



# JIPUNGWAYI

(The Fire in Me)

Milikarpiti, Tiwi Islands  
Northern Territory,  
Australia



Jipungwayi is working to create positive engagements with youth in the local community. Its founder Michael (Mikey) is a young, passionate Tiwi, Iwaidja and Luritja man from the saltwater and desert region. Returning to his homeland after many years away for schooling, Mikey saw the disadvantage that local youth face daily. He wanted to do something – to give back and make a difference – not only today but to affect generational change in a positive way.

Mikey found that the systems in place were inadequate and unable to effectively support youth diversion, engagement, and empowerment. They didn't consider the importance of connections and the challenges around intergenerational trauma, loss of culture, and other complexities that are unique to First Nations' peoples and communities.

*Instead of expecting someone else to do something about it, Mikey set out to do something himself.*

*I didn't want to point fingers. I wanted to lead by example, and that's what I hope these kids will do. I want to light the fire inside of them to make the right decisions and do the right thing, even in the face of adversity.*

*Having grown up in community, I can relate to the challenges that youth experience. Positive role models in my life helped me break generational cycles that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are faced with and I want to use my journey to positively impact others.*

Mikey, Founder, Jipungwayi



*Mikey, Gabby, Baby Lilly and our CFD officers at Milikarpiti.*

**The foundation of Jipungwayi is to give young boys and girls a safe place to go, hang out, connect to culture, and attend wellbeing activities that will help guide them and break adverse generational cycles.**

The long-term dream is to provide youth with pathways that lead to a better quality of life and enable them to positively contribute to our communities. Recently becoming a father has further strengthened Mikey's resolve to create a future that is bright. He aims to do this through his programs by showing youth that it is possible to be connected to their roots while walking in two worlds.



# COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT

WITH OUR PEOPLE, FOR OUR PEOPLE

Mikey first reached out to our community development team in 2023. He wanted to provide positive engagement and empowerment opportunities for kids:



*I didn't know where to start. A friend introduced me to Community First Development and I learnt about the support that was available. I started to feel as though this goal and dream could be achieved. It just made it all so much more real.*

*Mikey, Founder, Jipungwayi*



## Capability Statement/ Business Profile

Mikey was referred to Community First Development by a friend and approached us seeking support to get his business venture underway. Specifically, he was keen to connect with a skilled volunteer who could mentor and guide him through writing up a Capability Statement/Business Profile for Jipungwayi.

*This project has given me the tools and guidance needed to build a strong foundation for my business. Whereas if I was to do this myself, I wouldn't know where to start.*

*Mikey, Founder, Jipungwayi*

Senior Community Development Officer, Leonie, connected Mikey with skilled volunteer, Janet, who has business development and strategic planning expertise. Over a period of approximately two months, Janet and Mikey worked closely together via Teams, phone and email, to develop the Capability Statement.

*Jipungwayi's vision is to see healthier and happier young Tiwi people become the best versions of themselves, taking up opportunities and pathways of learning.*

With Janet's mentoring and support, Mikey finalised his Capability Statement which clearly outlines and articulates the need for Jipungwayi and what it aims to achieve, to two different audiences: the broader community and potential funders.

Mikey has developed and grown with the knowledge that he has gained through working with Janet. He now has a strong foundation for his business that will support community children to develop and grow.



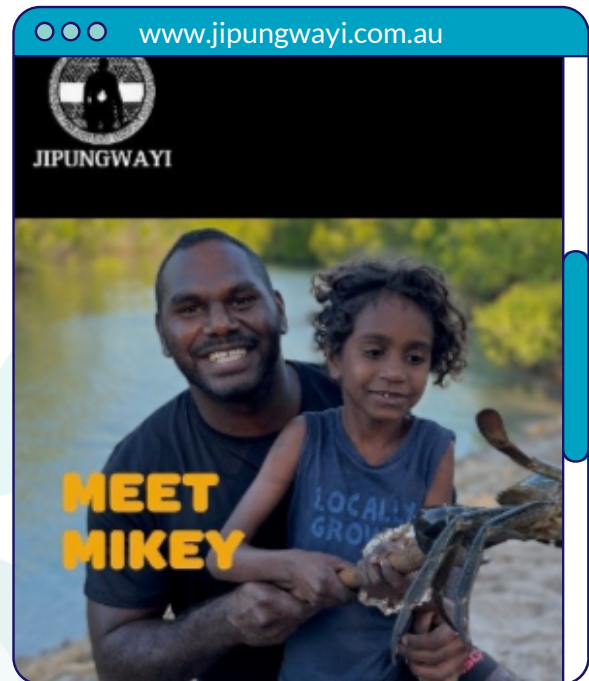




## Website Project

During the development of the Capability Statement, Mikey decided that he wanted to create a website for Jipungwayi to build awareness around his business, reach a wider audience and ultimately grow his business. After yarning with Mikey around his ideas, Leonie connected him with skilled volunteer, Deb, whose expertise spans multiple areas including in website development and graphic design.

To get things started, Leonie and our Regional Manager Northern Territory/Western Australia, Tania, facilitated several online briefing sessions between Mikey and Deb to discuss website content and logistics in more detail. At these sessions, Mikey and Deb prepared content for the website and discussed the availability of high-quality visual assets, relevant business data and website costs. As Deb discovered, Mikey already had some fantastic photos to include on the website.



Check out Jipungwayi's new website!



In early September, Deb flew to Milikapiti to spend two days in community with Mikey and his family. As Mikey and Deb had already laid strong foundations for the website, this enabled them to finish the website quickly and focus on building Mikey's capability to manage the website himself. In addition, Deb was able to explore Country with Mikey, visit waterfalls, go fishing and play AFL (Australian Football League) with the local kids. As Deb observed, Mikey is a respected and trusted person in the community.

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Mikey has lots of rapport with the young people, he is respected and trusted. They just love him, he is a hero in community and the parents respect him and trust him with their kids.

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Deb, Community First Development volunteer

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It's really important having a Tiwi person like myself who has grown up here and knows the cause of certain behaviors leading a project like Jipungwayi is going to make a real change, we are so passionate, we want to see big changes in our communities, we are going to see results.

Mikey, Founder, Jipungwayi

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## Business Plan



Mikey decided to build on the Capability Statement and invited Community First Development to support him to develop a Business Plan for the Jipungwayi Youth Pathways Program. Mikey wanted to develop the Business Plan to comprehensively scope and outline his vision for the program. A Business Plan would also assist Jipungwayi to meet governance requirements and secure funding.

Mikey's partner, Gabrielle, the school principal in the community and a Wanaruah woman from the Hunter Valley, New South Wales, sees children and young people struggling to unlock their potential for various reasons. She believes the main reason for this is the difficulty they experience in overcoming the challenges and trauma they face in their lives. Gabrielle believes that such a program would provide a positive outlet and safe space for children to participate in and would significantly impact their academic outcomes and open up more pathways for them after school.

Tania connected Mikey with skilled volunteer, Fiona, who has expertise in business development and strategic planning. To get things started, Mikey and Fiona met via videoconferencing to discuss Mikey's vision for the program and the key focus areas. Over several weeks, Mikey and Fiona worked together to develop the Business Plan. This was done both remotely using tools such as Google Docs and Facetime, and in community with Fiona traveling to Milikapiti to spend one week with Mikey and his family.

With Fiona's support, Mikey has developed a 38-page Business Plan for the Jipungwayi Youth Pathways Program. The comprehensive document outlines Mikey's vision for the program and includes detailed analysis, goals, costings, promotional initiatives, and an implementation plan.



## Looking to the future

Mikey is full of enthusiasm and so determined to change the course of history in the Tiwi community that he is already running activities and camps to positively engage and empower kids and young people to become the best versions of themselves. Since the establishment of Jipungwayi, Mikey has seen a reduction in youth crime and an increase in positive attitudes!

Mikey also told us he has noticed the kids are feeling more confident and prouder of who they are and look forward to attending Jipungwayi activities. Mikey is keen to watch Tiwi kids grow and become more involved in the community, find their sense of belonging and purpose and become role models and mentors for the next generation.

*Community First Development connected me with different volunteers around Australia that could best help me get my business up and running. There were so many options to choose from and the mentors I had were amazing; they were flexible and understanding and incredibly knowledgeable.*

*Mikey, Founder, Jipungwayi*

Tania and Mikey have connected recently to talk about how CFD can further support the success of Jipungwayi. Yarns are now underway to connect Mikey with one of our skilled grant writing volunteers in the hopes of growing Jipungwayi's impact across Tiwi.

