# REMOTE REALITY OF DELIVERING ELDER ABUSE SERVICES IN THE KIMBERLEY REGION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA


*By Kimberley Community Legal Services*

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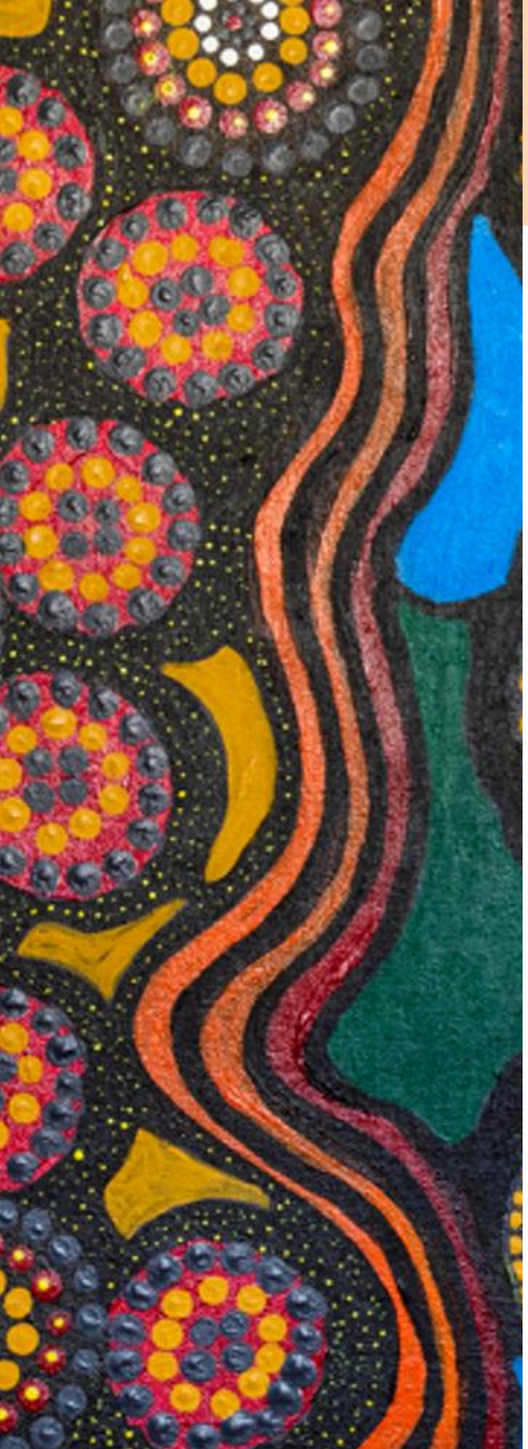

# WHO ARE WE?

Kimberley Community Legal Services (KCLS) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that provides legal advice, social support, financial counselling and representation to people across the Kimberley.

- Largest remotely based civil law service in Australia
- Our clients are: **77%** women, **39%** stated disability, **85%** Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- Federally funded to support people experiencing Elder Abuse.

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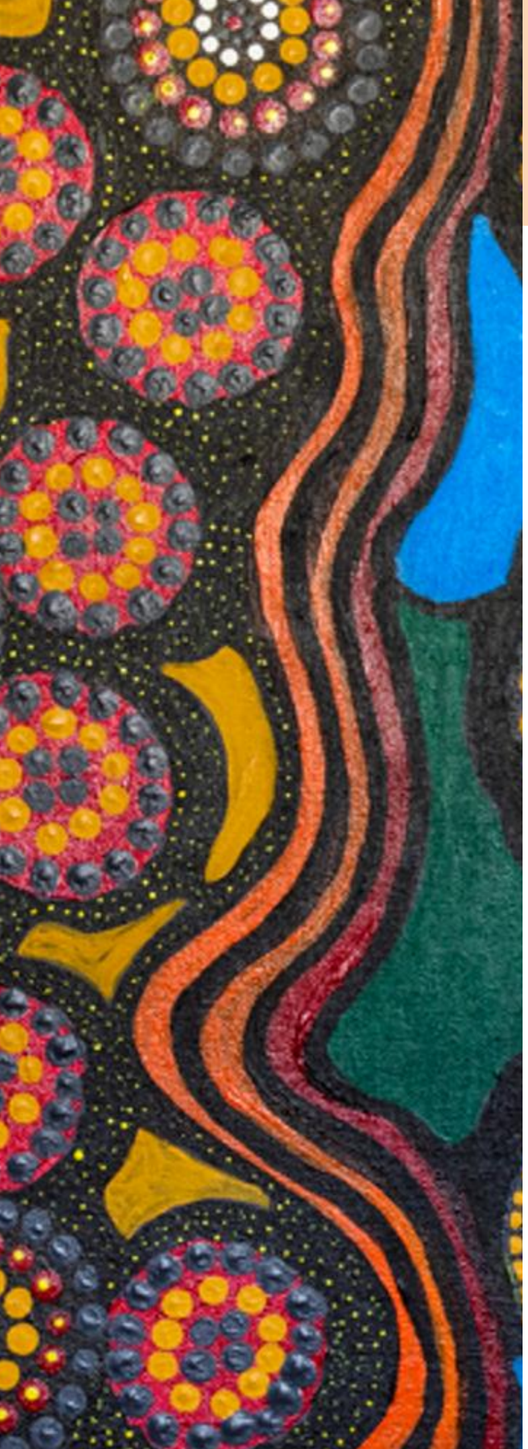
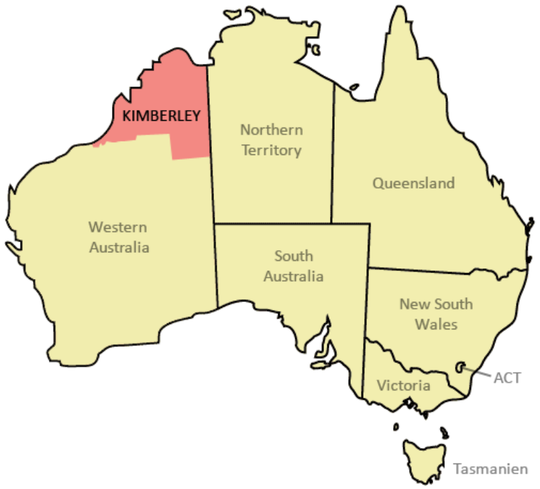
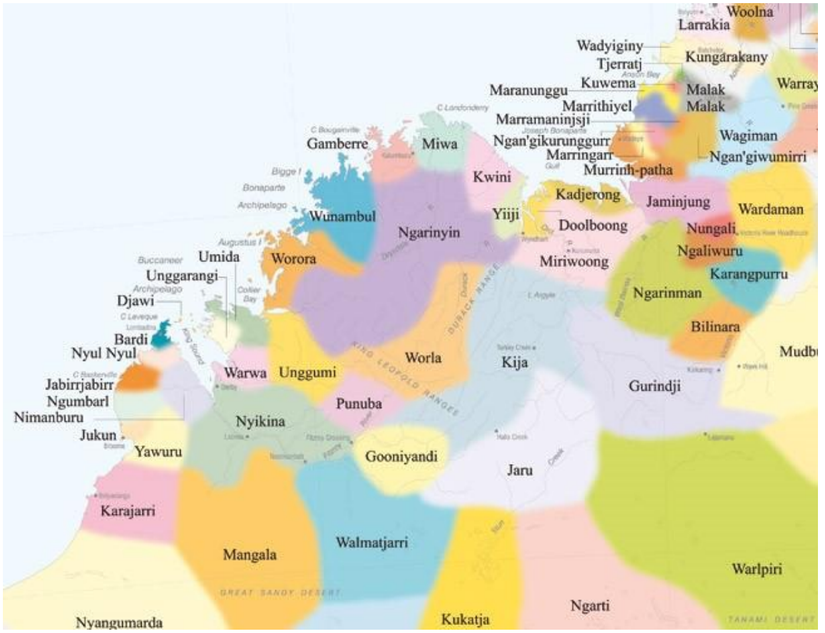


# WHERE ARE WE?




- The Kimberley region spans more than **400,000** square kilometers (around three times the size of England).
- Home to **six** major townships and over **160** small remote Indigenous communities.



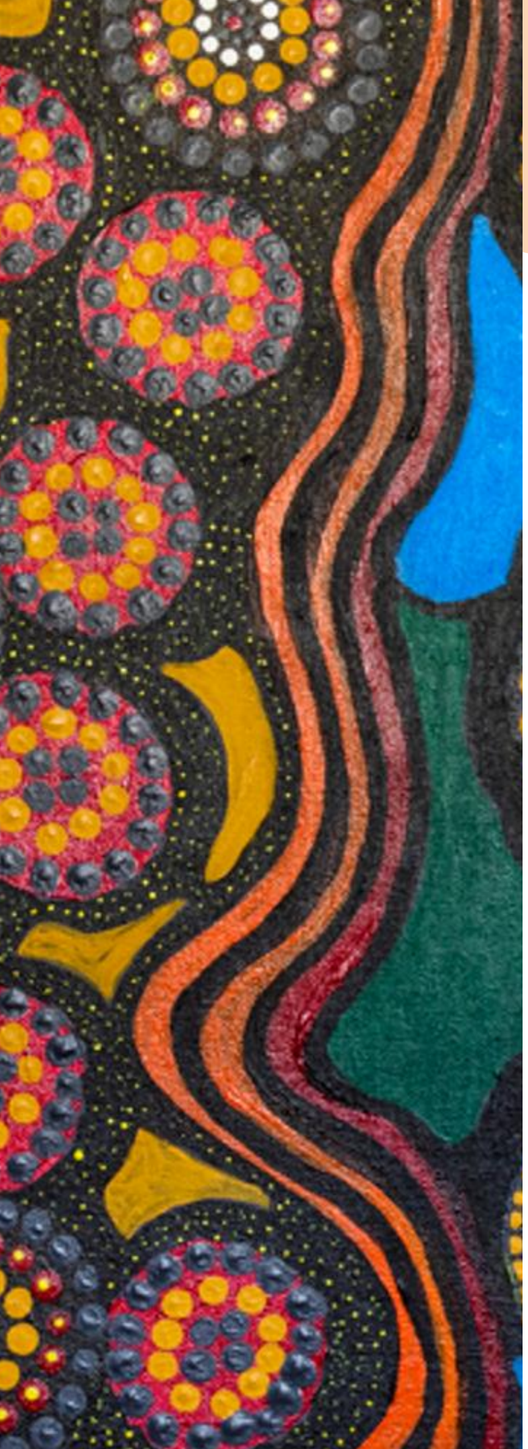

- Semi-arid tropical monsoon climate, experiencing over 80 to more than 200 days each year above 35°C.
- Wet season humidity in towns like Broome averaging around 60% in the afternoon.

# WHERE ARE WE?

- Two offices – in Broome and Kununurra.
- Outreach across the region, travelling thousands of kilometers by car and plane.
- Unique service delivery challenges including distance, climate, lack of phone reception.

# WHERE ARE WE?

The Kimberley region has over 160 remote Aboriginal communities and outstations.



# ELDER ABUSE IN THE KIMBERLEY

**Common experiences reported by Elders include:**

- Financial abuse and exploitation
- Pressure to share housing, vehicles or income
- Humbugging and family demands for money
- Social and emotional abuse
- Neglect and lack of support
- Abuse that may be normalized or not recognized as abuse
- Pressuring or refusing to let older people go to residential care because the result is family missing out on that money once a fortnight

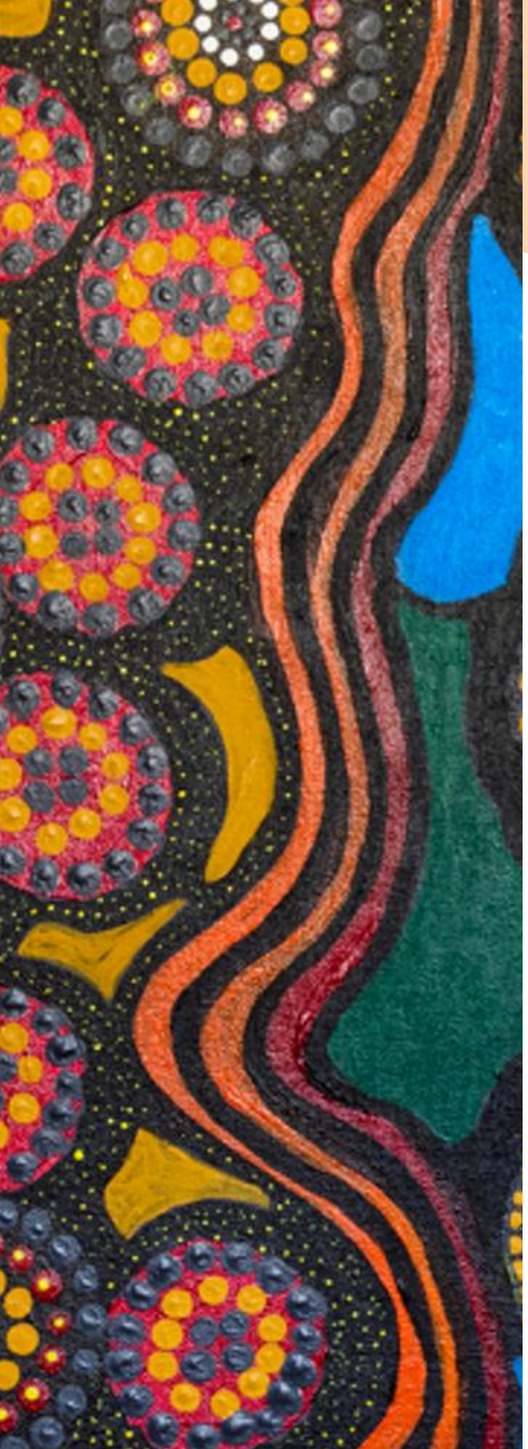
**Our service must acknowledge family, cultural and community relationships while prioritizing Elder safety and autonomy.**

Managing complex familial dynamics

# OUR WORK WITH ELDER ABUSE CLIENTS

Working with Elders in the Kimberley experiencing Elder Abuse requires building trust, working collaboratively and empowering older people to make decisions that reflect heir own values, culture and circumstances.

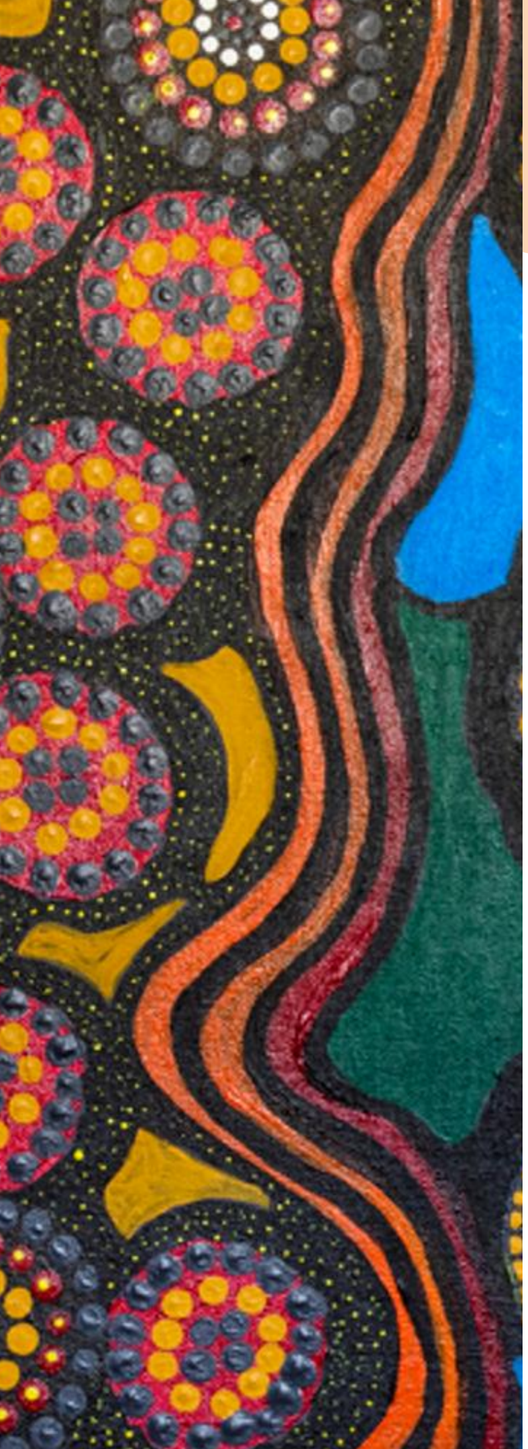
- Meeting people where they are.
- Taking time to build trust.
- Using plain language and interpreters.
- Respecting cultural cultural protocols and kinship systems.
- Managing complex family dynamics



# LISTENING TO KIMBERLEY ELDERS

*At the heart of everything we do are the voices of Kimberley Elders.*

*This short video shares one client's experience and highlights the importance of culturally safe elder abuse support.*



# NO MORE HUMBUG PROJECT

The No More Humbug project helped KCLS understand the scale and drivers of financial Elder Abuse and informed subsequent community education and advocacy initiatives.

**Key findings:**

- **51%** of participants reported that most Elders are being humbugged or financially abused frequently.
- **93%** of perpetrators were identified as the Elder's own children or grandchildren.
- **71%** said financial abuse is most likely to occur on pension day.

# NO MORE HUMBUG REPORT

- Financial abuse is often hidden within family relationships
- The line between sharing and abuse can become blurred
- Humbugging has become normalized in some communities
- Technology has created new risks
- The loss of respect for Elders was a recurring concern

*“Humbugging is not culture”*

# NO MORE HUMBUG REPORT

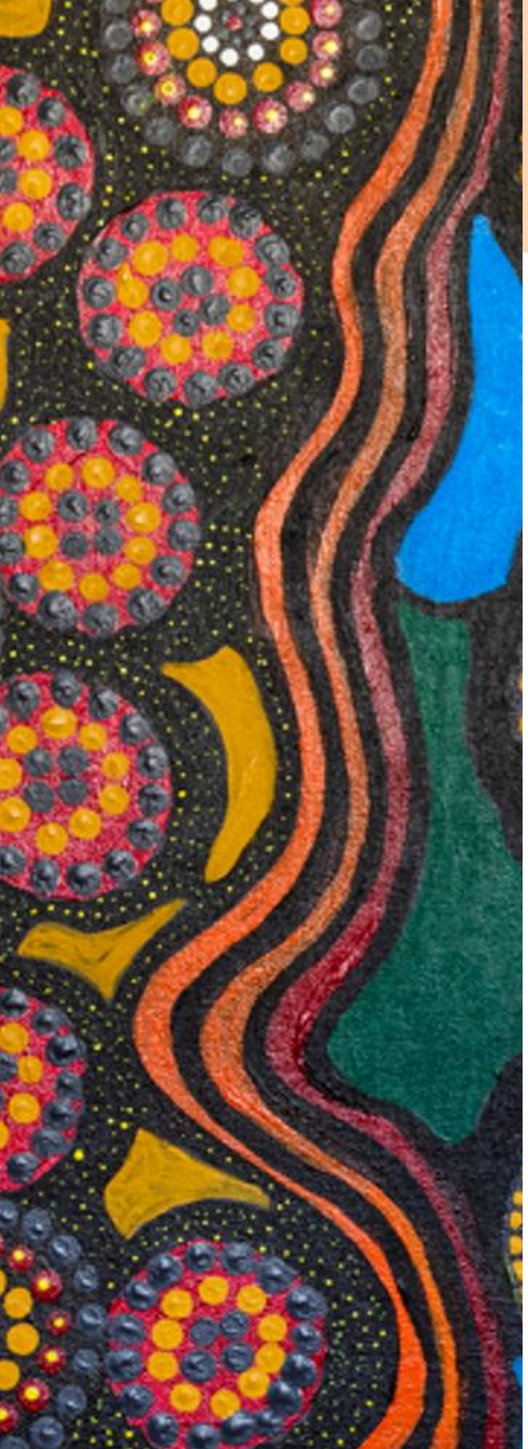
# US WITHOUT ABUSE

US is better without abuse

*A primary prevention campaign by KCLS and Marninwarintikura Women's Resouce Centre to tackle Family and Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse in the Kimberley region.*

- Challenge the normalisation of abuse
- Raise awareness across the Kimberley
- Encourage community accountability
- Promote respect for Elders
- Amplify Elder voices

# US WITHOUT ABUSE

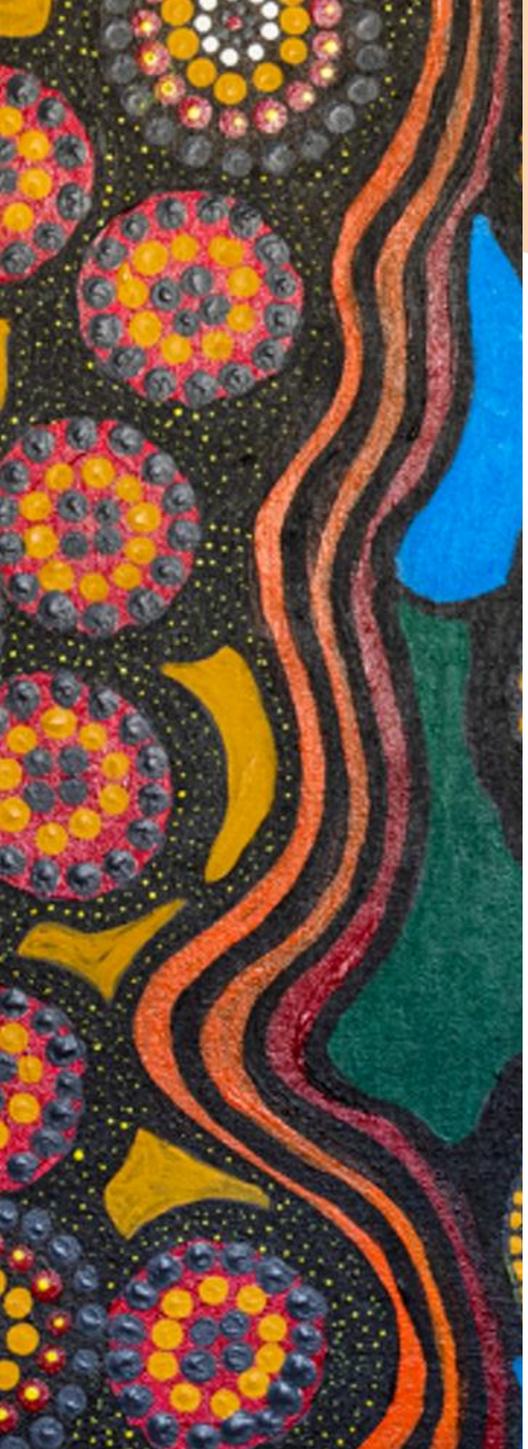


# CREATING CHANGE THROUGH STORYTELLING

The *No More Humbug* project and the *Us Without Abuse* campaign both highlight the same truth: **Lasting change happens when communities hear, value and amplify the voices of Elders.**

**What helps create change?**

- Positive storytelling that centres Elders voices
- Community-led conversations about respect
- Education that challenges the normalization of abuse
- Strength-based messaging that reflects local values
- Celebrating the knowledge, leadership and contributions of Elders
- Working together to create safe, connected and healthy communities



# THANK YOU!

## Any Questions?