



MARTU YIRNA MAPARN NGURRA  
NEWMAN, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

*Miralarringu*  
*'it becomes visible'*



# contents



**“Sometimes man is OK. Sometimes man is a problem.  
They get jealous with their wives, they have too much grog.  
It’s getting worse.  
Even the kids watching their mother and father when they’re small.  
I’ve seen what’s been happening and it’s no good.”**

**Martu Senior Lore Man Mr. Colin Peterson  
from the Kunawarritji community.**

**Martu Yirna Maparn Ngurra means Aboriginal Male’s Healing Centre in the Martu Wangka. It literally means ‘Martu Males’s Magic Camp. Martu Wangka is an Aboriginal language spoken by the Martu people in and around the Gibson and Great Sandy Desert area of Western Australia including Newman.**

#### Cover Artwork

The cover art work is by Mr. Colin Peterson. Mr Peterson is a Martu Senior Lore Man and a senior cultural advisor and AMHC board member.

The artwork on the front cover is the ‘Yirna Ngurra’ which means Men’s Camp.  
The artwork on the back cover is ‘Jaramarra’ which means Dreamtime Rainmaker.

<b>Chief Justice Mr. Wayne Martin’s foreward</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Chief Judge Mr. Stephen Thackray’s foreward</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>It stops with me: Mr Devon Cuimara</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Miralarringu - Our Vision</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The challenge</b>	<b>11</b>
Intergenerational cycles of family violence	11
Aboriginal familes and communities	11
Current programs are not effective	12
The economic cost	13
<b>Why the AMHC?</b>	<b>14</b>
The need to heal	14
The integration of clinical methods and Aboriginal culture and lore	15
Connectedness with the land	16
The value case for the AMHC	16
<b>Our ask</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>‘Kangaroo Dreaming’</b>	<b>21</b>
The collaborative design process	22
The location	25
Proposed centre	26
Landscape and enrionment	27
<b>Design considerations</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Thankyou to our partners and supporters</b>	<b>31</b>

# foreword

The impact of family violence is devastating on victims, their children, their families and communities.

Although family violence occurs across cultural and socio-economic groups, the data suggests that the impact on Aboriginal Australians is significantly higher than on non-Aboriginal Australians. Dispossession and the injustices of the past have created cycles of intergenerational trauma, disadvantage and violence.

As a judge of the Supreme Court, I have travelled to regional Western Australia to preside over homicide trials involving the death of an Aboriginal person at the hands of their partner far too often. Substance abuse, especially misuse of alcohol, mental health issues and a prior history of violence are common features of such cases.

In serious instances of family violence, the courts will, and should, respond with appropriately severe sentences. However, the safety and well-being of victims is paramount, and in less serious cases the safety of victims in the medium to longer term is not always improved by a custodial sentence. Sometimes the best way to protect victims is to respond in a way which maximises the prospect of behavioural change and reduces the risk of reoffending, increasing the prospect that the family can reunite and live peacefully together. That outcome is in the best interests of all members of the family and of the community.

Intervention programs, like the AMHC, will enable men that use violence to live in supervised accommodation with access to rehabilitation programs. There is a body of evidence that the most effective programs are those that are culturally appropriate and are designed and delivered by Aboriginal people. The AMHC is such a program.

I am very pleased to support the AMHC and to serve as a patron. I wish Devon and the team every success.

**The Hon. Chief Justice Wayne Stewart Martin AC  
Chief Justice of Western Australia**

# foreword

One in six Australian women experience violence at the hands of their partner. The effects of this on families can be seen every day in the Family Court, where violence is the most common denominator in disputes about children.

The impact of family violence on children is profound and lifelong. It severely affects both them and their carer, leading to poor physical and mental health, and is a leading cause of homelessness. The effects are particularly severe for Aboriginal children, since Aboriginal mothers are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence than non-Aboriginal mothers.

The long-term answer is not to be found in punishment, but in addressing the underlying causes and attempting to rehabilitate the perpetrators, who themselves have usually been victims of violence. There are programs seeking to achieve this goal in metropolitan areas but there are major gaps in the remote areas of our vast state.

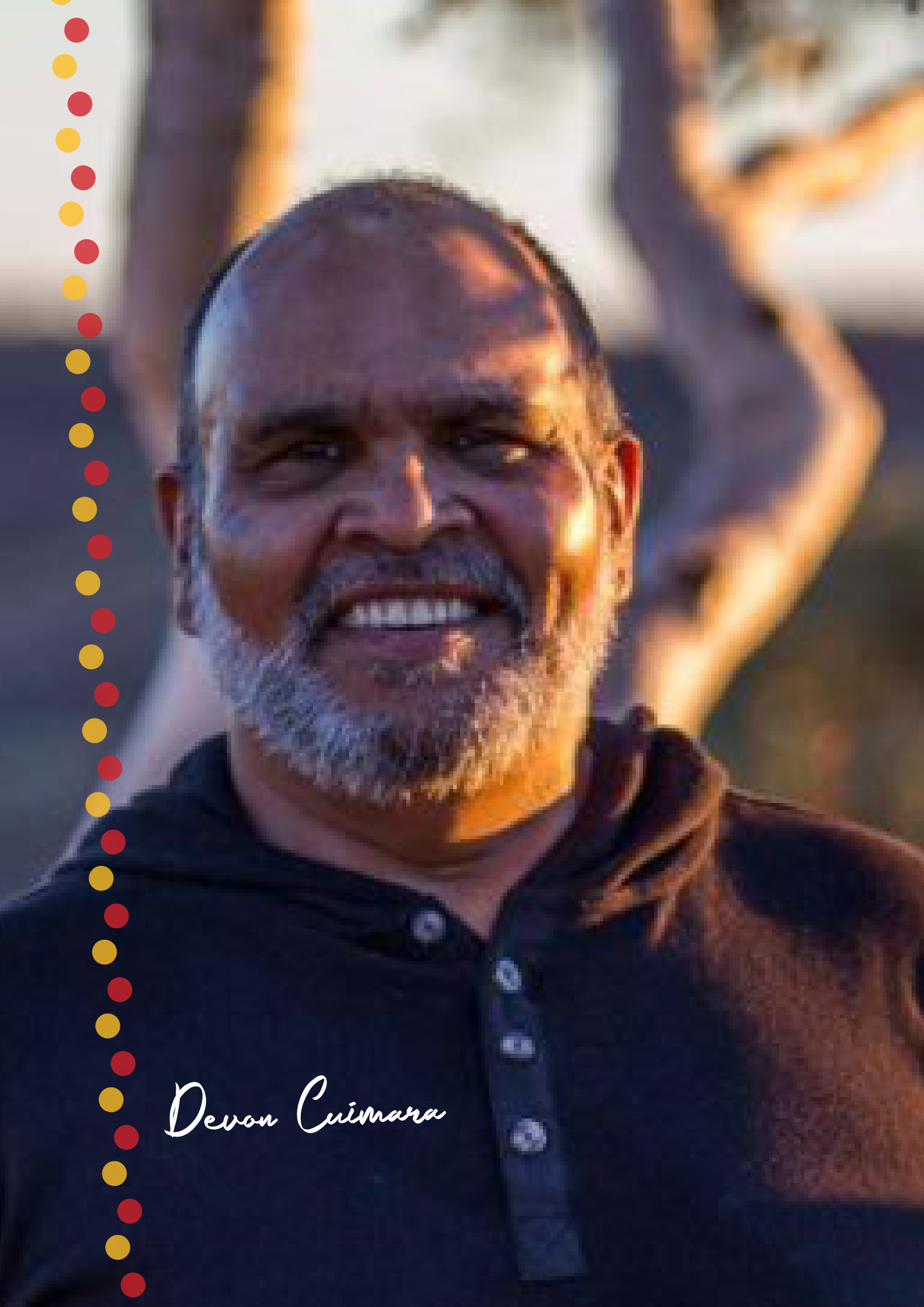
Culturally appropriate local services are desperately needed for Aboriginal men who have inherited the whirlwind of generations of repression, dispossession and rampant racism.

I am proud to be associated with the Aboriginal Males Healing Centre and the highly professional drive being led by Mr Devon Cuimara and his board to build a unique facility to house perpetrators who would otherwise end up in prison, separated from their families, their community and their land.

It is a project worthy of support of government, private enterprise and citizens who want to build a better future for our precious aboriginal children.

**The Hon. Justice Stephen Thackray  
Chief Judge of the Family Court of Western Australia**





*Devon Cuimara*

# *it stops with me*

My vision to establish the Aboriginal Male's Healing Centre comes from seeing violence in my own family and in the Aboriginal community in general. It goes back to my father and my grandfather.

There were generations when police wouldn't worry about a complaint from any women.

It was something that was seen and not heard, like we were as children. I had to protect my mother, I had to protect my brother, my sister and myself. I was more my father's keeper. You sort of become him in your mother's eyes.

I left an abusive home and started abusing my partner (now former partner) until I managed to change my ways 20 years ago. My attempts to use mainstream rehabilitation services fell flat and so I actively worked through the issues myself.

I did this through a process of self healing (using 'my HALF'<sup>1</sup> in being accountable and responsible) along with abstinence of violence.

I did my own rehabilitation which was to just stop. I didn't do any of it. I didn't smoke, I didn't use drugs. It's not our way. We weren't born like that.

I learnt it – so if I could learn it, I could un-learn it.

It's been 20 years since I started on my healing journey.

**Devon Cuimara**  
**Founder and CEO**  
**AMHC**

<sup>1</sup> My HALF is an acronym that stands for needing to have: Humility, Acceptance, Love, and Forgiveness





*Aboriginal Males Healing Centre Board & Volunteers*

*miralarringu<sup>1</sup>*

## **Our Vision**

**It is our vision that all Aboriginal women and children live safe and healthy lives free of family violence.**

The Aboriginal Male's Healing Centre Strong Spirit Strong Families Strong Culture Inc (AMHC) is a not for profit based in Newman in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. AMHC will offer an alternative to incarceration for men that use violence against women and children. The centre aims to heal these men and break the cycle of violence; and provide a safe and secure place for women and children. The safety of women and children is our paramount concern.

The AMHC will offer a 12-month residential healing program incorporating western clinical care and rehabilitation methods (Duluth model) underpinned by Aboriginal culture and lore as the key healing element. All programs are developed and delivered by respected Elders in collaboration with the clinical team. The AMHC will offer a holistic approach to healing over an extended period giving enough time for the men to develop life skills, a sense of responsibility, meaningful employment, good physical health and emotional and spiritual strength. Throughout the healing process, AMHC will aim to protect the safety of women and children by providing a safe and secure environment.

The build of the residential centre in Newman is a large-scale green-field project. The architectural and engineering design is well underway. We are currently seeking funding and support for the capital works and the ongoing operation of the centre. The longer-term aim is for the centre to be self-sustaining through enterprise and partnerships with business.

While this is happening, the AMHC has established a drop-in counselling and support centre in Newman for the immediate benefit of the community. This drop-in centre is located at the Parnpajinya Aboriginal Community Reserve – a town based reserve in Newman; and opened in March 2018. Parnpajinya is presently characterised by overcrowded and rundown housing. The drop-in centre will be one of the first initiatives to revitalise that town reserve. It is proposed that, in line with the opening of the AMHC residential program, Parnpajinya will become a safe, secure and sacred place for women and their families escaping family violence – notably the partners and family of the men undergoing healing at the AMHC.

The AMHC project currently relies on the generous support and hard work of our patrons, the community, business and government. For the residential centre, the Shire of East Pilbara has kindly agreed to transfer a well-located and culturally significant parcel of land to AMHC. PM+D Architects and Matthews MacDonald Architects have developed a conceptual design and drawings (with significant input from local Martu people); and Arup Engineering has provided engineering design and advice. Indigenous Community Volunteers has provided broad support through experts working pro bono. The feasibility study is near completion thanks to the tireless work of these and other partners.

Our immediate next steps are a detailed design and fundraising for the capital works.

<sup>1</sup> Miralarringu (Our Vision) means 'to become visible' in Martu Wanka



amhc board with our clinical managers



# The challenge

**Violence against women and children is a crime and a fundamental breach of human rights. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing violence over the course of their life.**

The AMHC has a big vision – that all Aboriginal women and children live safe and healthy lives free of family violence. This is no small task. To do this we must:

- Build the capacity and strength of individuals, families and communities to prevent, respond to, and recover from, family violence.
- Break the cycle of inter-generational family violence.
- De-normalise violence in Aboriginal communities.
- Nurture the spirit, resilience and cultural identity of Aboriginal people.

Our primary concern is the safety of the women and children. The AMHC is a prevention, rehabilitation and support program for men that use violence. Reduced family violence and incarceration will, in turn, improve health, social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people.

## Intergenerational cycles of family violence

The impact of family violence on women and children is significant. Women experience physical and emotional trauma, depression and anxiety, homelessness and poverty. Children suffer from inadequate brain development and learning problems; and are likely to think and act differently to children that have been raised in a safe and secure environment.

The long-term impact is dysfunction and disadvantage – poor health, low participation in employment, alcohol and drug abuse and criminal activity<sup>1</sup>. Family and community networks can be disrupted; leading to a loss of culture, identity and connection to the land.

Family violence creates intergenerational cycles in which trauma and the propensity for violence is passed from parent to child. For families and communities caught up in this cycle, violence can become normalised and an expected part of family life.

Children are **3x** more likely to be removed from their families if a parent is, or has been **incarcerated**.

**48% BOYS** aged 0-10 yrs who were separated from their families due to incarceration were convicted as an adult.

**20%** of Indigenous children have at least **one parent in prison**.

## Aboriginal families and communities

An enormous impact of colonialization and dispossession is that Indigenous people are the most disadvantaged group in Australia<sup>2</sup>. Family violence is not something that is constrained by culture, ethnicity or social-economic status. It is absurd to suggest that family violence is peculiar to Aboriginal families and communities.

<sup>1</sup> Healing Foundation, healingfoundation.org.au

<sup>2</sup> Closing the Gap: Prime Ministers Report 2017. Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.



Intergenerational trauma from colonialization, dispossession of land, forced child removal, racism and discrimination has resulted in Aboriginal people being considerably over-represented as users, and victims, of family violence.

It is difficult to accurately determine the prevalence of family violence in Aboriginal communities because a lot goes unreported (KPMG 2017); but the recorded data is damning.



**Current programs are not effective**

An emphasis solely on criminal justice responses to family violence is an ineffective solution to the problem of family violence. The safety and wellbeing of the women and children is not always best served by a custodial sentence. Incarceration simply removes the men from the community for a period of time and then returns the men to the community without effective rehabilitation.



The impact of incarceration on individuals, families and communities is enormous. Those who have been incarcerated and their families are at greater risk of poor housing, financial stress, low levels of educational attainment, poor employment prospects and poor health and wellbeing<sup>3</sup>.

For Indigenous people, connection to culture serves as a protective factor and helps build resilience and strength in identity. The social exclusion and isolation through incarceration may lead to a loss of connectedness to culture. Unfortunately, the delivery of culturally aware and responsive programs has been found to be intermittent in prisons.

There is a clear need for both cultural strengthening services that help cultivate a strong Indigenous identity and regular opportunities to participate in cultural activities.

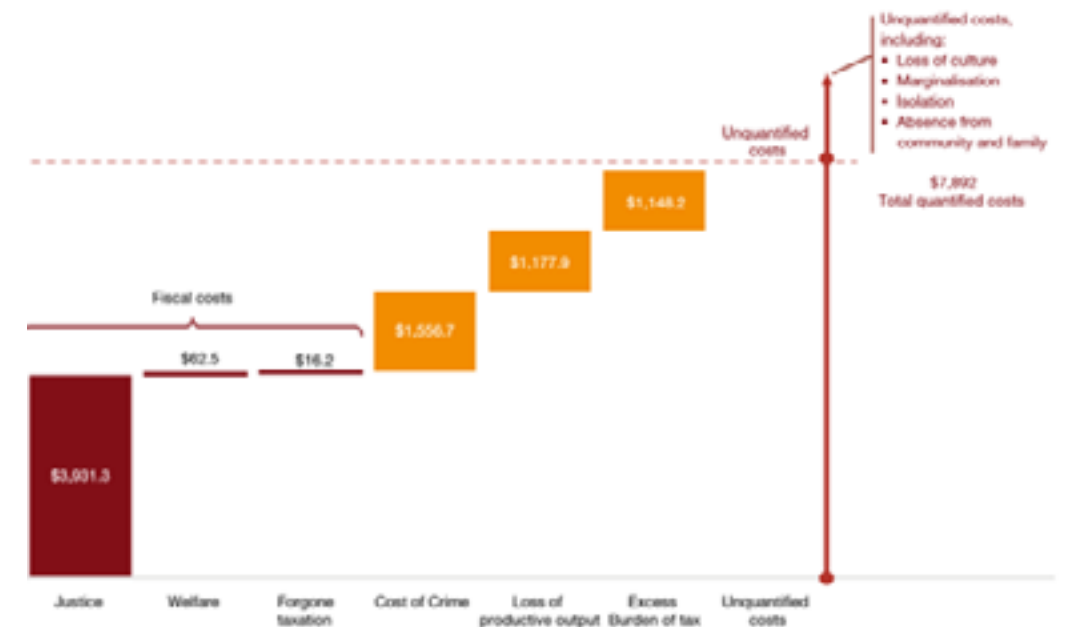
**The economic cost**

Family violence and incarceration comes at an enormous cost to the Australian economy<sup>4</sup>. In addition, there are numerous other devastating 'qualitative' impacts on Aboriginal families and communities.

The impact of family violence on the Australian economy is \$22 billion each year. A further \$1.2 billion may be added because of underreporting by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women<sup>5</sup>.



Indigenous incarceration costs the Australian economy \$7.9 billion each year. If nothing is done this will rise to \$9.7 billion in 2020 and \$19.8 billion by 2040.



Estimated costs of Indigenous incarceration 2016. Excerpt from Indigenous incarceration: Unlock the facts, PWC.

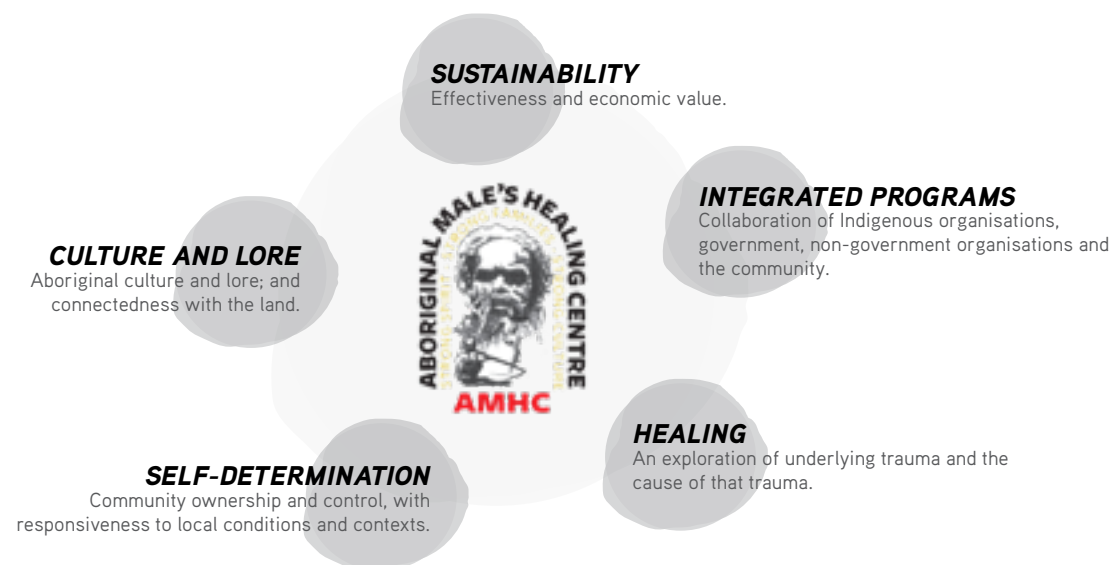
3 Australian Government, Australian Law Reform Commission, Pathways to Justice—An Inquiry into the Incarceration Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, December 2017  
 4 See both Indigenous Incarceration: Unlock the Facts, PWC (2017); and The Cost of Family Violence in Victoria, KPMG (2017).  
 5 The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia, KPMG, May 2016. Prepared for the Department of Social Services.

# why the amhc?

## The need to heal

There is currently a patchwork of programs to address family violence in Aboriginal communities; but there remains a lack of coordination and consistency in approaches. The cycle of violence persists.

To address the gap, there is accord among practitioners that a holistic system-wide approach is needed. Self-determination for Indigenous people is internationally regarded as the most effective factor in producing better health and social outcomes for Indigenous people. Accordingly, the following principles are core to the AMHC.



In response to disproportionately high rates of Aboriginal incarceration, the Australian Law Reform Commission recommends a 'justice reinvestment' approach. Justice Reinvestment is the notion that there should be a redirection of criminal justice resources from incarceration to strategies that can better address the causes of offending.

The AMHC model encompasses a residential healing centre and an outreach program focussing on early intervention and prevention. The proposed 28-bed residential facility will offer a culturally appropriate location and facility incorporating accommodation, training and a range of healing programs for the men over a 12-month period. The AMHC will aim to provide meaningful training and employment opportunities (including as future healing counsellors).

The program is designed in accordance with the findings of a significant bank of research conducted by the AMHC over the past 5+ years and reflects the principles of the Duluth Model:

- Take the blame off the victim and place the accountability for abuse squarely on the offender.
- Court mandated and referred.
- Offer non-custodial change programs for the offenders.
- Create a coordinated community response to program development and delivery; with ongoing engagement to close the gaps and improve responses to family violence.

Men can enter the program on a voluntary basis or be referred by the courts. The demand for the AMHC is anticipated to be high. Accordingly, residents referred by the courts will be prioritised.

Under Western Australian law, there are various ways in which the AMHC program can be mandated by the courts such as: a condition of bail; a condition of a Community Based Order or Intensive Supervision Order or deferring a sentence for a period during which the offender can be subject to conditions.

## The integration of clinical methods with Aboriginal culture and lore

Modernity presents a difficult challenge for many Aboriginal men and their sustaining of Yirna Jukurrapa (*men's dreaming*). Aboriginal men often find it hard to get non-Aboriginal people to understand and respect their cultural values. Programs that are imposed without the development of community relationships and which are not culturally 'safe' places, prove difficult to develop and sustain.

It is recognised that programs to tackle the devastating impact of family violence in Aboriginal communities are often not effective due to this lack of 'cultural competence'<sup>1</sup>. Cultural competence means behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together to work effectively in cross-cultural situations<sup>2</sup>.

It is widely accepted that connecting to culture should be a key component of Indigenous programs and is 'significantly associated with non-recidivism'<sup>3</sup>. There is clear recognition of the importance of culturally safe interventions, 'which centre on culturally based forms of identity, belonging, stability and protection which create meaning and connection for Aboriginal peoples. This is viewed as the central element in building resilience, meaning and purpose for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the entire community, not solely in the criminal justice system.'

Underpinning the development and implementation of the AMHC model is Aboriginal Culture and Lore as the key healing element. Controlled by Aboriginal people, the AMHC will be developed and delivered by Elders and offers an opportunity for Aboriginal men who use violence to remain on country and reconnect with their culture.

The AMHC will offer a holistic approach to healing, over an extended period so that at the end of the healing process the men will have life skills, a sense of responsibility, the opportunity of meaningful employment, and good physical health and be emotionally and spiritually strong. A 'core paradigm' model.

In remote areas like the Pilbara, English is often the second language and men may not be familiar with a clinical environment. Accordingly, AMHC:

- Identifies, acknowledges and consults with senior lore men and community male elders.
- Gains local knowledge from men's groups.
- Plans services with input from local men.
- Involves outreach services in the community.

Aboriginal men can find it hard to open-up and discuss personal and sensitive issues, particularly family violence and sexual abuse matters. AMHC will offer a safe, private and comfortable environment that supports open and free dialogue, where more care can be taken in approaching sensitive issues.

1 Australian Government, Australian Law Reform Commission, Pathways to Justice—An Inquiry into the Incarceration Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, December 2017

2 Council of Australian Governments, Prison to Work Report (2016)

3 The impact of indigenous cultural identity and cultural engagement on violent offending; Stephane M. Shepherd, Rosa Hazel Delgado, Juanita Sherwood, and Yin Paradies; 2017



## Connectedness with the land

The location of the residential AMHC is on Nyiyaparli land and was selected for its cultural significance. Aboriginal Elders are working in close collaboration with our architects and engineers to design a residential centre and healing environment that enables the men to develop a connectedness with the land.

Remarkably, an ancient path for Aboriginal men passes through the site. Nearby Round Hill is an integral reference point for the program along with other culturally significant sites such as Aboriginal burial grounds and a nearby meeting place. There are also more recent historical sites associated with past pastoral station activities where many of the Elders and their family members worked; as well as the remnants of an early government ration depot. The Elders wish to preserve these sites.

The project team certainly recognises a strong element of serendipity and happy coincidence in the coming about of this site for the facility, which was positively supported by the Shire of East Pilbara. The forces of nature are strong!

*For more information on the importance that AMHC places on connectedness with the land – please refer to the Kangaroo Dreaming section of this document (pg 21). This section outlines the architectural and landscape design of the AMHC.*

## Evaluation and monitoring

There is always debate around the effectiveness of responses to family violence. Accordingly, the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the program is paramount.

The success of AMHC will be determined by the extent to which policy outcomes are achieved and how they have affected stakeholders. AMHC will identify and map baseline information as well as ensure that ongoing access to consistent data sources will be available through monitoring over the life of AMHC. Data will be quantitative (hard or numerical data) or qualitative (soft or categorical).

The credibility of our evaluation will be enhanced through sound evidence, high professional and ethical standards, and the engagement of independent evaluators. AMHC is aware that an effective evaluation is the result of a planning process over the life of the initiative.

A number of people and organisations have agreed to develop the monitoring and evaluation framework and carry-out the monitoring; including important contributions from Clear Horizons, Dr. Mick Adams at ECU, Prof. Victoria Hovane at ANU and LotteryWest.

## The value case for the AMHC – Justice Reinvestment

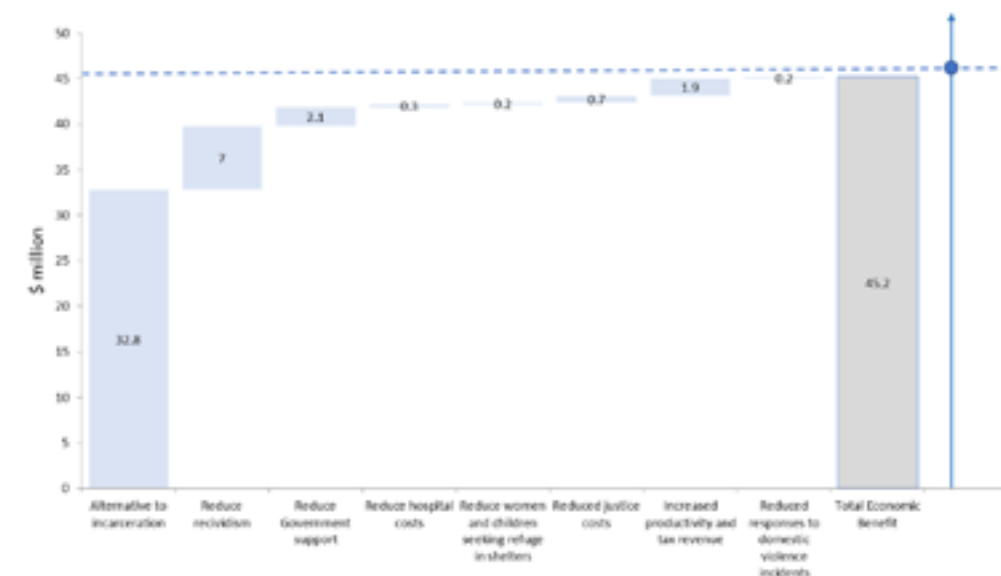
In addition to having an immediate social impact on the Pilbara community, the AMHC has a compelling economic value case such as through ‘healing not incarceration’.



According to PWC, the most effective programs modelled are those described as *targeted intervention*. The AMHC is a targeted intervention program.

The implementation of the AMHC will require a sizeable capital investment. However, this cost must be considered against the economic and social cost of family violence and incarceration.

It is estimated that **AMHC will bring a total of \$45 million of economic benefits**. These benefits flow from reducing incarceration, recidivism, reliance on government support, use of hospitals, the number of women seeking refuge and court costs; and increased productivity.



The \$45 million assumes a 20% improvement in re-offending rates for those who undertake the AMHC program compared to those entering the prison system. If the degree of success in reducing rates of recidivism relative to the prison system is 10%, instead of 20%, the economic benefits would be reduced to \$39 million. By contrast, a 30% relative improvement would generate about \$51 million in economic benefits. The flow on effects of reduced recidivism onto the second generations may result in even further economic benefit.

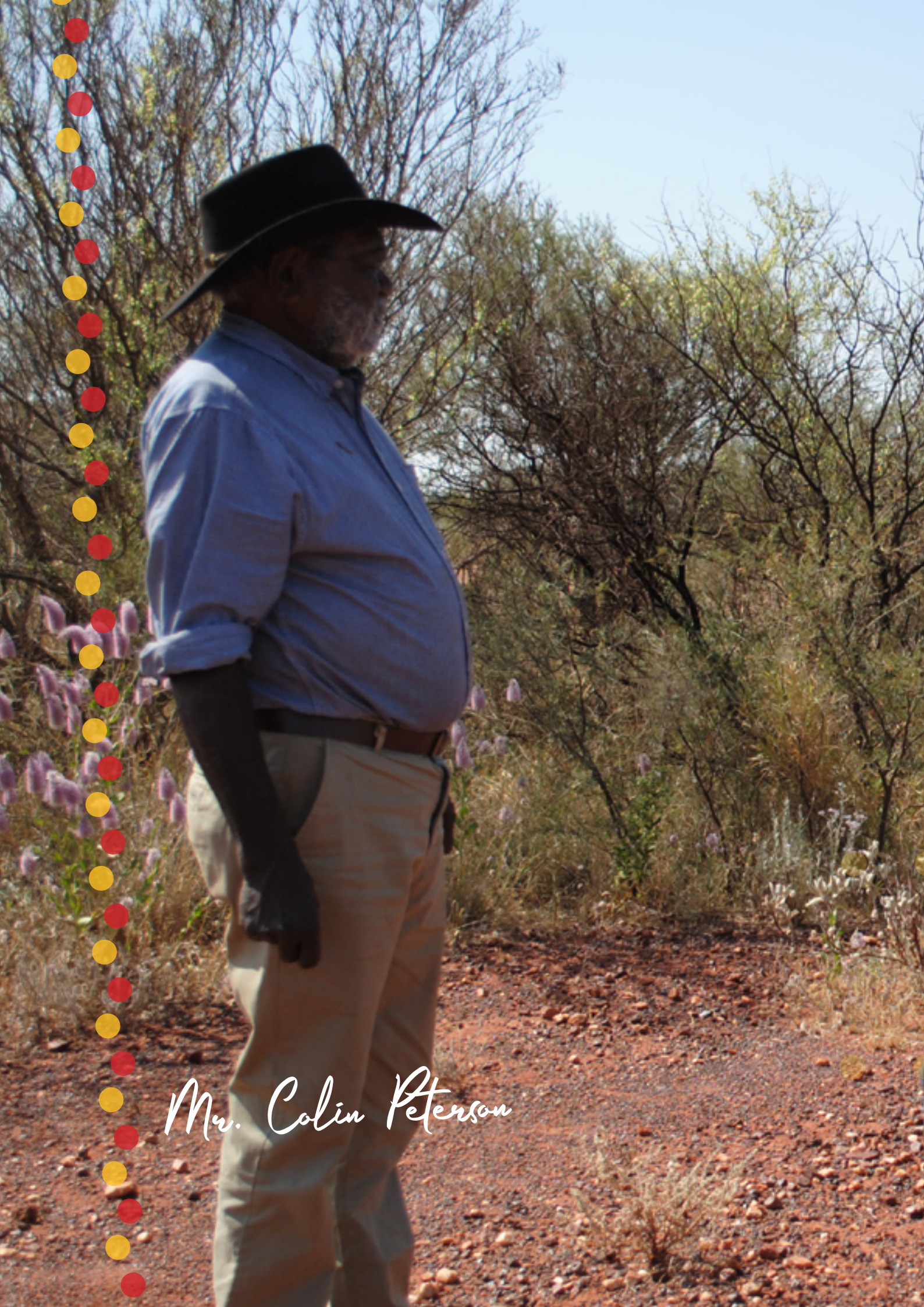
It is important to note that the AMHC is a Justice Reinvestment. This means that expensive criminal justice resources are redirected from incarceration to a program framework that directly addresses the causes of offending. Diversion programs like the AMHC are a more cost-effective approach to improving the health and well-being of Indigenous people and reducing the disproportionate rates of incarceration<sup>4</sup>.

## Indigenous employment

In order to enhance the economic and social outcomes for local Indigenous people in the Pilbara, the AMHC will use Indigenous owned firms for construction and services; employ Indigenous people on the project and during the operation of the centre; and support skill enhancement and higher education opportunities.

<sup>4</sup> To highlight the effectiveness of justice reinvestment, the Australian Law Reform Commission (2018) has recommended that establishment of an independent justice reinvestment body "...to promote the reinvestment of resources from the criminal justice system to community-led, place-based initiatives that address the drivers of crime and incarceration, and to provide expertise on the implementation of justice reinvestment."





# our ask

**The aim of the AMHC is to get this vision operational.**

Since inception, the AMHC under the leadership of Mr. Devon Cuimara and with the support of many generous individuals and organisations, has achieved significant successes.



All of this contributes significantly to our target. However, the most challenging aspects of the project are yet to come. AMHC recently engaged an independent consulting firm to estimate the construction cost of the AMHC. The firm estimated \$40 million. This excludes non-construction costs and operational costs.

To be able to turn the AMHC model and design into a reality, we are looking for a collaborative funding arrangement involving: the community, all levels of government, business funding and private donations.

## We need your help

### FUNDING

A funding commitment or contribution to the \$40 million Capital Development Fund; and over \$3 million per annum for ongoing operations.

### SUPPORT

Pro-bono involvement, services and resources from professional people and organisations. The provision of infrastructure, materials and construction on a pro bono or discounted basis.

### COMMUNITY

Community support to raise the profile of the AMHC.

### DONATE

Help alleviate family violence in Aboriginal communities through an individual or company donation.

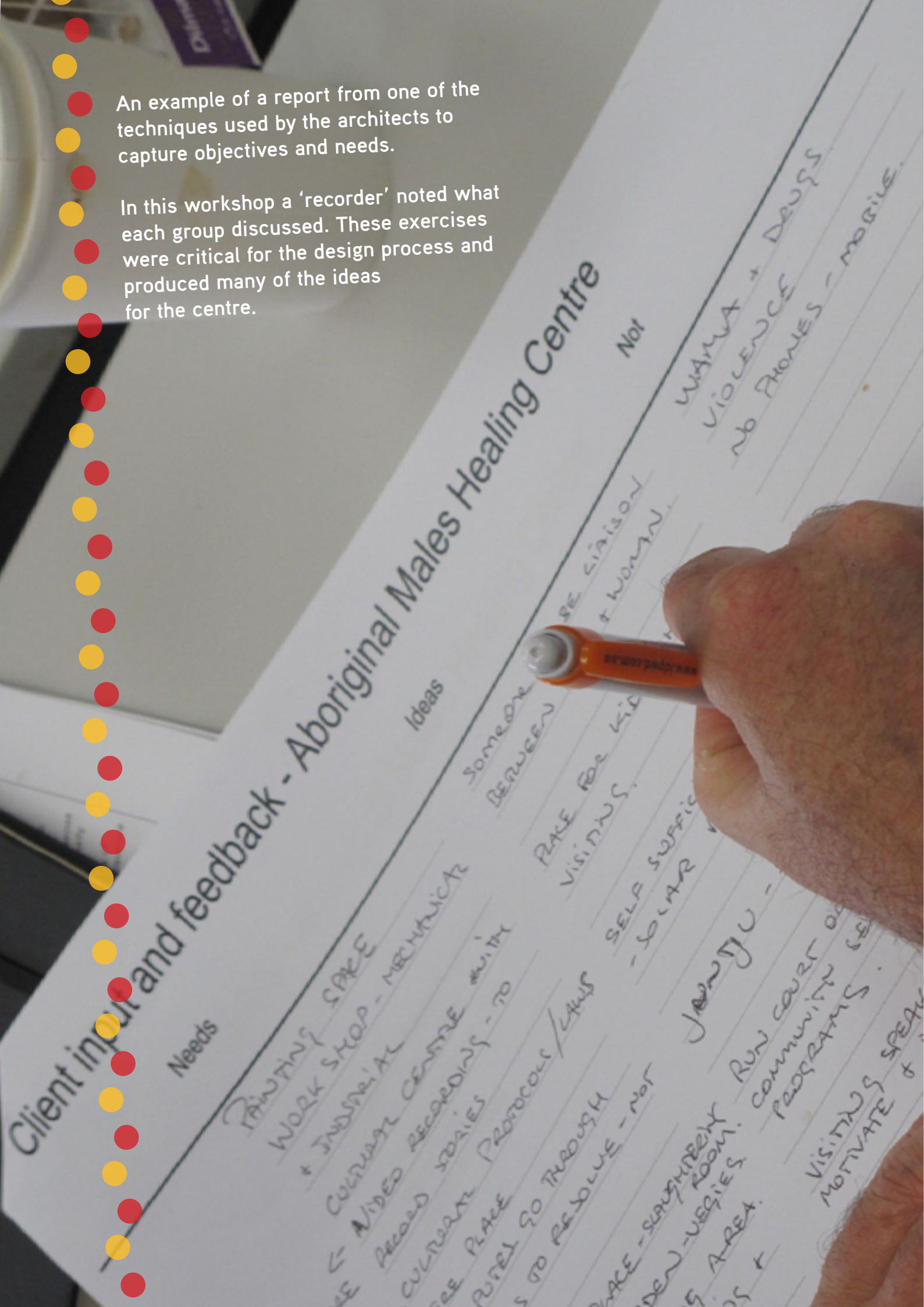
*Mr. Colin Peterson*

The AMHC Board welcomes individuals, industry and government to contribute to this important community initiative as our 'partners in development', with due recognition to reflect the level of funding and support. This recognition will be in the form of naming rights for selected buildings of the AMHC facilities, or in the press, on our website and social media and through our regular engagement with political and business leaders.



An example of a report from one of the techniques used by the architects to capture objectives and needs.

In this workshop a 'recorder' noted what each group discussed. These exercises were critical for the design process and produced many of the ideas for the centre.



# kangaroo dreaming

**“For Aboriginal peoples, country is much more than a place. Rock, tree, river, hill, animal, human – all were formed of the same substance by the Ancestors who continue to live in land, water, sky. Country is filled with relations speaking language and following Law, no matter whether the shape of that relation is human, rock, crow, wattle. Country is loved, needed, and cared for, and country loves, needs, and cares for her peoples in turn. Country is family, culture, identity. Country is self.”<sup>1</sup>**

Serendipitously, the AMHC site is located on a significant dreaming path – Kangaroo Dreaming. This path is recognised as a male ceremonial pathway. This was raised as an important cultural connection to respect, recognise and interpret in the design of the centre and the centre’s program. This informed discussions around the use of art work, motifs and cultural materials; and influenced the location and layout of the buildings, the form and design of the buildings and the finishes and landscape.

Work continues on the detailed designs; but these factors have already been recognised in the current layout and design. The dreaming path passes through the site – beginning near the entry into the centre and continues to where the ancient path changes direction. It is this point that was selected as a gathering space. A built path will then head in a southerly direction (following the ancient path) to the “exit point” of the centre – through which residents who have completed their program pass back to their families and the community.

## The collaborative design process – human centred design

AMHC setup a project working group – a collaboration of our architects and engineers, traditional owners of the land and the local community. An early task of the working group was to identify the core objectives and establish a set of principles for the design.

In summary:

- Ensure a visual connection to significant cultural and environmental sites in the area – views, space between buildings and a sense of openness.
- An environmentally sensitive design of buildings, infrastructure and landscapes; considering energy and water efficiency, solar energy, constructability and maintainability.
- The use of decks and shaded areas keeping a theme appropriate to the Pilbara.
- Retain as much of the existing bush habitat and land form as possible.
- Ensure the use of local labour, businesses, equipment and other resources.
- Use local and on-site materials where effective and possible such as local timber for building, stone and rocks for paths and retaining walls, etc.

The desired outcome of the design is that the built and natural environment will enable the residents to connect with the land, the environment and the culturally significant aspects of the site; and promote a feeling of safety, protection and tranquillity. Collaboration has been the central plank of the project development process.

<sup>1</sup> Ambelin Kwaymullina, Seeing the Light: Aboriginal Law, Learning and Sustainable Living in Country, Indigenous Law Bulletin 2005.



# collaborative design process

## EARLY WORKING GROUP

In order for the design to appropriately satisfy the aims, objectives and needs of the AMHC it was important that the 'Project Development Process' be a collaboration with the traditional owners of the land and the AMHC Board. To facilitate this, AMHC has a long-standing relationship with the traditional owners and Elders and maintains significant engagement and consultation.

A series of workshops, each building on the progress of the other, have been conducted - facilitated by the Architects - starting with an open ended discussion and Q&A about needs, ideas and aspirations resulting in 'ideas maps'.

Further workshops will continue to be run with this team to finalise the design and determine the procurement and construction.



## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF DESIGN

These mock-ups subsequently became more structured - representing functional groupings and relationships and showing possible layout and building uses.

The dotted line indicates the ancient 'kangaroo dreaming' path which traversed through the site. The working group has purposefully ensured that the meeting places and other significant places are on this path.

## MOCK UP FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

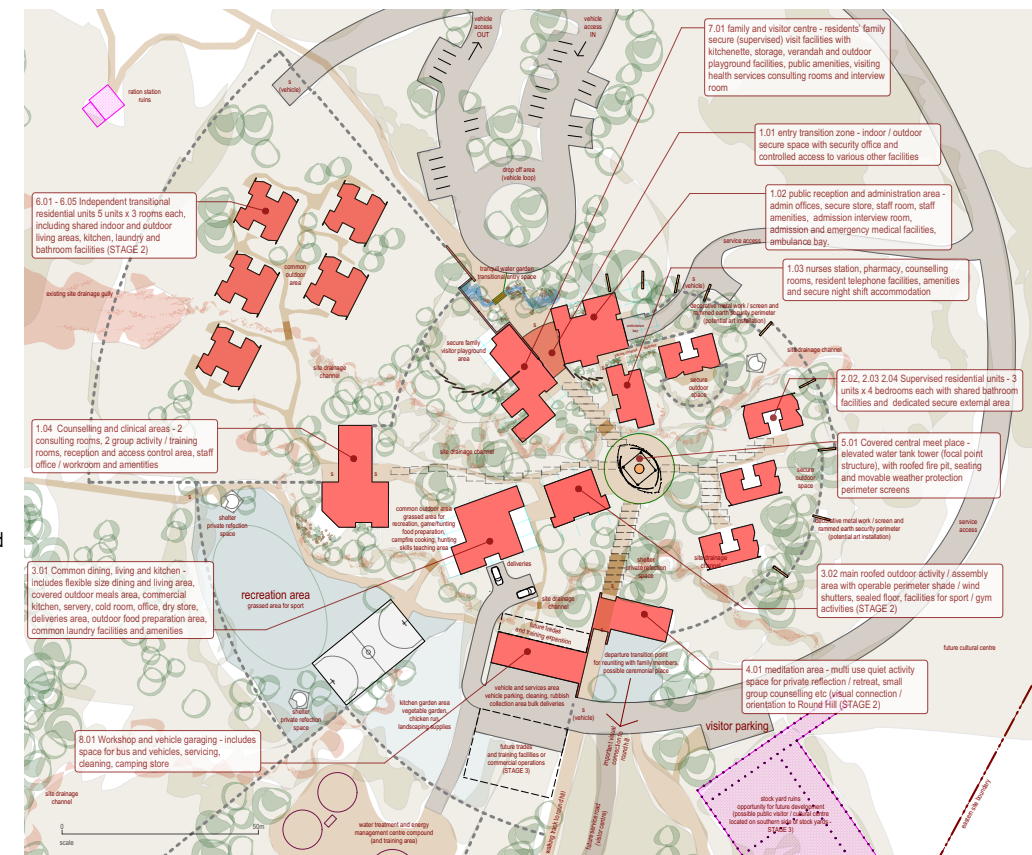
The importance of culture and strengthening cultural beliefs within the men resident in the centre was stressed. So too was the importance of the proposed physical environment being 'relevant' and 'familiar' to enhance the connection between culture and the environment.



## FORMAL CONCEPT DESIGN

Through these workshops and engagement with key stakeholders, the notional designs and layouts became more formal and formed the basis for the concept designs. The concept design is shown to the right.

The forces of nature are strong!





# location

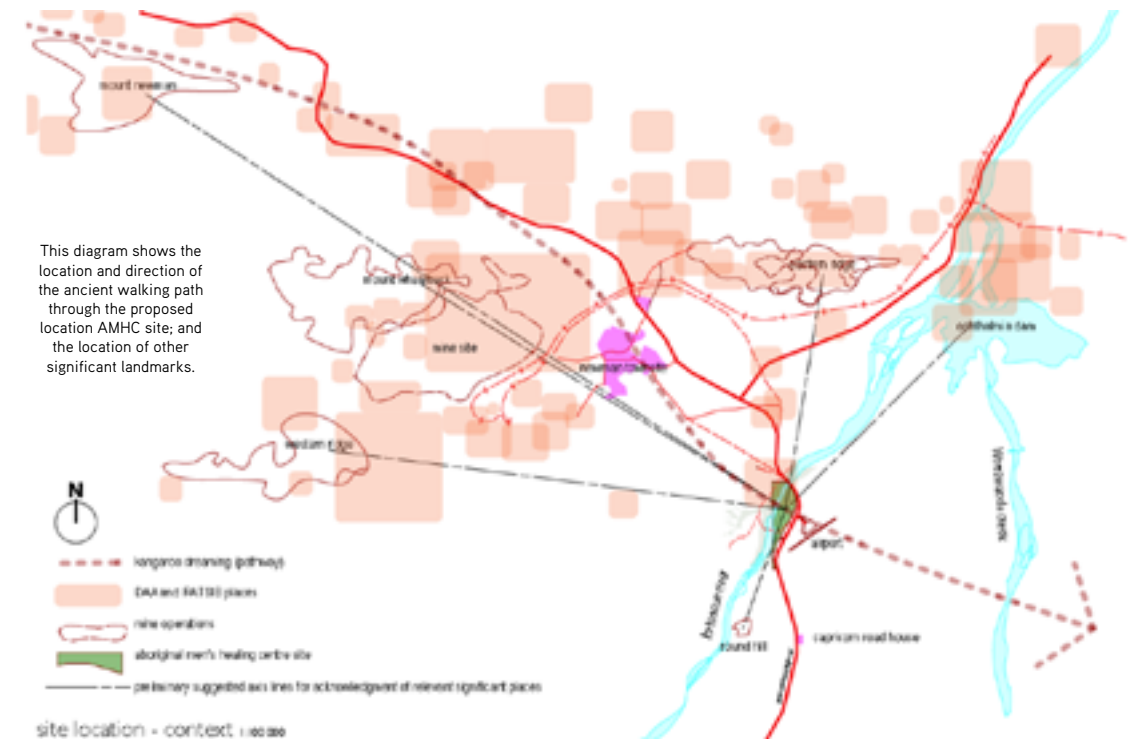
**The proposed site for the AMHC is on a parcel of land on the Great Northern Highway opposite Newman Airport and 10km from Newman town centre.**

Importantly, the site includes places of cultural and historical significance which have been incorporated into the architectural and landscape design of the AMHC; and will form key reference points for the healing process.

The East Pilbara Shire Council has been a strong supporter and ally of the AMHC. After an extensive search for a suitable site by Shire staff and our architects, the Shire has generously transferred a parcel of land previously held by the Shire to the AMHC. This extensive search considered important issues such as the availability of water, access, soil types, flooding impact, climate and development opportunities and constraints. While not all these criteria were satisfied some benefits of the proposed, and accepted, site include:

- Large parcel of land providing room for growth (only the eastern side of the river is capable of development)
- A broad and diverse natural environment and river frontage
- 10km SE of Newman. This offers distance from the community, yet easy to access for services.
- Opposite the Newman Airport and the proposed transport hub for potential employment and business affiliations.
- Potential easy access to water through the Shire and the adjacent airport.

The remnants of the old stockyards on the AMHC site. Many of the Elders and their families worked on these stockyards and have asked that these be maintained. Mr. Colin Peterson on site.



*On site*

Mr. Colin Peterson, Mr. Clive Sampson, Mr. Devon Cuimara,  
Mr. Paul McDonald (Matthews Macdonald Architects) and Mr.  
Geoff Barker (PM+D Architects)





# proposed centre

**A centre that satisfies the operational needs of an integrated 'healing' program for local Indigenous men naturally led the project working group to focus on what would be acceptable as culturally appropriate and responsive designs for the buildings, pathways, drainage systems, earthworks and landscape enhancement.**

Advancing this has involved an iterative process and different types and formats of engagement and communication over a 12 month period to date.

There is an emphasis on achieving environmentally sustainable design throughout, to restore much of the biodiversity of the area and support the bird and wildlife populations. The outcome is intended to be optimal in terms of: energy, maintenance, whole of life costs and dependence on scarce water resources.



A concept drawing of the entrance to the AMHC (Matthews McDonald Architects)

# landscape + environment

**The natural environment is an important aspect of the project for the traditional people and their connection to the land. The local Elders have a deep understanding and historical knowledge of the landscape, waterflow and climate; and these Elders contributed to the landscape design.**

Hard feature landscaping including pathways, meeting places, sitting areas and natural rock arrangements will be incorporated into the design to enhance the natural land features. Native trees will be planted more intensively to support the natural fauna and flora and to provide shade and protection from the wind.

There is a natural pattern of wet and dry seasons in Newman, with some of the site subject to seasonal flooding over the flat areas between Fortescue River and Great Northern Highway. The ground around the proposed development area drains through natural water courses or gullies that will be protected and further developed as a series of predominantly dry creek beds. These water courses will assist in draining the area and to enhance the natural feel.



The proposed site of the AMHC



# design considerations

“Sometimes man is OK. Sometimes man is a problem. They get jealous with their wives, they have too much grog. It’s getting worse. Even the kids watching their mother and father when they’re small. I’ve seen what’s been happening and it’s no good.”

Martu Senior Lore Man Mr. Colin Peterson  
from the Kunawarritji community.

**To ensure a successful project, through a collaborative design process, we established a set of principles and objectives based on the needs of the residents, the staff, visitors and regulators.**

## Space and design

The design of the facility should be efficient and cost effective; and consider:

- The environment, climate and comfort of users.
- Frequently used spaces and consideration of efficiency and comfort of staff and residents
- Safety and security of the residents, staff and visitors.
- Enable visual supervision by a limited workforce.
- Minimise redundant spaces.
- Multi-use of space.
- Hygiene and maintenance.

It is important to note that the facility is for men and that women will not be permitted within the centre. However, a half-way family centre will be an on-site secure place where the men can spend time with their families and support agencies.

## Therapeutic

An overarching objective is for the physical infrastructure to be integrated with the natural setting in a way that respects the environment and facilitates therapeutic outcomes. Terms such as: calming, peaceful, quiet, restful, relaxing, familiar, welcoming, understandable and healing were all raised by the working group.

In order to achieve these feelings the following ideas were raised:

- Familiar and non-institutional materials.
- Varied colours, textures, patterns and artwork to promote healing. Keeping in mind that some colours and patterns are inappropriate and can disorient or agitate.
- Maximise natural light.
- Visual and window outlook with long views and an aspect to country – restorative qualities.
- Direct access to outdoor areas and easy movement between spaces e.g. obvious travel paths, avoidance of glare, repetitive spatial configurations and excessive corridor lengths.
- Promote privacy and confidentiality.
- Design to mitigate any fear of sorcery and malevolent spirits e.g. avoid dark corners and windowless spaces.
- Empower residents to control his immediate environment as much as possible e.g. lighting, and temperature.
- Encourage the residents’ sense of competence by making spaces easy to find and use independently.

## Visual experience

The visual experience of the centre is a major factor in the healing process, the comfort of the residents and staff and AMHC’s public image.

Considerations include:

- Incorporate latest technology in lighting and performance glazing in creating naturally lit spaces (important in the context of natural materials and colours internally as these can absorb a high proportion of light compared to more common smooth artificial surfaces).
- Use of traditional materials, artwork and imagery to create a reassuring and familiar environment.
- Careful consideration of details, proportions, colour, and scale.
- Naturally bright open public and congregating spaces.
- Comfortable and intimately scaled nursing spaces, counselling spaces, treatment rooms and offices.
- Consistency of interior and exterior design qualities with context of the surrounding natural environment.

Recognition in the broader public realm as an important community initiative is critical. Accordingly, a visual impact and location are key objectives of the detailed design phase.

## Risk Management, safety and security

The centre must not unwittingly create opportunities for danger, violence or self-harm. The safety and well-being of residents, staff and visitors is a chief concern of the AMHC – in particular the mitigation of conflict and self-harm.

The focus is ‘healing not incarceration’ – so the use of conventional high-level security such as barbed wire and security fencing is to be avoided where possible. Instead, the centre will deploy robust risk management (security) procedures, employ skilled staff and use land features, building forms and passive technology. The working group agreed to explore the use of physical barriers and wall/fence “art installations” for that part of the Centre needing a controlled boundary.

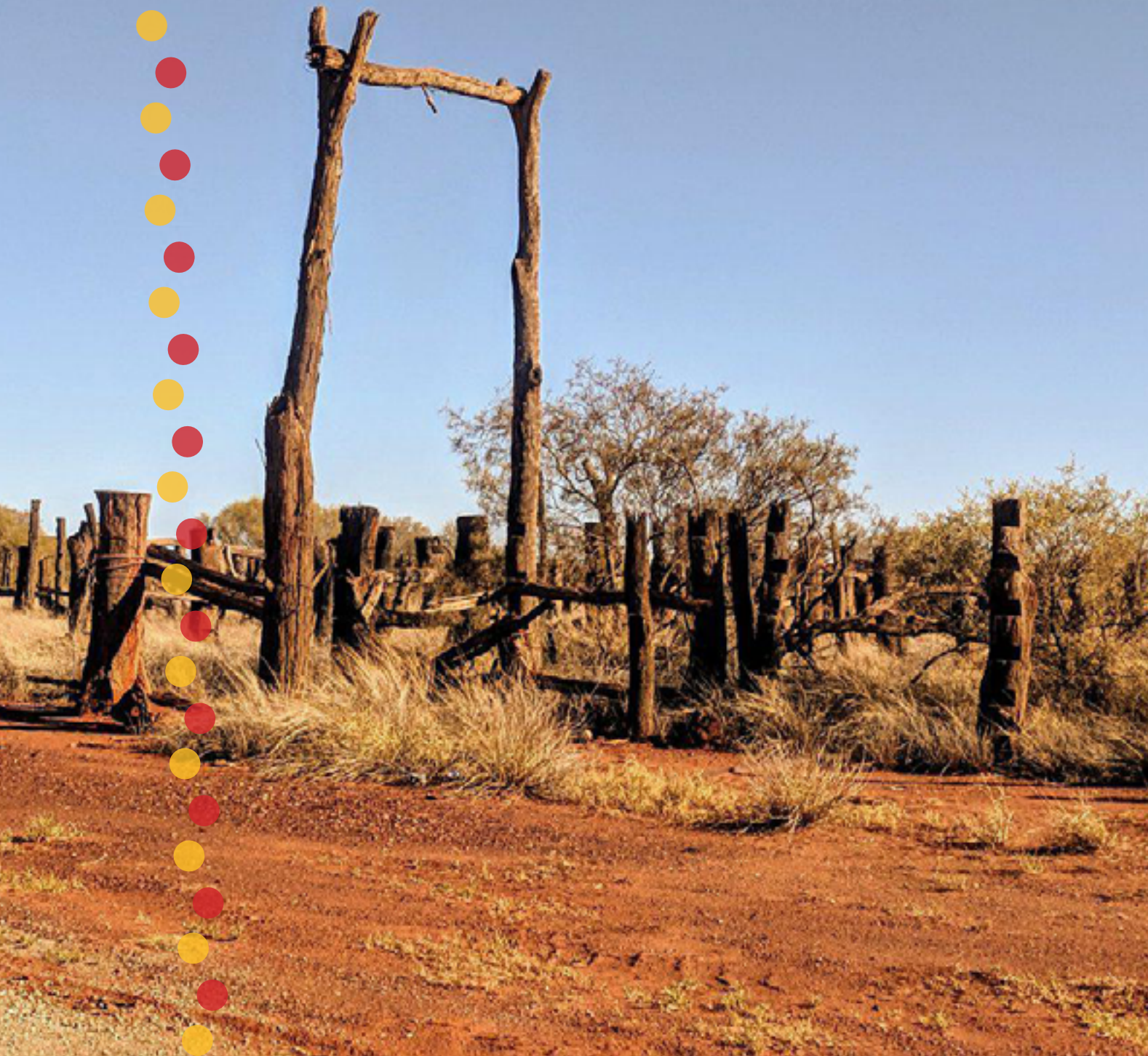
In addition, within the Risk Management Strategy, it is important to ensure ‘interference’ from outside the perimeter of the designated Centre does not impact on the residents and their involvement in the programs.

A lot of work has gone into the concept designs developed by the architects, engineers and the working group. For more detailed information please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Devon Cuimara, CEO.



# stockyards

The remnants of the old stockyards on the AMHC site. Many of the Elders and their families worked on these stockyards and have asked that these be maintained.



# Thankyou

## Thank you to our partners and supporters!

**We are happy to say that there is broad support for the Aboriginal Males Healing Centre. Clearly, our communities, business and government support our vision that all Aboriginal women and children live safe and healthy lives free of family violence.**

The next phase of construction will require significant contributions and investments. We would like to thank the following individuals, businesses and governments for the support that we have received so far.

To date, the value of pro bono services is close to \$1 million and growing.



Matthews McDonald Architects  
Paul McDonald



PM+D Architects  
Geoff Barker



Dr. Mick Adams, *Edith Cowan University* // Clear Horizons, *Evaluation and monitoring* // Mr. Pete Condon, *Technology via Indigenous Community Volunteers* // DLA Piper, *Legal* // Professor Victoria Hovane, *Australian National University* // Mr. Garry Keats, *Surveyor via Indigenous Community Volunteers* // Ms. Ros King, *bid writing via Indigenous Community Volunteers* // Ms. Margot Matthews, *CO-LAB* // Mr. David Minty, *Finity Actuaries and Consultants* // Mr. Doyen Radcliffe, *Indigenous Community Volunteers* // Mr. Ashwin Ramdas, *Eventum Consulting (accounting and audit)* // Rawlinsons, *Quantity Surveyors* // Ms. Deborah Stanley, *design and production via Indigenous Community Volunteers* // Mr. David van Dieren // Western Australian Police Force





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