deliver greater insights than has been gained from this more limited project. However there is value in selecting exemplar programs that represent best in class for detailed review to inform development of a national design solution and assess for potential partnership potential.

Despite the limitations of the scope of this mapping exercise the findings do offer an excellent snap shot of the status of early literacy work being undertaken in remote Indigenous communities in Australia. Refer to Table 1: Policies and programs identified with a specific Indigenous focus for a summary.

The consultation and desk top research has identified the key national organisations and programs that deliver services and resources to remote Indigenous communities. The mapping has also revealed that there are many small community based programs being quietly delivered by dedicated organisations and individuals.

Table 1: Policies and programs identified with a specific Indigenous focus

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Policy/strategy frameworks								
DEEWR Closing the Gap								
DEEWR Early Years Learning								
DETE Solid Partners Solid Futures								
SLQ Libraries for Literacy								
Program delivery								
Indigenous Knowledge Centres								
Libraries and Knowledge Centres								
Reading with my father								
Adult Literacy and Numeracy Foundation								
Aboriginal Literacy Foundation								
Borrooloola								
Family as First Teachers								
Burringurrah Playgroup								
Early Reading Fantastic Phonics								
Better Beginnings								
Not Just Kids Play								
Wyndham Early Learning Activity Centre								
Indigenous Literacy Foundation								
Honey Ant Readers								
Cathy Freeman Foundation/Telstra								
Ngroo Education Walking Together								
Kids Own Publishing/State Library VIC								
Early Words								
HIPPY								

Common factors and key trends

The mapping identified some key trends. These are listed below.

1. There is a significantly greater focus on school aged children rather than pre-school. Schools are an obvious channel to access communities for the distribution of resources and of course have the human resources to deliver programs.
2. Most of the programs are dependent on one off funding streams or one off supply of resources and as such do not benefit from systemic follow up or a long term focus.
3. Formal evaluation of one off local programs or resource provision is undertaken only where programs are run by larger organisations. When evaluations are completed there is no central national repository to help build the evidence base across the sector.
4. Communities are more likely to receive programs, resources and services if they have:
 - a local advocate
 - a dynamic and proactive local library team
 - a cooperative channel into the community such as a library service, health service, school or an Indigenous Knowledge Centre
 - the ability to generate funding from fragmented sources, and/or
 - a fortuitous relationship with supporters who advocate on their behalf.

The result being that services are not necessarily delivered equitably, where they are most needed or where they will be of most impact.

5. There are no overarching systems in place to assure that programs and services that are being delivered are evidenced based and adhere to a national standard of good practice.

For the detailed mapping data refer to Appendix 2 Detailed service and program mapping.

12 Conclusions

The mapping and consultations undertaken as part of this project reveal quite clearly that there is no shortage of activity, good will and commitment within remote Indigenous communities and among government and non-government service providers.

The literature scan also shows us that there is much evidence available on what is good practice, that there is a growing set of population data to track performance and finally that there is emerging recognition by Government at all levels of the need for action.

Despite positive movement in the right direction, in 2012 (The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) an Indigenous child was nearly three times more likely and a child (Indigenous or not) living in a remote community twice as likely to be *Developmentally Vulnerable or at Risk* for language and cognitive skills. It is obvious from this population data that improving early literacy in remote Indigenous communities is throwing up challenges that have yet to be addressed. This project offers some key insights that can contribute to changing this situation.

Mapping of existing early literacy programs in remote Indigenous communities shows that there are many early literacy projects being delivered by a broad range of government, community and not for profit agencies. While there are some exceptions most of these programs face funding, resource and capacity challenges. The result is varying levels of quality, depth, longevity, community involvement and capacity building.

The organic nature of these services means that communities do not necessarily receive services based on need or risk. Instead it may be based on arbitrary rationales such as the capacity of a community to advocate, the existence of channel into that community (such as an Indigenous Knowledge Centre, a local health service or library), the ability to generate funding from fragmented sources or by the community having a fortuitous relationship with supporters who advocate on their behalf.

There is a lack of holistic national or state wide approaches to addressing early literacy skills and behaviours that start with building the capacity of the community and family as the foundation to developing early literacy. Further, despite the literature's consensus that early literacy development is a critical precursor to future literacy success there is a significant skew of programs that target school aged children. This is likely because

schools provide accessibility and human resources to deliver that are unmatched in the remote early literacy sector.

However, there are signs that this is improving.

The National Early Childhood Development Strategy was developed in 2009 by the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations. It would appear that this is an ideal vehicle for the creation of state based partnerships to deliver coordinated good practice approaches. While reviewing the performance of this strategy is outside the scope of this project it is possible to state that at the time of the consultations there was no practical evidence that the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations National Early Childhood Development Strategy was touching the lives of remote communities in Far North Queensland and the Pilbara in Western Australia in a systematic and rigorous way.

However, more recent state government programs such as the Northern Territory's *Families as First Teachers - Indigenous Parenting Support Services Program*, delivered by the Office of Children and Families, Northern Territory Government and funded in part by the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations and Queensland's *Solid Partners Solid Futures Strategy* are emerging programs that hold much promise. They appear to be making every attempt to be evidenced based and are adopting good practice principles as identified in this project. It will be exciting to monitor their progress over the coming years.

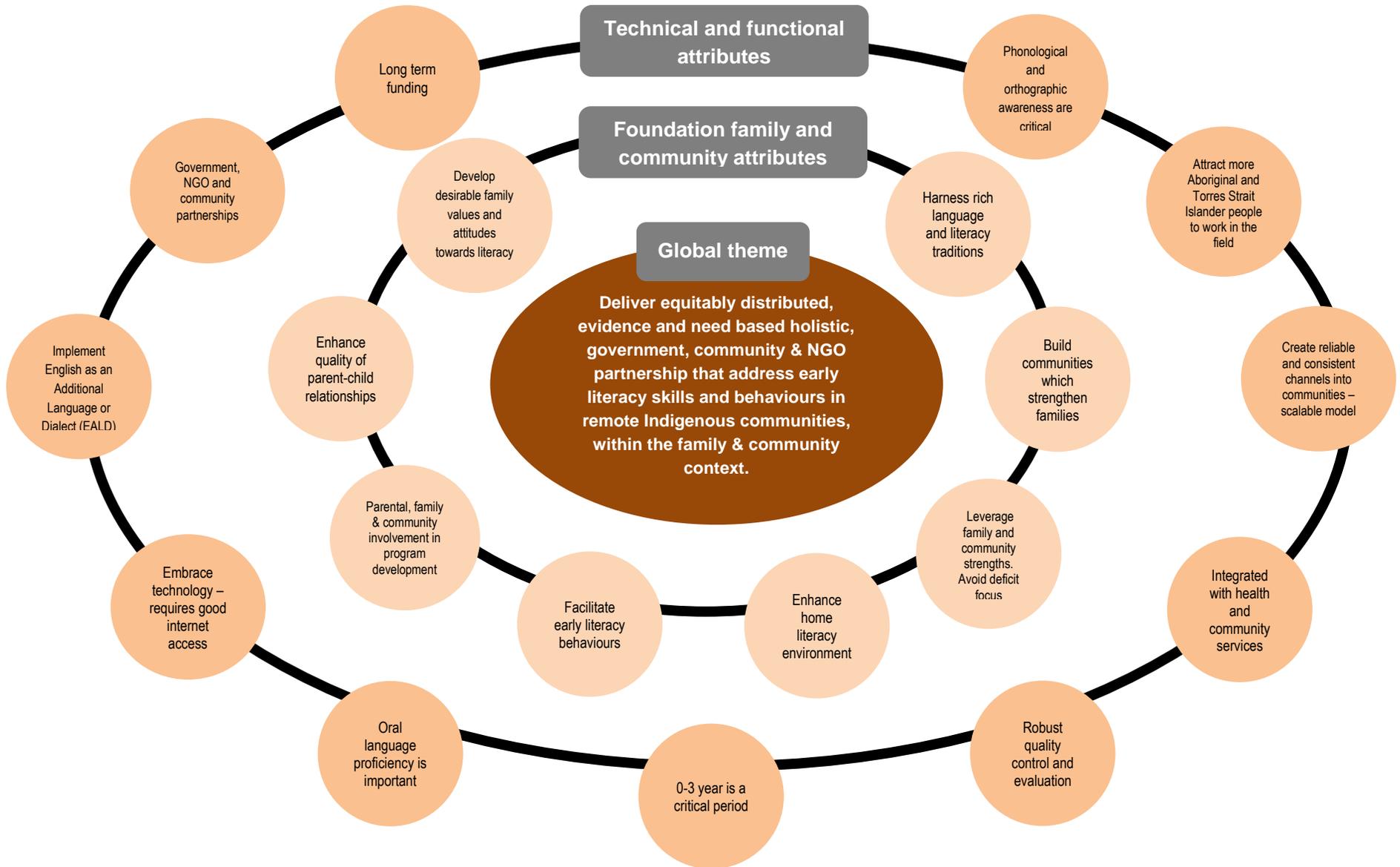
13 A proposed good practice framework

A thematic network (Figure 4) approach has been used to collate together the findings from the community consultations, service mapping and literature scan to create an initial framework for good practice. This has been termed a proposed good practice framework as the limited scope of this project has not enabled the depth of research to build and recommend a definitive model for good practice. This proposed good practice framework provides the basis for further debate and testing.

This thematic analysis has grouped the findings into the *foundation family and community attributes* that are required to deliver good practice. These are placed in the middle circle. This is surrounded by an outer circle that outlines the *technical and functional attributes* that form part of the proposed good practice framework. The central *global theme* presented as the central circle seeks to unite all these elements as a catch all summary of the approach required to deliver all the good practice elements outlined in the model.

Based on this proposed good practice framework, a remote Indigenous early literacy program would seek first to build a foundation of a strong community and family literacy culture and capacity. Only then would it be possible for the family and community to work in partnership with a variety of service delivery and resource providers to build the early literacy competencies of its pre-school children. All this needs to be delivered with strong partnerships with government to assure funding, equitable and repeatable access across all remote communities, systematic project management, quality control and a robust approach to the evaluation of local and population impacts.

Figure 4: Attributes of a proposed good practice framework for early literacy in remote Indigenous communities informed by the community consultation, service mapping and literature scan.



14 Appendix 1 Consultation records

14.1 Cairns

What remote early literacy programs are out there right now?

1. The State Library Queensland has developed a plan titled – ‘*Libraries for Literacy Every Day, Every Way: 2011– 2014*’ outlining its commitment and approach to developing literacy across all populations with a specific commitment to addressing at risk populations. The priority areas for action are family literacy, social disadvantage, collaboration, advocacy, effective workforce and digital literacy. Importantly this plan pledges the commitment of the State Library of Queensland, and the network of more than 340 public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres across the state, to building literacy through innovation and collaboration so Queenslanders can actively participate in the social, economic and cultural life of their communities.

“Libraries, with their networks, geographical distribution, facilities, collections and professionalism brings an impressive net worth to the development of a culture of literacy” (*Robert Wedgeworth, 2003*)

http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/202043/Literacy_Framework_web.pdf

2. The Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) offer a range of pre-school activities aiming to get hard to reach children into libraries. Some examples are:
 - **Culture Love** – Culture love school holiday programs provide week-long activities for children, employ local artists and support the intergenerational sharing of stories, song and dance. The IKC coordinators are supported to develop their leadership and project management skills to build sustainability into the program and the capacity of the IKC as a community centre for the delivery of arts activities for children and young people.

- **Cape Treasures** is a collection of animations/group stories developed by school age children from four communities in Cape York: and delivered in English and local language.
 - [Wujal Wujal: Adventure at Thompson's Creek](#)
 - [Lockhart River: The Wallaby and the Dugong](#)
 - [Pormpuraaw: The Kaangkan Brothers](#)
 - [Injinoo: The Journey to Injinoo](#)
- Baby Ways program
- Story Time program
- The Indigenous Literacy Foundation book packs are distributed by the Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKC).
- iPads are currently in some of the IKCs and were funded through Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access (RIPIA) project, they are a very desirable resource in the community, but it is up to the Councils/IKC Coordinators to decide if they can be taken out of the IKCs and into the home.
- Palm Island and Woorabinda are trialling mini iPads that are pre-loaded with eBooks – the mini iPad that is loaded with children’s eBooks is proving to be very popular but as with the iPads, it is up to the Council/IKC Coordinators to decide if they are taken out of the IKCs, which they are currently not.
- **Athletes as role models** – Breakfast program where children attend for breakfast and while there are read to.
- **Northern Peninsula NPA** program incorporates everything. Driven by NPA Council in Bamaga. Good stuff. Low staff turnover.
- The iPads in the library are of course a desirable resource for children but have the secondary benefit of attracting mothers to come into the library to do emails etc which in turns increases the frequency of library interaction for their children while they are there. The iPads distributed into homes are loaded with apps targeting both parents and children. The iPads’ in home trials are yet to be formally evaluated but feedback to date suggests that the children’s apps are most popular with parents preferring to use them with their children rather than access parents’ apps separately.

What makes them work?

- Technology is an important part of it.
- Must be intergenerational.
- Culturally relevant.

- Has engagement tools that connect with the whole community.
- The IKCs work well as they can adapt programs to suit the community they are in.
- Must be adaptive to community needs and owned by the community.
- Be creative. Take program in creative ways to mums, dads and Elders.

‘Whenever we put a program out there the community adopts its. They look for something they can identify with and where they can work together’

What else needs to happen?

- Require more resources in local language.
- Coordinate local services already in the community so not competing for funds.

What are the key messages for government policy makers in the early remote Indigenous literacy arena?

- Improve accessibility.
- Embrace and harness technology.
- Internet access is key.

How can state based partnerships be developed?

- Hard to get Indigenous people to apply for jobs.

14.2 The South Hedland Library

Sharon Groch, Coordinator of Library Services in the Town of Port Hedland, spoke of the Better Beginnings Program for kindy and pre-primary children. There was a specific Indigenous Package for remote communities. Library Officer for Young People’s Services, Anneke Scheepers, serviced remote areas such as Waralong and Marble Bar and other remote Aboriginal communities. Child Australia conduct rhyme time sessions while the YWCA deliver storytime sessions.

Since commencing at the library four years ago, Sharon has openly welcomed Aboriginal clients into the library and there has been a major uptake of Indigenous people visiting and using the library services. They know they are most welcome. The library and staff have developed good relationships and trust

with the Aboriginal community and hope that the library can become the repository for local Indigenous stories.

The transient nature of workers in the Pilbara (which is not limited to the mining sector) create challenges for continuity of services. There had been management changeovers in some Aboriginal organisations including the Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre. Coincidentally that evening we attended a Pilbara Languages lecture and Sharon and Jackie Huggins met the new manager Julie Walker. An agreement to partner and meet as soon as practicable was made.

At the day care centres Anneke meets once per fortnight to read stories with children in care aged between 2-5 years. NAIDOC reading is popular at the day care centres when some Aboriginal people come in to read however there is still a shyness to do so. This is coupled by low literacy levels also.

The Young People's Services role is dedicated to outreach work within the town and outlying communities. The continuity of this role is important in establishing trust between the community and the library service. Anneke Scheepers has scheduled visits to remote communities and as a result built up a rapport with community members. The sessions are fun and informal.

There is a need for more resources and funding, and for staff that are not predominantly Anglo white female. An Indigenous trainee would be valuable who can go out into the community. It is barrier for engagement at times if the worker is non-Indigenous.

Shire-based relationships are fair with mining companies, There are other literacy initiatives for Aboriginal communities provided by State Government, local governments and not-for-profits. However a key question is how this can be more coordinated and impactful. There is a need for more conversations with industry and state governments.

Quote from Sharon:

"A community doesn't have employable people unless you have literate people".
They are willing to try whatever it takes so that kids do not miss out.

They feel lots of literacy programs are too competitive and the quality control is inconstant.

For example it was reported that resources were being delivered through schools providing support materials to people who have no literacy skills themselves. This means these resources are ineffective and lost.

“Why are we competing? There is a desire to have a literate community and we need a holistic approach”.

Library staff are time constrained yet are often called upon to work with several different NGO agencies at any one time. They would like a better relationship instead of the duplication they see now. They spoke of some authors who come to the Pilbara who they would love to use only to find out that they are only available to the school for a week or so. BHP and the Smith Family brought one author out. South Hedland Primary School does Aboriginal language classes. Some resources they receive are not in first language.

Sharon commented that it would be beneficial to understand the common medical conditions which can affect a child’s potential literacy development. Having an insight into glue ear and eye health issues is important as is working with health professionals such as speech pathologists.

At the library there is a “no shoes, no library” policy so their library has a box of thongs readily available. They do not turn anyone away.

In regards to mobile libraries they rely on people to get into town. People come into Hedland for shops, hospital etc. as it is close so they did not see the need for mobiles at this stage.

14.3 Other consultations

Margaret James - Author Honey Ant Readers

Jackie Huggins met with Margaret James in Brisbane. She described her methodology in working with Aboriginal women Elders in Alice Springs. Trudy Inkampala was her main contact there.

Margaret has a passion to keep Aboriginal English in the stories she writes and to have this acknowledged as a language in its own right.

The Honey Ant Readers are an exciting new series of picture and story books, playing cards, activity books, songs, rhymes, board games and more easy to use resources developed for Indigenous learners which make learning to read fun, relevant and successful.

Margaret says that it is not uncommon to find Indigenous Year 11/12 students with Grade 1/2 literacy levels.

95 per cent of Indigenous children speak Aboriginal English in their homes and code switch when they get to school. She spoke of her work Yiparinya School in Alice Springs as there are no other schools in Alice Springs which teach Aboriginal languages.

Pilbara Language Course South Hedland

There are 31 language groups in the Pilbara. Karinyarra are the traditional owners. Marapikurrinya is the word for Port Hedland.

After outlining the early literacy program we were working on, we enquired if they had any more insights to offer. Their response was that they were trying to keep the language alive in the Pilbara and to teach it to interested people. They all knew of the Better Beginnings program with the exception of Andrea who worked with much older children.

Where possible Aboriginal Medical Services were involved in Better Beginnings as evidenced by my trip to Roebourne on 3 July 2013. I spoke with the manager Ann Flynn who said that Better beginnings was utilised by her Aboriginal Health Service. She employed two young Aboriginal women to deliver it instead of the health workers who were overloaded by their caseloads. This was later verified by the State Library WA who said significant contacts were made in communities to deliver the Better beginnings program. It tied in with their 'Mums and Babies' health program they deliver and there was a literacy component to it.

There is an absolute need for literacy programs to be run in conjunction with Aboriginal Medical Services and Language Centres.

State Library of Western Australia

In 2009 the State Library of Western Australia's Better Beginnings Family Literacy Program developed the *Read to Me, I Love It!* pilot program that promotes early literacy and library use to Aboriginal families living in remote WA.

After the successful pilot in 25 communities in the Pilbara and Kimberley, the program has been offered more widely to Aboriginal communities across WA. In 2013, over 100 remote Aboriginal communities are participating in the program with a current reach of over 1600 families.

The State Library of WA employs an Indigenous Liaison Officer and Education Officer who developed the model and resources and administer the program.

The program is delivered in partnership with community councils, Aboriginal medical services and schools. Each community nominates a distributor to provide reading packs to families with children up to five years of age. The contents for each reading pack have been developed or selected based on cultural relevance, use of language, and to promote the key messages of "reading to your child" and "using your local library".

The initial reading pack includes two picture books, a library of books read aloud on DVD, alphabet posters, a t-shirt and a copy of the Koori Mail for parents to role model positive home literacy practices. Every three months over a two year period each family receives an additional two picture books and the next volume of the DVD to create a home library of resources.

There is a need for access to these and more quality books in remote areas, particularly in communities without access to library services.

As with the universal Better Beginnings Family Literacy program, *The Read To Me / Love It* program is currently being independently evaluated by Edith Cowan University. The interim evaluation has indicated that the quality of the resources, books and information, the consistency of the program's contact with families and the flexible, community-driven delivery model are key attributes to its success.

Better Beginnings is funded until 2014 by the State Government of Western Australia, the Department of Regional Development and Lands, Royalties for Regions, Rio Tinto and WA local governments. One of the key aims of this partnership between state and local government and the business sector is to support the development of literacy in children from birth providing them with greater potential to grow, learn and develop, perform well at school and succeed in later life. Improved literacy levels across Western Australia contributes to the creation of a skilled workforce and future economic development.

Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF)

Mary-Ruth Rendell and Kim Kelly.

- Children first develop an appreciation of what comes out of their own mouths therefore need to do speak in their own language.
- Cannot start with English if it is the second language at home.
- Good programs are those that work in first language. – can be Aboriginal English or true language.
- Children learn to read before school – too late after they get to school.
- Should be learning based. Most in education sector are play based focussed. This is a source of debate.
- It is well known that the family need to get on board but English is not their first language.
- Need to engage the community.
- Seven steps needed before you can get to Jolly Phonics.
- Three keys:
 - Phonic awareness is imperative
 - Build oral vocabulary (require 20 words by grade 1)
 - Teachers need appropriate resources in the first language or Aboriginal language.

- Other key factors:
 - Evaluate – need to be evidence based
 - Pre and post testing important
 - A little bit of Jolly Phonic and a little bit of something else is not enough – Many programs fun but not evidence based
 - Must be in first language/Aboriginal language
 - Engage with family
 - Divide into two areas – (1) Developmental pre-literacy vocab building (2) resources for children to use
 - Multi-sensory is important to make up for deficits such as ear health
 - Empower people to do it themselves
 - Require 7 steps before Jolly Phonics – Jolly phonics is step 8.

Suzy Wilson, Founder and Board member of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation Suzy Wilson

We had a very short meeting with Suzy. While the Indigenous Literacy Foundation has supported over 200 indigenous communities Suzy outlined a program delivered by the Indigenous Literacy Foundation in Warburton that she believes is a model for the future. The Indigenous Literacy Foundation consulted with the Elders of the Indigenous community of Warburton¹ to develop a literacy program. Following the consultation 6-7 books were translated into their language and a bag of books were given to each family. A centre for 0-3 years old was established where Mothers and children attend to read and be read to. The mothers must attend with their children. Suzy said 'the engagement was amazing once you have books in their own language'. She believes that it is obvious that we need to teach in their own language first and she believes that every remote indigenous community should have a centre for 0-3 years old.

¹ Warburton or Warburton Ranges is an Indigenous Australian community in Western Australia, just to the south of the Gibson Desert and located on the Great Central Road (also known as the "Outback Highway") and Gunbarrel Highway. At the 2006 census, Warburton had a population of 571.

15 Appendix 2 Detailed service and program mapping

Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

National Closing the Gap target relevant to early literacy

Ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years (by 2013)

National Early Childhood Development Strategy

As an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments, in 2009 the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations published The National Early Childhood Development Strategy that:

'provided, for the first time, a shared vision for the development of young children in Australia—that by 2020 all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation'.

The Strategy claims to lead to better engagement across and between governments, with the non-government sector, and with families around the needs of young children.

A review of the report developed to summarise the National Early Childhood Development Strategy, *Supporting the Development of young children in Australia: 2009 A Snapshot* (The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Canberra 2009) shows that a total of around \$4.4 billion over the five years 2009 to 2014 had been committed towards new initiatives to directly improve the life opportunities of children, a particular focus has been on improving the quality, access and affordability of early childhood education and care. The following planned initiatives that relate to early literacy in remote Indigenous communities are listed below.

- National partnerships between the Australian Government and State and Territory governments on improving teacher quality, literacy and numeracy and low socio economic school communities will also contribute to children experiencing a positive learning pathway once they reach school.
- The Australian Government provided \$472 million over six years under a new National Partnership with States and Territories to improve outcomes for Indigenous children. This includes the establishment of 35 Children and Family Centres providing integrated early learning, child care and family support in areas of disadvantage and where there are high proportions of Indigenous children under four years.
- The Australian Government committed to ensure all Indigenous children living in remote communities have access to a quality early childhood education program in the year before

school by 2013.

- Providing additional early intervention services for Indigenous families across Australia through intensive supported playgroups and 50 new Indigenous Parenting Support Services.
- The Australian Government is invested \$970 million over five years through a National Partnership agreement with States and Territories to ensure that by 2013 every child has access to a quality play based early childhood education (pre-school or kindergarten) for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year in the year before school. The program will be delivered by a university trained early childhood teacher in a diversity of settings, including child care, in order to meet the needs of working parents.
- The Australian Government is working closely with the States and Territories to introduce a national quality standard and ratings framework which will improve quality in Australian Government approved early childhood settings to better meet the development needs of young children and inform parents about service quality.

Investing in the Early Years—A National Early Childhood Development Strategy An initiative of the Council of Australian Governments Canberra,

http://www.coag.gov.au/sites/default/files/national_ECD_strategy.pdf

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2009, *Supporting the Development of young children in Australia: 2009 A Snapshot*. Canberra,

<http://deewr.gov.au/national-early-childhood-development-strategy>

The Department of Education, Training & Employment, Queensland

Solid Partners Solid Futures 2013 - 2016

The purpose of the *Solid Partners Solid Futures program* is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have the support they need to enjoy and achieve success throughout their educational journey from early childhood through to employment.

Solid Partners Solid Futures calls for a partnership approach to improve early childhood, education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

As the peak advisory body to government on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training, the Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee (QIECC) has a central role to play in the implementation of *Solid Partners Solid Futures*.

The strategy has a key planned outcome related to early literacy in remote communities:

‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from 0 – 8 years of age learn, thrive and make successful transitions from home to early childhood education and care and school.’

To deliver on this outcome the strategy plans to develop an integrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education strategy (0 to 8 years) that covers: access to quality

culturally and linguistically appropriate programs; key transition points; workforce capacity; and parent and community engagement.

For further information phone (07) 3237 0808. The strategy can be accessed at

<http://deta.qld.gov.au/Indigenous/pdfs/atsi-solid-partners-solid-futures.pdf>

Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs)

Location	<p>There is a network of 21 IKCs in remote and regional communities across Cape York, the Northern Peninsular, Torres Strait Islands, and at Cherbourg in South East Queensland.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>South West Queensland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cherbourg (currently closed) <p>Cape York/Far North Queensland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aurukun • Hope Vale • Lockhart River • Pormpuraaw • Wujal Wujal <p>Northern Peninsular Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seisia • Bamaga • New Mapoon • Injinoo • Umagico </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Torres Strait Islands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badu Island • Boigu Island • Dauan Island • Erub Island • Hammond Island • Iama (Yam) • Kubin Village, Moa Island • Mabuig Island • Poruma Island <p>Central West Queensland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woorabinda <p>North Queensland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palm Island </td> </tr> </table>	<p>South West Queensland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cherbourg (currently closed) <p>Cape York/Far North Queensland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aurukun • Hope Vale • Lockhart River • Pormpuraaw • Wujal Wujal <p>Northern Peninsular Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seisia • Bamaga • New Mapoon • Injinoo • Umagico 	<p>Torres Strait Islands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badu Island • Boigu Island • Dauan Island • Erub Island • Hammond Island • Iama (Yam) • Kubin Village, Moa Island • Mabuig Island • Poruma Island <p>Central West Queensland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woorabinda <p>North Queensland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palm Island
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Contact details	<p>For a directory of all IKCs: http://libraries.slq.qld.gov.au/home/browse_by_ikc</p>		
Governance	<p>The Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) are owned, managed and staffed by local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Councils.</p> <p>The State Library of Queensland funds and facilitates the establishment of these Centres, and provides ongoing support through staff training and delivery of programs to promote literacy, build life skills and keep culture strong.</p>		
Description	<p>The centres are community hubs that engage all generations in creative, cultural and educational activities. They provide traditional library services (including information and communication technologies) as well as a means and a place to capture and preserve local history and traditions. Strong partnerships, including those with local schools, are encouraging written and digital Indigenous authorship while valuing traditional expression through art, carving, dance and song. The IKC's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empower communities through new technologies, literacy and learning • embrace local knowledge, culture and heritage, and 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share experience from a rich and dynamic Indigenous world...keeping culture strong for generations. <p>http://www.slg.qld.gov.au/about-us/Indigenous-knowledge-centres</p> <p>Qld blog is http://www.ikcnetwork.blogspot.com.au/</p> <p>Activities at Erub IKC in May 2013 can be found at http://www.ikcnetwork.blogspot.com.au/2013/05/activities-at-erub-ikc.html</p> <p>Storytelling time at lama IKC March 2013 http://www.ikcnetwork.blogspot.com.au/2013/03/storytelling-time.html</p> <p>Kids Corner at Kubin IKC February 2013 http://www.ikcnetwork.blogspot.com.au/2013/02/hi-from-kubin.html</p> <p>Lets Read at Kubin IKC September 2012 http://www.ikcnetwork.blogspot.com.au/2012/09/lets-read-at-ikc.html</p>
Libraries and Knowledge Centres (Northern Territory)	
Location	<p>The Northern Territory Library's Knowledge Centres are located in the following places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milingimbi, • Wadeye, • Peppimenarti, • Umbakumba, • Angurugu, • Pirlangimpi, • Milikapiti, • Barunga, • Ti Tree, • Ltyentye Apurte • Lajamanu
Contact details	<p>Telephone: 8999 7177, Freecall: 1800 019 155 Email: ntl.info@nt.gov.au Mail: GPO Box 42, Darwin NT 0801 http://artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/northern-territory-library/programs-and-projects/knowledgecentres#.UeYa445-L8</p>
Governance	The Northern Territory Library
Description	<p>The Northern Territory Library runs a similar service to that of the Queensland IKCs under the title of Libraries and Knowledge Centres (formerly known as 'Indigenous Knowledge Centres').</p> <p>Support to remote libraries is delivered through the Libraries and Knowledge Centres (LKC) Program. The program was developed in response to requests from Indigenous communities, who wanted assistance to preserve their cultural heritage and provide appropriate access to it. The Libraries and Knowledge</p>

	<p>Centres Program also manages library resources for remote libraries across the Territory. A key feature of the Libraries and Knowledge Centres program is the local Our Story database which provides access to cultural and historical resources about each community.</p> <p>In 2007 Northern Territory Library won the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Access to Learning Award for the Libraries and Knowledge Centres Program.</p> <p>In 2005, NTL commissioned Professor Martin Nakata and a team of academics to review the LKC model. One recommendation was made with regards to literacy “That NTL seeks expert advice to develop consistent and clear literacy strategies for LKCs in three primary areas: local knowledge documentation, information literacy for external information sources, and early literacy development.’</p> <p>The evaluation observed that: <i>‘The Libraries and Knowledge Centres (LKC) concept, as a model for the delivery of relevant and sustainable information services in the Northern Territory, has the potential to be a key infrastructure element for the Northern Territory Government’s plans for building capacities in the regions and better futures for all Territorians. LKC services, when fully developed in line with the whole-of-government approach, will prove to be vital components of regional development strategies, business development, ongoing education and training needs, literacy and basic skills development, and information communication across the Territory.’</i> (Northern Territory Libraries 2006).</p>
Reading with my father	
Location	Tablelands, Queensland
Contact details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briengan Rodgers, Tablelands Regional Library Service Coordinator, Ph. 07 4043 4150 • Les Elliot, Manager Accommodation Low Security (Farm), Ph. 07 4093 3935 • Catherine Franklin, Vocational Programs Officer, Lotus Glen Farm, Ph. 07 4093 3935
Governance	<p><i>Reading with My Father</i> (RWMF) is a family literacy program initiated in April 2011 by Tablelands Regional Library Service in partnership with Lotus Glen Farm, the local open access prison of Lotus Glen Correctional Centre, and funded through a State Library Queensland (SLQ) Expanding Horizons Grant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$23,750 from SLQ’s Expanding Horizon’s grant for Family Literacy • \$6,900 in-kind funding from Tablelands Regional Library Service • \$10,000 in-kind funding from Lotus Glen Correctional farm
Description	The program connects families by offering inmates the opportunity to record a story to their child and is a powerful rehabilitation tool with the capacity to bring an inmate to tears and pledge that they will change when they leave the farm.

	<p>To improve the literacy skills of, and enhance relationships between, inmates and their children. Inmates and their children are coached in literacy skills until they are at a level where they can read a story time book that is then recorded on to a CD and sent together with the book to the father and child respectively.</p> <p>This not only encourages literacy but strengthens the bond between a father and his child, encouraging the retention of a supportive family unit. The interchange also allows an inmate and their child to interact in an enjoyable and non-confrontational manner.</p> <p>Note: similar programs are run in prisons in the ACT and Tasmania.</p>
Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation	
Location	Based NSW. Service Australia wide with a focus on marginalised populations including remote Indigenous locations.
Contact details	<p>The Australian Literacy & Numeracy Foundation 208 New South Head Road Edgecliff NSW 2027 Tel: 02 9362 3388 Alt Tel: 02 9362 4822 Fax: 02 9362 4853 Email: foundation@alnf.org</p> <p>https://alnf.org/</p>
Governance	Self-funded, not for profit.
Description	<p>The Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF) is dedicated to raising language, literacy and numeracy standards in Australia and raises funds to develop, implement and sustain innovative projects for individuals, families and communities.</p> <p>ALNF exists to help these people by raising literacy levels in Australia's most marginalised communities. Through six core programs and a number of one-off community projects, ALNF provides funding, training, support and resources to individuals, families and schools.</p> <p>One of the six core programs is The Early Childhood Language & Literacy Program provides literacy instruction to pre-school teachers, early years teachers, special needs teachers, teachers' aides, parents and community members.</p> <p>It consists of a 5-day course and ongoing assistance to ensure the inclusion of Phonemic awareness activities and early language skill builders into the curriculums of pre and primary schools. These pre-literacy games and activities provide children with the basics of English language development that are essential building blocks for learning to read, spell, write and comprehend</p>

	<p>English.</p> <p>The Early Childhood Language & Literacy program also works with communities in Indigenous First Languages on request. Making connections between Indigenous Australian First Language and English is vital for the development of personal and community health, welfare and education.</p> <p>ALNF is also behind the Wall of Hands campaign, raising awareness of the low levels of literacy among Indigenous children.</p>
Aboriginal Literacy foundation	
Location	Based Melbourne. Services Australia wide including remote Indigenous communities.
Contact details	<p>Aboriginal Literacy Foundation Ross House 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne Vic 3000 Email: info@aboriginalliteracyfoundation.org Ph. 03 9650 1006 http://www.aboriginalliteracyfoundation.org/about-us.html</p>
Governance	<p>The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation is an independent not for profit, charitable organisation that relies on the support of the community to achieve its work.</p> <p>In 2010, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia became the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation's Patron.</p>
Description	<p>The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation believes that positive and practical change to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people starts with literacy and numeracy. Its vision is for a future where all Indigenous children can pursue quality education, reach their full potential and contribute to their community and the country.</p> <p>Working in collaboration with local communities and partners, they develop literacy skills with Indigenous children so that they can succeed in school and beyond.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation provides weekly one-on-one literacy tutoring to Indigenous children struggling to make literacy gains at school. They provide Indigenous Literacy and Heritage Camps to fast track literacy and numeracy learnings for significantly disadvantaged students. These programs are provided by a dedicated team of volunteers and paid tutors.</p> <p>The Foundation also supplies books and literacy backpacks to children in remote communities to encourage them in their educational journey. They fund education scholarships for Indigenous young people to give them the best</p>

	<p>possible start and greater educational opportunities.</p> <p>They conduct literacy testing for Indigenous children to enable early intervention and tailored support. Through many of the Foundation's campaigns they create community awareness with the aim of closing the poverty gap.</p> <p><i>The primary beneficiaries of the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation's programs are Indigenous children aged between 8 and 16 years.</i></p>
Indy Kindi	
Location	Borroloola
Contact details	<p>2/108 Cammeray Road Cammeray NSW 2062 AUSTRALIA Emailinfo@nangalaproject.org.au Phone +61 2 9908 2416 Fax +61 2 9908 7231 http://www.nangalaproject.org.au/</p>
Governance	<p>Australian Indigenous strategy and design company, The Jumbana Group, conceived the vision of The Nangala Project in 2010 to deliver three ground breaking and interrelated community programs in remote Australia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indi Kindi, preparing under five year old children for literacy and numeracy, offering them a better chance of reaching basic Australian educational benchmarks • John Moriarty Football for under six, eight and ten year old boys and girls to use football (soccer) to improve school attendance and achieve sustainable healthier outcomes for families and communities • Bunji Travel, to mobilise a traveller and corporate volunteer workforce to help deliver Nangala projects, and build bridges of cultural and social understanding. <p>The Nangala Project is a non-profit initiative to relieve poverty and disadvantage amongst Australian Indigenous children and their families, through creating locally engaged, sustainable opportunity.</p> <p>The project is funded with support of government and non-government partners, donors, supporters and volunteers.</p>
Description	<p>Award-winning author Ros Moriarty has founded Indi Kindi to help change literacy outcomes amongst remote region Aboriginal children.</p> <p>Indi Kindi is creating a range of reading and counting materials for use by very young bush children, their parents/relatives and teaching professionals. These and other resources are being matched with best practice teaching and support</p>

	<p>models.</p> <p>Indi Kindi is being piloted in Borroloola, the birthplace of Jumbana co-founder and Chairman John Moriarty. The plan is for it to be trialled, measured, sustained locally, and scaled up for expansion across remote Australia.</p> <p>Working with leading educators, publishers and booksellers, Indi Kindi is using The Jumbana Group's Balarinji design archives, now owned by the National Museum of Australia, royalties from Jumbana Group co-founder and Managing Director Ros Moriarty's memoir, <i>Listening to Country</i>, and children's picture books <i>Ten Scared Fish</i> and <i>Kangaroos Hop</i>, to create this best practice Indigenous literacy program to respond to the way very young children learn - turning pages, looking at pictures, counting things, seeing repetition, using memory, and recognizing familiar cultural themes – to help break the cycle of Indigenous destitution</p>
Family as First Teachers	
Location	Remote Northern Territory (NT)
Contact details	Senior Director, Remote Early Childhood Integrated Services, Early Childhood Policy and Regulations at the NT Office of Children and Families.
Governance	The program is funded by the NT Government and the Australian Government through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations until June 2014.
Description	<p>Content here is a verbatim excerpt from https://apps.aifs.gov.au/ipppregister/projects/families-as-first-teachers-nt-faft-Indigenous-parenting-support-services-program</p> <p>This early learning program is delivered exclusively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families with children from birth to school age. Adult capacity-building is also provided through family support and by linking services within local communities.</p> <p>School readiness is addressed through the FaFT - Indigenous Parenting Support Services Program in early learning groups with a focus on literacy and numeracy foundations, orientation to school programs and, as part of a dual generational approach, parent engagement initiatives.</p> <p>FaFT Kuranda was the starting point for the NT FaFT Program, which has now been rolled out across 21 local communities. The program was adjusted to suit the NT remote community context and developed in consultation with community members and staff at each site.</p> <p>The program objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provide quality early childhood programs with a focus on early literacy and numeracy foundations for young Indigenous children (0-3 years of age) and their families; ▪ prepare children and their families for successful transitions to pre-

school ;

- build the capacity of families and community members to support the healthy development of young children;
- develop community-based resources and increase the availability of resources for learning and parenting programs;
- up-skill an Indigenous workforce in knowledge of early learning and family support;
- increase collaboration with partner agencies in service delivery; and,
- build the capacity of communities to deliver early childhood services.

The need for the program was emphasised through the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) that indicated NT remote Indigenous children arrive at schools with higher levels of disadvantage in almost all indicators. The National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results further support this. NT remote Indigenous families in communities experience chronic health issues, high rates of abuse and neglect, substance abuse, overcrowded housing and highly compromised educational outcomes.

Involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Extensive consultation at each program site was undertaken prior to program establishment and local teams employ Indigenous Family Liaison Officers to develop and deliver a range of culturally appropriate and place-based programs. FaFT established the Indigenous Early Childhood Parent Reference Group (IECPRG) that consists of Indigenous representatives from across the NT. This group meets quarterly and advises on program practice to ensure Indigenous views are central to program delivery and that Indigenous aspirations are reflected in program directions. The focus of Indigenous views and aspirations are about early childhood and parenting that are specifically relevant to the remote NT context.

Aboriginal parents and FaFT staff work together to identify place-based areas of interest and activities for program development. Cultural awareness training is delivered locally by the schools in each community for non-Indigenous staff who join the program. All new staff attend a FaFT orientation and the resource "You're in New Country Now" is provided for early childhood competence information. Follow-up is provided by local Indigenous staff and regional advisory staff to ensure their training has been effective in their work to support Indigenous children and families.

Evaluation status

The program has been subject to an external/independent process that studied the establishment of the program through site visits and included interviews with schools, program staff, local community staff and families.

Demonstrated outcomes

The program has been well established across 21 growth towns in the NT.

	<p>Demonstrated outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a need to refine the program documentation; • sufficient funding was provided to program enablers for appropriate funding allocation; • staff were committed and capable; • the use of a community development approach was appropriate for each site; • there was sufficient funding to employ qualified staff and to provide professional development opportunities; • there were strong program structures for remote and on-site support; • advisory staff demonstrated good pedagogical leadership; and, • the program provided appropriate school and community support. <p>Inhibitors to effective program delivery included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a lack of housing availability; • venues for program delivery were insufficient; • data management and reporting requirements were inhibitive; and • managing the broad scope of the program work at the community level was challenging. <p>Other evidence</p> <p>Program data show an increase in the number of children and parents attending the program which reflect the efficacy of the program in engaging local families.</p> <p>School teachers' perceptions are that there has been increasing number of children enrolling in pre-school, higher attendance at pre-school and enhanced readiness for children to attend pre-school.</p> <p>Unexpected outcomes as perceived by program staff include the strength of collaborative partnerships with other agencies who work with children, families and local communities, and the employment opportunities that were created for participating parents.</p> <p>Replicability</p> <p>The FaFT program has demonstrated a capacity to be replicated across various local communities, as evidenced by the uptake across 21 growth towns across the NT. This has been achieved by consulting with local communities at each site so that the program can be adapted to suit the specific needs of families living within those communities.</p>
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Burringurrah Playgroup	
Location	For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in a remote area.
Contact details	West Australian Department for Child Protection (DCP).
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded by the WA State Government through the Departments of Health, Education and Child Protection. • Delivered by the Burringurrah Clinic and the West Australian Department for Child Protection (DCP).
Description	<p>Content here is a verbatim excerpt from https://apps.aifs.gov.au/ipppregister/projects/burringurrah-playgroup</p> <p>Uses the Playgroup as a "soft entry" gateway to service provision (for example, health services) and to engage families and children to develop early literacy skills.</p> <p>The Playgroup is delivered exclusively to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and provides play activities for children between 0-4 years of age with a focus on providing support for parents.</p> <p>The Playgroup is based on the "Better Beginnings" model that is targeted to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents. The Burringurrah Playgroup shares the model's purpose to support parents in reading to their children to facilitate the early literacy skills needed to become good readers and succeed at school. The Playgroup works through strong partnerships with public libraries, local governments, health professionals and schools to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build awareness in the whole community of the value of reading and sharing stories with young children from birth; and, • encourage and support parents in sharing books and activities that foster language and a love of reading with their young children. <p>Burringurrah Playgroup staff work with young mothers and fathers to help identify the specific needs of their children and to formulate appropriate responses. Staff also conduct eyeball observations of toddlers who do not frequent health and welfare services.</p> <p>Demonstrated outcomes</p> <p>Those who deliver the Playgroup point to its financial reports and attendance rates as evidence of the program's effectiveness. They further note that parent and child engagement was "great".</p> <p>Evaluation</p> <p>An internal evaluation is expected to be completed by December 2013. It is anticipated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders will prepare the evaluation and clients will complete satisfaction surveys on a regular basis.</p>

Early Reading: "Fantastic Phonics" program	
Location	The program is delivered world-wide and across Australia in various regional and city areas.
Contact details	Director of the Early Reading Company. http://www.early-reading.com/contact/
Governance	<p>Delivered by the Early Reading Company – a private company http://www.early-reading.com/</p> <p>The Early Reading programs are provided free of charge to charities, aid agencies and schools in disadvantage. No funding is received for the programs delivered in Liberia, Rwanda and Southern Sudan.</p> <p>In Australia, four books that incorporate Indigenous storylines, artwork, characters and health messages were funded by the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation.</p>
Description	<p>Content here is a verbatim excerpt from https://apps.aifs.gov.au/ipppregister/projects/early-reading-fantastic-phonics-program</p> <p>Early Reading delivers a range of programs and materials for teachers, families at home, speech pathologists, non-English speaking families and for children who experience intellectual or severe learning disabilities. The aim is to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for pre-school and early school children and for children with specific learning needs.</p> <p>The Early Reading programs are not designed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. However, some of the materials have been adapted for use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders after consultation with Aboriginal Elders.</p> <p>The Early Reading Program is a learn-to-read program that is used by 252 Australian schools to reach approximately 1000 users, including Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island children. "Fantastic Phonics" is Early Reading's flagship program that is delivered around the world to countries that include Liberia, Rwanda, Southern Sudan and the programs are currently being developed in South Africa, India, Pakistan and the USA.</p> <p>Four additional books have been added to Early Reading's Fantastic Phonics program for specific use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their parents.</p> <p>Early Reading delivers a range of other programs to supplement Fantastic Phonics. These Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the "English as a Second Language" program for use in multi-language communities, developing communities, and in areas of economic

	<p>disadvantage in First World countries;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the "Remedial Reading" program that is delivered in schools to supplement existing remedial programs; and, the "Autism and Intellectual Disability" program that is tailored for delivery to children with a disability. <p>Early Reading is designed to provide low cost printable materials for families and schools in areas of disadvantage. At a low cost, each child can receive up to 60 reading books for each year of the children's development. Early Reading continues to develop a range of programs based around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> downloadable, printable phonics literacy programs which are adapted for cultures; video literacy as an introduction for pre-school children into the reading program; and, pre-reading programs for Indigenous pre-school children.
Better Beginnings	
Location	Western Australia
Contact details	<p>State Library of Western Australia 25 Francis Street, Perth Cultural Centre, Perth WA 6000, Australia Telephone: (+61 8) 9427 3130 Facsimile: (+61 8) 9427 3256 email: betterbeginnings@slwa.wa.gov.au</p>
Governance	<p>Better Beginnings is developed and managed by The State Library of Western Australia and delivered through public libraries. The program is funded via a tripartite alliance between the Government of Western Australia, including Royalties for Regions, Western Australian local governments and Rio Tinto.</p>
Description	<p>Content here is a verbatim excerpt from http://www.better-beginnings.com.au</p> <p>Better Beginnings has been developed by the State Library of Western Australia as a family literacy program that supports parents as their children's first teacher.</p> <p>It works through strong partnerships with public libraries, local governments, health professionals and schools to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> build awareness in the whole community of the value of reading and sharing stories with young children from birth; encourage and support parents in sharing books and activities that foster language and a love of reading with their young children; and promote the vital role of public libraries as community hubs that provide ongoing support to parents and caregivers in giving their children a love of reading.

	<p>Since 2010 Better Beginnings has been working with distributors in remote Aboriginal communities to deliver resources to families with children up to five years old living in remote areas.</p> <p>Recognising the need for sustainable strategies and resources that reflect the experiences of Aboriginal families is the primary focus of the Read to me - I love it! project, and specialised reading packs have been developed to support the specific early literacy requirements of children living in remote communities.</p> <p>Better Beginnings is currently working with around 100 Aboriginal communities throughout Western Australia, including some of the most isolated and remote schools and communities in the world. The program is running Western Australia-wide through a network of distributors, early childhood practitioners, parents, health nurses, teachers and Aboriginal Medical Services. Better Beginnings works directly with community members, chairpersons and Elders to devise culturally appropriate and relevant ways of working, and provides support and training to remote and regional libraries.</p> <p>The aim is not only to encourage more Aboriginal families to use their library, but also to help these library services become more relevant to the lives of Aboriginal Australians.</p>
<p>Not Just Kids Play: A Model of Playgroup in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities</p>	
<p>Location</p>	<p>Locational Supported Playgroups are delivered in the Indigenous communities of Woorabinda in Central Queensland and Lockhart River in northern Cape York.</p>
<p>Contact details</p>	<p>Manager, Strategic Projects at Playgroup Queensland. Phone: 1800 171 882 (QLD only) or (07) 3855 9600. Email (general): info@playgroupqld.com.au</p>
<p>Governance</p>	<p>Delivered by Playgroup Queensland: A not-for-profit children's charity.</p> <p>Funding for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supported playgroups is from several sources.</p> <p>The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs funds Playgroup Australia which distributes funding to Playgroup Queensland for the National Supported Playgroups Program for a period of four years.</p> <p>The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) funds the Locational Supported Playgroups in Woorabinda and Lockhart River to operate four playgroup sessions per week in each community over a four year period.</p> <p>The Accessible Playgroup Initiative has been funded for a second three year period by the Queensland Government Department of Education, Training and</p>

	Employment, and the Office of Early Childhood Education and Care.
Description	<p>Content here is a verbatim excerpt from https://apps.aifs.gov.au/ipppregister/projects/not-just-kids-play-a-model-of-playgroup-in-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-communities</p> <p>Overview</p> <p>Playgroup Queensland is a leading early intervention provider and the state's peak body for playgroups. It has been providing and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander playgroups in urban, rural and remote communities for more than 15 years.</p> <p>The Locational Supported Playgroup (LSP) model is used to deliver playgroup services that engage vulnerable families with young children and provide those families with parenting and early childhood development support from a single fixed location. This involves bringing a group of parents and their under-school aged children together for approximately two hours per week in a community venue or private home. These facilitated supported playgroups are conducted in a non-threatening environment and are designed to enhance relationships in to help families develop valuable social and support networks. The aim is to build positive parent-child relationships, promote parenting skills and confidence, and to stimulate all areas of child development.</p> <p>Activities and playgroup settings are designed to be creative, age-and developmentally-appropriate to be suitable for the children attending the playgroups. Considerable planning goes into the playgroups, such as the Playgroup Plus Program where a dedicated baby area is provided to facilitate a mix of structured and unstructured activities. Activities include music and dance, indoor and outdoor play, storytelling, and a variety of activity areas for dramatic and creative play.</p> <p>Playgroup Queensland also offer services to support and assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to establish their own community and supported playgroups. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Playgroup Resource Unit works under the "Accessible Playgroups Initiative" to deliver training an on-site mentoring for workers, support for families, and the provision of resources and activities.</p> <p>Indigenous Playgroups provide an opportunity for family-focused early intervention as a means of family support. Family support empowers families by assisting them to identify and develop their own strengths and resources. The children develop a positive sense of identity through knowledge and understanding of their family and culture, whilst parents and carers are provided with an environment where they can develop and maintain pride in their family, and cultural identity.</p>

	<p>Cultural practices and materials</p> <p>The following components of the model have been designed specifically for use in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ focusing on community and family strengths and recognising that the strong cultural resilience and social bonds within families act as protective factors; ▪ recognising the primary concerns of communities and focusing on what resources are available and which of these can be mobilised to further support families in raising their children; ▪ employing local staff who are often known to - and trusted by - families; ▪ acknowledging the importance of family, home and community learning environments in early learning; ▪ recognising that the notion of "family" also relates to identity and overall connectedness to kinship and culture; ▪ practicing decision-making during playgroup sessions can lead to greater confidence in decision-making within the community; ▪ understanding the importance of education and early learning in a child's life; ▪ recognising that, for all parents, their views and approaches to child rearing are shaped by the culture in which they themselves were raised; ▪ understanding that partnerships with other organisations offer families a soft entry into the services offered by the organisations; ▪ providing community and families time to consider decisions which affect them and their community; ▪ raising family awareness of the importance of children building the skills and confidence required to enter formal schooling; ▪ equipping children to have better developed skills to begin formal schooling and encouraging families to be more engaged with schools; ▪ understanding that employment, training and supervision of local community members as playgroup facilitators builds capacity in individuals and the community; and, ▪ expecting that some parents may express an interest in employment or to undertake training. <p>Evaluation</p> <p>The model has not been evaluated and an evaluation has not been planned due to existing funding arrangements</p>
Wyndham Early Learning Activity Centre (WELA)	
Location	The Kimberley Region, Western Australia
Contact details	http://welacentre.wordpress.com/
Governance	<p>Delivered by Wyndham Early Learning Activity Incorporated: A community-based organisation.</p> <p>WELA's core funding arrangements include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-5 year programs are funded under the Communities for Children initiative; • the Community and Parent Engagement Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; and, • Prime Minister Julia Gillard pledged \$1.7 million for new premises.
Description	<p>Content here is a verbatim excerpt from https://apps.aifs.gov.au/ipppregister/projects/wyndham-early-learning-activity-centre-wela</p> <p>Overview</p> <p>Wyndham Early Learning Activity Centre (WELA) is a multicultural family centre for parents or primary care givers to provide and facilitate early learning opportunities for their children. The aim is to encourage the promotion of children’s social, emotional, physical and cognitive development as well as providing a source of support for their parents and carers. WELA services are open to all parents/carers and children who were born and bred in the Kimberley region.</p> <p>The program was started in 2005 in response to a need identified through various Kimberley communities for a service that increased school readiness among children. Existing family support services at that time were not producing the desired outcomes that families sought for their children in those communities. The WELA centre was conceived as both a school readiness program and a family support service as part of a holistic approach to service delivery, where parents, carers and other community members could have a "voice" in their children's development and wellbeing.</p> <p>Children's school readiness is influenced to a large degree by parents and for this reason, WELA adopts a "family-centered" approach to building the capacity of parents to facilitate a good education for their children. This means building the confidence of parents to speak with teachers and educators and to get them involved in their children's schooling. Often parents placed little value in education after having negative school experiences themselves, so WELA works to break down these negative perceptions and foster positive relationships between parents, carers, teachers and other community service workers.</p> <p>As a "grassroots" organisation, where WELA staff, volunteers and community members worked together to plan and refine the service, a large degree of flexibility was written into the Incorporation Act by the community itself. This enables WELA services to more readily respond to family and community needs as they arise.</p> <p>In every sense, the WELA Centre is entirely Aboriginal led and owned yet it is available to all non-Aboriginal families to promote a sense of social inclusion for all participants. This approach is key to WELA's effectiveness in facilitating vital</p>

and ongoing friendships, social support and community connections for the whole community. By employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as workers and volunteers and involving the wider community in the decisions surrounding the delivery of WELA's services, a sense of trust has been cultivated for the Centre, and community members are actively engaged in participating and refining the services. This trust is also a key feature to WELA's effectiveness in meeting the specific needs of families in the Kimberley community and its ability to promote the capacity of the community to deliver positive outcomes for its children and families.

Play-based learning is also known as an effective means to assist families with children that have additional needs, and playgroups act as a soft-entry gateway for families to access more intensive assistance and support where required. This is reflected and recognised in the achievements and awards the WELA Centre has received, and the reputation of WELA among other state-wide agencies has been achieved without excessive promotion.

Evaluation

An external/independent qualitative evaluation of the Communities for Children component of WELA's services has been undertaken by Curtin University. See Saggers S & Frances K 2009, Local Evaluation of East Kimberly Communities for Children Initiative for Children and Their Families: Final Report. Social Justice Research Centre

There is evidence from the Catholic School Board and the WA Department of Education to suggest children from local schools who have been involved in the program are learning more quickly and their attention is being held for longer periods. This is reflected in recent results of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) and the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Testing shows Wyndham children have performed better than in previous rounds of testing.

WELA received recognition of its work at the WA Department for Communities 2010 Children's Week Awards by winning the regional award for "Outstanding Children and Family Services".

The Australian Prime Minister acknowledged WELA's credibility and effectiveness when she recently visited the premises to open the WELA's new early learning centre.

The WA Commissioner for Children and Young People included the program in its "best practice" Building Blocks report (2012), which highlights outstanding local programs that are improving the lives of children and young people and their families, and contributing positively to their community.

Above all, WELA staff and volunteers report that they have seen the positive

	<p>changes they've made to children's lives</p> <p>See Siggers S & Frances K 2009, Local Evaluation of East Kimberly Communities for Children Initiative for Children and Their Families: Final Report. Social Justice Research Centre.</p>
Indigenous Literacy Foundation	
Location	Based Sydney. Services nationally - 200 remote Indigenous communities in Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales.
Contact details	<p>PO Box 3227 Redfern, NSW Australia 2016</p> <p>Ph: (02) 9319 2883 Fax: (02) 9319 1884</p> <p>Email: info@indigenouseliteracyfoundation.org.au</p>
Governance	The Indigenous Literacy Foundation worked in partnership with The Fred Hollows Foundation from 2006 to 2010. ILF is a national charity and currently does not receive any government funding. It raises all its funds through donations which come from schools, libraries, individuals, businesses, a small number of grants, volunteers. In addition, it receives 'in kind' support from the Australian Book Industry, including the Australian Booksellers Association, the Australian Publishers Association and the Australian Society of Authors as well as readers and writers.
Description	<p>Content here is a verbatim excerpt from http://www.indigenouseliteracyfoundation.org.au/about</p> <p>The Indigenous Literacy Foundation aims to tackle some of the disadvantage experienced by kids in remote Indigenous communities, whose standards of reading and writing are generally years behind those of other Australian kids. ILF provides specially-chosen books to more than 230 remote communities around Australia. It's about practical ways that readers, writers, publishers and booksellers can help close the literacy gap in Australia and share the love of reading and writing.</p> <p>The Indigenous Literacy Foundation believes that Australia's Indigenous people should enjoy the same education, employment and societal opportunities as other citizens. However, a lack of literacy skills among Indigenous communities is a common and critical barrier to participating in activities that many of us take for granted.</p> <p>To help alleviate this literacy disadvantage, our Foundation works to provide access to books and literacy resources to over 200 remote Indigenous communities in Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia, South</p>

	<p>Australia and New South Wales.</p> <p>The Foundation uses a three-way approach to building literacy and each of our projects aims to promote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Literacy – connecting people, particularly young people, to their culture and traditional language • Practical literacy – developing the skills needed for daily activities • English literacy – promoting skills in English reading, writing, speaking and listening.
Honey Ant Readers – Margaret James	
Location	Based Alice Springs – services nationally
Contact details	<p>Margaret James</p> <p>Telephone: 0412 248 145</p> <p>Email: info@honeyant.com.au</p> <p>Postal: PO Box 2309, Alice Springs, NT 0871, Australia</p>
Governance	
Description	<p>Content here is a verbatim excerpt from http://honeyant.com.au/</p> <p>The Honey Ant Readers is an exciting and innovative new literacy program developed in collaboration with Aboriginal elders and community that Indigenous learners of all ages can relate to, succeed with, and feel proud of.</p> <p>This research-based program includes: a set of 20 beautifully illustrated and scaffolded reading books, with matching coloured flash cards and activity books; a colourful, interactive book to teach spoken Standard Australian English with matching cards; a set of conversation cards; pre-reading material and other teacher resources that use unique teaching theories which focus on Indigenous learners and their languages, interests and life experience. These resources help learners to build vocabulary, decoding skills and confidence towards reading success.</p> <p>The supporting program incorporates activities, games, songs and rhymes to assist speakers of traditional Aboriginal languages, as well as Aboriginal English speakers, to acquire Standard Australian English, with a focus on teaching phonics and grammar.</p> <p>The program teaches reading by incorporating aspects of Aboriginal English in the text and builds oral Standard Australian English through songs and rhymes.</p> <p>We know that it is very difficult for people to learn to read and write in a language they do not speak.</p> <p>We also know that once a person can read in one language they can transfer that skill to another.</p>

	<p>The Honey Ant Reading Program teaches learners to read in the language they speak in the playground, their lingua franca, while offering it respect. In the case of many Indigenous Australians this is a form of Aboriginal English. The learners can then transfer their reading skills to reading and writing in Standard Australian English.</p> <p>At the same time the Honey Ant Readers reinforce and teach oral Standard Australian English through rhymes and songs. Once Standard Australian English has been acquired orally, learning to read in that language is easier because it is meaningful.</p>
Cathy Freeman Foundation/Telstra Foundation	
Location	Palm Island
Contact details	www.catherinefreemanfoundation.com
Governance	\$550,428 grant from the Telstra Foundation over three years
Description	<p>Since 2007, CFF has implemented initial programs on Palm Island addressing truancy and promoting positive school attendance and participation, as well as after school programs and scholarship programs.</p> <p>Now, with a \$550,428 grant from the Telstra Foundation over three years and in collaboration with the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF), CFF's priority is breaking the poor literacy cycle among Palm Island's Indigenous children and empowering the community to teach their children to read.</p> <p>"When there is a level of commitment, education can empower Indigenous communities and therefore create brighter futures for all," Catherine said.</p> <p>Together, CFF and ALNF will establish a pre-literacy and language skills program for local pre-school Indigenous children so they are ready, willing and inspired to learn when they commence primary school.</p> <p>The program involves a multi-tiered whole of community approach of working with children and their families, teachers and carers so they have the skills and knowledge to reinforce the learning process of the children.</p> <p>The ALNF has conducted a similar pilot program among Indigenous communities in the Kempsey area of NSW, and the post-program testing revealed significant improvements across a range of key learning areas.</p> <p>The Telstra Foundation funded CFF project on Palm Island will involve;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALNF trainers providing five day Early Childhood and Literacy Courses to infant, pre-school, pre-prep, early years teachers, teacher's aides and other

	<p>staff at two Palm Island schools and at one day care centre along with parents, family members and community elders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building the capacity of parents, family members and community elders in improving their literacy skills as well as being better prepared to assist the learning of the children • Parent and Community Involvement Programs throughout the school year at information forums <p>As a result, it is hoped that parents, family members and community elders will better connect with children using pre-literacy and language strategies, games, activities and resources that they community members will increasingly promote school attendance.</p>
Ngroo Education Walking Together Aboriginal Training Model for non-Aboriginal early childhood staff	
Location	Delivered state-wide across NSW.
Contact details	Executive Officer of Ngroo Education Incorporated: http://ngroo.org.au/
Governance	<p>Ngroo Education Incorporated: A not-for-profit community based organisation.</p> <p>The program was initiated by a philanthropic donation to establish and implement a model of best practice, with an understanding that Federal and State Government would be approached for additional funding. Resources are also sourced from program partners, and as the program moves beyond the pilot phase other income is starting to be generated from training and consultancies.</p>
Description	<p>Content here is a verbatim excerpt from https://apps.aifs.gov.au/ipppregister/projects/ngroo-education-walking-together-aboriginal-training-model-for-non-aboriginal-early-childhood-staff</p> <p>This program educates non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood educators to understand the relevance of culture and incorporate it into their daily teaching routine. Ultimately this may also translate to the broader community and thereby has the capacity to contribute to the healing process through a shared understanding.</p> <p>The aims of the program are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop the awareness and skills of mainstream early childhood workers so they engage respectfully and effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children and staff; • prevent long-term harm for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by supporting their successful participation in inclusive and culturally appropriate early childhood education; • facilitate social change in Australia by ending the cycle of abuse, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, self-harm and disconnection that occurs

	<p>when a person cannot access a sustainable and inclusive education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families through the network of local Elders, honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways and empowering the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to drive the activities of the association; and • introduce the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through the employment and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in each pre-school. <p>The need for the program was identified collectively by Ngroo staff (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), local community Elders, family and community members who report dissatisfaction with the marginalisation of Aboriginal children in mainstream early childhood education. Research and anecdotal stories from these people also suggest that services with strong Aboriginal relationships and involvement, community governance and cultural knowledge will ensure access to services to deliver sustained enrolments, improved educational outcomes and community well-being. In addition, many families do not trust or access specialist services that do not engage appropriately with the community.</p> <p>The program works towards producing the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural training for all non-Aboriginal early educators • improved knowledge of universal services that support Aboriginal children and families • educators that are culturally aware and willing to listen and learn from Aboriginal people • Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partnerships that develop programs • self-determination and buy-in from local Aboriginal families • improved educational outcomes as children move through various learning settings, and • strength based approaches to working with Aboriginal children. <p>Evaluation</p> <p>The program is currently being evaluated through an internal evaluation. Stage one of the evaluation process included a pilot evaluation that included written evaluations following client participation in the program and the effects of the program on participants by pre-test and post-test comparison.</p> <p>A feedback survey was adopted as part of stage one of Ngroo's internal evaluation process and the findings are available from Ngroo's website. The feedback process involved contacting parents and schools to provide feedback about the program and its impact on enrolled children.</p> <p>Academics are being consulted about stage two of the evaluation. However, it is expected that all interviews and questionnaires will be developed with Aboriginal staff and local community Elders. Interviews with Aboriginal</p>
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	<p>participants will be conducted by trained Aboriginal survey researchers and the design of the assessment tools will primarily be developed by Aboriginal Elders. Culturally approved methodologies that meet wider "good practice" in research will also be adopted.</p>
Kids' Own Publishing/State Library VIC	
Location	<p>Based in Victoria – deliver nationally. They work in metropolitan, rural and remote parts of Australia. They work with indigenous communities and with new migrants.</p> <p>24 Abbotsford Convent 1, St Heliers Street, Abbotsford Victoria 3067 Australia</p>
Contact details	<p>Ph. 03 9078 1168 admin@kidsownpublishing.com</p> <p>Victoria Ryle, Executive Director victoria@kidsownpublishing.com Anna Dollard Project Manager anna@kidsownpublishing.com</p>
Governance	<p>Financial support provided by the Commonwealth, state and local government, and from philanthropic trusts and foundations.</p>
Description	<p>Content here is a verbatim excerpt from http://kidsownpublishing.com/</p> <p>Kids' Own Publishing has pioneered an innovative arts-and-community-based approach to early literacy for children from diverse cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds.</p> <p>They bring together families, artists, educators and communities to help children develop an early love of reading, even those from homes without books or where English is not the first language.</p> <p>Children's community publishing is widely endorsed by professionals in early learning centres, schools and libraries, as a highly effective way of engaging children with books.</p> <p>Key program areas are listed below with example for indigenous projects.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kids own publishing workshops They work in partnership with diverse agencies – community groups, libraries, schools, early learning centres, arts organisations, hospitals, local government – to deliver tailor-made workshops and projects to meet the specific needs of children and their families. The core team includes artists and illustrators who are trained to guide the activities, while ensuring that the participants are the ones who drive the creative process that ends in a book.

	<p>Program example: Making Books, Making Readers (with the State Library of Victoria)</p> <p>Kids' Own Publishing works in partnership with the State Library of Victoria to bring literacy into communities where books have played little or no part in people's lives. They encourage communities to tell their own stories by making culturally appropriate picture books with high production value.</p> <p>2. Building capacity</p> <p>They work in partnership with community-based agencies, to train community leaders, early childhood professionals, educators, service providers and volunteers in the practical skills and philosophical understanding that enable them to deliver their own community publishing workshops.</p> <p>They run training sessions for artists and designers who facilitate the creation process. They encourage applications from professionals from diverse backgrounds, and developing intercultural awareness is a key feature of the training.</p> <p>Program example The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Childcare</p> <p>The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Childcare Inc. underwent community publishing training with Kids' Own in 2010. This training lead to the development of a manual for community publishing with Aboriginal Communities and SNAIC continues to publish independently, using the Kids' Own model.</p> <p>3. Publishing Hub</p> <p>The Kids' Own Book Cubby is a foldable wooden structure, which converts into an instant space for book creation and display. This is where children, families and community groups can put their work on show and, if they choose, contribute their books to the Kids' Own Publishing travelling library. Some of the partners have their own Book Cubbies.</p>
Early Words	
Location	NSW
Contact details	217 Blacktown Road Blacktown NSW 2148 P. 9831 1099
Governance	A project of Children First , funded by Families NSW
Description	Content here is a verbatim excerpt from http://www.earlywords.info/aboriginal/materials.html Early Words Aboriginal Resources were developed in partnership with our

	<p>Western Sydney Aboriginal community. They cover nine stages from pregnancy to 5 years. Families can look at easy activities that will help bub get ready to read write and yarn well from birth to 5 years.</p> <p>The Early Words project helps families build the basic skills that children need for reading and writing, right from birth.</p> <p>The Resources target early literacy development at these stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy • Baby's birth • 2 months • 6 months • 12 months • 18 months • 3 years • 4 years <p>You can download some of the resources, including tip sheets, from the Resources page on this website.</p>
Location	Based Victoria – delivery model can service Australia wide
Contact details	<p>HIPPY Australia Brotherhood of St Laurence Mezzanine Floor 145 Smith Street Fitzroy Victoria 3065</p> <p>Ph: (03) 9445 2400 hippyaustralia@bsl.org.au</p>
Governance	<p>The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.</p> <p>The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) is licensed to operate HIPPY in Australia.</p>
Description	<p>Content here is a verbatim excerpt from http://www.hippyaustralia.org.au/contactus.html</p> <p>The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) is a two-year home-based parenting and early childhood enrichment program targeting families with young children. Families start HIPPY when their child is in the year before school (usually around 4 years old) and continue into the second year of HIPPY during their first year of formal schooling. The HIPPY approach develops</p>

the foundations for learning in the home during children's crucial early years. HIPPY fosters social inclusion, contributes to successful school participation and offers parents, a supported pathway to employment and local level community leadership.

HIPPY's attention to the interactions between children and their parents and its emphasis on supporting early literacy development is consistent with key policy initiatives across Australia and reflects contemporary understanding of the crucial role of parents in their child's learning.

HIPPY seeks to build a sense of belonging for families and children and actively equip parents to support their children and other parents. HIPPY has grown from strength to strength with the support of the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

HIPPY is informed by an evidence base that indicates that children's earliest and most powerful learnings come from their family and that early learning experiences that encourage literacy and numeracy equip children for lifelong learning.

HIPPY is a program that works with families, to encourage the idea of parents as their child's first teacher. The program is delivered by a tertiary trained site Coordinator to parents from the community who are employed as home tutors. The home tutor completes the activities with their own children before making home visits to families within their community and role-playing the activities with the parents. The parent then spends time each day reading playing and doing the activities with their own child. HIPPY may definitely benefit your community but it is not designed to be delivered directly to children. Our target is parents and helping them to have fun learning with and educating their own children.

In Australia, a series of research and evaluation projects between 2002 and 2011 has shown very positive and recurring themes:

- eagerness in children to learn new concepts
- increased self-confidence of parents
- improved communication between parents and children, and
- positive impact on family relationships

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