



Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families to Stay Together from the Start

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THE AIATSIS MAP OF INDIGENEOUS AUSTRALIA

This map attempts to represent the language, social and cultural groups of Indigenous Australia in a way that is consistent with the AIATSIS (Aboriginal Information and Statistics Service) data. It is not a political map and should not be used for political purposes. It is a map of the past and should not be used for political purposes.

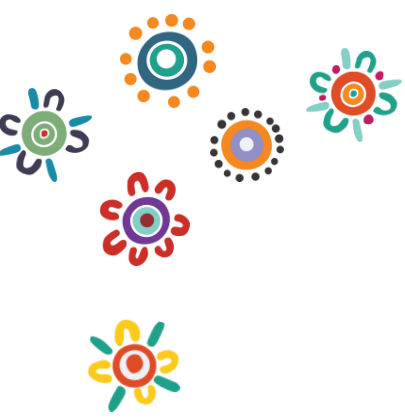
Legend:

- Language group name
- No published information available

SCALE 1 : 4 700 000

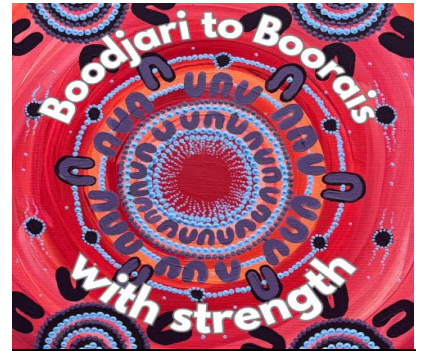
AIATSIS, 1985. No reproduction without permission.



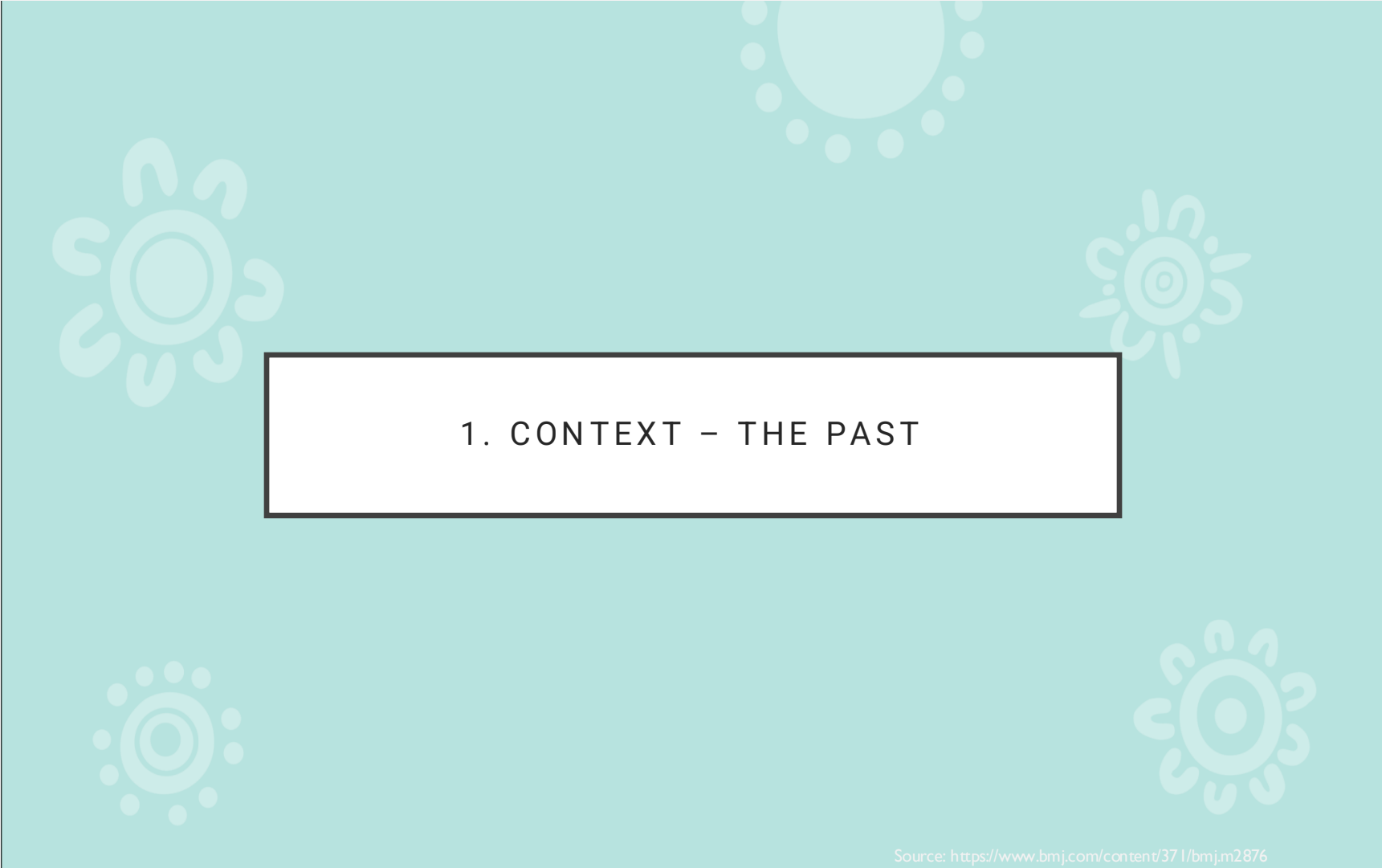


Presentation Overview

1. Context – the past
2. Current issues – the now
3. Ways forward – what next



Artwork © Emily
Nupurulla Maloney

The background is a solid teal color. It features five stylized sun or gear-like icons. One is at the top center, partially cut off. Another is on the left side, and another on the right side. At the bottom, there are two more: one on the left and one on the right. Each icon has a central circle with radiating lines or dots.

1. CONTEXT – THE PAST

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strengths

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's social, emotional and physical wellbeing has been nurtured for millennia.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing is a conception of self which is grounded in and shaped by connection to family and community.



The Journey of healing (WA Health)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDYGjkcjUdg>

SEWB Diagram adapted from Gee et al., (2014)



Background

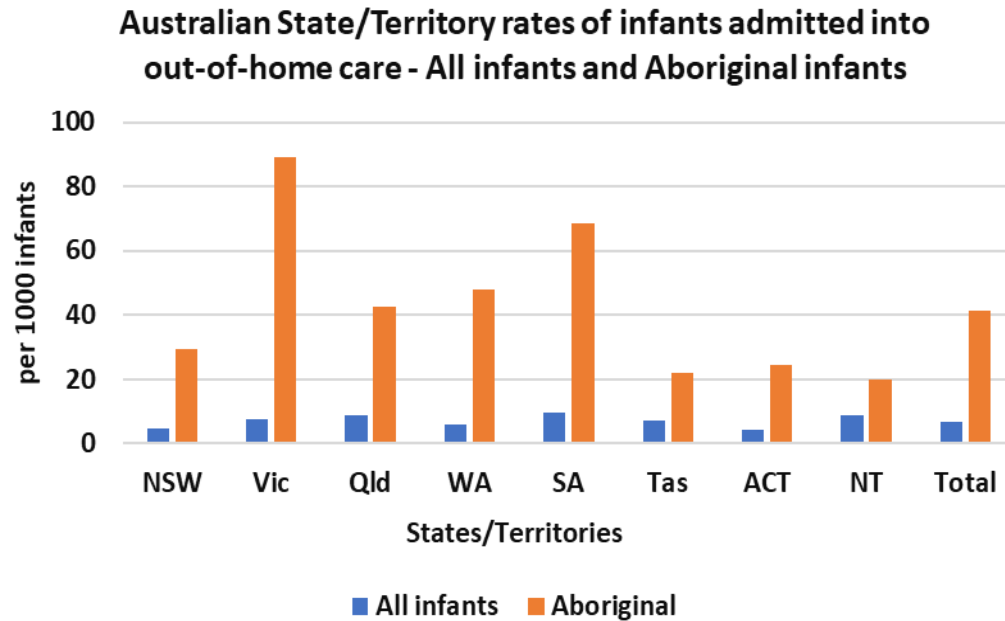


- Colonisation, forced child removal and dispossession has led to intergenerational cycles of trauma and socioeconomic deprivation.
- This adversity is compounded by sustained threat of coercive punitive systems (child protection and youth justice)



The Current Reality

- Infants most likely to enter child protection
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants overrepresented (~8x higher)
- High rates of prenatal (unborn) notifications
- Early life removals continuing across generations



Context – Why This Matters

- Lack of a focus on prevention a key reason for ongoing failure
- Child protection systems not designed for prevention
- Perinatal period is a critical intervention window for interrupting cycles of intergenerational trauma



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1. CURRENT ISSUES – THE NOW

Current System Challenges – Child Protection

- Fear of child protection
- Service demand and fragmentation
- Over-surveillance and risk-focused practice





Current System Challenges – Maternity Sector

- Institutional harm
- Lack of culturally-safe perinatal support
- Challenges regarding data availability and quality to drive reforms

Chamberlain, C., Gray, P., Herrman, H., Mensah, F., Andrews, S., Krakouer, J. et al. (2023) Community views on 'Can perinatal services safely identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents experiencing complex trauma?'. *Child Abuse Review*, 32(1), e2760.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2760>





3. WAYS FORWARD

Source: <https://www.bmj.com/content/371/bmj.m2876>

Ways Forward

- Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing
- Shift to prevention
- Clarity of roles across child protection and perinatal care services
- Culturally safe, trauma-informed care
- System accountability
- Investment in community-led models

Mucabel-Bue, N., Onwuka, Gray, ... Chamberlain, Krakouer. (2025). “‘Keeping Ourselves Safe From the System’: Perinatal Care Model Considerations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families Intersecting With Child Protection.” *Australian Journal of Social Issues*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.70088>

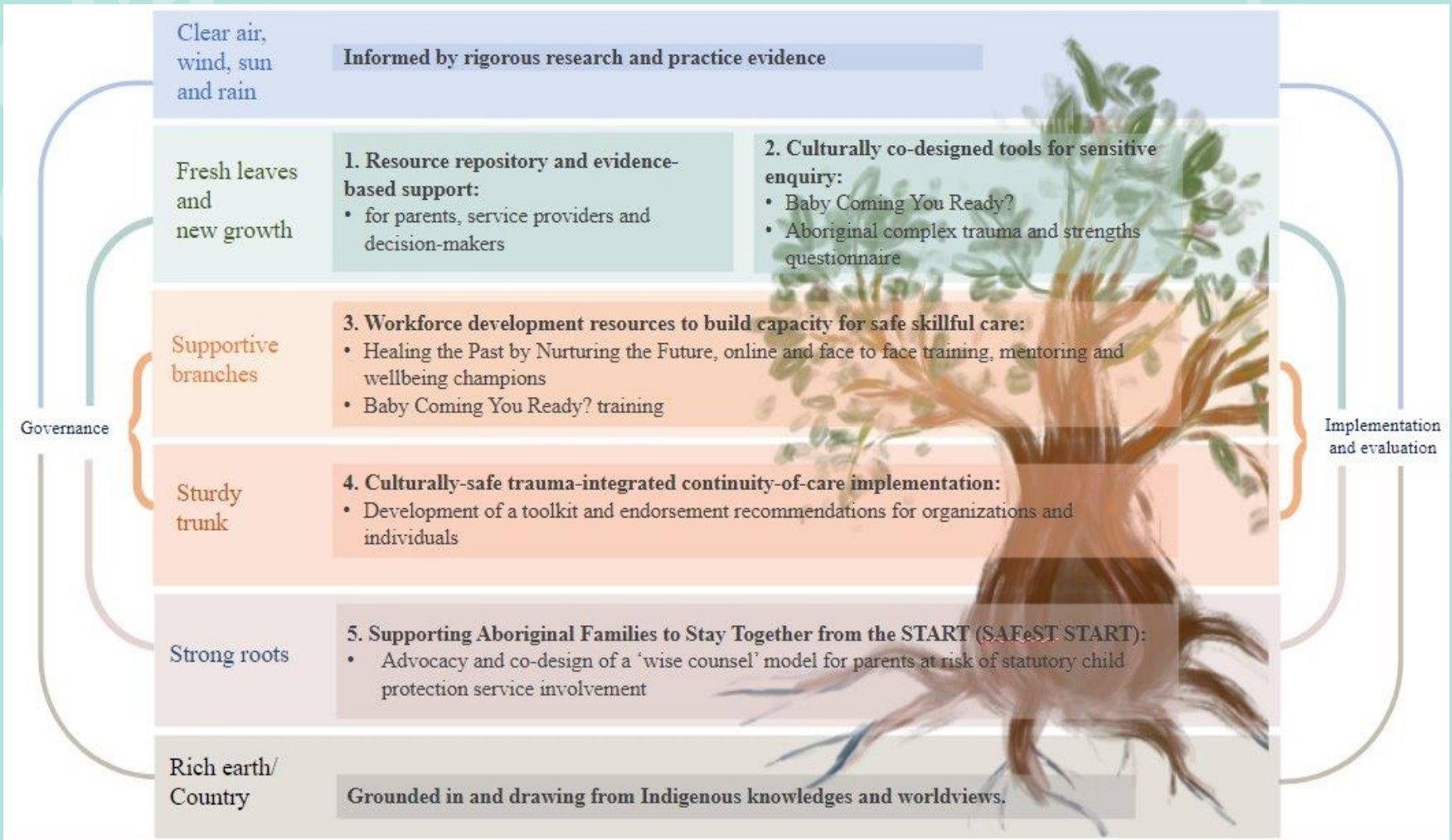


Potential implementation phases of the RISE Framework

	Standard Care	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
R edesign health service	Routine care in community or hospital	Specific Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander antenatal/postnatal programs	Continuity of carer with caseload midwifery and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers	Integrated community-based caseload midwifery and wrap around holistic services	Integrated Service/ Hub/ Birth Centre Choice of birth place
I nvest in health workforce	No Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identified positions Workforce with limited cultural understanding	Identified positions Cultural capabilities training	Career pathways and support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff Measures of organisational progress of cultural capability	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce pipeline Comprehensive mentoring and support New minimum standards for culturally safe workforce	Culturally and clinically capable (exceptional) workforce
S trengthen families' capacity	Ad hoc or non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander antenatal/parenting programs	Formal strategies to engage families in maternal and infant health programs	Wellbeing framework to strengthen family capacity	Community developed cultural strengthening antenatal and parenting programs	Strong resilient families
E mbed community governance and control	No Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander engagement strategy	Multi stakeholder engagement e.g. Community Consultation	Formal system of governance e.g. Advisory Group	Transformative and strategic governance e.g. Steering Committee	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ownership

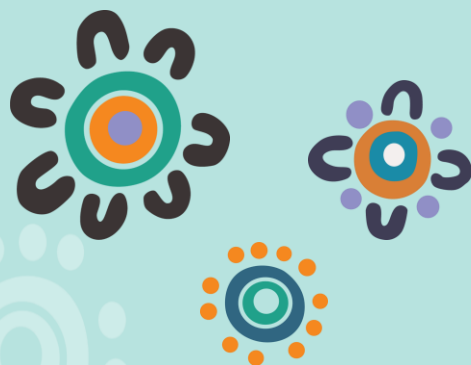
BIRTHING ON COUNTRY

Replanting the Birthing Trees



Baby Coming You Ready?

<https://babycomingyouready.org.au/>



Baby Coming
You Ready?

Home

About Us

Mums

Dads

Practitioners

Resources



A bold innovation designed to support the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents-to-be and new parents.

Welcome to *Baby Coming You Ready?*

Baby Coming You Ready? (BCYR) is a digital platform that has 'cracked the code' to overcome communication barriers between Aboriginal women and their health care provider during pregnancy and after baby arrives.

Designed by Aboriginal community and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal professionals, it provides 'wrap-around' solutions to the many barriers impacting trusting engagement, effective assessment, routine screens and effective woman-centered care.

Baby Coming You Ready centres web-based 'app' using touch screen images and Aboriginal voices over. These guide both users through an engaging, culturally-safe 'yarn' that supports women to reflect on their strengths and worries and create their own solutions.



Baby Coming You Ready

Find out more about the digital programs and its 'wrap-around' features that provides a culturally safe model of care and new concept to Birthing on Country.



Mums

If you are a Mum or soon to be one, find out more about your journey ahead.



Dads

If you are a Dad, or soon to be one, find out more about what lies ahead.



The Journey of Wellbeing

This short animated film shows the present day impacts that colonisation has on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.



Culture starts in the womb

From the time of conception until baby is 2 years old, baby's deep memories and building blocks foundational for life are being formed in her/his mind, body and spirit. Find out more.



The
Department
of Health

MU Murdoch
University



Publications



Published articles relating to Baby Coming You Ready.

Publications

Message stick



See what's happening with our 'Baby Coming You Ready?' community.

Find out more

Contact us

Office Hours:
Monday to Friday: 9am - 5pm

Baby Coming You Ready? Team

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Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Whadjuk people as the traditional custodians of the land in which we developed 'Baby Coming You Ready?'. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our deepest respect to Elders past, present and emerging. The past and continuing connection to land, waters, community and culture brings hope to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, who warmly welcome us to work together collaboratively towards a brighter future.



WISE COUNSEL MODEL

- Valuing the **wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.**
- **Shared power** in decision-making and planning.
- **Strengths-based, family-centered, place-based and tailored** approach.
- **Indigenous self-determination** at the fore.
- **Culturally safe and trauma-informed.**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies, children, families and communities have a **right to their cultures.**
- Culture is healing.



Call to Action

- Take responsibility within your service
- Stop practices that cause harm
- Partner with Aboriginal organisations
- Invest in prevention and early support
- Listen to and follow community leadership



Our Vision

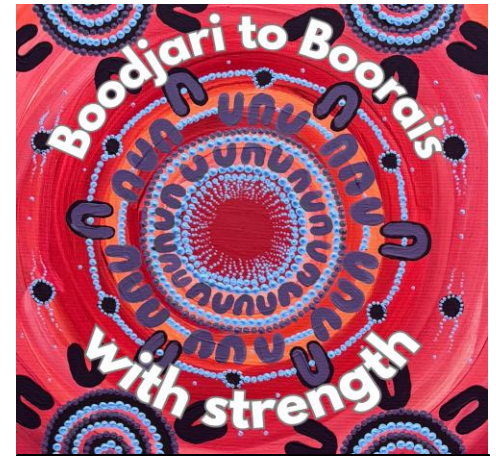
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families thriving
- Culture, connection and community at the centre
- Systems that support—not separate—families

Artwork © Valerie Ah Chee





Replanting the Birthing Trees



*Artwork © Emily Nupurulla
Maloney*

Thank you!

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[https://mbspgh.unimelb.edu.au/centres-
institutes/onemda/research-group/indigenous-
health-equity-unit#research](https://mbspgh.unimelb.edu.au/centres-institutes/onemda/research-group/indigenous-health-equity-unit#research)

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