

# NIT

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS TIMES

## Fashion after the flood

LIFESTYLE  
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# YOUTH PRISON MUST CLOSE

## Coroner's blast at inhumane conditions

RONAN O'CONNELL, NATASHA  
CLARK & GIOVANNI TORRE

Western Australia's troubled Unit 18 youth detention centre is dangerous and should be closed "as a matter of urgency", Coroner Philip Urquhart has warned as he released findings of the inquest into the death in custody of 16-year-old Yamatji boy Cleveland Dodd.

Mr Urquhart said Unit 18, the notorious youth unit within the maximum-security Casuarina Prison, was an unsafe environment for inmates when Cleveland's death occurred, and should be closed despite subsequent improvements.

He said Unit 18 staff on shift were not responsible for Cleveland's death, and found the main problem was Unit 18 was chronically understaffed, and had been for years.

Cleveland was found unresponsive in his cell early on October 12, 2023. The teenager died a week later after being kept on life support.

Cleveland had warned prison staff he intended to take his own life, the inquest noted. The staff asked him not to say such things. Thirteen minutes later, prison officers found him unresponsive in his cell, where the CCTV cameras had been covered by toilet paper for hours. That evening, Unit 18 staff several times rejected his request for a cup of water.

During his close to three months in custody Cleveland had repeatedly made threats of self-harm, but he had been removed from the prison's list of "at-risk" children. Cleveland



Cleveland Dodd  
Picture supplied by  
Nadene Dodd

had continually been denied time outdoors, having been inside for more than 22 hours a day during 74 of his 86 days at Unit 18.

Mr Urquhart described Cleveland's cell confinement as "deeply disturbing" and "inhumane". Cleveland would have felt "despair and despondency" due to these conditions, he said.

### Adverse findings

The Coroner made 15 adverse findings against the Department of Justice. They included findings Unit 18 was unfit to adequately care for, treat and supervise detainees at high risk of self-harm; the failure to

resolve the widespread practice of detainees covering their cell CCTV cameras for extended periods; the failure to remove Cleveland from a cell with an obvious ligature anchor point; the failure to place Cleveland on to its at-risk management system on the night of October 11, 2023; and the failure to have an adequate number of staff rostered for night shifts to ensure Unit 18 was operating safely.

Five months before Cleveland's death, Unit 18 had been exposed as having youths and staff in crisis by a May 2023 audit by WA Inspector of Custodial Services Eamon Ryan. Mr Ryan found rates of attempted suicide and self-harm in Unit 18 had reached

unprecedented levels. Similar failures in WA's youth-justice system were uncovered by the coronial inquest into Cleveland's death, and also by a 2024 Corruption and Crime Commission investigation into his case. The CCC cleared prison staff of serious misconduct on the night Cleveland fatally self-harmed, but found Unit 18 was "trapped in a cycle of destruction", with its staff poorly equipped to assess the seriousness of frequent self-harm threats made by detained children.

Mr Urquhart noted Cleveland was the first death in WA of a child in custody, and

described this inquest as the "saddest I have presided over".

The Coroner said no child in detention deserved to be treated the way Cleveland and other Unit 18 inmates were treated.

Intense boredom, lack of access to mental health services, education and even running water had become the norm for Cleveland and many fellow detainees, he said.

### He faced 'unbearable physical and psychological pain'

Cleveland's mother Nadene Dodd issued a statement after the Coroner's findings. "The

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# An historic apology delivered under the weight of 190 years — but will real change occur?

DECLAN BRENNAN  
ANALYSIS

Gough Whitlam pouring sand into Vincent Lingiari's hands in 1975.

Bob Hawke at the Barunga Festival in 1988.

Paul Keating's Redfern speech.

Kevin Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generations in 2008.

Uncle Andrew Gardiner invoked these defining moments in the relationship between governments and First Peoples on the steps of Victoria's Parliament House on Tuesday, December 9.

To that list, he said, must now be added: Jacinta Allan, 2025.

Just after 11am, First Peoples from across the State witnessed an official Government apology in Parliament for 191 years of harm.

Among those in the gallery was Travis Lovett, towering above the Aunties who smiled with warmth at everyone they saw. His great-uncles — five Aboriginal brothers — survived World War I only to return to land loss and discrimination.

"I keep thinking of the Elders, I keep thinking of the ancestors that we lost," he says.

"This is an important step for our people. Because it legitimises and solidifies that our people have told the truth over the last 191 years about the continual, ongoing harm of government policy and government failures on our people."

Nearby sat Rodney Carter, soft-spoken and reflective. His mother, Aunt Fay Carter OAM, helped establish the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, spending her life devoted to others after being born on a hospital porch because Aboriginal women were barred from the maternity ward.

"This is not just the newest apology," Mr Carter said on the steps of Parliament. "I think it's the most personal, intimate, measured description of the treatment of us as First Peoples ... it's an amazing day."

Ngarra Murray, co-chair of the First Peoples' Assembly and a descendant of seven generations of activists from the 1881 Maloga Petition to today's Treaty process, sat with fellow co-chair Reuben Berg. Together with Elders, community members and advocates, they listened as the



Andrew Gardiner speaking on the steps of Parliament. Picture: Declan Brennan

“This is not just the newest apology. I think it's the most personal, intimate, measured description of the treatment of us as First Peoples ... it's an amazing day.”

Rodney Carter

Premier apologised for the “harm inflicted upon them through the actions and inactions of the State, and the colony that came before it”.

As the Opposition sat uncomfortably through an apology it would ultimately reject because it referenced Treaty, Ms Allan addressed Aboriginal Victorians directly. Many filled the chamber; many more watched from an adjacent overflow room.

“We acknowledge the harm inflicted on generations of First Peoples — and mark the beginning of a new era, one that embraces truth, honours justice, and creates space for a shared future built in full view of the past,” she said.

“The actions and inactions of the State — and the colony

that came before it — carried out through words spoken and laws passed in the chambers of Parliament, resulted in profound and undeniable harms; the effects of which we are still grappling with today.”

Sheena Watt, who at times reached for the Premier's hand during the parliamentary address, appeared visibly emotional when speaking to reporters earlier.

The Yorta Yorta woman described feeling an “interesting mix” of pride and sorrow, but said she was certain the apology would help ensure a fairer future for everyone. She spoke of her experience hearing people in her community speaking in language as they walk down the street.

“I can't do that,” Ms Watt said. “I have stories of heartbreak: From hospitals, from my grandmother; of loss and sorrow that weren't captured — but will be captured today.”

The importance, of course, was tempered somewhat by the contradictions of some current policies. Greens leader Ellen Sandell praised the apology while pointing out that, only a week earlier, the Government had passed laws expected to increase the number of First Nations children in prison.

“I think it's important to remember, though, that this apology today comes at a

really difficult time for many First Nations communities,” she said, warning that future leaders might one day deliver yet another apology for the predictable consequences of today's decisions.

Ms Allan was forced to defend the laws to journalists earlier in the day. She argued many Indigenous Victorians are victims of crime — a point accurate, yet disconnected from the criticisms that the changes will widen inequality and breach the State's Human Rights Charter.

Yet the Government's discomfort paled beside the Opposition's decision to force a vote on the apology — one they were certain to lose — rather than accept it on the floor with the numbers against them.

Shouts of “shame” echoed through the chamber as the bells rang, and the motion for an apology was forced to wait a little bit longer.

It was, as one Assembly member remarked in the corridors afterwards, a reminder that in Aboriginal affairs, “the more things change, the more they stay the same”. Regardless of the Opposition's stance, it is up to both sides of politics — not just now, but in the future — to make that aphorism a false prophecy.

Speaking in the chamber, Minister for First Peoples, Natalie Hutchins, said the apology “is a line in the sand”.

## Terror at Bondi is condemned as pure evil

GIOVANNI TORRE

The Bondi terror attack which killed 15 innocent people, including at least one child, and injured 42 was an “act of pure evil”, Anthony Albanese said.

Hundreds of people had gathered at Bondi Beach in Sydney on Sunday for an event to celebrate the first day of Hanukkah, when the two terrorists opened fire in a deliberate attack on the Jewish community.

The Prime Minister said the day “should be a joyous celebration and the Jewish community are hurting today” and that Australians stand with them.

“What we saw yesterday was an act of pure evil, an act of antisemitism, an act of terrorism on our shores,” Mr Albanese said on Monday.

He said it is a moment for national unity and vowed to stamp out antisemitism.

Senator Lidia Thorpe and many other community leaders expressed grief and shock at the attack.

“I am devastated by the shooting at Bondi and the horrific loss of life at a Hanukkah celebration. This was an act of antisemitic violence and I send my love and solidarity to the Jewish community across the country,” she said. “I extend my deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of those killed, as well as everyone injured and traumatised by this attack.”

“Jewish people deserve to live, gather, celebrate and worship free from fear, like everyone in this country. There is no place for antisemitism, racism or terror in our society.”

Senator Thorpe said “many people will be profoundly hurting and fearful” after the horrific crime.

“Together we must commit to a society where everyone's safety and dignity are non-negotiable, regardless of faith or background. Everyone in this country deserves to belong and to live without fear,” she said.

Local fruit shop owner, Ahmed Al Ahmed, was hailed as a hero after ripping the gun from the hands of one of the terrorists before he was shot multiple times by another shooter from a nearby bridge.

As National Indigenous Times went to print, Mr Al Ahmed, a 43-year-old from the Sutherland Shire, had had surgery and was awaiting further surgeries.

NSW Police commissioner Mal Lanyon confirmed the suspected attackers were a 50-year-old male and 24-year-old male, father and son, and the 50-year-old was killed during the attack.

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with AAP

# Coroner's call for change

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pain I feel today is as intense as it was when I heard that Cleveland had taken his own life on 12 October 2023," she said. "I believed that my son Cleveland would be safe, and that he would be treated humanely while he was held in detention.

"But the evidence before the inquest into his tragic death at Unit 18 confirmed that Cleveland was neither.

"I believe that Cleveland's death was the product of institutional abuse and neglect, and it breaks my heart to know that Cleveland spent 23 hours a day, for days on end, locked down in a filthy cell with no end in sight."

Ms Dodd said that on the night of his death, her son "was in unbearable physical and psychological pain and was unable to get even his most basic needs met". "For example, Cleveland's repeated requests for water, and threats of self-harm and suicide, were ignored by custodial staff," she said.

"I can understand why my son lost hope and the will to live.

"While I hope that Cleveland's death, and Coroner Urquhart's findings and recommendations will catalyse the change required to prevent other children from suffering the way my son did, it depends upon a seismic shift in the Department's approach to youth justice, yet to be effected."

## 'Unit 18 should be closed as a matter of urgency'

In addition to recommending that Unit 18 should be closed as a matter of urgency, the Coroner issued 18 other recommendations, including that the Department: hires six case managers at Banksia Hill; funds a youth-specific clinician and a youth-specific reference group to provide oversight and advice in relation to the management of detainees who are at high risk of suicide; provides training at the Corrective Services Academy to youth corrections officers for the positions of unit manager and senior officer; that mandatory and comprehensive training is provided by the Corrective Services Academy to custodial staff moving from the adult estate to the youth estate; and the allocation of a mental health team member based in Unit 18 for day shifts seven days a week.

The Coroner also called for the allocation of youth carers, separate from YCOs, to support and guide detainees in every aspect



A vigil was held outside court on the day the inquest findings were brought down. Picture: Ronan O'Connell

of their daily activities in detention; that funding be provided to the Aboriginal Legal Service WA's Youth Engagement Program so it can extend its case management services to detainees being released from detention; and that detainees who are not confined to their cells for breaches of discipline are to receive, "at the barest minimum", two hours out-of-cell time in every 24-hour period.

## Coroner wants special inquiry

The Coroner called for a special inquiry be held to investigate the manner in which Unit 18 came to be WA's second youth detention centre. From the outset, justice experts, Indigenous groups and youth advocates warned that Unit 18 was a poor concept that would not help young people.

Another key recommendation that could, if implemented, drive a major shift in policy was the call for a new forum of relevant government agencies and stakeholders (such as the ALS WA, Children's Court, Inspector of Custodial Services, Commissioner for Children and Young People, and Aboriginal community organisations) to consider whether youth justice should remain entirely within the department's responsibility and that a report of its findings be

prepared for the WA Government to consider.

The Coroner recommended that should his recommendation to "immediately close Unit 18 not be implemented", the department should suspend "the operation of Unit 18 as a youth detention centre for a fixed period to determine whether all or some of the detainees then in Unit 18 can be safely cared for at the newly refurbished Banksia Hill", and also called for a Unit 18 closure date to be "immediately announced".

## Department's response

The WA Department of Justice said "Cleveland's passing was a tragedy" and that since late 2023, it has "implemented a comprehensive program to strengthen youth detention and improve outcomes for young people... guided by a model of care which sets out a therapeutic, trauma-informed approach to care across the youth estate (and) focuses on safety, cultural security, rehabilitation and through-care, ensuring young people are supported to reintegrate successfully into the community".

"Out-of-cell hours have increased significantly, supported by a major increase in youth custodial officers ... In addition, staff receive training from the

National Organisation for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders to assist with the management of young people," the department said. "Mental health and cultural supports have also been expanded, and individual engagement plans are in place for every young person at Unit 18, developed with psychologists and Aboriginal Youth Support Officers The Aboriginal Services Unit provides cultural connection for young people."

The department said it will "carefully review the Coroner's report and consider opportunities for further improvement" to youth justice.

## 'I want the end of keeping children in concrete boxes'

Days before the findings were delivered, Ms Dodd said it had been heartbreaking to experience the inquest into her son's death. "It has been torture to sit through all of it, to hear how my boy lived his last days and hours. To hear what was done and what wasn't done," she said.

"I want the end of keeping children in concrete boxes. I want investment in supports, in real help, in keeping our kids alive and well; not locked away."

Hours after the hearing Ms Dodd confirmed that she would soon meet Premier Roger Cook

to discuss Cleveland's death and the youth justice system.

Justice advocate Gerry Georgatos said Cleveland's family were very disappointed that staff at Unit 18 were not held accountable for their actions, and inaction, in the lead-up to his death.

Ms Dodd thanked Mr Urquhart and counsel assisting the coroner Anthony Crocker for their efforts investigating the cause of Cleveland's death and for their compassion, and Shirley Tan, the coronial counsellor, for her support.

She expressed gratitude to Mr Georgatos, Connie Georgatos and Megan Krakouer for "being a constant source of support since Cleveland's death in 2023".

Ms Dodd thanked her family, including her uncle Stewart, aunt Gillian and Cleveland's grandmother Glenda Mippy, "for being there to support me and my children", and her legal representatives, Steven Penglis and Dana Levitt and solicitors from Levitt Robinson and Gilbert + Tobin, and Cleveland's lawyers at the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA for advocating for Cleveland when he was held in Banksia Hill and Unit 18.

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## On-Country youth justice diversion project offers hope

NATASHA CLARK

Deep in the Kimberley bushland, a cluster of new buildings and a tennis court have risen as an on-Country program for Aboriginal young people at risk of entering the justice system takes shape.

In late November a pre-opening ceremony was held for the Wala Kooral-bi Centre, created by KRED Enterprises to house the Marlamanu program. The Aboriginal-led initiative is based at Mount Anderson Station on Nyikina

Mangala Country, 120km south-east of Derby, with its three-year pilot expected to begin from next year.

Its landscape of cattle yards and wide horizons stands in stark contrast to the recent scenes of six young people on the roof of Banksia Hill in Perth, WA's main youth detention centre.

Noongar justice advocate Megan Krakouer said conditions within Banksia Hill "remain dangerous, degrading, and completely unacceptable", and children at risk of entering the justice system

"deserve dignity, safety, accountability, and a system that actually works".

Her longtime colleague Gerry Georgatos said the Marlamanu model offered "a constructive alternative" to the status quo.

Kimberley MP Divina D'Anna noted "how much work community leaders have put into establishing an alternative way of responding to challenging situations".

"Marlamanu is not just about working with these kids, but also their families," she said.

The program has been shaped by experts in youth justice diversion together with cultural leaders, aiming to interrupt cycles of disadvantage through structured daily activities and therapeutic support, education and mentoring.

With support from the Kimberley Agriculture and Pastoral Company, participants can experience mustering and caring for animals.

"It's about turning their light switches on to all their opportunities in life," Ms D'Anna said.

Marlamanu is voluntary. Those involved in designing the model say if the pilot proves effective, lawyers and youth justice officers may eventually look to it as a program they could recommend to young people seeking community-based support.

KRED chief executive Damian Parriman was clear Marlamanu is not a bail house and is not a custodial facility. "We will do whatever we can to make sure they are engaged in the program and want to be here," he said.

GIOVANNI TORRE

A new report from the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body revealed this month only four of the 22 targets under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 are on track.

The study from the Elected Body, the 2025 August Hearings Report, Truth Through Transparency: A Turning Point Report, released on December 5, found four targets are not on track, eight are actively getting worse and six have no published data for assessment.

The report makes 56 recommendations, concluding: "The ACT is now in a worse position than when the ACT Agreement was signed."

The Elected Body said the report was "different from previous hearings reports" in that for the first time, the Body has "done its own full, evidence-based assessment" of how the ACT Government is tracking against the 2019-2028 Agreement.

The Elected Body studied data, tested evidence and asked: are government commitments creating real change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT?

Elected Body chair Maurice Walker said the report was about telling the truth clearly and openly.

"Transparency gives truth, and truth gives us another beginning," Mr Walker said. "We need shared data, real

# Agreement failing on ACT targets

accountability and genuine partnership; not more plans, but action alongside community."

The Elected Body described the report as "an honest assessment and an invitation to reset".

"Community voices were central to this process. Many community members helped shape the hearings by contributing questions, ensuring the Elected Body represents the broad interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"The findings are deeply concerning... in many areas, outcomes are going backwards."

Independent member for Kurrajong Thomas Emerson said the report was another in a "long string of reports exposing the ACT Government's

repeated failure to follow through on its commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people".

He called on the ACT Government to respond promptly to the Elected Body's recommendations, and to prioritise increased resourcing for the Elected Body in alignment with its self-stated commitment to shared decision-making.

"Shared decision-making cannot be a tokenistic afterthought. We need to empower the Elected Body to operate as an equal partner with the ACT Government... (it) remains hugely under-resourced."

Mr Emerson said the report shows "accountability has been lacking, action has been limited, and change has been slow".

"The ACT Government cannot keep disregarding its prom-

ises to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans while their life outcomes continue to worsen. It's time to turn things around."

On December 2, to loud applause, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed Mr Emerson's Closing the Gap Bill, which legislates accountability standards for senior public servants and government agencies in relation to the ACT Government's Closing the Gap commitments.

The new law makes the ACT the first State or Territory to legislate its commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap by embedding the provisions of the agreement in the laws that govern the responsibilities and reporting obligations of the public sector.

The Government also tabled its phase three implementation plan for the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 on December 5, which was originally to start in January 2024.

Mr Emerson said he had asked government officials during multiple Estimates and Annual Reports hearings when the plan would be ready, and that deadlines for finalising the report had been repeatedly missed.

An ACT Government spokesperson said the Government acknowledged "the extensive work" undertaken by the Elected Body in the preparation of the report and "respects and values" its role. "An important part of this role is holding the Government to account for commitments under the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028. The detailed level of analysis in the report helps to better understand the action and information community is seeking from government and the ways this can be progressed," the spokesperson told National Indigenous Times.

The spokesperson said all ACT Government directorates are "focused on Closing the Gap and improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and communities, including the recently completed agreement of implementation actions under Phase III of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement".

# Indigenous deaths in custody at new high

DECHLAN BRENNAN

Australia has recorded the highest number of Indigenous deaths in custody in 45 years of reliable data, amid growing calls for the Federal Government to hold States and Territories accountable for punitive laws.

Data from the Australian Institute of Criminology released last Wednesday shows 33 of the 113 deaths in custody in 2024-25 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people — the highest number since reliable record-keeping began in 1979-80.

Senator Lidia Thorpe described the figures as a "national disgrace... in a country that claims to be Closing the Gap".

"In these horrific figures, I see violent colonialism perpetrated by hollow politicians desperate for votes and power," the Gunai, Gunditjmarra and Djab Wurrung independent senator said.

"How many more of our people do we need to bury before governments stop sacrificing our lives for political gain?"

Broken into deaths in prison custody and deaths in police custody, the figures emerge alongside a wave of new laws in jurisdictions experts warn will only increase deaths in custody.

Since the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, there have been at least 617 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in custody.

There were 26 deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prison custody in 2024-25; up from 18 the previous year.

Of the available data, an equal



Protesters at a Stop Deaths in Custody rally in Boorloo/Perth in June. Picture: Zoe Theiadore

number of deaths were attributed to natural causes as to self-harm and other complications, with the latter category at its highest since 1979-80.

Ninety-six per cent of the deaths were male — the largest number of Indigenous men to die in prison custody since national reporting began.

Nine of the deaths were in NSW, the highest number on record for the State. NSW Coron-

er Teresa O'Sullivan said: "Each of these deaths represents a person whose life mattered and whose loss is felt deeply by families, loved ones and communities across the State."

Despite the royal commission urging that imprisonment be a last resort, 42 per cent of the First Nations people who died in custody were unsentenced prisoners.

Six Indigenous people also

died in police custody in 2024-25.

According to the AIC, five of these occurred "during the process of detaining or attempting to detain the person".

There has been outrage over laws introduced across the country.

"The racist 'tough on crime' laws we're seeing nationwide were always going to lead to more deaths," Senator Thorpe

said. "We warned that this would happen. When prisons are full, more of our people die."

"Every piece of evidence shows it would be cheaper, safer, and more effective to invest in housing, bail services, income support, disability services and community-led services, not cages."

In Victoria, despite a coroner noting previous bail laws were an "unmitigated disaster" that contributed to the death of Gunditjmarra, Dja Dja Wurrung, Wiradjuri, and Yorta Yorta woman Veronica Nelson, the State Government reversed bail reforms, claiming changes made following her death were wrong.

In the Northern Territory, incarceration rates have surged since the Country Liberal Party took office last year.

Corrections data shows the average prison population has increased by 15 per cent over the past year.

The age of criminal responsibility has been lowered to 10, and bail laws have been tightened.

Senator Thorpe said the Federal Government must move beyond treating deaths in custody as solely a State and Territory responsibility.

"The Commonwealth has the constitutional power to legislate national minimum standards across the criminal legal system," she said.

"They must also follow through with their commitment to impose funding restrictions on states and territories that are increasing incarceration... Now is the time to act."

# Tenants win court battle against 'worst landlord'

GIOVANNI TORRE

Four Indigenous remote renters won their case unanimously in the High Court this month, successfully invalidating the Northern Territory government's widely-criticised 'Remote Rent Framework'.

Rents have been hiked for the majority of remote tenants by up to 200 per cent since the former NT Labor government established the Framework in early 2023. The CLP took office in 2024 and maintained the Framework.

On December 3, Asher Badari, Ricane Galaminda and Lofty Nadjamerrek from Gunbalanya, along with Laramba woman Carmelena Tilmouth made history in the High Court by striking out the unlawful actions of the NT Government.

The High Court unanimously found the NT Government did not afford the tenants affected by the new model procedural fairness, therefore rendering the 'Remote Rent Framework' unlawful.

Australian Lawyers for Remote Aboriginal Rights (ALRAR) said the decision means the Territory Government will be "forced to scrap the rent model and go back to the drawing board, this time consulting those affected by the rent hikes before taking any

further steps", and also means the NT Government has been unlawfully collecting \$9.7 million a year additional rent for the past two years.

## 'A much-deserved victory'

ALRAR lead solicitor Daniel Kelly said "renters of Gunbalanya and Laramba led this fight for the benefit of all remote tenants in the NT, and today their persistence has paid off".

"This is a much-deserved victory for the many families who've been battling to keep their heads above water since these unwarranted and destabilising rent hikes were implemented," he said.

"Now is the time for the NT Government to start the conversations with remote Aboriginal public housing tenants about what rent method works for each of them. Involving the existing community Housing Reference Groups and making sure people can give their views orally and in-language has to be part of that process.

"I look forward to the Government working with communities to develop a new rent model that keeps a roof over everyone's head and reduces financial stress for thousands of NT families."

ALRAR said the rent framework, which was implemented by the NT government in Feb-

ruary 2023, saw rent increases for 68 per cent of remote First Nations tenants in the NT, with more than 5000 homes affected in total. No renter was consulted before these rent hikes were imposed.

The framework made remote communities in the NT the only public housing tenants in the country that have rents determined by the number of bedrooms in a home, rather than an income test.

The Territory currently has a homelessness rate of 12 times the national average, and faces the nation's worst rates of housing stress. It also remains the worst performing state on Closing the Gap housing targets, with more than half its population of First Nations people living in inappropriately sized, overcrowded rental homes.

## Decision welcomed by Indigenous housing advocates

Aboriginal Housing NT chief executive Leeanne Caton welcomed the court's decision.

"The Remote Rent Framework exacerbated the high numbers of rough sleepers and people experiencing homelessness in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek, as many people in remote communities who are unable to afford the increased rent are

effectively forced into seeking alternative accommodation, often in urban centres," she said.

"Public policy reform must never disadvantage remote tenants. The Remote Rent Framework further disadvantaged remote Aboriginal tenants and households who are already experiencing some of the highest costs of living nationally.

"Aboriginal tenants and households in remote communities are already being forced to pay inconceivably high prices for basic goods, essential groceries, fuel and standard day to day items."

Ms Caton said all Territorians should have access to "a safe, healthy and affordable public housing rental model that does not further impoverish nor diminish the wellbeing of families".

## Government 'considering options' for a new system

NT Minister for Housing, Local Government and Community Development Steve Edgington told National Indigenous Times the Northern Territory Government "acknowledges the High Court decision regarding the former government's Remote Rent framework implemented on 6 February 2023 by then Minister for Housing and Homelands, Selena Uibo".

"All public housing tenants, remote and urban, are still required to pay rent," he said.

"The Northern Territory Government is considering options to ensure a valid rental framework is in place for remote tenants."

The Minister did not address a question regarding what would be done to remedy the unlawful collection of more than \$9 million a year in rent under the Framework.

## 'The worst landlord in Australia'

The Grata Fund backed the case brought by the four tenants.

The fund's executive director, Isabelle Reinecke, said the outcome was "a remarkable victory for Asher, Ricane, Lofty, and Carmelena, who took on the Goliath that is the NT Government and pursued justice all the way to the High Court".

"Once again, the NT Government has proven itself to be the worst landlord in Australia," she said.

"Remote communities have copped blow after blow from successive NT governments, with steep rent hikes, neglect of basic housing repairs, and failure to provide safe drinking water for all communities."

## Anger at claim staff used boy's T-shirt as 'spit hood'

CALLAN MORSE

Revelations security staff at a Tasmanian youth detention centre used a young person's T-shirt to create an improvised spit hood sparked an outcry from Aboriginal legal and advocacy groups this month.

Tabled in State Parliament on December 2, Tasmanian Custodial Inspector Dr Grant Davies' review, "Security contractor transport of young people in custody: safeguarding review 2025", revealed "significant inconsistencies" in the Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People's safeguarding of those in their care.

They included revelations contract security staff supervising the transportation of a young person between Ashley Youth Detention Centre and Launceston General Hospital covered the young person's head with their own T-shirt, creating an improvised spit hood while their hands were



Ashley Youth Detention Centre. Picture: Ethan James/AAP

handcuffed behind their back.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service chief executive Jake Smith said TALS holds "grave concerns" about "systemic issues" noted in the review.

"The use of a spit hood or the use of an improvised spit hood is completely unacceptable, it contravenes United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, is dangerous and dehumanising," Mr Smith told National Indigenous Times.

"All children and young people deserve to feel safe and supported, and should be, no matter where they are and particularly in the care of the Tasmanian Government, its contractors and service providers."

A TALS statement revealed Aboriginal children and young

people currently represent close to 30 per cent of those held at AYDC, labelling the figure a "significant over-representation" of the broader community.

"The report highlighted the improvised use of a spit hood on a young person among other concerns such as concerns including the use of force, the vetting and training of contractors, and the inconsistent therapeutic care for children and youth while being transported," TALS said.

Dr Davies' report confirmed "systemic issues" and "significant inconsistencies" are compromising the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Tasmanian State care.

The Inspector said despite concerns being raised by his

office — along with other oversight bodies such as the Commissioner for Children and Young People over a number of years — private security officers continue to be used to transport children and young people to and from AYDC, resulting in safeguarding gaps which compromise their safety and wellbeing. He said while the Department for Education, Children and Young People have some safeguards to protect children and young people during transport, they did not have systems in place to oversee their use and effectiveness.

"Safeguards can only protect children and young people if they are consistently applied, meaningfully embedded and overseen by robust internal

systems as well as independent bodies," Dr Davies said.

Despite the incident detailed in the Tasmanian Custodial Inspector's review, State Minister for Children and Youth, Jo Palmer, said spit hoods "are prohibited and not in use at Ashley Youth Detention Centre".

"This includes spit hoods of any type — including makeshift spit hoods such as T-shirts or any material that covers the face, and the prohibition extends to use on transports to or from the centre," she said.

Ms Palmer said the DECYP is "actively progressing work to ensure all practices at AYDC and during transport of young people remain aligned with contemporary therapeutic models at all times".

# Standing as one to be seen

DECLAN BRENNAN

Speaking at Djirra's 16 Days of ACTIVEism Festival in Naarm this month, Antoinette Braybrook delivered a clear message: "Too often, Aboriginal women are overlooked, invisible and excluded from the decisions about our lives."

Australia's 16 Days of ACTIVEism — the national campaign against gender-based violence — has sparked marches across the country and renewed calls for greater visibility and support for those most affected.

Djirra, an Aboriginal community-controlled family violence service in Victoria, marked the campaign with a walk in Canberra, followed by a festival in Naarm on 5 December drawing 400 women and children.

The event, held on the Aunty

Patricia Ockwell Court at Narandjeri Stadium, was pitched as a "welcoming and fun space for Aboriginal women and allies to come together to celebrate culture, strength and our proud ACTIVEism".

"Djirra's ACTIVEism campaign calls on our supporters to stand with us as we demand the urgent change and investment Aboriginal women deserve," Ms Braybrook, Djirra's chief executive, said.

A range of stalls — from children's and women's activities to legal services — highlighted the strength and resilience of First Nations women: mothering, nurturing, surviving and thriving. Women and Elders of all ages took part, with live music, face painting, tote-bag workshops and quiet spaces creating a culturally safe environment.

Throughout the 16 days, Ms



Djirra's 16 Days of ACTIVEism Festival in Naarm/Melbourne. Picture: Dechlan Brennan

Braybrook says the organisation "draws national attention to the men's violence that continues to devastate the lives of Aboriginal women and children, and to the systems that target, overlook and harm us".

"When we bring Aboriginal women together, we are organising, agitating and demanding that governments invest in our self-determined solutions," she added. "The solutions led by us that will make a difference to Aboriginal women and children's lives."

After a warm and humorous welcome by Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Annette Xiberras, Djirra received a \$60,000 cheque from

Shape Australia; an endorsement of the organisation's committed, daily work supporting First Nations women across Victoria.

"Real change will only come when Aboriginal women are able to lead and when we are visible, heard and backed with meaningful, sustained investment in our self-determined solutions," Ms Braybrook said.

Ms Braybrook pointed to the "appalling and despicable" statistics which shape Aboriginal women's lives, who are 45 times more likely to experience family violence.

"For more than two decades, Djirra has been advocating to

turn this devastating reality around," she said.

"Our ACTIVEism is about getting louder, refusing to be ignored, and demanding the change our women deserve. At every turn, Aboriginal women are at risk. We are at risk of losing our lives, at risk of having our children taken, and at risk of being criminalised and incarcerated.

"It's time to back us in, to invest in us, and for us to lead so that the safety of Aboriginal women and children is prioritised."

This year's campaign underscored a simple truth: visibility and collective action save lives.

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# Foundation an avenue to build a stronger community

EXCLUSIVE  
GIOVANNI TORRE

The Yinhawangka People launched a new community-led organisation this month to “strengthen self-determination, elevate cultural authority and open pathways for long-term community-driven outcomes”.

The Yinhawangka Foundation aims to provide an avenue for Yinhawangka people to design and deliver programs strengthening social outcomes and drive health, wellbeing and prosperity in the Pilbara.

“Our young people carry the future of Yinhawangka. This foundation gives them the tools, knowledge and experience to lead with strength and respect for each other and our Elders past and present,” Yinhawangka Foundation chair Karis Drummond said.

“To have a youth board is something that we all hope for, where they can design and implement programs that best suit them. I also want to see empowerment in other ways, like building our youth confidence and giving them employment and training opportunities.

“My dream is to build and empower our youth so that one day in the near future our Yinhawangka people are managing and running the entire foundation.

“Our Yinhawangka membership lead us ... These are programs that they want. Our job is not to lead but to build ... Listening and learning from our members. Everything that we plan to do with the foundation is driven by the ideas of our people.”

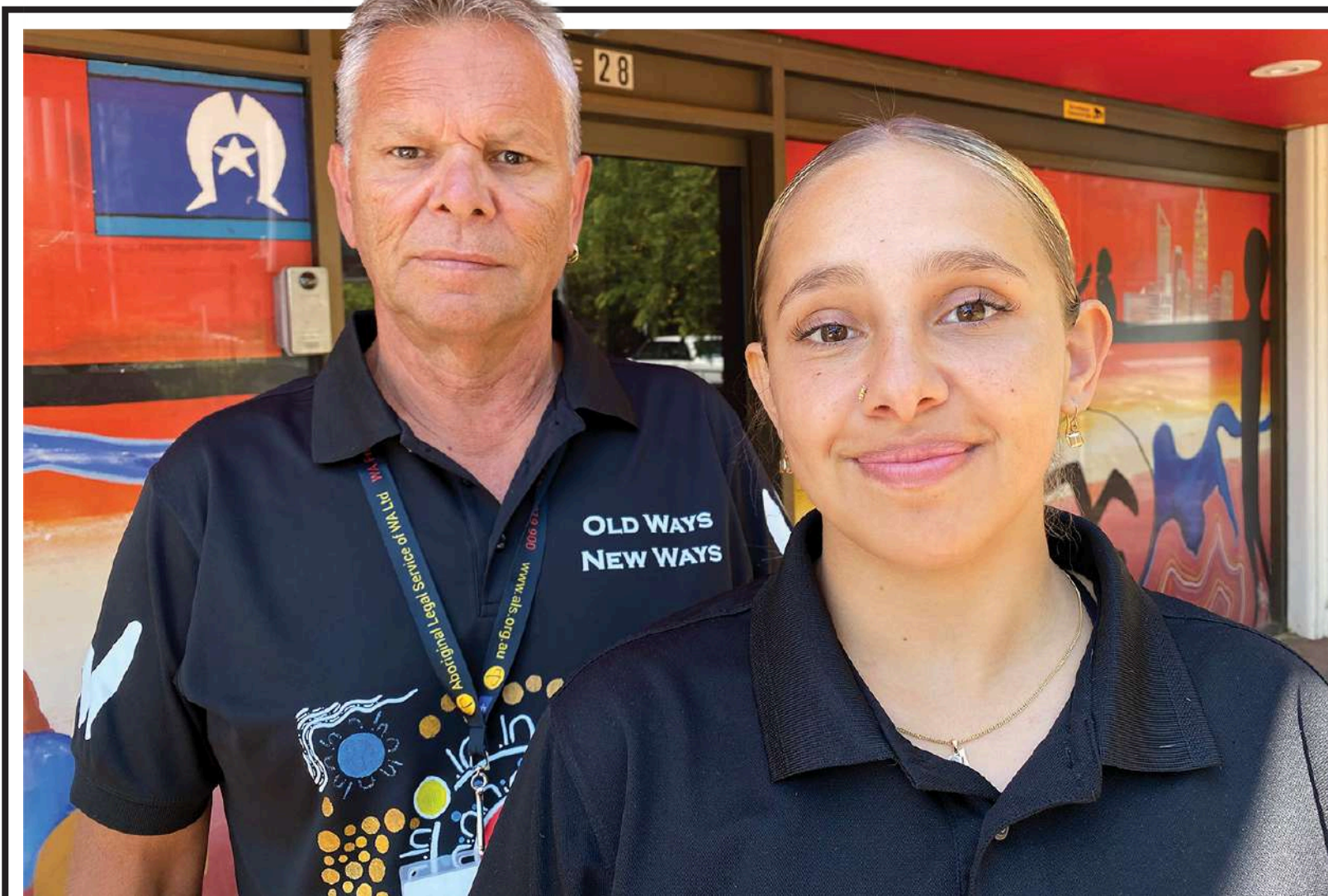
At the launch event, Yinhawangka Aboriginal Corporation director and proud Yinhawangka man from the Minatanguha Clan Marlon Cooke told National Indigenous Times the foundation was “mainly for the future generation; employment, education and comfortable living”.

“It all makes a big difference in how our people live now and for the future. It will make a big difference in our day-to-day lives,” he said.

Yinhawangka Foundation CEO Joanne Headlam said Yinhawangka leadership was “embedded throughout the foundation, including our board, representing three of our apical groups and our program design team”. “As we recruit Yinhawangka youth, we will continue to strengthen Yinhawangka leadership across the organisation,” she said.

The foundation’s establishment was made possible through seed funding provided by Rio Tinto.

Rio Tinto Iron Ore health, safety, environment and communities vice-president Caitlin Westgarth said supporting the foundation was “about partnering with the Yinhawangka people and advancing their priorities and aspirations”.



Old Ways New Ways' Jamie Jackson and Anna-Shae Michael. Picture: Giovanni Torre

# ALS youth initiative with a big impact

GIOVANNI TORRE

The Old Ways New Ways program is an Aboriginal-led voluntary program for young people at risk making a big impact in Western Australia, and it could be a model for the whole country. Delivered by a consortium of community-based organisations: the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA, Wadjak Northside Aboriginal Corporation, Hope Community Services and the Stephen Michael Foundation, ONEW began in October 2024 after community members saw a need for a new approach to help kids who had come into contact with the justice system or were at risk of doing so. Indigenous children are drastically over-represented in the WA justice system. ONEW cultural and youth co-ordinator Bruce Loo said it was a chance to lift young Aboriginal people “out of the pit of despair”. “The Old Ways New Ways program brings back culture and the values that Aboriginal people have been missing for a long time,” he said.

Lenny Yarran of Wadjak Northside said the seeds of the program were sown over many years of work with Indigenous students.

“Old Ways, News Ways came from identifying (kids at risk) and teaching them about their culture - some of them didn't know. We didn't blame mum and dad... we identified the Stolen Generation and what came with that,” he said.

“We worked with the community to build relationships... We had to work together, and the table was set for encouraging conversations and conducive conversations about how we create a safe place for kids in community - and every one of us played a role in that.”

ALS WA director of programs Victoria Williams told National Indigenous Times: “One thing that struck me the most with the pilot program was the young person who said ‘the Old Ways New Ways staff make us feel like we are OK.’” “It is Aboriginal-led, we can do it four times a week, we can do the camps; these decisions are made by Elders. It allows for the fact every child is different,” she said.

ONW program worker Anna-Shae Michael said: “As a Blackfella and a young person it was very easy for me to connect with the kids as they start to open up. “They’re coming to activity day and they’re getting fed; they’re getting attention; they get education; they get to connect to culture; they get to do some sports — things that they haven’t done. “Some of these kids haven’t been to school in five or six years.”

ONW cultural and youth co-ordinator Jamie Jackson said consistency, communication and culture was the key.

“Some of the kids might struggle but they know next week they will have that opportunity again,” he said.

“If there are gaps in the kids’ knowledge about their family

history you can help them figure out who their mob is. One young fella, he has 23 first cousins he didn’t know about. And, like, in anyone’s world, that’s huge.”

The program has Federal funding but, at this stage, none from the WA Government. Forty-six per cent of referrals to Old Ways New Ways come from State agencies such as the departments of Justice, Communities, and Education; WA Police; Legal Aid; and Government schools. Mr Jackson noted ONEW was getting attention. “If we show up at court and we have our shirts on, we will get a tap on the shoulder — ‘can we get into Old Ways New Ways?’,” he said. Senior program manager Liam Anthony said self-referrals were now the second highest source of participants for the program. The highest source is the Department of Justice, with the Department of Education rounding out the top three. Funding and resources are needed to expand the program, which has had 282 children referred in its first 13 1/2 months. There are 105 children active in the program, with a waitlist of 24. Old Ways New Ways is funded under the Federal National Justice Reinvestment Program until 30 June, 2026. Courses including leadership skills, respect, teamwork, life skills and culture are held in two Perth sites with separate weekly sessions for boys and girls. Ms Michael, who is 21 and has worked for the program since it

started, said “four or five years ago, being a teenager, there was never anything like this around”. “You couldn’t ... find a program where you can get education, culture, connected to sports, engagement with other kids your own age,” she said. “This is really different and it’s really special. “Our team always shows up and goes an extra mile for these kids and that’s what you need.” In terms of ONEW as a model for other parts of the country, Ms Williams said its adaptability was a great strength. “Whether it is Old Ways New Ways in New South Wales or in the Kimberley, they would all look different — they’d all be different people and different organisations that would be running it, but it actually could change the system completely — absolutely,” she said.

A spokesperson for WA Attorney-General Tony Buti said the government “continues to explore ways to develop and support culturally safe initiatives and responses to assist young people, such as the Old Ways New Ways program”.

“There are a number of... initiatives undertaken by the Aboriginal Legal Service that already receive State... funding, including the recently expanded Youth Engagement Program to support young people. There are ongoing discussions with the ALS on funding support for their various initiatives and programs and these are subject to the budget process.”



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## ALSO INSIDE

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## Fitzroy rebounds

Support for women and  
girls as town recovers  
from floods **Pages 10-11**

Billie-Jean Hamlet  
on the KAFTA  
runway. Picture:  
Isabelle Grand'Eury

# After the tide, Fitzroy rises

**NATASHA CLARK**

Orange afternoon light dapples the concrete of the old bridge as young Aboriginal women turn it into a runway, draped in garments created by local designers.

It's a striking scene — almost unimaginable on the same bridge that, nearly three years ago, lay beneath a once-in-a-century flood which devastated the Fitzroy Valley and cut off the town of Fitzroy Crossing in WA's Kimberley region.

The 2022-23 floods damaged about 240 properties and forced more than 1500 people to evacuate in what became WA's worst recorded flood.

Since then, much of the physical damage has been repaired, and the Fitzroy Bridge has been reconstructed.

The community is now investing in something longer-term: helping young women recover from the trauma the flood left behind.

Fitzroy Crossing's Camilla Sawford says she grew up with floods, but this time she knew something was different.

"When people ask if it was scary for the community, I say yes — it was," she says.

Ms Sawford remembers the stress rippling through families as the water rose and the scale of the damage became clear.

Through Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation's After the Flood fashion workshops, young women and girls affected by the disaster have been given a space to be supported by women who understand their experiences.

The project was made possible through funding from the Australian and WA governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, with additional support from Kimberley Aboriginal Fashion Textiles and Art.

Over two days in late November the women worked with the KAFTA program, which develops First Nations designers, stylists and creatives across northern WA.

Day one focused on modelling, fashion and art tutorials at MWWAC's Night Space, while day two brought those new skills on to the runway.

Working alongside the KAFTA team were three mentors who grew up in Fitzroy

Crossing: founder of Jalayimiya swimwear Brodie George, founder of Litiyalla earrings Ms Sawford, and international model Billie-Jean Hamlet — each returning home to guide the girls through the workshops.

Before the program began, KAFTA artistic director Kartika Christophers sat on the floor of MWWAC's Night Space, meeting the girls at eye level.

She told them warmly but firmly: "We aren't doing shame."

She was naming something many young women in the Fitzroy Valley talk about — the

feeling that expressing their femininity, or being visibly confident can draw unwanted attention or criticism.

It's also something Ms Sawford says "holds us back".

"We can't fully be seen or even experience things if we sit back and we go, 'No, we're too shame'," she says

Ms Christophers praises the women for challenging shame by entering the Night Space to participate in the program.

"It takes a lot of courage for our girls to walk through that doorway and be here," she says.

She says the skills the girls learnt are not isolated to the runway — they are applicable to everyday life.

"There aren't a lot of programs out there that are promoting empowerment, beauty, hygiene, poise and confidence for our young women," Ms Christophers says.

"These are skills the girls don't even realise they're building, but they're capacity-building.

"It means that when they're ready for job interviews, they have more confidence in how they hold themselves."

A woman who embodies this is Kahlia Rogers — a Night Space youth officer and 2024 National Indigenous Fashion Awards young achiever, who brought unmistakable elegance gliding down the runway when opening the show.

Ms Rogers walked in an outfit painted by children she mentors at the Night Space, their illustrations vivid against the backdrop of the bridge.

Moments later, those same girls followed her down the runway, expressing how strength moves between generations in the Fitzroy Valley.

Ms Rogers says the project is not only about self-empowerment but also an opportunity for the young women "to build each other up".

"It's a great way for the women to positively feed off each other's energy, and boost creativity," she says.

Among them is 10-year-old Jeneaqua, one of the youngest participants, who says she simply loves being with her friends and doing fashion by the river.

"I love fashion and I love being here with friends and family," she says.

"I like this modelling thing for girls.

"You can do hair and make-up and stuff, you get to go to old bridge and do fashion."





Pictures: Isabelle Grand'Eury



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© MARRA WORRA WORRA - Isabelle Grand'Eury

# Artist's work on show at Triennial

## PHOEBE BLOGG

Yolnu artist Naminapu Maymuru-White is showcasing her work at the 5th National Indigenous Art Triennial: After The Rain.

The exhibition, which opened at the National Gallery of Australia on December 6, sees artists including Vincent Namatjira, Alair Pambegan, Aretha Brown, Blaklash, Dylan Mooney, Hermannsburg Potters, IltjaNtjarra (Many Hands) Art Centre, and Jimmy John Thaiday presenting 10 large-scale, immersive multi-disciplinary installations celebrating intergenerational legacies and cultural warriors of the past, present and future.

Artistic director, artist and Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku-Yalanji man Tony Albert worked with the artists, inviting them to respond to the exhibition title, which for him represented rebirth and new beginnings.

Maymuru-White said she found the process “really interesting and helpful”.

“I really appreciated working alongside Tony and the team from the NGA, I enjoyed

spending time with Tony in Yirrkala sharing my work and art centre to give him a deeper understanding of my work and community,” she told Style Up.

“When we share the patterns and designs passed down from our ancestors it shows us the way to live our life, sharing the journey and our connection to the Milniyawuy, the Milky Way.

“My work is about the cycle of life and our journey here on earth and in the stars.”

Maymuru-White said her homeland heavily influenced all her work.

“My homeland is Djarrakpi at the base of Cape Shield in the northern part of Blue Mud Bay. . . My paintings are from there, they share the stories of the land, sea and the river on earth and in the sky,” she said.

“In a Yolnu world we know that everything is connected — people, land, sea, animals and the sky.

“When I look up at the night sky, I can see my ancestors but I can also feel connected to friends and family that are a long way away.”

On the theme of After The Rain, Maymuru-White said:

“When I think of rebirth it is about a cycle of life; our Gurrutu kinship system connects us all to each other and to all things, and our ceremonies and songs connect us with the spirits of our ancestors and our country.”

“When I leave this place on Earth, I will become part of the Milniyawuy — Milky Way and my children and their children can see me up there as one of the stars.

“My art is real, it is the truth for us and will never stop or change, our law and knowledge is there and has been passed down through my family and clan for generations.

“Every line carries a memory of the land, our ancestors and the laws that guide us.”

Maymuru-White said she was thrilled her work would be touring nationally for two years after the exhibition at the National Gallery ends in April.

**The 5th National Indigenous Art Triennial: After The Rain is made possible by the support of the National Gallery's First Nations Arts Partner, Wesfarmers Arts, and key philanthropic supporters. Entry is free.**




Naminapu Maymuru-White Picture: Leicolhn Mckellar

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# No room for shades of grey

JARRED CROSS

Aretha Brown's contribution to the National Gallery of Australia's 5th Indigenous Art Triennial: *After The Rain* is one of her most significant works to date.

"I'm doing this huge 50m mural detailing the time line of this country and the 'birth of this nation', whatever that means," she told National Indigenous Times.

"From the Dreamtime to Cook's arrival, first contact, 1930s to revolutionary '60s, Sydney Olympics then to the present day, the referendum, Treaty, and also Blak future.

"It's definitely culturally my biggest work, in terms of what it means to me."

The Gumbaynggir artist moved to Sydney (on Gadigal Country) from her base in Naarm/Melbourne this year in large part for her exhibition, to throw herself into the "lion's den" of first contact.

"I'm depicting arguably the darkest moment in our country's history," she said.

"I kind of felt a little bit like an imposter trying to draw the Endeavour or the First Fleet sitting in my studio in Brunswick. I went, 'This doesn't feel real. I'm just looking at other photos, and I'm trying to feel something that doesn't exist right now'.

"This sounds crazy . . . but I actually went on the Captain Cook. There's a fake Endeavour ship that sits in Darling Harbour. I went on it.

"I had to really feel . . . Imagine 200 years ago, I was sitting here and I saw a ship mast come over the horizon. How would that feel?"

Brown said she needed to go to the heart of that history.

"I had to go to these kinds of places and really feel like I was in the lion's den to understand and make a work that felt real," she said. "Because it didn't feel authentic otherwise."

More than 70 public street art pieces into her career, including several overseas, and with her Kiss My Art Collective, her body of work is an active effort to "take up space" and decolonise cities and suburbs using her own brand of symbols, or "twist" on those passed down from the women in her family.

Her often sole use of black and white paint has a humble origin.

"I was just a broke student,



Gumbaynggir artist Aretha Brown. Picture: Jarred Cross

and I literally could afford one litre of black paint, one litre of white paint, and that was it," she said.

"I kind of like my style, and I know where that came from. I see the world in black and white as an Aboriginal person.

"And so, my works are black and white. There are no grey areas. When I was in art school, people were expecting me to do dot. My mob, we're Gumbaynggir. We're not dot artists or desert people. Even that expectation of dot art in the very beginning, I went, 'No way. I'm doing whatever I want'. I drew up my own style with my own symbols, my own way."

Brown's mother and grandmother are and were deadly painters, she said.

"My campaign and my motto is to teach Black history," she said. "It's pretty simple. It's about people understanding that this country has a Black history, a Black present and a Black future as well. For me, it's always come down to (saying)

“  
I see the world in black and white as an Aboriginal person. And so, my works are black and white. There are no grey areas.

Aretha Brown

Aboriginal culture is so unique. It's so special. It's so beautiful.

"This country's got a bit of catching up to do in terms of, you know, how it thinks about Aboriginal art . . . there are lots of stereotypes still out there, lots of misconceptions.

"It's all about subverting the stereotype of what Aboriginal art is.

"This is all history . . . these are symbols the Black women in my family have taught me

and passed down to me. And if you cut off Aboriginal people's ability to make art, you've just severed songlines, you've severed thousands of years of art and education and history. It's like burning a textbook."

Brown had her first painting selected for a major exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria in 2018, while still in her teens. It was a swift entry into the national art sphere for the now 25-year-old, first doing art classes in Year 12 at school, and one of just two Black students, she said, in her classes at university.

In *After The Rain*, Brown is sharing a room with Vincent Namatjira, led by artistic director and her "deadly mentor" Tony Albert.

"I can retire after this... he's (Namatjira) truly my hero. He's the most exciting iconic painter I think we've got in this country. To share a space with someone that I studied is like, it's a bit of like, pinch me moment," she said.

"After The Rain is about rebirth and new beginnings. It

symbolises planting new seeds and our reasons for doing so.

"After The Rain carries cultural, economic and political weight, and gives artists a rich and diverse set of themes to explore. When you visit, I want you to be transported, fully immersed into the artists' worlds."

Alongside Brown, featured artists include Alair Pambegan, Blaklash (Troy Casey and Amanda Hayman), Dylan Mooney, Jimmy John Thaiday, Alair Pambegan, Naminapu Maymuru-White, Thea Anamara Perkins, Yarrenyty Arltere Artists and Grace Kemarre Robinya, and Warraba Weatherall, alongside Albert Namatjira, Vincent Namatjira, Hermannsburg Pottery, and Iltja Ntjarra Art Centre as House of Namatjira. **The National Gallery of Australia's 5th Indigenous Triennial: After The Rain opened on December 6 and will remain at the Gallery, on Ngunnawal and Ngambri Country in Canberra, until April 26 before embarking on a two-year national tour.**

## Songs that capture spirit of Country put six in line for award

JOSEPH GUENZLER

Six Indigenous artists are in the running for this year's Environmental Music Prize, set to be announced on Wednesday, December 17.

King Stingray (Yolngu), Charlie Needs Braces (Garigal), DOBBY (Filipino/Muruwari), Mitch Tambo (Gamilaroi), Wildheart (Yugumbah), and Sunny Luwe (Wayilwan) are among the 30

finalists reflecting diverse communities and identities contributing to Australia's climate conversation.

Their songs explore themes such as rising tides, fossil fuel dependence, biodiversity loss and community resilience — drawing on personal, cultural and environmental experiences.

The finalists were selected by eco-focused music ambassadors and community impact leaders,

with an emphasis on work that can shift public thinking through storytelling.

Prize founder Edwina Floch outlined the purpose of the award. "Music reminds us of what's at stake, but it also gives us hope," she said.

"These songs capture the beauty of nature, the spirit of Country and the resilience of communities rising to protect it. Together, they form a

powerful soundtrack for now."

Public voting closed on 14 December. Voters could select three songs and share them to help strengthen the reach of the messages carried in the finalists' work.

The Environmental Music Prize, now in its third year, offers \$20,000 to the winner; aiming to increase recognition for artists using music to drive environmental awareness.

Genres represented across the finalists include folk, hip-hop, pop, indie rock and electronic.

Previous winners King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard and Xavier Rudd donated their prize funds to community conservation projects, reinforcing the prize's emphasis on linking creative expression with environmental outcomes.

Ms Floch said this year's finalists continue that approach.

# Giant's life dedicated to healing

JARRED CROSS

*This report contains the name of someone who has passed away.*

The late Maitland Parker was a giant in his community and widely-respected Banjima Elder who dedicated his life to healing his home, 'poison Country' in the Pilbara.

Yurlu | Country, a moving and brave telling of his final year, intimate family moments and continued fight to clean up Country was recognised with the Walkley Documentary Award in late November.

Mr Parker passed from illness linked to the destruction of Banjima Country — mid-20th century mining of asbestos and three million tonnes of tailings left after the mining ceased.

Boyhood exposure resulted in Uncle Maitland ultimately growing ill with mesothelioma.

Aboriginal people in Western Australia have the highest incidence of mesothelioma in

the world, the film explains, and his home Country is considered the largest contaminated site in the Southern Hemisphere.

Six decades have passed since the health of that Country, and community, changed forever.

"We have to look at avenues to be able to bring that message across, because this happened in my Elders' generation, and then as a young person as Banjima, you sit there and you think, 'Well, our Elders didn't have a say, but now we have some kind of say'," Mr Parker's niece Johnnell told National Indigenous Times during early preview screenings in August.

"Uncle Maitland highlighted that Country is sick and it is poisoned, and it's been poisoned for the last 60 years."

Ms Parker is also a director on the board of Banjima Native Title Aboriginal Corporation.

Already a five-time Walkley winner before the latest honour, Yaara Bou Melhem



Yurlu | Country, a legacy film of Maitland Parker, received the Walkley Documentary award.  
Pic: (Illuminate Films)

directed Yurlu | Country, with support of crew, including Indigenous members of the team, Tom Banningan, and distributed by Illuminate Films.

The late Mr Parker is credited as co-writer and executive producer.

The documentary came out ahead at the Walkleys in front of high-quality finalists The Palestine Laboratory from Al Jazeera English and Black Leaf Films, and the ABC with Wild Pacific Media's The Kimberley.

Ms Bou Melhem told National Indigenous Times:

"Maitland's story was so powerful. Not only was he trying to clean up and heal the largest contaminated site in the southern hemisphere, but it mirrored his own struggle with mesothelioma, something that he developed as a result of exposure to his Country," she said. "We wanted to work with him, and he wanted to work with us to really honour his story, honour the fight, and try to get this cleaned up for the next generation."

Ms Bou Melhem said Mr Parker and his family "bravely

brought us into their lives so that together, we could bring this largely 'out of sight, out of mind' issue into full view".

"Receiving a Walkley, the highest honour in Australian journalism, is huge for propelling Banjima people's campaign to clean up Wittenoom on the national stage," she said.

Johnnell Parker, Mr Parker's wife Marjorie Hughes, and his daughters Coreen and Renira described their uncle, husband and father as a gentle and devoted family man.

## environment plan

seeking relevant persons' input



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### our activities

Chevron Australia is planning to drill and complete six subsea production wells in the Geryon and Eurytion gas fields in Commonwealth waters, approximately 180 kilometres off the northwest coast of WA in water depths of approximately 1,200 metres. The drilling activities are indicatively scheduled to commence in early 2027 and are expected to take approximately 12 to 18 months to complete.

The feedback we receive during consultation will inform and enhance the Gorgon Stage 3 Drilling Environment Plan, which must be accepted by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) before activities may commence.

### environment that may be affected (EMBA)

As part of our environmental assessment and consultation process, we create maps to provide geographical context for relevant persons to determine if their functions, interests or activities may be affected by an offshore petroleum activity during planned activities (e.g. routine or contingency operations) or from an unplanned event (e.g. emergency scenarios).

The map shows the operational area (OA) which is a 5 km radius buffer around the indicative location of the wells, and the EMBA, which is based on worst-case unplanned hydrocarbon release (oil spill) scenarios resulting from either a vessel collision or loss of well control event.

The EMBA has been defined through combining multiple oil spill model simulations for the unplanned release scenarios under different weather and ocean conditions. This means that in the highly unlikely event an unplanned release does occur, a geographical area much smaller than the EMBA would be affected.



The majority of the impacts and risks directly arising from planned activities would occur within, or within proximity of, the OA.

Chevron Australia has systematic control measures to prevent and mitigate emergencies and to reduce the impact of planned activities on the environment, including ecological, social and cultural sensitivities.

### we want to hear from you

We are now seeking feedback and input if you consider your functions, interests, or activities may be affected. This may include Traditional Owners and Custodians with a spiritual and cultural connection to land and sea Country, local community members, and those involved in commercial or recreational fishing and tourism.

Please contact us by **20 January 2026** to be included in consultations. Visit [australia.chevron.com/feedback](https://australia.chevron.com/feedback), call tollfree on **1800 225 195** or scan the **QR code** for more information.



# Ruling a big win for First Nations

GIOVANNI TORRE

Indigenous Nations have won a major legal victory in the Canadian province of British Columbia.

On December 5, the Gitxaala and Ehattesaht Nations secured a landmark victory at the BC Court of Appeal, with the support of the First Nations Leadership Council and the BC Civil Liberties Association.

The First Nations Leadership Council and the BC Civil Liberties Association congratulated the nations on their win, and said the court's decision "breathes new life" into Canada's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and "affirms the substantive legal effect" of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The court's ruling places the British Columbia provincial government's de-prioritisation of UN Declaration implementation "into serious question, specifically not following its own interim approach for the development and passing of several key pieces of streamlining legislation, notably the Renewable Energy Projects (Streamlined Permitting) Act and the Infrastructure Projects Act," the FNLC and BCCLA noted.



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip.

The ruling by the BC Court of Appeal reversed a lower court's "unduly narrow approach to the legal effect of the Declaration Act" and held that the Declaration Act "incorporates the UN Declaration into British Columbia's positive law".

Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs president, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, said Indigenous leaders have, "from the beginning" emphasised that "the provincial government's position on the legal effect of the Declaration Act was inconsistent with the substantial collaborative and cooperative effort that went into developing it".

"The BCCA's decision, and its observation that the provincial government's 'intransigence ... does not contribute to the co-operative consultative dynamic to which all concerned should



Terry Teegee at the BC Legislature. Pictures: BC Government, CBC

aspire', confirms what we have long understood: that reconciliation requires honourable conduct, good faith, and respect for commitments made. It's time for us to get on with the important work of reconciliation, together," he said.

The court confirmed the government of British Columbia must consult and co-operate with Indigenous Nations to address inconsistencies between the UN Declaration and the laws of the province, and that the question of whether a law of BC is consistent with the UN Declaration is justiciable (can be tested in a court of law).

The FNLC and BBLA said provincial government "cannot continue its ad hoc and discretionary approach to creating new law that is inconsistent with the UN Declaration".

BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Terry Teegee said "this legal victory sends a ground-shaking message to the provincial government: the Declaration Act is legally binding and cannot be implemented or interpreted in a unilateral Crown approach".

"The Declaration Act is justiciable and First Nations in BC may enforce the legal requirement of consistency with the UN Declaration. The provincial government must honour in good faith the legal commitment it made to the First Nations of this Province," he said.

First Nations Summit Political Executive member Robert Phillips said Indigenous leaders and communities "celebrate and hold up the Gitxaala and Ehattesaht Nations for the significant time and resources

they invested into advancing this litigation and holding the provincial government accountable".

"The clear outcome of their persistence and dedication to the protection of their rights is a win for all First Nations in British Columbia," he said.

BCCLA litigation staff counsel, Veronica Martisius, said the decision affirmed "the legal effect of the UN Declaration in BC Indigenous rights must be honoured and respected".

"The work of truth and reconciliation is now and belongs to us all, including the judiciary.

"There is no reason why the Declaration Act should not be legally enforceable when the government is shirking its duty to align the laws of BC with the rights and standards set out in the UN Declaration," she said.

## Pacific leaders want change to be meaningful

ANDREW MATHIESON

Leaders of several Pacific island nations and territories say they are working to ensure their voices will not be marginalised again following the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belem, Brazil, last month.

The Pacific region is particularly vulnerable to climate change; on the front line of rising seas and intensifying storms. Regional leaders and organisations have long argued smaller island nations remain excluded from key climate finance and the decision-making channels, despite facing the greatest risks.

An analysis by the Green Overseas program found without deliberate and decisive action, progress made at COP30 will fall short of producing change for nations most exposed to the climate crisis.

Green Overseas director Ahab Downer stressed the need for systemic change.



Demonstrators highlight Pacific issues at COP30. Picture: Fraga Alves/EPA

"COP30 has shown that many climate-conscious leaders remain keen to pursue the ambitious objectives, but ambition must be paired with access," he said.

"For COP31, ensuring that Pacific islanders — in addition to other island populations across the globe — are given an

opportunity to shape and to drive the agenda is essential and will surely generate benefits for all populations of our planet.

"These peoples have extensive lived experience and uniquely appropriate expertise, without which resilience-related implementation efforts will remain incomplete."

Iiona Mayerau-Lonné, a representative for Kanaky New Caledonia across the European Union's Overseas Countries and Territories Youth Network, said while COP31's move to Turkey "may reshape the conversation ... it must not come at the cost of silencing the Pacific".

"Our leadership isn't optional; it's the foundation of credible climate action. From loss and damage to ocean resilience, the Pacific's solutions are the world's lifeline. Excluding us isn't just unfair, it's a strategic blunder we'll all pay for."

Ms Mayerau-Lonné said Pacific islanders' knowledge and expertise cannot be ignored.

"This isn't just about representation, it's about recognising that no climate solution is complete without the voices of those living the crisis at the forefront," she said.

"If islands' voices are drowned out by distance or bureaucracy, COP31 fails before it will even begin."

Smaller island governments

continued to push for practical, accessible mechanisms that allow their administrations to engage meaningfully in the Paris Agreement's next phase.

Shiva Gounden, the head of Greenpeace Australia-Pacific, said the multilateral process is being attacked, making it hard to reach a meaningful consensus on important decisions.

The Pacific campaigner said the conference in the city of Belém on the doorstep of the Amazon finished with an "extremely weak" outcome.

"The credibility of COPs (Conference of Parties) is dropping somewhat, but it can be salvaged if there's a little bit of political will that is visionary from across the world. The Pacific has showed leadership in this ... in the last few COPs.

"The facts that show we need to really be lot more ambitious than we are. There are parties within the system, who are attacking the science ... If that continues there will be a lot more faith that's lost."

# Owners' fears for Country

EXCLUSIVE REECE HARLEY

The Aboriginal organisation whose role is to safeguard heritage, oversee community benefits and ensure the closure of the Argyle Diamond Mine restores Country rather than damages it says there is “zero trust” regarding the management of the site.

Kia Dowell, a Gija woman from Warmun in the East Kimberley, is the chair of Gelganyem, the organisation created under the Argyle Participation Agreement to represent the seven Gija and Miriwoong Traditional Owner families connected to the Barramundi Dreaming.

“There’s been zero trust for at least five years,” Ms Dowell said.

The relationship deteriorated as Rio Tinto moves toward relinquishment of one of Australia’s most culturally important mining landscapes.

“When our Old People negotiated that agreement it was on two understandings: whatever went into Country would also leave Country when Rio were finished; and that no means no,” Ms Dowell said.

“The ‘no means no’ principle has absolutely not been upheld.”

Argyle ceased production in 2020. Rio Tinto has since done rehabilitation works, including re-shaping landforms, decommissioning the airport and village, backfilling vent shafts, and installing seepage structures.

For Traditional Owners, the works do not address the most significant risks.

“At the moment closure looks like we will be left with a pit lake in perpetuity... It means tailings left there forever. It means we can no longer fish in places we used to fish,” Ms Dowell said.

The Argyle State Agreement governing the mine was established in 1981 and excluded Traditional Owners. The Argyle Participation Agreement, signed between Traditional Owners, Rio Tinto and the Kimberley Land Council in 2004 was designed around operations, not the long-term technical and cultural requirements of closure.

“We have been raising concerns because decisions have been made that directly affect the exercise of our rights and interests without us at the table. The governance arrangements did not consider the way decisions had been made for millennia,” Ms Dowell said.



The Argyle Diamond Mine in 2013. Picture: Kim Christian/AAP

“At every opportunity to improve or change the way Rio has approached closure we’ve been met with a challenge. We keep asking and the answer keeps being no.”

Trust was further damaged when Rio Tinto conducted internal study exchanges on closure and rehabilitation overseas without including Traditional Owners.

“Rio were doing these study exchanges, taking staff from Argyle, flying them off to look at rehabilitation elsewhere, and not involving Traditional Owners. We requested to meet. They said they were happy to make that happen but they have not.”

Gelganyem responded by commissioning an independent technical review of Rio Tinto’s 2021 Mine Closure Plan. Ms Dowell argues the State of Western Australia should require Rio Tinto to revise its completion criteria, ensure post-mining

land use reflects Traditional Owner expectations.

Gelganyem has developed its own completion criteria, informed by cultural land use mapping and independent expert analysis, to ensure closure aligns with cultural law and long-term safety. “If we don’t get this right now, the consequences will last generations,” she said.

Ms Dowell believes Argyle reveals the limits of Australia’s current closure regime. She supports a national framework in which closure criteria are set at the start of a project and cannot be weakened without the approval of rights holders.

“Everyone will close at some point,” she said. “If we do not get Argyle right collectively, we are failing ourselves and we’re failing future generations.”

Rio Tinto expects to complete closure execution in 2026 before entering a long monitoring phase. For Traditional Owners,

closure cannot simply mark the end of mining; it must make Country safe, stable and culturally viable.

A Rio spokesperson said the company “acknowledges Traditional Owners as custodians of Country, with a deep connection to the land, and who have a critical role in caring for Country throughout the Argyle Diamond Mine life cycle, including closure”.

“We understand the impact closure has on the community and we continue to work with the seven Traditional Owner family groups who are signatories to the Argyle Participation Agreement throughout the closure project,” they said.

“We are working with Traditional Owners to develop a co-managed Cultural Heritage Management Plan to support shared decision-making and the closure outcomes that Traditional Owners have identified.”

## Teen’s inquest should be a wake-up call

HANNAH MCGLADE

The coronial inquest into the death of 16-year-old Cleveland Dodd should have been a watershed moment.

We should be saying “never again” but the WA Government is refusing to listen to the recommendations of its own coronial process, showing disregard for the legal system and the lives of Aboriginal children.

Instead, they tell us all is well now — they’ve made changes, and Unit 18 will stay in place until a new youth facility is built, some years away.

Cleveland died in Unit 18 — a youth wing in Casuarina Prison, an adult men’s maximum-security prison, in violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In the months before his death in 2023, he was kept in solitary confinement.

On the night he died he called out repeatedly for water and was denied even that. The Coroner examining his death has described it as “inhuman” and “reminiscent of 19th-century jails”.

WA has a long history of incarcerating Aboriginal children in violation of

international human rights law. I’ve been a youth justice advocate since the 1980s, and saw the introduction of mandatory detention laws known as “three strikes” which denied judges any discretion other than detention for children convicted of three property crimes. These laws have directly contributed to the very high rate of incarceration of Aboriginal youth in WA.

Mandatory detention laws violate UN conventions including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and have also been condemned by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Race Discrimination. WA is the only State that continues to incarcerate children under these laws, and from the age of 10. The coroner’s recommendations included Unit 18’s immediate closure and a special inquiry into how the unit came into existence.

Additionally, he called for a forum of government and non-government stakeholders to consider whether youth justice should remain within Corrective Services.

These are urgent and necessary responses yet they were immediately rejected by Corrective Services Minister

Paul Papalia — who should have been stood down from the portfolio following the death of Cleveland and another child at Unit 18.

When children are dying in incarceration in a foreseeable and preventable manner, there should be a consequence for the minister responsible. The failure of Premier Roger Cook to demand accountability in this respect is damning.

It was disappointing the Coroner neglected to acknowledge that the conduct of the State leading up to Cleveland’s death breached UN human rights laws, which are binding on Australia and should be respected in all laws and policies. In WA it has been estimated Aboriginal children are 50 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Aboriginal children.

That, and Cleveland’s death, should have been a wake-up call of a system out of control and needing urgent reform.

Unfortunately, the Government prefers to scapegoat Aboriginal children, ignoring experts, people like Professor Fiona Stanley and Associate Professor Jocelyn Jones, who know what is being done is damaging children, many of whom have disability and need health and social

interventions long before incarceration.

It makes no sense at all as to why we’d continue down this dangerous path.

As Professor Stanley said: “Many of these children are challenging but, Minister Papalia, they are not the problem. They are not giving you permission to lock them up for 22 out of 24 hours a day, in inadequate cells and to deprive them of the basics of living. Treating such vulnerable children in this way exacerbates their fragile developmental state. And understandably they respond with anger, or with severe depression and self-harm.”

The Government points to its new youth detention facility and appointment of a youth justice commissioner but these responses are not enough, especially when there is a continued lack of regard for Aboriginal children’s human rights. What’s urgently needed are culturally appropriate prevention and diversion responses, as well as treatment, developed with Aboriginal communities, and consistent with the right to Aboriginal self-determination. It’s not too much to ask.

The courts can also take some responsibility here, and

begin discussions about an Aboriginal youth justice court, which is well overdue. Our people and Elders especially should be heard and listened to. We do not want any more children dying in custody or losing their future as criminalised children.

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, 18 children have now died in detention facilities across Australia.

Isn’t it time we all say enough is enough? Aboriginal children deserve to have their lives respected, yet this State persists in demonising children who have suffered and lived on the margins.

The hypocrisy of an ALP Government that supports reconciliation and truth-telling on one hand while subjecting Aboriginal children to abusive treatment on the other must be addressed. No political party that engages in systemic racial discrimination targeting Aboriginal children deserves our continued support.

Lifeline 13 11 14  
13YARN 13 92 76

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

# Tarkiner launches space for treasures

CALLAN MORSE

A Tasmanian Aboriginal corporation has launched an online marketplace to support the economic self-determination of Indigenous artisans and creatives.

Established by tarkiner — the business arm of North-West Tasmania's Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation — tarkiner treasures provides Indigenous people with a dedicated space to share and sell handmade crafts and artworks.

CHAC said tarkiner treasures honoured the intergenerational tradition of Indigenous communities expressing culture, identity and connection through art and craft by creating a space where artisans could showcase their work while ensuring their voices and stories remained central to the marketplace.

"This marketplace promotes and celebrates Blak excellence right here in our local community," CHAC chairperson Selina Maguire-Colgrave said.

"It shines a light on the talent, innovation and cultural strength of our creators, making sure their work is recognised and valued close to home."

CHAC said every item available through tarkiner treasures

reflected the richness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Indigenous artist Mel Pfeiffer said: "It's wonderful to have a space that belongs to us."

"(It is) a marketplace where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can share their wares, tell their stories and connect with community."

CHAC said tarkiner treasures created visibility, access and support for artisans, no matter where they were

"By highlighting products from local makers, we are ensuring that the voices, traditions and creativity of our communities are at the heart of this marketplace," it said.

The launch of tarkiner treasures follows tarkiner's success in developing an indoor plant food product made from organic bull kelp.

Harvested from Tasmania's rugged far North-West Coast, the kelp-based product — which launched last year — is available at Bunnings Warehouse stores across the country.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artisans interested in joining the tarkiner treasures marketplace are encouraged to contact tarkiner by emailing [info@tarkiner.com.au](mailto:info@tarkiner.com.au).



Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation chairperson Selina Maguire-Colgrave. Picture: Carbon Creative.

## Soaping up for outback health and a cleaner planet

Every year, millions of small bars of soap are used across WA's mining camps by fly-in fly-out workers; and most end up in landfill. Now, with support from Fortescue, Indigenous-owned company Woollahra Group has teamed up with Soap Aid to change that story, transforming waste soap into a force for good.

Through the Soap Aid Waste Soap recycling program, used soap from mining accommodation sites is collected, recycled, and remade into fresh bars that are delivered to First Nations communities across WA, improving access to hygiene and supporting better health outcomes.

Woollahra Group, a 100 per cent Indigenous-owned cleaning and hygiene product supplier, has long focused on creating practical ways to reduce waste and deliver social benefit. Its signature 60-gram bar soap, packaged in recyclable cardboard, was created specifically for FIFO workers on an



Sharing out the soap bars.

eight-and-six roster to cut down on single-use packaging waste. But the team wanted to go further.

Woollahra Group director Sam Smith said: "We asked ourselves, what if we could not just

reduce bar soap waste, what if we could remove it entirely? Through partnering with Soap Aid, we can close that loop and give waste a purpose."

For Woollahra, the goal is environmental and social.

"Every year, millions of single-use bar soaps needlessly enter landfill, but by transforming that waste into new soap for First Nation communities, we're closing the loop — turning waste into wellness," Mr Smith said.

"To have companies like Civeo and Fortescue agree to support our vision and agree to collect and return waste soap from their mining camps was a game changer and catalyst for us to lead industry-wide change in the way we think about soap waste."

Soap Aid, a not-for-profit that collects, purifies and remakes used soap into brand-new bars, saw immediate potential in the collaboration. Together, the two organisations created a recycling initiative tailored to

the mining industry — one built on shared purpose and practical impact.

Under the program, Woollahra supplies Soap Aid-branded soaps to accommodation providers such as Civeo, with collection support from partners including Fortescue.

After use, cleaners gather the leftover bars in specially designed Soap Aid tubs, which are returned to Woollahra's Perth warehouse. Soap Aid collects the soap, sanitises and remoulds it, then distributes the recycled bars through its "Camps to Communities" initiative to First Nations families across the Pilbara.

Soap Aid general manager Carol Bellew noted that access to soap can make a difference in preventing disease.

"With our partners' support, we're keeping waste out of landfill and getting soap to families who need it most. This is a powerful example of how businesses can lead with purpose when partnering with a not-for-

profit like Soap Aid," she said.

"Together we are reducing waste, protecting the planet and delivering critical hygiene resources to communities in need. Soap Aid thanks Fortescue, Civeo and Woollahra Group for their commitment to sustainability, social responsibility and to Soap Aid."

Through this initiative, over 1.5 million free soap bars have been delivered to communities across WA so far. This equates to 150,000kg of waste soap being diverted from WA landfill, resulting in 218,000kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e not being released into the atmosphere.

Fortescue's director of approvals, community and services, Rosli Wheelock, said the company is proud to support Woollahra and Soap Aid, "and to see the difference it's making in First Nations communities in remote areas".

"It's a simple change with far-reaching benefits," he said.

*This report was produced with the support of Fortescue.*

# Scholarship boost for MBAs

GIOVANNI TORRE

As of January 1, all successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants to Melbourne Business School's MBA programs will receive a scholarship to cover the full costs of their tuition.

The scholarships, announced on December 4, will be offered for the next five years and are made possible by supporters including mining giant BHP, which has invested \$20 million in Indigenous business education and research at the Dilin Duwa

Centre for Indigenous Business Leadership and Melbourne Business School.

Dilin Duwa director Professor Michelle Evans said empowering the next generation of Indigenous business leaders was critical.

"Indigenous business contributes over \$16 billion in revenue each year, employing more than 116,000 people, and bring immense benefits to the community which go beyond economic numbers," she said.

"We need informed, impactful leaders to continue to support

this important sector. Leadership and social networks are strengthened by education."

Professor Evans noted the "transformative" nature of education provided by Melbourne Business School, citing MBA graduates such as Dr Jennifer Beer, who is now general manager of Telstra Health.

"A range of scholarships supported by BHP and a dedicated group of philanthropists are a way of ensuring equity for Indigenous Australians."

BHP's head of Indigenous engagement Allan James said

the scholarships were "bringing to life" the company's \$20m investment in support of the school's Indigenous initiatives.

"These scholarships are a powerful way to support the next generation of Indigenous leaders," he said.

"We know the talent and capability already exists within Indigenous communities. By removing barriers and creating access to world-class education, we can help unlock that potential and amplify its impact."

Melbourne Business School dean Professor Jenny George

said the scholarships would enable the school to fulfil its commitment of "creating better business leaders, capable of creating positive change for their communities".

"With the support of BHP and our donors, we will be able to shape the next generation of Indigenous business leaders who will be capable of strengthening the Australian economy," she said.

More information about studying at Melbourne Business School is available on the institution's Degree Programs page.



## 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 Mines, Petroleum and Exploration, 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	15/2148	BELRES PTY LTD	10BL.	41.7km SW'ly of Coolgardie	Lat: 31° 11' S Long: 120° 49' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Exploration Licence	30/593	CATALINA RESOURCES LTD	2BL.	99.6km W'ly of Menzies	Lat: 29° 55' S Long: 120° 2' E	MENZIES SHIRE
Exploration Licence	38/4044	EE 1 PTY LTD	56BL.	137.5km NE'ly of Leinster	Lat: 27° 11' S Long: 121° 49' E	LAVERTON SHIRE, WILUNA SHIRE
Exploration Licence	63/2531	PLAYA ONE PTY LTD	6BL.	82.3km SE'ly of Norseman	Lat: 32° 52' S Long: 122° 8' E	ESPERANCE SHIRE
Exploration Licence	77/3357	ALLEN, Dianne Elizabeth	1BL.	157.8km E'ly of Paynes Find	Lat: 29° 40' S Long: 119° 14' E	MENZIES SHIRE
Exploration Licence	80/5944	BEAU RESOURCES PTY LTD	97BL.	114.5km N'ly of Halls Creek	Lat: 17° 16' S Long: 127° 16' E	DERBY-WEST KIMBERLEY SHIRE, HALLS CREEK SHIRE
Exploration Licence	80/6170	CAENEUS RESOURCES PTY LTD	90BL.	54.1km NE'ly of Wyndham	Lat: 15° 14' S Long: 128° 33' E	WYNDHAM-EAST KIMBERLEY SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	16/3565-S	BRANCH, Ian Robert	6.05HA.	101.3km W'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 30' S Long: 120° 1' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	16/3569	VISAGIE, Juan Daniel	157.62HA.	33.8km W'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 19' S Long: 120° 42' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	16/3570	DE LA MONTAGNE, Queenie Kathryn	199.65HA.	27.3km S'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 36' S Long: 121° 3' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	24/5856-S	RAMSAY, Paul Brian	9.78HA.	8.1km NW'ly of Broad Arrow	Lat: 30° 24' S Long: 121° 15' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	24/5920	FLEMING, Leo Glenn	79.69HA.	9.9km W'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 22' S Long: 120° 57' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	24/5923	FLEMING, Leo Glenn	128.25HA.	13.4km NW'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 17' S Long: 120° 56' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	24/5924	FLEMING, Leo Glenn	79.42HA.	14km NW'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 17' S Long: 120° 56' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	47/2129	AMMM RESOURCES PTY LTD	102.58HA.	88.8km SE'ly of Tom Price	Lat: 23° 1' S Long: 118° 34' E	ASHBURTON SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	57/1554	REDScope ENTERPRISES PTY LTD	112.72HA.	102.5km SW'ly of Sandstone	Lat: 28° 47' S Long: 118° 46' E	SANDSTONE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	57/1555	REDScope ENTERPRISES PTY LTD	110.56HA.	104.6km SW'ly of Sandstone	Lat: 28° 48' S Long: 118° 46' E	SANDSTONE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	77/4709	CATALINA RESOURCES LTD	9.99HA.	148.4km W'ly of Menzies	Lat: 29° 43' S Long: 119° 30' E	MENZIES 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: 17 December 2025. 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 **17 March 2026**. 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. **17 April 2026**), 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 Mines, Petroleum and Exploration, 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<sup>2</sup>



## NOTICE TO GRANT AMALGAMATION APPLICATIONS 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 Mines, Petroleum and Exploration, 100 Plain Street, East Perth WA 6004 may grant the following amalgamation applications under the *Mining Act 1978*:

Exploration No.	Applicant	Amalg No	Area	Locality	Centroid	Shire
57/984	LEGENDRE, Bruce Robert VENUS METALS CORPORATION LIMITED	746224	6.44HA.	19.7km SW'ly of Sandstone	Lat: 28° 7' S Long: 119° 10' E	SANDSTONE SHIRE
57/1033	SANDSTONE EXPLORATION PTY LTD	706598	79.89HA.	17.6km SE'ly of Sandstone	Lat: 28° 7' S Long: 119° 23' E	SANDSTONE SHIRE

**Nature of the act:** Grant of amalgamation applications which authorises the applicant to explore for minerals. **Notification day: 17 December 2025. 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 the applications. The 3 month period closes on **17 March 2026**. 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 the *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 amalgamation application may be granted unless, within the period of 4 months after the notification day (i.e. **17 April 2026**), 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 Mines, Petroleum and Exploration, 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.



## 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 Mines, Petroleum and Exploration, 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
Mining Lease	15/1937	A.C.N. 665 883 509 PTY LTD	1670.88HA.	19.2km NW'ly of Kambalda	Lat: 31° 7' S Long: 121° 29' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE

**Nature of the act:** Grant of mining leases, which authorises the applicant to mine for minerals for a term of 21 years from notification of grant and a right of renewal for 21 years. **Notification day: 17 December 2025. 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 **17 March 2026**. 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. The mining tenements may be granted if, by the end of the period of 4 months after the notification day (i.e. **17 April 2026**), there is no native title party under section 30 of the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)* in relation to the area of the mining tenements. For further information about the act (including extracts of plans showing the boundaries of the applications), contact the Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration, 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.



## NOTICE OF PROPOSAL TO RENEW MINING LEASE 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 Mines, Petroleum and Exploration, 100 Plain Street, East Perth WA 6004 may renew the following mining lease under section 78(2) of the *Mining Act 1978*:

Mining No.	Renewal of Term No.	Applicant	Area	Locality	Centroid	Shire
M 15/34	737682	STANKO, Ladislav FORD, Neville Graeme	9.24Ha	32.5km S'ly of Kambalda	Lat 30° 37' 58" S Long 120° 51' 41" E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
M 15/74	745248	MT EDWARDS CRITICAL METALS PTY LTD	926.90Ha	35.9km SW'ly of Kambalda	Lat 30° 29' 26" S Long 121° 20' 55" E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
M 15/75	745249	MT EDWARDS CRITICAL METALS PTY LTD	568.38Ha	38.5km SW'ly of Kambalda	Lat 31° 27' 55" S Long 119° 29' 41" E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
M 15/87	740655	WIDGIE GOLD PTY LTD	363.74Ha	35.6km S'ly of Kambalda	Lat 31° 27' 37" S Long 119° 29' 32" E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
M 26/46	746819	NORTHERN STAR (KLV) PTY LTD NORTHERN STAR (SARACEN KALGOORLIE) PTY LTD	98.38Ha	3.5km SE'ly of Kalgoorlie	Lat 31° 28' 8" S Long 119° 29' 50" E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY

**Nature of the act:** The renewal of mining lease, which authorises the applicant to mine for minerals for a term of up to 21 years. **Notification day: 17 December 2025. Native title parties:** Under Section 30 of the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*, persons have until three months after the notification day to take certain steps to become native title parties in relation to the notice. The three-month period closes on **17 March 2026**. 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. The mining lease may be renewed if, by the end of the period of four months after the notification day (i.e. **17 April 2026**), there is no native title party under section 30 of the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)* in relation to the area of the application for renewal. For further information about the act (including extracts of plans showing the boundaries of the application for renewal), contact the Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration, 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.

## SPARTAN A VISION OF HEALTH EQUITY

GIOVANNI TORRE

Spartan First Imaging, Australia's first Indigenous medical imaging service for radiology and nuclear medicine, was among several Indigenous businesses honoured at the recent WA Business Awards.

SFI, based in Kalgoorlie-Boulder in WA's Goldfields region, was a finalist in the employer of the year category, which was won by Mader Group.

The company is led by CEO and director Des Headland and clinical lead and director Pete Tually.

Mr Tually told National Indigenous Times being named a finalist was "incredibly meaningful".

"It recognises not just our business achievements, but the purpose behind Spartan, which is to deliver world-class, culturally safe medical imaging in a region that has historically been underserved," he said.

"For an Indigenous-owned startup operating in remote Western Australia, this acknowledgement validates our hard work, innovation, and collaboration. It also shines a light on the health inequities we are working to address and gives our team, our community partners, and our emerging Indigenous workforce a sense of pride and momentum."

Mr Headland, a proud Noongar-Yamatji man, said advances in medical imaging "are



Des Headland and Pete Tually in May this year with artist Carol Thompson, who hand-painted this scanner at Spartan First Imaging. Picture: Jessica Antoniou

occurring at a rapid pace". "Our vision is to ensure that gap between the haves and have-nots is narrowing.

"Particularly in cancer imaging and cancer therapy, where the advances in the specialty called theranostics means that people living with cancer have a much brighter future, and we wish to ensure that broader regional public and communities can access these benefits," he said.

Mr Tually said SFI was born from a shared determination to close the diagnostic gap in regional and Indigenous healthcare.

"For years, residents of Kalgoorlie

and surrounding communities had limited access to specialised cardiac and lung imaging, often requiring costly and disruptive travel to Perth," he said.

"TeleMed's long history in rural imaging, together with Spartan First's deep roots in Indigenous leadership and community engagement, came together to form a model that could genuinely shift health outcomes.

"Ultimately, SFI was inspired by the belief that where you live or who you are should not determine the quality of care you receive."

"Culturally safe care is especially

critical for Indigenous patients, who too often avoid or delay investigations due to negative past experiences," Mr Tually said.

"We want to go beyond a clinical health service to represent a community asset that improves outcomes, access, and trust."

The company has "an ambitious long-term vision".

"We are preparing to introduce additional advanced imaging services, expand our telemedicine and AI-driven diagnostic capabilities, and commence training programs for local Indigenous youth to build a sustainable clinical workforce," Mr Tually said.

"We also anticipate establishing a second site and, as funding and partnerships permit, developing a fixed PET/CT service with future theranostic capabilities.

"Our goal is to create a regional centre of excellence that brings cutting-edge diagnostic and therapeutic imaging to remote Western Australia delivered by local people, for local people."

On the night of the awards, Mr Tually sent "a huge congratulations" to all the other finalists, and to the category winner, Mader Group, "for their inspiring stories of courage, persistence, and real impact on WA communities".

# Pindari earns award glory

GIOVANNI TORRE

Pindari WA was named Indigenous business of the year at the recent WA Business Awards, recognising its performance, growth, workforce capability, and ongoing contribution to the State's resources, government and commercial sectors.

Founded in 1997 and headquartered in Dunsborough, Pindari has grown from a small family-operated trade business into a major multi-disciplinary contractor with nearly 400 employees delivering building, electrical, maintenance and

labour solutions across the Pilbara, Great Southern, Goldfields and South West regions.

Accepting the award at a gala dinner in Boorloo/Perth on November 29, managing director David Pidek said the recognition reflected the dedication of the entire Pindari workforce.

"This award belongs to our people. Every day, our teams show what strong leadership, commitment and teamwork look like across some of the most demanding operational environments in WA," he said.

"We are incredibly proud of the capability we have built and

the quality of service we deliver for our clients.

"Pindari has grown steadily for more than 25 years because we stay true to our values — integrity, accountability, reliability, community and teamwork."

Mr Pidek said the recognition "reinforces the hard work of everyone across our sites and offices, and we look forward to continuing to grow in a way that strengthens our people, our business and the communities we work in".

Pindari said the company's award submission demonstrated the company's "strong finan-

cial performance, mature safety systems, investment in technology and governance, and long-term strategic planning".

The judges recognised Pindari's commitment to providing meaningful career pathways, delivering high-quality service to tier-one clients, and driving positive outcomes across regional WA.

They highlighted Pindari's commitment to creating employment and career pathways for Indigenous people across WA, including long-term investment in training, mentoring and capability-building programs

that supported employees to grow within the business.

Pindari's continued contributions to community-led initiatives and partnerships were also recognised.

Pindari executive director Natalie Venosi said the award was a milestone for the company's next phase of growth.

"This recognition affirms our strategic direction and the incredible work our teams deliver every day," she said.

"We are grateful to our clients, industry partners and community organisations who have supported our journey."

# NIT

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## SPORT

# Teenage star looks up to trailblazers

JARRED CROSS

Sixteen-year-old Northern Territory cricketer Harrison Johnny says a historic summer for Indigenous cricketers will have important flow-on effects, not long after becoming a trailblazer himself.

In Boorloo/Perth last month, Scott Boland and Brendan Doggett became the first Indigenous cricketers to feature in an Australian Test XI together when they helped bowl the hosts to victory.

Doggett became just the third Indigenous male player, and the fifth Indigenous cricketer overall, to receive a baggy green.

Weeks earlier Johnny, a fellow First Nations quick, was the first player from the NT to attend the National Indigenous Cricket Training Camp at the MCG.

He wasn't aware of the achievement until seeing it posted online.

"It's a great honour. I feel very proud . . . so does my family," he said.

Delivered by the Melbourne Cricket Club Foundation and Cricket Australia, the camp brings together emerging and established cricketers from across the country — some with national Indigenous side experience — for intensive training and exposure to high-performance systems.

Boland was there to deliver some advice to the group.

"He did say . . . 'you may get sloggled for six, but you've just



got to bring it back in. Keep your head cool," Johnny said.

It's only been a few years since he first got involved in the game around Mparntwe/Alice Springs. Previously, footy and soccer were his sports of choice.

"One day in Year 7, my mate's dad said 'You should join our cricket team' . . . I joined up with the club (Complete Construction Cricket Club), improved very quickly and I found a love for the sport," Johnny said.

"From there I just wanted to keep improving, keep getting better. Being able to play in Alice A-grade at only 14-15, it was a great experience, being able to learn quickly."

Johnny has continued to ply his trade against older opposition, at both the National Indigenous Cricket Championships for the NT in Mackay earlier this year, and at the tournament's precursor, the Imparja Cup, which continues to call Alice home.

"I would describe it as a great opportunity for young Aboriginal

cricketers to get around people, play the sport that they love, and be seen by people looking for younger cricketers, or even older blokes," Johnny said of the Imparja Cup. "It's a really good opportunity and a competition for Indigenous people. It's a really good thing to have."

It was at the Imparja Cup — an annual community, major centres and schools Indigenous cricket gathering — that Johnny was identified to represent the Northern Territory at the National Indigenous Cricket Championships.

For the next generation, Boland and Doggett's historic representation at the top level was inspiring, he said.

"Seeing two very good cricket players, fast bowlers, Indigenous . . . it's great to see," he said.

"I personally look up to Scott Boland. Now . . . I can look up to Doggett too. All the Indigenous boys and girls around Australia can all look up to them."

The Imparja Cup returns to Alice from February 20-24.



Harrison Johnny, pictured playing at the Imparja Cup in Mparntwe/Alice Springs.  
Picture: Albert Perez

# Return a knockout

## Back in the ring with a fast victory

JOSPEH GUENZLER

Noongar boxer Alex Winwood marked his return to the ring recently with a first-round TKO win over Thailand's Wutthichai Montri on the Gold Coast.

Winwood got the job done in two minutes, 18 seconds after three knockdowns in the opening round, and told National Indigenous Times he felt at home in the ring.

"I didn't know what to expect, I came out here to box but this is second nature to me," he said.

"This is my home, it's good to be back."

The fight was Winwood's first since signing with Moxie

Sports Management and joining Bethania Boxing Club under coach Mark Wilson.

"First fight back after 14 months, we are pretty happy with it," Wilson said.

"It's now about rebuilding and trying to get the support around him to get those building fights and work our way back into the world rankings.

"He's done tonight what we've been working on.

"Admittedly, it didn't go long but the whole time he was doing something."

Winwood said the night carried a familiar feeling as he adjusted to his new team.

"It was good to feel the feel-

ing, to have a different crew around, different atmosphere, different venue, and it takes me back to when I was an amateur," he said.

"I wanted to have a short night . . . no one was more excited than me.

"It was like beautiful music playing when I was landing those shots so I'm very happy, great win."

Agent Brent Stowers emphasised how ready Winwood was to take on the fight.

"It was supposed to be a tune-up but I don't think Alex got the memo," he said.

"I've never seen a guy so calm and relaxed before a fight."



Alex Winwood is declared the winner. Picture: Joseph Guenzler