



IGNITING COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CHANGE

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CEO MESSAGE

STEPHANIE HARVEY, CEO

Thank you for supporting our approach to keep projects community driven – so First Nations' communities can control their own decisions. Time and time again, we see the best community achievements when First Nations' people use their own strengths and local knowledge to reach the goals they set for themselves.



In this edition of Stepping Stones, I'm so pleased to share incredible stories with you about First Nations' communities like JD Mechanical Solutions, a mobile mechanic business based on Arrernte Country in the Northern Territory (see page 6).

On page 8, read about Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative, based in Sydney, who are demonstrating the power of Aboriginal-led education as self-determination in action.

You can see how Burrunju Aboriginal Art Gallery is a crucial part of the community, as the only Aboriginal owned and run art gallery in Canberra (see page 10).

You can also read about Sunbury Aboriginal Corporation in Victoria and the special place they provide for locals to gather in a culturally safe environment (page 12).

Readers should be aware that this newsletter may contain images and names of deceased people.

Cover photo: JD Mechanical Solutions, Ian (*Volunteer*) with kids in tow.



JD Mechanical Solutions,
Ian (*Volunteer*) with kids in tow.

I hope you enjoy reading about the community projects you help make possible. Thank you for walking alongside First Nations' communities and being part of their story.


Read about 
Advancing PNG Women Leaders Network (APNGWLN) (Pg 4).

Photo Credit:
PNGAus Partnership



WILL YOU FILL OUT YOUR ENCLOSED SUPPORTER SURVEY?

Your feedback will help us find areas for improvement as we plan for the future. Learning more about you also means we can make sure we're speaking to you about the things that are most important to you.

THANK YOU!

OUT AND ABOUT

AN INSPIRING VISIT: ADVANCING PNG WOMEN LEADERS NETWORK

In March, Community First Development was sponsored to visit some of our neighbours across the Strait in Papua New Guinea. We spent time with the Advancing PNG Women Leaders Network. These strong women are pillars in their communities – providing schools and clinics where there were none, speaking out against injustice and family-based violence, negotiating with mining companies for better environmental and community outcomes, gaining better access to water and sewerage, and providing pathways to employment for women. What an incredible example of community-based enterprise as a vehicle for change. We engaged in two-way learning, and were able to share some of the valuable insights we have learned from the community success stories you have supported.



Stephanie Harvey (CEO Community First Development) **presenting to Advancing PNG Women Leaders Network (APNGWLN)**
Photo Credit: PNGAus Partnership



NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK: 27 MAY - 3 JUNE

National Reconciliation Week is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements – and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

This year's theme "Now More Than Ever" is a powerful reminder that we must continue walking alongside First Nations' people to create better outcomes. Reconciliation Week provides an opportunity to reflect on what reconciliation means to all of us. The quote below from Patrick Dodson is a wonderful place to start.

"The river is the river and the sea is the sea. Salt water and fresh, two separate domains. Each has its own complex patterns, origins, stories. Even though they come together they will always exist in their own right. Our hope for Reconciliation is like that."

PATRICK DODSON

'RAP blessed with water', Reconciliation News 12/2009 p.26

WOMEN AND GIRLS: THINK GLOBAL - ACT LOCAL!



Late last year, our Chair, Karen Milward, and Director, Karen Jacobs, were thrilled to be invited to the 2023 Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council (KAWC) roundtable by Janine Dureau, Chair of KAWC and winner of the 2023 Bill Armstrong AO Human Rights Award. It was an uplifting event themed 'Think Global - Act Local' where more than 100 women gathered on Yawuru Country on Western Australia's Kimberley coast. Workshops covered women's wellbeing and healing, mentoring, leadership, empowerment and resilience.

"As Kimberley Aboriginal women, we know our communities and we hold the solutions. We are in the best position to self-govern."

**JANINE DUREAU, CHAIR OF KIMBERLEY
ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL**

**NOW
MORE
THAN
EVER**
#NRW2024

“ON THE ROAD” TO GROWTH

NORTHERN TERRITORY



JD Mechanical Solutions are a First Nations’ owned and run mobile mechanic business based on Arrernte Country in the Northern Territory. Danni and her partner Josh, a qualified diesel mechanic, started the business in 2022 serving remote and local communities surrounding Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

The business is an active part of the community – not only providing employment opportunities for First Nations’ people, but JD Mechanical Solutions is also a major sponsor of the local Alkamilya Women’s Football Club.

Danni and Josh approached Community First Development with their interest in developing key documents to grow and expand their business. They were particularly looking for assistance to write a Capability Statement that would support tender applications to local Aboriginal organisations.

Senior Community Development Officer, Alex, who is based in Alice Springs, connected JD Mechanical Solutions with skilled

volunteer, Ian, a mechanic and carpenter who also has business management expertise. Ian worked alongside Danni and Josh remotely before meeting face-to-face for a two-day intensive visit to Alice Springs where they developed the key documents together.





Josh, Danni & Ian working on JD Mechanical Solutions Business Plan and Capability Statement.

“ Our volunteer helped us with our Business Plan and Capability Statement. We got a lot out of our visit with our volunteer. Everything we intended to get done, we did. ”

DANNI, JD MECHANICAL SOLUTIONS

“ The project started with a shared dream of a couple, and this helped them to put their dream into words on paper. This is the first step towards seeking some financial help to turn the dream into a reality. ”

IAN, COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT VOLUNTEER

Danni and Josh hope to continue growing their business. They are applying for tenders, with the plan to hire two apprentices. Look out for more updates on this incredible community!

THE POWER OF ABORIGINAL-LED EDUCATION

SYDNEY, NSW



Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative is an independent Aboriginal-controlled organisation based in Sydney, NSW. Since 1957, Tranby has demonstrated the power of Aboriginal-led education as self-determination in action.

As said on Tranby's website:

“ When Indigenous adults are supported, listened to, and given the skills they need to thrive, families and communities have the chance to heal. ”

Whether it be through trade-based skills or legal studies, Tranby provides education opportunities for mothers, fathers and grandparents, so they can share the positive impacts of education with their young ones.

Community First Development first connected with Tranby more than a decade ago in 2013. We've worked on a number of projects together, including marketing strategy, grant assistance, graphic design, and communications support.

It's an honour to be invited back to work alongside this inspiring community again. Senior Community Development Officer, Emma, connected Tranby with one of our newest volunteers, Sarah. Tranby invited Sarah to meet with staff members at their campus in Glebe to discuss providing graphic design support for key communication materials, such as their Annual



From left-
Sarah (*Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative*) and
Sarah (*Community First Development Volunteer*)

Report. We're delighted to be part of Tranby's journey as they seek to tell their own story and build relationships.

Besides their education programs, Tranby is also dedicated to impacting policies and providing information, services, and resources. They do this through projects such as their Family Violence Research Hub, Indigenous Business Hub, Library & Archive Collections, and Indigenous Community Art Gallery.

WHAT AN INCREDIBLE COMMUNITY!

To find out more about Tranby, you can visit their website at

www.tranby.edu.au



WHERE CREATIVITY MEETS COMMUNITY

CANBERRA, ACT

Since 2014, Burrunju Aboriginal Art Gallery has been a crucial part of the community as the only Aboriginal owned and run art gallery in Canberra. The name Burrunju holds significant meaning, referring to the “ruined city of Arnhem Land” and the resting place of founding members’ totem, the saltwater catfish.

Burrunju provides the First Nations’ community with culturally appropriate programs to improve resilience and wellbeing, create meaningful and sustainable employment, and support the passing on of culture and heritage to younger generations.

The unique art gallery also offers the wider community with insights into First Nations’ heritage through art displays, cultural activities and programs. Tourists can come along for a visit and see the beauty of the local Aboriginal culture. Not only are there gorgeous artworks available for purchase, but there is also a space for the community to enjoy some art therapy by learning to paint or make artefacts.

All proceeds from artwork and artefacts sold in the gallery are invested directly back into supporting local artists, whether it’s by providing a source of income for artists or purchasing art supplies for the community space.



Community member Dale, skilled volunteer Deb, Community Development Officer Ruth, working together to enhance the presence of local Aboriginal artists in Canberra.

We were thrilled when Burrunju invited Community First Development to work alongside them to revamp their website. We connected skilled volunteer, Deb, with Burrunju so, together, they could refresh and strengthen the community's online presence to showcase all the wonderful work they do.

You can check out Burrunju's website here

www.burrunju-aboriginal-arts.org.au

BALANCING THE BOOKS FOR A STRONG FUTURE



Sunbury Aboriginal Corporation provides support across the shire of Hume in Victoria. Because there is no other Aboriginal group operating in this area, Sunbury's dream is to be a valuable resource to the local service system, education providers, and community groups. They also strive to be an asset to the community by providing support and advice on local Aboriginal issues.

This incredible community has created a special place that is truly welcoming as a culturally safe environment for locals to join workshops, group gatherings, and events throughout the

Jacob & Raquel



year. Sunbury hosts programs such as a Koorie children's playgroup and an event for high school students where they discuss issues they're passionate about in a "Ted Talk" format.

Sunbury first approached Community First Development to be part of their story in 2021. More recently, in October, Senior Community Development Officer, Jacob, visited Sunbury to yarn about the upcoming goals of the community, identifying a clear vision of their next steps.

“We got a chance to see the space, which included a community room, native botany garden and mural, within an old courthouse and located next to a police station.”

JACOB, SENIOR COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

We've been delighted to work alongside Sunbury's Executive Officer, Raquel, to assist with financial auditing and annual reporting. Skilled volunteer, Russell, was invited to offer his extensive financial industry experience and knowledge. Russell worked closely with Raquel to complete Sunbury's financial audit requirements and provide guidance on how the board can manage their financial records into the future – which is particularly useful for funding applications.

THANK YOU
FOR WALKING ALONGSIDE
RESILIENT COMMUNITIES LIKE
SUNBURY WITH US!

STAFF PROFILE

MEET OUR RELATIONSHIP MANAGER,
TASH

Tash recently joined Community First Development as our new Relationship Manager. We asked Tash what motivated her to join the team.

Here's what she shared:

“ I'm a proud Yuin woman from the far south coast of NSW and grew up in Moruya.

As a longtime fan of Community First Development's work, I jumped at the chance to become part of the team! I am so thankful for the amazing opportunity to work alongside First Nations' communities to become self-determined and achieve their dreams and aspirations set by them for them. There is so much the government, and wider population can learn from our people, including the need to understand that prioritising self-determination and Indigenous-led solutions is the answer to closing the gap. All we need to do is listen and act.

I can't wait to bring all my learnings, knowledge and experience into the Relationship Manager role and help to gain, maintain, and grow our relationships. ”



WE'RE SO
HAPPY TO HAVE
YOU WITH US, TASH!

↑
Tash at the
Yuin Healing Bunaan

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

MEET SKILLED VOLUNTEER, PAUL

Since his first project in early 2022, Paul has worked alongside more than 10 communities, clocking up close to 500 volunteer hours!

Paul was happy to share what his experience as a Community First Development skilled volunteer has meant to him.



 Paul holding his Certificate of Achievement

“Working on Community First Development projects has been very humbling yet deeply gratifying. I am humbled by the spirit of generosity I see in every person: staff, volunteers and most especially those people in the communities. Their commitment to their communities makes me pause and think about the real meaning of generosity. And, when the projects are successfully wrapped up, I feel a sense of satisfaction in knowing that I was able to help, albeit in a very small way.

My wife said that since volunteering, I've become a better person. I used to be very impatient, but my philosophy now is 'hurry up and wait!'

Knowing that there is still more to be done, I will continue to volunteer where I can. ”

THANK YOU, PAUL,
for your generous support, energetic spirit and incredible approach to community!

PLEASE GIVE WHAT YOU CAN. **THANK YOU**

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www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/donate

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