



NGANGK YIRA  
INSTITUTE FOR CHANGE



Coolamon Research  
and Advocacy Centre

# Deadly Koolinga Chef Program

***Sponsored by Aryzta***

2025 Foundation Partner Report

Ngala kwop biddi.  
Building a brighter  
future, together.

# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that Murdoch University is situated on the lands of the Whadjuk and Binjareb Noongar people.

We pay our respect to their enduring and dynamic culture and the leadership of Noongar elders past and present.

The boodjar (country) on which Murdoch University is located has, for thousands of years, been a place of learning. We at Murdoch University are proud to continue this long tradition.



# Thank You

We are sincerely grateful for Aryzta's unwavering commitment to Murdoch University. It is an honour to acknowledge your role as the **Foundation Partner for the Deadly Koolinga Chef Program (DKCP)**.

Since the launch of the Coolamon Research and Advocacy Centre within the Ngangk Yira Institute for Change in 2023, we have focused on strengthening and expanding the DKCP. This growth has been shaped by two strategic roundtables and a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot program made possible with Aryzta's support.

A key milestone was reached in July 2025, when Professor Roz Walker, A/Professor Caroline Nilson and Aryzta's Sean Masterton came together with stakeholders, school principals, and government representatives for a DKCP Roundtable. The discussions throughout the day highlighted the strong and widespread enthusiasm for the program's next phase and reinforced our shared commitment to building a sustainable pathway forward. The Roundtable also affirmed the depth of support for strengthening and continuing our valued partnership.

The true impact of the DKCP initiative is best reflected through the achievements of our students. Jedda, a member of the inaugural 2011 DKCP cohort at Pinjarra Primary School, completed her nursing degree in late 2023 and graduated in February 2024. We are delighted to share a photo from her graduation, where she stands proudly with her grandmother, Aunty Gloria Kearing.

From 2021 to 2023, Aunty Gloria also played a vital role in supporting Aboriginal students in the DKCP as they shared their experiences through art narratives and Noongar symbols. These artworks were later exhibited at the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre in mid-2024, marking a significant moment during the first year of Aryzta funding.

Thank you once again for your vision, leadership and commitment to improving health and educational outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people. We believe in providing a strong start for healthy, resilient Aboriginal communities. Our research is dedicated to self-determination and creating an enduring legacy. Aryzta's partnership continues to make a profound and lasting difference.

We deeply value our partnership and are proud to share the lasting impact of the **Deadly Koolinga Chef Program sponsored by Aryzta**.



# Deadly Koolinga Chef Program

In 2025, ARYZTA reaffirmed its commitment to the Deadly Koolinga Chefs Program through a renewed funding agreement with Murdoch University. As the foundational sponsor, ARYZTA's support has been instrumental in anchoring the DKCP, which has proven highly successful in cultivating vital culinary and life skills among school students across the Peel region.

## Building Nutritional Health Literacy

Led by Associate Professor Caroline Nilson, the Deadly Koolinga Chef Program is an Aboriginal community-based cooking and nutrition initiative for children and young people. The Program aims to strengthen nutritional health literacy to support improved and sustained health and well-being. By fostering food literacy, the DKCP equips young people with essential life skills that help preventing diet-related diseases.

The DKCP is also a recognised collaboration between the Coolamon Research and Advocacy Centre and Murdoch University's School of Nursing, focusing specifically on improving health outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people. Through culturally grounded, community-driven approaches, the program continues to build capability, confidence, and pathways to long-term health and educational success.

The development of this translational research project has been shaped by collaborative consultation with Aboriginal community Elders, community organisations, Local Government, and relevant Aboriginal health services.

Participants engage in practical classes covering:

- Kitchen safety and food storage
- Meal planning and budgeting
- Integration of STEM skills within the culinary curriculum
- Cooking techniques incorporating Traditional Bush Foods



# Student Numbers

**TOTAL ATTENDANCE: 432 students**

**Monday - John Tonkin College**

**23 classes**  
(6 classes term 2,  
8 classes in terms 3 & 4)

**42 Aboriginal**  
students

**61%**  
attended  
11-23 classes

**Tuesday - Mandurah Primary School**

**32 classes**  
(8 per term x 4 terms)

**168 children**  
attended

**40%**  
attended  
3-5 classes

**Wednesday - Greenfields Primary School**

**32 classes**  
(8 per term x 4 terms)

**172 children**  
attended

**38%**  
attended  
3-5 classes

**Pinjarra Senior High School**

**32 classes**  
(8 per term x 4 terms)

**32 Aboriginal**  
students

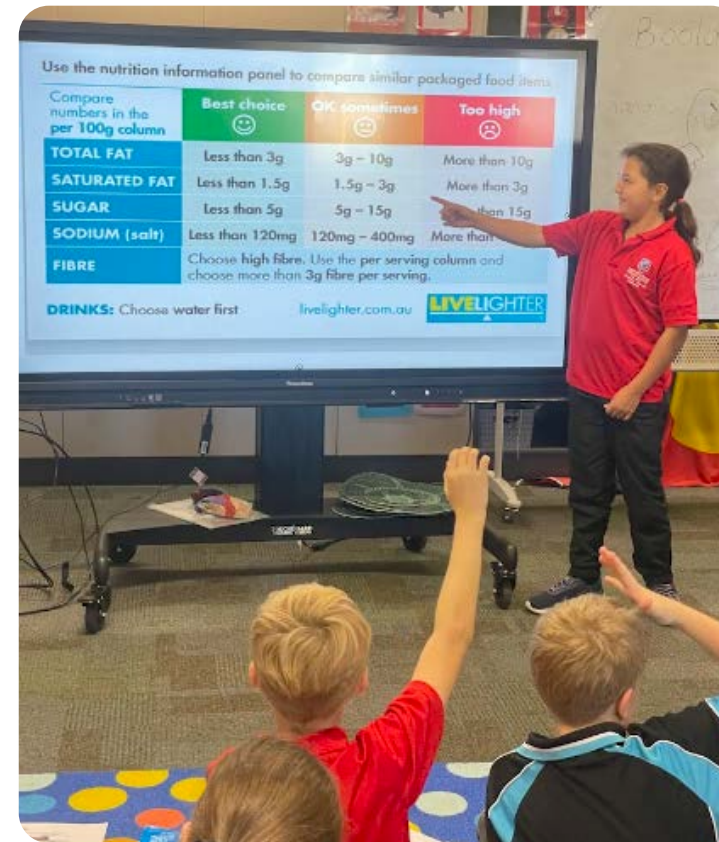
**47%**  
attended  
between 16-32  
classes

**Pinjarra Primary School**

**32 classes**  
(8 per term x 4 terms)

**18 Aboriginal**  
students

**64%**  
attended  
between 16-32  
classes



# Tangible Impact and Community Reach

Over the past two years DKCP has reached approximately 3,500 participants. Each week, students aged 6 to 17 prepare and take home a family size meal for 4 to 6 people, extending the program's impact from the classroom to the dinner table.

The DKCP has delivered significant outcomes, including:

- **Improved School Attendance:** Aligning with the National Close the Gap Targets by reducing absenteeism.
- **Heightened Confidence:** Students report increased pride in their abilities and a greater capacity to contribute to healthy family food awareness.
- **Educational Success:** School Principals report extremely positive benefits to student wellbeing and engagement.



32 Aboriginal children from Mandurah Primary School, Greenfields Primary School, and Pinjarra Primary School utilised Aboriginal art symbols to paint the stories of their experiences from taking part in the Deadly Koolinga Chef Program.

# Tangible Impact and Community Reach

On behalf of Pinjarra Senior High School, thank you once again for supporting our students to participate in the Deadly Koolinga Chef Program (DKCP) throughout 2025.

Over the past four years of our involvement, the DKCP has had a profound impact on our Aboriginal students, providing an engaging and culturally rich learning experience that blends food, culture, and life skills. More than a cooking program, it is a space where students experience authentic learning that is hands-on, meaningful, and grounded in cultural identity.

Through the program, students develop vital STEM skills—measuring, problem-solving, sequencing processes, using equipment safely, and applying critical thinking in real-world contexts. Attendance on program days has been consistently strong, with students showing great enthusiasm and anticipation for each session. This speaks to the program’s ability to make learning relevant and exciting.

We have also observed positive effects on student wellbeing and engagement. The Deadly Koolinga Chef Program provides a safe and respectful environment where quieter students have grown in confidence, friendships have been strengthened, and all students have flourished in the collaborative space. The program’s strong relational focus, particularly through the leadership of Aunty Tania Herbert, has given students a trusted community-based mentor and role model.

Importantly, Deadly Koolinga Chef Program promotes food literacy as a lifelong skill. Students are not only learning to cook but also to make healthy choices, to share their learning with families, and to take pride in cultural and personal expression through food. These experiences have strengthened connections between school, family, and community.

In addition, the program builds highly transferrable learning skills that extend well beyond the kitchen. Students are strengthening their capacity to work collaboratively, communicate effectively, think critically, manage time, and apply persistence in solving problems. These skills are invaluable both within the classroom and in preparing students for future education, employment, and life pathways.

Pinjarra Senior High School is proud to partner with DKCP, and we acknowledge the dedicated facilitators, Tania and yourself, alongside our Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer, Lana Hall, whose commitment has championed the program in our school. Most importantly, we recognise the enthusiasm and pride of our students who have embraced it so fully.

We wholeheartedly endorse the continuation and expansion of the Deadly Koolinga Chef Program. To achieve this, ongoing sponsorship and investment will be critical. With sustained support, the program can be scaled across a greater number of schools, extending its many benefits to more Aboriginal students and communities. The long-term value of this initiative lies not only in its immediate impact, but in its ability to empower future generations with skills, confidence, and pride in culture.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Stone  
Principal  
Pinjarra Senior High School



# Integrating Nursing Excellence and Community Health

Murdoch University nursing students have become a significant part of the Deadly Koolinga Chefs Program through their health promotion placements.

Between January 2022 and December 2025, 603 students contributed 635 shifts, totalling 4226 hours of dedicated community engagement.

This unique learning and development opportunity is made possible through the continued support of Aryzta, allowing future healthcare professionals to gain invaluable experience in a community setting.



# Student Testimonials

## CLASS PRESENTATION BY ALAISHYA & IYLA



**Alaishya**

- Good morning everyone,

**Iyla**

- Our names are Alaishya and Iyla, and we're excited to tell you about a program we're apart of.

**Alaishya & Iyla**

- It's called the Deadly Koolinga Chef Program, also known as DKCP!



**Alaishya**

- DKCP is a cooking program that runs every Thursday during school.

- We usually take part for two or three periods, and during that time, we get to prepare and cook healthy meals.

**Iyla**



- It's not just about cooking—it's about learning important life skills too.

- We learn how to use all the kitchen utensils safely and respectfully.

- From using knives properly to handling hot pans, it's helped us grow more confident in the kitchen.



**Alaishya**

- We also learn about healthy eating, hygiene, and how to work together as a team.

- It's fun, but it's also teaching us things we can use at home and in the future.

**Iyla**

- One of the best parts of the program is that Aunty Tania comes in to teach us.

- She's kind, patient, and always makes sure we understand what we're doing.

- She explains why we use certain ingredients while we cook.



**Alaishya**

- Another thing we love about DKCP is that we get to take the meals home.



**Iyla**

- We take them home to share with our families.



- It's a way for us to give something back and let them try new foods and flavours that they might not usually have.



**Alaishya**

- It makes us feel proud to be the ones who made the food, and it feels good when our family members enjoy it and ask, "Did you really make this?"

**Iyla**

- We're also learning about culture, community, and sharing—which are important values in Indigenous culture.

**Alaishya**

- We're proud of everything we've learned, and we're excited to keep cooking and learning more!

- We want to say a huge thank you to Lana, who works so hard to organise this program and many other amazing Indigenous activities.

**Iyla**

- Without Lana, we wouldn't have these opportunities to learn, grow, and connect with our culture in such a fun and delicious way.

**Alaishya & Iyla**



# Student Testimonials

"My daughter has been fortunate enough to participate in your cooking classes at Greenfields Primary school and the immense benefits this program has on children is beyond imagination. Since being involved my daughter confidently cooks most days independently. She has made stir-fry's, chicken pie, steak and vege, all manner of delicious and healthy meals for our family."

"The cooking program has motivated me to come to school, so my attendance has improved."

"I have really enjoyed the Deadly Koolinga Chef Program because it gives us a reason to come to school because you are more likely to be chosen to cook."



# Teachers & Aboriginal Education Officers Testimonials

"The program ignites such positive student engravement."

"When students are selected, they speak about being proud to cook for their family . . . they seem to thrive on the responsibility."

"The students are very vocal about their enjoyment of the cooking and always want to come to school on the day."

"Students are looking forward to coming to school to learn more."



# A Shared Vision for the Future

By embedding nutrition knowledge early in life, the DKCP aligns strongly with the World Health Organisation's vision and goal of making every school a health promoting school. The program's focus on culturally grounded, community led nutrition education supports lifelong healthy habits and contributes to broader public health goals.

ARYZTA's partnership is helping realise this vision. Your support enables an innovative approach that combines bush tucker, community collaboration, and evidence-based nutrition to create a healthy, enduring legacy for children, families and schools across the Bindjareb region. Together, we are building the foundations for a future in which Aboriginal children and young people can thrive.



# Media Coverage

## **Caroline Nilson, Education HQ**

The Deadly cooking program transforming students' health and social outcomes By Grant Quarry and Caroline Nilson. The Deadly Koolinga Chefs Program, now in its fourth year, focuses on healthy foods and has had transformative impacts on everything from health outcomes, student behaviour, school attendance and nutrition knowledge and the way students think about and engage with cooking. It's also helping to build their confidence and self-efficacy. It's more than a cooking class; it is a culturally grounded, hands-on learning experience that transforming students and communities.



**Caroline Nilson, The interview with Peter Barr: ABC Regional Drive Radio**



**Caroline Nilson, ABC's program Nightlife**  
<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/nightlife/nightlife/105558914>

# DKCP July Roundtable



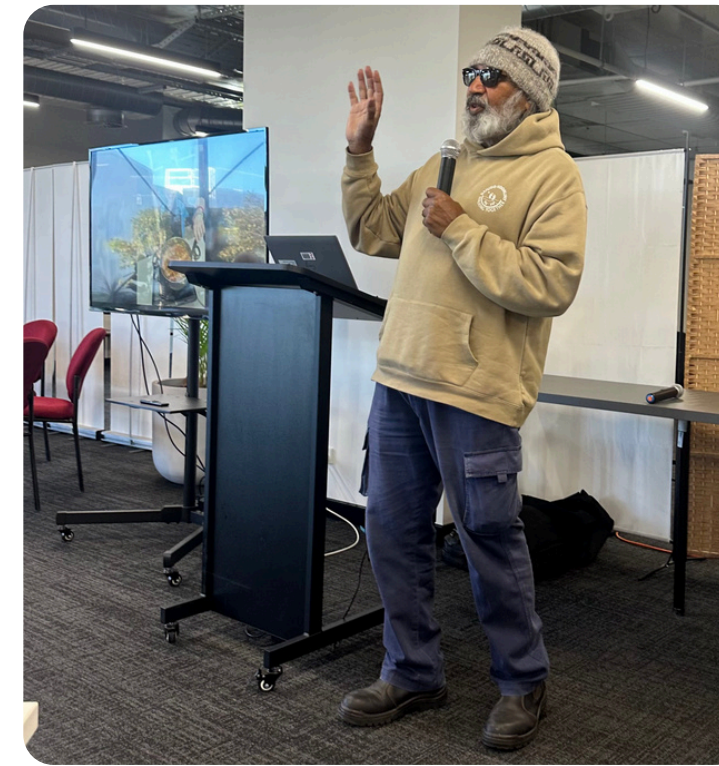
**Professor Fiona Stanley AC, Patron, Ngangk Yira Institute for Change, Murdoch University**

- Rethinking what health really means, and who gets to shape it
- Our children – Their future, their health must be our number one priority. We are doing too little, too late. As a society we need to step up.



**Hon Dr Katrina Stratton MLC**

- Vital life skills that go beyond cooking and food
- Importance of food – Family, culture, identity, expression of love for people.



**George Walley, Nidjalla Waangan Mira Aboriginal Health Service**

- Think strategically about the systems in place. Young people are our succession plan.



**Sean Masterson – Ayzta**

- Vision for the Future
- Adding value in WA agriculture
- Strengthening corporate food and nutrition partnerships.

# DKCP Roundtable Art Series

**Created by Paige Wood-Kenney – Visual Scribe and Cultural Artist**  
**30 July 2025 | Food Futures Centre, Murdoch University**

On Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar, within the Food Futures Centre at Murdoch University’s Ngangk Yira and Coolamon Research and Advocacy Centre, the Deadly Koolinga Chef Roundtable became more than a meeting, it became a visual conversation.

Across the walls, colour and words began to take form as three art pieces emerged, each one a living record of the stories, insights, and hopes shared throughout the day.

This three-part visual story captures the shared voices, reflections, and spirit of the Deadly Koolinga Chef Roundtable. Each artwork represents a layer of community learning, connection, and growth. Together, these artworks embody the essence of the Deadly Koolinga Chef

## 1. Voices of the Koolinga

Young chefs shared stories of pride, learning, and cultural connection. Their artwork reflects confidence, belonging, and joy in learning through culture.

## 2. Elders & Leaders Experience

Elders and Leaders offered grounding wisdom—healing through food, culture as education, and building pathways for the next generation. Their guidance forms the foundation of the program.

## 3. Schools Experience

Educators and partners contributed their perspectives, with the artwork showing the many journeys connecting schools, families, Elders, researchers, and koolingas.

## The Collective Story

Together, the artworks form a visual timeline of the Roundtable and the impact of the Deadly Koolinga Chef Program across the Peel region.

**When culture leads, learning grows. When food connects, community thrives.**



# Note of thanks



**Professor Roz Walker**

Centre Director

My deepest gratitude for the invaluable role you all play in shaping the future of First Nations people. As the Foundation Partner, your contributions are the cornerstone of many of our successes, both visible and behind the scenes, and I thank you for the profound difference Aryzta has made – and will continue to make.

It has been a pleasure to prepare this report, which highlights the significant impact made by the Deadly Koolinga Chef Program sponsored by Aryzta. The activity undertaken reflects our strong commitment to a strong start for healthy and resilient Aboriginal people and communities.

Your contributions are the foundation upon which futures are built, lives are changed, and ultimately, society is improved. On behalf of all the students and their families, the school communities and members of the broader community whose lives you have touched, I thank you.

**Professor Roz Walker**  
Director





**NGANGK YIRA**  
INSTITUTE FOR CHANGE



**Coolamon Research  
and Advocacy Centre**

# Thank you

*On behalf of the Murdoch University community, we thank you for your contribution.*

*We hope that you are inspired by the positive impact of your giving. All gifts, large or small, make a lasting difference as we build a brighter future, together.*

**Ngala kwop biddi.**  
Building a brighter  
future, together.

For further information please contact:

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