

# OUR JOURNEY, OUR STORY

April, 2021  
Newsletter

## THE STORY SO FAR...



The team is currently working with five headspace centres and their lead agencies: Broome in the Kimberley, the Northam satellite headspace in the Wheatbelt, and Osborne Park, Joondalup and Midland in the Perth metropolitan area.

*"We need to get a **big picture on youth mental health** and how we as Elders and agencies can support them best in dealing with that mental health and trying to overcome it or what ever how to deal with it in a **good way.**"*

*Elder co-researcher*

During the COVID-19 restrictions video conferencing enabled the baseline data interviews to be completed for Broome, Joondalup, Osborne Park and Midland. Northam baseline data collection is planned. Video conferencing with senior staff at each headspace centre and their respective lead agency has supported relationships and connection. Non-Aboriginal participants have described how engaging in the project (meetings, Storying, On Country) is helping them to slow down, focus on relationships (professionally and personally), and establish a greater connection to Country and place.

We acknowledge the Nyoongar and Yawuru peoples as the custodians of the lands we are working. We thank the communities who guide and support our work on their Country.

*"We always talk about ourselves from a deficit approach and I think that **there's just so much strength within all of us...**"* Young co-researcher

### Website & Protocol Paper

A project website, developed by Research Associate Amanda Sibosado, is about to be launched. The website will incorporate all the Looking Forward Team's projects including Our Journey, Our Story. The *British Medical Journal (BMJ Open)* has just accepted a protocol paper describing how the Our Journey, Our Story project works with the Community.



# Storying

*"It's been a great experience for me, I have never been able to sit like this in a group and be able to listen and tell my story and its made me open up more."* Young co-researcher

*"Services need to have more education, they are disconnect on the levels that they could be to really understand what's going on in the kids and why they're broken, and why they have so much anger."* Young co-researcher



## Activities at each site:

Baseline data collection is complete for Broome, Osborne Park, Joondalup and Midland sites.

**Broome:** Storying (October, 2020), co-design workshops one and two and a Youth Services Forum (requested by Yawuru Elders) February, 2021. Elders in collaboration with local filmmaker and Orygen First Nation's representative Scott Wilson created a [video](#) inviting local youth services to participate.

Further co-design workshops are scheduled for late April, and the On Country will occur after the wet season.

**Osborne Park & Joondalup:** These sites have the same lead agency (Black Swan Health) and are working together. The On Country was completed December, 2020, and Storying in February, 2021. The first co-design workshop is scheduled for mid-April.

**Midland and Northam satellite headspaces:** Storying and On Country are being planned.

The **Early Psychosis Program:** works across all metropolitan sites and is engaged in Storying and On Country activities. Orygen staff have been attending regular project meetings and, although based in Melbourne, some staff are planning to attend the Midland On Country and Storying following travel restrictions being lifted.

## Relationships, connections and commitment

The project mat (pictured top right during a Storying session) has become a symbol—particularly in Broome—for the relationships and connections that have been built and the collective commitment to making changes to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Aboriginal young people.



**Pictured above:** the young co-researchers who are working with Osborne Park, Joondalup and Midland headspaces and their respective lead agencies.

*"One of the biggest words in mental health or any support agencies is outreach but if you have a look at these agencies, they don't outreach, they sit in the office and they 'in reach'; wait for people to come to them. So **there is not enough going out and sitting on the grass, sitting on the dirt and going out on country with young people.**"* Elder co-researcher