Our vision

Using art to engage young Aboriginal parents to access health and education opportunities
Our team

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Program Implementation Officer

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Aboriginal Early Childhood Worker

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Early Childhood Nurse
Ngala Nanga Mai pARenT program

Community

Transport Childcare Food
Volunteers
ART PROGRAM
Research Evaluation
Funding
HEALTH SERVICES
Community

- Cultural visits
- Program content
- Exhibitions
- Artists’ visits
- Support services - mentoring, tutoring
- Liaison with providers

Art Program & Education
Showing up

“engagement with artistic activities, either as an observer of the creative efforts of others or as the initiator of one’s own creative efforts, can enhance one’s moods, emotions, and other psychological states” (Stuckey and Nobel, 2010)
The Art Process

- Showing up - being present
- Making choices & taking risks
- Accepting limitations
- Exercising reflective processes
- Asserting control
- Making a mess - order & chaos
- Exploring the non-verbal
- Connecting with self & others
Finding a voice

- Totems
- Personal symbols
- Colours
- Internal organs
Engagement

Context gives shape to arts practice in communities

- La Perouse Community Health Centre (opens 2006)
- Community participation & consultation
- Governance structures with community representation
- Program commences in June 2009 - Opportunities for further conversations
“unique way to establish common ground and to create an inclusive and non-threatening environment ... Art as a tool affords people opportunities to share what is unique about themselves, but also what contributes to their sense of belonging to a particular community.”

(White 2009)
Asking questions about who we are, identity, community & history...
The group takes shape

a space to cultivate cultural well being
Experimentation & mastery in a safe environment
Finding a language
Exhibition – a turning point...

Context & Meaning
Continuity & Change

Looking back…
**tradition**
Looking forward…
**innovation**

*Shell Art Tradition in La Perouse*
Visiting artists…

• Thinking about Aboriginal Art
• Exploring artistic traditions in a contemporary urban context
Moving toward complexity

- Individual focus
  - Focus on self
  - Personal stories - internal dialogue
  - Solitary

- Group focus
  - Collaborative
  - Negotiation
  - Conflict
  - Compromise
  - Multiple voices - shared stories
  - Social skills
Finding a name

What's in a name?

Parent Program?

Community
growing
growth
becoming
founders
teaching together
peer
dynamic
circles
tree

windbreak

ngala nanga mai
we dream
parent group
Community connectedness...

Kooloora Community Centre

La Perouse Museum

Mothers Day lunch

Art Gallery of New South Wales
Context, interpretation, meaning

- Interpretative ownership
- Hidden meanings
- Silent/ced voices
Reflection…Texts

• Using our own words to interpret images
• Technology: Facebook & phone texts

“This program has helped me become a better mother and person. Before being part of the program I felt lost and without support. This group has shown me the way to improve life for myself, my partner and my children.”
“... I'm 19 yrs old and I have a 14 and a half month old baby boy... although it's only on 2 days a week, on those 2 days I am more happier than the rest because we've both become quite attached to every body there and there has not been even once where I didn't feel welcomed or comfortable. And not meaning sound like I'm over exaggerating but it gives us a reason to get out of bed on those days it's on.

... If it wasn't for Michelle's [Project Officer] different art ideas, love for our children and just ever always happy personality, evan though I much respect the other workers very much, it would be alot different and dare I say, alot less enjoyable!

... it so hard to come across somebody that really n trueley loves her job and the respect she has for Aboriginal people and our art is so overwhelming and very uncommon”. 
So what... achievements
What next?

• Formal Evaluation using mixed methods approach with baseline and follow up data collected in 2010 and 2011
• Involvement of UNSW’s Mura Marri Indigenous Health Unit (School of Public Health and Community Medicine)
• Growth and Empowerment Measure (GEM)
• Formal measures of the children’s social and emotional development (Ages and Stages: Social-Emotional survey & Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire)
• Replicating this model
• Securing a future - ongoing funding & staff
• Sharing (Research)
“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”

“What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make and end is to make a beginning.”

LITTLE GIDDING
(No. 4 of 'Four Quartets')
T.S. Eliot