NGAGA-DJI (HEAR ME) young voices creating change for justice
Murrenda (alive) – contains distressing content
Yarning justice, gathering stories
Ngaga-dji is a call to action
Power in the room

To everyone, we ask:
• Decolonising research methods, epistemologies, unis and academia as sites of colonisation
• Centring Aboriginal voices, solutions and justice/lore
• What is academic responsibility in this space?
• Where does the work of criminology academics fit in to the Ngaga-dji pathway to change?
• Embed Ngaga-dji in your decision-making processes and your procedures and practice
• Join us to advocate for legislative and procedural change
• Support Aboriginal organisations to work with Aboriginal children instead of mainstream services
• Amplify these voices by advocating for the Ngaga-dji solutions in committees and forums you sit on
• Use your networks to help Ngaga-dji be heard by more people
• Share and support Ngaga-dji in media and social media
NGAGA-DJI: A VISION FOR VICTORIA

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- SELF-DETERMINATION
- YOUTH PARTICIPATION
- CULTURE, FAMILY, ELDERS AND COMMUNITY

SOLUTIONS:

- GIVE CHILDREN SERVICES THAT WORK
- KEEP CHILDREN SAFE AND STRONG IN THEIR CULTURE, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES
- COMMUNITY-DESIGNED AND LED YOUTH SUPPORT SYSTEMS
- CREATE JUST AND EQUITABLE SYSTEMS
It was the first time I told my story where people heard me. They asked me what I needed and what my family needed. I felt a spark of trust light up again.

With Koorie YJ I have cultural support. I feel like I'm part of a community, like someone wants me and I am someone. I feel respected and people are trustworthy. There's support and I have someone to talk to even if there's not a crisis. First time I don't feel like a piece of shit.

- Participant
Key asks for this forum

1. Embed family, culture and community at every stage of supports to keep children connected within safe, supportive networks.
   • Support the networks around children such as family, community and schools to ensure children are nurtured in every part of their lives. Ensure that programs use holistic, whole of family approach to support children and families in key areas such as family safety, child protection, social services and support for children who are carers.

3. Provide a capable and consistent workforce across youth services.
   • Provide every child with access to a mentor to give one-on-one, intensive support.

4. Provide culturally safe services that support young people’s diverse identities, particularly those facing discrimination in the form of ableism, sexism, transphobia and homophobia.
   • Support culturally-based services that break down rigid ideas of gender, particularly encouraging young men to positively explore their identities.
I grew up with a lot of alcohol and family violence...I was running from home. Smoking weed at a young age. Up to no good basically. Just trying to get away from the life I was living...I wanted to feel wanted and accepted and fit in with people.
- Participant
Key asks for this forum

1. Support local Aboriginal organisations to ensure everyone has access to their culture.
   - Support culturally safe programs for children and adults, particularly addressing the gap in cultural services for women, girls, people with disabilities and LGBTIQ&A+ community members.

2. Support community designed and led responses to intergenerational poverty, particularly in Housing, Family violence responses and prevention, Out-of-home care, Social and emotional wellbeing, Economic support including employment and education, Legal services and Disability services

3. Strengthen community resources and infrastructure.
   - Strengthen communities to be independent and resourced, particularly in rural and regional areas by providing localised youth services, transport, economic opportunity, recreational opportunity and culturally safe spaces for young people.
   - Support Aboriginal ownership of community infrastructure and gathering places to ensure future generations of children and families have access to resources and spaces.
“This is the first time I’ve left court and had somewhere to be. Something to stay clean for.”

Culture was really strong for me. It kept me out of prison.
- Participant
Key asks for this forum

2. Sustainably resource Aboriginal community orgs to develop youth support systems that support children in their communities with localised services at every stage of their lives (in place of the current youth justice system).

3. Community-based out-of-home care and child protection

4. Raise the age of criminality to at least 14

5. End the imprisonment of children
"They didn't know my story and they didn't ask. What did they think would change? My life was the same, I was the same. My stupid crimes were the same."

"If he were my son, I would disown him. If he were my son, I would disown him. If he were my son, I would disown him. If he were my son, I would disown him. If he were my son, I would disown him."

"There's racism. People think just 'cos you're black you're a criminal, an alcoholic. I feel it at school, I feel it down the street. I feel like I get looked down on in my community. - Participant"
Key asks for this forum

1. End systemic abuses and institutional racism using self-determination, youth participation and cultural responsiveness.
   • Embed policies and procedures that commit the Victorian Government and opposition to eliminate systemic abuse, bias and racism across systems and institutions and ‘gaps’ in system processes, particularly interdepartmental communication.

2. Create an inclusive education state that supports children’s need and pathways to independence e.g. support schools and teachers to find positive alternatives to address student disengagement, replacing formal and informal exclusion from school

4. Create an informed Victoria that is free from discrimination
   • Provide societal education about Aboriginal culture and history particularly in schools, media and for those working with Aboriginal people
WALK WITH ME

WHEN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN ARE SEPARATED FROM CULTURE, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE SEPARATED FROM THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT SUPPORT HIGH SELF-ESTEEM, SECURE ATTACHMENTS AND A STRONG AND POSITIVE SOCIAL NETWORK.¹

¹ PHILIP REED, CEO, ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE
If you listened to my story, you would understand.

If you found me somewhere safe to live, I wouldn’t be on the street.

If you kept that program running, I’d have someone looking out for me.

If you helped me with grief, trauma and abuse, I wouldn’t feel so hopeless.

If you kept my family together, I wouldn’t be lost.

When you see me as the child I am, I feel nurtured and loved.

When you connect me with my culture, country and community, I know who I am.

I heal, I grow, I thrive.

When you stick by me, I feel like I’m worth something.

When you support me earlier, I wouldn’t be here in the first place.

When you see me beyond the stereotype, I feel like I have a future.

When you help me talk up, my anger can’t control me.

When you support my family, you support me.

With Koorie YJ I have cultural support. I feel like I’m part of a community, like someone wants me and I am someone. I feel respected and people are trustworthy. There’s support and I have someone to talk to even if there’s not a crisis. First time I don’t feel like a piece of shit.

- Participant
SAME CHAINS
DIFFERENT TIMES

IF THEY [POLICE] TALKED TO ME THEY WOULD HAVE GOTTEN
MORE THROUGH TO ME THAN THROWING ME AROUND AND
SPRAYING ME AND DOING ALL KINDS OF THINGS. THEY WOULD HAVE
GOTTEN THROUGH TALKING TO ME...I GOT THROWN AROUND AND
BASHED UP A BIT FOR RESISTING. I WAS ALWAYS PRETTY OUT OF
IT UNTIL THE STATION AND THEN I WOULD COME TO. AND I WOULD BE
LOCKED UP.
- PARTICIPANT

YOUR MUM HAD YOU WHILE I WAS IN JUVI

ALL YOU ***** ARE THE SAME

I NEVER KNEW YOUR POP, THEY LOCKED HIM UP
FOR STICKING UP FOR HIMSELF

WILL YOU GROW UP IN A
BETTER WORLD THAN I DID?
REMEMBER OUR MOB ARE SURVIVORS, CREATORS, FIGHTERS, CARERS
You belong to this land
 DRAW STRENGTH FROM COUNTRY, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

You are never alone. Your ancestors and elders travel with you.

You are a child of the dreaming.

Your family and culture stretches back for over 2500 generations.

You are a future elder.

I will always be with you.

Will the future see you for who you are?

Culture was really strong for me. It kept me out of prison.
- Participant
Pathways to change – what’s coming up?

- Advocate for and implement the issues brought forward by young people
- KYC visiting RAJACs to present on Ngaga-dji
- KYC handed back Ngaga-dji to young people involved to custody and community sites to return present Ngaga-dji to participants.
- Conference presentations on Ngaga-dji
  - Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Conference
  - World Suicide Prevention Conference
  - Australia & NZ Criminology Conference
- Hosted the 52 Aboriginal Justice Forum and much work to be done
- Continue to advocate for Raising the age and critical changes required!
Making the Ngaga-dji vision happen – 2min

• Discuss with people near you about what you can do after this presentation to support the Ngaga-dji project.
Share our stories, share our solutions

Take your phone out!

Follow us on:
Facebook – Ngaga-dji: hear me
Twitter – @Ngaga_dji

Join our mailing list:
www.ngaga-djiproject.org.au