

# **Discourse, Deficit & Strength**

## **Changing the narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing**

**Research project by:**

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# Introduction

- In 2017 a team of researchers from the National Centre for Indigenous Studies (NCIS) undertook a two-part series research project that examines deficit discourse, and responses to it in Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health field.
  - Part I** - *The narrative framing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing*
  - Part II** - *Discourse, Deficit and Strength: Changing the narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing*
- This presentation will focus predominantly on Part II, although to set the scene and provide background information some of Part I will also be discussed.
- First key terms will be discussed followed by details of the research (findings), concluding with a couple of case studies of programs employing strengths-based approaches to shifting the narrative.

# Deficit Discourse

*‘Refers to discourse that represents people or groups in terms of deficiency – absence, lack, or failure. It particularly denotes discourse that narrowly **situates responsibility for problems** with the affected individuals or communities, overlooking the larger socio-economic structures in which they are embedded.’*

Fogarty, Lovell, Langenberg & Heron (2017)

# Discourse




# Part I: Narrative Framing

- This report looked at how 'discourse' shapes the narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing.
- Examined the way that discourses of deficit are produced and reproduced.
- Draws attention to active efforts to counter deficit discourse.

## **Part II**

# **Changing the narrative...**

- Builds on the first research, by examining growing body of work from Australia and overseas that proposes ways to displace deficit discourses in health and wellbeing.
- Identifies strengths-based approaches as the dominant approach seeking to move away from a problem-based paradigm.
- Provides a typology of approaches
- Provides case study examples

The background features a hand holding a yellow ball on the left and a blue flag with a white star on the right. The text 'Case studies' is centered over this background.

# Case studies

# Ngangkari Program



TRADITIONAL HEALERS  
*of Central Australia: Ngangkari*

*Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara  
Yankunytjatjara Womens's Council Aboriginal Corporation*



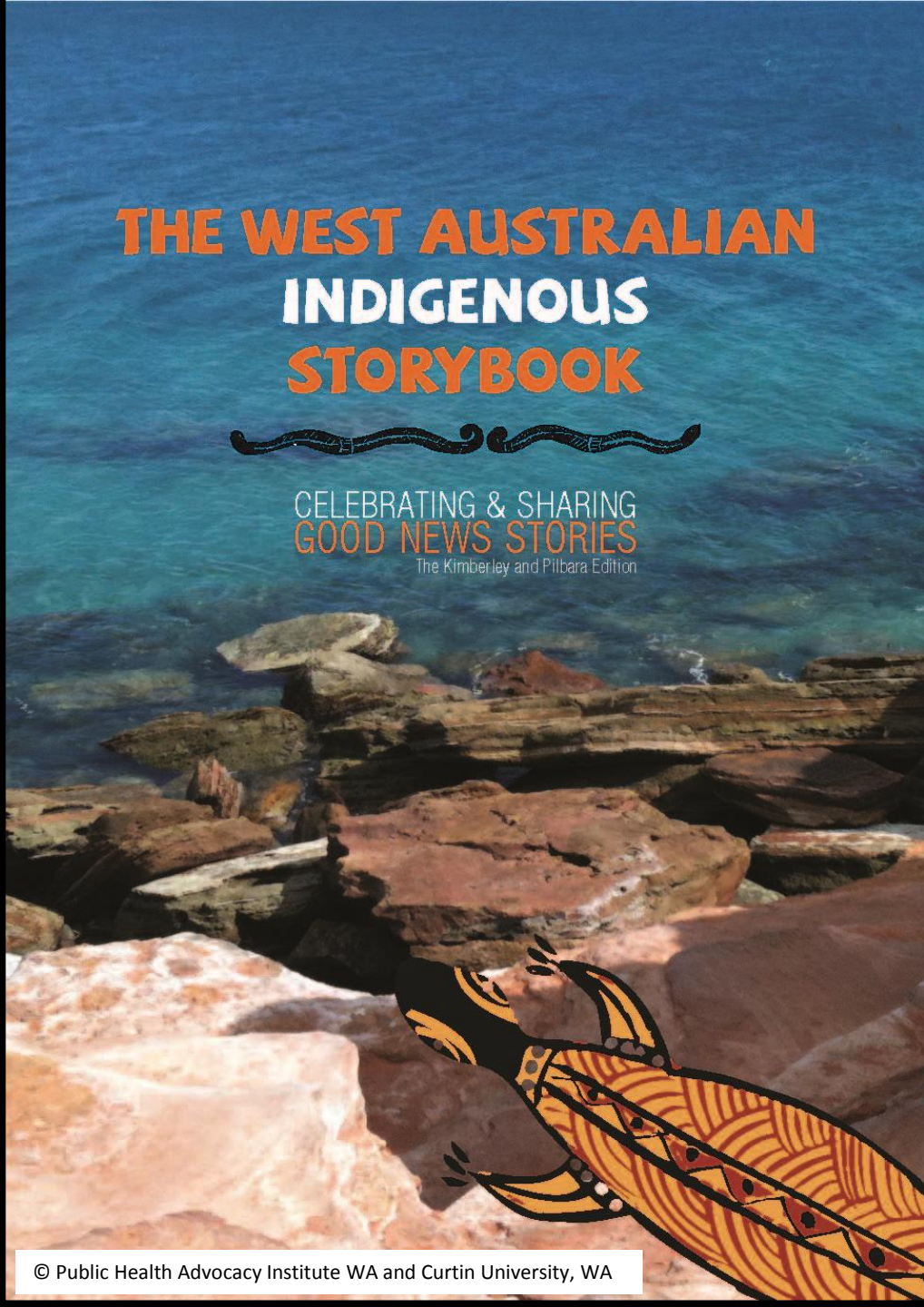
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# THE WEST AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS STORYBOOK



CELEBRATING & SHARING  
GOOD NEWS STORIES  
The Kimberley and Pilbara Edition



# TALKING UP OUR STRENGTHS



# Thank you

For more details on the presentation and research please contact:

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