



# 'Core of life' – designing and implementing culturally respectful pregnancy and parenting programs for youth & families Nationally

Tracy Smith – Director/Midwife Youth & Family Education Resources

Kima O'Donnell – Childbirth Educator / Core of Life Instructor & Coordinator



# Core of life- pregnancy birth & early parenting education

COL recognises and  
appreciates that birth and  
parenting is central to all  
cultures ~

Real & evidence based  
content

User friendly

Multiple target groups

Multiple settings

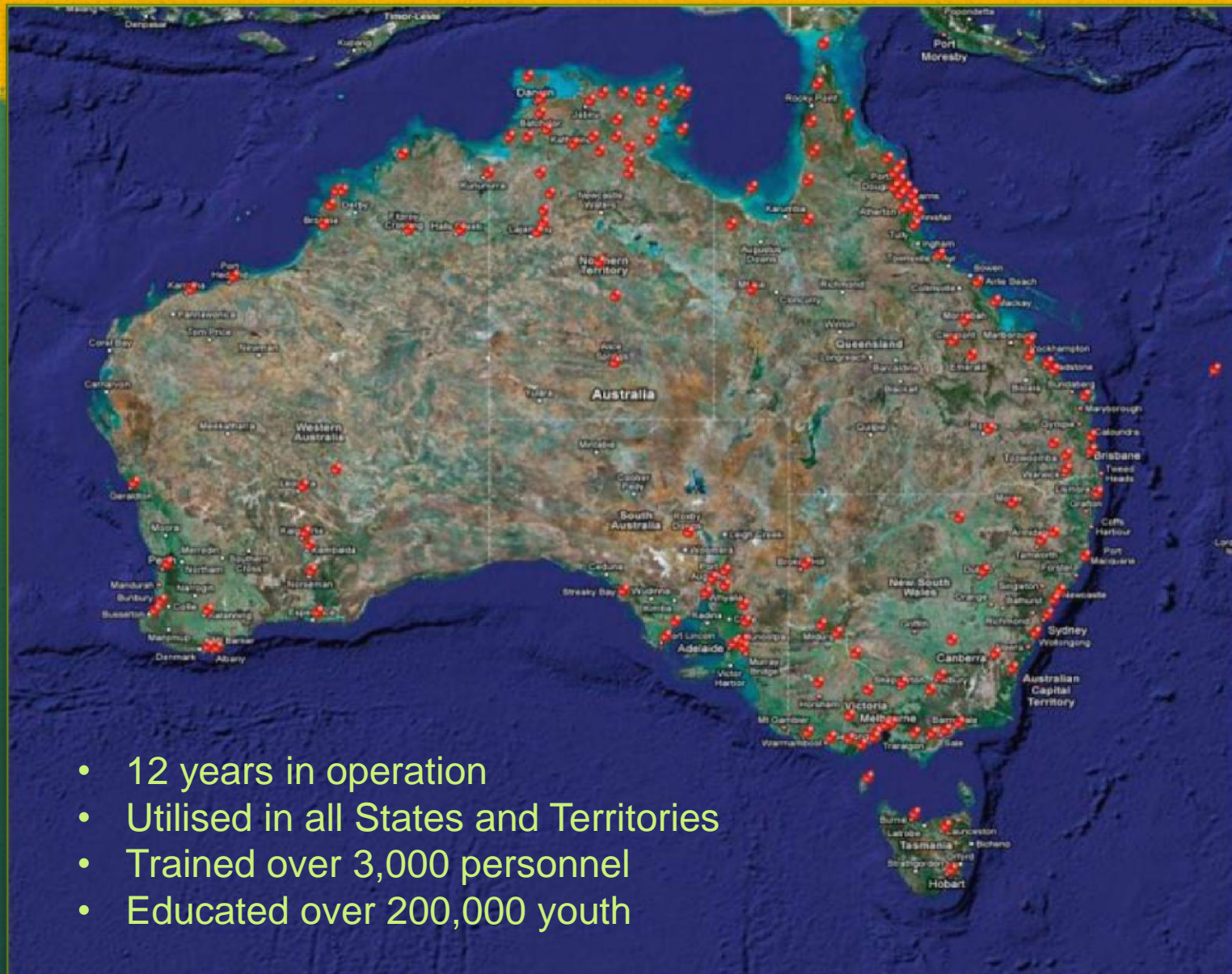
Didactic interactive delivery

Capacity building –  
Individuals and Community  
Responsive to local needs





# Where is Core of life?



- 12 years in operation
- Utilised in all States and Territories
- Trained over 3,000 personnel
- Educated over 200,000 youth

# Ingredients of success

- Organisational support and flexibility
- Openness, creativity, passion & long term commitment – and to have and promote fun!
- Collaboration & partnerships
- Respect for ‘old ways’ and ‘new ways’ of knowing
- Media & graphics – the power of what you see and what you do
- Sharing the joy for a sustainable future





Community consultation  
working WITH community to  
promote better outcomes  
Understanding what works and why?



# Extensive preliminary promotion, liaison.

Cross sectorial –  
health / gov't /  
education / NGO /  
youth / community

Inclusive, friendly,  
informative

Suitable timing  
Formal & Informal

Identifying a local  
champion

Neutral ground and/or  
several sites

Food provision





# Needs analysis

History taking

Local AEDI

Maternity service  
review and knowledge  
of on the ground  
experiences

Substance misuse

Nutritional status

Family violence issues

Housing conditions

Language

Cultural practices

## Common Issues

- Youth Promiscuity
- Grandmothers role
- Loss of cultural practices
- Loss of language
- Less opportunity for sharing/storytelling
- Less cross generational discussion
- Less positive role models
- Alcohol & ganja



# Flexibility & Accessibility

Weather

Site availability –neutral zone?

Ceremony

Clinic commitment–best days?

School holidays

School / community events

Start - finish times

Transport availability

Access to Catering

Royalty day

Accommodation availability

Male / female

Family groups





# Discussion & Negotiation

Respectful consideration of program content and manner of delivery related to;

- Target groups
- Age/gender
- Location
- Community & Program Directors Responsibility to impart information vs Cultural beliefs e.g. evolving role of fathers and respect for 'Womens Business'

2 way understanding of objectives and expected outcomes





# Community development approach

The Ottawa Charter considers health promotion as a process, not as outcome based, as it is carried out with people and not on people. (Thorogood & Coombes, 2000).

Stakeholder commitment  
Collaborative development  
of resources

Valuing teamwork  
Maximising strengths





# Support for implementation & follow up

Diversity, modification, replenishment of teaching resources

Transportable training

Locally adaptive evaluative tools

Open access to refresher training

Website support

Social media platforms





# Challenges

## Budget

Good sustainable programming takes time therefore .....

- Difficulties in “fitting” true quality into deliverable deadlines balancing the amount of “where’s” “hows” & “whens”

## Transition of human resources

- General movement of non local staff – COL is transportable
- Changing roles and inflexibility of local’s employment  
E.g. moves from clinic to council – COL seen as cross community issue & solution
- Locals overwhelmed and burnout due to volume of demand on their time – build into existing programming where possible e.g. SWSBSC, FAFT



# Rejoicing the successes Banatjarl Strong Wimun





























