



GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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Community charting a new course for the future of Aboriginal children

Aboriginal people in Kakadu have this week launched a 25-year plan to raise the health and well-being of their children to the same level as other Australian children. Children's Ground, Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation and the Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust today announced a radical new approach to 'Closing the Gap' on the disadvantage faced by so many Aboriginal communities.

The new partnership was sealed this week with the decision by the Kakadu West Arnhem Social Trust to allocate significant start-up funding for Children's Ground to roll out its holistic and community-driven socioeconomic program in the region. The members of the Trust are Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation and Energy Resources of Australia.

The plan will see the Trust kick-start initial financial investment to improve the lives of children and families across the West Arnhem region of Kakadu. Funding will be directed on the basis of thorough research and monitoring and with a central focus on community design and delivery of service.

"What is happening now is not working for us. We want to change the future for our children," said Annie Ngalmirama, the chairwoman of the GAC.

The chairman of Children's Ground, William Tilmouth, described the agreement as ground-breaking.

"This is something we've never seen in Australia before – Aboriginal people controlling a 25-year agenda for the future of their children. If we listen to the people, and back them with the very best services provided the right way we will break the cycle. Our people are still dying too young, our country is still hurting. We as Aboriginal people are still not having enough say in our destiny and our future. Through Children's Ground we will create a future where our children can celebrate their social, cultural and economic life."

Children's Ground chief executive officer, Jane Vadiveloo, said the project represented a new paradigm for working with disadvantaged communities in Australia.

"This is a bold new approach that will celebrate Aboriginal knowledge, capture the ability in communities, and bring the scale and quality of resources needed for kids to have the very best in learning, wellbeing and economic development over the long term," Ms Vadiveloo said.

Children's Ground brings community, government, philanthropy and business together in a collective funding partnership. The primary seed funding from the Trust is supported by visionary partners including philanthropic investors, the Australian Government Department of Employment, Education and Workplace relations, and Energy Resources of Australia.

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