

LOOKING BACK: RESEARCH 'TIWI WAY'

Tiwi Bush Medicine Research with the Pumulayu Child and Family Centre

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I came up with the idea for the research, because young people when they are sick, they go to the clinic, and they forget about the bush medicine out in the bush. None of the kids on the Island know about the bush medicine, only the old people know. The bush medicine is really important to us Tiwi people. When we have cough, when we have scabies, we go out bush it clears scabies, coughing, when we have headache.

The pandanus tree, when we have terrible headache, we tie the pandanus around our head and with the small spikes it stays there. It helps the headache. We know about this from our grandparents who had this passed on from a long time ago. But we are worried about the younger generation, they probably won't know the medicine. If we keep talking to them, teaching them, they will understand. We don't want them to keep going to the clinic taking Panadol.

I wanted to take the video so we can show it to families, little ones, so when they go out bush they can say, this is the one that we saw in the video. We don't go out bush, especially little ones and the Pumulayu Child and Family Centre needs to take kids out, fishing, swimming, talk to them about culture, where they are from, where their grandfather from. This is the only place they can learn about their totem, dreaming. When they are in town they will be on phone, kicking footy in the park, Facebook, TikTok and they won't listen. Take them bush where there is no reception so they can sit and listen. This is where they can learn and understand.

I'm worried about kids and what is going to happen in 10-20 years' time. So, we would need transport, fuel, vouchers to support this every Tuesday. I would like to make one plan to go out camping and take mothers and kids, husbands might like to come or not. Virgil will be there teaching them singing and dancing, because Virgil knows all the songlines – crocodile, buffalo. He is the man for that. Can teach the little kids their own dreaming. We are worried because there is a lot of sickness around in the community. We are not helping ourselves. There is bush medicine out there that can help us live longer. Kids are drinking coke, soft drink, greasy food not healthy food.

Who were the right people for me to talk to for this research?

- Ella Monica Purantatimmerri
- Sophia Tipamantemerri
- Kaitlin Keriniaua (took the video)

I chose Ella Monica because she knows more about cultural things and medicine, she was the right person. She was able to tell the story and was explaining. She asked me yesterday, why aren't people out bush. The kids should be spending holidays in their country, learning about the land. That is why family should take kids out bush, instead of in town. This is why I chose Ella, she works at TITEB and does cultural things, weaving, painting, telling stories. Sophia has been learning from Ella, and both of them work at the women's centre. And I also chose Kaitlin because we are working with the Mantiyupwi Pumulayu Centre. She is working on children and family.

We went out to an outstation, Tarntipi. When we drove, we could find the bush medicine there at the side of the road. It is close to town. If people can see the video, they will see we want to leave gambling behind. Try to go out bush. One day we will take the ladies out with the kids. Show the land where the ancestors used to stay, their country.