Birdiya Maya Homelessness Research Project

Birdiya Maya (Voice of the Elders) is an Aboriginal-led research project privileging the voices of Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness in Perth.

The research came about after the first wave of COVID response, when people were rapidly moved into temporary accommodation. Aboriginal people told us that they wanted their voices to be listened to and to be included in decision making about them.

Birdiya Maya is funded by Lotterywest and led by Wungening Aboriginal Corporation, working in partnership with Curtin University's National Drug Research Institute, to provide a platform for these voices to be listened to. The project is guided and overseen by a group of Elders elected from Elders groups across the Perth region to form the project *Community Ownership Group*.

What we are working toward

- Better outcomes for the most vulnerable beyond the life of the project
- ***Djeran*** *Maturity*
- Elders, community and lived experience participants feel seen, heard and invested in future interventions
- Project evaluation and impact measurement completed
- Shared knowledge strengthens and improves the community service sector's response to issues faced by people experiencing homelessness
- Resources developed from research outputs
- ***Bunuru*** *Adolescence*
- Insights, findings and final report are presented to the community, to decision makers and to services – to influence change.

The Project Journey

Reflected through the *6 Noongar Seasons* cycle of change

- A draft report is developed, with review and input from the Community Ownership Group.
- The information provided by participants is analysed under the guidance of the Community Ownership Group
- ***Birak*** *Youth*
- 70-90 participants tell their stories through yarning, Photovoice, creative kits. The story of the project is recorded through short films.
- **Photovoice Exhibition**
- **The research**
- The Community Ownership Group is established and sets research principles, names the project, guides the approach and connects researchers to potential participants
- Meetings and presentations about the project to eight established Elders groups
- ***Kambarang*** *Birth*
- Research team established including senior Aboriginal Elders. Ethics approval granted
- Lotterywest funds our research proposal for community-led research
- ***Djilba*** *Conception*
- Wungening and the National Drug Research Institute (NDRI) collaborate to listen to Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness and community Elders, who tell us they want their voices to be heard by decision makers
- ***Makuru*** *Fertility*
- Aboriginal people living with homelessness are affected by COVID responses
- **The beginning**

The research has been taking place throughout 2022.

The Birdiya Maya Photovoice Exhibition is the first major event of the project, showcasing the diverse stories and experiences of Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness, through their own photographs and descriptions.

The Community Ownership Group is central to the Birdiya Maya project. The 15 members meet every six weeks.

They bring extensive lived experience, community knowledge and cultural insight to the project.

They are key to making this a truly community-led project.

The Community Ownership Group are co-researchers on this project and have provided cultural guidance and validation, interpreted findings, and connected the project team with participants and issues.

They have also named the project, set the research principles, and sense-checked information in the literature.

Wungening Aboriginal Corporation

Lotterywest

NDRI national drug research institute