

Questions and Answers

Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council - The Ripple Effect

Primary Priority Group focus: First Nations People, Vulnerable Women; Intersectional

Project summary: The Ripple Effect is a First Nations-led initiative strengthening culturally grounded volunteering by Aboriginal women across Western Australia. Aboriginal women have always volunteered caring for family, supporting community, responding in times of need, and leading change in ways that are often unseen but deeply felt. Ripple Effect recognises and builds on these strengths.

Through listening, relationship building, and regional engagement, the project has connected with women across WA to understand existing leadership, identify gaps, and support locally led volunteer initiatives. Rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach, Ripple Effect is guided by each region's unique strengths, priorities, and needs.

Grounded in care, kinship, and self-determination, Ripple Effect is laying the foundations for stronger, more connected volunteering led by Aboriginal women across the state.

Questions asked after presentation and responses:

1) How do you manage intergenerational mentorship? What are the specific challenges?

The Ripple Effect values the knowledge and leadership that already exists within our communities. We create opportunities for Elders, senior women, young women and emerging leaders to come together through gatherings, yarning circles, mentoring and shared community activities.

One of the biggest challenges is balancing different perspectives, experiences and expectations across generations. We have found that creating culturally safe spaces, listening respectfully and allowing relationships to develop over time helps bridge those gaps and strengthens understanding between generations.

2) How did you create the sense of oneness/unity when there were internal disagreements?

We recognised early that every region, community and woman brings different experiences and priorities. Rather than focusing on differences, we focused on our shared purpose, which is supporting Aboriginal women, strengthening communities and creating opportunities for future generations.

We used respectful conversations, yarning and relationship-building to work through challenges. We didn't expect everyone to agree on everything, but we encouraged everyone to have a voice and find common ground where possible.

3) How did you share knowledge and information across the state?

We used a combination of regional visits, community gatherings, roundtables, online meetings, social media and direct communication with local leaders and organisations.

Importantly, knowledge sharing wasn't just about sending information out. It was about listening, learning from each region and creating opportunities for women to

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share their stories, successes and challenges with each other. This helped strengthen connections across Western Australia.

4) What is the story behind the logo?

The Ripple Effect logo extends from the painting Butterfly Healing, created by Aboriginal artist Jennifer Kent. The artwork reflects the journey, strength and resilience of Aboriginal women and the important role they play in strengthening families and communities.

The logo features three butterflies native to the Kimberley. Each butterfly has injured wings, symbolising the struggles, challenges and adversity many women have faced. Despite these scars, they remain strong, beautiful and continue to fly forward, representing resilience, healing and transformation.

The butterflies each carry their own meaning:

- **Canopus Swallowtail Butterfly** – represents divine intervention, hope and transformation, reminding us that good things can emerge from difficult times.
- **Chequered Swallowtail Butterfly** – represents love, healing, joy, happiness and rebirth.
- **Pale Green Triangle Butterfly** – represents abundance, growth, encouragement and hope for the future.

Surrounding the butterflies are women's gathering circles, representing Aboriginal women coming together to support, strengthen and empower one another. These circles reflect the work of the Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council in creating safe spaces for connection, leadership and healing.

At the centre of the logo is a gathering circle, with ripples flowing outward. These ripples represent the impact that occurs when women are supported and empowered. The positive effects extend beyond the individual, flowing through families, communities and future generations.

The seeds placed between the ripples symbolise hope, growth and opportunity. They remind us that when women are given the right tools, support and opportunities, seeds are planted that will continue to grow and create positive change for generations to come.

The logo tells the story of healing, strength, connection and the lasting ripple effect created when Aboriginal women come together and lead.

5) How are you preparing and identifying future leaders to continue your role in community?

We believe leadership already exists within our communities. Our role is to create opportunities for women to recognise their strengths, build confidence and develop skills that they may not always see as leadership.

Through mentoring, networking, volunteering opportunities, regional gatherings and leadership pathways, we encourage women to step into leadership roles in ways that are meaningful to them. We also support young women to learn from experienced

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community leaders and Elders, helping ensure knowledge and leadership continue into the future.

6) How do you promote the program? What is your selling point or drawcard?

Our strongest promotion comes through relationships and word of mouth. Women join because they feel welcomed, heard and valued.

The drawcard is that Ripple Effect is Aboriginal women-led, culturally grounded and community-driven. We don't tell communities what they need; we listen and work alongside them. Women are drawn to the genuine connections, opportunities for leadership, mentoring, wellbeing and the chance to be part of something that supports Aboriginal women across Western Australia.

7) How did you manage the compliance and regulations in your organic approach?

We recognised that community-led work needs flexibility, but it also needs good governance and accountability. We worked closely with Volunteering WA, KAWC governance processes and project reporting requirements to ensure we met our obligations.

At the same time, we allowed communities to engage in ways that suited their local context. We balanced compliance requirements with cultural ways of working by focusing on relationships, clear communication, documentation and regular reporting while remaining responsive to community needs and priorities.

In short: We didn't make compliance drive the project; we made compliance support the project while keeping community at the centre.