

# Rise and Shine



## Organisation:

## Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council

**Website:** <https://kawc.org.au/>

**Focus:** Inclusive practices

**Picture:** Sarah and Carol from EdConnect, alongside Adele, external consultant engaged by KAWC

As part of Phase 3 & 4 of the development of the Rise & Shine program, the Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council (KAWC) developed a culturally grounded volunteer mentoring model that empowers First Nations Kimberley women to support and guide First Nations girls across the Kimberley. This intergenerational approach was warmly welcomed as a meaningful way to build culturally safe and supportive, leadership and connection. To strengthen this work, KAWC formed a new relationship with EdConnect, a national organisation experienced in supporting older volunteers to mentor young people. This collaboration became one example of how respectful, two-way relationships can enhance culturally inclusive volunteer management.

### Approach

KAWC engaged EdConnect to share their expertise and internal resources, including policies, training frameworks, and risk templates, adapting these tools to the Kimberley context.

What has made this collaboration particularly powerful is its reciprocal nature. While KAWC is drawing on EdConnect's tools and systems, KAWC has also offered to support them by reviewing their materials through a cultural lens. This opens up space for learning on both sides, not just about process, but about values, safety, and cultural integrity. It also reflects a critical belief that First Nations-led programs don't just need support, they have insights and approaches that can influence the broader volunteering sector in meaningful ways.

Through designing the Rise & Shine program, KAWC has also prioritised creating safe, supportive pathways for volunteer mentors.

These conversations highlighted the importance of addressing lateral violence, a term for harm rooted in historical and ongoing trauma triggered by colonisation, and its impact on First Nations women stepping into leadership roles. In response, KAWC committed to co-developing a dedicated Cultural Safety and Risk Management Policy to protect and support volunteer mentors, ensuring the program reflects the strength and responsibility Kimberley women bring to their communities.

### Outcomes

- Established a values-aligned relationship with EdConnect.
- Developed a culturally safe volunteer mentoring model that acknowledges and plans for complex community dynamics
- Committed to a Cultural Safety and Risk Management Policy addressing lateral violence and volunteer protections
- Developed and shared tailored volunteer management resources to support Rise & Shine and ensure cultural safety
- Strengthened volunteer pathways with clear supports, safeguards, and escalation protocols

### Key Learnings

- Inclusive volunteer management is built through relationships grounded in respect and culture, not just resources
- Cultural safety must be foundational, not an afterthought, in volunteer systems
- Lateral violence is a systems issue created by colonisation and requires sensitive, proactive responses
- First Nations-led programs offer valuable knowledge that can inform and improve broader volunteering practices
- Reciprocal partnerships create sustainable and meaningful change