



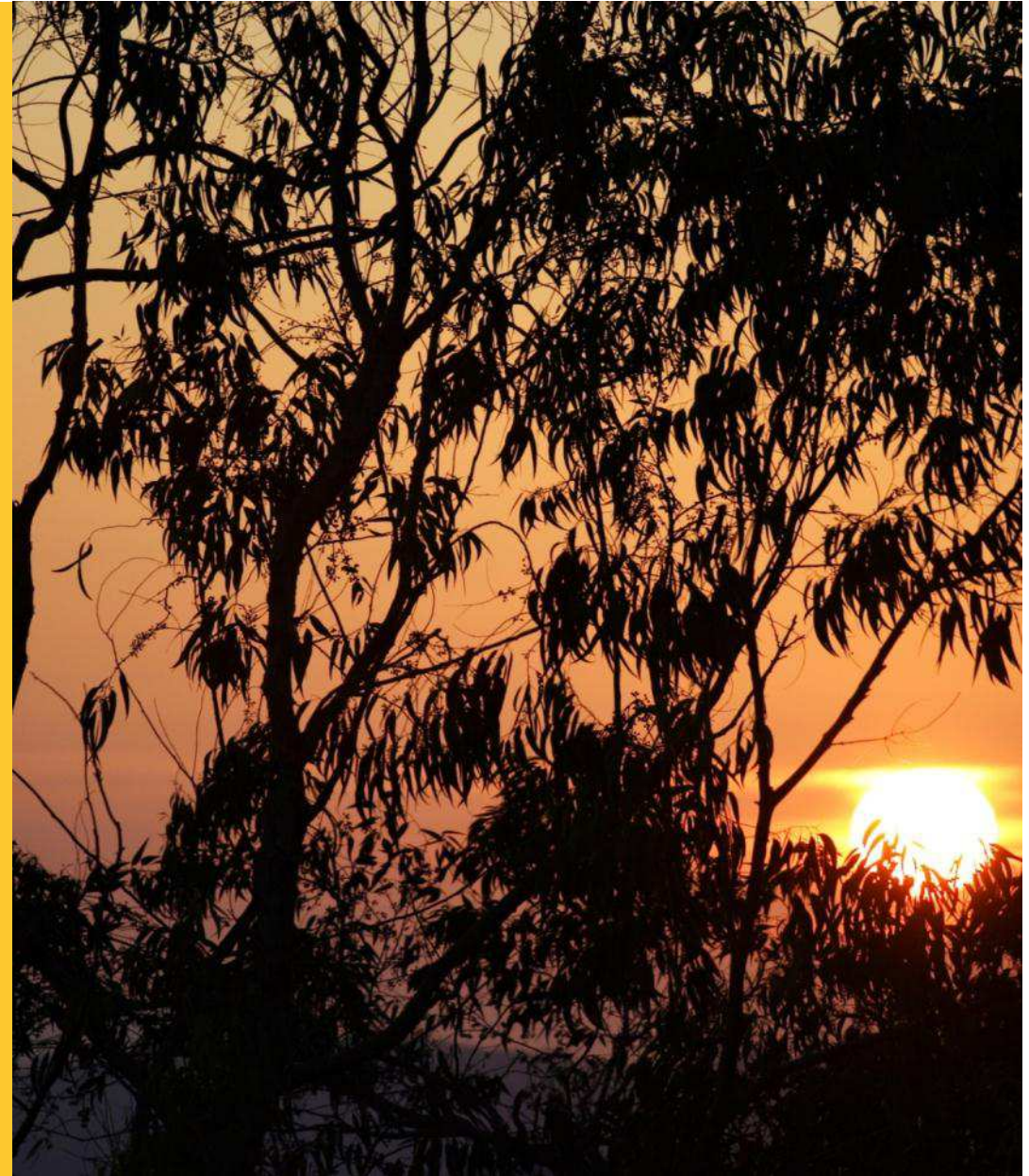
# Ethical Research with Indigenous communities.





# Overview

- The problem
- Participatory Action Research
- The Wadeye AFL Program Evaluation Case Study



# The problem with past research approaches

- Historically Indigenous people have had little say in what research they are subjected to, how it is conducted and what it will be used for
- Research is something “done to” Indigenous people rather than “with” Indigenous people
- Appears ad-hoc, disconnected, disjointed, inefficient, and uncoordinated
- Often hear - someone else was asking the same questions for a different mob a few days ago
- Results not fed back to community which feels like “stealing” rather than genuine dialogue
- Little social improvement as a result of participating in research

# The problem with past approaches cont.

- Most over-researched people in the world
- Communities are tired of “things being done to them” without genuine consultation
- World view that pathologises and condemns Indigenous people as being “a problem that needs to be fixed”- studied under a microscope
- Self serving Indigenous industry - makes its living by analysing blackfella problems - dedicated to “saving” Indigenous people but unconsciously hindering attempts to make genuine progress for fear of losing out on lucrative “black money”
- The myth of Indigenous privilege – money dedicated to helping Aboriginal people is often being swallowed up by bureaucracy and consultancy (of which research is a part)

# A way forward

- Recently CBSR conducted a program evaluation in Wadeye which sought to overcome these issues by using an innovative participatory action research approach that places the community at the centre of the research process
- Similar approaches were used in the NTER Evaluation Community Safety and Wellbeing Survey, and the CYWRT Outcome Evaluation Social Change Survey



# True empowerment

True test of if you're empowering Indigenous communities in research

## - Ask:

How much power did they have over:

1. research relationship
2. information collected
3. resources used
4. decision making in the research process





# Participatory Action Research is a process.

- Gaining community consent
- Engagement strategy
- Involving the community in the design of the evaluation methodology and data collection instruments
- Recruiting and training local researchers
- Mentoring and ongoing support
- Data collection instrument / use of Ipads
- Inclusion in the data processing and analysis
- Reporting back the results
- What's next – how do we ensure that what we have built is utilized





Ethical Indigenous  
Research maximises the  
benefits and reduces the  
costs of participating...

Equalising power relations  
Indigenous people at the Centre  
Ownership of results

# Gaining community consent

- Existing relationships with the community
- Approach Council, Local Reference Group, GBM, Traditional Owners (TOs)
- Outline research project – objectives, how it will be done, benefits/costs to the community, proposed dates
- Seek written permission for research to proceed - send letter that leaders can sign and email back
- Allowance of sufficient time for the community and the individuals concerned to assimilate and respond to the information offered
- Ethics approval – national guidelines suggest all research involving Indigenous people should have ethics committee approval

# Example of existing relationships with a community

## Wadeye

- **Delivery of research:** Community Safety and Wellbeing Survey, Evaluation of the AFL Remote Regional Development Program Wadeye, Wadeye Secondary Student Accommodation Feasibility Study, Income Management Communications Testing
- Through the projects outlined above CBSR has developed close working relationships with major stakeholders including Traditional Owners (TO) of Wadeye particularly Boniface Perdjert from the KarduYekDiminin clan, Leon Melpie, the Parmbuk family, John Berto Thamarrurr Development Corporation (TDC) CEO, Mark Crocombe - coordinator of the museum and the language centre, Greg Dowd, Government Business Manager (GBM), members of the Thamarrurr Regional Advisory Aboriginal Council (TRAAC) and Thamarrurr Development Corporation (TDC) as well as managers and staff at the CDEP, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic School (OLSHTCS), Job Futures Employment Service, The Shire, The Rangers, The Women's Centre, Centrelink, Aged Care, The Crèche, The Safe House, The Store, The Night Patrol Mob, James McNamee Club Development Manager (CDM), Wadeye Magic Football Club and Craig Kimberley Regional Development Manager (RDM)
- We have also developed a network of local researchers including Clara Longmair, Jeffrey Fultchen (TO), Prudence Pupuli (TO) and Mark Pupuli and CDEP youth worker Omar



# Engagement strategy

- Discussion with key information dissemination conduits:
  - Local Reference Group
  - Council of Elders
  - Clan representative groups
  - Interagency meetings
  - CDEP or equivalent employment services
- Posters up in all key service provider's officers – photos of researchers, dates, subject – minimal text – visuals and colours are more impt
- Local radio/TV broadcasts eg Hope Vale, Wadeye, Aurukun and Central Melbourne
- All researchers have shirts and caps clearly identifying them as CBSR researchers

# Poster example


**Torres Strait Marine Safety Project**


[www.saferstraits.qld.gov.au](http://www.saferstraits.qld.gov.au)

**BEFORE YOU HEAD OUT STOP-THINK SURVIVE**

**John Young**  
**from Colmar Brunton Social Marketing**  
 will be visiting your community to talk to people about the marine safety program.  
 John will be seeking your views on marine safety, Boatsafe and the  
 education program that has been running since last year.

**Your assistance would be appreciated in  
 the interests of making the community safer**

 **Queensland Government**  
 Maritime Safety Queensland

 Australian Government  
 Australia's Maritime Safety Authority

John will be visiting your community on:

# Involving the community in the design of the evaluation methodology and data collection instruments

- Simply ask the community how they would do it!
- Explaining objectives and asking how they would ask the questions
- Explaining who the target audience is and asking them how best to engage with them
- Asking for feedback on draft qualitative guide and report card
- Keeping them informed as to how the research is going
- Issue topline after first week
- Ensure they are happy with conduct and approach through out fieldwork

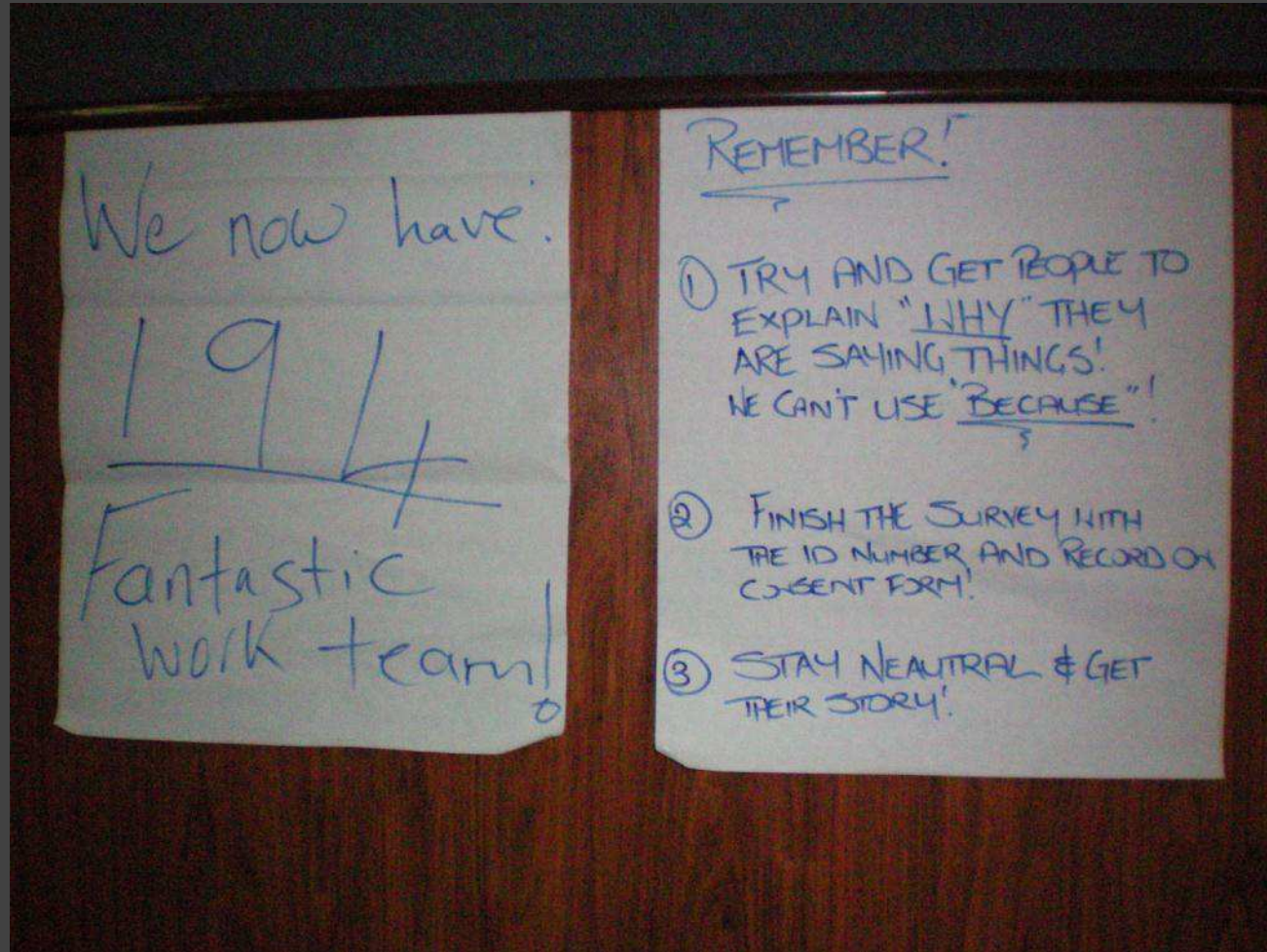


# Recruiting and training local researchers

- Discussion with key information dissemination conduits
- Organisation that is subject of research eg Wadeye Football Club
- Approach CDEP and or Job Search Australia eg Wadeye, Peppi, Hope Vale
- Spend first 2 days in field meeting and training local researchers
  - Explain research objectives
  - Go through plain English training manual - importance of being respectful, telling it like it is in their words, not pressuring participants, effective probing
  - Go through data collection instrument question by question – detailing how people answer Qs and common traps – may be paper based or Ipad
  - Local researchers interview each other with CBSR providing encouragement and feedback

## Mentoring and ongoing support

- Observational interviews to check quality control
- Pairing up local researchers with CCSR staff
- Pick up and drop off - supply lunch and/or breakfast
- Central base of operations - every morning give run down of how we are going, issues coming up, numbers we need to achieve
- Help with filling in tax and employment forms – getting tax file numbers and accurate bank account details can be time consuming – start early!!
- Provide written references and letters of appreciation
- Project debrief – what could we have done better eg training, mentoring, research questions
- Sponsorship to conferences eg AES











# Data collection instrument/use of Ipad

- Not too many questions – 20-40 mins is ideal
- Plain English - cognitive interviews are important eg 2001 Indigenous Job Seeker Satisfaction with Centrelink
- Plenty of opportunities for people to tell their stories in open ended Qs
- Positive agreement scales and positively phrased questions result in positive response bias – check what community members saying v service providers
- Asking how something could be better or comparing different things can be problematic in the more traditional remote communities
- Questions eliciting YES or NO - then Big yes/little yes or big NO/little no work better
- New technology works – interactive, kinesthetic Ipad are very popular





## Wadeye Football Club Consultation: Quantitative Report Card

1. Improves school attendance?

**Strongly agree**

**Agree**

**Neutral**

**Disagree**

**Strongly disagree**

**Don't Know**



2. Improves community safety?

**Strongly agree**

**Agree**

**Neutral**

**Disagree**

**Strongly disagree**

**Don't Know**





# Consultation in the bush





# Inclusion in the data processing and analysis

- Involve local researchers in analysis of data coming out of the research
- Explore context behind the answers



# Inclusion in the data processing and analysis cont.

- Examine data - come up with lists of 8-12 items
- Discuss with community and ask people to vote for their top 3
- Works really well, love instant feedback and chance to discuss further and prioritise key issues
- Provides repeatable quantitative dimension to qualitative results
- Wait until most surveys have been done so not influencing people



# Most Significant change

- Seek local researcher's views on biggest changes that have occurred as results of intervention/program and biggest challenges that still need to be overcome
- Examine data - come up with lists of 8-12 items
- Discuss with community and ask people to vote for their top 3
- Love instant feedback and chance to discuss further and prioritise key issues
- Provides repeatable quantitative dimension to qualitative results

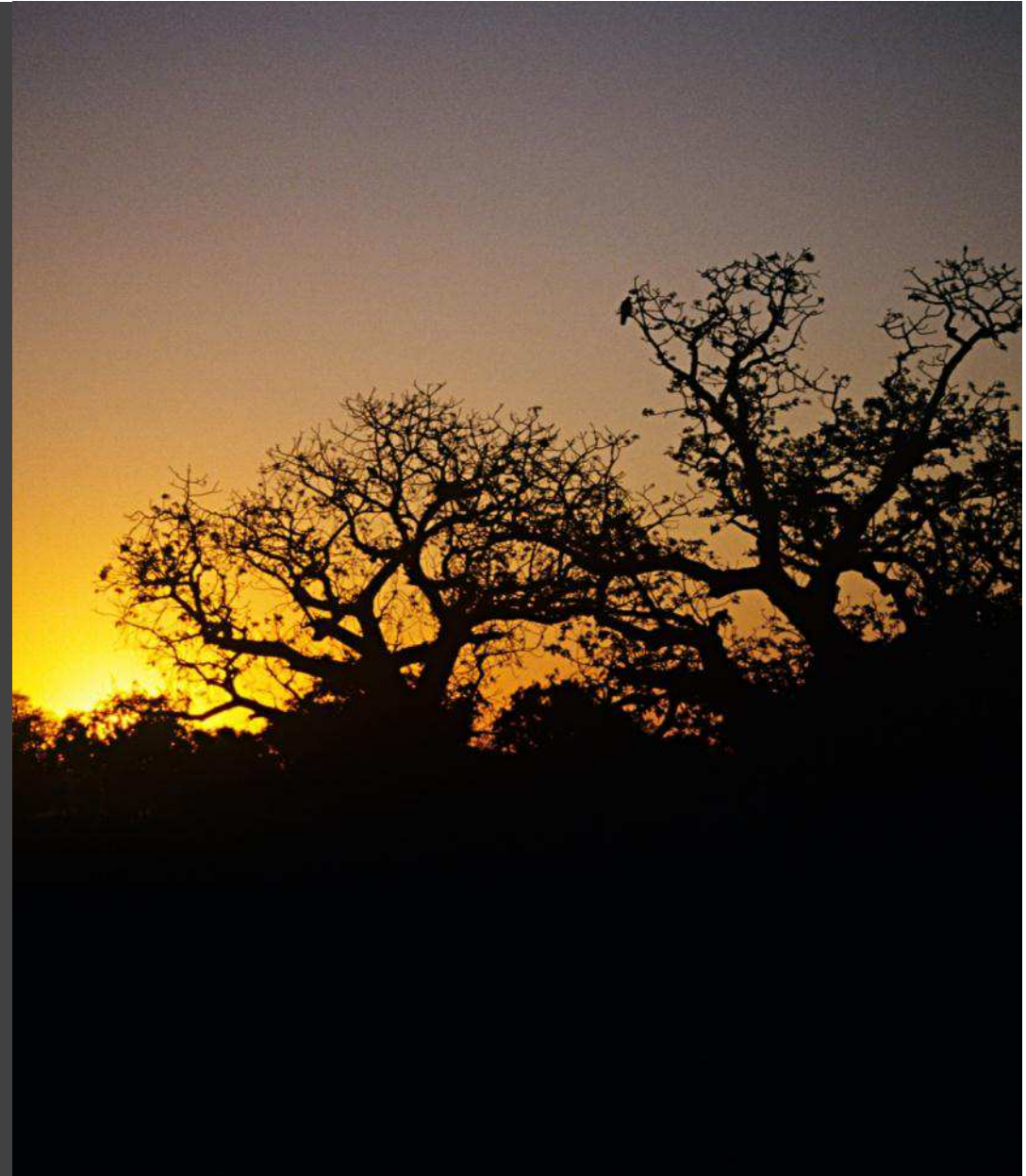


# Reporting back the results

- Separate visit to present back the findings to the community
- Start with Local Reference Group, GBM, organisation that was subject to study – try to touch base with all organisations that assisted
- Have 1 pg. of key points for community members
- Collect feedback on how the research could have been conducted more effectively
- Report acknowledges community ownership of Indigenous knowledge
- Picture provided by the community appears on the cover
- Acknowledgment of help supplied by local researchers and organisations that gave us access to their clients

# What's next – how do we ensure that what we have built is utilized

- The report becomes a resource for the community to use in forward planning
- Sharing what we are doing at conferences, in conference papers and in our proposals
- Building up a network of local researchers across all the communities we work in
- Setting up an online data base to share contacts and learnings







# Wadeye

- Wadeye (formerly Port Keats) is the single largest Indigenous community in the Northern Territory – in 2011 it has an estimated population of 2,800 people
- The community is located, by air, 270 km south-west of Darwin and by road 417 km south-west of Darwin
- The region around Wadeye, known as the Thamarrurr Region, is home to some 20 land owning clan groups.
- A Catholic Mission was founded at Wadeye in 1935







WELCOME TO

WADEYE COMMUNITY

GIVE EVERY ABORIGINAL  
KID A CHANCE

By S.A. NORTON C.J. BUNDICK



# Disadvantage in Wadeye

82% of kids go to school for less than half the school year

86% of Indigenous people aged 20 to 64 years either never attended school, or left before completing Year 10 or equivalent.

Up to 2 generations of illiterate students have come out of the education system

Contact rate with the criminal justice system is the highest per capita in the NT. At any one time 10% of all adult males aged under 30 are imprisoned

In 2006 the percentage of Indigenous people aged 15 to 64 who had a job was 16%; if CDEP was not included this drops to 4%

Over 85% of Indigenous households experience overcrowding - the current housing occupancy rate is 4.6 persons per bedroom

There are high incident rates of infectious disease and preventable health concerns

Ave life expectancy is 46 years - 33 years less than the average Aust male and 37 years less than average Australian female;

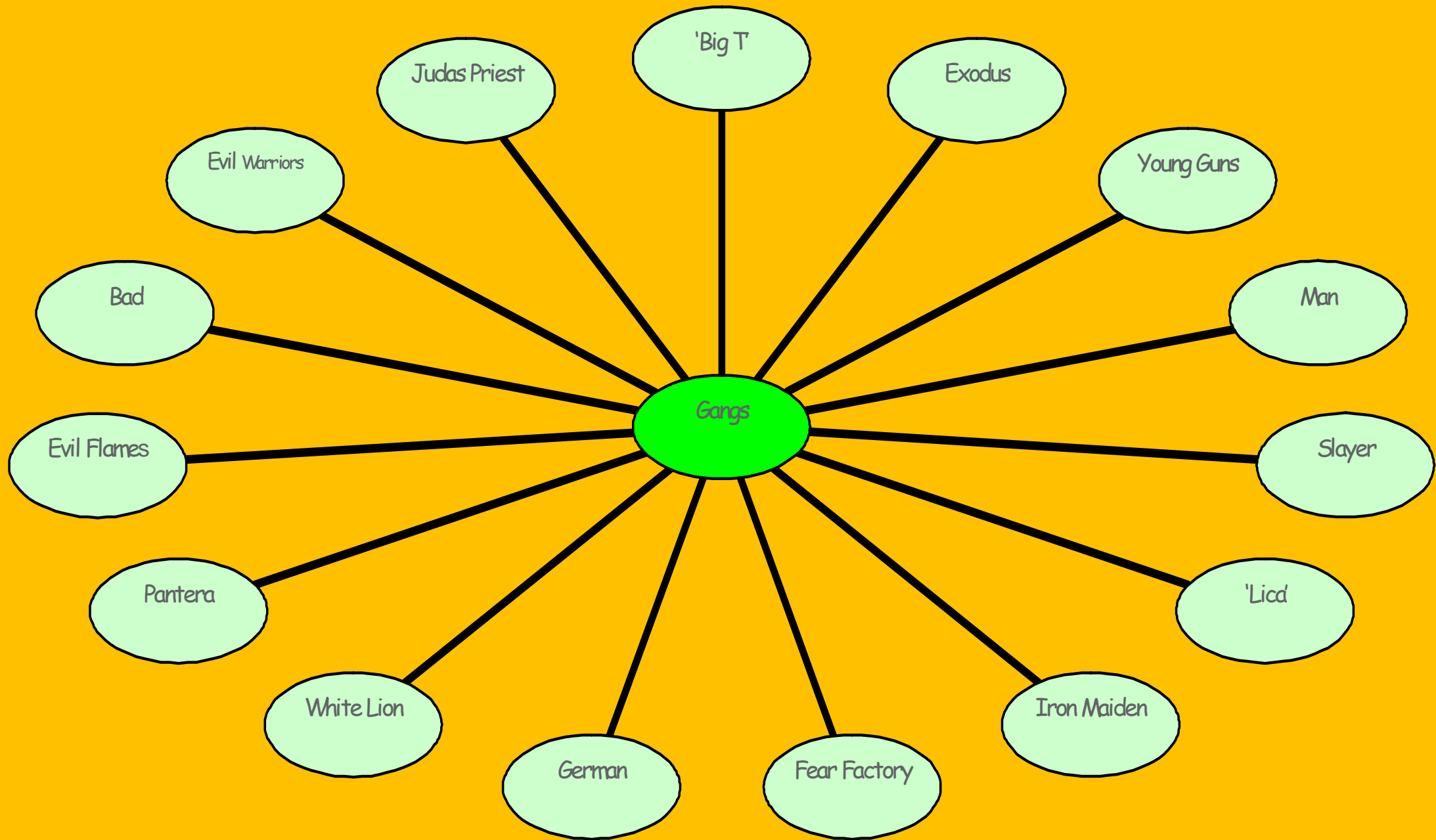
Increasingly high levels of substance abuse and gambling addiction, domestic/family violence, inter clan, gang and family fighting.







# Gangs of Wadeye



# The Wadeye AFL Program Evaluation Study

In 2007 AFL introduced a Regional Development Manager to Wadeye region

- Key objective of **creating a structured AFL Program that engaged community members**

The AFL Program has evolved over the years and currently supports:

- 6 Team Senior Competition.
- 3 Team Under 17 AFL Juniors competition.

- 3 Team Under 13 AFL Juniors competition.

In recognition of the ongoing need to engage youth in constructive activities, Thamarrurr leaders asked for the Wadeye Football Club to enter a team – Wadeye Magic into the NTFL competition





*“Wadeye desperately needs to do something to assist our young people; football is a tool that will help us create a better future. Young men that run out and represent Wadeye will be positive role models.*

*Wadeye Football Club will bring the community together in support of one team. Participation rules developed in consultation with the community aim to encourage young men to stay in school, be involved in work related training programs, maintain employment and lead a healthy life style and stay out of trouble.”*

Covering Letter Wadeye Football Club Business Plan,  
Wadeye (2010).

## Participation in the NTFL will:

- Provide young men with an aspiration and opportunity to play football at a higher level
- Give players a chance to test their skills against the best in the Northern Territory
- Enables players to gain valuable cross cultural experience while learning important skills like discipline, teamwork, respect and leadership



# Wadeye Magic AFL Team

38



# Participatory Evaluation Approach

Objective - **Examine the effectiveness of the Program** and assess its potential to be considered a best practice model

128 people participated, 104 were community members and 24 were service providers

Used a semi structured qual guide and quantitative report card

Local Indigenous researchers were sought through the CDEP

Trained 4 local researchers - 3 turned up regularly on subsequent days

Supported local researcher's attendance by picking them up each morning and dropping them off at lunchtimes and providing breakfast and lunch

Local researcher's preference was to work half days usually 9am -12 noon. And were paid at a rate of \$30 per hour



## Participatory Evaluation Approach cont.

Written consent

12 day visit to Wadeye

Involvement of community in design of data collection instruments

Face to face quantitative report card

Follow up face to face qualitative discussion

A participatory component

Training local researchers

Involved in data collection, data entry and data analysis

Keeping WFC and local leaders involved and informed at all stages

Reporting back including presenting the findings of the research to the Wadeye Football Club Committee, community and other interested key stakeholders



# Findings

- Very successful at engaging community members – 94% agreed it encourages people in Wadeye to support the program
- Helping to break down negative media stereotypes of life in Wadeye – good news story - people are prouder, feel better
- Strengthening community cohesion - 98 per cent agreed it encourages the community to come together
- It gives young men sporting opportunities and something to aspire to - 90 per cent agreed it helps young people to play AFL from primary school level to the highest level
- Most agree it teaches leadership qualities like discipline, respect, resilience, personal organisation, team work, grit, determination, get-up-and-go and dedication. These skills are clearly transferable to other realms
- Helping to restore and strengthen local Aboriginal authority - works closely with local Elders they were involved in the planning and vision



# Findings cont.

- There are early signs of improved engagement in school attendance, training and employment:
  - 86% agreed it improves school attendance and/or training
  - 95% agreed it helps players to be involved in paid work or training. The (approximately) 50 Wadeye Magic players on the team's playing list have to be engaged in education, training or work to be eligible for selection to play in the NTFL Darwin competition
- Effect of the Program on community safety and violence is unclear.
  - 79% agreed that the Program 'improves community safety/reduces violence' - service providers (17%) were much less likely to agree with this statement than Community participants (86%).
  - Basically they felt it was too early to say and only a small number of males involved
  - More support for view that community has been calmer and more cohesive since the advent of Wadeye Magic which selects the best players from all the clans of Wadeye. Now the community has a team in Wadeye Magic that they can all get behind whereas in the past, teams in the Senior League Competition based on clan loyalties were sometimes divisive

# Feedback

People are happy to participate and enjoy having their say when they are involved and have equal power in the process

This approach is helping to build the capacity of local Indigenous researchers as well as helping Indigenous communities to better understand how they can use research to meet their own needs, priorities and aspirations

## Influencing Voluntary Behaviour Change Requires An Exchange....



*If I (action) instead of (competitive behavior) I will receive (benefit).*

*I know this will happen because (support).*



# Exchange statement

If I keep participating in work experience, training or school (action) instead of maximising my leisure time (competition) I will get to play for Wadeye Magic (key benefits - enjoy playing the sport I love at a higher level, have the chance to play at the professional level, feeling proud to represent my community, be a role model to other men and boys – have people look up to me and gain the respect of my family/clan)

I know this will happen because people just like me have participated in work experience, training or stayed at school and they got to play for Wadeye Magic and enjoyed playing AFL at a higher level, felt proud to be representing their community, had people look up to them and gained the respect of their family/clan







Questions  
then answers.

# Thanks.