

COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023





THE STORY BEHIND OUR NAME AND ARTWORK

As part of our 20 year and new name celebrations in 2020, we had an artwork especially painted for us by Krystal Hurst, a Worimi artist and Creative Director of Gillawarra Arts. The painting tells the story of our connection with community. The circles represent different communities and tell us that every community is different with their own language, knowledge and way of life. We respect and acknowledge those differences. It shows the pathways of connection and collaboration between communities and Community First Development, our supporters and volunteers.

The painting also inspired a new direction for our logo. It was co-designed by Kimiah Alberts, a Gungalu, Koinjmal, Yiman and South Sea Islander woman from Queensland alongside communications agency *contentgroup*.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this publication may contain the names and images of people who have passed away.

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ABN 900 9312 3418

COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT

Level 1, 67 Townshend Street

Phillip ACT 2606

PO Box 6155

Mawson ACT 2607

Front cover image: The incredible women of Bima Wear showcasing their stunning new design and print by Helen Tipuamantimirri, called 'Her Country Warriyuwu'. This print is for Bima Wear's new staff uniforms.

COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023

OUR VISION

First Nations' peoples and communities are thriving.

WHO WE ARE

Community First Development is a First Nations' community development and research organisation that creates positive change in and with First Nations' communities.

WHAT WE DO

We undertake social and economic development, and research projects in partnership with First Nations' communities, businesses and people. Communities have control; they name the priorities and choose the design, assets, capabilities and approach to achieve their vision. We provide tailored support through community partners, skilled staff, trained volunteers, key supporters and service providers.

IMPACT

With community expertise leading the way, outcomes and impact will vary depending on the priorities of communities and the activities they request. When we hold self-determination at the heart of all we do, First Nations' people lead the way in creating more for youth, stronger economic and education outcomes, safer communities and stronger, healthier lives.

*WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF
COUNTRY THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA AND RECOGNISE
THEIR CONTINUING CONNECTION TO LAND, WATERS
AND CULTURE. WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO THEIR
ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING.*

WE VALUE

VALUES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US

ETHICS

We commit to ethical actions and decision making.

CULTURE

Recognition and respect for culture are at the centre of everything we do. Self-determination and agency are the foundations of our practice.

CARING FOR COUNTRY

We honour the relationship and responsibility we have to the earth in all of our business practices and relationships.

PARTNERSHIP

Everything we do is in partnership; it is only through collaboration and working together, that we can achieve genuine change in our lifetime.

OUR PRIORITIES 2020-2023

1 THRIVING COMMUNITIES

We will achieve thriving communities, with our people, for our people, through successful development and research initiatives, designed and delivered in partnership. This includes a focus on youth and their emerging leadership.

2 ACTION LEARNING

We will value and develop our people by providing a rewarding and satisfying place to work. We will continue to improve our development and research practice and methodology, through lessons learnt with our people.

3 GROW

While staying true to our community development approach and organisational culture, diversify and create new First Nations' opportunities that grow our organisation and allow us to innovate, expand and share knowledge, learning and success.

4 INFLUENCE POLICY

Increase communication and accessibility to our work, share our impact and grow our evidence base, to influence policy.

FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLE HAVE GLOBAL SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATIONS THAT ADDRESS MANY OF HUMANITY'S GREATEST CHALLENGES, INCLUDING CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

KAREN MILWARD ➤➤



Our organisation's vision is thriving First Nations' communities. We want to strengthen community capacity and capability. Our long-term strategy is growth, to do more and more with more communities. To achieve this, the focus for the Board is longevity and sustainability. Funding is a significant part of this.

OUR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MODEL IS THE STRENGTH OF THE ORGANISATION, AND WE HAVE NOT WAVERED IN OUR COMMITMENT TO THE APPROACH WE TAKE WITH OUR COMMUNITIES, PARTNERS, SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS.

Our model works, and this is what our stakeholders tell us. It's all about the greater good for our communities. People are surprised that our model allows community to choose the design of their project to suit their aspirations. We don't overlay an idea that may not suit the community, wasting resources on activities that are not requested, or fit for purpose.

This year someone asked me 'What is the secret sauce of Community First Development?' I believe it is our model – community come to us, and have for the last 23 years. The model is unique, there is no other organisation like us. This works for us, but it can also work against us, where funders don't know where to fit us because we are unique.

Much of our focus, time and energy has gone into building understanding about what we do – working with the Australian Government to understand and fund the model, and not to change it. In my conversations this year I have found that people are shocked to hear of the limited support we have from government, and that the contributions of everyday Australians far outweigh the support provided by government.

A key challenge going forward is to maintain momentum and confidence among our team and stakeholders while the uncertainty with government continues. We persevere but recognise that this is time and energy intensive. Government has a responsibility to fund this work, and we will continue to request adequate and long-term funding so that our resources can be directed to sustaining our core business and to continue to learn and improve as we go.

This year we have celebrated the achievements of some of the projects that have happened on the ground. A good example of this was the World Community Development Conference where the presentations of our team and community members were a highlight for the 400 or so participants.

Another highlight for me was hosting the Bill Armstrong AO Human Rights Award,

and learning about the people who were nominated. These are people doing amazing things; it's always a challenge to select a recipient. This year, Dr Fiona Crockford received the Award. Having members of the Bougainville Parliament and the Australian Consulate in Papua New Guinea present for the Award ceremony demonstrated the support they had for Fiona, and the work that we all do. Making these types of new connections globally was important this year, and meeting with people face to face again. People believe in our model.

THE YEAR AHEAD

As a Board, we are closely following discussions on the Voice to Parliament and acknowledge that the outcome of the referendum may present opportunities for our work with communities. This, and any related government funding model, is something we continue to raise with government.

The key opportunities over the next year will be strengthening our relationships and partnerships, and we are looking forward to this. We will grow our stakeholder pool and nurture the new partnerships that we've developed here and overseas. This is an important investment of our time, developing and strengthening relationships with like-minded partners. We have strong communications and compelling stories, and people are contributing to the conversations about the good work that is happening. We want to continue and expand on this, to be more visible. Our challenge is to adequately portray the value of the diverse support we provide to communities. Explaining the full range of community requested activities is not always easy.

For example, people are surprised when they learn that we offer support on governance and funding application activities, and about the cultural lens we bring to these activities.

A community story I like to share is about Nairm Marr Djambana in Frankston, Victoria. It is a safe gathering place that provides opportunities to advance and improve the health of Aboriginal people. The local Aboriginal community in Frankston have worked tirelessly to keep the doors open.

I have watched the community grow over the years, including through architectural development, a playground installation and landscaping. We have provided a range of community development support including skilled professionals as volunteers. Our relationship is strong, and it continues. The community has inspiring plans for the future, including developing walking tours around the surrounding lake so they can raise money for their community activities. As long as community request it, we will continue to offer our support.



Nairm Marr Djambana playground in Frankston, Victoria.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'm grateful for our Board, leadership, the wider Community First Development family and my former Co-Chair, Bill Armstrong. You all believe in what we do and continue to show passion and determination. Thank you also to our communities for believing in us.

I am thankful to the CEO Steph Harvey and the team for their continued commitment to doing things the right way, through community initiation and following community's lead on what they want to see happen in their community.

Thank you to the people who fund us through regular donations. It continues to inspire me that everyday people are giving and their contributions surpass the support we receive from the Australian Government.

THIS IS WORTHY OF RECOGNITION, PEOPLE DEEPLY VALUE OUR MODEL AND CONTINUE TO DONATE, DESPITE COST-OF-LIVING PRESSURES. WE ARE INCREDIBLY GRATEFUL, THANK YOU.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

STEPHANIE HARVEY

Our focus is always on how we best meet community needs. We know this is about communities having power and agency to live their own lives and make decisions for themselves, about themselves. It is so simple, which is why it drives me a bit crazy when people aren't on board with this. We know that community development based on self-determination works because it is what community has identified themselves as their priority and solution. When community own the change process, it's sustainable, whatever the solution. It's the only way to deliver successful outcomes.

We also continue to focus on the sustainability of funding to deliver on our commitment to communities. We need to secure substantial multiyear funding to ensure we meet the emerging needs from community, and to not burn out our people while doing it. We are a leanly resourced organisation and do more than seems humanly possible. There is such need in our communities. We really need more people!



It's not just the lack of funding we are addressing. It's the sheer effort and commitment of resources to stay on the hustle repeatedly. It means we're not hitting our potential as an organisation. We have an amazing group of strategic and deeply committed people who are forced to get on a hamster wheel around funding, when we could be in the next evolution of our community development practice. I find that frustrating because we will achieve so much more if we are able to break this cycle.

When it comes to funding, I sometimes wonder whether there's a visibility problem. People see Australia as a thriving developed country and they don't see that there are significant pockets of disadvantage caused by the impacts of colonisation. It may seem invisible, but we know it is real because of the huge demand for our services. I feel sick when we have to say

no to requests of crucial value to community. Whether it's reducing youth suicide rates or supporting a community that is experiencing climate change impacts such as food insecurity. There are priority needs from community that we're dedicated to meeting. To achieve this, we need multiyear funding and more support for our team.

GLOBAL THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

I'm proud of the projects and strategies that we've deployed this year. One of those is the collaboration with Global First Nations' peoples – that sense of solidarity and learning from each other.

THERE REALLY IS A SPECIAL KIND OF MAGIC THAT HAPPENS WHEN IT'S FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLE SUPPORTING FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLE.

Partnering at the World Community Development Conference this year was exciting, particularly co-presenting with our community partners, talking openly around what's working and what's not and how to shift power in funding and philanthropy models and community development.

I'm really pleased around the emergence of our reputation as thought leaders and sharing the work that we do in Australia to a global stage. People now call on us for our expertise and to collaborate in key dialogue. This is an exciting evolution of our organisation. Previously, I think we have been guilty of hiding our light. This year we have come more to terms with the idea that our 'playing small does not serve the world.' (Marianne Williamson). This is not about organisational ego, empire building, or saying 'look at us, we're just too deadly!' This is about sharing good practice examples of what's possible. It is providing leadership and a tangible demonstration of the positive outcomes achieved when there is a commitment to the agency and self-determination of communities.

SELF-DETERMINATION - NO HALF WAY MEASURE

A key barrier this year was the environment we were working in. We're surrounded by people who mean well yet are often caught up in making fear-based decisions on shifting power. We are utterly committed to our model because it's the right model. It's not about disadvantaging other people or seizing power. It's about supporting communities to have agency in their own lives. It's not something to fear. Overcoming this barrier means bringing people along on that journey, whether it's bureaucrats, politicians or funders.

The power in the genuine relationships formed through our approach is hard to articulate, but it is everything. Recently we had a community partner tell us, "you believed in us and you never gave up on us." It was a teary time, with senior community leaders and staff, at a group dinner in a public place. I still get emotional thinking about that. To experience everyone together sitting with that vulnerability and trying not to make it something else tells me that we can never change this model.



2022 NAIDOC Perth Opening Ceremony - Get up! Stand up! Show up! Djoogan Keeniyirra Dance Group.

Any dilution of a process that supports agency is impinging on people's human rights. It's like the word integrity. There are no degrees of integrity. You can't have a little bit of integrity. You act with integrity or you don't. Equally, you either have agency as a human right, or you don't. You can't have a little bit of human rights or a little bit of agency. There are no halfway measures here. There's no middle ground, and I find that barrier difficult because there is no middle to bring people to.

I despair over some of the conversations we have on this. This isn't just about Community First Development in Australia. There is a global movement on shifting power and agency, and I'm saddened that Australia is not at the forefront of these discussions.

**WE WILL NOT GIVE UP.
WE HAVE A MORAL AND
CULTURAL OBLIGATION
TO KEEP HAVING THESE
CONVERSATIONS.**

Look at our Elders and the shoulders we stand upon. They're not giving up. They're not throwing in the towel, and neither can we.

THANK YOU

I'm astonished and grateful by the amazing people we have around us. Without them, we wouldn't be doing this, it just wouldn't be possible. Recently I had a conversation with a new staff member, and the first thing she said was, "What I've observed about this organisation is how humble and grateful everyone is". That's so powerful. I am deeply grateful for the people who work with me, for their trust and deep commitment to this right way of supporting communities. I'm also thankful for the leadership of my Board and their staunch stance, shoulder to shoulder with us on that line in the sand that is about agency and our operating model.

We also have donors who are welded on, truly committed. Each of them gives what they can, and we are just as excited by a \$20 donation as we are about a \$20,000 donation. It's not up to us to put a value on that \$20, that might be everything for that family. It might be a family's total discretionary funds, and they're choosing to give it to us. I have no words around that and continue to be humbled by our supporters' generosity.

I am thankful for the trust of our community partners. We're proud Peoples, it is not easy to reach out for support and show vulnerability. I am deeply grateful to our community partners that continue to show courage to reach out. Externally it may look like we worked on a youth diversion activity not understanding that it's been initiated by a spate of youth suicides; or it may be a community that is deeply impacted economically and need support to turn that around. There is a danger of looking at things on the surface, and not understanding the humanity and courage it takes for our community partners to share their true needs and aspirations.

We have people within corporate foundations who support us, who celebrate and value the way we work. We are grateful and encouraged by your support. Thank you. And of course, the pro bono and volunteer specialists who continue to give their time, away from their families, to be part of this story, we thank you.



ORGANISATION SNAPSHOT 2022-2023



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- We engaged with 106 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- On 170 community development projects
- Engaged with 256 volunteers including three regional events and 51 online volunteer trainings.



EDUCATION & AWARENESS

- Completed 185,007 interactions with members of the public through 8 campaigns to generate support, awareness and education of First Nations' Peoples and communities
- Hosted two educational events, trekking the Larapinta Trail and The Rocks Cultural Dreaming Tour



ACTION RESEARCH

- Continued action research on ways of evaluating with 10 First Nations' partner communities
- As conference partners, welcomed close to 400 global delegates to the World Community Development Conference in Darwin
- Presented 9 seminars and training, including at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies annual summit

*FUNDRAISED A TOTAL OF \$3,694,060 IN
SUPPORT OF FIRST NATIONS' COMMUNITIES
FROM GENEROUS INDIVIDUALS TO
PHILANTHROPIC FUNDS*

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 2022-2023 SNAPSHOT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ARE INITIATED AND OWNED BY COMMUNITIES AND CAN SPAN MULTIPLE FINANCIAL YEARS.

55

PROJECTS COMMENCED DURING THE YEAR,
20% OF WHICH WERE COMPLETED.

47

PROJECTS CONTINUED,
64% WERE COMPLETED.

42

PROJECTS WERE
COMPLETED.

12

DREAM INDICATORS HAD AN OVERALL CHANGE WITH A MEDIAN INCREASE OF **48 GROWTH POINTS**.

202

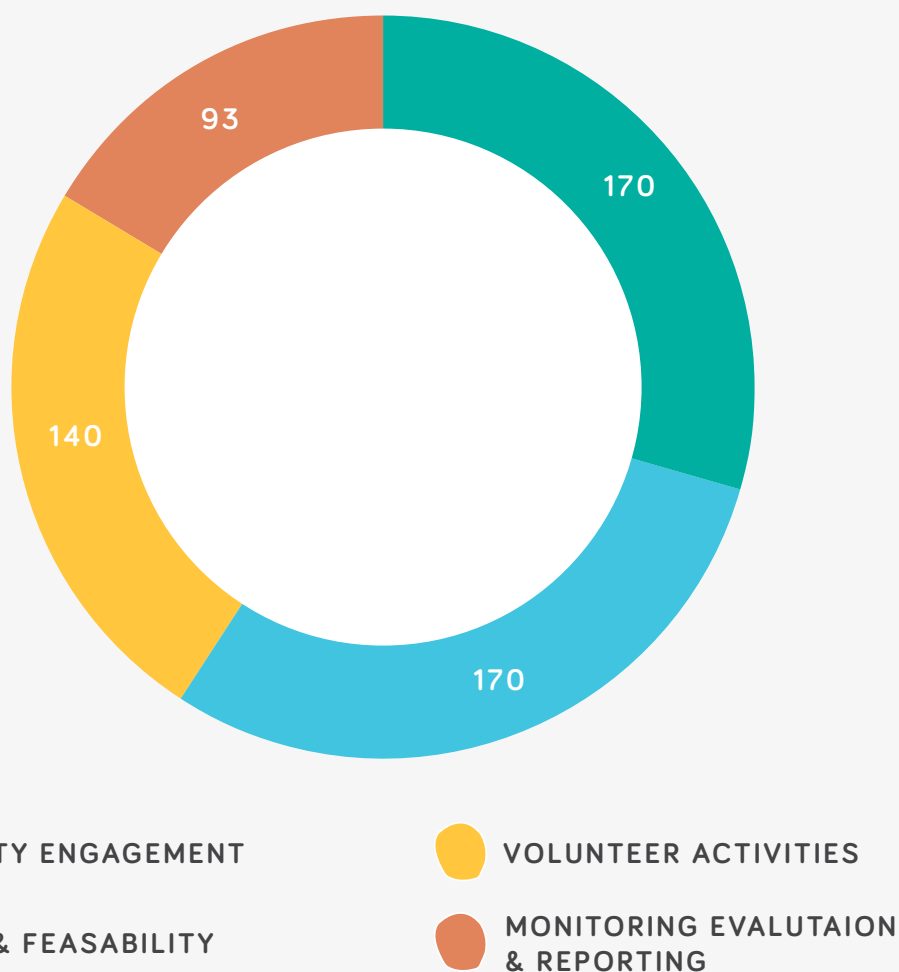
PROJECT INDICATORS HAD AN OVERALL CHANGE WITH A MEDIAN INCREASE OF **70 GROWTH POINTS**. **58 SAW A POINT CHANGE OF 100**.

SNAPSHOT OF PROJECT PHASES

Each project is part of a cycle of understanding, engagement, genuine co-design and delivery and reflection. This is an evidence and strength-based approach, built on 20 years of experience working alongside First Nations' people and communities.

We know community development is not a quick fix to addressing disadvantage. It takes time and is a collaborative effort. It is a planned, long-term process.

FIGURE 1: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PHASES BREAKDOWN (2022-23)



While our reporting often focuses on discrete projects, each project comprises four key project phases: Community Engagement, Scoping and Feasibility, Volunteer Activities, and Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting. Figure 1 provides a holistic overview of where our Community Development team focused their efforts this year. As highlighted, a project is much more

than just the support a volunteer provides to a community. Our Community Development team spends a significant amount of time undertaking community engagement activities which are critical to developing relationships built on trust. Similarly, working together with communities to scope projects and requirements is also important.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

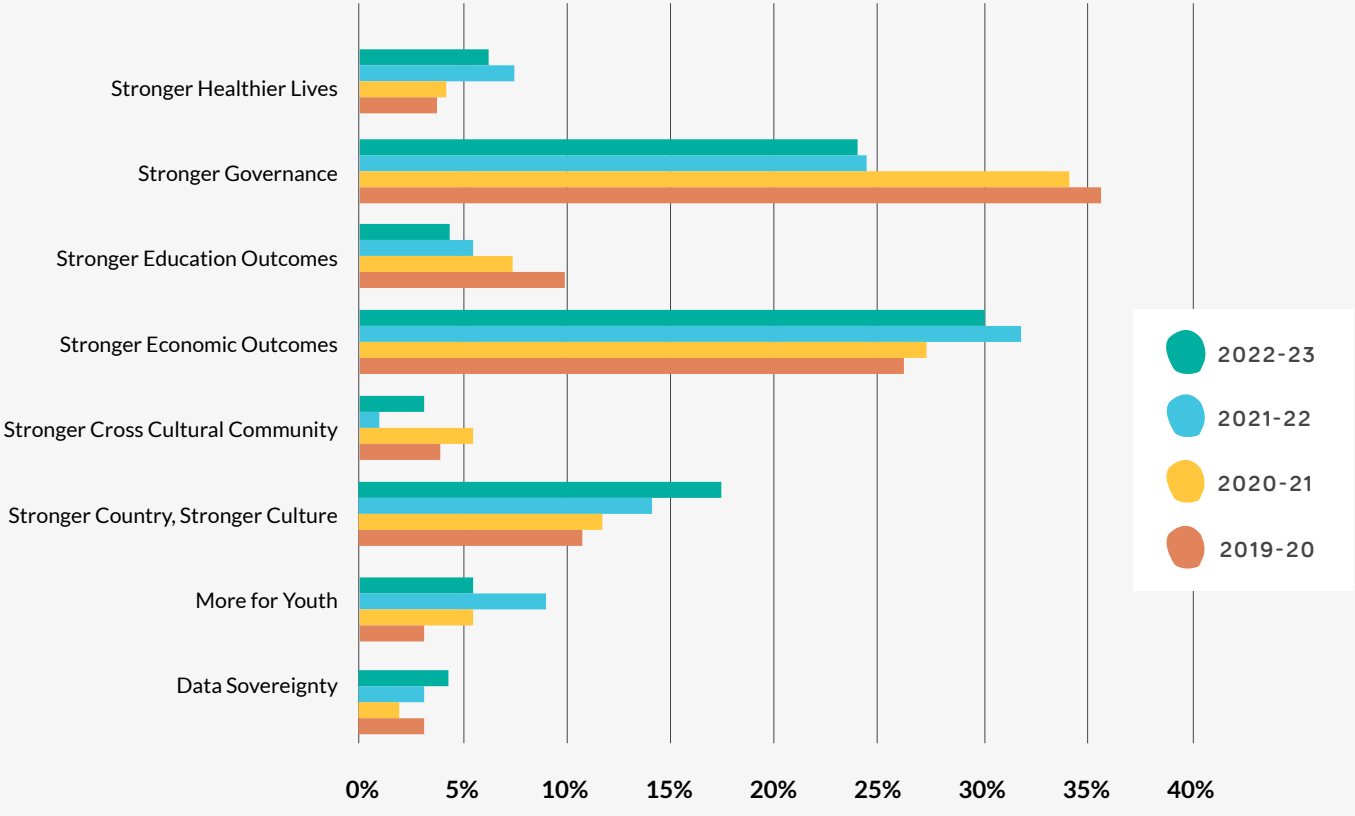
THIS YEAR COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT ENGAGED WITH 106 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES ON 170 COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

Projects are designed and delivered in partnership with communities, directly assisting each community to move confidently towards a broad range of goals.

Activity levels began to return to patterns pre the COVID pandemic and related lockdowns.

As shown in Figure 2 below, projects relating to Stronger Economic Outcomes, Stronger Governance, and Stronger Country, Stronger Culture continue to have a high community demand. There was a modest increase in the proportion of requests for projects relating to Data Sovereignty.

FIGURE 2: COMMUNITY REQUESTED PROJECTS BY OUTCOME - FOUR YEAR COMPARISON



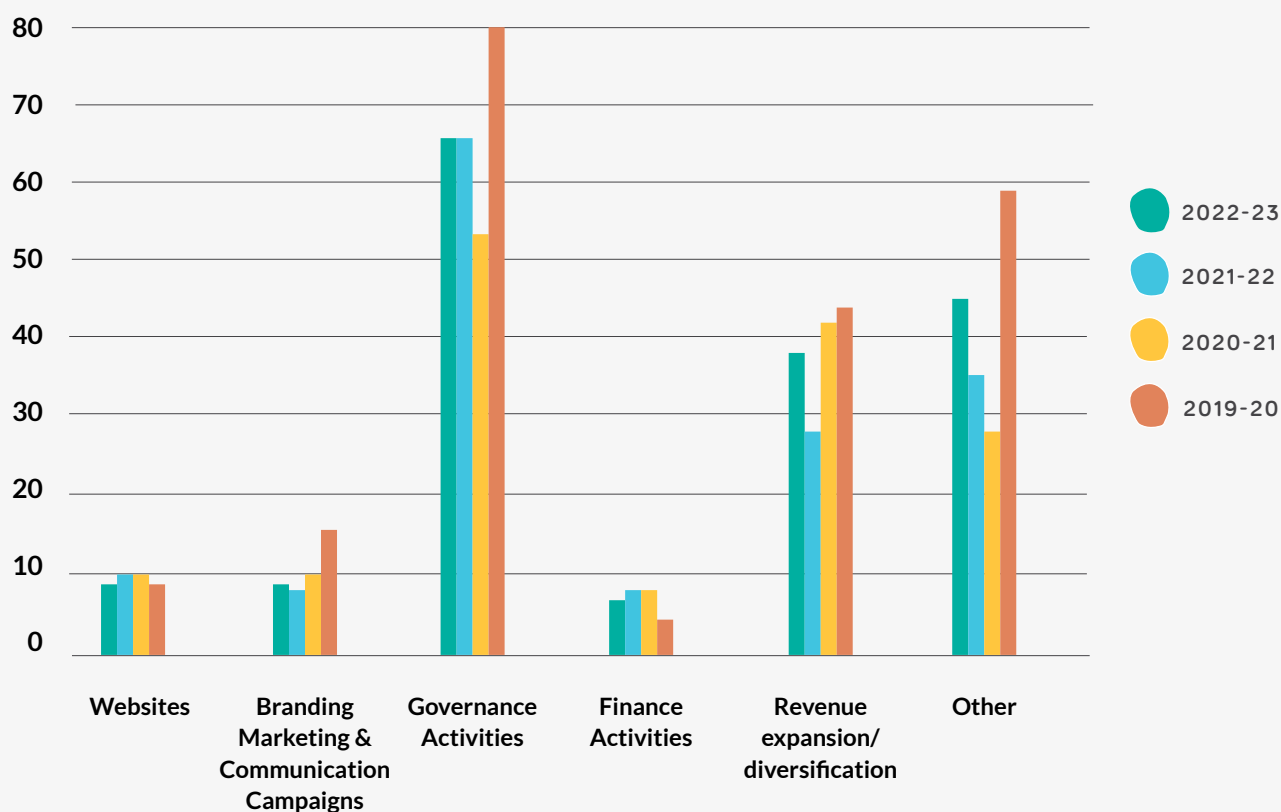
A continuing trend for activities relating to economic and governance outcomes is consistent with the trend we see in the challenges communities are facing. While a community may have a focus on strengthening the health or education outcomes of its people, they need a sustainable economic foundation to achieve this.

Over previous years many of the communities we work with have undertaken extensive work to strengthen their western governance

capabilities to access financial opportunities. For the second year in a row, governance outcomes were not the top category of projects. The lead in economic outcomes may signal a shift and a trend we will observe closely.

Figure 3 provides greater insight into the types of activities in the governance and economic categories.

FIGURE 3: TOTAL PROJECTS BY CATEGORY: FOUR-YEAR COMPARISON (2019-23)



* Note this is a new dataset and the breakdown of projects into these categories is an approximate only, based on project names. 'Other' projects may include (but are not limited to) hands-on workshops e.g. sports, arts, trades and infrastructure, legal, development of specific programs and mentoring.

THE COMMUNITIES WE WORK WITH

We are privileged to work closely with strong and innovative First Nations' communities across Australia. We define a community as a social group which shares a common culture, background and location, often structured as a community organisation or community-minded business. The location of communities we partnered with is illustrated in the map at Figure 4.

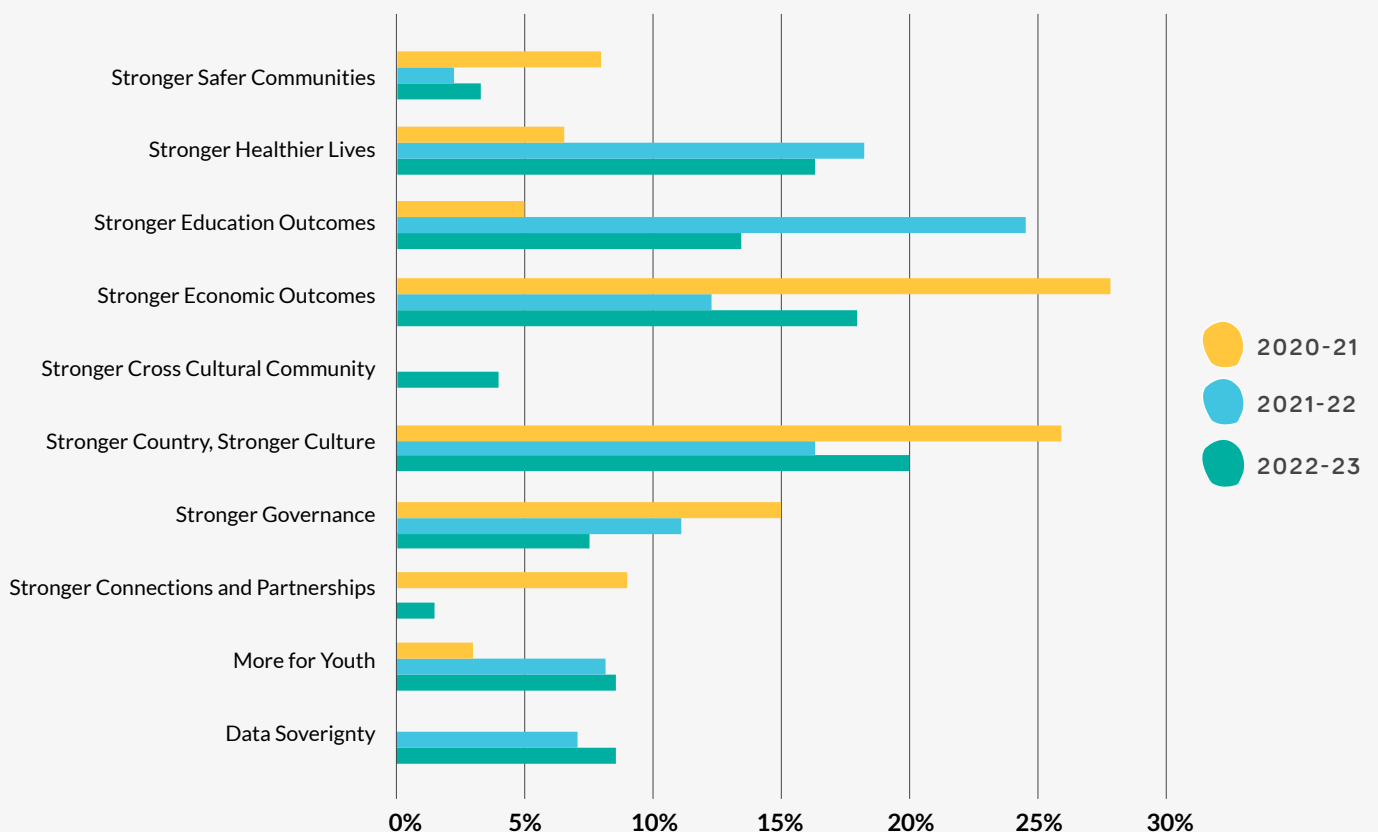
Communities each have a unique vision and purpose, with a focus on different aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing. The driving purpose of the 106 communities we supported this year is outlined at Figure 5, compared with trends over the past two years.

Community partners with key focus areas of economic outcomes, health and culture and Country were in the majority. This differed from last year where communities focused on education outcomes were in the majority.

FIGURE 4: LOCATION OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS (2022-23)

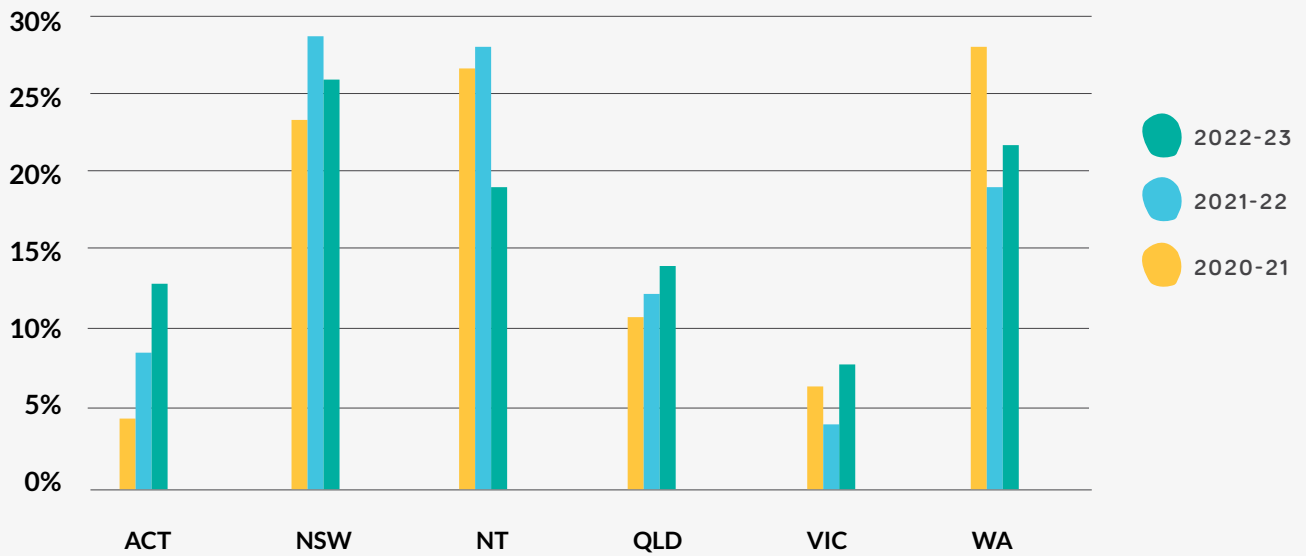


FIGURE 5: CORE BUSINESS OF COMMUNITIES WE WORK WITH



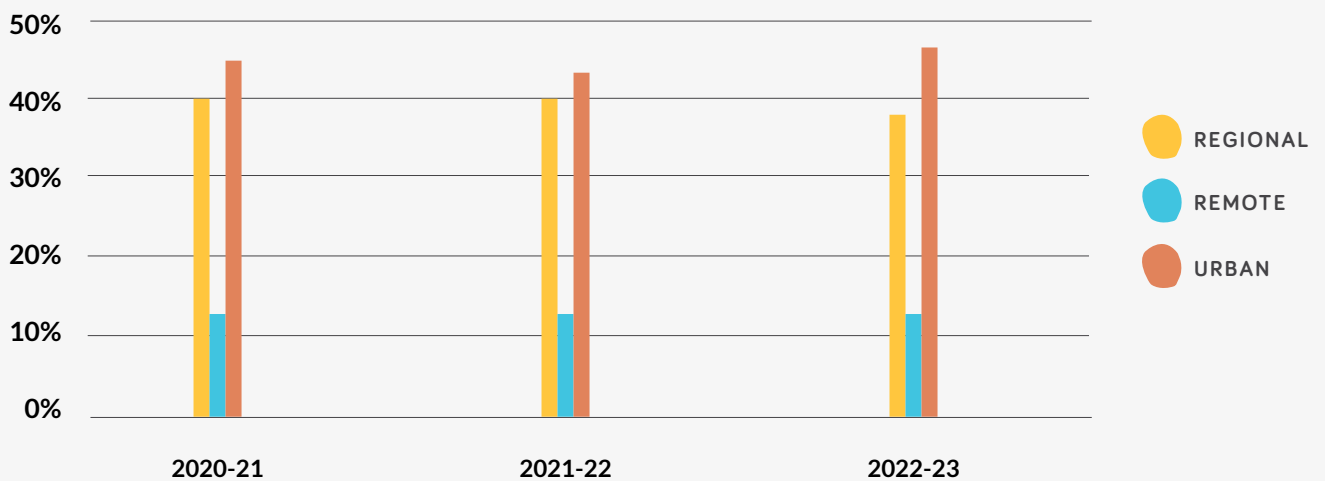
In 2022-23, there was moderate change in the distribution of projects across Australian states and territories. As shown in Figure 6, most activities took place in New South Wales (NSW) followed by Western Australia (WA) and the Northern Territory (NT). The activity levels in each jurisdiction correlate closely with where staff numbers are based and how long they have been engaging within a region and developing relationships with communities.

FIGURE 6: PROJECT DELIVERY BY STATE AND TERRITORY



As Figure 7 illustrates, the proportion of community project locations in remote, regional and urban areas has been consistent over the past three years. Regional and remote based projects made up 51 per cent of the total, and urban 48 per cent.

FIGURE 7: COMMUNITY PROJECT LOCATION



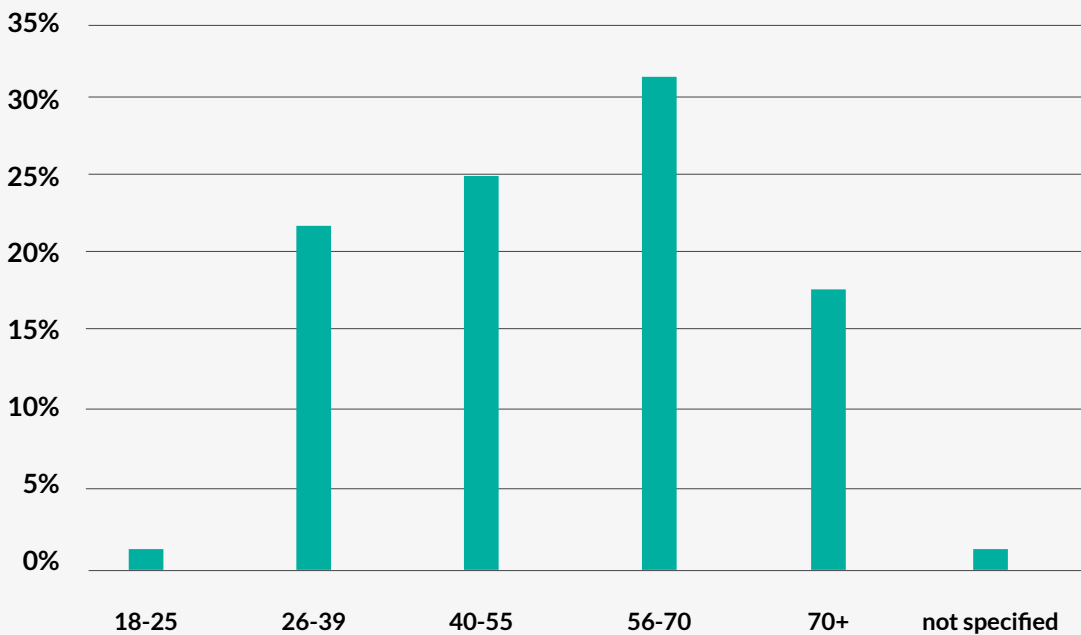
VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

Alongside the guidance and experience of our community development team, volunteers with specialised cross-industry skills play a critical role in supporting communities to achieve their priorities. Volunteers undertake a detailed application, screening and training process before undertaking activities.

AS AT THE END OF JUNE 2023, THERE WERE 256 SKILLED VOLUNTEERS REGISTERED WITH COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT.

Of these, 226 were classified as active (worked with a community at some stage) and 30 prospective. There was a slight majority of female volunteers in this cohort (54 per cent), and a variety of ages represented. The age cohort with the most volunteers was 56-70 years (32 per cent), followed by 40-55 years (25 per cent).

FIGURE 8: PERCENTAGE OF VOLUNTEERS BY AGE CATEGORY



THE SKILLS, EXPERTISE AND GENEROSITY OUR VOLUNTEERS BRING TO EACH PLACEMENT IS CRUCIAL TO SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS.

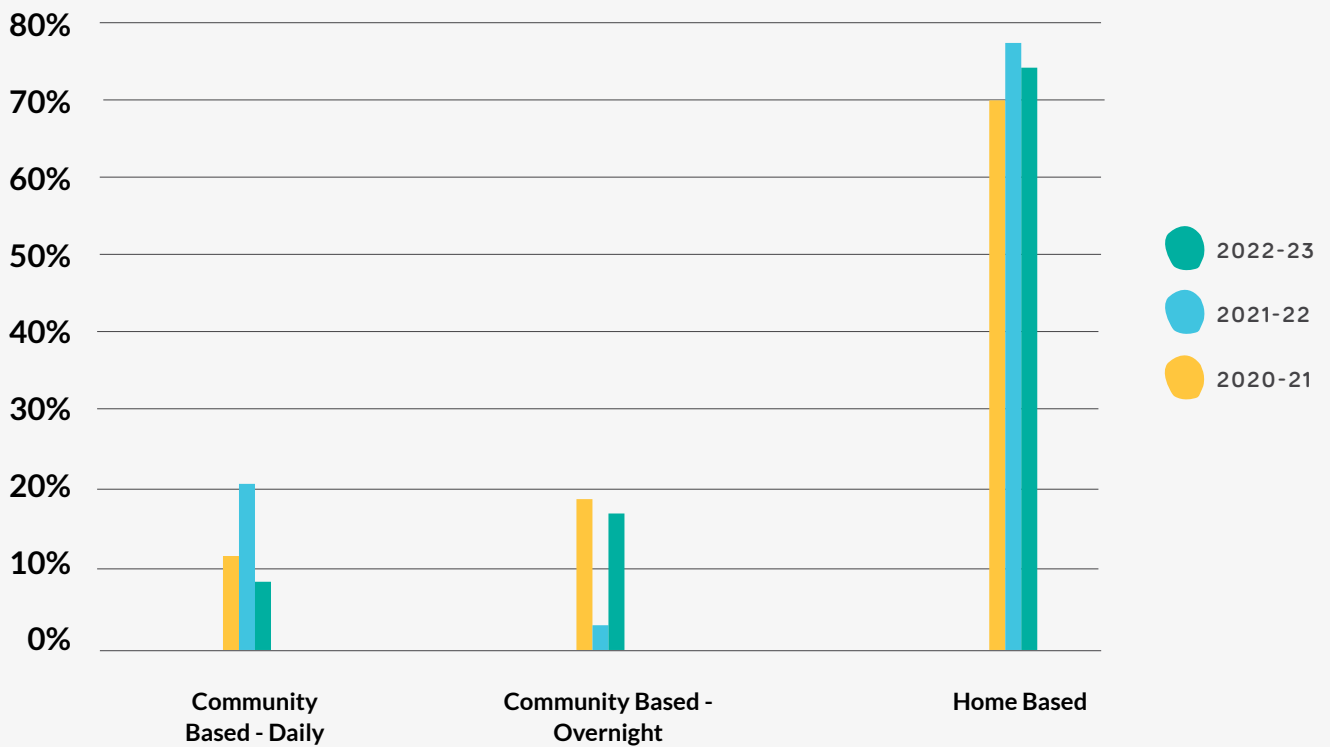


Youth worker Luke Wighton with the Wollundry Dreaming "junior management team", Olivia, Jaydah and Zaliah. Photo: Chris Roe, Region Riverina.

Consistent with global trends over recent years volunteers and communities have embraced hybrid work arrangements. As shown in Figure 9, most of the volunteer activity was home based. This type of work complements the types of projects communities are requesting – those that can be completed in a desk-based setting.

THIS YEAR THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN COMMUNITY BASED OVERNIGHT PLACEMENTS SIGNALING A RETURN TO ACTIVITY LEVELS PRE PANDEMIC.

FIGURE 9: VOLUNTEER PLACEMENTS



VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT

Volunteering in Australia across sectors has been slow to recover since the pandemic. Even prior to the pandemic, there had been a more subtle and long-term decline in the proportion of Australians volunteering¹. Due to this trend, volunteer recruitment and engagement continues to be an area of focus for Community First Development.

This year we continued targeted recruitment activities in regions where volunteer numbers have historically been low. Social media campaigns and working with volunteer peak bodies have proven to be effective measures to reach new volunteers. We were pleased to welcome 24 new volunteers to the organisation. This year a new approach has also been trialed, offering online volunteer information sessions to prospective applicants. We experienced an overwhelming response, with over 160 people registering for the first session to be held in July 2023.

We are committed to supporting and preparing our volunteers, ensuring they have access to relevant and useful resources. We know this enhances their wellbeing and knowledge base and importantly, it increases the likelihood of better outcomes for our First Nations' community partners.

To support flexibility and efficiency in volunteer induction and training activities, we finalised our online volunteer induction last year. In the 2022-23 year, 51 volunteers completed the online training. By completing this course, volunteers gained a deeper understanding of our approach, values, and Community Development Framework, as well as important information on the volunteer role, experience, and responsibilities. Volunteers who completed the course provided positive feedback.

"I ENJOYED THE ONLINE INDUCTION PROGRAM WHICH WAS WELL DESIGNED AND DELIVERED. THE PROGRAM WAS BOTH ENCOURAGING AND INTERESTING."

In addition to the launch of the online course, a working group was established to refresh our in-person regional inductions. The refreshed in-person course will be launched in the second half of the 2023 calendar year. We also launched an online Volunteer Information Hub that provides active volunteers with a central place to access important documents and resources, as well as a quarterly volunteer newsletter that provides updates on specific information as part of a broader engagement strategy.

"I THOUGHT THE COURSE WAS GREAT! INFORMATIVE, STRAIGHT FORWARD AND THE USE OF INDIGENOUS ART/SYMBOLS IN DIAGRAMS QUITE CAPTIVATING. THE COURSE CERTAINLY REFRESHED MY UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT. THANKS FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE!"



Some of the content from the new online volunteer training. Over 50 volunteers completed the course this year.

¹ Professor Nicholas Biddle and Professor Matthew Gray, (2022) *Volunteers and volunteering during the COVID-era in Australia*, Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods.

CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

We were delighted to gather with some of our community partners and supporters to celebrate the skills, generosity and impact of our volunteers.

After limited contact over recent years due to the pandemic, it was momentous to gather in person in Brisbane, Perth and Melbourne.

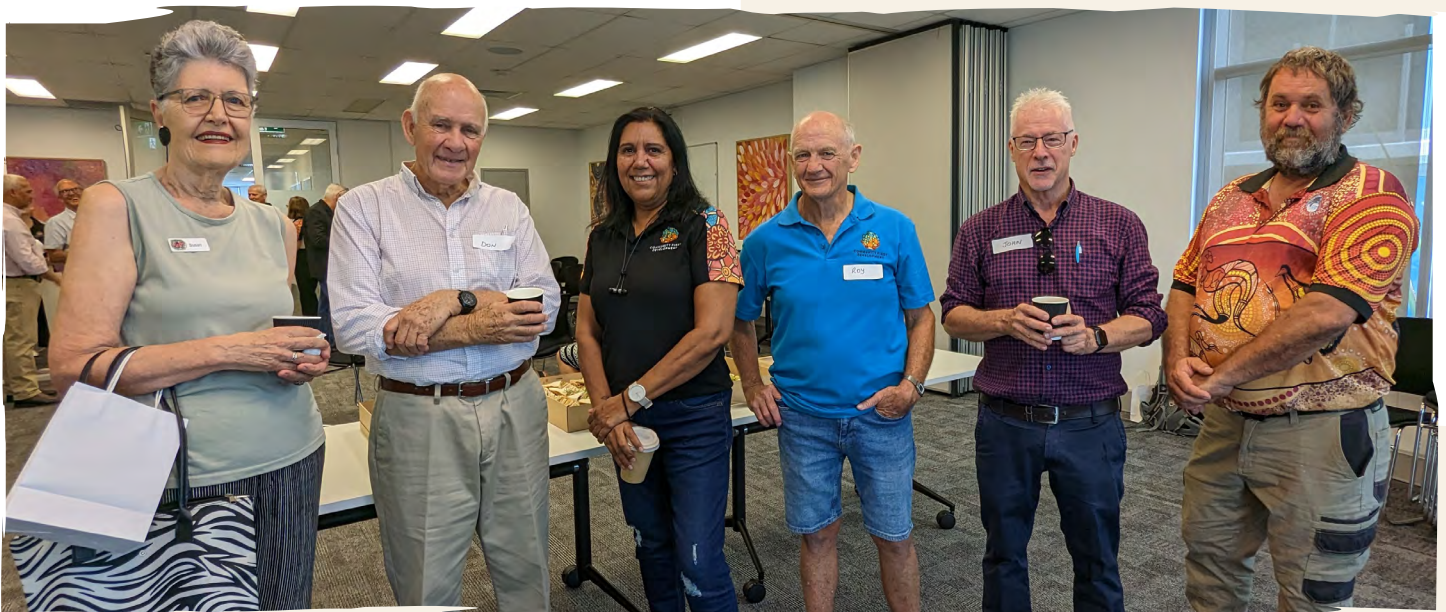
VOLUNTEERS WERE PRESENTED WITH AWARDS IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINING COMMUNITIES AND THE WAYS THEY HAVE CONTRIBUTED THEIR SKILLS TO COMMUNITY-LED GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS.

BRISBANE, QLD

The event in Brisbane kicked off with a heartfelt Welcome to Country by Uncle Robert Anderson OAM, and was followed by an inspiring presentation by Peter from Taribelang Aboriginal Corporation. (Pictured bottom photo)



Volunteer, Roy, receives a certificate of appreciation from Board Director, John Jeffery, and Volunteer Coordinator, Aimee, at our event in Brisbane.



Peter (right) with Susan (supporter), Don (volunteer), Deb (Senior Community Development Officer), Roy (volunteer) and John (supporter).

PERTH, WA

In Western Australia we met on the grounds of Dyoondalup, on Whadjuk Noongar Country. Our CEO, Stephanie Harvey, presented awards to volunteers and spoke of their incredible efforts among various communities and acknowledged the great work they have done.

Senior Community Development Officers, Kristy and Sharon (pictured) with Alice Kearing, gave a Welcome to Country and shared about her family background and connection to Country, welcoming us and sharing the story of Dyoondalup known as “a place of long flowing white hair”. It was traditionally an area for women and children. The sandbar is the hair of the Dreamtime figure Djunda, the Charnok woman, and the nearby cliffs at Blackwall Reach are her footprints. Djunda is said to have carried spirit children in her hair, who then fell out and formed rocks.

MELBOURNE, VIC

Around 40 Community First Development volunteers, community partners and supporters braved the wild Melbourne weather to attend our Morning Tea event at the Koorie Heritage Trust, Federation Square, Melbourne.

Presenting here (pictured right) is former Co-Chair Bill Armstrong AO who concluded the event with the presentation of volunteer certificates of appreciation.

Victorian Senior Community Development Officer, Jackson, spoke about our existing relationships and work in Victoria which was then followed by the powerful and inspiring stories from some of our community partners.



Senior Community Development Officers, Kristy (left) and Sharon (right) with Alice Kearing.



Former Co-Chair Bill Armstrong AO presenting.



Selina Dronryp from Derrimut Weelan Gathering Place with Jackson at our Melbourne gathering.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IMPACT

WALKING ALONGSIDE PAST DORMITORY RESIDENTS

Cherbourg Boys and Girls Dormitory Ltd, located in south-east Queensland, provides support and healing to those who were sent to live at the Cherbourg Boys Dormitory or Cherbourg Girls Dormitory, and their descendants. Core programs are centred around remembering the generation of First Nations' young people and children who spent their early years separated from their families and communities.

The Aboriginal committee who run Cherbourg Boys and Girls Dormitory Ltd approached Community First Development seeking assistance with a Business Plan.

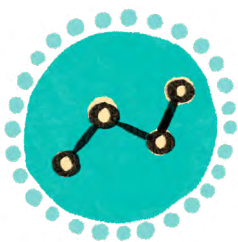
Senior Community Development Officer, Eddie, met with the community for a yarn, where the committee members explained their goal for the Business Plan to capture the growth and development of their core programs, and enhance their ability to source vital funding. It was an important time to connect and hear the stories shared by committee members—about life in the dormitories and the impact this has had on former residents, their families and community.

To get the ball rolling, the committee chose to work with our skilled volunteer, Deb. They collaborated to develop a comprehensive five-year Business and Strategic Plan outlining the community's vision, plus short-term and long-term strategic priorities.



Senior Community Development Officer, Eddie, (far left) meeting with Cherbourg Boys and Girls Dormitory Ltd committee members in Meanjin, Brisbane, Queensland.

WE ARE THRILLED TO SHARE THAT CHERBOURG BOYS AND GIRLS DORMITORY LTD HAS SINCE BEEN AWARDED GRANT FUNDING TO ASSIST MEMBERS WITH ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE.



MEASURING IMPACT TOGETHER

WHAT COMMUNITY DEFINES AS SUCCESS

We work together with each community to determine what they want to achieve in both the long-term and short-term. This involves designing both dream indicators (long-term) and project indicators (short-term) with communities which are based on community goals and aspirations. After designing the indicators, we then work together to measure progress towards these aspirations. Each indicator is categorised by a different outcome area.

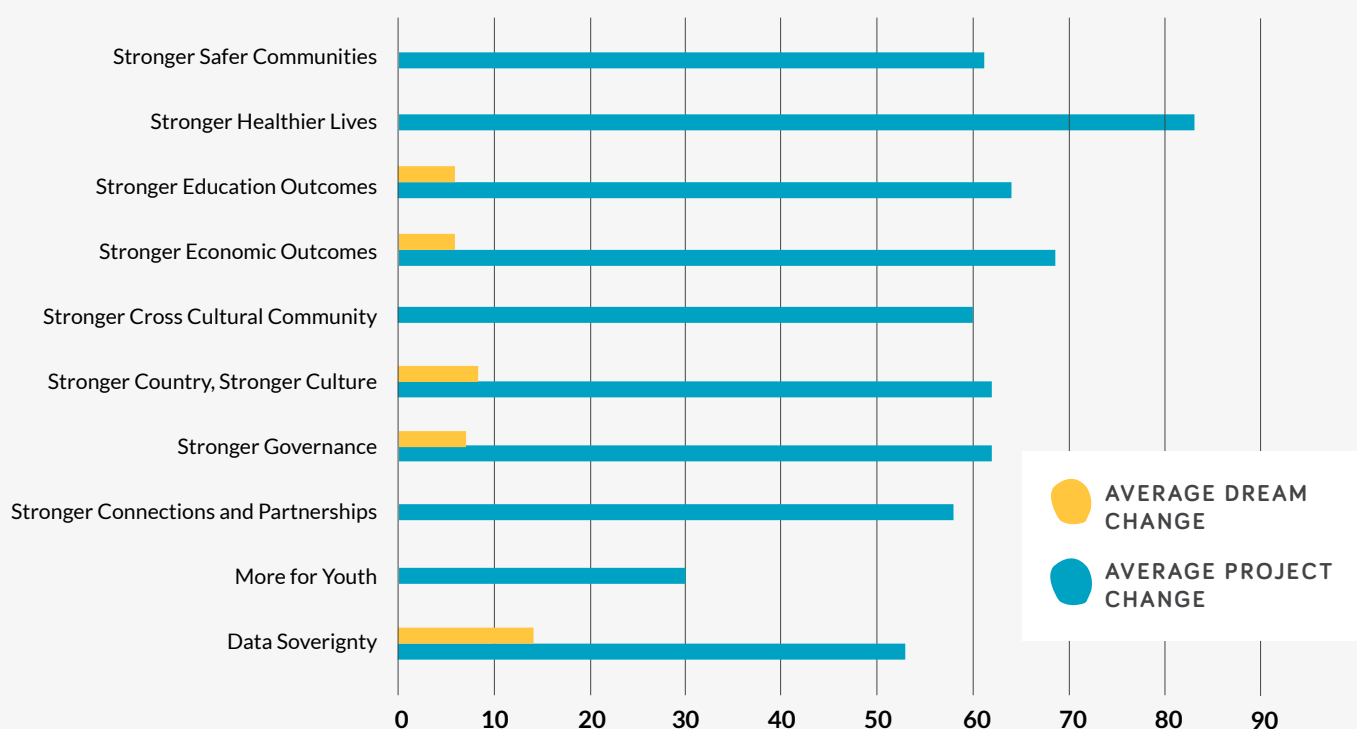
We monitor progress and measure impact through listening and yarning together with communities as part of community development activities. Team members work with communities to identify the degree of change across each indicator and give it a quantitative reading.

To provide some insight into the scale of these activities, 126 projects had a monitoring point within the year resulting in 400 indicators being monitored (each project is likely to have 3-5 indicators).

CHANGE IN DREAM AND PROJECT INDICATORS

Indicator trends provide aggregate insights into the outcomes and impacts of the activities underway. Consistent with the trends illustrated in Figure 10, we anticipate the growth point change occurring in the shorter-term (project indicators) will be greater in a year, than the longer-term change measured in dream indicators.

FIGURE 10: AVERAGE CHANGE IN DREAM AND PROJECT INDICATORS BY STORY OF CHANGE OUTCOME





THERE WERE A TOTAL OF 289 DREAM INDICATORS ACROSS THE COMMUNITIES WE WORKED WITH THIS YEAR. 123 DREAM INDICATORS HAD A MONITORING POINT, WITH 12 OF THESE EXPERIENCING GROWTH OR CHANGE THIS YEAR.

The median point change was 48 with 3 dream indicators experiencing a point change of 100. One of these indicators was Cherbourg Boys and Girls Dormitory’s, featured at the start of this section of the report. Another was Wattandee Littlewell Aboriginal Corporation’s, featured in one of the community stories that follows below.

There were a total of 400 project indicators with a monitoring point in 2022-2023. 202 experienced an overall change, with a median point change of 70. Of the 400 project indicators, 58 saw a point change of 100.

Figure 11 below provides an overview of the impact trends using the monitoring points of dream and project indicators within the year.

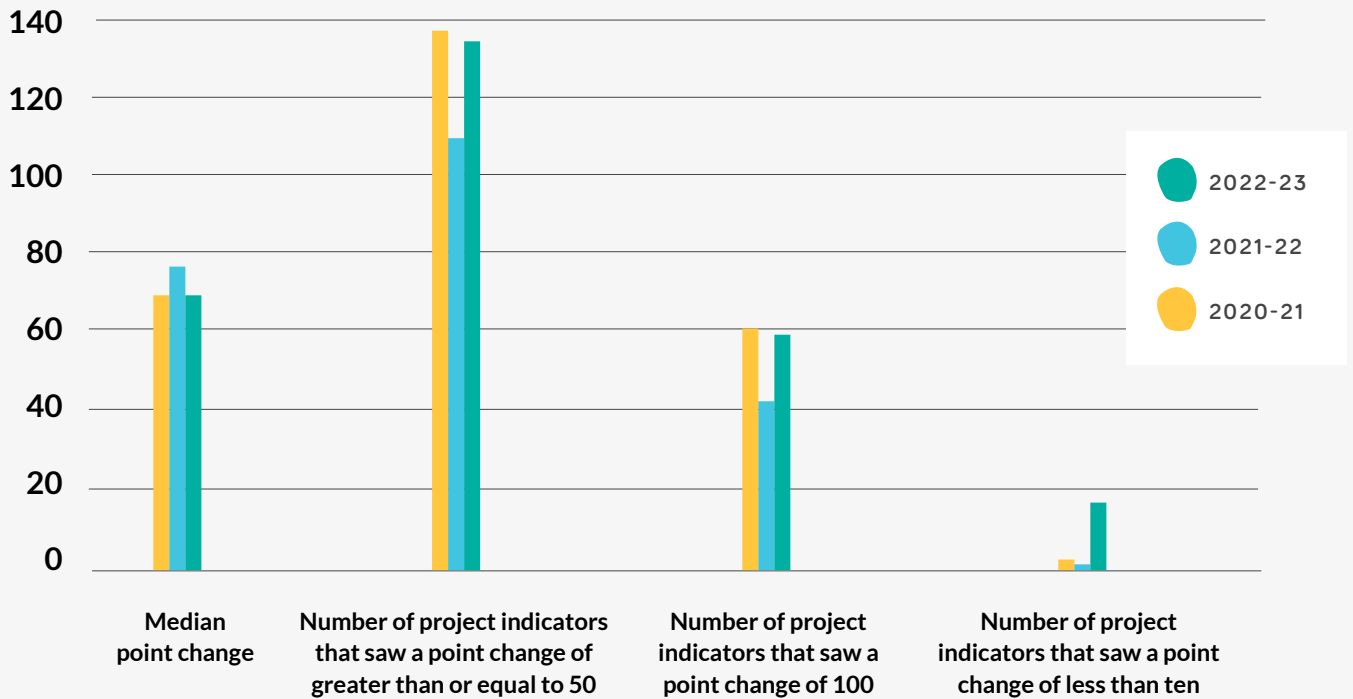
FIGURE 11: TREND IN COMMUNITY DREAM AND PROJECT IMPACTS

INDICATOR TYPE	NUMBER OF INDICATORS WITH A MONITORING POINT AND OVERALL CHANGE		MEDIAN INCREASE (GROWTH POINTS)	
	2022-2023	2021-2022	2022-2023	2021-2022
Dream	12 (this year)	13 (last year)	48 (this year)	30 (last year)
Project	202 (this year)	144 (last year)	70 (this year)	72.5 (last year)

Figure 12 provides a detailed breakdown of change in project indicators this year, including the median point change. Projects commence at different times throughout a year, driven and requested by community demand. As a result, project indicators are not necessarily completed (or will reach a reading of 100) within a financial year.

Examples of projects indicators that reached 100 include development of an organisational constitution, strategic plans, grant applications, financial analysis and systems, a feasibility report and an organisational logo; accreditation processes, establishment of a business venture, improved organisational operations, revised policy and procedural manuals, board training, partnerships developed and legal contracts reviewed.

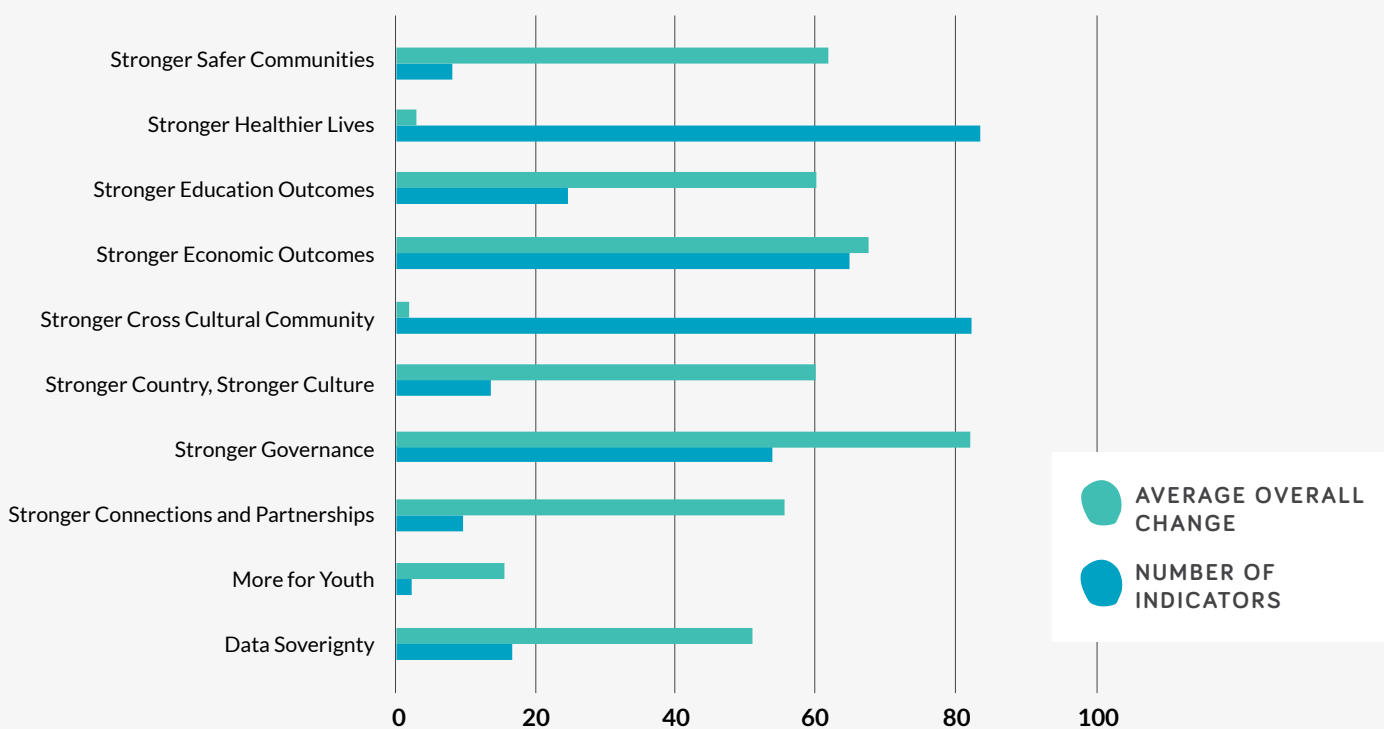
FIGURE 12: CHANGE IN PROJECT INDICATORS (3 YEAR COMPARISON)



* Please note that the categories in this figure are not mutually exclusive.

Figure 13 shows the average change in project indicators by Story of Change outcome. As the chart highlights, progress has been made against indicators across all Story of Change outcome areas.

FIGURE 13: TOTAL NUMBER OF PROJECT INDICATORS AND AVERAGE CHANGE BY OUTCOME





EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

THIS YEAR, THE PROGRAM COMPLETED:

185,007

INTERACTIONS WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

8

CAMPAIGNS TO GENERATE SUPPORT, AWARENESS AND EDUCATION ON FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLES AND COMMUNITIES.

SUPPORTER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Our Supporter Engagement Program's ability to enhance education and awareness about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and cultures, has the potential to lead to significant positive impacts for First Nations' people in Australia. This important program is shifting long held and, at times, damaging perceptions of First Nations' people.

This year, the program completed 185,007 interactions with members of the public through 8 campaigns to generate support, awareness and education on First Nations' peoples and communities.

Individuals were also invited to experience Arrernte Country with us and trek the Larapinta Trail. Pictured bottom left are the trekkers with Rayleen from Kungkas Can Cook, Mparntwe, Alice Springs.



Rayleen from Kungkas Can Cook, Mparntwe, Alice Springs, preparing food for Larapinta Trek participants.

THE SYSTEMIC, NATION-WIDE PROBLEM

Despite significant investment from all levels of government towards "Closing the Gap", entrenched disadvantage persists for First Nations' people impacting health, social, economic and educational outcomes. Progress against the Closing the Gap targets has been mixed over the past decade, resulting in recent major reforms.

THE TARGET TO CLOSE THE GAP IN LIFE EXPECTANCY BY 2031 IS NOT ON TRACK AND THE EMPLOYMENT RATE FOR FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLE HAS NOT CHANGED MARKEDLY.

52%

**EMPLOYMENT RATE OF
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER PEOPLE AGED 15-64.**



Based on data from the 2021 ABS Census of Population & Housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15-64 continue to have a considerably lower employment rate than non-Indigenous Australians (52% compared with 75%), with the employment rate being lower in more remote areas.²

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to experience high levels of discrimination and racism, with a recent Australian National University study confirming the links between racism and poor mental health, physical health and cultural wellbeing.

The study involved data from more than 8,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults collected between 2018-2020 as part of the

national Indigenous-led Mayi Kuwayu Study³ at the Australian National University.⁴

Another systemic scoping review, undertaken by a collective of universities and involving 12 research studies, showed the most common health outcomes associated with racism were general poor mental health and health perception.

Anxiety, depression, difficulties in child behaviour, asthma, increased Body Mass Index and smoking were also associated with racism. The study recommended that strategies that prevent all forms and sources of racism are necessary to bridge the health gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.⁵

2 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and National Indigenous Australians Agency, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework*, 2.07 Employment. Retrieved 10 August, 2023 from 2.07 Employment - AIHW Indigenous HPF.

3 Australian National University. (n.d). *Mayi Kuwayu: the National Study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing*. Retrieved April 05, 2023 from <https://nceph.anu.edu.au/research/projects/mayi-kuwayu-national-study-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-wellbeing>.

4 Thurber, K., Colonna, E., Jones, R., Gee, G., Priest, N., Cohen, R., Williams, D., et al. (2021). *Prevalence of Everyday Discrimination and Relation with Wellbeing among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adults in Australia*. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(12), 6577. MDPI AG. Retrieved April 05 2023 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18126577>.

5 Kairuz, C.A., Casanelia, L.M., Bennett-Brook, K. et al. *Impact of racism and discrimination on physical and mental health among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Australia: a systematic scoping review*. *BMC Public Health* 21, 1302 (2021). Retrieved April 05, 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11363-x>.

IMPACT OF OUR EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

The Supporter Engagement Program invites our supporters across Australia on a journey of learning and understanding. Careful design in the language and information shared reflects our recognition of the growth in knowledge and understanding as individuals progress along their journey with us.

For example, we know that when we acquire new supporters, we are limited to using terms that would be understood by a general audience.

Over time, supporters become familiar with terms and concepts that are second nature to our people: the impacts of colonisation, different First Nations' Countries, why culture and language is important, why we celebrate success and strength and do not use deficit language or perpetuate damaging stereotypes.

PROGRESSIVELY SUPPORTERS GROW IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF OUR APPROACH OF WORKING WITH, AND NOT DOING THINGS TO OR FOR FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLE.

We are delighted to regularly receive feedback that the reason they continue to support our organisation is because of the way we work. Supporters appreciate and celebrate that we only work with communities when invited to, that communities have control, that they name the priorities and choose the design, assets, and capabilities and approach to achieve their vision.

Through our Supporter Engagement Program, we share projects that highlight communities' self-determination, the value of connection to culture and caring for Country, and the importance of preservation of heritage and First Nations' languages.

Supporters read about the many, wide-ranging projects that First Nations' communities are working on around Australia that include education, health, youth, safer communities, improved economic outcomes, governance and stronger Country and culture.

Each year we send our supporters a survey. The survey is an opportunity to seek direct feedback, to learn about the areas of our work that resonate the most for them, to hear about why they choose to support our organisation, to ask them if we are communicating with them effectively.

This year, we asked our supporters if they felt their knowledge of First Nations' cultures, histories and issues had increased since becoming a Community First Development supporter – we were pleased to learn that more than 88% of those surveyed felt that it had.



88%

OF SURVEY RESPONDERS FELT THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF FIRST NATIONS' CULTURES, HISTORIES OR ISSUES HAS INCREASED SINCE BECOMING A SUPPORTER.

COMMUNITY STORIES



PRESERVING AND PROTECTING CULTURE: AN EVOLVING AND ONGOING JOURNEY



MINGENEV,
REGIONAL WA

On the outskirts of the town of Mingenev in Midwest Western Australia lies a former Aboriginal reserve named Littlewell Buri Wonduri Reserve (Jinjarbarba Baba). In 2010, a group of Elders—who are either former residents of Littlewell, or their descendants—established the Littlewell Working Group.

LITTLEWELL'S VISION WAS TO PRESERVE THE RESERVE AND BUILD A HERITAGE TRAIL TO CELEBRATE AND HONOUR THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WHO HAD LIVED THERE.

They also wanted to record the history of the area and post it online so that their stories would not be lost in time.

In 2019, Littlewell achieved their dream to establish the trail and record their stories. Community First Development is privileged to have been invited by Littlewell to support them on this journey. In 2021, Littlewell became an incorporated organisation and is now known as Wattandee Littlewell Aboriginal Corporation (WLAC). WLAC now wants a permanent presence on Country to preserve and protect their cultural identity and heritage and interest.



Tristan and Thomas, Wattandee Littlewell Aboriginal Corporation.

Image at top: Thomas Cameron at the opening of the Littlewell Buri Wonduri Reserve.

WLAC and Community First Development have a long-term relationship having worked together since 2014. As a newly incorporated organisation, WLAC had many ideas and plans for the future but needed support to map out a pathway to achieving those dreams.

A COLLABORATIVE AND INCLUSIVE APPROACH

WLAC's representative, Thomas Cameron, approached Community First Development Regional Manager, Doyen, to support them to develop a strategic plan. Doyen connected Thomas with skilled volunteer, Deb, who brings a range of expertise including in strategic planning and submission writing.

Over several months, Deb worked closely with Thomas and Tristan Mongoo, both remotely and in-person, to progress the strategic plan. Tristan took a highly collaborative and inclusive approach to developing the strategic plan, regularly taking information back to the Board for clarity, input and endorsement. Tristan is a new emerging leader within WLAC and has taken the pressure off Thomas who led from the front in the early days working with the Littlewell mob.

"TRISTAN'S LEADERSHIP HAS SHINED THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS AND TAKEN MUCH OF THE BURDEN FROM THOMAS CAMERON. THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE WILL BE LED BY YOUNGER EMERGING LEADERS."

- Doyen, Community First Development Regional Manager, Western Region.

As Deb noted, the project moved slowly due to various reasons, but she was comfortable working at the community's pace.

"DUE TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS' OTHER COMMITMENTS, AND LOCATIONS ACROSS WA'S MID-WEST AND IN QUEENSLAND, THIS HAS BEEN A SLOW PROJECT TO DEVELOP. PEOPLE ARE NOT ALWAYS AVAILABLE FOR MEETINGS OR CHECK-INS AT REGULAR TIMES. HOWEVER, THEY ARE COMFORTABLE WITH THIS PACE AND THEREFORE SO AM I."

- Deb, Community First Development volunteer.

During her time volunteering with WLAC, Deb was invited into the Wattandee healing circle at the Elders Connect Day where she listened to Wattandee people yarning about their experiences as part of the Stolen Generations. As Doyen observed, this experience proved beneficial for Deb in several ways.

"THIS STRENGTHENED DEB'S KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WATTANDEE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT POLICIES THAT HAVE IMPACTED THEM. DEB GAINED A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WATTANDEE PEOPLE, BUILT RELATIONSHIPS, AND UNDERSTANDS WLAC VISION FOR THE FUTURE."

- Doyen, Community First Development Regional Manager, Western Region.



Doyen and Deb at the Elders Connect Day on Littlewell Buri Wonduri Reserve, Mingenew.

TRACKING CHANGE TOGETHER

Doyen has been working closely with Thomas and Tristan to track progress towards achieving their dream, noting that dreams are not always static and can evolve and change. WLAC have now finalised their strategic plan after it was endorsed by the Board of five Directors. The two year plan provides a clear direction for the future and outlines four strategic priorities to focus on. As the seed to tree scale shows, WLAC have achieved the dream indicator below and can now focus their attention on other objectives within their dream journey.

To Tristan, promoting and protecting Wattandee culture and heritage is always ongoing, it never stops.

"DO YOU KNOW THE DREAM WILL ALWAYS GROW AND IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT ONCE YOU REACH THAT DREAM, THAT'S IT. IT ALWAYS COMES BACK TO A CIRCLE OF DOING IT AGAIN EVERY YEAR. LIKE JUST SAY FOR OUR DREAM IS TO PROMOTE, PROTECT AND PRESERVE OUR CULTURE. THAT DOESN'T EVER STOP... SO IT'S NEVER EVER GOING TO STOP THE DREAM BECAUSE IT'S FOREVER CHANGING."

- Tristan, WLAC representative.

DREAM INDICATOR: STRATEGIC PLAN COMPLETED AND GOALS OR PRIORITIES CLEARLY IDENTIFIED

BASELINE
(2022)

0

FINAL MONITORING
POINT (2023)

100



0



25



50



75



100

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

WLAC have already started implementing their strategic plan and are currently focused on revitalising the Wattandee language and developing their ranger program. With Deb's support, they have commenced drafting a funding submission for a bus that will be used to transport members to visit and connect with Country.

WLAC have also continued to run on-Country cultural and social events and programs for Wattandee families. As Doyen remarked, "Wattandee mob are just thriving. Awesome!"



Community members at Smoking Ceremony, Welcome to Country and Cultural Awareness session led by Thomas Cameron.



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS: CONNECTING THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



Community First Development's Final Report from our recent Action Research Project confirmed the well-documented understanding that First Nations' communities operate within two forms of governance: First Nations' Governance and Western Governance.⁶ Our research also found that First Nations' communities regularly navigate the intersecting space where these two forms of governance meet, doing so out of necessity and to achieve goals such as securing funding.

FOR FIRST NATIONS' ORGANISATIONS, THE NEED TO 'WALK IN BOTH WORLDS' IS A PRODUCT OF COLONISATION THAT HAS RESULTED IN A NEW SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE PRACTICES BEING APPLIED ON TOP OF ONGOING FIRST NATIONS GOVERNANCE PRACTICES AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES THAT HAVE EXISTED FOR MORE THAN 65,000 YEARS.

In recent years, Community First Development has observed a steady increase in communities inviting us to work with them on projects focused on the area of 'Stronger Governance'. Types of activities include strategic and business planning; funding application support and mentoring; and governance training and capability building.

Image at top: Robert Duncan, Wandarrah Committee Member, providing cultural education to Wandarrah jarjums.

⁶ Community First Development. (2021). *Good governance practice leads to good relationships: An exploration of the effectiveness of Community First Development's community development approach in the Australian context - Final Report: Findings and lessons learnt.* Canberra, Australia: Community First Development.

GROWING CHILDREN UP STRONG

Wandarrah Preschool (now Wandarrah Preschool & Community Centre) was established in 1973 by 'Save the Children Fund' to provide a place of learning and gathering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families within the Inala and surrounding communities. Today, Wandarrah is a community kindergarten and childcare centre owned and managed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

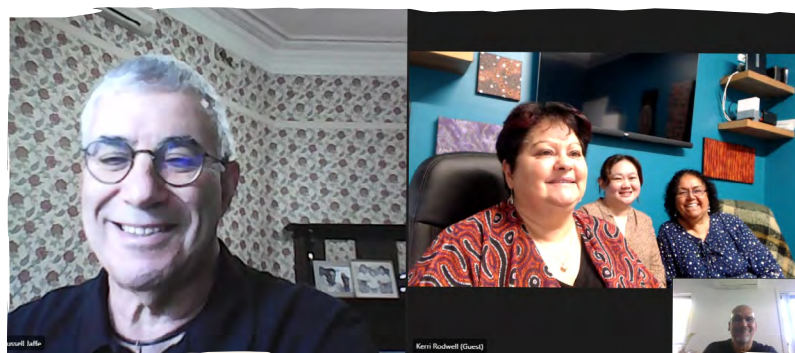
WANDARRAH IS A PLACE WHERE CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH PLAY IN A WARM AND NURTURING COMMUNITY.

It is a sanctuary that offers Indigenous Culture within the curriculum and embraces the culture of all children. Each child is made to feel safe, encouraged to explore and grow while learning important values and social skills. Wandarrah's long-term vision is to be operating from a purpose-built early childhood educational and training hub supported by key external partnerships, state of the art technology, recurrent funding, specialist staff in multiple areas, a significantly strengthened cultural program (including input from Elders), and a majority of First Nations' jarjums (children) in attendance.

CONNECTING WITH A SKILLED VOLUNTEER

Wandarrah reached out to Community First Development because they wanted support with developing a Strategic Plan.

The year 2023 marks 50 years since Wandarrah was established and the community was keen to develop a plan that would provide a strong foundation for their future.



Russell, Eddie, and the Wandarrah team participating in a planning.

After yarning further about what Wandarrah wanted to achieve through the project, Community First Development Senior Community Development Officer, Eddie, connected Wandarrah's General Manager/ Nominated Supervisor, Kerri, with skilled volunteer, Russell, who has expertise in strategic planning.

PLANNING FOR A STRONG FUTURE

Over several months, Kerri, the Wandarrah Board and Russell met via videoconferencing to scope out and progress the Strategic Plan. Following development of a draft Strategic Plan, Russell flew to Inala in March 2023 and spent three days with Kerri and the Board finalising the plan.

As part of these discussions, Russell presented and facilitated conversations on fundraising, governance, planning and risk management. He also shared and discussed a list of philanthropic grant opportunities that Wandarrah could potentially apply for.

Following his visit to Inala, Russell incorporated Wandarrah's feedback and produced a final draft of the Strategic Plan for Wandarrah's approval. The five-year plan reflects the aspirations, hopes and endeavours of the whole Wandarrah organisation and community. It outlines six strategic goals and a detailed action plan for the Board to implement.

For Kerri, the process of developing Wandarrah's Strategic Plan has provided an opportunity for reflection and to connect the past, present and future. She sees this as the highlight of the project:

"WORKING THROUGH THE PROCESS AND ACKNOWLEDGING CURRENT ACHIEVEMENTS, LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE WITH A CONSIDERED LENS, GATHERING THE VOICE OF ELDERS, STAFF, AND FAMILIES. TARGETED APPROACH TO WHAT CAN BE ACTIONED NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE. ACKNOWLEDGING THE FIRST VISION FROM THE BEGINNING IS STILL CURRENT."

- Kerri, General Manager/Nominated Supervisor, Wandarrah Preschool and Community Centre.

As part of the process, the Wandarrah team also gained a stronger understanding of the funding opportunities they could currently access and those that would require obtaining Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status.

For Russell, the highlight of the project was working with the Wandarrah team:

"THE ENTHUSIASTIC INVOLVEMENT OF THE CENTRE MANAGER, AND ONE KEY BOARD MEMBER, WHO BOTH WERE CLEAR IN WHAT THEY WANTED AND THE FUTURE THAT THEY SEE FOR THE CENTRE."

- Russell, Community First Development volunteer.

Wandarrah are currently focused on implementing the Strategic Plan. They have been engaging with government agencies around funding and hope to engage with other agencies, soon, in support of their goal to create one site for all of their early childhood education services.

Eddie and Russell with Faye (Wandarrah Board member), Kerri (Wandarrah's General Manager and Christine (Wandarrah Board Member).





FUNDING SUCCESS LEADS TO MUCH NEEDED SERVICES

Kings Narrative is an Aboriginal owned and operated social enterprise that is centered on culturally appropriate counselling and coaching for Aboriginal men. Founded and led by Managing Director and proud Arrernte man, Tyson Carmody, Kings Narrative aims to change the discourse surrounding Aboriginal men and provide much needed support services.

“UNDERSTANDING HOW CHALLENGING IT CAN BE FOR ABORIGINAL MEN TO ENGAGE WITH COUNSELLING SERVICES AND CONSTANTLY BEING FRUSTRATED WITH THE LACK OF CULTURALLY COMPETENT SERVICES THAT ARE AVAILABLE. IT HAS BEEN MY MISSION TO ESTABLISH AN ABORIGINAL LED, SOCIAL ENTERPRISE THAT PROVIDES CULTURALLY SAFE AND STRONG COUNSELLING/COACHING PROGRAMS ON COUNTRY, DELIVERED THROUGH NARRATIVE APPROACHES FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.”

– Tyson Carmody, Founder and Managing Director, Kings Narrative.

By taking men out on Country, making bush medicines, and providing cultural immersions, Kings Narrative is connecting Aboriginal men to their roots. Using Narrative Approaches to help Aboriginal men unpack, understand and re-author their own story, Tyson’s mission is to unlock the potential of each participant.



Tyson Carmody, Founder and Managing Director, Kings Narrative

Image at top: Bower shed at Black Tank (Apmwerre).

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT

Since Kings Narrative's launch in December 2021, demand for their services has rapidly increased. Kings Narrative has a site out at Black Tank (Apmwerre), 80km north-east of Alice Springs, where they can facilitate their services from. To grow their organisation, they needed support to secure funding to establish the necessary infrastructure and acquire vehicles to assist with service delivery.

KINGS NARRATIVE FIRST APPROACHED COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT IN MARCH 2022. SINCE THEN, WE HAVE WORKED TOGETHER ON TWO SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS.

CREATING AN IMPACT PROGRAM

Kings Narrative wanted to create an Impact Program that could be used to support funding proposals. Community First Development Senior Community Development Officer, Alex, connected Tyson and his partner Jess, Kings Narrative's Business Manager, with skilled Community First Development volunteer, Katherine, who has a range of expertise including in communications, business development and submission writing.

Tyson and Jess invited Katherine and Alex to visit their homelands at Black Tank (Apmwerre), where they spent the weekend developing content for the Impact Program and a Central Lands Council (CLC) funding proposal. The trip on Country provided a valuable time of connection and included a smoking ceremony, sleeping under the stars and eating stew from the camp oven. Following Katherine's visit, Tyson, Jess and Katherine finalised and submitted the proposal to the CLC.



Tyson, Founder and Managing Director of King's Narrative, welcoming volunteer, Katherine, to Country with a smoking ceremony.



IN AUGUST 2022, THE CLC ADVISED KINGS NARRATIVE THAT THEIR FUNDING APPLICATION WAS SUCCESSFUL FOR A TOTAL OF \$480,000!

This has supported Kings Narrative to do the following:

- Purchase two Hilux Utes (with branding + signage).
- Purchase a disability-friendly 12-seater bus (with branding + signage)
- Employ two young family members as caretakers of Black Tank Homelands.
- Launch their bush medicine range online.
- Commence and complete infrastructure works at Black Tank including storage rooms for camping gear, a meeting place/ conference room, shower and toilet amenities, and a commercial kitchen to manufacture bush medicine products in.

For Jess, a highlight of the project was working with Katherine, particularly the way she listened and engaged with both Tyson and her.

"WE FELT VERY SAFE WORKING WITH KATHERINE. MORE THAN OFTEN, WE SEE A LOT OF PROFESSIONALS LET THEIR EXPERTISE AND PERSPECTIVES DROWN OUT THE VOICES OF FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE. THIS WAS NOT THE CASE WITH KATHERINE, HER CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS WERE COMPLIMENTARY AND HELPED US TELL OUR STORY IN A WAY THAT OTHER PEOPLE CAN ALSO CLEARLY UNDERSTAND OUR VALUES AND MISSION."

- Jess, Business Manager, Kings Narrative.

SECURING FUNDING TO EXPAND SERVICES

Following the success of the first project, Kings Narrative invited us to work with them on a second project aimed at securing funding to expand their services. Jess and Tyson invited Katherine to work with them again, working remotely together over several months to progress and submit funding applications to three philanthropic foundations.

In April 2023, Kings Narrative were advised that they had successfully secured a \$1.6 million grant from the Paul Ramsay Foundation. The funding will be used to expand Kings Narrative's services, including the establishment of Barber Blak Kings and the creation of a six-week training and development program on barbering. This is an amazing outcome for Kings Narrative and a testament to their clear vision, strong work ethic, and desire to achieve change.

"WITH THIS HUGE AMOUNT OF FUNDING WE ARE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE OPERATION OF KINGS NARRATIVE AND THE SERVICE WE PROVIDE. ALONG WITH EMPLOYING MORE ABORIGINAL MEN. WE ARE FULLY BOOKED UNTIL 2024 WHICH IS INCREDIBLE."

- Jess, Business Manager, Kings Narrative.

Kings Narrative are continuing to kick goals and recently won two 2022 Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network awards: Blak Male Business owner of the year & Best Blak start-up Business of the year! We look forward to seeing what the future holds for them!

"WITHOUT COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT WE WOULD HAVE NEVER FOUND KATHERINE AND SHE'S BEEN A GAME CHANGER FOR US. ALEX IS SO EASY TO DEAL WITH, IF ANY CHANGES HAPPEN WE JUST CALL AND WORK IT OUT."

- Jess, Business Manager, Kings Narrative.



Camp Kitchen at Black Tank.



ACTION RESEARCH

OUR RESEARCH APPROACH RESULTS IN PRACTICAL, TANGIBLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ON THE GROUND, AS WELL AS ACTIVE LEARNING AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH FINDINGS WITH OUR COMMUNITY RESEARCH PARTNERS.

RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

This year our research-related activities aimed to raise the profile of the community-informed and evidence-based practice we have published, with a continued goal to influence the policy space that impacts First Nations' people and communities.

POWERFUL MOMENTS CO-PRESENTING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We co-presented with several community partners at two conferences, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Summit 2023 in Perth on Noongar Boodja, and the World Community Development Conference in Darwin on Larrakia Country. Our community partners led these presentations alongside our team, a unique approach in line with our Community Development Framework.

The AIATSIS Summit provides a unique forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, academics, native title stakeholders, legal experts, community and cultural sectors and government to collaborate in addressing current and future challenges. At this year's Summit in June, our community partners, Nadine and Kristie Tucker, presented alongside our Regional Manager, Doyen, sharing the story of our long-standing relationship with Menzies Aboriginal Corporation (MAC). With full management and

ownership of their communities' assets, MAC provides housing and is the central hub to the Wangkatha people who reside in Menzies.



Community partners, Nadine and Kristie Tucker, from Menzies Aboriginal Corporation presented alongside our Regional Manager, Doyen at the AIATSIS Summit.

The World Community Development Conference in June invited global practitioners, organisations, businesses, academics, policy makers, funders, and many others to share perspectives on challenges and current contexts for community development and community work. As co-hosts we welcomed close to 400 delegates, representing 23 countries.



Preparing for the arrival of close to 400 World Community Development delegates

On day one, we hosted two concurrent workshops. Our Regional Manager, Tania, and Senior Community Development Officers, Leonie and Alex, had the privilege of co-hosting an engaging presentation alongside our community partners Belyuen community and Raymond Walters, Director of Penangke Collaborative Cultural Consultancy.

THEY ENGAGED PARTICIPANTS IN STORIES OF HOW OUR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKS IN PRACTICE AND HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-DETERMINATION BEING THE CORE OF OUR THEORY OF CHANGE AND PRACTICE.

Belyuen community had prepared a film, and a group of the local students had prepared a dance. It was powerful to hear about their community development plans. Tania explained that this is community development at its best – communities doing it for themselves.

Our Regional Manager, Doyen, co-hosted an incredibly moving yarning circle alongside Wattandee Littlewell community representatives, Thomas Cameron and Tristan Mongoo, discussing the significance of strengths-based community led practice and two-way relationship and the importance of space, time, and symbols by sharing the story of Wattandee’s journey.

On day two, our CEO Steph gave an insightful keynote presentation on decolonising community development. This was followed by former Co-Chair Bill Armstrong’s discussion of his book *Everything & Nothing*.

In the afternoon, our Regional Manager, Doyen, presented alongside Tristan Mongoo, Wattandee Littlewell community representative, on the development of the Seed to Tree guide and its journey to Country.



Leonie, Senior Community Development Officer, presenting alongside Raymond Walters, Director of Penangke Collaborative Cultural Consultancy, providing a demonstration of the impacts of cultural load.

SELF-DETERMINATION IN PRACTICE AT THE 2023 NATIONAL VOLUNTEERING CONFERENCE

The Future is Now, was the theme of the 2023 National Volunteering Conference held on Ngunnawal Ngambri Country. Volunteer Coordinator, Aimee Bacchetto and Strategic Projects Manager, Ginibi Robinson, presented to a highly engaged audience.

The conference brought together over 800 (500 face to face and 300 online) not-for-profit peak bodies, volunteer management professionals, government and corporate representatives, academics and researchers, and volunteers to address emerging issues within the volunteering space and as part of the conference,

launch Australia's first National Strategy for Volunteering in ten years.

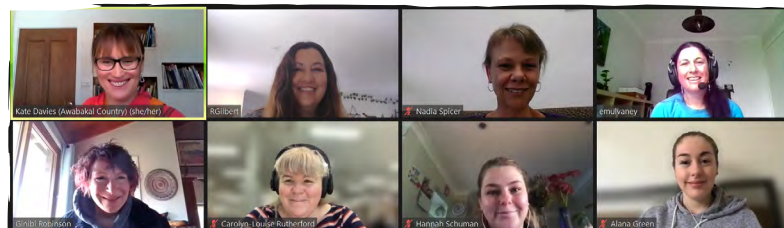
Our presentation, *Volunteering Alongside Self-Determining First Nations' Communities*, outlined our principles of engaging with First Nations' communities: by invitation with self-determining relationships led by communities at the core of every collaboration and connection, including obligations to and relationships with Country.

Following the presentation, we had further conversations and received validation from participants about the power and significance of our core principle, self-determination and how this works in building strong relationships between the volunteer, community and community development officers.

We shared powerful feedback from First Nations' communities we have relationships with, about the volunteer qualities that are important to communities as part of building strong relationships, and how we incorporate this feedback into how we induct volunteers.



Strategic Projects Manager, Ginibi Robinson, and Volunteer Coordinator, Aimee Bacchetto, presenting at the National Volunteering Conference.



Presenting at University of Newcastle.

QUEST LECTURE SERVICES

We were invited by Dr Kate Davies from the University of Newcastle to provide two sessions as guest lecturers for their course 'Working with Groups and Communities'. Staff members Ginibi Robinson and Ruth Gilbert presented two online lectures on the Community Development Framework, with Regional Manager, Renee Tomkinson, and Senior Community Development Officer, Emma Mulvaney, each presenting alongside at one of the lectures.

Dr Davies thanked the team warmly for our participation at the initial session, "Today was fantastic – a beautiful mix of concepts and principles and stories... I can't even tell you how much the students and I loved and valued spending time with you over the past couple of days!"

The opportunity to provide guest lecture services to external training organisations follows on from Ginibi and Ruth's previous successful presentation in June 2022, developed for the NSW Health Education Centre against Violence (ECAV) students as part of the Certificate IV in Aboriginal family wellbeing and violence prevention course.

COLLABORATORY PODCAST

We were delighted to appear in the Collaboratory Podcast series in an episode exploring Cultural Governance. Doyen Radcliffe, Regional Manager WA, and Sharon Babyack, General Manager Impact and Strategy, discussed findings from our 'Good governance leads to good relationships' research report.

THE PODCAST EPISODE WAS CREATED AS PART OF AN AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT, 'SCAFFOLDING CULTURAL CO-CREATIVITY'.

We were also invited to write a short article for the project. We reconnected with our Inaugural Research and Evaluation Fellow, Donna Stephens, to co-author the article, 'Curious about First Nations Governance? Listen deeply'.

AUSTRALIAN EVALUATION SOCIETY CONFERENCE

Donna Stephens, a member of our Research and Ethics Committee and former First Nations' Research and Evaluation Fellow, presented at the Australian Evaluation Society international conference. She spoke about the intersecting space where different perspectives meet and are sometimes woven together between cultures. She shared some of the insights from our research and lessons from First Nations' people in Australia who have navigated this space through necessity and skilful negotiation. These lessons provide a clear pathway to 'Right Way' practices where relationship building takes place, trust is built and solutions are designed and implemented together.

We were delighted to support the Australian Evaluation Society (AES) workshops this year on applying the AES First Nations Cultural Safety Framework. Two of our team, Doyen Radcliffe and Ginibi Robinson, worked with the authors to develop an engaging workshop. Participants were supported to strengthen their understanding of how principles for culturally safe evaluation can be applied in evaluation contexts and to develop skills in critical self-reflection.

Much thought and heart went into the design of these workshops, with the strength and knowledges of communities and their



The Yurrampi Child and Family Centre Reference Group – Malpa Jungu Jintangka - comprising strong Yapa (Warlpiri) women who provide direction and advise on the best ways to 'grow children up strong', Yuendumu.



Donna Stephens, former First Nations Research and Evaluation Fellow presenting in the main auditorium at the Australian Evaluation Society conference.

stories the gold in what was shared. These workshops have the potential to benefit communities through the way evaluators engage with First Nations' communities.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY (ANU)

The ANU's Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy and Research (CAEPR) released a paper, 'No more business as usual: the need for participatory Indigenous development policy and skilled practice'. Community First Development is mentioned as one of two First Nations' organisations working in participatory development with First Nations' people.

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT: FIRST NATIONS' LED MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Our research project continues to emphasise the importance of understanding and following the journey of communities' long-term dreams.

This year we completed the field work, undertaking research yarns with 10 communities about their dreams and their understanding of the value of monitoring and evaluation.

OUR DRIVING FOCUS WAS TO READILY APPLY RESEARCH FINDINGS INTERNALLY WITHIN OUR SYSTEMS TO ENSURE WE ARE ENGAGING WELL AND EFFECTIVELY SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES WITH THEIR LONG-TERM DREAMS.

We have taken clear advantage of the real-time application of a participatory action research approach of applying findings as we go. This has also required much in-depth engagement with the community development practitioners in our research team to ensure any changes were fit for purpose and culturally responsive.

To achieve this, members of our Community of Practice were invited to share their concerns,

identify barriers and propose solutions. A Dream Working Party was tasked with developing a plan to implement the many suggestions and Information and Systems Manager, Wayne Harvey, rapidly responded with developments to our purpose built technology platform.

A short summary of the changes made, informed by extensive team collaboration and engagement, include:

- Re-design of post-project evaluation questions to encourage story-telling, using open ended questions and refining the language of existing questions.
- Adding 'signposts' and links throughout the project records in the database to keep the Community Dream and related data entry front of mind.
- Re-designing field guides to be more conversational, informative and engaging - the project proposal and evaluation forms now also reflect the changes made in the database so that yarning in the field is easily matched to data entry requirements.

CASE STUDIES

We also engaged with our community research partners to co-author case studies. Co-authoring looks different in each community, and the community development practitioners in our research team carefully adapt their approach for each unique setting.



INNOVATION AND LEARNING

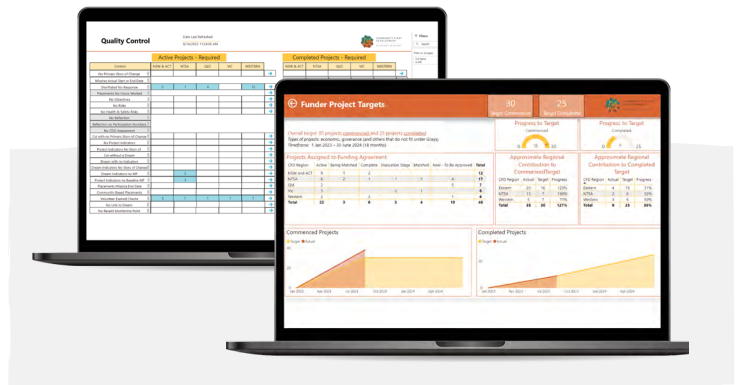
EVER-GROWING POTENTIAL OF OUR IMPACT DATABASE

This year we have focused on enhancing the capabilities of our sophisticated cloud database we fondly call 'D4'. D4 underpins our community development program and allows us to track and measure community success and demonstrate impact.

Our Systems and Information Manager, Wayne Harvey, has transformed our D4 quality control approach from an Excel spreadsheet with limited data checks, to a Power BI app with multiple data checks that is used by all levels of staff within our Community Development team. The innovative quality control app provides users with real-time access to identify and correct data errors, omissions and issues. While the app will continue to grow as technology evolves and business needs are identified, the efficiencies created are already saving time and making reporting processes easier.

Another exciting development is our new process for collecting volunteer hours. Volunteers are an integral part of our organisation, and the hours they contribute to supporting communities assists with demonstrating our impact and contributes to several other business processes.

Following a comprehensive review of the previous volunteer hours process, we streamlined and automated the process, taking advantage of the technology available to us. Rather than using a Word document to provide their hours, volunteers are now emailed a link to an online form, with the data they enter going directly back into D4. Not only has this new process create efficiencies, it has also opened up a range of possibilities for how we do things.



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: OUR COMMITMENT TO LEARNING AND REFLEXIVE PRACTICE

Over the past year, we have built upon the strengths of First Nations' knowledges, ways of being and yarning circle processes in our monthly 'Community of Practice' sessions. The sessions held via videoconferencing, bring together community development staff from across the regions with the impact and strategy team, volunteer coordinators and the Systems and Information Manager, to facilitate a collaborative learning environment.



Some of our national team gathered at Meanjin, Brisbane.

Each month a theme, topic of interest or continuous improvement opportunity is identified, and staff are invited to share First Nations' community development knowledges, challenges, reflections and innovative solutions. These sessions create opportunities for us to reflect and share our learnings, including our action research project, strengthening how we work together across the country, identifying and growing best practice.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Senior Community Development Officer, Alex, based in Alice Springs NT, secured a scholarship through the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation (ARLF) to attend the Leading Australian Resilient Communities (LARC) program.

"THE WHOLE WEEK WAS SUCH AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY, I FELT VERY HUMBLLED TO BE PART OF THIS GROUP OF LOCAL LEADERS."
- Alex, Senior Community Development Officer.

Senior Community Development Officer Sharon Whitby, based in Perth WA, won a scholarship last year to participate in the Leadership WA, Rising Leaders Program and was chosen to attend an event at WA Parliament House as part of the program.

WE ARE SO PROUD OF ALEX'S AND SHARON'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND THE STRENGTHS THEY BRING TO THEIR ROLES WITH US AND TO THE COMMUNITIES IN WA AND NT.



Leocardia, Jeanette, Annie and Alex at the Leading Australian Resilient Communities (LARC) program.



Senior Community Development Officer Sharon Whitby (fourth from right) with her peers at the Leadership WA, Rising Leaders Program.

BILL ARMSTRONG AO HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD 2022

The recipient of the 2022 Bill Armstrong AO Human Rights Award was Dr Fiona Crockford.

Dr Crockford was recognised for her volunteering with First Nations’ communities in Australia and her commitment and efforts to human rights, facilitating the strengthening of relationships between First Nations’ peoples.

The panel recognised the opportunities created by Dr Crockford for dialogue between First Nations. Dr Crockford has created pathways for First Nations’ peoples to contribute to strategic discussions led by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) within Australia and in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Bougainville. As a result, First Nations’ peoples have advocated first-hand for the value and sustainability of community led solutions.

The ceremony was streamed live and Dr Crockford appeared at the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby alongside the Australian High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea. Ministers of the Autonomous Bougainville Government also attended online.

BILL ARMSTRONG AO, IN ATTENDANCE AT THE AWARD CEREMONY, ACKNOWLEDGED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DR CROCKFORD’S WORK IN DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

ABOUT THE AWARD

The Bill Armstrong AO Human Rights Award identifies and honours those who are doing outstanding work with First Nations’ people and communities, exemplifying self-determination in practice.



From left to right, Stephanie Harvey CEO Community First Development, Karen Milward Chair Community First Development and Bill Armstrong AO, in Australia. Right hand image inset: Dr Fiona Crockford, award recipient and HE Jon Philp, Australian High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.



OUR UNIQUE MODEL WORKS

THERE IS NO OTHER ORGANISATION LIKE US

AT COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT, WE SUPPORT COMMUNITIES TO IMPLEMENT THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS.

Working by invitation only, we utilise a “by community, for community” approach with self-determination at its core. With more than 20 years’ experience working at the grassroots level with First Nations’ people, we know that grassroots approaches underpinned by deep listening and trust, lead to better outcomes.

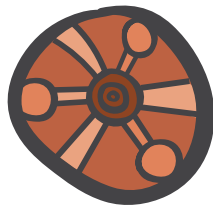
OUR GRASSROOTS PARTNERSHIP APPROACH IS 100 PER CENT COMMUNITY DRIVEN AND OFFERS PRACTICAL AND SPECIALISED SUPPORT TO FIRST NATIONS’ COMMUNITIES ACROSS INDUSTRIES.

We meet to listen, yarn, and plan together; and connect community with skilled volunteers who are experts in their fields.

First Nations’ people lead the way in creating more for youth, stronger economic and education outcomes, safer communities and stronger, healthier lives. We are honoured to be trusted by hundreds of communities across remote, regional and urban settings.

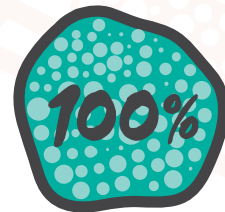
As an established national Aboriginal organisation working at grassroots, we are ready to leverage our assets, expertise and networks to deliver on the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*. Our national community development program demonstrates practical solutions and proven value for money and cost savings to governments. It is underpinned by an approach that works.

WHY SUPPORT THIS WORK?



BY *INVITATION* ONLY

Our national network of skilled volunteers provide practical support where skills and resources are limited.



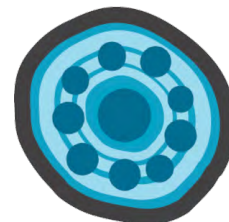
100% *COMMUNITY* DRIVEN

Projects are 100% community driven. We give people control of development decisions and we respect local knowledge.



PRACTICAL SUPPORT

We do things with First Nations' people, not to or for them. Communities invite us to help them achieve their own goals.



PROVEN IMPACT

Every project is monitored throughout, using indicators designed and evaluated by communities themselves.

LOOKING TO COLLABORATE WITH US ON THIS IMPORTANT WORK? SUPPORT SELF-DETERMINING FIRST NATIONS' COMMUNITIES ACROSS AUSTRALIA.

Contact us:

✉ info@communityfirstdevelopment.org.au ☎ 1800 819 542

FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023



COMMUNITY FIRST
DEVELOPMENT

Community First Development Limited
ABN 90 093 123 418

DIRECTORS' REPORT

The Directors present their report for the year ended 30 June 2023.

Directors

The names and details of each person who has been a Director during the year and to the date of this report are as follows. Directors were in office for this entire year unless otherwise stated.

Karen Milward

MBA, Williamson Fellow

Certificate IV Training and Assessment and Business Administration

Chair

Karen is a proud Victorian Yorta Yorta woman, born and raised in Melbourne. She owns and operates Karen Milward Consulting Services and has done so since 2004. She has extensive experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at grassroots and organisational levels right through to peak body representative level. She regularly undertakes complex projects commissioned by government departments and their agencies. This involves assisting those who have lead responsibility for policy and program development and service delivery impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Owner and Operator - Karen Milward Consulting Services

Chair - Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place

Chair - Kinaway Chamber of Commerce Victoria Ltd

Director - Yarra Valley Water

Council Member - Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council

Stan Kalinko

B.Com, LLB, Higher Diploma in Tax

Company Secretary

Chair, Audit and Risk Management Committee

Stan practised law for more than 30 years, was a merchant banker for 6 years, is a mediator and has been a non-executive Director of companies for many years.

John Jeffery

Member, Governance Committee

John is an Aboriginal man of the Wiradjuri Nation of central New South Wales. John has extensive experience in developing and implementing Indigenous engagement, employment, training and education initiatives. He was the founder and Managing Director of Indigenous Success Australia (ISA) where he negotiated and worked with private and public-sector employers nationally to develop and implement Indigenous employment and training strategies and retention programs. John specialises in providing corporate and public-sector groups with Indigenous employment and training solutions, with a strong focus on local people for local jobs. This involved working nationally with Indigenous communities, government agencies and industry groups to identify and realise engagement, employment and training opportunities and joint venture partnerships.

Lauren Ganley

GAICD, FARLF

Member, Research and Ethics Committee

Lauren is the Head of Telstra's First Nations Strategy and Engagement, where she leads the strategy and ongoing governance of engagement with First Nations peoples and communities. Lauren's works involves providing strategic advice, leading programs and business activities to improve digital and social inclusion and advocating for better outcomes for First Nations peoples and communities.

Co-Chair - AGENCY

Director - Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education Agency

Director - Kakadu Tourism

Director - Darwin Festival Board

Member - First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group

Ian Hamm

Chair, Governance Committee

Ian is a Yorta Yorta man who has been actively involved in the Victorian Aboriginal community in a personal and professional capacity for over 30 years. He has had a wide exposure to, and led, policy reform and program implementation for both the State and Federal Governments at executive level, most notably in Aboriginal Affairs. His work as a board member includes leading organisations through change and adaptation to ensure they are well placed for the challenges of improving the lives of people in a rapid changing environment.

Chair - First Nations' Foundation Ltd

Chair - Connecting Home Ltd

Chair - Community Broadcasting Foundation

Chair - Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation

Board Member - Inclusive Australia Ltd

Board Member - Killara Foundation

Board Member - Holmesglen Tafe

Board Member - Yarra Valley Water

Board Member - Victoria Health

Director - The Healing Foundation

Director - Australian Institute of Company Directors

Council Member - Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council

Professor Anne Martin AM

Member, Research and Ethics Committee

Dr Anne Martin AM is a Yuin Aboriginal woman of the NSW South Coast. From 2012, Anne has been the Director of the Tjabal Centre at the Australian National University (ANU). There she supports and mentors hundreds of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. In 2017 in Ontario, Canada, Anne was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the World Indigenous Nations University in recognition of her contributions to a broad Indigenous education agenda with a particular emphasis on student success. In 2019 Anne was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia and awarded the ACT senior Woman of the Year.

Karen Jacobs

Member, Audit and Risk Management Committee

Karen is a bloodline descendant and a Traditional Owner of Whadjuk Country in the Perth metro and surrounding area, Western Australia. Karen is the Principal of Indigenous Economic Solutions Pty Ltd, trading as IES Cultural Heritage, IES Enviro Scapes and IES Enviro Clean. Karen's primary focus is on developing and encouraging Aboriginal people to be involved in enterprise and business opportunities. She has extensive background in Aboriginal cultural heritage and practices, environmental plans and management, cultural tourism, education and was a former lecturer at the University of Western Australia, School of Social Science in the Foundations to Heritage Management.

Principal - Indigenous Economic Solutions Pty Ltd

Chairperson - The Whadjuk Foundation Inc

Vice Chair - Foundation for Indigenous Sustainable Health Ltd

Principal - IES Enviro Scopes, IES Enviro Clean & IES Cultural Heritage

Independent Director - Yinhawangka Decision Making Committee

Director - Katajin Mia Mia Foundation

Director - Ngangk Trust

Director - Bookitja Pty Ltd

Director - Noongar Property Holdings Pty Ltd

Director - Noongar Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Advisor - Green Australia

Member - WA State Design Review Panel

DIRECTORS' REPORT

Objectives

Community First Development (the Company) is a First Nations' community development and research organisation that creates positive change in and with First Nations' communities. We promote the skills, talents and cultural strength of our people, and facilitate activities where they lead positive changes for their communities. We acknowledge our responsibility to contribute to a more just and equitable world for First Nations' people.

As detailed in the Constitution, the objects, summarised here, are to:

- (i) undertake community development activities in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,
- (ii) link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with volunteers who have expertise to share,
- (iii) provide opportunities for Australians to make contributions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by working in partnership with these communities, and
- (iv) undertake fundraising activities in order to support the work of Community First Development.

Strategy for achieving objectives

Community First Development has four strategic priorities as part of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023. The strategic priorities are:

1. **Thriving communities:** We will achieve thriving communities, with our people, for our people, through successful development and research initiatives, designed and delivered in partnership. This includes a focus on youth and their emerging leadership.
2. **Action learning:** We will value and develop our people by providing a rewarding and satisfying place to work. We will continue to improve our development and research practice and methodology, through lessons learnt with our people.
3. **Influence policy:** Increase communication, and accessibility to our work, share our impact and grow our evidence base, to influence policy.
4. **Grow:** While staying true to our community development approach and organisational culture, diversify and create new First Nations' opportunities that grow our organisation and allow us to innovate, expand and share knowledge, learning and success.

The above listed strategies have been developed to support the Company's operations in future financial years and are expected to support the on-going operations of the Company.

Principal activities during the year

Community First Development has continued to operate with a core commitment to genuine partnership and collaboration, working with First Nations' communities based on the principle of self-determination.

During the year, Community First Development achieved the following outcomes:

- engaged with 106 First Nations' communities on 170 community development activities;
- continued action research on ways of evaluation with 10 First Nations' partner communities;
- engaged with members of the public to generate support, awareness and education of First Nations' peoples and communities;
- as conference partners, welcomed close to 400 global delegates to the World Community Development Conference in Darwin;
- presented seminars and training, including at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies annual summit;
- engaged with volunteers including three regional events and online volunteer trainings;
- fundraised a total of \$3,694,060 in financial support from our supporters; from generous individuals to philanthropic funds.

Community First Development had an operating deficit for the year ended 30 June 2023 of \$1,046,773 (2022: deficit \$1,692,379).

There were no other significant changes in the state of affairs during the financial year.

Auditor independence

The Board has received a declaration of independence by the auditor. A copy is included in the following Financial Report.

Member contribution if Community First Development is wound up

Community First Development has one class of member. Each member is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding \$20 if the Company is wound up. The total amount that members are liable to contribute if the Company is wound up is an amount not exceeding \$140.

DIRECTORS' REPORT

Directors' meetings

The number of meetings Directors (including meetings of the committees of Directors) held during the year and the number of meetings attended by each Director were as follows:

Number of meetings attended by:	Directors' Meetings		Audit and Risk Management Committee		Governance Committee		Research & Ethics Committee	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Karen Milward	6	5						
Stan Kalinko	6	6	4	4				
John Jeffery	6	6			3	3		
Lauren Ganley	6	5					-	-
Ian Hamm	6	5			3	3		
Karen Jacobs	6	4	4	3				
Anne Martin	6	5					-	-

A - Number of meetings held to which the director was eligible to attend

B - Number of meetings attended

Benefits and interests in contracts with Board Members

Members of the Board declare that they have no interest in contracts, transactions, arrangements or agreements with Community First Development, other than contracts entered into, in the ordinary course of the Company's business. (See note 15).

Community First Development is covered by Directors and Officers Liability Insurance.

Events subsequent to year end

On 14 July 2023 the Company co-signed a grant agreement for significant funding from a Philanthropic Foundation to support Community First Development's program of supporting First Nations' communities to achieve self-determination through community development activities for the financial year ending 30 June 2024. The grant was received on 31 July 2023.

There were no other significant events occurring after 30 June 2023 which require adjustment or disclosure in the financial report.

DIRECTORS' DECLARATION

In accordance with the resolution of the Directors of Community First Development Limited, we state that:

In the opinion of the Directors of Community First Development:

- (a) The financial statements and notes of Community First Development are in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012*, including:
 - (i) Giving a true and fair view of Community First Development's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the year ended on the date; and
 - (ii) Complying with Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosure Requirements (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Regulation 2013*;
- (b) There are reasonable grounds to believe that Community First Development will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable;
- (c) The provisions of the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1946 (Western Australia)* and the regulations under the Act and the conditions attached to the authority have been complied with;
- (d) The provisions of the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (New South Wales)* and the regulations under the Act and the conditions attached to the authority have been complied with;
- (e) The statement of profit and loss and the statement of financial position give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the organisation with respect to fundraising appeals; and
- (f) The internal controls exercised by the Company are appropriate and effective in accounting for all income received and applied by the Company from any of its fundraising appeals.

Signed on behalf of the Board this 15th day of August 2023



Karen Milward

Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT



**Building a better
working world**

Ernst & Young
121 Marcus Clarke Street
Canberra ACT 2600 Australia
GPO Box 281 Canberra ACT 2601

Tel: +61 2 6267 3888
Fax: +61 2 6246 1500
ey.com/au

Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Statements

To the members of Community First Development Limited

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, the summary statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, summary statement of changes in equity and summary statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited financial report of Community First Development Limited (the Company) for the year ended 30 June 2023.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report, as prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012*.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and *Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012*. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

The Audited Financial Report and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial report in our report dated 15 August 2023.

Responsibility of the Directors for the Summary Financial Statements

The directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012*.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard *ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

Ernst & Young
Canberra
5 October 2023

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue, income and gains			
Donations from the public	5	3,058,555	3,540,255
Philanthropic grants		635,505	-
Federal Government funding		537,500	-
Services revenue		823	2,802
Interest income		65,149	1,425
Other income		100	13,569
Net gain on disposal of non-current assets		19,091	-
Total revenue, income and gains		4,316,723	3,558,051
Expenses			
Community development activities		(2,507,136)	(2,455,664)
Direct costs of fundraising appeals	5	(754,824)	(710,549)
Compliance and governance		(194,703)	(182,898)
Enabling services		(753,749)	(717,370)
Supporter engagement		(631,048)	(720,532)
Awareness and education activities		(522,036)	(463,417)
Total expenses	6	(5,363,496)	(5,250,430)
Net operating deficit		(1,046,773)	(1,692,379)
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive loss for the year		(1,046,773)	(1,692,379)

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements as part of the full financial report available at communityfirstdevelopment.org.au

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash		2,471,276	3,434,974
Right of use asset	7	-	10,125
Other receivables	8	62,070	59,221
Prepayments		47,996	40,637
Total current assets		2,581,342	3,544,957
Non-current assets			
Plant and equipment	9	-	-
Intangible asset	10	29,725	60,022
Total non-current assets		29,725	60,022
Total assets		2,611,067	3,604,979
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	11	428,677	373,165
Lease liabilities	12	-	10,186
Employee benefits	13	435,371	444,943
Total current liabilities		864,048	828,294
Non-current liabilities			
Employee benefits	13	91,778	74,671
Total non-current liabilities		91,778	74,671
Total liabilities		955,826	902,965
Net assets		1,655,241	2,702,014
FUNDS			
Accumulated funds		1,655,241	2,702,014
Total funds		1,655,241	2,702,014

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements as part of the full financial report available at communityfirstdevelopment.org.au

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Total Accumulated Funds
	\$
Opening balance at 1 July 2021	4,394,393
Operating deficit	(1,692,379)
Other comprehensive income	-
Balance at 30 June 2022	2,702,014
Opening balance at 1 July 2022	2,702,014
Operating deficit	(1,046,773)
Other comprehensive income	-
Balance at 30 June 2023	1,655,241

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Operating activities			
Receipts from donations and supporters		3,058,555	3,540,255
Receipts from Philanthropic grants		635,505	-
Receipts from Government funding		591,250	-
Fee for service		905	3,082
Interest income		65,149	1,425
Net GST refunded		90,827	159,381
Other revenue		3,500	11,624
Payments to employees and suppliers		(5,419,989)	(5,199,069)
Net cash used in operating activities	14	(974,298)	(1,483,302)
Investing activity			
Sale of property, plant & equipment		21,000	-
Net cash provided by investing activity		21,000	-
Financing activity			
Principal repayment of lease liability		(10,400)	(14,856)
Net cash used in financing activity		(10,400)	(14,856)
Net decrease in cash held		(963,698)	(1,498,158)
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		3,434,974	4,933,132
Cash at the end of the financial year		2,471,276	3,434,974

These statements are to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements as part of the full financial report available at communityfirstdevelopment.org.au

THANK YOU & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THIS YEAR 11,786 DONORS GENEROUSLY GAVE 76,519 GIFTS TO ENABLE FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLE TO UNDERTAKE PROJECTS THAT PRIORITISED COMMUNITY GOALS INCLUDING ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS PLANNING, CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND LEARNING, EDUCATION, AND HEALTH.

Our work is only possible because of the generous support of our partners, donors, philanthropic trusts and foundations, federal and state government funding and corporate bodies.

We also receive much-needed in-kind support from a range of organisations. We are sincerely grateful for the support and services we receive.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies, The Wood Foundation, Millet Family Foundation and H2Cairns Foundation.




Cultural Aboriginal Dreaming Tour, The Rocks, Sydney, with our friends from Allan and Gill Gray Philanthropies.




Some of our supporters joined us to hike the Larapinta Trail, raising funds for Community First Development.



COMMUNITY FIRST
DEVELOPMENT

 communityfirstdevelopment.org.au

 info@communityfirstdevelopment.org.au

 1800 819 542



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