



MADAS

MALLEE DISTRICT ABORIGINAL SERVICES

Our Lore

Our Journey through life

Barkindji/Wamba Wamba women, who's mothers line is just over the river. Darlene Thomas's acrylic on canvas work "Our Journey through life" represents the four stages of the Wellbeing program.

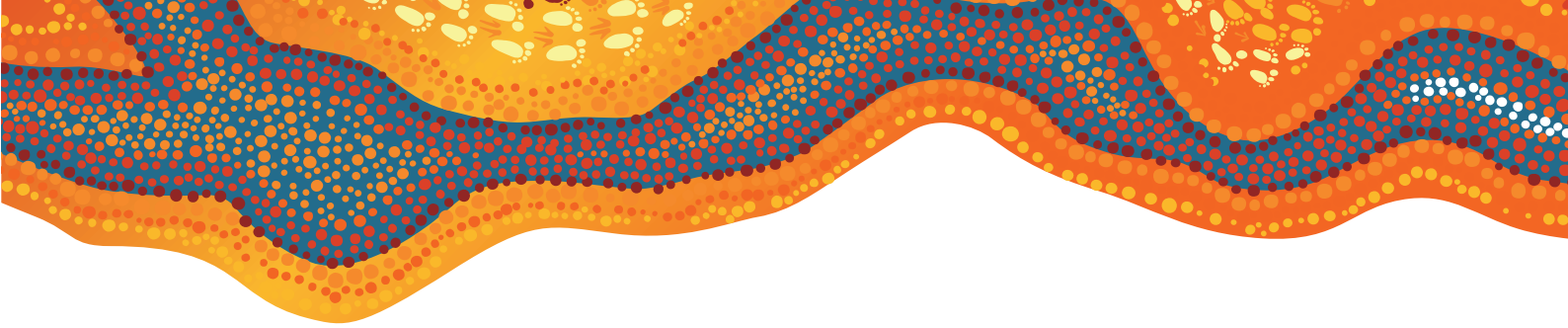
The River of life runs through and the fork in the river represents her home lands where the Darlingriver and the Murray river meet.

Below the river represents the darkness that we all face in our lives and the circle represents our generations walking the same paths of trauma in all its forms.

The emu and kangaroo footprints are our ancestors trying to help us break through the darkness to lead us up into the loving supportive community.

We may start our healing journey alone but as you see we then have not only our ancestors footprints with us, but our community walking this journey with us also. Making for a strong healthy happy community.





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Acknowledgement to Country and Our People

We at MDAS would like to acknowledge the wonderful and historic lands on which we live, work and play. We pay our sincerest respects to our Ancestors whom have paved the way for us through their strength, determination and resilience and continue to guide and support us from the Dreamtime.

We also want to pay our deepest respect for our Elders that are our connection to our history, culture, our truths and our future. May our Elders continue to nurture us to become humble, strong, motivated and deadly. We also want to acknowledge our young people as they are our future, we will all pass our knowledge, strength, courage and culture onto them to continue a culture that has existed for many thousands of years





Meaning of OUR LORE

The term "Lore" refers to the customs and stories of Aboriginal peoples learned from the Dreamtime. Traditional Aboriginal Lore was passed on through the generations through songs, stories, dance and land, it governs all aspects of traditional life.

There are four key components to Traditional Aboriginal Lore:

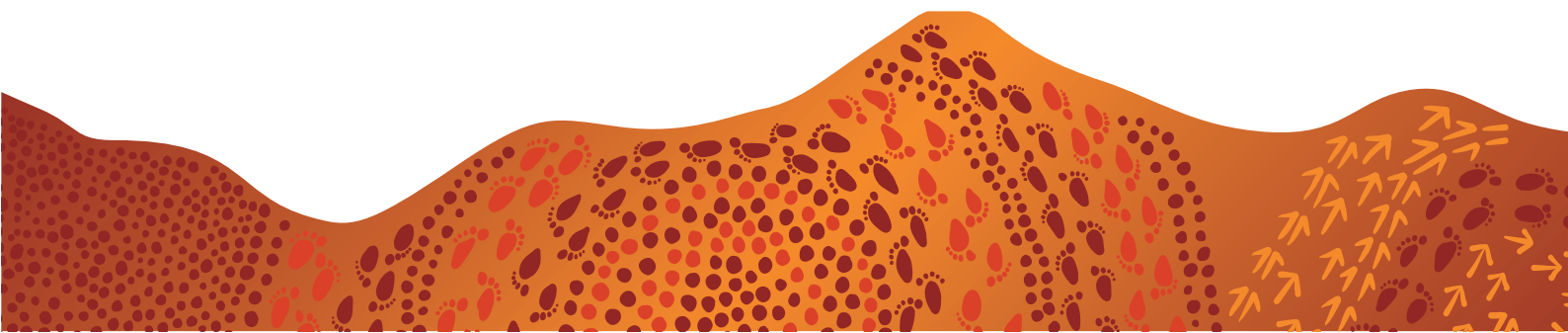
LAND, ORIGIN, RESPECT and ELDERS this LORE has continued to govern our people for all of our existence. We have modified this to embrace the values that derive from our LORE.

LAND, within our cultural lands we will have a place to heal and draw strength. As our Ancestors before us we need to ensure we continue to take care of our lands.

ORAL, our history is an oral tradition, we have passed down generation to generation by song-lines, language, customs and ceremonies through story-telling.

RESPECT, is the underpinning value of our people we show respect for country, our Elders, our cultural practices and others cultural practices, our animals, our dreamtime


ELDERS, are our wisdom holders, our story tellers, our links to our culture and our families. Our Elders provide the cultural knowledge and spiritual guidance that we all need.





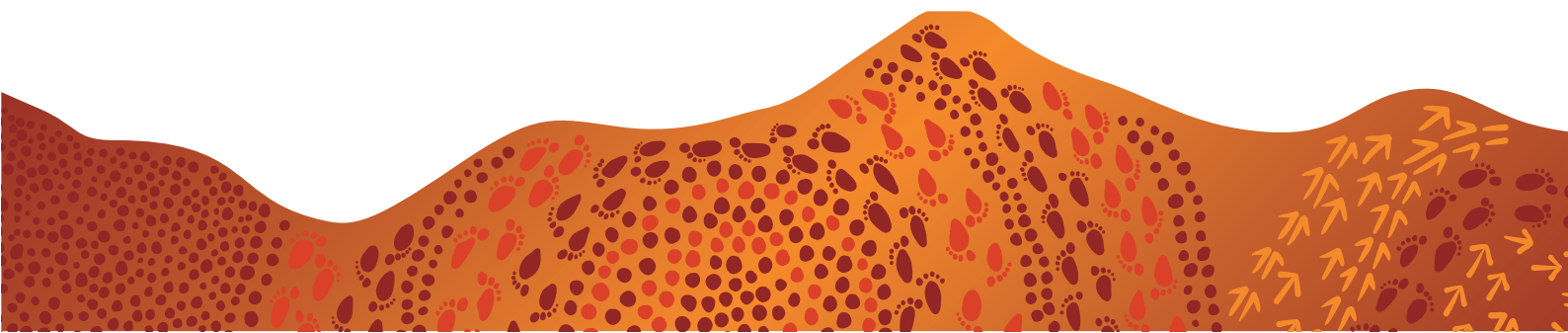
Respect

Respect is the foundation to all we are. Respect for ourselves, our families, our elders, our community, our land and our animals. Here are ways you can show respect to our community when they come to our service.

- Dress respectfully, this is a sign that you have respect for yourself, community and your employer.
 - Greet with a smile and have a yarn
 - Never interrupt someone when they are telling you something
 - Speak with respect.
 - If someone is upset allow them to express their issue, show compassion and use active listening to try and resolve, offer a drink of water and tissues if needed.
 - Eye contact - If someone looks away from making eye contact with you, do not continue to stare into their eyes. Make eye contact when you are talking to them and break when you are listening. Others will be okay with eye contact but that's why we pay attention to body language.
 - If someone is struggling to move or sit, offer assistance.
 - Always check in whilst they are waiting or have a yarn with a person while they wait for the person they want to see.
 - Respecting land - if you go onto country with community ensure you leave the area the same way it was when you got there. Never take or touch things that you are not allowed to.
 - Smoking ceremony - this is conducted to cleanse any bad spirits, when there is a smoking ceremony it is important that you participate unless advised by your elders.
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Respecting Our Elders

- Greet with a smile and address them as Aunt or Uncle unless told otherwise by them.
 - Go out and sit next to them and have a yarn while they wait unless they indicate they would prefer to be left alone.
 - Offer them a cup of tea or coffee
 - Offer assistance to elders if they are struggling to walk or sit
 - Never interrupt an elder when they are speaking
 - Never correct an Elder, if there is a mis understanding address this in private with the Elder respectfully
 - An Elder will check that you have been listening to them so be attentive
 - If an elder asks you to do something for them, like photocopy, make a call, share food or help them with something you should do it without question, unless it is unlawful.
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Men's Business

- Greet respectfully
- If client is presenting with his children offer the children coloring tools or toys while they wait
- Where available offer support by a Aboriginal Male worker or Male worker.
- Health or sensitive issues where available support with male staff
- Don't interrupt a person when they are speaking
- Show respect and do not judge
- If there is not a male worker in that particular department offer a male support person.



Women's Business

- Greet respectfully
- If they are presenting with children offer the children coloring or toys
- If a women is presenting with FV issues find a safe and private place for them to wait
- Health or sensitive issues offer an Aboriginal female worker when available.
- If Aboriginal Female worker is not available as the client if they would like another female staff member
- When dealing with women's health where possible offer a female GP or Health worker, if not possible make client aware of this prior to booking the appointment



Yarning

- Do not swear in front of elders
- If you are not Aboriginal do not use Aboriginal language or terminology as this may offend community
- Speak clearly and respectfully
- Do not speak to community with condescending tones
- If you get frustrated with a client excuse yourself and take a breath
- How you speak to others will affect the way they speak to you.





Our culture

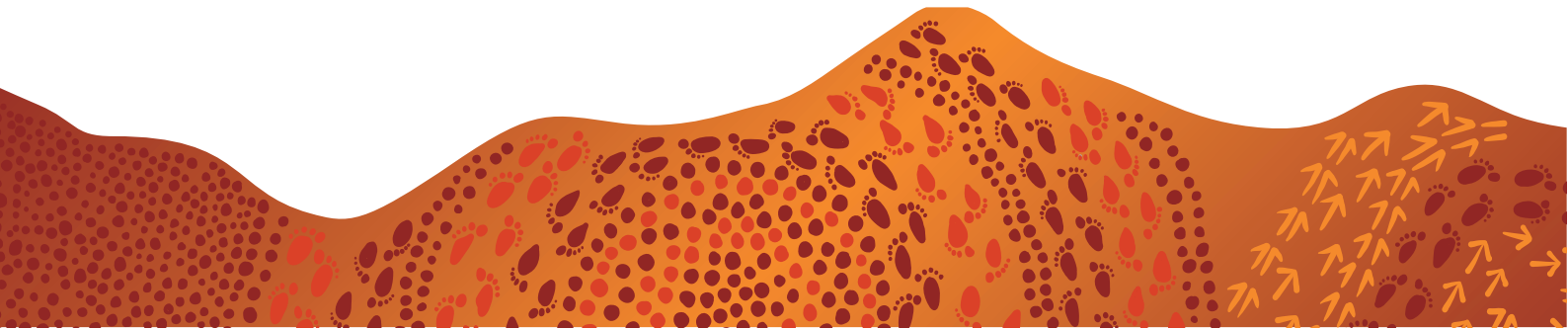
- We have a culturally diverse organization
- We need to be respectful of each others cultural differences/practices/opinions and beliefs
- Aboriginal staff and community will have beliefs of spiritual beings that should not be judged or mocked
- Our culture is based on community and Land, it is about sharing and caring for each other
- Our culture is about uplifting each other not running each other down
- Our culture is about RESPECT





Our children

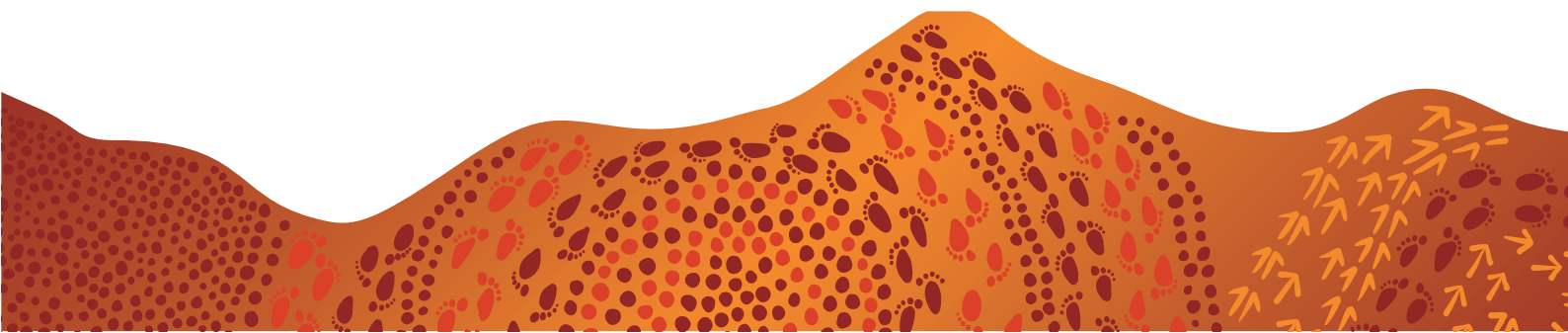
- Greet with a smile
- Offer them a drink and/or food
- While they are waiting go out and have a yarn with them.
- If they look like they are scared or uncomfortable in the open waiting area offer them a private space to wait for their worker.
- Again if this is a female child offer a female worker when available and if this is a male child offer a male worker when available.
- Do not stare at children they find this really uncomfortable.
- Be respectful towards their needs as a young person and comply with any boundaries they set, pay attention to body language.
- Our children's voices should be heard.

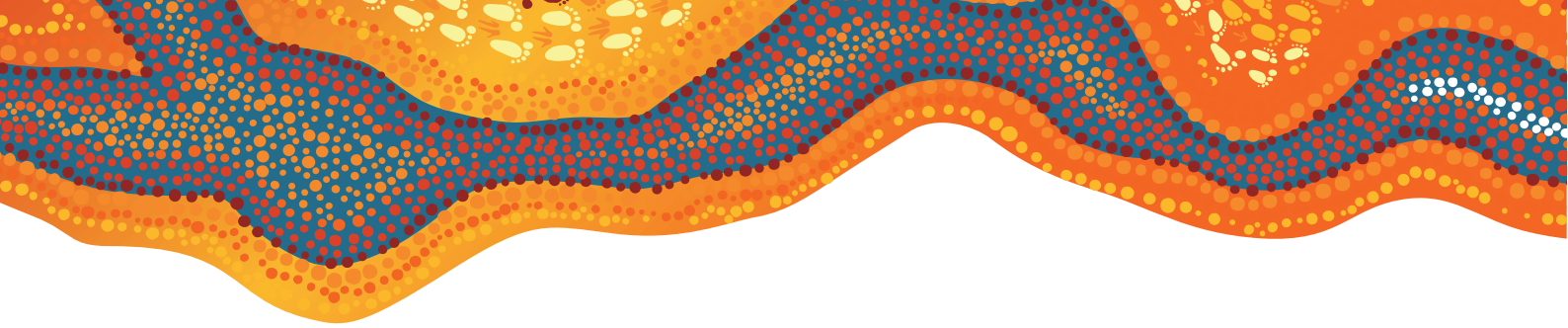




Our Terminology

- **Aunty, Uncle** - are used to show respect for our elders, sometimes you will hear Aboriginal people referring to young people as aunty and uncle. This is done when they are the nieces and nephews of those people.
- **Bro, Brother, Sis, Sister, Cuz , Bruz** - Aboriginal people may use these terms with people they are not necessarily related to but are comfortable with. This is also used to show acceptance of a person. (Depending on the individuals, some Aboriginal People may find it offensive if a non-Aboriginal person refers to them using these terms, so be mindful of the person and if you use these terms.)
Some family members may call their cousin mum/dad, aunty/uncle, brother/sister
- **Gammin/Gammon** - this term is used when something is slack or not great. This term can also be used when someone is joking about something.
- **Nunya** - means stubborn / head strong
- **Doopy** - means slow of mind or reactions





Thank you and Acknowledgement

Thank you to the MDAS Board and staff for input
on this document.

