

ILLAWARRA  
ABORIGINAL  
CORPORATION



## *Cocooning in Culture; The Development of a Culturally Situated Trauma Informed Practice Approach within an Aboriginal Community Controlled OOHC Program – Reimagining Cultural Plans for Aboriginal Children in OOHC.*

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SOCIAL WORK

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# Acknowledgement of Country

UOW Image Sammy Hill, a local Aboriginal graphic design and contemporary artist with connections to Dharawal/ Wandandian country



# Presentation Outline

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Background

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Privileging Aboriginal Voices

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Research Aim and Questions

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Methodology and Data Gathering

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Culturally Situated Trauma Informed Practice

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Practices of Cocooning in Culture

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Questions



# Background to the Research

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# Privileging Aboriginal Voices

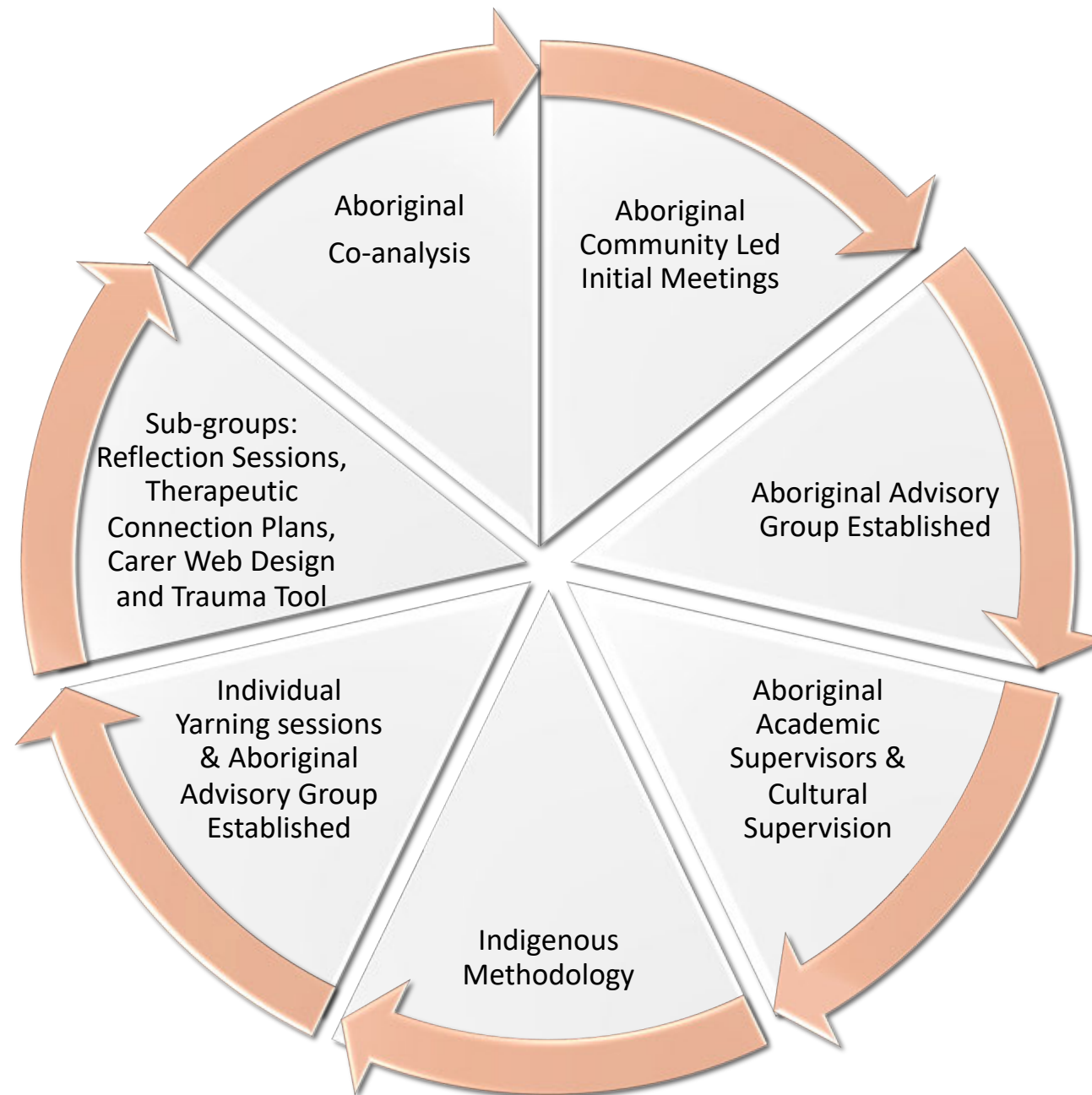


Figure adapted from 'Exploring the use of technology to address barriers Indigenous peoples experience when help-seeking for family violence' by R. Fiolet, Dec 2020. PhD Thesis. University of Melbourne. (<http://hdl.handle.net/11343/274400>)



Co-researchers

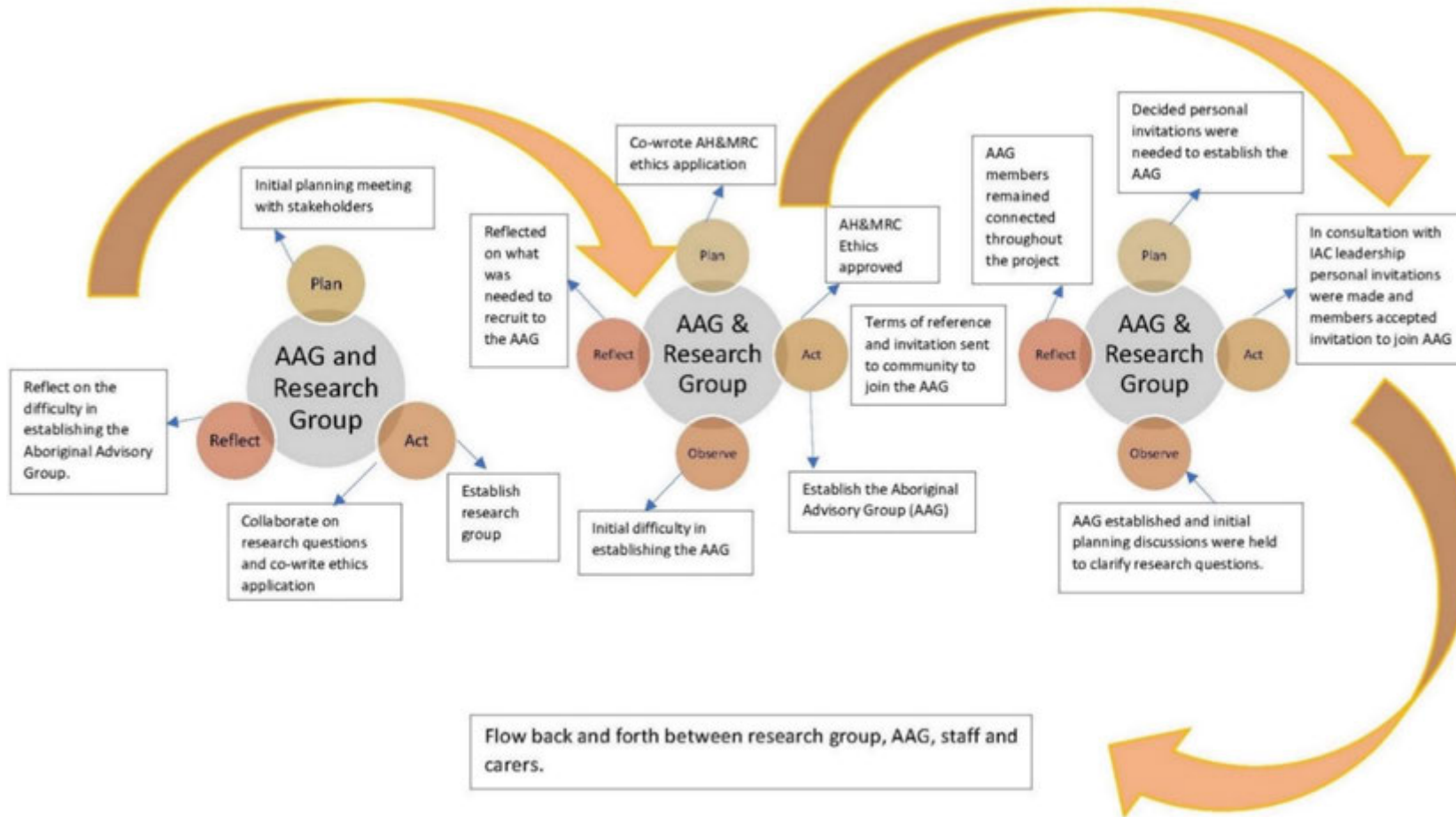
# Research Aim and Questions

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Aim: To explore the development and implementation of a culturally situated trauma informed approach with the Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation Myimbarr Child and Family Service.

- What constitutes culturally-situated trauma-informed practice?
- What enables or hinders the implementation of culturally-situated trauma-informed practice?

# Indigenous Participatory Action Research Cycles



Kemmis, 2009 and Dawson et al., 2017.



# Decolonising Practices

Knowing	Being	Doing
Recognising the importance and Value of cultural humility.	Being quiet and listening.	Demonstrate cultural humility by practicing deep listening.
Learning and embedding collaboration skills.	Noticing and reflecting on practices.	Through reflection improve practice.
Acknowledging white fragility.	Noticing and reflecting on white fragility as it arises.	Step back to enable Aboriginal voices and wisdom to be prioritised.
Understand and learn about de-colonising practices.	Notice and reflect on colonising practices.	Avoid reproducing language and practices that reinforce colonial approaches to child protection.
Know that relational connection is fundamental.	Reflect on ways to connect with Aboriginal people.	Build relationships with Aboriginal communities.

What  
Constitutes  
Culturally  
Situated Trauma  
Informed  
Practice?

Situated on  
Country

Driven By  
Cultural  
Leadership  
Within  
Community

Fostering  
Sustainability;  
Social and  
Emotional  
Wellbeing for  
Aboriginal  
Practitioners  
and Carers

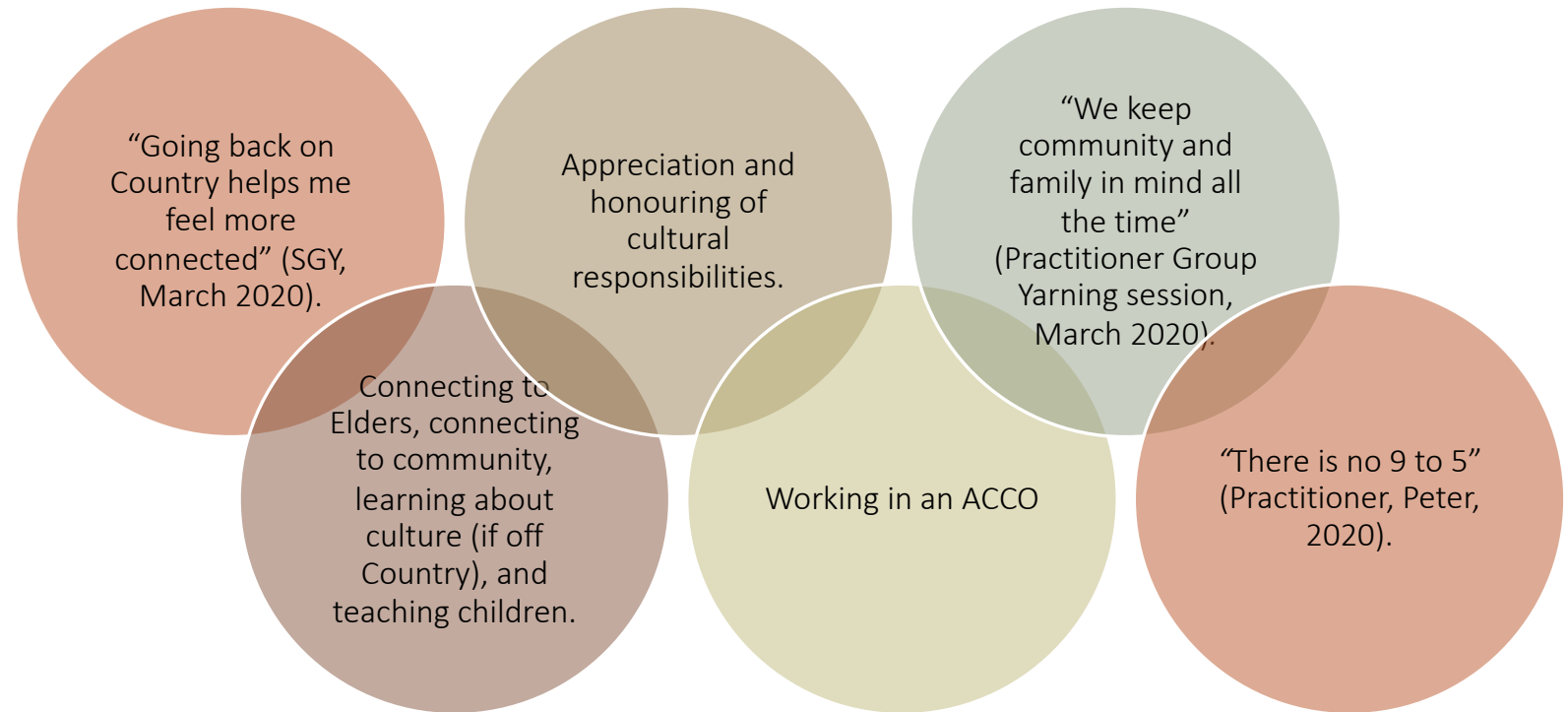
Cocooning in  
Culture A  
Trauma-  
informed  
Practice  
Approach

## Participants Quotes

*Culture is community. So to me culture is, well culture is everything. I believe my community is my family, in sense. I think community, you know it's all about ownership of going back to Country, if you go back to Country and get known in your own community you get accepted and the community will take you in and teach you those ways of your culture. James*

*Cultural safety has to be at the top of the list.  
Tracey*

# Strength of Culture



What is culture  
to you?

What are the strengths in culture for you

How do you connect to culture.

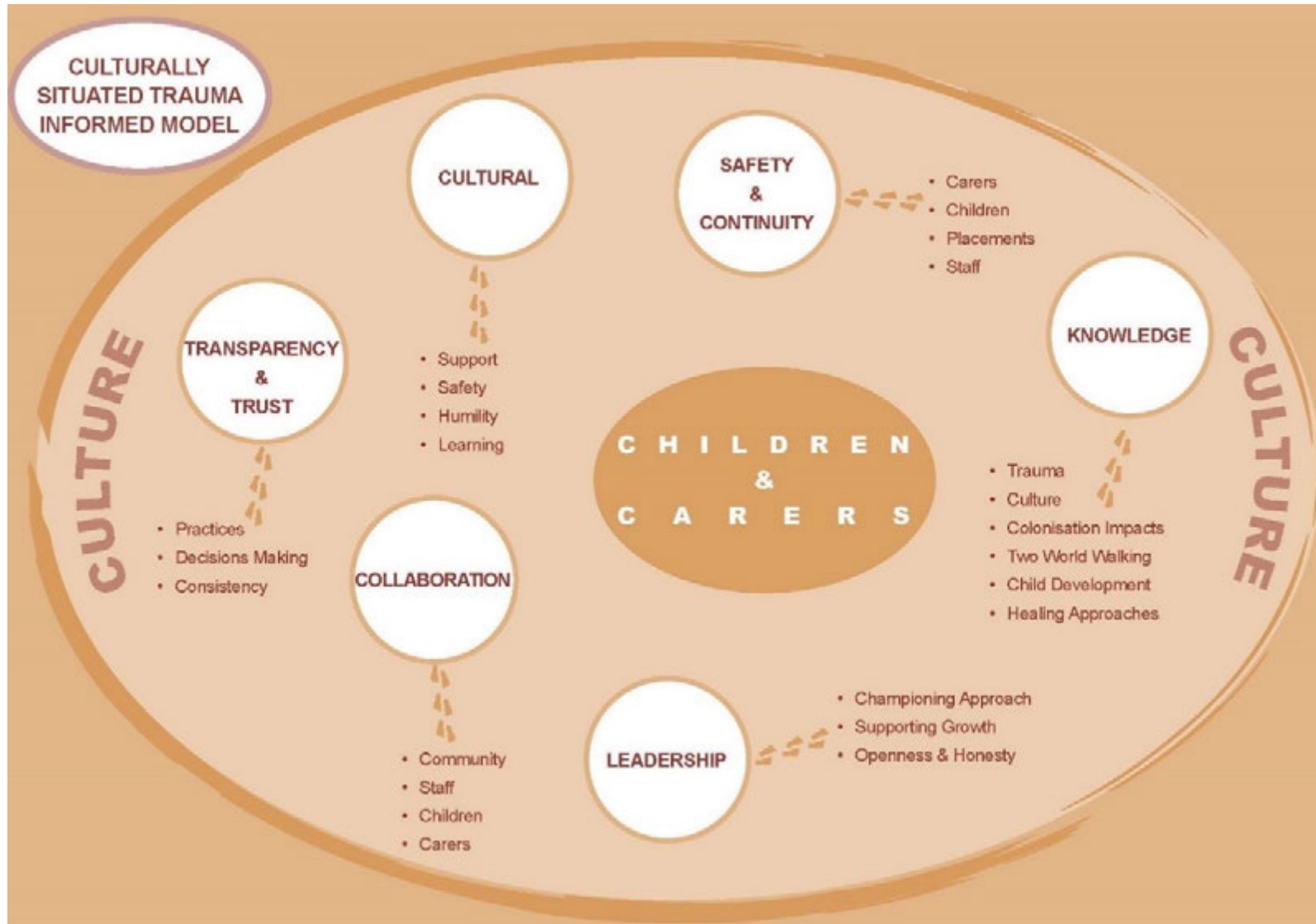
# Cocooning in Culture

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Determined by the  
Aboriginal Advisory Group  
after co-analysis  
discussions of the findings.

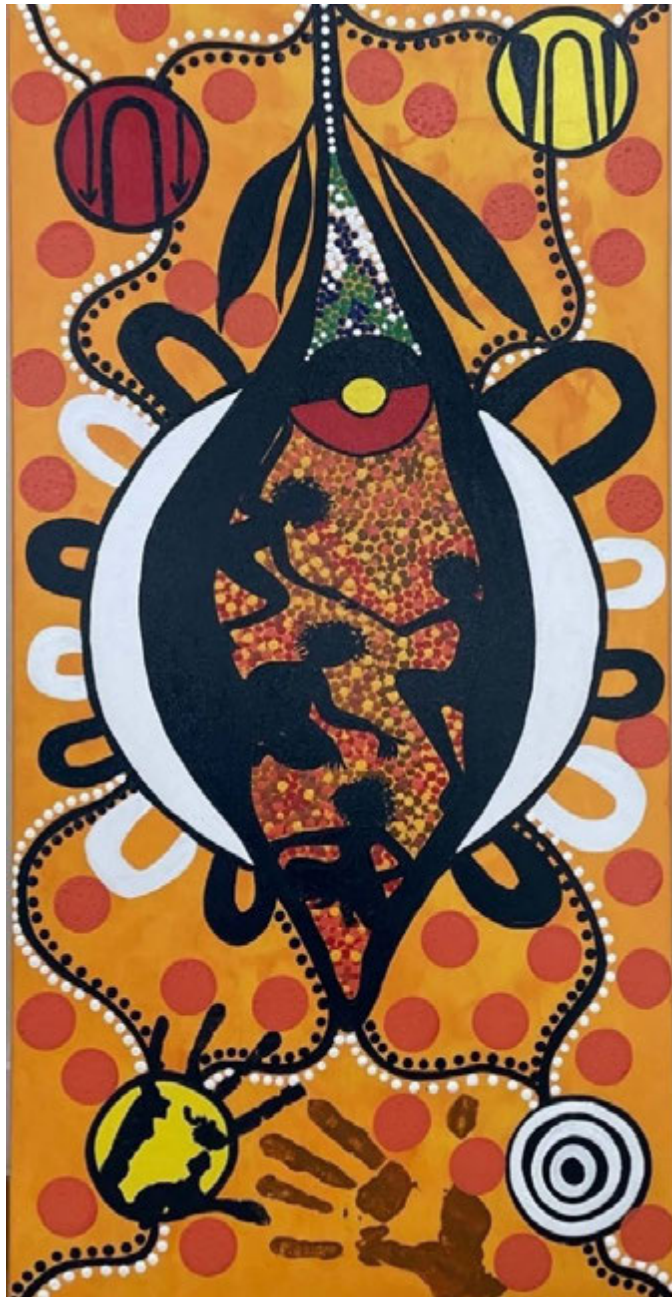
Created into an image  
including words from the  
participants.

Translated into a painting  
by local Elders: Aunty  
Laraine and Aunty Narelle  
– Coomaditchie United  
Aboriginal Corporation.



*Cocooning in Culture: A Cultural Situated Trauma Informed Model.*

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*Cocooning in  
Culture: A  
Cultural Situated  
Trauma Informed  
Model.*



Translation  
of knowledge  
to practice?

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Quality individualised cultural connection  
plans

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Reconnecting and repairing

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Connection to community

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Culturally safe family time

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Culturally safe relational activities

# Culturally Safe Relational Activity

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Reconnecting  
and repairing.



# Questions

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1. What are the implications for a non-Aboriginal worker who is involved in the removal of Aboriginal children who then return to gather the cultural story?
2. How willing do you think Aboriginal families would be to share their stories with those who have been involved in their children's removal?
3. What are the implications for trauma informed care and practice?
4. Cost v's value - One off payment for child entering into care (cultural care planning, family finding, participation in cultural activities and genealogy work is \$3, 937.65.



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# Implications

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## Barriers and possibilities

Being removed by a non-Aboriginal worker then sharing their story with a non-Aboriginal worker.

Policy shift to Aboriginal staff developing cultural plans.

Financial implications – need additional support for a truly valid and valuable cultural plan.

Government to recognise and actively implement a decolonising frame in addressing the complexities of OOHC Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO's). Embedded practices driving culturally informed trauma model is required.

Two world walking: Aboriginal staff require additional supports to perform their roles in identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander positions.

Aboriginal leadership is needed to drive TIP cocooned in culture.

A CSTIP model must be driven by community.

Appropriate funding is needed to support staff to provide cultural learning and connections for children.

# Key Messages

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Cultural plans when they are done well are key to '*cocooning in culture*' for Aboriginal children

Finding the non-dominant story - rather than the child protection removal story

Should be led and completed by Aboriginal staff

Knowing cultural protocols are important and should be invested in

It is active - child orientated - their story

It is embodied

It supports healing of cultural ruptures

Healing happens when '*cocooned in culture*'

# Co-researchers – Aboriginal Advisory Group

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**William Henry**

Yuin man  
CEO  
Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation

**Aunty Rhonda Cruise-Rawari**

Yuin woman  
Community member and carer

**Suzanne Trueman**

Yuin Woman  
Aboriginal Mental Health Worker and community member

**Fiona Frith**

Wiradjuri woman  
Social Worker  
Team Leader Myimbarr

**Tina McGhie**

Wiradjuri woman  
Previous Manager Myimbarr  
Original member of Advisory Group

**Barry Lenihan**

Yuin/Dharawal man  
Previous Manager Myimbarr  
Original member of Advisory Group

**Julie Power**

Previous Manager Myimbarr  
Member of Advisory Group

**Mandy Kent**

Completing MSWQ  
Manager Myimbarr

**Aboriginal Carers**

**Aboriginal Practitioners**

**Aboriginal Community Members**



# Research team

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Social Work program

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University of Wollongong

Professor Paul Chandler

Former Pro Vice Chancellor (Inclusion and Outreach)

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# Questions

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