

## **Raising the voices of young people in remote Aboriginal communities in Australia to identify place-based support needs: The Bigiswun Kid Project**

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**Background:** There is a global push for adolescent-specific services informed by young people; such services are crucial for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples because adolescents make up one-third of the population. The authors of this study worked with young people and their families to: identify the support that young people need to thrive in very remote Aboriginal communities; report how young people and their parents would like these supports support to be delivered; and describe what was learned from piloting support during the research project

**Methods:** We interviewed 83% (n=94) of all young people born in 2002–03 (aged 17 to 19 years) who were living in the Fitzroy Valley at the time, and 89% (n=101) of their parents. Using an Aboriginal participatory action approach, the authors worked with young people and local Aboriginal leaders to pilot some supports.

**Results:** The young people identified 12 supports that they needed to thrive in late adolescence/early adulthood. Based on the interviews and co-design consultation with young people, we identified five supports to be provided in a youth SEWB service. These included mental health support, particularly clinical psychology for people with moderate mental illness; community wellbeing workshops; male- and female-specific wellbeing workshops; and support to access existing services, particularly health services.

**Conclusion:** Partnering with young people ensured that community strengths and challenges were incorporated in the service design. Study findings were used to secure funding for the implementation and evaluation of a SEWB service in the Fitzroy Valley. The process and lessons learned in the Project could be used to engage, consult and partner with young people to design services in other remote regions.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare. The Bigiswun Kid project was funded by a Mental Health of Young Australians Research Grant from Australian Rotary Health, a Public Health Research Grant from the Ian Potter Foundation (#31110414), a Kimberley Brain and Mind Foundation grant; an Exploratory Research Grant from Healthway (#33726) and a Project grant from the Lowitja Institute (#20-PG-10). L.R. was supported by the Ian Potter Foundation (#31110414) and a 2021 Westpac Research Fellowship; E.E. was supported by an Australian Medical Research Futures Fund Next Generation Fellowship (#1135959) and currently receives a National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia Investigator Grant (#2026176).