



GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Media Release

28 May 2014

Creating A New Future For Aboriginal Children And Families

More than 40 new jobs and over 60% of Bininj (Aboriginal) children gaining access to early years learning are among the first major milestones of a 25-year plan by the Traditional Owners of Kakadu in the Northern Territory to secure their future.

Children's Ground, Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) and the Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust today announced the initial 6-month achievements of a radical new approach to 'Closing the Gap' on the disadvantage faced by so many Aboriginal communities.

Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust established the 25-year platform for social, cultural and economic development in the region. Children's Ground is a key plank to that strategy. The dynamic partnership is led by the community, and supported by the Commonwealth Government, Industry and philanthropy.

"In our first six months, 43 Bininj people have been employed by Children's Ground in Kakadu, West Arnhem. For most, it is their first job," said Jane Vadiveloo, CEO of Children's Ground. "The energy, commitment and skill that people are bringing is transforming the community."

Children's Ground is providing access to early years support for children who didn't have it before.

"Children's Ground is developing early years learning resources that are relevant to local children. So far, we have created six books and two movies in Kunwinjku and English, and are translating the books into Gundjehmi," said Jane.

"Our family health outreach team is visiting people across the region, building trust and understanding, individual goals and needs," she said. The Jabiru Health Clinic has reported an increase in attendance by Bininj families and stronger engagement with health challenges.

Community members have also reported a decrease in conflict, with the Community Centre in Jabiru operating as a conflict-free space. "I have never seen people come together like this before. Children, families and community coming together with pride in themselves," said Roxanne Naborlhborlh, who works on family engagement and media with Children's Ground.

Children's Ground's approach responds to complex trauma and engages the strengths of the community. Its governance structure, service platform, workforce, evaluation and funding frameworks have all been designed with local people to ensure the community has agency and control.

"This is something we've never seen in Australia before – Aboriginal people controlling a 25-year agenda for the future of their children", said Justin O'Brien, CEO of GAC. "It is genuine proof that if we listen to the people and back them with the very best services, provided the right way, we will address socioeconomic disadvantage into the long term."

Further information:

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