## **Doing Culture Better for Aboriginal Kids in OOHC**

Lana Draper and Ebony Larrigo Hunter Cultural Hub

Aboriginal Wellbeing Conference

## Doing Culture better for Aboriginal kids in OOHC

Ebony Larrigo, Cultural Case Worker, Hunter Cultural Hub Lana Draper, Occupational Therapist & PhD Candidate UoW

Artwork Credit: Cate McHughes



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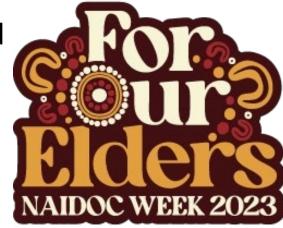




## Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the Gumbaynggirr people as the traditional custodians for time immemorial of the lands and waterways on which we meet, learn and connect today.

We also acknowledge the Elders past on whose shoulders we stand, Elders present who keep our knowledges strong, and Elders emerging who will take us into the future.









## **Standpoint**

### **Ebony Larrigo**

- Biripi Yagle woman
- Cultural Caseworker with DCJ
- Studying BA Applied Social Science
- Work and live on Awabakal, Wonnaruah, Worimi Countries
- Worked in Early Education, as Director and Educator







## **Hunter Cultural Hub**

#### Background:

- Formed from recommendations in the Bringing Them Home Report (1997)
- Specialist unit that sits in DCJ targeting:
  - decreasing rates of entry into care
  - Improving cultural connection for Aboriginal children in OOHC
  - Increasing the frequency of restoration and/or guardianship orders
  - Increasing DCJ Staff cultural capabilities (training, consultations, mentoring)
- Located in a family friendly building in the community
- Currently employs 5 staff
- Areas covered Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Maitland, Cessnock









## **Hunter Cultural Hub**

#### Responsibilities:

- Family group conferencing
- Group supervision (supervision on case work practice)
- Aboriginal Practice panel (review of Aboriginal children in care and permanency domains, including cultural connection)
- **Consultation** (placement principles, cultural identity, best practice in working with Aboriginal families and children)
- Case Planning (advocating for families and children to have their wellbeing needs met)
- Preservation (early intervention)
- Restorations (advocating for children and families, guiding case work practice)
- PAC & Triage points (providing consultation)
- Cultural plans
- Family Action Plans (addresses what the worries are)
- ACMP (Aboriginal Case Management Policy accountability towards consulting with community )





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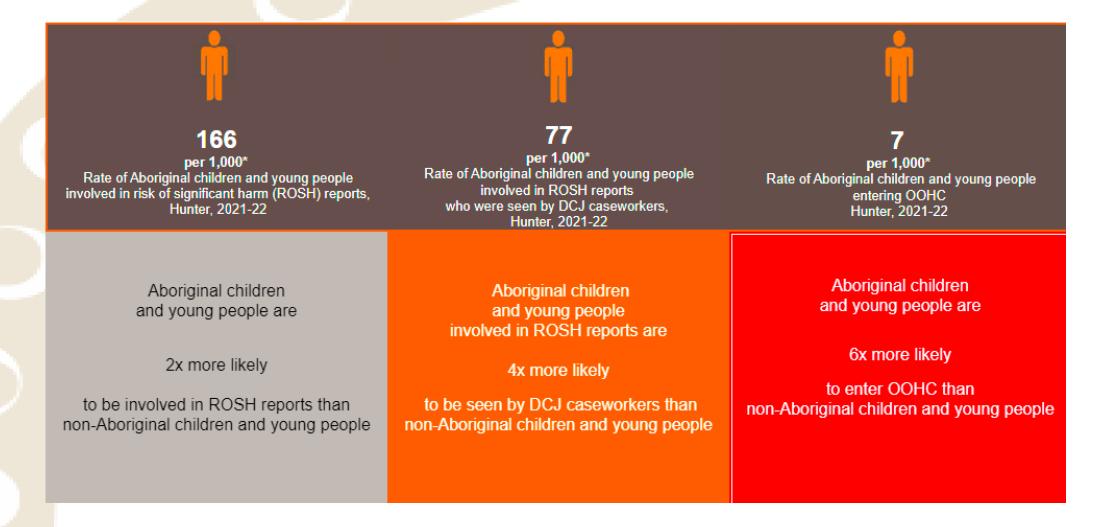


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## Hunter District 2021 - 2022

Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Maitland, Cessnock

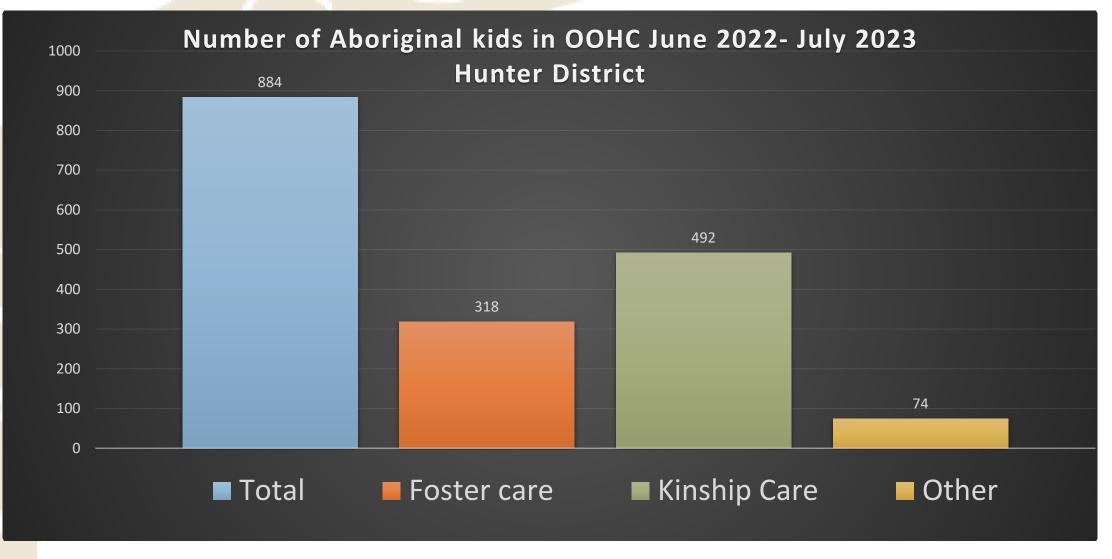




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## **Hunter Cultural Hub**





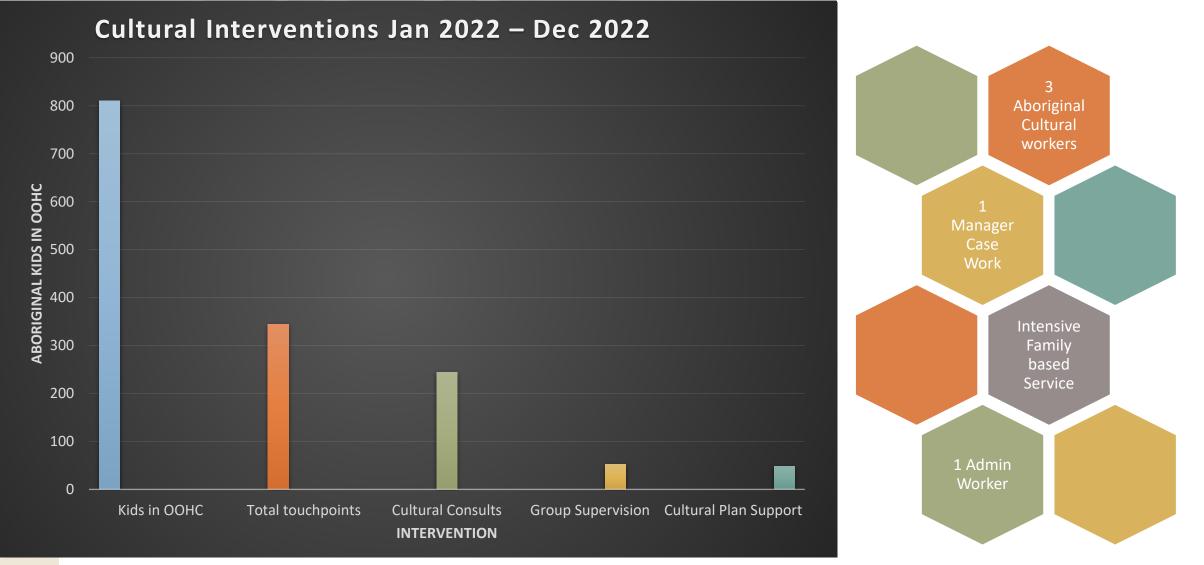
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## **Hunter Cultural Hub**





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## Outcomes

#### Short term outcomes

- Cultural plans
- Recommendations implemented
- Advocating for more short term orders
- Increasing family placements and contact
- Greater advocacy and child centred work

#### Long term outcomes

- Reducing kids in care
- Increasing restorations
- Meaningful connection to culture
- Reduced contact with DCJ







## **Integrating SEWB**

- Drawing on personal Indigenous Knowledge and departmental knowledge to advocate
- Integrates with Practice Framework
- Winangay cards designed specifically as a carer assessment tool
- SEWB Yarning cards<sup>©</sup> provides natural discussion points that can be used in any situation, highly adaptable and beneficial in cultural contexts, broadens people's understanding of connection to culture







### Case Study My Story, My

## Connection



#### Jack Smith Born 2/12/2020 at Maitland Hospital on Wonnarua country

Jack, this connection plan was stated on the 0606/2023 and holds information about your mob, culture and life connections can be added at any time. This is a living document that will hold significant information about your life, mob, culture and life connections and can be added to at any time. This is a living document that will hold a logitificant information about your life, mob, culture and life connections and can be added to at any time. This is a living document that will hold a logitificant information for you.

#### BODY

Jack, part of being strong in culture is being as healthy as can be. It is important for you to have regular health checks for your ears, eyes, teeth and body. Because you are still little, these checks will be done every 6 months to make sure you are growing up strong and healthy!

#### COUNTRY

Jack, you were born at Maitland hospital on Wonnarua country You still live on Wonnarua country with your carers. Marion and Bill. Before you lived with Marion and Bill, you lived with you mum and on XXX. When you lived with mum, you moved between XXXXXXXX countries countries You are connected to Worimi country through your mum. It is important as you grow, that you are supported by DCJ, Marion and Bill to be able to visit the country that you and your family are connected to. Connecting to country is a way for you to grow your cultural identity.

#### COMMUNITY

Jack, you are living on Wonnarua country and are connected with the Wonnarua community An important part of your community connection is your Day Care Centre. Your Day Care supports you to connect with other little ones in the community and build connections with other community members

These community connections are a big part of connecting to culture and will strengthen as you get older. For Aboriginal people, community is and extension of their family and will help you grow strong Jack Smith

#### FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Jack, you have a big family! You have 2 younger brothers, Nate and Nick Your Uncle Matthew and Aunty Sally have a huge family history story. This story dates back all the way to the early 1800's and lists all your ancestors. This family story starts in 1837 with your great great great grandmother Margaret Foley. Margaret was born in Gloucester on Worimi country. As you get older, mum and other family members will be able to teach you more about your family history.

#### SPIRITUALITY AND ANSESTORS

Jack, Uncle Matthew and Aunty Sally have a big family story that talks about lots of your ancestors. It hold knowledge about where these family members were born, where they lives, when they passed away and who they married. There is lots and lots of knowledge in this story, and as you grow, this is something your mum can share with you and teach you. It is important that family, knowledge is passed down by family, through to the younger generations. The younger generations is you, your brother and your sister!

MIND AND EMOTIONS

#### Jack, you are very young and are still learning how to understand your thoughts, feelings and emotions. As you grow, your carers and family will be able to guide you on how to understand your thoughts and feelings and

how to express them as well.

CULTURAL EXPRESSION

Jack, as you get older and grow your cultural identity, it is important for you to be able to express your culture in your own way. Your family have told us that you will be able to express your culture by attending NAIDOC celebrations each year and XXXX. Cultural expression looks different for everybody, so how you express your cultural will be different to how you express your cultural will be different to how your brother Jack or sister Tiliey express theirs. As an Aboriginal person, you have a right to feel proud of who you are and share this with the world. Mum, your carers and your wider family will all



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## **Standpoint**

### Lana Draper

- Ngiyampaa winarr of the Stone People, grew up on Wiradjuri Country
- Live and work on Awabakal, Wonnaruah, Worimi and Darkinjung Countries
- Occupational Therapist, LINKS Trauma Healing Service, DCJ
- PhD Candidate, University of Wollongong
- Mother, daughter, wife, grandmother, sister







### Research

"The role of Culture in strengthening social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in NSW OOHC" (AH&MRC submission 2111/23)

• Supervisors: Prof Kathleen Clapham, Director Ngarruwan Ngadju, University of Wollongong

Dr Karen Fildes, University of Wollongong

 The SEWB Yarning cards that will are presented today are the Intellectual Property (IP) of Lana Draper and are currently in the implementation and evaluation phase of her PhD project that is focussed on integrating Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing and being into child protection.







## **Intellectual Property**

- All information on the SEWB Yarning Cards<sup>©</sup>, provided in this or subsequent presentations and its associated resources, are the property of Lana Draper.
- Intellectual Property shared during this presentation is for the sole knowledge of the attendees and should not be disseminated without written permission from Lana Draper.
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## **Partnerships & Collaborators**

- Hunter Cultural Hub (DCJ)
- Muloobinba
- Wandiyali
- Hunter Knowledge Circle\*

- Ngarruwan Ngadju, First Peoples Health & Wellbeing Research Centre
- Dr Aunty Laurel Williams







## **Social and Emotional Wellbeing**

- Developed by Graham Gee, Pat Dudgeon, Clinton Schultz, Amanda Hart & Kerrie Kelly (all Aboriginal Psychologists)
- Defines Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concept of wellbeing
- Differs from Western concepts of mental health
- I being used to create mental health reform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people nationally
- Is an evidence-based culturally appropriate tool



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## SEWB Yarning cards © Lana Draper, 2021

- Developed in response for need to do culture better for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids in child protection
- Based on the SEWB domains
- Are designed to help clinicians and case workers capture meaningful information on culture
- Have undergone several community consultations
- Will be undergoing evaluation to determine their impact
- Cultural Hub are research collaborators







## **Connection to Community**

### Community

The young person's relationship to their community – not just their family

- Is there a particular community or Country you feel most connected to?
- Who do you consider your Elders/Aunties/Uncles, outside of your blood family?
- Who can you turn to for support, rely on when you need help, or go to for advice? Neighbour, teacher, etc.
- Do you meet up with other Aboriginal mob?
- Are you linked in with any Aboriginal services/organisations? Medical service, land council, sporting teams, dance troupes, etc.

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## **Connection to Family & Kinship**

### Family & Kinship

The young person's relationship to their whole family – not just parents and siblings

- Who is in your family tree?
- Tell me about your cousins? Favourite, biggest, youngest, etc.
- Do you know the names/surnames in your family tree?
- Can you tell me about your family? Or the most significant people in your family?

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ou would like me to

- Do you have a strong family who help each other?
- Who keeps you strong?

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- Do you have an older person looking out for you?
- Is there anything about your family you would like me to know?

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## **Connection to Country**

### Country

The young person's relationship to the land and spirit beings

- Is there a particular Country, land or sea, that you feel connected to?
- Do you know where your mob is from?
- Where do you feel most relaxed? Beach, bush, river, etc.

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## **Connection to Body**

### Body

Physical wellbeing – age, weight, nutrition, Illness, disability

- Do you have any health conditions I should know about? Asthma, diabetes, etc. Are you seeing a doctor?
- Do you have trouble sleeping? Do you take a long time getting to sleep?
- What foods to do you prefer to eat? What don't you like to eat?
- Do you know much about traditional foods?
- Do you exercise? What sports do you play?
- Do you find it hard to concentrate on school work? Or know how to get started?

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## **Connection to Spirituality & Ancestors**

### **Sprituality & Ancestors**

Worldview or beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, values

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- Do you participate in any cultural practices that give you strength? Eg. Smoking ceremonies, yarning with mob, communion, etc.
- What would you like to do more of?
- Do you go on bush camps, back to country, go to the bush?
- Who taught you what's important? What do you think is important? Eg. Honesty, family, determination, loyalty
- Do you feel like someone is looking out for you? Eg. Ancestors, The Old fella's
- Do you see, smell, or feel things that make you think your ancestors are watching? Eg. A kookaburra is your Nan checking in on you © Lana Draper, 2021

## Connection to Cultural Expression & Events

### Cultural Expression & Events

Community events, celebrations or activities

- Do you participate in any cultural events that give you strength? Eg. NAIDOC week, Sorry Day, etc.
- Do you visit special locations?
- Do you celebrate any family traditions?
- Do you know or learn any cultural occupations, drawing, painting, dance, weaving, etc.
- Do you speak any traditional language?
- How do you express culture? TikTok, photo's, music, art, football, etc.

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## **Connection to Mind & Emotions**

### Mind & Emotions

Not just the experience of mental health, but the whole spectrum of cognitive, emotional & psychological needs

- What do you do to stay strong and keep yourself happy?
- What or who makes you feel safe?
- What makes you laugh?
- How do you cope when you are stressed?
- Have you thought about hurting yourself, or plans to suicide?

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- Do you worry, feel lonely, get wild/angry a lot, laugh a lot?
- Where do you feel you belong?
- Do you struggle to concentrate on things?
- Are you forgetful?

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## Implications for practice

- Aligns with Aboriginal Case management Policy and Practice Framework
- Targeted case worker training cultural planning
- Implementing in carer support group
- Has application across a range of program areas and decision making points







## Thank you!

# QUESTIONS



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