

Connecting in the Gulf: Digital Inclusion for Indigenous Families Living on Mornington Island Research Project

WHAT DID WE DO?

We yarned with Aboriginal families on Mornington Island about how they use mobile phones, the internet and other technology.

WHO DID THE RESEARCH?

Dr Jessa Rogers, Dr Amber Marshall, Dr Kim Osman, Dr Thu Pham, Prof Michael Dezuanni from Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane, and Prof Hurriyet Babacan from JCU. Jessa (an Aboriginal researcher - Wiradjuri) and Amber (non-Indigenous researcher) came to Mornington Island to yarn with families. Three trips were made to Mornington Island in 2022 for this project.

HOW DO INDIGENOUS FAMILIES ON MORNINGTON ISLAND USE TECHNOLOGY?

- Families connect to the internet through broadband satellite, Telstra 4G on prepaid mobile phones, community wi-fi, the outstation phones, and satellite phones.
- There are places to get help using the internet and online services like Bynoe or Save the Children.
- Using the internet on Mornington can be hard. The strength of the signal is weak and the internet is slow a lot of the time. Sometimes phone networks don't work.
- Travelling out of Gununa for cultural activities is dangerous because people can't call for help in emergencies. The signal drops out after the dam.
- Young people don't go out to homelands and learn out on Country, because there's no signal and they like being connected to the internet
- The free community wi-fi is used mainly by young people.
- People like to use wi-fi at home or where they work.
- People mostly use mobile phones. They go to the post office and get \$30 recharge credits, sometimes three times a month.
- People share data with family and friends through hotspotting. Some activities make the data run out quickly, like watching YouTube or playing games.
- There are long delays when the phone lines go down and it takes a long time to get fixed.
- Families use Facebook and like sharing photos to connect with others.



WHAT DID MORNINGTON ISLAND FAMILIES SAY THEY NEED?

- The internet needs to be cheaper, faster and more reliable on Mornington Island.
- People need to get online for jobs, shopping, education, banking, email, Facebook and MyGov.
- Better phone reception that covers more of the land and waters of Mornington Island. It is important for activities on Country to call for help and to share activities on Facebook.
- People would like more computers and laptops, not just mobile phones.
- People would like to learn how to use email on a computer, do banking and things like MyGov.
- Families would like a digital place to keep family stories and photos safe.
- People would like a place to visit to use computers to learn about family history and Mornington Island history.