

Solid Kids, Solid Schools

Project summary

In Australia there is much information about bullying in non-Aboriginal school-age children and young people. However, there is very little information about the bullying experiences of Aboriginal children. This makes it difficult to help **Yamaji** kids involved in bullying. **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** is a research project that listens to the experiences of childhood bullying among **Yamaji** communities in the Mid West, Murchison Region of Western Australia, it has been running during 2006-2009. Aboriginal community members of all ages (**Elders**, children and young people, parents and carers, and Aboriginal school staff) have been invited to tell us what they think about bullying. They have talked with us about what they call bullying actions, why they think bullying happens, and how it feels to be Aboriginal and bullied.

Project newsletters and reports

In the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project we have made newsletters to inform community members about what is going on in the project:

- [newsletter 2006](#)
- [newsletter 2007](#)
- [report 2009](#)

Project partners

The **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project is led by the Child Health Promotion Research Centre (CHPRC) in partnership with the Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health (CUCRH) and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research (TICHR).

- [Child Health Promotion Research Centre](#), Edith Cowan University
- [Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health](#)
- [Telethon Institute for Child Health Research](#)

Project schools

More than 200 people are involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project. Staff and children mostly come from nine schools in the Mid West Education District (MWED). These schools are:

Geraldton



Beachlands Primary School is located in Geraldton. A little more than half of the 154 students in years K – 7 are Aboriginal (DET, no date).



Bluff Point Primary School was established in 1913, and is located in Geraldton. There are approximately 400 students in years K – 7, 37% of these are Aboriginal.

In 2003 and 2004 the Wadjarri Aboriginal language was offered as a subject to students in years 1, 2 and 3 – 7. The continuation of this program is dependent on the availability of Wadjarri speakers (DET, no date).



John Willcock College was opened as a middle school for year 8 and 9 students in 2003. Almost 30% of the 600 students are Aboriginal (DET, no date).



Geraldton Senior College was first opened as Geraldton Senior High School in 1939. The school provides academic, vocational, social and service programs for around 900 students from Years 10 – 12. Many of the students are from Aboriginal or Cocos Island communities (DET, no date).



Nagle Catholic College is a co-ed school with approximately 1,100 students from Years 7 – 12. Students come from Geraldton, Dongara and Northampton. The College offers boarding facilities to students from all over the state (CEO, no date).



Phoenix West Vocational College is an independent school that delivers an alternative community-based education program for students who have difficulty with mainstream schooling. The College uses the LEAP (Learning Engagement and Participation) program to support the development of academic skills, social-emotional wellbeing and the development of a work ethic. The college caters for the needs of both primary and secondary students.



St John's is a Catholic primary school located in Geraldton. St John's is characterised by its strong sense of community and tradition. Of the 270 students in years K – 7, 19% are Aboriginal (St John's, no date).

Carnarvon

Carnarvon is a coastal town approximately 450 km north of Geraldton, with a population of 7,000 people. The town is known for prawn and snapper fishing, horticulture, mining and tourism (DET, no date).



Carnarvon Primary School has almost 200 students in years K – 7, with approximately 70% Aboriginal students (DET, no date).



There are 280 students attending **Carnarvon Senior High School** from years 8 – 12, 46% are Aboriginal. The school's curriculum includes TEE subjects and vocational courses such as hospitality and boating courses (DET, no date).



East Carnarvon Primary School has 320 students in years K – 7, 38% of are Aboriginal (DET, no date).

Meekatharra

Meekatharra is a remote mining town approximately 550 km east of Geraldton and has a town population of almost 800. The town is known for hot summers and spectacular sunsets (DET, no date).



The Meekatharra District High School has approximately 200 students from Years K – 12. Aboriginal people comprise 90% cent of the population of Meekatharra, and a similar proportion of the school population (DET, no date).

Karalundi Aboriginal Education Centre (Inc.) is an independent boarding school that was established in 1986 and is 60 km from



Meekatharra. The school has approximately 60 Aboriginal students from years K – 10 (Karalundi, no date).

Project investigator committee

The **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project is guided by the Steering Committee (SC). The SC assists the project with leadership and support. The SC is made up of the following community members who are experts in teaching and working with **Yamaji** children and young people:

○ Milton Quartermaine

Dolly was born and raised in Geraldton **Yamaji** and now lives in Mount Magnet, about 340 km east of Geraldton. For the past three years Dolly has worked for the Department of Education and Training (DET) as a Participation Coordinator. Dolly has been involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project since it started. Dolly contributes to the project with her knowledge as a parent, educator and community member.

○ Dolly (Louise) Dalgety

Milton's family are from the York and Wheatbelt region (Noongar Country) of Western Australia. Milton lives in Geraldton (**Yamaji** Country). Milton is an Aboriginal Teachers' Assistant and Aboriginal Liaison Officer at Nagle Catholic College. Milton has been involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project since 2007 as a Research Assistant and Steering Committee member.

○ Amanda Biggs

Amanda's family are connected to the Juat and Badimaya people. Amanda grew up in Three Springs and now lives in Geraldton. Amanda works at the Mid West District Education Office where she coordinates the Aboriginal Education Team. Amanda has been involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project since it started in a support role with cultural input.

○ Cheryl Ridgeway

Cheryl's family come from the Port Stephens area in New South Wales. Cheryl lives in Gascoyne Junction; she is the Principal of the Gascoyne Remote Community School. Cheryl has been involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project since it started, as a Steering Committee member.

○ Des Thomson

Des is a Badimia Elder and his family come from Mt Magnet. For the past three years Des has been living in Geraldton and working at the Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health (CUCRH). Des is the Aboriginal Health Educator and cultural advisor to medical students. Des has been involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project since 2007 assisting with data collection and in a support role as a SC member.

At various stages of the project the following people were involved in the project in either an advisory role or research assistant.

Gloria McCallum	Glenys Kelly	Greg Cross
Gwen Rakabula	Sue Carr	Loretta McDonald
Adrian Bartlett	Gai Adams	Priscilla Rodd
Robyn Boddington	Kerry Drage	Lauren Bovell
Lenny Papertalk	Roni Forrest	Simon Forrest
Makeesha Dalgety	Shannon McNair	Vanessa Cross
Therese Cross	Leeza Radcliffe	Tony Dodd

Project steering committee

Members of the investigator committee represent the partnership organisations listed earlier (CHPRC; CUCRH; and TICHR):

○ Donna Cross

Donna is a Professor of child and adolescent health and Director of the CHPRC. Donna has been involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project since it started and is the chief investigator. Donna initiated this project because of her concern that Aboriginal children were not adequately represented in mainstream studies investigating bullying. Donna and her family live in Perth.

○ Juli Coffin

Juli is from the Pilbara area of Western Australia and she lives in Geraldton (**Yamaji** Country). Juli works at the Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health as an Associate Professor in Aboriginal Health. Juli is passionate about helping Yamaji kids be happy and healthy and has been involved with the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project since it started. As a chief investigator and project director, Juli has worked closely with Yamaji community members to represent their stories and experiences of bullying.

○ Cheryl Kickett-Tucker

Cheryl lives in Swan View (Noongar), a hills suburb of Perth. Cheryl's family have lived in the Swan region for seven generations and are linked to the Wadjuk people on her mother's side and the Ballardong people on her father's side. Cheryl works at Murdoch University and is an Associate Professor and Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of

Health Sciences, and the Faculty of Arts and Education. Cheryl has been involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project since it started and is one of the chief investigators.

○ Lydia Hearn

Lydia's family are from the UK. She was born in Venezuela and lived in Columbia for 10 years. Lydia migrated to Australia in 1995 and lives in Perth. Lydia works at the CHPRC as a Senior Research Fellow and grant writer. Lydia has been involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project since it started and is one of the investigators.

○ Peter Shaw

Peter's family come from Poland, Germany, Ireland and England; they moved to south-east Queensland. Peter currently lives in Geraldton (**Yamaji** Country). Peter works at Nagle Catholic College as the school counsellor. Peter has been involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project since it started, as an advisor.

○ Dionne Paki

Dionne is Maori (Tainui) from the Waikato region of New Zealand and grew up in Perth. Dionne works at the CHPRC as the Project Coordinator for the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project. Dionne has been involved with **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** Solid Kids, Solid Schools since it started.

The following people were also members of the investigator committee:

Sven Silburn

Steve Zubrick

Anne Larson

Project website team

○ Christian Geyer

Christian is originally from Germany and lives in the Perth. Christian is a freelance web designer and developer. Christian has been involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project for three months creating this website!

○ Erin Erceg

Erin's family are from Katanning in south-west Western Australia. Erin lives in the Swan Valley area of Perth. Erin works at the CHPRC as a Project Director. Erin has been involved in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project as a curriculum writer for about a year.

Project artists

The artwork used in the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project was commissioned in two

phases. The logo was developed in the early stages of the project by Allison Bellottie. In the later stages Jilalga Murray–Ranui created the artwork for the website, basing her design on the logo.

○ Jilalga Murray–Ranui



Jilalga’s family are from the Pilbara region (Nyangumarta) of Western Australia. Jilalga’s family have ties to the Riverina region (Wemba Wemba and Yorta Yorta Country) of New South Wales through her father. Jilalga lives in Perth. Jilalga is an artist and produces artwork for galleries, homes and offices. Jilalga has been involved with the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** project for the last three months creating solid graphics and designs that help tell the story of the project on this website.

○ Allison Bellottie



Allison’s family are from the Shark Bay area and she belongs to the Malgana and Nanda tribal groups. Allison designed the **Solid Kids, Solid Schools** logo in 2006. The logo represents the ways families and communities are connected to Yamaji school kids. Allison believes that Aboriginal culture and values are a solid foundation for developing good art.