

# Living longer, living stronger

Improving health and wellbeing  
in our Aboriginal community

Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation (Coomaditchie) is an Illawarra-based organisation working with local Indigenous Australians to improve their wellbeing, strengthen Aboriginal identity and culture, and encourage self-determination.

At COORDINARE's 2019 'Pitch Night', Coomaditchie successfully pitched their idea for a new healthy lifestyle initiative aimed at tackling some of the main drivers of poor health outcomes for local Indigenous Australians. This led to the launch of the *Deadly Women, Deadly Kids* project.

## Deadly Women, Deadly Kids

Aimed at Aboriginal families living in the southern suburbs of Wollongong, *Deadly Women, Deadly Kids* offers a fresh approach to meeting the needs of communities who traditionally tend not to access mainstream health facilities and services.

Through information sharing and encouragement, the project guides and supports local Aboriginal families, particularly women and children, to make healthy lifestyle changes, with a focus on physical activity and healthy eating.

*“Some people have had dramatic, even life-changing, improvements to their health, including weight loss, commitment to exercise, and reduction in prescription medication.” – Kristy ‘Lil’ Thomas*





## The power of healthy choices

During 2020-2021, *Deadly Women, Deadly Kids* guided 20 local Aboriginal families through their personal health and wellbeing journeys. Participants were supported to grow, prepare and share nutritious food – including from their local community garden – and take part in regular exercise programs. Families were also connected with local health services, and encouraged to pay attention to their social and emotional wellbeing.

Coomaditchie reports seeing more community members making healthy food choices for themselves and their families, and increased participation in community programs. For some, improvements have been dramatic, even life-changing. This, in turn, has a positive influence on others, creating a significant ripple effect.

*“Family members are heavily influenced and encouraged by obvious improvements in the health and wellbeing of the participants. The ripple effect is significant.” – Kristy ‘Lil’ Thomas*

### Demystifying a ‘healthy lifestyle’

For some project participants, dramatic improvements to health and wellbeing have been life-changing. One community member, a 45-year-old person with Type 2 diabetes needing insulin for treatment, learned how to manage their health and no longer requires insulin!

Coomaditchie attributes this outcome to the support, encouragement and education provided through *Deadly Women, Deadly Kids*. In particular, the demystification of ‘a healthy lifestyle’ through demonstrating that it can be easy and affordable to eat well, and simple and achievable to exercise.



***By supporting initiatives like *Deadly Women, Deadly Kids* COORDINARE is empowering local communities to make positive change.***