



THE KICA PROJECT

2025 NEWSLETTER

What is the KICA project?

The **Kimberley Indigenous Cognitive Assessment (KICA)** is an assessment package for health workers to see if an older person is having trouble with their **memory and thinking** that is not getting better, which could be caused by dementia. Having a KICA assessment early is important so that information and supports can be given.

It was co-developed in 2003 by researchers, remote Aboriginal communities, and local organisations in the **Kimberley region of Western Australia**, and has been adapted for Elders living in urban areas and the Torres Strait Islands. It is the **first and only assessment package of its kind** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders.

Twenty years on, this **new KICA project** aims to review the KICA and how it is used in urban, rural, and remote areas - making sure it continues to work well for **Elders now and into the future**.

The KICA Project Journey so far...



KICA National Contact

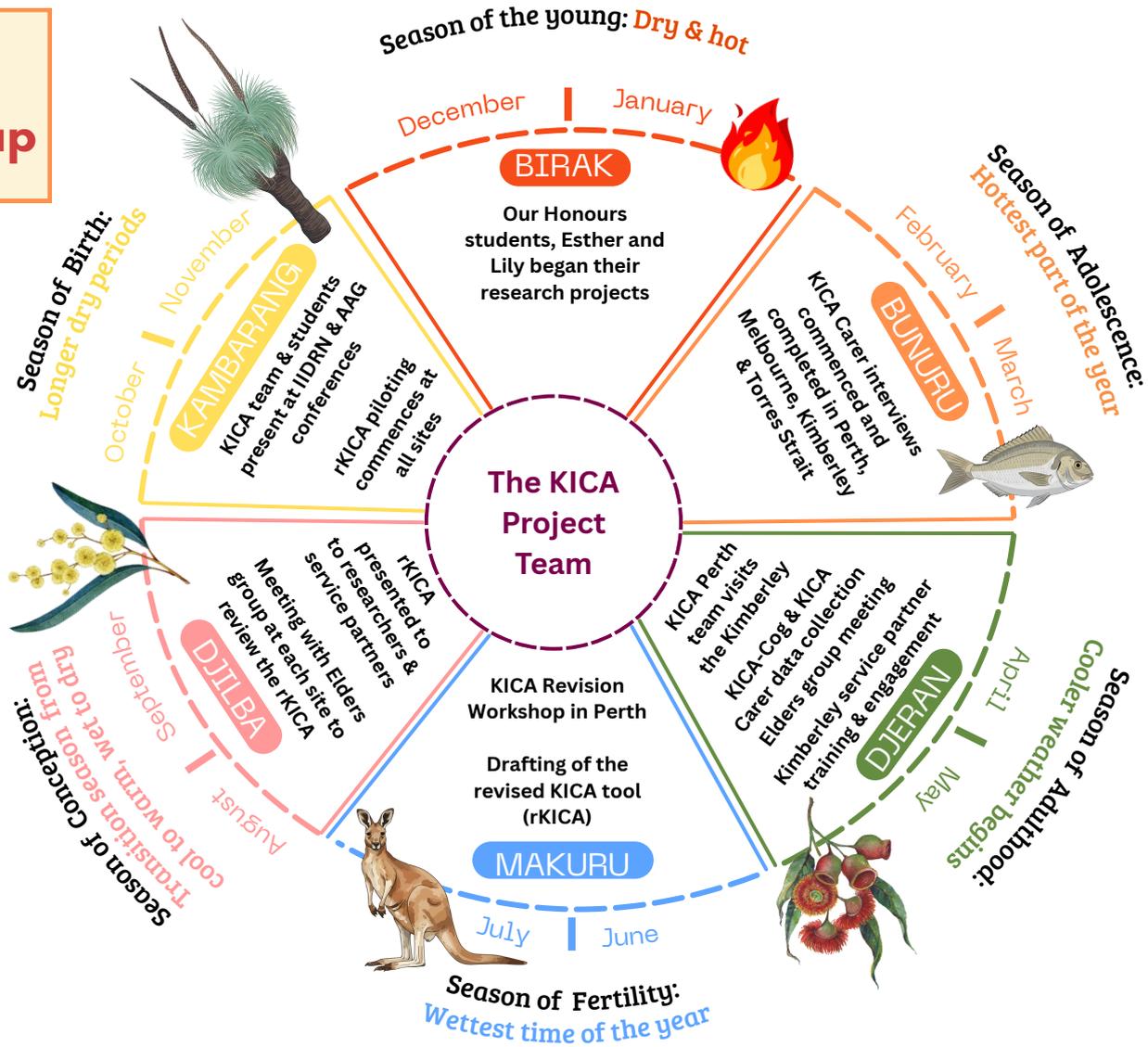
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2025 KICA Project Recap

The Noongar calendar includes six seasons in Western Australia—Birak, Bunuru, Djeran, Makuru, Djilba, and Kambarang. Each season reflects changes in weather, plants, animals and cultural activities, guiding how people move, gather food, and connect with Country.



KICA Revision Workshop in Perth



In June 2025, the KICA team hosted the **KICA Revision Workshop**, bringing together lead research officers, researchers and specialists from the four KICA Project sites: Victoria, Torres Strait, Kimberley and Perth.

The three-day workshop opened with a warm and meaningful **Welcome to Country** from **Uncle Charlie Kickett** and **Aunty Helen Kickett**, setting the tone for the days ahead.

This gathering marked the transition from **Stage 1 (Review)** to **Stage 2 (Revise)**, bringing all sites together to reflect on feedback on the KICA tool gathered from reviews, health worker surveys, and yarning groups with Elders and carers in Stage 1. We also reviewed the current **KICA processes**, including how the assessment is delivered and how instructions are understood.

These conversations highlighted what is **working well** and where **improvements** can be made to ensure the KICA continues to be **culturally safe, clear, and useful for communities**. It was a wonderful chance for all sites to yarn and plan our next steps together. We now move forward into **Stage 2** guided by voices of Elders, carers, clinicians, and community partners.

CIRCLE sub-study

The **CIRCLE** sub-study (Co-design of Indigenous dementia Resources in Canada and Australia: Enhancing health communication for Indigenous peoples along the dementia journey) will be a new collaboration between researchers in Canada and Australia. Building on the **KICA Project**, **CIRCLE** aims to co-design culturally centred resources on dementia prevention and assessment that support better communication throughout the dementia journey.

In Australia, **CIRCLE** will run as a sub-study of the **KICA Project**, helping us follow up on what Elders and service providers shared during the KICA reviews, especially the need for **clearer, safer, and more culturally grounded ways** of communication during cognitive assessments. This year, members of both the Australian and Canadian **CIRCLE** teams were able to meet at the IIDRN Conference in Hawai'i, strengthening relationships and shared goals for the project. **CIRCLE** is an exciting next step, ensuring our work continues to be guided by **community voices, cultural knowledge**, and the **needs of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**.

Meet Lianne

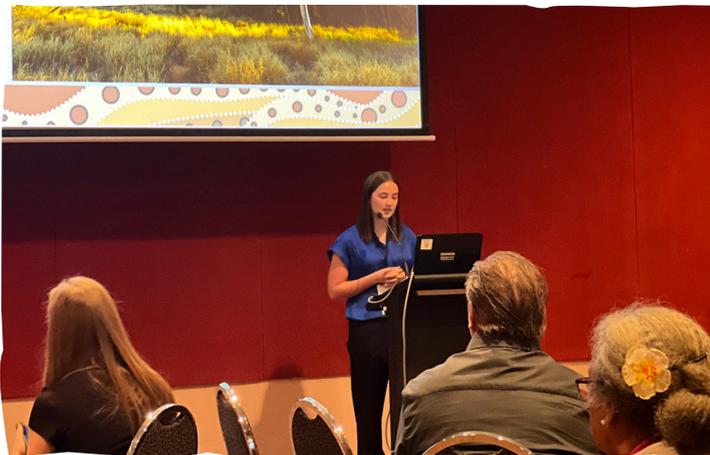


Meet the CIRCLE coordinator:
Lianne Gilchrist

Lianne is a Yamatji woman whose journey began in Occupational Therapy, driven by a desire to support her community's wellbeing. Her path led her into research, where she developed and adapted the **Good Spirit Good Life** quality-of-life tool for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia and the Torres Strait. Lianne continues to grow as an emerging researcher, sharing her work on national and international stages.

Spotlight on the KICA students

This year, we are proud to highlight the achievements of our two Honours students, **Esther Chaney** and **Lily Turton**, who are working on important parts of the **KICA Project**. Both students travelled to Alice Springs to present their work at the 2025 Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) Conference, where their research was warmly received by Elders, clinicians, and researchers from across the country.



Esther presented her Honours project reviewing all versions of the **KICA-Cog** to understand what is **working well** and where **improvements** are needed. She drew on a scoping review, yarning circles with Elders and carers, clinician surveys, and psychometric analysis. With guidance from **Elders Governance Groups** and **service partners**, Esther helped refine both the KICA-Cog items and assessment processes. She presented the draft **revised KICA-Cog (rKICA)**. Her work supports earlier and more culturally responsive detection of memory and thinking changes for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Lily is a Yamatji woman who grew up on Noongar boodja. She presented her Honours project on **strengthening** the **KICA-Carer** tool, ensuring it remains **culturally meaningful** and **aligned with community needs** across different regions. She shared the **key themes** which emerged from yarning-style interviews with carers across Perth, the Kimberley, Victoria, and the Torres Strait/NPA, which included **cultural preferences, language, terminology**, and **transferability**. Her work is guided by a commitment to culturally safer, strengths-based approaches within psychology and ageing.

KICA Photo Gallery



YARNING CIRCLE WITH
ELDERS IN VICTORIA



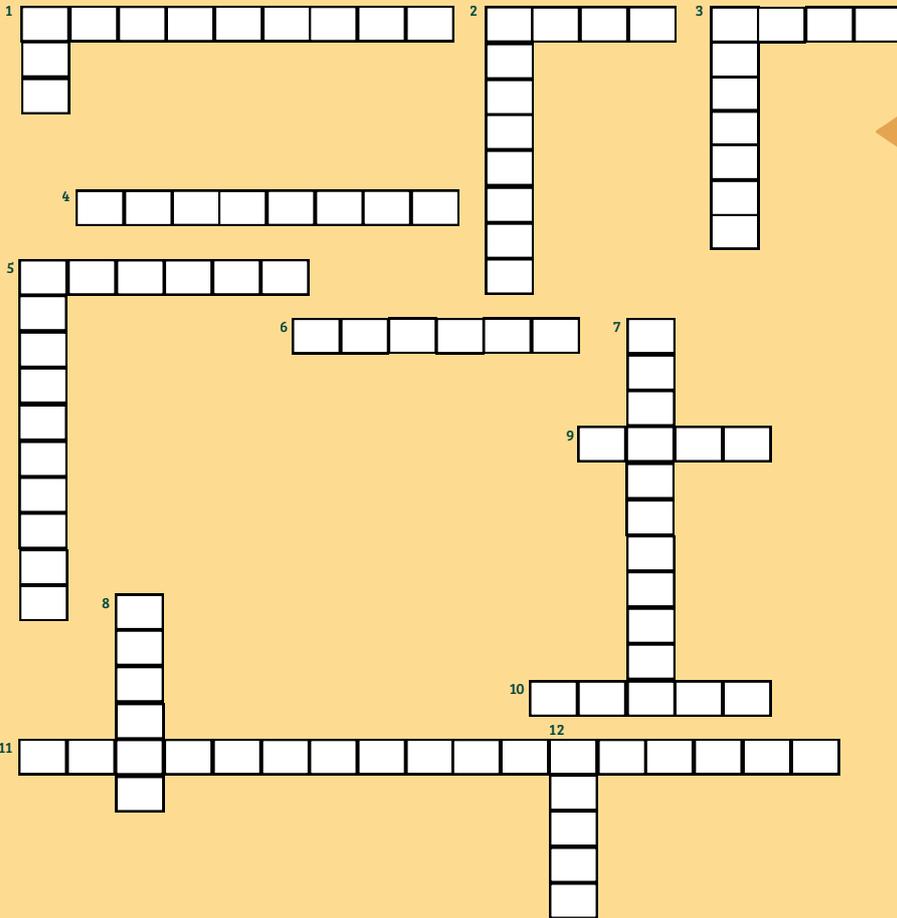
THE CIRCLE TEAM AT THE
INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS
DEMENTIA CONFERENCE IN HAWAII



YARNING CIRCLE WITH ELDERS
IN THE TORRES STRAIT



YARNING CIRCLE WITH ELDERS
IN THE KIMBERLEY



Try Auntie Lyn's crossword!
The theme is **Moana**.



Down

- Who does Moana take with her when she first tries to sail?
- "I am Moana of _____. You will board my boat, sail across the seas and restore the heart of Te Fiti."
- What did Maui **not steal** during his mythological escapades, as mentioned in the song "You're Welcome"? (2 words)
- What unique physical trait allows Maui to perform his shape shifting abilities? (2 words)
- What is the significance of the heart of Te Fiti? (3 words)
- Te Fiti restores Moana's boat so she can return home. What is the symbol on the sail?
- What does Moana put on the pile of stones placed by the previous Chiefs?

Across

- Where does Moana live?
- Who is the Demigod that Moana is seeking to help her restore the heart of Te Fiti?
- What was Moana's grandmother's name?
- What is the tattoo on Moana's grandmother's back?
- What is the name of the chicken in Moana?
- Which animal does baby Moana protect in the beginning of the movie?
- The villagers are worried because their traps are empty and there are no more _____.
- What does Moana's name mean in Polynesian?
- What happens to Maui's tattoos? (3 words)

Answers

Across

- Polynesia
- Maui
- Tala
- Stingray
- Heihei
- Turtle
- Fish
- Ocean
- Moana appears there

Down

- Pua
- Montunui
- The moon
- His tattoos
- It gives life
- Spiral
- Shell

Food 4 D Brain

Aunty Lyn's Plain Kangaroo Rissoles



Serves 4-6

Ingredients & Equipment

- 1 kg kangaroo mince
- 1 packet of bacon bits
- 1 tablespoon of Italian Herbs
- 1 tablespoon of garlic powder
- 2 eggs (beaten)
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- Aluminium foil
- Baking tray
- Mixing bowl

1. Take the 1 kg of Mince (drain off the liquid) then place it in a mixing bowl.
2. Add the packet of bacon bits (cut the bigger pieces down smaller if there are any).
3. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of Italian Herbs and mix it through.
4. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of garlic powder and mix it through.
5. Take 2 beaten eggs and stir into the mixture to help hold the mixture together.
6. Then, take 1 cup of breadcrumbs and mix through to bind the mixture together.
7. Mix all ingredients thoroughly.
8. Take 1 large baking dish/tray and grease with a small amount butter.
9. Then, take the mixture and roll it into large round meatballs in your hand (for adults) or smaller sized ones (for children).
10. Cover the tray with aluminium foil to hold in the heat and steam the meatballs, so they do not burn or dry out.
11. Then, put the tray into an oven set at 180 degrees and cook for about 45 minutes, then remove the tray and let it stand covered for 5 minutes.

You can serve the rissoles with mashed potatoes and steamed vegies and gravy. I like to use the back of a spoon to make a round deep indent in my mashed potatoes and put gravy into it.

P.S. If you want chilli or curry rissoles, add curry or chilli powder (to your taste and preference).

ENJOY!



Important Dates

Notes



A special thanks to our partners



Thank you to all our research teams, Elders groups, and service and community partners for all their contributions to this project.