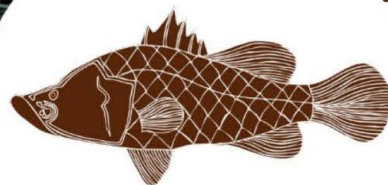


FISH

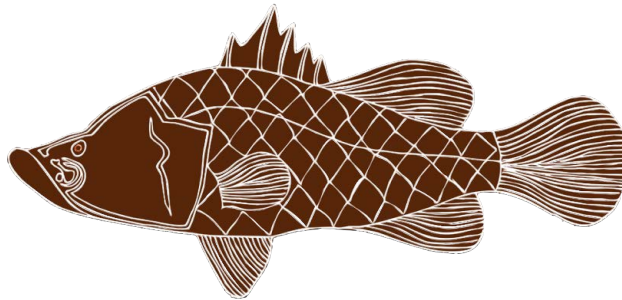


"Healthy spirit, heart, mind and body,  
healthy families, community and land"

Foundation  
for Indigenous  
Sustainable Health  
Annual Report  
2024-2025



# Foundation for Indigenous Sustainable Health



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



## Annual Report

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2024-2025

Foundation for Indigenous Sustainable Health  
PO Box 7741, Cloisters Square WA, 6850  
[info@fish.asn.au](mailto:info@fish.asn.au) | [www.fish.asn.au](http://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, training, employment, wellbeing, 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 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 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 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 peace.



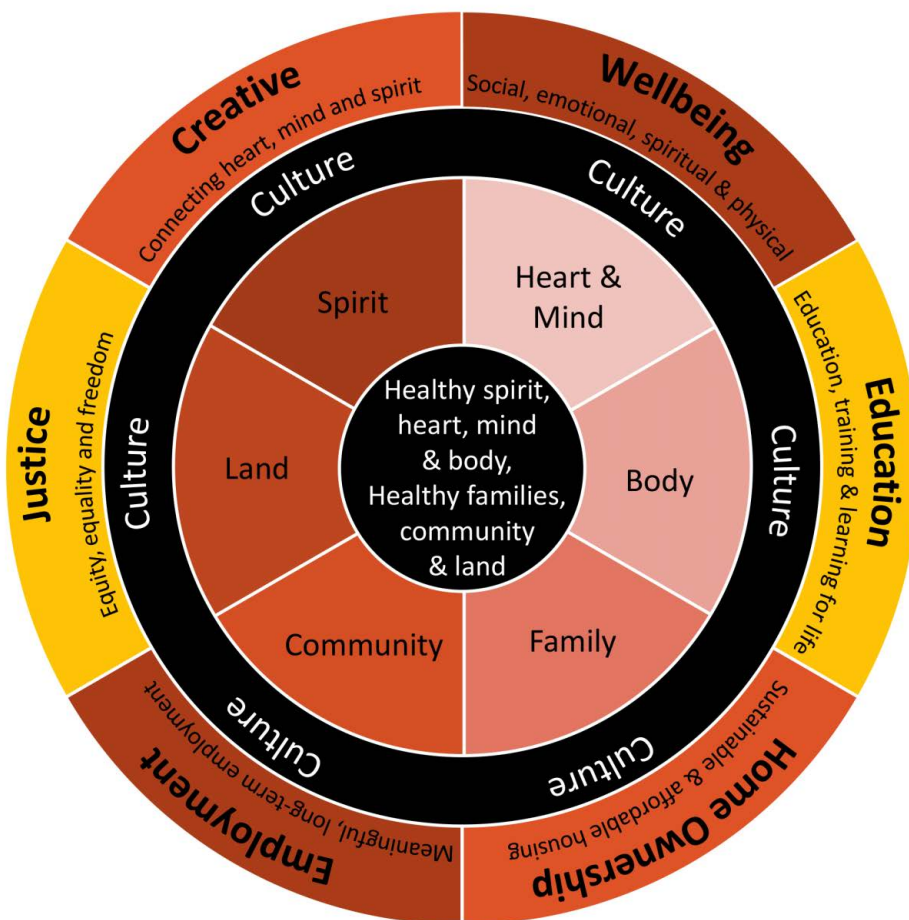
We uphold and promote the highest standards of **INTEGRITY** in leadership and service, including honesty, transparency, and accountability.

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).<sup>1</sup>

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**.

<sup>1</sup> 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



On behalf of the Board of Directors, we are proud to present FISH's Annual Report for 2024–25: a year of significant growth, innovation, and community-led impact.

FISH continues to be guided by an unwavering commitment to co-design with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, reflecting our values and Indigenous ways of knowing.

The challenges facing Aboriginal people remain, but so does the strength, resilience, and wisdom within communities. This shared journey continues to lead the way toward healing, opportunity, and self-determination.

This year saw achievements across all six pillars of our work. FISH strengthened its remote digital health programs to address chronic disease burden, including eye health and rheumatic heart disease. Our international partnership with Mari-One advanced digital health equality in remote areas, launching Australia's first Med Tech Home. We also worked with the Nyiyaparli people to co-design culturally sensitive solutions for chronic renal disease, demonstrating the power of Aboriginal-led health outcomes.

Expansion of FISH Outback Stores into Derby and South Hedland marked a milestone in employment through social enterprise. Fitzroy Crossing is now fully staffed by Aboriginal people – a major achievement in a region where retail employment is low for Aboriginal communities. The site also enabled a Containers for Change refund point, supporting recycling and care for Country. Our Perth social enterprise expanded through pop-up stores and new opportunities at Fremantle Markets, employing over eight Aboriginal staff. Education and Creative Programs continue to strengthen connection to culture and learning.

Through partnerships in the Fitzroy Valley, FISH supported student re-engagement following the floods. Our Books for All initiative delivered culturally appropriate reading materials, while weaving workshops and art exhibitions enabled intergenerational knowledge sharing.

FISH completed a national prototype for Aboriginal Home Ownership in Ravenswood and commenced new builds elsewhere, now walking with over 40 people toward stable housing. Collaboration with Indigenous Business Australia has demonstrated the possibilities of culturally appropriate pathways to home ownership.

Through co-design, FISH remains committed to improving social and emotional wellbeing and breaking intergenerational cycles of trauma, poverty, and justice system engagement. Work at Myalup progressed through the completion of detailed building co-design, governance development, and site activation.

FISH strengthened financial sustainability through growth of the Future Fund, Impact Investment Strategy, and expanding Social Enterprises, ensuring continued leadership by Aboriginal voices.

These achievements were made possible by our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, Elders, and the communities who guide our work. FISH acknowledges the generous bequest from the Estate of the late Sonya Pamela Rodgers and thanks Clayton Utz for their ongoing pro-bono support.

Thank you all for your continued support.

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



## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



This past year has been one of consolidation, growth and acceleration for FISH – a year in which long-term strategy, community-led design, and financial innovation have created real and lasting impact for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Many of our major strategic initiatives have come to fruition at once, which has been both exciting and challenging.

When FISH launched its revitalisation a little over a decade ago after 18 months of hibernation, we had \$650 in the bank, no insurance, no assets and were delivering no programs. Today we are custodians of over \$3 million in assets and a range of social enterprises, investments and programs from the Kimberley and Pilbara through to the Southwest of Western Australia, and are softly moving into the Eastern States. Together we are reducing reliance on short-term external funding and creating a closed loop economy where we can invest internally. That change is the result of a deliberate strategy to build sustainability and community control through social enterprise, home ownership and impact investing.

Our Future Fund is now delivering dividends into our work. The Fund and its sub-funds (including the Microfinance Loan Fund, the Aboriginal Home Ownership Fund and the Social Enterprise Fund) create a closed-loop economy: revenue from enterprise and investments is recycled into loans, home builds, and community initiatives. Through the impact investment vehicle we are supporting Aboriginal micro-enterprises and businesses – with \$8 million under contract to date – and are growing the fund to expand lending and enterprise support. Our microfinance model is deliberately different: we charge 0% interest for many loans so capital circulates to strengthen Aboriginal micro-enterprises, authors and artists without onerous cost. This

financial architecture creates long-term, self-sustaining income streams that allow FISH to act quickly, independently, and in true partnership with communities.

We continued to deliver on our core program pillars: Wellbeing, Education, Employment & Training, Home Ownership, Creative and Justice.

- **Digital health & Mari-One partnership.** We formalised an international partnership with Mari-One to advance digital health equality in remote communities. This collaboration is supporting Australia's first transitional home embedded with health sensors and AI analytics, integrating housing, technology and culturally-grounded care.
- **Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing & Justice Initiative.** This year saw the creation of a fire circle and meeting hub and deepened engagement with Elders and partners. Our meeting with the State Coroner and the Commissioner of Corrective Services signals recognition at the highest levels, and the Coroner's forthcoming report may present opportunities to influence systemic change. We continued to pilot culturally-led interventions including Solid Sistas, Justice Arts & Mentoring, and participant pathways placing culture, healing and employment at the centre of rehabilitation.
- **Home Ownership.** FISH now walks alongside more than 40 families. Through sweat equity, shared equity models and partnerships with Indigenous Business Australia we are demonstrating scalable alternatives

that build housing stability and generational wealth.

- We are in the final stages of registration as a **Community Housing Provider**, focusing on transitional accommodation leading to home ownership.
- **FISH Outback Stores** expanded into Derby and South Hedland, strengthening retail, supply and employment hubs. Our Fitzroy Crossing outlet is staffed 100% by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – an outcome that speaks directly to our employment and training objectives.
- **Containers for Change** in Fitzroy Crossing has prevented tens of thousands of containers going to landfill and created new community roles and income streams.
- We are close to establishing our **Group Training Organisation** which will provide apprenticeships and wrap-around support tailored to trainees.

These enterprises are strategic levers for employment, training, and local economic sovereignty.

Land stewardship and ownership remain central to sustainability. Over the year we continued to build our property base – including holdings in Wilson and Henley Brook and a Derby property nearing settlement. Ownership provides the platform from which to deliver housing, training, and enterprise, and underpins our longer-term plan to construct culturally appropriate homes at scale.

Our people are our strength. I am deeply grateful for the staff and volunteers who bring dedication, cultural knowledge, and

adaptability to every program. Management reviews highlight FISH as a workplace that supports professional and personal wellbeing – reflecting our cultural safety practices and flexible leadership.

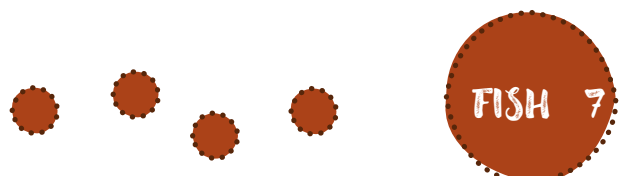
I also thank our Board and pro-bono partners who make our work possible. In particular, legal services from Clayton Utz have enabled complex transactions and governance arrangements we could not otherwise deliver. FISH's voice is being heard across policy and sector tables. We spoke at the recent national Impact Investment conference and the International Digital Health conference and our work has attracted interest from senior policymakers. These engagements matter because they open doors for systemic reform that must be led by Indigenous people and designed around community needs.

We acknowledge with gratitude the legacy gift from the Estate of the late Sonya Pamela Rodgers. This bequest has accelerated our work in home ownership, Myalup and social enterprise and will leave a legacy benefiting generations of families.

We are poised to scale. With established structures, growing capital, and proven partnerships, the next phase will focus on expanding impact investment capital, increasing home builds, scaling social enterprises, and embedding Med-Tech and preventative health pilots into routine care.

This progress is collective – it belongs to our Elders, community partners, staff, volunteers, donors and members of the FISH family. I invite you to join us as we deepen community control, create jobs, and walk with and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people toward sustainable, culturally led change.

Mark Anderson  
(Chief Executive Officer & Director)



## GOVERNANCE

### Board of Directors

FISH's Board of Directors comprises nine Directors, with the majority, five, being Aboriginal people. 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/ Director of Redsphear Safety and Safespear, Co-Chair/ 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. Consultant Ngaparrtji Ngaparrtji Two-Way Science. Department of Education.



**Noel Prakash**

Head of Indigenous Business and Community at National Australia Bank.



**Prof Pat Dudgeon, AM**

Bardi woman. Psychologist and professor at the Poche Centre for Aboriginal Health and at UWA. Director at Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention at UWA.



**Scott Wilson**

Gooniyandi and Gajerrong man. Advocate for Australian Youth Mental Health. Managing Director and Co-Founder of Ice Cream Productions. Writer of the *Indigiverse* comic books.



**Mark Anderson**

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

## 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 four 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:

- **Programs 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 Waangkiny 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 Waangkiny 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 Chair of Finance of FISH's Board.

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

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

## 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 Operational 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

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

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

# 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><sup>2</sup>

FISH supports the SDGs and **we ensure we design 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

- Digital health technology trials and partnership with Mari-One to establish Australia's first Med-Tech Home.
- Remote AI-powered eye-health screening initiative.
- Expansion of our Social Enterprise work, with an expansion of Perth stores and new FISH Outback Stores in South Hedland and Derby.
- Launch of FISH Containers for Change recycling depot in Fitzroy Crossing.
- Established Solid Sistas women's justice program.
- Commenced major Health and Wellbeing Project with Karlka Nyiyaparli Aboriginal Corporation and Grounded Impact.
- Acquisition of land in Wilson and Henley Brook.

<sup>2</sup> "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".





This easy-to-carry kit for babies and toddlers contains useful contents allowing parents to treat minor scratches and to manage unexpected accidents on the go.

- Baby nail cutters included



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WELLBEING

# WELLBEING

## Why These Programs

There remains a significant health gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians. According to recent ABS/AIHW data, life expectancy at birth in 2020-22 was estimated at 71.9 years for First Nations males, compared with 80.6 years for non-Indigenous males (a gap of ~8.8 years), and 75.6 years for First Nations females versus 83.8 years for non-Indigenous females (gap ~8.1 years).<sup>3</sup>

Chronic disease burden is high, with about 67% of First Nations adults reporting at least one long-term health condition, and roughly 36% reporting three or more. Leading causes of death include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, lung cancer, and intentional self-harm.<sup>4</sup>

Suicide is more than twice as common among First Nations people compared to non-Indigenous Australians, with age-standardised suicide rates around 30.8 per 100,000 versus 11.1 per 100,000. Among children aged 5-17 years First Nations youth experience higher suicide rates being the leading cause of death.<sup>5</sup>

These health outcomes are shaped by systemic racism, colonisation, socioeconomic disadvantage, and limited access to culturally safe care.

Importantly, First Nations concepts of health are holistic – integrating physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and cultural wellbeing.

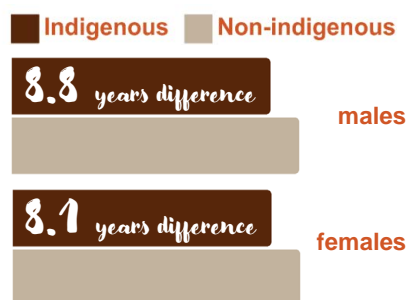
Addressing the health gap requires interventions that are culturally driven, community-led, and focused on equity in access and outcomes.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, *Closing the Gap Targets 2025*

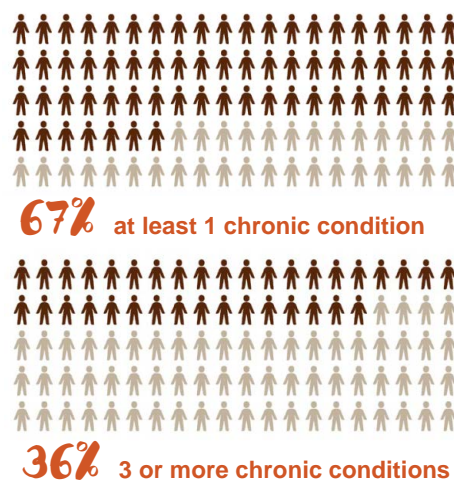
## First Nations Health Statistics



### LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH



### CHRONIC CONDITIONS



### SUICIDE RATES



<sup>4</sup> Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, *Indigenous Health & Wellbeing, 2023*

<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023

## Key Points This Year

1. Digital health technology trials and partnership with Mari-One.
2. Launch of Australia's first Med-Tech home.
3. Remote AI-powered eye-health screening initiative.
4. Rheumatic heart disease prevention strategy.
5. Commenced major health and wellbeing project with Karlka Nyiyaparli Aboriginal Corporation and Grounded Impact.

## Digital Health for First Nations Communities



In 2025, FISH was honoured to formalise an international partnership with Mari-One from Glasgow, Scotland, to deliver digital health equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through satellite-connected health technologies. The partnership was launched in Perth in the presence of Her Excellency Vicki Treadell CMG MVO, British High Commissioner to Australia, who spoke passionately about the significance of this global collaboration.

Together, FISH and Mari-One are co-designing digital health solutions that are culturally grounded, community-led, and responsive to the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Mari-One specialises in combining satellite connectivity with advanced biometric sensors to provide real-time health monitoring and data visualisation. Their “space-enabled” approach connects wearable and environmental sensors through satellite networks, helping overcome one of the biggest barriers to healthcare access in remote Australia — unreliable connectivity.

The partnership also extends to housing innovation, with the development of Australia’s first Med-Tech Home — a transitional home embedded with sensors and AI-driven health analytics — demonstrating how technology, housing, and health can work hand-in-hand to improve wellbeing and break cycles of disadvantage.

This collaboration represents a powerful example of how international partnerships, guided by Indigenous leadership and cultural respect, can deliver truly equitable, future-focused health outcomes for remote communities across Australia.



## Inside the Med Tech Home

### Sleep

**mari-one monitors** bed occupancy, sleep duration and quality, heart rate and breathing

**Example mari-one sensors:** sleep sensor, wearables

**Example mari-one alerts :** out of bed at night for too long, poor sleep quality, sleep apnoea

### Nutrition

**mari-one monitors** weight and body composition, hydration, appliance use (kettle, fridge)

**Example mari-one sensors:** body composition scales

**Example mari-one alerts :** dehydration alert, weight loss alert

### Medication

**mari-one monitors :** medication compliance, medication supply levels, device health and connectivity

**Example mari-one sensors:** medication dispenser **Example mari-one alerts:** missed medication, medication is running low

### Health

**mari-one monitors** cardiovascular health, temperature, HR arterial stiffness

**Example mari-one sensors:** pain assessor, incontinence sensor, scales

**Example mari-one alerts :** vital signs recorded remotely , heart rate , breathing rate, core body temp, possible fever, fall detection

### Activity

**mari-one monitors :** daily activities, bed occupancy, room occupancy, appliance use, presence

**Example mari-one sensors:** power, motion, door, presence, wearables

**Example mari-one alerts :** possible fall: inactivity alert, away from home late

### Safety

**mari-one monitors :** alarm activation / cancelation, hazard risk prediction (H/M/L)

**Example mari-one sensors:** passive fall detector (lamp or ceiling mounted), predictive smoke alarm

**Example mari-one alerts :** elevated fire hazard level, possible fall detected

## Eye Health Technology



A groundbreaking collaboration between Australian and Indian partners is redefining how sight-threatening eye conditions are detected, combining WA-led artificial intelligence innovation with a shared commitment to equitable care.

These pilot programs, led by Professor Yogesan “Yogi” Kanagasingam, Chair of Digital Health and Telemedicine at The University of Notre Dame, and Tamil Nadu, are demonstrating how portable, AI-powered screening can deliver specialist-level eye care to the most remote communities.

In the Kimberley, FISH partnered with Professor Yogi and TeleMedC Pty Ltd to trial an AI-based eye-screening system in the Aboriginal communities of Muludja and Bawoorrooga – more than 2,500 km from Perth. For many residents, this was their first eye examination.

The system successfully detected conditions such as diabetic retinopathy, cataract, keratitis, glaucoma, and macular degeneration, with results and follow-up completed within a single day.

Co-designed with community leaders and local health workers, the initiative ensured cultural safety and local ownership, proving that digital health technology can bridge distance, reduce waiting times, and improve outcomes.

FISH believes partnerships like this are vital to Closing the Gap in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – bringing life-changing innovation to those who need it most.



## Agili8 Virtual Care Trial



In 2023–25, FISH partnered with Agili8, founded by technologist and innovator Esther Oh, to trial AI-enabled virtual care technology in the remote Aboriginal communities of Bawoorrooga and Muludja in the Kimberley Region of Western Australia. This work formed part of FISH's National Medical Technology Trials and was grounded in a deep co-design process with Elders, families, and local health workers. Through community-led discussions, the people of Bawoorrooga and Muludja shaped every aspect of the trial – including timing, duration, participants, evaluation, and feedback processes.

Agili8's platform uses AI, merged reality and computer vision through wearable smart glasses, bringing "virtual hands-on care" directly to Country. Powered by XRAI Vision®, specialists can guide local clinicians in real-time, overlaying their hands and tools into the wearer's field of view. This enables procedures such as wound assessment and clinical review to happen safely and effectively without requiring travel to major centres.



The co-design process held particular significance for the communities, occurring at a time when many Aboriginal people felt unheard and despondent following the national referendum. Community Leads Scott Wilson (Gooniyandi/Gajerrong) and Philomena Lands (Gooniyandi, Muludja) played a central role in steering the design and ensuring that the trial honoured cultural expectations and community priorities.

The trial demonstrated clear value: timely care, improved patient confidence, and avoidance of delayed treatment or hospitalisation. It also validated Agili8's potential to strengthen culturally safe, community-led healthcare by empowering local practitioners with specialist support. FISH is proud to have worked alongside Bawoorrooga and Muludja to pilot this innovative model and advance digital health equity.

## CloudHalter Heart Monitoring Trial



FISH's CloudHalter trial was also conducted in genuine partnership with the Bawoorrooga and Muludja communities, who co-designed the project to ensure cultural safety, community relevance, and appropriate implementation.

CloudHalter is a modern, wearable cardiac monitoring system that remotely records heart rhythm while people go about daily life. Data is securely transmitted to cardiology specialists – including Professor Rukshen Weerasooria, a leading cardiac electrophysiologist from the Heart Rhythm Clinic – for rapid interpretation and reporting. This model removes long delays and travel burdens associated with traditional Holter testing, challenges that disproportionately affect remote Aboriginal communities.

Through the trial, the lightweight CloudHalter devices were used on Country to support earlier detection of cardiac issues, particularly in people with risk factors for heart disease – one of the leading contributors to the health gap. Early feedback highlighted increased community engagement with heart health, improved timeliness of clinical decision-making, and strong acceptance of the technology.

The project for the first time enabled every adult on community to have their heart monitored, with identified underlying heart conditions in several participants, providing them with the early warning needed to seek potentially life-saving treatment. This monitoring would normally take anywhere up to two years to occur with participants needing to leave community and often fly to Perth for the monitoring, impacting them, their family and community. By helping validate the technology and demonstrating its impact on patient outcomes, both communities played a crucial role in shaping future digital cardiac care models for remote Aboriginal people.



## Preventing Acute Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease



Acute rheumatic fever (ARF) and rheumatic heart disease (RHD) disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly children and young adults in remote areas.

In 2022, 95% of ARF diagnoses were among First Nations people, with rates rising from 47 per 100,000 in 2013 to 64 per 100,000. RHD affects 3–5% of Aboriginal people in rural and remote regions, with rates increasing 50% from 2012–2021, and is more common in females. Both ARF and RHD are preventable, with ARF caused by group A streptococcus infections that spread through contact with infected throat or skin.



As part of FISH's preventative health strategy, we distribute Tiny Tots First Aid Kits to families in Fitzroy Crossing and surrounding communities, helping treat minor wounds promptly and reduce the risk of ARF.

FISH Outback Stores provide a central point for distribution, ensuring accessibility for families. This initiative is made possible through the support of HIF Australia, helping safeguard children's health and reduce future RHD risk.

While ARF and RHD rates are declining globally, they are rising in remote Australian communities, highlighting the importance of continued preventative efforts.





## Women's Health Week

In September 2025, the FISH Team was proud to be walking with the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing during Women's Health Week. It was an important opportunity to reflect and share what is working on the ground.

Members of the FISH Team, including Noongar Elder Averil Scott and FISH Manager for Cultural & Community Engagement Renna Gayde had the privilege of leading a yarning circle along with Jordan Hansen and Suzy Moore from South Coastal Babbingur Mia, where everyone wove together, listened, and reflected.

Aunty Averil, who has been working tirelessly for decades to support Aboriginal women and their families, provided rich insight into the importance of non-judgemental access to support, listening to women's needs and experiences, and building enduring relationships of trust, respect and honesty.

Participants shared stories, exchanged wisdom, and explored a deeper conversation about Aboriginal self-determination and empowerment in health. We look forward to creating more spaces for dialogue, learning, and walking alongside Aboriginal women as leaders.



## Niyaparli Health and Wellbeing Project



FISH is deeply honoured to be walking shoulder to shoulder with the Karlka Niyaparli Aboriginal Corporation and Grounded Impact as together we support Niyaparli people requiring renal dialysis and other medical treatment leaving their country and travelling to Perth for treatment.

We are working together to remove the range of barriers, including limited access to affordable and culturally appropriate transport and accommodation, culturally appropriate care and logistical challenges, so that Niyaparli people get the best level of care possible while in Perth for treatment, as together we work to close the gap in health outcomes.



*“When we sat with our families last year, we heard loud and clear that we needed to take the matter of kidney health prevention, treatment and support into our own hands and get better results for our people. It is a long-term goal of KNAC and the Niyaparli people to provide a seamless health and wellbeing centre with all the wrap around services from start of their journey to returning home. We also want to provide those services for our own people which creates lots of training, employment and contracting opportunities for our mob.*

*We’re excited that its finally happening and we are happy to be doing this with FISH.*

*They have listened and respected what we need, and how soon we need it!”*

Christina Stone, Chair of the Niyaparli Health and Wellbeing Project Steering Committee.



FISH will build and manage the wellbeing centre. FISH’s Architect is working with the Niyaparli Steering Committee through an extensive co-design process to ensure that the design captures the mob’s functional, aesthetic, and cultural needs.

The centre will offer holistic support as part of the supported patient journey for Niyaparli dialysis patients away for Country, as well as providing significant Niyaparli employment, training, business development and contracting opportunities in Perth. The innovative partnership with KNAC creates a closed loop economy where Niyaparli members are being cared for on their patient journey while other Niyaparli members are being trained and supported through skills and business development to provide the needed services and support for their family members.





EMPLOYMENT

# EMPLOYMENT

## Why These Programs

Expanding employment pathways for young First Nations people is central to addressing economic disparities and fostering long-term community empowerment and resilience.

Australia's most recent census shows a deeply concerning employment gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians. Only 52% of First Nations people aged 15–64 were employed, compared with 75% of non-Indigenous Australians. Employment rates for First Nations people were highest in major cities (58%) and lowest in very remote areas (32%).<sup>6</sup>

First Nations people continued to be over-represented in labouring and community service roles and under-represented in professional and managerial positions. In 2021, just 8% of First Nations people held managerial roles, compared with 14% of non-Indigenous Australians, and just 0.7% of senior and executive roles were held by Indigenous people.<sup>7</sup>

The 2018–19 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey also highlights the link between employment and wellbeing – 42% of unemployed First Nations people reported high or very high levels of psychological distress, compared with 22% of those who were employed.

FISH remains committed to addressing these inequities by creating equal opportunities for training and long-term employment. Through targeted programs, FISH works to break intergenerational cycles of poverty by empowering First Nations individuals to pursue stable, higher-paying careers, building both economic independence and community resilience.

<sup>6</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

## 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

<sup>7</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency

## Key Points This Year

1. Expansion of FISH Outback Stores with new stores in South Hedland and Derby.
2. 100% Aboriginal employment in FISH Outback Stores, Fitzroy Crossing.
3. Launch of FISH Containers For Change Depot.
4. FISH Social Enterprise in Perth continues to thrive and expand.

## FISH Outback Stores



### Fitzroy Crossing

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 through our social enterprises.

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. It also provides essential day-to-day items such as

whitegoods, phones, electronics, toys, books, bikes, beds and manchester goods. By purchasing from FISH Outback Stores, you are supporting:

- the community, with all profits from the stores going back to local programs including youth engagement, education, health and medical services;
- our local Aboriginal employment program; and
- local and nearby suppliers from whom we source our products.

In short, every dollar spent with a social enterprise is a vote for a fairer, more inclusive, and sustainable society. It's everyday impact, made intentional.



Achievements and programs in the last year include:

- 100% of staff now trained and employed in FISH Outback Stores in Fitzroy Crossing are Aboriginal people, being the only retail/service industry outlet in town to achieve this.
- Toddler 1st Aid Kits distributed through FISH Outback Stores to families from 19 remote communities in Fitzroy Valley to assist in lowering the rates of rheumatic fever leading to heart and kidney problems later in life.
- Selling locally-grown community produce, such as the famous Bawoorrooga mangoes, supporting economic self-sufficiency and healthy living.
- Support for eye health technology trials in Bawoorrooga and Muludja.
- Support for the Ladies Self Care Evening held by Karrayili Adult Education Centre in Fitzroy Crossing.
- Support for student re-engagement initiatives with local schools.
- Facilitating access to medical grade footwear to help prevent diabetic foot complications through working with Boab Health Podiatry Services.
- Continued our successful Teddy Bank Project, with the aim to distribute teddy bears to children in communities so they know they are loved and supported.



## Expanding Our Reach: Derby and South Hedland

We are thrilled to celebrate the recent opening of FISH Outback Stores in Derby and South Hedland. These new locations strengthen our ability to serve remote communities, providing essential goods, supporting local families, and creating hubs for health and wellbeing initiatives.

The expansion marks an exciting milestone in FISH's ongoing commitment to empowering communities across the Kimberley and Pilbara regions.

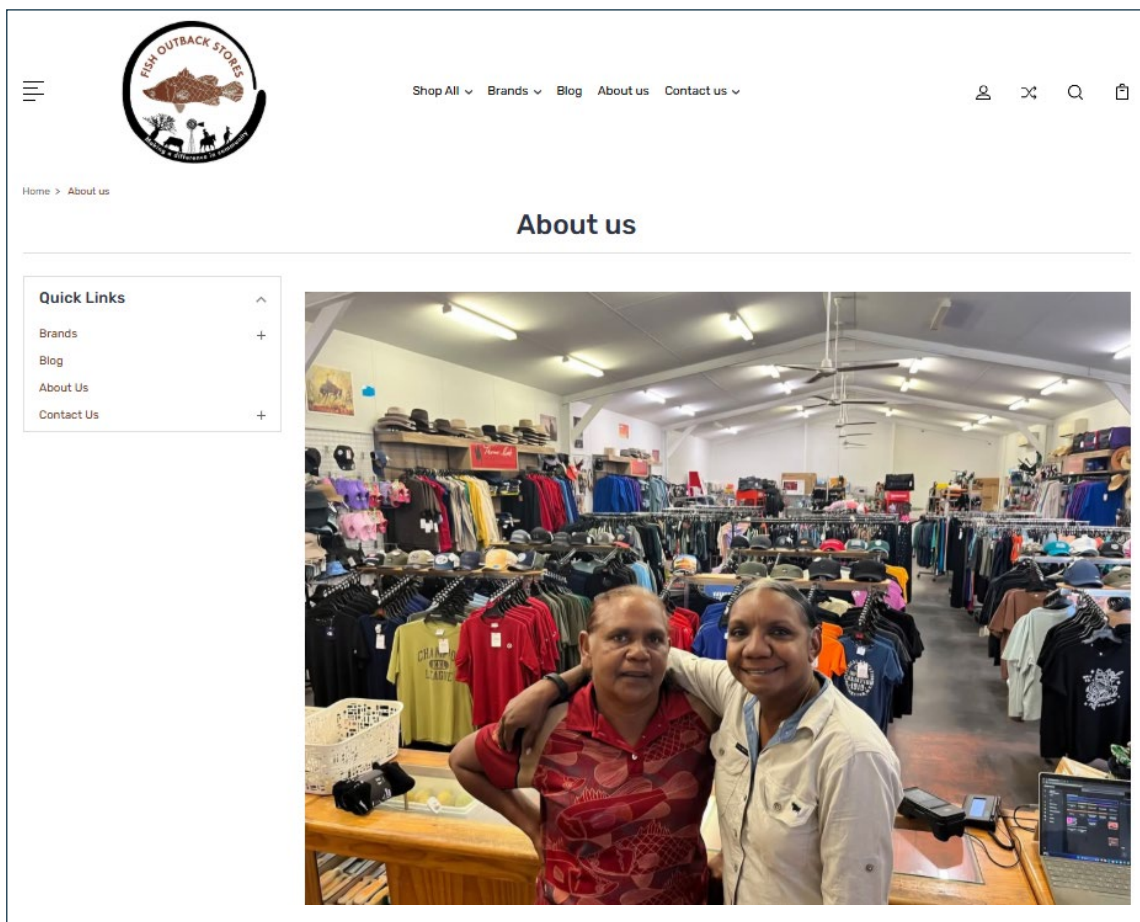
FISH would like to acknowledge the tremendous pro-bono contribution of Clayton Utz towards this initiative.

## FISH Outback Stores: Online Store

We now have a new online shop showcasing all the amazing products we have on offer. Our product range is diverse with many brands on board including Akubra, Wrangler, Cinch, Ariat, Ringers Western, Billabong, Roxy, Converse, Crocs and so much more.

Why purchase from us when you can get these brands in Perth? Because buying from our social enterprise isn't just a transaction – it's a ripple effect of good.

<https://www.fishoutbackstores.au/>



## FISH Social Enterprise in Perth

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. FISH is now supporting over 40 micro-enterprises, 35 artists, and we stock more than 500 Indigenous-authored books.

This year, FISH continued to expand 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. Polly Wilson, a proud Ngemba Weilwan woman and FISH's Metro Social Enterprise Manager, also runs weaving workshop at the FISH's pop-up social enterprises as well as at primary and secondary schools. We are also proud to have been nominated for a WA Social Enterprise Council (WASEC) Award.



We are thrilled to have introduced products from Yalkarang, Buffie Creative, Sassy Soap, Kaya Kwobidak, and Gammin Threads to our collection, as well as artworks from our new artist, Chynna Chadderton (Blue Eyes Art). We farewelled our amazing volunteer turned Arts Coordinator, Charlotte O'Shea, in December. Charlotte's contributions to FISH were invaluable, including her recent organising of FISH's Aboriginal Art Exhibition at Bridge 42 in Perth.

We also celebrate our retail staff, welcoming our newest team member, Lurlene Button, an amazing Jaru woman from Halls Creek, as well as the amazing work of our Trainee Assistant Manager, Gypsy Williams, in producing content for our Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.

All the amazing products from FISH's Perth social enterprise can also be purchased from our online shop at <https://shop.fish.asn.au/>.



## Containers for Change



We proudly launched our Fitzroy Crossing Containers for Change refund point in November 2024. FISH operates the depot in collaboration with WA Return Recycle and Renew (WARRRL).

FISH is passionate about caring for Country and recycling, and joining the Containers for Change scheme in Fitzroy Crossing goes hand in hand in achieving our caring for Country objectives.



Since starting our depot in November, we have sorted and saved approximately 76,000 containers from entering landfill in the first seven months. FISH worked in partnership with the Fitzroy Crossing Rodeo in July 2025, and sorted and saved approximately 7,600 containers during the event.

FISH supports several “Super Collectors” in Fitzroy Crossing, who are members of the community who have a strong passion for recycling. These partners make a great difference in keeping Country beautiful.

FISH was also extremely fortunate to recently recruit our volunteer sorter, Christine (Aggie) Budzyn. Aggie has been indispensable to the operation of our refund point, and we really appreciate her contribution.



## FISH Group Training Organisation

FISH has been busily working to develop our Group Training Organisation (GTO). This will allow FISH to employ First Nations apprentices and trainees, and provide much needed employee resources to host employers. FISH's GTO will be a niche offering, providing not only apprenticeship and trainee services, but also life wrap around

services to our apprentices and trainees. FISH is in the final stages of the GTO application process, and we are looking forward to offering this service soon. If you are a host employer looking for an apprentice or trainee, or if you are member of the community looking for an apprenticeship or traineeship, we would love to hear from you.





JUSTICE

# JUSTICE

## Why These Programs

First Nations people remain vastly over-represented in custody – a reality that continues to have lifelong consequences for their health and wellbeing. The effects of incarceration extend far beyond the individual, rippling through families and communities and perpetuating intergenerational cycles of trauma and disadvantage.

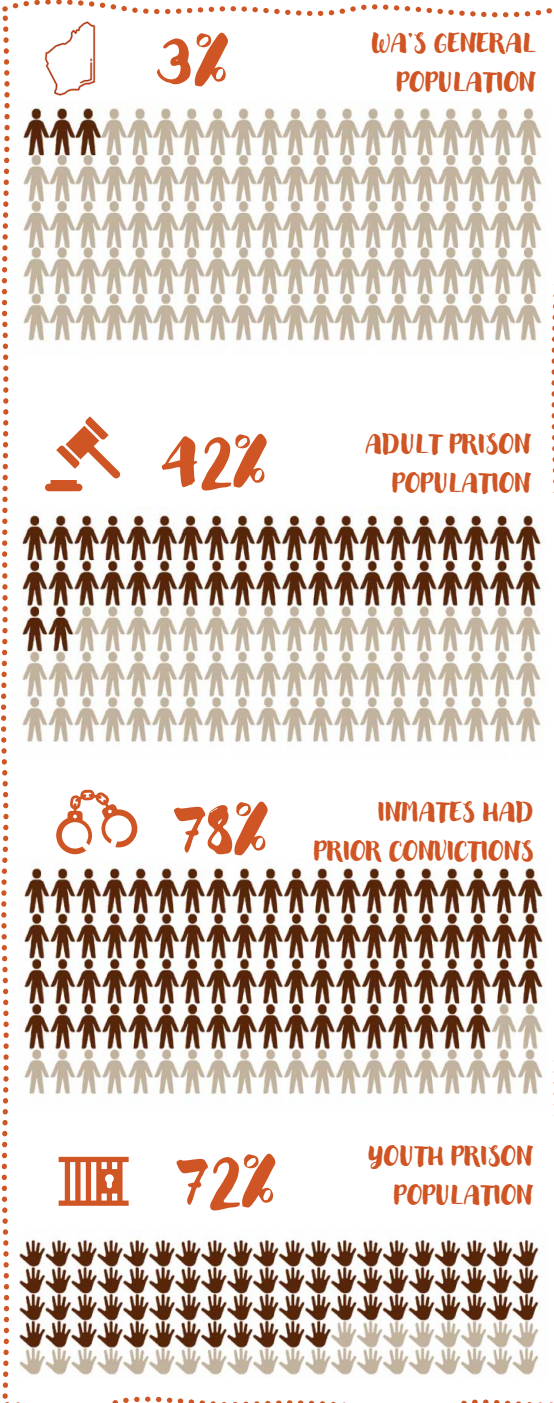
As of June 2024, First Nations people comprised 35% of all prisoners in Australia. In WA, 80% of Aboriginal prisoners are not released on parole when eligible, compared with 40% of non-Indigenous.<sup>8</sup>

Western Australia continues to record the highest incarceration rate for First Nations people. Although they represent just over 3% of the WA population, they make up almost half of the adult prison population. With 78% of Aboriginal prisoners having prior adult convictions, it is clear that the current system fails to address the root causes of offending and instead reinforces a destructive cycle of reoffending and imprisonment.

Aboriginal youth account for 72% of all detainees,<sup>9</sup> and First Nations young people aged 10–17 are imprisoned at 29 times the rate of their non-Aboriginal peers.<sup>10</sup> Breaking this pattern requires timely, culturally focused interventions that connect young people with culture, community, and Elders, fostering identity and belonging.

There is an urgent need for culturally led, community-designed approaches to rehabilitation and reintegration, that address the root causes of offending and create real pathways out of the justice system for First Nations people.

## First Nations Justice in WA



<sup>8</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024

<sup>9</sup> WA Department of Justice, 2023

<sup>10</sup> Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2023

## Key Points This Year

1. Developed detailed operational model for Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative.
2. Created fire circle and meeting hub at Myalup.
3. Completed co-design process on architectural design for all buildings.
4. Established Solid Sistas women's justice program for post-release support.

## FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative

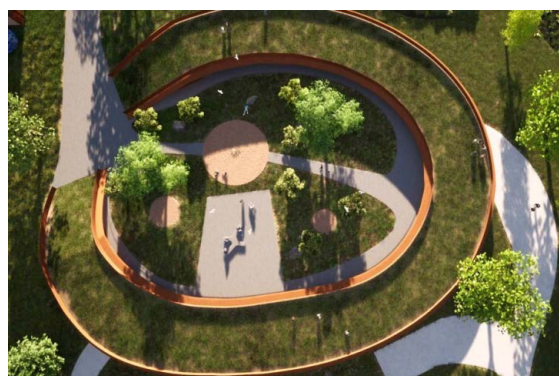
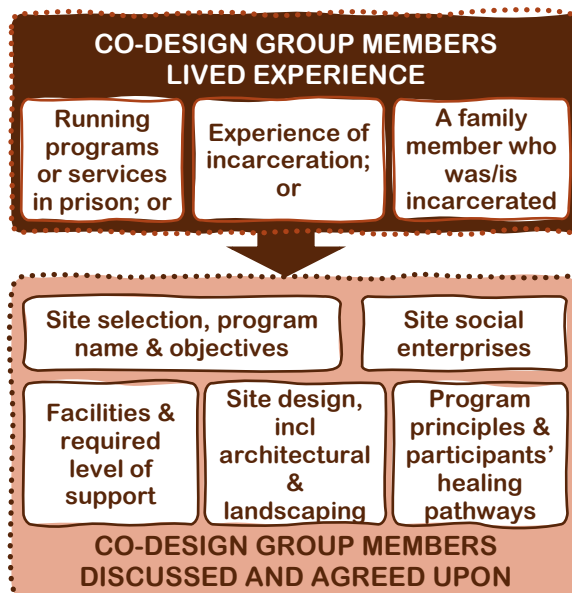


FISH has worked with First Nations people within the justice system and from across Australia to co-design a place and program where First Nations people can heal and receive holistic support to break intergenerational cycles of trauma, avoid (re)engagement in the justice system and contribute positively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

The FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative will be based at an 11ha site in Myalup, South West WA. The initiative, including site design and the content of the healing and justice program, has been co-designed by our Aboriginal Co-Design Group – a group of 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.



## Co-Design Group

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.



Greg Little



May McGuire



Dennis Jetta



Melba Wallam



Koodah  
Cornwall



Lesley Ugle



Troy Bennell



Sharon Cooke



Robert Taylor



Donna Wallam



Jeff Amatto



Liza Fraser-  
Gooda



Frank Mitchell



Karen Jacobs



Kallan Nannup



Karen Jetta



Corey Kahn



Renna Gayde



Adam Drake



Rita Lusted



Chris Nannup



Alyssa Whitby



Brad Vittale



Kaisha  
Champion

In November 2024, following cultural protocols, the Elders, Leaders, partners and Members of the FISH Co-design Group and FISH team, led by the Elders and leaders of the Harvey Aboriginal Corporation, brought the boodja (land) to life at the Myalup site through

cool burning. The cool burning was preceded by a fire lighting ceremony where together we lit the fire within for the next stage of the development; and a cultural dance that put the song back into the land.



## Operational Model and Participant Journey

The Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative is grounded in an Aboriginal-led, culturally safe operational model that has been co-designed with local Elders, community members and people with lived experience of the justice system. At its core, the model recognises that healing, cultural reconnection and stability are essential foundations for long-term independence, wellbeing and reduced justice involvement.

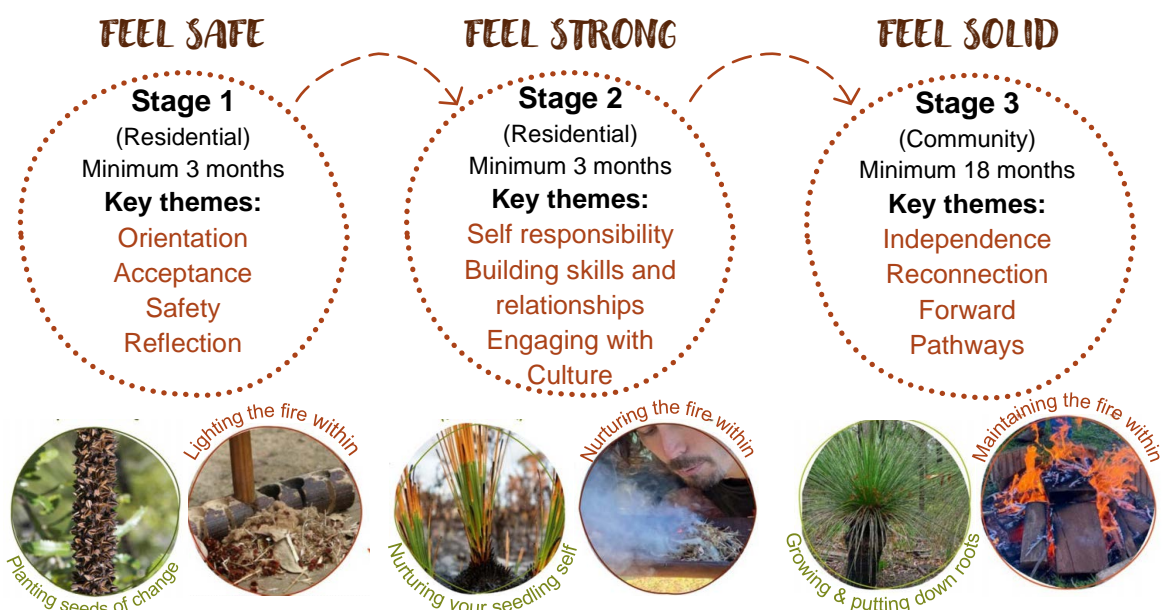
Participants engage in a staged journey that supports gradual change over time. The program begins with a residential healing phase, where participants are welcomed into a safe, on-Country environment focused on orientation, acceptance and reflection. This stage prioritises physical, emotional and cultural safety, allowing participants to reconnect with identity, culture and community while stabilising their wellbeing.

The second residential phase builds on this foundation by strengthening self-responsibility, relationships and life skills. Participants engage more deeply in cultural activities, mentoring, training, and health supports, while being supported to reflect on their goals and pathways forward. Throughout both residential stages, healing is approached holistically –

addressing social, emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing.

The final community-based phase, extending over a longer period, supports participants to transition back into the community with greater independence. This stage focuses on reconnection with family, training and employment pathways, housing stability and ongoing cultural support, ensuring participants are equipped to maintain positive change beyond the program.

Over the next 12 months, the Myalup Karla Waangkiny team will finalise and formally endorse the operational model through comprehensive co-design. Key priorities include the recruitment of a male staff member to support community-based programming and the development of a culturally grounded men's program guided by local Elders. This phase will also see the completion of core policies and procedures, alongside the development of a robust, culturally informed evaluation framework to support learning, accountability and long-term impact. Together, this operational model reflects FISH's commitment to Aboriginal leadership, cultural integrity and sustainable pathways that strengthen individuals, families and community.



The Myalup initiative has advanced over the past year with key achievements including:

- **Creation of fire circle and meeting hub** – Now enables on-site meetings, ceremonies, and yarning with connection to boodja (country) and karla (fire).
- **Operational Model & Frameworks** – Developed a participant-centred Model of Care, detailed Journey Map, and group-based activities grounded in trauma-informed, culturally safe, and evidence-based practices.
- **Pre-entry & Assessment** – Introduced a holistic, culturally grounded assessment process using Relational Yarning, with restorative approaches to behavioural management emphasising accountability and healing.
- **Partnerships** – Deepened collaboration with Harvey Aboriginal Corporation and sustained Elder-led community involvement in program codesign.
- **Program Delivery** – Continued Solid Sistas groups at two Perth sites, providing safe spaces for Aboriginal women to connect, heal, and plan futures.
- **Sector Leadership** – Shared learnings and promoted Aboriginal-led justice reinvestment at major sector events.
- **Governance** – Implemented key policies and procedures to support best practice, compliance, and future scaling.
- **Completed architectural Co-Design process** – Architectural design drawings completed for all buildings.

These achievements would not have been possible without the generous support of the Rae Group, Paul Ramsay Foundation, and the bequest of the late Sonya Rodgers.



## Solid Sistas Women's Program



FISH is honoured to have partnered with Culture Kare, Indigo Junction, and Djinda Bridiya Wellbeing in delivering our first pilot program in community Solid Sistas.

Solid Sistas is a program developed by and for Aboriginal women, led by FISH Manager for Cultural & Community Engagement Renna Gayde and Noongar Elder Averil Scott. Weaving cultural and creative elements throughout, each session is designed to support women develop life and personal skills, confidence, connection, and opportunities to share and support each other.

Topics include: culture as protective, building identity, strong spirit, and weaving stories. Groups are facilitated by a Noongar Elder and an Aboriginal Social Worker with lived experiences of family and domestic violence, child protection, incarceration, and homelessness.

Women from many age groups and backgrounds participated in the program over ten weeks and feedback was so positive that the teams have agreed to continue running programs through 2025. Many thanks to all the yorgas (women) who participated and to NM Health for warming the space



## Justice Arts & Mentoring Initiative



The FISH Justice Arts & Mentoring Initiative uses art as expressive therapy to support healing, self-awareness, and reconnection to spirit, country, and culture for Aboriginal people engaged in, or at risk of entering, the justice system. Revenue from artwork sales through FISH Social Enterprise outlets is held in trust for artists to help cover re-establishment costs such as accommodation, training, debts, and living expenses after incarceration.

Although currently limited in capacity, the initiative aims to expand through the FISH Myalup Karla Waangkiny Healing and Justice Initiative, including an arts therapy space.

A recent example saw funds from an artist's work used to engage a barrister and support a young Kimberley prisoner's direct transition from custody into rehab, preventing homelessness and enabling positive change, with FISH providing intensive mentoring in the absence of family support.



HOME OWNERSHIP

# HOME OWNERSHIP

## Why These Programs

There remains an urgent need for safe, secure, appropriate, and affordable housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – a fundamental building block for families seeking to move out of poverty. On Census night, an estimated 24,900 Indigenous Australians were homeless<sup>11</sup>. 75,000 First Nations people sought help from Specialist Homelessness Services, representing more than 25% of all clients across Australia.<sup>12</sup>

Overcrowding and poor housing conditions remain major contributors to the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.<sup>13</sup> Inadequate housing increases the spread of infectious diseases, as overcrowded environments make it difficult to maintain proper hygiene and sanitation.

First Nations people continue to experience significantly reduced access to affordable, secure housing, often relying heavily on public housing that is poorly maintained and fails to meet cultural or community needs.<sup>14</sup> The ongoing impacts of dispossession from land and culture also contribute to higher rates of Indigenous homelessness. For many families, strong kinship obligations and the responsibility to accommodate extended family add further pressure in finding and maintaining suitable housing.<sup>15</sup>

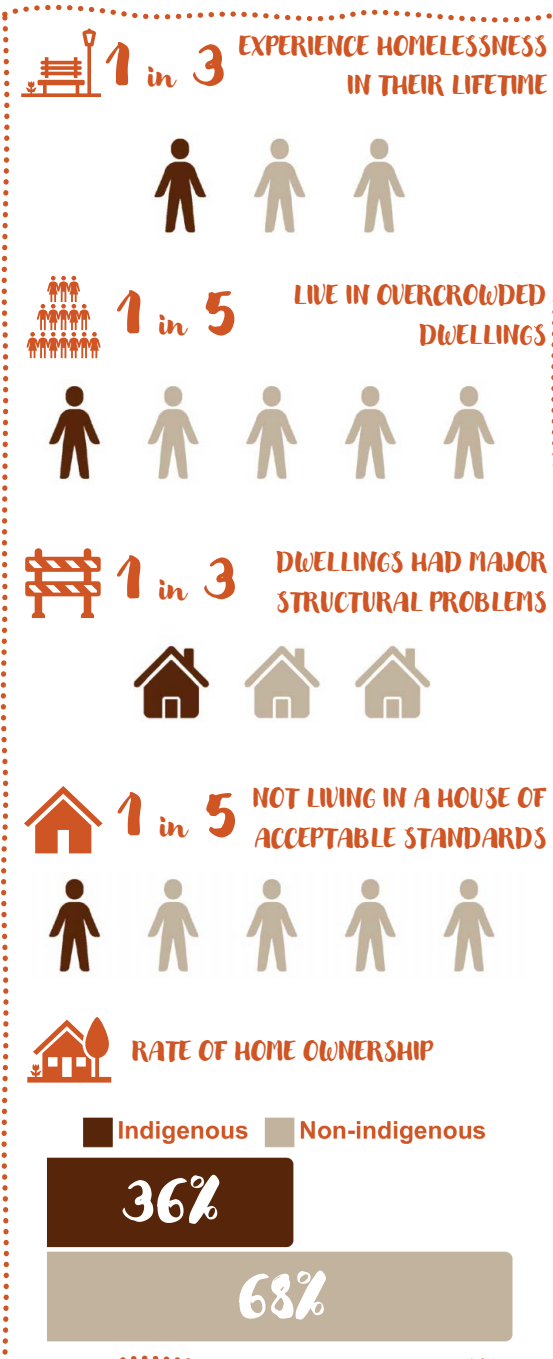
While governments invest considerable resources in Aboriginal housing each year, insufficient attention is given to cultural safety in design, construction, and maintenance. This has led to widespread mistrust of mainstream contractors and housing providers, undermining confidence and engagement within Aboriginal communities.

<sup>11</sup> CENSUS, 2021

<sup>12</sup> SHS annual report 2022-2023

<sup>13</sup> Alim S., Foster, T., & Hall N., 2018. *The Relationship between Infectious Diseases and Housing Maintenance in Indigenous Australian Households*.

## First Nations Housing Statistics



<sup>14</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020

<sup>15</sup> Vallesi, S., Tighe, E., Bropho, H., Potangaroa, M. & Watkins, L., 2020. *Wongee Mia: An innovative family-centred approach to addressing Aboriginal housing needs and preventing eviction in Australia*.

## Key Points This Year

1. FISH working with over 40 future homeowners.
2. Negotiations with State and Federal Governments and builders to develop affordable home ownership models.
3. Working partnership with Indigenous Business Australia for low interest and low deposit loans.

## FISH Aboriginal Home Ownership Initiative

Over the past year, FISH has proudly supported four more Aboriginal families into home ownership and worked with more than 40 others on their journey toward secure, sustainable housing. Each story represents determination, empowerment, and community-led success.

In the South West, young mum Jedda celebrated the moment she closed the roller door on her new home – a milestone made possible through her dedication, over 200 hours of “sweat equity,” and the support of the FISH team. Moving from a shed to a home she co-designed and co-built has been truly life changing for her family, symbolising the transformative power of ownership.



The FISH Aboriginal Home Ownership Initiative focuses on creating culturally appropriate, affordable homes that promote self-determination and break cycles of poverty. Home ownership builds generational wealth, stability, and wellbeing – benefits that ripple through families and communities.

With projects now completed in the South West and new builds underway in Two Rocks and Mandurah, FISH continues to walk alongside nearly 40 individuals and families on their path to home ownership. This life-changing work is made possible through the generous legacy of the Estate of the Late Sonya Pamela Rodgers, whose support enables FISH to expand opportunities for Aboriginal families to build secure and sustainable futures.



Through the success of FISH's Aboriginal Home Ownership Initiative, we have built a strong working relationship with Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) where we are able to secure low interest and low deposit loans and shared equity with a 100% success rate in securing finances for our participants home

loans. The current success rate for IBA from initial enquiries for home ownership loans is only 5% with a failure rate of 95%. IBA are now in discussions with FISH to work in partnership with us to explore how we can assist them in increasing IBA's success rate for Aboriginal home ownership.



As part of our Transitional Accommodation Strategy, we have entered into an international partnership with Mari-One, leading to the establishment of Australia's first Med-Tech Home. This innovative initiative repurposes one of our transitional homes into a living space enhanced with digital health technology – a first of its kind in the country.

Through this partnership, an Aboriginal family will be supported on their journey toward home ownership, and also toward improved health and wellbeing outcomes. It represents a significant step forward in promoting digital health equality for First Nations peoples, combining safe housing, technology, and culturally informed support to deliver real and lasting impact.



What do you call  
a baby...?

NICHOL HYNES  
**STAND PROUD**

**LITTLE BUN**  
NGOOLONG

Counting  
our  
Country

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.

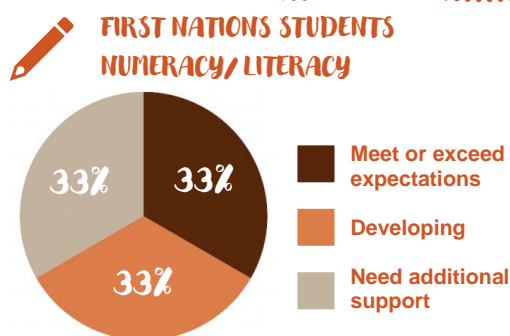
NAPLAN results were lower in remote areas. Among First Nations students in Year 3, the average proportion meeting or exceeding expectations was 39% in major cities, 37% in inner regional areas, and 30% in outer regional areas, compared with 17% in remote areas, and 8% in very remote areas.

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).<sup>16</sup>

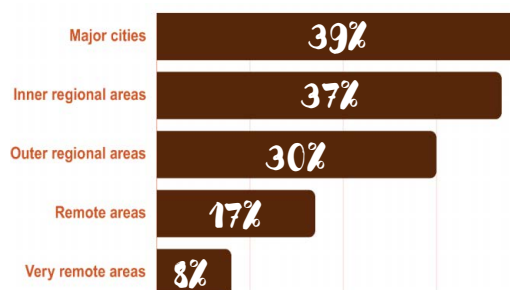
Increasing the number of First Nations teachers in remote areas could enhance educational outcomes. A more diverse teaching workforce can provide cultural role models and improve student aspiration and retention. Strengthening connections between schools and tertiary institutions and offering tailored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

<sup>16</sup> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework, NIAA

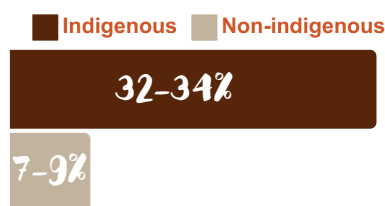
## First Nations Education Statistics



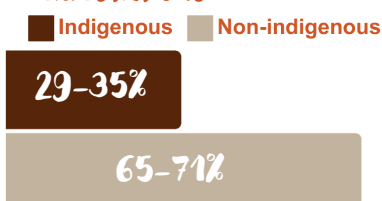
### FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS MEETING OR EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS (BY LOCATION, YEAR 3)



### STUDENTS NEEDING ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC SUPPORT



### STUDENTS MEETING OR EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS



## Key Points This Year

1. School partnership program continued throughout WA.
2. Ongoing Professional Development with Halls Head College.
3. Books for All initiative continues to provide Aboriginal-authored books to disadvantaged children and youth.

## School Partnerships: Supporting Education and Recovery in the Fitzroy Valley



FISH has continued to play a vital role in supporting long-term flood recovery across the Fitzroy Valley, with a focus on helping children re-engage in education following the devastating floods and the impacts of COVID-19. This work has been made possible through our valued partnership with Good360 Australia and BIG W, who have walked alongside FISH to celebrate and encourage student achievement.

At Muludja Remote Community School, FISH continues to work closely with Principal Natasha Francis and her dedicated team to

strengthen attendance and learning outcomes. Together, we are ensuring that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential through regular school attendance and a lifelong love of learning.

FISH has also partnered with Fitzroy Valley District High School, supporting its engagement program through donations that promote mindfulness and creativity in the classroom. These initiatives demonstrate how strong partnerships can inspire resilience, recovery, and opportunity in remote communities.



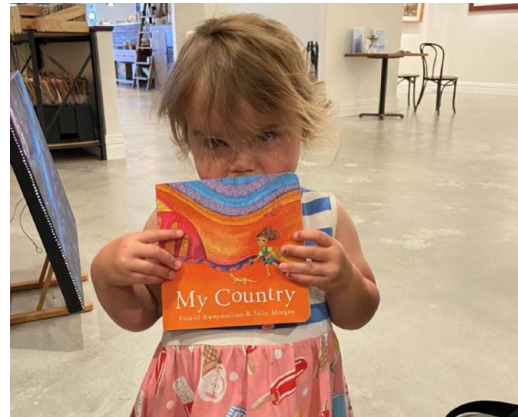
## Books for All



FISH believes every child in Australia should have equal access to books and language resources – especially children in remote communities. Through our Books for All Initiative, we have continued to support teachers, schools, carers, and families to access culturally appropriate books that inspire learning and connection.

This work is made possible through the generosity of our partners such as Enscope, and our incredible volunteers including FISH Ambassador Steven Streat from Fortescue, who regularly helps deliver books to remote communities. Most recently, Steven transported a new collection to Nullagine and Jigalong in the Pilbara, ensuring children there have access to engaging stories and learning resources.

Reading for pleasure is the single greatest predictor of a child's future success. By fostering a love of reading and providing access to quality books, FISH is helping children in remote communities build brighter futures and lifelong learning habits.



## Professional Development



Since 2016, FISH has delivered Cultural Competency Professional Development to schools, government agencies, and businesses, helping participants move beyond awareness into genuine cultural partnership. Our program connects head knowledge with heart and spirit, shifting paradigms and empowering people to create workplaces grounded in respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Participants explore the richness of First Nations society before settlement, the impacts of laws and policies, the intergenerational effects of trauma, and how to build culturally safe, inclusive environments today.

A standout example of long-term commitment is our partnership with Halls Head College, which began in 2019 with a Fire Lighting

Ceremony and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. This created a foundation for a relationship built on trust, shared learning, and authentic reconciliation. Every staff member at the College – teachers, support staff, office staff, cleaners, even gardeners – undertakes the full PD program, with new staff completing it each year. This whole-of-school commitment ensures a shared cultural understanding across the entire community.

This year, FISH delivered four sessions to staff, working alongside Traditional Owner Karrie-Anne Kearing and her team at Bindjareb Park, who lead the on-Country component. Together, we aim to reshape the “DNA” of the College – fostering cultural knowledge, belonging, and connection to place in everyday practice.



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.<sup>17</sup>

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.<sup>18</sup>

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.<sup>19</sup>

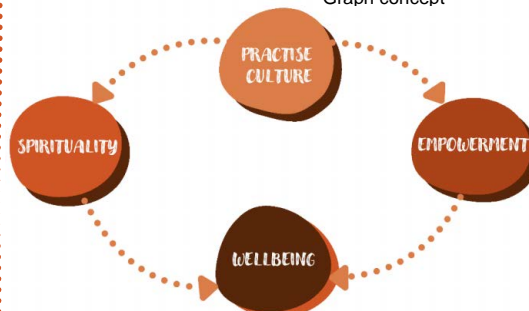
<sup>17</sup> Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation, 2017, *Interrelationships: Bringing together Stories and Numbers*

## First Nations Creative Statistics



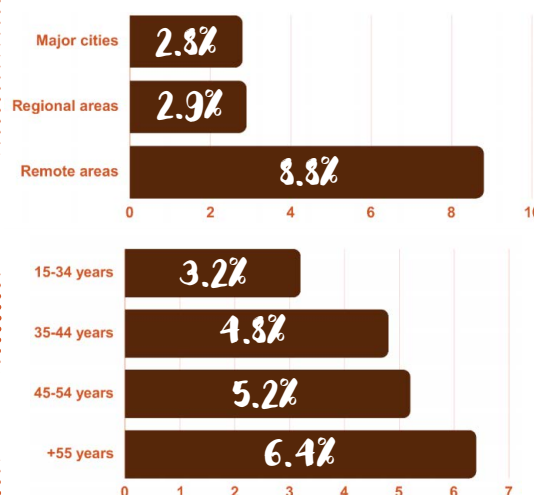
### CULTURE SUPPORTS WELLBEING

Graph concept <sup>17</sup>



### ECONOMIC ART PARTICIPATION

(BY LOCATION, BY AGE GROUP)



### CREATIVE ARTS PARTICIPATION BY FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGE SPEAKING



<sup>18</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics

<sup>19</sup> Creative Australia ([www.creative.gov.au](http://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. Weaving workshops throughout Perth region.
4. Supported over 35 artists, 40 micro-enterprises, and 500 Indigenous-authored books.

## Working with Artists



Our creative arm embraces literature, music, film, painting, poetry, and other art forms as powerful ways to share knowledge, spark conversations about social issues, and celebrate uplifting narratives.

FISH sees art and storytelling as vital tools for:

- reconnecting with culture and tradition;
- building empathy and understanding across journeys;
- celebrating achievements and showcasing role models; and
- shining light on challenges facing our communities.

Through stories and creative expression, we seek to strengthen both individual wellbeing and community resilience.

Since its beginning, FISH has partnered with Aboriginal artists, recognising that creativity lies at the heart of cultural identity, spirituality, and connection to Country.

Over the past year, FISH has welcomed new artists into our creative programs, including retail art sales through our social enterprises, exhibitions in schools and workplaces, and the development of merchandise lines.

We also maintain a permanent gallery space at our Perth social enterprise, Local and Aesthetic in Mt Lawley, and are always seeking new artists to keep the collection vibrant and engaging.

One of our newest artists is Chynna Chadderton (Blue Eyes Art). Chynna is a Malgana woman from Gathaagudu (Shark Bay, WA) and a self-taught Aboriginal artist. Painting has been a tool for managing stress and trauma, offering a way to express complex emotions through symbols and colour.



Using dots and lines drawn from traditional Malgana styles, she blends contemporary elements with deep cultural meaning, incorporating colours and language symbols to tell stories rooted in Country.

Chynna's work helps keep culture alive, passing knowledge to others, and fostering appreciation of the beauty and significance of Aboriginal identity and Country.

## Art Exhibitions

For years, FISH has worked with corporate supporters who host Aboriginal art exhibitions in their Perth premises. Most recently, we had the pleasure of exhibiting our artworks at Bridge 42's building, displaying 22 spectacular pieces of artwork, which included cultural expression from the Whadjuk people in the

southwest of WA, through to the Bunuba and Walmajarri in the Kimberley, the Yindjibarndi in the Pilbara, and the Guringai and Kamilaroi in New South Wales.

100% of the income from the sale of the art supported the artists and FISH's Aboriginal Home Ownership Initiative.



## Weaving Workshops

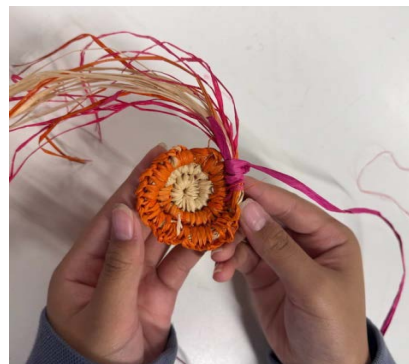


Our weaving workshops bring people together through the timeless art of hand weaving – a practice that connects culture, creativity, and wellbeing. Using natural raffia and traditional techniques, participants learn the foundations of weaving while gaining insight into the deep cultural significance of textile arts.

Throughout the year, we delivered workshops in schools, community spaces, and cultural venues, guiding participants to create their own woven forms – from small vessels to wall hangings and wearable art. The sessions encourage mindfulness, patience, and presence.

Beyond raffia, we also explore other textile forms such as twining, coiling, and fibre art, inviting participants to experiment with recycled and found materials that honour sustainability and creativity.

The workshops have become a space for skill sharing and cultural exchange, where stories and techniques are passed between generations. Teachers have remarked on their calming influence in classrooms, while community participants describe a renewed sense of connection – both to culture and to the simple, meditative act of making by hand.



## Poetry

Each Monday, FISH shares a poem to encourage us to stop 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's poetry book is available through the FISH Social Enterprise, both online and in our store.

## You're Awesome

*It's been a tough old week for me,  
Yet I've made it through thus far,  
But not because of circumstances;  
It's the fight that leaves no scar.  
Like static on the radio  
Or old rubbish on the street,  
It's hard to practice loving self  
When you're staring at your feet.*

*But through it all I'm hanging tough,  
And I take those thoughts to court,  
I know that I will get through this,  
For I've won this fight I've fought.  
Then a mate gets in beside me, says,  
"If you could see you like I do",  
That one small gift of kindness  
Was enough to get me through.*

*It lifted my head and altered my gaze,  
Shifting perspective right where I stood,  
Returning colour to the overcast day  
Or because a mate asked "are you good?"  
Next thing you know I'm spotting a meme  
Of a puppy giving a wink,  
Pointing at me with one of its paws  
With a statement that made me think.*

*"Who's awesome?" it asked,  
"You're awesome", replied,  
Four words that lifted me up,  
A simple statement to edify  
From the cutest one-eyed pup.  
It's true; we're all amazing,*

*Unique in every way;  
Mould-breaking flipping legends;  
Bringing sunshine to a day.  
Design whose sheer complexity  
Still baffles the greatest minds;  
Nature, nurture, or no idea;  
You – a precious one of a kind.*

*I don't want to hear you saying,  
"Compared to them on this or that"  
For we were never meant for measure,  
We are not a copied cat.  
We all have strengths and weaknesses,  
Things that set us all apart,  
A gift that only you possess,  
A joy that fills your heart.*

*That moment when you're in the zone,  
When effortlessly you slip some stream,  
Time becomes irrelevant,  
As purposely you pursue your dream.  
We all have a role in this movie called life,  
That sometimes shifts with the breeze,  
The role of a champion who steps up to the plate  
To help others like me on our knees.*

*I tip my hat to you heroes,  
If you're struggling, my friend, please hold tight  
For no matter what role you are playing today,  
You are awesome,  
That puppy was right.*

Justin Geange

# 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 has been 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

## International Partners



## National Partners



## State Partners



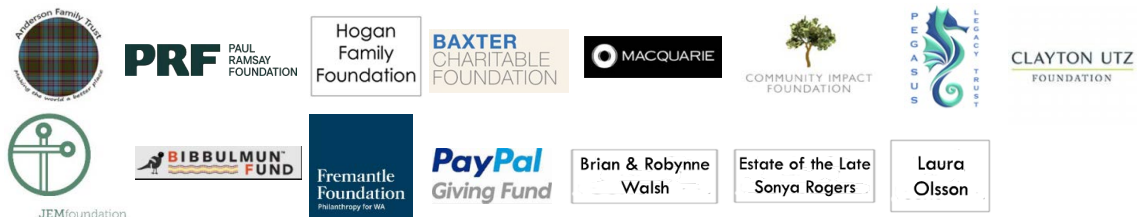
## Aboriginal Partners



## 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:

- Aspire Tiling – Josh Pyrc
- BGC Concrete
- Big W
- Blackfish
- Bridge 42
- Chasse Ninette
- Clayton Utz - Legal Services
- GHD
- Good360 Australia
- Graham Murdoch - Project management consultancy
- HIF Australia
- Mandurah Glass
- MB Sales Mandurah
- Midland Brick
- Retravisio
- Soroptimist International of Western Australia
- TPS Total Project Solutions - Chris Howlett

### Volunteers and Champions:

- Lady Claire Browne
- Lord Sebastian Browne
- Christine (Aggie) Budzyn
- Kaisha Champion
- John Gilmore
- Laura Hejleh
- Gail Humphreys
- John Makedonez
- Charlotte O'Shea
- Steven Streat



Foundation for Indigenous  
Sustainable Health  
2024-2025





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