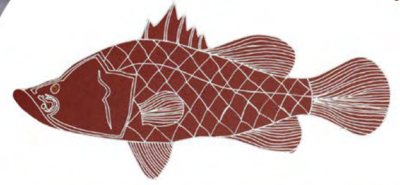


FISH

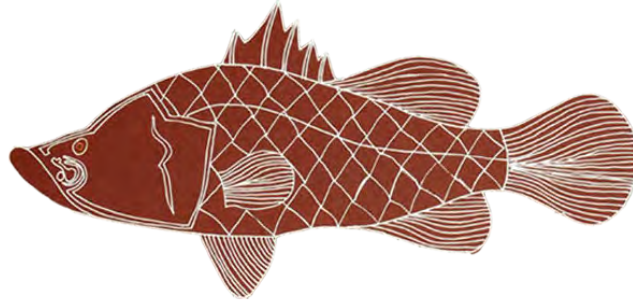


"Healthy spirit, heart, mind and body,
healthy families, community and land!"

Foundation
for Indigenous
Sustainable Health
Annual Report
2023-2024



Foundation for Indigenous Sustainable Health



**“Healthy spirit, heart, mind and body,
healthy families, community and land”**



Annual Report

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2023-2024

Foundation for Indigenous Sustainable Health
PO Box 7741, Cloisters Square WA, 6850
info@fish.asn.au | www.fish.asn.au

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

FISH acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first peoples of our nation and as the traditional owners of the land. FISH acknowledges that there were hundreds of different First Nations groups within Australia prior to European settlement, each with their own distinctive language, customs and lore. Under traditional lore and custom, First Nations people have cultural responsibilities and rights in relation to the land of which they are the traditional owners. First Nations people have a living spiritual, cultural, familial and social connection with the land. First Nations people have made, are making, and will continue to make, a significant and unique contribution to the heritage, cultural identity, community, and economy of Australia.



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About Us

Foundation for Indigenous Sustainable Health Ltd. (FISH) is:

- A registered company limited by guarantee with ASIC
- A registered Income Tax Exempt Charity and Deductible Gift Recipient with the Australian Taxation Office
- A registered Public Benevolent Institution with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission (ACNC).

The abbreviation of our organisation's name FISH fits with the old proverb and the work we do:

"When you give someone a fish you only feed them for a day but if you teach someone to fish you feed them for a lifetime."

Our Story

FISH was established in 2010 to address the severe housing crisis in Indigenous communities throughout Australia. Our work has since expanded to include education, health, justice, and cultural initiatives. Acknowledging that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a living spiritual, cultural, familial, and social connection with the land, FISH seeks to bring healing to the spirit, heart, mind, body, and land to help create healthy people and communities.

FISH believes that change does not come through welfare, but by walking with and empowering people; where Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people work hand in hand through innovation and enterprise to bring sustainable change.

FISH provides opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share their wisdom and insights to the broader community, to teach people how to connect and care for each other, and for country, whilst closing the gap and breaking intergenerational cycles of trauma, poverty and engagement with the justice system. The focus of the organisation is:

"By Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people".

Our Purpose

To improve the **social and emotional wellbeing** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and **break intergenerational cycles of trauma, poverty, and engagement in the justice system.**

Our Vision

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are **confident, connected, healthy**, have equal opportunities with education, training, employment, and life choices, and are valued as **positive and healing contributors** who lead others to **care for each other and for Country.**

Our Values

We are inspired to **act** from **Compassion** and strive for **Equality**. We approach our work with **Courage, Integrity, Perseverance, and Resourcefulness.**

We are driven by **COMPASSION**, care, and solidarity for those suffering through poverty, and oppression. With respect for human dignity, we seek to empower individuals to claim and protect their human rights.



Conscious of our common humanity, we believe in **EQUAL** rights for all where people are valued and able to positively contribute. We work to create fairer, more just societies, promoting tolerance inclusiveness, and understanding.

We have the **COURAGE** to act boldly with confidence and conviction, speaking truth to power, challenging unjust systems and harmful traditional practices, and promoting justice and pace.



We uphold and promote the highest standards of **INTEGRITY** in leadership and service, including honesty, transparency, and accountability.

We aim to keep hope alive in addressing inter-generational disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and recognise the need for **PERSEVERANCE** and determination. We take the long view striving to ensure sustainability and continuity of our work.



Resources are finite, **RESOURCEFULNESS** is not. We aim to use creativity and ingenuity to get the best results. We aim to grow each other's knowledge, working smarter not harder, trying new methods to overcome challenges through innovation, creativity and partnership.

WHAT WE DO



The diagram above summarises how we work, where we focus our efforts and the outcomes we are working towards.

Social and emotional wellbeing from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldview encompasses a healthy spirit, heart, mind, and body, plus healthy families, communities, and land (central circle in diagram).¹

To achieve our vision, we also work on breaking intergenerational cycles of trauma, poverty, and engagement in the justice system

for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by addressing the **socio-economic determinants** of wellbeing: **Creative, Education, Home Ownership, Employment, & Justice** (outer circle in the diagram) in a culturally secure and sustainable way.

We create equal opportunities in education, training, and employment that empower and enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to become **positive and healing contributors** who lead others **to care for each other and for Country**.

¹ SEWB is a community-owned concept, first formally referenced in the National Aboriginal Health Strategy,

1989. Diagram adapted from Gee, Dudgeon, Schultz, Hart, & Kelly, 2013.

CO-CHAIRS' REPORT



It has been a year of significant progress for FISH, led by the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as we uphold our commitment to breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty, trauma, and engagement with the justice system. Our work addresses immediate needs but also paves the way for long-term community empowerment.

A major achievement this year, after 9 years of planning and codesign work, was the successful Development Approval by the WA Government for the FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative. This is a major step in our goal to create a national prototype site where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are engaged in the justice system can reconnect to culture, heal physically, emotionally, and spiritually, and positively transition back into society as confident and healthy individuals.

In response to the 2023 flood that devastated remote communities of the Kimberley Region and cut off the national highway for over 6 months, FISH took immediate action to provide relief. Our efforts brought essential non-food supplies and health support to those most in need. This highlighted FISH's ability to mobilise quickly and effectively in times of crisis, reaffirming our commitment to being a reliable and responsive partner to Aboriginal communities.

Our FISH Outback Stores social enterprise in Fitzroy Crossing has undergone exciting growth in the last 12 months leading to the employment and support of local people – a tremendous achievement considering the major challenges caused by the worst flood in the history of the Kimberley. This is key to our broader strategy of generating Aboriginal employment through social enterprise and community-led development.

The advancement of our digital health programs and medical technology trials has opened new avenues for improving health outcomes and closing the gap in remote Aboriginal communities. By leveraging technology, we make healthcare more accessible and tailored to the needs of these populations. Our commitment to community codesign for the trials enables Aboriginal people to have a voice in the development of new treatments and health innovations, ensuring they receive health care that is culturally appropriate and of the highest standard.

Finally, the expansion of FISH's Aboriginal Home Ownership Initiative is empowering families to take control of their housing future by offering five distinct pathways into home ownership, tailored to different needs and circumstances. This is not just about providing housing; it is about improving the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of Aboriginal families and creating a sense of pride, ownership, and economic independence.

2023 was a major challenge for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people with the No vote and this has impassioned the Board and our organisation to be even more focused to ensure the voices of our people are heard and that they drive the work that we do as we walk with them to bring real lasting change.

The Board could not do what we do without our staff, volunteers, partners, stakeholders and supporters and for this we thank you. We look forward to the year ahead as we build on our achievements and move our discussions with State and Federal Governments from words into actions led by the voices of our people.

Liza Fraser-Gooda and Dr Scott Martyn
(Board Co-Chairs)



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



Now, more than ever, following the outcome of the referendum, the Australian community needs to listen to, hear, and act upon the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in matters that relate to their lives.

As a nation, we asked Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people what they want and after years of consultation they came back to the nation with the Uluru Statement from the Heart seeking a Voice in matters that relate to their lives; Truth Telling about our nation's history; and a Treaty in recognition of the original custodians of this land!

The request was to walk together to build a better future by establishing a First Nations Voice to Parliament enshrined in our Constitution, and the establishment of a Makarrata Commission for the purpose of treaty making and truth-telling.

This request was made in the context of Australia having the highest number of incarcerated Indigenous people in the industrialised world; where we continue to see more Indigenous children in care than the stolen generation; where we have one of the highest suicide rates for Indigenous young people in the world; where we have chronic housing problems with homelessness, overcrowding and low home ownership for Indigenous people; where we have a widening gap in health outcomes and life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and ongoing challenges of racism and a lack of progress in closing the gap.

Despite the significant and growing financial burden and social cost to the nation we said no to a voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander people who have the answers to closing the gap.

While we took the time to mourn the outcome of the referendum, it has made our Board and the FISH Team even more impassioned to ensure that our organisation is directed and driven by the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Board of Directors is honoured to be led by two strong Aboriginal women with Liza Fraser-Gooda, a Bidjara, Ghangulu and Iman woman, in the Co-Chair role, and Karen Jacobs, a traditional owner of Whadjuk Country, as Deputy Chair. These two women continue to play such integral roles along with Rita Lusted, a Noongar woman, with ties to Wilmen and Koreng boodja (Country). Each of these Aboriginal women have continued to contribute significantly not only on the Board but also as respective Chairs of our Justice, Home Ownership, and Education Board Committees.

Our initiatives in home ownership, healing and justice have continued to be led by our national and state based codesign groups of Aboriginal Elders and Leaders with major achievements being made in the last twelve months with receiving Development Approval from the Government of Western Australia for the FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing & Justice Initiative, our expanded five strategies in Home Ownership, and the establishment of Impact Investing opportunities.

We have seen the solidification of work in the Kimberley Region with clients moving into home ownership and our social enterprise work becoming firmly established and managed by local community people.

To have 100% of our staff in our social enterprise retail outlet in the Kimberley being local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people is a great outcome in an industry where they are often not able to gain employment.

This year FISH was able to move into the longer-term strategy for flood relief, driven by Gooniyandi Leader Claude Carter, to assist in rebuilding communities in Fitzroy Valley through supporting local community organisations, families, and remote community schools through donating over 20 pallets of non-food aid, through our Books for All Initiative, our Teddy Bank Project, and our medical technology trials working to close the gap in health outcomes.

We have continued our work in education, training, and employment with a focus on the provision of professional development and resources for schools and educators as we work together to assist in creating an educational environment which recognises the identities and cultures of Aboriginal people and encourages all students and staff to engage in reconciliation, respect, and recognition.

This report details the work of FISH over the last year, noting why we work in the areas we work in, the gaps we are striving to close, and the outcomes achieved.

FISH believes in the principle that you cannot do wrong in one area of your life, be that as an individual or nation, without affecting another. This is why this report also ties FISH's work to

the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

We cannot not do what we do without the support and passion of so many people, organisations, businesses, stakeholders, the Board of Directors of FISH, our management team, staff and volunteers and for this I thank you!

I also want to particularly highlight the legacy of the Late Sonya Pamela Rodgers who provided a major bequest to FISH over three years that has enabled the organisation to majorly move our work forward, particularly in the areas of Home Ownership, Training and Employment and our Myalup Healing and Justice Initiative. The positive impact of this legacy will be felt for generations to come.

The last year has seen the foundation of our work solidified, led by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and we have only just begun to do what we have set out to achieve. Join with us on this exciting journey of lasting positive change as we empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to drive their own social and economic sustainable change.

Mark Anderson
(Chief Executive Officer and Director)



ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

Board of Directors

FISH's Board of Directors comprises 50% Aboriginal people with a current vacancy to be filled giving over a 65% majority. All our Board Members are highly qualified and passionate about bringing positive long term sustainable change led by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Liza Fraser-Gooda
(Co-Chair)
Bidjara, Ghangulu and
Iman Woman.
Co-Founder of Redspear
Safety and Safespear,
Director of Spear
Foundation.



Dr Scott Martyn
(Co-Founder & Co-Chair)
Medical practitioner,
engineer, innovator, and
researcher.



Karen Jacobs
(Deputy Chair)
Traditional Owner of Whadjuk
Country. Managing Director/
Chairperson of Indigenous
Economic Solutions and
Chairperson of The Whadjuk
Foundation.



Tim Donisi
(Board Secretary)
Partner at Clayton Utz law
firm.



Rita Lusted
Noongar woman, with ties to
Wilmen and Koreng boodja.
Principal Consultant
Ngaparrtji Ngaparrtji
Two-Way Science.
Department of Education.



Noel Prakash
Head of Indigenous Business
and Community at National
Australia Bank.



David Wirrpanda
(2022-2024)
Yort-Yorta man. Former AFL
champion, and experienced
in community work.



Mark Anderson
Director & CEO – FISH
Over 40 years working in the
community sector, 10 living
in remote regions.

FISH Team



Steven Andreazza – ACCOUNTANT

Steve brings a wealth of experience in business operation, holding degrees in Extractive Metallurgy, Professional Accounting, and being a Chartered Accountant. Steve volunteered with FISH for several years, and now supports FISH's strategic financial planning to enhance our impact in the community. Outside of work Steve enjoys practicing and teaching karate and fishing on family outings.



Averil Bairnsfather-Scott – WHADJUK ELDER

Averil is a proud Nyoongar woman who was born and raised on Whadjuk country with connection to Menang from the Great Southern region. Averil's employment background is nursing, childcare, education, social and mental health well-being of Aboriginal people. Averil joined FISH in 2024 as she was drawn to their vision of providing opportunities for First Nations people to share their wisdom and insights to the broader community to teach people how to connect and care for each other and for country, whilst closing the gap and breaking generational cycles of poverty, trauma, and engagement with the justice system.



Judy Campion – BOOKKEEPER

Judy came to Australia from England 34 years ago. Her book-keeping journey started 26 years ago when she met her husband and together, they started a small plumbing business. After her kids grew up, she started working at a small accounting practice where she first encountered the good work of FISH. Judy stepped forward to become the volunteer bookkeeper because she believes in the ethos that FISH stands for.



Claude Carter – COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER

Claude is an Aboriginal leader from the Gooniyandi clan group in the Fitzroy Valley. He is the Founder of the remote Bawoorrooga Community and the Chairman of Gooniyandi Aboriginal Corporation and is committed to communities bringing and driving the change for themselves. He is also a recognised artist, traditional dancer, and a leader in his culture.



Koodah Cornwall – NOONGAR ELDER

Koodah is a Noongar man and Elder from the Willmun clan, committed to lighting the spirit within and reconnecting Aboriginal people with their culture, community and land to heal their spirit. He was part of the Stolen Generations and suffered the impact of intergenerational trauma. He has worked for the Department of Education, managed an Aboriginal Corporation for over a decade, and worked for the Department of Parks & Wildlife for over 20 years.



Katrina Cox – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Katrina has worked in Aboriginal based projects since the late 1990s, starting with her involvement with Family Income Management in Cape York, Far North Queensland. Working on a variety of projects for FISH including FISH's Social Enterprises, Books For All Program and Micro Finance Funding, Katrina is passionate about business development and tourism opportunities for Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses throughout Australia.





Jason Dinning – GTO IMPLEMENTATION MANAGER

Jason Dinning has extensive professional experience ranging from social housing, finance, and construction, having held managerial roles in the public and private sectors, including remote work in Fitzroy Crossing where he first came across FISH. Jason has a strong passion for helping Aboriginal people in living better lives through meaningful employment and training pathways.



Renna Gayde - CULTURAL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CO-ORDINATOR MYALUP KARLA WAANGKINY

Renna is a proud Walbunja woman from the Yuin nation on south coast of NSW. Living on Noongar Boodja for the past 26 years she is mother to four beautiful daughters. Renna studied social work at Curtin University and works as a lived-experience advisor/advocate across various organisations and institutions. Renna is passionate and committed to driving positive, self-determined change for her people and the community in which she lives.



Janine Gordon – FISH OUTBACK STORES SOCIAL ENT. MANAGER

Janine is a proud Gooniyandi and Walmajarri woman from Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley region. She enjoys working as the manager for FISH Outback Stores. Janine previously worked for Youth Justice and the Kimberley Mental Health & Drug Service. She also enjoys going out bush, camping, fishing and painting.



Jessica Graham – BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

Although Jess has lived on Noongar Boodja for all her life, her mob is Gumbaynggirr from the coast region of Coffs Harbour, NSW. She is a single mother of one and has her Certificate IV in Legal Services. Delivering the “customer service experience”, is something she has always enjoyed doing. Jess is the new face behind the emails that you may send through to FISH enquiries and also assists with the behind-the-scenes business of FISH.



Michael Pugliese – MANAGER, ABORIGINAL HOME OWNERSHIP

Michael has 15 years of experience in housing service delivery with Aboriginal housing, specialising in maintenance program management, business analytics and human services - along with trade and project management experience in residential construction. Beginning his working career in hospitality, Michael has learnt that relationship building is the bedrock to any successful and meaningful outcomes, and is passionate about finding long lasting housing solutions for people in an ever changing financial and social landscape.



Kristian Rodd – PROJECT MANAGER

Kristian is a former lawyer who worked in corporate law in Melbourne and China. He changed paths to focus on sustainable development and has worked throughout Europe, South America, and Australia. He is committed to ensuring that projects are driven by community members to enable them to take their own power back and bring positive change.



Jara Romero – ARCHITECT & PROJECT COORDINATOR

Jara is a Spanish architect with a passion for sustainability, natural construction, and working with communities. She has worked across Europe, South America, and Australia, learning from traditional architecture about the use of local materials and the adaptation of structures to local climates. Jara lived and worked for three years in the remote Kimberley Region with the FISH-Bawoorrooga Self-Build Sustainable Housing & Education Program and now is focussed on the FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Justice and Healing Initiative.



Danica Scott - PROGRAMS MANAGER

Danica Scott is a qualified Social Worker, holding a Bachelor of Social Work, a Diploma of Counselling, a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, and is completing a master's degree in Community Development. Danica specializes in youth training and employment, residential support services (24/7 care), education to work transition, dependent drug and alcohol use, homelessness and housing, personal and family mentoring, life-skills development, severe and complex mental health, disability, and family crisis issues.



Ronni Smith – EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT AND HR ADMIN SUPPORT

Ronni originally joined FISH in the role of Executive Support having previously worked in operations management, executive coaching, and personal development. With her HR experience and strong communication skills, Ronni now assists FISH with HR documentation and processes for our team, having stepped out of her previous role to focus on family and personal commitments. Ronni is most fascinated by people, place, and the systems and stories that connect us all.



Brendan Stallard – FINANCE OFFICER

Brendan's time with FISH has provided an insight into the challenges faced by indigenous communities, which has been an invaluable experience both personally and professionally. Brendan is an avid traveller, as he believes experiencing other cultures and communities allows us to better ourselves and the world around us.



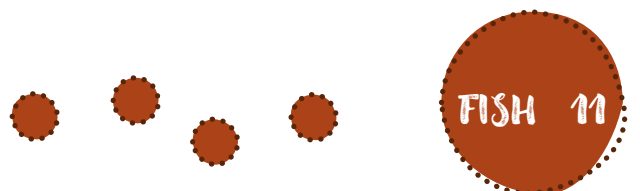
Donna Wallam – MYALUP SITE AND CULTURAL CARETAKER

Donna is a Bindjareb woman, who works as FISH's Site Caretaker for the FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative, monitoring and looking after the site from an organisational, as well as cultural, point of view – continuing the custodianship of the land that the Bindjareb people had for thousands of years. Donna is also a member of FISH's Co-Design Group.



Gypsy R. Williams – SOCIAL ENTERPRISE METRO RETAIL TRAINEE

Gypsy R. Williams is a proud Gamilaroi woman who grew up in Narrabri, NSW. Gypsy joined the FISH Family as a Retail Trainee, undertaking a Cert III in Management. Gypsy has taken huge inspiration from her incredible mother, Polly Wilson, and believes that, together, they can part the sea. FISH is supporting Gypsy in her goals to pursue business management.





Polly Wilson – SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MANAGER, PERTH

Polly is a proud Gamilaroi, Ngemba Weilwan Woman who grew up in Wee Waa, NSW. As well as managing FISH's social enterprises in the Perth Region, Polly is an Artist and mother of four beautiful children. Polly aims to become a qualified art therapist working with families from a trauma background. Polly truly believes, and has experienced herself, the difference FISH can make in the lives of Indigenous peoples, families, and communities.



Scott Wilson – COMMUNITY PROJECT OFFICER

Scott is a Gooniyandi and Gajerrong man from WA's Kimberley region. Scott has lived across Australia working with various youth organisations as an advocate for Australian youth mental health. He is the managing director and co-founder of an Aboriginal-owned film, television, publishing, and events company. Scott is writing various television series in animation and live action, while having developed an Aboriginal Superhero Universe in comic books.

Ambassadors



Tjiirdm McGuire

Tjiirdm is FISH's Young Creative Ambassador. He is a successful film and television actor who began his journey with FISH in 2017, starring in the feature film Three Summers – an official FISH partner.



David Rennie

David is an internationally recognised wildlife photographer, environmentalist, artist, and Aboriginal advocate. He has won many awards including the 2013 Australian Geographic Anzang Nature Photographer of the Year.



Steven Streat

Steven works for Fortescue. He organises the collection of cans, bottles and scrap metal from Fortescue work sites to be recycled with revenue supporting the work of FISH.



Suzi Browne

Lady Claire (Suzi) Browne is a marketing communications professional, with a wealth of experience within the higher education sector. She has a background in hospitality and tourism, has run her own business, as well as worked for large corporations both here and overseas.



Sebastian Browne

Lord Sebastian Browne is the 12th Marquess of Sligo, whose family history includes the abolition of slavery in Jamaica and also played a critical part in humanitarian issues closer to home. Sebastian is dedicated to assisting others to realise their home-ownership aspirations and accomplish their property goals.

Co-Design Group



Greg Little



May McGuire



Dennis Jetta



Melba Wallam



Koodah
Cornwall



Shirley Harris



David Wirrpanda



Donna Wallam



Troy Bennell



Lesley Ugle



Robert Taylor



Sharon Cooke



Jeff Amatto



Liza Fraser-
Gooda



Frank Mitchell



Karen Jacobs



Buddy Cornwall



Karen Jetta



Kallan Nannup



Renna Gayde



Corey Kahn



Rita Lusted



Adam Drake



Delvene
Cornwall



Chris Nannup



Alyssa Whitby



Brad Vittale



Kaisha
Champion



UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) are 17 global goals, adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

The SDGs recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth –

all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>²

FISH supports the SDGs and **we ensure we tie our initiatives to align with these goals.** FISH recognises that each of the SDGs are integrated — in other words, action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES THIS YEAR

- Obtained Development Approval for FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative.
- Three successful medical technology trials in remote communities.
- Flood relief program in Kimberley Region.
- Growth of FISH's social enterprises, including retail store in Fitzroy Crossing.
- Delivered educational workshops and training to schools and organisations.
- Continued development and expansion of Aboriginal Home Ownership Initiative.
- Expanded partnerships with Aboriginal artists and creators.

² "The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not

reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States".

THE VOICE REFERENDUM

Self-Determination/Empowerment

In 1967 Australia voted overwhelmingly, with the highest yes vote ever in Australian history in a national referendum, to address some of the inequalities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people which saw a positive change to our nation's Constitution with a flow-on impact in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Sadly, the 2023 Voice Referendum did not have the same outcome. Australia was asked to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a say in matters that directly concerned their lives, and as a nation **we voted no**. The outcome of the referendum left most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their allies devastated and in a period of mourning.

The results of the referendum reinforced FISH's determination to ensure that the voices of our people and communities are **valued, listened to, and acted upon** when working together to solve the major challenges that most affect them in Closing the Gap.

The development of the FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative, the FISH Aboriginal Home Ownership Initiative, and the Medical Technology Trials are just a few examples where the voices of our communities are valued, listened to, and acted upon as we continue to walk shoulder to shoulder together to solve the major challenges that most affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"All the decisions concerning we, the Aboriginal community, have been made for us by non-Aboriginal people; looking at the problem through their own eyes and coming up with solutions that fit into their particular priorities and values and then saying 'you must do this, or must do that, or must do something else'. Instead of sitting down with us and discussing the whole problem with us and asking us to come up with solutions to our own problems and then working together so that we can bring about a change by the ideas that come from us as Aboriginal people."

Neville Bonner AO, Australia's first Indigenous parliamentarian. Quote 1967





JUSTICE

JUSTICE

Why These Programs

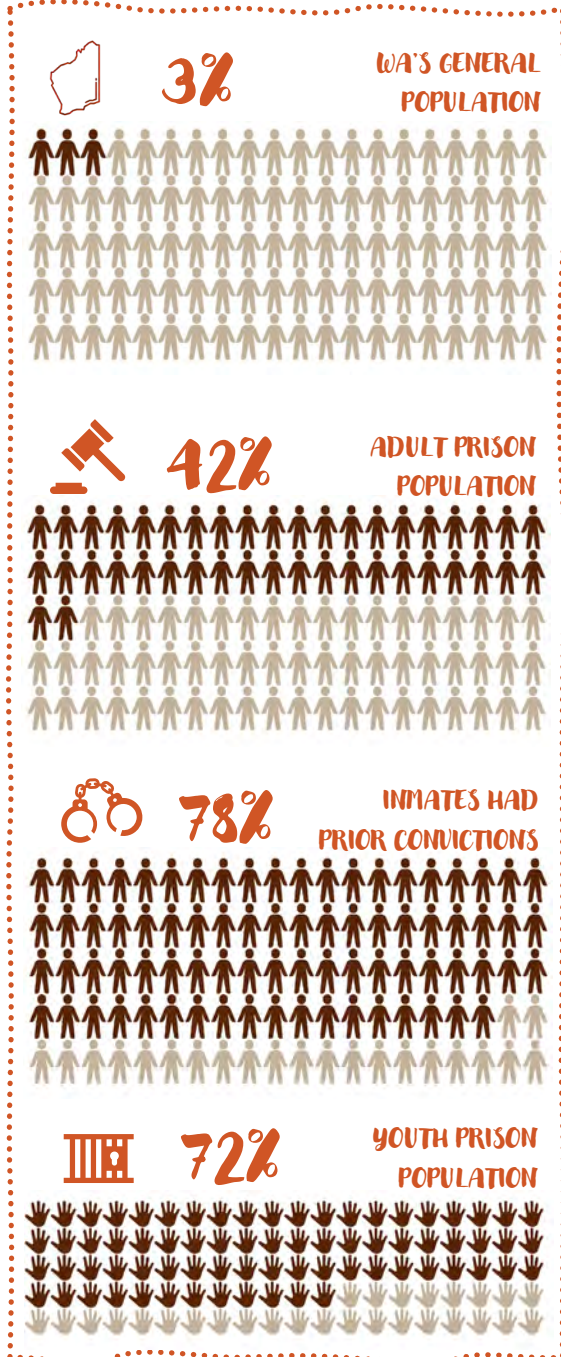
First Nations people are vastly over-represented in custody throughout Australia. This has lifelong consequences for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The impact of incarceration extends beyond the individual, impacting entire communities and perpetrating intergenerational cycles of trauma and disadvantage. Between December 2023 and March 2024, the number of First Nations people in prison grew by over five percent, with First Nations people comprising 35 percent of all prisoners in Australia³.

Overall, WA has the highest rate of incarceration for First Nations people. Despite encompassing just over three percent of the WA population, First Nations people account for almost half of the adult prison population. With 78% having prior adult convictions, it's clear that the system fails to address the root causes of offending and leads to a cycle of reoffending and incarceration.

Aboriginal youth face even graver statistics, comprising 72% of total detainees⁴. First Nations youth aged 10-17 were imprisoned at 29 times the rate of non-Aboriginal youth⁵. To break this cycle of reoffending, timely culture-focused interventions that connect young people to culture, community, and Elders are critically important.

Government-funded justice programs designed by non-Indigenous people have failed to bring about significant change. There is therefore an urgent need for a different approach to rehabilitation and reintegration of First Nations offenders to break the cycle of engagement in the justice system.

First Nations Justice in WA



³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024

⁴ WA Department of Justice, 2023

⁵ Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2023

Key Points This Year

1. Obtained full Development Approval for FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative.
2. Myalup Initiative co-designed by Aboriginal Co-Design Group.
3. Justice reinvestment and capacity building supported by Paul Ramsay Foundation.
4. Development of Women's Program for post-release support.

FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative



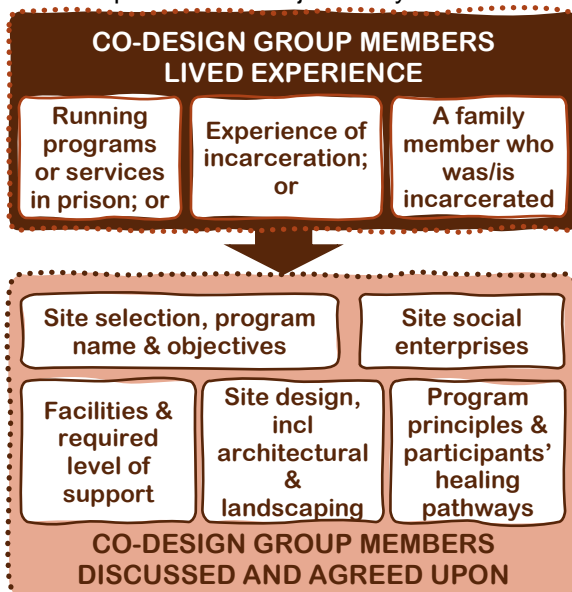
A Place to Heal

FISH has worked with First Nations people within the justice system and from across Australia to co-design a place and program where First Nations people can heal and receive holistic support to break intergenerational cycles of trauma, avoid (re)engagement in the justice system and contribute positively to society.

FISH has acquired an 11ha site in Myalup, South West WA, which will be the site for the "FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative". The initiative, including site design and the content of the healing and justice program, have been co-designed by our Aboriginal Co-Design Group – a group of 28 Aboriginal Elders, leaders and people with lived experience of the justice system.

The site is being developed as a national prototype, and will include:

- Healing, rehabilitation and mentoring for Aboriginal people at risk or in justice system.
- Education, training, and employment.
- Agri-innovation: aquaponics, horticulture, traditional food and medicine, and research.
- Manufacturing sustainable housing panels.
- Construction and maintenance.
- Landscaping, grounds maintenance, and nursery.
- Hospitality, retail, and tourism.



3D View: Wellbeing Centre and residential area

When fully operational, the site will accommodate the following:

- 48 resident participants and 12 residential peer mentors.
- 20 low risk participants on community work release from Karnet and Bunbury prisons.
- 20 participants on community service orders.
- Qualified staff team to support program participants onsite and in community.



Members of the Co-Design group at a meeting on site

Development Approval Obtained

In December 2023, FISH obtained full project Development Approval. The approval was granted by the Western Australian Planning Commission, via the State Development

Assessment Unit (SDAU); a special purpose authority set up to streamline projects of State significance under WA's COVID-19 economic recovery plan.



Above: Full project has been granted Development Approval. Design by Co-Design Group and FISH architect Jara Romero.

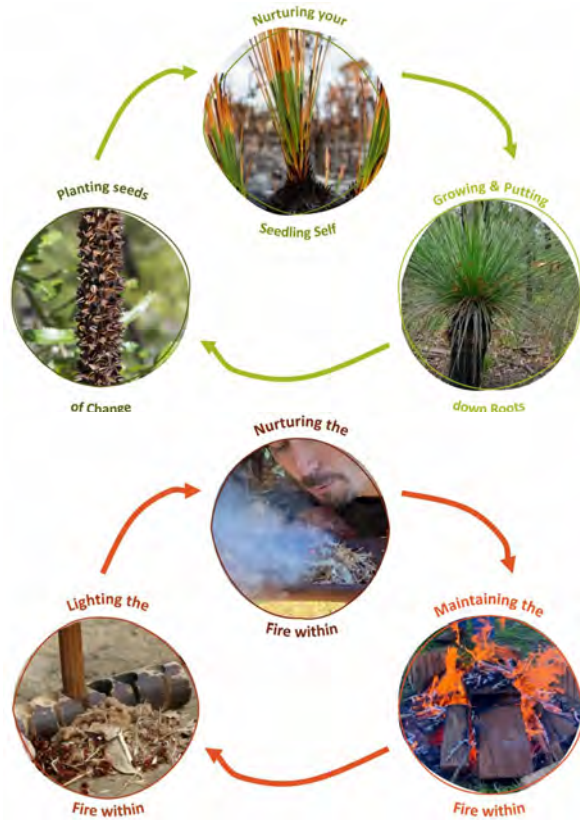
Aboriginal Co-Design

For decades, governments have funded justice programs designed by non-Aboriginal people to bring about change for Aboriginal people, but real change is yet to occur. Co-design by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people has a much higher probability of success. True co-design means allowing time for yarning and deep listening. Through this, we share and value each other's hearts, spirits, knowledge, and wisdom.

The FISH program draws on 40 years of experience in the justice system, as well as conversations with Aboriginal Elders, community leaders and participants involved in FISH's Cultural Healing programs run in Casuarina Prison. In 2019, FISH created an Aboriginal Co-Design Group of First Nations people from across Australia to co-design core programs and site design.

Right: Structure of the female and male healing programs as described by the Co-Design Group.

Below: Weaving and lighting the fire during a Co-Design meeting on site



Justice Reinvestment and Capacity Building



This year, FISH made significant strides in our justice reinvestment initiatives, thanks to the support of the Paul Ramsay Foundation and the Estate of Sonja Rodgers. This support enables us to develop the detailed program design for the Myalup Initiative while building capacity across the organisation. This includes, for example, the development of our Cultural Framework, which aims to embed Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing, and being into the fabric of our organisation.

We have fostered strong partnerships with national Aboriginal organisations, such as Mob Co and Blackfish and we are deepening our

relationships with South West Aboriginal community groups, including the Harvey Aboriginal Corporation and South West Rangers, ensuring that we have the right people on the ground to activate and care for Country as a place of healing.

In mid-2024, FISH and co-design group members were privileged to present at the WA Justice Reinvestment Forum where we shared with mob and allies our work on the Myalup initiative. Over the two days we heard from the National Justice Reinvestment Alliance and communities engaged in justice reinvestment initiatives across the country.



FISH Team and members of the co-design group at the WA Justice Reinvestment Forum

Women's Program

Our Cultural & Community Engagement Manager, Renna Gayde, has developed an innovative 8-week women's program designed to be delivered first as a pilot in the community and then expanded to women's prisons. This program is specifically aimed at supporting women post-release by helping them navigate complex systems and draw on culture as a protective factor. The program is deeply rooted in cultural empowerment and provides women with the tools and support they need to

successfully reintegrate into society.

Whadjuk Elder Averil Scott, has also joined the team to help build and co-deliver this initiative. Avril's involvement ensures that the program remains culturally grounded and resonates with the participants. The pilot program is poised to make a meaningful impact, and we look forward to expanding its reach in the coming year.



CAN

HEALTH

HEALTH

Why These Programs

There is an alarming gap in the health status between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia. Life expectancy for non-Indigenous Australians is more than 8 years longer than for First Nations people⁶. This disparity is even greater for remote Aboriginal populations. Barriers such as cost, unavailability of services, and long wait times meant that one-third of First Nations people who needed to see a healthcare provider did not⁷.

Chronic conditions were prevalent, with 67% reporting at least one long-term health issue, and 36% having three or more. Leading causes of death included coronary heart disease, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases.

Suicide was the fifth leading cause of death among adults and the leading cause among children aged 5-17, with rates more than twice that of non-Indigenous Australians.

These outcomes reflect the ongoing impact of systemic racism, colonisation, and insufficient healthcare access, highlighting the need for targeted interventions.

The notion of health for First Nations people is a holistic concept that encompasses the physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and cultural wellbeing of individuals and communities.

First Nations people face disproportionate levels of socioeconomic disadvantage compared to non-Indigenous people, which increase their vulnerability to behavioral and environmental health risk factors.

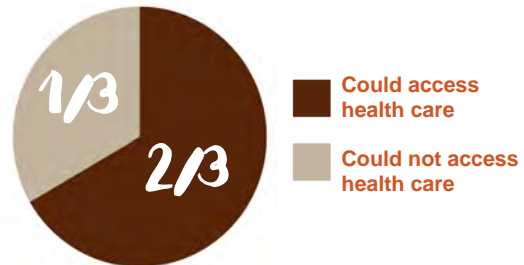
First Nations Health Statistics



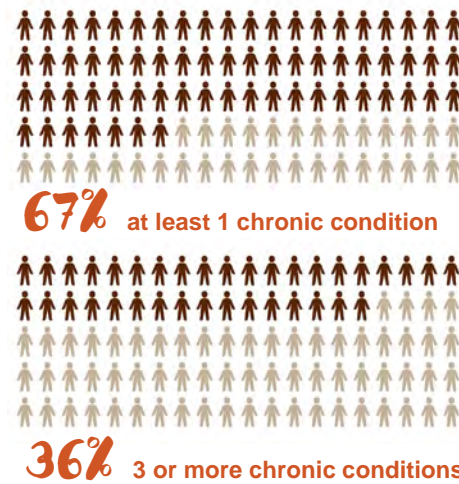
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH



ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE



CHRONIC CONDITIONS



⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024

⁷ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023

Key Points This Year

1. Three successful medical technology trials in remote communities.
2. Flood relief program in Kimberley Region.

FISH National Medical Technology Trials



FISH, in partnership with three national and international medical technology companies, conducted three exciting and innovative medical trials in remote Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley Region, throughout 2023 and 2024. The trials involved:

- **Vision Smart Glasses (AGIL18 XRAI):** lightweight smart glasses, connecting communities, health workers, and doctors via a mobile app to a secure platform, enabling remote provision of advanced medical care.
- **Eye health technology (University of Notre Dame and TeleMedC):** advanced mobile telehealth device that provides digital screening of the eye to support better eye healthcare.
- **Heart health technology (CloudHolter):** tiny external device that provides 24-hour heart monitoring in community, enabling a cardiologist to prepare a comprehensive report for doctors, nurses, and community health workers.





The initiative was co-designed with the remote communities of Muludja and Bawoorrooga. FISH and a team of medical representatives collected community input to guide the design and implementation of the trials, with the co-design process helping to refine the timing, duration, and participants of the trials, as well as the evaluation and feedback process. The co-design process was particularly significant following a referendum where many Aboriginal people felt their voices were not recognised, causing despondency in the community. Scott Wilson, a Gooniyandi and Gajerrong man, and Philomena Lands, Gooniyandi woman from Muludja Community acted as FISH's Community Leads.

The trials were a great success, providing vital information to validate these technologies, improve patient health outcomes, and help close the gap in health outcomes. As well as being paid for their involvement, community members benefited directly from improved health outcomes, as well as improved technology for their communities. The trials provided them with Starlink satellite internet access, laptops for data upload (courtesy of Clayton Utz), and training on how to use the technologies.

Flood Relief



After the flood waters subside, it can take years for communities to fully recover. The Fitzroy River floods in 2023 were the most devastating in Western Australia's history, with catastrophic damage to infrastructure and housing, including the destruction of the Fitzroy bridge. Small communities are often overlooked for essential recovery support, and many elderly people lack the ability to travel to the larger towns. Through the support of the Bibbulmun Fund and the Fremantle Foundation, FISH Community Liaison Officer Claude Carter, has been delivering flood relief to communities in the region. As the Chairperson of the Gooniyandi Aboriginal Corporation, he has a deep knowledge of his people, their communities, and their needs.

"The Gooniyandi are a proud people, our connection to this land goes back to the dreaming and we hold those stories that have been passed down from our old people. When the flood came, it had a great impact and together we have worked hard to recover. I am pleased to work with FISH to make sure the long term flood recovery support goes to the old people, families, children and especially the smaller communities that need a hand up."

Throughout 2023 and 2024, Claude has made regular trips out to remote Fitzroy Valley communities with much needed supplies of clothing, cleaning materials and equipment, first aid kits and other essential items to support the people out there with over 20 pallets of aid delivered.

Communities receiving FISH's assistance have included Wangkatjunka, Ngumpan, Bawoorrooga, Karnparmi, Gillarong, Mimbi, Yiyili, Ganinyi, Ngalingkadji, Girriyoowa (Pullout Springs), Galeru Gorge (Mount Pierre), Moongardie and others.



"It was great to catch up Claude and thanks for the stuff you bought out today. Your support and the support of FISH is appreciated."
Anne Lenard, Gillarong.

"Thank you FISH for your support! It makes a real difference for us as sometimes we are forgotten."
Matt, Lurlene, Frances Dawson,
Girriyoowa



"Thank you so much FISH for all the stuff that will help us. Claude knows our needs so good he could bring the things out."
Mum Gina, Galeru Gorge

"Thanks FISH for your support for the needs of our community. And for the delivery from FISH. This support will help us get stronger."
Kaye Cox, Moongardie

Teddy Bank Project



It takes a village to raise a child. Each one of us shares the responsibility to help create a community environment where children feel safe, cared for, and loved; so that they can grow up to be confident, connected, and healthy. As part of our Teddy Bank Project, FISH has distributed hundreds of soft toys to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in WA.

The FISH Team thanks the WA Multicultural Lions Club, the Melville Bahai community, All Saints Church Bull Creek Parish Office, Bull Creek Library and Chorus Bull Creek, for their generous support.



“This support from FISH will mean so much to our children and their parents, especially the mums that come into our regional daycare centres. The donated teddy bears will assist in letting our children know they are cared for and the families in knowing they are being supported by the community in caring for their children. This is about community walking together and loving and supporting our children.”

Sharon Cooke, Bindjareb and
Wardandii Elder



WE HONOUR AND
RESPECT
ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES
STRAIT ISLANDER
PEOPLE AS THE
TRADITIONAL
CUSTODIANS
OF COUNTRY.



EMPLOYMENT

EMPLOYMENT

Why These Programs

Increasing First Nations employment, particularly for young people, is essential for addressing disparities and advancing community resilience and empowerment.

In 2021, the gap in employment rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians continued to be deeply concerning. The statistics show that 52% of First Nations people aged 15–64 were employed, compared to 75% of non-Indigenous Australians. The employment rate for First Nations people was highest in major cities at 58% and lowest in very remote areas at 32%. The gap in employment rates between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians was 17% in major cities and widened to 47% in remote and very remote areas.⁸

In 2021, First Nations people were disproportionately represented in labouring and community service roles, while being significantly under-represented in professional and managerial positions. Only 8% of First Nations people held managerial roles, compared to 14% of non-Indigenous Australians.⁹

According to the 2018–19 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, 42% of unemployed First Nations people reported high or very high levels of psychological distress, compared with 22% of those employed.

FISH is committed to addressing these disparities by providing equal opportunities in training and long-term employment. Through targeted programs, FISH aims to break intergenerational cycles of poverty by empowering First Nations individuals to access higher-paying, stable careers, ultimately fostering economic independence and community resilience.

First Nations Employment Statistics



GENERAL EMPLOYMENT RATE

Indigenous Non-indigenous

52%

75%



FIRST NATIONS' EMPLOYMENT RATE BY LOCATION

Very remote areas Major cities

32%

58%



MANAGERIAL ROLES

Indigenous Non-indigenous

8%

14%



FIRST NATIONS' MENTAL HEALTH BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Unemployed Employed

42%

22%

Reported high or very high levels of psychological distress

⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

⁹ National Indigenous Australians Agency

Key Points This Year

1. New Aboriginal employment positions including: 2 managers, 2 elders, 4 retail staff, 3 retail trainees, 1 bookkeeper.
2. Growth of FISH Outback Stores social enterprise (Fitzroy Crossing)
3. Thriving retail social enterprises in Mt Lawley (Perth), pop up shops and online.

FISH Outback Stores



The retail and service industry in the Kimberley is one of the region's largest employers. However, Aboriginal people are the lowest employed in that industry despite being the largest population group. FISH is working to change that by expanding our social enterprise activities in the Kimberley and using it as an example of how to bring change.

FISH Outback Stores – a social enterprise retail store in the remote WA town of Fitzroy Crossing, opened in November 2022. The business focusses on training and employing local people, with revenue from the store going back into community initiatives to bring positive long term sustainable change.

FISH Outback Stores sells a wide range of outdoor products, from clothing, hats, and footwear to cattle station and camping accessories, guitars, and other outback supplies. The store also provides essential day-to-day items such as whitegoods, phones, electronics, toys, books, bikes, beds and manchester goods.



Achievements and programs in the last year include:

- Aboriginal employment: Management positions, retail traineeships, and local elders for community outreach and emergency relief.
- Flood relief: Ongoing support since 2023. Donation and distribution of more than 20 pallets of non-food aid to remote Aboriginal communities.
- Support for Aboriginal youth programs: including Yiriman and other services, providing diversionary and leadership skills using lore and culture and access on country.
- Support for Aboriginal artists and product creators: FISH created a line of branded goods by local artists featured on hats, shirts, and keyrings,

providing ongoing income for local creators.

- Support Remote Community Op-shop Project to assist in building financial economic independence of remote communities.
- Volunteering and donations to Fitzroy Crossing Rodeo weekend.
- Education: including FISH Books for All, support for Muludja, Wangkatjungka, and Bayulu Remote Community Schools, Fitzroy Valley District High.
- Income management support and budgeting assistance: Including the Centrepay program, which provides a mechanism for people to budget and accumulate funds for essential purchases.



FISH Social Enterprise at Mt Lawley

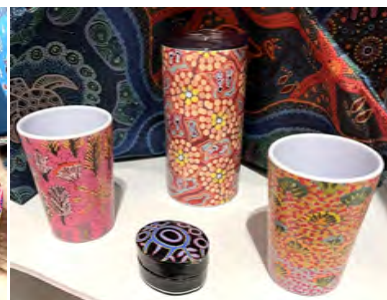


Since 2021, FISH has run a social enterprise retail shop and art gallery in Mt Lawley, Perth, located inside the Local & Aesthetic café. Our products are sourced from 100%-owned Indigenous businesses, authors, and artists, and include a wide range of books, bush tucker, clothing, jewellery, artwork, and artisan products. Income from the shop goes into supporting FISH's other initiatives.

This year, FISH expanded its presence within the community through a series of pop-up stores and events across the city, enhancing our visibility and impact both north and south of the river. Notably, we launched a new pop-up store in Duncraig, generously supported by Porter Commercial Real Estate, who donated space in the Glengarry Shopping Centre for six months. Polly Wilson, a proud Ngemba Weilwan woman and FISH's Metro Social Enterprise Manager, not only ran the store, but also offered a weekly weaving workshop at the FISH's pop-up social enterprise.

We are proud to have introduced products from the Juluwarlu Art Group, an Indigenous collective from Roebourne. This collaboration allows us to stock beautiful merchandise and artwork from the Yindjibarndi people, including homewares, trays, cups, and tea towels.

Additionally, we have partnered with six local businesses, including Kaarli, Jalbi, SWK (South West Kinships), Bilya Maali Collective, and My Dilly Bag, to offer a diverse range of products that celebrate Indigenous culture.



Our bookstore continues to thrive, with over 150 new titles added this year, bringing our collection to more than 520 books by Indigenous authors and illustrators. This growing collection is a testament to our dedication to Indigenous voices and stories.

This year, we welcomed Gypsy Rose Williams as a new trainee, undertaking a Cert III in Management. We are also delighted to announce that our Retail Manager, Polly Wilson, became a grandmother, proudly welcoming her newest member of the family into NAIDOC's year of "Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud, and Proud".



FISH Group Training Organisation



In line with FISH's Strategic Plan and commitment to provide culturally appropriate training and employment opportunities to Aboriginal community, FISH has been progressing towards the submission of documentation to become a Group Training Organisation. In the last 12 months FISH

contracted Aboriginal run and owned business Aak-ither to support with the development of policies, procedures and associated documentation for submission for GTO registration to the Department of Workforce Development. This has been possible through the support of the Estate of Sonya Rodgers.





EDUCATION

EDUCATION

Why These Programs

Education is vital for improving the health, wellbeing, and socio-economic outcomes of First Nations people. In 2023, averaging results for First Nations students across the five NAPLAN learning areas, about one-third (29% to 35%) of First Nations students in each year level met or exceeded proficiency expectations. Another third (30% to 34%) had results in the 'Developing' category. The remaining third (32% to 34%) had results in the 'Needs additional support' category.

NAPLAN results were lower in remote areas. In 2023, among First Nations students in Year 3, the average proportion meeting or exceeding expectations was 39% in major cities, 37% in inner regional areas, and 30% in outer regional areas, compared with 17% in remote areas, and 8% in very remote areas.

A greater proportion of First Nations students needed additional academic support compared with non-Indigenous students (32–34% across year levels, compared with 7–9%). Conversely, fewer First Nations students were meeting or exceeding proficiency expectations compared with non-Indigenous students (29%–35%, compared with 65%–71%). (All statistics from National Indigenous Australians Agency).¹⁰

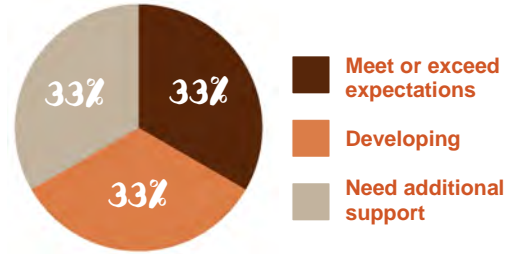
Increasing the number of First Nations teachers in remote areas could enhance educational outcomes. A more diverse teaching workforce can provide cultural role models and improve student aspiration and retention. Strengthening connections between schools and tertiary institutions and offering tailored support such as mentoring and financial assistance, are crucial for bridging existing gaps for First Nations people accessing education.

¹⁰ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework, NIAA

First Nations Education Statistics



FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS NUMERACY/LITERACY



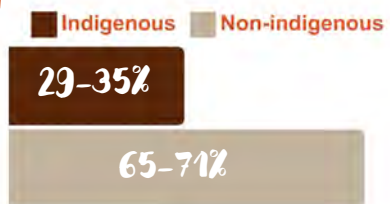
FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS MEETING OR EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS (BY LOCATION, YEAR 3)



STUDENTS NEEDING ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC SUPPORT



STUDENTS MEETING OR EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS



Key Points This Year

1. Cultural Awareness Training at schools and organisations.
2. Literacy and Gooniyandi language workshops in remote Kimberley schools.
3. Four scholarships funded.
4. Currently working to secure three years of funding for FISH Education to continue and expand.

FISH Education Programs



In the last year, FISH Education delivered cultural competency training at schools, corporates, and organisations, to encourage engagement with Aboriginal culture, literature, and perspectives. These included early childhood workshops at North Perth Early Learning Centre and Ronald McDonald House, and a teachers' workshop at Inglewood Primary. Our workshops blend cultural literacy with creative traditional activities such as weaving or firelighting, and perspectives around community and self-care.

FISH continues to build upon its long-standing partnership with Halls Head College. We facilitated the final event in a series of professional development workshops for staff, supporting cultural responsiveness for Aboriginal young people. We also secured funding for STEM scholarships for Halls Head College to assist with educational support and resources for four Aboriginal students. These scholarships were made possible by Wood Australia.



In early 2024, the Board of FISH made the difficult decision to pause the operations of FISH Education due to financial constraints. FISH does not receive any government funding, and we need to generate our own revenue to support our work, including employment of key positions. FISH is currently working to secure three years of funding for FISH Education with the view to employ a specialist Aboriginal Education Manager and an Aboriginal staffing team to support with facilitation activities.

FISH maintains its commitment to walking together with schools, early childhood centres, and other places of learning to provide opportunities for learning, and education for

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to be heard, in-person, on-Country, and through books and resources. Our focus is to secure the ongoing viability of FISH Education moving forward.

Through our retail arm, FISH continues to provide support with procurement and selection of leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander books and resources. Our book initiatives include tailored rotational box boxes provided to schools, libraries, and education centres, and we have a wide selection of books and resources both online at <https://shop.fish.asn.au/> or at our retail store location in Local and Aesthetic, 769 Beaufort Street Mount Lawley, Perth WA.

Little Bullock Ngooloog Ngooloog Book Workshops



FISH ran a series of literacy and Gooniyandi language workshops in schools in the remote Kimberley Region. The workshops fostered enthusiasm for books and traditional languages through Scott Wilson, Gooniyandi man and author of the book 'Little Bullock Ngooloog Ngooloog'. The book teaches children about keeping hydrated, making sure friends and family are hydrated, and the importance of caring for yourself and others.

The FISH team thanks the Water Corporation of Western Australia and Broome's Lions Club for supporting and empowering the people and communities in the Kimberley through their Kimberley Community Grants program. 'Little Bullock Ngooloog Ngooloog' was also the first book published by FISH Publishing.

"To be in a room filled with young Gooniyandi people, reading a book based on Gooniyandi country that shares Gooniyandi language, and to hear Gooniyandi peoples chanting their Gooniyandi language was a reminder of the importance of the work we all are doing to protect, preserve and share to empower and inspire our future generations. All children are asked to join in the reading by chanting, "NGOOLUOG NGOOLUOG" which means "to drink".

Scott Wilson





HOME OWNERSHIP

HOME OWNERSHIP

Why These Programs

There is an urgent need for safe, secure, appropriate, and affordable housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a fundamental building block for families moving out of poverty. On census night, an estimated 24,900 Indigenous Australians were homeless¹¹. The number of First Nations people seeking assistance from Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) across Australia has increased substantially, with almost 75,000 First Nations people presenting to SHS between 2022 and 2023, accounting for more than 25% of all presenting clients¹².

High levels of overcrowding and poor housing conditions have shown to be major contributors to the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians¹³. The burden of infectious diseases is far greater with poor housing conditions where disease transmission is exacerbated by overcrowding leading to the inability to carry out good hygiene practice.

First Nations people have significantly less access to affordable, secure, and quality housing with a heavy reliance on often poorly-maintained public housing¹⁴. Dispossession from land and culture contribute to high rates of Indigenous homelessness. Deep kinship connection and the pressure to house extended family complicates the search for suitable housing for Indigenous families¹⁵. Each year, while major investment is made in housing for Aboriginal people, little importance is placed on operating in a culturally safe manner. This has resulted in high levels of mistrust in mainstream contractors involved in the construction and maintenance of social housing for Indigenous people.

First Nations Housing Statistics



¹¹ CENSUS, 2021

¹² SHS annual report 2022-2023

¹³ Alim S., Foster, T., & Hall N., 2018. *The Relationship between Infectious Diseases and*

Housing Maintenance in Indigenous Australian Households. Int J Environ Res Public Health.

¹⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020

¹⁵ Vallesi S et al 2020

Key Points This Year

1. FISH Aboriginal Home Ownership Initiative expanded through co-design: Five pathways to home ownership.
2. FISH working with over 20 future homeowners.
3. Negotiations with State and Federal Governments and builders to develop affordable housing model.
4. Working partnership with Indigenous Business Australia for low interest and low deposit loans.
5. Wholesaler agreement in place with ABN Group reducing the cost of construction for clients.

FISH Aboriginal Home Ownership Initiative



This financial year has seen the bankruptcy of key builders in WA. Pairing this with ever increasing costs in materials and subcontractors, makes for a tricky landscape to navigate building a house. Our co-design co-build prototype of Jedda Salmon's house in Ravenswood has encountered several delays, and FISH is now positioned to have this project completed by December 2024, working with many supportive local businesses such as CSR, M&B Sales, Reece Plumbing and Harvey Norman all based in Mandurah. The completion of this project will not only be a momentous point in Jedda's life – and now her own young family as she welcomes to the world her little boy; but is a great advantage for generations to come, to have a place to build their lives from, and grow into the future.

FISH is now working with over twenty future homeowners through its Aboriginal Home Ownership program. We have been working with State and Federal Government, property developers, and builders to develop a model where we can deliver a new home to our clients for less than the expected market rate, making it more achievable for First Nations

people to enter the housing market and take control of their future. One way we are doing this is by seeking State and Federal grants to act in a similar way to a First Homeowners grant for house and land packages.

We also work with homeowners to assist in managing mortgage repayments as the cost of living for low to middle income earners becomes near unattainable. FISH assists homeowners in procuring competitive interest rates on home loans and provides mentoring around planning and saving for regular property maintenance and services to support the long-term upkeep of a home.

The life cycle of a FISH Home Ownership Initiative participant can vary. In some cases, extensive support is required to get a participant ready for an Indigenous Business Association (IBA) Loan approval; and in other cases, they have worked diligently to put together savings and are ready to go. Each of our participants is at different stages along this continuum, and so, to meet these individual needs, FISH has identified five pathways to Home Ownership.

Co-Design
Co-Build



House & Land
Package



Transitional
Housing



Purchase
Established



Rent to Buy



Co-Design, Co-Build: Jedda Salmon's Home in Ravenwood

Following FISH's award-winning earth house with Bawoorrooga Community in the remote Kimberley, FISH has been working with young Bindjareb woman Jedda Salmon and her family to build her new home in the Bindjareb Region of South West WA, which is now at lock up stage. Jedda's ancestors walked this land for thousands of years. Jedda has co-

Purchase of an Established Property

What a great Christmas present one of our client's received as part of our Home Ownership Initiative where they were supported to secure their first home in the Broome region of Western Australia. The FISH Home Ownership team supported them through the Indigenous Business Australia home loan application process, the selection

Transitional Housing

This is a new form of supportive housing, which is distinct from social housing. The social housing model, while providing a necessary service for a specific period, can trap participants in poverty as there is no transition process into mainstream rental and ultimately into home ownership. This year FISH has been able to offer our first transitional home to a family living on a shed,

House and Land Package

This pathway offers an achievable option to purchase a new home. Utilising FISH's purchasing power and not for profit status, we will on-sell newly constructed homes to Aboriginal families with up to 20% gifted equity, with a minimum of 10% gifted equity depending on market conditions. Families will be selected via our Employer Sponsorship Program, and provided with a transitional home, with FISH utilising a portion of the

Rent to Buy

This pathway 'bridges the gap' experienced by many families in saving a deposit to purchase a home. FISH will work with participants in the selection and purchase of a home and will rent the selected property to the participant over a 2-3 year period. At the end of this rent to buy

designed her home with FISH's partner – Aboriginal -owned, Tjuart Architects – and is completing 200 hours of work in assisting with the construction of her own home as "sweat equity". The whole family has saved diligently to support her, and she is the first member of her family to co-design and build a new home.

of a home, conveyancing arrangements, insurance requirements for a cyclone region and so on. The client is the first person in their family to own their home and they are no longer paying over \$900 a week in rent but now contributing to their own mortgage and ultimately owning their own home.

with the aim of expanding this strategy through the purchase of established properties, initially in WA. These properties will be rented for the purpose of transitioning First Nations families into home ownership. FISH is providing wrap-around support and education programs directed towards home ownership, delivered by FISH Aboriginal staff members in a culturally positive and appropriate way.

rental payments to support construction finance for the new home. This year FISH has been able to enter into a wholesaler agreement with the ABN Group leading to discounts on construction costs. We are also working with other builders and land developers to provide affordable house and land packages for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

period, FISH will gift our participant up to 30% of the rent they have paid over the life of the program as a deposit, and will assist them with finance negotiations to purchase their home from FISH.





MOST PEOPLE ARE OBVIOUS TO THE DANGERS THAT LURK IN THE SHADOWS. DARK HEART REVEALS A 65,000 YEAR OLD STORY OF THE ELDER PROTECTORS THAT STAND BETWEEN US AND THEM. THEY DEFEND THE LORE THAT PROTECTS THE PEOPLE. IF THE LORE IS BROKEN BY THE DYING OF THE LIGHT, WHO WILL STAND AND PROTECT US FROM THE EVIL THAT COMES IN THE NIGHT?

DARK HEART
INDIVERSE™



CREATIVE

CREATIVE

Why These Programs

Creative programs are essential in creating positive societal change for First Nations people. Generations of First Nations artists have used art to share wisdom, raise awareness, and amplify narratives fostering progress. Artistic and cultural creativity is known to enhance community wellbeing, acting as catalysts for change.

Research shows that practising culture, including through arts participation, is the key to improving wellbeing for Aboriginal people, and that empowerment and spirituality are pathways between practising culture and wellbeing.¹⁶

Older First Nations Australians are more likely to participate, and earn income from, First Nations arts. This highlights the contribution of arts and culture to the wellbeing of older First Nations Australians. It also highlights the importance of supporting intergenerational cultural transmission and engaging young First Nations people in the arts – one of the fastest growing and at-risk segments of population.¹⁷

Almost one in ten First Nations people in remote Australia receive income from arts (8.8%, compared to 2.9% in regional Australia and 2.8% in major cities).

There is a strong relationship between First Nations language maintenance and arts engagement, with many First Nations people connecting to their culture by learning First Nations languages. Those who speak or understand a First Nations language are more likely to create arts. One fifth of First Nations people in the highest household income decile are learning a First Nations language (19%) – demonstrating that cultural participation and mainstream success can go hand in hand.¹⁸

¹⁶ Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation, 2017, *Interrelationships: Bringing together Stories and Numbers*

First Nations Creative Statistics



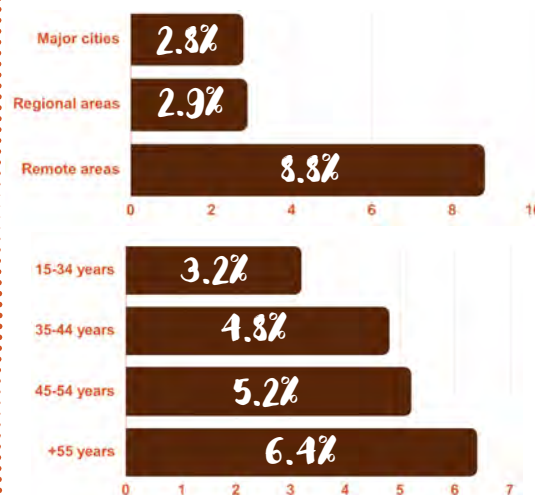
CULTURE SUPPORTS WELLBEING

Graph concept¹⁶



ECONOMIC ART PARTICIPATION

(BY LOCATION, BY AGE GROUP)



CREATIVE ARTS PARTICIPATION BY FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGE SPEAKING



¹⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics

¹⁸ Creative Australia (www.creative.gov.au)

Key Points This Year

1. Partnerships with new artists and creators in FISH gallery and retail spaces.
2. Art exhibitions in Perth.
3. Supported the creation of Indigiverse comic book series.

Working with Artists



Our creative arm uses literature, music, film, painting, poetry, and other art forms to communicate wisdom, highlight societal issues, and champion uplifting narratives.

FISH recognises art and storytelling as a significant tool for:

- connecting with traditional culture;
- understanding and appreciating each other's journeys;
- celebrating accomplishments and providing role models; and
- addressing societal issues.

By sharing stories, we aim to nurture healthy individuals and communities.

Since FISH's founding, we have worked with Aboriginal artists – recognising that art and creativity form such a core part of people's connection to land, culture, and spirituality. FISH's logo – the barramundi – was painted by Bunuba/Walmajarri artist Jack (Loodgengardinge) Macale, who later went on to become a FISH Artist in Residence and FISH Microfinance participant.

In the last year, FISH brought a range of new artists into our creative initiatives, which have included retail art sales through our social enterprises, art exhibitions at schools and corporate premises, and merchandise production.

FISH maintains a permanent gallery space in our Perth social enterprise, located at Local and Aesthetic in Mt Lawley, and we are always on the lookout for new artists to keep our gallery space fresh and interesting.

Our recent artists include:

Loretta Egan: a Yamatji woman who produces vibrant and colourful works showcasing her Yamatji culture.



Emily Rose: a Noongar/Yamatji woman whose works have a contemporary style through which she explores stories from her heritage.



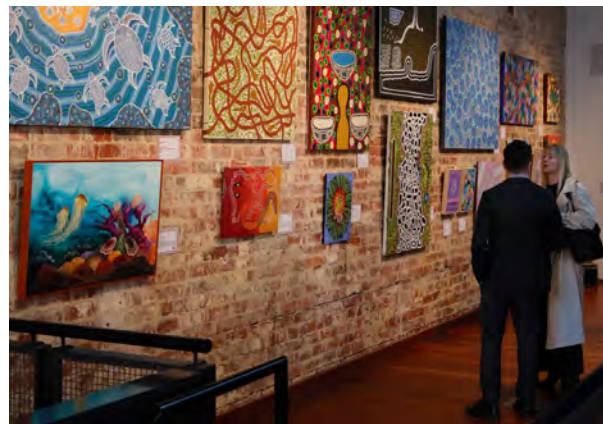
Michelle Henderson: works mainly in watercolour. Her works are delicate and detailed and reflect our native flora and fauna.



We continue to have a strong relationship with Linda Loo and a number of Kimberley artists. We have also developed an artwork and merchandise collaboration with the Juluwarlu Art Group, of the Yindibarndi people from Roebourne in the Kimberley.

We have recently set up an exhibition at Bridge 42, who have kindly provided exhibition space in Perth. We hope to develop further corporate exhibition spaces over the coming months and broaden the audience and sales opportunities for our artists.

Art sales have been affected by the current financial situation. In adapting to this, we have developed new strategies such as selling affordable prints of our most popular artworks.



CEO Mark Anderson and artist Linda Loo at FISH's art exhibition at Bridge 42

Poetry

Each Monday, FISH shares a poem to encourage us to stop, pause, and reflect. We are honored to regularly share the poems of our FISH poet, Justin Geange, to connect people and refocus us on the important things of life.

Justin is a Maori man, a devoted husband and father who works for suicide prevention charity Mates in Construction. He is a lived experience expert who uses his own struggle with mental health to walk with others and share his wisdom, understanding and knowledge he has gained to continue walking

softly upon this earth making it a better place for all.

FISH Publishing worked with Justin to collate his poetry into a book, titled *Connections*, illustrated by Justin's daughter, Tegan. Justin recently presented to members of Federal Parliament at the Suicide Prevention Australia WSPD breakfast at Parliament House, where he had the opportunity to present the Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP, Treasurer of Australia, with a copy of his book. Justin's poetry book is available through the FISH Social Enterprise, both online and in our stores.



New Perspective

*Have you ever had a convo,
Where you stopped yourself in flight,
Gob-smacked with realisation,
That the other person's right?
Do you shut it down and apologise,
Acknowledging that you were wrong,
Or continue with the diatribe
And on your soapbox sing your song?*

*I thought upon this long and hard
And the dots, I tried to join,
Is winning really that important
When there's three sides to every coin?
I was reminded of the moment,
My daughter asked me during tea;
"Why are there some who agitate?
Why do they disagree?"*

*As I looked across the table,
There sat a soft drink sitting free,
I asked her to describe the can;
"What is it that you see?"
She rattled off ingredients,
Percentages and grams,
Describing in some detail,
The things on her side of the can.*

*I then described what I could see;
It was coloured white and red,
One hyphenated well-known word;*

*"Coca-Cola", is what I said.
We both described the single can
in two distinctly different ways,*

*Based solely on the place we sat,
And the direction of our gaze.*

*I said "there's strength within our differences,
It helps us see things from all sides,
Just like the world spins round the sun,
And how the moon directs the tides.
You see, in life we all acquire,
Our own opinions thoughts and views,
As a result of our experiences,
The paths we often choose.*

*Those choices frame the world we see,
It's not a case of right or wrong,
Like an orchestra has many parts,
That blended difference makes a song."
I could see the penny slowly drop,
Right there on Tegan's face,
As to how unique perspective is,
How it shapes the human race.*

*So herein lies the challenge:
What is it that you'll do
When we interact with other folk,
Who see the can from another view?
Will we act with care and kindness,
As we seek to understand,
A perspective that is not our own,
As we learn from a different brand?*

*Thus ends my dissertation;
My perspective, so to speak,
I'll do my best to practice grace,
Every single day, each week.*

Justin Geange

Justin Geange
presenting his book
Connections (FISH
Publishing), to the Hon
Dr Jim Chalmers MP at
Parliament House.



Indigiverse Comics

Imagine sitting on Country and reading the very first Aboriginal superhero comic series with your culture, stories, language, and names of your Elders imbedded! The FISH team recently got to experience this in Muludja and Bawoorrooga Communities in the remote Kimberley Region, where we donated copies of Indigiverse editions Dark Heart 1 and Dark Heart 2 to Elders and community members through our FISH Books for All Initiative.

Author and creator of Indigiverse Scott Wilson, a Gooniyandi-Miriwong Kadjorong man, was onsite to celebrate with his Elders and community. Their language and culture is now being shared around Australia and the world, with their superhero Indigiverse being

developed as a TV show. FISH was honoured to provide an interest-free microfinance loan to assist in getting the first edition published.

Scott has big plans to expand the Indigiverse. "The reason why we use the word 'Indigiverse' is because we are interested in a universe where First Nations people of their countries are the superheroes", stated Scott. Scott wants the Indigiverse to grow and plan to include Maori, Fijian, Samoan, Tongan and Vanuatu cultures in future editions.

The FISH Team is excited to support Scott on his Indigiverse journey. FISH stocks DARK HEART #1 and #2 with #3 on the way through our FISH Social Enterprise stores.



GOVERNANCE

Board Committees

FISH's majority Aboriginal-led Board of Directors is Co-chaired by Liza Fraser-Gooda, a Bidjara, Ghangulu and Iman woman originally from Rockhampton in Central Queensland, who is responsible for setting and overseeing the strategic direction of the organisation. We have five Board Committees that do the operational work of the Board in their areas of expertise and knowledge, with

each being chaired by a Director of the Board. The Board Committees then break down the strategic plan and provide direction on implementation, which is carried out by the FISH team on the ground working with our partners.

Our Board Committees and Chairs are listed below:

- Justice Committee: **Liza Fraser-Gooda** has extensive senior management experience and holds a number of directorships across a broad range of sectors. Liza also Chairs FISH Myalup Karla Waangkinny Healing and Justice Implementation Working Group.
- Education, Training, and Employment Committee: **Rita Lusted** is a proud Wilomin yok living on Noongar boodja. Rita is a specialist Noongar Teacher, passionate educator, and principal consultant Ngaparrtji Ngaparrtji Two-Way Science in the Department of Education. Rita has extensive senior management experience and holds many advisory roles in the education and language sector. Rita is also a member of the FISH Myalup Karla Waangkinny Healing & Justice Co-design Group.
- Home Ownership Committee: **Karen Jacobs** is a bloodline descendant and a Traditional Owner of Whadjuk Country. Her primary focus is on developing and encouraging Aboriginal people's involvement in enterprise and business opportunities, drawing on her extensive experience in both corporate and government sectors. Karen is also the Deputy Chair of FISH's Board.
- Finance Committee: **Noel Prakash** was born in Fiji and moved to Australia at sixteen to complete his schooling and tertiary education. He is a senior banking professional and has held the role of National Head of Indigenous Business Banking in two of Australia's four big banks. Noel is passionate about creating financial independence for First Nations people. Noel is also the Treasurer of FISH's Board.

We acknowledge and thank our partners Clayton Utz who, provide pro-bono legal support and facilities to enable FISH to do this important strategic planning work.

This support means FISH can focus our financial resources on direct service provision instead of administration.

Aboriginal Leadership Group

As FISH grows, we strive to serve as an example of organisational best practice and innovation. FISH has established its Aboriginal Leadership Group, which was formed out of a desire to ensure cultural security across the organisation, especially for our First Nations staff.

A large piece of the group's work involves developing a **Cultural Framework** that will guide FISH in this time of growth to ensure

Cultural Framework

The purpose of this Cultural Safety Framework is to ensure that we are working in reciprocal relationships with each other, with communities, and with a focus on "PEOPLE" to effectively achieve our vision.

VISION:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are confident, connected and healthy, have equal opportunity with education, training, employment and life choices and are valued as positive and healing contributors, who lead others to care for each other and for country.

1. Our People

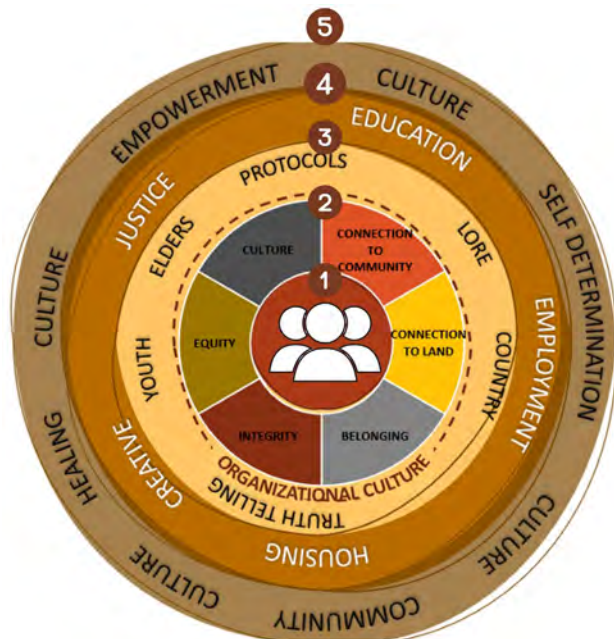
We are working to create a culturally safe place for people, therefore people need to be at the core of this framework, whether they are employee or a recipient of the services our organisation is providing.

2. Our Values

Our core values must surround an individual, and it is upheld by the individuals, to form the foundation of how we work together in a culturally safe environment to deliver greater impact through the purpose and vision of the organisation.

that cultural competency and cultural security is at the heart of everything we do.

Membership of the group extends to all First Nations employees, however the ethos and purpose of the group is about inclusively walking shoulder to shoulder with our non-Indigenous staff members to create real and lasting change for Aboriginal people. It is exciting to see the how the group contributes to the strategic direction of FISH.



3. Our Relationships

Our values should inform how we establish positive relationships, with our youth, elders, and country. Furthermore, building our strong connections to protocol, truth telling and lore.

4. Our Priorities

Our values and the relationships will inform and guide our ability to deliver on the priorities set by the organisation.

5. Our Impact

When we can embed our values within what we do, we build long lasting relationships, that support effectively delivering on our organisational priorities to have the greatest impact on our people.

Financial sustainability

Future Fund

FISH believes that Government policy cannot always adequately respond to community needs. Therefore, FISH's own financial sustainability and non-dependence on government are essential to our long-term goals of bringing about breaking intergenerational cycles of trauma, poverty, and engagement in the justice system.

In 2017-2018 FISH established a Future Fund to provide long-term financial security for the organisation.



We are working to build up a capital asset, maintain the base capital of the fund, and utilise the remaining income from the fund to carry out our mission. The Future Fund is

embedded in the FISH constitution along with an Investment Policy Statement.

The Board has established three subset funds under the Future Fund, being the Microfinance Loan Fund, the Aboriginal Home Ownership Fund, and the Social Enterprise Fund which we are working to grow.

FISH adopted the Australian Ethical Charter flow chart as a framework to assist us in ethical investment decisions that support such things as sustainable food production, endangered eco-systems, and the alleviation of poverty, and avoid harms such as waste mismanagement, militarism, and discrimination.

The Australian Ethical Charter

	 SUPPORT	 AVOID
SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate technological systems • high quality, properly presented products & services • ameliorate wasteful or polluting practices • locally based ventures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • misleading or deceitful marketing or advertising • promotion of unwanted products or services • speculation • financial over-commitment
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable land use and food production • appropriate human buildings and landscape • preserve endangered eco-systems • efficient use of human waste • workers' participation in organisational decision making and ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • destroy or waste non-recurring resources • products and services harmful to humans, non-human animals or the environment • pollute land, air or water
SOCIAL IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alleviate poverty • dignity and well-being of animals • human happiness, dignity, and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • militarism or weapons • exploit through low wages or poor working conditions • discriminate • restrict human rights

Note: This is a summarised version of our Ethical Charter. To view the full, original version, see www.australianethical.com.au/australian-ethical-charter

HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

FISH 250 Club

FISH established the FISH 250 Club several years ago following requests from individuals and business who wanted to partner with us as we work to achieve our purpose.

FISH believes that all First Nations people have the right to be confident, connected, healthy, have equal opportunities with education, training, employment, and life choices, and are valued as positive, healing and leading contributors to community in connecting people to caring for each other and caring for country.

Individuals and organisations can become one of the limited 250 Members of the FISH 250 Club and will be working in partnership with FISH to provide people with opportunities to make positive change to their lives. Members make an annual tax-deductible donation of \$250, which can be recurrent or once-off. The revenue from the FISH 250 Club covers the core operational expenses, allowing other financial support and funding to be fully directed towards direct service provision. Will you join us?

Donations

FISH sees the significance of every single donation, no matter how small or large, to be as important as a single boab seed from which abundant things can grow.

Join with us on this great adventure by supporting the work of FISH. From your

support and partnership, we can achieve great things together and make a positive, lasting, and sustainable difference in the lives of First Nations people.

Gifts of more than \$2 are tax deductible in Australia.

Bequests – A lasting change

One of the most effective ways of assisting FISH in achieving its mission to improve the social and emotional wellbeing of First Nations people and to break the cycle of inter-generational trauma, engagement in the justice system, and poverty, in the medium to long term, is by remembering us in your Will.

FISH does not rely on government funding because we know that government policy

does not always focus on positive long-term sustainable change for First Nations people. Your lasting, caring gift will be responsibly managed and will continue to benefit many people long after you have gone. You also have the opportunity to nominate which area you would like your bequest to support, such as the Aboriginal Home Ownership Initiative, our Justice, Health, Creative, Education, or Employment Initiatives.



Thank you

One of the ways each one of us can leave a lasting legacy is through a bequest, and in 2022 FISH was honoured to receive a bequest from the Estate of the late Sonya Pamela Rodgers as she wanted to leave a lasting legacy for the benefit of First Nations people.

The bequest is spread over a three-year period and has enabled FISH to bring our planned work forward to bring positive long-term change in the lives of First Nations people, their families, and communities.

The bequest has enabled FISH to expand our traineeship and employment initiatives and complete the final stages of becoming a Group Training Organisation which will provide culturally appropriate and supported employment opportunities for First Nations people to assist in breaking the cycle of poverty and enable them to become economically independent.

The bequest will also enable FISH to work toward becoming a Registered Training Organisation to provide certified training for First Nations people led by First Nations people. This will also tie into the work we are

doing within the education system to support young Aboriginal people to transition from school into culturally supportive training and employment opportunities.

The bequest has contributed to the codesign and implementation work for the FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative enabling the organisation to secure Development Approval for the 11-hectare site in December 2023 as a national proto-type healing and justice initiative.

Finally, the bequest has enabled FISH to complete the codesign work for FISH's Aboriginal Home Ownership Initiative to expand it into 5 strategy areas along with establishing a Capital Rotating Fund to support the construction of 50 homes over the next 5-8 years. This will assist in breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty through home ownership.

We thank and honour the late Sonya Pamela Rodgers and her family for this lasting gift that will truly bring positive intergenerational change for First Nations people, their families and communities for years to come.



OUR PARTNERS

National Partners



State Partners



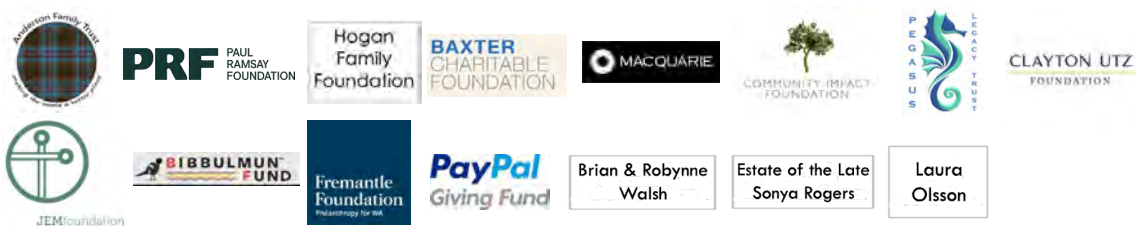
Aboriginal Partners



School Partners



Trusts, Foundations, and Individuals



Pro-bono support and volunteers

The work of FISH would not be possible without the ongoing dedication and generosity of our many supporters. In the past year, in addition to the support of our financial donors and 250 Club members, we have been privileged to receive pro-bono and volunteer support across a range of specialised areas. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed their expertise, including:

Pro-bono Services:

- Blackfish
- Clayton Utz - Legal Services
- GHD
- Mob Co
- Project management consultancy - Graham Murdoch
- Think Impact
- TPS Total Project Solutions - Chris Howlett

Volunteers and Champions:

- Kaisha Champion
- Amy Douglas
- Kaya Farrell
- Gail Humphreys
- Charlotte O'Shea
- Cheryl Scott



Foundation for Indigenous

Sustainable Health

2023-2024





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