

STYLEUP

FASHION, BEAUTY & LIFESTYLE

Runway Our way

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Fashion Week
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Symbolic storytelling hits runway

Aboriginal designers command the Melbourne stage on their own terms, writes **Phoebe Blogg**

Renowned for spotlighting the industry's top First Nations designers, in 2026 Melbourne Fashion Week returned with culture, creativity and craftsmanship at its core.

This year's theme, Wear The Moment, celebrated self-expression and the inclusive spirit of MFW, inviting everyone to be part of the moment, on and beyond the runway.

The week kicked off with the all-Indigenous ganbu marra (in Woi Wurrung "one mob") runway.

Held on October 19 at the National Gallery of Victoria, the runway took over the Gandel Hall.

Dedicated to First Nations designers, ganbu marra featured the likes of Delvene Cockatoo-Collins, Ebony Noire,

Kaninda, Marnin Studio, Atyene Clothing, OUT OF HAND x Lisa Waup, Rowland Vision, Saretta The Label, Van Ermel Scherer, and Yapa Mali.

Taking on the role of creative director and runway stylist, proud Wiradjuri and Waiben Island man Lindyn Rowland infused his own aesthetic into the runway while staying true to each designer's niche and inspiration.

Speaking to Style Up, Rowland explained he wanted audience members to feel the emotion of the runway before they understood it, which on the night resulted in Rowland creating a high-energy symbolic runway.

"There are a lot of subliminal messages throughout the vision," he said.

"I think that's very Scorpio of me, having these incredibly deep

hidden emotions that don't always get spoken about directly, but somehow find a way to come through.

"I want people to feel something before they necessarily understand what they're looking at."

This year, popular swim and resortwear house Van Ermel Scherer made their MFW debut.

Founded by designer Verity van Ermel Scherer, the brand, which launched at Australian Fashion Week this year, pays tribute to Scherer's late grandmother, Valerie van Ermel Scherer (Mattie Frith), a Stolen Generations survivor whose creative legacy lives on through the house's signature kaftans and bespoke textile storytelling.

"Following our Australian Fashion Week debut, being part of the ganbu marra runway feels like a natural next step for the brand," van Ermel Scherer told Style Up.

"I'm particularly excited that my first Melbourne Fashion Week experience will be alongside other First Nations creatives.

"Opportunities like this allow us to share our individual stories while contributing to something much bigger than ourselves."

Debuting a variety of the brand's signature free-flowing silhouettes, the collection featured both men's and womenswear.

"The collection brings together swimwear and resortwear, featuring expressive prints, earthy tones and fluid silhouettes," van Ermel Scherer said.

"What makes this runway particularly exciting is the theme, Ghetto Opera, and the creative vision of Lindyn Rowland, who is leading the creative direction and styling for the show.

"I love the idea of seeing my work through another creative's lens and being part of something that pushes boundaries and celebrates individuality."

First Nations designers also appeared on other runways during the week including Ngali, Gammin Threads, Clothing The Gaps, Grace Lillian Lee, LIANDRA and EDITION x Sarrita King.

First Nations models were also spotlighted during the week including Billie Jean Hamlet, Elaine George,



Picture: Gemma Thomas

Picture: Naomi Rahim

Savannah Kruger and Cassie Black. Executing yet another high-energy ganbu marra runway, Melbourne Fashion Week proved once again that First Nations design is no longer

fighting for the spotlight, but creating a significant space of its own.

■ Melbourne Fashion Week took place October 19 to 25, 2026.



Picture: Naomi Rahim



Picture: Naomi Rahim



Picture: Kyle Archie-Knight



Picture: Kyle Archie-Knight

Carrolup art goes on show

PHOEBE BLOGG

Landmark truth-telling exhibition *Once Known* is now on Menang Country at the Albany Entertainment Centre.

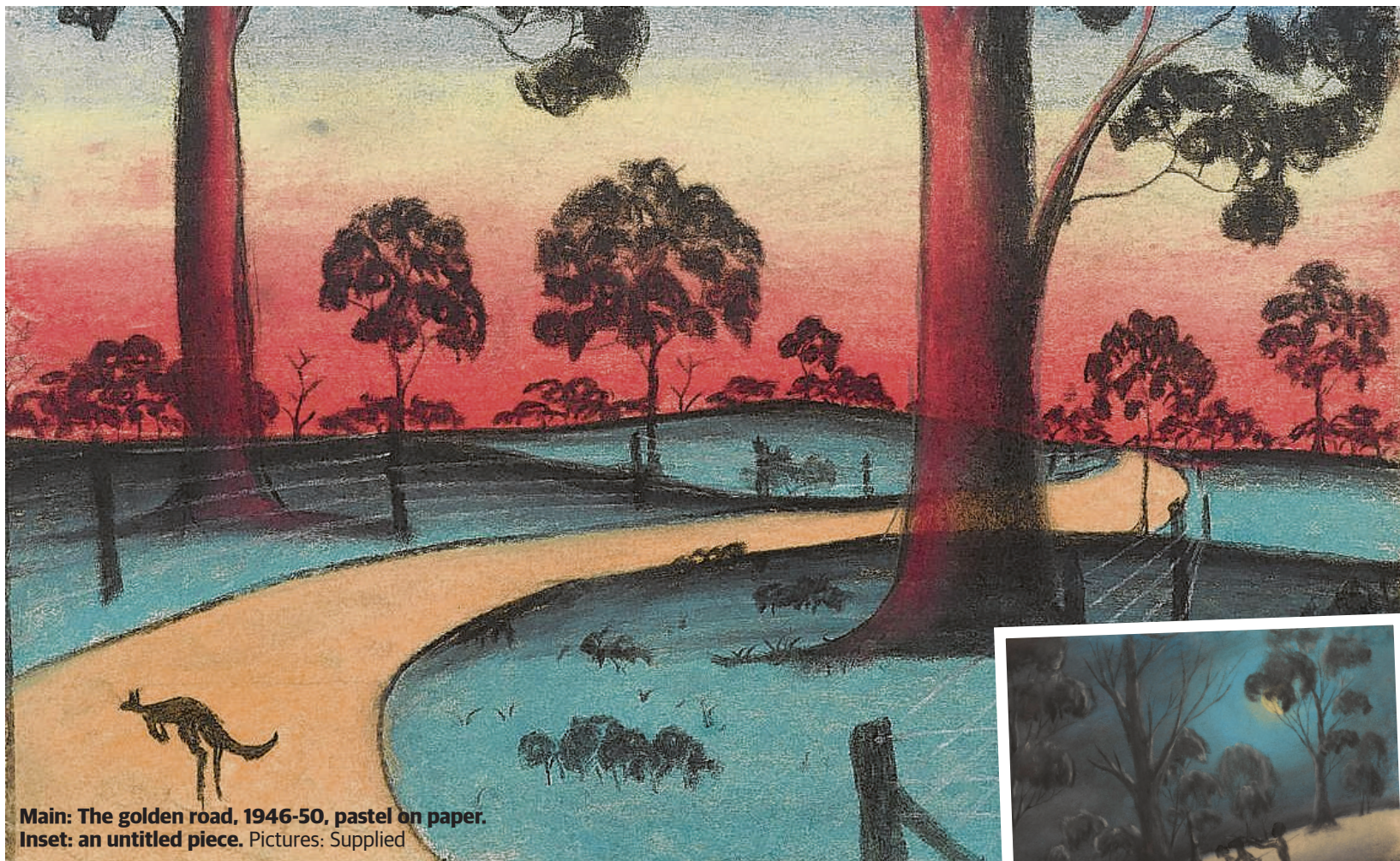
Presented by John Curtin Gallery and Gorenang Moortabiin Aboriginal Corporation, the new iteration of the exhibition opened to the public on Thursday, October 22.

Once Known offers an opportunity to see artworks created by Aboriginal children forcibly taken from their families and detained at the Carrolup Native Settlement in the 1940s.

A selection of the Carrolup artworks made their way to the United States and were rediscovered by chance at Colgate University, New York, in 2004. This collection, known as the Herbert Mayer Collection of Carrolup Artworks, comprises 127 pieces, 23 of which are included in *Once Known*.

John Curtin Gallery director Professor Susanna Castleden said she was grateful to work with Gorenang Moortabiin to bring such an important exhibition to the region.

"Through the Carrolup Centre for Truth-telling Reference Group, Noongar Elders have gently guided the care, use and priorities of the Carrolup artworks and we are honoured to share this exhibition on Menang



Main: The golden road, 1946-50, pastel on paper.
Inset: an untitled piece. Pictures: Supplied

Country," Professor Castleden said. The artworks were moved from Old Perth Boys' School in St

Georges Terrace to the Albany Entertainment Centre — with future exhibitions set to launch

at the new purpose-built gallery space at John Curtin Gallery in 2027.



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Warning as artists face AI counterfeit threat

RONAN O'CONNELL

Chern'ee Sutton is one of a growing number of Indigenous artists whose work is being copied and sold using AI, which experts warn is worsening Australia's huge problem with counterfeiting of Aboriginal art.

Australian Indigenous-style souvenirs sell for \$250 million annually, but more than 60 per cent are fake, a 2022 investigation by Australia's Productivity Commission found.

The 2022 report found Indigenous artists earn just \$1800 from their art a year, on average. A key reason for the low level of this income was because of the market being flooded by fake Aboriginal paintings made overseas, imported to Australia and then mostly sold to tourists by non-Aboriginal businesses.

Now the future of Aboriginal artists is facing an even greater challenge because of AI technology which can copy or mimic any type of Aboriginal design, as Ms Sutton has discovered. A Kalkadoon woman from the Mount Isa area of north-west Queensland, she and her sister Brooke are considering legal options after recently discovering AI versions of Brooke's art being sold online by an Australian website.

"People need to realise that just because they're buying a piece of art or a product that has Indigenous art on it, does not mean that it is art created by an Indigenous artist," Ms Sutton told National Indigenous Times.

"The best way to ensure that you know exactly where the art is coming from is to ask who the artist is and if there's no artist mentioned, there's generally a reason."

The counterfeiting of Aboriginal art is now "on steroids" because of the impact of AI, according to Dr Louise Buckingham, chief executive of the Arts Law Centre of Australia, the country's only community legal centre supporting artists.

Dr Buckingham said the centre offered free services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, who frequently reported concerns about counterfeiting.

"I'm not aware of any more recent study conducted along the same lines (as the 2022 investigation into counterfeiting) but all evidence points to it being way, way worse now, thanks to generative AI running roughshod over culture and law," she said.

Dr Buckingham said the Federal Government needed to make AI companies, as well as businesses selling fake Indigenous art, legally responsible for any role they played in facilitating fraud against Indigenous artists.

"(They must be made) accountable for their theft and authorisation of mass copyright and moral rights infringement, as well as existing encroachments on ICIP and First Nations culture," she said.

"We know it's happening at an inconceivable scale. We need regulation and the law to step up. Anything less is a denial of sovereignty and a denial of these works being a means of self-determination and economic gain for community. It's shameful."

A spokesperson for the Federal Government told National Indigenous Times they did not have data on how commonly AI was being used to copy Indigenous Australian art, but recognised concerns about the impact of AI on creators.

The spokesperson noted that in 2023 the Government pledged \$13.4 million over four years to help develop new legislation to protect Indigenous traditional knowledge and cultural expressions.

"The Government is progressing measures to strengthen protections for First Nations traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, including action to address fake Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, merchandise and souvenirs," they said. "An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expert working group is helping ensure First Nations knowledge, expertise and lived experience inform this work."

For now, however, there is limited legal protection for Aboriginal artists like Emrhan Tjapanangka Sultan. A Western Arrarnta, Luritja and



Chern'ee Sutton with one of her works, and top, Ngarabul and Torres Strait Islander artist Lauren Rogers.

Kokatha man, raised in Mparntwe / Alice Springs he is the co-founder of Solid Lines, an independent creative agency which represents Indigenous artists. Mr Sultan said he knew several Aboriginal artists whose work had been used without permission.

He had also noticed many fraudulent artworks for sale that appeared to be mimicking the style of a particular region. Especially the dot art of Australia's Western and Central Deserts, which was commonly manipulated on AI platforms.

"AI adds another layer of worry, making it even more difficult for Aboriginal artists

with a deep cultural connection to their storytelling that impacts their way of making a living or a small wage," Mr Sultan said.

"Personally, AI hasn't changed the way that I create art as my designs are traditionally rooted my strong culture and connection to country. Although it has made me extra cautious that AI can steal and manipulate what is Aboriginal art very easily and that people who are prompting AI to create Aboriginal art, it should be made aware that it isn't right or fair to the artists."

Ngarabul and Torres Strait Islander artist Lauren Rogers has been outspoken on how

counterfeiting of Indigenous works robs artists and devalues Aboriginal culture. These worries are now deepening due to the use of AI to replicate Indigenous artistic languages. "What concerns me most is how quickly AI can create something that looks like Indigenous art without any of the cultural knowledge, relationships or lived experience that sits behind the work of an Indigenous artist," Ms Rogers said. "When those elements are scraped, reproduced or imitated without consent, attribution or cultural understanding, there is a real risk of cultural appropriation being accelerated by technology."



Acclaimed artist to lead Parrtjima as new festival curator

PHOEBE BLOGG

Parrtjima announced this month the appointment of acclaimed First Nations artist, designer and creative director Jacob Nash as curator for 2027.

Nash's appointment will build on Parrtjima's legacy, bringing his renowned creative vision and

experience to a festival that continues to showcase Aboriginal culture, stories and creativity in new and engaging ways.

Parrtjima will light up Mparntwe (Alice Springs) from April 9 to 18, celebrating Aboriginal culture through contemporary art, technology and storytelling against the spectacular backdrop of the

Tjoritja/MacDonnell Ranges in the Northern Territory's Red Centre.

The festival returns amid growing international recognition for the Red Centre's immersive art scene, which was named among Lonely Planet's World's Top 25 Experiences in Best in Travel 2027, with Parrtjima highlighted as one of the region's must-see cultural

attractions. "There's nowhere else in Australia where culture, Country and light come together like they do at Parrtjima," Nash said.

"Aunty Rhoda Roberts had a vision for a festival in the heart of Australia, a platform for First Nations artists to share their stories on Country, under the night sky. Over 11 years she brought that

vision to life, showcasing artists from the Centre and beyond and carrying their work out to the world. To be entrusted with that legacy, I am deeply honoured.

"I'm looking forward to working with the Arrernte community, the Reference Group and First Nations artists from across the country. I can't wait to get started."

Portrait honours fight for justice

GIOVANNI TORRE

A portrait of justice campaigner Leetona Dungay, whose son David Dungay Jr died in custody, has won a major international photography prize.

Photographed by David Prichard, the portrait captures Ms Dungay, a Dunghutti Elder, in her South Kempsey home.

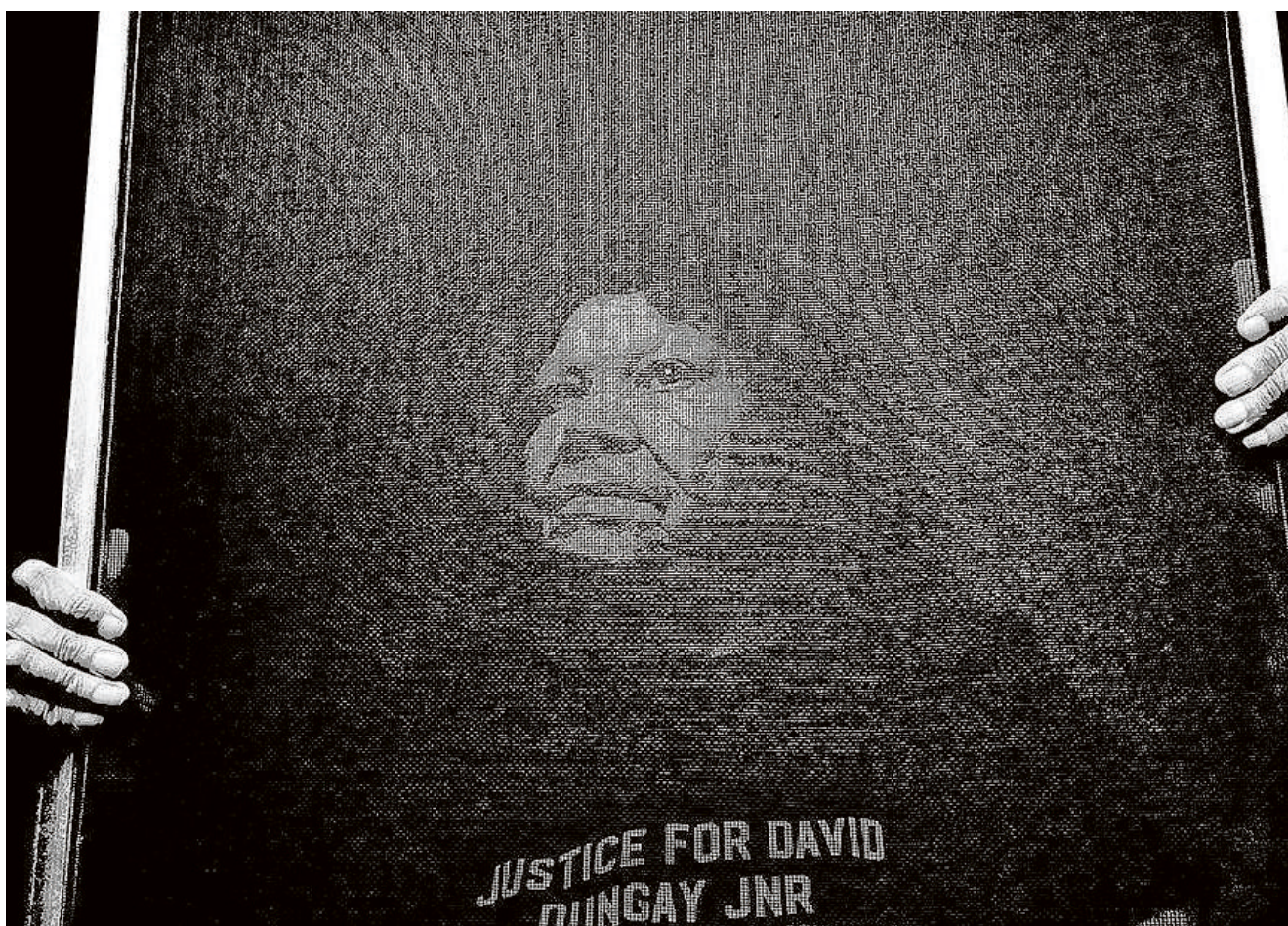
She has spent more than a decade fighting for justice following his death in December 2015 at Long Bay Jail, after he was forcibly restrained by six prison guards.

His last words were “I can’t breathe”.

Ms Dungay, along with her family, friends and community, has been taking a stand against a system that continues to fail Aboriginal people.

In December 2025, through her ongoing advocacy, a scholarship was established in David’s honour to support Aboriginal health professionals working in the NSW criminal justice system.

Prichard contacted Ms Dungay after learning that 2025 marked 10 years since David’s death. He travelled to her home in January and spent the day with her,



The portrait of Leetona Dungay. Picture: David Prichard, supplied by the National Justice Project

creating the portrait.

Titled “Just A Breath Away”, the photograph takes its name from a poem David wrote while incarcerated.

“I will always keep fighting for justice for my son and to end deaths in custody,” Ms Dungay said.

“Knowing that this photograph will be seen by people around the world means my son’s words and his story can continue to reach people.”

The photograph received the bronze award at the 2026 Prix de la Photographie, Paris.

The awards recognise professional and non-professional photographers from around the world.

The winning portrait was entered into the “press/political” category and will now be exhibited at Galerie 24b in Paris.

It brings Ms Dungay’s ongoing fight for justice to an international audience.

Prichard said he was “very happy with the recognition of this portrait of Leetona and the prize, as it will bring attention to Leetona’s fight for justice”.

Environment Plan

seeking relevant persons’ input



Chevron has been operating in Australia for more than 70 years – creating enduring benefits and delivering reliable, affordable energy. We welcome feedback to enhance our environmental management measures as we progress offshore activities to support the ongoing supply of natural gas to Western Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

Our activities

Chevron Australia is planning to drill and complete five subsea production wells in the Chrysaor and Dionysus (C&D) gas fields in Commonwealth waters, approximately 73 kilometres northwest of Barrow Island off the mainland of WA in water depths between 770 and 1,140 metres.

The drilling activities are indicatively scheduled to commence from Q3 2027 and may occur as a single campaign or over multiple campaigns. Drilling activities are estimated to take 12–18 months to complete.

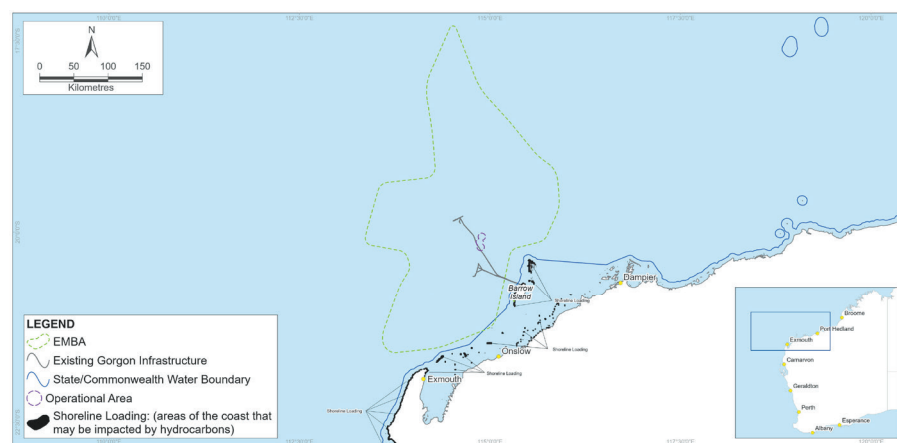
The feedback we receive during consultation will inform and enhance the Chrysaor and Dionysus Drilling Environment Plan, which must be accepted by the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA) before activities may commence.

Environment that may be affected (EMBA)

As part of our environmental assessment and consultation process, Chevron Australia creates 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), a 5 km radius buffer around the indicative well locations, and the EMBA, which is based on worst-case unplanned hydrocarbon release scenarios (oil spill events) 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 (~300 simulations per scenario). This means that in the highly unlikely event an unplanned release of hydrocarbons does occur, a geographical area much smaller than the EMBA would be affected.



Most of the potential environmental impacts or risks arising from planned activities would occur within, or within proximity of, the OA. However, for unplanned events the geographical extent may be much broader.

Chevron Australia has systematic control measures to prevent and mitigate emergencies, and to reduce the potential environmental impact and risks of planned activities on the environment (including to ecological, social, and/or 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 **2 December 2026** to be included in consultations. Visit australia.chevron.com/feedback, call tollfree on **1800 225 195** or scan the **QR code** for more information.



Empowering Yolngu artists

LIANDRA GAYKAMANGU

LUNDU started almost by accident. I never intended to start another organisation. The work we were doing with Yolngu creatives was always going to sit within LIANDRA, my fashion brand. But somewhere along the way, it became clear that what we were building was much bigger than a fashion label. When I started LIANDRA in 2018, I wanted to build a business that reflected who I was, where I came from and what mattered to me.

As a Yolngu woman who grew up between two very different worlds, I've experienced firsthand how people's access to opportunities can depend on where they grow up. I've been fortunate to work across industries and build relationships that have opened doors I never imagined walking through when I was younger. Naturally, I wanted to share that. As LIANDRA grew, I started bringing other First Nations creatives into photoshoots, fashion events and collaborations, or simply introducing someone to a person I thought they should know. There wasn't some grand strategy. It was something I felt



Picture: Felipe Molina Dorlhiac

was important and knew I was in a position to do. Over time, those opportunities added up. I began working more intentionally with emerging Yolngu creatives, creating paid work, industry connections and experience in spaces that aren't easy to access from remote communities. The more we did, the more I questioned why these opportunities were so difficult to come by. Because the talent has always been there. Our remote communities hold extraordinary creativity, knowledge and capability. What isn't always there are the networks, resources and pathways to turn those skills into careers.

From somewhere like Milngimbi, attending an industry event or meeting a potential mentor can involve four days of return travel, significant costs and a whole lot of co-ordination. And that's before someone even gets their foot in the door. In 2025, we supported emerging creative Jack Minmidhi to attend Australian Fashion Week in Sydney, work behind the scenes and connect with people across the industry. The value goes well beyond the event. It's the people you meet, the confidence you build and possibilities you hadn't considered. But what happens next matters. I've never wanted to bring

someone into a project for a day, celebrate the moment and move on. I want relationships to last and opportunities to lead to other opportunities, giving creatives the experience, confidence and connections to pursue whatever direction they choose. After several years, I realised LIANDRA could only take this work so far. The possibilities extended beyond fashion into photography, media, styling and design. I didn't want them limited by the size, resources or direction of my business. That's where LUNDU came from: giving work that had been growing for years the space and independence to become what it needed to be. Today, LUNDU creates meaningful work, professional development and connections for Yolngu creatives, while building relationships with industries that have so much to gain from working alongside them. Opportunity doesn't only flow in one direction. Our communities have extraordinary knowledge, creativity and perspectives to contribute. This isn't about expecting people to fit an existing mould. It's about making space for different ways of working, learning from one another and recognising everyone's contribution.

That means bringing industry into our communities too, creating real work on Country and building relationships where Yolngu knowledge, leadership and creativity help shape the work from the beginning, on our own terms. I don't believe people should have to leave their communities behind to pursue their ambitions. We need to think more creatively about how people can build careers while maintaining strong connections to Country, culture and community. Looking back, I can see how this work has evolved over five years, one relationship, one project and one opportunity at a time. I didn't set out to create LUNDU, but I always intended to create opportunities for people from my community. I'm proud of what it has become and excited about what it can make possible. I've never believed that talent is the problem. It's what we do to create opportunities for that talent that matters. Perhaps the real challenge isn't finding it, but changing how our industries connect, collaborate and create opportunities beyond the places and people they already know.

Liandra Gaykamangu is the founder of LUNDU.

SWWEP Drilling and Subsea Installation Environment Plan

For more than 50 years, the Gippsland Basin has played a significant role in supplying oil and gas to help power homes, businesses and industries across eastern Australia. Today, Woodside Energy continues to deliver Gippsland gas to Australia while also working to responsibly decommission facilities that are no longer in operation.

Woodside consults with relevant persons to gather feedback to inform its Commonwealth Environment Plans.

SWWEP Drilling and Subsea Installation Environment Plan

Woodside plans to submit the Sweetlips, Wirrah, Whiting and East Pilchard (SWWEP) Drilling and Subsea Installation Environment Plan (EP), which covers drilling and completions of up to four infill development wells and installation of subsea infrastructure, as well as pre-commissioning to enable hydrocarbons from these wells to be conveyed to shore through the existing pipeline network for further onshore processing at the Longford gas plant. The proposed SWWEP development remains subject to achieving the policy certainty necessary to support a Final Investment Decision and, if approved, would be located in Commonwealth waters approximately 20 km south of Lakes Entrance, Victoria.

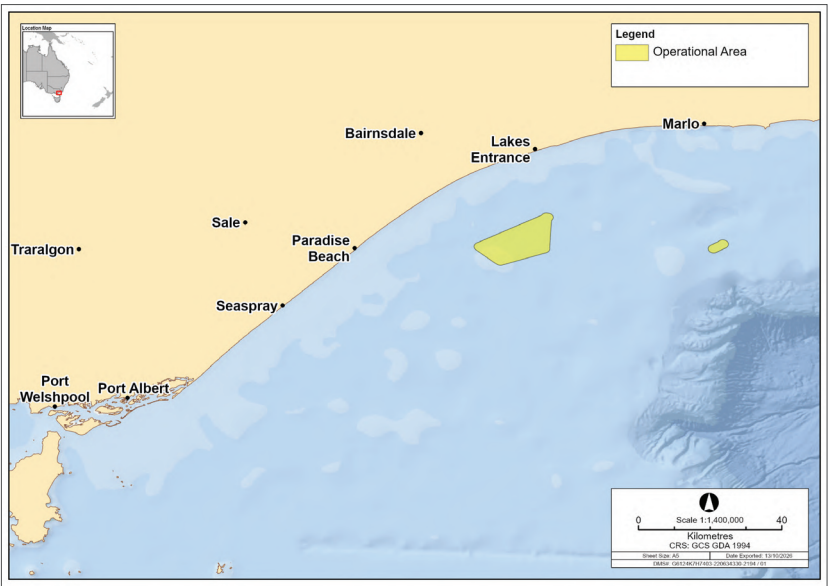
Consultation

If you are an individual, organisation or community group and believe your functions, interests or activities may be affected by the activities under this EP, we would like to hear from you by **18 November 2026**. Woodside's methodology for identifying relevant persons includes consideration of both planned and unplanned impacts of the activity. For unplanned impacts, Woodside uses the Environment that May Be Affected (EMBA), which is the largest geographic area where an unplanned event could potentially have an environmental consequence. For more information on the EMBA and whether the proposed activities in this EP have the potential to affect your functions, interests or activities, please see the full Consultation Information Sheet using the QR code below.

 To find out more go to:

www.woodside.com/what-we-do/consultation-activities

You can also subscribe via our website to receive future information on proposed activities.



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