



THE MARULU STRATEGY

Making FASD history

2017-22



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Contact us

marulustrategy.com.au

PO Box 43 Fitzroy Crossing Western Australia

Phone: (08) 9191 5284

Fax: (08) 9191 5611

Email: admin@mwrc.com.au

ABN: 78560614

ICN: 1225

MARNINWARNTIKURA



FITZROY WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE



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MESSAGE FROM THE MARULU PATRON



Marulu is a word from my mother tongue, Bunuba. It means **precious, worth nurturing**. Each child deserves a life where they can be all that they want to be. All our children in the Fitzroy Valley are a vessel carrying a future that will restore our society to its full health and wellbeing. This strategy promises to honour the human rights of our children for today, and for all our tomorrows. It lays the groundwork, and builds the infrastructure for the wraparound supports and care to strengthen our children and their families' resiliencies to create long-term generational change.

I am honoured to be the patron of the Marulu Strategy, and to present the exciting next step in this work. The Marulu Strategy is a world first. It broke ground when, for the first time, an entire community consented, informed and led a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) prevalence study. With the evidence, we have acted. We have rigorous research partnerships that have united academic institutions and our community to work toward a common goal: **Make FASD History**. This is visible in the multidisciplinary teams operating in the Fitzroy Valley that continue to diagnose and support families living with FASD. The initial stages of this strategy have given us a body of knowledge that can be translated from academic documents to applied practice. This is evidence owned and held in the hands of community to effect change on the ground.

The next iteration of the Marulu Strategy is a multipronged approach to development that respects the context in which our community lives and works. It acknowledges and builds on our inherent community strengths, which emanate from a time immemorial. Equally, it is



responsive to the effects of intergenerational trauma, beginning with European colonisation.

This means the strategy operates on several levels. It implements practical, incremental steps in how we establish programs that train and support families to care for children with early life trauma (ELT) and complex needs. Beyond this, in maintaining these approaches, the strategy considers service delivery reform to enable sustained coordination and collaboration among services that span diagnosis, support, and prevention of trauma and complex needs.

Ultimately, the second stage of the strategy is designed to form a shared knowledge among community and service providers about the effects of early life trauma on the mind, body and long-term behaviour. The trauma our communities have sustained has brought into being complex harms, of which FASD is one of the most damaging. With a better understanding of trauma, we will overcome its harmful effects, and make fetal alcohol spectrum disorder history. We will allow our societal strengths to flourish again as we confront, heal and put an end to all forms of harm caused by intergenerational trauma.

We will know we are successful when we see what can happen with the right supports.

June Oscar AO

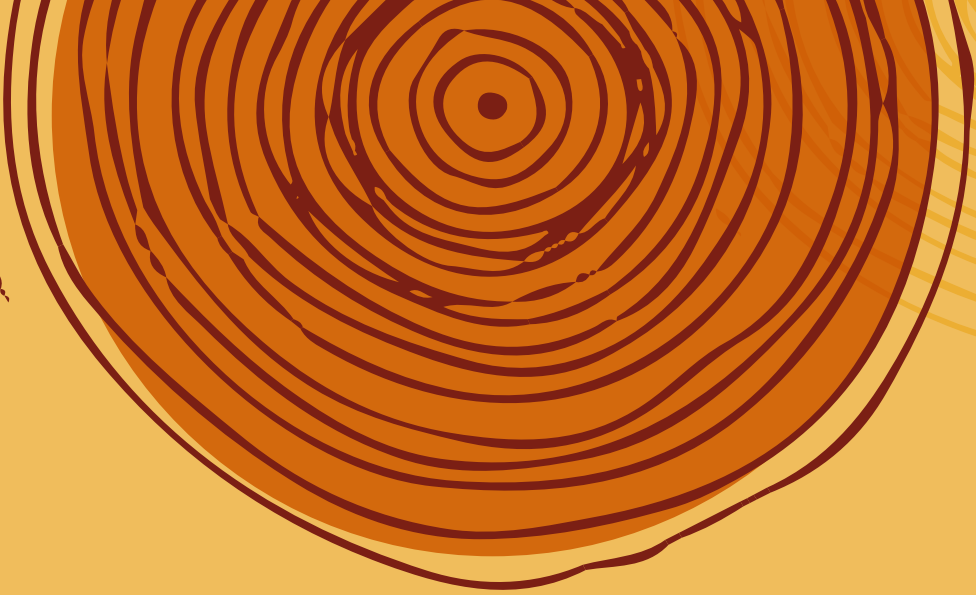
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner,
Australian Human Rights Commission

Marninwarntikura, Nindilingarri and Fitzroy Valley Communities, along with our Essential Partners will progress the strategy aspiration to **Make FASD History, through a collective effort that dramatically strengthens capacity of all those interacting with Fitzroy Valley families and communities.**




Marulu, a Bunuba word meaning precious, worth nurturing, is a community-led initiative to overcome fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and early life trauma in the Fitzroy Valley

This strategy document sets out the broad objectives of the Marulu Strategy. The strategy intersects with a range of organisations across the health, education, employment, child protection and family support, police and juvenile justice sectors. It has a significant focus on prevention, support and diagnosis. The collective outcomes of this unique collaboration between Aboriginal community organisations and Essential Partners are designed to inform and enhance service delivery, strengthen community capacity and directly improve the lives of children, families and communities in the Fitzroy Valley.



TRAUMA
AND
HEALING IN
THE FITZROY
VALLEY





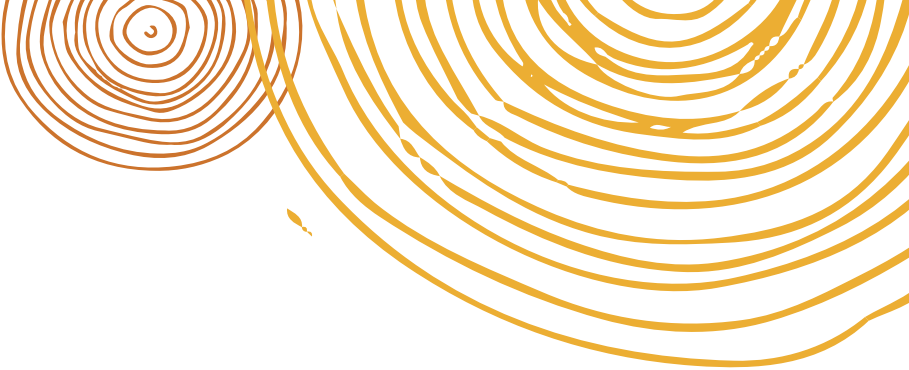
For two hundred years, people across the Fitzroy Valley have experienced a series of socially destructive events that have threatened to dismantle existing structures and erode community values and norms. The region's recent shared history has come to define many dimensions of the Fitzroy Valley's current socio-economic structure, and created contemporary challenges, such as the need to address alcohol-related harms and respond to early life trauma.

Across the Fitzroy Valley, significant ongoing trauma, grief and loss has been passed from generation to generation. Over time, the consequences of this intergenerational trauma have affected many people's daily lives as people grow up and live surrounded by trauma.

The cumulative effects of significant childhood adverse experiences increase children's exposure to family and domestic violence, disrupt feelings of safety in the home environment, and often result in an increased likelihood of young people coming into contact with the police and criminal justice sector. These environmental conditions create extremely high levels of early life trauma and toxic stress.

As a consequence, substantial numbers of children and families are suffering permanent ongoing effects to their physical and mental wellbeing. These conditions contribute to the prevalence of lifelong damage, such as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and other chronic conditions resulting from alcohol and substance abuse.

The reality facing many young people in the Fitzroy Valley is an uncertain future, and the community is determined to make sure more positive futures become the norm.



In the face of these conditions, mothers and grandmothers in the Fitzroy Valley had concerns for the children in their community who were presenting with complex learning and behavioural difficulties. This prompted the need to collect evidence and take action.

Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre, a nationally acclaimed Aboriginal organisation based in the central west Kimberley, established the Marulu coordination and implementation unit as an integral part of its response to these concerns. Marninwarntikura aims to provide wraparound supports for women, children and families across their lifetime based on principles of empowerment. These programs range from immediate crisis response, support and care, to early childhood education and care, and a therapeutic social enterprise enabling women to be financially empowered.

Marninwarntikura's two strategic priorities are to:

- **Make FASD History**; and
- **Reduce Harm** in the Fitzroy Valley, freeing all from fear and discrimination.

In 2007, with the leadership of Marninwarntikura and Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services (NCHS), the women of the Fitzroy Valley spearheaded a community campaign. They achieved what they had fought for years to achieve: legal restrictions on the sale of full-strength alcohol in the Fitzroy Valley. This ground-breaking work was designed to have immediate and long-term effects on the community.

In the wake of the alcohol restrictions, Marninwarntikura and Nindilingarri began to work collaboratively with significant research partners—the George Institute for Global Health and Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, both at the University of Sydney; and Telethon Kids Institute. Together they developed a deeper knowledge



and understanding about what FASD is and its lifelong effects on individuals, families and communities. The community is engaging with Essential Partners to build knowledge and understanding about promising practices that will suit its diverse needs, trialling different evidence-based strategies or therapeutic interventions, monitoring and evaluating effectiveness, and building on this knowledge to inform others.

For healing to occur, it is fundamental that we recognise the immense importance and value of the Fitzroy Valley's long and continuing Indigenous history, resilience and strengths. Building knowledge, understanding and empathy across the community empowers people to overcome sorrow and grief and transform challenges into opportunities, changing national agendas and systems in the process.



THE MARULU
STRATEGY
2009-16



The Marulu Strategy aims to address the concerns of the Fitzroy Valley community regarding the incidence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. It is a comprehensive community-driven partnership between community leaders, Aboriginal organisations, non-government and government organisations, research institutions and service providers. Since its inception, the strategy has evolved and developed new approaches to address the diverse needs of children, families and communities across the Fitzroy Valley. Trauma-informed practices are embedded in the therapeutic supports for children and their families affected by FASD and ELT.

THREE PILLARS

The first iteration of the strategy, developed in 2009, included three pillars, which focused on diagnosis, prevention and support.

1

Diagnosis

- The strategy collected evidence of the prevalence of FASD and built understanding of the complexity of the condition.
- Families are given access to multidisciplinary teams that have the expertise and capacity to diagnose complex needs, and set up processes to recommend appropriate interventions.
- PATCHES Paediatrics and Western Australian Country Health Services(WACHs) are providing families with access to diagnostic services through the establishment of multidisciplinary clinics in the Fitzroy Valley.



2

Prevention

- The strategy aims to **Make FASD History** by educating the community and building awareness and understandings so that everyone is equipped to change attitudes and behaviours and ensure harm reduction becomes the reality across the valley.
- The Marulu Strategy is driving the work with Essential Partners to research and document the effectiveness of promising national and international FASD prevention strategies and therapeutic interventions. It continues to strengthen and build evidence of what is shown to work in order to inform ongoing priorities and create a holistic community-led, culturally responsive approach.
- Nindilingarri and Telethon Kids Institute have been working together to provide the community with knowledge and understandings of the effects of alcohol and substance abuse. They support people to reduce the effects of alcohol-related harms on individuals and their families.



3

Support

- Children and families affected by FASD and ELT are provided with supports designed to meet individuals' needs.
- The strategy strives to improve opportunities for children, families and communities in the Fitzroy Valley.



THE LILILWAN PROJECT

One of the first initiatives of the Marulu Strategy was the Lililwan Project (the first population-based study of FASD prevalence in Australia), which was conducted in the Fitzroy Valley in 2009–12. This study was initiated by local Aboriginal community leaders, who invited researchers and clinicians from the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health and the George Institute (both at the University of Sydney) to partner with them. The result was the development of an evidence base, which has enabled the community to understand the extent of the problem. The findings are now being used by the community to advocate for needed prevention programs and therapeutic services for children, families and communities living with the effects of FASD and ELT.

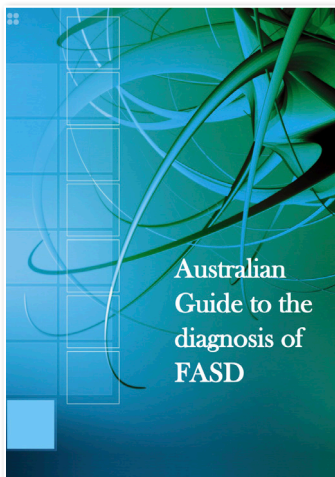
The Lililwan Project found that of the children born in 2002 or 2003 in the Fitzroy Valley:

- 1 in 5 are on the FASD spectrum, among the highest known rates in the world
- 1 in 8 have fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), involving complex and severe neurodevelopmental and physical problems, including having distinctive facial features
- 1 in 7 have neurodevelopmental problems associated with alcohol exposure, without the distinctive facial features of FAS.

This comprehensive research is being used to inform subsequent projects currently being undertaken in the Fitzroy Valley. These projects are exploring effective interventions for addressing some of the challenges facing families that participated in the Lililwan research. Each project building on and related to Lililwan is contributing to the design of a holistic model of care that will ensure access to ongoing quality therapeutic supports for families experiencing and living with complex needs.

A NATIONAL DIALOGUE

An Australian FASD collaboration led by the University of Sydney and Telethon Kids Institute has developed the *Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of FASD*. This incorporates current Australian and international knowledge about FASD, clinical expertise, and models for effective practice. The guide, published in 2016, standardises the approach to diagnosing FASD. Clinicians now have the confidence and knowledge to make a diagnosis and refer children and families to appropriate services designed to manage diverse and complex needs. Researchers on the Lirilwan Study extensively contributed to this nationally significant work—Professor Elizabeth Elliott, University of Sydney, was one of the lead investigators of the guide, and both she and Dr James Fitzpatrick, Telethon Kids Institute, were on the Steering Group and Expert Review Panel for the project.

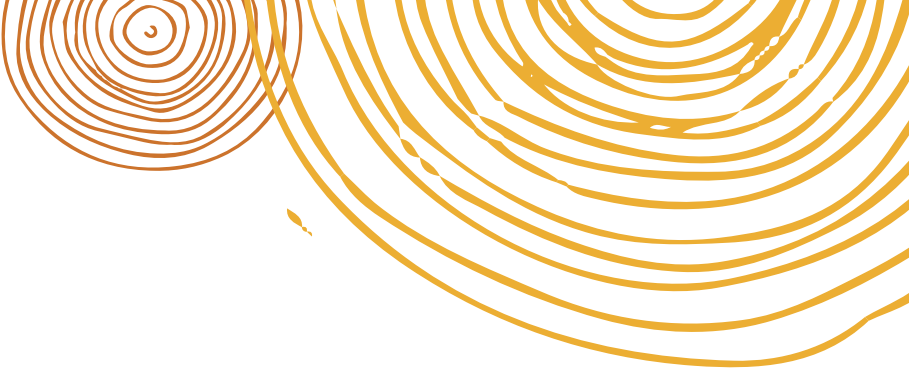


Australian Guide to Diagnosis of FASD

apsu.org.au/assets/Uploads/20160505-rep-australian-guide-to-diagnosis-of-fasd.pdf



BUILDING THE EVIDENCE



The Lililwan research provided extensive insights into community needs regarding FASD and ELT. It has helped set the agenda for subsequent research projects. These research projects and the education and prevention focus provided by Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services are currently helping to build our knowledge and understanding of what works, in order to construct an effective model of care and support for Families in the Fitzroy Valley.

ALERT PROGRAM®

The Telethon Kids Institute is currently working with the communities of the Fitzroy Valley to develop, implement and evaluate the Alert Program®, a school-based FASD intervention that teaches self-regulation and improves executive functioning of children in Years 1–6. Children are taught five ways to change their level of alertness (high, low or just right) through listening, moving, touching, looking or putting something in their mouth.

The program also supports families, school staff and occupational therapists to develop strategies to change or maintain states of alertness that optimise student functioning. While the Alert Program® can be used in a variety of group and individual therapy settings, this research will focus on upskilling teachers and school support staff to deliver the program to their primary school classes using a tailored curriculum guide.

telethonkids.org.au/our-research/brain-and-behaviour/disability/alcohol-and-pregnancy-and-fasd-research/alert-program/

For additional information about this project, please contact Study Coordinator, Bree Wagner:

bree.wagner@telethonkids.org.au, (08) 9489 7752



JANDU YANI U

During the Lililwan Project, families were asking for help in raising children who were experiencing significant challenges. Marninwarntikura and the University of Sydney have subsequently worked with the University of Queensland to explore the effectiveness of the Triple P (positive parenting program) for families in the Fitzroy Valley.

The Jandu Yani U (For All Families) project is training and supporting parent coaches to work with families to empower them to bring up children using positive parenting tools. The project is exploring the effectiveness of these tools and is building family functioning capacity. The training involves an additional module focused on working with children with complex needs such as FASD and ELT.

During 2017 the parent coaches will be supported to strengthen their skills and work with more families experiencing challenges with bringing up young children in the Fitzroy Valley.

marulustrategy.com.au

For additional information about this project, please contact Marninwarntikura Marulu Strategy Coordinator, Sue Thomas: sue.thomas@mwrc.com.au, 0408 936 735



3M FASD PREVENTION STRATEGY, MARULU, MASS MEDIA AND MIDWIVES

The Telethon Kids Institute is working on a number of research projects designed to raise community awareness of harm caused by drinking during pregnancy, support women and their partners to stop drinking during pregnancy, and build knowledge and understanding of FASD and the lifelong effect it has on children and their families.

alcoholpregnancy.telethonkids.org.au/our-research/research-projects/current-research-projects/3m-fasd-prevention-strategy/

For additional information about this project, please contact Telethon Kids Institute Marulu FASD Prevention Strategy Coordinator, Kaashifah Bruce:

Kaashifah.Bruce@telethonkids.org.au, (08) 9489 7828

PREVENTION THROUGH HEALTH PROMOTION

Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services was established as an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation to deliver culturally appropriate services that recognise the effects of Aboriginal law, culture, spirit and land issues on the health of the community. NCHS focuses on providing disease prevention and health promotion to the communities of the Fitzroy Valley.



Nindilingarri are championing FASD prevention strategies directly across each of their health promotion programs, in an innovative approach informed by the Aboriginal view that everything is linked. Working to improve the social and cultural determinants of health, each of the health promotion programs contain elements of FASD prevention. The NCHS Maternal Health Promotion, Child Health Promotion, and Alcohol and Drug Health Promotion programs are central to coordinating the organisational approach to FASD prevention, to ensure that it is consistent and culturally secure.

FASD education and prevention strategies are implemented by NCHS on a number of levels—to individual clients, families and communities. Education about how to prevent FASD is delivered as a core component of the comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Health Promotion programs delivered to schools. Through partnerships with clinical staff within the Fitzroy Valley Health Partnership, FASD education and support is offered to all antenatal and postnatal clients, as well as their families. The right to live in alcohol-free homes and communities is championed by the NCHS Alcohol and Drug team, who support families and communities to use legislation and support networks to create and maintain safe and healthy homes. They maintain a close working relationship with the Kimberley Mental Health and Drug service team to facilitate referrals for those clients requiring alcohol and drug counselling.

In collaboration with key Aboriginal organisations, NCHS coordinates International FASD Awareness Day event in the Fitzroy Valley. This day is not only to highlight the importance of ongoing efforts to prevent children being born with FASD, but also presents an opportunity for the entire community to celebrate their brave and comprehensive approach to addressing the issue.

nindilingarri.org.au



HEARING THEIR VOICES PROJECT

The excessive consumption of alcohol in the Fitzroy Valley significantly affects children and young people's sense of safety and wellbeing. In 2016, an application was made to loosen existing alcohol supply laws in Fitzroy Crossing, resulting in concerns for child and family safety.

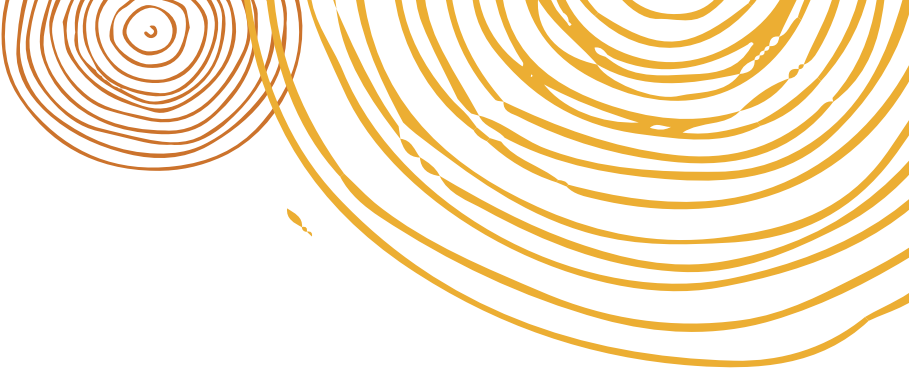
The Alcohol and Drug Health Promotion team at Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services partnered with the WA Commissioner for Children and Young People's (CCYP) office to deliver the community-based Hearing Their Voices project that collected the thoughts and experiences about alcohol-related harm of children and young people living in the communities of the Fitzroy Valley. Workshops encouraging sharing of stories, thoughts and feelings with nearly 300 children facilitated the development of simple individual posters that demonstrated the wide-reaching effects alcohol has on young people in our communities. The children and young people were then photographed with their posters, resulting in powerful visual representations and associated stories and quotes.

The posters and photos were used as anecdotal evidence by the CCYP office to support the maintenance of current liquor restrictions, and to advocate for the safety and rights of children and young people living in the Fitzroy Valley. The application to amend the liquor restrictions was rejected in late 2016. The visual materials developed from the project are being used by the NCHS Alcohol and Drug Health Promotion team to further educate people and discuss the harmful effects of alcohol on our children and communities.

nindilingarri.org.au



THE MARULU STRATEGY 2017-22



Increasingly, the people of the Fitzroy Valley are driving change and rebuilding their lives, with a targeted focus on minimising harms, including tackling alcohol consumption, actively reducing the prevalence of FASD, supporting women to decrease drinking during pregnancy, raising awareness, and engaging with a range of services to support children, young people and their families living with FASD and ELT throughout different phases of their life.

While there is evidence of progress, the response needs to have a long-term outlook that caters to changing community needs and priorities. This will enable the development and implementation of a model of care and associated therapeutic supports (the Marulu model) that is family-centred, dynamic, and provides ongoing wraparound supports for individuals and their families.

THE NEXT PHASE

The Marulu leadership group and the Marulu Strategy Coordinator have now developed the next phase of this project, the Marulu Strategy 2017–22. The next stage builds on the progress made to date. It is informed by changing community needs and priorities and aims to strengthen its research foundations while incorporating a broader vision.

The next phase incorporates four goals:

- 1 Prevent children in the Fitzroy Valley from being born with FASD and experiencing ELT.
- 2 Support children and families living with FASD and ELT throughout their lives.
- 3 Build capacity and enhance services for children, adults and families affected by FASD and ELT.
- 4 Develop a sustainable community-driven response to FASD and ELT.

Overview of the Marulu Strategy 2017–22

Vision

Healthy children, families and communities are thriving in the Fitzroy Valley, free from harm. All children and families have access to community-designed models of therapeutic supports, and healing-aware and trauma-informed care (the Marulu model) that meet changing needs throughout their lives.

Purpose

Make FASD History and strengthen community capacity, resilience and wellbeing

Key stakeholders

The Marulu Strategy Leadership Group along with Essential Partners and an expanding Circle of Friends.


Our core values and principles

We are community led.
 We work from and build the evidence.
 We strengthen strategic partnerships.
 We build capacity.
 We respond to the lived experiences and knowledge of the Fitzroy Valley community.
 We have a healing-informed and trauma-aware approach to all we do.

Goals and priorities

1	2	3	4
Prevent children in the Fitzroy Valley from being born with FASD and experiencing ELT	Support children and families living with FASD and ELT throughout their lives	Build capacity and enhance services for children, adults and families affected by FASD and ELT	Develop a sustainable community-driven response to FASD and ELT
Champion Nindilingarri	Champion Marninwarntikura	Champion Marninwarntikura	Champion Marninwarntikura with Nindilingarri
1.1 Provide drug and alcohol support for pregnant women 1.2 Build on community awareness 1.3 Increase education and prevention initiatives 1.4 Provide services that support and empower families to heal from trauma(s)	2.1 Identify intergenerational and early life trauma and promote healing 2.2 Connect families with targeted therapeutic supports 2.3 Identify gaps and create solutions that incorporate trauma-informed practice with comprehensive wraparound supports 2.4 Ensure all families continue to have their needs met through the changing circumstances of their lives	3.1 Advocate for multidisciplinary diagnostic clinics 3.2 Collect data to build on the Lililwan findings 3.2 Support therapeutic programs 3.3 Ensure Make FASD History is the responsibility of all 3.4 Build understandings and the capacity of all services interacting with Fitzroy Valley families 3.5 Strengthen the capacity of families and carers	4.1 Develop a whole-of-community harm reduction strategy 4.2 Set priorities and coordinate community-driven research opportunities 4.3 Build and share information through the Marulu Knowledge Hub 4.4 Use our experience and expanding knowledge base to influence the national agenda

Build the evidence, share knowledge and extend impact



Prevention, diagnosis and support are embedded across these goals to reflect the interrelated nature and importance of all three pillars from the first phase of the strategy. They combine to **Make FASD History** and enable children, families and communities to access appropriate knowledge and supports to make a difference to the life opportunities of all those living in the Fitzroy Valley.

The success of the next phase is dependent on many collaborators working together—community organisations, Essential Partners and the combined efforts of research institutions. This multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration ensures rigor and expertise guaranteeing useful knowledge production and the wide distribution of findings to communities on the ground, stakeholders and national and international societies.

MARULU STRATEGY GOALS



Goal 1: Prevent children in the Fitzroy Valley from being born with FASD and experiencing ELT

The imperative for this goal is that FASD is 100 % preventable and 100% permanent, so the potential effects on the long-term future and wellbeing of the community is immense. The collective efforts of Aboriginal organisations Nindilingarri and Marninwarntikura working together with our Essential Partners to support women and their families, increase community awareness and empower families to heal from trauma, has the potential to dramatically change the lives of many. Strengthening collaboration and extending our involvement with more organisations and new partners will ensure we gain more traction and **Make FASD History** a reality.

We will:

- 1.1 provide drug and alcohol support for pregnant women
- 1.2 build on community awareness



- 1.3 increase education and prevention initiatives
- 1.4 provide services that support and empower families to heal from trauma(s).

Strengthening community wellbeing

We are working to reduce harm in the Fitzroy Valley and create positive futures for all children and their families by alleviating some of the life stressors that have become normalised and far too common in the lived experience of people growing up in the community.



Goal 2: Support children and families living with FASD and ELT throughout their lives

The more we grow our knowledge and understandings of the challenges being faced by families in the Fitzroy Valley, the more we know about the importance of developing a holistic therapeutic model of care designed to support families by creating a tailor-made model that will:

- 2.1 identify intergenerational and early life trauma and promote healing
- 2.2 connect families with targeted therapeutic supports
- 2.3 identify gaps and create solutions that incorporate trauma-informed practices with comprehensive wraparound supports
- 2.4 ensure all families continue to have their needs met through the changing circumstances of their lives.

The benefits of the work we do in preventing FASD will contribute to the improved health and wellbeing of families in the community. We also aim to work beyond preventing FASD. We support Fitzroy Valley families to live fulfilled lives by creating solutions that improve outcomes and address the myriad of cumulative challenges faced throughout the different phases of life for a person living with FASD and complex trauma.



Healing-aware and trauma-informed approaches

For generations the people of the Fitzroy Valley have experienced and continue to experience intergenerational and early life trauma and grief. Breaking the cycle of intergenerational and early life trauma will require access to tailored, culturally embedded healing and therapeutic responses that enable people to tackle deeply entrenched underlying issues.

We want all the children of the Fitzroy Valley to grow up healthy and happy, to have goals and dreams in life that strive for excellence. We need them to be born healthy and develop well through infancy, to be actively engaged in school and move into aspirational education, training and employment opportunities. For this, we need to ensure we can provide them with the right services and opportunities in a way that benefits and significantly lifts the expectations and prospects of children and young people at every stage of their life. We need to provide children and families living with FASD and ELT with access to new services that will strengthen their capacity and continuously address their health and wellbeing requirements.



Goal 3: Build capacity and enhance services for children, adults and families affected by FASD and ELT

All government and non-government organisations delivering services to Fitzroy Valley families have a professional responsibility to ensure the needs of this community are met and the community's desire for an integrated service delivery model that produces excellence becomes a reality. Working *with* community, not *doing to* community is a shift in mindset and affects processes, which provides for an exciting new strength-based approach. The collective efforts of all those working across the Fitzroy Valley will drive this new way of responding to community needs, and demonstrate promising practices. The Marulu



leadership group will do this through collaboration with their Essential Partners and expanding circle of friends to ensure the needs of the Fitzroy Valley and the lessons learnt are shared, and that expectations are constantly being lifted.

We will:

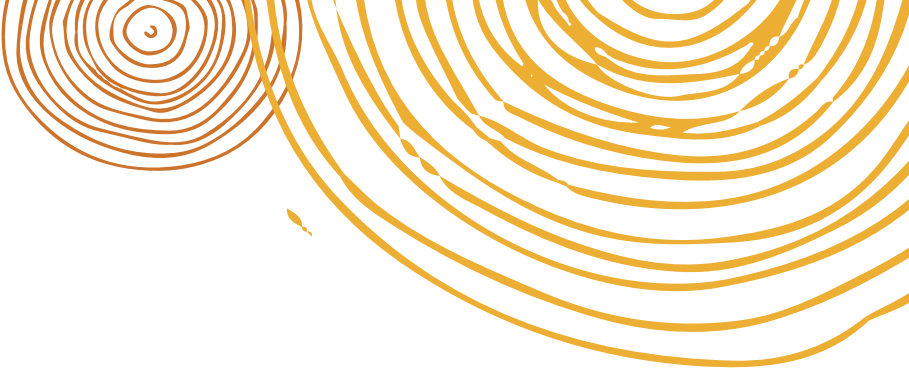
- 3.1 advocate for multidisciplinary diagnostic clinics
- 3.2 collect data to build on the Lililwan findings
- 3.2 support therapeutic programs
- 3.3 ensure Making FASD History is the responsibility of all
- 3.4 build understandings and the capacity of all services interacting with Fitzroy Valley families
- 3.5 strengthen the capacity of families and carers.

Service system responses

To support the parents, carers and families of children with FASD, we need to provide quality services and ensure all those interacting with families in the Fitzroy Valley are working together in an integrated way. We will strengthen the capacity of the different service providers to build their knowledge and understandings and ensure they are supported to adapt their approaches. The new knowledge will provide learning opportunities and the establishment of professional networks. This will create a supportive environment, leading to an empathic response that builds capacity across the community to respond from a place of understanding rather than judgement.

Reducing harms

Many people living in the Fitzroy Valley are focused on the prevention of FASD and the rebuilding of a healthy, thriving community. To achieve these goals there needs to be a change in the way in which services are delivered across the community.



In the past, government services and mainstream community organisations have not adequately catered to the needs of the people of the Fitzroy Valley, or understood the different cultures and the way we live. This has led to a failure of local people accessing these services. Through the Marulu Strategy, we will work with agencies to support the ongoing development of culturally sensitive services that are relevant to the people of the Fitzroy Valley.

Every agency delivering services in the Fitzroy Valley will need to ensure that they properly meet the needs of their clients and families who are living with the effects of FASD, and address their needs in a trauma-informed manner. This means that all services should understand FASD, tailor their service delivery accordingly and deliberately leverage their programs to contribute to the prevention of FASD, while making it an imperative that all services contribute to the highest quality wraparound supports for all families.

The Marulu Strategy seeks to strengthen the delivery of services to the Fitzroy Valley community by responding to community-identified priorities that emerge through an ongoing cycle of community engagement and research. The Marulu Strategy leadership group will actively encourage agencies in the Fitzroy Valley to adapt their environments and workplace practices, and provide expertise and advice to support them to tailor their services to ensure the needs of people and their families living with FASD and ELT are met.



4

Goal 4: Develop a sustainable community-driven response to FASD and ELT

Many organisations and communities across the Fitzroy Valley are contributing to an improvement agenda designed to prevent children being born with FASD, and are working to reduce



traumas across the valley. We are coordinating and capturing the momentum in an integrated way and working together to harness our collective impact, which is a vital component of our work.

To achieve this, we will:

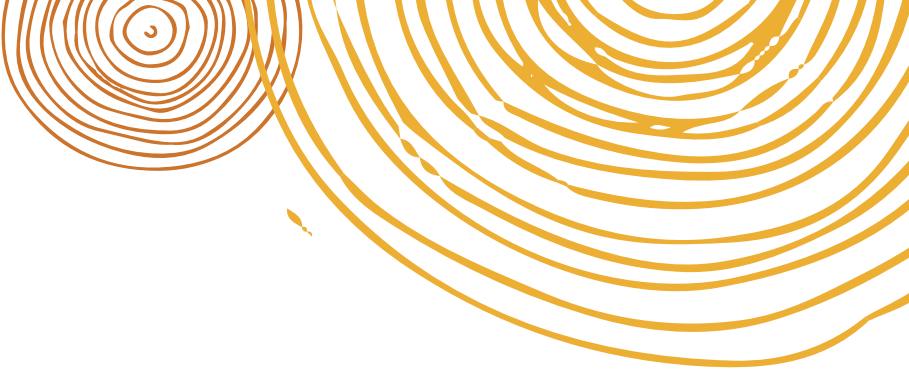
- 4.1 develop a whole-of-community harm reduction strategy
- 4.2 set priorities and coordinate community-driven research opportunities
- 4.3 building and share information through the Marulu Knowledge Hub
- 4.4 use our experience and expanding knowledge base to influence the national agenda.

While the Marulu Strategy 2017–22 is focused on addressing the issues affecting children and families living with FASD in the Fitzroy Valley community, the action taken will ripple out to the surrounding communities. The community's response to the concerns that highlighted the prevalence of FASD is a model that has been recognised nationally and internationally. The model focuses on working with Essential Partners to build the evidence, seek out solutions, explore what works and advocate for improved access to holistic therapeutic supports for all.

The Marulu Knowledge Hub

We are committed to working with others and support them with the knowledge and understandings we have gained. We will document the work we have done and develop resources designed to support other communities in their journey to construct a community response based on what has been shown to work.

To achieve this and more, the Marulu Unit will evolve into the Marulu Knowledge Hub. The Marulu Unit and Nindilingarri will establish



this centre together with the support of the Telethon Kids Institute, Sydney University and other organisations, such as service providers. Collectively we have significant expertise, have a lot to learn from each other and are continuously building on the evidence and sharing knowledge and understandings in ways that will assist and inform others.

The Marulu Knowledge Hub will drive community-based research to understand and provide action on issues relating to FASD and ELT—in health, education, justice and policing, training and employment and child protection. By identifying the strengths and building on community solutions this research will provide our community leaders, people living in the Fitzroy Valley, practitioners, academics and service providers with the knowledge and ability to respond to challenges and concerns they face, as they work with the community towards the rebuilding of a healthy, thriving Fitzroy Valley.

The Marulu Unit will also be strengthened as it forms a hub that responds to community priorities through continuous engagement with the communities of the Fitzroy Valley.

The Marulu Strategy articulates a flexible, responsive, iterative approach that strives to **Make FASD History** and strengthen community capacity, resilience and wellbeing. The Marulu Unit will communicate the strategy's initiatives and key messages to Fitzroy Valley communities using innovative technologies. It will bring local Indigenous knowledge and the lived experiences of people living with FASD and ELT to program design and delivery processes. Local contextualised knowledge will assist with setting priorities and establishing the advocacy focus. The Marulu Unit will become a hub that supports Essential Partners to facilitate community engagement and support research practices, which will in turn enable quality community input, maximising the strategy's outcomes and successes.

MARULU PARTNERS

The Marulu Strategy is a collaborative initiative between Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre and Nindilingarri Cultural Health Service and a diverse group of essential partners working together to **Make FASD History**.



Our relationship with a range of organisations continues as we develop ongoing connections to promote safe living and **Make FASD History**.



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