

# KALUMBURU STRONG GIRLS



# Kalumburu Community

- Northern most and most remote Aboriginal Community in the Kimberley region of WA
- 598 km north of Kununurra
- Kalumburu is situated on the banks of the King Edward River
- Kalumburu Strong Girls commenced in May 2016.



# History of Kalumburu

- Sir Francis Brockman was the first white man to explore the area
- **1905-** Fulgentius Torres, a Benedictine monk, establish a new mission in the Drysdale river area.
- **1932-** Mission relocated to the present site and a more reliable water source.
- **First 30 years-** the only contact with the outside world was by the missions luggers.



Kalumburu Mission



Pago- The original Kalumburu Mission



# History of Kalumburu

- **1939**- Start of WW2 and Kalumburu was an initial strategic staging point
- **1944**- Military focus was shifted to Truscott airfield. Kalumburu was bombed and sustained serious damage and deaths
- **1972**- Whitlam Labour Gov was elected and a concerted move to grant aboriginal people their rights and their land.
- **1981**- finally Kalumburu Community regained their independence from the Catholic Church



# Demographics

- Australian Bureau Statistics states Kalumburu's population is 374 (2016)
- Our CMS indicates that the population is around 550.
- Males account for 45.5%
- Females account for 54.5%
- The median age is 23
- Total of 66 households in Kalumburu



# Challenges Faced In Kalumburu

## Isolation-

- 10 hours from Kununurra by road
- 1 hour by plane
- One of the remotest location in Western Australia
- Many fly in, fly out service providers to the WACHS Remote Clinic
- Kalumburu Remote Community School educates pupils from pre-primary to year 12.



# Challenges Faced In Kalumburu

## Chronic Disease-

- High Incidence of diabetes, hypertension, and renal failure, respiratory and cardiovascular disease.
- Kalumburu Clinic strives towards the Closing the Gap with a Primary Health Care service through Health promotion, education, screening and treatment.



# Challenges Faced In Kalumburu

## Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence-

- Alcohol and marijuana being the two drugs that are commonly abused.
- Kalumburu is a dry community as per their by laws
- 54.5% of the female population has experienced domestic and family.
- Kalumburu Women's Centre opened in 2014
- Presences of Police and The Department of Families and Communities



Doreen Green-  
Has opened the first  
Op Shop in  
Kalumburu

# Challenges Faced In Kalumburu

## Poverty-

- The community store is very expensive- transportation is expensive
- Opportunities for employment are very limited
- Job Pathways are active in the development of and assistance with community based projects for Newstart recipients.
- Median weekly income per household is \$900 (ABS, 2016)
- Average household occupancy is 4.6 (ABS, 2016)
- Gambling is an insidious problem is prevalent in the community
- Many young children participate in gambling



# Kalumburu Strong Girls

- Health promotion program set up in May 2016
- Targets- 12 to 18 year old age group.

Targeted topics include;

- Family and domestic violence,
- low self-esteem and self-worth
- Substance abuse
- Sexual health
- Chronic disease prevention
- Suicidal ideation and self-harm



- Unique approaches are required to tackle the problems in the Kalumburu Community.

# Kalumburu Strong Girls

- A positive sense of self is widely viewed as a key contributor to wellbeing (Noble ET al. 2015).
- Poor self-esteem during adolescences is associated with heightened risk of mental health problems, as well as poorer overall adjustment.
  - Low self esteem can lead to aggression, antisocial behaviour and and delinquency.
  - Low self esteem in Aboriginal children is related to mental health risk, experience of racism and exposure to family violence.
- Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey- The overall self esteem was lower for girls then for boys and decreased with age (Zubrnick et.al 2015).
- Cultural identity is regarded as a crucial dimension of self to aboriginal children.



# Kalumburu Strong Girls

- There is currently no mobile reception in Kalumburu- expected in mid 2018.
- All of the Kalumburu Strong Girls have been given access to the limited information technology available.
- Only exposure is at School, Community Resource Centre and the Women's Centre.
- Lack of continued access- access, hardware and poor connectivity in Kalumburu makes it some what frustrating for these girls.
- One family member will usually have a smart phone.

Old Bush Telegraph- 6km out  
of Kalumburu



# What have the Kalumburu Strong Girls been doing?

- The girls have taken pictures and have produced some short video clips on the Ipad.
- Ideas are generated by the young women
- The girls are very keen to finish their You Tube presentation of their life in Kalumburu 'Telling Yarns'- Small scene will be shown at the end of this presentation
- This story is of a young Kalumburu women, as she went away to boarding school.



# What's Next??

- In the process of linking up with an Indigenous Strong Girls group from America and will be communicating via email and Skype.
- Empowering and Fostering relationships with others
- Wonderful for these young women to discuss common issues that they are faced with everyday.
- No simple answer to these challenges;
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Identify these challenges
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Arm them with the tools to overcome them
- This monthly group is a way for services to collaboratively develop some sustainable life skills and knowledge in a fun and educational way to make them even **STRONGER!!!**



# WHAT ABOUT A STRONG YOUNG MAN'S GROUP ??

