



YOU'RE A DAD

7 storylines about
being a Dad





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“I’m proud to be a Dad. I’ve found out that us, as fathers, we can make choices and we can make changes. To me, this book is all about hearing and feeling the happiness and hurt and stories from other Aboriginal and Torres Strait fathers. Just to know that our brothers are all feeling the same in a lot of ways. It’s also about acknowledging us as fathers and the important role that we do play in our children’s lives. The final message is the simple thing - just talk with your kids and talk with other blokes about your kids.”

Craig Hammond - an Aboriginal Dad

“Our kids need us Dads more than ever, to be a role model, to be a friend, to be a listener, to be a loan office, to be lots of other things, but most of all it’s just to be there when they need us.”

Steve Larkins - SNAICC Chairperson

**BE THERE
CONNECT
BE PROUD
TALK
FEEL GOOD
PROTECT
THE JOURNEY**



I had to catch two buses, broken
leg and all, to get here for my kids

When I seen him
born I just cried

BE THERE

MAKE TIME TO BE WITH YOUR KIDS, DO THINGS
TOGETHER, LOVE, HOLD, PROVIDE FOR AND SUPPORT
THEM, HAVE FUN, SHOW THEM YOUR FEELINGS -
YOUR CHILDREN LOVE YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE,
SO JUST LOVE THEM FOR WHO THEY ARE, NO MATTER
WHAT THEY DO





While I'm locked up I can be
there for them by phone, letters,
sending them things I've made

Just mucking around together a lot

I pay for all the
flights to see my boy,
no matter the cost

It's hard but I need to work with
the kids' Mum - to be there for
them when I am needed

I pick up my little one from
school every day, because my
woman does afternoon shift

I always keep
a picture of
them in my
heart

Me and my kids have a special bond

I haven't seen my
daughter for over
12 years and it'll
be hard to even
find where she is,
but I'll try

I like being involved with
my kids' school activities

CONNECT

**BE INVOLVED FROM THE START AND ALL THE WAY
THROUGH – MISTAKES MAY HAPPEN BUT KEEP IN
TOUCH WITH THE KIDS, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AND
LET YOUR KIDS KNOW YOU ARE THERE FOR THEM**

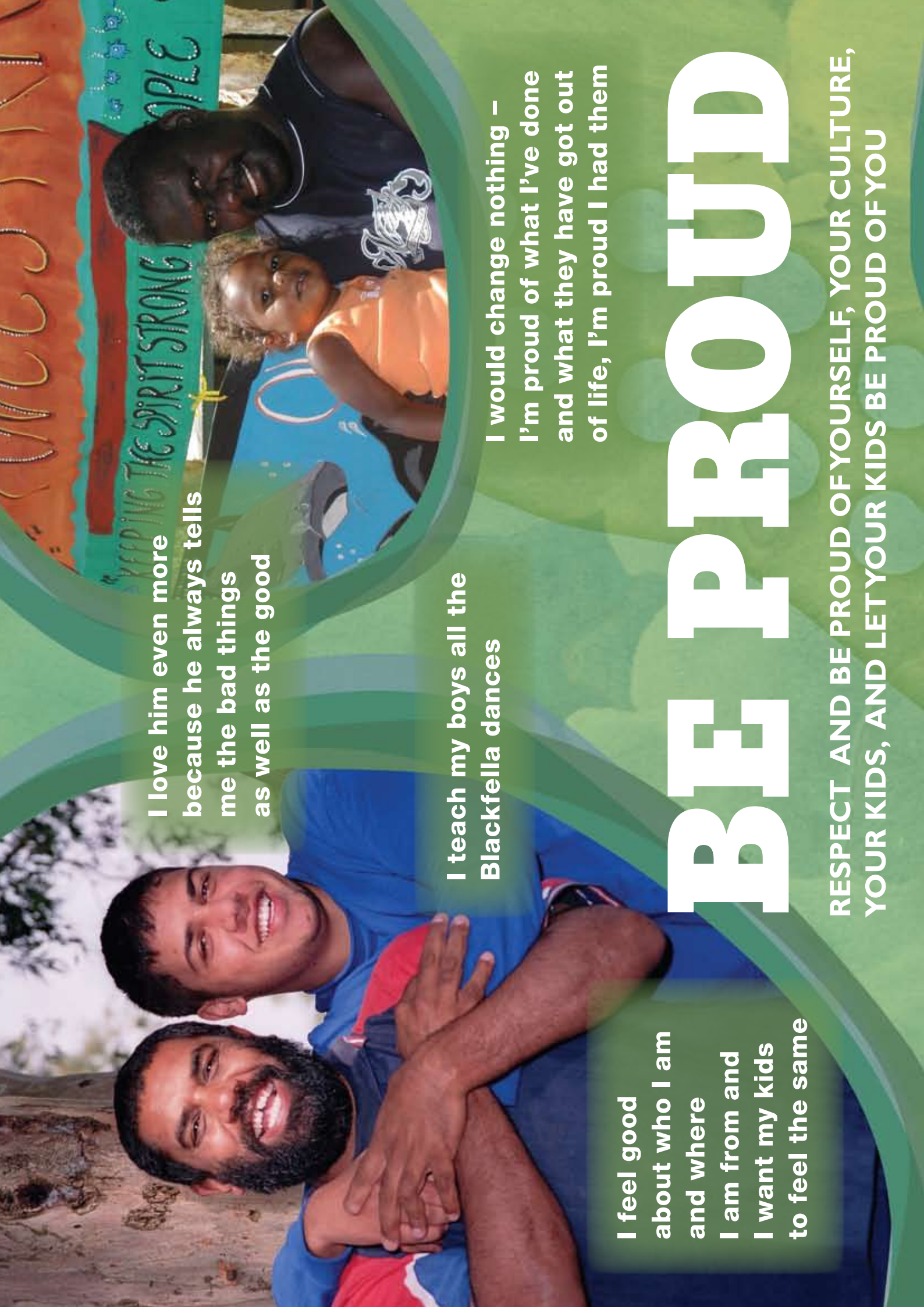
**He lives with his
Mum, so I call him
every week and
when he visits we
always see family**

**If I knew who my Dad is and
where he is, I'd feel better**

**I like my kids to
know where I'm from
and who's their mob**

**When I'm on the road I ring up
the kids from the roadhouse
to see how they are going**





**I love him even more
because he always tells
me the bad things
as well as the good**

**I teach my boys all the
Blackfella dances**

**I would change nothing –
I’m proud of what I’ve done
and what they have got out
of life, I’m proud I had them**

**I feel good
about who I am
and where
I am from and
I want my kids
to feel the same**

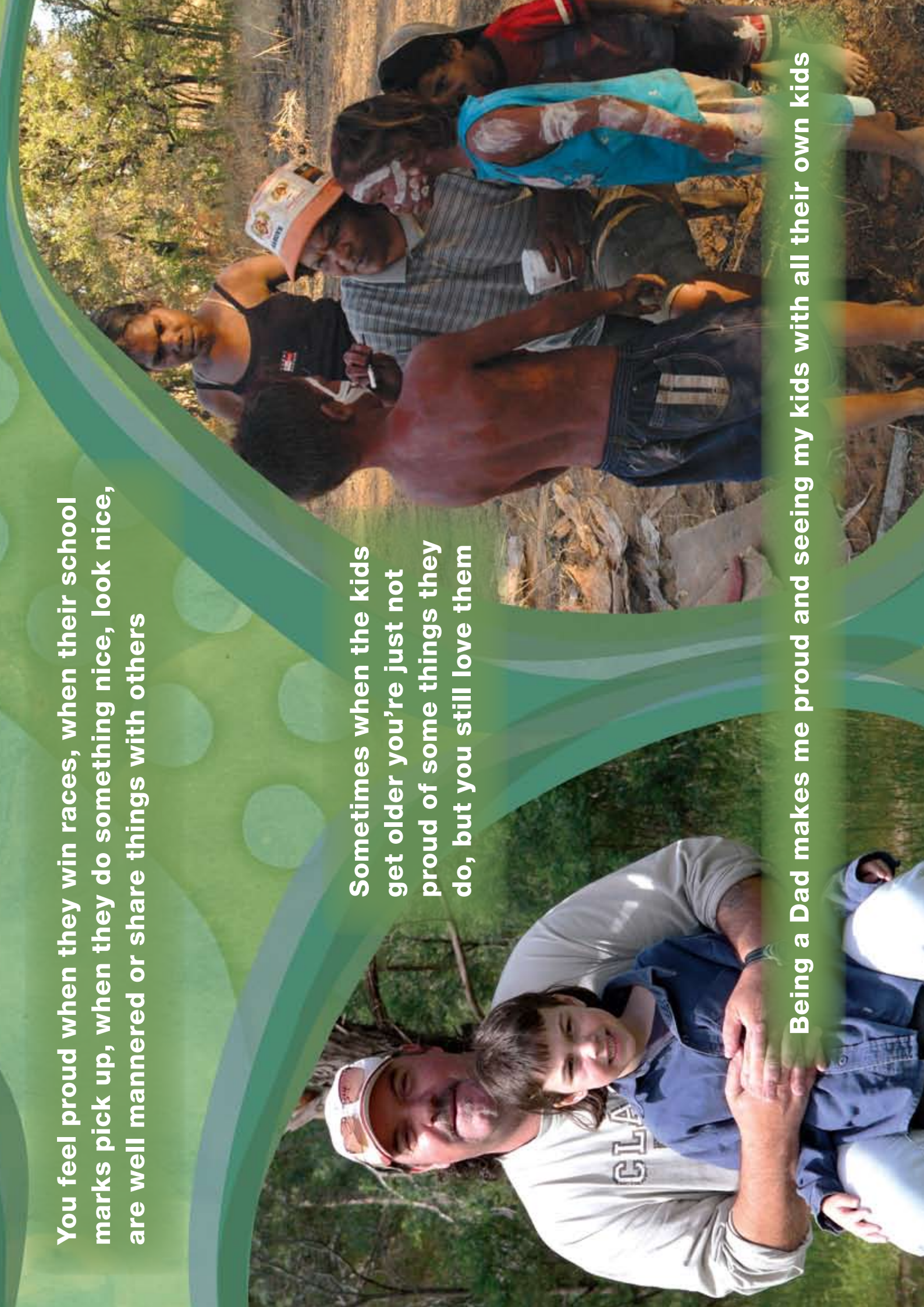
BE PROUD

**RESPECT AND BE PROUD OF YOURSELF, YOUR CULTURE,
YOUR KIDS, AND LET YOUR KIDS BE PROUD OF YOU**

You feel proud when they win races, when their school marks pick up, when they do something nice, look nice, are well mannered or share things with others

Sometimes when the kids get older you're just not proud of some things they do, but you still love them

Being a Dad makes me proud and seeing my kids with all their own kids



I tell them how much I love them

I need to listen to
my girls and not do
all the talking

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I always ask how his day was or
what he has planned for the weekend

We talk to them and
show them different
things until they find
something they want
to do— it takes time

I didn't talk to my own kids a lot,
because I was working but now
I can talk with my grandchildren

TALK

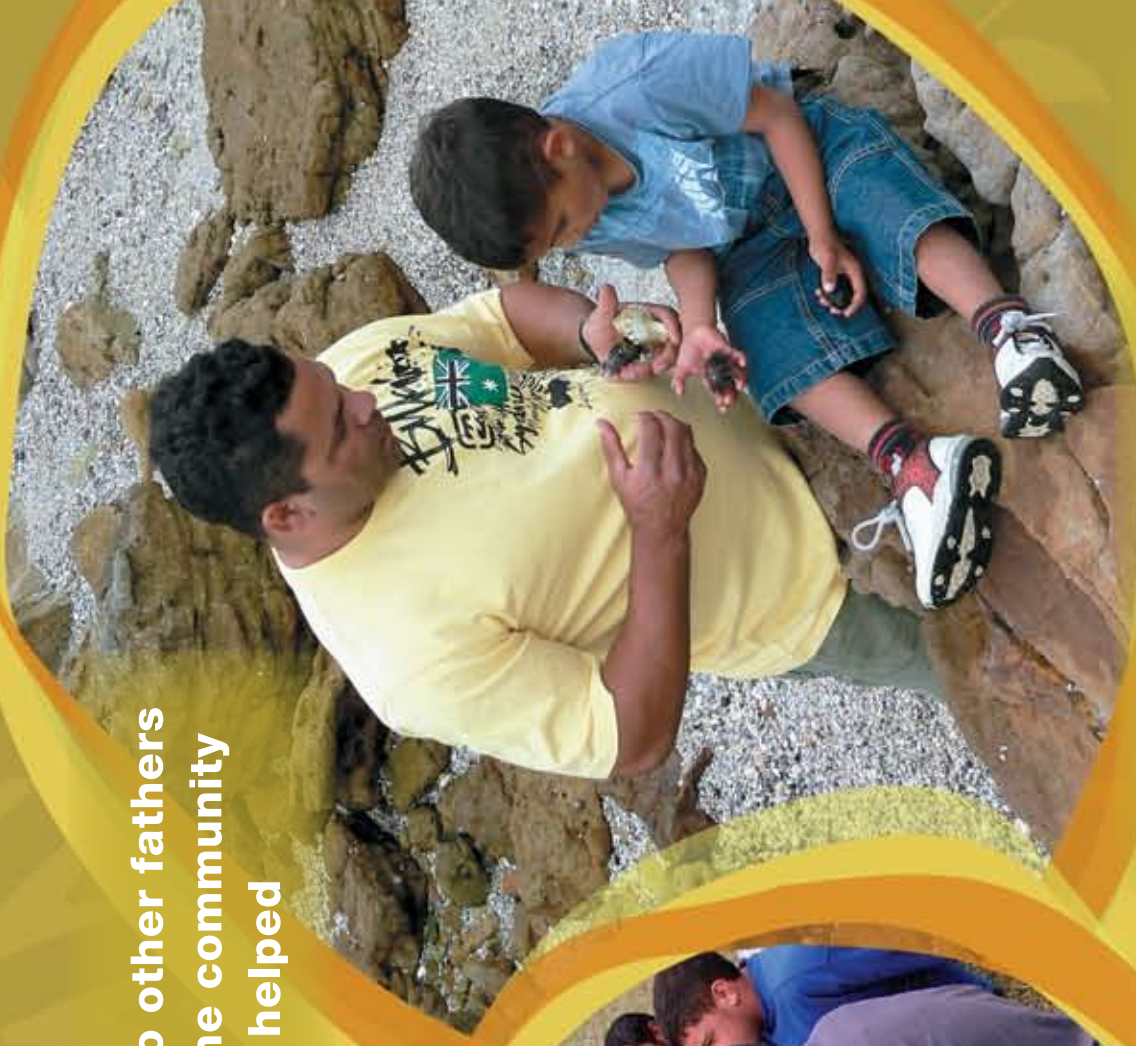
TALK WITH AND LISTEN TO YOUR KIDS – TALK UP FOR YOUR KIDS AND TALK WITH OTHER DADS ABOUT BEING A DAD

Bro, I gave up buying tobacco so I had the money to ring my kids while I'm on the inside

Talking to other fathers around the community would've helped

I tell my kids stories about how I grew up on the mission

When I spend timeout bush with my son – all we do is talk





I can't wait for my grand-daughter
to wake up in the morning

When your baby is born you feel on
top of the world – you're a Dad!

I was tossing up about going to the knockout
or staying at home for the birth of my child –
I made the right choice for my family

FEEL GOOD

THERE MAY BE HARD TIMES TO GET THROUGH
BUT ENJOY YOUR KIDS AND ENJOY BEING A DAD

**Do things with
the kids they
like doing**



Watch them play football

**I ring him up whenever I feel down because he
lives away from me – just hearing him cheers me up**



**When my girls
throw themselves
into my arms**



**Seeing my kids growing
into what they are today**



**Make sure you know
where they are, that
they're safe, healthy,
fed – things like that**

**Work with your kids from an
early age and teach them
about rules – things like look
for cars before you chase a
ball, don't swim here – be firm**

**Teach them to stick together
and keep each other safe
from when they are young**



**Just how that kid turns out
depends on how you teach
and work with them**

PROTECT

MAKE GOOD DECISIONS FOR AND WITH YOUR
KIDS, THINK ABOUT HOW YOU TALK, GUIDE AND
PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN TO KEEP THEM HAPPY,
SAFE AND PROUD

They know what I expect
from them even when I am
not there and I let them know
when I am not happy and why

Make the time to
talk about the
birds and the bees
and about life



We didn't talk for a few years, I miss those years

I lost my way for a bit, but got back in touch

When I see a picture of my children and grandchildren, I can see me and my ancestors in them

My children are having children. I'm helping him with his children now

THE JOURNEY

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT
IN YOUR OWN LIFE JOURNEY AND TEACH
YOUR OWN KIDS AND GRANDCHILDREN

Having a kid has made me grow up a bit more

**I learnt about
being a father from
my own Dad**



**We were both young,
just freaking out and
didn't know what to do
but we stayed together
and now we've got
another two**

**I bathed them, took them to work with me,
I done everything you can name with them,
even took them to training with me**



**I want to share my life story
with family so they don't
make the mistakes I did**



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(SNAICC)

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Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain images of people who may have since passed away.



Share your stories

The best thing for Dads who want some support or advice is to talk to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.

There are many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's groups meeting Australia-wide who are talking together about how to look after themselves and their kids and renew their pride and strength.

Ring your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child, family and health services to find out what supports and men's groups are in your area.

Online information

SNAICC www.snaicc.asn.au

The Family Action Centre www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac

Raising Children Network
http://raisingchildren.net.au/for_fathers/for_fathers.html

www.menslineaus.org.au

Phone helplines (free for the cost of a local call)

Men's Line 1300 7899 78

Parent helplines

QLD & NT	1300 30 1300	WA	1800 654 432
VIC	13 22 89	ACT	(02) 6287 3833
SA	1300 364 100	TAS	1300 808 178
NSW	13 20 55		



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Be there

Make time to be with your kids, do things together, love, hold, provide for and support them, have fun, show them your feelings – you're children love you for who you are, so just love them for who they are, no matter what they do

Connect

Be involved from the start and all the way through – mistakes may happen but keep in touch with the kids, family and community and let your kids know you are there for them

Be proud

Respect and be proud of yourself, your culture, your kids, and let your kids be proud of you

Talk

Talk with and listen to your kids – talk up for your kids and talk with other Dads about being a Dad

Feel good

There may be hard times to get through but enjoy your kids and enjoy being a Dad

Protect

Make good decisions for and with your kids, think about how you talk, guide and protect your children to keep them happy, safe and proud

The journey

Think about what you have learn in your own life journey and teach your own kids and grandchildren

**You're a Dad – Developed by the Secretariat of National
Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) in partnership
with The University of Newcastle's Family Action Centre**

