

Thankyou X Children's Ground

Annual Goals & Milestones

Report: 2021





Children's Ground Annual Goals & Milestones

Children's Ground has annual goals that relate to:

- The strategic plan of the organisation.
- Area plans for each location and each operational area within the organisation that feed into the strategic plan.

The work of Children's Ground focuses on what to date have been intractable issues for the most marginalised communities in our country. It is important to us that our funders recognise that Children's Ground deliberately works with the most marginalised communities where there has been a long history of disempowerment, social and economic exclusion and inequitable access to essential services and supports.

We choose to work in places where governments have not been able to deliver services adequately or sustainably due to the complex issues of access and logistics that are now confounded by decades of absent and locally responsive investment in First Nations communities, particularly on homelands.

This report outlines Children's Ground 2021 annual goals and milestones related to our research and evaluation and each of the three regions in which Children's Ground operates. In each region communities are at various stages – these goals and milestones reflect the different delivery and growth stages.

Children's Ground looks at progress milestones for long term change that are both qualitative, process and quantitative measures. Our primary focus is outcomes rather than outputs. Where output measures provide a clear progress marker towards outcomes these are included.

Our 2021 goals follow our goals and milestones from our organisational five-year strategic plan - presented by each goal.

Milestone

Community Engagement	25 Year implementation of full Children's Ground Approach					
Walk, Talk & Act (WTA) Community engagement & planning	Access & Engagement Establishing the CGA	Opportunity A new norm emerging	Change & Consolidation	Sustainability		
(12-24 months)	(1-3 years)	(4-10 years)	(11-20 years)	(20-25 years & ongoing)		

Goal Embed community led evaluation and research within each community. Locally responsive Evaluation Frameworks established in Each region, that link to Children's Milestone Ground's overarching 25-year outcomes. Children's Ground has ethics approved 25-year longitudinal evaluation and framework designed with First Nations leaders with an external research advisory group. Locally designed monitoring and evaluation progress measures align with key impact data for child learning, health, emotional and cultural wellbeing, and safety. Collection tools/systems have been developed with each project community, feeding into a Children's Ground Approach-wide framework that enables cross-community comparisons and evaluation in diverse contexts. Western and Cultural evaluation methods include activity/participation data, interviews, surveys, paintings, observations, and administrative data. Children's Ground monitors process (the 'what and how') and impact (changes for children and families) and cost-effectiveness. Process outcomes (access, engagement, efficiency, Response effectiveness) are measured against community plans, and the practice principles core to all Children's Ground delivery. Impact outcomes are measured against administrative data and Children's Ground First Nations culturally designed child development and family wellbeing tools. Cost-effectiveness will be measured through expenditure review and analysis. Each region has its own evaluation framework expressed in western frameworks and is and will also be expressed through cultural frameworks. In Central Australia, their Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe cultural framework will be completed and released in 2021 with their first baseline and progress evaluation report. West Arnhem and Darwin regions are underway with working on the cultural expression of their evaluation framework. Children's Ground takes the time required to ensure genuine empowerment in monitoring and evaluation from a western and cultural perspective.

Number of First Nations staff engaged in leading and supporting research and evaluation (target: 10).

The evaluation in Central Australia is oversighted by two Elders and led by six First Nations staff. In West Arnhem, four First Nations staff have been engaged in evaluation and in Darwin five First Nations staff. In addition, over 30 more First Nations staff have involved in monitoring and evaluation design, data collection, data reviews, analysis, and reporting.

Goal

Embed community led evaluation and research within each community.

Milestone

Local First Nations people in each region are trained and engaged in local evaluation data capture, analysis, reporting and presentations. (Target: 2 per region).

Response

First Nations staff have been trained in survey development, data capture and western evaluation techniques. Training and local evaluation has also included data sovereignty and cultural analysis and evaluation. Training has been peer-based between western-trained evaluation staff and First Nations cultural leaders and staff. Over 30 staff have been involved in training and development over two regions. Three part-time First Nations research and evaluation officers are employed in Central Australia.

Milestone

Number of data feedback loops and data informed practice sessions achieve (target: 8 – one per quarter per region).

Response

Data is presented in First Nations governance meetings, staff team meetings and community planning sessions. Data is used by the governance committee to track outputs, review data quality and to inform delivery. In addition, each community review data for their community. Staff teams, such as the Learning and Wellbeing team, review data to track child engagement and delivery. At least eight data feedback loops have occurred per region (twice per quarter = 16).

Action Research & Evaluation



Goal	Embed community led evaluation and research within each community (cont).
Milestone	A six-monthly learning and wellbeing summary is completed for all actively engaged children.
Response	Children's Ground implements comprehensive learning and wellbeing plans for each child. This began with learning and wellbeing portfolios for children and is now developing into more comprehensive plans. Individual learning and wellbeing plans (ILWP) are developed with families and focus on the individualised learning needs of the child as well as key health needs of the child. This is allowing Children's Ground to better integrate key priorities understanding cultural and language priorities, learning and development priorities and health and wellbeing priorities. Plans are developed by staff and families who work together to set goals, and review and develop plans as children grow.
Milestone	A list of the most prevalent health and wellbeing concerns for families engaged with Children's Ground.
Response	 Covid Food Security Renal disease Heart disease Trauma Skin issues Hearing Safety and family violence Environmental/home health Immunisation / Vaccination Family Worries School transition/ engagement/enrolment Nutrition Anxiety/Worry/Spirit Money management / Financial literacy Housing – access, security, overcrowding, safety
Milestone	Community-led and strategic research nested within the Children's Ground Approach.
Response	We do not yet have the resources to deliver on our Children's Ground community and strategic research agendas but are working towards this. Children's Ground has engaged with external research institutions to partner on research projects that align with our community and strategic priorities. Nested research projects have been identified.

Goal

Embed community led evaluation and research within each community.

Milestone

Public evaluation reports are produced biennially for each region (target: 1).



In 2021, Children's Ground released the 'Evaluation of Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe: Children's Ground in Central Australia (2017-2019 baseline and early progress)'. The evaluation of the first three years of Children's Ground in Central Australia followed a rigorous evaluation method that brought together First Nations and Western data analysis and reporting. This collaborative and powerful report demonstrates early progress against Closing the Gap goals in key areas of early childhood learning, adult employment, local decision-making, and community wellbeing, just three years into a 25-year plan.

This evaluation reinforces the evidence from our first proof-of-concept evaluation, finding that the Children's Ground Approach is:

- Engaging a new cohort of children who had previously rarely or never participated in early learning
- Engaging First Nations people in meaningful employment, many of whom previously experienced chronic unemployment
- Creating environments of safety
- Empowering First Nations families through governance and decision-making about their children and communities
- Privileging first culture and languages and cultural teaching and learning has been evidenced as the foundation for early change and impact.

This evaluation report marks the beginning of Ampekenhe Ahelhe's 25-year journey to change the status quo for First Nations children, young people, and families.

It has been decided that Triennial evaluation reports will be undertaken for each region. Evaluation reports will be released publicly to contribute to the national and international evidence base for systems reform.

Response



"This report builds on the evidence from Children's Ground in Kakadu West Arnhem. With an increasing evidence base, the demonstrated effectiveness and early impact of the Children's Ground Approach is compounding. To date, your two evaluations have shown progress in key government policy areas nationally and in the Northern Territory - progress that has not been publicly evidenced against Closing the Gap in employment, health and early childhood education."

- Children's Ground's Research Advisory Group

Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe (Children's Ground Central Australia)



Achieve stability in operations and community engagement after initial establishment and growth.

Milestones

- Number of children and families engaged in early learning, family health, economic development, community development and cultural development and wellbeing (target: estimated 750 people across four locations.
- Stability in engagement in terms of delivery (target: 400 learning and health promotion sessions delivered).

The launch of the first evaluation of Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe (baseline and early progress 2017-2019) at the end of 2021 was a celebration of our formative years. This collaborative and powerful report allows us to see how things have evolved over time for our children and families, what we need to improve on as we develop, and how empowerment and self-determination grow through governance, leadership, and action.

2021 marked the fifth year since Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe began in Central Australia with a vision and belief from the Elders. Reflecting on these last five years, the achievements have been incredible and the growth in the team – in individuals, families, and communities – has supported increasing stability. We continue to walk alongside five communities in Central Australia and engage more families and children every year. Four of those communities in the delivery phase and one in Walk, Talk & Act.

Children's Ground's First Language resource development exceeded expectations in 2021 with the production of three new children's books, four Arrernte early years songs and additions to our language learning app.

Response

We also embarked on a new language project led by one of our founding Elders and Directors, MK Turner OAM, on her First Language – Akarre/ Akityerre. It is one of the Arandic dialects and is spoken by a small group of people and is critically endangered. This is a language preservation and revitalisation project which is vital for the sustainability of language and culture.

2021 also brought grief, loss and the challenges of living through a pandemic. Losing Elders is always hard and affects us all, as does the passing of family members taken too soon which is tragically an all-too-common occurrence in First Nations communities.

Preparing for Covid reaching the Northern Territory was a key priority of 2021. This was led by our Health Promotion team and supported by dedicated Covid health promotion staff. Through local languages and local cultural and family knowledge and talent, our team supported communities in vaccinations, planning and support to manage the risk of Covid.

In the end, the commitment and passion of the team were at the heart of everyday activities and outcomes with First Nations and non- First Nations staff working together. Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe is an amazing place that consistently brings hope and the reality of change.



Achieve stability in operations and community engagement after initial establishment and growth

Milestones

- Number of children and families engaged in early learning, family health, economic development, community development and cultural development and wellbeing (target: estimated 750 people across four locations.
- Stability in engagement in terms of delivery (target: 400 learning and health promotion sessions delivered).



758 people of all ages engaged across 356 sessions – including early learning sessions on Country, in community, at family nights and during community celebrations

631 participants engaged in health promotion and wellbeing support (249 young people 6-17 years and 382 adults 18+ years)





123 people participated in weekly governance meetings, both in their communities and as part of the Ingkerrekele Arntarnte-areme (Children's Ground Central Australia Governance Committee

60 First Nations staff were employed at Ampe-kenhe Ahelhe across Learning, Health, Men's and Youth, Admin, Finance, Research and Evaluation, Community Development and Governance





1,270 First Nations people participated in 20 intergenerational Arrernte language workshops

Over 80 children, young people and adults engaged in the Arrernte Angkwerre-Iwetyeke at Inteye Arrkwe (Healing Camp at Ross River), facilitated by Children's Ground and Akeyulerre to support cultural knowledge transfer and healing





91 First Nations people participated 70 Resource Development and Enterprise workshops or development sessions

Establish an intergenerational hub of safety and learning in the northern homelands and increasing delivery to include primary school education for northern homelands.

Milestones

- Intergenerational hub established in the northern homelands.
- Number of children and families engaged in early childhood education and primary school learning (target: estimated 50 children and their families).
- Number of people engaged in economic opportunities on their homelands (target: 15 people).

Response

2021 saw improvements to the northern outstations/homelands of Mpweringke Anapipe with wheelchair access in place. The hub has been critical during Covid with homelands being more isolated. The hub has allowed families to deliver stable learning uninterrupted during these times. Primary school education has not been established however primary aged children have been engaged in extended hours learning and in on-country learning. Children are speaking more of their First Languages, knowing their Country, learning their cultural responsibilities, and developing solid foundations in their identity as First Nations children. Developing literacy and numeracy through high-quality Western education enables our children to walk in a global world.

- 41 children 0-5 years, 50 school-age children 6-12 years and 101 family members 18+ engaged in learning.
- In 2021 11 First Nations staff were employed in education at Mpweringke Anapip who have historically experienced long-term unemployment and barriers to work.





Scale from Community Engagement & Planning phase into Stage One delivery in early childhood and integrated services in one community.

Milestones

- Number of children and families engaged in the Children's Ground Approach at Uyenpere Atwatye (target: estimated 150 people engaged).
- Number of local community governance and planning meetings held (target: estimated 8).
- Number of local First Nations people employed as educators, cultural experts, leaders, support staff (target: 7).

- At Uyenpere Atwatye the Children's Ground Approach has grown in each of the five integrated areas and stage I operations.
- 82 children aged 0-8 engaged in Learning and Wellbeing supported by 102 family members (18+ years)
- 30 local community governance and planning meetings held
- Four local First Nations people living in the community are employed as
 educators, cultural experts, leaders. A further two First Nations staff connected to
 the community but not living in the community are employed, providing active
 engagement to delivery.

Top End: Wurdurd Garriyigarrmerren



Further develop, implement and evaluate the feasibility of Children's Ground's homelands delivery model in the West Arnhem region.

- Annual internal review and evaluation of homelands delivery feasibility about the removal of access barriers, logistics, sustainable infrastructure and partnership approach to delivery.
- Note: Liveability, service access and economic opportunities on homelands across the Northern Territory (and Australia) have been areas of significant under-investment by all levels of government.
- Our work in Top End is at the extreme end of complexity and innovation. It is at the very beginning of
 re-establishing sustainable access and life for people back on their homelands which was a right
 removed from them as a result of colonisation. A feasibility evaluation is embedded from the outset
 to understand the significant risks and learnings required to address the complexity and challenges
 of homelands' holistic and integrated service delivery. Our feasibility analysis will inform the next
 steps regularly and yearly regarding systemically addressing barriers and ensuring people are
 afforded their right to live on their traditional lands and have equitable access to services that most
 Australians enjoy.
- Our KPIs in this area is founded on the conditions that we need to establish for this to be successful –
 this includes local community governance, planning, logistics, seasonal changes, sorry business, the
 removal of barriers and how this is achieved through partnership work alongside other services.
 These foundational conditions are not often visible in standard KPIs. It is also important to emphasise
 that these communities are small in population and so normal KPIs that present numbers alone are
 not always the greatest marker of progress and success

In 2021 in Marlkawo, delivery of learning, health and community development continued to strengthen, but due to Covid, biosecurity measures for safety and travel restrictions, it was a challenging year for the Marlkawo families. Despite this, with support, families remained on their Country for another year and delivery continued when possible.

During the dry season, a Western-trained educator and health practitioner worked with First Nations educators to deliver high-quality educational experiences for children living at Marlkawo ranging in age from early childhood through to primary age. First Nations leaders led multiple bush trips every week, rediscovering some sacred places that had not been visited since moving back to the Marlkawo Homelands in 2018. This was the first time many adults had visited these important sites, alongside their children and grandchildren. These Country trips provided the perfect space for integrated learning and health activities, with children engaging in cultural storytelling, traditional healing and eating bush tucker.

The interconnectedness of the Children's Ground Approach happened naturally in Marlkawo, where families live on their traditional Country in remote West Arnhem Land. On Country, everything is connected; everything wurdurd (children) learn on Country is connected to their health, their spirit, and their knowledge to carry culture and language into future generations.

First Nations governance continued, with a focus on planning for learning and health delivery, enterprise, and economic development in location on homelands and logistics for increased sustainability for homelands livability.

In 2021, Marlkawo families wrote and published their first Community Report to document their journey with CG since moving back to their Homelands. Senior community leader Cecily Djandjomerr explains,

"Every time I go to sleep, I think about Children's Ground. It's on my mind. When I start working again everything is for the kids. I want everyone to come to Marlkawo and work for the kids. We can all help one another as families and friends."

The Marlkawo feasibility evaluation is currently occurring. Daily evaluation data collection occurs in community and evaluation interviews have been undertaken. With a focus on equitable access to services on homelands, the feasibility evaluation focuses on how the Children's Ground Approach is modelled in a homeland's environment. It is evaluating and analysing the engagement, logistics, challenges, enablers, costs, and resources required for families to live on their homelands and have equitable access to essential learning, health, economic and social services. This report will be released towards the end of 2022.

Milestones



Build a partnership approach to homeland integrated service delivery.

Milestones

- Service delivery partnerships established in homelands (target: 3).
- Analysis of the type, contribution, and resource impact of Children's Ground delivery partnerships with other local services across West Arnhem.

Partnerships with local health, education and community infrastructure services continued, with six strong working relationships and partnerships across these key sectors.

Health partnerships: Covid health promotion workshops and access to vaccination services were provided in collaboration with Territory Health (Jabiru and Gunbalanya Clinics) Red Lily, and Malal'a Health (Maningrida) which resulted in 100% vaccinations. Partnership work and collaboration also continued with these health clinics supporting medication access/delivery and chronic illness check-ins and management.

During periods of Covid lockdowns, biosecurity measures for safety and travel restrictions, it was challenging for services to deliver to Marlkawo families. However, Children's Ground was able to continue delivering learning and integrating health promotion into every learning session. Throughout the year, we worked with Narwarrdeken academy to achieve equitable access to education.

Response

Community infrastructure partnerships: Our partnership with Demed Association in Gunbulunya continued (as the infrastructure service provider for Marlkawo). They donated garden supplies and tools to support the community garden structure and establishment. They also supported the maintenance of housing external fixtures and structures to keep animals and weather at bay.

Through our partnership with Demed, Children's Ground provided advice and advocacy for a grant application. This application was successful and sees the supply and install Ablution Block & Pit toilet and new septics and decommission old septics. Demed also applied for a grant for a new waterline from bore to tank, tank to house and an additional water tank. These are all important achievements as we continue to support the community to establish safe, clean, and sustainable infrastructure on their homelands.

Children's Ground alone does not have the resources and is not designed to lead the delivery of all service needs of a community. These partnerships are emerging evidence of how effective delivery partnerships with shared resources can increase access to and engagement services on their homelands and subsequently seeing the benefits of service access for children, young people, families and the whole community.

Engage families in homeland leadership and delivery of the Children's Ground Approach.

Milestones

- Number of children and families engaging in Children's Ground homelands delivery (target: estimated 70 people).
- Number of children and families supported to access (non-Children's Ground) essential health, wellbeing, economic and social services (target: 40).

The population of this remote Homeland ranges from 8 people to 50 people, depending on the time of the year.

Over the course of the year, the service population has included over 100 people who engaged with Children's Ground's learning, health, employment and/or governance with Marlkawo.

- 27 children (aged 0-15 years) engaged in Learning and Wellbeing and were supported by 31 family members (18+ years)
- 100% of learning took place on Country. Children learned literacy and numeracy in the morning and engaged in deep cultural learning in the afternoons
- 38 children (aged 0-15 years) engaged in health promotion and wellbeing support
- 63 family members (aged 16+ years) engaged in health promotion and wellbeing support. People in Marlkawo live with significant health issues and Children's Ground was the only health support regularly available in the community.
- 59 people were supported to access non-Children's Ground services through service coordination, transport, arranging appointments, etc.
- Daluk (women)'s health and wellbeing sessions are established to provide a safe space for discussion around women's social, emotional, and physical health
- 100% vaccination rate was achieved through above-outlined health service collaboration
- Families were supported to engage in cultural health practices: collecting bush foods and medicine, being on Country, hunting and traditional smoking ceremonies for new babies
- 31 First Nations staff were employed, many of whom had no employment experience prior to Children's Ground
- 76 people engaged in cultural learning, on Country learning, and cultural health activities. Creative and cultural arts activities integrated into all learning activities Families engaged in a 3-day cultural camp with Nawarddeken Academy and the Warddeken Rangers to visit significant ancient bim (rock art), deepening cultural learning for children

Two young learners Susan and Raya record a video in their First Language, Kunwinjku, about what it is like living on their Country in Marlkawo. The video was showcased as part of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation's Indigenous Literacy Day virtual event.

Kunwinjku literacy workshops were held for both First Nations and non-First Nations educators to learn how to read and write the language in a two-way exchange of knowledge systems.

Top End: Darwin



Develop community plans with two Darwin town camps that reflect community voice, decision- making and aspirations.

Milestones

- Community plans established with community leaders and families (target:
 2).
- Number of people involved in community governance and planning (target: 10 people / Town Camp).

Children's Ground operations on Larrakia Country in Darwin grew significantly in 2021. The year focused on building on the small-scale Walk & Talk (community engagement and planning phase) from 2020. We continued to walk with community and listen to their vision while beginning early implementation of elements of all five Children's Ground platforms. Delivery of early learning, health promotion and after school activities occurred in three Town Camps.

In three communities, Community Plans were created by Traditional Owners, families, and community leaders for safe, strong, and thriving communities with a vision for education, employment, and community safety at its heart. 30 people engaged in community governance – making decisions about Children's Ground for their children, families, and whole community. Community leaders and Elders were unwavering in their commitment to ensuring the younger generation had the best opportunities to grow, learn, be healthy, strong in culture and language, and be surrounded by family.

First Nations families in Darwin experience barriers to learning and being on Country. For many, Larrakia Country is not their Homeland. For some we can travel to their homelands for learning on country and for others it is too far and so learning on country occurs on someone else's country. Some families are still in the process of reclaiming their language, culture, and knowledge of Country. As a team and as communities, we learned together and adapted accordingly.

Response

First Nations families broadened their economic opportunities and financial literacy through selling art, crafts, and educational resources at local pop-up shops and markets. Participants developed their skills in marketing, sales, customer service and business development, expanding the potential for culturally and creatively based economic opportunities for First Nations families in the Top End.

Each community is building Children's Ground around their needs. We worked with leaders and other local organisations to improve infrastructure and revitalise local community hubs for a range of activities and uses.

One community has no infrastructure for children or community members. We continue to seek funding from with Government for improved infrastructure to create access to basic resources and facilities which will create places that are vibrant and safe for kids and families.

As we transition from community engagement, planning and early action to the gradual implementation of the Children's Ground Approach in the coming years, communities are excited about the growth and future of their children and families.





Increase accessibility to early learning and wellbeing in two Darwin town camps.

Milestones

- Number of children and families engaged in early learning (target: estimated 60 people).
- Number of early learning sessions delivered by First Nations cultural and western educators (target: an average of 2 sessions per week per camp).

This year, community leaders were supported by Western-trained staff to provide access to health and wellbeing, early years, and after-hours education sessions. It was exciting to see children and their families growing in numbers and developing confidence. Our early years learning occurred several times a week in each location and families were always keen for more.

Regular early years learning activities were delivered in two Darwin Town Camps by cultural educators, Western-trained teachers, and family educators. Due to the age of the population, two other Town Camps focused on after school and holiday learning activities. Total delivery across three communities included: 69 early learning sessions; 10 after hours learning sessions; 11 women's groups.

Collectively, 115 children (aged 0-8 years), 66 young people (9-17 years) and 96 family members (18+ years) actively engaged in Learning and Wellbeing sessions.

Learning includes both Western and Cultural learning, where Western-trained teachers collaborated with cultural and family educators. In one Town Camp, the community requested a focus on supporting young mothers and providing afterschool hours activities.

We saw increasing numbers of children learning through play, discovering the world around them, learning independently and in groups – all supported by their family and educators. We integrated nature, art, language, culture, literacy, and numeracy into every session, with a strong focus on health. Children learned about good nutrition through preparing healthy meals during every learning session and through gathering bush tucker on Country. Children learned how to care for themselves and others through role play, yoga and meditation, quiet time, physical activity, and creative arts. Most importantly, children we able to access all of this in their community, where they live.



Integrate health promotion, health and wellbeing support and employment into early learning in two Darwin town camps.

Milestones

- Number and type of health promotion sessions integrated (target: an average of 2 sessions per week per camp).
- Number of children and families engaging in health promotion and wellbeing support (target: estimated 50 people).
- Number of local people employed at Children's Ground as educators, cultural experts, leaders, support staff, etc (target: 2 per camp).

maternal and family health promotion, social/emotional wellbeing, supporting chronic health issues and Covid health promotion and responses, including safety plans developed and implemented to support environmental health, hygiene, food security and access to vaccinations and accurate information.

Health promotion was integrated into 100% of learning sessions and focused on child,

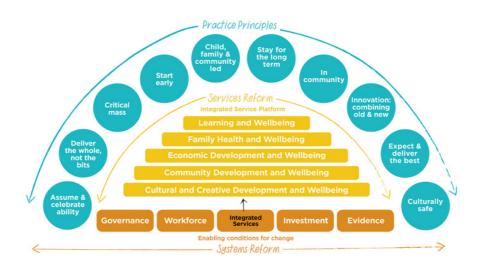
- 110 children aged 0-8 years engaged in health promotion and wellbeing support
- 373 people of all ages engaged in health promotion and wellbeing support
- Children and young people participated in emotional regulation skills and workshops and explored healthy coping mechanisms for dealing with challenging emotions and situations
- Partnerships with Territory Health supported vaccinations in Darwin
- Six First Nations staff were employed with Children's Ground in 2021.

The Enterprise team participated in Darwin market days selling Children's Ground products and artwork created by local First Nations families. Staff members developed skills in sales, marketing, financial literacy, and public engagement. Families began collecting pandanus leaves for dying and weaving into mats and baskets as part of an emerging creative enterprise.

Our Strategy

The Children's Ground Approach (CGA) is a 25-year strategy designed to create lasting change.





Goal 1

Further develop and articulate the Children's Ground Approach.

The Children's Ground Approach is articulated and strategically communicated within governments and other key stakeholders.

Milestones

- By the end of Q2 2021 Children's Ground Approach system and service reform frameworks are articulated.
- System and service reform frameworks are strategically disseminated to Commonwealth government departments, as well as the NT government and other jurisdictional government departments (target: 4).

Throughout the funding period, Children's Ground made progress with articulating key system and service reform frameworks, with a particular focus on Economic Development & Wellbeing, Governance, Research & Evaluation and Learning & Wellbeing.

Dissemination of our first Central Australian evaluation report to Commonwealth and NT Government departments, the Productivity Commission, etc was a strategic opportunity to connect with key stakeholders. From these connections were made, meetings were set, and our other frameworks were distributed to relevant government departments alongside funding proposals, in meetings and by email as part of introductory/connecting correspondence.

Response

Our Family Health and Wellbeing framework was referenced as a leading practice in the NT Government's 10-Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the Northern Territory released in 2021. In October 2021, we also provided a submission to their consultation on their draft strategy and discussion paper.

Our Family Health framework was also used in our engagement with and advocacy to the Commonwealth Department of Health to secure ongoing funding for our health platform.

In July 2021, key elements of our Learning & Wellbeing framework were included in a submission to the NT Government's consultation about their Education Engagement discussion paper, which informed their Education Engagement Strategy released in late 2021.

We continue to finalise our key frameworks to achieve full public articulation of the Children's Ground Approach to contribute to achieving our strategic goals of increasing uptake of the Children's Ground Approach and promoting systems change locally and nationally.

Goal 2

Implement the Children's Ground Approach with communities.

Progress delivery of the Children's Ground Approach across three distinct operational regions (Central Australia; Top End – Darwin; Top End West Arnhem Land) done.

Milestones

- In Central Australia: Grow from stage one to stage two operations continuing to grow towards full operational delivery.
- In Top End Darwin: Progress to stage one operations.
- In Top End West Arnhem: Implement and evaluate feasibility of homeland delivery model through a partnership approach.

KPI Growth: Proportion of full CG Approach delivery

The CG Approach continues to be delivered and evaluated in three regions - each is at a different stage of the 25-year Approach. As at quarter three 2021, this happened to the extent shown below. In this quarter, there has been no change in the number of communities Children's Ground is working alongside.

Walk, Talk & Act Sustainability Opportunity: Change & (WTA): Community A new norm Consolidation Engagement: engagement & planning emerging Establishing the CGA (11-20 YEARS) (20-25 YEARS (6-18 MONTHS) (4-10 YEARS) (1-3 YEARS) & ONGOING) Current operations: Progress towards full CG Approach Region 1: Central Australia (4 current communities - 1 in WTA) = 70% of phase one full approach Region 2: West Arnhem (1 current community) = 50% of small scale homelands delivery model Region 3: Darwin (3 current communities - 1 in scope). Small scale engagement and WTA in all areas

Response

The CG Approach requires all key elements to be implemented fully to achieve long term change. Children's Ground is a developing organisation. It is expected to take a further 3-5 years to be fully operational in three regions, as funding resources are secured. In this quarter we saw an increase in funding for Economic Development & Wellbeing in Central Australia.

How we are tracking against full implementation	WTA	< 2	25%	35-50%	50-75%	75-100%
	CENTRAL AUS	TRALIA	WEST A	ARNHEM	DARWIN	
Learning & Wellbeing						
Family Health & Wellbeing						
Economic Development & Wellbeing						
Cultural & Creative Development & Wellbeing						
Community Development & Wellbeing						

These quarterly reports will present progress across key performance indicators (KPIs) and measures of the CG Approach.

Goal 2

Implement the Children's Ground Approach with communities (cont). Explore increasing interest for the Children's Ground Approach from other regions nationally.

Milestones

- Following invitation, explore partnership opportunities to support delivery of the Children's Ground Approach in new regions (where financial viability is present) either as a deliverer or facilitator.
- Subject to viability implementation of Community engagement and planning with one new community partner.

Communities continually express interest in the Children's Ground Approach. We have a list of communities where we could begin community engagement and planning however do not currently have the resource.

The time for scaling the Children's Ground Approach is now. First Nations designed and delivered child development systems that could and should have been implemented generations ago. Now is a pivotal moment in time. With global Black Lives Matter movements advocating that First Nations people have had enough of being mistreated, misrepresented, and missing from the systems, workforces and decisions made about them without them.

Response

Equipped with an evidence-based, First Nations designed, proven solution, Children's Ground has the local community and critical stakeholder relationships to scale and evaluate First Nations child development systems in new geographically diverse regions to continue building an international evidence-base for First Nations empowerment and improved outcomes for children and subsequently young people and adults across a generation.

Governments globally state their intentions to improve outcomes for First Nations people. Yet continually fail. Minimal examples of genuinely First Nations designed child development systems exist. Children's Ground has evidence that our solution achieves changes for children in areas intractable for governments.

The Children's Ground Approach stands in support of a generation of Elders feeling the urgency to implement their solution to change the next generation of children that will ripple across multiple and future generations in ways, which successive governments have failed to achieve globally.

"We've been following government nearly all our lives. This is a new beginning. We are following a new path, our own path as First Nations people for the future of our children. At Children's Ground, the community is taking the lead. We are very proud" (M.K. Turner, OAM, Cultural Elder, Professor, Law Woman, Director of Children's Ground).

Goal 3

Promote systems change.

Increased work on significant reform agendas of First Nations led education and broader human rights and justice reform, such as water rights, land tenure, juvenile justice, and child welfare – with a national focus on prevention, justice, and equity.

Milestones

- Two publications from the emerging evidence of impact from the implementation of the Children's Ground Approach.
- Development of Utyerre Apanpe (National First Nations Educator's Network) to lead national reform including hosting a national First Nations Education forum.

Due to constrained resources, our emerging evidence is yet to submitted for publication.

In April, Utyerre Apanpe (National First Nations Educators' Network) gathered in Central Australia to connect, activate, and confirm the ambitious education reform agenda set in 2019. The National network includes contributions from First Nations educators from over 20 different nations. The group is calling for a First Nations-led education system in line with Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Network seeks the establishment of hubs and infrastructure located on First Nations educators' country. Utyere Apanpe seek investment in the training of a First Nations education workforce. This workforce are the keepers of language and knowledge and teachers from country. The plan Utyerre Apanpe has sought the government's investment to ensure a First Nations education system is built, our way and with our leadership and control. The following comments were provided by First Nations members at the event:

Response

"This (Utyere Apanpe) is our voice as First Nations educators. The current education system does not work for our children. It is hurting our children. We want our communities to run our education through our law, culture, and language. We have our education system, and we want this recognised by the Government. The Government spends millions of dollars on our kids going to prisons, kids going into care and kids in hospital. We feel this pain and we still wait for our voices to be heard. We want investment in our educational systems. We are the educational leaders from many First Nations and many languages. We have one plan for all of our children."



Goal 3

Promote systems change (cont.)

Increased work on significant reform agendas of First Nations led education and broader human rights and justice reform, such as water rights, land tenure, juvenile justice, and child welfare – with a national focus on prevention, justice, and equity.

Milestone

Submissions to relevant national inquiries (Productivity Commissions, Senate Inquiries, Royal Commissions), such as Systems Reform, First Nations Education, Indigenous Evaluation, etc. (target: 2).

Children's Ground supports the Raise the Age organisation (RTA). RTA was formed to petition and lobby State and Territory governments to raise the age of detention of children from 10yrs to 14yrs. In just one year close to 600 children aged 10 to 13 years were locked up and thousands more were hauled through the criminal legal system.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are disproportionately impacted by these laws and pushed into prison cells at even higher rates, accounting for 65% of these younger children in prisons.

Response

Children's Ground also provided the following submissions during the reporting period:

- Federal Govt Senate Inquiry into Effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis, and support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
- Federal Govt, Dept of Education, Stage 2 Discussion Paper 2021 National Quality Framework Approved Learning Frameworks - Early Years Learning Framework Update
- NIAA New Remote Engagement Program Discussion Paper
- Interview with Chair, Quality Initial Teacher Education Review

Children's Ground was also mentioned in Senator Siewert's Adjournment speech on her retirement from the Senate and Australian Parliament. Senator Siewert was a great supporter of the Children's Ground Approach and work.

DID YOU KNOW, IN AUSTRALIA,
A 13-YEAR-OLD CAN BE
SENT TO PRISON

13 year-olds are children. They belong in school,
not in prisons. It's time for Australia to
#RaiseTheAge to at least 14.

LET'S #RAISETHEAGE TO AT LEAST 14 AND KEEP KIDS OUT OF PRISONS AND IN SCHOOL.

This week children across the country are having their first day of high school, Share a photo of yourself in year 7 and tell members of parliament that 13 year old belong in school – not prison.

SHARE A PHOTO OF YOU IN YEAR 7

USE THE HASHTAG #RAISETHEAGE





Goal 3

Promote systems change (cont.)

Increased work on significant reform agendas of First Nations led education and broader human rights and justice reform, such as water rights, land tenure, juvenile justice, and child welfare – with a national focus on prevention, justice, and equity.

Milestone

Secure tenure and water rights for Irrkerlantye.

At Irrkerlantye we are two years into a five-year plan and are still trying to work with the NT government to secure tenure and water and infrastructure. Felicity Hayes - Mparntwe (Alice Springs) Traditional Owner appeared on ABC News, NITV and ABC Radio on the 18/19 of May 2022 with this message for the Government:

Response

"Last week we buried my sister, she was a long—term resident of Irrkerlantye. She was diagnosed with cancer and passed within two weeks of her diagnosis. She was living in a tin shed with no running water and no electricity, 3 kms from the centre of Alice Springs. She was in terrible pain. She lived a very hard life but was always gentle and showed respect to everyone. We are hurting. We have been living this way, neglected by all levels of Government, for over 40 years. She came to meeting after meeting with me, talking with Government, waiting patiently for housing and water. Now she has passed away. How can this happen in Australia.

We have been asking Government for housing and essential services for this whole time, however nothing has been done to provide the most basic services that all people are entitled to.

We are traditional owners of the second largest town in the Northern Territory and we still have no government support. We want to be shown respect so that we can live with dignity on our country."

Goal 4

Champion First Nations history, voice, and culture.

Use social media and other communications to promote and highlight the voice, cultural strength and truth telling of our First Nations people.

Milestones

- Increase engagement on social media platforms (target: 20%).
- Establish a First Nations webinar learning series that promotes and champions First Nations people and includes truth telling about their history from their voice. (Target: 6 webinars).
- Undertake key events to engage national audiences for key dates throughout the year, such as Reconciliation week, NAIDOC week, etc.
- Partner with other organisations and services where relevant to amplify the voice and strength of First Nations people and local leadership.

Social Growth

- 56% growth across social media
- Engagement on Instagram remains high at 8% (industry standard: 1.41%)

Webinars

- International Women's Day
- Reconciliation Week
- End of year wrap

Children's Ground did focus efforts to set up the Truth Telling workshops but due to continual Covid lockdowns, these were cancelled and will now be taking place in 2022.

Key events

Children's Ground launched our first Reconciliation Week engagement campaign with Wear It Yellow. Raising awareness, sharing resources and \$20,000 in donations.

Wear It Yellow asks schools, companies, and clubs to organise a fundraiser in National Reconciliation week as a great chance to celebrate First Nations culture and take action to help brighten the future for First Nations children and their families.

Response

Using our free educational resources to help plan their Wear it Yellow activity for National Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June) and share your fundraising page to get the word out.

Holding a free dress day with a touch of yellow is a simple way to get everyone involved, or feel free to get creative and come up with other fundraising ideas, the bolder the better!

During NAIDOC Week Dan Sultan and Children's Ground launched Fender®-Art: an online art auction combining high-end instruments and art raising \$20,000 and connecting with millions of people through media and social outlets. Children's Ground was proud to welcome Dan Sultan as an official Ambassador last week. Now with a young daughter, Sultan, and his partner Bron are raising their voices for systems change, backing First Nations people to follow their own approach in education, health, enterprises, and governance.

"When Fender reached out to me a few months ago about celebrating NAIDOC Week in 2021, I decided to curate an art project with two leading and incredible artists: Yuin Monero and Wandandian woman Niah McLeod and Gumbayngirr and Bundjalung man Otis Carey, having each of them use a Fender guitar as a canvas to create a couple of unique pieces of art we can use to raise much-needed funds and, most importantly, awareness for Children's Ground."

Goal 4

Champion First Nations history, voice, and culture (cont.).

Use social media and other communications to promote and highlight the voice, cultural strength and truth telling of our First Nations people.

Milestones

- Undertake key events to engage national audiences for key dates throughout the year, such as Reconciliation week, NAIDOC week, etc.
- Partner with other organisations and services where relevant to amplify the voice and strength of First Nations people and local leadership.

Key events cont.

Children's Ground hosted a launch of the Central Australian evaluation report live from Alice Springs and streamed nationally. Ken Wyatt (the then Minister for Indigenous Australians), June Oscar AO (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner) and Dr Tim Moore, child psychologist, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, and member of the Research Advisory Group to Children's Ground praised the report:

"It [the evaluation] provides both the aspiration and the outcomes. when I look at the practise principles that you've put in place, if we can put that in to place in every community then we will achieve the five key goals of the national strategy" Ken Wyatt

'Another key feature of this program is that it is designed, led, and evaluated by First Nations people, backed by Western scientific evidence. The Arrente people requested Children's Ground's involvement in Alice Springs and the community owns and controls the program.' Dr Tim Moore

"This evaluation provides significant insights for policymakers, practitioners and politicians, and an example of effective leading practice in closing the gap." June Oscar

Response

Partnerships

Children's Ground ambassadors use their voices and platforms to help grow our profile and add weight to our advocacy and fundraising. Through their public position in the community, this fantastic group of people advocates for change for First Nations families. Our ambassadors are a key part of our big Children's Ground family. We also recognise the countless other people, organisations and businesses of prominence who use their platforms to support Children's Ground and First Nations justice.

Children's Ground partners with an extensive list of influencers, media outlets, corporate clients, education facilities and media agencies that amplify the voice of First Nations People and Children's Ground. The First Nations team and Chair are regularly invited to conferences and to speak on webinars.

During NAIDOC Week in 2021 Ethical Jobs supported a dollar matching campaign and as outlined above Children's Ground supported the Raise the Age organisation and continued to represent significant days through external communications and opinion pieces.

In 2021 the Children's Ground continued to work with In My Blood It Runs sharing messaging to both databases and social outlets delivering a petition of 70,000+ signatures supporting education reform.

Goal 5

Financial Sustainability and efficiency.

Maintain diversified income streams, aiming for 50% government and non-government income, and growth in other incomes streams.

Milestone

- Increase income by 25% (recognising this may be ambitious in current global context) (the Board will be determining budget target later in 2020).
- Renew current funding agreements and increase Commonwealth and NT Government's funding by 25%.
- Increase donations and online retail income.
- Maintain min 85% of philanthropic funding and secure new partnerships to grow income.
- Maintain diversity in funding target: 50-50 split of income between Government and non-Government sources).

Response

- The 2021 income came in line with budget targets.
- Existing Government Grants continued but no large Government funding was procured.
- The ratio was 38% government and 62% non-government as of the end of the year.
- Online donations and retail targets were exceeded by 25%.
- Of 20 applications Children's Ground was successful in receiving 13.
- 49% of income was acquired from Philanthropy.

Goal 6

Strengthen and grow the Children's Ground Organisation.

Improve organisational effectiveness and efficiency aligned with key internal targets in relation to compliance, risk management and staff wellbeing.

Milestone

- Finalise current upgrade to record management system.
- Review of IT systems and capacity with development subject to funding.
- Review financial systems infrastructure and develop to align with growth and need.
- Continue to strengthen Human Resource systems to meet need, compliance, and risk management.
- Complete annual audit and review of policies and procedures.
- Further develop Sentient workplace safety, wellbeing and compliance training to all staff and use for relevant training and sharing new/updated policies.
- Biennial implementation of staff wellbeing survey.

- Our Staff Wellbeing survey was undertaken again in October 2021 with follow-up focus group meetings being held with small groups of staff Mid 2022 to progress areas for development.
- Key IT projects and progress have been made on our CRM (Salesforce) enhancement and use; Integrated finance and HR systems (HRIS); Current workplace compliance system upgrades; Ongoing enhancements for electronic practice and evaluation data systems; and overall IT system review.
- Ongoing policy development, reviews, updates, and distribution. An organisational working
 group leads this priority task in collaboration with key staff in regions and the head office. Policy
 updates are either distributed for information or shared as part of compliance through
 Sentrient for example Workplace vaccinations were shared via Sentrient with a video
 developed in First Nations language to support this policy to enable greater understanding.

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Goal 7	Demonstrate that we are creating change. Interim/Progress evaluation reports are produced biennially for each region.
Milestone	 Daily data collection occurs to capture engagement in learning, health, cultural development, governance, employment, community development, enterprise. Quarterly evaluation and data regional internal reporting, review, and analysis to inform operations and standards. Research and evaluation training with First Nations staff (target: 2 per region). Number of First Nations staff and families engaged in data collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (target: 10). Two Research Advisory group meetings per year (Children's Ground independent review and advisory body. Number of publications, presentations, and others strategic and public evidence disseminations (target: at least 5).
	Daily data collection continued in each region and community collecting delivery and Walk, Talk & Act participation data. We continued to finalise our electronic data system which includes daily data entry by staff via an app or web-based portal. At least eight data feedback loops have occurred per region (at least 24 total across regions). Data is presented in weekly governance meetings and community planning sessions. First Nations leadership in evaluation is achieved through peer mentoring between western-trained evaluation staff and First Nations cultural leaders and staff. Peer mentoring occurs daily and is embedded in discussions and planning for all monitoring and evaluation planning and implementation reflections. First Nations leadership in evaluation is achieved through peer mentoring between western-trained evaluation staff and First Nations cultural leaders and staff. Peer mentoring occurs daily and is embedded in discussions and planning for all monitoring and evaluation planning and implementation reflections.

Response

Three Research Advisory Group meetings were held in the period, with a primary focus on reviewing and approving the Central Australian evaluation report.

Number of publications, presentations, and other strategic and public evidence disseminations (target: at least 5)

- 4 impact reports
- Central Australia:
- 1 Evaluation and progress report
- 1 Community Report
- West Arnhem: 1 Community Report as a prelude to feasibility evaluation report
- Darwin: 2022 will see preparation and data collection for a baseline evaluation report with Walk, Talk & Act progress findings.
- 3 conference presentations