

# Working with Indigenous Nations to co-Design Stillbirth (WINDS) awareness for prevention resources

A report summarising the WINDS project,  
including community engagement  
for co-design of resources as well as  
dissemination and evaluation activities

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## Specific Acknowledgements

**The Still Aware team and the principal author of this report (Associate Professor Jane Warland) would like to thank and acknowledge each of the more than 120 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (hereafter respectfully referred to as Aboriginal) community members who participated in giving their time and cultural knowledge to this project.**

We felt very welcome by the people of each Country and thank them once again, here, for their invitation to visit and generosity in sharing their cultural knowledge with us. We appreciated their willingness to work with us to co-design stillbirth awareness for prevention resources.

We were privileged to be allowed to listen to ancient cultural knowledge and wisdom expressed firsthand by 'Old Girls.' We valued being taught traditional customs and taken to visit traditional birthing grounds on Country. We appreciated Elders' and Senior women's kindness, and persistence in sharing Cultural knowledge and patiently teaching us.

### Acknowledgement of Country

Still Aware acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and Elders past and present.

Artwork by Ngarrindjeri artist Jordan Lovegrove

We recognise all the project's participants, their strength, resilience, spirit and dignity especially when yarning about their birthing experiences with us. We were inspired by their artwork and the beautiful messages each canvas portrays.

**We are proud that all the Project resources are co-designed with and for Mob.**

Aboriginal people should be aware that this report may contain images of individuals, alive at the time of the project activity, who are now deceased. This report was prepared on Kurna Country.



Scan QR code to view report and associated appendices online.



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### About Still Aware

Still Aware is the first Australian not-for-profit charity solely dedicated to ending preventable stillbirth through providing healthy pregnancy information for all Australian families. We have been the peak national body for Stillbirth education and awareness in Australia since we were established in 2014.

For the past 10 years we have co-designed, produced, and disseminated awareness for prevention collateral (e.g. Your Pregnancy brochure and fridge magnet) with and for pregnant Australian families. This project allowed an extension of our work to include co-designing new collateral with and for Australian Aboriginal families. This report provides a summary of this work through a project funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care in 2022.

### Citation

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**“ I have lived a long life dealing with White fellas and their Departments and I can say the way that you have worked with us, listened to us and respected us has been extraordinary... I’ve never met anybody like you before. ”**

– Aunty June Mills,  
Larrakia Elder

# Executive summary

The 'Reducing Stillbirth: Stillbirth Education and Awareness grant (4-GZTOSZR)' funding was won by Still Aware Inc. to:

Co-design<sup>1</sup>, co-disseminate and co-evaluate community education and awareness resources that provide high quality, evidenced-based information about stillbirth awareness for prevention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



## Co-design

We co-designed resources by:

Reaching out to more than 15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and visiting nine (by Elder invitation). Then holding community yarning sessions (WINDS workshops) to co-design Stillbirth awareness for prevention resources with more than 120 individuals from five different communities:

- Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi Country (West Pilbara, WA)
- Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar (Perth, WA)
- Latjilatji Country (Mildura, VIC)
- Larrakia Nation (Darwin, NT)
- Dharawal Land (Campbelltown, NSW)

The suite of the resources co-designed with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities included:

- Project Shirt
- Keep Bubba safe and strong! brochure
- Keep Bubba safe and strong! fridge magnet
- 3-minute Animated Video (+15-30 second cut downs)
- 3-Minute 'talking heads' video (+15-30 second cut downs)
- Project mural
- Tote Bag (featuring project mural).



## Co-dissemination

At the time of publication of this report we had:

- Posted Safe Bubba packs (brochure and fridge magnet) to 151 ACCHOS and 137 other Aboriginal Health Service organisations suggested by community
- Presented (podium or poster) to 11 national and international audiences
- Revisited participating communities (by invitation) to present the new suite of resources and give gifts to participating community members
- Handed out Project brochures and magnets at 10 Parent, Baby and Child (PBC) expos in 2024
- Engaged WDM (an Adelaide based advertising and design agency) for a three month intensive social media, GP and Tonic Health Screens advertising campaign.

## Co-evaluation

We collected one word evaluations anonymously from each community member who wanted to provide feedback in this way.

This was suggested as a culturally sensitive means of determining what community participants thought of the new resources. We also collected:

- One word evaluations from Australian College of Midwives conference attendees
- Adhoc comment data collected from comments made by social media users
- Unsolicited comment data from organisations and individuals ordering the new resources.

# Winds of Change project highlights

Co-creating stillbirth awareness resources with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities



### Ngarluma & Yindjibarndi Country

- 3 visits
- Winds of Change name chosen
- Project schematic
- Artwork created
- Project shirt

### Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar

- 5 visits
- Brochure
- Stillbirth awareness animated video
- Mural begun

### Larrakia Nation

- 2 visits
- Project video
- 5 key messages created for Keep Bubba safe advertising campaign

### Latjilatji Country

- 2 visits
- Fridge magnet
- Website discussions began

### Dharawal Land

- 2 visits
- Mural completed
- Tote bag

Sharing resources and information to increase awareness and help prevent stillbirth



<sup>1</sup> Co-design means: collaborating, including and designing WITH people that will use, deliver or engage with a service or product. (Burkett N.D.)



# Connecting and co-designing with community



## Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi Country

West Pilbara, WA

### Community overview

The Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi Country is in the Pilbara area of WA. It stretches from the Pilbara coast to the Millstream-Chichester National Park to the south, from around Whim Creek in the east to just west of Pannawonica.

The area is classified as 'very remote.' As at the 2021 National Census (latest data) the total estimated resident population of the West Pilbara was 29,592, and 3,365 of these identified as 'Aboriginal'.

### West Pilbara activity overview

We<sup>2</sup> visited this community three times:

**First visit:**  
July 29-31  
2022

**Second visit:**  
August 25-31  
2022

**Third visit:**  
October 18-21  
2022

<sup>2</sup> In this report whenever 'we' is used it refers to some or all members of the WINDS project team. If 'I' is used this refers to the consultant Still Aware engaged for this project Associate Professor Jane Warland who is the lead author of this report.

## West Pilbara engagement



### First Visit: July 29-31, 2022

Face-to-face meeting with key senior Aboriginal women and community members was held.

During this three-day visit we did some initial planning about the project and what to include in the workshop content.



### Second Visit: August 25-31, 2022

At the second visit August 25-31<sup>st</sup> two 'old girls,' not present at the first visit, came to our meetings. We did further workshop planning including the development of the **project schematic, project name and project painting.**

We were also taken on a tour of the West Pilbara area to visit Country including an ancient birthing ground. I was taught how to 'meet Country' (something I then did with every Country I visited for the remainder of the project).



“ The painting represents both stillbirth and livebirth. The baby at the centre is protected by the coloured lines, yellow (the sun and giver of life) the other colours represent protection for the baby by land, sea, plants, flowers and ancestral connections. The baby is surrounded by their parents and also community who also protect them. The stillborn baby is on a bed of stars. If the baby is stillborn the parents are supported by community as they toss their black feelings of despair and grief to their community and the ancestors. ”

Listen to Sissy tell the story of her Winds of Change painting

### Project name

While touring Country and visiting potential venues to hold the workshop every time we got out of our vehicles we noticed a gust of wind on an otherwise still day.

The Aboriginal people I was with saw this as a sign from Country that we should call the project the *Winds of Change*.

As it happens the word 'winds' also could be used as a suitable acronym for the project Working with Indigenous Nations to co-Design Stillbirth awareness resources (WINDS).

### Project Painting

At the second visit I was shown a painting. The painting had come to the artist as a vision after our first visit.

The artist is Sissy Ramirez a senior woman from the local mob. She signed an agreement which gave Still Aware rights to use her painting to promote the project, while she retained ownership of the original.

She explained her painting at the first WINDS workshop.



She also allowed and helped us to adapt her painting as a shirt design featuring her painting in combination with Still Aware branding and colours. We subsequently produced and offered each WINDS project participant a shirt. Many chose to wear it at the WINDS workshops (see photographs of different communities throughout this report).

## West Pilbara engagement

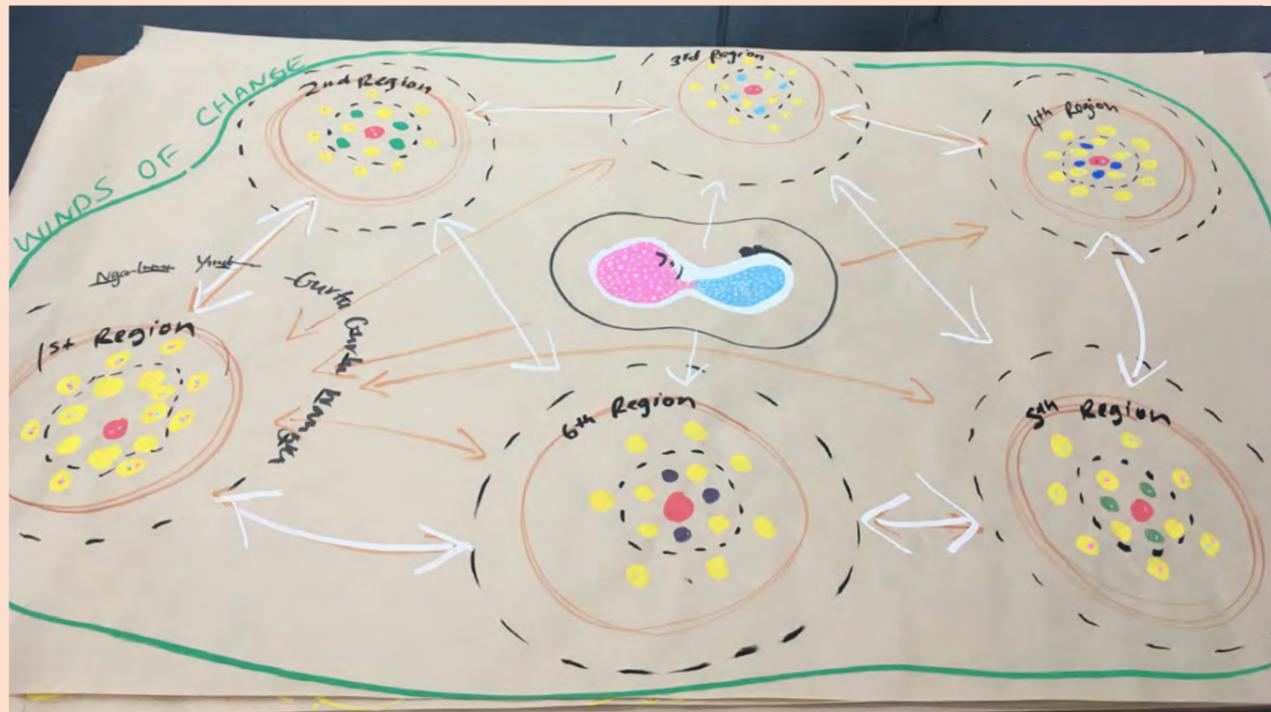


### Project Resources co-designed in the Pilbara

At the second visit we co-designed a schematic to guide the progress of the project. The project schematic shows a symbol of the project at the centre of all activity.

There are six meeting places depicting the six communities that the project aimed to visit. Communities are each interconnected with many lines of communication and connection to show that co-designed resources will be shared backwards, forwards and across to all participating communities.

The schematic shows our intention of not just visiting one community and ticking them off as 'done,' but that resources, as they were being developed, would be shared between communities to facilitate co-design and community 'ownership' of all resources.



The photograph above depicts a raw 'pictorial scribe' of the 'Winds of Change' project schema drawn by us.

### Third Visit: October 18-21, 2022

During the third visit a **WINDS workshop** was held. It was a half-day session attended by 10 community members, some local and some who had travelled to Karratha from as far away as Port Headland (240 kms away).

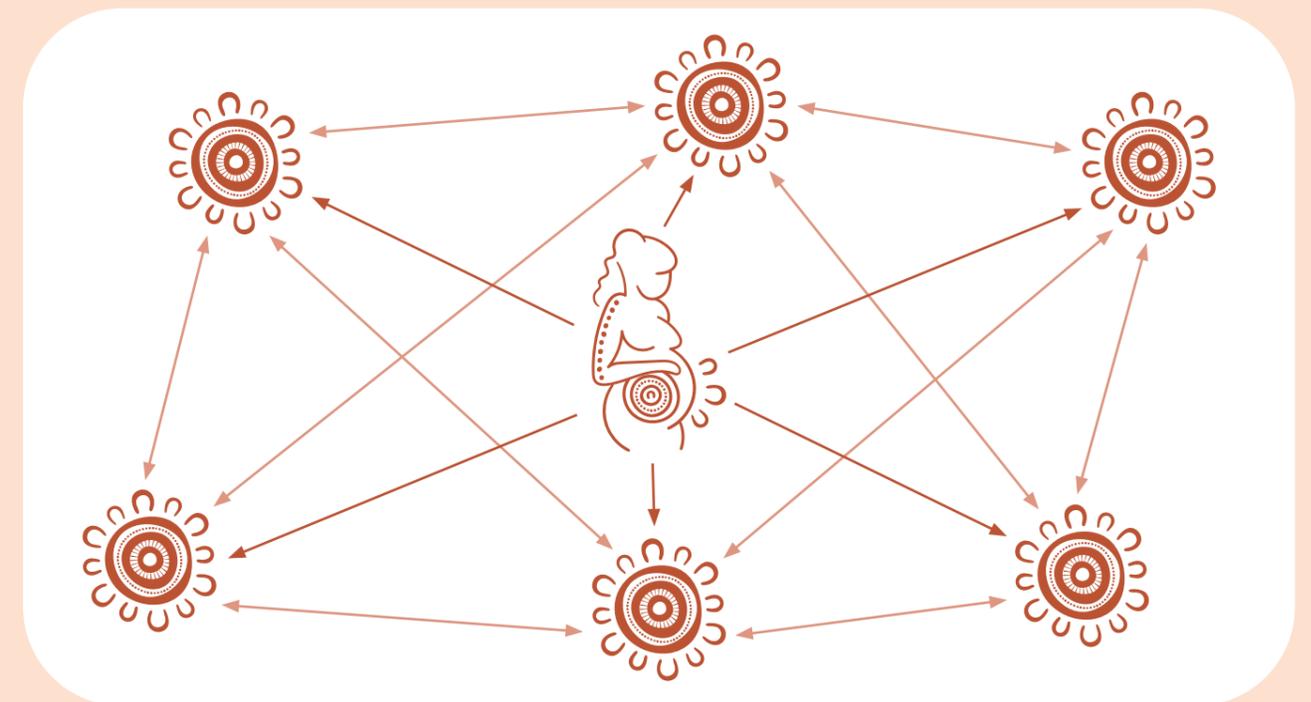
I first presented on Stillbirth risk factors and prevention strategies. Then we held a yarning session about stillbirth awareness for prevention and what resources we might co-design.

These community members suggested that the project could develop:

- Written resources about stillbirth awareness for prevention (brochures, or perhaps books)
- Digital resources such as videos that people with low literacy could access
- Educational awareness resources with a focus on upskilling health workers
- A podcast or similar for sharing stories.

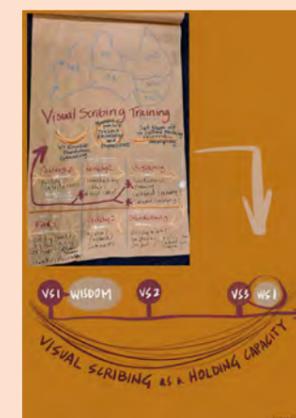
Community participants also expressed an ambition for systemic change i.e. developing a health care system "ecosystem" that was culturally safe. Meeting participants realised this was outside the scope of the WINDS project.

The figure below shows the final 'presentation ready' version of the Project Schematic.



### Summary of WINDS project activities in the West Pilbara

3 Visits to area by project team	17 Aboriginal community members attended activities	Project name "Winds of Change" confirmed	Project "Winds of Change" painting received	Project "Winds of Change" shirt created	Project Schematic created



**Note:** At the time of writing the grant proposal, we foregrounded our intention to utilise and also train Aboriginal Scribes to provide a pictorial documentation and record of each of the WINDS workshop yarning sessions.

Unfortunately, the experienced Aboriginal Scribe used in the Pilbara was not available for the remainder of the project. Furthermore, the advertised offer to train young Aboriginal scribes from the West Pilbara did not attract any interest. Therefore, instead of using scribes, we pivoted to still use art by developing a community project mural which was commenced in Wadjuk Noongar Boodjar and continued for the remainder of the project (see overleaf).

## Noongar Boodjar engagement



## Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar

Perth, WA

### Community overview

Noongar Boodjar (Country) covers the entire South-West corner of Australia. Extending from north of Jurien Bay, inland to north of Moora and down to the southern coast between Bremer Bay and east of Esperance.

There are 14 Noongar groups: Amangu, Balardong, Yued, Kaneang, Koreng, Mineng, Nyakinyaki, Njunga, Bibulmun, Pinjarup, Wardandi, Whadjuk, Wilman and Wudjari.

The Whadjuk Noongar are the people of the Swan River plains, whose Country is now occupied by the greater metropolitan area of Perth.

The community we worked with were connected to the Ngangk Yira Institute for Change (NYIC). While not necessarily Noongar, all community participants identified as Aboriginal. The Institute is led by Professor Rhonda Marriott. As a descendant of strong and resilient Nyikina women from the Kimberly, Rhonda acknowledges that she works, researches and lives on Whadjuk Noongar Country. Still Aware engaged Rhonda as an Aboriginal Cultural consultant for the Project.

### Ngangk Yira activity overview

We visited this community five times:

**First visit:**

May 23  
2023

**Second visit:**

June 12  
2023

**Third visit:**

August 3  
2023

**Fourth visit:**

October 16  
2023

**Fifth visit:**

November 13  
2023



Our first meeting was a face-to-face with Noongar Elders and other senior women to tell them about the project and seek their permission/invitation to host the project on their Boodjar (Country).

This first visit resulted in an invitation to hold an information session with community. This was followed by four more co-design workshops with them.



### Project Mural

At the meeting with the Noongar Elders I noticed the 'Birthing on Noongar Boodjar' mural installed in the foyer of the NYIC foyer. This is a Mural consisting of more than 100 8x8 canvas' painted by participants in the Birthing on Noongar Boodjar Project.

It occurred to me that producing a similar mural might be a way to reintroduce the element of art into the project by inviting workshop participants to paint "what stillbirth awareness for prevention meant to them" IF they chose to. This was enthusiastically embraced by the NYIC participants and then carried on for the rest of the project.



# Noongar Boodjar engagement

## Project resources co-designed on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar

We co-designed the project brochure and animated video with this community. The community drafted the brochure content, video story boards and script. We word-smithed all the content together focussing on simple, everyday language.

Community participants wanted to avoid medical or technical language and focus on words Aboriginal women usually use when referring to themselves, their body, their unborn baby and their pregnancy. They also wanted to avoid "don't" messaging (such as don't smoke, don't drink) that they felt undermined the strengths-based messages that they wanted to convey.



## Brochure co-design

### Brochure core messages:

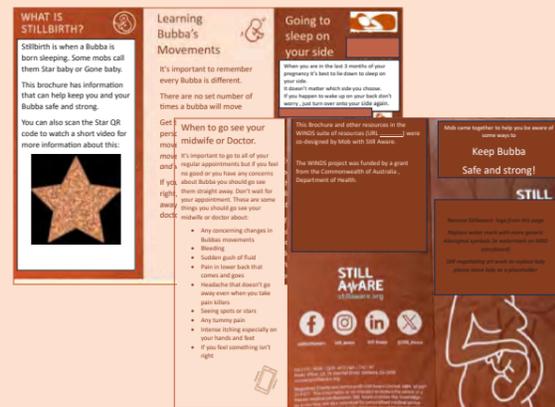
*"What is stillbirth?"*

*"Learning Bubba's movements"*

*"Going to sleep on your side"*

*"Trust your mum feelings"*

*"When to go see your midwife or doctor"*



Once we had bedded down the brochure content we discussed its appearance and graphic design elements.

Community participants suggested that the brochure have "earthy tones" and design elements which clearly convey the messages in the brochure are for Aboriginal families.

We also yarned about ways and means of producing the brochure and decided on Ochre Dawn, a Kaurna Country (Adelaide) based 100% Aboriginal owned and managed creative industries company.



## Animated video co-design

### Animation core messages:

*"More detail on each of the core messages to align with brochure"*

*"Focus on keeping safe and strong and connecting to culture"*

*"No don't, don't, don't messages"*

*"Focus on strength and positive 'keep safe' messages"*

*"Reflective of diversity in skin colour, eye colour etc"*

*"Acknowledgement of Country incorporating Sissy's Painting"*



At the third co-design session in August 2023 the community reviewed and amended the Brochure and Animated video storyboard images and voice over drafts.

Following this meeting both Ochre Dawn and MBD were provided with revisions that community participants had indicated that they wanted to make to the brochure and video.

The fourth co-design session was held at NYIC on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, which was incidentally the day after the Voice referendum result. I witnessed a community in shock and grieving. Community participants mainly came together to support one another rather than yarn about the project. I respected this and left meeting attendees with drafts of the brochure and animated video. Some offered a few suggestions on the day but most promised they would look at them later and provide feedback to me via email, which they did.

Once again I provided the suggested changes to both Ochre Dawn and MBD. I visited this community one more time in mid-November 2023 and at this stage community participants approved the brochure and animated video for production. In keeping with the planned project approach these close-to-final draft resources were then submitted to the Department of Health and Aged Care for final review and approval to produce.

There was a lot of stillbirth awareness-for-prevention information from my presentation that community participants felt was important to also provide to their mob but that would be too much to include in a brochure.

We decided that an animated video could complement a brochure and provide more information in an easy to access format, particularly to those who preferred to listen to/watch messages rather than read them. We decided on similar messages to complement the brochure but with a little more detail.

I asked Ochre Dawn for their recommendation for a company to produce the animation and they referred us to Motion by Design (MBD). MBD are also Adelaide-based and, while not Aboriginal owned or run, they took direction for the drawings, storyboard design and script from us per the communities feedback. They also contracted an Aboriginal person to perform the voice over.

## Summary of WINDS project activities in Noongar Boodjar Country

5

Visits to area by project team

24

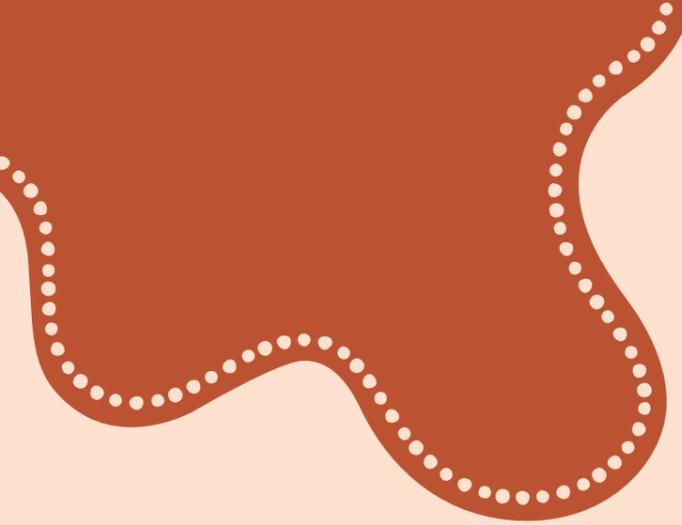
Community members attended activities

Project Mural commenced

Keep Bubba safe and strong! brochure good draft produced

Animated video good draft produced

**Note:** We have not provided this brochure as a publicly available PDF because we wanted to avoid any possibility of users changing the approved messaging (using adobe software) and /or printing their own copy of, what would then be, an inferior copy. Instead, the brochure is available to order free of charge from the website and the brochure content can be viewed on the safebubba website. The final animated video can also be viewed on the safebubba website at [safebubba.com.au](http://safebubba.com.au).



# Latjilatji Country

Mildura, VIC

## Community overview

The Latjilatji lands extended over some 9,100 km<sup>2</sup>, ranging from Chalka Creek to the town, now called, Mildura on the southern bank of the Barka (Murray River) and stretching some 80 kms to its south. The Latjilatji are divided into two kinship groups, the *Kailpara* and *Makwara*, the former connected to the emu, the latter to the eagle-hawk.

The Area is considered Regional. Invitation for the project team to visit community was facilitated via an Aboriginal Midwife employed by Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS). MDAS is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) providing services including maternity services to northwest Victoria's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

They deliver support services to communities based across the local government areas of Mildura Rural City Council, Swan Hill Rural City Council and Gannawarra Shire. All meetings with community occurred at the MDAS centre in Mildura.

## Latjilatji activity overview

We visited this community twice:

**First visit:**  
March 4  
2024

**Second visit:**  
April 23  
2024

However, there was considerable planning that occurred prior to the first meeting such that the usual 'meet and greet' was forgone and we went straight to a WINDS information workshop including an art session incorporating a co-design yarn.

## Latjilatji engagement



The first visit was attended by 10 people including two local Elders, 3 young mums and 5 MDAS staff including Aboriginal midwives and community workers. After listening to a project presentation including strategies for reducing risk of stillbirth, we held a yarning and painting session in which it was decided to co-design a fridge magnet together.

In keeping with the project schematic, this community also provided feedback on the brochure and animated video.



This community suggested that the "hero image" be altered from the three women facing away from each other to facing each other. The community thought this change better reflected Aboriginal kinship.

One Elder commented on the backing music, suggesting the inclusion of a sound similar to a Digeridoo as suitable because "we need men to get pregnant!"

Following the WINDS workshop Still Aware engaged Ochre Dawn to design the magnet based on this community's design suggestions and wording.

The second visit was attended by 8 people. The draft magnet was presented to meeting attendees and several changes were made to the Ochre Dawn draft, see below.

## Latjilatji engagement

### Project resources co-designed on Latjilatji Country

The community liked the idea of a **fridge magnet** to serve as a daily reminder of strategies for keeping bubba safe and strong. Community participants wanted it to 'stand alone' as a resource but also to complement the brochure, as an insert, to be given together with the brochure during antenatal visits.

They wanted the magnet to highlight 5 Key messages:

- “
1. Connecting to culture
  2. Learn bubba's movements
  3. Going to sleep position
  4. Trusting your mum feelings
  5. Seeing your maternity care provider if you were concerned
- ”



#### First mockup provided to Ochre Dawn



#### Draft taken to community



#### Final approved



Community wanted to use pictures rather than icons. To link all the developing resources together they wondered if the pictures could be taken from the animated video. This required both Ochre Dawn and MBD collaborating, which they did. Community liked the colours on the brochure and agreed that the magnet background should be the same colour. This also led to a decision to use the same colour palette for all the new resources. They wanted contact details of the maternity care provider to be able to be included on the magnet. They also wanted a QR code to link to more information such as a website.

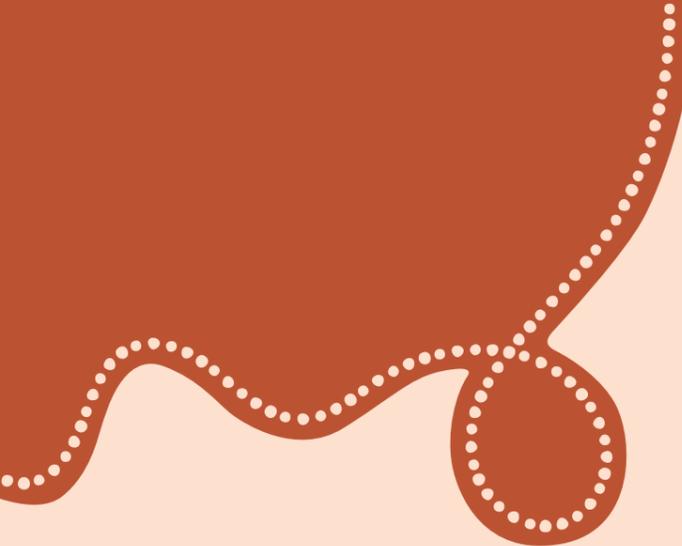
The community asked for the 'connect to culture' image to show the cast of the video around a camp fire, as they felt this better reflected the message. They recommended a simpler green tick for what was "good" to learn about bubba's movements. They suggested revisions to "their name is..." to a more broad box that could also be used by hospitals or clinics.

Following approval by community, the close-to-final draft was sent to the Department for their approval prior to production.

The final approved version of the magnet can be seen on page 20.

### Summary of WINDS project activities in Latjilatji Country





# Larrakia Nation

Darwin, NT

## Community overview

The Larrakia people are the traditional owners of lands and waters of the Darwin region. Their Country runs from Cox Peninsula in the west to Gunn Point in the north, Adelaide River in the east and down to the Manton Dam area southwards.

While the land includes the city of Darwin many of the Larrakia People live in rural and remote areas of Australia.

Invitation for the project team to visit the Larrakia Nation came from our team making contact with Kay Villaflor – a senior Larrakia Woman who is a Coordinator at the Palmerston Culture and Family Centre.

## Larrakia Nation activity overview

We visited this community twice:

**First visit:**  
April 2  
2024

**Second visit:**  
May 7-8  
2024

Once again a considerable amount of preplanning and several online meetings with Kay was carried out prior to our first meeting. This allowed us to move straight to a WINDS workshop, art and co-design session with two Elders present.

## Larrakia Nation engagement

### Project resources co-designed on Larrakia Nation

The community felt that the resources produced so far lacked 'real' people. Community participants wanted to provide the how and why to further explain the messages in the already developed resources. They wanted to add their voice to messaging mum-to-mum, and Senior/Elder to mum.

Community participants wanted to be sure young mums had an opportunity to contribute but they were keen to avoid anyone being obviously pregnant when they were filmed. They were happy to have shorter 'grabs' taken from the longer video suitable for waiting rooms.



# Larrakia Nation engagement



We engaged WDM (an Adelaide based multi-service creative studio) to help us film and then produce the long video (which can be seen on the [safebubba website](#)) as well as eight shorter 15-30 second grabs featuring the messaging for GP screens.



THE WINDS PROJECT TEAM ARE WITH MOB THIS WEEK TO WORK TOGETHER TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT STILLBIRTH PREVENTION

Darwin, Northern Territory

## Project video

We first had a meal with potential people that would be included in the videos and yarned about what we wanted to achieve.

Community participants mainly wanted to sit together (for support) and we filmed (usually in one take) them talking about keeping Bubba Safe within the 5 key messages of connecting to community, learning bubba's movements, going to sleep on their side, trusting mum feelings, and going to see your midwife or doctor if you had concerns.



## Summary of WINDS project activities in Larrakia Nation

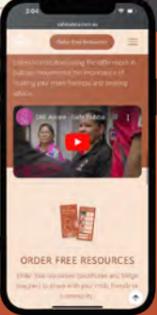


# Resource production

We engaged WDM (an Adelaide based communications and marketing company) to develop a range of communication tools utilising the key messages co-designed with and for mob.

These tools included cut downs of the longer animation and video suitable for GP screens and clinic screens, expo display materials such as pull up banners and a range of promotional merchandise including banner pens and a project water bottle.

Community participants also assisted us to create a new custom website as well as social media content across multiple channels.



# Dharawal engagement



## Dharawal Land Campbelltown, NSW

### Community overview

Dharawal Country is an area in New South Wales, encompassing southern and south-western Sydney area from the south side of Kamay (Botany Bay), around Port Hacking to the north of the Shoalhaven River (Nowra) and extending inland west to Campbelltown and Camden.

The area is considered an outer Metropolitan area of the city now called Sydney. Campbelltown City has one of the largest urban populations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in New South Wales, with over 7,000 residents identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Invitation for the project team to visit community was facilitated via the Chief Operations Manager of Big Yellow Umbrella (BYU) Ms Kim Landouw.

BYU is a not-for-profit organisation based in Narellan NSW and servicing the entire Local Government Area with a variety of programs for local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. While not Aboriginal herself Kim has strong links to the local Aboriginal Community.

Following a number of online meetings with us she secured an Elder invitation for the project team to hold a WINDS co-design workshop in the area.

### Dharawal Land activity overview

We visited this community twice:

**First visit:**  
May 14  
2024

**Second visit:**  
May 28  
2024

The WINDS co-design workshop included me presenting information about strategies for keeping safe in pregnancy. Then we yarned and painted but on this occasion, we spent more time talking about pregnancy and pregnancy experiences and did not decide on a resource to co-design. Two weeks later I returned to yarn with a smaller group to decide what resource/s the community wanted to co-design.



**Joanne Ubilla** · 2nd  
Leader / Collaborator / Graphic Facilitator and Recorder, Liv...  
5mo · 🌐

**In the last couple of weeks I have participated in a co-design project where groups of Aboriginal parents and community have come together to talk about stillborn awareness and prevention.**

**It was great to support Mums accessing our program to be a part of this really important discussion. New connections have been formed and we hope these connections continue to grow.**

**The resources have, and are, being progressively developed as more community are consulted. There are t-shirts, brochures, short animations, a mural that continues to evolve as participants paint whilst yarning in the sessions, and more.**

**Thanks Big Yellow Umbrella for hosting and inviting #VillageConnect to be a part of this. Thanks to Jane Warland for being a wonderful facilitator, holding space for the rich conversation.**

**Latoya Corbett Freda Simpson**  
Still Aware  
#Reconciliation #Codesign #stillbirth

*“ I didn't know that going to sleep position was important until today. A really informative fun workshop. ”*

– Campbelltown WINDS workshop participant

## Dharawal engagement



### Project resources co-designed in Campbelltown

This community decided that they wanted the project mural to be printed onto something that had everyday use. They wanted to see the originals installed together in a public place.

Community participants also wanted to have something to remember the project by so they could have a printed copy of their painting. They also saw whatever was developed as an opportunity to have stillbirth awareness for prevention messages on it. We discussed options such as a poster, tea towel, scarf, baby wrap or cot quilt cover, but decided on a tote bag.



They proposed that the tote bag could be given along with the brochure and magnet at the Antenatal visit in the middle of pregnancy.

After leaving the workshop I contacted Ochre Dawn to design the tote bag using all the paintings and also utilising the gussets of the bag to include stillbirth awareness for prevention messages consistent with other newly developed resources.

This community also expressed a desire at the second workshop, to produce stillbirth awareness for prevention resources for Aboriginal men. Unfortunately, there was not enough time left in the project to properly arrange and facilitate this (see 'Next steps/ recommendations' on page 62).



### Summary of WINDS project activities in Dharawal Land



### Other communities we visited

In addition to the five communities that we co-designed resources with, we visited four other communities (Adelaide, Hobart, Mittagong and Bamaga) to 'meet and greet' and yarn with them about the project.

For a variety of different reasons these visits did not result in an invitation to hold a WINDS co-design workshop. Neither did these particular community members contribute paintings to the project mural. These communities are mentioned here by way of completeness of the report.



# WINDS Mural

## Community project mural

What stillbirth awareness for prevention meant to them

The final mural consists of 60 8x8 paintings. WINDS project participants from each of the five communities we co-designed resources with also were given the opportunity to contribute a painting depicting what stillbirth awareness for prevention meant to them. Some children painting alongside their mother, also contributed a painting.

Even though the artists came from several different mobs from different areas of Australia there are many recurring themes e.g. paintings of:



Birthing trees, sacred to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and a symbol of safety and security for birthing



Placenta/ tree of life



Stars, representing the baby gone to dreamtime



Water, the sustainer of life



Turtles, are a highly favoured food source and communities which eat them have a high level of respect for the food that sustains them



Frogs, a symbol that prevents loss



Dragonflies, a symbol of good health, wisdom and resilience

Several of the paintings have short descriptions on the back but two of the artists shared the story of their painting which they have allowed us to share here.

### Natalie Bates (MDAS, Mildura)



The baby connected to the tree is us (pregnant mums) being the tree of life for our baby, the baby's place of belonging, safety and strength to grow healthy and strong.



Above are hands held together with a love heart in the middle, this is our midwives/ Aboriginal health workers nurturing and empowering us through our pregnancy.

### Ruby (Mildura Workshop)



The lines to both sides of me are all my ancestors, my mother's parents and their parents guiding me along my track keeping me going, protecting me from evil.



My daughter is there [the pregnancy], my mother is there within me also along my journey helping me to keep going and staying strong.



All the lines down my arm represent that I have gone through hell but I am still pushing myself, guiding myself down my track.



At the top of my leg is my tribal tattoo.



From the back of the lady are stars, they represent our babies that have gone to dream time.



The lines and colours represent awareness and knowledge.



The river (BARKA) is our flow of life, my tribe are River people, so our River is our life, when the river is sick so are our People it's a part of our connection to Country.



The man hunting is our protector, gatherer, peacemaker and without him we can't create life.



Queens our trees of life (our Grandmothers, mothers, aunts and sisters) who have empowered us to be strong women, carrying their roots through to us so we could build a strong healthy baby through our tree of life: the placenta.



The emu is our wild tucker and one of my favourite foods.





# Celebrating and evaluating the project's success

## Returning to community

Project celebration and evaluation

In late 2024 we were invited to return to four of the five communities (Mildura, Darwin Campbelltown and Perth) to hold celebration and evaluation events.

We took or shipped a thank you pack to give to each of the WINDS co-design workshop participants including in the Pilbara. The pack consisted of the safe bubba tote bag which held the water bottle, brochure and fridge magnet, and banner pen.

At each of these events participants were invited to write a one word "impression of the safe bubba resources" This was anonymously collected. People were also asked if they would like to contribute a 'reel' for social media and some people also chose to do this.

### Larrakia Nation (Darwin, NT)

This mob decided to have an evening meal together.

42 adults, 8 children and several infants attended the event. I showed a PowerPoint focussing on the videos shot with community members but also showing them all of the final resources.



## Larrakia Nation (Darwin, NT)

### Evaluation

32 people completed a 'one word evaluation' at the event.

See the combined word cloud below.



*"I have lived a long life dealing with White fellas and their Departments and I can say the way that you have worked with us, listened to us and respected us has been extraordinary... I've never met anybody like you before."*

– Aunty June Mills, Larrakia Elder



This young couple expressed their appreciation for the project resources.

Woman: "I'd like to thank Still Aware for the information. Its not only helpful for the mums but its also helpful for the fathers."

Man: "Thank you Still Aware."

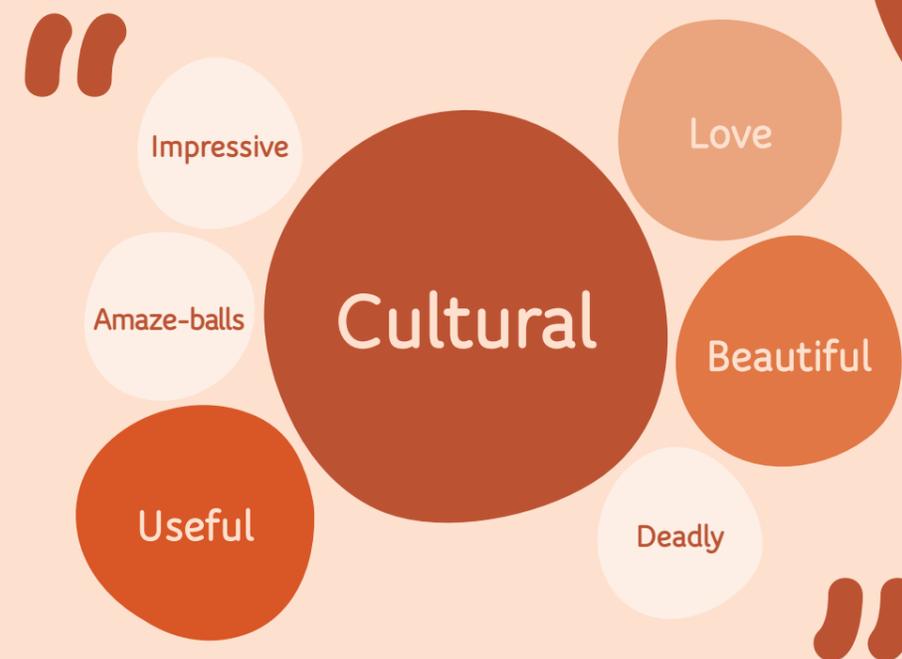
## Latjilatji (Mildura, VIC)

12 people attended a celebration morning tea at MDAS in Mildura including two local Elders.

### Evaluation

Twelve contributed to the 'one word' evaluation at the event.

Other comments including "culturally appropriate", and "I absolutely love this." A local Elder said "beautiful opportunity to be a part of and support the group." See the combined word cloud below.



*"Got amazing deadly culture included and amazing vision for all mothers."*

– Anonymous comment, MDAS morning tea



One of the local midwives provided a reel for social media as to how she is currently using the resources.

"So here is our new 'keep bubba safe and strong' culturally sensitive resources. This is our fridge magnet that you can pull out and give to women, let them know they can pop it on the fridge..."

There is also a place you can add the midwife or doctors name and contact telephone number so women have really easy access to this straight on their fridges at home."

## Dharawal Land (Campbelltown, NSW)

For this celebration and evaluation event I was invited to give a short presentation to the BYU AGM and then participate further by holding a booth at the family fun day afterwards.

### Evaluation

50 families (not all Aboriginal) attended the day, 20 of whom provided a 'one word' evaluation of the new resources.

See the combined word cloud below.



## Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar (Perth, WA)

We held a final e-meeting with NYIC in late November 2024. This involved being allocated a 20-minute time slot in a morning tea break of a co-design workshop that NYIC were running for another project. NYIC leaders didn't want to hold a separate event so as not to "overburden" their participants.

### Evaluation

16 people contributed to the 'one word' evaluation at the event.

NYIC have also added information about their participation in the project to their website: [Yorga, Maaman and Koolanga Research Centre | Ngangk Yira Institute for Change](#)







# WINDS of Change in the world – disseminating key messages

WINDS project information and Safe Bubba co-designed resources were shared with the wider community throughout the project through face-to-face events and a digital marketing campaign.

## Connecting at events and conferences

Information about the WINDS project was provided at the following meetings, conferences and events:

Event name and place	Type of presentation	Approximate number of people attended	Audience type
<b>Still Aware Gala</b> Adelaide, 2022	WINDS project introduction	200	General public
<b>PSANZ</b> Adelaide, May 2022	Poster	600	Maternity care providers
<b>Star Legacy Stillbirth Summit</b> June, 2022	Online Plenary Session	200+ in person and online	Clinicians and parents
<b>PSANZ</b> Melbourne, March 2023	Poster	750	Maternity care providers
<b>Australian College of Midwives Conference</b> Adelaide, September 2023	Poster	600	Midwives
<b>Stillbirth CRE Annual Update</b> Brisbane, 2023	Podium Presentation	300+ in person and online	Stillbirth researchers, parents and clinicians
<b>Safer Baby Bundle Conference</b> Perth, November 23	Poster	150+ in person and online	Stillbirth researchers, clinicians
<b>PSANZ</b> Christchurch, NZ, April 24	Podium Poster	800	Maternity Care providers
<b>Australian College of Midwives</b> Melbourne, September 2024	Podium Presentation	200+	Midwives
<b>El Hueco de mi Vientre</b> Madrid, September 2024	Half Day Seminar	50	Parents
<b>Still Aware Gala</b> Adelaide, 2024	WINDS update	320	General Public, sponsors of event

We are continuing to present at relevant conferences and meetings beyond the life of the project. We have had abstracts accepted at the PSANZ conference in Brisbane and the Star Legacy conference in Minneapolis in 2025.

## Safe Bubba resources

100's of branded water bottles, pens, USBs, tote bags, brochures and fridge magnets were delivered to our target audience.



## Safe Bubba brochures

288 Aboriginal health service organisations (ACCHO) received Safe Bubba brochures. Following this targeted mail out to all ACCHO and other health care providers we received numerous orders for further brochures from midwives and maternity wards.

A snippet of areas that have ordered Safe Bubba brochures since they were released:



## Safe Bubba USBs

Custom credit card sized USBs were created to provide clinicians with project videos suitable for patient resources and to show in waiting rooms. Clinicians could order them free of charge along with brochures and fridge magnets for their clients from the safebubba website at any time.

110 USBs have been requested and orders fulfilled from all over Australia. Further afield, we received an order from Health New Zealand.

**"Thank you so much. They will be well used."**  
 – Sharon Haste, Nurse Management  
 Coordinator Child and Adolescent System  
 Reform Team – NT Health

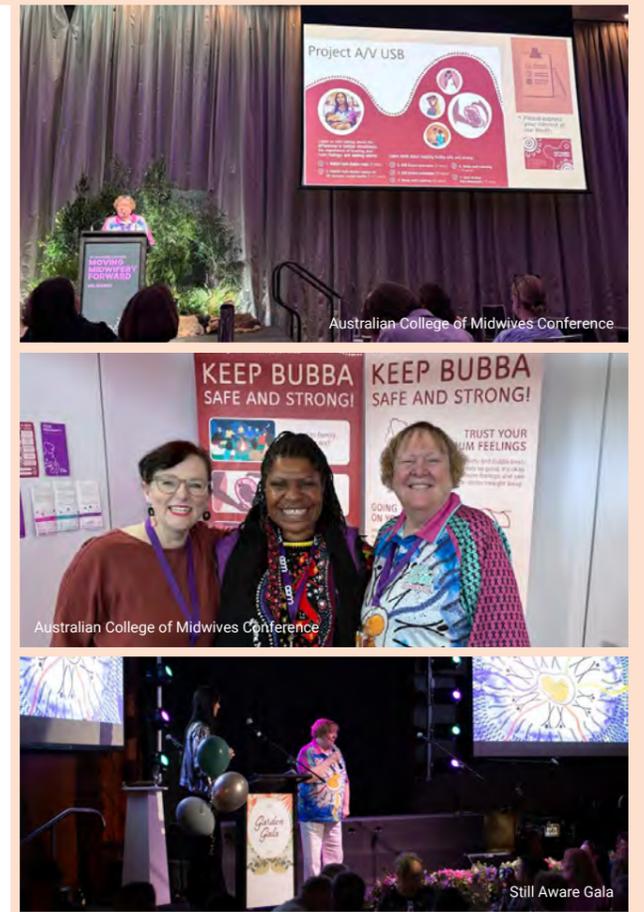
Also, unexpectedly the largest order we received was from the National Department of Health in Papua New Guinea – a total of 23 USBs ordered, one for each midwife in each of the 23 provinces.

*"I really like the design and colour, such a strong connection to the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Patients when we have Antenatal Clinics."*

– Cheryl Hayes | H.A | JIM SCATTINI (WD1)  
 Katherine Hospital | Department Of Health



## Spreading Safe Bubba messaging



## The Conversation newsletter

The Conversation is a widely read online newsletter. It is the world's leading publisher of research-based news and analysis.

They published an article on August the 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 in which the authors claimed the only stillbirth awareness for prevention resources for First Nations families had been 'culturally adapted' from existing resources developed for non-Aboriginal populations.

Read the article here:  
**First Nations women are at greater risk of stillbirth. Here's why – and what we can do about it**

We were permitted to contribute a comment to this article in which we announced the launch of our co-designed Aboriginal resources.



# Sharing WINDS project messages online

## Maximising reach Digital advertising campaign

We ran a national digital advertising campaign over four months using two main channels:



(Brand awareness, video views, traffic campaigns)



Tonic Aboriginal Health TV screens

Advertisements on both channels drove people to [safebubba.com.au](https://safebubba.com.au)

### Meta advertising

The Meta Advertising Campaign ran from July to October 2024, using three different objectives to maximise the reach, video views, and website traffic. Overall, the campaign:



Reached

**1.3M<sup>+</sup>**

users across Facebook and Instagram

Campaign ads appeared across users feeds over

**4M<sup>+</sup>**

times

Videos in campaign ads were viewed by users over

**167K<sup>+</sup>**

times

Generated over

**13.7K<sup>+</sup>**

links clicks to the [safebubba](https://safebubba.com.au) website

Users engaged with ads over

**412K<sup>+</sup>** times

### Advertising metrics



#### Reach:

The number of users that saw your ads at least once across Meta platforms. This number is estimated.

#### Impressions:

The number of times that your adverts were on-screen.

#### CPM (cost per 1,000 impressions):

The average cost for 1,000 impressions.

#### ThruPlay:

The number of times that your video was played to completion, or for at least 15 seconds.

#### Cost per ThruPlay:

The average cost of each ThruPlay

#### Link Clicks:

The number of clicks on links within the ad that led to advertiser-specified destinations.

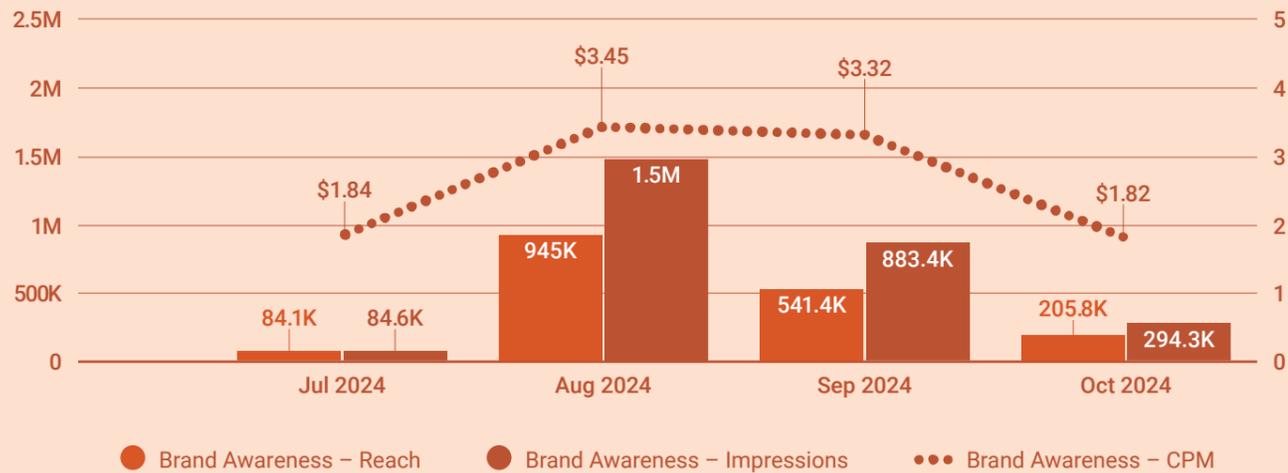
#### CPC:

The average cost for each link click.

## Phase 1: Brand awareness

Kicking off the campaign, was the brand awareness phase. Our aim was to increase brand recognition and reach new users who are most likely to be interested in the Keeping Bubba safe and strong Campaign.

We reached 1.5 Million+ users during this phase of the campaign, ads appeared across users feeds over 2.7 Million+ times and the average cost per mille (CPM) was \$2.08.



# 1.5M+ users reached

**Still Aware** Sponsored

Worried about bubba? Don't wait, listen to those mum feelings and get help from your midwife or doctor.

CHECK IN IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT BUBBA

Funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Health and Aged Care

**Still Aware** Sponsored

After 6 months, you can reduce your chances of stillbirth if you sleep on your side. It doesn't matter which side you choose!

GO TO SLEEP ON YOUR SIDE

Funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Health and Aged Care

**Still Aware** Sponsored

Every bubba is different. If you feel something is not right, then get help straight away from your midwife or doctor.

LEARN YOUR BUBBA'S MOVEMENTS

Funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Health and Aged Care

**Lou** What a fabulous initiative. I hope it spreads in awareness. Wonderful health promotion that saves lives by engaging preventative health model. Congratulations. Lucky mummas.

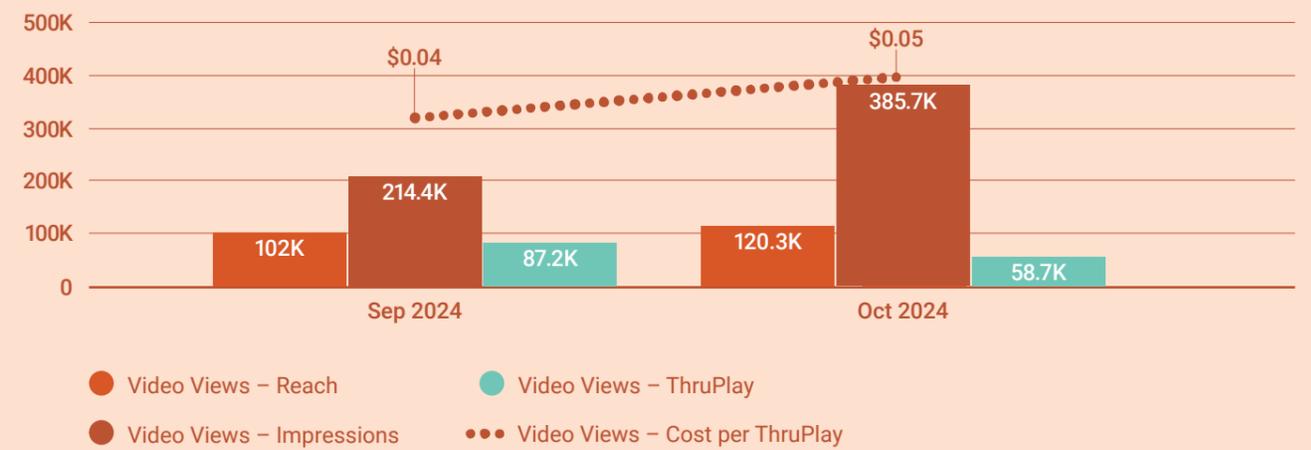
Reply

## Phase 2: Video views

After introducing campaign messages to a new audience, we then layered in a video views phase. Our aim was to get more users to watch the project videos.

We reached 197K+ users during this phase of the campaign, with ads appearing across users feeds over 600K+ times, resulting in 145K+ ThruPlays\* (engagement for at least 15 secs) with an average Cost per ThruPlay of \$0.04.

During this phase, we also saw 546K+ video plays (engagement of any duration) with 50% of those videos played to at least 1/4 of the videos length (25%).



# 546K+ video plays

still\_aware Sponsored

Watch more

still\_aware If you feel no good, have a concern or you are worried about bubba, call or go see your midwife or doctor straight away.

still\_aware Sponsored

Watch more

still\_aware Keep bubba safe and strong! Sleep on your side after 6 months of pregnancy to reduce your risk of stillbirth.

still\_aware Sponsored

Watch more

still\_aware Reduce the chance of stillbirth by sleeping on your side. Put hair in a bun or use a tennis ball at your back to prompt you.

**12** Comment Share

**Rosina** Love this! I agree no silly questions don't ever feel bad for advocating for baby and you ❤️

Like Reply

### Phase 3: Website traffic

Last but not least was the website traffic phase. Our aim was to get people to visit the safebubba website, learning more about how to keep bubba safe and give them the opportunity to order a brochure.

We reached 202K+ users during this phase of the campaign, with ads appearing across users feeds 642k+ times, generating over 12.3 thousand clicks on the link to the website. The average cost per link click was \$0.01.



12.3K+ link clicks to website

Comments:

- @measuretheplacenta This is awesome to see! 🙌❤️ keep up the amazing work Reply
- Tiffany Love this. Great work Still Aware spreading your very important message Like Reply

### GP screens

Nine, 15 second videos were shown nationally in 214 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service waiting rooms over four months. Broadcast once every 30 minutes, they were played more than 200,000 times and seen by all waiting room visitors in their average 30-minute pre-appointment wait. These videos provided targeted education during 1,552,356 predominantly First Nations waiting room visits.

Still Aware received around \$100,000 in added media value from Medianest, through a 50% charity concession and bonus month of delivery, which contributed to the phenomenal reach of this campaign.

### Website

The website was designed to complement the 'Keep Bubba safe and strong!' brochure, with key messages for pregnant women and their families most prominent on the home page. The website also features both the cut down animated video and project video from Darwin.

The website was optimised for mobile users, with a 'single page' design for easy navigation, as we predicted that most of our target audience would access information in this way.

More than 10,000 people visited the safebubba website during the campaign, and the majority of those visitors came from paid social media. Just over 91% of the visitors accessed the website from their mobile phone, 6.2% from their tablet, and around 2.6% from their desktop.

This supported our initial hypothesis and design choice that most people would access Safe Bubba resources from their mobile phone.



# Lessons learned

## Overview of lessons learned

### Understanding culturally appropriate work

This was not a research project however we were aware of, and applied principles underlying culturally appropriate work with Aboriginal People<sup>3</sup>. We include here an overview of lessons learned particularly from the perspective of a non-Aboriginal charity working directly with Aboriginal mobs.

### Indigenous self-determination

#### Learning to understand silence

There were two forms of silence that we encountered:

1. A period of silence which we later realised indicated that while a Mob had apparently not responded to our initial overture, they had in fact been mulling it over and there had been considerable community engagement and excitement generated behind the scenes. This type of silence was often followed by a sudden invitation meaning they had come to a decision and now they wanted a workshop, as soon as it could be arranged!
2. Assent followed by silence. This type of silence was used when a community had agreed to something when yarning, meeting face-to-face or electronically, which then did not occur. We saw this type of silence used in each of the four communities we visited for a 'meet and greet' but any further attempts on our part to set up a WINDS workshop was met with silence.

It was impossible to know which of the two types of silence we were encountering at the time the silence was occurring but we learned not to expect a communication saying "we got your email and are thinking about it" nor anything saying "we have decided not to have a workshop" instead we learned to patiently wait, to gently reach out again if we had not heard anything for a while and then accept when the silence meant no.

Going steady, slowly, gently, respectfully are all principles of engaging with Indigenous communities. We learned to

*Going steady, slowly, gently, respectfully are all principles of engaging with Indigenous communities*



understand this way of working but we did encounter issues with reporting to our funder who, like us, were non-Aboriginal.

For example, it was initially somewhat challenging when reporting activity progress because in the first year of the project it often looked as if we were not doing anything while we were waiting for communities to mull things over.

We valued the Department adopting a verbal report system in addition to requiring a written report. Asking for times, dates, numbers (none of which were ever known prior to the workshop day) was also difficult and we appreciated the fact that the Department eventually learnt, as we did, that this type of reporting wasn't possible until after the event.

We also recommend that funders of projects undertaking work with Aboriginal People should understand that significantly more time is needed than might normally be allocated for similar work not involving this population and that need for a longer time frame may be able to be built into future funding rounds targeting Aboriginal populations.

<sup>3</sup> AIATSIS code: [aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/aiatsis-code-ethics.pdf](https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/aiatsis-code-ethics.pdf)

## Indigenous leadership

We acknowledge that we were funded as a non-Indigenous organisation for a project to co-design resources directly with and for different Aboriginal communities from across Australia. We kept our original intention as expressed in the funding proposal that we would work with different Indigenous Peoples under their own tribe's governance and leadership framework.

When we reached out, we made it clear that we would be waiting for Elder invitation and that all decisions rested with them. I avoided declaring myself 'project lead' because I did not consider myself as one. I always introduced myself as a project consultant for stillbirth engaged by Still Aware. My role in the WINDS co-design workshop was one of co-facilitator.

This meant that the project leadership for each stage of the project was always in the hands of the local Indigenous Leaders. Therefore, they made the choice about where, and when to hold a workshop following our reaching out to their community and they decided who should be invited and if they should attend themselves.

We noticed that most Elders attended the first meet and greet and/or WINDS Workshop to welcome the team to Country as well as to provide cultural security for workshop participants. For later workshops the Elder/s sometimes did not attend. We learned that this was often about their concern that younger women might not speak up out of deference to them.

All communities acknowledged me as an internationally well-known non-Aboriginal stillbirth research knowledge holder. Community members also respected my status as a bereaved mother. I learned to 'hold the space' for safe and respectful yarning. I was usually the only non-Aboriginal person at the Workshop, even if there were sometimes a few trusted non-Aboriginal people who attended the workshop I was always the only person not from the local community.

This way of working was not always immediately understood by people not involved in the project and I and the Still Aware team drew criticism from some quarters at the apparent lack of Aboriginal Leadership for the project. This was ironic to us because the project was entirely Aboriginal led by each of the communities involved.

*Each stage of the project was always in the hands of the local Indigenous Leaders.*

*I learned to 'hold the space' for safe and respectful yarning.*

## Impact and value

We understood the concept of reciprocity and therefore never arrived empty handed and never left a community without making some kind of contribution to the wider community.

We used gift vouchers to give to those participants who attended workshops from the community. In recognition of Elders as cultural knowledge holders they received a higher amount than others. We also reimbursed everyone's travel costs.

Sometimes there were people who attended as a result of their workplace releasing them e.g. a midwife or other worker. They did not accept the gift voucher but we still wanted to provide them with a token of our appreciation. We wanted to avoid typical whitefella gifts of chocolates and flowers. Instead, we observed many of the Elders liked to drink tea and so we settled on giving those participants a gift pack of an assortment of Tea from T2.

We also always left materials we had used for the co-design workshop behind. This included stationery items as well as art supplies such as canvases, paint brushes, painting pens and glitter. Where we held a creche we also left supplies such as colouring books, pencils, and toys.

*We never arrived empty handed and never left a community without making some kind of contribution to the wider community.*

We also always over catered as we learned early on that sharing food was important and we recognised that the food we provided for the workshop was going to be shared with the wider community who sometimes did not have a secure food source. The end of project gifts for those community members who co-designed with us were also part of reciprocity.

*Food we provided would be shared with the wider community who sometimes did not have a secure food source.*



## Flexibility and serendipity

We learnt to pivot and quickly learned that even though I had co-written the funding proposal with an Aboriginal person, that didn't mean that what was proposed would be suitable, or even acceptable by all the communities we visited across Australia.

For example, the shirt designed by the Pilbara community received mixed reception with some mobs not wanting them at all and others demanding them as soon as they saw them, even ahead of the workshop.

There were several serendipitous outcomes as a result of learning to be flexible and listening to what each community wanted. The mural was one such outcome. Instead of relying on just one scribe as had been originally planned, this artwork became a way of connecting all the communities which participated in the co-design workshops. We observed yarning while painting is such a comfortable thing to do that this activity facilitated the co-design in a way that yarning on its own may not have done.

The other serendipitous outcome was the tote bag. Originally the idea was that it be given as a gift to those community members who had contributed paintings to it, when we returned to participating communities for the evaluation workshops. We were surprised to see the size of the bag when it was first delivered however, all community members that we gave it to LOVED it and told us they really liked its handy size.

Further, Aboriginal midwives could immediately see it would have value to give to Aboriginal families along with the brochure and magnet at antenatal visits. Importantly midwives from remote communities with families who might not necessarily have a fridge (for the fridge magnet) could still be given a resource promoting stillbirth awareness for prevention messages.

We do not have the resources to produce these for every Aboriginal family in Australia however, we have arranged through Ochre Dawn for organisations who want to give them to their families during pregnancy to be able to order them 'at cost'.



*Yarning while painting is such a comfortable thing to do that this activity facilitated the co-design in a way that yarning on its own may not have done.*

*There were times when I needed to advocate for what the community wanted and staunchly defend their choices of wording and concepts.*



## Sustainability and accountability

We are very proud at the high level of quality of all the project resources. They reflect our high level of accountability and strong commitment to the co-design process. There were times when I needed to advocate for what the community wanted and staunchly defend their choices of wording and concepts.

*We have produced sustainable resources that are all in a form that they can be readily updated.*



As a result we have produced sustainable resources that are all in a form that they can be readily updated if new stillbirth awareness for prevention evidence comes to light. In the meantime, we are delighted that we are already getting repeat orders from across the country.

# Next steps/ recommendations



## Music and dance

The funding proposal contemplated that some communities might like to co-design music or a dance item that reflected stillbirth awareness for prevention messages. While there was always interest in this idea from each community we quickly realised that this kind of activity would need more time and resources than we had available.

It remains something that Aboriginal communities expressed an interest in with us but probably should be something that actually does not need to be co-designed with a non-Aboriginal organisation but could be entirely composed, choreographed and produced by them.



## Men

Several male Elders asked if they could attend the co-design workshop in order to develop resources for Men. Our response to this request was always the same...“that is up to you”. No male ever actually did attend a WINDS workshop. Women who attended the workshops also often said they wanted to know if there could be a co-designed resource for men arising from the project, particularly towards the end of the project when it became more obvious there was a gap in the resources we had produced.

This gap is reflected in all stillbirth awareness for prevention resources for men, even in a non-Aboriginal context worldwide. We acknowledge that this is a significant gap which should be addressed in future funding rounds.



## Children

Stillbirth awareness for prevention messaging should not be left until the person is pregnant. Ideally healthy behaviours can – and should – begin in childhood.

Several of the communities we worked with expressed a desire for a picture book or educational game to help inform and educate their children.

Once again this is a significant gap that could be well met in a targeted funding round.



## Language

There was strong interest expressed by all communities to translate the project resources into local Aboriginal languages.

This is something that should be done in the future with accompanying resources and adequate time.

## STILL AWARE

stillaware.org

Thanks to those organisations who donated time, a meeting place and/or contributed their resources to the project:



