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Armfuls of ARIAs

First Nations artists take the awards by storm

STYLE UP STARTS PAGE 9





WA Premier Roger Cook, accompanied by WA Governor Chris Dawson, apologises for the horrors of Wadjemup. Picture: Rhiannon Clarke

STATE SAYS SORRY

Premier apologises for atrocities on popular holiday island

RHIANNON CLARKE

Western Australia's Premier Roger Cook has issued an historic apology for the most sinister episode in the State's history — atrocities committed against Aboriginal people on Wadjemup, or Rottnest Island.

Indigenous people imprisoned on Wadjemup by colonial authorities and the WA government endured horrific conditions and many perished there. There remain mass graves on the island to this day.

On November 9, Mr Cook joined many in gathering for the Wadjemup Wirin Bidi Commemorative Ceremony on the island acknowledging the crimes committed and honouring the victims.

From 1838-1931 Wadjemup was used as a place of incarceration, segregation and forced labour for more than 4000 Aboriginal men and boys who were forcibly taken from regions across WA.

Historic records indicate at least 373 of these men and boys were buried in an area now referred to as the Wadjemup Aboriginal Burial Ground.

Organisers of the ceremony said Wadjemup Wirin Bidi, meaning 'Spirit Trail', was a cultural Ceremony for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to gather to facilitate healing and commemorate those affected by the past incarceration of Aboriginal men and boys on Wadjemup.

The Premier, standing beside WA Governor Chris Dawson, acknowledged many were "incarcerated here for crimes not committed, but simply because of who they were and the culture they represented".

"We are sorry for the incarcerations, we are sorry for the injustice, and we are deeply, deeply sorry for those who lost their lives and were never able to return to their people," Mr Cook said.

Member of the Wadjemup Aboriginal Reference Group and respected Noongar Elder Uncle Richard Walley said the Wadjemup Wirin Bidi ceremony marked an essential step in confronting this difficult history.

"Events like these are very important because of what it does. It addresses the truth. And when you get to the truth, regardless of how traumatic it is, it has to be faced," he said.

Member for Kimberley Divina D'Anna reflected on the importance of the day for all Aboriginal people, including those from her own region.

"It's not only important for the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation in which this land is, but it's also for a lot of the Kimberley mobs too that

CONTINUED PAGE 3

DEFIANT THORPE VOWS NEVER TO BE SILENCED PAGE 2

Defiant Thorpe: I'd do it all again



Independent Senator Lidia Thorpe. Picture: AAP

DECHLAN BRENNAN

Independent Senator Lidia Thorpe said she would protest against King Charles again as the Senate passed a censure motion against her last Monday.

The Gunnai, Gunditjmara and Djab Wurrung senator was both criticised and congratulated for her protest last month, when she was removed from a parliamentary reception for King Charles after shouting "you are not my king" and "this is not your country".

"In no way do I regret protesting the King," she said.

"I would do it again. It is time this country reckons with its history and puts a stop to the continuing genocide on First Peoples.

"My allegiance is to the true sovereigns of this country, not some king who thinks he's sovereign."

The Senate passed the censure motion against the Victorian senator, 46 votes to 12.

Footage showed Senator Thorpe entering the chamber and calling out "Why wasn't I allowed to be here?". "Shame on you all . . . I'll do it again," she appeared to say.

Greens Senator Mehreen Faruqi called the motion a "disgrace", arguing her former Greens colleague was being punished for "telling the truth about invasion, dispossession and the genocide of First Nations people in this country".

Before the vote, Coalition Senate leader Simon Birmingham said the Opposition supported the censure motion against Senator Thorpe, calling her behaviour "disrespectful", and arguing politicians should use their platform with "respect and care".

Senator Thorpe said the motion showed both major parties "lie" and "don't stand with First Peoples in this country", arguing instead they stand against "justice and truth" in defending a "foreign king".

"They want me to kneel, to be silent, to disappear, but let me be clear: I am a sovereign Gunai, Gunditjmara, and Djab Wurrung woman," Senator Thorpe said.

"My loyalty lies with my people, with justice, not with a government or a crown that has systematically worked to erase us."

Neither Senator Thorpe nor United Australia Party Senator Ralph Babet — who was also censured for a social media post using various slurs last week — were in the chamber during the vote.

Senator Thorpe said her flight had been delayed in Melbourne, which meant she couldn't attend the vote, noting a Labor senator had texted her while she was on the plane.

"I said, 'I'm on a plane delayed. Can you wait? I want to be there.' And so, I was denied my right to be in that chamber whilst everybody else voted to shut me down. I'm not one to be shut down," she said.

Later, the senator said: "I don't give a damn about (the) censure motion.

"In fact, I'm going to use it for kindling later on in the week."

"As I say, you got 3.5 years left of me and I'll continue to decolonise, and in a way that is best for this country. Best for everybody in this country.

"I will keep doing it.

"I will resist colonisation in this country.

"I swear my allegiance to the real sovereigns of these lands.

"First Peoples are the real sovereigns.

"You don't have some random king rock up and say he's sovereign. Would you like that happening to your home? Would you like someone to knock on your door and say, 'Time for you to leave, I'm taking over, and these are the new rules of your house'? Well, not on my watch."

Scientist up for national award

GIOVANNI TORRE

Research fellow Katrina Wruck was named the 2025 Young Australian of the Year for Queensland this month.

A proud Mabuigilaig and Goemulgal woman working in industrial chemistry and a lecturer at Queensland University of Technology's school of chemistry and physics, Dr Wruck has a passion for making the world a greener place

Dr Wruck's work focuses on developing materials to address contaminants in water, with an emphasis on sustainable green solutions. Her business, Nguki Kula Green Labs, aims to transform the consumer goods sector by harnessing the power of green chemistry and inspire others to step into STEM.

Dr Wruck's unique method of converting mining by-products to zeolite LTA — which can remove contaminants from water that cause hardness — will be commercialised while her postdoctoral research examines how to break down dangerous "forever chemicals" into benign ones.



Dr Katrina Wruck Picture: QUT

An advocate for First Nations knowledge, Dr Wruck also takes part in community engagement programs where she says she is often told by the students she's the first Indigenous scientist they've met. "It's extremely validating to get this recognition because too many people along my entire journey have doubted my abilities," Dr Wruck said.

"I was told by teachers I would never be able to read or achieve any kind of success, let alone be able to study hard maths.

"This year, I discovered I am neurodivergent which has helped me to realise I learn a different way to the expectations of all those critics.

"I hope that by sharing my story, it helps another young person pursue their passion."

Dr Wruck joins Queensland recipients — Geoffrey Smith (Australian of the Year), Dr Bronwyn Herbert (Senior Australian of the Year) and Claire Smith (Local Hero) — at the national awards which will be announced on January 25.

Land transfer to Yamatji corporation approved

GIOVANNI TORRE

The Yamatji Nation and WA Government finalised the transfer of the first 10 reserves to Bundi Yamatji Aboriginal Corporation on November 18, initiating the delivery of up to 149,090ha for the Yamatji Land Estate.

Covering about 48,000sqkm of land in the Mid West, the Yamatji Nation Indigenous Land Use Agreement resolves the WA Government's compensation liability for the impairment and/or extinguishment of native title in the agreement area and includes a package of benefits for the Yamatji people, totalling about $500 million.

The transfers mark the formal creation of the Yamatji Land Estate agreed through the landmark Yamatji Nation Indigenous Land Use Agreement of 2020. The Yamatji Land Estate will be drawn from the Crown land estate and eight Aboriginal Lands Trust properties in the Geraldton area.

It will establish the Yamatji people as one of the largest landholders in the Mid-West. The aim is to provide a diverse asset base through which to build self-determination and long-term economic independence for Aboriginal people in the region.

Yamatji Southern Regional Corporation CEO Luka Gray said she was thrilled to see the first 10 reserves approved.

"This marks a pivotal moment for our people in securing our ancestral lands and paving the way for future generations of Yamatji people to thrive economically and culturally in the Mid West," she said.

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Torment of kids in care

JARRED CROSS



Stolen Generation survivors Uncle Roger 'Pigeon' Jarrett, Uncle Robert 'Bullfrog' Young and Uncle Willy Nixon at the NSW Aboriginal Child and Family Conference Picture: Georgia Brogan

At the NSW Aboriginal Child & Family Conference, held on Dharug Country this month, many shared memories of the days, and heartbroken years which followed, when their lives encountered the child protection system.

One mother said she grieved as if it were a death when her children were taken from her care.

"If this is what I'm going through. . .imagine what my girls are going through," she recounted feeling.

She has since been reconnected with her daughters, who now live at home, after an exhausting battle.

"The system only ever did everything it could to stop my girls from coming home," she said.

Across the many discussions, the realities of what's been endured by many — families separated, children arriving at strangers' doorsteps, abuse and pain — were heard.

The accounts brought silence from a room filled with the sector working to end those experiences from being repeated, followed by applause for the speaker.

People, not numbers or statistics, was a common theme.

One mum lived through knowing her now-adult daughter, who sat beside her on the panel, was being sexually abused by her father while she was forced to keep her distance despite living on the same property.

Another described fearing the possible consequences of going to pick up one of her children after he called pleading to come home.

After a "healing" reunion where her care rights for her son were reinstated, the toll of her son's experience in an abusive out-of-home care environment took its toll, she said.

Her son became an "angry" teen, and later entered juvenile detention.

"There was so much trauma. It's not his fault," the mum said.

Uncle Willy Nixon told National Indigenous Times his culture is still lost as a result of his removal from family and placement at Kinchela Boys Home on the NSW mid-north coast more than half a century ago.

Stolen Generation survivors Uncle Roger 'Pigeon' Jarrett and Uncle Robert 'Bullfrog' Young joined Uncle Willy in relaying their experiences at KBH. All three were forcibly removed from their family, stripped of their names, identity and endured the result of government policy.

"I feel the bloody tears of my mum on my hands, even today," Uncle Roger said of the time his mother was made to leave after travelling hours believing she was going to take her son home.

She had been told signing papers would mean her son would return home after 12 months on the day he was taken, aged 11.

Uncle Roger described his time there as torment.

After 11 years at KBH, Uncle Robert was placed with "nice people . . . they treated me like a human being".

He wasn't told, however, his mother was living just 150 yards away from his foster home.

Uncle Willy said they are three of just 49 still alive from the 600 who were taken to KBH. He spent seven years there before being sent to other institutions as a child. "It's still going ahead now. . .through removing children from their families, their culture," Uncle Willy told the Times.

Speaking earlier at the conference, Yoorrook Justice Commissioner Sue-Anne Hunter said the government philosophy on the Stolen Generation was not a thing of the past, and "the colonial machine is working exactly as its planned".

"Laws have changed. . .but the actions have not stopped," Commissioner Hunter said, adding, "this isn't history, this is now", referring to the over-representation of Indigenous Victorian children being placed into care — 102.9 per 1000.

Earlier this month, Catherine Liddle, chief executive of SNAICC, the national non-government peak for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, revealed the latest data shows 22,000 First Nations children and young people are in out-of-home care.

Speaking to the National Indigenous Times, Ms Liddle backed Aboriginal community-controlled organisations as the groups with means to create safe spaces for children. She added full commitment to Closing the Gap targets from government was crucial to "the tidal wave that we need to push back on the over-representation of our children in out of home care".

Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and research fellow, Dr James Beaufils told a session OOHC philosophies are "vague and inconsistent in placements, not aligning with First Nations' worldviews" and principals of kin are not adhered to where the "majority of our first nations children are". Dr Beaufils said he found a number of barriers are in front of Aboriginal families wanting to become carers. This includes being over-policed, being disenfranchised, elements of shame and inappropriate assessment.

"Young people with a lived experience of OOHC referred to those who were placed with Aboriginal families as being one of the lucky ones. Being in these placements was seen to be luck of the draw," he said.

Tyrah Chan-Hampton is trying to change the future for Indigenous kids in OOHC. A week out from graduating a social work degree at UNSW, she joined student peers Mahlia Garay, Tiah Payne, Tara Weldon in a panel discussion.

Ms Chan-Hampton has her own lived experience of the OOHC system.

"My hope for when I enter this sector is (that) more children are home. That's literally all I want. I want kids to be home with family, with kin, with community," she said.

Sorry part of healing journey

FROM PAGE 1

have come down," she said.

"There are a lot of people that were buried here, far from their homes and have had their lives taken here."

The ceremony paid tribute to the resilience of Aboriginal women, who kept their communities and traditions alive in times of immense hardship.

Whadjuk Noongar, Ballardong, Yuat, and Kungarakan woman, Meg McGuire, acknowledged the critical role of women in preserving culture and caring for country, even when faced with the absence of the men who had been taken from them.

"I think about the women that were left on the mainland to carry the traditions, the laws, the customs, and caring for country . . . we commemorate their contributions and the way that the women have contributed to carrying our culture on," she said.

Owner-operator of Go Cultural Aboriginal Tours, Walter McGuire, noted that while apologies from both the State and Federal governments hold significance, they need to be accompanied by tangible steps toward justice and reparations.

Mr Walley also recognised the importance of the apology but stressed a commitment to real action was essential for genuine reconciliation.

"This is the remnants of colonisation, and those who are beneficiaries of colonisation should understand that it came at a cost, and this is one of those costs," he said.

For Mr McGuire and his family, who have shared Wadjemup's history through tours for the past six years, this gathering was part of a personal and collective journey toward healing.

"We do it in a very conciliatory way, in a gentle way, but also that's really helped our healing as a family as well. And sharing that with others has been a real privilege," he said.

Noongar human rights law academic and member of the UN's Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Dr Hannah McGlade, told National Indigenous Times Wadjemup should be included in the UNESCO World Heritage list as a place of significant cultural and heritage value. "We must remember this shocking history and also the history of the Noongar activists who led the movement to remember and acknowledge what was done here," she said.



Roger Cook apologises for the shocking history of Wadjemup.

"Our future reconciliation efforts depend on genuine efforts to know and renounce this violence and history and its present impacts. I was a young activist in the 1980s protesting at the way it was being used as a holiday resort, with people even sleeping on the resting places of those who were violently abused and even murdered here. And today, Aboriginal people remain the most incarcerated group in the world. This deep-seated racism is pervasive across Australia and Western Australia, which has the highest rates of incarceration in the nation."

Honour for forest fighter





Top: Uncle Jim Everett, and with Dr Bob Brown. Pictures: Bob Brown Foundation

CALLAN MORSE

Tasmanian Elder Jim Everett-puralia meenamatta has been recognised as the Bob Brown Foundation's environmentalist of the year.

The foundation said Uncle Jim was recognised for his "real achievements for a world in environmental crisis".

Continuing his decades-long fight for ecological protection, Uncle Jim has been involved in multiple protests against logging of native forests in Tasmania this year. This included in southern Tasmania's Styx Valley in March and the Central Highlands in October.

He was arrested for trespass on both occasions, and subsequently refused to attend court on the matter, following which a warrant was issued for his arrest.

The Foundation said Uncle Jim has been a prominent figure in many environment and First Nations justice movements, including the historic protests to protect the Franklin River in the 1980s.

Uncle Jim said receiving the award was a great personal honour, an accolade which recognises his decades of environmental activism in the State.

"My Caring for Country and political actions go back to the Gordon below Franklin dam issue, early 1980s," Uncle Jim said. "In the early 90s Peg Putt and I visited Japan and fronted the big papermakers with letters demanding that they stop taking our ancient forests away as woodchips.

"In 1995 I was taken by helicopter to the Tarkine 'road to nowhere' and arrested for trespass.

"This action had me attend a court in Burnie, and I pleaded 'no jurisdiction', the magistrate gave me a not guilty plea anyway and I was fined around $150 and court costs."

The 82-year-old said he would not make a plea in a colonial court, which has no jurisdiction because "we have never made any agreements to be Australian citizens".

"The frustration of facing-off governments on multiple Palawa community issues year in and year out has had our leaders having to concentrate on how to heal the community under colonial trauma," he said.

"It is only now that I have been able to find time to address the environmental issues with forest logging being the obvious major issue."

Bob Brown commended Uncle Jim's commitment to environmental activism, saying he is "much loved by the wider community".

"(He) has actively defended country since the Franklin River campaign and is an outstanding defender of forests and advocate for saving the natural world, including its oceans," Dr Brown said.

"Jim is Country and Country is Jim. This wise old Palawan is defying the plunderers while yet inspiring to action all those who want nature protected but think someone else should do it. If they lock him up there will be huge public anger."

Dr Brown noted Uncle Jim expressed that the most important thing is for him to accept the award on behalf of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, and for the Aboriginal community's ancestors who cared for Tasmania for thousands of years.

The annual Environment Awards which are in their 13th year also saw Alexa Stuart from Rising Tide awarded young environmentalist of the year, the North East Forest Alliance awarded environmental group of the year and John Middendorf awarded the Deni Greene award for business of professional environmentalist.

Part of a Strong Community

Meet Brian, Woodside's Longest-Serving First Nations Employee.

Known as "Flash" to his team, Brian has dedicated 28 years to Woodside in Karratha. A humble achiever, he reflects on his journey with pride, calling it a "dream job" that has allowed him to support his family and be part of a strong community.

Join us in celebrating Brian's contributions and achievements, and the dedication that strengthens Woodside every day.



Follow the QR code to hear Brian's story and explore Careers at Woodside.

Woodside Energy

Complaint after arrest footage

DECHLAN BRENNAN

Confronting footage of the arrest of an Aboriginal man being shoved into a wall by a police officer before being dragged through a front yard has been shared online, with South Australia Police confirming this month that a formal complaint has been made.

In two videos shared on Facebook, a man is seen speaking to officers before he appears to be pushed into a wall, causing him to collapse.

He is then seen being dragged along a concrete path by a police officer before being arrested while being held down.

SA Police confirmed the 42-year-old man was arrested and charged with hindering and assaulting police after officers attended a home in Davenport, close to Port Augusta, on November 16.

He was bailed to appear in Port Augusta Magistrates Court on February 6, SA Police confirmed.

SA Attorney-General and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Kyam Maher, said on November 20 that he had spoken with the Police Commissioner on the incident.

"I have been contacted by a number of Aboriginal community leaders and members over the last 24 hours concerned about the footage. I understand those concerns."

Mr Maher said he had been assured by the Police Commissioner "this will be thoroughly investigated under the Police Complaints and Discipline Act process".

SA Police said they understood and acknowledged the footage shared on social media "will have a significant impact on Aboriginal peoples and communities".

"Body worn vision of the officers involved has been reviewed in its entirety, and police are assessing the full circumstances of this incident," SA Police said.

"A complaint has subsequently been made to police pursuant to the Police Complaints and Discipline Act."

Victims of new Stolen Generation take battle to court

GIOVANNI TORRE

First Nations people who allege they have experienced unlawful racial discrimination at the hands of the Department of Communities in Western Australia and the Department of Communities and Justice in New South Wales have taken took their battle to the Federal Court.

A class action on behalf of affected families was lodged on November 7 in WA and on November 17 in NSW.

Shine Lawyers special counsel Caitlin Wilson is leading the class action.

"First Nations families allege that there has been widespread racial discrimination across a number of State governments that has resulted in the unlawful and unjust removal and separation of First Nations children from their families, and a loss in their cultural connection," she said.

"First Nations children are consistently and significantly overrepresented in out of home care.. . .This class action alleges that this is largely because of the discriminatory conduct of the department throughout each of the various entry points into the child protection system."

Shine noted that in WA, Indigenous children are 19.7 times more likely than non-First Nations children to be placed into State care, and 19.4 times more likely to remain on long-term orders, with only around 7.8 per cent of First Nations children reunified with families.

"Families in NSW aren't better off. NSW has the lowest reunification of First Nations children at only 2.3 per cent, has the third-highest rate of First Nations children on long-term orders and First Nations children are around 11.5 times more likely than non-First Nations children to be living in out of home care," Ms Wilson said.

"Despite these bleak statistics, the proportion of expenditure on family and intensive supports services in NSW was below the national average and dropping."

Shine client Sarah, a mother of four, had her children taken into State care when they were very young. Her eldest three children — now 20, 19, and 18 — were each placed in care for seven years, while her youngest, aged 11, was taken just five days after birth and remained in care for nine months.

During their time in State care, one of Sarah's children was subjected to sexual abuse. Despite these challenges, Sarah worked toward reunification and had her parental rights reinstated. "Many of the families we have spoken to liken themselves to a modern-day Stolen Generation," Ms Wilson said.

To be a part of the class action, the conduct of the departments must have occurred in WA or NSW on or after March 5, 1992.

Racism is 'not a relic' of the past



Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro. Picture: AAP

DECHLAN BRENNAN & GIOVANNI TORRE

Concerns have been raised over the Northern Territory Chief Minister's claim an investigation by the Territory's corruption body on a specific case is evidence systemic racism doesn't exist in the NT Police.

On November 14, an investigation by the Office of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption into racism in the Northern Territory Police Force found "no admissible evidence" five officers lied to the court but concluded "any person of reasonable intelligence" would see evident racism in a series of informal awards for "c..n of the year".

Patricia Kelly SC, who led the investigation, said the investigation had "already fulfilled one of its objectives by highlighting historical evidence of racism within the TRG (Tactical Response Group)."

"The OICAC does not have the resources to conduct any further wide-ranging investigation into racism within any unit of the NTPF, nor in my view, given the positive steps already taken by the NTPF is it necessary," she noted.

Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro, however, claimed the report exonerated claims of systemic racism in the NTPF.

"The CLP has never supported the view that there is systemic racism within the Northern Territory police force. This report puts those claims to bed. . .This period has caused much angst and distress amongst our hardworking police," she said.

The allegations of racism emerged publicly in February while former NT constable Zach Rolfe gave evidence at the inquest of Kumanjayi Walker.

Mr Rolfe, who shot and killed Mr Walker but was found not guilty of all charges, told the inquest the elite TRG gave racist mock awards to members who displayed the most "Aboriginal-like behaviour" — referred to as "c..n of the year" or "Nugedah" award.

Senior officers denied the claim, with NT Police lawyer Ian Freckleton tendering four statements from senior officers in the TRG who rejected the claims, saying no such award existed.

"There is no such award and never has been," Sen. Sgt Meacham King said in a statement.

"None of the awards have any connotations to race."

Mr Rolfe produced three certificates — allegedly awarded to TRG members — including one printed on an Aboriginal flag.

In September, the Department of Public Prosecutions said there wasn't enough evidence to charge any of the five officers who denied the allegations by Mr Rolfe, with Ms Kelly describing the decision as "reasonable if not inevitable".

"There is no admissible evidence of any conduct of the five named police officers which warrants any further investigation of any potential charge against them," she said.

Ms Kelly noted some statements from the five officers contradicted one another. She also cited statements from Commissioner Riches in May this year that the certificates from 2007, 2013 and 2015 "are evidently on their face racist".

"It is difficult to conclude how any person of reasonable intelligence could conclude otherwise," Ms Kelly said.

After the OICAC findings, Police Commissioner Michael Murphy said the NTPF was making, and would continue to make, strides in driving institutional change.

"We are committed to creating and delivering on a culture of safety, integrity, accountability, and professionalism. There is no place for racism or discrimination within our ranks," he said.

Earlier this year at the Garma festival he apologised to Aboriginal Territorians for the "past harms and the injustices caused by members of the Northern Territory Police".

The Land Council said systemic racism in the NT Police Force, both the Tactical Response Group and more generally, is "not just a relic of the past". The NLC said ICAC's conclusion that there was no admissible evidence to warrant individual charges or resources for further inquiry into NT Police failed "to reflect the lived realities of Aboriginal people across the Top End".

The NLC said it would not accept "any attempt to minimise or dismiss these harmful practices as isolated or historic", and that the Commission's "failure to hold individuals or the institution accountable undermines the gravity of the issue and reinforces mistrust in the system".

NLC chair Matthew Ryan said "things can only improve if we start with truth telling".

Community figure denies VRO breach

RHIANNON CLARKE

Prominent Pilbara Indigenous community figure Jolleen Hicks has appeared at Karratha Courthouse to face two charges of breaching a family violence restraining order.

Ms Hicks, who is listed by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission as deputy chair of Mawarnkarra Health Services, pleaded not guilty to both charges on November 21.

One charge relates to an email Ms Hicks sent to her ex-wife requesting contact with their child. In court, she claimed the email was sent based on legal advice and she believed she was acting within her rights. The prosecution argued the restraining order prohibited such contact and that Ms Hicks' actions constituted a clear violation.

Ms Hicks told the court, "I thought I was following the right advice", and explained her intent was not to breach the order but to reconnect with their child after years of separation.

The second charge arises from statements Ms Hicks allegedly made during family court proceedings.

The prosecution presented evidence Ms Hicks was overheard and recorded on camera saying, "I'm gonna get you, I'm gonna get you c..t".

While the intended target of the remarks was not made clear, the prosecution argued the statements breached the conditions of the restraining order.

The court was told that any violation of a restraining order was a serious matter.

At the hearing Ms Hicks represented herself, and said her lack of legal experience contributed to her misunderstanding of the order's conditions.

She also expressed frustration at the complexity of navigating the legal system.

Ms Hicks graduated from the University of Western Australia with a bachelor of laws in 2006. In 2007 she completed a graduate diploma in legal practice at the University of New South Wales.

In a recent social media post about the case, Ms Hicks wrote: "I'm still waiting to have my say in court after 18 months of hell. Everyone is welcome to attend and watch. I don't mind. I'm a great lawyer by the way."

According to the Legal Practice Board of Western Australia, Ms Hicks does not hold a practising certificate in WA.

The matter will return to court in March 2025.

Protest on jail results in ban


Emily Lassam Picture: Curtin Guild

GIOVANNI TORRE

A Curtin University student has been suspended and banned from campus for one year for confronting Mark McGowan over the treatment of Aboriginal children in Western Australian detention centres Banksia Hill and Unit 18 while he was the State's premier.

Unit 18 was opened under the McGowan government and has come under increasing scrutiny from human rights, justice and Indigenous groups. WA's youth justice system has been criticised by experts including current and former Inspectors of Custodial Services, and current and former presidents of the Children's Court, as well as leading Indigenous justice advocates.

Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the WA government to close the Banksia Hill youth detention centre and the Unit 18 compound at Casuarina maximum security adult prison. Last year, a 16 year-old Yamatji boy, Cleveland Dodd died in custody, having been detained in Unit 18.

Indigenous children are drastically over-represented in WA's justice system, and over-incarcerated at a rate significantly higher than the national average.

Student Emily Lassam confronted the former premier over his handling of youth justice in September.

National Suicide Prevention & Trauma Recovery Project director and Noongar activist Megan Krakouer said: "Emily Lassam's brave confrontation of former Premier Mark McGowan at Curtin University highlights the devastating impact of Unit 18 at Casuarina Prison and the ongoing crisis at Banksia Hill Detention Centre".

"The tragic deaths of Cleveland Dodd, a 16-year-old Aboriginal boy, and another boy within 10 months … underscore the deep systemic failures.

"These institutions are cruel places where hundreds of children have self-harmed or attempted suicide. I stand with Emily in condemning these facilities and call for urgent reforms to protect our children and end the cycle of trauma and neglect," she said.

Greens WA MLC Dr Brad Pettitt said universities "should be a place for advocacy, activism and the challenging of ideas and social norms".

"Unfortunately, across Australia we have seen an increase in universities cracking down on activism and peaceful protest by students, particularly on human rights issues," he said.

"There are significant concerns with the investigation by Curtin University into the suspension of Ms Emily Lassam and I would urge them to reconsider this drastic action."

Dr Pettitt noted the WA government "has a terrible record when it comes to the treatment of kids in youth detention that has seen two deaths — the first in our State's history – occur in the last 12 months as well as shocking revelations of solitary confinement and self-harm occurring regularly at both Banksia Hill and Unit 18".

"All of the evidence, including that coming out of the research centres of universities like Curtin, is that locking kids up in a maximum-security adult prison is not safe," he said.

"It is high time Unit 18 closed and the wellbeing of kids who interact with our youth justice system made a priority."

A Curtin University spokesperson told National Indigenous Times the university "cannot comment on individual disciplinary matters during the misconduct process or when it has been completed".

"Curtin strongly upholds academic freedom however this right comes with responsibilities. Any alleged behaviour or speech that contravenes our student charter or codes of conduct is addressed through established processes," she said. "All members of our community are expected to engage respectfully and in line with our codes and values, ensuring a safe, inclusive and accountable environment for all."

Edith Cowan University lecturer Alexis Vassiley said there has been "a concerted attack on freedom of speech on university campuses around Australia this year". "It is concerning that Curtin University seems to be following this trend. The university must immediately revoke the suspension of Emily for expressing legitimate political concerns toward a former premier," Dr Vassiley said.



Call to 'do better' after woman dies from attack

A Katherine woman died in hospital this month four weeks after being assaulted, the eighth suspected domestic violence killing of an Indigenous woman in the Territory since the start of July.

The 61-year-old was found on October 12 with serious injuries by NT Police following an assault at a residential address in Katherine East.

She was transported to Katherine Hospital and then flown to Royal Darwin Hospital.

"It is believed the woman was assaulted sometime on the evening of Friday, October 11, by her male partner, who also assaulted a 68-year-old male who attempted to intervene in the assault," NT Police said.

On the evening of November 14, NT Police confirmed the woman had died in hospital.

The 68-year-old alleged offender has since been arrested and appeared in Darwin Local Court on October 16, where he was remanded in custody.

There have been at least eight suspected domestic violence-related homicides in the Top End since the start of July. It is understood all the women killed were Indigenous.

The NT has the worst domestic violence rates in the country, with intimate partner homicides seven times higher than the national average.

Of the at-least 476 First Nations women killed since 1989, a third were Territorians, according to a report by Australian Institute of Criminology.

It has been described as a "national shame" by coroner Elisabeth Armitage, and the lack of reporting around murdered Indigenous women in stark contrast to that of non-Indigenous women was highlighted on ABC's Media Watch earlier this month.

In August, an Aboriginal woman in Darwin was allegedly murdered by her partner nine hours after police were "too busy" to conduct a welfare check.

Last month, NT Police Assistant Commissioner Travis Wurst said everyone needs "to do better".

"We wonder why we have young people on our streets who are committing crime and terrorising the community at times . . . part of that has to be linked back to domestic violence," Mr Wurst said. "Northern Territory Police need to do better. The community needs to do better."

If you or anyone you know is experiencing domestic or family violence, please reach out on 131 444 or in an emergency call 000. You can also anonymously report through Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

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Distress after police arrest boys at course

GIOVANNI TORRE

Indigenous justice groups and children taking part in a rehabilitation program were left shaken and stunned this month when WA Police arrived without warning at a program event and arrested three participants.

On November 14, officers arrived at the event, part of a program co-run by the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA, with five cars, arresting three boys.

ALS WA chief executive Wayne Nannup told National Indigenous Times the incident was "completely unforgiveable".

"We have a program with partners called Old Ways New Ways. Our partners are Hope Community Services, Wadjak Northside, and the Stephen Michael Foundation. The program is set up, and we're running a pilot right now for youth diversionary engagement; it could be community referrals, or it can come from the courts," he said.

"It's a grant that's been funded by justice reinvestment, which is now being closely looked at by the Attorney-General office federally. This morning, part of our pilot, we had 20 kids roll up, which has been the most we've had, and we've only started it three weeks ago.

"We're able to engage young kids to on the on the cusp of entering the justice system, or are already in the justice system. What happened? This morning, they had all these kids together at Wadjak Northside offices in Balga, and the cops turned up with five carloads of cops then proceeded to arrest three young boys that are in that program, handcuff them in front of all the other kids." Mr Nannup said the incident left all of the children present "distraught".

"We are trying to get this off the ground, providing alternatives to send for sentencing and just general youth engagement in the community. My kids are upset. My staff are upset, and it's just completely unforgivable," he said.

"It's an incredible thing that we're doing, because we're getting community referrals from all the agencies in that area, and they're so happy. . . This is *the* program. We know this thing's going to work, and it has started to work already. . . But what happens? We give the hope to these kids, we get them there, and we show them a different way, and then you have this turn up, and we go back 200 years."

WA Police said detectives from the rapid apprehension squad "attended an address in Balga, making inquiries in relation to series of aggravated burglary and stealing incidents that occurred between October 27 and 3 November 3, 2024".

The spokesperson said three 16-year-old boys were charged with 20 offences between them.

"Body-worn camera vision of the arrests has been reviewed and it is clear officers acted in a calm and professional manner.

"All interactions appear respectful and the arrests were actioned without incident," the spokesperson said on November 18. National Indigenous Times understands a formal complaint has been lodged.



Pat Turner speaks at the meeting to discuss Closing the Gap. Picture: Rhiannon Clarke

Leaders urge crucial collective action

RHIANNON CLARKE

At a major meeting in WA on November 15 leaders from across the nation reaffirmed their dedication to tackling the stark inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

The Joint Council on Closing the Gap convened with representatives from Federal, State, and Territory governments, including WA Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Tony Buti, alongside key figures from the Coalition of Peaks, an organisation representing over 80 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations nationwide.

The meeting underscored the critical importance of collaboration to address the systemic challenges facing Indigenous people, particularly in youth justice, health care, housing and education. Coalition of Peaks co-chair Pat Turner said the current approach to youth justice was inadequate, noting 84 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in detention are unsentenced, spending an average of 55 days in custody on remand. "We are deeply concerned by recent moves to lower the age of criminal responsibility," Ms Turner said.

"This approach risks compounding harm for our young people. To make real progress, we need solutions that protect and uplift, not punitive measures that overlook the underlying issues these children face," she said.

The meeting heard Indigenous community-controlled organisations are playing a leading role in developing culturally safe, sustainable solutions for youth, focusing on preventing homelessness, supporting education, and fostering a sense of belonging.

Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, echoed the need for structural reform aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Senator McCarthy highlighted recent developments in Indigenous health initiatives, including the First Nations Health Worker Traineeships Program.

"These traineeships . . . bring trusted healthcare access to rural and remote areas, ensuring Indigenous Australians receive care that respects their cultural needs. Indigenous health should be led by Indigenous people, and this program enables communities to address health challenges on their terms," the Garrwa and Yanyuwa senator said.

Housing reform was a recurring theme. "Housing reform must be a core priority for Closing the Gap. The links between secure housing and better health, educational outcomes, and economic participation are clear," Ms Turner said.

The council also emphasised that Closing the Gap was a collective responsibility.

"Every minister in every Cabinet across Australia has a responsibility to Closing the Gap," Senator McCarthy said.

"This commitment cannot rest solely on Indigenous-specific ministries; it must permeate every level of government, ensuring that each department plays its part in addressing disparities in health, justice, education, and beyond."

One important upcoming development cited was the appointment of the National Commission of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People, aimed at providing accountability and oversight to drive meaningful progress for Indigenous youth. Ms Turner said this would ensure Indigenous voices "remain central in policy-making, particularly on issues impacting young people and community wellbeing".

Protest show of defiance

BEN MCKAY

One of Aotearo's largest-ever protest movements concluded last week in Wellington, where tens of thousands of Kiwis took to the streets to oppose a government Bill to redefine the Treaty of Waitangi in law.

The "hikoi mo te Tiriti" began at the northernmost tip of Aotearoa 10 days previously with a few hundred in attendance. After 10 days of rallies across the country, police estimated that on November 19 roughly 42,000 walked through Wellington to fill the lawns and streets outside Parliament in a national show of defiance to the Treaty Principles Bill.

The crowd was so vast, many were unable to see or hear speakers.

Even more signed a petition calling on Chris Luxon's government to scrap the Bill, with more than 200,000 names handed over to Opposition MPs at the conclusion of the hikoi, or march.

"We've got a message for this government: Kill the Bill. Kill the Bill," Maori Party co-leader Rawiri Waititi told the crowd, who joined him in the chant.

The hikoi followed a now-famous haka inside Parliament earlier this month led by Maori Party MP Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke, who ripped up the proposed law.

Those videos and images have been seen by millions worldwide.

The Bill is a proposal by the ACT party, one of three government parties, which would reinterpret how the Treaty of Waitangi has been implemented by Parliament and the courts.

ACT leader David Seymour says this is essential in a modern New Zealand to ensure equal rights for all citizens.

Opponents of the Bill say it strips Maoris of their central place in their homeland.

No other parties in Parliament — including ACT's Coalition partners National and NZ First — support it. The Bill has only reached Parliament after a concession from Mr Luxon in government formation talks last year that his party would support its tabling and the public consultation process that will follow.

As a huge Opposition rallied outside, Mr Luxon was forced to defend that decision in question time last Tuesday.

"We came to a compromise. . . in forming a Coalition government," he said.

"We agree on many, many things between the three parties in this Coalition government. We don't agree on this. We came to a compromise. We're not supporting it beyond first reading. It won't become law."

Despite not supporting the Bill, it is a huge political problem for Mr Luxon, who stands accused of fuelling disunity by supporting the divisive legislation to this stage.

In contrast, Mr Seymour appears to be revelling in the moment, as he attempts to swell his minor party's support base by championing the cause.

Mr Seymour met with Maori representatives and stood outside Parliament to face the hikoi, but Mr Luxon did not.

The crowd carried traditional Maori flags, sang chants and Maori songs, or waiata, and heard from firebrand speakers.

Moana Maniapoto, a veteran activist and broadcaster, said she was in awe of the rally's size: "It was the biggest, most unified and positive one ever — and the biggest change was the number of non-Maori stepping up."



Thousands gather to protest a proposed law that would redefine New Zealand's founding agreement between Indigenous Maori and the British Crown. Picture: Charlotte Graham-McLay

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First Nations artists clean up at the Aria Awards



3%
Picture: Jess Gleeson

ALSO INSIDE

Movie director's multi-dimensional debut **P14**
Fresh platform for Indigenous theatre and dance **P15**



Jade Akamarre at work.

Art pays homage to land & family

PHOEBE BLOGG

Proud Alyawarre artist Jade Akamarre is no stranger to the spotlight, whether she is being celebrated for her Pwerle Gallery or for her own engaging works.

She follows in the footsteps of her grandmother and great-grandmother — the late Barbara Weir and the late Minnie Pwerle — both renowned Aboriginal artists.

Their artistic cultural legacy is strongly reflected within Akamarre's works, which are inspired by her connection to culture and Country, exuding her passion for the land and her knowledge of its natural patterns.

Utilising a distinctive technique of loosely executed dots in linear patterns, evoking an aerial view of her Country's natural beauty, Akamarre's artwork pays homage to her family and the generations who lived on the land before her.

Akamarre is also the daughter of art dealer, curator and owner of Dreaming Art Centre of Utopia gallery Fred Torres.

Her vision for Pwerle Gallery, launched in 2015, was to build a platform to promote new ways to engage with art, while also championing Indigenous culture and history.

Since opening the gallery, Akamarre has sought out new ways to bring art and culture to new audiences, including through collaborations such as working with fashion label Aje on a series of Minnie Pwerle prints for the brand's 2018 resort collection, with a percentage of every sale going back into the community.

Akamarre told Adelaide Review several years after opening her gallery that keeping culture, history and the love of Country alive "has been the most critical part of the process".

"It is an extremely sensitive topic and it was very important to us to make sure it was done correctly. We wanted to give our customers the opportunity to appreciate our culture and history in a different form other than canvas," she said.

This year Akamarre ventured into new territory with the announcement she was collaborating with American Express Australia to create new point of purchase signage for the company's merchant customers — in celebration of First Nations communities.

Her work celebrates the connections that bind communities and is inspired by the ever-changing seasons of the land.

The collaboration with American Express will bring Akamarre's work to new audiences, enhancing her reputation both at home and abroad.

"My collaboration with Amex Australia came about after I was establishing relationships with various other companies, such as Porsche Australia, to raise awareness of Aboriginal culture through modern creative expressions," she told StyleUp.

"This led me to having discussions with Amex Australia who have actively supported Aboriginal designers in events such as Australian Fashion Week where Aboriginal designers can present their work to a wider audience."

Akamarre said her selected colour palette was inspired by Amex, while the tonal gradients and hues reflected her community, culture and Country.

"The gradients and hues in my palette illustrate the ever-changing seasons of the land and the linear patterns pay homage to the natural contours surrounding my community. Inspired by my ancestral ties, I use a distinctive technique in my work that offers an aerial perspective of my country, Atnwengerrp."

Noriyoshi Tsugama, vice-president of Merchant Marketing for American Express Asia Pacific, said the collaboration with Akamarre brought to life American Express' commitment to supporting communities.

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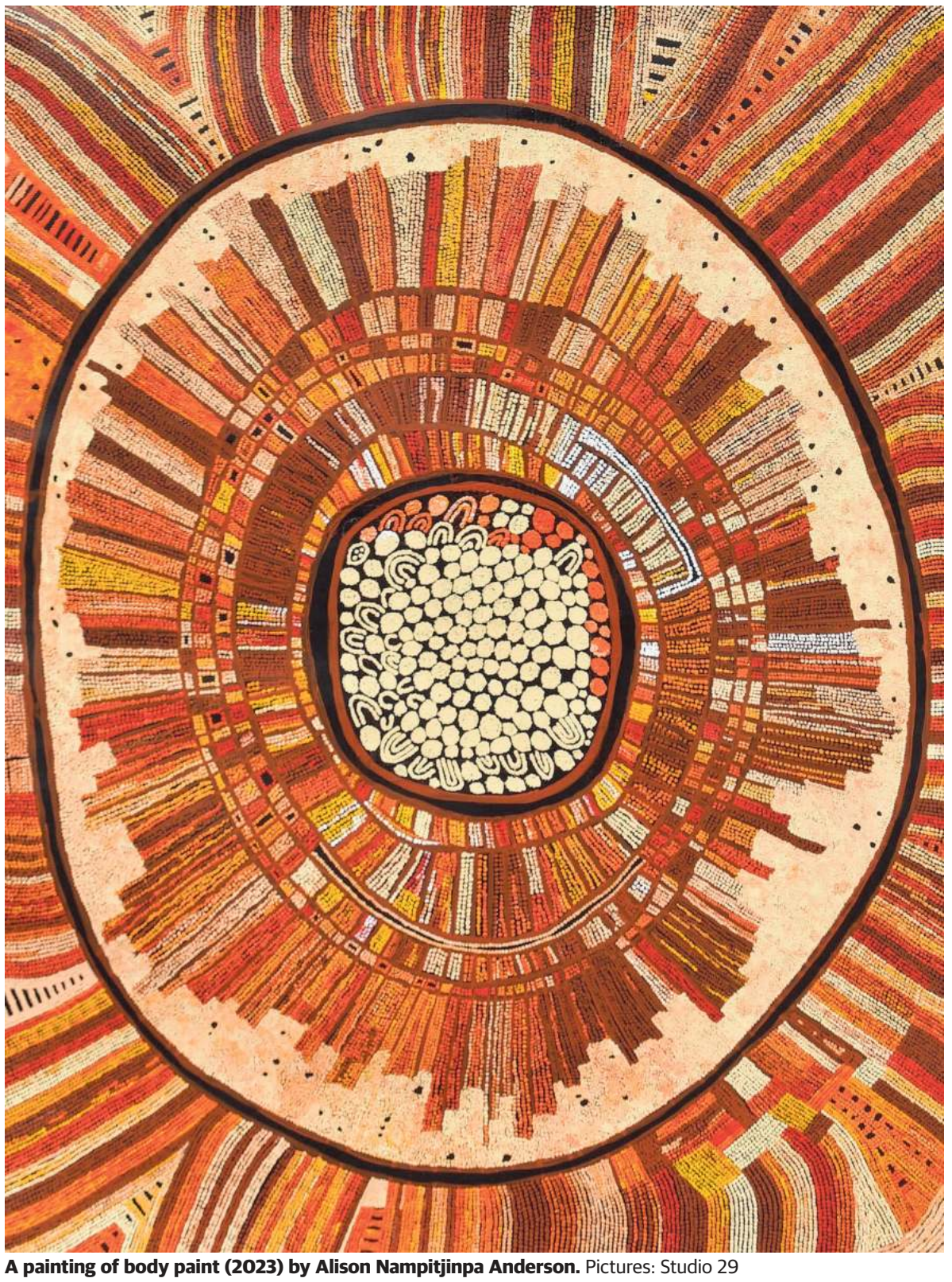
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Acclaimed artist puts her work on display



A painting of body paint (2023) by Alison Nampitjinpa Anderson. Pictures: Studio 29

PHOEBE BLOGG

Cairns' newest exhibition, art and design hub, Studio 29, celebrated the opening of its much-anticipated show, Flourishing, on Friday November 22.

Hosted in collaboration with the Short Street Gallery, the exhibition features award-winning paintings by acclaimed Luritja artist Alison Nampitjinpa Anderson, and will run until December 20.

Nampitjinpa Anderson is a prominent artist whose work is deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of the Western Desert and the early Papunya art movement.

All the way from Broome's Short Street Gallery, Nampitjinpa Anderson's new collection has found a good home at Studio 29.

Short Street Gallery director and co-founder of Studio 29, Emily Rohr — who has been representing and promoting First Nations artists since 1998 — said the works that comprised Flourishing are extraordinary and a must-see for anyone who appreciated First Nations art.

"Alison's work is beautifully observed. While Alison lives and paints in her home studio in Julatten, her cultural and family ties stretch across large



Secrecy (2024) by Alison Nampitjinpa Anderson.

tracts of the Western Desert, which is the source of her inspiration — the harsh landscape of her homelands and the intergenerational stories within are redolent in the colours, textures and delightfully abstract resolve of her paintings," she said.

Rohr noted Nampitjinpa Anderson experienced the origins of the Western Desert art movement first-hand, and had enjoyed close relationships with many first-generation painters.

Her artistic practice, subjects and techniques are tied to the desert country, and Flourishing is about honouring the seriousness of the tradition while paying homage to her teachers and sacred nature of desert law.

"While an artist all her life, she's incredibly accomplished beyond her works on canvas, from writing and speaking four distinct Indigenous languages and dialects to raising five children, being a grandmother to eight, and for almost 20 years enjoying a distinguished political career," Rohr said.

Nampitjinpa Anderson twice won the central desert NT seat of MacDonnell, now renamed Namatjira after her grandfather Albert Namatjira, and also served as minister for Aboriginal advancement and regional development.

Plant knowledge doco part of smartphone festival

JOSEPH GUENZLER

Australia's smartphone film festival is celebrating cinematic innovation, showcasing films shot entirely on mobile devices.

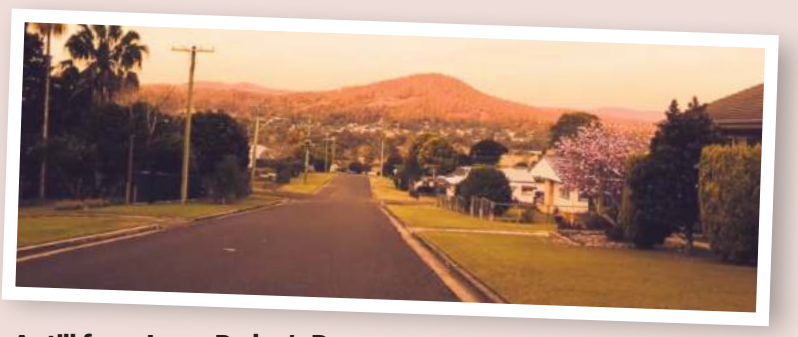
This year's SmartFone Flick Fest, featuring a record number of Indigenous entries, includes the documentary Durangen, a deeply personal project by Aboriginal artist Jenny Fraser.

The film, available online in the highly commended screening section, centres on traditional plant knowledge through the perspectives of six Aboriginal matriarchs.

It reflects the environmental and cultural resilience of Aboriginal women.

Fraser, a Migunburri, Yugumbeh, and Bundjalung woman from Mt Barney, Queensland, brings her decades of experience in digital storytelling to the film.

She has spent her career exploring the intersection of



A still from Jenny Parker's Durangen.

nature and technology. Her film's title, Durangen, which means "grow" or "growing" in Yugambeh, encapsulates the project's themes of cultural regeneration and environmental awareness.

"I decided to make a commitment to the plant work now that I am in the winter of my life," she said.

"Over time, I have been continuing and revitalising Yugambeh family traditions and have a practice in the healing arts and education, including plant and body work."

Fraser's connection to plants is rooted in family traditions.

"I grew up collecting bush food with my father, and my first job as a teenager was at a plant nursery in the 1980s, so I am returning to my early experiences," she said.

To bring Durangen to life, Fraser collaborated with other knowledge holders.

"I can't do it all alone, so I called in knowledge holders who each have unique perspectives and are generous with their own practice," she said.

The title Durangen was suggested by Yugambeh language worker Faith Baisden, giving the film a deeper cultural resonance.

"This was gifted by Faith, and it relates to growing," she said.

"Since then, I have also found out that the word is used in terms of witches.

"We are proud to be advocating for our plant companions and sharing knowledge to help heal."

With a career marked by pioneering digital platforms for Indigenous artists, Fraser believes in the value of representation in these spaces.

"Digital platforms are kind of like real estate, so we need to take up space now and then, but it's healthy to go bush and connect with homelands in reality. Balance," she said.

Fraser appreciates the recognition Durangen is receiving on the international festiva l circuit.

"If we can pick up some mentions or awards, then that is a bonus, but the reason why I put the film on the festival circuit first is to be a part of screen culture," she said.

This month, Durangen screened at Hawaii's Menehune Indigenous Film Festival, which Fraser describes as saying "Aloha from other Indigenous people around the world".

Looking to the future, Fraser is eager to continue fostering Indigenous creativity on the world stage.

"I'm hoping to get invited back to the JAALA Biennial in Japan to curate my seventh show with them," she said.

SF3 held screenings in Sydney and Melbourne earlier this month, and will run an online program until December 2.

First Nations talent in full swing at Arias

PHOEBE BLOGG

Australia's First Nations musicians have made their presence felt at the 2024 ARIA Awards.

At the Awards ceremony on November 20 several Indigenous artists took to the stage to perform and present — including but not limited to Jessica Mauboy, The Kid Laroi and 3%.

Held at Sydney's iconic Hordern Pavilion the event welcomed Barkaa, Briggs, Budjerah, Emily Wurramara, Emma Donovan, Kobie Dee, Miss Kaninna and more.

"It's my favourite thing to be amongst mob. There is going to be plenty of mob taking out awards this year," Barkaa told Style Up.

First Nations artists dazzled on the big night. Best Country Album went to Troy Cassar-Daley; Best Cover Art to Kill The Dead by Daniel Boyd and Nomad Create for 3%; Best Use Of An Australian Recording In An Advertisement went to JK-47's "End The Trend" for Cancer Council and Bolster Group; Best Adult Contemporary Album went to Emily Wurramara for her album NARA; Teacher Of The Year went to Nathaniel Miller of Bulman School, Bulman Community, Arnhem Land; Best Hip Hop / Rap Release was Kill The Dead by 3%; Best World Music Album went to Dobby for Warrangu: River Story; and the Best Original Soundtrack or Musical Theatre Cast Album went to Far Away Downs — created predominantly by Indigenous artists.

Taking home her first ever ARIA, proud Warnindhilyagwa woman from Groote Eylandt Emily Wurramara shared her excitement upon accepting her award.

"To all the mob in the room your ancestors are watching and they are so proud. This is my first ever ARIA," she said.

While Indigenous artists were strongly represented among the winners, a number of nominees who did not walk away with a gong have stunned music lovers with their achievements this year.

Miss Kaninna made history as the first independent Aboriginal woman to be nominated for a debut single, "Blak Britney" — which was up for three categories including Best Soul/ R&B Release, Best Independent Release and Best Video.

"It's been kind of scary because I haven't put out a full piece of work before but now I have I feel like it is nice, I have worked so long and so hard on it, now it's finally out there," she said. "It's been quite an interesting ride, I am the first independent Aboriginal woman to be nominated for a debut single, which is such an honour. I am just really honoured to be here."

ARIA chief executive officer Annabelle Herd also expressed her excitement for both nominees and winners.

"It has been an absolutely huge year for Aussie music and this year's ARIA Awards will showcase that landmark moment as our artists celebrate major success on the global and local stage," she said before the ceremony.

"The 2024 ARIA Awards nominees aren't just loved at home; they're commanding audiences from Europe to the US to Asia and collaborating with international icons while bringing a distinctly Australian perspective to the cultural conversation.

"All of us at ARIA are so proud of this genuinely global-facing industry that proved tonight exactly how much Australia has to be proud of when it comes to homegrown music," she said later that night.



Troy Cassar-Dale Picture: Jess Gleeson



Emily Wurramara Picture: Jess Gleeson



Angus Field of 3% Picture: Jordan Kirk



Jessica Mauboy Picture: Jordan Kirk



Becca Hatch Picture: Jordan Kirk







BARKAA Picture: Liam Mahoney

Debut puts diversity & trust at fore


David Cook has marked his directional debut with Heart of the Man.

RHIANNON CLARKE

Butchulla filmmaker David Cook's directorial debut, Heart of the Man, marks an inspiring milestone for Queer First Nations filmmaking in Australia.

Set in Brisbane, the film celebrates and highlights a predominantly LGBTQIA+ and Aboriginal cast and tells the story of Chris Wundurra (Parker Little), a young man grappling with his father's relentless expectations.

His father, Sammy — portrayed by Cook — is a former boxer who once dreamed of winning a national title. Life had other plans, and a tragic accident left Sammy without that victory and Chris without a mother.

As an emerging actor, Cook grew frustrated with the lack of stories that represented his own experiences and those of his community. Driven by a desire to bring such narratives to life, he taught himself to write screenplays and direct, pulling together the resources to make Heart of the Man a reality within just two years.

"When I started calling people, asking if they could be involved, everyone said yes," Cook said.

"It felt like the universe was saying, 'Yes, this is the time.' Suddenly, all the pieces started falling into place."

This momentum did not go unchallenged. The film's development and production were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought unexpected delays, but with determination and the support of his cast and crew, Cook pushed forward.

"It was an indie film, so we really just had to have a go and make it happen with what we had," he said.

Heart of the Man is a powerful examination of grief, generational trauma, and the complex bond between father and son.

As Sammy pushes Chris into the ring to reclaim his own lost dreams, Chris begins questioning his place in the sport and, ultimately, in his father's world.

"My own experiences as an athlete really bled into the story," Cook said.

"I wanted to explore the pressures of living up to others' expectations while also dealing with one's own desires."

Rather than staying in the ring, Chris finds himself drawn to the world of theatre, exploring his creative side and eventually, his sexuality.

Cook's approach to these themes is subtle yet powerful, portraying Chris' personal journey with sensitivity and authenticity.

He explores universal questions about identity, family, and the courage it takes to diverge from expectations.

For him authenticity was key in every aspect of the film. He cast many roles within his own community, reaching out to Indigenous and LGBTQIA+ actors he knew personally, creating a tight-knit cast and crew who brought shared experiences to the project.

This choice allowed for a powerful sense of trust and safety on set, which was especially important when exploring complex and personal themes. The casting approach also strengthened the film's genuine portrayal of First Nations and LGBTQIA+ experiences. Cook emphasised casting this way was about building a community of storytellers and fostering a safe space for them to bring their own perspectives into the film.

In an industry that often limits Indigenous narratives to traditional or historical depictions, Heart of the Man stands out for its contemporary focus, showing Indigenous experiences as vibrant, current, and relatable to a broad audience.

The film's debut highlights the strength in authenticity, bringing forth new, complex narratives that challenge stereotypes and remind us that Indigenous voices are as multi-dimensional as any other.



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Honouring richness of Indigenous storytelling


Ella Havelka

RHIANNON CLARKE

The Short+Sweet Sydney Festival was thrilled to announce this month the launch of Short+Sweet Deadly 2025, a week-long program that places First Nations voices centre stage through a celebration of theatre and dance.

Scheduled for April 2025 at Turner Theatre, TAFE NSW Ultimo Campus, this inaugural event will offer First Nations artists a dedicated professional platform to share their stories, talents, and culture with diverse audiences.

Supported by TAFE NSW, Short+Sweet Deadly aims to honour the richness of Indigenous storytelling, preserve cultural heritage, and engage the broader community.

Organisers say the festival promises to be "an unforgettable experience" that resonates deeply with both performers and viewers.

Curating the event is acclaimed Wiradjuri dancer and choreographer Ella Havelka, the first Indigenous dancer to join The Australian Ballet and an alumna of Bangarra Dance Theatre.


Ella Havelka

Havelka's experience brings a unique vision to the program, one that seamlessly combines traditional and contemporary forms of storytelling.

"This platform provides an incredible opportunity for First Nations artists to present authentic stories that resonate with our communities and beyond," she said.

"By blending traditional and contemporary forms, we can create powerful narratives that honour our heritage and inspire future generations."

Short+Sweet Sydney festival director Ali Bendall emphasised that Short+Sweet Deadly is more than just a festival week; it's a movement to empower First Nations artists and bring their stories to the forefront.

"We are honoured to provide a stage where First Nations creatives can shine and connect with audiences on a profound level," she said.

As a global festival brand, Short+Sweet brings Theatre, Dance, Music, and Film Festivals to audiences worldwide. The festival's mission is to build enthusiastic theatre-goers by showcasing exciting and accessible short-form works, fostering a celebration of storytelling across cultures and communities. The program goes beyond celebrating Indigenous culture — it sets the stage for a more inclusive and representative arts landscape. Artistic Director of Short+Sweet, Mark Cleary, describes Short+Sweet Deadly as a bold step towards a more inclusive and representative arts landscape in Australia.

"By investing in First Nations talent, we are not only celebrating their cultural contributions but also laying the groundwork for future touring productions, educational initiatives, and working towards the establishment of a permanent First Nations theatre company by 2030," said Cleary.

TAFE NSW First Nations Team spokesperson Kallie Fernando said they are proud to support Short+Sweet Deadly 2025.

"This partnership aligns with our dedication to empowering Indigenous communities through education and the arts," she said.

"By nurturing talent and providing platforms for expression, we contribute to a richer, more diverse cultural fabric in New South Wales."

The program is actively seeking submissions of 10-minute (or less) plays and dance pieces from First Nations writers, directors, actors, dancers, and choreographers.

Participants will not only perform at one of Sydney's most celebrated arts festivals but also have the chance to learn from industry leaders through workshops and masterclasses.

Art awards entries open

The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory has announced the opening of the call for entries for the 2025 Telstra NATSIAA (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards).

Telstra NATSIAA is the longest-running celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture.

For more than 40 years, the prestigious awards have provided a platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. The awards honour established, mid-career artists and emerging artists.

The 2025 Call for Entries welcomes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to submit their work and be in the running for the following awards: Art Award — $100,000; Wandjuk Marika 3D Memorial Award — $15,000; General Painting Award — $15,000; Bark Painting Award — $15,000; Work on Paper Award — $15,000; Emerging Artist Award — $15,000; and the Multimedia Award — $15,000.

Entries close on March 2. More information and how to enter can be found at natsiaa.com.au.

Cruse's tragicomedy role strikes a chord

JOSEPH GUENZLER

Biripi, Wiradjuri, and Yuin actor of Aboriginal, Native American, and Chinese heritage, Bee Cruse, is set to star in a Sydney production of August: Osage County, in the role of Johnna Monevata.

The Belvoir St Theatre production, directed by Eamon Flack, promises a fresh perspective on Tracy Letts' acclaimed tragicomedy, with Cruse portraying the Native American housekeeper amid the family's unfolding drama.

"When I went for the role, it was actually on offer from the director," Cruse said.

"I wasn't familiar with the story or the script, so I had to research the story itself."

Flack emphasised the play's themes of land and ownership, pointing out that August: Osage County is named after the Osage tribe's homeland in Oklahoma. USA.

He draws a connection to Belvoir's role in sharing stories on Gadigal land, acknowledging the significance


Actor Bee Cruse.

of Indigenous land throughout the story. Cruse's casting adds a layer of cultural depth to the play's exploration of generational pain and identity, resonating with her background as a queer Indigenous artist also invested in learning Gamilaraay and Dhurga, two of her grandparents' languages.

"Johnna being the only Native in the story—I felt very much like that growing up in the 90s, being the only Black kid at my primary and high school," she said.

"I feel like there is a part of me that is Johnna, and Johnna is me. The way that Eamon has directed this show, it's like my character is kind of running the show."

Cruse brings a multifaceted perspective to her performance and storytelling.

"I was blessed with the gift of storytelling when I was 12," she shared.

"My great-Aunty Iris Clayton was a poet and she told me I was going to be the next storyteller of the family.

"I didn't understand what that meant — I was actually into politics and on my way to becoming a diplomat."

Her path took a turn when filmmaker Rachel Perkins offered her extra work on Redfern Now.

"From there, that opened my mind up to storytelling," Cruse said.

"I was surrounded by so many strong and deadly artists. I believe that storytelling trumps all."

Working alongside a stellar cast, Cruse admitted to initial nerves.

"The first two weeks I felt a bit of imposter syndrome going on, working with some big-name actors," she said.

"Eamon, being the amazing director he is—he's so willing to hear out suggestions.

"He may be the captain of the ship, but it's a group effort."

Discussing the enduring relevance of August: Osage County, Cruse noted the dynamics of a chaotic family are "quite universal".

"I grew up in a household where we love each other, but we love to choke each other sometimes as well."

She hopes the production will resonate with audiences in different ways.

August: Osage Count runs until December 15.



CREATING SUSTAINABLE CAREER PATHWAYS

Congratulations to our latest group of Vocational Training and Employment Centre graduates for 2024!

Operating in Perth, Broome, Karratha, Port Hedland and Busselton, the program has provided more than 1,500 First Nations people employment opportunities and sustainable career pathways since it was established in 2006.

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Strong spirit means our voices will be the future

ROMLIE MOKAK

In 2005, I stood with Tom Calma, Black peak organisations and many others to call on governments to treat health as a human right for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This call turned into The Close the Gap campaign for Indigenous health equality.

Now that "Close the Gap" has been a catchcry for so long, it is easy to forget the paradigm shift it represented.

Close the Gap sought to recognise the ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have long been impacted, often to our detriment, by national policy priorities. It was a statement that we are so much more than policy priorities. We are so much more than program recipients. We are so far beyond needy vessels to build capacity.

In 2020, with gaps not closing, an unprecedented commitment was made from governments to partner with the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

For the first time, a signatory external to Australian governments was in a national agreement. In signing, governments committed to radical changes.

In early 2024, having just finished a five-year term as the first Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Commissioner at the Productivity Commission — the organisation responsible for monitoring progress under the Agreement — I've been in a unique position to follow the progress to close the gap and the barriers continuing to be faced.

The most fundamental of these barriers is a failure to put Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the centre of policy decision-making, program design and implementation.

Put another way, it is about a failure to share power.

Sharing power means ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the most say on the matters concerning them — that they have the power to set priorities, lead design and delivery, and assess outcomes.

People, locally, in their places and spaces, know best. For solutions to be successful, they must be place based with strong local ownership.

Public sector leaders have already committed to this — whether under the banner of place-based approaches, or local decision making.

Yet in its first five-yearly review of the Agreement published in February, the Productivity Commission found that the commitment to shared decision-making, a centrepiece of the Agreement, is rarely achieved in practice.

Addressing this was at the core of the recommendations in the report. In July the Joint Council on Closing the Gap agreed to all four of these recommendations, as well as 15 of the 16 actions sitting under the recommendations.

But as history has shown us, a commitment can only get us so far. We need action. We need real change.

And we know that where this change occurs, *prosperity* follows.

Some in our communities may react to prosperity as a word, thinking it is only about economics, or material wealth.

But the prosperity agenda is a family-centred, community-focused agenda. It's relevant to local and regional spaces, and is firmly rooted in the daily lives of people.

The Goulburn Murray Regional Prosperity Plan, developed for a local Aboriginal think tank, the Kaiela Institute, defines prosperity as 'a state of success'.

This success can be in terms of wealth, health, peace, self-determination, cultural strength, and happiness.

And Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are designing futures in all sorts of sophisticated and systematic ways.

I have seen growth in Black businesses across the country, accelerated by Indigenous procurement policies, and the growing commercial nous of our people and organisations.

As a judge of the recent Indigenous Governance Awards, I saw the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities who are showing the way on what excellence in governance looks like, under the stewardship of Elders who hold cultural authority

Look no further than the Wintjiri Wiru Working Group, an Anangu committee who hold cultural authority and oversight of cultural experiences at Yulara. The drone show depicting the Mala story is shared with visitors from across the globe. It is a world first cultural experience. A portion of revenue goes to the two communities that are custodians of that chapter of the story.



Romlie Mokak Picture: ANZSOG

Another, Djarindjin community, 200 kilometres north of Broome became the first Aboriginal owned airport in Western Australia in 2018. The Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation is largely self-funded through revenue from its airport operations which supports other community priorities.

Our people's empowerment and prosperity go hand in hand, with strong spirit, strong culture and strong identity. Strong mob!

The pain associated with the outcome of the Referendum for a Voice to Parliament still sits with many of us today.

To quote the Uluru Statement: *this is the torment of our powerlessness*.

But Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people *will* have the most say in our futures. Not just some say, or even the first say, or the last say; the *most* say.

> "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people ***will*** have the most say in our futures. Not just some say, or even the first say, or the last say; the ***most*** say.
> A future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the designers, builders, practitioners, evaluators of our future . . .
> And where racism is for others to understand, call out and eradicate, not for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to endure, educate and explain.

A future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the designers, builders, practitioners, evaluators of our future. Where we prosper in the fullness of our talents, ingenuity and Indigeneity, in a nation where we are no longer positioned as problematic people. And where racism is for others to understand, call out and eradicate, not for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to endure, educate and explain.

We must tackle the imbalance and abuse of power at all levels of decision making. And we must redefine our understanding of prosperity as a family-centred, community focused agenda that is firmly rooted in the daily lives of our people.

The wellbeing of future generations depends on it.

Romlie Mokak is a Djugun man and a member of the Yawuru people. In 2019, he was the first Aboriginal Commissioner appointed to the Productivity Commission. As Commissioner (2019–24), he led a number Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inquiries, studies and reviews and contributed his knowledge and insights to strengthen work across the whole Commission. Prior to joining the Productivity Commission, Mr Mokak was chief executive of the Lowitja Institute and the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association.

Racism in justice ignored

HANNAH MCGLADE

The Coalition of Peaks meeting in Boorloo/Perth this month appears intended as a sharp reminder of the State Government's commitment to Closing the Gap targets and the partnership of Commonwealth and States to work together to do this.

Indigenous Australians Minister Malarndirri McCarthy with Pat Turner and organisational heads from around the country began with a "welcome" to the new governments of Queensland and Northern Territory, governments who show blatant disregard for Aboriginal people and children's rights.

As we all know, these States have been active in campaigning for and passing new laws that will increase Aboriginal youth incarceration, with the NT in the process of lowering the age of criminal responsibility to 10 years, and the Queensland government now promising to treat children as adult offenders. These are clear violations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, although children affected have no right to recourse under UN law because the Federal Government has refused to ratify the Optional Protocol allowing for this process to be used in Australia. At the same time, in fact that very day in WA, we learnt the Aboriginal incarceration had risen by 17 per cent just over the past year alone. WA has the shameful reputation of incarcerating more Aboriginal people than any other State, with the NT close behind. Consequently, we also have more deaths in custody, with two Aboriginal men dying in WA prisons in the past month.

Underlining factors include poverty and rising costs, strict bail conditions and lack of measures such as bail hostels, mandatory detention laws known as "three strikes" which extend to property related offences such as burglary, lack of culturally safe rehabilitation services, and the ongoing travesty of systemic racism in the criminal justice system so evident from the harsh criminalisation of First Nations children.

The Justice Policy Partnership adopted by the Commonwealth and the Coalition of Peaks is intended to reduce Aboriginal incarceration, but the WA statistics tell us clearly the extent of the policy failure.

The JPP has no apparent influence on States prepared to increase Aboriginal incarceration through discriminatory laws, including in WA with the High Risk Serious Offenders Act of 2020 which imposes indefinite detention, allowing for prisons to apply to keep people incarcerated past their release date, on the basis of perceived "risk factors", largely impacting Aboriginal people, and was challenged unsuccessfully in the High Court in Garlett v WA (2022). There have also been no serious efforts in Western Australia about repeal of the mandatory detention laws, underlining incarceration rates, or increasing the age of criminal responsibility from the mere age of 10 years which is criminogenic, and likely to increase children's risk of incarceration.

The Australian Law Reform Commission inquiry "Pathways to Justice. Inquiry into the Incarceration Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples" (Report 133), was tabled in Federal Parliament in 2018 and recommended the establishment of a national justice reinvestment body to address the Indigenous situation. This never happened.

Senator Pat Dodson and I also called for a National Aboriginal Justice Commission to oversee and advocate for reforms nationally — this never happened. The JPP, a committee of Indigenous peoples with government and secretariat jointly of the Attorney Generals' Department and the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Services cannot address this dire situation of Indigenous incarceration.

And while Close the Gap included a commitment to addressing systemic racism, there's little evidence of this happening in the justice sectors.

To the contrary, systemic racism and discrimination remains the norm, largely rendered invisible and normalised, with Aboriginal efforts to advocate reforms typically met with silence or indifference.

As the Productivity Commission recently made clear, the Close the Gap targets on reducing Indigenous incarceration will continue to fail while State governments engage in retrograde punitive laws that particularly impact Indigenous children

Senator McCarthy's rebuke to States and her reminder of their commitments under CTG is unlikely to engender any improvements in terms of Aboriginal justice.

You don't have to be a cynic to see that the NT and QLD ran racist "law and order" agendas to win government this year. This approach has been long been used in WA and especially by former Labor premier Mark McGowan who frequently engaged in demonisation of Aboriginal children.

The current Corrections and Justice Minister Paul Papalia has also demonstrated his willingness to continue this conduct which puts the lives of Aboriginal children at risk.

We can only hope the State Coroner examining the death of 16-year-old Cleveland Dodd has the integrity needed to identify the State's participation in human rights violations contributing to Cleveland's shocking death.

As the evidence points to the failure of the JPP, surely, it's time we do better than superficial co-operation with racist governments whose promises "are like writing in the sand" in the words of Yothu Yindi in their powerful call for Treaty. Indigenous people's advocacy for Indigenous rights, including in international human rights forums, and under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is paramount and urgent.

Dr Hannah McGlade is a Kurin Minang human rights expert, law academic and member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

INPEX

Environment plan consultation:

Opportunity for relevant persons to provide feedback

INPEX Browse E&P Pty Ltd (INPEX) on behalf of the Bonaparte Carbon Capture and Storage Assessment Joint Operating Agreement participants was successfully awarded a greenhouse gas storage assessment permit in 2021 for G-7-AP located offshore in the Bonaparte Basin off northern Australia. In parallel with current appraisal activities, INPEX is proposing to undertake a range of geophysical and geotechnical surveys to inform design and location of the potential future development within G-7-AP and a pipeline corridor.

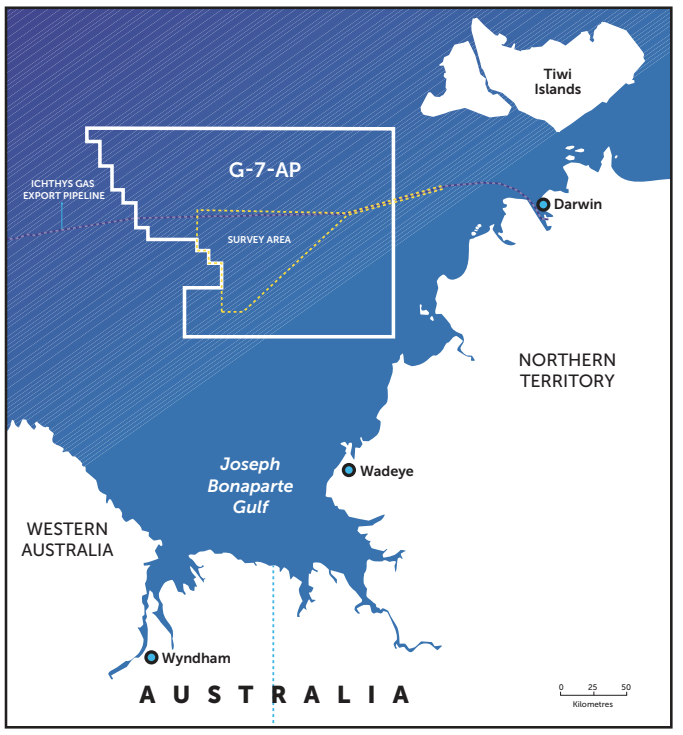
We wish to hear from relevant persons whose functions, interests and activities may be affected by the work that we are planning in the Bonaparte Basin. These may include cultural and spiritual connections, commercial or recreational activities offshore, tourism or local community interests.

Your feedback assists with continuing to understand the environment, identifying any new potential environmental impacts and risks, and enables INPEX to refine its management measures, if needed, to reduce potential impacts.

At the closest point, the survey area is approximately:

- 37 kilometres north-west of the NT mainland
- 80 kilometres west of Darwin
- 54 kilometres south of Bathurst Island.

INPEX kindly requests feedback is submitted by 21 January 2025.



Contact us

Your views on these activities are important to us and we welcome your comments. If you have any questions, please contact the consultation team on **1800 705 010** or by visiting the above QR to the right.
For more information on INPEX visit inpex.com.au

Kumara way looks to define true value



Maori leader Te Puoho Katene, chief executive of Tapuwae Roa. Picture: Indigenous Business Review

ZAK KIRKUP

At the Australian Sustainable Finance Institute Summit recently held in Sydney on Gadigal land, Maori leader Te Puoho Katene, chief executive of Tapuwae Roa, delivered a powerful keynote advocating for Indigenous principles to reshape the finance sector's approach to sustainability.

His philosophy, termed "kumara economics" calls for using capital as a tool for community sustenance, empowerment and self-determination — a perspective that resonates with Australia's Indigenous communities as they push for financial independence and environmental guardianship.

"Money is like a kumara. Its true and only value lies in its ability to sustain people," Mr Katene said, alluding to the sweet potato his ancestors brought back across the Pacific generations ago.

This approach stands in stark contrast to typical measures of financial success, such as profit margins or asset accumulation.

Instead, "kumara economics" prioritises community resilience and social transformation, ideas that align with many Indigenous Australians' goals for self-determination and sustainable economic development.

Mr Katene urged the summit's audience, including First Nations leaders, policymakers, and sustainable finance professionals, to consider capital's "moral steering power" in advancing Indigenous and community-led sustainability.

He cautioned against the "tragedy of the horizons"— a short-term economic focus that ignores intergenerational impacts, environmental responsibility, and Indigenous autonomy.

The summit's theme of catalysing ambition into action underscores Australia's goal to decarbonise and develop frameworks that empower Traditional Owners in financial and developmental decision-making.

"In times of crisis," Mr Katene reminded attendees, "we tend to revert to short-term survivalism." He emphasised capital should be directed towards creating resilient Indigenous futures, rather than "short-term" goals.

Programs like the Indigenous Growth Fund, featured at the summit, reflect this shift towards impact investment that prioritises Indigenous development and environmental stewardship. "In the search for impact, Indigenous communities are the nexus of social, environmental, and intergenerational outcomes," Mr Katene added.

His message provides a roadmap for integrating Indigenous principles of sustainability, partnership, and community focus into the core of the nation's sustainable finance strategies.

Capacity building crucial as First Nations firms expand

DAVID PRESTIPINO

Research published this month illustrated the rapid expansion and diversity of Indigenous businesses across Australia.

The findings from Indigenous Business Australia's latest report also found First Nations startups and those already developed were both challenged by access to suitable funding to meet demand.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pathways Through Business report highlighted the sector's growth of more than 50 per cent from 2016-2021, with opportunities aplenty to expand.

Findings from the IBA and the Australian National University's specific First Nations research team of Indigenous and non-First Nations experts found the sector had grown remarkably over the past decade.

IBA chairperson and Dagoman man from the Northern Territory, Eddie Fry, believed the findings would give stakeholders a deeper understanding of the Indigenous business sector's growth opportunities.

"As we celebrate the incredible growth of First Nations businesses, we also recognise the work that still lies ahead to expand our investment in businesses ideas to help to make them real," he said. "We are building a future where businesses thrive at every stage, exploring opportunities for sustainable business growth that will create prosperity for people, communities and the nation as a whole. I am confident that with continued support and collaboration, the best is yet to come."

The report indicated there was growing evidence of big businesses and industries taking notice and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

"However, some negative perceptions continue to impact decisions by policymakers and people in positions of power, which reduce the inclusivity of Australia's business, financial, and economic structures," the report found.

"At the stabilisation and maturity phases, the challenges are less about capabilities and more about expanding capacity, to be able to either increase demand or have the capacity to meet demand."

Available support systems were less focused on capacity building, with a gap in capacity-related support.

"IBA commits to ensuring First Nations people further their economic and business aspirations with the freedom to choose how and when to access capital, knowledge, and networks," the report found.

"It is evident from this research that this choice should be available to all First Nations businesses, despite their maturity.

"In this way, IBA can assist existing businesses to propel themselves towards achieving their full social, cultural, environmental, and economic potential."

Key findings show the Indigenous business sector grew more than 50 per cent from 2016 to 2021, reaching about 29,200 businesses.

IBA supported about 19 per cent of the sector (5,515 businesses) over five years, contributing to 56 per cent of the overall growth in business ownership during that period.

While First Nations business ownership rate (4.4 per cent) has grown rapidly over the past 15 years, a gap remained with non-First Nations business ownership rate (8.5 per cent). "If rates were the same in 2021, there would have been an additional 26,900 First Nations business owners," the report found.

The report found societal bias and prejudice continued to impact business owners across the business cycle, hitting those at earlier stages hardest.

The Pathways Through Business report can be found online.

Truck-driving program a 'lifeline' for women

When Heather Jones founded Pilbara Heavy Haulage Girls Group 20 years ago, she could never have anticipated the profound impact her business would have on the community.

Today, the group (PHHG) is more than just a trucking company; it's a lifeline for women rebuilding their lives after domestic violence and abuse.

75 per cent of the women employed by PHHG are Indigenous.

Almost half of the women trained through PHHG are domestic violence survivors.

The team provides not only technical training but also vital support and nurturing, helping these women regain confidence and independence.

In 2023, Fortescue engaged PHHG to deliver driver training and heavy haulage services to support the company's oversized road haulage from Flying Fish to Eliwana.

Ms Jones said: "I was fortunate to have someone help me when I needed it and I wanted to give back by offering that same support to others.

"When we started, I didn't realise this would become our main focus. Now, I can see how important it is and how many lives are being changed."

Fortescue's director Approvals, Communities and Environment, Warren Fish, said the company is proud to partner with Pilbara Heavy Haulage Girls Group to deliver training and verification of competency to support the oversized road haulage from Flying Fish to Eliwana.

"This collaboration underscores the positive impact Heather and her team continue to have on both the local economy and the broader community. Their work not only benefits the individuals involved but also strengthens our local communities," he said.

"We look forward to continuing this partnership and seeing the positive ripple effect it creates."

The training process at PHHG is "rigorous", the company said, ensuring participants are fully prepared for the demands of the trucking industry and travelling on Pilbara roads.

After an initial classroom session covering the compliance basics, participants are introduced to the practical skills they need. The minimum 160 hours of driving experience for the program ensures there's a hands-on learning element allowing participants to gradually build their confidence and skills to drive the trucks.

This report was produced with the support of Fortescue.

Pivotal role for our SMEs



Supply Nation chief executive Kate Russell. Picture: Supply Nation

ZAK KIRKUP

In a milestone for Indigenous enterprise, Supply Nation unveiled its latest Research Report, "State of Indigenous Business: An analysis of procurement spending patterns with Indigenous businesses 2023-2024", this month.

The report, now in its sixth edition, provides in-depth analysis on the current state of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business growth, emphasising the impact of procurement and supplier diversity on the sector's success.

The 2023-2024 financial year featured a substantial rise in procurement directed towards verified Indigenous businesses.

Supply Nation facilitated $4.6 billion in procurement spending from corporate, government, and not-for-profit sectors, marking a $500 million increase over the previous year. This growth underscores the increasing value of Indigenous-owned enterprises in the Australian economy. The report revealed 284,864 contracts were awarded to Indigenous businesses in the past year.

Among these, the largest contract, valued at $91m, was forged between a resources company and a facilities management business.

This year's findings illustrate that the prominence of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within Indigenous business procurement — a move that has shifted in time from government agencies and large resource companies.

The report shows that SMEs now account for 89 per cent of the total procurement spend, showcasing their pivotal role in driving the Indigenous business sector forward.

Supply Nation's data also highlighted that businesses owned by Indigenous women are gaining ground, with 713 contracts valued over $1m awarded to female-owned businesses, about 22 per cent of high-value contracts. A significant driver influencing procurement patterns is the adoption of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) by Supply Nation members.

Organisations with RAPs spent a total of $3.8b with Indigenous-owned businesses, significantly outpacing the $776m spent by those without RAPs.

This stark contrast highlights the tangible impact that RAPs have in promoting equitable economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

The report also shows that Certified Suppliers, those businesses which are 51 per cent-plus owned by an Indigenous person or persons, while representing just over 30 per cent of all listed businesses, received nearly three times more contracts than Registered Suppliers (businesses with 50 per cent Indigenous ownership).

Supply Nation chief executive, Awabakal woman Kate Russell, spoke of the dedication of Supply Nation's members and suppliers in a challenging economic climate. "In a year where business has confronted significant inflationary pressures and global uncertainty, our members and suppliers have stepped up to the challenge and continued their commitment to values-based collaboration. Their efforts bring tangible benefits to their business growth and the communities they serve," she said

As Supply Nation marks its 15th anniversary, Ms Russell highlighted the enduring commitment to fostering long-term partnerships that deliver economic empowerment for both Indigenous businesses and the country more broadly.

Business' dedication & passion for change rewarded



CYP won the Indigenous Business Excellence Award for empowering Indigenous communities. Picture: CYP

JOSEPH GUENZLER

Cape York Partnership won the Indigenous Business Excellence Award at the 2024 Cairns Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards this month, recognising their dedication to empowering Indigenous people across Far North Queensland.

The award places CYP among a distinguished group of Indigenous-led organisations and initiatives recognised for making a significant impact on Indigenous communities.

For more than two decades, CYP has focused on education, employment, health, and cultural preservation, creating lasting change across the region from Cairns to Cape York.

With a staff of more than 370 — 65 per cent Indigenous — CYP delivers development and empowerment programs tailored to Indigenous communities.

CYP Group chief executive Fiona Jose attributed the award to the hard work of staff and the engagement of local communities.

"This award is an excellent acknowledgement of our team's daily hard work," she said.

"It recognises the passion and dedication of our people, especially those working directly in our communities.

"Their efforts are what make our mission possible. We don't see this as just a win for Cape York Partnership but for the families and communities we serve."

Judges praised CYP as a model for Indigenous-led development, describing it as an "outstanding non-profit" with a "transformative role in improving the lives of Indigenous Australians".

"CYP's commitment to sustainable development and measurable outcomes showcases their transformative role in improving the lives of Indigenous Australians," they said.

Another judge highlighted CYP's initiatives, including Mayi Market, School to Jobs, and Pama Platform, as "hugely commendable".

"The collection of initiatives included are compelling and demonstrate a holistic approach to supporting Indigenous Australians and communities," they said.

Ms Jose expressed pride but noted the ongoing challenges faced by CYP. "This award serves as a reminder that when we work together, we can achieve great things," she said.

CYP congratulated the other finalists in the Indigenous Business Excellence category.

Winyama signs big deal for Woodside project



Winyama Contracting Group said the agreement with Woodside would significantly increase its capabilities.

DAVID PRESTIPINO

Woodside awarded its biggest construction contract to an Indigenous-led firm ever this month, for civil works on the Pluto Train 1 Modifications project.

Winyama Contracting Group said the supply agreement with Woodside was a major milestone that would result in significant expansion for the Karratha-based company.

Winyama is a 50 per cent Indigenous-owned and 100 per cent Karratha-owned civil, construction, mining services and renewable asset hire provider.

Group chairman and Indigenous business manager Arthur Ramirez said partnering with Woodside on the Pluto Train 1 Modifications project would help with the company's vision to increase its footprint in the region.

"This project will allow our team to grow by about another 65 new employees, with the majority being residential employees," the proud Ngarluma, Yinjibarndi, Nykina, and Nyul-Nyul man said.

"The contract will enable us to increase our focus on outcomes for Aboriginal people."

Mr Ramirez said he was proud Woodside had chosen the local Indigenous business he chaired to execute a major part of one of its biggest current projects, with the $16 billion LNG project off the coast of WA a significant development in the country's energy future.

"It shows they live their values and support local and Indigenous business growth in the region," he said.

Winyama will collaborate with Woodside's primary contractor, Kellogg Brown & Root, on the substantial project, with the contract awarded after a competitive bid process focused on experience, local content, and health, safety, and environmental performance.

The contract will strengthen Winyama's staff numbers and business capabilities, and help it develop new training programs for Indigenous workers.

Woodside's Scarborough Energy Project has spent almost $20 million contracting Traditional Owner businesses between 2021 and 2023.

Woodside Pluto Expansion project manager Paul Baker said the company was pleased to be partnering with Winyama Contracting Group for the delivery of the civil works for the Pluto Train 1 modifications.

"The contract will ... support the growth of Winyama, increasing the company's capacity to deliver services to other industries across the Pilbara," he said.

Shaping economic future

JARRED CROSS



Torres Strait Islander Brian Wyborn has come on board as Aboriginal Investment NT's chief investment officer. Picture: Stephen van der Mark

There's a "unique opportunity" to shape the economic future for Aboriginal Territorians and set the foundations of a different world for future generations, says incoming Aboriginal Investment NT chief investment officer Brian Wyborn.

Mr Wyborn, a Torres Strait Islander and Papua New Guinea man, joined the body following its rebrand and announcement of a $600 million-plus bolstered, 2024-2029 strategic investment plan in October labelled a "milestone moment for our people".

Previously known as the Northern Territory Aboriginal Investment Corporation, AINT has forecast aims to drive Aboriginal-led development in the Territory, and the unprecedented capital "to support development that leverages Aboriginal assets".

Mr Wyborn told Indigenous Business Review there's a "huge opportunity. . .to really empower economic growth and investment opportunities for Aboriginal Territorians" and the scope for rethinking.

Mr Wyborn previously served as managing partner at First Australians Capital, as a director at investment management firm JBWere, and maintains board and committee positions with Philanthropy Australia, Boodja Trust and Australian Regional and Remote Community Services.

"Traditional investment markets and impact investing in economic outcomes, they haven't really worked in our space," he said.

"What we're excited about is the opportunity that we have with a corpus of capital to innovate and explore how this works for community, and we want to ensure that our investment approach and our mandate understands what are community priorities.

"We think that's where the change happens — cultural, social and economic well being, they're all in it (and) need to be one thing for it to be successful, not just economic prosperity."

Within its five-year plan, AINT outlined a $500 million Future Fund and more immediate $155 million Community Ready Fund.

"The purpose of that (Future Fund) is really around long term tenure, to generate those long term financial returns, (to) allow us to continually contribute to the generational wealth that we're creating here. It's also to top up our community ready bucket as well, so we can deploy that capital into the communities," Mr Wyborn said.

"The Community Ready Fund is "a pot of capital" to write grants and invest in businesses."

Mr Wyborn also has sights to "leverage additional capital" from partners in addition to the money on hand. To him, cultural tourism, land management, agriculture and renewable energy are sectors sitting ready, as well as harnessing the land rights and coastline territory for aquaculture to utilise tradition and allow on-country participation.

Mr Wyborn said Aboriginal representation and leadership is strong at the top, within AINT's board structure, including both government and independently-appointed members passionate about "seeing the prosperity of Aboriginal Territorians" informed by community interest, "which allows us to propose strategies, policies, delegations to that committee, to that board and really get their sphere on saying 'do you see this working in the NT?'".

"We've got a really unique opportunity to showcase this, but also put the governance around this to ensure that it works," he said.

"You know, we need to make sustainable commercial investments into community along the old continuum of really early stage investment, which might include grants and really early stage concessionary capital to larger scale infrastructure projects, potentially generating a financial return that's effectively a market return."

In Mr Wyborn's view, Aboriginal economic successes promise broader positive impact for the Territory.

"I've got three young children, and they're going to grow up in a very different world (compared to) me growing up," he said.

Shared equity in home to be a 'game changer'

DAVID PRESTIPINO

Gamilaroi woman Abbey said the benefits of accessing funds from a new $50 million shared equity scheme announced this month by Indigenous Business Australia was a "game changer'" for her becoming a homeowner.

"An opportunity to create a safe space and intergenerational wealth and healing for hopefully my future jarjums and their jarjums," Abbey said.

The new homeowner said the arrangement was crucial to her reaching a dream of owning a home sooner.

"I had a really supportive home loan officer," Abbey said.

"She had done lots of research and could see there was nothing in the area for the price I had been approved for.

"The shared equity plan was the game changer for me, and made it all possible."

Abbey said she doubted whether home ownership was within her reach before the shared equity plan was presented to her.

"This isn't just a home; this will be a change in my family's bloodline," she said.

A 12-month pilot program of the shared equity product helped 56 IBA customers purchase a home in their preferred location, with more customers expected in the following year.

IBA said the funding product would help more Indigenous people become homebuyers and covered up to 35 per cent of the purchase price of a property, with IBA home loan customers qualified for shared equity financing over three years.

Customers could purchase a property in their local market where their approved IBA home loan was insufficient to meet its price.

IBA deputy chief executive Sean Armistead, said IBA did not jointly own the property through the arrangement, but holds a share in the property equivalent to the percentage of the house's purchase price used to finance using the product.

"When the customer refinances or sells their home, IBA receives a percentage of the property value at that time relative to the IBA shared equity product, along with the outstanding balance of the IBA home loan," he said.

The scheme comes after IBA last month released a report with the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute to jointly research how best to support Indigenous people access secure, affordable, and appropriate housing, amid rising house and rental prices and cost-of-living pressures on households.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pathways Through Housing report helped strategise how IBA and other institutions could address home ownership challenges faced by First Nations people.

It noted the considerable benefits specific to First Nations homeowners, including security of tenure, building intergenerational wealth, and greater lifestyle autonomy, all critical to self-determination.

The number of Indigenous homeowners has more than tripled in 20 years, from approximately 46,000 in 2001 to 145,000 in 2021

While the proportion of Indigenous households that were homeowners increased to 41 per cent in 2021, the rate was significantly lower than the nation's overall home ownership rate of 66 per cent, according to 2019-20 Australian Bureau of Statistics data.

Mr Armistead said the initiative was created in response to the growing housing crisis.

"It can make home ownership achievable for some First Nations people who otherwise could not afford to buy in their local area," he said.

Learn to 'grow' startups

DIANNE BORTOLETTO

First Nations Business Accelerator's new program, Native Grow, is a free 14-week training program for early-stage Indigenous entrepreneurs interested in starting a native food, botanicals or other agricultural business.

The training is delivered by Yuin, Dunghutti and Gumbangyir woman Gemma Lloyd, owner of Sacred Country Consulting and Wiradjuri woman Sinead Singh, owner of First Nations Start Up. The duo collaborated to form First Nations Business Accelerator. It trains and supports entrepreneurs in all industries, recently announcing 2025 intake dates.

Ms Lloyd, a graduate of the MURRA program at Melbourne Business School as well as the University of Cambridge, said sustainability lies at the heart of the Native Grow program.

"By supporting First Nations entrepreneurs to develop innovative and environmentally conscious businesses in native foods and botanicals, we're fostering a deep connection between culture, community, and the environment," she said. "It's not too late for new participants to join — lessons are uploaded online and new students can catch up."

A pilot program, Native Grow began in early November with an intensive three-day workshop for 11 participants from NSW and Queensland and continues with online weekly sessions, which includes tailored business coaching, mentoring, and masterclasses.

The Native Grow program covers everything a startup business needs featuring customer discovery, growth roadmaps, go-to-market strategies, connections to Elders and role models, and access to university research facilities.

An entrepreneur herself having started 11 businesses with seven still actively trading, Ms Singh said the Native Grow program is more than just a business initiative.

"Native Grow is a platform for First Nations entrepreneurs to connect cultural knowledge with modern innovation," she said. "By supporting businesses in native foods, botanicals, and agriculture, we're not only empowering individuals but also revitalising traditional industries in a sustainable way."

Native Grow is supported by the Australian Government, the Food and Beverage Accelerator and the University of Queensland, and focuses on food products, ingredients, skincare, beauty, health, wellness, technology, and medicinal products.

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

NOTICE TO GRANT MINING TENEMENTS

NATIVE TITLE ACT 1993 (CTH) SECTION 29

The State of Western Australia HEREBY GIVES NOTICE that the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, C/- Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, 100 Plain Street, East Perth WA 6004 may grant the following tenement applications under the *Mining Act 1978*:

Tenement Type	No.	Applicant	Area*	Locality	Centroid	Shire
Exploration Licence	16/601	OWEN, Tristan David	3BL	25.1km SW'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 32' S Long: 120° 53' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Exploration Licence	26/264	MONGER EXPLORATION PTY LTD	4BL	15.4km N'ly of Kambalda	Lat: 31° 4' S Long: 121° 42' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Exploration Licence	27/651	JINDALEE LITHIUM LIMITED	8BL	37.8km E'ly of Broad Arrow	Lat: 30° 24' S Long: 121° 43' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Exploration Licence	31/1392	BLACK CROW (WA) PTY LTD	41BL	37.8km S'ly of Edjudina	Lat: 30° 8' S Long: 122° 13' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY, MENZIES SHIRE
Exploration Licence	47/4951	WESTROCK MINERALS PTY LTD	12BL	37.6km E'ly of Whim Creek	Lat: 20° 52' S Long: 118° 11' E	KARRATHA CITY, PORT HEDLAND TOWN
Exploration Licence	77/2991	POLARIS METALS PTY LTD	1BL	48.1km NE'ly of Southern Cross	Lat: 30° 51' S Long: 119° 35' E	YILGARN SHIRE
Exploration Licence	77/2993	POLARIS METALS PTY LTD	2BL	142.9km NE'ly of Mukinbudin	Lat: 29° 56' S Long: 119° 11' E	YILGARN SHIRE
Exploration Licence	77/3240	NIMY PTY LTD	35BL	84.6km NE'ly of Mukinbudin	Lat: 30° 13' S Long: 118° 35' E	WESTONIA SHIRE, YILGARN SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	15/6678	SCORPION MINING PTY LTD	174.73HA	15.4km S'ly of Coolgardie	Lat: 31° 5' S Long: 121° 7' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	15/6679	SCORPION MINING PTY LTD	157.23HA	14.1km S'ly of Coolgardie	Lat: 31° 4' S Long: 121° 7' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	15/6680	SCORPION MINING PTY LTD	128.96HA	12.7km S'ly of Coolgardie	Lat: 31° 3' S Long: 121° 8' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	15/6698	BLACK CROW (WA) PTY LTD	146.00HA	15.5km S'ly of Coolgardie	Lat: 31° 5' S Long: 121° 8' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	15/6876	TITCHENER, Brodie Luke	8.99HA	24.9km SW'ly of Kambalda	Lat: 31° 21' S Long: 121° 28' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	15/6910	WILDCAT RESOURCES LIMITED	117.89HA	17.2km SW'ly of Coolgardie	Lat: 31° 3' S Long: 121° 1' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	15/6919	THOMPSON, Shannon Walter	174.06HA	18km SW'ly of Kalgoorlie	Lat: 30° 52' S Long: 121° 21' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	24/5806-S	CLANCY, John Leonard	1.98HA	10.6km SE'ly of Broad Arrow	Lat: 30° 31' S Long: 121° 23' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	24/5807-S	CLANCY, John Leonard	4.85HA	10.5km SE'ly of Broad Arrow	Lat: 30° 30' S Long: 121° 23' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	24/5808	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	196.18HA	5.4km SW'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 23' S Long: 121° 0' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	24/5809	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	195.55HA	5.5km SW'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 23' S Long: 121° 0' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	24/5810	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	194.11HA	6.1km W'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 22' S Long: 120° 59' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	25/2829	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	194.83HA	36.3km NE'ly of Kambalda	Lat: 30° 55' S Long: 121° 52' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	25/2840	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	199.62HA	33km E'ly of Kambalda	Lat: 31° 5' S Long: 121° 59' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	26/4747	PLAVSIC, Nicky	187.96HA	8.6km NW'ly of Kalgoorlie	Lat: 30° 40' S Long: 121° 25' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	26/4792	SMITH, William John	8.34HA	30.9km NE'ly of Kambalda	Lat: 30° 59' S Long: 121° 52' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	26/4794	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	196.51HA	29.4km NE'ly of Kambalda	Lat: 31° 2' S Long: 121° 54' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	26/4795	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	199.78HA	29.4km NE'ly of Kambalda	Lat: 31° 2' S Long: 121° 54' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	26/4796	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	185.54HA	31.1km NE'ly of Kambalda	Lat: 30° 59' S Long: 121° 53' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	26/4797	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	194.56HA	30.7km NE'ly of Kambalda	Lat: 30° 59' S Long: 121° 52' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	26/4798	MONGER EXPLORATION PTY LTD	182.95HA	15.8km SE'ly of Kalgoorlie	Lat: 30° 51' S Long: 121° 33' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	26/4799	MONGER EXPLORATION PTY LTD	163.50HA	16.8km SE'ly of Kalgoorlie	Lat: 30° 52' S Long: 121° 34' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	26/4800	MONGER EXPLORATION PTY LTD	185.68HA	17.6km SE'ly of Kalgoorlie	Lat: 30° 52' S Long: 121° 34' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	30/1167	LABYRINTH RESOURCES LIMITED	37.14HA	59.4km SW'ly of Menzies	Lat: 30° 2' S Long: 120° 34' E	MENZIES SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	57/1538-S	OXWELL, Dean Eliot	8.26HA	5.4km NW'ly of Sandstone	Lat: 27° 57' S Long: 119° 15' E	SANDSTONE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	57/1539	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	199.44HA	73.2km SE'ly of Sandstone	Lat: 28° 27' S Long: 119° 48' E	MENZIES SHIRE, SANDSTONE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	57/1540	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	200.15HA	72km SE'ly of Sandstone	Lat: 28° 27' S Long: 119° 48' E	SANDSTONE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	57/1541	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	199.88HA	70.8km SE'ly of Sandstone	Lat: 28° 26' S Long: 119° 48' E	SANDSTONE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	57/1542	COMPLETE PROSPECTING PTY LTD	199.36HA	67.8km SE'ly of Sandstone	Lat: 28° 26' S Long: 119° 45' E	SANDSTONE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	77/4617	STRANGE, Vernon Wesley	9.62HA	20km SE'ly of Marvel Loch	Lat: 31° 37' S Long: 119° 34' E	YILGARN SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	77/4657	STRANGE, Vernon Wesley	171.01HA	56.5km N'ly of Hyden	Lat: 31° 57' S Long: 119° 3' E	YILGARN SHIRE

Nature of the act: Grant of prospecting licences which authorises the applicant to prospect for minerals for a term of 4 years from date of grant. Grant of Special Prospecting Licences, which authorises the applicant to prospect for minerals for a term up to 4 years from the date of grant. Grant of exploration licences, which authorises the applicant to explore for minerals for a term of 5 years from the date of grant.
Notification day: 20 November 2024
Native title parties: Under section 30 of the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), persons have until 3 months after the notification day to take certain steps to become native title parties in relation to applications. The 3 month period closes on **20 February 2025**. Any person who is, or becomes a native title party, is entitled to the negotiation and/or procedural rights provided in Part 2 Division 3 Subdivision P of *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). Enquiries in relation to filing a native title determination application to become a native title party should be directed to the Federal Court of Australia, 1 Victoria Avenue, Perth WA 6000, telephone (08) 9268 7100.
Expedited procedure: The State of Western Australia considers that these acts are acts attracting the expedited procedure. Each licence may be granted unless, within the period of 4 months after the notification day **(i.e. 20 March 2025)**, a native title party lodges an objection with the National Native Title Tribunal against the inclusion of the statement that the State considers the grant of the licence is an act attracting the expedited procedure. Enquiries in relation to lodging an objection should be directed to the National Native Title Tribunal, Level 5, 1 Victoria Avenue, Perth, or GPO Box 9973, Perth, WA 6848, telephone (08) 9425 1000.
For further information about the act (including extracts of plans showing the boundaries of the applications), contact the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, 100 Plain Street, East Perth WA 6004, or telephone (08) 9222 3518. Please note – Not all Intention to Grant notifications are published in the National Indigenous Times. For more information please contact the Department above.

*** - 1 Graticular Block = 2.8 km^2**

Swans visit Arnhem Land

JACKSON CLARK


Swans players in Maningrida.

Sydney Swans players visited the Northern Territory this month to tackle an important health issue by holding a series of community clinics and a football carnival.

The Kick the Habit campaign encourages communities to keep their lungs and bodies strong by committing to a smoke-free lifestyle.

The initiative is part of the Australian Government's Tackling Indigenous Smoking program.

The Swans spent a week in Jabiru and Maningrida in West Arnhem Land, which is an area with some of the highest smoking rates in the country.

During the visit, the club held football clinics, visited schools and organised a three-day smoke-free festival in Maningrida.

Swans players Robbie Fox, Matt Roberts, Maddy Collier, Tanya Kennedy, Sam Wicks, Patrick Snell and Eliza Vale attended.


The Swans at the Jabiru Football Club. Pictures: Sydney Swans

Fox described his first visit to West Arnhem Land as an "incredible" experience.

"You hear about these sorts of communities but to see it first hand is incredible," he said.

"Food is hard to come by sometimes, and then you have kids who have to go to school this morning with no sleep and without a bed. But they are all happy at the same time . . . it puts everything into perspective."

The visit was the first phase of a three-year commitment to the region.

The club's First Nations strategy manager Jarred Hodges said he was thankful for the opportunity to visit the Top End communities.

"We visited Maningrida two years ago and formed some really strong bonds with the community, so we are grateful for the opportunity to return and strengthen those connections, as well as hopefully have a meaningful impact on health outcomes," Hodges said.

"West Arnhem Land is one of the most culturally diverse Aboriginal regions in Australia, with around 15 different languages spoken.

"This year we're delivering the Kick the Habit message in English, Burrara and Ndjebbana, and we plan to expand the language offerings each year."

The festival was held over three days, beginning with a youth carnival.

The following two days a weekend tournament was held featuring men's and women's teams from the region.

During the festival the program's partners, including the Mala'la Aboriginal Health Service, offered workshops and health checks throughout the event to support the campaign against smoking.

David Freier from Mala'la Aboriginal Health Service was excited to collaborate with the Swans on this initiative.

RioTinto

We're better together. Grow with us.

Sign up to our Talent Network to hear about our career opportunities.



SPORT



Indigenous XI and MCC teams.
Pictures: Joshua Scott

OUR STARS SHINE

JARRED CROSS

Cricket Australia's women's Indigenous XI made light work of their opposition with a convincing nine-wicket victory in their one-off T20 at the MCG.

The comprehensive win on November 21, wrapping the second annual National Indigenous Training Camp in Naarm, came after the men's Indigenous XI went down in a final over thriller earlier in the day.

Tahlia Meier (39 from 49) and Tracey Williamson (18 from 14) entered the drinks break well ahead of the required run-rate, before Dharmini Chauhan (37 from 24) made her time at the crease count to complete the Indigenous XI's convincing chase of 101 with more than six overs to spare.

After her unbeaten knock, Meier told National Indigenous Times "they were coming off (the bat) pretty well" early, saying it was "good to get the win" in her first time at the camp.

The women's Indigenous XI set the tone early by restricting MCC to 7-100 in the first innings, led by a Player of the Match-winning 3-17 from Wiradjuri leg-spinner Aimee Ravot.

Coming off Team of the Tournament selection at the National Indigenous Cricket Championships, Ravot did the damage to MCC's top order by the halfway mark, before wickets continued to fall as the hosts looked to build a defendable total. "Definitely felt like I was good. . .hit my line and length . . . fielding was good too," Ravot said.

Earlier in the day, the men's Indigenous side felt two runs short in a nailbiter against a men's MCC XI.

After expensive early overs with the ball, the Indigenous XI turned to spin options in the middle overs, slowing the MCC XI's run rate and limiting their opposition to a moderate total.

The MCC XI posted 146 from their 20 overs.

In response, Kamilaroi keeper-batter Dylan McLachlan struck nine 4s and five 6s on his way to an unbeaten 93, but was caught at the non-striker's end in the final balls of the chase, unable to pull off victory a final-ball victory.

With 13 required from the final over, consecutive boundaries brought the win within reach before the MCC XI applied the brakes to hold on by a run.

"I really thought we had the choccies there. . .but that's cricket," McLachlan told National Indigenous Times.

He joked it was "good to correct" his last time out in the middle — a duck, at the MCG.

McLachlan said the the camp's cultural elements combined with the opportunity to play where the "greats go about it" made the camp an "awesome experience".

Wurundeji senior Elder, Aunty Joy Murphy, delivered a Welcome to Country ceremony between matches, with the two teams exchanging gifts following the results.

Earlier last week, Cricket Australia announced more regular fixtures for the national Indigenous team across a three-year government partnership under their latest Reconciliation Action Plan. The National Indigenous Cricket Training Camp is delivered with support from the MCC Foundation.



Dylan McLachlan hit a game-high 93 off 68 balls.

Players & Hawthorn settle discrimination case

JARRAD CROSS

Hawthorn and the former players and their partners who alleged historical experiences of racial discrimination against the club have settled "without determination of any parties' allegations", and have received an apology from the club.

More than two years on from the allegations surfacing, the club and Cyril Rioli, pictured right, Shannyn Ah Sam-Rioli, Jermaine Miller-Lewis, Montana-Rae Lewis, Carl Peterson and Leon Egan released a joint-statement confirming an agreement was met on November 20 to settle the Federal Court proceedings. According to reports, the settlement was made following two days of mediation.



Hawthorn issued an apology to the former players, their partners and their families.

"Hawthorn accepts that the allegations were made in good faith, and has heard, respects, and accepts that they represent their truths," the club statement reads.

"Hawthorn is sorry and apologises that the former players, partners, and their families, in either pursuing a football career, or in supporting such a person, experienced ongoing hurt and distress in their time at the club."

The statement said the club has learned from the experiences expressed by "the former players, partners, and their families and all people involved with the club", and pointed to a range of steps it had taken "as a direct result of the allegations raised". "Hawthorn remains committed to providing a safe environment for First Nations peoples and the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination," the club said.

"No person should suffer to pursue a career in football. By the former players, partners, and their families sharing their truths and raising their allegations, this has provided valuable learnings for the club and has greatly assisted the club in improving its processes, education and the care it provides to each First Nations player and their support persons.

"The club thanks the former players, partners, and their families for their courage in providing this guidance.

"The fact the former players, partners and their families feel the way they do about their time at Hawthorn will continue to guide how the club interacts with and supports First Nations peoples moving forward." Hawthorn said they were committed to ongoing work with the players, partners and families who raised the allegations and with hopes they are able to return to the club.

There was no reference made to former staff Alastair Clarkson, Chris Fagan and Jason Burt in the statement.

In September 2022, the ABC broke alleged accounts of racial misconduct experienced by Indigenous former Hawks and their partners in the club's most recent premiership period.