

# DOOR-TO-DOOR FOR MENTAL HEALTH:

**Learnings from implementing the Assisting Communities through Direct Connection Project in an Aboriginal Community context**

*Report collaboratively written by Each and the Centre for Social Impact, The University of Western Australia*

June 2025

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***This report has been prepared by Each and the Centre for Social Impact, University of Western Australia (CSI UWA).*** The CSI UWA are the evaluation partners for the Assisting Communities through Direct Connection (ACDC) Project, an initiative of Community Mental Health Australia (CMHA). Each is a community organisation who was a delivery partner for the project with direct experience implementing the ACDC Project in the site of South Burnett.

### ***Each***

Each is a for-purpose organisation delivering health and support services that improve lives and strengthen communities. We believe everyone should have the power to live well.

We recognise that health and wellbeing are significantly and negatively affected by factors such as unemployment, homelessness, financial difficulties, social and cultural exclusion and addiction, so we offer a wide range of supports to assist members of our community to lead happier, healthier lives.

We believe that health and wellbeing are achieved through a holistic approach which includes not only biomedical factors, but the social determinants of health and wellbeing, such as access to safe and affordable housing, education and employment.

### ***Each Wantima***

Each Wantima is an Identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing service dedicated to improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Wantima coordinates services to support spiritual, cultural, social, emotional and physical healing. Each Wantima, alongside the South Burnett community connection team, delivered the ACDC Project to households across Cherbourg, Kingaroy and Murgon.

### ***Centre for Social Impact***

The Centre for Social Impact is a national research and education centre dedicated to catalysing social change for a better world. CSI is built on the foundation of four of Australia's leading universities: UNSW Sydney, The University of Western Australia, Swinburne University of Technology and Flinders University.

Our research develops and brings together knowledge to understand current social challenges and opportunities; our postgraduate and undergraduate education develops social impact leaders; and we aim to catalyse change by drawing on these foundations and translating knowledge, creating leaders, developing usable resources, and reaching across traditional divides to facilitate collaborations.

### ***Community Mental Health Australia***

Community Mental Health Australia (CMHA) is a coalition of peak community mental health organisations from Australian States and Territories. It was established to provide leadership and direction to promote the importance and benefits of community mental health and recovery services across Australia. CMHA provides a unified voice for several hundred community-based, non-government organisations who work with mental health consumers and carers across the nation and who are members of, or affiliated with, the various coalition members.

### ***Suggested citation***

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### ***Report design***

Michlin Mustac Designs



"It was pretty deadly to see local Aboriginal Peoples employed to do the job and the boss lady was Aboriginal too... **We want to talk to mob when it comes to personal stuff.**"

(Community member)

"What was good? They came to the house and had a yarn. No one comes to the house and around here **people don't really ask if you are doing OK.**"

(Community member)

"**The big barby at the end was the best thing**, having a cook up and yarn... We all came together to talk through the problems."

(Community member)



### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Australians, and the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work, play and meet. We come together from many different Aboriginal lands.

We acknowledge the cultural and spiritual relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have in caring for and nurturing the land, water, and Community for over 60,000 years. We acknowledge the injustices of the past and ongoing inequalities and commit to listening deeply. We commit to learning, growing, and walking gently together, respectful of Country in our collaboration. We pay our respect to Elders past and present.





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# INTRODUCTION

*This report seeks to unpack the experience of Cherbourg – a small Aboriginal Community in Queensland – in implementing a doorknocking approach to understanding and supporting Community members' mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.*

This reflection is part of broader research, evaluation and learning activities from the Assisting Communities through Direct Connection (ACDC) Project, which was implemented by Community Mental Health Australia (CMHA).

This report is best read as an addendum to **'Door-to-door for mental health: Research and evaluation findings for the ACDC Project, Round Three'**<sup>1</sup> which describes the ACDC Project whereby teams

of people – referred to as **'People Connectors'** – knocked on doors of households in 27 diverse Australian communities to have conversations about mental health and wellbeing. This report highlights the unique historical, social and cultural factors that influenced the approach and effectiveness of this doorknocking project in an Aboriginal Community setting.

## PURPOSE

*This report documents the learnings from implementing the ACDC Project in the Cherbourg Community, with the aim of contributing to broader knowledge about the appropriateness of implementing doorknocking as a proactive outreach method in an Aboriginal Community context.*

More generally, this report outlines some key considerations and processes that were important for making the project more successful in this Aboriginal Community setting – from the perspectives of both the Cherbourg Community's ACDC Project Staff as well as the commissioning organisation. However, we cannot know the extent to which these learnings are generalisable to other Aboriginal Communities.



<sup>1</sup> Kaleveld, L., Szabo, L. & Hooper, Y. (2024). Door-to-door for mental health: Research and evaluation findings for the Assisting Communities through Direct Connection Project, Round Three. Centre for Social Impact, The University of Western Australia. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25916/q5k6-v906>

# CONTEXT

## THE ACDC PROJECT

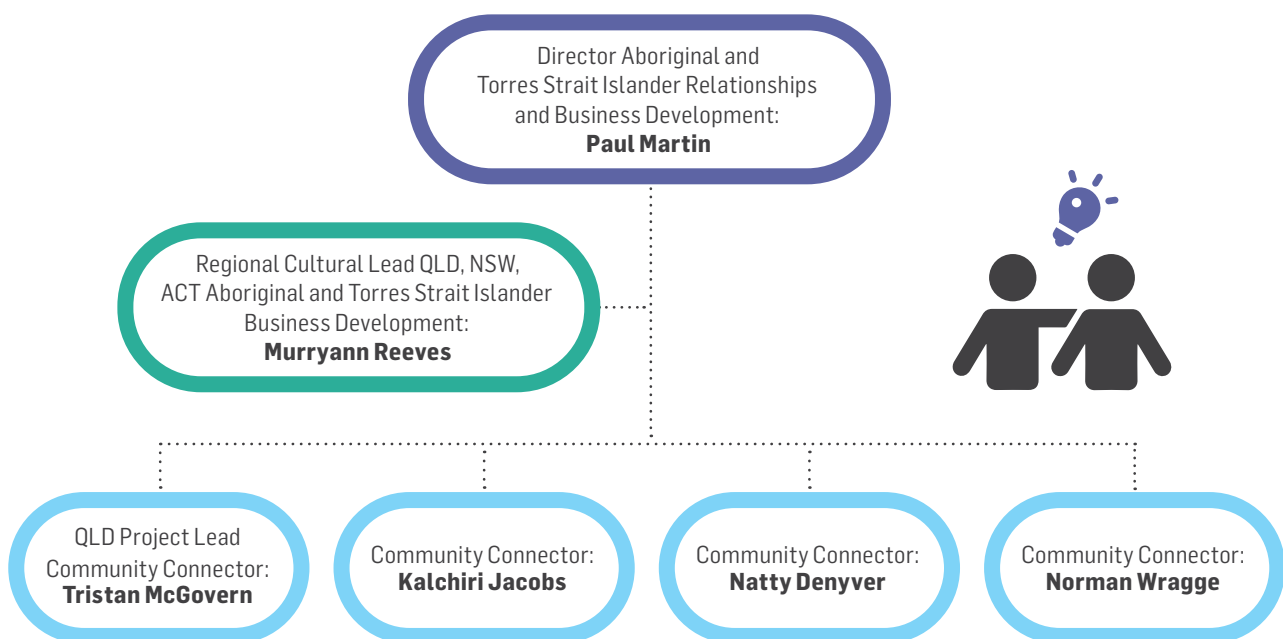
*The ACDC Project is a large-scale doorknocking project that operated between 2021 and 2024.* In total over 50,000 doors were knocked on across 27 communities. Through doorstep conversations, People Connectors discussed mental health and social and emotional wellbeing, collected data through a survey, discussed health and wellbeing needs and provided information and assistance by suggesting support options or linking people to services.

This project was comprehensively evaluated by the Centre for Social Impact, The University of Western Australia (CSI UWA)<sup>1</sup>, and this report forms part of the larger evaluation.

Delivery Partner Organisations (DPOs) were engaged to deliver ACDC in the 27 communities. Each was the non-governmental organisation that was contracted to run the South Burnett site in Queensland. Each delivered the ACDC Project in three suburbs within this site: Cherbourg, Kingaroy and Murgon. All three of these communities are categorised as relatively disadvantaged (under quintile 1 of the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage which is based on ABS' Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA))<sup>2</sup>.

Each employed a team of Aboriginal staff members to deliver the ACDC Project in the South Burnett region. Aboriginal staff members of Each brought to the project significant knowledge and experience about local Aboriginal histories and cultural protocols.

The staffing structure of Each relative to ACDC was as follows:



<sup>1</sup> Kaleveld, L., Szabo, L. & Hooper, Y. (2024). Door-to-door for mental health: Research and evaluation findings for the Assisting Communities through Direct Connection Project, Round Three. Centre for Social Impact, The University of Western Australia. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25916/q5k6-v906>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia. Retrieved 5 November, 2024 from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/latest-release>

## CHERBOURG

*Cherbourg was chosen as the focus for this report due to some key learnings from implementation that Each and ACDC Project staff considered important to document and share.*

The Community was founded as a settlement for Aboriginal Peoples in 1900. It is located approximately 250 kilometres north-west of Brisbane and has a total population of 1,195 people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples make up 96 percent of the local population<sup>3</sup>.



<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Cherbourg: 2021 Census Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Retrieved 5 November, 2024 from <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/ILOC30600301>



# METHODS

***This report has been written through a collaborative process of critical reflection by Each's Aboriginal Community Connectors (CCs), Each's Aboriginal Cultural Leader and CSI UWA's researchers.***

Initially, Aboriginal CCs reflected upon and documented their experiences of implementing doorknocking in Cherbourg. CSI UWA then thematically analysed their experiences relative to findings from existing literature and created a summary of key findings relative to the approach and implementation of doorknocking. The Project Lead for Each then reviewed the draft summary and added their perspectives where needed.

Across the three suburbs of South Burnett, a total of 1,058 doors were knocked on and 391 people engaged with the Community Connectors. Of these, 145 householders responded to a

survey about mental health needs and access to services in their Community. This data was also reviewed by CSI UWA to inform this report. The survey explored Community members' experiences of the ACDC project.

The take-up of people engaging with CCs was less in Cherbourg than in the other two suburbs. However, when Each hosted local Community events in Cherbourg, they also conducted their own evaluation survey, which people attending the events filled in, and these responses also informed this report.

Further input was obtained from the leadership team at Each to ensure this summary was an accurate reflection of their experience. Leaders at Community Mental Health Australia (CMHA) also reviewed the summary report to ensure it also reflected their experience and learnings as commissioners.







**1,058**



**391**



**145**

'... a total of **1,058** doors were knocked on and **391** people engaged with the Community Connectors. Of these, **145** householders responded to a survey about mental health needs and access to services in their community.'









**"The project provided an opportunity for us to collaborate and solve the long-term issue of limited engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in our services." (Service provider)**







# KEY FINDINGS

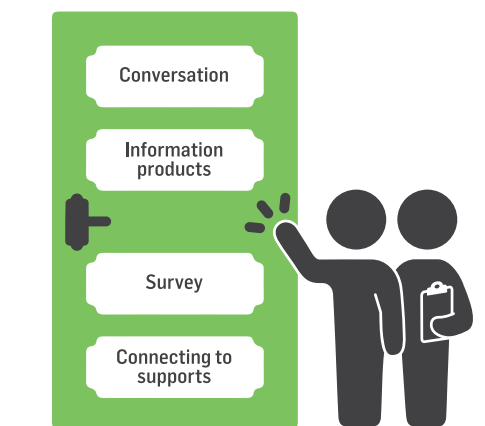
## DOORKNOCKING – APPROACH AND PROJECT DESIGN

### Consider impacts of history

***The design and approach of any initiative seeking social change in an Aboriginal context must consider the impacts of history.***

Aboriginal Communities across Australia have experienced (and continue to experience) colonising processes that undermine culture, language and Spirit, with varying degrees of dispossession, exploitation, trauma and ongoing experiences of racism from mainstream Australia. All have significant impacts on Community life both in the past and in the current day. The consequences of this history have resulted in tangible impacts on the mental health and wellbeing of Aboriginal Peoples leading to events like sickness, death, suicide and ongoing Sorry Business. However, another consequence of this unreconciled Australian history, for Aboriginal Communities, is a deep mistrust in mainstream services or institutions, especially ones that are not Community-led.

Another historic impact with implications for the ACDC Project was the fact that consultation in Aboriginal Communities in Australia has historically done more damage than good. Data and information collected from Aboriginal Australians have been used to exploit or misrepresent the views of Aboriginal Peoples, often with no follow-up actions offered.







The implementation of ACDC was greatly impacted by all of these factors. Expectations were adjusted around how many Community members would choose to engage with doorknockers, or volunteer to fill in a survey – CCs reported that hesitation was to be expected, and understandable. The high suicide rate within the Community meant that Community members were regularly experiencing grief and trauma and that it was not always an appropriate time to visit the home of grieving individuals to talk about mental health. With the team of the CCs also living within the Community they were surveying/doorknocking, there were also many weeks when the team, or individuals within the team, were themselves experiencing profound grief and loss and doing an outreach role and having conversations about mental health and wellbeing at this time was not tenable nor advisable.

In retrospect, there would have been value in creating a deliberate and safe space for commissioners and project delivery partners to reflect together on the suitability of the approach in an Aboriginal Community, and to consider ways that the approach could be tailored to an Aboriginal Community context. As the project was implemented, these reflection processes and learnings emerged, but anticipating this and making space at the beginning of the project would have been more productive.

## Establish appropriate governance and seek opportunities for Aboriginal-led redesign

While Aboriginal CCs played an important role in implementing the doorknocking initiative, local Aboriginal stakeholders were not involved in the program design. In the beginning phases of the project Each was consulted, and a stakeholder engagement process was initiated with the local Community. However, ultimately, Each had responded to a tender in which many key components of the project were already established and reflected in a contract between Each and CMHA.

Local Aboriginal governance is critical to enable self-determination and ensure the suitability of programs in local contexts, particularly those with a focus on engaging with Community members. There may have been better alternative approaches to achieving the same goals of the doorknocking initiative in the Cherbourg Community, which could have been determined through oversight by an appropriate governance structure. Elders or other Community representatives involved in governance or oversight need to be remunerated appropriately in recognition of their knowledge and experience.

The way that the ACDC Project was commissioned is fairly standard in the Australian context and suits the accountability structures of mainstream institutions (i.e., based on requirements associated with Government spending and standardised, competitive tendering processes, which are difficult to shift). This example highlights, however, that in these commissioning processes, the opportunities for Aboriginal Communities to adapt programs to their cultural context, and establish their own governance are very limited.



**“With support from CMHA, Each was able to make necessary adjustments to make the project more effective and appropriate in their setting. We moved staff to other suburbs when things got heavy and allowed for extra personal leave and extended periods of leave without pay. We added one-on-one cultural sessions and reflective practice, training in suicide prevention and trauma-informed practice.”**

**(Each Project Lead)**

## Assess political and cultural context (think about safety)

The doorknocking initiative was undertaken in the lead-up to the 2023 Voice Referendum in which all Australians were to vote on a change to the Constitution to establish an Aboriginal Voice to Parliament. Whilst there had been broad support for this idea for years leading up to the referendum, the campaign became highly politicised in the months before the vote. This was a particularly tumultuous and polarising time for the nation and especially for Aboriginal Peoples. Aboriginal CCs reported that householders were more interested in holding conversations about the likely outcome and many in the Kingaroy area (predominantly non-Aboriginal population) were advocating for the No Vote.

These negative cultural shifts severely disrupted the planning of the project and left staff feeling disempowered and unsettled. It also put them in a difficult position in trying to stick to the focus of the project (i.e., supporting others) whilst engaging in highly emotive and opinionated political conversations. They required further training in diffusing hostile conversations, including verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. Reflective practice and debriefing time were increased throughout this period to keep staff safe from racism and aggression while doorknocking. Each and CMHA also worked together to make adjustments in staffing throughout the project.

When the project was initiated, the referendum was planned but it was hoped that 2023 would be an empowering and celebrated time to be Aboriginal in Australia. However, the political environment changed, making proactive engagement methods like doorknocking for ACDC fraught for both CCs and those being surveyed.

This example highlights the importance of understanding local Community attitudes and the impacts of direct racism should be considered seriously as risks. Putting in place strategies for doorknockers to stay safe and feel well in themselves and be protected where needed, is a priority.





**"We have been in business here for some time though never really been given the opportunity to learn from the local people, I found they started to share of themselves when they knew we were open to learning about their culture and the way they might think we could do things better."**

(Service provider)

**"Each held a number of yarning circles and gatherings that we were invited to, this gave us an opportunity to connect with both Community and other services."**

(Community member)

**"That I might, in fact, have a touch of depression and I hadn't really given it a great deal of thought prior to the young ones visiting."**

(Community member)

**"The last day of the ACDC Project everyone came together to yarn and have a feed. The Each staff were very knowledgeable, we spoke to the Nurse and the NDIS lady. Everyone was friendly and helpful."**

(Community member)





## Minimise unnecessary Community consultation, clarify expectations and ensure feedback of results and findings

Some householders who took part in the survey responded that they were suspicious of how the information being collected through the survey was going to be used. They said they were tired of responding to the same questions and not seeing change.

**“Feeling like we have answered these questions hundreds of times, shared our stories again and again.”** (Householder)

This highlights the importance of minimising unnecessary consultation to avoid compounding the effects of mistrust in data collection, which has been created through generations of improper use of Aboriginal Peoples' information. A lack of trust or comfort with data collection processes is understandable within an Aboriginal Community context.

Although the purposes of this ACDC survey were made clear (to understand Community experiences of mental health and social and emotional wellbeing and understand need), there is already ample research that establishes mental health

and suicide as an urgent issue in Aboriginal Communities across Australia, hence, people might not have been convinced that new survey findings were needed.

Several comments were also received regarding dissatisfaction about ongoing consultation and seeing lack of change:

**“Telling more people the same thing again and again but no help. Our people are killing themselves all the time and all these people come here asking all these questions.”** (Householder)

Consultation and data collection should only occur if there is an explicit need for information, and a clear understanding of actions that will result from the data. Other sources such as the literature should be explored prior to undertaking consultation. If new data collection is required, a clear explanation should be given regarding its purpose and how information will be used. Feedback about findings and use of findings should always be provided back to the Community.





Unlike in other ACDC Project sites, Each requested a specific data report for Cherbourg, and CSI UWA worked with them to provide a report of their local data. CSI UWA ensured that the survey data reflected local issues could be accessible and available in a shareable format. Each made a plan to provide this data directly back to the Community through a presentation and short report (at the time of publication Each were awaiting invitation to present to the Elders Advisory in Cherbourg).

## Allow flexibility, in response to localised understandings about what is appropriate

The ACDC team reported that there were significant disparities across communities in the South Burnett region in terms of social background, ethnicity, financial status, religion, spiritual beliefs and culture. Yet, a standardised approach was taken across the three locations.

As the CCs gained experience in their roles, they began to understand that doorknocking in Cherbourg might not be as effective as, say, facilitating Community events and spaces for conversations about social and emotional wellbeing. Each did negotiate with CMHA to enable this to occur.

Each Wantima and ACDC Staff came together to create the Free Social and Emotional Wellbeing Community BBQ (sausage sizzle lunches) and early morning breakfasts. These Community events were popular, and provided a welcoming, relaxed and non-intrusive way to have conversations about mental health and meet service providers or other stakeholders who could discuss the various support options available (focusing, in particular, on free services).

**"Eating and sharing a meal is a core part of who we are, food is often something that brings Communities together."**

(Each Project Lead)

Creating these spaces for sharing became a more comfortable, culturally acceptable way to have conversations about mental health and wellbeing.

## Acknowledge layers of accountability at play

Aboriginal staff found themselves experiencing sometimes conflicting accountability demands to the ACDC Project and to their Community.





For example, the staff were not just employees who were recruited to deliver a project, they were recognised as people who live in and carry responsibility for their Community. For projects that engage directly with the Community, Aboriginal staff may hear again and again from their fellow Community members that change is urgently needed, creating a feeling of cultural responsibility that non-Aboriginal staff might not experience with the same depth and level.

Aboriginal staff also have knowledge and a deep understanding of the unheard voices in the households they were canvassing; relationships of obligation. The staff also had direct, personal experience of the continual losses facing the Community. These factors had deep implications for their role, and in some ways this outreach role was less straightforward for this team, than the ACDC teams who were doorknocking in other communities. Community Connectors felt a level of personal responsibility for creating change and advocating for funding of services that will help address, in practical ways, the urgent issues that Community members were facing. To undertake the ACDC work with a sense of '*legitimacy*', there was a desire to create hope and possibility at the end of the project.

Checking in on the wellbeing of Aboriginal teams working in social change initiatives is important; it is not uncommon for people to carry very high expectations for themselves to serve their communities by delivering real and meaningful change.

## Recognise the unique challenges faced by Aboriginal staff and provide support

Aboriginal staff were often in Sorry Business while performing their roles. It is important that staff are supported to attend Sorry Business where appropriate. There is no set timeframe for Sorry Business as these depend on Community-specific protocols and the status of the person being mourned. When Aboriginal staff are in Sorry Business, their privacy should be respected and arrangements should be made to reschedule or make relevant adjustments to events and meetings. Ceremonial or cultural leave for Aboriginal staff to attend ceremonial events may also be considered by workplaces.



Ongoing racism caused by mainstream views about Aboriginal Peoples also affected Aboriginal CCs in their roles. As outlined in the previous subsection, CCs reported that they did not feel safe in suburbs outside of Cherbourg and that many households in these locations expressed racist views or hostility towards them. Aboriginal staff should have access to appropriate supervision and support, and leave arrangements to ensure they are able to cope with such challenges should they arise. In some locations it might have been more helpful to have a non-Aboriginal staff member also on the team.





**"We have been in business here for some time though never really been given the opportunity to learn from the local people, I found they started to share of themselves when they knew we were open to learning about their culture and the way they might think we could do things better." (Service provider)**





welcome to

KINGARROY

South Burnett



SOUTH BURNETT  
REGIONAL COUNCIL





## DOORKNOCKING - IMPLEMENTATION

### Establish relationships and trust

*Relationships and trust are critical to implementation of any initiative that has a focus on Community engagement, due to the historical mistrust in services previously described.*

Relationships and trust are established through not being restricted with time. It is important for staff to spend the time **'deep listening'** to the perspectives of Community members. In an Aboriginal Community context, if someone asks **'how are you?'** with authenticity, they need to make themselves available to hear the full response, which may involve time for connection, reflection, listening and silence. The ACDC Project's accountability measures were largely based on **'number of conversations had'** or **'number of surveys completed'**, which did not adequately capture these important facilitators of engagement, and could even encourage staff to reduce the time they spend on this essential work.

Some people may not feel comfortable with doorknockers attending their home while others have no issue with this. Having a mix of doorknocking activity and other events in various Community settings can provide platforms for people to engage in various ways at a time that is suitable to them and in a way that allows for different peoples' preferences to be taken into account. For Cherbourg Community members, Community barbeques were an effective way to encourage Community members to attend events. Community Connectors also attended existing Community events such as football games, which provided a natural way to engage with people and have conversations with Community members at the event. To allow for a range of engagement options, expenses such as Welcome to Country fees, catering and travel costs need to be considered in planning and budgeting.





## Align delivery to local cultural norms and protocols

The ACDC team faced many challenges when out in the Community and stated they would have benefited from a non-Indigenous member of staff doing doorknocking with them, particularly in the non-Indigenous residential areas.

For the most part, mixed gender teams did the doorknocking. For the Aboriginal Community context the mix of females and males helped ensure the team was able to support Men's Business and Women's Business when these discussions came up from householders. However, with many of the CCs unavailable throughout the project implementation due to Sorry Business, the teams were not large enough to ensure that a male and female were available at all times.

## Use strengths-based, culturally relevant language

Aboriginal CCs reported that using appropriate terminology helped to open up conversations with Community members. For example, having a focus on **'social and emotional wellbeing'** rather than **'mental health'** created a better basis for understanding and sharing.

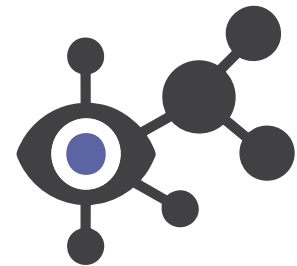
With guidance from Each Leadership team, the ACDC Project commissioning team provided opportunities to adapt language used in the doorknocking approach as well as project materials.

Art was also seen as a key element to creating a safe space for Cherbourg participants. Resources were co-designed to include Wakka Wakka Aboriginal artwork, creating a sense of recognition and welcome for householders who received magnets, calling cards, pens and brochures.

**"Language can be a place of struggle for Aboriginal Peoples, scripts provided in the Community Mental Health Australia training did not take into consideration Australian Aboriginal English and often there would be a need for translation at the door, Aboriginal staff regularly navigated 'linguistic imperialism'."**

(Each Leadership Team)

Whilst training resources were standardised, doorknocking and having conversations could be adaptive and flexible to allow for Aboriginal ways of being, knowing and doing.









# CONCLUSION

*This report provides a glimpse into a doorknocking project delivered in an Aboriginal Community setting.*

Based on the learnings gained over the life of the ACDC Project in Cherbourg, it is clear that if this project was to be implemented in this Community again, with local leadership driving key decisions, it may look quite different.

It is a credit to both Each (local delivery partner) and CMHA (project managing organisation) that over a fairly short period of less than a year, they were able to establish a productive partnership where they could reflect on learnings from the field, have honest conversations, share data, adapt, and reach agreement about new approaches where needed, rather than adhering rigidly to the contracts and planning documents. However, it is important to acknowledge that there were no formalised, dedicated spaces or processes for this reflective work to occur as a matter of course. The opportunities for both organisations to pause, reflect and reconsider their approach in relation to an Aboriginal Community context, were not built into the project design or timeline, therefore this work occurred **'on the run'** and relied on the goodwill, common sense and adaptability of individual staff members.

Project delivery usually occurs within the bounds of institutional norms and cultures. However, as the themes in this report highlight, the assumptions behind project designs, as well as project management practices, can be constraining and will not always deliver the best outcomes when partnering with Aboriginal Communities, especially for social change initiatives where meaningful engagement with Community members matters.





As is becoming clear, and as is outlined in the Productivity Commission's Closing the Gap Review (2023), if we are serious about Closing the Gap and improving outcomes for communities such as Cherbourg, this ***“requires systemic and structural transformation of mainstream government agencies and institutions to ensure they are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, including through the services they fund.”***<sup>6</sup> As of 2023 when this report was published, there is a ***“stark absence of whole of government or organisation-level strategies for driving and delivering transformation”*** needed (p.4).

The learnings shared in this report provide examples of the kind of adaptive thinking – and respectful consideration of the cultural contexts of Aboriginal Communities – that is needed for those who design and commission programs, or who are interested in implementing initiatives in ways that better meet the needs of Aboriginal Communities.

Every Aboriginal Community is vastly different, in cultural, social, economic and geographic characteristics. Every Community has its own stories and histories. But as was the case in Cherbourg, there will also be the Aboriginal leaders who have local knowledge of what will work (or not), who are well-connected to Community members, and generous with their insights and willingness to engage, when given the opportunity for leadership and decision-making, to help make initiatives more suitable to their communities.

This report does not claim to speak generally for what might work or not work in terms of doorknocking approaches in other Aboriginal Communities. However, the themes presented in this report might provide others with the impetus and an outline for starting important conversations about how best to implement projects in other Aboriginal Community contexts.



<sup>6</sup> Productivity Commission: Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, Draft Report, July 2023. <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/closing-the-gap-review/draft/closing-the-gap-review-draft.pdf>





**"Just everyone was really welcoming and the bosses, they were all pitching in and you could tell Each was a good place to work. They were respectful you know and not 'up themselves'. They did things the Community way."**

(Community member)

**"I appreciated just how approachable and how much knowledge people had, and then they emailed us back a whole heap of information when they got back to their head office, and resources to help with the kids and getting a referral to counselling through the Aboriginal Medical Service. They were very good in helping."**

(Community member)

**"What was great was learning about the next generation and what supports might be necessary for my grandchildren."**

(Community member)

**"I've been grieving for six years and no one asked me how I was doing. When you get older people just assume you cope with death and dying... it can be lonely. These young ones were very respectful to me."**

(Community member)





# EVENTS

## MORNING TEA

*ACDC South Burnett enjoyed several events with Communities across Cherbourg, Murgon, and Kingaroy, consisting of a BBQ, morning and afternoon teas, and pop-up events outside the office and a picnic in the park.*

The events were a success as a way to connect with Community members, and as an innovative way to start open conversations about mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.

Our most successful events were held in Cherbourg with Community.



## BBQ CHERBOURG



## BUSH TUCKER PICNIC DAY







**"This project gave us  
an opportunity to be guided by  
Community and learn the right way.  
As Annie said, learning that we may  
have made mistakes along the way is  
good too, we have the opportunity to  
respectfully ask Community about a  
better way, to make changes and  
build a better relationship."**

**(Service provider)**





