



Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network

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Understanding and responding to Hepatitis C reinfection and retreatment among Aboriginal Peoples in custody:

A culturally informed co -design approach

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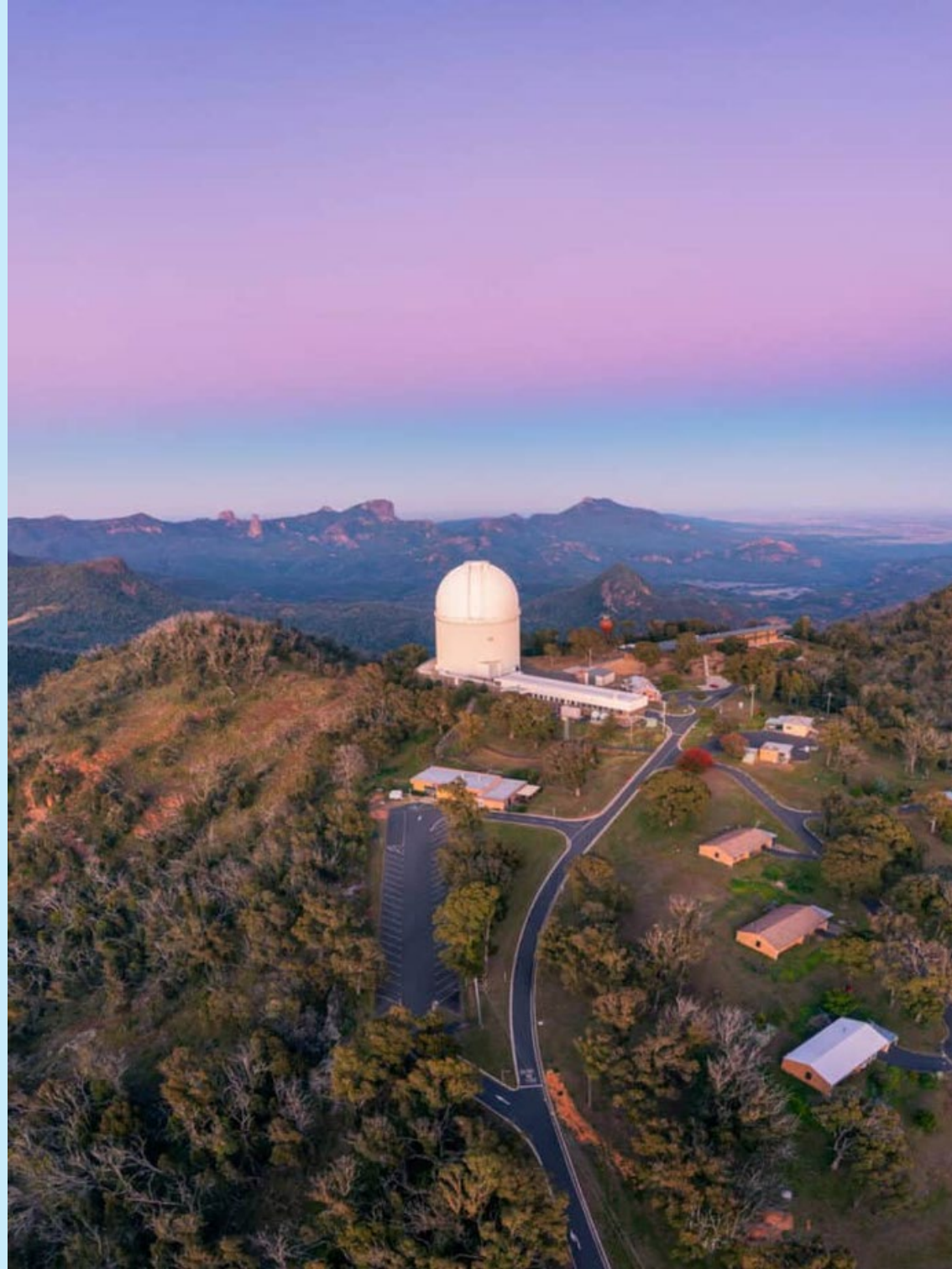
The original artwork was created by a Wiradjuri man from Wellington NSW and patient in 2019 and represents the importance of Aboriginal cultural elements being intrinsic to our work.

August 2026

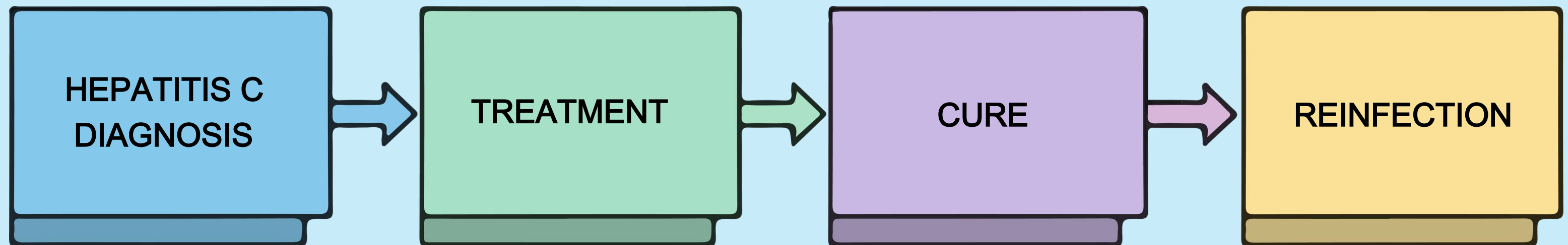
Disclosure of Interest

The presenter and broader project team
have no conflicts of interest to disclose

Acknowledgement of Country



From Treatment to Retreatment



So, we asked:
What is the driving force behind this cycle?

What the data revealed...



2494

Aboriginal
People Treated



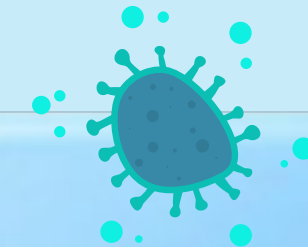
3726

Treatment
Episodes



1 in 3

Required
retreatment



73%

Retreatments
due to
reinfection

7

Maximum
treatment
episodes
recorded

THIS RAISED KEY QUESTIONS...

Why was reinfection occurring?

What were Aboriginal patients' experiences and understanding of hepatitis C?

What would culturally safe education look like?

How could we strengthen Hepatitis C knowledge in custody?

Listening First - Yarning Circles



Safe Spaces
open & honest conversations



No right or wrong answers
We listened to learn



**Understanding before
Designing**



Strengths -based approach
focused on what works

What We Heard

Mistrust of Health Services

Past experiences reduced trust and engagement.

Shame & Stigma

Shame prevented people from seeking care.

Limited Health Literacy

Knowledge gaps contributed to reinfection risk.

Culture, Identity & Healing

Reconnecting with culture and identity was seen as an important part of healing

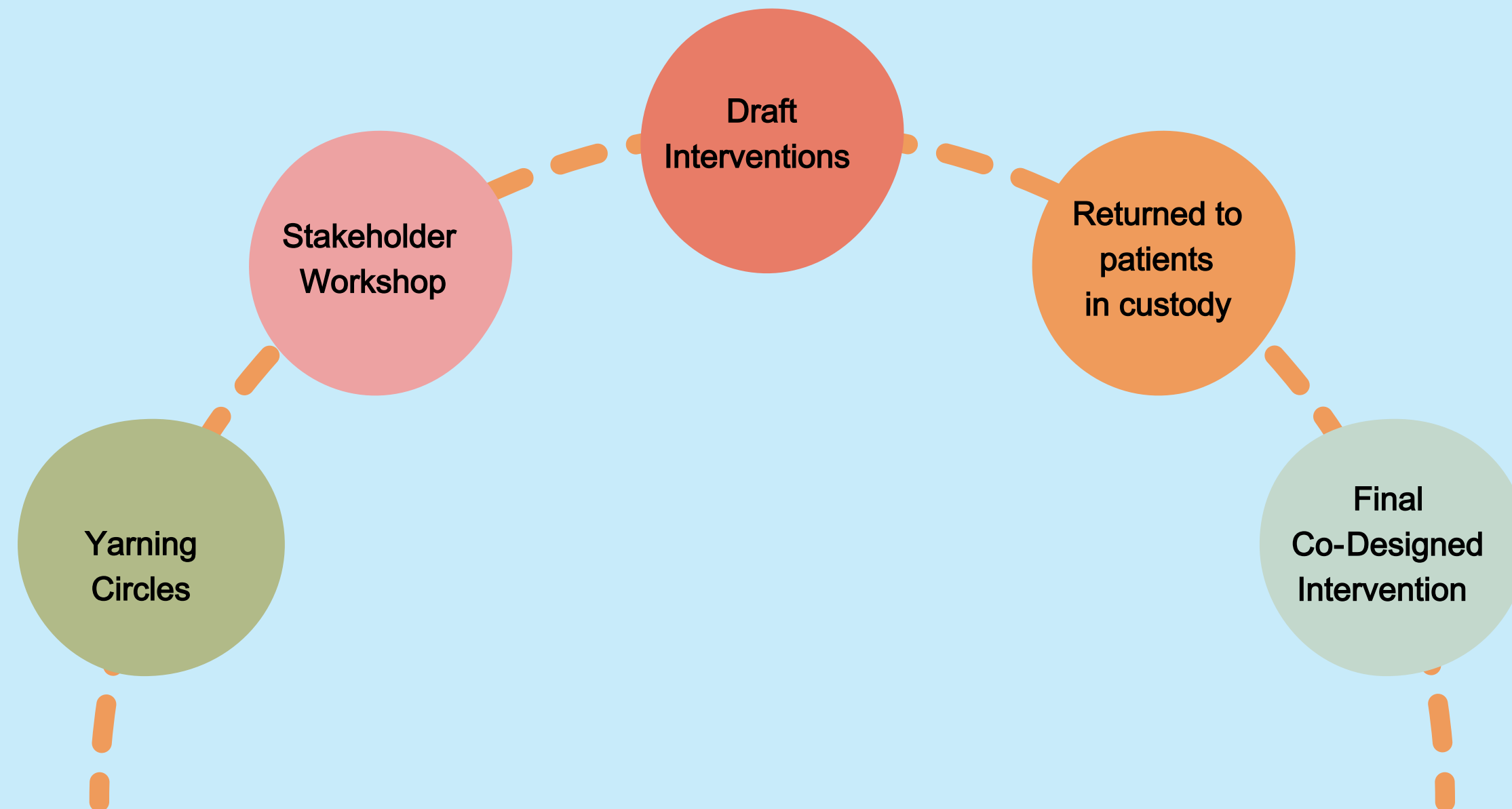
System Navigation & Continuity of Care

Services were difficult to access and navigate.

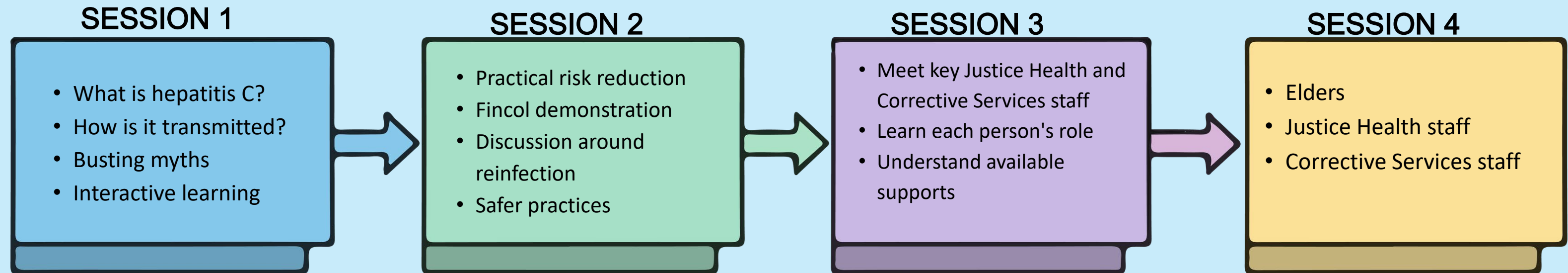
These insights became the foundation of our co -designed education program.

Co-Design in Action

*Refining the intervention
together*



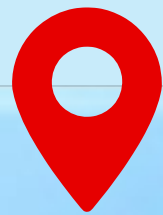
The Co-Designed Intervention



Embedded Throughout:

- ✓ Aboriginal-led facilitation
- ✓ Elders and community mentors
- ✓ Yarning as the primary engagement approach
- ✓ Strengths-based, interactive delivery
- ✓ Relationship-centred approach
- ✓ Culture embedded across every session, not delivered as a standalone component.

From Co-Design to Implementation



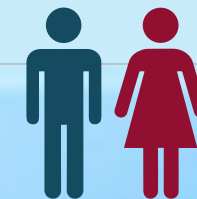
Pilot Site

Mid North Coast
Correctional
Centre



Commencing

August
2026



Delivery

1 Men's Group &
1 Women's Group

Weekly for 3 months



Participants

10-12 per
group



Evaluation

Participant surveys.
Staff & participant focus
groups.
Implementation
evaluation.

Looking Ahead

Evaluate

Evaluate the feasibility
and
acceptability of the
intervention

Refine

Refine the project
based on participant
and staff feedback

Inform

Inform future
Aboriginal-led
education across
correctional settings

Key Takeaways

💖 **Co-design was embedded throughout the project.**

Community remained involved from identifying the problem through to developing and refining the intervention.

🤝 **Cultural safety underpins the intervention.**

Aboriginal-led facilitation, yarning, relationship building and community partnerships are embedded throughout the program.

🌱 **This is just the beginning.**

The pilot will help inform future culturally safe hepatitis C education and prevention initiatives across NSW.

The data identified the issue.
Community shaped the solution.

A Final Reflection

This project has never been about Aboriginal people in custody.

It has always been with Aboriginal people in custody.



My Contact Details:



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