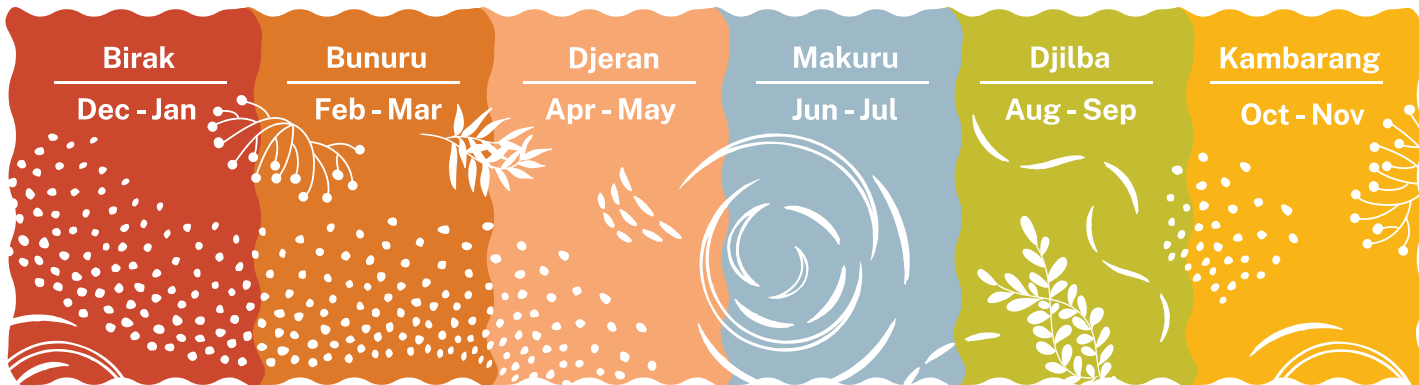




Children's University

Western Australia Partnership

Impact Report 2020 - 2025



Acknowledgment of **COUNTRY** ———

Through the Children's University WA Partnership Edith Cowan University and The University of Western Australia acknowledge that their campuses are located on Noongar land, and that Noongar people remain the spiritual and cultural custodians of their land, and continue to practise their values, languages, beliefs and knowledge. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this region.

Welcome to the Children's University WA Partnership



The young people of Western Australia are our greatest future asset. Unfortunately, not all children in WA have equal access to high-quality extra-curricular learning opportunities that we know can be transformative for their social, emotional and academic development. Equally, too many children experience barriers to accessing post-school learning pathways, including those that might best realise their skills, passions, and aspirations. Children's University helps open these doors for the benefit of children, their parents and carers, their schools, and the wider WA community.

The Children's University model is internationally recognised with demonstrated outcomes in building children's self-confidence, strengthening their educational engagement and academic attainment, and supporting family-led learning. These benefits are closely aligned with the strategic directions of the WA Department of Education, providing every student with a pathway to a successful future and partnering with families and communities to support educational engagement. The program also answers the call of the Australian Universities Accord, placing equity at the heart of education and preparing more children and WA communities for the demands of the future economy.

The Children's University WA Partnership with ECU, UWA and the Children's University Australasia & Africa is incredibly valuable. The partnership enables state-wide reach to more children, families, schools, and communities across WA. Since launching into COVID headwinds in 2020, it has celebrated over 3190 graduates who have completed over 241,120 hours of learning from across 42 schools in the Albany, Perth, Peel and South West regions – and more to come.

As both the Vice Chancellor of the Children's University WA Partnership and the former Western Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People, I believe the potential impact of this program is enormous. Facilitating educational opportunities is the best investment that any organisation can make. We look forward to working with you to achieve this, together.

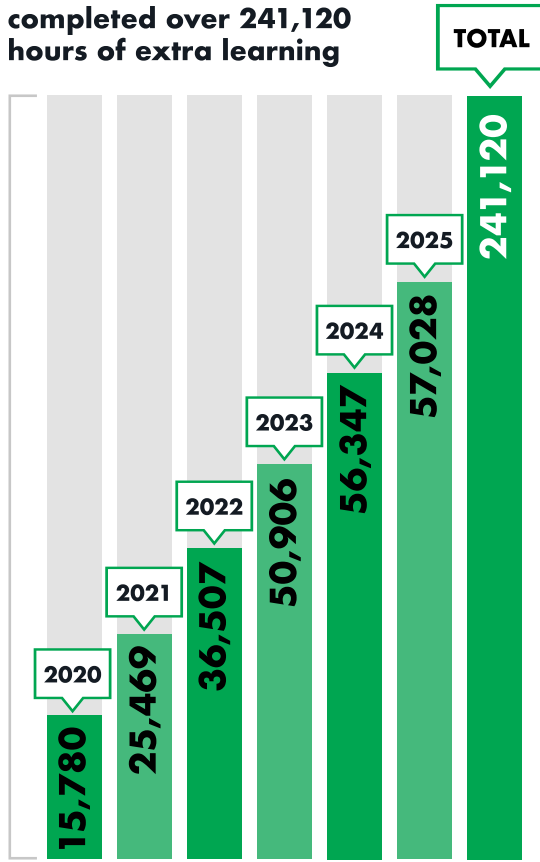
Colin Pettit

Colin Pettit
Vice Chancellor - Children's University WA Partnership

Our Reach and Engagement

Learning

Members have completed over 241,120 hours of extra learning

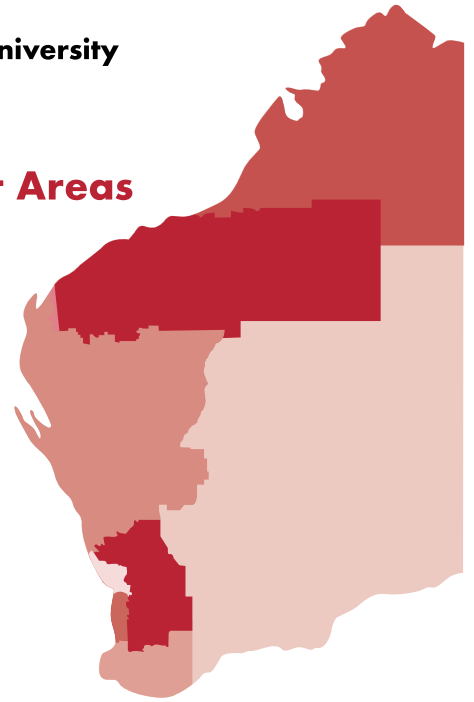


Partnerships

Delivering the Children’s University program across

37 Local Government Areas

And with 117 WA Learning Destinations situated over 160 physical sites.



3,671

Families On Campus

Total number of CU children and family members invited to on campus events including holiday programs and graduation ceremonies.

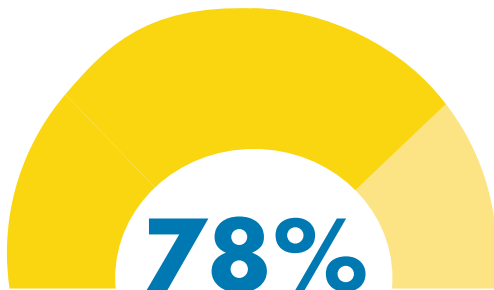
42 Partner School Engagements

From across Perth, Peel, South West and Albany regions.

Memberships

5,335

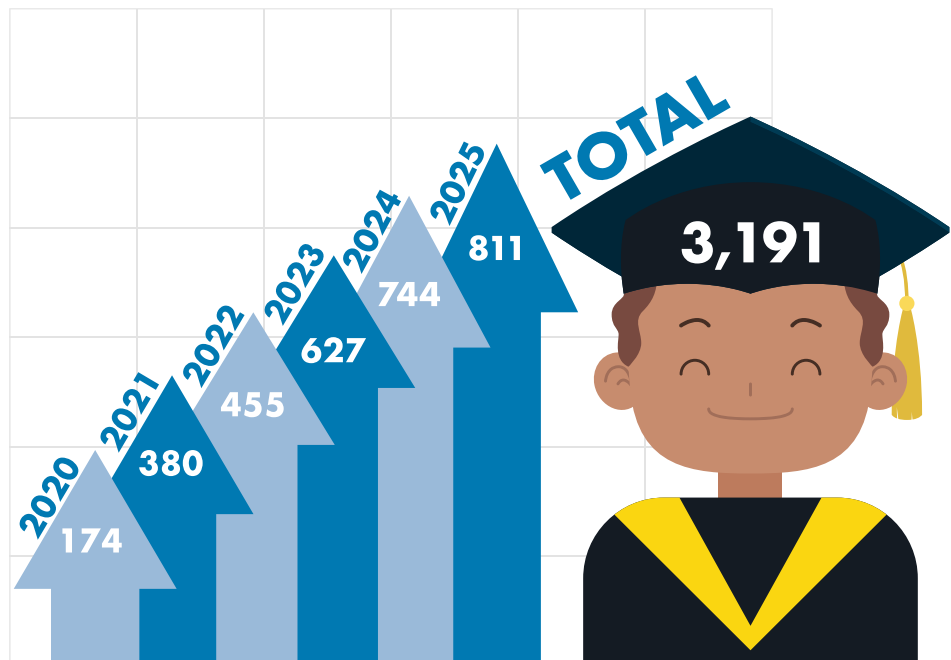
Total number of child memberships since 2020.



Total proportion of low SES or regional child memberships in 2025.

32 Graduation Ceremonies Hosted on ECU and UWA Campuses.

Number of graduates:



Who we are

Our program began in the United Kingdom (1993) and is delivered across the world in Australia, New Zealand, Mauritius and Africa! Since 2017, the Children's University Australasia & Africa Indian Ocean (CUA) has signed up more than 70,800 annual memberships from over 510 schools and works with 1043 community organisations and cultural institutions.

The CUA program has won multiple awards for its work as an educational charity both in Australia and in the UK including:

- 2024 Australian Business Awards Winner for Community Contribution
- 2024 Engagement Australia Excellence Award – Highly Commended for Community Engagement
- 2024 Australian Charity Award for Outstanding Achievement
- 2021 winner of the Australian Charity Award for Outstanding Achievement



The Western Australian story so far

The program was first established in Western Australia by Edith Cowan University (ECU) in 2017 and since 2020 is now delivered by ECU and the University of Western Australia (UWA) through the Children's University Western Australia Partnership (CUWAP); the only joint CU university partnership of its kind in Australia. The CUWAP Program currently operates in the Perth, Peel, South West and Great Southern regions of WA.

Our Purpose

Vision

Learning beyond the classroom holds unlimited potential for exceptional skills development and social mobility. We engage children in learning that connects them to their community and broadens their horizons, creating limitless opportunities for every child.

Mission

- To inspire a love of learning for all children.
- To create wider communities of learning.
- To remove barriers to learning for all children.

Values

Passionate, collaborative, responsive, flexible, strategic, child centered and evidence-based.

Key outcomes for members and families

The Children's University program aims to support children and families:

- Foster their love for learning, self-confidence and motivation.
- Take agency of their own learning and make positive choices.
- Engage in family-led learning, sharing educational experiences together.
- Explore early aspirations for life-long learning, higher education and careers.
- Broaden their horizons through a multiplicity of rich learning experiences that may otherwise be out of reach.
- Feel pride in their learning achievements.



How the Program Works

The CU Learning Journey

The Program is delivered through CU Partner Schools. Students attending these schools can choose to join and become Children’s University “members”.



Step 1

Formation of Local Partnerships

Each school appoints a CU Coordinator, who supports students with their learning throughout the year and adapts the program to meet local needs and contexts.

Community Learning Destinations provide accessible learning experiences for local families.

CUWAP provides training, support, and facilitates partnership opportunities.



Step 2

The Learning

Is voluntary, extra-curricular and family-led

Learning occurs through:

Community organisations and school extra-curricular clubs

Learning Destination Partners

On-campus school holiday programs at ECU and UWA

CUWAP activity booklets & CUA online portal activities at home

Step 3

Recording the Learning

A ‘Passport to Learning’ is used by the members to record the hours of learning completed as part of the program.

Time spent on each activity is validated with a stamp. As hours accrue members build towards achieving CU certificates ranging from a Bronze Award up to a Gold Masters Degree. The achievement of members is then celebrated at an annual graduation ceremony.



Step 4

Graduation

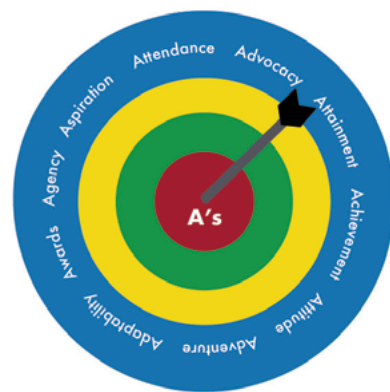
Graduation celebrations are hosted on campus at ECU and UWA, in which children, parents, school staff and the wider CU community come together to recognise children’s learning achievements. Children receive formal certificates while dressed in regalia.

Graduations offer children and parents alike the proud and empowering experience of seeing themselves as future university graduates.



How CUWAP Program Benefits the Community

Independent evaluations of the Children's University program across Australia and the UK as well as preliminary data from WA, indicate the success of the program model in supporting six key student outcomes [ACER \(2023\)](#), as well as fostering community-based learning by building strong connections between children, caregivers, local communities and universities.



Key benefits include:

#1 Attitudes Towards Learning

Children build a stronger sense of themselves as learners, shown through increased motivation and more positive learning behaviours at school. Teachers agree that CU plays a valuable role in engaging children who show less enthusiasm for traditional learning. Parents also report that participation in the program, including CU's on campus holiday activities, nurtures their children's passion for learning.

"His connection to the CU program has given him more confidence as a young person to be able to try new things and step out of his comfort zone, allowing him to experience so many avenues - as a parent for that I am eternally grateful!"

CU Parent,
Roseworth Primary School



#2 Self-assurance, Confidence and Wellbeing

Learning experiences and challenges build self-confidence and resilience and self-confidence. This is support by improved communication skills, empathy, teamwork skills, and social responsibility.

"Since participating in the program, our students have shown increased motivation, confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Families have also appreciated the way the program recognise their children's efforts...helping to build pride and a sense of achievement"

CU School Principal,
Brunswick Junction Primary School



#3 Agency and Self-empowerment

Through family-led learning opportunities, children develop a sense of power, decision making and initiative, allowing them to build independence towards their own learning journey.

"I am so glad that I was in the Children's University program because I did so much extra learning that I could not normally do at school - and that meant I didn't fall behind and have always been keen to learn more"

CU Student, Swan View Primary School



#4 Aspiration to Further Education and Career Pathways

Children express higher aspirations for further education and an increased awareness of the pathways available to them. Compared with non participating groups, Children’s University members are more likely to identify professional careers as their future goals. Parents report that involvement in CU increases their child’s intention to attend university and strengthen their belief that their child is more likely to pursue post secondary education.



Cr Paul Gillett, Shire of Harvey President

“Aspiration is really why we got involved...It’s just increased the breadth of their engagement. It’s something extra special for my school community”

Principal, Groveland Primary School

“This partnership with Children’s University will put a spotlight on Shire of Harvey Libraries and ensure young people in the community have the support they need to study their dream degree and get their dream job”

#5 Adaptability to Learn in Different Environments

Children become more willing and open to trying new things and engaging in a variety of learning activities and opportunities that would not otherwise be approached and experienced. “93% of parents across Australia and New Zealand agree that their child has experienced new and exciting things through CU – an indicator of promoting students’ adaptability to different learning environments”(ACER, 2023).



“The highlight of being part of the Children’s University Program is being able to try a huge variety of different activities. This has given me further knowledge of different career paths and sharing these learning experiences with my family at the same time has meant that we have created lots of fun memories!”.

CU Graduate, Midland Home-schooling Group

CU Coordinator, Flinders Park Primary School

“I am very appreciative of the high-quality university-based learning program that students from my school have access to. It is a wonderful opportunity, especially for those who may not typically have exposure to something like this”.

Academic, Edith Cowan University, 2025

“I wanted to extend my heartfelt congratulations and appreciation for the incredible Children’s University graduation event. It was truly a joy to witness the success of these young graduates and to see their hard work celebrated in such a meaningful way...The graduate speaker’s speech was particularly inspiring—it was a testament to the transformative impact of the program and left a lasting impression on everyone present”.

#6 Academic Achievement

Participants access valued and enriching learning opportunities through the CU program, whilst there has been a positive correlation between the length of time children are involved in CU and their performance in reading and math.

CU Student, Grovelands Primary School

"As a Warrwa-Noongar kid, the storytelling is not only phenomenal but also shows me how much the Children's University respects Aboriginal people and culture, which also means they respect me and my family too".

"One of the program's greatest strengths is its ability to build meaningful partnerships between families, schools, and community organisations. By participating, students develop a stronger connection to their community while exploring potential career pathways and learning opportunities they might not otherwise encounter".

CU School Principal, West Byford Primary School



#7 Community-Based Learning

CU establishes networks of various community partner organisations, jointly advocating for the importance of educational equity and widening participation in educational community-based learning. The program supports school-family-community partnerships, providing opportunities for shared learning experiences fostering academic socialisation towards children's development.

CU School Coordinator, Cooinda Primary School

"Our students can't wait to show off the awesome learning experiences that they have participated in ...It is evident that the highlights of being a Children's University student are the opportunities to take part in hands on learning at ECU with real life professors and lecturers, as well as getting to wear the cap and gown, and graduate".



Ruth Morris, Manager, Learning & Engagement
WA Museum Boola Bardip

"WA Museum Boola Bardip is super excited to join Children's University as a Learning Destination"

"The City of Armadale is proud to be involved with the Children's University Australasia (CUA) – a program supporting children with educational and socio-economic disadvantage to enhance their academic achievement and encourage students to aim high"

Ruth Butterfield, City of Armadale Mayor



Note: Additional evaluations of the Children's University in Australia are currently ongoing through ACER (2023) and the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment (longitudinal 2022 – 2028). With your support, a local evaluation will examine the impact and mechanisms of change of the Children's University in Western Australia.

Who we Support & Partner with

	Local Government Area (LGA)	Region	Partner Schools	Partner Learning Destinations
1	City of Albany	Great Southern	5	16
2	City of Armadale	Perth	1	5
3	City of Bayswater	Perth		1
4	City of Belmont	Perth	1	1
5	Shire of Broome	Kimberley		1
6	City of Bunbury	South West	1	5
7	City of Busselton	South West		3
8	Shire of Collie	South West		1
9	Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup	South West		1
10	City of Fremantle	Perth		5
11	Shire of Gingin	Perth		2
12	City of Joondalup	Perth	3	5
13	Shire of Kalamunda	Perth		2
14	City of Kwinana	Perth		1
15	City of Mandurah	Peel	4	2
16	City of Melville	Perth		1
17	Shire of Murray	Peel	1	7
18	Shire of Nannup	Great Southern	1	
19	City of Nedlands	Perth		6
20	City of Perth	Perth		5
21	Shire of Plantagenet	Great Southern	1	1
22	Shire of Ravensthorpe	Great Southern	1	
23	City of Rockingham	Perth	3	4
24	City of South Perth	Perth		2
25	City of Stirling	Perth	3	2
26	City of Subiaco	Perth		1
27	City of Swan	Perth	1	5
28	City of Wanneroo	Perth	6	4
29	Shire of Boddington	Perth	1	1
30	Shire of Carnarvon	Gascoyne		1
31	Shire of Capel	South West	2	
32	Shire of Denmark - Tingledale	Great Southern	1	
33	Shire of Harvey	South West	3	2
34	Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale	Peel	4	1
35	Shire of Waroona	Peel	1	1

Learning Destinations

Our Community Partners

Learning Destinations (LD's) are places, clubs, and organisations that provide high quality learning opportunities to CU members. Learning Destinations may include: public libraries, zoos, museums, galleries, observatories, universities, government organisations, education providers, local businesses, sporting clubs, and parks etc. All organisations seeking to become Learning Destinations must undertake our quality assurance process, known as Planning for Learning, to ensure consistency in the quality of learning activities. LD's are encouraged to provide both physical and virtual activities for Children's University members.

CUWAP is now affiliated with **117 Western Australian LDs** covering over 160 physical sites within 35 Local Government Areas across Western Australia.

Bunbury Dolphin Discovery Centre



WA Museum Boola Bardip



Scitech



Libraries

Albany Public Library
Bunbury Public Libraries
City of Armadale Libraries
City of Bayswater Libraries
City of Bunbury Library
City of Perth Library

City of Joondalup Libraries
City of Melville Libraries
City of Swan Libraries
City of Stirling Libraries & Hubs
City of Wanneroo Libraries
Mount Barker Public Library

Shire of Boddington
Shire of Harvey Libraries
Shire of Serpentine - Jarrahdale
Shire of Waroona
State Library of WA
City of Busselton Libraries

and more...

Museums & Visitor Centres

Albany's Historic Whaling Station
Army Museum of WA
Bert Tyler Vintage Machinery Museum
Bunbury Museum Heritage Centre
Carnarvon Space & Technology Museum
City of Armadale Museums

City of Wanneroo – Heritage Houses & Museum
Coalfields Museum & Historical Research Centre
Edward de Courcy Clarke Earth Sciences Museum

Fremantle Prison
Mandurah Visitor Centre
Motor Museum of WA
Mount Barker Visitor Centre
Museum of Great Southern
National ANZAC Centre

Scitech
WA Maritime Museum
WA Museum (Boola Bardip)
WA Shipwrecks Museum
WA Women's Hall of Fame

Galleries & Observatories

Art Gallery of WA (AGWA)
Bunbury Regional Art Gallery (BRAG)
Busselton Jetty Observatory
Contemporary Art Spaces – Mandurah
Gravity Discovery Centre and Observatory
Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery
Perth Observatory

Community, Business, Health & Education Providers

Advocacy WA
Arthritis & Osteoporosis WA Crunch & Sip
Australian Earth Science Education (AusEarthEd)
Bunnings DIY Workshops
Down South Arts & Crafts Collectives

Edith Cowan University
Gold Industry Group
Kingston First Response
St John Ambulance WA
The Amanda Young Foundation
The University Department of Rural Health – SW
The University of Western Australia

Zoos, Parks & Environmental Organisations

Aquarium of WA (AQWA)
Baldivis Children's Forrest
Bibbulmun Track Foundation
Bunbury Dolphin Discovery Centre Educated by Nature
Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park
Forrest Discovery Centre – Dwellingup
Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation

Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre
Nature Play WA
Perth Zoo
Ranger Red's Zoo & Conservation Park
Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk
Wave Energy Research Centre (WERC)
Whiteman Park
and more...

How we can work together to support the CU program in Western Australia

Your sponsorship is a powerful tool for the success of the Children's University program. Sponsorship will allow the delivery of CUWAP across new regional or remote areas in WA helping to build strong, sustainable communities and offer additional educational opportunities to children across Western Australia. Your support will enable more WA children to succeed. We welcome a discussion of the range of sponsorship options available, including expanding Children's University to new communities, supporting bus transport to on-campus events, and expanding access to outstanding community-based learning experiences. Sponsorship packages can be tailored to best suit your organisation. Here are some ways you can sponsor the Children's University:

-  **Expand CU into a new region**
-  **Offer university experiences to children and families**
-  **Low SES school sponsorship to participate in the program**
-  **Graduation ceremony for children and families**
-  **Help families access outstanding community-based learning experiences through local Learning Destinations**

How supporting us could benefit you



Recognition for the contribution towards improving educational equity and supporting the empowerment of young people among regional or disadvantaged areas of WA.



Opportunities to foster collaborative responsibility for the development of WA communities leading to increased civic engagement and educational outcomes.



Opportunities for your organisation to expand its visibility, range and breadth of community engagement activities within your local areas or to access new communities.



Promotion of your organisation across local, national and international Children's University networks.



Opportunities to join a network of university partners including ECU and UWA.

Acknowledgement

We sincerely wish to thank our sponsors for their generosity towards supporting the Children's University WA Partnership program.

ECU: The Australian Government Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) and the University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) South West.

UWA: Rio Tinto, Peel Development Commission, Water Corporation.

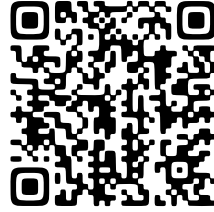
How to get involved

For more information, please scan or select the QR codes below:

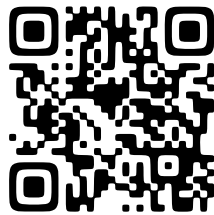
Be part of it!



CU at Edith Cowan University

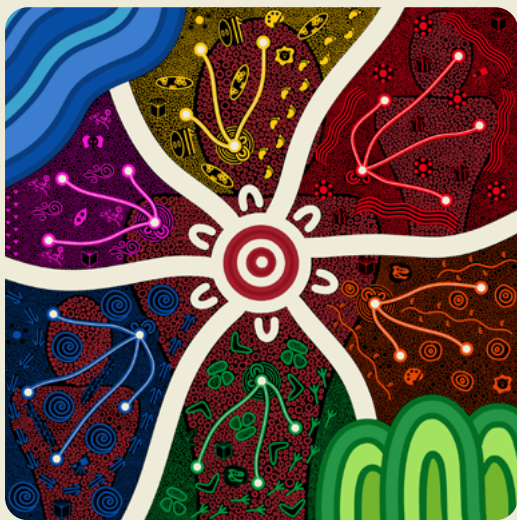
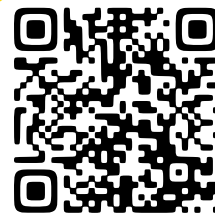


CU at the University of Western Australia



CU WA Partnership - Video

CU in WA - Video



Six Learning Pathways by Brad Vitale

The artwork showcased throughout this booklet was created by Noongar artist Brad Vitale to celebrate the Children's University Western Australia Partnership (CUWAP) and its mission to inspire lifelong learning beyond the classroom.

Centred around the CUWAP logo, six coloured pathways represent both the diverse journeys of learners and the Noongar six seasons, each symbolising a stage of life and growth. Kangaroo tracks (yongka bidi), Vitale's family totem, trace these paths to signify progress, development and moving forward. Icons along the pathways depict learning destinations such as libraries, museums, parks and galleries, reflecting the rich opportunities CUWAP offers to children and families across the community.

Contact us via:

ECU at childrensuniversity@ecu.edu.au or UWA at childrensuniversity@uwa.edu.au.