

Planning for Locally Provided Haemodialysis Care in Badu Island in the Torres Strait: Kikirrui Dan Walmai Project

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Background

Diabetes is a very common cause of morbidity in the Torres Strait, and Tribal leaders previously endorsed the Torres Strait Health Strategy in the 1990's, which identified infrastructure (building, staffing and care models) will be crucial for locally-provided care for adults living with diabetes-related kidney failure.

The Kikirriu Dan Walmai Project (KDWP) is a community-led initiative to restore health to Maluilgal (the people of Maluilgau, of the near western island cluster of Torres Strait. The KDW project honours cultural protocol and acknowledges the leadership and responsibility of Kuiku Mabaigal (Head people).

Recognising the need for care delivered closer to Country, the Australian Government offered remote Communities a funding opportunity to build four-chair dialysis units.

Flinders University researchers were requested by Kuiku Mabaigal to provide support with technical advice, a needs assessment, and KDWP reporting.

Project Aims

To describe the community-defined infrastructure for safe and quality haemodialysis care in Badu island of near west Torres Strait, an isolated Australian island.

Overall goals:

- 1 Advocate for building a dialysis unit on Badu Island for Maluilgal, so people do not have to leave home for dialysis, and relocate to Waibene (Thursday Island) or mainland Australia.
- 2 Prevent and manage chronic diseases such as diabetes and chronic kidney disease by restoring health across Maluilgau.

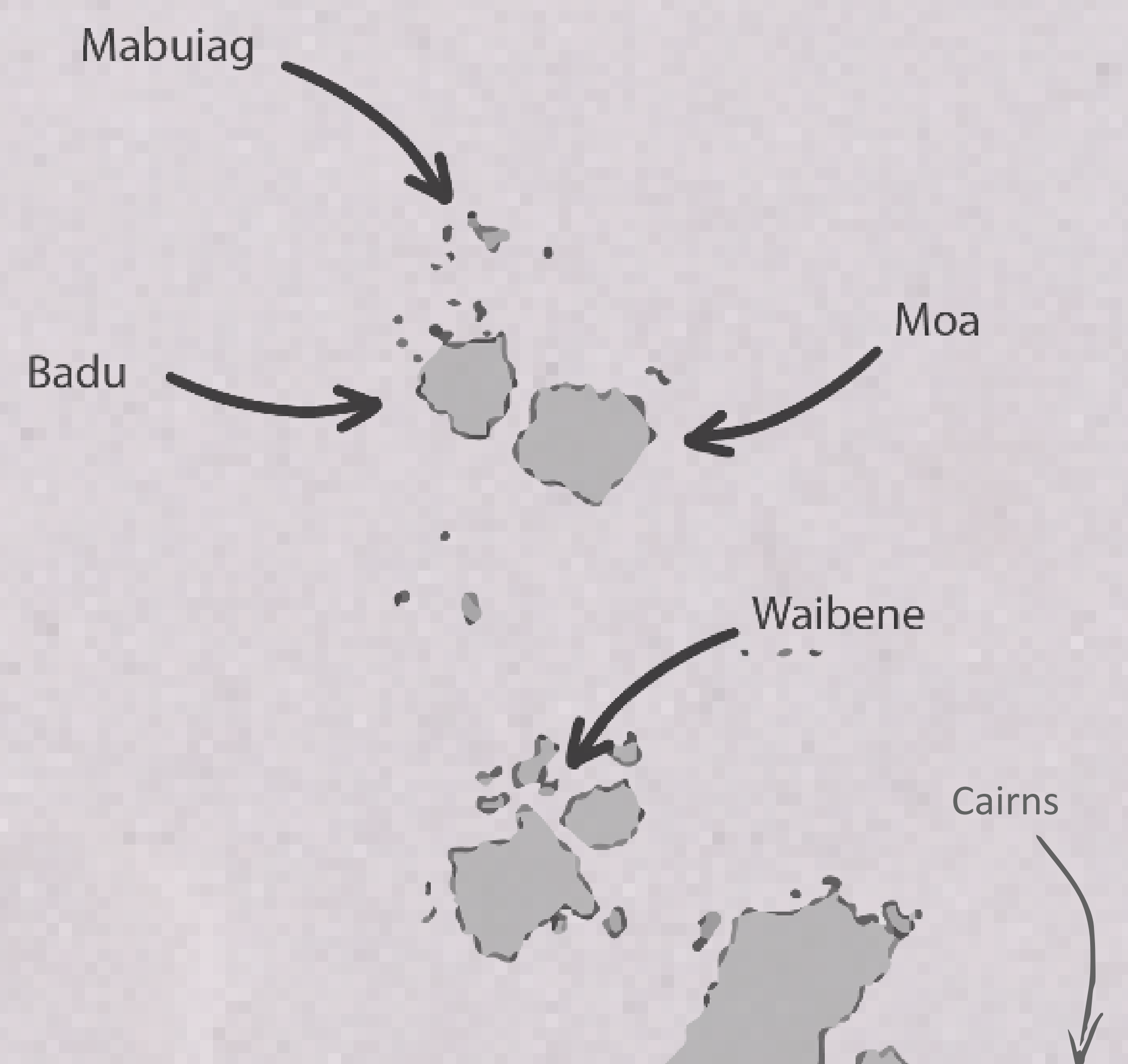


Kikirriu Dan Walmai means Our life is resurrected through overcoming sickness, in the Kala Lagaw Ya language spoken in western and central island regions of the Torres Strait.

Methods

In late 2023, the KDWP team visited three Maluilgau communities, as well as Waiben, and Cairns. The engagement visits introduced community to KDWP, discussed the need for a dialysis unit, and sought support for the KDWP team to progress action towards the two goals. Community members in these meetings overwhelmingly supported the KDWP to continue its work and advocate for building a dialysis unit on Badu Island.


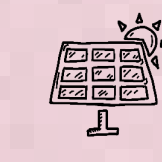


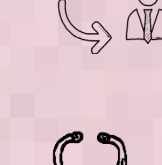

Badu Island Tribal elders prioritised locally-available haemodialysis as key health infrastructure. They then sought to establish a culturally-knowledgeable Torres Strait Islander team to engage community members in Badu, Mabuigal, and Moa islands and living in Cairns. The research and its conduct was approval by Maluilgal Tribal Governance, and supported by NHMRC Fellowship Grant: 'Yes We Will' – Implementing Indigenous-led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kidney health in Northern and Central (1174758).



Results

The team met with communities in the Torres Strait in October 2023 and in Cairns in December. At each meeting the attendees supported the pursuit of a dialysis unit on Badu Island. The need to also pursue funding to support community-led restorative health initiatives was also discussed. A report consolidating those engagement visits was relied upon to make a Commonwealth Government Grant, approximating \$3.5million to support a new build of 4-chair haemodialysis unit.

What is needed to support a dialysis unit?

-  Dialysis treatments require large volumes of clean cool water
-  Reliable continuous electricity needs to be supplied
-  Removal of waste (including clinical, water, and plastic waste)
-  Accommodation for patients and their carer/family
-  Strong partnerships with stakeholders
-  Culturally safe practice for our people who will use this dialysis unit

Conclusion

Tribal governance was the persisting attribute in bringing together a report, that summarised a health plan for locally-delivered haemodialysis. The zageth will continue with the award of funds to commence building, and parallel zageth to identify a clinical training pathway for Torres Strait Islander clinicians to provide dialysis care and related health care.

Read the latest KDWP report by scanning the QR code



KDW would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we live and work: Kaurareg, Larrakia, Yolngu, Kurna, Gimuy Walubara Yidinji and Yirrganydji. We also acknowledge the traditional owners of Maluilgau. We acknowledge every person who attended a meeting or gathering and talked to us opportunistically over this period. We thank all who have helped behind the scenes to make KDW a success.