

# **Participatory Action Research: an approach for evaluators to discover and celebrate community strengths**

**AES 2019 International Evaluation Conference**

# Who is ICV?

## ICV's Community Development Framework



The people of Tjuntjuntjara decided to take matters into their own hands and began a project that would not only increase accommodation but would directly benefit all of the community.



# ME&L Review - change process



BY INVITATION ONLY



100% COMMUNITY DRIVEN



PRACTICAL SUPPORT

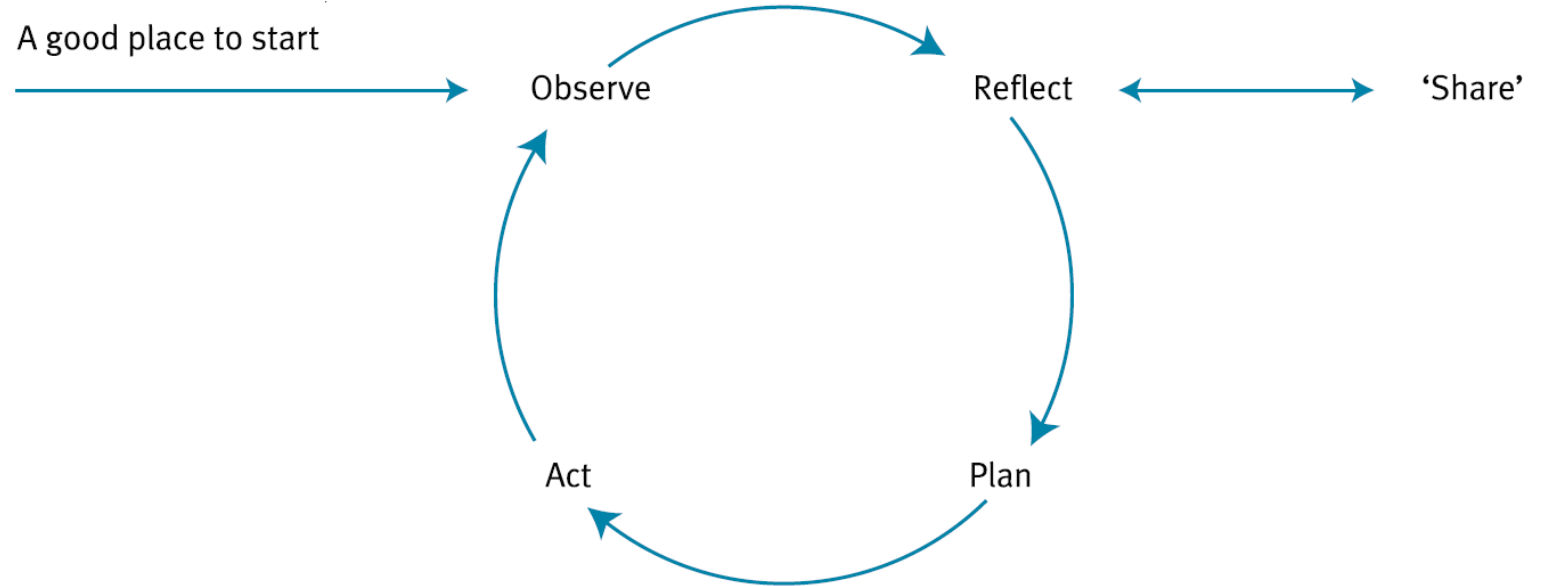
# Benefits of the Action Research Project



**AIATSIS**  
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL  
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES



A good place to start



Imagine a rolling ball - multiple cycles over time



Action Research cycle image source: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 'On PAR: Using Participatory Action Research to Improve Early Intervention', 2010

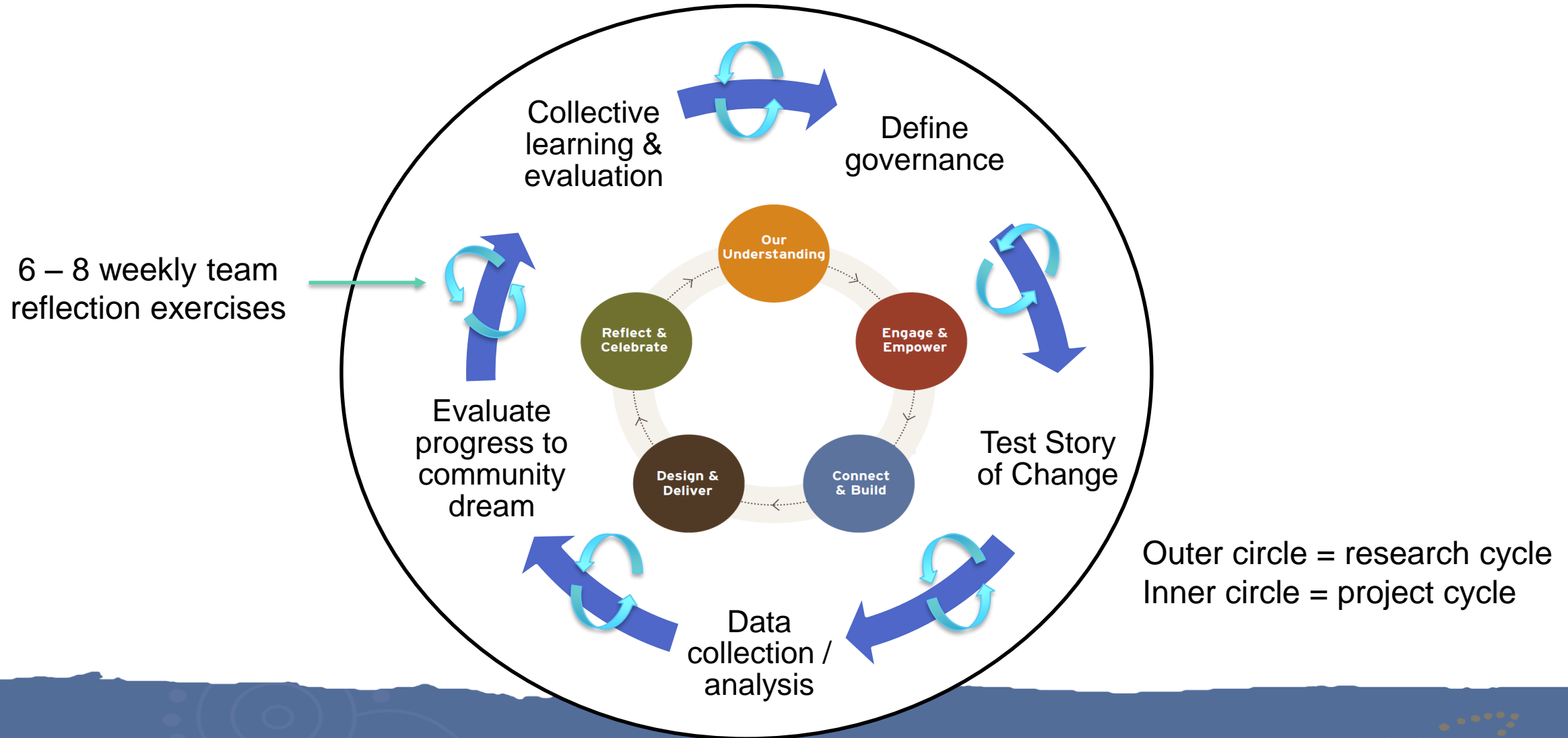
# Stronger outcomes with communities



Littlewell mob win the 2019 NAIDOC Caring for Country Award



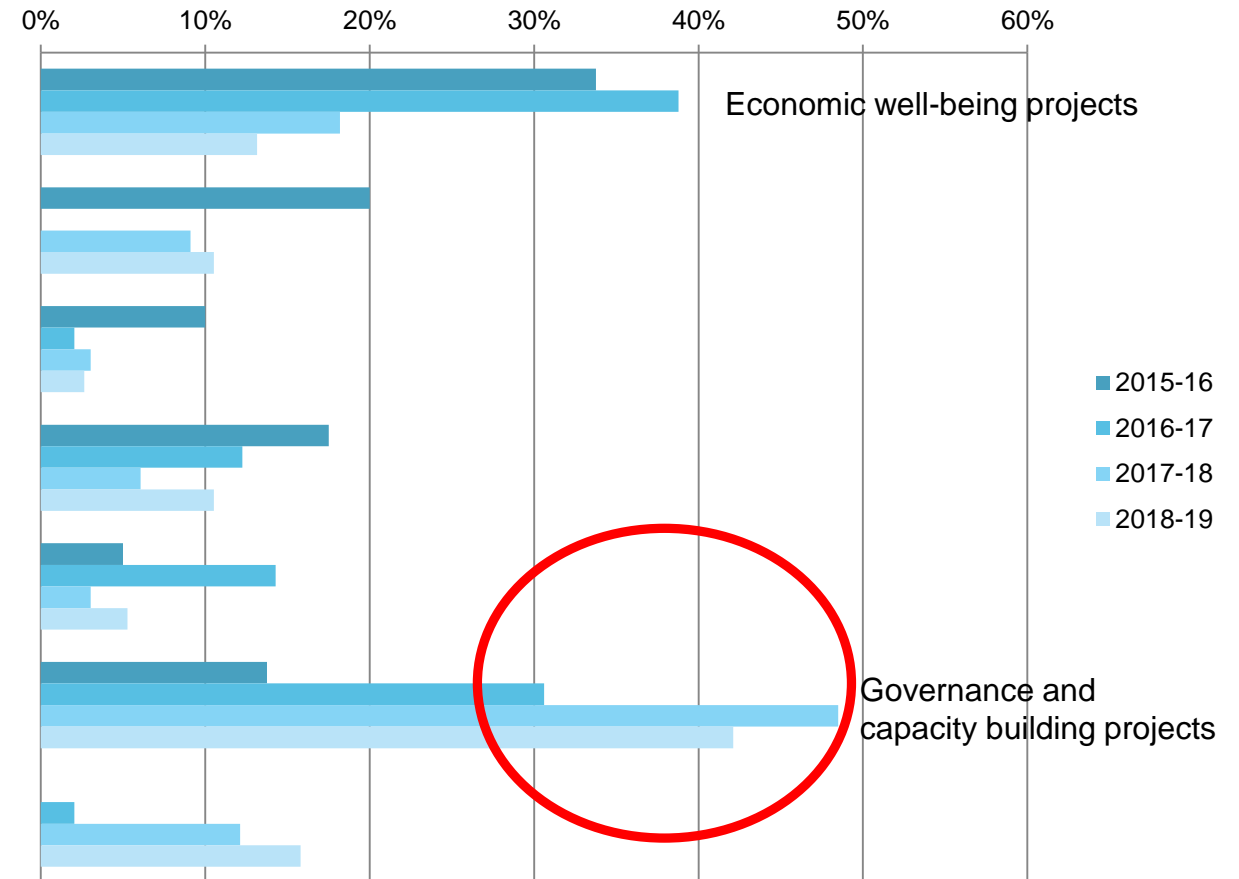
# What is Participatory Action Research?



# Why did we choose governance

## ICV'S STORY OF CHANGE

Our vision is an Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised and celebrated for our culture and our contribution to Australia and societies around the world.



# Good governance practice leads to good relationships: An exploration of the effectiveness of ICV's community development approach in the Australian context

**ICV Stories of change**

**Blue Mountains ACRC sustainable enterprise**

**Change**

The Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre (ACRC) was formed in 1994 as a meeting place for the Aboriginal Community, and to promote visibility for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the region. ACRC provides the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with support and services and makes culturally appropriate referrals to mainstream services where necessary.

ACRC has enlisted the support of ICV with the goal to become more sustainable and to develop a structured plan for the future of the organisation. Part of this has included securing Deductible Gift Recipient status to receive tax deductible gifts and diversify their sources of income. ACRC also engaged an ICV volunteer to learn basket weaving and tie dying skills as an important step for cultural preservation.

A key part of becoming sustainable is recruiting more staff to grow the organisation. ACRC are firmly on this path, having recently recruited four additional full-time staff.

The organisation is currently in the process of bringing together a business plan to outline their strategic direction. This has included seeking the input and feedback of potential investors and stakeholders in developing the plan and pulling together a list of actionable tasks for the Manager and Board to complete. This project is ongoing however,

**ICV Stories of change**

**Littlewell strength in shared strategic vision**

**Change**

On the outskirts of the town of Mingenew in Midwest Western Australia lies a former Aboriginal reserve named Junjamarba Baba, or Littlewell. In 2010, a group of elders—who are either former residents of Littlewell, or their descendants—established the Littlewell Working Group. There are now 30 members in the Group. The vision of the Group was to preserve the reserve, and build a heritage trail to celebrate and honour the lives of people who had lived there. They also wanted to record the history of the area, and post it online, so that their stories would not be lost in time.

The reserve was closed in 1972, and given to the Shire of Mingenew to use for recreational purposes. Littlewell realised early on that it would be important to work closely with the Shire in order to move towards their long-term dream. A key spokesperson was elected for the Group, who spent time building a relationship with the shire, with the local community, and other key stakeholders. Over time, this responsibility was shared by group members.

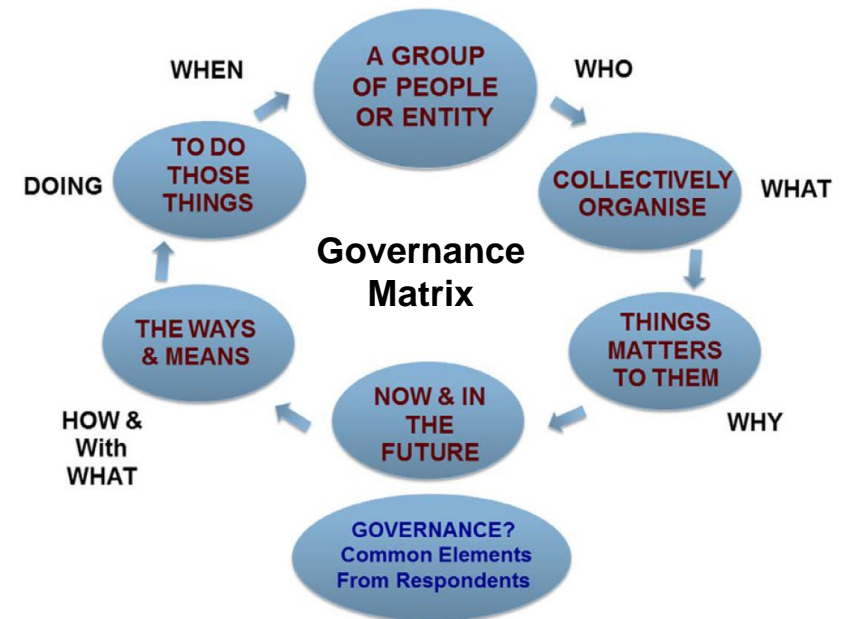
**Social Policy Implications**

There are a number of success factors that enabled Littlewell to achieve their dream. These factors are worthy of reflection, and should be incorporated into the design of other policies, programs and initiatives in order to yield positive results.

Littlewell had total control over decision-making, and directed their energy towards building relationships and working in partnership. This approach was key for Littlewell's success. The Working Group developed a strong relationship with the Shire of Mingenew, which was then formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This enabled the Shire to submit funding applications on the group's behalf, as the funding body required the application to be submitted by the legal owner of the land. Littlewell also established close relationships with Lotterywest, the key funding body, and with ICV.

Community control—which underpins ICV's community development approach—and working in partnership have been recognised as factors common to successful community-managed programs and organisations.

**Story #4**  
March 2019



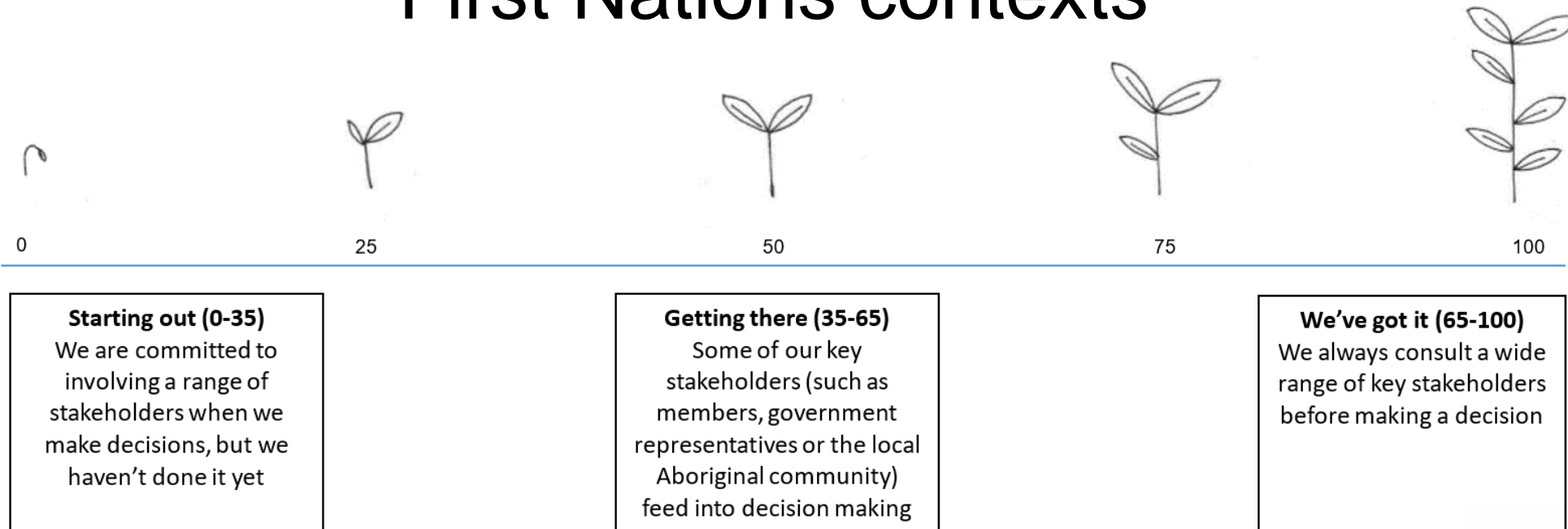


# Good ethics improve evaluation design

“...there is no sharp distinction between researchers and Indigenous people. Indigenous people are also researchers, and all participants must be regarded as equal partners in a research engagement.”

AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies, 2012

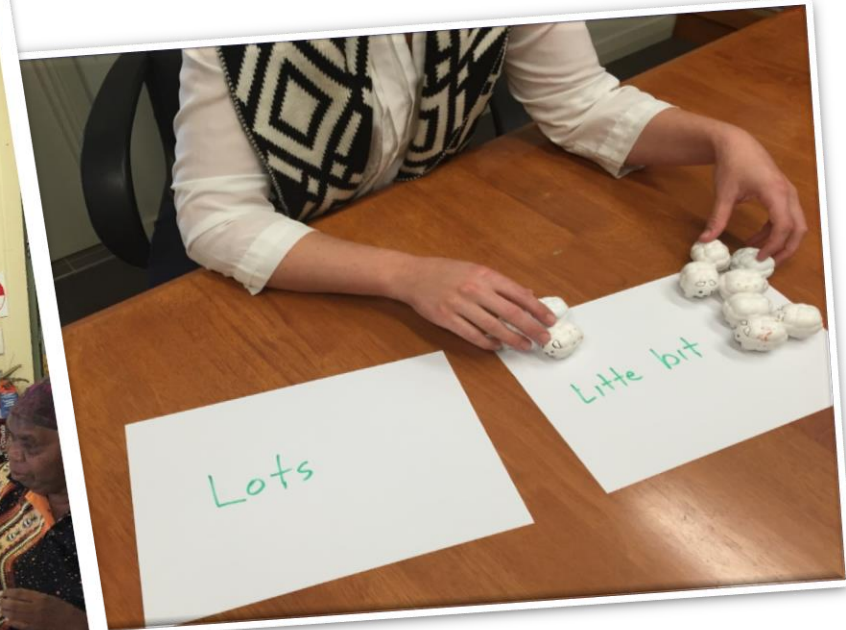
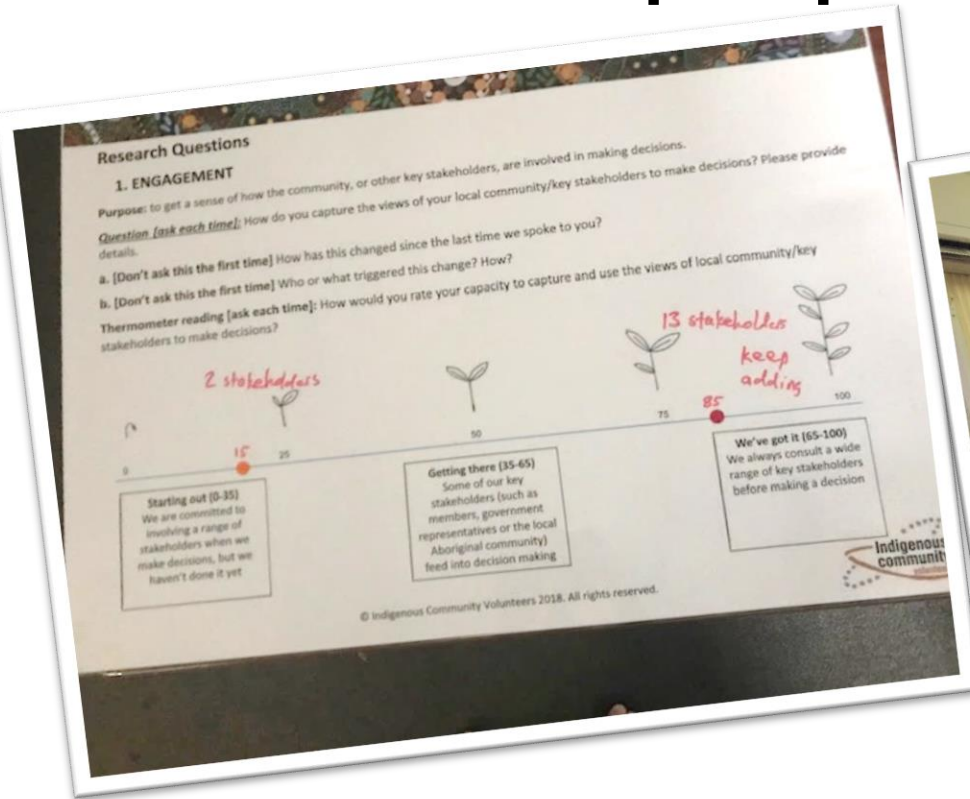
# Designing a tool fit for a variety of First Nations contexts



*"I was a tree with a little branch. I felt like I knew a bit about it [financial management], but now I understand a lot more and about what needs to be done. I wasn't confident at the start, but I am now and it's prompted me to do this work. I feel a lot better now, I feel I've grown a few more branches!"*

*– Rayleen, Kungkas Can Cook founder*

# Multi-purpose use of Seed to Tree



Southern Tanami Kurdiji in Yuendumu NT use the seed to tree tool to discuss, 'How strong is our plan?'

# Describe where you rate your capacity in evaluating with First Nations Peoples?



I'm new  
to this



I know a bit and my  
confidence is  
building



I feel confident,  
and I'm always  
learning

# Our deadly team – Action Learning



**Doyen Radcliffe**

Regional Manager - Western  
Region



**Louis Warren**

General Manager- Community  
Development



**Jenny Foster**

Regional Manager - Eastern  
Region



**Nina Tsernjavski**

Regional Manager - Alice Springs

## Central Region



**Tania Liddle**

Senior Community  
Development Officer



**Maddi Ginnivan**

Community Development  
Officer

## ACT, NSW & VIC Region



**Ruth Gilbert**



**Renee Tomkinson**

Community Development Officer -  
Sydney



**Eddie Miles**

Senior Community Development  
Officer - Brisbane



**Gwen Taylor**

Community Development  
Officer - Brisbane

## QLD Region



**Jackson Hunt**

Community Development Officer -  
WA



**Emily Lapinski**

Senior Community Development  
Officer - WA



**Emma Mulvaney**

Community Development Officer -  
WA

## Western Region





# First attempts at refining the Story of Change

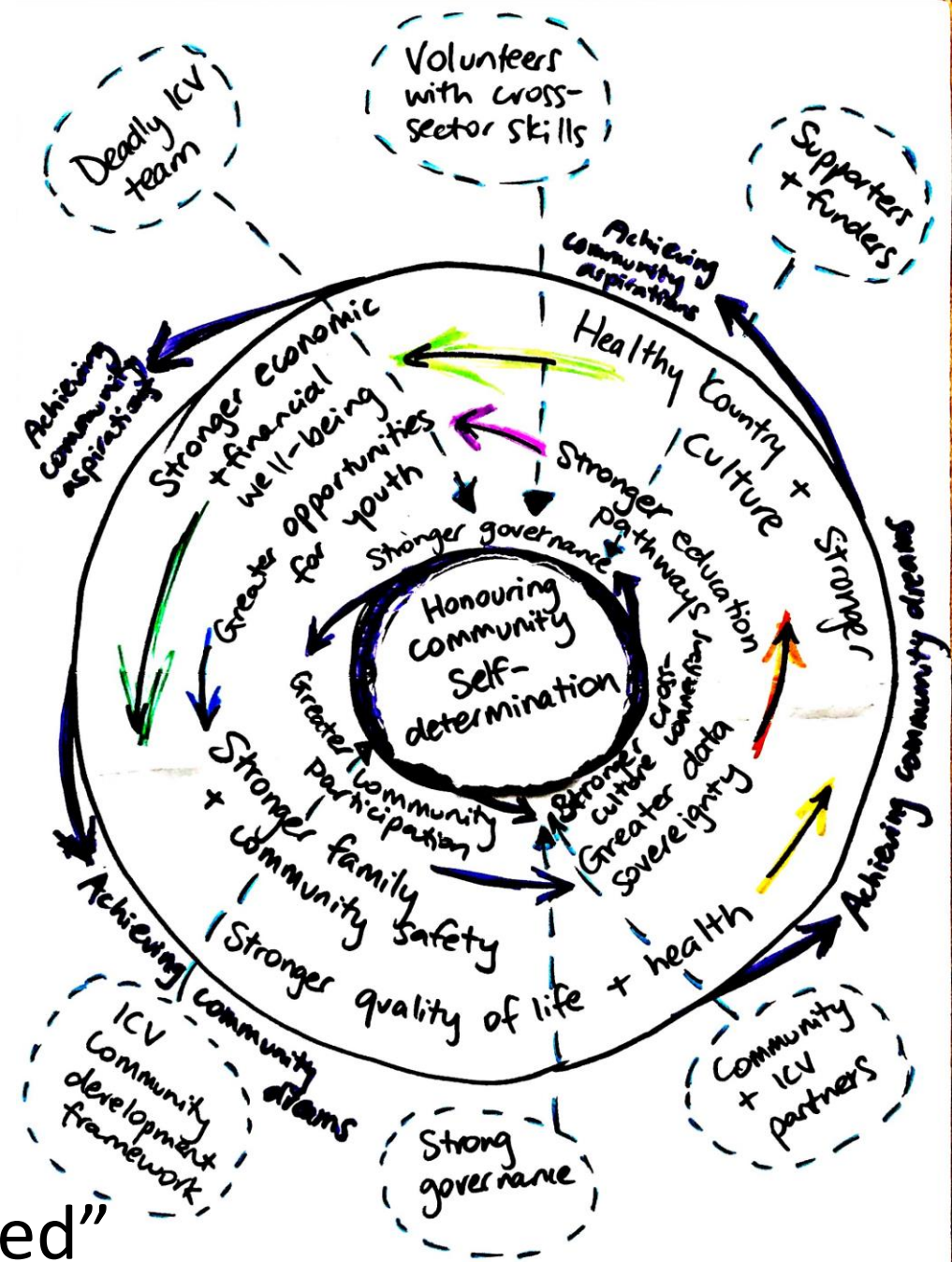
## ICV'S STORY OF CHANGE

Our vision is an Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised and celebrated for our culture and our contribution to Australia and societies around the world.



“It’s not linear”

“It’s all inter-connected”





In summary:

Things we have  
learned and how  
we are applying  
them

*Devon Cuimara from the Aboriginal Males' Healing Centre in Newman  
with Doyen in Perth undertaking a semi-structured interview on video  
conference using the Seed to Tree scale*

# Bibliography

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