

Grandparent carers: identifying health and social service gaps and needs

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Session overview

- Who are Grandparent Carers?
- Overview of WA Grandcarer program of research
- Edith Cowan University projects
- Curtin University project
- Preliminary findings



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Who are Grandparent Carers?

Provide significant support and protection to many children unable to remain in the care of their parents (Child Safety Services, 2011).

In 2016-17, Australia-wide (AIHW, 2018):

- 47,915 children in *formal* out-of-home-care.
- 47% children in relative/kin care, 38% in foster care, 7% third-party parental, 1% other.
- 52% of children in relative/kinship care placed with grandparents (8086 households).

Thousands of informal arrangements.



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A snapshot of issues and challenges

- Re-learning how to parent in changed times
- Grief, loss and guilt
- Financial impact
- Housing
- Impact of ageing issues
- Dealing with trauma
- Legal issues
- Social isolation



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WA Grandcarers: Who is involved in the project?



- Lead agency
- Coordinating role
- Communications and marketing

Advisory and Working Groups

- Guide the research
- Governance framework
- Grandparent carers, politicians, service providers



- Impact of caring role on Grandcarers
- Grandchildren's voices

Funded by:



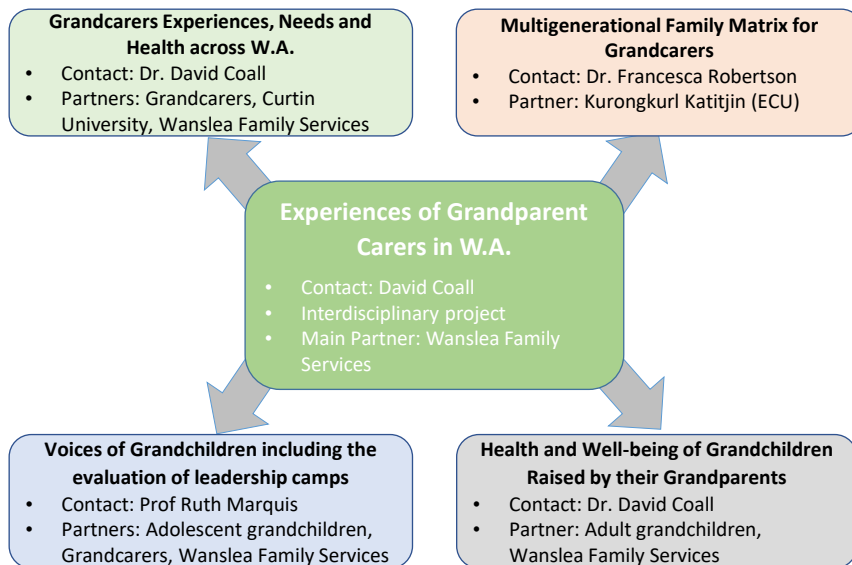
- Service provider mapping
- Review current policy & legislation



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Grandcarer Program of Research



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Grandcarers Experiences, Needs and Health across W.A.

Dr. David Coall (ECU)

- Gathering the largest body of data on the needs of grandparents who have experienced custodial caregiving.

Research aim.

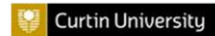
- To extend current understanding of the needs of Western Australian grandparents.

Research design

- Comprehensive questionnaire, completed either online (hosted by Qualtrics through ECU) or by paper copy.

Translational research

- Industry driven research with the capacity to inform social policy and enhance services and resources for grandcarers.

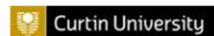


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Grandcarers Experiences, Needs and Health across W.A.

Survey structure informed by stakeholder consultation:

- **Demographics** – standard plus financial security, housing.
- **Family structure** – children, grandchildren, reasons for care, parent contact and residence, grandchild health conditions.
- **Grandparenting role** – satisfaction and enjoyment.
- **Grandparent issues** – personal, social emotional, grandchild issues, service issues, supportive family & friends.
- **Cultural and service barriers** – access to services.
- **Grandparent health status** – comprehensive SF36 health survey.
- **Tobacco and alcohol use** – type and number.
- **Family conflict** – grandparent/grandchild conflict, risk of abuse.
- **Food security** – affordability & quality.
- **Rewards and challenges of caring** – day to day coping & motivations.



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Multigenerational Family Matrix for Grandcarers

Dr. Francesca Robertson (Kurongkurl Katitjin, ECU)

Accessing and engaging people who are marginalized.

- Most in need of, yet least likely to access, services.
- Poorly represented.

Appropriate research design

- Contribute to the design of services. they are more likely to access.
- Not a problem saturated survey.

Novel research design

- A structured interview process.
- A system of three adaptable matrices.



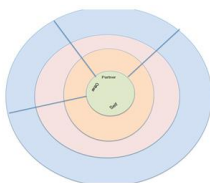
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Multigenerational Family Matrix for Grandcarers

Dr. Francesca Robertson (Kurongkurl Katitjin, ECU)

Novel research design – 3 matrices

Matrix 1: Our Family



Demographic data and uses pictographic space.

Matrix 2: Us Now

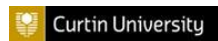
Home	Income and Money Management	Partner and/or Friends - either taking the children on	Health	Wellbeing
Happy with home, it is safe and comfortable	We have a reasonable income and I manage money well	I have nice friendships that support me as a partner and a grandparent/carer	In good health	I'm happy with life
Unhappy with home but it is safe and comfortable	We have a reasonable income and I'm okay at managing money	I have had some friends but I have kept some	At least as can be expected given age and/or conditions	Life could be better
Happy with home but it is somewhat unreliable	We don't have a reasonable income but we just get by	I have new friends who are in the same boat	In poor health due to illness or condition	Some bright spots still but mostly just get by
Under threat of eviction	We don't have a reasonable income because other people take it	My friends feel more like my friends than mine	In poor health due to chronic illness	It's really tough, I'm struggling all the time
Homeless	We don't have enough to live on	I have lost all my friends and feel isolated	In very poor health	I don't like I want to give up

Environmental data and uses domains with associated best to worse case.

Matrix 3: Helps & Hopes



Barriers and aspirational (improvements) data.



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Health and Well-being of Grandchildren Raised by their Grandparents

Dr. David Coall (ECU)

- Investigating the experiences and long-term outcomes of adult grandchildren 18-25 years raised by their grandparents.

Research aim.

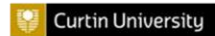
- To provide a detailed picture of the experiences, needs and health of adult grandchildren who were raised by their grandparents in Western Australia.

Research design

- Comprehensive questionnaire, completed either online (hosted by Qualtrics through ECU) or by paper copy.

Translational research

- Industry driven research to inform social policy, resources and service provision for adult grandchildren who were raised by their grandparent(s).



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Voices of Grandchildren: Leadership Camps

Prof. Ruth Marquis (ECU)

- Evidence of the benefits of the camp experience for grandchildren and grandcarers

Research aim.

- Evaluate 3 youth camps with 16 children (14-16 years of age) being raised by grandparents in each camp, focusing on the strengths and development potential of youth

Research design

- Grandchildren – survey and focus groups
- Grandparents - focus groups and follow-up telephone interviews
- Staff and volunteers – daily journal and focus group.

Translational research

- Industry driven research leading to real world impact



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Curtin Research: Social policy and service provision - gaps, barriers and enablers

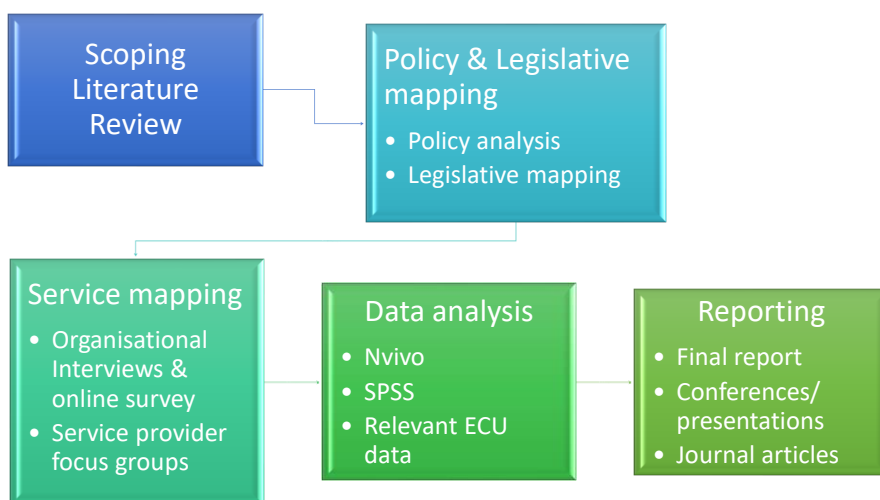
Focus areas:

- Policy context and service delivery framework
- Mapping services and supports in WA to identify accessibility, gaps, and duplications
- Identify improvements to service availability, accessibility and delivery, and policy frameworks
- Focus on needs of grandcarers: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, lower SES, rural and remote areas, caring for children with disabilities



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Curtin research methodology



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Participant demographics



Figure 1: Curtin data collection locations

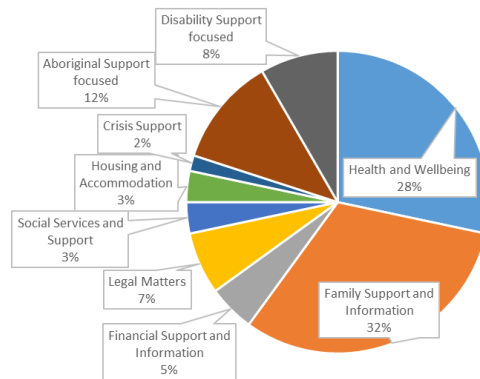


Figure 2: Participants by service category (n=69)

Table 1: Participants by location

Location	Participants
Perth	
• Interviews	21
• Focus groups	11
Regional	
• Interviews	8
• Focus groups	29
Total	69



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Preliminary Findings

Social Policy mapping:

- 34 relevant social policy documents identified

Legislative mapping:

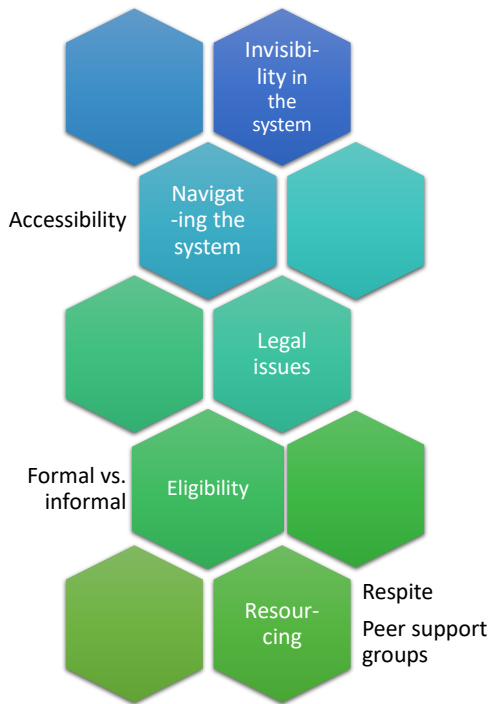
- 8 primary Acts; 46 subsidiary Acts (State and Federal)

Service mapping:

- 37 organisations across Perth, Bunbury, Broome, Kalgoorlie, Albany, and Geraldton



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Gaps and Issues for Grandparent Carers – service provider perspective



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Service provider recommendations



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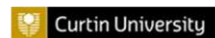


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