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North West Telegraph Pilbara

Group workshops to support Aboriginal families

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The workshop team Storm Motohata, Dianne Dalgety, Danielle Lockyer, Sara Vaz, and Dianne Lockyer. Credit: Supplied



A series of group therapy workshops were delivered in South Hedland throughout August, with organisers believing they could offer wide-ranging support for Aboriginal workers in the resources sector.

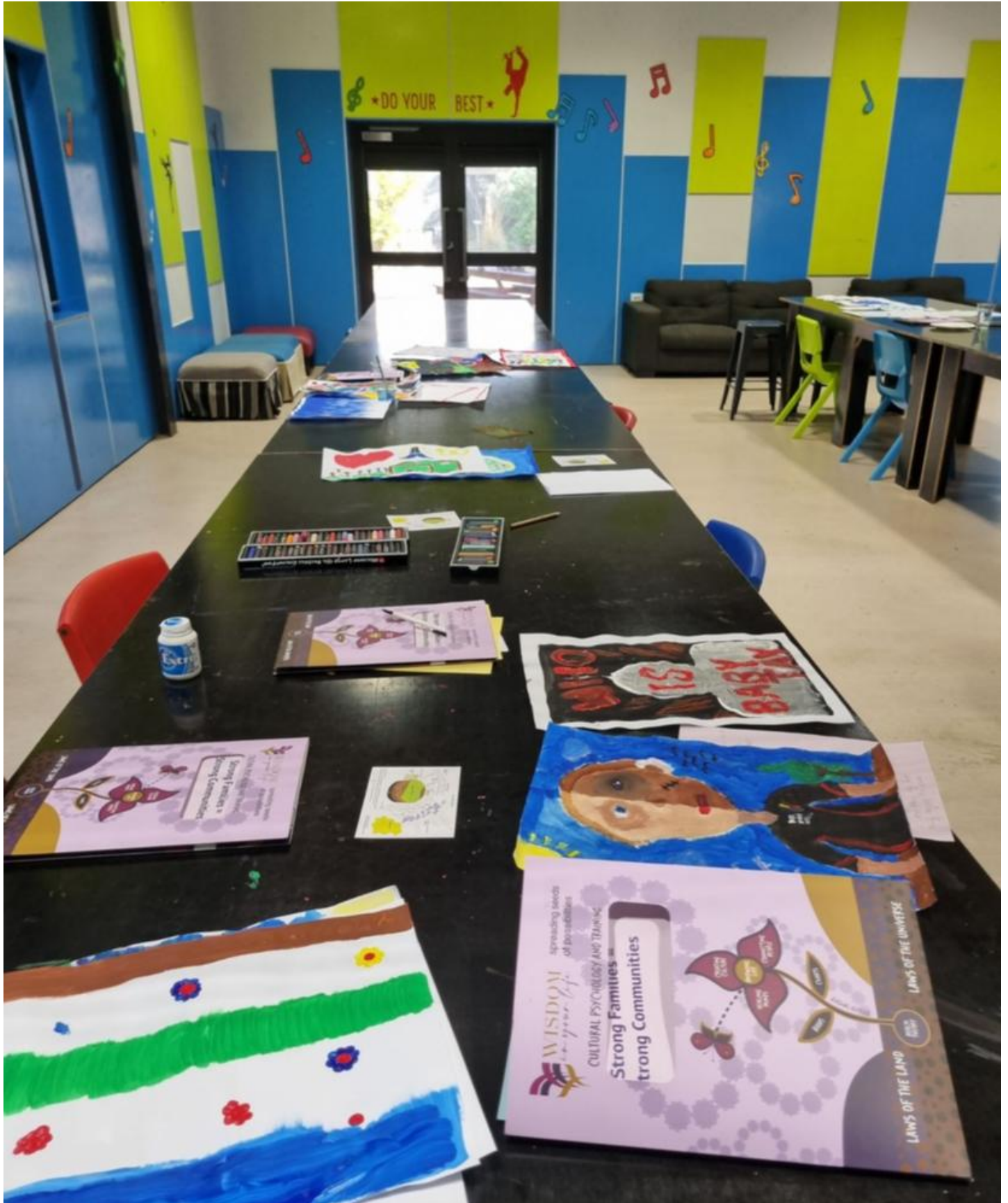
The free community-based group healing sessions were jointly delivered by the Perth-based mental health provider BSS Psychology and the Aboriginal-focused cultural psychology company Wisdom in Your Life.

BSS Psychology facilitator Storm Motohata is a Yawuru and Nyul Nyul woman from the Kimberley region and helped run the workshops.

She said the sessions could provide support to families of Aboriginal people employed in the resources sector.

“What we have found is that Aboriginal employees for mining companies access EAP services just as much as their non-Aboriginal colleagues,” Ms Mohata said.

“However, the families of Aboriginal workers do not.”





 The workshops were delivered at the Youth Involvement Council building Credit: Supplied

Ms Mohata said that by providing support to the families, those employed in the sector were more likely to decide to continue in their jobs.

“One of the reasons why we don’t retain Aboriginal people in employment is because of extenuating circumstances either in their families or their communities,” she said. “The idea of our programs is that we run community and group healing programs.”

The workshops used art, music, stories, and movement to help individuals explore complex emotional issues in a supportive collective environment.

BSS Psychologist Sara Vaz said that group sessions were a proven way to offer support to families.

“Together we have fun, sadness, and laughter whilst we explore whatever individuals need to make them and their family and community stronger,” she said.

Ms Mohata said the ultimate goal was to have local people deliver the workshops as a sustainable therapy model.

“If it’s successful we will be looking at training some local Aboriginal people within the community to keep running it while it’s being funded,” she said.

“It’s another way of empowerment and for us to step back and let community takeover so they can deliver it locally themselves.”

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