Australian Government

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

binarri-binyja yarrawoo

East Kimberley Little Footprints Big Futures Partnership

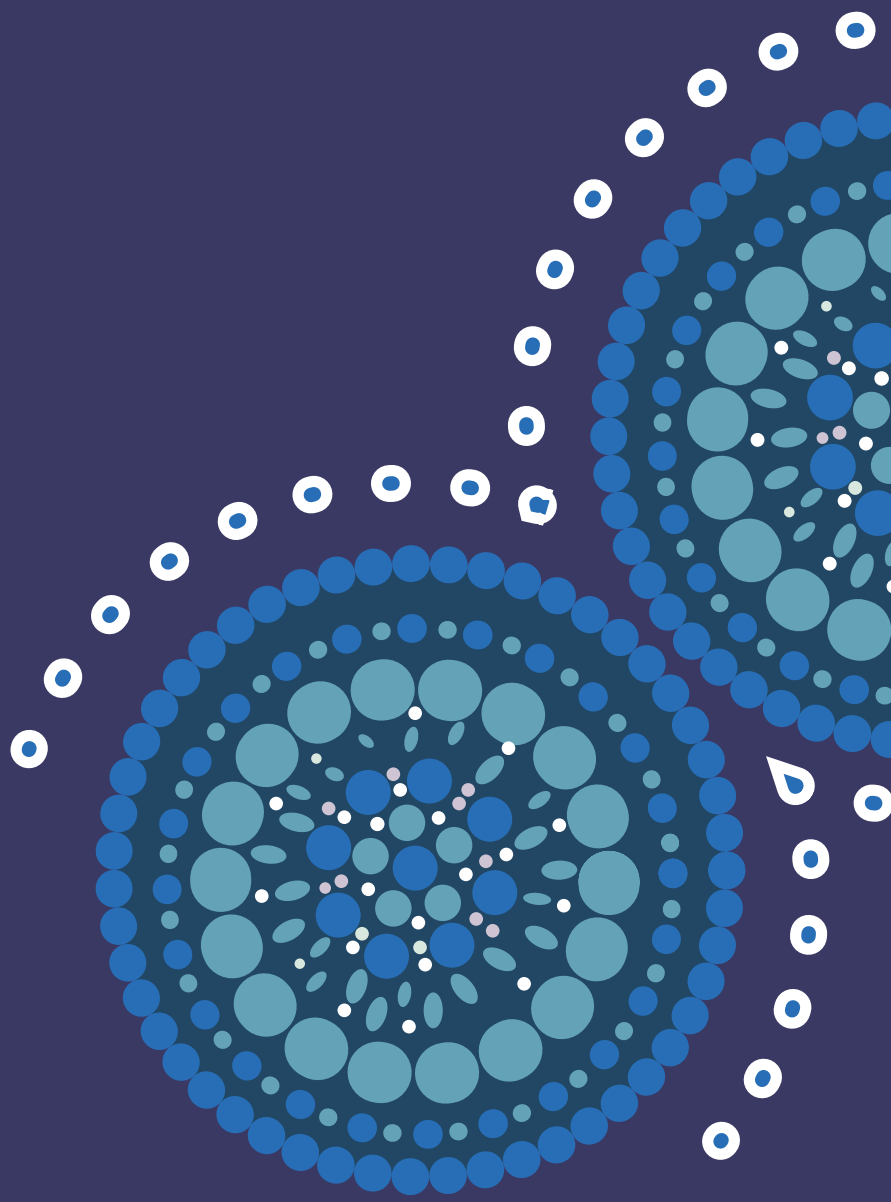
Partnership Agreement for the East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership

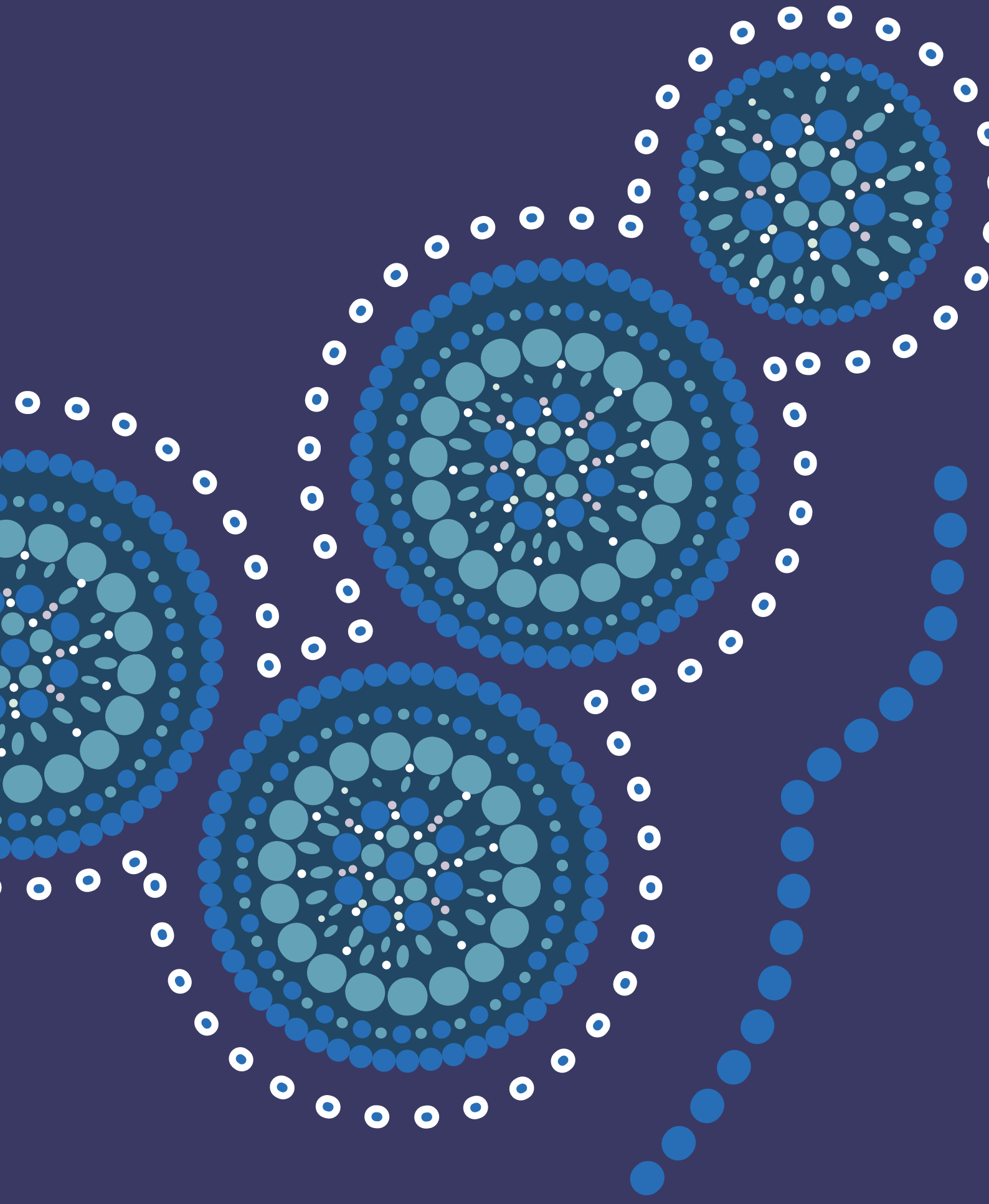
Executed under the National Agreement on Closing The Gap

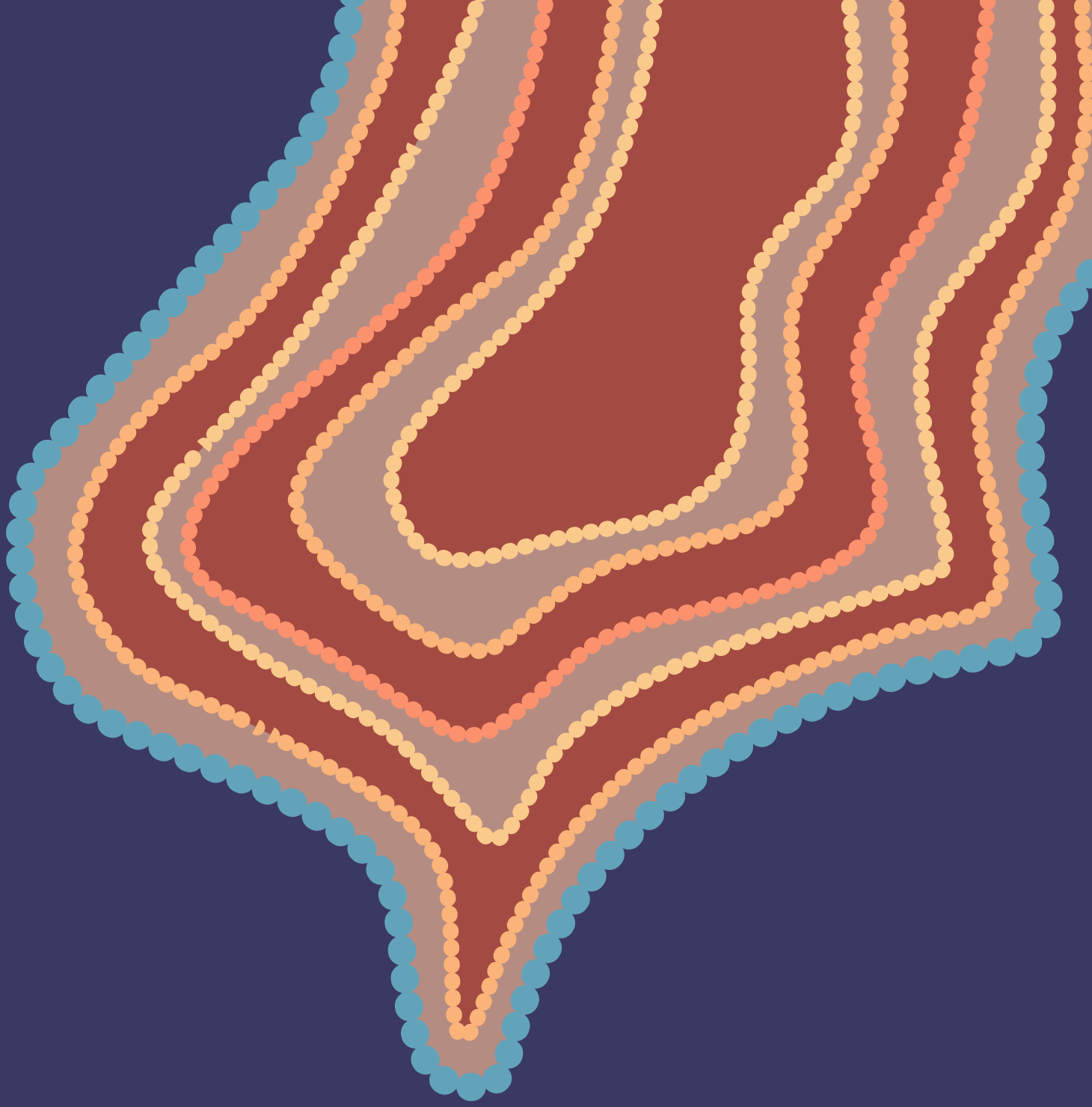
APRIL 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

The Parties to this Partnership Agreement acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners and sovereign communities of the East Kimberley, the people of the Balanggarra, Miriwoong Gajerrong, Yurriyangem Taam, Gooring, Malarngowem, Koonjie Elvire, Purnululu, Ngarrawanji, Uunguu, Wilinggin, Gajirrabeng, Gooniyandi, Kija, Walmajarri, Kwini, Jaru and Tjurabalan groups. We recognise the continuing connection of Traditional Owners to the lands and waters, and the strengths of community that guide this Partnership Agreement.







Terminology

In this Partnership Agreement, the term Aboriginal people is used in preference to “Indigenous”, “First Nations” or “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples”, in recognition that Aboriginal peoples are the original inhabitants of the East Kimberley region.

We respectfully recognise the valuable contributions of Torres Strait Islander peoples to Western Australia’s society, economy, and communities. We also acknowledge that some families have both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage, and this rich diversity is acknowledged and celebrated.

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About the artwork

New beginnings – Taminga Connell

This painting shows three large circles. The two outer circles represent the Central and West Kimberley. The middle circle is the East Kimberley, a place where many different tribes from across the region come together and now call Kununurra home.

At the heart of the story is the people, who have cared for this Country since the beginning. All who arrive are welcomed and united with them.



Around the outside are eleven different language groups from across the Kimberley. They are all linked by the blue rivers flowing through the painting rivers that connect Country, stories, families, and culture. These waters bring unity and remind us that all who gather in the East Kimberley are connected.

This painting also honours the young people who are growing strong, carrying culture forward and shaping the future with strength and confidence.

A fresh chapter for all — this is where new beginnings take shape.

Preamble

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) is a demonstration of genuine partnership between all Australian Governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations to improve life outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is underpinned by the belief that when Aboriginal people have a role in the design and delivery of services that impact them, better life outcomes are achieved.

The National Agreement recognises that structural change in the way governments work with Aboriginal people is needed to close the gap. The National Agreement is built around four Priority Reform areas that seek to change the way governments work with Aboriginal people and communities:

1. Formal partnerships and shared decision-making
2. Building the community-controlled sector
3. Transforming government organisations
4. Shared access to data and information at a regional level

Priority Reform One calls for the establishment of six place-based partnerships across Australia. A place-based partnership is a partnership between all levels of government and Aboriginal community organisations in a specific location which tailors actions and services to the priorities and issues of that community.

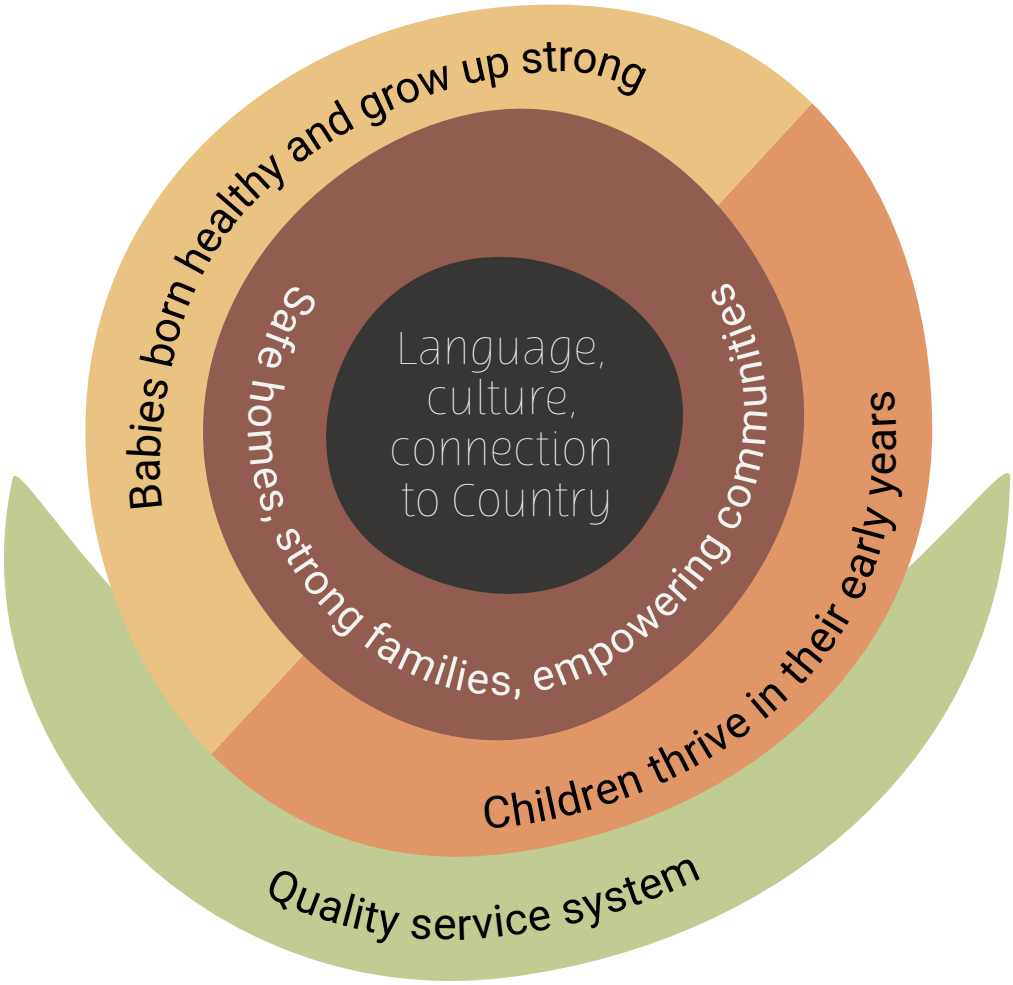
In August 2022, with the support of local Aboriginal organisations, the WA Government formally nominated the East Kimberley as Western Australia's place-based partnership location to the national Joint Council on Closing the Gap.

The East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership will progress practical implementation of all four Priority Reform Areas at the local level, with a focus on a select number of socio-economic outcome areas based on the priorities of local communities.

East Kimberley: supporting outcomes in the Early Years

East Kimberley Aboriginal communities have determined that supporting local children and families in the 'Early Years' is the priority for this place-based partnership. The Early Years – the period from conception to age seven – is the most important time to lay strong foundations for the health, learning, development, and identity of Aboriginal children. It is a critical window of opportunity to set kids up for life.

The Empowered Communities East Kimberley Regional Development Agenda identifies shared strategic priorities for the East Kimberley to improve economic, social and cultural development for Aboriginal people.



Development domains of the Regional Development Agenda for Growing Up Strong Kids

Supporting Aboriginal children and families in the Early Years will have positive impacts for local communities broadly and support progress towards all Closing the Gap targets. As the starting point, the East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership will focus on the following Closing the Gap outcome areas:

- **Outcome 2:** Aboriginal children are born healthy and strong.
- **Outcome 3:** Aboriginal children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years.
- **Outcome 4:** Aboriginal children thrive in their early years.
- **Outcome 9:** Aboriginal people can secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need.
- **Outcome 13:** Aboriginal families and households are safe.
- **Outcome 16:** Aboriginal cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.

The East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership provides for a new way of working for government and community; it provides the 'front door' for all current and future Early Years priorities, initiatives and policy decisions in the East Kimberley.

The full story of how the East Kimberley came to be nominated, and the community's aspirations for supporting outcomes for Aboriginal children in the East Kimberley is in full at *Schedule A: Origin of the Partnership*.

Partnership Agreement

1. Partners

1.1 The Parties to this Partnership Agreement have been selected based on the Early Years focus of the Partnership.

1.2 The Parties to this Partnership Agreement may change if the scope of the Partnership is amended, consistent with Clause 8.6.

1.3 The Parties to this Partnership Agreement are:

a. East Kimberley Aboriginal organisations:
   i. Binarri-binyja yarrawoo (BBY) Aboriginal Corporation, the backbone for Empowered Communities East Kimberley (ECEK), on behalf of ECEK member organisations

b. Local Government Shires:
   i. Shire of Halls Creek
   ii. Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley

c. Western Australian Government:
   i. Department of Communities
   ii. Department of Education
   iii. Department of the Premier and Cabinet
   iv. WA Country Health Service

d. Australian Government:
   i. Department of Education
   ii. Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
   iii. Department of Social Services
   iv. National Indigenous Australians Agency

1.4 In addition to the Parties listed above, Aboriginal community members from each location within the Partnership participate in and support shared decision-making as members of the Partnership Table, consistent with Clause 11.1a. Those members will not be strictly 'Parties' for the purposes of this Partnership Agreement.



2. Purpose

2.1 The Parties agree the purpose of this Partnership Agreement is to:

a. acknowledge the East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership as a formal partnership under the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap,* aligned to state and national reporting requirements;

b. formalise commitments and enshrine shared decision-making roles and responsibilities that respond to Aboriginal community priorities outlined in the Early Years Regional Development Agenda (EYRDA); and

c. commit the Parties to fully implementing the Partnership in a transparent, consultative, and accountable manner.

2.2 The Parties acknowledge the provisions of this Partnership Agreement are not legally enforceable. This Partnership Agreement does not create any legal relationship between the Partes.

2.3 The Parties acknowledge participation in this Partnership Agreement will be in accordance with all relevant state and Commonwealth legislative and privacy requirements.

2.4 All Parties are committed to its implementation aligned with the Strong Partnership Elements and consistent with the intention of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*.

3. Term and review

3.1 This Partnership Agreement takes effect on the date that it is signed by the Parties and, unless terminated earlier, will continue until 31 December 2029, to align with the term of the *Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap 2019 – 2029*.

3.2 Once in effect, this Partnership Agreement supersedes the *Framework Agreement for the East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership.*

3.3 The Parties may extend the Partnership Agreement beyond 31 December 2029 through a review of the Partnership by 30 June 2029.

3.4 The Parties agree that this Partnership Agreement may be amended at any time through written agreement by all Parties.

4. Definitions

4.1 In this Partnership Agreement the following terms have the meanings defined below:

a. **Action Plan** means the Action Plan developed and agreed by the Parties as per Clause 10.

b. **Aboriginal Parties** means the organisations listed at Clause 1.3(a).

c. **ACCO** means Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation.

d. **BBY** means Binarri-binyja yarrawoo Aboriginal Corporation.

e. **Backbone Organisation** means the Aboriginal organisation, being BBY, with responsibility for supporting and facilitating arrangements for the Partnership at the local level.

f. **Developmental Domains** means the Developmental Domains outlined in BBY's Early Years Regional Development Agenda.

g. **Early Years** means maternal and child health and development from conception to seven years of age.

h. **Early Years Working Groups** means the working groups facilitated by BBY in Kununurra, Halls Creek and Wyndham, comprising local Aboriginal organisations and government and non-government service providers.

i. **EYRDA** means the Empowered Communities East Kimberley Regional Development Agenda for Growing Up Strong Kids.

j. **ECEK** means Empowered Communities East Kimberley.

k. **ECEK Partnership Principles** means the principles developed by BBY ECEK to guide the development of a partnership-centred approach between Aboriginal organisations and non-Aboriginal organisations in service delivery and development initiatives in Aboriginal communities.

l. **Government Parties** means all government agencies and local shires listed at Clause 1.3(b) to Clause 1.3(d).

m. **National Agreement** means the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

n. **Operations Group** means the officer-level working group comprising nominated representatives from the Government Parties and Aboriginal Parties.

o. **Parties** means all parties listed at Clause 1.3.

p. **Partnership** means the East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership.

q. **Partnership Agreement** means this Partnership Agreement for the East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership under the authority of the National Agreement.

r. **Partnership Table** means the shared decision-making forum comprising senior representatives of all Parties, as outlined under Clause 11.

s. **Partnership Table Co-Chairs** means the Chairperson of BBY and the WA Government lead agency representative as Co-Chairs of the Partnership Table.

t. **Priority Reforms** means the Priority Reform areas in the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap.*

u. **Socio-economic Outcomes** means the socio-economic outcomes listed at Table B of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*.

v. **Strong Partnership Elements** means the Strong Partnership Elements outlined in Clause 32 of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*.

5. Partnership principles

5.1 The Strong Partnership Elements at Clause 32 of the National Agreement are embodied throughout this Partnership Agreement.

5.2 This Partnership Agreement is consistent with the following ECEK Partnership Principles:

a. The Parties recognise the existing capacity and strengths of East Kimberley Aboriginal organisations and will identify how they can contribute to further developing this capacity and strengthening the ACCO sector.

b. The Parties will be guided by the priorities of Aboriginal people and leadership in the East Kimberley, recognising the inherent power imbalance between large government agencies and small Aboriginal organisations.

c. The Parties recognise that many East Kimberley Aboriginal organisations already have robust and effective practices embedded in a cultural framework (whether documented or not). The Parties agree to recognise existing development practices and support these through partnership arrangements.

d. The Parties recognise Aboriginal organisations and communities as lead agents in creating sustainable governance and leadership in Aboriginal communities in the East Kimberley.

e. The Parties agree to work within the structures and processes that provide Aboriginal decision-making control, including formal delegation of power and dedication of self-generated resources to assist with this process.

f. The Parties agree that Aboriginal organisations need to drive and have control of development initiatives, services and programs delivered to their communities.

g. The Parties will work together to share learnings and establish effective development practice and cultural competency standards for development projects and service delivery initiatives.

h. In relation to both research and operational data, the Parties:

   i. recognise the inherent rights of Aboriginal peoples to maintain, control, protect and develop data in respect of their culture, tradition and lives;

   ii. agree to work with Aboriginal organisations to maintain data sovereignty.

6. Role of the parties

6.1 Under this Partnership Agreement, the Parties collectively commit to:

a. engage proactively and constructively in the Partnership, including actively participating in the formal governance structures which embed and enable shared decision-making and genuine partnership;

b. support the participation of community representatives and leadership, subject-matter expertise, and/or cultural authority;

c. ensure all Parties and participants can engage from an informed perspective, with clarity about processes, expectations, and responsibilities;

d. strengthen the capacity of East Kimberley Aboriginal organisations to support outcomes under this Partnership Agreement;

e. develop an Action Plan in accordance with Clause 10 to support and progress priority initiatives and actions determined by local communities;

f. increase accountability to those on the ground to ensure the funding flowing into the East Kimberley is achieving results;

g. identify and address systemic and structural barriers limiting meaningful change and progress of this Partnership Agreement;

h. continuously build understanding, awareness and responsiveness to Aboriginal cultural and organisational contexts in the East Kimberley to support strong relationships with Aboriginal people and organisations; and

i. support data sharing arrangements where data is relevant and available, subject to meeting privacy requirements, and ensure shared data is analysed and interpreted in an Aboriginal cultural context.

6.2 The role of the Aboriginal Parties is to:

a. ensure ECEK members and the broader community are aware of the Partnership and its activities;

b. facilitate Aboriginal-led processes on the ground to ensure the Partnership Table and the EYRDA are informed and guided by local regional priorities;

c. lead and drive regional reform priorities;

d. participate in, support and/or convene local level governance arrangements in the East Kimberley to support the Partnership; and

e. work closely with the Government Parties to build capability across the Partnership to do things differently and achieve reform outcomes in the East Kimberley region.

6.3 The role of the Government Parties is to:

a. share decision-making with the Aboriginal Parties on Early Years reforms, actions and initiatives in the East Kimberley to support implementation of this Partnership Agreement and Action Plan;

b. enable greater place-based engagement through increased agency decision making at the regional or local level;

c. ensure each Government Party is represented, actively participates and is accountable for progressing actions in relevant meetings of the Partnership governance, in-person where possible;

d. regularly brief executives across Local, State and Commonwealth Governments, including Ministers, and provide updates through the Partnership governance as required; and

e. be accountable and transparent about the actions and outcomes under this Partnership Agreement and Action Plan, including the scope of authority, relevant governance processes, and any barriers which may arise.

6.4 Other parties may participate in the Partnership from time to time as agreed by the Parties through the Partnership Table.

7. Aims

7.1 Under the National Agreement, this Partnership Agreement will:

a. bring East Kimberley Aboriginal communities together with governments to share decision-making, drive community-led outcomes and support community-led development initiatives;

b. demonstrate how implementation of the Priority Reforms at the local level is fundamental to changing the way governments do business with Aboriginal people, communities and organisations;

c. embed transformational and sustainable change to ensure government systems and services are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley;

d. enable Aboriginal communities in the East Kimberley to self-determine their aspirations and priorities through local governance structures, including through the development of the Action Plan which reflects these aspirations and priorities;

e. demonstrate targeted progress towards all Priority Reforms by identifying opportunities for building the ACCO sector; transforming government organisations and ensuring all parties have access to the same data and information in an easily accessible format (subject to meeting privacy requirements and ensuring data security and integrity);

f. track implementation of the indicators outlined in the EYRDA in the East Kimberley. The indicators are linked to the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms and Socio-economic Outcomes; and

g. share learnings to inform potential future versions of place-based partnerships and other relevant initiatives.

7.2 The Partnership will progress priority actions and initiatives that have been identified in the EYRDA as the most essential next steps for children and their families in the East Kimberley. These include:

a. strengthening language, culture and connection to Country: through bilingual education, two-way learning, whole of family approaches to connection to Country and birthing on Country;

b. safe homes, strong families, empowering communities achieved through improved housing for families, and quality parenting, education and support programs;

c. babies are born healthy and grow up strong through improved access to and availability of culturally safe maternal and child health services; strong supports for mums to have healthy pregnancies and investment in Aboriginal-led maternal health services;

d. children achieve their full potential in early learning, both at home and through participating in high-quality early childhood education and care. Parents and caregivers are empowered to take the lead in children's early learning and development; and

e. quality service systems through integrated service delivery; improving access to and awareness of Early Years services, regional workforce development for early childhood education and a quality Early Years community data project.

8. Scope

8.1 Initiatives and activities to support positive education, health and wellbeing, and socio-economic outcomes for East Kimberley Aboriginal children and their families in the Early Years.

8.2 Aboriginal community-led priorities and initiatives in the Early Years, in line with the EYRDA and the Priority Reforms.

8.3 The geographic scope of this Partnership Agreement is within the towns of Kununurra, Halls Creek and Wyndham. This acknowledges the three towns as the major centres which provide services and outreach into communities.

8.4 Implementation of the Priority Reforms including by:

a. **Priority Reform One**: Strengthening partnerships between Aboriginal people and governments so that Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap.

b. **Priority Reform Two**: Strengthening the Aboriginal community-controlled sector in the East Kimberley to maintain a strong and sustainable ACCO sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley.

c. **Priority Reform Three**: Transforming how government organisations work to enable culturally safe and responsive systems and services for Aboriginal people, communities and organisations in the East Kimberley.

d. **Priority Reform Four**: Increasing access to and control over locally-specific data and information for Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley, by ensuring the Aboriginal Parties have:

   i. access to the same data and information on which any decisions are made, in an easily accessible format, to inform decision making, subject to meeting privacy requirements and ensuring data security and integrity; and

   ii. the capability to use locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor priorities and implementation efforts to close the gap.

8.5 The Parties will work together to establish data sharing arrangements which respond to the priorities of local communities, in line with relevant state and Commonwealth legislative and privacy requirements.

8.6 The Parties acknowledge that the priority area and/or geographic scope may be amended or expanded in future. Any amendments to the priority area, geographic scope and/or Parties must be agreed in writing by all of the Parties to the Partnership Agreement and must only occur with express consent of additional communities and relevant parties.

8.7 The Parties agree that additional entities may become Parties to the Partnership Agreement, as agreed by the Partnership Table, by signing onto this Partnership Agreement.

9. Shared decision-making

9.1 Under this Partnership Agreement, and consistent with Clause 32(c) of the National Agreement, decision-making is shared between governments and Aboriginal people and is:

a. by consensus, where the voices of Aboriginal parties hold as much weight as the governments.

b. transparent, where matters for decision are in terms that are easily understood by all parties and where there is enough information and time to understand the implications of the decision.

c. where Aboriginal representatives can speak without fear of reprisals or repercussions.

d. where a wide variety of groups of Aboriginal people, including women, young people, Elders, LGBTQI and Aboriginal people with a disability can have their voice heard.

e. where self-determination is supported, and Aboriginal lived experience is understood and respected.

f. where relevant funding for programs and services align with jointly agreed community priorities, noting governments retain responsibility for funding decisions.

g. where partnership parties have access to the same data and information, in an easily accessible format, on which any decisions are made.

9.2 The Parties commit to share decision-making on activities which primarily or predominantly impact East Kimberley Aboriginal children and families in the Early Years including:

a. investment planning and funding and alignment of existing and new investment to support Early Years reforms;

b. co-design of Early Years policy and programs across all stages including development and design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and learning;

c. planning, coordinating and undertaking consultation and engagement with Aboriginal people and communities; and

d. collating data assets and collections, and data indicators and monitoring, evaluation and learning.

9.3 The Partnership Table is the shared decision-making forum for the Partnership. The Parties, through the Partnership Table, will progress shared decision-making in line with the agreed Terms of Reference.

9.4 The Partnership Table will agree the allocation of government funding explicitly committed for the purposes of progressing the Partnership.

9.5 The details of dedicated funding subject to shared decision-making by the Partnership Table will be outlined in the Funding Schedule at Schedule C.

9.6 For new or future proposals related to policy, programs, and services which fall within the scope of this Partnership Agreement, the Parties commit to:

a. collectively develop and agree funding proposals for consideration by government.

b. align proposals with the priorities agreed with the Aboriginal Parties.

c. transparently share details of potential opportunities and challenges.

9.7 For existing or previously committed funding and expenditure for Early Years in the East Kimberley, the Government Parties commit to:

a. transparently share details with the Aboriginal Parties to support shared decision-making and Aboriginal self-determination.

b. work with the Partnership Table when funding is expiring or required to be reviewed to ensure review recommendations are informed by local Aboriginal communities and agreed by the Aboriginal Parties.

10. Action plan

10.1 The Aboriginal Parties have outlined a list of community informed and endorsed Early Years actions and initiatives in the EYRDA. The EYRDA is a living document that is reviewed annually by BBY and ECEK member organisations.

10.2 The Partnership Table is responsible for agreeing the list of initiatives and actions in the Action Plan in line with the priorities in the EYRDA. This may include new ways of working, as well as service delivery.

10.3 The Parties may update the Action Plan based on community priorities raised through the annual review of the EYRDA, with changes agreed by the Partnership Table.

10.4 Addendums to the Action Plan to support emerging actions and innovative priorities outside of the formal review process may be considered through agreement by all Parties.

10.5 All Parties have a responsibility for reporting, monitoring and/or evaluation of progress on initiatives listed in the Action Plan, including updates to community through local governance arrangements.

11. Governance and reporting

11.1 The formal governance structure for the Partnership includes:

a. the Partnership Table as the shared decision-making forum, comprising senior Aboriginal leadership representing the Aboriginal Parties, nominated Aboriginal community representatives from each location, and senior leadership from the Government Parties.

b. a local Aboriginal Backbone Organisation, being BBY (ECEK).

c. Early Years Working Groups facilitated by the Backbone Organisation and comprising representatives from relevant Aboriginal organisations, alongside relevant government and non-government service providers as required, in each location within the geographic scope of the Partnership.

d. an officer-level Operations Group comprising nominated representatives from the Aboriginal and Government Parties.

11.2 The Partnership Table will operate in accordance with the agreed Terms of Reference.

11.3 The Early Years Working Groups, through the Backbone Organisation, will identify and escalate issues and report through to the Partnership Table. The Partnership Table, through the secretariat, will provide a written report back to the Early Years Working Groups on actions taken and issues resolved.

11.4 The Early Years Working Groups share information, identify priority issues and problem solving, and progress joint planning to support the agreed priorities of the Partnership Agreement.

11.5 The Operations Group responds to issues arising from the Early Years Working Groups and Partnership Table, monitors performance delivery, and provides timely feedback and longer-term reporting to the Parties.

11.6 The Backbone Organisation will regularly share feedback on progress made under the Partnership Agreement with Early Years Working Groups.

11.7 The Partnership Table may agree to expand the Partnership Governance to incorporate arrangements and/or reporting lines with other relevant national, state or local level forums and bodies.

11.8 Progress on the Partnership Agreement will be reflected in the WA Government's jurisdictional reporting mechanisms under the National Agreement, including updates to the Joint Council on Closing the Gap.

11.9 All Parties will report on progress against the Partnership Agreement through internal governance arrangements as required.

11.10 An overview of the governance arrangements is at Schedule B.

12. Monitoring and evaluation

12.1 The Parties will develop a robust evaluation framework to measure the performance and effectiveness of the Partnership.

12.2 The Parties acknowledge that a community development approach to investment, programs and services as supported by this Partnership Agreement may take time to demonstrate expected outcomes.

12.3 The Parties agree on the importance of effective monitoring and evaluation of outcomes, rather than inputs and outputs, informed by Aboriginal ways of working. The Parties further agree to the need for community-led, ongoing 'learning as we go' or 'learning by doing', to ensure that the Partnership:

a. adapts and changes in 'real time' in response to place-based successes and failures, as opposed to being designed after the fact or 'set and forget';

b. is inclusive of monitoring before the evaluation phase with a forward looking, outcomes-based approach to improving initiatives that are still underway; and

c. is directed by the community at the local level to enable on the ground learning.

12.4 The Parties agree to regular joint learning cycles, including an annual reflection process, which allow the Parties to monitor and consider:

a. what action was taken;

b. what were the results;

c. what will be done differently; and

d. the overall health of the Partnership.

12.5 The Parties will monitor and report against locally relevant indicators identified in the EYRDA Development Domains. These Development Domains support Closing the Gap Outcome Areas 2, 3, 4, 9, 13 and 16.

13. Conflict of interest

13.1 The Parties agree to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest regarding the implementation of this Partnership Agreement and Action Plan.

13.2 The Parties agree to define and manage conflicts of interest in line with their existing internal procedures.

14. Dispute mechanisms

14.1 The Parties will endeavour in the spirit of co-operation, good faith, and mutual trust to resolve all difficulties, disputes or misunderstandings with respect to this Partnership Agreement.

14.2 Any Party may give written notice to the Partnership Table Co-Chairs of a dispute under this Partnership Agreement. The Partnership Table Co-Chairs will attempt to resolve any dispute in the first instance.

14.3 If a dispute cannot be resolved by the Partnership Table within 10 business days of notification, the matter may be escalated to the Chairperson of the lead Aboriginal party and lead Government Minister/s.

14.4 In the event of a dispute that cannot be resolved using the dispute resolution mechanisms outlined in this Partnership Agreement, any Party may terminate their participation in this Partnership Agreement at any time by giving 10 business days' notice to all the other Parties in writing.

15. Resourcing

15.1 Clause 33 of the National Agreement recognises that adequate funding is needed to support Aboriginal parties to be partners with governments in formal partnerships. This includes agreed funding for Aboriginal parties to:

a. engage independent policy advice.

b. meet independently of governments to determine their own policy positions.

c. support strengthened governance between and across Aboriginal organisations and parties.

d. engage with and seek advice from Aboriginal people from all relevant groups within affected communities, including but not limited to Elders, Traditional Owners and Native Title Holders.

15.2 Resourcing arrangements may involve reallocation or reprioritisation of existing resources and/or commitment of additional resources.

15.3 Resourcing under this Partnership Agreement includes support for the operation of formal governance arrangements, and for initiatives.

15.4 The Government Parties will provide resourcing to support governance including:

a. The WA Government lead agency has provided funds to the Aboriginal Parties governed by a separate agreement. Further agreements may also be reached between Government Parties and Aboriginal Parties.

b. The WA Government lead agency will dedicate staff resources to the Operations Group and the convening of the Partnership Table.

c. All Government Parties will ensure adequate staff resourcing to participate in the Partnership Table. Government Parties may participate in other local forums as invited by the Aboriginal Parties.

15.5 The Parties will provide resourcing towards initiatives that include:

a. existing WA Government funding allocated for the Partnership.

b. further funding opportunities that may arise, subject to Government budget processes.

15.6 It is expected the Government Parties will align their East Kimberley Early Years priorities, initiatives and policy decisions through the Partnership governance.

15.7 Government Parties will work collectively to support implementation of the Action Plan, including consideration of reprioritisation or reallocation of existing funding which may include cross-agency funding approaches.

15.8 Any actions requiring new or additional funding will be subject to future government budget processes.

16. Communications

16.1 Public communications and statements regarding the Partnership are to be consistent with the intent and terms of the Partnership Agreement.

16.2 Public communications will be agreed by the Partnership Table Co-Chairs in the first instance.

17. Confidentiality and privacy

17.1 The Parties acknowledge that confidential matters may be discussed through formal governance arrangements. These will be designated as confidential, and the Parties agree not to communicate or onforward confidential materials without prior approval of the Party responsible for the relevant information.

17.2 The Parties agree to a high degree of visibility and transparency, whilst also noting the sensitive nature of information that relates to families and communities.

17.3 The Parties agree to comply with obligations under relevant privacy legislation and other legislative requirements in relation to information sharing.

17.4 The Parties agree that data sharing in relation to this Partnership Agreement will be appropriately documented, information being shared will be anonymised and, if other steps are necessary to ensure the sharing complies with other relevant legislation, those steps are taken.



Signature Page

Sally Martin
Chairperson
Binarri-binyja yarrawoo
Aboriginal Corporation
(Empowered Communities East Kimberley)

Hon Don Punch MLA
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
WA Government

Hon Sabine Winton MLA
Minister for Education &
Early Childhood
WA Government

Hon Meredith Hammat MLA
Minister for Health
WA Government

Senator the
Hon Malarndirri McCarthy
Minister for Indigenous Australians
Australian Government

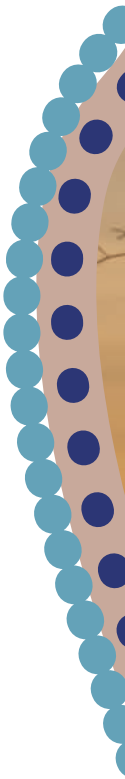
Senator the
Hon Dr Jess Walsh
Minister for Early
Childhood Education
Australian Government

Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Ageing
Australian Government

Hon Tanya Plibersek MP
Minister for Social Services
Australian Government

Cr David Menzel
Shire President
Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley

Cr Brenda Garstone
Shire President
Shire of Halls Creek





Schedule A:
Origin of the Partnership



The National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Priority Reform One of the National Agreement commits the parties to building and strengthening structures that empower Aboriginal people to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements. This includes 'place-based partnerships' that are "based on a specific region, between government and Aboriginal representatives, and others by agreement, from those specific areas" (Clause 30).

The East Kimberley is one of six place-based partnerships established across Australia under the National Agreement. The purpose of the place-based partnerships (Clause 31) is to:

a. drive Aboriginal community-led outcomes on Closing the Gap;

b. enable Aboriginal representatives, communities and organisations to negotiate and implement agreements with governments to implement all Priority Reforms and policy specific and place-based strategies to support Closing the Gap;

c. support additional community-led development initiatives; and

d. bring together all government parties, together with Aboriginal people, organisations and communities to the collective task of Closing the Gap.

Place-based partnerships recognise and build on the successes of existing decision-making structures in Aboriginal communities (Clause 34), consistent with the Strong Partnership Elements of the National Agreement (Clauses 32 & 33).



Empowered Communities

In 2014 Aboriginal leaders from across the East Kimberley region came together under the East Kimberley Aboriginal Charter to make a commitment to long-term reform to secure the wellbeing of Aboriginal people in the region.

Since opting in to Empowered Communities in 2015, the region has worked hard to partner with Governments at all levels to lead reform initiatives that are underpinned by the interconnected principles of:

a. **Empowerment**
Aboriginal people exercising the right to take responsibility for their lives and futures and Governments sharing and in some cases relinquishing certain powers and responsibilities and enabling Aboriginal empowerment through the provision of resources, and support for capability building.

b. **Development**
Supporting and enabling Aboriginal development through a capability approach that recognises that different regions have different priorities for building capabilities to close the gap given their different contexts and circumstances.

c. **Productivity**
Supporting opportunities to improve the productivity of the substantial funding allocations made in the name of Aboriginal people through shared decision making, including to reduce duplication and red tape and shifting funding away from unproductive investments towards innovative initiatives that can achieve better outcomes.

Within this context the East Kimberley region has embraced six social norms that tell the story of what the region agrees it want for its families and communities. These are:

1. We care for children, old people and vulnerable people
2. Children go to school and are ready to learn
3. Adults go to work or are in training
4. We listen to the old people to strengthen culture, country & language
5. People take personal responsibility and do not commit crimes
6. People look after their homes & pay rent

Nomination of the East Kimberley

Following the finalisation of the National Agreement in July 2020, BBY Chairman Mr. Hill wrote to Ministers Ken Wyatt and Ben Wyatt proposing a tripartite partnership between three levels of government and Aboriginal leadership in the East Kimberley, to continue to build on the ongoing Empowered Communities partnership.

On 2 February 2021, Minister Ben Wyatt wrote confirming the WA Government would nominate the East Kimberley as the state's proposed site for a place-based partnership under the National Agreement.

In June 2022, the WA Government's Department of the Premier and Cabinet worked with BBY to engage East Kimberley Aboriginal organisations and confirm local community support for an 'Early Years' place-based partnership in the East Kimberley.

The Joint Council on Closing the Gap formally endorsed the East Kimberley as the place-based partnership location in Western Australia on 26 August 2022.



Supporting outcomes in the Early Years

The Early Years – the period from conception to school transition – is the most important time to lay strong foundations for the health, learning, development, and identity of Aboriginal children. It is a critical window of opportunity to set our kids up for life.

The EYRDA sets out a plan to achieve long-term change for Aboriginal children and families. The collective Early Years vision of the East Kimberley Region is this:

- Language and culture are essential and are at the centre of a child's start to life.
- Families and children in their Early Years are speaking their Aboriginal languages, have connection to Country, and have strong sense of belonging and cultural identity.
- Families live together in safe, nurturing homes where mums, dads, and extended caregiving family networks are empowered, children are thriving, and communities support families to succeed.
- Strong and healthy mums before, during, and after pregnancy. Babies are born healthy and children grow up with positive social and emotional wellbeing, including physical and mental health and meeting developmental milestones.
- Children achieve their full potential in early learning, both at home and through participating in high-quality early childhood education and care. Parents and caregivers are empowered to take the lead in children's early learning and development.
- The Aboriginal community-controlled Early Years sector is strong and sustainable, and supports self-determination. The early childhood education and care workforce delivers high-quality, culturally appropriate services for our kids.

From this vision comes the five development domains that underpin the EYRDA and provide a framework for the path forward. They are:

a. Language, culture, connection to country
b. Safe homes, strong families, empowering communities
c. Babies are born healthy and grow up strong
d. Children thrive in their early years
e. Quality service system

In order to deliver on the vision of the EYRDA, governments have committed to partner with Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children in the region.

Schedule B: Governance

Partnership Table

Senior representative decision-making forum

East Kimberley Aboriginal Organisations

Binarri-binyja Yarrawoo Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of Empowered Communities East Kimberley organisations | Six Aboriginal community representatives

Local Government

Shire of Halls Creek | Shire of Wyndham - East Kimberley

WA Government

Department of Communities | Department of Education | Department of the Premier and Cabinet | WA Country Health Service

Australian Government

National Indigenous Australians Agency | Department of Education | Department of Social Services | Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

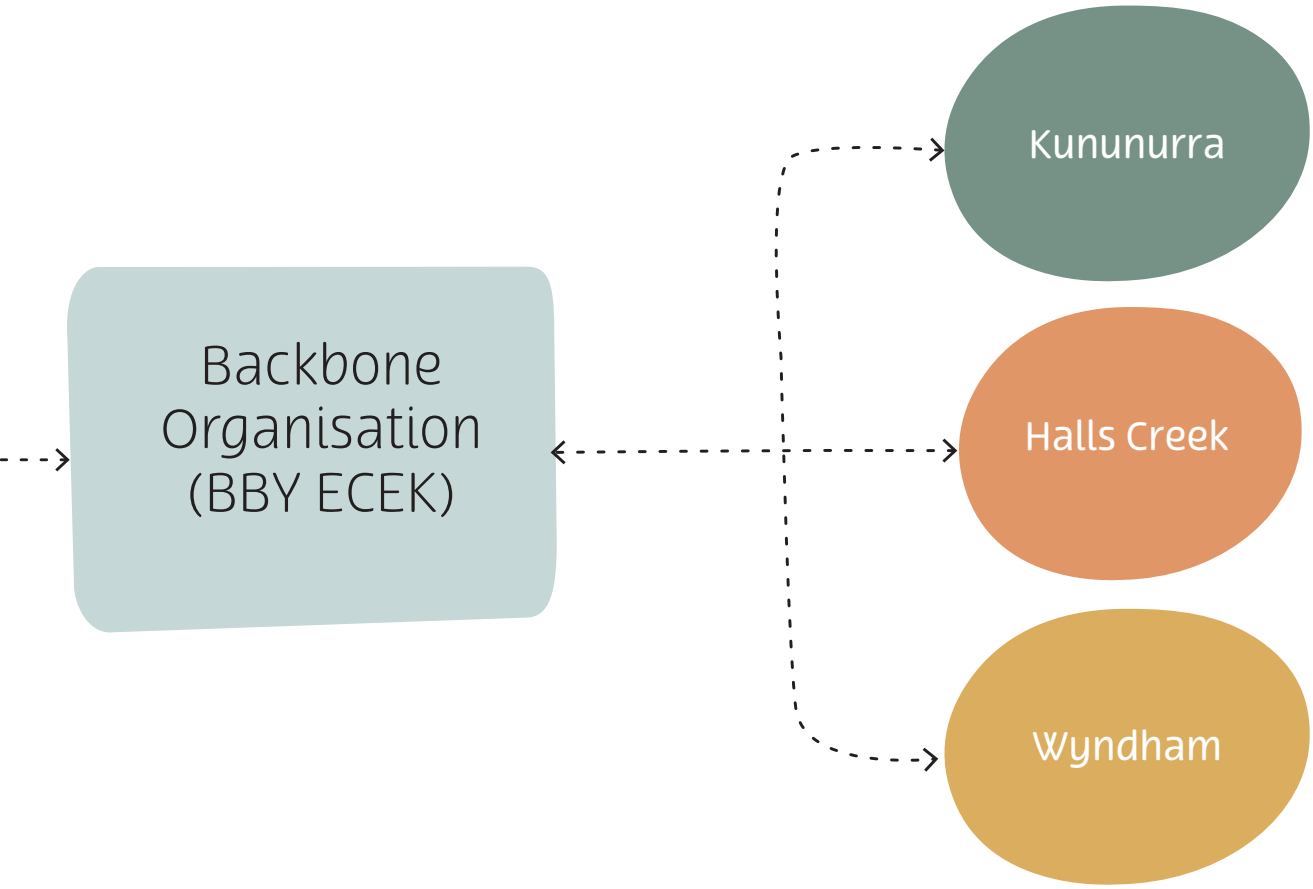
Operations Group

Problem solving, drafting, coordination, support

Officers from
Binarri-binyja yarrawoo Aboriginal Corporation (ECEK)
and government partners

Early Years Working Groups and Local Management Committees

Determine local priorities in 'Early Years', identify local issues and opportunities



Backbone Organisation (BBY ECEK)

- Facilitates and supports local governance arrangements
- Engages with local Aboriginal organisations and community members to establish 'Early Years' profile
- Ensures local priorities are central in discussions and decision-making

Schedule C: Funding Schedule

The 'Funding Schedule' for the East Kimberley Place-Based Partnership is available on the WA Government website at **wa.gov.au/EKPBP**







Taminga Connell

About the artist



Kimberley Artist Taminga Connell is a Bunuba/Gija woman.

She is a descendant of one of the Kimberley regions largest families. Her Grandmother Maude Bedford's country is Calwynyardah (Bunuba Country) and her Grandfather's is Tableland (Gija Country). Maude has twelve children. She raised them at Moola BullaMission and Flora Valley Station before settling in the old gold mining town of Halls Creek.

Taminga is the third child of Andy and Gloria Martin. Andy is an Australian champion Farrier and Blacksmith who first moved to Nicholson Station as a ringer when he was 15 in 1969. He worked mostly alongside aboriginal stockmen. Later he met his wife Gloria Martin (Bedford) at the Turkey Creek rodeo, a community which is now known as Warmun.

Taminga is a devoted Wife, Mother, Sister, Aunt, Daughter and Grandmother. She left home at 15 and went to station life working as a Jillaroo on Flora Valley Station. She went on to work at other stations in both the East and West Kimberley such as Moola Bulla, Legune and Yakamunga. In 2006 she had her first daughter Lilly in Kununurra. Over the next decade she had another four children. Three girls and two boys in total.

Taminga's greatest joy stems from her faith, supporting her loyal husband Scotty Connell, raising her five children, painting and enjoying the nearby country which is full of mountains, waterfalls, rivers and great fishing spots. She initially discovered painting whilst being introduced to art therapy. It was a form of expressing emotions, processing trauma, telling stories, sharing knowledge and calming herself. Her art is modern, contemporary and reflects the connection she has to her people and country through her dreams, visionsand stories both past and present. Each piece is unique and very special to her.

These days Taminga resides in the East Kimberley town of Kununurra and is thoroughly immersed in and enjoying her family life, painting and assisting in her family run business Kimberley Spirit lours which also has a not for profit aimed at reducing youth suicide in the region, empowering and equipping kids to reach their full potential, it's named the Kimberley Spirit Foundation. Taminga gets a thrill out of people expressing interest in her work and absolutely loves seeing it hanging on walls around the country. She hopes you'll experience similar feelings of Love, Joy and Peace when viewing, purchasing and admiring her art.

