WA’S FIRST JUSTICE REINVESTMENT SITE:
OLABUD DOOGETHU

A collaboration between the Shire and Communities of Halls Creek, and Social Reinvestment WA.

The Shire of Halls Creek, together with Communities Balgo (Wirrimanu), Billiluna (Mindibungu), Mulan, Ringer Soak (Kundat Djaru), Warmun (Turkey Creek) and Yiyili Mardiwah Loop, Yardgee and Nicholson Town Camp, in partnership with Social Reinvestment WA, a coalition of 23 NGO’s statewide, have broken ground on Western Australia’s first Justice Reinvestment Site, Olabud Doogethu: Smart Justice in the Heart of the Kimberley. Initiated based upon the principles of Asset Based Community Development, Justice Reinvestment, and Collective Impact; A community co-design process 18 months long has led to the development of the Aboriginal owned project.

The need for a new approach to justice

Western Australia has the highest disproportionate rates of Aboriginal Incarceration in the entire nation. In 2019, 74 percent of the children and young people imprisoned in WA were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Corrective Services, 2019). Aboriginal people are just 3.9 percent of our population (AIHW, 2017). Historical injustices such as Stolen Generations, wage theft, and other colonial policies have deeply impacted Aboriginal people in WA, socially, emotionally, and economically. Subsequently intergenerational trauma and entrenched disadvantage and poverty are experienced at significantly higher rates than for the non-Indigenous population. Poor life outcomes associated with poverty are social determinants of crime.

Our prison system does not successfully rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders, with 38.5% of all offenders being sent back to prison and 45.3% to corrective services within just two years of release (Australian Productivity Commission, 2019). This continual cycle of incarceration and reoffending fails to make communities safer in the long term. The justice system is also wildly expensive and growing. Adult and Juvenile Corrective Services costs close to $1 billion a year (DoJ Annual Report, 2018/19), and the incarcerated population has risen by 27% in the last 5 years to 6,908 people (DoJ Annual Reports 12/13-18/19). Furthermore, most people involved with the justice system experience complex social dysfunction prior to involvement with the justice system, such as unstable accommodation, substance use issues, and mental illness. Providing treatment in the community is significantly cheaper than incarceration. Our siloed system of support is ineffective at enacting intervention ‘upstream’, to prevent crime ‘downstream’.

If the status quo remains, incarceration and costs will continue to rise without a marked difference in creating safer WA communities, or alleviating disadvantage to resolve the underlying causes of offending.

Challenges facing the people of Halls Creek

The Shire of Halls Creek in WA’s East Kimberley region, covers an area of 143,030 square kilometres, roughly the size of Greece. It is the ancestral country of the Jaru, Kija, Kukatja, Walmajarri, Gooniyandi people. Halls Creek has one of the largest youth populations per capita in Australia; 51% of the East Kimberley’s young people (10-19 years) reside here, and 43.2% of Halls Creek Shire’s population are under the age of 25 (ABS, 2016). The people of Halls Creek experience high rates of youth offending, youth suicide, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and instances of complex trauma. Halls Creek, a town of 1,500 people, had 1227 offences in 2018/19 compared to 660 the year prior (WAPol Crime Statistics, 2019). Kimberley Police...
Superintendent Adams said the number of children taken into custody had also increased, with 112 juvenile arrests by December 2018, compared to just 41 the year prior (ABC News, 2018). Furthermore, 69 percent of children in Halls Creek are considered developmentally vulnerable, as compared to 34 percent in Broome (WA Country Health Service). The Halls Creek region has suicide rates up to 100 times the national average, not only the highest suicide rate in the nation but in the world (WAToday, 2018). In 2019 they once again faced a cluster of tragic youth suicides placing significant pressure on resources.

There is a sense of urgency due to the issues that are prevalent for young people within the Shire, that has driven the community to work for a better future for their youth.

These complex intractable issues illuminate a need to approach youth development in a collective, community-driven methodology - compelling the Shire of Halls Creek to conduct an ambitious and innovative method of collaborating community interests, needs, and ambition through an extensive all-encompassing consultation process which will be outlined in the body of this work.

Olabud Doogethu is as a response to persistent Indigenous social, cultural and economic disadvantage and over-representation of young Indigenous citizens in the criminal justice system in this region.

Social Reinvestment WA Strategic Solutions

Social Reinvestment WA (SRWA) is a state-wide coalition of NGO’s committed to reducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Incarceration across WA, through Social Reinvestment approaches. SRWA collaborates with communities to drive strong, healthy families, safe communities, and smart justice approaches. Directing these outcomes is our firm belief that ground up, place-based solutions deliver the best service and social outcomes for local communities. SRWA recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the state celebrate diverse law and cultural obligations. We work to enable community’s capabilities to develop and deliver culturally secure, ground up and place-based solutions to best serve their community.

A Social Reinvestment Approach is a transformative approach to justice issues. One that focuses on responding to the underlying causes of offending, reducing both crime and costs, and supporting the social and economic development of disadvantaged communities. The social causes of crime are complex, and a one-size-fits-all approach does not work. Creating healthier families, safer communities, and implementing smart justice approaches requires both cross government and cross sector collaboration and reform; and empowered communities leading local solutions.

Key tenements of a Social Reinvestment approach are:

- Redirecting expenditure to focus on supporting families early to address the underlying causes of offending; Diversion of people in contact with the criminal justice system into support programs that will rehabilitate or prevent future crime; Assisting people to reintegrate into the community. This spending may come from funds previously allocated to the tertiary end of the justice system. Future savings and contributions are projected to occur across multiple areas.

- Reform of legislation and policies that intentionally or unintentionally result in discrimination within the justice system, or inadvertently cause ‘unfair’ outcomes. A key example of an area requiring reform is the 2012 Fines, Penalties, and Infringements Enforcement Act; In October 2019 an amendments bill which SRWA advocated significantly for is before WA’s lower house of Parliament.

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Community Development principles should be at the heart of leading Community co-designed, place-based solutions. This ensures solutions address the causal factors unique to individual communities; are owned and driven by an empowered community to ensure longevity and responsibility; and Self-determination is fostered and upheld for Aboriginal peoples.

Data sharing and Collaboration between government agencies, the NGO services sector, researchers, and place-based service providers will develop more accurate understandings of the experiences of disadvantage across WA. Once communities and/or individuals in need are identified, in conjunction with community led design, these understandings can subsequently inform more effective, targeted, and holistic solutions to social issues.

Healing trauma and building healthy, strong families and individuals is critical to overcoming many of the social causes of crime. Mental health and AOD issues are prevalent among persons in the justice system, and resolving these issues must be prioritised. Culture plays a critical role in forging strong identities and healing symptoms of intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal people impacted by the Stolen Generations and Colonisation.

The Olabud Doogethu Project

Based upon the existing research and principles of Asset Based Community Development, Justice Reinvestment, and Collective Impact Work, The Shire of Halls Creeks office of Community and Youth Development, supported by experts in the field, embarked upon an 18 month co-design process to develop a new plan for the future of young people in the Shire of Halls Creek. This process involved extensive visitations and consultations, considerable engagement with communities, and engaged leaders and broader community members in Balgo, Billiluna, Mulan, Ringer Soak, Warmun and Yiyili; as well as the town of Halls Creek and the surrounding four community cultural groups Yardgee, Nicholson Block, Mardiwah Loop and Red Hill, each representing unique respected Elders and cultural practices. An extensive report of the co-design process is available.

“These kids are running to Yardgee [Community] because they want their parents to show them love. Poor mental health and many of these issues, it starts in prison. You mob say you’ve got the answers, maybe we should all work together as one. We all live differently. We all can come together and try and make things work for kids in Halls Creek.”

- Rosemary Stretch, Halls Creek Councillor, Elder, Yardgee Creek Community. (Justice Reinvestment Forum, May, 2019)

Intended Place Based Outcomes of the Project include: Localising Halls Creek Solutions; Strengthening Communities and Neighbourhoods; Supporting families and young people; Improving Halls Creeks Justice footprint; Building Community Capacity in the region; Developing Collaborative Actions and Responses;

Intended State Wide Outcomes of the Project include: Building the evidence base for approaches that are place based, community designed, and culturally secure; Informing justice reinvestment mechanisms and models state wide; Educating the WA public; Improving policy; and Reducing Aboriginal incarceration.

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The community led co-design process resulted in the development of the holistic Shire-wide Olabud Doogethu Framework and Plan, and additionally Individual Community Plans for each named community. The ‘Smart Justice’ Outcomes Framework specifically details developing:

- Community Order Options;
- Leadership/Capacity Building;
- Employment Opportunities;
- An alternative Education Model;
- Youth Health Project;
- Australian Defence Force Partnerships;
- Suicide Prevention;
- Boarding School Support;
- Youth Safety;
- Stronger Families;
- Youth Recreation Initiatives;
- Community neighbourhood Building Initiatives.

This framework (see next page) and plan are committed to and signed off by the Shire of Halls Creek Council and by leaders and Elders representing each Aboriginal community named. Please see the ‘Olabud Doogethu: Smart Justice in the Heart of the Kimberley’ Document for further details.

Initial Project Delivery and Immediate Outcomes

Through existing commitments and new funding sources some parts of the project have begun delivering, and early impacts of the alternative approach are already visible.

1. Co Design Process led by SoHC Department of Youth and Community Development. The plan has been signed off by Aboriginal Corporation Reps from every distinct community in the Shire.
3. The establishment of the Youth Engagement Night Officers, which upon its introduction in May 2019 saw offences in Halls Creek drop from 138 to 44 in one month. (WaPol Monthly Crime Stats., 2019) The program has maintained this reduction of 70 less crimes per month on average.

4. Establishment of program by the Shire of Halls Creek to provide a guaranteed 12 month paid traineeship for every high school graduate in the Halls Creek region, of which 11 have begun.
5. The employment of Learning on Country Coordinators in 3 remote communities to lead development of youth rehabilitation and alternative education models that are culturally secure.

Planned Future Delivery Phases

Future phases of the project include:

1. Delivering on Individual Community Plans.
2. Collaborative service delivery of Shire wide Outcomes.
4. Evaluation and Research by independent bodies and researchers.
5. Development of financial models that enable Reinvestment Mechanisms.
6. Storytelling, and state wide sharing of successful learnings.

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See Outcomes Framework below & ‘Olubud Doogethu: Smart Justice in the Heart of the Kimberley’ Document.
## Project Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OLABUD DOOOGETHU</th>
<th>Year 0 (Work to Date)</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Led Design &amp; Ownership</td>
<td>Community Co-Design</td>
<td>Community Governance Structures</td>
<td>Annual Review of OD Plans and Community Consultations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Delivery to OD Plan</td>
<td>OD Plans &amp; Initial Rollout</td>
<td>Service Delivery of Shire Wide Outcomes by OD in Partnership</td>
<td>Service Delivery of Individual Community Plans by Multiple Providers (Coordinated)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnerships and Collaborations</td>
<td>External Partnerships Developed</td>
<td>Partners and/or Fund Ongoing OD Work</td>
<td>Place based Service Delivery Coordination: Local Collaboration for implementing OD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and Research</td>
<td>Outcomes Framework</td>
<td>Ongoing Data Analysis and Outcomes Measurement</td>
<td>Research Advisory Body Established</td>
<td>Research Projects with Academic Partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling and Advocacy</td>
<td>Sector Informed</td>
<td>Stories from the Inside HC</td>
<td>Ongoing Communications Strategy to Wider WA Public</td>
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## Project Funding

### Olabud Doogethu - Existing Funding Partners

- **Department of Communities**: $146,000.00 (6%)
- **National Indigenous Australians Agency**: $825,000.00 (32%)
- **Shire of Halls Creek**: $1,619,588.00 (62%)

### Olabud Doogethu Funding Requirements (annually)

- **Backbone Organisation**: $2,444,588.00
- **Infrastructure Upgrades**: $2,478,560.00
- **New Funding Needed**: $1,448,389.20
- **Repurposed Funds**: $196,426.80
- **Existing Funds**: $252,409.00

## Key Contacts:

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The Partnership Between Social Reinvestment WA and Shire of Halls Creek

The SoHC and SRWA have agreed to enter a partnership to support the ongoing establishment, implementation, evaluation, and promotion of the Olabud Doogethu project; And ensure the lessons learned can be utilised and implemented in future projects and areas across WA.

Please see ‘Shared Statement of Intent’ for further details.

We Need Your Support.

The Olabud Doogethu Social Reinvestment site is currently seeking funding partners and project sponsors from government, corporates, philanthropic, and non-profit agencies who have an interest and are committed to working with us to reducing Aboriginal incarceration, and creating healthy families, safer communities, and implementing smarter justice solutions across WA.

Join us in lifting this innovative project off the ground.

Please get in touch to arrange a meeting. Contacts below.

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