

'Our Story. Our Future.' was created by proud Wiradjuri, Wotjobaluk, Yuin and Gumbaynggirr artist Luke Penrith and Maluiliilgal people, Badu Island artist Naseli Tamwoy.

Census data and local partnerships promote wellbeing at the new Walu-win Centre in Orange NSW

Last year, community-controlled organisation, Orange Aboriginal Medical Services (OAMS), opened a purpose-built wellbeing and rehabilitation centre in Orange, NSW. The name of the centre - Walu-win - comes from the Wiradjuri word for 'healthy'.

Jamie Newman, proud Wiradjuri man and OAMS' Chief Executive Officer, said they use Census data to understand needs of the local community and help secure further investment from partners. Walu-win's services include health, housing and employment, which are vital for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to thrive.

OAMS combined Census data with other local data to build a profile of the region, helping it to better understand what was needed in the local community. Despite an uncertain year due to COVID-19, the Walu-Win opened in August 2020. The centre combines holistic and traditional medical practices to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"Improving access to health services through Walu-Win, and a more holistic and wellbeing focus is vital to closing the gap. We can't close the gap without focusing on wellbeing for our people," Jamie said.

Walu-win's Manager, Zara Crawford, describes Walu-Win as a hub for a variety of health outcomes.

"We often see clients more than a GP would, which could be about something that is stressing them out socially or emotionally, through to developing exercise and nutritional programs. That's our day-to-day service and that's what we mean about being holistic."

Jamie and Zara believe participation in the Census is an important conversation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities ahead of this year's count.

"Accurate Census data enables community-controlled organisations to know where our people are situated and what their needs are. This ultimately goes back into generating positive health outcomes for our people," Jamie said.

"In terms of participating in the Census, if our voices aren't heard and if we are not recognised, then how do we make change?" Zara said.

The 2021 Census will be held on Tuesday 10 August nationally, with a targeted approach in July and August for people in remote communities.

Information and resources to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is available at www.census.abs.gov.au/indigenous