



Exploring the Experiences of Indigenous Women who Participated in a 'Follow-through' Journey within a Bachelor of Midwifery Program

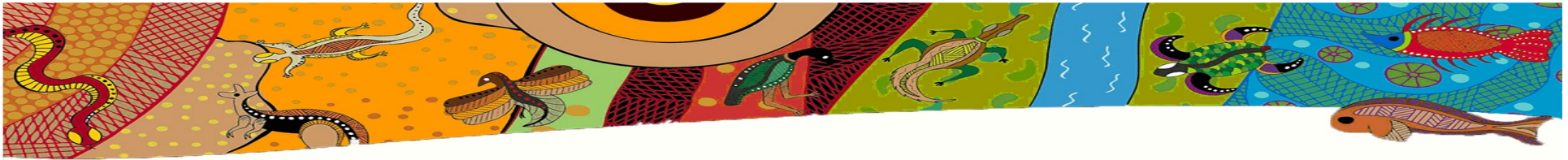
Professor Roianne West^{1,2}

Associate Professor Jenny Kelly¹

¹School of Nursing & Midwifery, Griffith University

²Townsville Hospital & Health Service, Townsville





Research Team

Professor Jenny Gamble

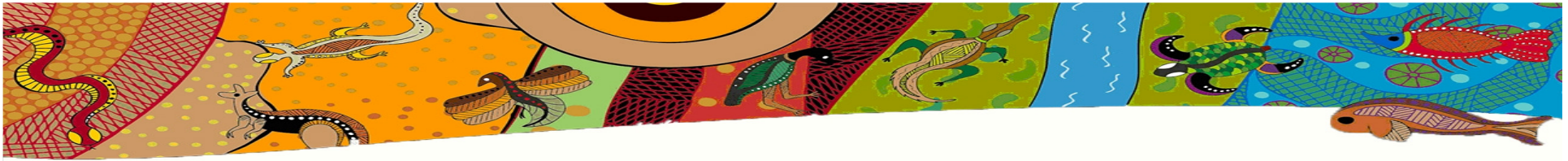
Professor Roianne West

A/Prof Jenny Kelly

Dr Mary Sidebotham

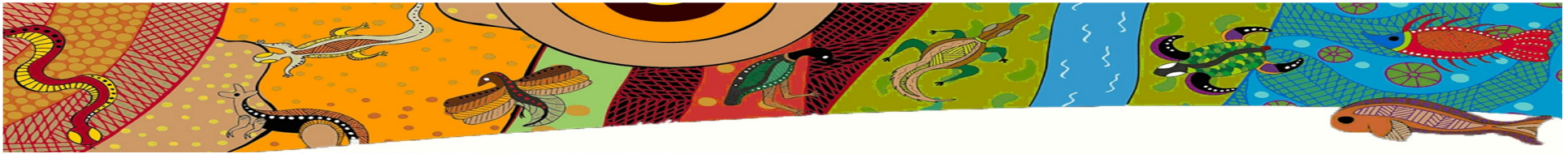
Ms Vicki Carson

Professor Elaine Duffy



Acknowledgement

Thank you to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (mothers & students) who participated in this study.



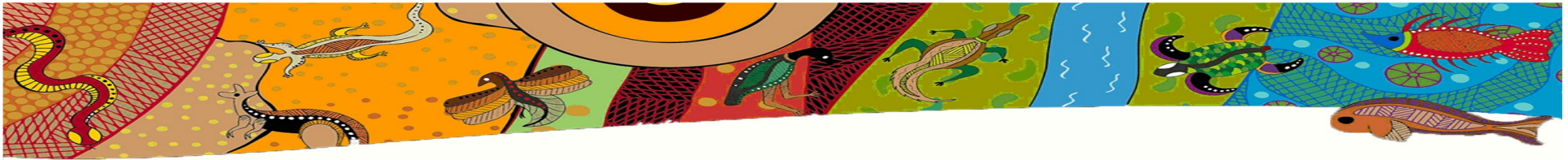
CLOSE THE GAP

Indigenous Australians die 17 years younger than non-Indigenous Australians.

Demand Indigenous health equality

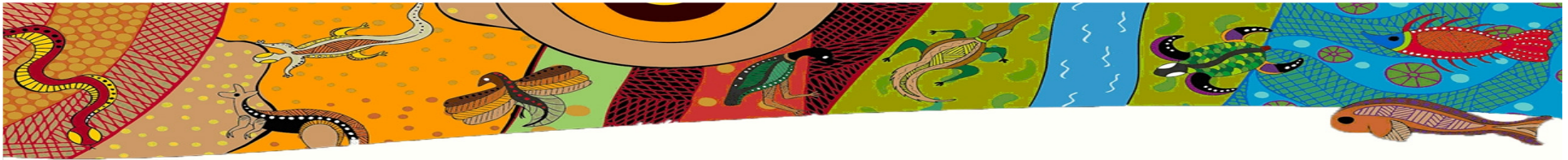
**Indigenous
Midwives leading
Australia's health
workforce in
Closing the Gap
within a generation**





Midwives & Nurses Registered in 2011

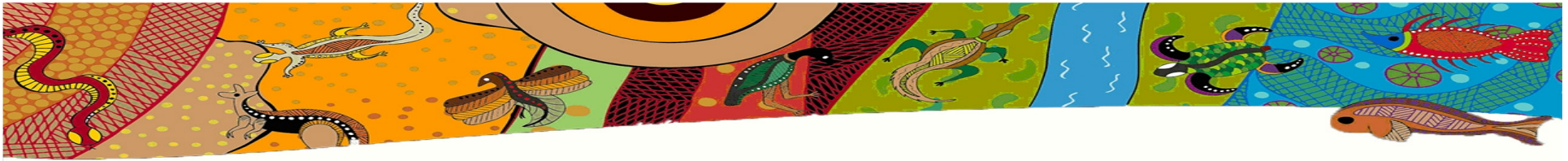
Midwife & RN	38,197
Midwife	1,783
Midwife and enrolled nurse	18
RN	228,038
EN	58,633
Total midwife registrations	39,998 (12.2%)
Total people registered	326,669



Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Midwives & Nurses

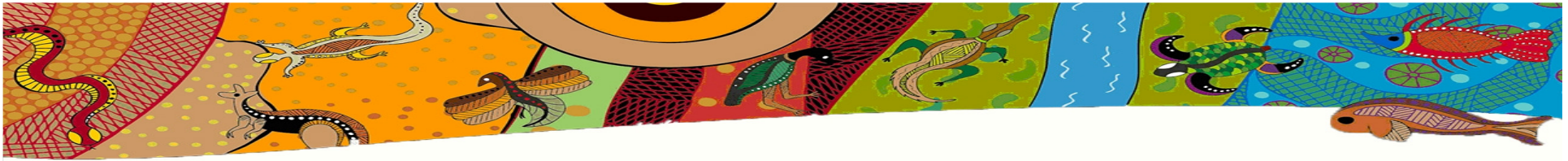
- In Australia, only 70 midwives identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (0.17%) of total Midwifery workforce in 2011
- In Queensland, only 545 nurses and midwives identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (1%) of the total Nursing and Midwifery workforce in 2011

Ref: ABS 2011 Census: Employment, Income and Unpaid Work



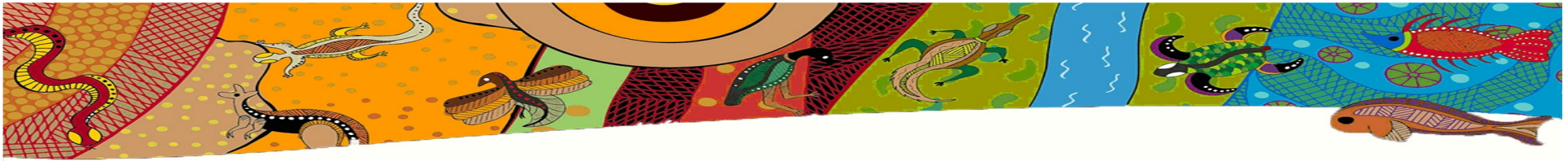
Project Aim

- Explore the experiences of Indigenous women who participated in a ‘follow-through’ journey:
 - Childbearing women
 - Bachelor of Midwifery students



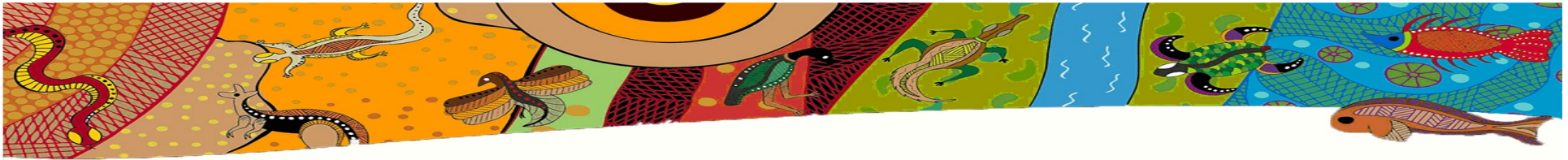
Four Themes Identified

- Communicating 'our way'
- The role of relationships
- Support and assistance
- Challenges of the system



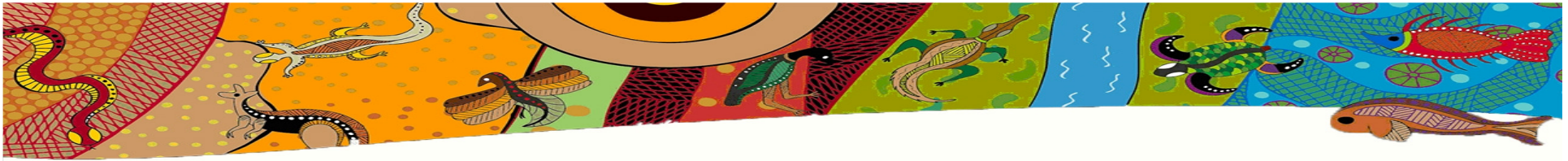
Communicating our Way

- Vital interpreter role
- Feeling comfortable



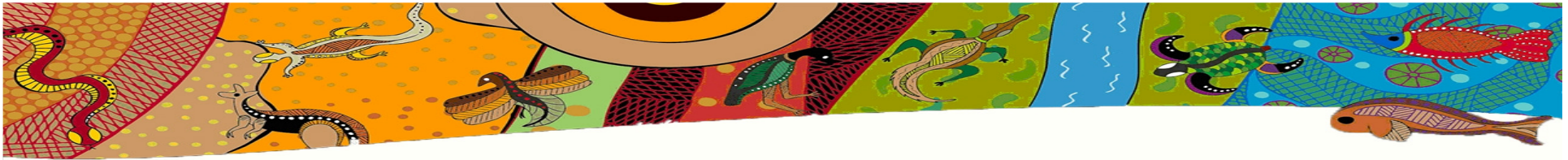
Interpreter Role

‘Some stuff that the doctors told me I’d never even heard of, so it was easier for her to inform me with more in depth information to make me understand properly.’



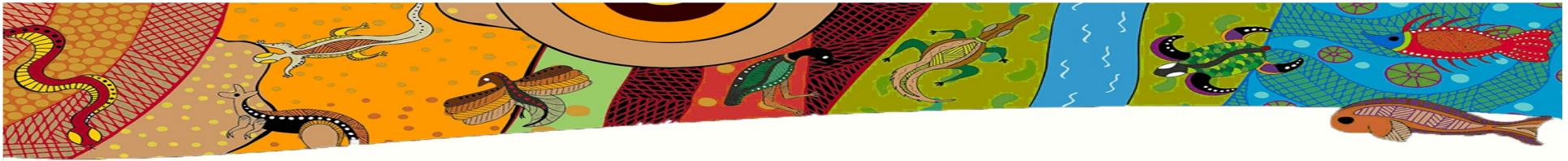
Interpreter Role

'You know, just to have an Indigenous person with me was good. A lot of us, we get shamed to asked questions to non-Indigenous people. If I didn't understand, I'd just ask her.'



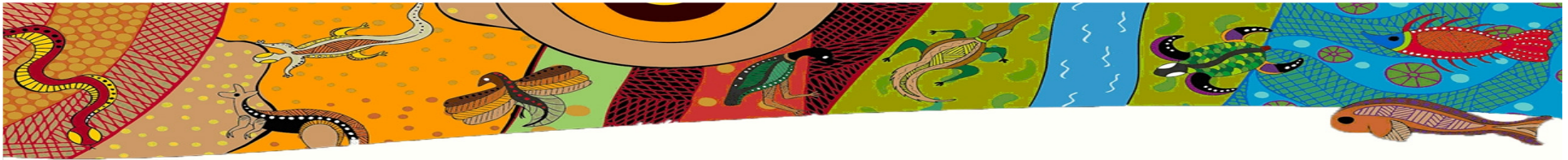
Feeling Comfortable

'If there was anything that I needed to know I could go to her and ask ... it was good to have her around. I was able to relate to her. It's easier to talk to someone who is Indigenous than [someone] who is not. You know, you just feel more comfortable.'



Feeling Comfortable

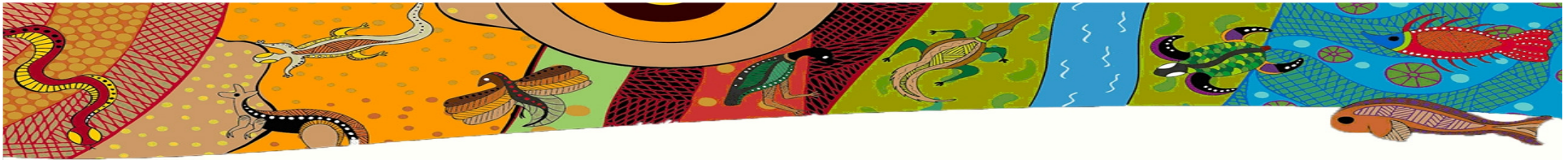
'I opened up more to her, I felt comfortable. She knew how to communicate with me properly. I had a lot of confidence in her, I trusted her.'



Role of Relationships

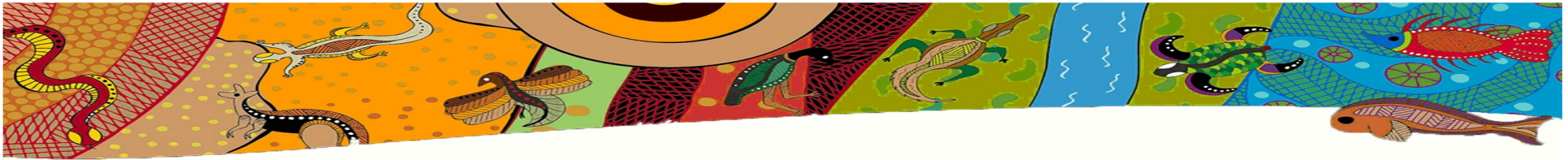
‘You get that bond and it grows from there... we’ve got a friendship now after she was my student.’

‘The relationship wasn’t really like, I didn’t see her as a doctor or anything, she was someone like a good friend.’



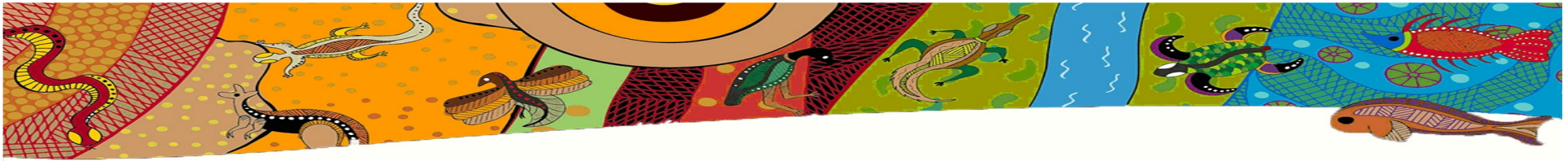
Support and Assistance

'... she talked me through it [the birth] and it was good, she knew all the time what was going on, like even though I've had... that was my seventh baby, she still talked me through what's going to happen next. Just her support and her knowledge... I had lots of confidence in her and I trusted her.'



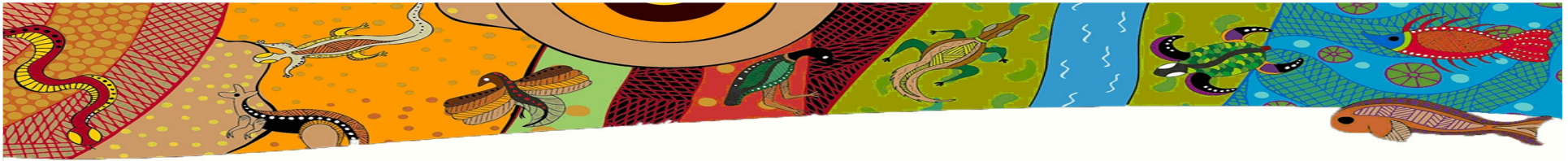
Support and Assistance

‘She even offered help outside of her work, like equipment for baby, finding stuff like that. It's really helpful when you come from a little place like [rural town].’



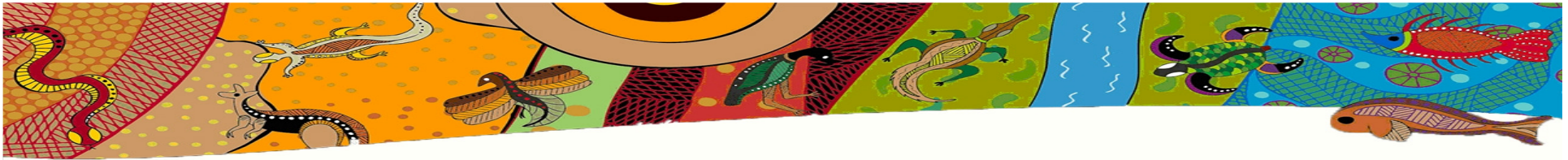
Support and Assistance

'She kept in contact with me. It was good to hear from her. It wasn't just like, I don't care, and keep moving on. It was good to hear from her. It was just really good to have her there, you know. I'm glad she was there.'



Summary

- The women interviewed in our study reported the many benefits of having an Indigenous midwifery student provide them with Continuity of Care
- Increasing the number of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander midwives is essential to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander families.



References

ABS 2011 Census: Employment, Income and Unpaid Work

AIHW (2012). Nursing and midwifery workforce 2011. National health workforce series no. 2. Cat. no. HWL 48. Canberra: AIHW.

Department of Health & Ageing (2002) Indigenous Nursing Education Working Group. 'gettin em n keepin em.' Canberra.