



Midwest Aboriginal Men's Empowerment Project

2023 - 2024

REPORT ONE

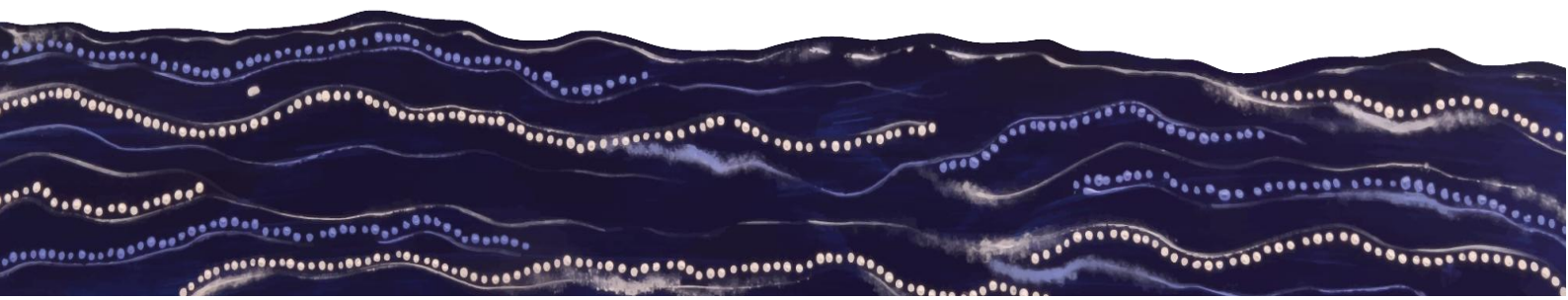
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Cover Artwork

The artwork on the cover of this document was created by the MAME Men's Group with support from artists Trevor Pickett and Beau Simpson.

The artwork represents Men coming together in the Midwest region representing all cultures and communities now in the Geraldton area. They are held together by the Greenough River, Chapman River, and the Irwin River.



Acknowledgements

The Midwest Aboriginal Men’s Empowerment Project: an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partnership for action is a collaborative Family Domestic Violence Primary Prevention project between the Geraldton Aboriginal Men’s Group (GAMG), Dr Mick Adams, The Men’s Project (TMP) JSS Melbourne, Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation (GSAC), Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (GRAMS), Poche UWA and Western Australian Centre for Rural Health (WACRH).

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Terminology

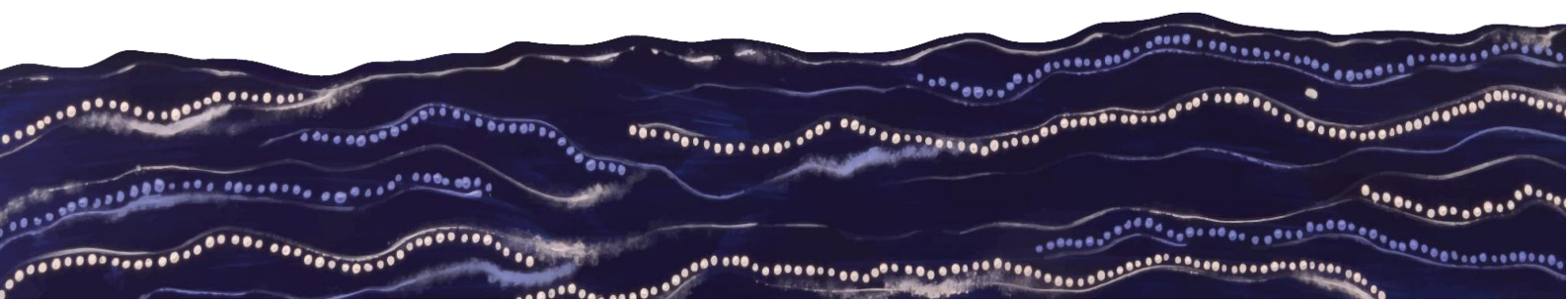
In this document ‘Aboriginal’ respectfully refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the City of Greater Geraldton region – the Amangu, Naaguja and Wilunyu peoples of Western Australia on which this project was delivered.

Acronyms

GSAC	Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation
GAMG	Geraldton Aboriginal Men’s Group
GRAMS	Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service
MAME	Midwest Aboriginal Men’s Group
TMP	The Men’s Project Jesuit Social Services Melbourne
UWA	University of Western Australia
WACRH	Western Australian Centre for Rural Health

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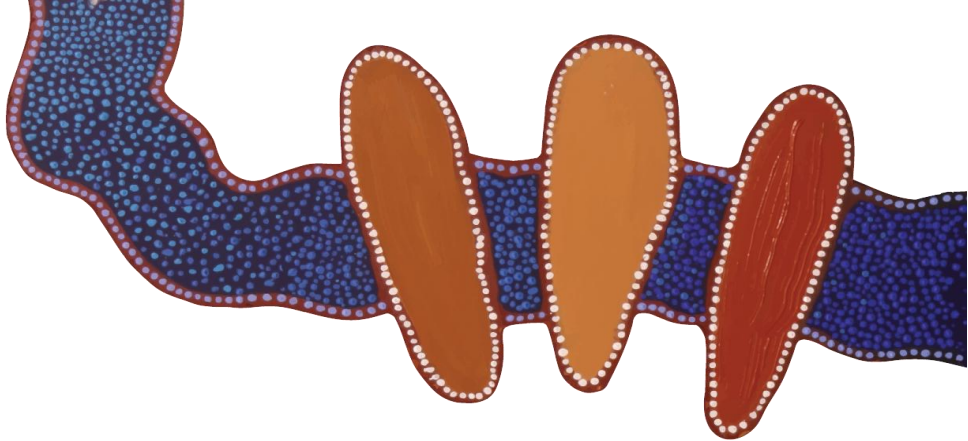






Contents

INTRODUCTION	6
MAME Project Objective.....	6
MAME Project Outcomes	6
Focus Communities.....	7
Participants and Communities.....	8
Pre MAME-Project Community Consultation 2022	9
City of Greater Geraldton – FDV Initiatives, Programs, Research	10
MAME Project Framework.....	12
PHASE ONE: MAME Implementation	13
MAME Project Plan.....	13
MAME Program Logic Plan	13
MAME Project Officer Recruitment	13
FDV PP Grants Community of Practice (COP)	13
PHASE TWO: MAME Co-design	15
MAME Community Workshops April 2023	16
Yarning Circles – Community Desires/Aspirations.....	17
PHASE THREE: MAME Program Delivery	19
MAME Modelling Respect and Equality (MoRE) training July 2023	19
Key Responses – “A healthy and respectful Yamatji man is”:	19
MAME COGG Workshops: Different Types of Violence	21
PHASE FOUR: MAME Tailored Materials	23
MAME Yarning/Conversation Kits	23
MAME Video FDV PP Messages	23
PHASE FIVE: Evaluation	24
MAME Project Objective.....	24
Key Findings.....	24
MAME Participant Post Program Feedback March 2024	32
Measuring Effectiveness of the MAME Program	36
DISCUSSION	39
What are the drivers of Family Domestic Violence?	39
Primary Prevention versus Early Intervention	39
Capacity Building /Mentoring.....	41
PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS	42
SUMMARY	44



INTRODUCTION

In 2022 the Midwest Aboriginal Men's Empowerment (MAME) Project was identified by the Geraldton Aboriginal Men's Group (GAMG) due to the lack of Family Domestic Violence (FDV) information, support and understanding available for First Nation's male/men and boys in the City of Greater Geraldton including Mullewa.

In response to this identified WACRH & GAMG co-designed a FDV Primary Prevention program for the City of Greater Geraldton. WACRH submitted a FDV Primary Prevention grant application late 2022, and in 2023 the Western Australian Department of Communities provided 12 months funding to WACRH to implement the Midwest Aboriginal Men's Empowerment (MAME) collaborative community project through their Family and Domestic Violence Grants program 2023/2024. Poche UWA supported Dr Charmaine Green in coordinating and leading MAME FDV PP Project along with MAME Project Officer Levi Thorne.

In 2023-2024 the Western Australian Centre for Rural Health (WACRH) engaged The Men's Project (TMP) Jesuit Social Services (JSS) Melbourne and Dr Mick Adams to (1) lead preparatory yarning circles on FDV knowledge, historical violence, intergenerational trauma, and impacts; (2) codesign the MoRE training with the City of Greater Geraldton Aboriginal community.

This MAME Report corresponds to the MAME Project Plan's Five sections – Phase One (MAME Implementation), Phase Two (MAME Co-Design), Phase Three (MAME Program Delivery), Phase Four (Develop Tailored Materials); Phase Five (MAME Evaluation & Summary). Importantly, this MAME Report can act as an initial reference point for further examination and planning of FDV primary prevention strategic planning and development for the City of Greater Geraldton Aboriginal communities.

MAME Project Objective

The program's core objective was to increase the number of active Aboriginal FDV Primary Prevention conversation 'influencers' in the City of Greater Geraldton with a clear understanding on FDV primary prevention including the role of rigid gender stereotypes.

MAME Project Outcomes

1. Build primary prevention capability through development of skills and knowledge amongst Aboriginal men to engage in community-wide conversations about the primary drivers of FDV in the Midwest.

2. Forge successful and enduring partnerships between the GAMG, Aboriginal agencies, and the wider Aboriginal community, along with the growing primary prevention sector in Geraldton including family and domestic violence services, bring in primary prevention experts including The Men's Project and respected national leader and researcher Dr Michael Adams.
3. 'Build the evidence-base around effective prevention of family and domestic violence in Aboriginal communities by co-designing, implementing and evaluating the delivery of MoRE, an existing evidence-based primary prevention program for men. This will be documented in an evaluative report on the process of reviewing, implementing, and adapting the MoRE program.
4. Develop appropriate resources for working with and advocating to the Aboriginal community about primary prevention and understanding gendered drivers.

Focus Communities

The City of Greater Geraldton communities Geraldton and Mullewa were the focus communities for the MAME Project. Geraldton is a port regional city 480km north of Perth and as at 2021 Census had a population of 39, 490 of which 9.7% are Aboriginal community members. Mullewa is a small town within the City of Greater Geraldton local government area located 98 kilometres east northeast of Geraldton with a population of 356 people as at 2021 Census of which 25.3% are Aboriginal.

The targeted communities for the MAME FDV Primary Prevention project were selected because:

1. The Geraldton Aboriginal Men's Group (GAMG) was based in Geraldton and had identified the lack of FDV Primary Prevention information available for Aboriginal men in the City of Greater Geraldton, including the town of Mullewa.
2. In 2020, WACRH conducted two Aboriginal community focused FDV yarning circles with community members in Geraldton to begin conversations about the findings of the LCAEVS and possible responses. The FDV yarning circles identified racism, colonisation, and dispossession as key drivers of violence, consistent with Our Watch's Change the Picture framework, which also includes gendered drivers.
3. Under Conversations for Change, a primary prevention research intervention funded by Healthway, WACRH conducted the Local Attitudes and Experiences of Violence Survey (LCAEVS) in 2019. This showed Aboriginal people in Geraldton were more likely to have attitudes which support violence, including that men should be head of the household and have more power in the family https://www.wacrh.uwa.edu.au/uploads/documents/reports/Conversation_for_Change_LCAEVS_Report_on_Baseline_2019_Survey_2021_August_2021.pdf. These local findings are consistent with findings of the National Community Attitudes and Experiences of Violence Survey (NCAS) and are valuable for local discussions and monitoring change.

Participants and Communities

The two City of Greater Geraldton Western Australian communities of Geraldton and Mullewa were the focus for the MAME project. Table 1 records the number of Aboriginal participants attending the 2023 MAME Yarning Circles, Table 2 records the number of Aboriginal participants attending the 2023 Workshops, excluding the WACRH Staff, Dr Adams and TMP JSS Staff from Melbourne. The largest participant group were Aboriginal males living in Geraldton. Table 3 records the participants' age groups. The MAME program privileged Aboriginal males/men to capture the Geraldton and Mullewa Aboriginal male/men voices and lived experiences.

TABLE 1 : MAME YARNING CIRCLE ABORIGINAL PARTICIPANTS AND COMMUNITIES 2023

Community	Gender		
	Male	Female	Mixed Gender
Geraldton	34	8	0
Mullewa	18	0	0
Combined Community	0	0	0
TOTAL	52	8	0

TABLE 2 : MAME MORE WORKSHOPS ABORIGINAL PARTICIPANTS AND COMMUNITIES 2023

Community	Gender		
	Male	Female	Mixed Gender
Geraldton	0	0	31 (6 female)
Mullewa	13	0	0
Combined Community	20	0	0
TOTAL	33	6	31

TABLE 3 : MAME ABORIGINAL PARTICIPANTS AGE GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES 2023

Community	Age Groups		
	13-17	18-79	80+
Geraldton	0	69	0
Mullewa	6	25	0
Combined Community	0	19	2
TOTAL	6	113	2

Pre MAME-Project Community Consultation 2022

2021-2022 WACRH staff were invited to attend several Geraldton Aboriginal Men’s Group meetings in Geraldton. The aspirations and themes of these meetings with the concerns and directions raised by the GAMG members are captured below in Table 4. These GAMG & WACRH meetings provided the catalyst for the emergence of this MAME project for the communities of Geraldton and Mullewa.

TABLE 4 :PRE MAME-COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community	Themes	Aspirations
Geraldton Aboriginal Men’s Group (GAMG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Men’s groups • FDV PP • Aboriginal Men’s Leadership • GAMG current status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an Agency we can be attached to help with the Aboriginal Men’s Group meeting? • WACRH – and funding to get The Men’s Project (TMP) to come over to Geraldton to talk to us. • Getting GAMG back on track • Encouraging men who are not working to join in • Start with yarning circles – maybe approach Southern Yamatji for assistance • GAMG meetings to be held on country • WA Police Force Aboriginal staff to be invited • Action – how do GAMG progress an Aboriginal men’s safe house – refuge – respite • Action – Have an Aboriginal Men’s Forum like the women did out at Gunnado Farm this year.

City of Greater Geraldton – FDV Initiatives, Programs, Research

Over the past thirteen years in the City of Greater Geraldton (COGG) Family Domestic Violence (FDV) initiatives , programs and research include the formation of the 2011 Midwest-Murchison Aboriginal Anti-Violence Action Group (MAAVAG) , the Midwest Murchison Aboriginal Community Safety Strategy Action Plan 2012 (the Shepherdson Report) , Geraldton’s Community Respect and Equality (CRE) Action Plan coordinated through Desert Blue Connect , 2019 Geraldton Aboriginal Men’s Group (GAMG) , 2019 WACRH’s Local Attitudes and Experiences of Violence Survey (LCAEVS), 2021 CRE Biannual Summit & The Men’s Project (TMP) and the 2023 Midwest Aboriginal Men’s Empowerment (MAME) project.

Statistics show that the rates of FDV in Geraldton and the Midwest are unacceptably high, the second highest rates for regions in WA. FDV results in profound social, mental, physical, and economic harms. Within the Aboriginal community, violence has become normalised and extends into the younger generations. If social norms remain unaddressed, these cycles of disadvantage lead to a myriad of health, social and community issues including high incarceration rates, drug induced psychosis and other mental health problems, unemployment, and anti-social behaviour.

In 2011 the Midwest-Murchison Aboriginal Anti-Violence Action Group (MAAVAG) was formed in response to the concerning levels of violence in Geraldton, Mullewa, and surrounds. The Midwest Murchison Aboriginal Community Safety Strategy Action Plan 2012 (the Shepherdson Report), an initiative of MAAVAG, identified (1) the nature of violence occurring in the Midwest (conflict between families, family domestic violence, child sexual assault, schoolyard violence and violence at sporting events); and (2) key factors related to the violence were identified: unresolved trauma and conflict; social networking and technology; abuse of alcohol and drugs; fear of repercussions; inadequate parenting skills and role models; housing issues. Additionally, the Shepherdson Report identified Key Priority Areas including Strong Men and Men’s Leadership Development. Sadly, the Action Plan was never funded or implemented.

In 2019, WACRH conducted the Local Attitudes and Experiences of Violence Survey (LCAEVS). Aboriginal respondents in Geraldton were more likely to have attitudes which support violence - more likely to agree with statements that reduced the responsibility of perpetrators (e.g., Aboriginal respondents were 6 times as likely to respond that violence by a man against his female partner can be excused if the offender is heavily intoxicated by alcohol) and with statements that increased blame on the victim with Aboriginal respondents 6 times more likely to consider FDV a private matter to be handled within the family and ~4 times as likely to think that if a woman reports abuse to outsiders it is shameful for her family. There were significant differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents towards gender equality. Aboriginal respondents were more likely to agree with attitudes of power imbalance between men and women, e.g. they were 6 times as likely to agree they would listen to a man’s opinion over a woman’s, to agree that men make better politicians and workplace bosses, that men should take control of relationships and men should be the head of the household.

Geraldton Aboriginal Men's Group reconvened in late 2019 with a view to developing a mutual support and healing approach to men's empowerment. The group has around 12 members with professional and community roles which include senior management of government and not for profit organisations, young sporting leaders and those involved in delivering a range of social services for both Aboriginal-Controlled organisations and other not-for-profits. Members are fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, husbands, partners, and community role models. COVID-19 prevented the group from continuing in 2020 but since 2023 efforts have re-invigorated the group and in discussions about developing the MAME intervention, strong interest was expressed in the project, with members saying it will provide structure, focus and a healing context for the Men's Group to flourish and engage effectively in the primary prevention of violence.

Geraldton's Community Respect and Equality (CRE) Action Plan, coordinated by Desert Blue Connect, has engaged community groups and organisations in the primary prevention of FDV since 2017 with WACRH a strong supporter of the CRE. The focus has been on primary prevention, deliberately not targeting Aboriginal people to avoid stigmatisation. However, it has not yet achieved strong and sustained engagement of the Aboriginal community. In May 2021, the CRE held its bi-annual Summit and The Men's Project (TMP) made a presentation and conducted a workshop on The Man Box research <https://jss.org.au/what-we-do/the-mens-project/the-man-box/>. The presentation and the workshop were very well received by CRE members and TMP was invited to submit a proposal to run training in Geraldton. However, COVID restrictions meant that the delivery would have to be online with the costs for this too great to proceed with the training in the absence of external funding. However, MAME offered the opportunity to engage with TMP and within Geraldton increase the knowledge and skills of a small number of Aboriginal men with the aim that they develop skills and readiness to engage in sustained, evidence-based discussions regarding the primary prevention of FDV and to influence the social norms and drivers of FDV.

In May 2023, the Midwest Aboriginal Men's Empowerment Project commenced under the leadership of WACRH, partnering with GAMG, Dr Adams and The Men's Project JSS. The project was funded by the Western Australia Department of Communities FDV Primary Prevention Grants 2022-2023. The MAME project was led by Dr Charmaine Green and WACRH engaged Levi Thorne in the Project Officer position. The MAME project ended on 1 May 2024 achieving 20 Yarning Circles in Geraldton and Mullewa with 60 Aboriginal participants resulting in the development of FDV PP Yarning/Conversation kits, engagement of 120 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants (14 female), creation of new male yarning circles in Mullewa and Geraldton and a series of video messages. Additionally, emerging from the MAME project were 2 new grant applications to support the development of Male Healing and Wellness Centres in Geraldton/Mullewa/Carnarvon and the development of FDV Train the Trainer program to support the development of FDV PP conversation influencers in Mullewa, Geraldton, and Northampton. The Yurla Wangga (Men Talk) FDV primary prevention grant application was approved by Department of Communities for a 2-year period – 2024-2026, to focus on Geraldton, Mullewa and Northampton. The federal funded grant application "The Birli Tharlbarra (Stronger Together) Aboriginal Men's Healing & Wellness Centre" submitted for Geraldton, Mullewa and Carnarvon over a 4-year period was unsuccessful.

MAME Project Framework

The MAME project was informed by Our Watch: Changing the Picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children Framework. The three essential actions addressing the three underlying drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

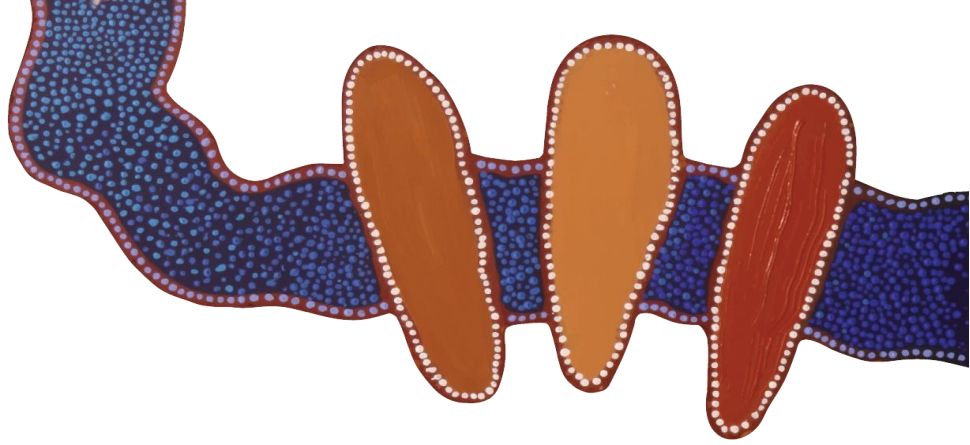
- **Action 1:** address the legacies and ongoing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities
- **Action 2:** Address the legacies and ongoing impacts of colonisation for non-Indigenous people, and across Australian society
- **Action 3:** Address gendered drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

A Focus on Action 1 Activities included:

- Addressing the impacts of intergenerational trauma through healing strategies
- Strengthen connections to culture language, knowledge and cultural identity.
- Strengthen and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- Implement specific initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and boys
- Challenge the condoning of violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

A focus on Action 3 Activities included:

- Challenge the condoning of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, by challenging both racist and sexist attitude and social norms
- Challenge gender stereotypes and impacts of colonisation on men's and women's roles, relationships and identities
- Engage both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men to challenge harmful and violence-supportive ideas about masculinity and relationships



PHASE ONE: MAME Implementation

MAME Implementation Phase included developing the MAME Program Logic Plan, MAME Project Officer Recruitment, MAME Project Plan, MAME Advisory Group and inclusion in the mandatory online FDV PP Grants Community of Practice (COP).

MAME Project Plan

The MAME Project Plan was the guiding framework for the implementation of MAME outlining key actions, timelines and milestones guiding the MAME project team. It was also a mandatory requirement for the Department of Communities FDV PP Grant Application. The MAME Project Plan was developed by WACRH in collaboration with Dr Mick Adams, The Men's Project JSS, WACRH project staff and GAMG members.

MAME Program Logic Plan

In March 2023 a draft MAME Program Logic Plan was emailed out to the MAME Project Team including GAMG (represented by Jamie Strickland) for comment prior to finalisation and being submitted to the Department of Communities WA. The MAME Program Logic Plan outlined the following components – Problem Statement/Proposal, Program Objective, Inputs, Activities, Outputs, Targets, Short term Outcomes, Long Term Outcomes, Assumptions and External Factors.

MAME Project Officer Recruitment

In January 2023 WACRH advertised for the MAME Project Officer for a 12-month period aligned with the Department of Communities approved FDV PP grant funding. Interviews were held in February 2023 with the successful applicant selected but unable to start at WACRH until 2 May 2023 due to current work obligations.

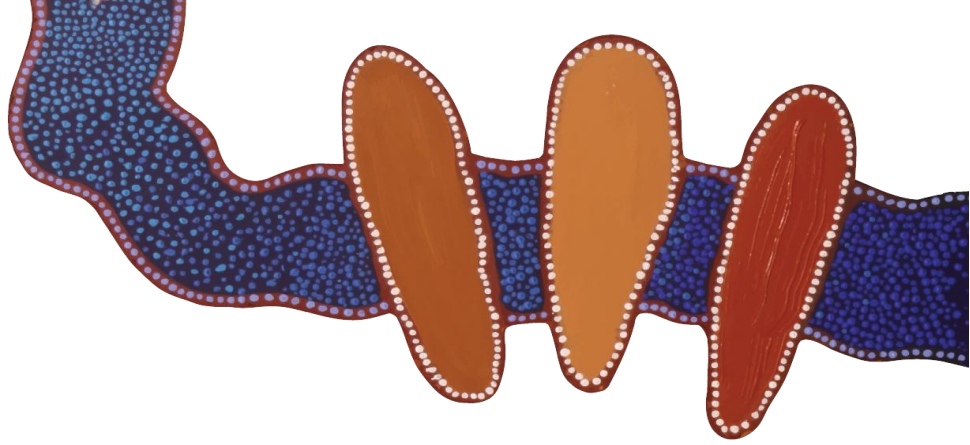
FDV PP Grants Community of Practice (COP)

The Department of Communities WA through the Preventing Violence Together (PVT) implemented a mandatory online Family and Domestic Violence Primary Prevention Grants Program Community of Practice (COP) for all successful funding recipients, including WACRH. The objectives of the COP were to (a) develop a consistent and evidence-based understanding of primary prevention of violence against women (including the primary prevention of family and domestic violence, as outlined in the Change The Story and Changing The Picture); (b) gain an understanding of the COP

purpose and process and (c) networking and building collaborations and partnerships with other funded projects.

The WACRH MAME FDV PP Project members participated in Stream 1 and Stream 2 from March 2023 to December 2023. Stream 1 (COP Sessions) was for project staff involved in the day-to-day delivery of the project with a focus on professional learning and development required to successfully deliver primary prevention projects. Stream 2 was for senior leadership staff who participated in the strategic management of the funded project. The focus was on putting the overarching structures in place (or improving existing structures) to successfully support the funded project and project staff delivering primary prevention projects.





PHASE TWO: MAME Co-design

Over a week in February 2023 the MAME Project team commenced community consultation conversations with several core Aboriginal corporations in Geraldton and the Department of Communities Jamie Strickland as a member of the Geraldton Aboriginal Men’s Group and leading Aboriginal male champion in local FDV conversations. Table 2 outlines the Aboriginal corporations and groups meeting in the codesign of the MAME program capturing resulting themes and aspirations.

TABLE 5 : MAME COMMUNITY CONSULTATION NOTES

Community	Themes	Aspirations
Geraldton Aboriginal Men’s Group (GAMG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gendered messages/expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community led Men’s wellbeing
Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violence in the Community Promoting healthier ways Trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Approach Flexible delivery Delivery on country – at Bundiyarra, on country, bush camps
Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (GRAMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection to Culture Young Fella’s Family Violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in collaboration /cooperation amongst Aboriginal services
Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation (GSAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-social behaviour Alcohol & Drug Use Toxic Masculinity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrating Aboriginal men Aboriginal youth to connect with country
Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service TIS Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men’s Health Engaging Men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect to program to further initiatives – Men’s shed, men’s space groups
Department of Community (Jamie Strickland)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability – how is this program going to be maintained?

MAME Community Workshops April 2023

Over a week in April 2023 the MAME Project team (TMP JSS, WACRH, Dr Adams) came together in City of Greater Geraldton (Mullewa) to commence meeting the Aboriginal community and delivery the male MoRE workshops including one female MoRE workshop. This time also gave the MAME Project team time for project planning, working through MAME Project Plan and forward planning for the next 12 months. This section includes community consultation to inform the codesign of future yarning circles and workshops during 2023 in Geraldton and Mullewa.

The core themes emerging were *Culture, Respect, Primary Prevention, Leadership, Violence, Gender, Family, Role Models, Communication, Trauma, Community and Racism*, see Table 6 below.

TABLE 6 : THEMES MAME COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS APRIL 2023

Themes	Yarning Circle 1	Female Yarning Circle 2	Yarning Circle 3
Culture	✓	✓	✓
Respect	✓	✓	✓
Family	✓	✓	✓
Role Model / Strong Male	✓	✓	✓
Violence	✓	✓	✓
Gender	✓	✓	
Leadership	✓	✓	
Trauma	✓	✓	
Community	✓	✓	
Primary Prevention	✓		
Racism	✓		
Emotions		✓	
Program Delivery		✓	
Youth			✓

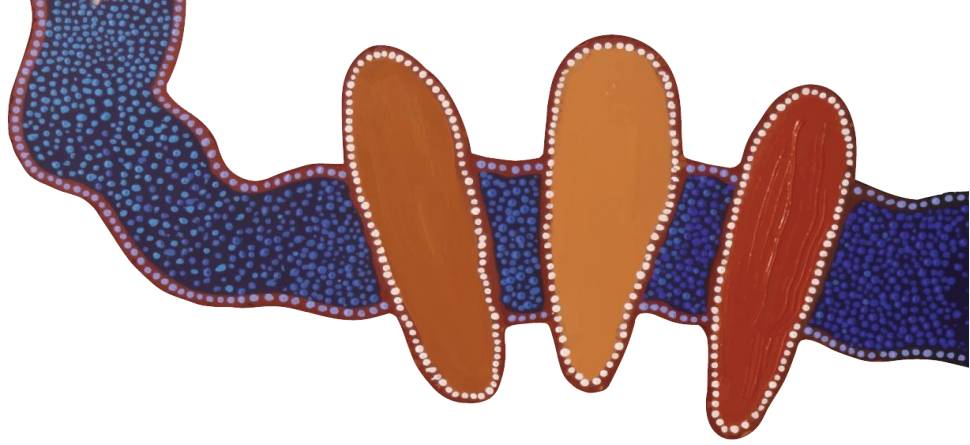
Yarning Circles – Community Desires/Aspirations

This section captures the Geraldton and Mullewa community desires and aspirations providing insight on what participants want to achieve and to move forward with FDV primary prevention – see Table 7.

TABLE 7 : YARNING CIRCLES COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS /DESIRES

Community	Aspirations / Desires
Geraldton	<p><u>MALE YARNING CIRCLE</u></p> <p>Approach: Flexible approach in delivery – do it in chunks across the week and make it more accessible for men. Have a gentle approach to conversations, low or no pressure when talking with young people.</p> <p>In program delivery important to have Aboriginal voice, a participant raised they are fine having a non-Aboriginal facilitator in the program. Learn from each other.</p> <p>Ask questions: “Who do you want to be and how do you want to act as a man?”. Working in collaboration /cooperation amongst Aboriginal services</p> <p>Messaging: Have clear messaging in training - Think about how to get messages out there for Social Media use and its impacts</p> <p>Community Led: Be humble and curious, the answers are in the community. Incorporate whole community in the program.</p> <p>Sustainability: How is this (program) going to be maintained – the ‘then what’”. Desires for resolutions of problems and men’s spaces within and post the program</p> <p>Men to be heard: Often feeling they are silenced and can’t talk</p> <p>Culture: Connect men with their history, culture and country. Culture, language and country is key to resolving issues</p> <p>Resolution: Look at ways of looking at resolving feuds/fights. Value walking away and not fighting – finding other ways to prove yourself and use your power (ex-activism)</p> <p>Celebrate men: Celebrate other ways of being a man focused on country, connection, ‘right way’ (other than glorifying drugs)</p> <p>Men’s wellbeing: Raise concerns around men’s health and access to wellbeing</p>

	<p><u>FEMALE YARNING CIRCLE</u></p> <p>Emotional Expression: Men to have space to talk about emotions and emotional expression – especially grief. Want to challenge the idea that it is cultural for men to be emotionless – challenge rigid holding of these ideas – unpack where they might come from</p> <p>Trauma: Recognise the impact of trauma on men and help men to talk deeper.</p> <p>Space for Men: To talk about deeper issues, encouraging men to speak up and talk about issues with each other</p> <p>Broadening the concept of strength: Strength being vulnerability</p> <p>Connection To Culture and Country: Particularly connecting to cultural values and bring families back to these values</p>
<p>Mullewa</p>	<p><u>MALE YARNING CIRCLE</u></p> <p>Youth Involvement: Want young people to hear these conversations, for there to be yarns for young fellas alongside the other yarns.</p> <p>Consider young people to be 11 yrs +</p> <p>Connect to Culture: Want the conversations and program to be connected to culture and country.</p> <p>Connect with camping or going out on Country.</p> <p>Respect: Want there to be respect for traditional values and community structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some older generation are not showing the ‘right way’ or respect – want this to change. • Good things in Mullewa (footy/sport, family connection, Mullewa is ‘one big mob’, country is close – easy to get on country, we are a tough town ‘pride in fighting’) • Want to get good leaders in community to have positive influence



PHASE THREE: MAME Program Delivery

MAME Modelling Respect and Equality (MoRE) training July 2023

Across a week in July 2023 the MAME Project team (TMP JSS, WACRH, Dr Adams) delivered tailored Modelling Respect and Equality (MoRE) workshops to over 20 participants through yarns and cultural activities. The purpose of the program was to start yarns around gender norms and the pressures on males (Unpacking the Manbox), violence in my community, healthy & respectful manhood, Role-modelling, emotions trauma, & healing, and ways of being a role model. Adding in the cultural side through making tap sticks, cooking traditional foods and so forth.

An essential part of the yarns was the discussion of what it means to be a healthy and respectful Yamaji/Aboriginal male. The group engaged actively in this conversation, sharing stories of their own experiences, how they role-model in their community, and their aspirations for men in Geraldton and Mullewa – see Table 8.

Key Responses – “A healthy and respectful Yamatji man is”:

TABLE 8 : RESPONSES TO WHAT A HEALTHY AND RESPECTFUL YAMATJI MAN IS.

Supportive	Connect to Culture and Country	Takes Action	Fishing
Open Minded	Look after Health	Show Love	Courage
Stable	Lead by example	Ask questions	Listening
Proud	Checks in on Family and Mates	Sport and Recreation	Honesty and Integrity
Respect (Women, Kids, Elders, Partners)	Good Boundaries	Respect Self	Yarn
Work	Willing to Participate	Family Orientated	Care for Young People and Others

The MoRE workshops delivery reemphasized the importance of being guided by the community and their knowledge and giving space for men to talk. Other actions which contributed to the success of the yarns included:

- **Flexibility** – being able to adjust to the situation & being flexible of start time for when males turn up. Following the direction of the yarns and how they were going.
- **Accessibility** – picking up the men and using a known /familiar location.
- **Storytelling** – Elders and everyone sharing their stories and knowledge.
- **Visual and Verbal Metaphors** – Metaphors used included – ‘planting the seed’ for encouraging change and “nudging back on the right path” for guiding young people and other males.
- **Positive Focus** – seeking to highlight and celebrate the positive, especially when feeling lots of negatives.

Learnings from the MoRE workshop delivery included:

- **Don’t over emphasize** that some of the presenters are outsiders.
- **Focus on Yarning** – PowerPoint and more formal room set-up didn’t work.
- **Shame Concept** – need to start conversations slow and build up conversations, the idea of ‘shame’ comes up if getting into conversations too quickly.
- **Desired Structure** for Future Conversations – Starting topics with a yarn, followed by an activity or information and then coming together for a shared meal.

Amongst all of these yarns was the importance of storytelling, connecting to culture and how yarning is healing for the male/men. Feedback from this delivery included:

“Good to be out having a yarn with other blokes.”

“Takes my mind off things help me think clearly.”

“Love connecting to culture.”

“Yarning with other men going through the same thing makes you feel like you’re not alone.”

“This is healing.”



MAME COGG Workshops: Different Types of Violence

Over a week in November 2023 the MAME Project team (TMP JSS, WACRH, Dr Adams) came together in City of Greater Geraldton (Mullewa) to continue male MoRE workshops and one female MoRE workshop. This time also gave the MAME Project team time for project planning, working through MAME Project Plan and forward planning including reviewing progress to date.

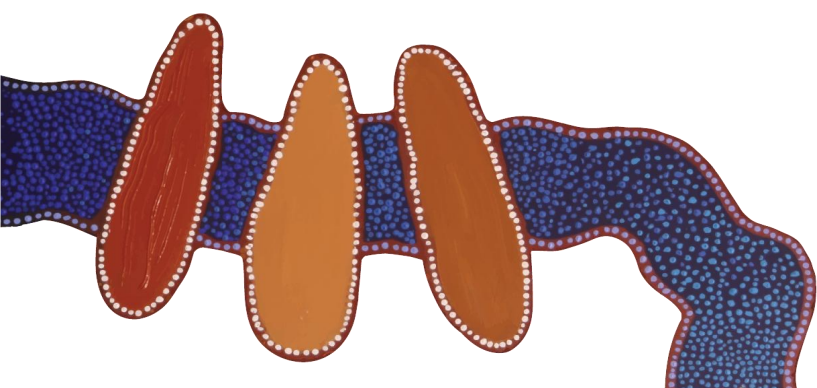
This section provides insight into the feedback from yarning and conversations around – table 9:

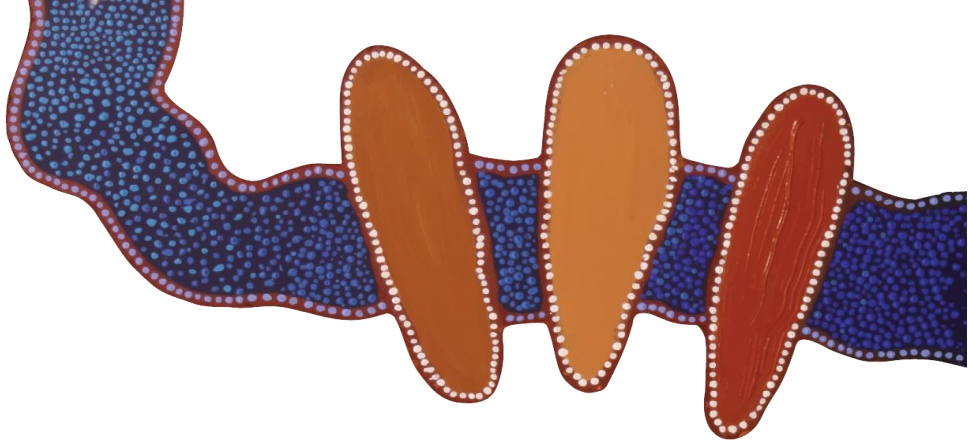
- Different types of violence
- Ideas on what the different types of violence are
- Respectful or positive ways of dealing with the different types of violence

TABLE 9 : DIFFERENT TYPES OF VIOLENCE WORKSHOPS NOV 2023

DIFFERENT TYPES OF VIOLENCE	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3
Ideas on what the different types of violence are			
EMOTIONAL			
Online, Facebook, Ghosting	✓		
Jealous, Insults, Jokes ‘Shame them up’	✓	✓	✓
Gaslighting			
Silent treatment, Denial		✓	
Racism		✓	
Staring/Look		✓	✓
Abusive, Cheating			✓
CULTURAL			
Colonisation, Not their culture, Acting ‘white’		✓	
Cultural payback, Spiritual/Cultural abuse. Threats		✓	
Kept away from culture, Culture taken away, Stopped from yarning and talking about culture	✓		✓
Not being respectful			✓
VERBAL			
Words, Stop from yarning, Talking rude, Sexual gossip		✓	✓
Swearing, Shouting, Shaming	✓	✓	✓

PHYSICAL			
Fighting, Revenge, Pushing, Biting, Tickling, Choking, Spitting, Sexual abuse, Using weapons		✓	✓
SEXUAL			
Drug them up, Spiking drinks		✓	✓
Blackmail, Making them do things/Nagging, Forcing eye contact		✓	✓
Exposure		✓	
Raping, Unwanted touching		✓	✓
Respectful or positive ways of dealing with the different types of violence			
Respect			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respecting men and women's cultural business</i> 	✓	✓	✓
Role models			✓
Apologise			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Verbal, gentle handshake, hugging</i> 	✓	✓	✓
Consent	✓	✓	✓
Healing			✓
Family			✓
Leadership			✓
Community support			✓
Communication			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Listening/giving voice; talking; check in and ask; don't be judgmental; challenge</i> 	✓	✓	✓





PHASE FOUR: MAME Tailored Materials

MAME Phase Four focused on MAME Project Outcome 4 - *Develop appropriate resources for working with and advocating to the Aboriginal community about primary prevention and understanding gendered drivers.*

The MAME project resulted in the development of *Conversation/Yarning Kit* and three video FDV Primary Prevention messages.

MAME Yarning/Conversation Kits

The MAME Yarning/Conversation Kits led by MAME Project Officer Levi Thorne, Dr Mick Adams and TMP JSS team offers a tool and framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males/men to use as a guide when wanting to start conversations /yarning/talking around Family Domestic Violence in a primary prevention context.

The information in the Yarning Kits came from the project yarning workshops and the Yurla Wanggamanha yarning circle sessions. The Yarning Kit topics include:

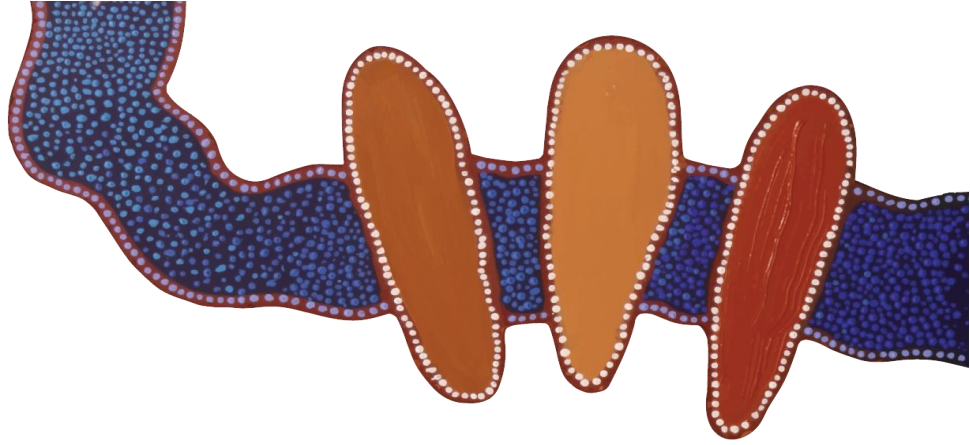
- Healthy and Respectful Manhood
- Challenging Family Domestic Violence
- Healing and Celebrating Aboriginal males

MAME Video FDV PP Messages

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male members of the MAME Project Team Dr Michael Adams, Trevor Pickett and Levi Thorne recorded three short messages around topics:

- Challenging Family Domestic Violence
- Being a Healthy and Respectful Aboriginal male
- Celebrating Aboriginal males

In these video clips the MAME project team members speak to lived experiences and conversations had with male participants in the MAME project, MoRE workshops and Yurla wanggamanha yarning circles in Geraldton and Mullewa.



PHASE FIVE: Evaluation

MAME Project Objective

The program objective was to increase the number of active Aboriginal FDV Primary Prevention conversation ‘influencers’ in the City of Greater Geraldton with a clear understanding on FDV primary prevention including the role of rigid gender types.

Key Findings

This section presents some of the key findings identified in the MAME Yarning Circles, Workshops and conversations in 2023-2024 from MAME participants in Geraldton and Mullewa.

TABLE 10 : MAME KEY FINDINGS 2024

Theme	Comments
Aboriginal Male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a healthy Aboriginal Man/Male - Promoting healthier ways of being a male/man through yarning, gentle encouragement, not chastising, role modelling and supporting men and boys • Need more positive role models – men are lacking positive role models and have a lack of support in their lives. • Focus on the truth and the value of Aboriginal men, not being deficit focused. • Peer group pressure to act tough, following rapper/US hip hop culture impact. Young people connect with Rap so should consider how to use that to connect them in the right ways. • Promoting positive role models within the community • Negative influence of negative role models in family, friends and community • Celebrating Aboriginal men – recognition and celebration of Aboriginal men, their positive values and the ‘right way’ of being. • It is important that there are opportunities for Aboriginal men to find purpose

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about how other mobs think about Aboriginal men because of the fighting • Aboriginal men have been told they have to ask permission to talk about what is going on and if they are trying to be assertive, they are told they are being aggressive. • “<i>Toxic masculinity</i>’ – feeling that young people are following their Elders, brothers and uncles and doing some things that are not good – copying what is happening at home.
Culture - Aboriginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of disconnection/alienation from culture in that some men felt lost or searching for culture • Some men are finding it hard to get some young fellas on Country • Strong desire to bring back family connections and real cultural values • Aboriginal youth to connect to country • Connection to culture – feeling that youth do not understand the history and struggle of previous generations – for example human rights, ability to vote and fight for country • Language is a keyway to connect and build relationships and connect to culture • Need to connect men with their history, culture and country
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited opportunities in the community for young people. Some males/men moving into drug dealing/crime for opportunity and status • Issues of Alcohol and Drugs • Sports and Recreation have a positive influence on lives but not everyone has the resources to access them • Men not wanting to know issues in the community or each other’s lives • Peer group pressure to act tough, rapper/US hip hop culture impact • Harmful impact of community members finding value and identity in being able to fight • Concerns over the impact of social media on young people • Consider the right time to have yarns and when and how to have them with young fellas and the community
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men feeling unable to talk and their voices being silenced by systems and racism • Men will gather to talk but they do not talk about the deeper conversations needed • There is a culture of men not talking about things

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men act differently in different settings • Code switching to be acknowledged • Seeking help is an issue • Influence of social settings and impact of social media • Recognition that TMP and outsiders should not lead conversations on Aboriginal ways of being • Desire for young people to participate in yarns alongside the MAME project and consider ways of reaching young people through role models • Code switching between white and Yamaji way of being a man /person in community • Consider the right time to have yarns and when and how to have them yarns with young fellas and the community • Fights being filmed and promoted on social media • Need to start having conversations with young people around 11 years of age onwards as they can start causing trouble from then
Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional stoicism/not expressing grief: pressures to be strong mean that men who cannot be emotional or express grief. – want to challenge this rigid gender idea by having more emotional expression discussions • Pressure that males must stand up and be strong and they cannot express their hurt or loss • Pressure that males cannot be emotional • Want to normalize males expressing emotions and that this is a human experience – it is human nature • There are some Aboriginal communities where Aboriginal men wail and weep with the women as part of the grieving
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong desire to bring back family connections and real cultural values • Feeling pressure from family, friends and partners to fight and join feuds • Family previously had a role in disciplining children and young people in the community and family – but this role has eroded and can now lead to family feuds and other forms of violence
Family Violence Community Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer able to discipline community children due to the high risk of escalating into feuding • Members do not want to intervene in violent incidents as ‘not our business and fears of escalating into feuds • Feeling pressure (family, friends, partners) to fight /join in feuds

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding value or identity in being able to fight • If refusing to fight would receive backlash from community • Negative outcomes from fights • Concerns over the impact of social media on young people. • Understanding differences between feuds (10 versus 10) to traditional fights (1 versus 1) • Finding that some men are 'puffing up' and walking around wanting to start fights
Gender Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gendered expectations on what males/men are expected to do, being a 'real man' and limitations that come from this. • Wanting men to have more freedom, adaptability, and equality in roles – as fathers and carers.
Racism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal males/men receiving racist backlash • targeting by systems and the Police.
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling a lack of respect for Elders – Young fellas do not listen to Elders, disrespecting them, or not following 'the right way'. • Abusing Elders
Leadership – Male Voices, Male Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men stepping up – they recognise women have been leading the work • Now needing men to step up and be engaged in the issues • Resolution – some men are calling mates out and talking to their groups about healthy ways to be a man, but this is not common • Want men to be accepting of themselves and others • Be focused on the truth and not a deficit model • Promoting positive role models within the community
Oppression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men feeling unable to talk and their voices being silenced by systems and racism • Emotional stoicism/not expressing grief: pressures to be strong mean that men who cannot be emotional or express grief. – want to challenge this idea
Primary Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be focused on the truth and not a deficit model • Important to work with community and family prior to an incident

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Services Program Delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing culture and ideas that lead to violence • Men spaces – men/males do not have spaces to go to • Flexibility is program and activity delivery in community • Sustainability – finding ways to maintain the initiatives after the MAME project by connecting to other projects, maintaining yarning circles, men spaces and groups • Delivery approach to be activity based, outdoors, not formal and visual learning • There is a desire for collaboration in the delivery and sustainability of primary prevention projects in Mullewa and Geraldton • Community expertise is important – learning from each other- community has answers, be humble and curious. Do not tell the community ‘how it is ‘or ‘what to do’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young males/men’s ideas about replicating the violence in relationships • Education around culture and country is key to relationship building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising intergenerational trauma, impact of colonisation, oppression, and harm on community • Need to understand some behavior might be trauma responses including AOD, fights/feuds • Men not seeking medical help/going to doctor or talking • Trauma history – violence, group/gangs and fights are a result of trauma experienced • Men are not allowed to grieve or be emotional, this grief turns to trauma and can lead harm to self or others • Trauma informed practice – need for programs and yarns to recognised trauma responses and impact on individuals and community • Men need to be encouraged and supported to love themselves and to love each other • Issue with men feeling shame over losing fights and cannot accept loses and will create more fights and feuds

Aboriginal Male

The conversations with and around Aboriginal Males covered a variety of topics. The idea to focus on strengths-based approaches was favoured, proposing celebrating and supporting Aboriginal men and promoting existing strong role models in the community to strengthen this approach.

Promoting being a healthy Aboriginal man/male was very important with multiple ways of achieving this recognised: through yarning, gentle encouragement, role modelling and supporting men and boys.

A challenge noted was the influence of negative role models in family, peer groups and community which impacted on the behavior of some Aboriginal men enabling a type of 'toxic masculinity' where young people were following their Elders, brothers and uncles, doing things which were not good, such as fighting, feuding and drug dealing.

There was acknowledgement from some of the younger male participants that RAP /US hip hop culture had an impact on the younger male generations and that this should be considered to connect the younger generation with the 'right ways'.

Culture

Culture is the cornerstone of Aboriginal society and the need to connect to culture featured strongly throughout MAME yarning, workshops and conversations. The need to take males/men and connect younger generations to Country and family was considered important and this approach needed to be integrated into FDV primary prevention service delivery.

There were concerns expressed on how there was alienation, town distractions and disconnection from culture and cultural practices whilst being on Country and that this should be addressed in designing programs and activities for everyone. The MAME cultural activities on country included bush food cook-ups, camping, net fishing, clapping stick making and yarning which were well attended.

Community

The City of Greater Geraldton community including Mullewa are in the same geographical area in the Midwest. There are many community issues including statistics that show that the rates of FDV in Geraldton and the Midwest are unacceptably high, the second highest rates for regions in Western Australia. Within the Aboriginal community, violence has become normalized and extends into the younger generations. The community issues mentioned in the MAME program can be found in all yarns and conversations, but the issues highlighted here include issues of drug and alcohol, peer group pressure to act tough, impacts of social media promoting and initiating fights/feuding and the limited opportunities creating pathways for males/men moving into drug dealing/crime for opportunity and status.

It was noted with concern the harmful impact of community members finding value and identity in being able to fight, and their family or community being known as good 'fighters'.

Sport and recreation offered positive influences on the lives of male community members, but the challenge is that not everyone has the resources to access these opportunities.

Communication

It is noted in this process that there is a culture of Aboriginal men not talking about the deeper issues, having deeper conversations or seeking help on issues. Some male MAME participants expressed that their voices had been silenced by systems and racism and that they were therefore unable to talk. For these reasons, the opportunity for Aboriginal men/males to have yarns and talk together on their issues is very important in advancing and tackling FDV issues within their communities.

The MAME participants expressed the importance that conversations need to start with young people from around 11 years of age and onwards as these young ones are at high risk of starting or causing 'trouble' from that age onwards.

Emotions

The issues expressed around emotions focused on the pressures to be strong and not express emotions and the concept of emotion stoicism (not expressing grief). Some of the participants expressed a desire to challenge this rigid gender idea and normalize males/men/boys expressing emotions by having more emotional expression discussions.

Family

Family is very important in the Aboriginal community and some participants expressed a strong desire to strengthen family connections and bring real cultural values, although they did not elaborate or define what those real cultural values are. On the other hand, there were feelings of pressure from family, friend and partners to fight and join the feuds.

Family Violence and Community Violence

The concerns raised around Family violence and community violence included conversations about how community/Family members did not want to intervene in these types of violent incidents and instead adopted the mindset 'not our business' due to the fears of their involvement escalating into feuds.

Further discussions were on the pressures put on members by their family, friends and partners to fight or join in the feuds and if they refused to fight, they would receive backlash from family, friends and partners. The female MAME participants shared that it was also women, not just men, encouraging the men to get into fights and/or to be violent, and that young men were being pressured by their female family relatives to fight for them in feuds.

The negative outcomes from fighting were of real concern and there needed to be ways of finding and teaching value in not fighting and violence. Concerns were also raised over the impact of social media on young people regarding family violence and community violence.

FDV Primary Prevention (program delivery, program services)

The conversations around FDV primary prevention focused on program delivery, program services, strength-based approach and the importance of working with community and

family prior to FDV incidents. This included flexibility, changing mindsets that lead to violence, delivery to be on country outdoors and a desire for a collaborative approach to delivery.

Strong conversations around sustainability and concerns around finding ways to maintain the initiatives after the MAME project by connecting to other projects, maintaining yarning circles, men's/males' spaces and groups.

Gender Roles

The gendered expectations on what males/men are expected to do, being a 'real man' and the limitations that come from this expectation was in conversations. The female participants wanted men to have more freedom, adaptability and equity in their roles as fathers and carers.

Leadership

There was recognition that women have been leading the FDV work and with community issues but now is the time for men/males to be stepping up into leadership roles and to be engaged in the issues.

Oppression

Men expressed feelings of being oppressed and unable to talk about issues, with their voices being silenced by systems and racism.

Stoicism is defined as the endurance of pain and hardship without the display of feelings and without complaint. Because of this, the term emotional stoicism was mentioned regarding not expressing grief and the feelings of being oppressed. The pressures to be strong meant that men could not be emotional or express grief and there was yarning around how this could be challenged and not oppress Aboriginal men in this way.

Racism

Aboriginal male/men participants said they felt they were unable to talk, their voices were silenced by racist backlash and they were targeted by systems and the WA Police Force.

Relationship Building

Whilst relationship building was seen as important by bringing Aboriginal male/men's together in these yarning circles and workshops, there was the tension with young males/men's idea's about replicating the violence they observe into their relationships.

Respect

The feeling of lack of respect from the younger generations (young fellas) especially towards Elders was raised as a concern. There was discussion around the lack of respect when the younger generations (young fellas) did not listen and did not follow 'the right way'. This was seen when there was no longer the ability to discipline community children because of the high risk that this could escalate into violence through feuding.

Trauma

Yarning around recognising intergenerational trauma and the impact of colonisation, oppression and harm on the Aboriginal community and whole community. There needs to be greater understanding that some of the community behaviours might be trauma responses including Alcohol and Drug (AOD), fights and feuding.

MAME Participant Post Program Feedback March 2024

This is a snapshot of MAME participant post program feedback to provide insight into Aboriginal male community members' thoughts around the MAME FDV PP project over an 11-month period.

Sixteen Aboriginal male participants (19 % of total participants) were recontacted post program through home visits, phone calls and interviewed by the MAME Project Officer Levi Thorne. All male participants resided in Geraldton, and at the time of interviews Mullewa participants were in the Pilbara for cultural reasons or out of town working, so their feedback is not captured. Their interview responses to the eight questions are provided in this report. This Report does not capture the voices of the Aboriginal female participants of the MAME project, their voices will be captured in future reports.

The MAME Project team – TMP, Dr Adams and WACRH codesigned the eight questions:

1. How did the MAME program help participants?
2. What do you remember about the MAME yarns and activities?
3. Do you feel able to have conversations within your families or communities about these MAME yarns?
4. How confident are you to role model healthy and respectful ways?
5. What did you like most about the MAME activities attended?
6. What did you not like most about the MAME activities attended?
7. Is there anything you would like to have done differently?
8. Do you think the MAME project contributes to making your community a better place to live?

What is an FDV PP Conversation Influencer?

A conversation 'influencer' is someone who influences others to take certain action, become aware of specific information or form certain opinions.

In the context of the MAME project the initial conversation influencers were The Men's Project JSS Staff, Dr Adams and WACRH staff. They provided Geraldton and Mullewa Aboriginal males with specific information on FDV Primary Prevention to build understanding of primary prevention and then enhance capacity in promoting safe respectful environments that reduce the likelihood of family domestic violence. The approach was through developing skills and knowledge amongst Aboriginal men to engage in community wide conversations about the primary drivers of FDV in the Midwest, City of Greater Geraldton.

Q1: How the MAME Program helped Male participants?

The Aboriginal male participants responded that the MAME Program helped by:

- Increased confidence to have FDV Primary Prevention conversations and to start these types of conversations
- Increased their FDV PP knowledge
- Helping with their mental health issues'
- Relationship Building with other males (mates etc.)
- Overcoming "Shame" to talk about their issues

Q2: What Participants recalled about the MAME yarns & Activities.

The Aboriginal male participants said the things they recalled about the MAME Program and Activities:

- Conversations about being a healthy Aboriginal male
- Safe community
- Challenging FDV
- Making a difference in the community
- Violence against women
- Family violence & community violence
- Importance of having conversations and yarning
- Mental Health issues
- Importance of understanding community issues

Q3: How Confident are Male participants as FDV PP Conversation Influencers?

81.25 % of the Aboriginal males felt they were able to have conversations within their families or communities about FDV Primary Prevention, and 19 % ranged between not sure, maybe and some confidence.

Q4: Participants' Confidence as Conversation Influencers in speaking about role modelling healthy and respectful ways to be males?

87.5 % of Aboriginal males felt confident that they were able to role-model healthy and respectful ways to be a male.

Q5: What participants like most about MAME Activities.

The Aboriginal male participants liked most about MAME included:

- Yarning
- Being on country/outdoors/connecting to country/Camping on country
- Storytelling
- Cultural Activities
- Aboriginal males coming together
- Opportunity to address issues /problems
- Learning about FDV
- How to start 'hard' conversations like FDV
- Relationship building with other Aboriginal men in the community
- Overcoming the "Shame" factor to talk about their personal issues

Q6: What Participants did not like about MAME activities.

The Aboriginal male participants did not like about the MAME included:

- There was not enough yarning
- Not enough advertising of the program
- Program was too short and only during the day
- Transport was not available

Q7: Is there anything you would have liked to have been done differently?

87.5% said there was nothing they would have liked to be done differently in the MAME program, 12.5% said they wanted more men's groups yarning sessions and more advertising done so Aboriginal men in the community had the opportunity to attend.

Q8: Did participants think the MAME project contributes to making the City of Greater Geraldton a better place to live? Responses

93.75% of the Aboriginal males in the post survey felt the MAME program contributed to making the City of Greater Geraldton a better place to live, and some of the reasons were:

- Gave us Aboriginal men a safe space so we can have open discussions
- Helps more Aboriginal men, the more Aboriginal men you can help the better the community can be.
- The project brought Aboriginal men from different ages and backgrounds together to yarn about topic that they never really talk about because of the 'shame' or just not knowing how to talk about things.

- Helped find and build confidence in speaking up as well as give tools to handle situations
- Gave us Aboriginal men a chance to talk about our issues and problems, learning and teaching each other, there is more to life than the fighting and drinking – we need to break the cycle
- If more Aboriginal men can come together and yarn about their problems, then community will be a safer place.
- Passing on knowledge and experience to the younger generation
- The community needs more for our Aboriginal men, giving them a space to talk and reflect
- Because in our community not very many people open up about these things
- Bringing Aboriginal males together to talk about issues in the community



Measuring Effectiveness of the MAME Program

The effectiveness of the MAME program/activities was measured against the following:

- Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Evidence Review: Final Report, Karen Milward (2023) prepared for Dhelk Dja (Safe Our Way) Victoria
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Programs: A Literature Review, Jane McKendrick, Robert Brooks, Jeffrey Hudson, Marjorie Thorpe, Pamela Bennett (2019) Healing Foundation
- Our Watch: Changing The Picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children. Our Watch Ending Violence against Women and Their Children, 2018 Melbourne Victoria.

In Tables 11, 12 and 13 the column MAME Response indicates if the MAME program met the characteristics of effective programs, principle of Healing programs good practice and principles for prevention in practice.

TABLE 11 : MILWARD REPORT 2023: MAME RESPONSE

Milward Report 2023 Characteristics of Effective Programs	MAME Response
Community Led Design and Implementation	✓
Prioritising cultural strengthening	✓
Reconnecting to Aboriginal culture	✓
Strengths-based approaches	✓
Engaging men and boys in prevention efforts	✓

The MAME program had met the characteristics of what the Milward Report 2023 lists as characteristics of effective programs because it was:

- community led and initiated by the Geraldton Aboriginal Men’s Group Aboriginal male members, local Aboriginal WACRH research staff members and local Aboriginal members on the MAME Advisory group.
- Program activities prioritizing cultural strengthening and connecting to Aboriginal culture were realised through the yarning circles, culture activities, bush tucker /food and on country camping.
- Engaged Geraldton and Mullewa Aboriginal men and boys in FDV primary prevention efforts.

TABLE 12 : HEALING FOUNDATION 2019: MAME RESPONSE

Healing Foundation Review 2019 Principles of Healing Programs Good Practice	MAME Response
Community Empowerment	✓
Recognition of human rights, transgenerational trauma, loss and grief	✓
The development of individual, family and community emotional wellbeing	✓
Acknowledgement and recognition of Aboriginal diversity and the importance of the local context	✓
Direct involvement of community members and the development of a local workforce	✓
Ensuring program sustainability and organisational capacity	1/2
Appropriate program evaluation (PAR is recommended)	
An evidence or theory base for the program	✓
The aim of researching ‘ourselves back to life’	

The MAME program had met 6 out of the 9 (67%) Principles of Healing programs good practice. The 3 principles not met were:

- The principal ensuring *program sustainability and organisational capability* was not fully met due to the program relying on 12-month grant funding from WA government. The MAME program met the *organisational capability* principle through the MAME project team members – WACRH, The Men’s Project and Dr Mick Adams.
- The MAME program was not a research project due to the shortness of the program to get Ethics therefore the principles of “*appropriate program evaluation*” and “*The aim of researching ourselves back to life*’ was not fully measured although the MAME program did meet the basic principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR).
- It was a community up approach initiated by the Geraldton Aboriginal Men’s Group members and champions.
- There was no debate but rather dialogue between all participants.
- Social learnings among and between Aboriginal community members and MAME Project Team.
- Embraced the strength of the Geraldton and Mullewa Aboriginal community.
- Sustainable solutions emerged through the FDV primary prevention Yarning/Conversation Kits of which the Aboriginal males were empowered to contribute with their lived reality experiences.

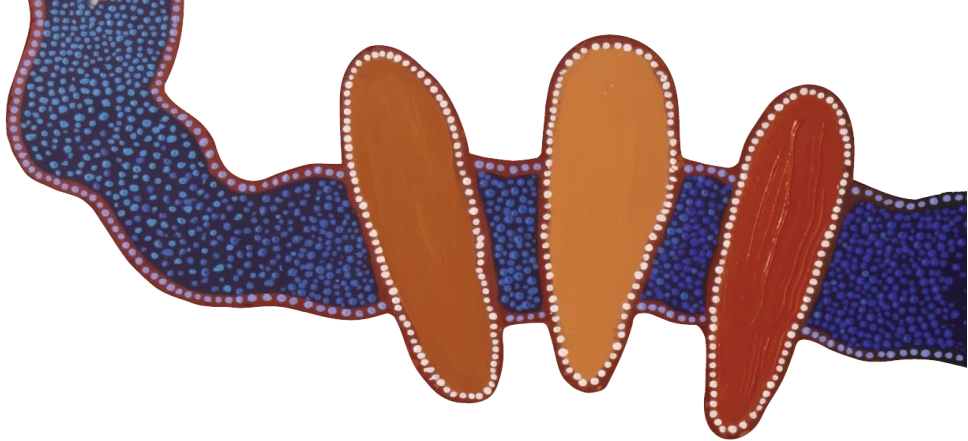
TABLE 13 : OUR WATCH 2018: MAME RESPONSE

Our Watch: Changing the Picture: Principles for Prevention in Practice	MAME Response
Self-determination: community ownership, control and leadership	✓
Cultural safety	✓
Trauma-informed practice and self-care	✓
Healing focused	✓
Holistic	✓
Prioritising and strengthening culture	✓
Using strengths-based and community strengthening approaches	✓
Adapting to different community, demographics and geographical context	✓
Addressing intersectional discrimination	✓
Non-Indigenous organisations working as allies in culturally safe ways	✓

The MAME program had met all of the 10 Principles for Prevention in Practice through the Yarning Circles (including Intergenerational trauma), MoRE workshops, On Country Camps and cultural activities (bush food cooking, fishing, net fishing, tapping stick making).

The principle “*non -Indigenous organisations working as allies in culturally safe ways*” was achieved through the program inclusion of The Men’s Project (TMP) Jesuit Social Services with the MoRE workshops.





DISCUSSION

What are the drivers of Family Domestic Violence?

1. For non-Aboriginal women, violence against women including family and domestic violence is driven by gender inequality and other forms of discrimination that give rise to power imbalances between men and women. Primary prevention action starts with addressing the gendered drivers of violence against women and other forms of discrimination.
2. For Aboriginal women, the drivers of violence are different. Colonisation, intergenerational trauma, and profound disadvantage are key drivers for family violence in Aboriginal communities. However, men exerting power and control over women remains a key driver in family violence for Aboriginal women.
3. These different understandings about the drivers of family and domestic violence for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women are similarly recognised in the formative work of Our Watch:
4. [Change the Story](#) A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (second edition)
5. [Changing the Picture](#) A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children.

Primary prevention is about targeting the drivers of violence to enable social and structural change that over time will create lasting results. Primary prevention approaches address the attitudes, behaviours, social conditions, structures, and practices that drive FDV. Action at this level is expected to have the greatest impact on reducing FDV rates, including fatalities, and deliver economic savings in the long term¹.

Primary Prevention versus Early Intervention

A comprehensive and effective response to violence against women requires a combination of both primary prevention and early intervention approaches, recognising the importance of both long-term societal change and immediate crisis management.

¹ Department of Social Services, Fourth Action Plan 2019-2022 of the National Plan to reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022.

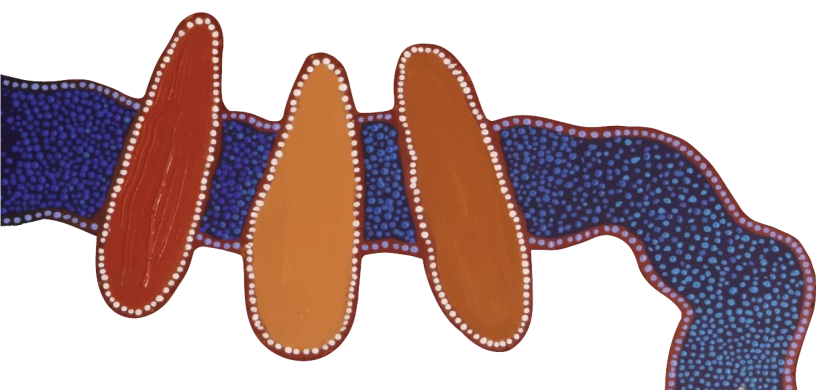
Primary prevention seeks to effect lasting change on a broad scale through changing social norms and strives to eliminate or reduce the factors that lead to violence in the first place.

The key characteristics of primary prevention are:

- **Community Focused:** Primary prevention initiatives often involve community-wide campaigns, education programs, and advocacy efforts. The goal is to raise awareness, challenge cultural norms that perpetuate violence and promote healthy relationship dynamics.
- **Long-Term Impact:** The emphasis is on creating sustainable, long-term change by addressing the underlying factors contributing to family and domestic violence. This may involve policy advocacy, cultural shifts, and educational reforms.
- **Proactive Approach:** Primary prevention is proactive, aiming to stop violence before it occurs. It involves strategies such as education programs in schools, community workshops, and campaigns challenging gender stereotypes.

Early intervention strategies come into play once violence has already occurred or is imminent. The key characteristics of early intervention are:

- **Targeted Response:** Early intervention strategies target individuals or families where violence is present or likely to occur. This may involve crisis hotlines, counselling services or legal interventions.
- **Immediate Action:** The focus is on taking immediate action to address the current situation and prevent further harm. This could include emergency shelter placement, counselling services for victims or legal measures such as restraining orders.
- **Crisis Management:** Early intervention is crisis-oriented, dealing with the immediate aftermath of violence. It aims to provide support and resources to those affected, minimising the impact of the violence, and preventing its escalation.



Capacity Building /Mentoring

The Midwest Aboriginal Men’s Empowerment (MAME) program offered a valuable space for mentorship and capacity building on a number of levels with a primary focus on Aboriginal males/men – community level, individual level and MAME project level.

MAME played a critical role in providing support and guidance to Aboriginal males in the Geraldton and Mullewa community. It contributed to building confidence, developing skills, and fostering positive relationships.

Community Level: The Geraldton Aboriginal Men’s Group members showed leadership in wanting to address family domestic violence in the City of Greater Geraldton by collaborating to developing prevention strategies allowing Aboriginal males to share their FDV experiences in a safe and respectful environment.

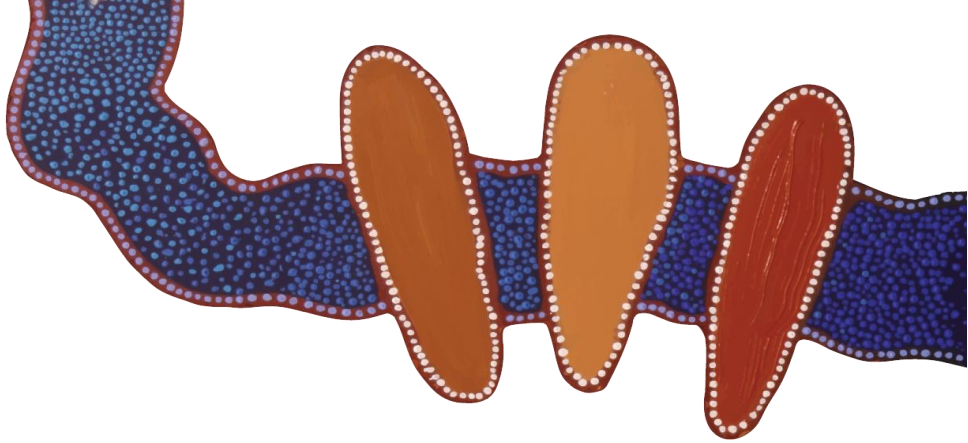
Individual Level: The participants attending the MAME program were mentored by their local community male champions, other Aboriginal male participants and the MAME project team members. This in turn increased the confidence of Aboriginal males to recognise their collective voice and the role they have as part of their community solutions in leading their own programs and activities to create change. This capacity building led to the creation of the MAME Yarning/Conversation FDV Primary Prevention kits to build the confidence of all men to engage in FDV Primary Prevention.

MAME Project Level: The MAME Project Officer Levi Thorne was mentored by Dr Adams and the Jesuit Social Services Prevention Coordinator Alexander Dentener gaining skills and knowledge on how to speak and how to support individuals the right way in addressing important issues like Family Domestic Violence. Dr Adams led the yarning circles in building capacity and understanding around the impact of intergenerational trauma and allowing the Aboriginal males to develop their skills and use their lived experiences to take ownership and control of their behaviours. The MAME Project Officer Levi Thorne said

“It’s crucial to provide education, resources and a safe space for individuals to seeking help and support. By raising awareness, offering guidance, and promoting healthy relationships, we can work towards preventing and addressing family domestic violence effectively in the Geraldton Mullewa community.”

Levi Thorne, 2024





PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

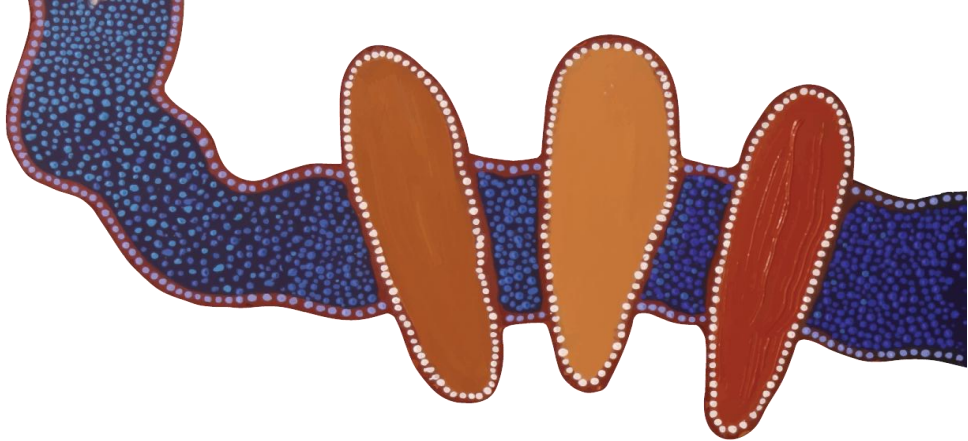
Gathered from the voice of the Aboriginal participants, the MAME project team recommends the following priorities for service providers, mental health funders, community development practitioners, researchers, funders, and community to work towards ending family and domestic violence in the City of Greater Geraldton and the Midwest of Western Australia. Priority recommendations in this FDV PP report are a steppingstone to creating pathways and a blueprint for making a safe community for everyone and ending violence against women.

We recommend that:

1. Support (financial & resources) are given to the male members of the Geraldton Aboriginal Men's Group as they regroup and work towards developing a new men's group in the City of Greater Geraldton.
2. Approaches to FDV Primary Prevention must be holistic, involve the whole family; be community led and designed; ensure cultural strengthening and connection to culture; be strengths based; be inclusive engaging Aboriginal men and boys in primary prevention efforts.
3. Resources/Findings are provided to support local community action and Aboriginal male influencers to have conversations in the community around FDV Primary Prevention.
4. A focus on FDV Primary Prevention approaches where local Aboriginal male role-models are recognised and Aboriginal men in Geraldton and Mullewa are celebrated.
5. Recognising role models and celebrating them – making visual all the amazing Aboriginal male leaders in Geraldton and Mullewa
 - Celebration and recognition are part of focusing on movement forward, growth & healing – instead of just FDV
 - Done via radio, events, posters etc.
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men's Social & Emotional Wellbeing is supported through Aboriginal Men's Wellness Healing centers or Wellness Healing Spaces in Mullewa and Geraldton. This includes further investigation into the need in other Yamaji communities to support men's mental health and wellbeing.

6. Cultural education and awareness for Midwest Service Providers with a focus on trauma-informed practices is offered.
7. Skills development offered workshops to Focus on conflict resolution, communication skills and emotional regulation. Teaching these skills can help males/men/boys manage their emotions and reduce the likelihood of resorting to violence.
8. Creation of supportive environments that help Aboriginal males/men/boys in Crisis and contributes to the prevention of Family Domestic Violence. It is crucial to focus on strategies that Empower Aboriginal males/men/boys in crisis situations related to the primary prevention of Family Domestic Violence.
9. Stronger, stable and established support mechanisms for networks working together effectively to strengthen FDV Primary Prevention for Midwest Aboriginal communities.
10. Access to FDV Primary Prevention resources is made readily available for community members.
11. FDV male yarning conversations are structured in the recommended format – starting topics with a yarn, followed by a cultural activity or information and then coming together for a shared meal.
12. Inclusion of the underlying drivers of family domestic violence include and focus on the ongoing impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal people, families and communities in the Midwest, Murchison and Gascoyne.





SUMMARY

In Australia there have been very few previous studies reported that engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males/ men around FDV primary prevention This MAME Report offers insight into the lived experiences of Aboriginal male participants who attended the 2023-2024 MAME Program in Geraldton and Mullewa. This included identifying issues influencing their understandings of Family Domestic Violence primary prevention. There were 121 participants (113 male) engaged in the 11-month period in the community consultation yarning circles, MoRE workshops with The Men's Project JSS Melbourne, Intergenerational trauma workshops with Dr Adams, WACRH On-Country camps and cultural activities.

The FDV Primary Prevention story that emerges from the MAME project is one of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male/men leadership in challenging Family Domestic Violence and creating a pathway towards ending violence against women.

- Provides local Aboriginal voices and a response to the results of the 2019 Local Attitudes and Experiences Survey (LCAEVS) reporting that the alarming rates of FDV in Geraldton and the Midwest are unacceptably high, the second highest rates for regions in Western Australia
- Aboriginal males in Geraldton and Mullewa have voiced their desires and aspirations to challenge normalisation of violence, rigid gender stereotypes and to provide ways forward for Aboriginal men's healing and wellness.
- Outcomes of the implementation of this specific FDV primary prevention initiative for Aboriginal men and boys in the City of Greater Geraldton. An initiative (MAME) that had offered opportunities for Aboriginal men and boys in culturally secure, respectful and empowering environments to participate in MoRE workshops, yarning circles and cultural activities. This includes the opportunity for Aboriginal men to come together to participate in cultural activities around the campfire, throwing a fishing net, cooking bush foods, making tapping sticks and having a yarn.
- The ongoing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities, and non-indigenous people and society, as key underlying drivers are brought alive through lived experience stories and experiences shared in MAME.

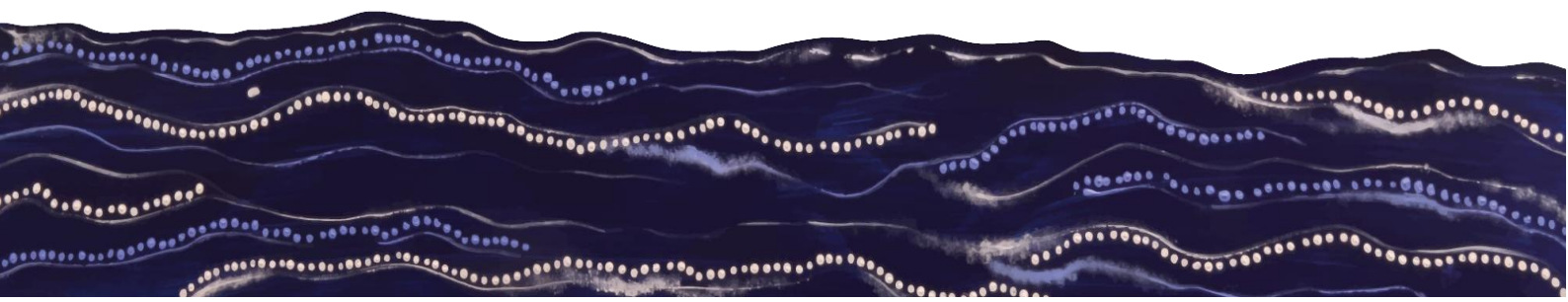
The primary MAME program objective was to increase the number of active Aboriginal FDV Primary Prevention conversation ‘influencers’ in the City of Greater Geraldton with a clear understanding on FDV primary prevention including the role of rigid gender types.

The MAME participants who had provided feedback post MAME project said the MAME project helped them by increasing their confidence in having FDV conversations, increasing their FDV knowledge, discussing mental health issues, relationship building and overcoming the “Shame” factor around FDV yarning. When asked to recall or what they remembered about the MAME yarning and activities, the participants’ responses included themes such as being healthy Aboriginal males, safe community’s, challenging FDV, making a difference in the community, violence (against women, community violence and family violence), yarning and conversations, mental health and understanding community issues. Generally, in the post project feedback the 16 participants thought the MAME project contributed to making the City of Greater Geraldton a better place to live by bringing Aboriginal men together into safe spaces to yarn about topics/issues they never really yarn about. The majority of those interviewed did not think anything needed to be done differently, commenting only on the need for additional promotion to engage more community men to attend the opportunity and the need for more yarning circles and groups.

There was no information collected from the participants at the beginning of this FDV primary prevention program on their confidence about engaging in conversations about FDV PP and willingness to influence other community members. The one-year timeframe for this project required that the project was implemented promptly, and it was important to build the relationship and trust with participants before collecting data. However, it is clear from the 16 participants for whom qualitative data was collected that most men gained better understanding about FDV and underpinning issues, developed deeper self-reflection and improved in their confidence and willingness to talk with others as part of community efforts to reduce family violence.

The MAME Report Findings provides an entry point for addressing the identified issues and challenges of FDV primary prevention for Aboriginal communities in the Midwest – Geraldton and Mullewa. Importantly, this MAME Report can act as an initial reference point for further examination and planning of FDV primary prevention strategic planning and development for the City of Greater Geraldton Aboriginal communities.

The MAME project contributes to a space where there is very little evidence of effective primary prevention of violence against Western Australian Aboriginal women, families and communities.



MAME Project Team Members

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Dr Charmaine Green, WACRH UWA Poche Research Fellow
Dr Mick Adams, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Men's Health
Michael Hail, TMP JSS Melbourne
Alex Dentener, TMP JSS Melbourne
Dr Sandra Thompson, WACRH Director
Jamie Strickland, GAMG MAME Advisory Group
Wayne McDonald, GAMG MAME Advisory Group
Shannon McNeair, MAME Advisory Group
Adrian Bartlett, GSAC Mame Advisory
Leedham Papertalk Snr, Mullewa Community

MAME Project Partners

Geraldton Aboriginal Men's Group (GAMG)
Western Australian Centre for Rural Health (WACRH)
UWA Poche: Centre For Indigenous Health
The Men's Project JSS Melbourne (TMP)
Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation (GSAC)
Geraldton Aboriginal Medical Service (GRAMS)

Geraldton Aboriginal Men's Group (GAMG) Members as at 22/10/2022

Jamie Strickland, Department of Communities
Wayne McDonald, Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation
Gary Heir, Department of Communities
Rob Gibson, Department of Communities
Clinton Bolton, MEEDAC
Willie Thorne, WACRH
Andrew Greaves, MEEDAC
Adrian Bartlett, Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation
Charlie Collard, Central West College of TAFE
Allan McDonald, GRAMS
Brent Walker, GRAMS TTS
Michael Cook, GRAMS ITC

MAME Project Community Supporting Organisations

Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service
Desert Blue Connect Geraldton
MEEDAC, City of Greater Geraldton
Geraldton Sporting Aboriginal Corporation
City of Greater Geraldton
Headspace Geraldton

Key Community Individuals

Debra Maher, Mullewa Community
Pauline Bell, Mullewa Community
Wendy Merry, Mullewa Community



Green, C., Thorne, L., Adams, M., Thompson, S., Papertalk, L.P., Hail, M., Dentener, A., McDonald, W., Strickland, J., Bartlett, A., Papertalk, L. (Snr) and McNeair, S. 2023-2024 Midwest Aboriginal Men's Empowerment Project, WACRH, Geraldton WA 2024.



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