

Mantiyupwi Gambling Management Project

GroundUp Research

August 2023



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This document may contain the names and/or images of Aboriginal people who have since passed away.

Reference: Kristelle Orsto, Rebecca Pupangamirri, Ainsley Kerinaia, Lorenzo Kerinaia, Michaela Spencer, Michael Christie (2023) Mantiupwi Gambling Management Project – Final Report, Charles Darwin University, UniPrint.



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Key insights

- Gambling is not a traditional Tiwi activity, but it has become a part of everyday Tiwi life.
- Tiwi people gave many reasons for enjoying cards: being together with relatives laughing and telling stories, feeling safe, sharing together and making donations to charity, winning money for expensive things like school trips and outboard motors, and the excitement of playing and winning.
- Gambling plays a significant role in the maintenance of Tiwi networks of family and community, including in the management of everyday needs, and ways people maintain connections and manage their money.
- When there are not strong networks of kin and family maintaining cultural ties and practices, it can be difficult for Tiwi people to manage the damaging aspects of gambling in ways which maintain Tiwi strength, autonomy and authority.
- The damages people report include focussing away from other healthy activities like hunting and being out bush, kids not being cared for, people getting angry about wanting or losing money, and looking bad to the tourists.
- Tiwi people, and the Mantiupwi family trust, have emphasised the importance of being able to manage gambling in their own ways, and supporting their own families and ways of life.
- When the structures and capacities of Tiwi everyday life and culture are supported, the bad aspects of gambling are more easily managed, and less likely to come up.
- In recent years, there has been more and more card games around the NUA shop, and a decrease in programs and services which support Tiwi people to go out from town and maintain connections with their lands. Wurrumiyanga is losing the feel of community.
- Supporting strong networks of Tiwi connection with family and country is seen as crucial to any gambling management strategy.
- There is strong concern for the safety of children and young people, when card games are played near the road, into the night and without consideration for how tourists and other outsiders view Tiwi people.
- Good and safe family gathering spaces, employment for Tiwi people and services oriented around community need (rather than external agendas) were seen as crucial components of ongoing gambling management work.
- The design of a Mantiupwi Gambling Management strategy was seen as most likely to be effective when mobilising a two part approach: addressing the direct safety issues and effects of card games in Wurrumiyanga; and working to keep Tiwi culture strong.
- The role of Tiwi researchers in encouraging people to be sharing stories about gambling is likely to play an important role in the implementation and evaluation of any Mantiupwi gambling management strategies moving forward.

Project overview

Mantiyupwi Family Trust engaged Tiwi researchers to work with the Ground Up team at CDU to research gambling in Wurrumiyanga.

The research team has been led by four Tiwi researchers – Kristelle Orsto, Rebecca Pupangamirri, Lorenzo Kerinaia and Ainsley Kerinaia. They were also joined by two CDU researchers – Michaela Spencer and Michael Christie.

The research team spoke with 55 people in Wurrumiyanga, starting with the most senior ladies.

We were told by senior Tiwi ladies, to remember that:

“Everything we do has a reason. Gambling has a reason.”



They reminded us that there are complex arrangements of Tiwi culture, leadership and social life that gambling is part of. Gambling sometimes supports Tiwi culture and sometimes it makes Tiwi unhappy and frustrated.

The purpose of this research is assisting the Mantiyupwi Traditional Owners to manage gambling in Wurrumiyanga. We are taking seriously the role that gambling plays in everyday life, while also supporting Mantiyupwi to work in ways that help keep culture strong and Tiwi people safe.

Aims of the research

1. To help the Mantiyupwi Family Trust better understand what Tiwi people in Wurrumiyanga think about gambling management.
2. To suggest to the Mantiyupwi Board some strategies for management.
3. To build up local Tiwi research capacity.

Local research team

On all research projects, the Ground Up team at CDU work under the guidance of local researchers. The Mantiupwi Family Trust proposed a team of four local researchers who would lead the gambling research.

Initially, Kristelle Orsto and Rebecca Pupangamirri began working with the CDU researcher to speak with people in Wurrumiyanga about gambling. Then they were joined by Ainsley Kerinauia and Lorenzo Kerinauia. These researchers were all involved as Tiwi people and community members, not as staff of any other organisations.

All the researchers have been supported in their professional development by CDU. They have created their own online research profiles and worked towards attaining an Indigenous community-based researcher credential.



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What we did

- The Mantiupwi Family Trust Board met with the Ground Up research team at CDU to discuss the gambling research project.
- A researcher from the Ground Up team CDU travelled to Wurrumiyanga and presented a proposal to the Mantiupwi Family Trust Board who endorsed the project.
- The Mantiupwi Family Trust Board put forward the names of some Tiwi researchers who could guide the project in Wurrumiyanga.
- In beginning the research, we started with the old people and listened to stories from senior women.
- They emphasised that some parts of gambling were good in that they helped to keep Tiwi culture strong. Other parts were bad because they caused unhappiness and frustration.
- Following from this, the role of the research has been to sit with many Tiwi people, from different clan groups, old and young, male and female, as they explained these good and bad things about gambling.
- We have got permission from these people to share some of their stories and photos.
- Looking through these, the CDU researchers noticed a number of key themes that is will be helpful to consider when thinking about how to manage gambling in ways that keep what is good, while working to reduce what is bad.
 - > Keeping things in order – sharing and keeping everything in its place.
 - > Cultural networks – working, playing and hunting as growing a strong community.
 - > Families together in networks of kin – maintaining skin and clan groups.
 - > Family and community spaces – well designed areas where gambling is permitted.
 - > Care and safety – the importance of keeping young and old people safe.
- The Tiwi researchers then travelled to Darwin for a workshop at CDU. Here they also looked at all the stories that Tiwi people told about their experience of gambling.
- At this workshop the whole research team (Tiwi and CDU) worked to develop some proposals for the future, about how to support what is good and important about gambling in Tiwi life, and to also help reduce the parts that are bad and cause problems.
- We presented the research and a draft report to the Mantiupwi Family Trust at a board meeting and asked for feedback and comments before finalising the project report.
- The final report has now been delivered to the Mantiupwi Family Trust Board, so it can be read by Tiwi people, and so that everyone can continue their work to keep strong Tiwi ways of life.

What we were told about the everyday business of Tiwi gambling

Stories from senior people tell how card games and other gambling first arrived. In days past, people used to only gamble with their close family. Nowadays, Tiwi people often organise themselves for gambling in larger and more public settings.



Tiwi people coordinate and manage card games and other forms of gambling for themselves. The gambling circles are closely regulated, with clear rules about how to manage the games.

The games work like a business; they are organised by Tiwi people in their way, outside of the rules and regulations of the non-Tiwi world. There is someone who puts out the tarp, and who brings the cards. They are the person who manages the game, counts the money and receives a cut of the winnings ('Tong money'). They may also pay cleaners (\$30) to clean the card area after the games are finished.

The card games are often played near the shops, where people can easily go to buy food, power cards, smokes or other things with their winnings. This area is also near to public toilets which are used by card players and managed by the store and the shire council.

The business of card games is an important part of Tiwi social life and economy. It plays an important role in the upkeep of community and is something that almost all Tiwi people say will always be there.

Some people say that it is only through gambling that families can afford large purchases like washing machines, airplane tickets or outboard motors.

What we were told about Tiwi ceremony and cultural life

Tiwi used to come together at the campfire. This is where they would tell stories and teach the young children how to dance.

Ceremonies would often last for three days. After a funeral happened, one or two years later there would be another ceremony for the deceased person. Everyone would gather, all the clans from both islands. There would be several days of ceremony, and on the last day there would also be a mass, before the ceremony started again.

Now, the ceremonies don't last as long; only one day. But Tiwi still have ways of coming together as family and sitting with old people. Tiwi people are still strong in culture and faith.

Sharing has always been an important part of Tiwi life. The dancers in ceremonies would be offered objects from the deceased family. First, they used to be offered pamajini, spear or tunga. Then rations, tobacco and cigarettes, and now money. It has always been important to support each other and exchange things.

Senior people and parents need to keep talking to our children and grandchildren. Encouraging them and reminding them, so they won't lose faith and culture. So they will keep it strong. Even if kids are disobedient, we have to correct them, sit with them and talk to them. This is very hard when some children and young people always shout – 'don't tell me what to do'.

Gambling used to happen mainly in circles of close family. It would happen in each area or suburb, and family living in that area would come together and share. There were strong rules about how to run the game, and they used to put out a circle of white flour so people wouldn't step into it, before someone else steps out. Now the population is growing, and people come to the main shop area for gambling and money.

The Mantiyupwi Traditional Owners feel a sense of responsibility around this gambling. They don't like seeing trouble arising, or rubbish left behind. They would like to keep the environment clean and offer a role model that others can follow.

Tiwi Voices: The Tiwi story of gambling



"To me gambling sounds like 'exchange'. It is a hobby for us Tiwi people. Don't put a stop to it, they love it. But it also brings trouble."



"When we're playing card games, we're speaking in Tiwi. Come together speaking one Tiwi language, understand each other. Is a Tiwi way of life, what we are doing today."



"Sometimes feel not good for kids to come around where people are playing. Sometimes old people see things, it's not right like this. Elders in community come together and speak to young ones about what is right and wrong."



"We still have that culture in learning with the kids. But is changing for our young people. Things changing for new generation – new technology. It's OK for us to live Tiwi way, but things changing for young people."



"Is good to have card game at place away from the store. Too dangerous – all eyes are on the cards, don't worry about kids running across."



"People didn't used to gamble at the shop. That somehow changed now. It's the hotspot for everyone to meet up and sit with family. Is a social place, always people there gambling Tues-Saturday. Sunday is hunting day, and on Monday there is no pay."



"Sometimes at the gambling people can be stressing. If are stressing, can help them, calm them down, tell them to notice when too much money. Walk away, go and sit down at the beach, cool your mind. Think of what to do."



"There is no support for young parents. It would be good to have organisation that supports old people and young people if they need something."



"When we are gambling we are gathering with family, sitting with them. Its only then we see family faces. Laughing, telling stories, sharing and caring. Some people do this, and some not."



"We have a boat, go out hunting, fishing in mangroves, collect mussel, long bum, crabs... teaching kids how to eat. Finding food in mangrove. Go out bush, bush food is best food. For medicine as well. Is free. Learn early from our elders. Know right names for food. Hunting is part of our culture."



"Sometimes gambling helps you get money to buy yourself feed. Sometimes get money, sometimes lose it all. Should play in the bush, on the side. Should build playground for little kids. They like swings. Should be where parents can see them."



"At Melville and Garden Point people don't play near the shop. They play away from shop, in park shade area and in family houses. The kids are playing 'holey' here, but not there. The parents there have got rules for their kids."



"Before the Dutch and the Macassans came, we were here, didn't know about cards. Then cards came to the Tiwi people – doesn't belong to us, it belongs to them, but it is our favourite hobby."



"I used to play card back then, but makes me feel bad, playing card, wasting money. It's very hard to ask family sometimes. I buy food when winning card games, and power. It keeps us going."



"Parents aren't being strong. Young boys need to learn about songs. Have to learn how to sing – culture way. Instead of break and enter, need culture for young boys. Come and learn to pronounce Tiwi words in song."



"Is hard to find food for people if you don't gamble. But if had enough money, would still want to play cards. Want to be able to have a good time. Like it near the shop, because when we win, just run. Near the shop is good, and the public toilet is here."



"We help each other, this is how we live – teabag, sugar, power card, trip, funeral. When people are struggling, they get stressed, and this is when trouble happens. If shop prices go down, then gambling will go down, maybe".



"Gambling is not the problem, it is the respect. We have to get the respect back, helping younger generation. They are losing it in younger generation. In the old days, you would play with one tribes and one families. Now it's all mixed up, now talk with all people. Manners are needed."



"Gambling is not our culture, but is now into our blood. Culture was introduced by the Macassans, traded for sea slug, introduced Tobacco and other things. Then the gambling came in that era. Since then, the gambling was through the Tiwi for long time."



"I strongly believe, we should break [Wurrumiyanga] up into suburbs. Every suburb has leaders. Don't worry about the Shire, this place is not theirs. Don't worry about the NUA ones, it's about us! Have a prize for the most fantastic suburb."

Emerging Themes

Gambling is part of the everyday happenings of Tiwi life. The good aspects of gambling help grow strong families and communities; however, the damaging aspects are something that Mantiupwi and other community leaders and members would like to do something about.

The ability to manage gambling well relies on a strong Tiwi community. Working together can help make solutions that lessen the harm by remembering the true Tiwi way. Including, through guiding services and organisations as to how to focus better on Tiwi people and their needs. This is not only services with gambling programs, but ALL services because they all have a role in supporting strong community and Tiwi ways of life in Wurrumiyanga.

In the sections below, we identify a set of key themes which show important areas of attention and consideration in taking a cultural approach to gambling management.

1. Keeping things in order – sharing and keeping everything in its place

All Tiwi are connected. Helping each other through sharing reminds people of their responsibilities, and their kin connections and their right ways of relating to other Tiwi people.

- *We help each other, this is how we live. We help with teabag, sugar, power cards, as well as for trips or funeral. We depend on each other; we only have each other.*
- *When see person walking, if aunty asks for smoke, we have to give it. Is a community concern, and is a parenting concern about how parents raise their kids.*

Today, gambling has become a way to circulate and share money within the community through kin relationships. Just as it also helps people manage situations of scarcity.

- *Without gambling life would be a lot harder for us. Gambling makes life a lot easier*
- *We are lucky compared to people who live elsewhere. Here we are alright because we are circulating our own money around. Gambling is here to help all of that too.*
- *Is sort of a business now. People come to get money, make money, share money. Family give money to trade. Is exchange, like trading. Money goes round and round.*
- *Leaders are showing their strength in guiding the games, and are happy for it to happen. Its normalised here and leadership is shown in the gambling places.*

Many of the problems of gambling arise when there is a lack of other activities which balance, and diffuse, the concentration of people around the card games.

- *People used to go out (of the centre of town) more. We would go for hunting. We would go out, out, out, in different directions. We were not always at the shop.*
- *We used to play marbles, skipping rope, hopscotch, basketball, hot squash at the tennis court. Lots of activities. Now kids don't see those games.*
- *We used to have swimming pool, video games at that shop. Arcade games would be good. We used to have pac-man.*

There are also good memories and considerable nostalgia for the ways older women used to collectively support young people and keep them engaged while teaching them about being Tiwi.

- *Since bilingual [education] stopped, there have been changes. We used to have everything in the school then. There was old people and culture in the school. Now we want the Wangatunga ladies there. We need that, they can support.*
- *Kids should not be playing cards. Have activities for kids. Basketball court. A lot of people like basketball. The elders should run it; people respect them.*
- *Elders have power to encourage young ones, and respect elderly in community. The old people are trying to help young people be strong as they are growing.*
- *Respect for others and elders is important. Some young people are being cheeky; they have lost respect for elders.*

2. Cultural networks – working, playing and hunting as growing a strong community.

For many generations, since it arrived with the Macassan's and the Malay's, gambling has been a part of everyday life in the Tiwi islands, just as it has elsewhere.

- *Malay men brought gambling a long time ago. They were trading for rations, teabag, sugar. We've played cards for a long time. We played for food before. In those days there was only a little bit of money.*
- *Our grandparents played from long time ago. Macassan and Malay brought this card game. They were looking for trepang and pearls.*
- *We used to play in the Mission. Poker was our first hobby. 5 people would play for food, tobacco. It was a gentle game. We had no money for smoke so played for that. Back then it was pound, shilling, and pence. Today it is dollars.*

Card games allow people to come and organise themselves as Tiwi, without the regulations and commitments that people experience in workplaces and other areas of life.

- *There is no (balanda) boss here. Boss is the owner of the tarp. Have Tiwi structure of being. It's not clocking in.*
- *Cards is place to meet family and friends, get along, have fun, talking, telling story, funny story from a long time ago, sit with old people, Feel good.*
- *When you go to a circle, you can just go to anyone, any circle. People are all there together. Some circles are mixed, some have just one family. Can go to any tarp – depends on how much money you have. Some are \$5 games; some are \$10 games. Can have 13 people, or 18 people – 18 is the biggest and you can earn thousands of dollars.*

People often talk about the feeling of enjoyment you get from card games as also being like the enjoyment that people get, or used to get, from going out bush and hunting.

- *Before didn't have to tell us what to do. Knew the routine. We used to go out bush, go with grannies. Go out and get water for old people. Used to go out, now go to shop. Used to go 'out', 'out' for hunting etc Now just go to shop and everyone is here, want to be where people are sitting.*



- *Wasn't that bad a long time ago. There were other things to do, like go out hunting. Now, gambling it's part of our lives in the community, its familiar.*
- *Before used to teach us culture in ceremony and cultural gathering, learn stories from old people. When ceremony happens, I bake damper, make tea for old people.*
- *Even when out for bush holidays, children can hear stories, hear from ancestors. Teach kids as they are growing.*

There is a strong sense that it is important to continue these other activities, and ways of being Tiwi people together and on-country.

- *Want to continue our culture, our tribal that was created for us, continue here. So the young ones can join in. Tell children at school their mother, father country, mother skin, father skin.*
- *Teach them our singing, dancing. Buffalo, rainbow, all our dance. We do this in both schools – senior and primary – on Thurs and Friday.*
- *Primary school has cultural program, high school does some days too. Based in the school only. Red Cross used to have a youth program – boys one night, girls another. But that went with the recent changes in Red Cross staffing and funding cuts.*

In the past there have been programs, which have supported these activities, both for children, and through opportunities for employment and training.

- *There also used to be programs for young people with Norforce, police force, army cadets. Stayed at the big army barracks where the American's are now, and used to have a liaison officer at the secondary school.*
- *Used to have program out bush – take people/children out for a weekend to Cape Fourcroy*
- *Also about community – not many people are in a job. Need to create training to get position and jobs. Have to train young people – then will be no gambling because will be busy working. Encourage young people to conserve more. If you add up cost of all cigarettes by Christmas time you will be Father Christmas.*

3. Families together in networks of kin – maintaining skin and clan groups.

The gambling circles can affirm right and respectful ways of relating, but this is difficult now when everyone is all mixed up and come to play together.

- *In the old days, you would play cards in your clan, and just mix with one tribes and one families. Now it's all mixed up. We talk with all people.*
- *Manners are needed. It was only old people that used to play cards, and if you were young, you had to come in with respect.*
- *We should make everything for our people. Old people are sometimes forgotten. If the services aren't helping and we don't get education, we'll keep losing respect and more people get sick.*
- *We used to bring flowers and decorate church with them, go out hunting. Now no respect. Doing breaking in. It makes us out of control too, all the problems we have. Just spend our money.*

Tiwi are all living so closely with each other in Wurrumiyanga and so joys and stresses are felt collectively. This can cause emotions to be amplified when not directed through the right channels or dealt with in the right ways.

- *We are all affected, live in small community together. Everything happens in front of our faces. Of course we are affected by that. It is in the open, can't run away from it.*
- *We all just live around each other – just suburbs, then club, shop, post office, Centrelink.*
- *Often young people want family to take notice, to pay attention. They say, 'if you don't do this, then I will act up. If don't pay attention, I will demand it'. Its stressful with my youngest son. Those family connections are both happy and sad.*
- *Some young people get mad about money – say if you don't give me any, I'm going to go out bush, I'm going to kill myself.*

It can be hard to manage the demands that come with close connections within family groups and demands for money and attention. Sometimes certain family groups need support.

- *Some people have to go and earn money from the cards for their partner's habits. And if they don't take any money back, they get in trouble.*
- *Some people understand, and they struggle with their teenage kids because they overpower parents.*
- *Today this is happening now. For some family it is easy, for other families it is hard, and they are struggling. Trying to get themselves out, but still stuck in situation where kids are telling them what to do – especially teenagers.*

There are good examples of where leaders and services have come together to take action in the community, and to support families and young people. There are also more opportunities for collaboration like this to happen.

- *We have bingo as well as cards. It has moved from Thursday to Friday nights because we had a lot of concern from the school, kids are sleepy on Friday if Bingo happens on Thursday. School wrote a letter. Senior nun been here for 60 odd years. Said could she support changing the time. Could do Friday and Saturday.*
- *Need to support the young men learning to sing. Is there role in Kurlama ceremony. When someone passes away, go to smoking ceremony. Men's funeral men should take over, women's funeral women take over*
- *Parents need to do a program about how to sort themselves to stop gambling. Everyday just talking about children's future, but no action. Children are always asking about money*

4. Family and community spaces – well-designed areas where gambling is permitted.

Playing cards in very public spaces is a relatively recent phenomenon.

- *People used to play suburb by suburb. And in the Kurlama, they used to play there as well, but Jubilee Park was the main one.*
- *Long time ago, people used to play in our park, and away from the shop. Now everyone wants to go straight to shop.*
- *There was a time when it was in houses and people's backyards. It was also not comfortable then; that is not the answer either.*

There are some benefits to having the cards out in the open for everyone to see, but it also brings a sense of shame when the tourists come through and see the 'bush casino'.

- *It can be embarrassing when tourists come over and they see us. For some people, they don't care and they just do their thing. Lucky we don't have a big casino there. The kids would be looking in the glass to come in the casino. All the money would be in the casino. Where would the kids end up*
- *Would be good to stop playing in public places like the shop. It's not a good look to be doing this in front of visitors/tourists. Takes up the whole place, and where cars are parked.*
- *Visitors when they come can't see the cards. BUT also it is a community, so what do you expect when you come in? Is Tiwi people being around each other, is a gathering, is our personal space where greet each other.*
- *Fighting unrest in the open is a community problem. We are all connected because if person is hurting, we are next to them and we are attached. (This is how I explain to white people – we are all attached)*

There are many suggestions, and different opinions about best places for playing cards in Wurrumiyanga.

- *Card games should move somewhere else, each area can have a place. Forrestry has a park, should play in the middle area. Used to play cards there before, not in the public area.*
- *Stay separate, give each other space/ avoidance. Having a shed for gambling, not at forestry. Near the shop.*
- *For the future, make a shed or a park – that is safer for the kids. Need a playground for the kids. It's not safe for the kids now at the shops, all the cars are there.*
- *We should play in the bush away from the road. Big fence around the road to block the kids. Nice area.*

As well as suggestions about how these areas should be serviced.

- *The Land Council have funding to build a shed, but it is up to people how they want to do it. We should move to place where there is no car driving.*
- *Should build shed – one for women and one for men – away from highway. That's cultural protocol, for men and women to keep separate. And have a playground close to cards so parents can see kids, close to swings.*
- *I am on the board of the [NUA] shop. I cut that tree, stop all the gambling there. I don't shop at my shop anymore; I shop at the new shop. Don't like going in my own shop, humbug by family/kids for cards.*
- *Build toilets in park, then they would use [that area]. The Shire is in charge of toilets. Get these open for people to use. Toilets here [outside NUA shop] are damaged and can't look after it.*

Most significant in these discussions, was an interest in safe areas that are family oriented and where gambling can happen.

- *People come to shed, come together with smile. Bring the goodness to everyone. Want somewhere with shelter, have a licence where people can utilise the building.*
- *Good idea to have family area where can gamble. Used to do card game at home – now in view of the public. It's bad to have in public – tourists can see. Want to keep shop clean for business and visitors.*
- *We need a playground near the shelter or around the park. Kids don't have facility now. Used to be many years ago, used to play swing, slide. Need things to come back, outdoor playground.*
- *Give kids activity to keep occupied. We need a centralised area, put it in Gsell, not close to the road but further away from everything. Two shelters separate and people can organise where they want to sit.*

5. Care and safety – the importance of keeping young and old people safe.

Taking care of family and community is different now than it used to be.

- *We used to play marbles, skipping rope, hopscotch, basketball, hot squash at the tennis court – activities. Now kids don't see those games. Are mobile phones, new addictions to alcohol, cigarette. Tobacco used to be in a tin.*
- *We used to have strong discipline for children, and it was good then. But then the intervention came and said you can't do that.*
- *This thing about card games is all about worries. None of our young people are working, only a few skill jobs, only doing training jobs, and us old people are worried. They are stuck, nowhere to go and attend to meaningful things.*

Sometimes the card areas can be a sanctuary, particularly when things are difficult at home. But they can also make it difficult to care for the safety of children, each other, and the environment.

- *If something bad is happening in house, just come to sit with people at cards. Just go sit there. Sometimes find peace there. Get away from argument.*
- *It's alright to play card to make money, that's our everyday life. Need to support ourselves to buy cigarette and power.*
- *It's bad when gambling is played in a public area, on the road in carpark near the shops. Kids are around, might get run over. I drive at 10-15km per hour along there. Babies are running around while mothers are playing. Sitting down and just calling to kids, nothing else.*
- *Sometimes young boys don't go and sit with family – like to be attention seekers. Think no family care about them.*
- *Around the gambling there is littering, health hazard. People go and play cards and leave the mess behind.*

Through the card games there are ways that Tiwi people can show their care for others including the old and those elsewhere who need the help of the church or are less fortunate

- *When there are old people that don't have food, the circles can give donation. There are also collections for the church, or if there are kids travelling to outstations. The person counting the money collects that. They can take out \$10, \$20, \$30 each time it [the pot] goes up, and that is for the church.*
- *We collect for project compassion for poor people on the other side of the world. The person that counts the money collects and takes it to the priest. Then the priest sends on the collection. It's like the collection for bread and wine.*



The school plays an important role in keeping children safe and helping them to be educated in ways that will allow them to grow up strong in culture.

- *I used to be a cleaner and cook at the school at the time that Teresita was there. Kristelle's mum was the eldest of them all, the team of Milimika skin group leaders in the school. Teaching the little ones about culture. Lands, totem, skin group and who you call this person, your aunty mum side, Tiwi ways. In those days, there was old people and culture in the school.*
- *Now we've got the Wangatunga ladies there. Like they said, yesterday, we need that. They can support. Since bilingual stopped, are changes. Have everything in the school then.*

Other services, and family support networks also play a role.

I try to tell mob, if you want to keep gambling keep the place clear, make sure the kids are home after school.

- *Young kids, they are learning, watching. When they are small, they learn very quickly. The adults need to be responsible. If you want to do something outside socially, make sure you have someone to look after the bubs.*
- *Now can't tell other people about support groups – they say, 'you can't judge me'. Some old ladies and old men who are involved in the church, can't even tell people what to do.*
- *When have a proper job, people cut the gambling. But there are not many proper jobs around.*

Including the shop, which has some responsibility to help fresh food to be available to Tiwi people at a reasonable price.

- *The store is ridiculously expensive. Food is not fresh. Get rotten food. Everything is out of date.*
- *Need cheap fresh food, products that are sold are out of date. This is why we gamble – show prices, cigarette prices. We try to live like white people, but we can't because we are ripped off by our community shops.*
- *If the prices at the shop goes down, gambling might go down too.*

Managing gambling in Wurrumiyanga

A possible Ground Up Strategy for Mantiyupwi Traditional Owners

The Ground Up research team were requested by Mantiyupwi as part of the research contract, to provide recommendations around a possible Mantiyupwi gambling management strategy.

Following the completion of on-ground research interviews in Wurrumiyanga, the Tiwi research team travelled to Darwin for a collaborative workshop at CDU. They reviewed the stories and opinions shared by Tiwi people through the research and worked with the CDU researchers to develop a draft management strategy.

It was agreed that the strategy should:

1. Address direct safety issues associated with card games in Wurrumiyanga; and
2. Work towards reducing the bad aspects of gambling by supporting Tiw culture and valued relations and activities.

This two-part proposed strategy is described in detail below.



PART 1: Good Safe Family Spaces

Addressing direct safety issues associated with card games in Wurrumiyanga

WHAT WE NEED – DESIGN

Safety issues were a recurring concern amongst the research participants. They were aware of the problems of the large gambling area near the shop, and concerned for the safety of children near the road, about illness and hygiene, and about the ability to maintain culturally appropriate ways of gathering together as Tiwi.

Many spoke of the importance of a family-safe area for Tiwi to gather, and proposed both locations and design features of such an area. The purpose of this area is to provide safety for children and families gathering together, and where gambling is also allowed.

Such an area would need to offer an attractive alternative to existing gathering areas, if it was to be utilised and have the desired effect on community safety.

Proposed design features:

- Shelter to protect from sun, rain and wind, and outdoor area
- One shelter for women, one for men
- Landscaping – trees for shade (with assistance from CDP)
- Lights and wi-fi at night (for safety, and so people don't drift back to the shop area)
- Playground with fencing (so children can remain safe away from the road)
- Toilets with wheelchair access, regular cleaning and privacy
- Large bins to help with waste management and keeping the area clean
- Kiosk with cards, snacks, change (to facilitate the possibility of moving away from the shop and ready access to its facilities)
- Shelters for services to use for outreach stalls, public meeting (in supporting a transition away from gambling oriented activities, and promoting better oriented and culturally appropriate services, see below)

WHERE? – SUITABLE LOCATIONS

Many people we spoke to provided clear suggestions, and directions, as to where such a family-safe area could be located. These proposed options were explored by the research team and are detailed below.

In discussions there were key criteria were mentioned:

- Away from road – so that children remain safe from cars
- Public space – so everything is visible, and therefore safer for women and children
- Not in direct view of tourists – as they may not understand Tiwi ways of coming together
- Away from, but still close to, the shop – so as to alleviate the focus of activities in this one place, but so elderly people and others could still be in close proximity to the store

SUGGESTED GOOD FAMILY-SAFE SPACES WHERE GAMBLING IS PERMITTED

GSELL PARK

Location preferred by most people.

Advantages:

- The site is public and in the open
- There is space for male/female shelters and playground equipment
- It's away from the main road
- Not far from existing gambling areas

Disadvantages:

- Remains visible to tourists



JUBILEE PARK

Remembered fondly as a place where gambling used to happen.

Second most preferred location.

Advantages:

Previous popular location

- Space for male/female shelters and playground equipment
- Away from the main road

Disadvantages:

- Not next to the shop
- Located close to houses



FORRESTRY PARK

Seen as a promising space that is largely unused, but inconvenient due to its distance from both shops.

Advantages:

- Space for male/female shelters and playground equipment
- Away from the main road
- Out of view of tourists

Disadvantages:

- Long way from both shops
- Located close to houses
- Requires greater coordination around purchasing cards, getting change etc



BESIDE TAI SHOP (OLD SWAP LAND)

A central open area, next to a shop.

Advantages:

- Space for male/female shelters and playground equipment
- Away from the main road
- Close to shop

Disadvantages:

- Potential to be seen as preferencing the Mantiyupwi shop
- Close to uneven ground and bush areas that are less safe than other areas



BETWEEN TAI SHOP AND FORRESTRY

A possible area, but not often mentioned by community members in the research discussions.

Advantages:

- Space for male/female shelters and playground equipment
- Away from the main road

Disadvantages:

- Potential to be seen as preferencing the Mantiyupwi shop



PART 2: Keeping Tiwi Culture Strong

Mitigating the effects of gambling by supporting other valued relations and activities

STRONG COMMUNITY

Stories about gambling shared by Tiwi people in Wurrumiyanga, pointed to the gambling circles as providing places and opportunities to come together as Tiwi, to sit with old people, and to feel good with your family members, and sometimes to feel safer than you otherwise would at home.

They also pointed to the recent intensification of these gatherings, because of a lack of other means and services enabling bush trips for hunting and food collecting, and other ways of coming together as a family, and feeling good as Tiwi people.

Those identifying themselves as particularly effected were young parents – young mother and young fathers – who are looking for other forms of support in raising their children, and meeting together.

Proposed actions:

- Community events/BBQ's
 - > Coming together and eating together
 - > Bringing back that feeling of the old days
 - > Hosted by services providers and/or Mantiyupwi
- Weekly trips out bush
 - > Guided by senior elders, supported by younger Tiwi
 - Young boys and girls, instead of culture day at school (like old scout trips)
 - Weaving, bush tucker collecting
 - > For disengaged family
 - > Resourced by Mantiyupwi
- Activities and programs for young mothers and young fathers
 - > Services providers
 - > Child and Family Centre programs

STRONG SERVICES PROVIDERS

What can the Mantiyupwi board do to guide services in the right direction?

While there are many services and organisations offering support to Tiwi people in Wurrumiyanga, the focus of these supports is often fragmented. If oriented around the complex needs and imperatives of the Tiwi community, then these services will themselves be better supported to work in ways which deal effectively with problems, and bring about strong Tiwi community and culture in Wurrumiyanga.

Drawing on past good experiences within the Tiwi research team, gatherings that involve opening up the doors of organisations, and coming together sharing food offer opportunities to talk and develop new networks of communication oriented around specific issues.

Proposed actions:

- BBQ lunch meeting where services are invited, and the ideas from the research are shared.
 - > Researcher presentation – where the research findings can be shared with organisations.
 - > Job network discussions – where services and Tiwi people can liaise so that Tiwi people are able to connect with jobs that are right for them as they arise.
- ‘Family safe space’ as a one-stop-shop run by Mantiyupwi where organisations can do outreach (e.g. putting people into contact with housing, clinic, BIHA etc)
 - > Provision of a permanent stall area at the family space which can be occupied on a rotating basis by different services. Allowing outreach from organisations such as the clinic, BIHA, housing, Territory Families and others.
- Create new partnerships through the new Child and Family Centre
 - > The growth of this new Tiwi-led hub in Wurrumiyanga offers considerable opportunity to build a culture of services delivery focused on Tiwi community and Tiwi networks of family, kin and country.
 - > This centre would be a logical place from which to run programs supporting young parents and bush trips.



Research team presentation to Mantiyupwi Family Trust Board members, 15 August 2023

Next steps for Tiwi researchers

The research carried out so far provides initial guidance around a future Mantiupwi gambling management strategy. However, the research team recognises that it is important to continue consulting with Tiwi leaders, community members and services on this strategy before more action can be taken. They propose these next steps:

1. Talk to other clan groups about the research:

- Present the research findings at each of the other clan group meetings held in Wurrumiyanga.
- Travel to Milikapiti and Pirlangimpi to present the finding at clan group meetings held in these places, so that leaders can consider if they want to activate something similar.

2. Invite services providers to a meeting to share the research:

- Invite services providers to a meeting in Wurrumiyanga, where the research team can share their findings; and
- Initiate a conversation around how local services may:
 - > have a presence at any new family space that was created.
 - > network supporting Tiwi people to have access to appropriate employment opportunities.
 - > orient their services delivery so as to support more people to be travelling out of Wurrumiyanga more regularly, and not orienting around the shop.

3. Continue hearing community opinions about plans for new spaces and the strategy:

- Further ongoing conversations are necessary at a community level, and within Mantiupwi Family Trust regarding:
 - > possible locations for a family space, and
 - > other elements of the proposed strategy.

4. Keep hearing stories from community about gambling and sharing them with the board.

- Many people participating in the research were happy to have been asked to share their stories, and to hear stories from other people about an issue that affects all Tiwi. It may be beneficial for the researchers to continue seeking feedback from community members and sharing stories with the board in relation to:
- the ongoing Tiwi experience of gambling
- responses to the strategy as it unfolds

5. Keep developing their research profiles on the Indigenous Researchers Initiative website.

- All researchers will have the opportunity to continue developing their research profiles and CV's and may be engaged by Mantiyupwi or other organisations to assist on other research projects in the future.



Tiwi researchers Rebecca Pupangamirri (left), Ainsley Kerinaia (centre), Kristelle Orsto (right) and Lorenzo Kerinaia (not pictured) look forward to continuing this work.

