

NIT

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS TIMES

Making waves

Swimwear designer hits milestone as it gives back to artists and communities



STYLE UP STARTS PAGE 9

The rally in Naarm/Melbourne. Picture: Jarred Cross



TRUTH TO POWER, POWER TO PEOPLE



Uncle Wayne Wharton speaks in Magandjin/Brisbane. Picture: Joseph Guenzler

Thousands gather to mourn, remember, and demand change

LEANNE DOLBY, JOSEPH GUENZLER, ALEXANDRA GIORGIANNI, DECHLAN BRENNAN & CALLAN MORSE

Tens of thousands of people across the country took to the streets on Monday in First Nations-led gatherings mark-

ing Survival Day/Invasion Day. Since 1938, January 26 has been observed as a Day of Mourning by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations nationwide. The date marks the beginning in earnest of the invasion and colonisation of the continent.

In Sydney, Aunty Lizzie Jarrett told the crowd she was inspired to see young people carrying the torch.

“Look at our youth up there, look at our Elders, understand that Australia had a Blak history but it also has a Blak future,” she said.

Eileen Murray, sister of Eddie Murray, said Indigenous people in Australia have been “surviving a war, an undeclared war” for more than two centuries, and that action for justice was motivated by love.

“We mobilise, we activate, we resist from a place of ngurrbul

— in my language that means love,” she said.

“Have a look and listen why we’re here today. We’re here to talk truth. Truth to power, power to people. The truth might hurt, but guess what else

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Yoorrook Justice Commission deputy chair Travis Lovett completing his 513km walk last June. Picture: Joel Carrett/AAP

Truth 'will help us repair the nation'

DECLAN BRENNAN

Truth-telling is not about assigning blame but about repairing the nation, former Yoorrook Justice Commissioner Travis Lovett said this month.

One of the three pillars of the Uluru Statement from the Heart — alongside Voice and Treaty — advocates have consistently argued truth-telling remains essential for Australia to fully understand its colonial history. Whilst some States and Territories have put forward truth-telling bodies or commissions, the Federal Government has failed to do so at a national level.

In Victoria, the Yoorrook Justice Commission — the nation's first truth-telling body with the powers of a royal commission — delivered its final report last year, handing down 100 recommendations. These included redress for First Peoples through measures such as land restitution, financial compensation, tax relief and other avenues.

Over four years, the commission held 67 days of public hearings, heard evidence from more than 200 witnesses, engaged with more than 2,000 people — including 1,500 First Peoples — received more than 1,300 written submissions, consulted

more than 9,000 individuals, reviewed nearly 10,000 state documents and participated in more than 400 community events.

In Queensland however, the LNP Government shut down the State's truth-telling inquiry in an "extraordinary act" after coming to power in 2024.

Kerrupmara Gunditjmarra man Travis Lovett, one of Yoorrook's commissioners, will take the call for Federal truth-telling to Canberra this year, undertaking a long-distance walk from the steps of Victorian Parliament to the nation's capital. He says accounts of Australia's past too often omit the "violence, dispossession and survival that followed colonisation".

"But a country that turns away from the truth of its own beginnings cannot be at peace with itself," says Mr Lovett, now executive director of the Centre for Truth-telling at the University of Melbourne.

"Truth-telling is not about blame. It is about finally listening to those who have too often been treated as a problem to be handled, rather than as sovereign peoples who deserve respect. Truth-telling is an act of national repair, so that we can walk a true path forward, together."

Calls for the Federal Govern-

ment to establish a national truth-telling process have continued since the defeat of the Voice referendum, including an open letter urging Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to commit to a formal, properly-resourced framework. Released as a video addressed to the Prime Minister, Minister for Indigenous Affairs Malarndirri McCarthy, and Attorney-General Michelle Rowland, and featuring First Nations leaders and allies — including journalist Narelda Jacobs, former Victorian Treaty adviser Jill Gallagher and Federal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Katie Kiss — the letter calls on the Government to properly fund and support such a body. This, it says, would ensure the "truths shared through this process are not just heard and shelved — but deeply listened to".

"Truth-telling cannot remain scattered and fragile, held only in courtrooms, commission archives and the memories of those who remember," the letter reads. "It must become national. It must be embedded in our laws, our institutions, our schools, our media and our public life; supported by a clear, resourced process that honours and builds on the work already done."

Calling for a national truth-telling process in genuine partnership with First Nations Peoples, Mr Lovett has also launched an online petition.

Last year, he completed a 513km walk from Portland to Victorian Parliament to mark the completion of Yoorrook's final report.

During this year's "Walk for Truth", he will carry a kangaroo skin bearing the names of every petitioner, which he plans to present to Parliament.

He says the invitation to the Prime Minister to "walk with us" extends well beyond Parliament House and is directed at all Australians.

"Friends, families, colleagues, and communities, as well as businesses. In particular, those with a Reconciliation Action Plan," Mr Lovett told National Indigenous Times last week. "Truth-telling is embedded within those action plans, and this is how we move beyond words on a page and into meaningful action."

Writing in this publication last month, Mr Lovett referenced Federal calls to expand Holocaust and Jewish history education following the Bondi attack, and urged a broader overhaul of Australia's curriculum to reflect what he described as the "true history of this country".

Crisis in remote housing draws call for action

DECLAN BRENNAN

The Northern Territory Government must address the ongoing neglect of public housing in remote communities, according to a Territory Labor MP.

Shadow attorney-general Chansey Paech launched a petition this month calling on the NT Legislative Assembly to pressure the Country-Liberal Party government to take immediate action to ensure all public housing is maintained to a safe and liveable standard. He argues the government has "ignored" neighbourhoods across the Territory.

The Eastern Arrernte and Gurindji man — whose electorate of Gwoja is more than 75 per cent Indigenous — said many Territorians are "waiting years on housing waitlists to get a home", with the petition calling for a timely completion of repairs, an end to public housing being left vacant, and clear timelines for rebuilds and renovations.

"We need action. Families need homes. Communities need respect. It's time to clean up this mess," it states.

"This petition calls on the CLP Government to urgently address the neglect and deterioration of public housing across the Northern Territory and to take immediate action to fix and maintain safe, liveable homes."

Mr Paech said the CLP continues to ignore both neighbourhoods and Territorians.

"We need the Government to start addressing the housing issues in the Northern Territory," he said.

Last year, the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory said there were nearly 6,000 people on the Territory's public housing waitlist.

A joint 10-year, \$4 billion investment by the Federal and Territory governments in remote housing has so far delivered 300 homes across the Territory, with up to 270 homes to be built each year under the agreement.

"This investment is not only changing the lives of First Nations families, it is building a stronger future for remote communities while at the same (time) creating jobs, building skills and backing Territory businesses," Federal Minister Malarndirri McCarthy said this month after the completion of the 300th home.

"We will continue to work with the Northern Territory Government, Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory and Land Councils to ensure remote housing solutions are community-led and sustainable for the long term."

National Indigenous Times contacted the NT government for comment.

Charges over ward death

DECHLAN BRENNAN

A Melbourne hospital where a young Aboriginal woman took her life in 2024 after presenting for psychiatric care has been charged by WorkSafe Victoria, with the woman's mother welcoming the decision and saying the hospital "should be held accountable".

Tagalaka, Kukatja and Worimi woman Makalie Watts-Owen died at St Vincent's Hospital in February 2024, days after her 24th birthday. She was working at the Victorian Office of Public Prosecutions and studying law when she voluntarily admitted herself on February 15, seeking psychiatric support.

Despite telling staff she was having suicidal thoughts, at the time of her death, Makalie's mother, Sharon Watts, said her daughter — who had been given medication to help her sleep —



Makalie Watts-Owen

was left alone in her room, where she took her own life.

WorkSafe Victoria has laid two charges against St Vincent's Hospital under section 23(1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act for "failing to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons other than employees were not exposed to health and safety risk".

The first filing hearing is scheduled for February 17.

In a statement last Thursday, Ms Watts welcomed the announcement and said her daughter "should still be with us today". She argued the hospital failed to keep Makalie safe, adding her daughter "was seeking support, and they failed her".

"St Vincent's should be held accountable, so this never happens again to anyone else's child," Ms Watts said. "I just want her back."

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service are representing Ms Watts, with chief executive Nerita Waight saying hospitals are meant to be places of safety and care for vulnerable people seeking help. However, for First Peoples, too often this is not the case.

"My heart breaks for Sharon and all those who loved Makalie. VALS will continue to support Sharon and her family in their pursuit of answers and justice

and all the individuals and families and organisations who seek — in both big and small ways — to improve the safety of hospitals for our communities," Ms Waight said.

VALS principal managing lawyer in the civil and human rights practice, Siobhan Doyle, said First Nations people experience higher rates of mental health issues and are at greater risk of self-harm and suicide.

"It is unfathomable that we are still having to advocate for hospitals to eliminate ligature risks," Ms Doyle said.

While WorkSafe Victoria has not publicly detailed the two charges, National Indigenous Times understands they relate to an alleged failure by the hospital to manage ligature points.

Ms Doyle said lives are put at risk when hospitals and health-care workers fail to provide "holistic, trauma-informed and

culturally capable" care. "That should be (the) minimum standards in mental health care," she said, noting VALS currently represents the families of three Aboriginal people who died by suicide in Victorian hospitals.

"I hope today's announcement is step forward in ensuring hospitals are safer for everyone."

Ms Watts said the grief in the two years since Makalie's death has been "overwhelming", but described WorkSafe Victoria's announcement as a "step towards achieving justice in her name".

"But this fight is not over," Ms Watts said. "Her life mattered and she deserved better."

Yarning Safe N Strong (24/7) | 1800 959 563

Thirrili — The National Indigenous Postvention Service — After Suicide Support (24/7) | 1800 805 801

13YARN | 13 92 76 (24/7)
Lifeline Australia (24/7) | 13 11 14

Thousands unite to demand real justice

FROM PAGE 1

the truth does? It heals. I was only eight years of age when the police took my brother away from me and my family. And we are still here . . . and we're going to stand and we're going to keep on fighting."

Dunghutti man Paul Silva said: "We stand here to demand real accountability, real justice and real change for Aboriginal people. 238, years since Invasion Day.

"We were here before the ships, before the guns and smoke . . . They came . . . with violence rammed as settlements with boundaries drawn in the blood of our ancestors.

"They call it development. We call it destruction. They try to erase our culture . . . mock our ceremonies, while stealing our art and making profit. We are still here . . . They tried to erase us, but we are still thriving in a country that always was and always will be Aboriginal."

Jordan Hennessy paid tribute to the Elders and leaders who came before him.

"They fought for our people, for our lands and for us to be here today. Our ancestors live on through us, as does our sovereignty to our ancestral lands that was never ceded," Mr Hennessy said.

He urged the crowd to "embrace the resilience and Black excellence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that is shown through our survival, our existence and our continued fight for freedom, justice, equality and equity".

In **Naarm/Melbourne**, close to 20,000 people rallied in the city. Organisers of the rally noted January 26 should be observed, but as a day of



Demonstrators in Magandjin/Brisbane; Travis Lovett in Naarm/Melbourne; the Sydney rally. Pics: Joseph Guenzler, Jarred Cross & Alexandra Giorgianni

mourning — as first expressed by Yorta Yorta man William Cooper in 1938.

Celeste Little told the crowd: "We call for change at the most fundamental levels of this society and a reckoning with the true history to ensure that one day there is indeed something to celebrate. Until the day comes, we, the Warriors of the Aboriginal Resistance, call for the 26th of January to be an official day of mourning."

In a statement by Bunurong Elder Uncle Mark Brown, he noted January 26 "marks the beginning of invasion, violence, theft of land and the attempted destruction of our people".

"This country was built on stolen land, and the wealth of this nation still sits on that theft today. Our children were stolen, our languages were banned, our ceremonies were criminalised. Our people were massacred. And for generations, this nation told itself a lie, and called it history. And yet, every year we're told to celebrate. Celebrate what?"

The Survival Day march in **Hobart** started at the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's Eliza-

beth Street headquarters, from where people marched to Parliament Lawns chanting: "We won't stop, we won't go away. We won't celebrate Invasion Day."

Thousands gathered at Parliament Lawns to hear from speakers including Nala Mansell, Ruth Langford (Tipruthana), Thomas Riley, Cody Gangell-Smith, Aunty Cheryl Mundy, and Hannah Moloney.

Ms Mansell, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre campaign manager, said: "As we hear those cannons firing in the background, we are reminded of what January 26 symbolises and why this nation chooses to so callously gloat about the victory of one race over another.

"Today is a day of mourning. January 26 represents the beginning of mass killings of so many innocent Aboriginal men, women and children," she said.

Rally MC Adam Thompson asked: "How can we celebrate a day that signifies the invasion of this country, violence against Aboriginal people, and the dispossession of our lands? What we are demanding is simple and reasonable, that

Australia change its national day to another date."

Mr Riley, an Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania councillor, said: "I refuse to celebrate that which completely belittles and ignores our history and the plight of our people . . . We are here, and we will always be here. No amount of revisionist thinking or writing will change that."

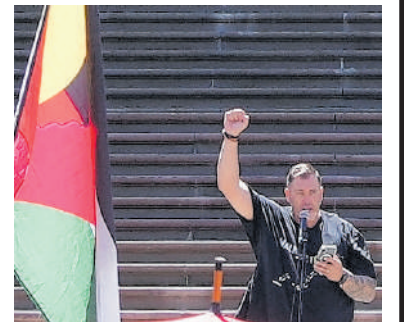
The **Boorloo/Perth** rally of well over 1000 people was disrupted early on, with WA Police responding to an alleged threat made against the action.

A witness at the rally advised National Indigenous Times she had been told a device had been found.

Move-on orders were issued, the witness said, and police began using megaphones to tell the crowd to disperse, warning "there is something in the crowd that poses a risk your safety".

Just after 1pm on Monday, WA Police said in a statement they were "currently responding to reports of a threat in Forrest Place in Perth CBD".

"One person is in custody and assisting police with inquiries," they said.



Protest calls for justice on prison deaths

ALEXANDRA GIORGIANNI

Hundreds recently gathered in Sydney to mark 10 years since the death of Dunghutti man David Dungay Jr and call for an end to deaths in custody.

Held at Hyde Park on Sunday, January 18, the rally condemned the historically high number of Indigenous deaths in custody in 2025 and called for justice and accountability from NSW Police and coronial processes.

Speakers at the protest included Dunghutti man Rick Hampson Sr, Greens representative Sue Higginson, and justice advocate Paddy Gibson.

The rally was led by Dunghutti man and nephew of David Dungay Jr, Paul Silva, who said the crisis of Indigenous deaths in custody has continued largely unchecked for decades.

"We now sit at over 615 Aboriginal deaths in custody since the 1991 royal commission with no justice and real accountability for the families involved," Mr Silva said.

Deaths in custody continue to devastate Indigenous families every year, prompting Mr Silva to challenge a system he says has failed his family and so many others.

"I've been on the front line for the past decade, since my uncle was tragically taken and brutally taken by this system," he said.

"Throughout my fight, I've stood alongside many families.



Rick Hampson Sr

I've witnessed the evidence of their loved ones being taken by this brutal system."

Under the newly introduced Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 restrictions can be placed on "public assemblies" for up to 90 days following a terrorism incident — legislation put in place after last year's Bondi attack.

Earlier this month, NSW Police Commissioner Mal Lanyon extended protest restrictions another 14 days, with the January 18 rally being the only protest affected by the extension.

Activists, including Mr Silva, have condemned the restrictions — with the rally speakers describing the laws as undemocratic and aimed at silencing resistance.

"Now we come up against NSW Police, NSW Government, implementing protest laws, try-

ing to silence movements, trying to silence our freedom of speech, whether that be Indigenous movements or whether that be any other movements, we have a right to congregate, to protest, to rally," Mr Silva said.

"I'm a grieving nephew who lost an uncle who won't give up fighting for the justice and accountability he deserves . . . I'm here to fight for my uncle, for everyone else that I've witnessed being taken by the system and being brutalised."

Mr Hampson Sr, father of the late Ricky "Dougie" Hampson Jr, who died on August 16, 2021 after a fatal misdiagnosis — a death the coronial inquest found as "preventable" — said his family was still waiting for justice.

"I just don't get this country and how they can treat us, Aboriginal people, in this way. 238 years of racism, murder, genocide, rape — that's disgusting."

Mr Hampson said his son's death — which was not in custody — reflects a wider systemic failure, arguing that racism is entrenched across the institutions responsible for care and accountability.

"Systemic racism plagues this country and all its institutions. And you know, we say the institutions, that's just the building. It's the racist people inside these institutions that are making these decisions, and that's what needs to change," he said.



Paul Silva speaking at the rally. Pictures: Alexandra Giorgianni

Health 'care' brings isolation and fear

NATASHA CLARK

"I'd rather go home and die." This is what Aboriginal patients say surgery feels like in the Northern Territory.

Before the operation, the fear had already set in.

"They shouldn't go around telling (people), 'you need the surgery or you're going to die'," one Aboriginal man said. "You're just really scaring them. I'd rather go home and die than stay and have surgery."

He made the comments during a yarning circle in Darwin — one of several held as part of a new qualitative study asking a simple question with difficult answers: what do Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory value during the operation journey?

Published this month in the Medical Journal of Australia, the research exposes a disconnect between how surgery is delivered and how it is experienced by Aboriginal patients, particularly

those travelling from remote communities. Hospitals tend to frame surgery as a technical process; consent forms and checklists. The people in this study described something else entirely. What they wanted was respect. Respect for family. Respect for culture. Respect in communication. And, from those things, trust.

Led by researchers from the Menzies School of Health Research and co-led by Aboriginal kidney health mentors across the NT, the study involved 18 Aboriginal participants with lived experience of surgery, many through dialysis and transplant journeys.

For them, surgery was never an individual decision.

"Not just about individual . . . family has responsibility (in the process) . . . check that everybody is on track about that operation," one participant said.

Family members were central throughout as decision-makers, and sources of cultural support.

However, participants described being moved through hospital systems that rarely recognised this collective model of care.

Families were excluded or left in the dark, particularly after surgery, when no one was given explanations. "So, when they come out of that operation, explain it to the family," one participant said. "If you want to have that trust — that patient trust — that family trust."

Many participants noted an absence of cultural respect.

One woman recalled bringing traditional food for a relative recovering from surgery. "I brought her in a kangaroo tail, turtle and all the yam," she said. "They got it, and they threw it in the bin. The nurse said, 'It is not lunch.' That was not for them (to say)."

Others spoke about the importance of traditional healing, smoking, muttering or singing, and the guidance of Elders — practices they said were rarely supported. "To make people's health better

they have to feel comfortable," one participant said.

"Nobody said they can have a family member . . . or get some of their own bush tucker brought in . . . (this) makes connection with Country and makes healing."

Being separated from Country during surgery — often for weeks or months — was described as deeply distressing, compounding physical illness with spiritual harm.

Communication failures also emerged as one of the most damaging parts of the experience.

Participants described being spoken to in technical language they did not understand, denied interpreters, or confronted with blunt warnings about death that shut down discussion rather than enabling consent.

"One doctor says this, and the next one says something different; lots of conflicting information," one participant said. Another spoke about the emotional toll of not being heard. "I get really upset . . .

because (doctors) think Aboriginal people are dumb, but they're not. They know what they're doing and saying . . . they need to listen."

For people returning to remote communities after surgery, the risks intensified. One participant described swimming across crocodile-infested waters in the wet season just to collect medication. Others spoke of being discharged without clear instructions, follow-up or local support.

The researchers note the concerns are shaped by generations of racism and culturally unsafe care. The findings come as Australia's health regulator has recognised culturally unsafe care as a breach of professional standards, allowing patients to make complaints against practitioners.

But participants were clear policy alone will not fix the problems. "Doctors need to talk to us first," one Aboriginal co-researcher said. "With communication everything works better."

Unsafe homes a DV risk

NATASHA CLARK

In the early hours of Boxing Day, a single Aboriginal mother told her 20-year-old son to flee the family home with her two-year-old daughter as her ex-partner approached the property in another violent outburst.

"I told my eldest son to run and get my younger daughter — who is blind — into the car and drive away," Sally, whose name has been changed to protect her safety, told National Indigenous Times. "It was then he threw a brick at my son's car as he was driving away."

Sally speaks of the incident quietly — a tone shaped not by its lack of seriousness, but by years of repeated abuse.

Since leaving her former partner several years ago, she has reflected on the insidious manip-

ulation which once led her lying to hospital staff after a severe assault. "I was a bit stupid, because I told the hospital a door had fallen on my head," she said.

"I had to have two stents put in my head."

Her former partner has been jailed three times for domestic violence incidents against her over the past five years.

Sally said he has weaponised her fear of death to gain control over her.

"I've had a lot of loss in my family," she said. "He knew my first partner — who I had three children with — had died, and how much that impacted me."

She describes an episode where he attempted to self-harm in front of the children and later sent her AI-generated images suggesting he was about to end his own life.

Relocating to a new State housing property would prevent further attacks, according to Sally, as her former partner would not know her address.

"If I had somewhere he didn't know where I lived, we could probably not be on edge every day," she said.

Her current State housing property in Boorloo/Perth is not secure, she said, with the family living in constant fear of another attack.

"He's ripped the security off the back doors and smashed our glass doors," she said.

Sally has been on the State's priority housing transfer list since July 2023, following a successful appeal based on her youngest child's complex medical needs.

Her advocates at Day Dawn Advocacy Centre have since sent

multiple letters to housing authorities and elected representatives, warning the violence could be fatal and urging the State to urgently rehouse the family.

In a response, the WA Department of Housing and Works said it was "sympathetic to Sally's complex situation" while acknowledging all applicants on the priority waiting list had demonstrated urgent need.

The DOHW said Sally had previously been transferred to a new address because of domestic violence concerns, however cited limited availability of five-bedroom properties in the area she is seeking to move to.

Proud Kurin Minang woman and human rights law academic, Dr Hannah McGlade, said safe housing for Aboriginal women experiencing domestic violence,

can mean the difference between life and death. "We know some women have been murdered because they did not have access to safe housing, and as a result of neglect by housing authorities and the State Government," Dr McGlade said.

Across Australia, Aboriginal women are 34 times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to experience domestic and family violence, and be hospitalised or killed as a result.

Dr McGlade criticised the State Government for failing to place the safety of Aboriginal women and children at the centre of its response.

"Aboriginal women's safety has not been treated with the urgency it demands, and that is why we continue to see such shockingly high rates of violence and death," she said.



Picture: Mick Tsikas/AAP

RACISM IN SCHOOLS INCREASES

DECLAN BRENNAN

A sharp rise in racism experienced by Indigenous children and young people has prompted renewed calls for schools and institutions to take active responsibility for addressing discrimination.

Ahead of January 24, the International Day of Education, the authors of the recently released Call It Out Annual Report — the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research at the University of Technology Sydney and the National Justice Project — warned experiences of racism could have immediate and life-long impacts on children, shaping their educational outcomes and broader life trajectories.

They said schools must take concrete steps to eliminate racism, rather than minimising or mischaracterising it.

Downplaying the impact

Jumbunna research fellow Rebecca Lewis said racism in schools is often minimised, de-

spite its profound effects on children. "When First Nations children experience racism at school, it cuts deeply. These are spaces where they should feel protected, yet many are subjected to public humiliation and trauma," she said.

"Too often this is dismissed as bullying. But racism is not bullying and treating it that way allows harm against First Nations children to be normalised and continue without accountability."

The report draws on 442 validated reports submitted between March 2024 and March 2025. More than a quarter of reported incidents of racism targeting Indigenous people involved children and youth.

Thirty per cent of incidents occurred in schools and other educational settings — more than double the 13 per cent recorded in 2023-24.

"The fellow student went around telling other students in my year group saying, 'I was only 3 per cent' and that I was 'faking it to receive benefits'

and that 'I was a fake Aboriginal,'" one Indigenous respondent said.

Another said: "Being at that school made me feel so (much) shame. It's so crazy that I felt and still feel so unwanted in my own country!"

Teachers perpetrating racism

Students, parents and teachers reported racist language and behaviour from students, and failures by teachers to intervene. In some cases, teachers were identified as perpetrators.

One non-binary Aboriginal student reported a teacher referred to blues music and its roots in American slavery as "n...er music". After reporting the incident, the student said they were subjected to harassment by the teacher and other staff members, ultimately forcing them to withdraw from classes and leave the school.

"I reported her (the teacher) for making sure my identity as an Aboriginal was known specifically because everyone in the class was white or white

passing and I wanted to put an emphasis on the harm she's committing specifically when she thinks only white people are around," the student said.

"I was then subjected to a harassment campaign by her, her friends who were my other teachers and school faculty until I decided to drop her class, classes her friends taught, and eventually had to leave school entirely.

"The school said all they could do about it was make her apologise and they wouldn't do anything further. They also tried to act like forcing me to drop her class instead of punishing the racist was doing me a favour."

Another Aboriginal student said they felt "targeted" during class discussions about the Voice referendum, where classmates and a teacher argued "why we don't deserve it, etc".

Systemic failures and individual wrongdoing

Professor of criminology at Jumbunna, Professor Chris

Cunneen, said the scale of incidents recorded in the Call It Out register demonstrated a systemic failure by schools to respond effectively.

"It's not just the failure of responses by the school, but individual staff perpetrating racism against students," Professor Cunneen said.

"Now we have a situation where First Nations children no longer want to go to school because it's seen to be an unsafe place for them."

At the report's launch in November, National Justice Project chief executive, George Newhouse, said while governments have focused on addressing anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, racism targeting First Nations people continues to be minimised.

For more information and to make a report visit: www.callitout.com.au.

Lifeline (13 11 14)

13YARN (13 92 76)

Yarning Safe'N'Strong (1800 959 563)

Beyond Blue (1300 22 46 36)

Games spark heritage bid

JOSEPH GUENZLER

Yagarabul Elder and Section 10 applicant Gaja Kerry Charlton says Traditional Owners backing a Federal heritage protection bid for Brisbane's Barrambin/Victoria Park remain committed to both the Olympics and permanent protection of the site.

Ms Charlton said applicants welcomed the chance to speak with the independent reporter as part of the Section 10 assessment under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act.

"We are pro Olympics and we are pro protecting Barrambin in perpetuity," she said.

Federal Environment Minis-

ter Murray Watt this month rejected a Section 09 application seeking emergency intervention to stop early works linked to the proposed Brisbane 2032 stadium precinct. Mr Watt confirmed he would not make a declaration under section nine of the Act.

"In accordance with Federal cultural heritage law, I have decided not to make a declaration under section nine of the act," Mr Watt said.

The rejected application related to "drilling and drilling-related infrastructure" within the proposed Olympic stadium and nearby National Aquatic Centre site.

Mr Watt said three separate applications seeking longer-

term protection remained under consideration. He has appointed a dedicated facilitator to work with the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority, along with community and Indigenous representatives, to help avoid harm to cultural heritage and inform future decisions.

Save Victoria Park said the decision did not end efforts to protect the park, describing Section 09 as a limited emergency pathway. "Section 09 is designed for emergency intervention only," the group said.

Save Victoria Park spokesperson, Rosemary O'Hagan, said "there are still multiple separate Section 10 applications for the

long-term protection of the park being considered by the Federal Government".

"These involve a different legal test and a much more detailed examination of cultural heritage. That process is still under way," she said.

Ms O'Hagan said Barrambin's cultural history and heritage listing were well established.

"The Aboriginal history of Barrambin is well documented," she said. "The whole park is heritage listed under Queensland State law for both its First Nations cultural significance and European history."

Save Victoria Park said it remained aligned with Traditional Owners pushing for per-

manent protection. "Save Victoria Park stands firmly with our First Nations partners in their resolve to protect what is one of our city's most important indigenous cultural sites," they said.

Yuggera woman Aunty Deb Sandy has previously described the area as sacred Country which should not be disturbed.

"That green space should be left as green space, as it was in the beginning — for the people of Brisbane," she said.

"No stadium should be built there ... it's a no-brainer. No deal. No stadium."

A community protest against the stadium proposal has been planned for January 31.

Walk-off changed job rights for many

JOSEPH GUENZLER

Torres Strait Islander communities, leaders and dignitaries came together this month to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the 1936 Torres Strait Islander maritime strike.

The anniversary — January 14 — recognised the strike as a defining moment of collective resistance that reshaped governance, labour rights and self-determination in the region.

Proceedings began with a march led by Kaurareg representatives from the Thursday Island wharf to the Anglican Hall, accompanied by the Malu Ki'ai singers.

The march was held in honour of Torres Strait Islander maritime workers who walked off the job in 1936 in protest against oppressive controls.

Speakers included the Governor-General Sam Mostyn.

Lugger boat dances performed by the Malu Ki'ai dance team were also part of the program, reflecting the maritime heritage at the centre of the strike.



Torres Strait Islander community members and dignitaries alongside the Governor-General Sam Mostyn.

Speakers described the strike as a turning point in Torres Strait Islander history and linked its legacy to ongoing calls for self-determination.

Kulkalaig man and Gur A Baradharaw Kod (GBK) chair Ned David said the commemoration was about honouring the decision made by workers who chose to walk off the job.

"We are gathered here today not to simply remember an event, but to honour a decision," he said.

"In 1936, Torres Strait Islander maritime workers made a choice ... they chose dignity

over compliance; unity over isolation; autonomy over control.

"This was not a spontaneous act, it was deliberate, it was organised and it was collective."

Mr David said more than 70 per cent of the Torres Strait Islander maritime workforce took part, arguing conditions of control, surveillance and economic exploitation had become unbearable.

"They were told where to go, how they could work, and what they could earn ... They were told to accept it. Instead, they refused," he said.

The strike continues to hold

lessons for the present, including the role of collective action in pursuing autonomy.

"The first lesson is that autonomy is never granted, it is claimed," he said.

"The second lesson is the power of collectivism.

"No single island, leader, or voice could have carried this alone or forced change."

Mr David acknowledged women's roles during the strike, saying their support as central to family, culture and resolve.

"The men who walked off those boats were not acting

alone," he said. "Behind them were women holding families together, maintaining culture, sustaining resolve, and carrying the weight of uncertainty.

"Their leadership may not appear in government files, but it is written deeply into our survival."

He said the strike helped create the conditions for later political reform, including the 1937 Inter-Islander Councillors' Conference on Masig.

"Economic resistance opened the door to political reform ... collective action gave birth to representative governance."

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Govt pick for top NT role sparks call for review

DECHLAN BRENNAN

Northern Territory political figures are continuing to call on the Government to reconsider the appointment of the incoming NT administrator, arguing the Territory deserves someone who commands broad respect.

Former Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association president David Connolly is due to be sworn in next month as the Territory's 24th administrator, after being nominated by Chief Minister Lia Finocchiaro in December. The role — equivalent to a State governor — is intended to be politically neutral.

In recent weeks, a number of Mr Connolly's past posts on X (formerly Twitter) have resurfaced, including mocking and dismissive remarks about First Nations people, despite Aboriginal people making up about one-third of the Territory's population.

Mr Connolly has stopped short of apologising, arguing he did not intend to cause harm and saying he would be a "fierce advocate for all Territorians".

"My former social media posts are exactly that and were done at a time when having the honour and privilege of being the administrator was not even in my wildest dreams," he said.

"I love this place and look forward to getting out and working for everyone right across the Territory."

Speaking to ABC Radio last Wednesday, Northern Land Council chair Matthew Ryan said he was "disgusted and very disappointed" by Mr Connolly's appointment. "We need someone that doesn't have any baggage," Mr Ryan said. "We need someone that will represent the Northern Territory — not just one-sided, but all Territory Indigenous also."

Before an administrator is appointed, the government does a vetting process, including checks and balances, to determine whether a nominee is a fit and proper person to hold the role of the King's representative in the Territory. In appointing Mr Connolly, Mr Ryan argued the Country Liberal Party Government had "massively" failed in its responsibilities.

"You do your due diligence right across so that you get the right fit and proper person for the position or for the role," he said.

Shadow attorney-general Chansey Paech said the administrator must reflect the "values, history and future" of the NT.

"Territorians deserve an administrator who understands the complexity of our communities, the challenges we face and the deep cultural roots of this land — especially in the bush," he said.

"It demands connection, cultural intelligence, and respect for the diversity that defines the Northern Territory, not someone who makes a joke of it."



Scotch College graduate Ben Stack and incoming MADALAH chief executive Casey Drummond.

Charity's new CEO to focus on growth

DALLMYN KELLY

First Nations-led education group MADALAH has begun 2026 under new leadership after appointing Casey Jo Drummond as chief executive.

The charity offers secondary and tertiary education scholarships in WA, partnering with leading boarding schools and universities across the state.

Ms Drummond said MADALAH's partner schools do a great job. "I think what we provide is making sure (education) is accessible to our families and our kids," she told National Indigenous Times.

"We play our part in getting the message out there to the communities and families who might not know about the opportunities, and actually making it feel achievable and attainable."

MADALAH's mentoring program is devoted to the wellbeing of students, ensuring a safe journey through the education system as well as a supported and positive transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Student and family support team lead, Charlie Mallard, said MADALAH is "an incredible place to work".

"For us there is nothing that compares or competes with the students we get to support. They are the reason this thing

“The beauty of this generation is that young people maintain their connection to their Elders, country, language and culture but they're also educated in the Western world.”

MADALAH CEO Casey Jo Drummond

works so well, they give us the motivation to not only do the best work we can do but also be the best version of ourselves."

Ms Drummond has played a pivotal role in the evolution of MADALAH's scholarship program. In her previous role between 2020 and 2025 she watched a generation of students flourish.

"The beauty of this generation is that young people maintain their connection to their Elders, country, language and culture but they're also educated in the Western world," she said. "They are the first gener-

ation coming through who can really walk in two worlds to the fullest. That is why MADALAH is important."

The program, which currently supports 520 students, has help more than 1000 young Indigenous people since its inception in 2009.

St Hilda's graduate and 2025 MADALAH head girl, Tahnee Rahnsfield, said with MADALAH's support she has been able to grow as a leader and represent her culture with pride.

"I took on responsibilities that required strong communication, organisation, and teamwork, and I worked closely with students and staff to support with initiatives," Ms Rahnsfield said.

She said Ms Drummond has been a vital part of her journey.

"Her guidance, encouragement, and genuine belief in students has made a significant difference in my confidence and ability to succeed. Casey's leadership reflects MADALAH's commitment to not only supporting Indigenous students financially, but also emotionally and culturally."

Guilford Grammar graduate and 2025 MADALAH head boy, Brian Nokes, said Ms Drummond provided invaluable support for him during his schooling. "Casey, for me, provided a safe space in MADA-

LAH, being someone to talk to and someone that knows what I'm going through on a cultural level, as well as understanding what it's like to be homesick for the Pilbara," Mr Nokes said.

Ms Drummond said following her appointment, she will look to the organisation's future with a focus on changing dynamics and expansion.

"The next phase for MADALAH is that the organisation will be run by alumni, who better to teach and do the things that we're doing than the kids who have experienced the program," she said.

"We've recently extended the program to the Northern Territory which is exciting so again we need to learn and listen to those communities."

MADALAH senior manager partnerships and impact, Beth Banasik, said the organisation provides holistic support for scholarship recipients.

"The financial and wrap-around support provided to our scholars aims to ensure students don't just attend our partner schools, but that they also get the most out of the experience," Ms Banasik said.

Last year was another successful year for MADALAH with 90 students graduating Year 12 across WA. A projected 85 MADALAH students are anticipated to graduate in 2026.



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Elder takes
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to music fest
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All going swimmingly fo

PHOEBE BLOGG

First Nations menswear brand Gali Swimwear is making waves with its niche designs, engaging colourways and culturally crafted pieces.

Founded on Bondi Beach by proud Kamilaroi man and volunteer surf lifesaver David Leslie, GALI fuses First Nations culture with sustainable swimwear. "In 2025, we expanded into new parts of Europe, launched our first swim shorts, grew our towel range, and released a new collection in collaboration with Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay and Biripi artist Dennis Golding," Leslie told Style Up.

"Each step helped us evolve the brand while staying grounded in our purpose; sharing Indigenous stories through swimwear that gives back.

"Like many businesses, the introduction of tariffs in the US pushed us to think about how we expand internationally. Since launching, GALI has built a strong and loyal customer base in the US, and we wanted to ensure we could continue to grow sustainably.

"We spent time working with agencies and industry experts, seeking advice on international growth and best practices. As a result, we're now developing launch strategies for our swim shorts range across the northern hemisphere."

This month GALI hit a remarkable milestone — \$100,000 in artist royalties and donations to community projects. "That moment really sums up what GALI is about:

designing beautiful, meaningful pieces and creating economic opportunities for artists and communities," Leslie said.

The designer noted his experience as a surf lifesaver led to him taking more notice of what people were wearing on the beach and where there are gaps in the market.

"We're expanding our designs across our new swim shorts and finalising development on resort shorts, which we started working on in 2025 and plan to launch in 2027," he said.

"GALI's swim shorts are designed with comfort, fit, and versatility front of mind. They feature a tailored cut, lightweight and quick-dry fabric, and a comfortable fit that works in the water and beyond."

Leslie said the launch planned for next year includes five designs drawn from three existing GALI swimwear collections. Each artwork has been carefully translated from swim briefs into swim shorts, maintaining the integrity of the original designs while offering a new silhouette.

"It gives customers more choice in how they wear GALI, while continuing to share Indigenous art and culture through wearable, everyday pieces," he said.

"Launching swim shorts is about creating swimwear that people feel comfortable wearing. I wear both briefs and shorts myself, and being out on surf patrol I notice what people wear on the beach. Australia has always been the home of swim briefs, but in other countries some men prefer to wear swim shorts over swim briefs."





or designer

Leslie said the fashion industry is welcoming more male Indigenous brands and designers.

"There's definitely momentum in men's First Nations fashion, and it's exciting to see the field expanding. There are so many incredible Indigenous brands doing amazing work in menswear. House of Darwin, Joseph & James, Take Pride Movement, Kirrikin, Magpie Goose, Gammin Threads, Kaninda, Yapa Mali, By Josh Deane, just to name just a few," he said.

Looking ahead, Leslie said GALI has multiple projects kicking off in 2026.

"We have two new artist collaborations in the works. We're hoping to launch one as part of NAIDOC Week and the second towards the end of the year, bringing new stories and artworks to our swimwear and towel ranges," he said.

"We've started development on a men's resort wear line, taking GALI beyond swimwear. The collection is designed for relaxed, everyday wear with the same focus on culture, creativity, and quality that our swimwear is known for."

Leslie said GALI was excited about the prospect of collaborating with an emerging First Nations artist for the launch of resort wear.

"Their water-inspired artworks are vibrant, full of life, and instantly captured our imagination," he said.

"We hope to work with them and their art centre to translate their stories into wearable

pieces that we can share with new audiences.

"This resort wear collection we aim to showcase on runways in Australia and internationally in 2027/28."

Leslie balances his own inspiration with community input, consumer sentiment and market demand.

As the talented designer enters 2026 with an abundance of inspiration, he reflected on his early days of designing, explaining how sometimes you don't find inspiration; it finds you.

"Sometimes an artwork just stops you in your tracks. That happened during COVID when I first saw Pauline Napangardi Gallagher's Lukarrara Jukurrpa (Desert Fringe-Rush Seed Dreaming) online, when we were planning the launch of GALI," he said.

"The energy, the movement, the way the story was told through the artwork . . . it completely shaped how I thought about translating Indigenous art on to men's swimwear.

"Now, as we plan our resort wear collection, I feel that same excitement seeing an emerging artist's water-inspired works.

"The way their pieces move and feel already points us in a fresh direction for GALI, while customer feedback continues to shape what people want to wear.

"It's this mix of inspiration, collaboration, and listening to our community that's guiding the next chapter for the brand."

Photographers

Jose Yutiu

Dan Castano

Main model

Trent Owers

(mob: Kamilaroi)

Artists

The late Pauline

Napangardi

Gallagher,

Jake Simon

Art Centre

Warlukurlangu

Artists

Telling the truth in her songs

JOSEPH GUENZLER

Kankawa Nagarra will bring her truth-telling songs to WOMADelaide in March, performing on Kurna Country as part of the four-day festival at Tainmuntilla (Botanic Park).

The Walmatjarri Elder from the Kimberley is known for blending folk, gospel and blues into music shaped by a life of work, community and deep connection to Country.

Ms Nagarra told National Indigenous Times she was looking forward to the festival experience and described it as another step in a journey she has taken through music.

"I feel good about WOMADelaide because it's going to be a very interesting journey," she said.

"I've been on those sorts of music journeys before, but this one is going to be really good."

While her performances draw crowds, Ms Nagarra said she does not see herself as someone

who belongs on a stage for the sake of it. A big part of her work is telling the truth about the experiences carried by Indigenous people, while using music as a way to speak to pain, loss and survival.

"I don't see myself as a stage person," she said. "I'm here to truth-tell and to spread my stories and my feelings."

Her message is grounded in what she feels for land and community, with a focus on younger people who are struggling and those who feel pushed to the margins.

"What I feel about our land, our soil, you know, that we walk on because I also feel for the youth, for the ostracised and those who are suicidal," she said.

Ms Nagarra's commitment to that message comes from personal grief after losing two sons to suicide. She said those realities are present across Indigenous nations and remain an urgent issue.



Kimberley singer Kankawa Nagarra is set to perform at Adelaide's WOMADelaide in March.

The songs Ms Nagarra performs often reflect the influences that have shaped her life, from the music she grew up with to what she discovered later. She said audiences at WOMADelaide can expect stories that reach beyond the performance itself, with each track introduced in a way that explains its origins.

"I want people to understand and I do talk about each song before I perform it and where it comes from," she said.

Her work is guided by a belief that Indigenous people hold a responsibility to stand strong

and lead, particularly in moments when the country is facing major decisions about its future. "We as Indigenous people are in this country for a purpose," she said. "Everything has happened for a purpose for us as Indigenous people so that we can be made prominent out there."

Ms Nagarra was recognised nationally in 2024 when she won the Australian Music Prize for her album *Wirlmarni*, becoming one of the oldest winners in the award's history. Beyond WOMADelaide, Ms Nagarra said she is working on

a plan to build a women's choir back home in the Kimberley, bringing together voices from different language groups across the region.

She said the goal is to create a choir where women can sing in their languages and feel their stories are valued.

"I've been talking to a group of women . . . to create a choir of women, all singing the languages," she said. "So, we kind of get all these women to start seeing themselves and know that they are important."

WOMADelaide runs from March 6 to 9.

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Garabari a watershed work

JOSEPH GUENZLER

Merrigong Theatre Company, in association with BlakDance, will bring Garabari to the Illawarra next month, presenting acclaimed Wiradjuri choreographer Joel Bray's immersive contemporary corroboree.

The work shares the Giilang of Marramalngidyal Marrambidyagu, a story and song about the making of the Murrumbidgee River, developed on Wiradjuri Country with Elders and artists.

Dunghutti and Gomeroi woman Zoe Brown-Holten will feature as one of the dancers in the production, performing the role of Balana within the story.

Brown-Holten told National Indigenous Times Balana's journey centred on retrieving water from Goanna men who were holding it back on Mt Tumut.

"It's basically



about this, this journey that Balana had gone on to get more water from the Goanna men that were hoarding it up on Mt Tumut," she said.

"She drove her bilow here, which is the digging stick right through the crack of one of the mountains where they were hoarding the water and thus the creation of the Murrumbidgee had then come through.

"It then gave water back to the land and the community that Balana came from, the Wiradjuri people," she said.

Brown-Holten, left, said being part of Garabari came after first seeing the work when it premiered.

"I remember seeing the work and being absolutely flabbergasted with the beauty and the complexities of First Nations stories," she said.

"To stumble



Joel Bray's Garabari brings Wiradjuri story of the Murrumbidgee to Wollongong and Dapto.

across a work that celebrates and that shows so much positivity and unity and collaboration, it was just something that was so bizarre to me at that time.

"I was like, I have to get on to this project."

Brown-Holten said the production created space for audiences to move with the work and leave changed.

"If you've got a problem, you come to Garabari and you just dance it out," she said.

"Leave like a different version of you as you came in."

Brown-Holten said the experience of working with Bray and the wider team had been grounded in shared learning and respect.

"It's been such a wonderful journey," she said.

"Coming into a work where everyone's so open and genuine and so willing to share knowledge and everyone's so respectful, so kind, so creative. I'm a walking sponge at this

point." Garabari will be performed at Wollongong Town Hall on Friday, February 6, and Saturday, February 7, at 7.30pm, before travelling to Dapto Ribbonwood Centre on Saturday, February 14, at 1.30pm and 7.30pm.

The show runs for one hour and 20 minutes with no interval and is recommended for ages 12 and over. Tickets start from \$40, with adult tickets priced at \$55 with more details available on the Merrigong website.

HOUSE LIGHTS ON FOR JOINT PROJECT

ALEXANDRA GIORGIANNI

Badu Gili: Story Keepers will light up the Sydney Opera House's eastern Bennelong sails nightly from sunset until March 2026, featuring the artworks of Gooniyandi Elder Mervyn Street and Inuk custodian Ningiukulu Teevee.

The installation celebrates the third year of a partnership between the Opera House, Biennale of Sydney and the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain as a vital pillar in the Opera House's First Nations program.

Badu Gili, meaning "water light" in the Gadigal language of the Traditional Owners of Tubowgule (Bennelong Point) celebrates the richness of First Nations culture and stories expressed through contemporary and traditional artworks sourced from First Nations and Indigenous artists across Australia.

Story Keepers marks a new chapter in this experience. Curated by the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain's First Nations curatorial fellow Bruce Johnson McLean, the projection features artwork by Street and Teevee, with Sydney-based creative agency Vandal animating the work of both artists to produce a mesmerising visual effect on the sails.

Street's artworks are influenced by his life as a stockman in the Kimberley and his ongoing



Gooniyandi Elder Mervyn Street with his artwork displayed on the Sydney Opera House sails. Picture: Cassandra Hannagan

advocacy for cultural preservation through language and living on Country. "My mum and dad used to work. My dad was just like a slave working over and over, every day," he said.

"I'm going back through my history. I'm doing it for the people, doing it for everybody, not for myself.

"I'm passing on my knowledge.

"This was a big project. I didn't know it was going to go this far. It's been a long journey for my art, and now I can't believe I'm doing this with the Sydney Opera House. I'm giving my story to the people."

Teevee's art is founded in Inuit myths and legends, keeping traditional stories alive while providing a contemporary lens on Inuit culture.

"I am honoured to be part of this animation project, which brings to life the legend of The Owl And The Raven – a story that has stayed with me since childhood. I first heard it in school from an Elder whose storytelling captured my imagination," she said. "The themes of curiosity, transformation and the balance between patience and pride continue to inspire me. Through

this animation, I explore how Raven's restless spirit and Owl's calm wisdom reflect human nature and the lessons found in our traditions.

"This work connects Inuit storytelling with contemporary art, celebrating the voices, memories and teachings that guide my creative journey."

At the heart of the project is a shared commitment to upholding Indigenous culture and history, a sentiment expressed by McLean.

"It's been a real privilege to bring together two leading Indigenous artists from opposite

sides of the world, from lands of heat and smoke and lands of snow and ice," he said. "What unites these artists is their incredible commitment to holding and sharing the knowledge and histories of their communities.

"Story Keepers is a celebration of those members of our Indigenous communities who continue to share our stories and give voice to our memories."

Badu Gili: Story Keepers will light up the Opera House's eastern Bennelong sails every 30 minutes from 8:30pm to 10:30pm until February 28.

Doco tells story of Buffalo nations

JOSEPH GUENZLER

Riders Of The Buffalo Nations, a long-form photographic and documentary project on Indigenous youth living on reservations across South Dakota and Montana, examines how culture, family and survival intersect in contemporary life.

The project follows young riders from nations including Oglala Lakota, Dine, Blackfeet and Northern Cheyenne, using rodeo as a lens to explore endurance, identity and continuity in communities shaped by generational trauma and resilience.

The work tracks how rodeo brings people together across nations, and how young riders move between cultural inheritance and the pressures of modern life.

The story is carried by families, Elders, and community members who asked for a record that moved beyond the public narratives that often define reservation communities from the outside.

English photographer Doug Hancock described the project as something that became less about making a documentary and more about staying close to the people who let him in.

"The work is secondary," he said. "You can't do the work without that level of mutual understanding . . . friendship comes first."

His connection to Indigenous communities developed through

relationships formed around rodeo and film, then through an introduction that helped shape his responsibilities.

He detailed how he was at a film festival in Missoula when he met a Blackfeet man, Jonas Rides-At-The-Door, during a conversation outside a bar.

He later contacted Mr Rides At The Door, who introduced him to a Blackfeet Elder, Allen MadPlume. Hancock described that relationship as formative, because it grounded the project in community context rather than his assumptions.

The project expanded across families and rodeo networks, including time spent with riders and relatives connected to the Dine Nation and communities at Pine Ridge.

Hancock framed rodeo as a shared meeting ground, where nations converge and young people are seen in motion, supported by family and community. "Rodeo becomes a collective, a collective of the nations," he said.

Within that collective, he said rodeo reflected struggle without flattening people into crisis stories.

"It became a metaphor for their struggle, but also for their hope and ambition."

Hancock said families and Elders were clear about what they wanted the work to do, particularly in response to the way places like Pine Ridge are often portrayed. "Just tell everyone we're still here," they said. "Paint the kids in a positive light, there's more to



Fort Hall wapici or powwow. A celebration of culture. Picture: Doug Hancock

it than just drugs and alcohol and everything else."

He said trust was something earned through everyday actions and restraint, rather than an exchange for access.

The approach relied on humility and an acceptance suspicion was reasonable because of the history communities carry.

"Everyone's like super cautious and for good reason, you know, I'm a white guy coming in," Hancock said.

Consent was imperative with people shown photographs and kept informed about where images would appear. The project now includes a monograph and a film, alongside an upcoming exhibition at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Wyoming running from April to December 2026.

Hancock said the exhibition was selected by a First Nations board and curated by Crow Agency.

He said the work is intended to live beyond a gallery setting through education materials connected to the exhibition.

"So, it can go to become part of an education pack in Wyoming," he said.

He described the broader impact as creating a record that helps audiences understand Indigenous communities through family, culture and the everyday reality of young people holding their ground.

Exhibition explores origins of Bundjalung tribes

JOSEPH GUENZLER

A new exhibition sharing the Bundjalung creation story of the Three Brothers is now open at the Tweed Regional Museum.

Titled The Wiiyaan, the exhibition explores the origins of the Bundjalung Nation's tribes and dialects through story, digital works and material illustration.

The exhibition is led by Gudjimbingurra Bundjalung men Kyle Slabb and Bijang Slabb, who worked as artists and cultural advisers on the project.

Slabb said the project was driven by the need to strengthen knowledge transfer at a time when cultural connection could be lost



The exhibition tells of the journeys of three brothers.

between generations. "One of the considerations that we have to think about now and the time that we're in is what we pass on to the next generation," he said.

"We're the last generation of contact with traditional people in our community.

"Our kids' generation never knew our grandmothers and grandfathers."

He said the risk of loss during that transition was central to why the work was made.

"During that transition, what doesn't get passed on, you can lose," he said.

Slabb noted the exhibition was part of ensuring Bundjalung children understood their origin story and what it connected to.

"This project is part of that exercise for me – making sure every Bundjalung kid knows our origin story, understands our lore and knows what connects us back," he said.

"For us, this exhibition really is about our ancestors and the

spiritual ancestors of Bundjalung country," he said. "It's really at the heart of Bundjalung lore, culture and tradition."

The creation story tells of three brothers who arrived by canoe with their families before splitting up and travelling north, south and west.

In the southern dialect, the brothers are known as Mamoon, Birrung and YarBirrain.

In the northern dialect, they are known as Yarbiri, Marming and Birin.

The story explains the origins of Bundjalung tribes and dialects across the Northern Rivers, with key locations tied to natural landmarks across Country.

Slabb said the exhibition reflected living cultural knowledge

rather than a story locked in the past. "A lot of the artefacts and the things that are in the museums, they have story and there's still people that carry those stories and attached to those things," Slabb said.

"For us, they're not ancient artefacts."

The exhibition includes digital and material illustrations created over several years by the local Tweed Aboriginal community and shared with Elders and knowledge holders for teaching younger generations.

Museum curator Erika Taylor said the exhibition reflected a community-led approach to cultural storytelling.

The Wiiyaan runs until July 18 at Tweed Regional Museum.

US First Nations face ICE onslaught

JOSEPH GUENZLER

Indigenous leaders in Minnesota and the Oglala Sioux tribe are demanding answers after Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detained Native people in Minneapolis during an operation this month.

Oglala Sioux tribal president Frank Star Comes Out said five enrolled members were taken into custody near the Little Earth housing complex. The tribe notes some were detained without their names being recorded, leaving community advocates and attorneys trying to confirm identities and locations.

Attorneys for the tribe have contacted Minnesota Lieutenant-Governor Peggy Flanagan to determine where the men are being held. The tribe says it is prepared to provide enrolment records to Federal authorities and has advised members to assert their rights if detained.

"I am a citizen of the OGLALA LAKOTA NATION, a federally recognised Tribal Nation," a statement read. "Under the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, all Native people born within the territorial limits of the United States are recognised as US citizens by birthright.

"Because I am both a Tribal citizen and a US citizen, ICE has no lawful authority to detain me."

Reports from Minneapolis' southside describe agents questioning and detaining Indigenous community members during what an ICT News report described as the "largest immigration raid ever".

Indigenous residents in the area around Franklin Avenue East reported stops and questioning near Little Earth, which community members describe as an urban hub for Native people.

Little Crow Belcourt, director of the Indigenous Peoples Movement, said people were being targeted based on appearance and that Native people were being mistaken for migrants from outside the United States.

"I think some of them (ICE) don't even know what they're doing or where they're at," Little Crow Belcourt said.

"They're just pulling people over at random, if you're Brown.

"Some of our Native people get mistaken for our relatives south of the border. ICT News reported ICE agents attempted to enter Little Earth Housing Project property last week but property managers told the outlet they were not welcome and turned them away.

The same report said agents later tried to detain Rachel Dionne-Thunder near the Powwow Grounds coffee shop, with workers stepping in as she recorded the encounter on Facebook Live.

Ms Flanagan told ICT News she believed the detentions reflected racial profiling.

"Native people have been here since time immemorial — there's no one that has been a citizen of this country longer than us," Ms Flanagan told ICT.



A crowd walks to the US consulate to protest against policy towards Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat in Nuuk on January 17. Pics: Evgeniy Maloletka/AP

Inuit march tells Trump to keep out

ANDREW MATHIESON

A largely Inuit mass protest of several thousand people marched on January 17 against threats from US President Donald Trump to annex Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat.

They carried protest signs, waved their national flag, chanting "Greenland is not for sale" in their capital Nuuk on their way to the US consulate.

The protest was attended by one-quarter of the city's entire population.

Indigenous Inuit make up more than 90 per cent of Greenland's 57,000 residents.

Kalaallit Nunaat, the Indigenous name for Greenland, is one of five sovereign lands for the Inuit people recognised by the United Nations.

Mr Trump has long argued the US should own the mineral-rich island, which remains a self-governing territory within the Danish Commonwealth and has long-held ties with Europe but geographically is aligned to the continent of North America.

However, Inuit advocacy groups say they are tired of being used as geopolitical pawns by world leaders.

"We want to say loud and clear that there's no such thing as a better coloniser," Sara Olsvig, the chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council and a former member of the Greenlandic parliament, told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

"We have already been through colonisation, and we know what it means when the interests of others and more powerful nations and peoples



Placards let the US President know the country is not for sale.

affects us negatively and when decisions are taken thousands of kilometres away from us."

According to a recent poll from an independent researcher, Mr Trump's desire to control Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat disregards the fact the Inuit people overwhelmingly do not want to be part of the US, while a significant number also want full independence from Denmark.

Inuit people also feared Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat may become the Arctic equivalent of American Samoa or Puerto Rico — US overseas territories where residents lack constitutional protections and have no voting representatives in the US House of Representatives or Senate.

Ms Olsvig said while Inuit want greater self-determination, they also want to be a part of stronger international forums such as the Arctic Council that already includes the Indigenous Inuktitut people of Eastern Canada and also

and Northern Sami people of Scandinavia.

"We have been able to work together based on mutual respect," she said.

"We have been able to maintain a zone of peace in the Arctic even through difficult times before and I think it lies upon every leader, who has something to say in the Arctic, to stand strong on those values, on calling for diplomacy to work."

The system of military and political alliances that has underpinned a world global order since the end of the World War II hangs in the balance for Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat.

Inuit man Karl Sandgreen, head of the Ilulissat Icefjord visitor centre in the Western Greenland fjord, fears for the Inuit way of life after Greenlanders have witnessed the harsh ways that Inuit people are treated in the US State of Alaska.

"We are totally different (to Americans). We are Inuit, and we've been living here for thou-

sands of years. This is my daughter's and my son's future, not a future for people who are thinking about resources."

Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat's mineral sector has been a point of geopolitical interest for Mr Trump over a number of years dating back to his first term.

The autonomous territory has 25 of the 34 critical raw materials that has been identified by the European Union, including rare earth elements, graphite, zinc and uranium.

The melting of ice sheets from ongoing global warming makes the resources more accessible despite environmental policies backed by Inuit stakeholders and its ruling Ataqatigiit party.

A solidarity rally was also held in Iqaluit, the capital of the Inuit-governed territory of Nunavut in Canada's far north that split from the Northwest Territories province in 1999 as an Indigenous homeland.

Aaju Peter, an experienced Inuit lawyer born in Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat but a longtime Nunavut resident, said Greenland appears to be at the mercy of the US even though the Trump administration looks to flout both international law and the Inuit right to self-determination.

"Greenlandic leaders and the population are willing to talk with the President, or with the administration in the White House, diplomatically, with respect ... that the Greenlandic Inuit are sovereign and they can make their own decisions," she told the Associated Press.

We know the risks of hate

HANNAH MCGLADE

Throughout Christmas, in the aftermath of the Bondi horror which left 15 innocent people dead, Opposition Leader Sussan Ley attacked Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, claiming he lacked the leadership to address antisemitism and blaming him for failing to tackle rising antisemitism in the lead-up to Bondi.

And yet the Federal Government's proposed law to address race hate — increasing criminalisation of hate and banning racist organisations — was initially opposed by Ley and her party, ignoring Jewish leaders who supported the laws.

The PM needed support to pass the bill, but Ley claimed the legislation didn't tackle the problem, didn't name "radical Islam" and was unsalvageable.

The Liberals have long opposed section 18(c) of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 that prohibits racial vilification or hate speech.

Albanese and Ley finally agreed to pass legislation to ban race-hate organisations, but not the criminalisation of hate speech last week.

Aboriginal people have long experienced and borne the brunt of race hate and violence

in Australia but weren't consulted in the chorus of voices drowning out the laws, demonstrating how the defeat for a Voice To Parliament has real consequences for Aboriginal lives, frequently impacted by racism and hate.

Some 25 years ago I researched racist organisations in Australia, (including the One Nation party which had made numerous racist statements against Aboriginal people).

Neo-nazi and racist organisations on the right were even then regarded as a serious threat by Australian authorities and yet were completely legal, and it's evident from the attack on Camp Sovereignty by neo-nazi groups that the problem has not abated and is alive and well today.

Numerous acts of racist violence and hate against Aboriginal people were also documented by the Australian Human Rights Commission in their National Inquiry into Racist Violence (1991).

Commissioner Irene Moss reported: "Racist violence against Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders is endemic, nation-wide and very severe." Also, evidence to the inquiry overwhelmingly demonstrated that racist attitudes and

practices (both conscious and unconscious) pervade our institutions.

The UN Convention on the Elimination of Race Discrimination requires nation states including Australia to prohibit race hate and racist organisations. Under Article 4, states must:

(a) Declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority and hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, an also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;

(b) Declare illegal and prohibit organisations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognise participation in such organizations and activities as an offence punishable by law;

(c) Not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination.

Unfortunately, the Government only allowed two days for the public to comment on the Combating Antisemitism, Hate and Extremism Bill, 2026, which proposed a new Federal offence making it illegal to publicly promote or incite racial hatred where the conduct would cause a reasonable person to feel intimidated, harassed or fear violence. It also provided for race-hate organisations to be listed and criminalised, and for visas to be cancelled for people engaging in race-hate conduct or associating with such bodies.

As Professor Luke McNamara noted, the law significantly proposed to criminalise the incitement of racial hatred. For more than 30 years Australia has treated racist hate speech as a matter for civil law. Criminal law only applies to hate speech that urges or threatens violence.

Arguably, the proposed law was consistent with and implementing Article 4 of the UNCERD which is a binding international treaty obligation and formed in the aftermath of nazism and genocide against millions of Jewish people.

I wonder will the royal commission the Government has established even consider UNCERD as it surely should?

In Australia's last review before the UN Committee on Race Discrimination, in 2018, it

was noted that Australia still hadn't removed a reservation to Article 4 (a) and needed to address this and ensure victims of race hate are protected.

The committee also expressed concerns that racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, including in the public sphere, in political debates and in the media, was on the rise.

The committee found that migrants, notably Arabs and Muslims, asylum seekers and refugees, as well as Africans and people of African descent, South Asians and Indigenous peoples, are particularly affected by racist hate speech and violence.

The chequered history of the new hate law shows Australia still has a long way to go in addressing race hate and racist organisations.

And if we're truly serious about addressing racist hate and violence in Australia, and learning from Bondi, we must start listening to people who've lived this experience, including Aboriginal people, who have pervasive long-standing experiences of hate in this country which continue to be largely ignored.

Dr Hannah McGlade is a Kurin Minang human rights expert and law academic

BHP

"More lifeguards, more opening hours, more fun. To me that's big."

Discover how Talent Pool is giving purpose to young people in Newman - and the kids at the pool more opening hours and more fun!

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Leadership program puts board lessons on the table

DAVID PRESTIPINO

Governance, leadership growth and succession planning are at the heart of a corporate leadership program enhancing skills for the next wave of Indigenous executives.

The board governance scholarship program was launched in September 2025 when BHP partnered with the Australian Institute of Company Directors to strengthen Indigenous leadership.

The initiative assists First Nations executives and aspiring board members build governance capability and contribute to stronger decision-making across Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations.

The program's aim to develop a pipeline of skilled First Nations directors and support long-term community and business outcomes is on track, with 250 projected participants to be or already further equipped with executive, governance and leadership skills.

The governance education for Indigenous leaders was backed by a \$1 million contribution from BHP, who said the successful initial intake from the partnership with AICD led them to continue the initiative in 2026.

Up to 46 scholarships are available in the next funding round, to be delivered in South Australia and WA between February and May.

Scholars were drawn from a diverse group of experienced Indigenous leaders, with previous program participants saying their experience was reaping rewards, providing tangible benefits for community and boards.

Gayaa Dhuwi director and Arrernte man, Tony Kiessler, said better management of the organisation would result from the program.

"There was a lot to take back to my organisation to strengthen the way we govern and manage," the chief executive of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association said.

"The work we did on the legal requirements for being a board director was very impressive."

Mithaka Aboriginal Corporation director Tracey Hough praised the breadth of talent she encountered. "Having those people with different, broad experiences around the table was really great," the proud Barkandji, Malyangapa and Ganguddi woman said.

BHP said the course aimed to deepen governance knowledge and provide insights for participants to strengthen leadership capability and succession planning within their organisations.

AICD managing director and CEO, Mark Rigotti, said the collaboration with BHP reflected their commitment to building leadership capability across the Indigenous business sector.

Applications for the next intake close January 28. More information is available online.



Chris Phillips (left) says people have noticed how he's grown with a stable career facilitated by Mundine Gosh Management.

MGM projects help communities thrive

JARRED CROSS

In 2026 Anthony Mundine will notch up a decade of opening doors for his community to build its future.

His venture Mundine Gosh Management (MGM) Australia, founded with life-long friend and partner Gosh Daher, works to provide clear employment pathways for First Nations people in the construction industry.

Chris Phillips says his work life lacked stability for a long time but now he's thriving with the right people backing him.

He got involved with MGM about two years ago and soon after took up an opportunity with concrete works civil contractor JK Williams.

Mr Phillips, 26, is a traffic controller at the company's large-scale project at Stockland's Figtree Hill housing estate in Sydney's south-west.

"Growing up (work) wasn't ever stable," he told *National Indigenous Times*, "it was hard to find a decent company to work for."

"I've been with MGM for two years. It's been a good challenge."

MGM operates as principal contractors facilitating people like Chris into strong stable employment opportunities.

Founded in 2016, it is celebrating 10 years of work.

Mr Phillips had previously worked with Indigenous businesses in similar roles but said steady hours could prove diffi-

cult to secure. He also has experience as a labourer.

"I like to continue to show our people that there's opportunities out there for us and to work together," he continued.

"When we work together, we kill it and we get things done . . . show each other and motivate each other."

Those connections can be a real strength when previous experiences and upbringings came with some challenges, Mr Phillips added.

The Stocklands project has years until completion. Phillips said he's committed to being there for as long as possible, and hopefully until it's finished. Working there has been a driver of, as he says, and as those around him have noticed,

a new sense of confidence and fulfillment. It's also 10 minutes down the road from home — keeping him connected with community.

Mr Mundine said it's exactly what MGM is all about.

"We started MGM to give opportunities to Aboriginal men and women to build their future and wealth and to understand the importance of working," the former rugby league player and world champion boxer said.

"It makes me proud and happy giving our people an opportunity to work and be comfortable and make them part of the MGM family."

"Throughout my career that's what I have done — uplift, love, care for people."

McGuinness takes on top job at Murawin

BRENDAN FOSTER

Proud Dunghutti woman Rebecca McGuinness is the new chief executive of the First Nations consultancy firm, Murawin.

Ms McGuinness, who has connections to the Gumbaynggirr and Anaiwan people, has years of experience across Murawin in key operational and leadership roles.

She is the daughter of Murawin's co-founders, Carol Vale and the late Greg McKenzie.

Ms McGuinness said she felt intimidated at first when she took the reins of the Brisbane-based company her parents founded in 2014.

"Succession planning has existed in many industries for thousands of years, but we're only now starting to see it emerge in the Indigenous business sector in Australia. That is

because, historically, although intergenerational knowledge has been passed down for 60,000-plus years, mob haven't always had the opportunities in today's society to build strong, sustainable economic businesses that can last across generations," she said.

Ms McGuinness said growing up alongside the business offered her a rare insight into what it takes to establish and maintain a family-led organisation.

She saw her parents sacrifice their weekends and work late nights to get the business off the ground.

The former director of business operations at the company said the transition to the

new CEO role was exciting, as similar stories were emerging across the Indigenous business sector.

"It's exciting not just for me, but because I'm seeing it happen in other Indigenous businesses as well," she said.

"I had the opportunity to see how Carol and Greg built Murawin. Now their generation is at a point where they can hand over the reins to their adult children, like myself, who are stepping into the leadership roles and continuing to build on the legacy for the next generation."

Ms McGuinness said Murawin would continue delivering its core

services across research, evaluation, community engagement and place strategy nationwide.

But she had plans to expand how knowledge and insights were shared through visual storytelling, using First Nations-designed video, animation, and other creative approaches.

"Knowledge and education are everything," she said. "The more effectively we share these stories, the greater impact we can have for clients, communities and mob."

Ms Vale said she would remain actively involved in the business dedicated to social justice and the empowerment of First Nations communities and marginalised groups. "I will always be a part of Murawin," she said. "This is about family, but it's also about contributing to the broader Indigenous business sector."



Bush food for thought

DAVID PRESTIPINO

Native foods are far from a fleeting culinary trend, with a new report underscoring a need to protect Traditional Knowledge in an industry grounded in more than 60,000 years of history.

The Nuffield report by Marlon Motlop, a proud Larrakia/Gulumeorrigin, Kungarrakany Erub/Darnley man, shines a spotlight on native ingredients including Kakadu plum, warrigal greens and rock fuchsia.

The report, An Age-Old Beginning: Understanding, Sharing, And Celebrating Australian Native Foods And Their Cultural Significance And Unique Benefits, calls for stronger First Nations leadership in what is a fast-expanding sector.

A former Port Adelaide footballer, Mr Motlop has undertaken an in-depth exploration of how native foods connect people, culture and country.

His report outlines practical measures to ensure the cultural

practices and knowledge systems underpinning these foods are respected and safeguarded.

Through his Nuffield scholarship, supported by Woolworths and Nuffield Australia, Mr Motlop visited Aboriginal Land Councils and Corporations across northern Australia. He also travelled to North and South America, Europe, Singapore and New Zealand, engaging with Indigenous farmers and food business owners to better understand global supply chains and markets.

Mr Motlop, who owns Australian native foods business Native Kitchen Australia, said native foods carried significance well beyond their use in cooking.

"In the report and through my Nuffield travels, I explore how understanding, sharing and celebrating native foods can be a powerful conversation starter for topics, including reconciliation," he said.

"The role Australian native foods play from a cultural per-



Marlon Motlop's passion for native ingredients earned him a Nuffield scholarship.

spective is a pillar in the lore of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

His research found the Australian native foods industry was experiencing rapid growth, driven by increasing interest in distinctive flavours and health benefits.

Mr Motlop argued First Nations knowledge and cultural protocols must remain central to how these foods were grown, marketed and shared.

"Major challenges remain for Indigenous-led native food businesses, including risks of cultu-

ral exploitation, barriers to market access, and the need for stronger protection of Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property," he said.

"We're talking about the protection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights to their cultural heritage, including knowledge, stories and creations."

The report makes a series of recommendations aimed at addressing these challenges and supporting ethical, sustainable growth across the sector. These include strengthening intellec-

tual property and Traditional Knowledge protection; building consumer trust through authentic branding; increasing investment in research and development; securing sustainable supply chains through capability and capacity building for First Nations agribusiness; and ensuring a majority share of First Nations-owned bush food businesses.

"This report is about more than food — it's about respect, opportunity, and working together for a better future," Mr Motlop said.



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	15/2150	BULLABULLING OPERATIONS PTY LTD	5BL	23km SW'ly of Coolgardie	Lat: 31° 4' S Long: 120° 58' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Exploration Licence	28/3556	SHILOH RESOURCES PTY LTD	96BL	152.1km SE'ly of Edjudina	Lat: 30° 37' S Long: 123° 37' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Exploration Licence	29/1318	FLEMING, Leo Glenn	4BL	62.3km NW'ly of Menzies	Lat: 29° 17' S Long: 120° 35' E	MENZIES SHIRE
Exploration Licence	29/1319	AURENNE MIT PTY LTD	3BL	72.5km NW'ly of Menzies	Lat: 29° 16' S Long: 120° 27' E	MENZIES SHIRE
Exploration Licence	57/1482	LRL (AUST) PTY LTD	57BL	41.6km NE'ly of Sandstone	Lat: 27° 42' S Long: 119° 35' E	SANDSTONE SHIRE
Exploration Licence	63/2529	BEAU RESOURCES PTY LTD	1BL	117.3km SE'ly of Marvel Loch	Lat: 32° 1' S Long: 120° 32' E	DUNDAS SHIRE
Exploration Licence	70/6773	EE V PTY LTD	14BL	25km NE'ly of Merredin	Lat: 31° 21' S Long: 118° 30' E	MERREDIN SHIRE, WESTONIA SHIRE
Exploration Licence	70/6774	EE V PTY LTD	20BL	20.7km SE'ly of Mukinbudin	Lat: 31° 1' S Long: 118° 22' E	MUKINBUDIN SHIRE, NUNGARIN SHIRE
Exploration Licence	77/3332	DEGRUSSA, Kevin Ronald	19BL	93.8km N'ly of Southern Cross	Lat: 30° 22' S Long: 119° 16' E	YILGARN SHIRE
Exploration Licence	77/3351	FORRESTANIA RESOURCES LIMITED	16BL	28.4km NE'ly of Merredin	Lat: 31° 19' S Long: 118° 30' E	MERREDIN SHIRE, WESTONIA SHIRE
Exploration Licence	77/3355	LAKE CHANDLER MINERALS PTY LTD	17BL	29.2km SE'ly of Mukinbudin	Lat: 31° 5' S Long: 118° 25' E	NUNGARIN SHIRE
Exploration Licence	77/3356	ALLEN, Dianne Elizabeth	2BL	152.5km W'ly of Menzies	Lat: 29° 47' S Long: 119° 28' E	MENZIES SHIRE
Exploration Licence	77/3361	EE V PTY LTD	36BL	41.4km SE'ly of Mukinbudin	Lat: 31° 8' S Long: 118° 33' E	NUNGARIN SHIRE, WESTONIA SHIRE
Exploration Licence	77/3362	EE V PTY LTD	11BL	39.8km NE'ly of Merredin	Lat: 31° 14' S Long: 118° 35' E	WESTONIA SHIRE
Exploration Licence	77/3363	EE III PTY LTD	70BL	78.8km N'ly of Southern Cross	Lat: 30° 31' S Long: 119° 16' E	YILGARN SHIRE
Exploration Licence	77/3365	AUSTRALIAN GOLDFIELDS VERMICULITE PTY LTD	6BL	106.8km W'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 21' S Long: 119° 57' E	YILGARN SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	15/7010	BULLABULLING OPERATIONS PTY LTD	88.57HA	23.9km SW'ly of Coolgardie	Lat: 31° 3' S Long: 120° 57' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	15/7011	BULLABULLING OPERATIONS PTY LTD	138.24HA	23.8km SW'ly of Coolgardie	Lat: 31° 6' S Long: 120° 59' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	15/7012	BULLABULLING OPERATIONS PTY LTD	65.24HA	23.2km SW'ly of Coolgardie	Lat: 31° 6' S Long: 120° 59' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	16/3557	VISAGIE, Juan Daniel	199.88HA	28.8km SW'ly of Broad Arrow	Lat: 30° 40' S Long: 121° 10' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	16/3566	NELSON, Leanne Michelle	185.59HA	24.3km S'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 34' S Long: 120° 57' E	COOLGARDIE SHIRE
Prospecting Licence	24/5827	COOPER, Arthur Owen	14.18HA	7km NW'ly of Broad Arrow	Lat: 30° 24' S Long: 121° 15' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	24/5911	WATSON, Paul Bradley	194.88HA	16.8km E'ly of Ora Banda	Lat: 30° 19' S Long: 121° 13' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	26/4854	BELRES PTY LTD/GEN ONE RESOURCES PTY LTD	163.67HA	6.8km S'ly of Kalgoorlie	Lat: 30° 48' S Long: 121° 26' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	27/2651	ACCELERATE RESOURCES LIMITED	95.09HA	19.2km NE'ly of Kalgoorlie	Lat: 30° 40' S Long: 121° 38' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Prospecting Licence	27/2652	ACCELERATE RESOURCES LIMITED	199.86HA	19.8km NE'ly of Kalgoorlie	Lat: 30° 39' S Long: 121° 39' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY

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: 14 January 2026.

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 **14 April 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. **14 May 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.

* - 1 Graticular Block = 2.8 km²



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	26/879	GOLDARC RESOURCES LIMITED/LOYAL METALS LTD	248.12HA	33km NE'ly of Kambalda	Lat: 30° 57' S Long: 121° 51' E	KALGOORLIE-BOULDER CITY
Mining Lease	29/460	DONKIN, Barry James	151.96HA	62km NW'ly of Menzies	Lat: 29° 20' S Long: 120° 32' E	MENZIES SHIRE
Mining Lease	29/462	DREADNOUGHT (YILGARN) PTY LTD	541.89HA	105.1km NW'ly of Menzies	Lat: 29° 16' S Long: 120° 3' E	MENZIES 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: 14 January 2026.

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 **14 April 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. **14 May 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.

Meals with a mission

ALEXANDRA GIORGIANNI

Blak Cede Gunyah, based in Nowra, is serving up more than just good food; it's serving community and culture.

The thriving Aboriginal women-led social and cultural enterprise uses high-quality native ingredients sourced from its community garden for its cafe and online store.

From pulled buru (kangaroo) nachos to strawberry gum scones and wattleseed hollandaise, each dish at Blak Cede Gunyah is an expression of its seed-to-table philosophy.

Paired with culturally safe workplace practices and inclusive employment opportunities, it exemplifies community health, cultural re-investment and Indigenous economic empowerment.

Cafe manager Melanie Williams, from the Wreck Bay Aboriginal community in the Yuin Nation, and e-commerce coordinator and marketing manager Marley Ashby, a proud Koori woman from the Jerrinja, Cullunghutti and Wandj Wandian communities, spoke with National Indigenous Times about Blak Cede Gunyah's journey.

"The initial idea came from a yarning circle of Aboriginal women in Waminda (nine years ago) who had type 2 diabetes... it was about educating our Aboriginal women with that type 2 diabetes, teaching them how to plant and harvest and cook sustainable food without spiking their type two sugar levels," Ms Williams said.

Ms Ashby said Blak Cede Gunyah is about "empowering Koori women from the Shoalhaven area on the South Coast and New South Wales to lead self-determined lives by providing culturally safe employment and educational opportunities".

Since opening in April 2024, it has bloomed into a popular Nowra eatery, unique for its culturally centred and health-conscious menu.

Major achievements include winning Outstanding New Business at the 2025 Shoalhaven Business Chamber Awards and being a State Finalist in the 2025 Telstra Best of Business Awards.



Blak Cede Gunyah is a thriving cafe and online store that prioritises health, inclusivity and Indigenous empowerment.

"We've only been (going) for 17 months, and the accolades that the cafe is receiving from community and State awards are phenomenal," Ms Ashby said.

"If you're a non-Indigenous person, you won't walk into Waminda's office and understand the back-end work that they do. So, it's the bit of recognition that the service gets, and it's exactly what it deserves, because our heart and soul went into it."

From its award-winning architecture to the decor to the menu, everything about the space is purposeful.

"The wood's been upcycled from the bushfires down the coast, the seating is covered in kangaroo leather. We've got the lampshades that tell the Seven Sisters dreaming," Ms Ashby said. "You know, you'll hear our music playing. You'll see our walls are covered in our Aboriginal art. So, it gives Aboriginal community members with micro-businesses the opportunity to showcase their artwork."

Blak Cede Gunyah's cultural

“It's a space where, you know, you take pride in your culture and your workplace, and it gives these young people a sense of belonging.”

Melanie Williams

values are also reflected in its workplace, where staff development, mentorship and community wellbeing are prioritised.

"Most of these young women that I work beside each day I case managed in our youth program, and now to be able to walk alongside those women with paid employment, and they can have opportunities like housing, financial support and taking care of their health," Ms Williams said.

"When they're working in

other organisations, you turn up late three times, and then you're told to walk out the door. But instead of that, we invest in these young ones and find out what is it that's going on for them? You know, look at their future, and what it is that they want, they want to do in their professional career and support them in getting all the qualifications and training that they need.

"So it's a space where, you know, you take pride in your culture and your workplace, and it gives these young people a sense of belonging, which is extremely important for us."

Focusing on native ingredients sourced from Waminda's Kareela Ngura community garden, each menu item is centred on Blak Cede's seed-to-plate philosophy.

"We look at what grows in what seasons for us, and then what the menu looks like from what we can grow and harvest in that time. So you know, things like your finger limes, your lemon myrtle, your pepperberry, saltbush, or edible flowers. We've got our own bees

set up for native honey," Ms Williams said.

Planning the specials is guided by community health and cultural exchange, ensuring each dish is diabetic-friendly and low-carb while remaining grounded in Aboriginal knowledge systems.

Blak Cede Gunyah is set to soar even higher in 2026, with plans to expand staff, as well as a food truck trial in late January. "You walk around most businesses here, and it's hard for anybody to support an Indigenous person working in a retail hospitality space in Nowra; it's very rare," Ms Williams said.

"We're on the complete flip side. We can't create enough positions for our community. We have over 20 resumes just sitting there from people wanting to work in the cafe. So, we've created that space, knowing that that's where people would like to work."

"That's what it's about, that's the future investment, and having people support the cafe is one way of giving back to the Indigenous community."

Mining scheme still helping many, 20 years on

As the Vocational Training and Employment Centres program celebrates 20 years of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into meaningful employment, stories like that of Ky Hayes show how culturally strong pathways can change lives.

Ky, a proud Puutu Kunti Kurrama man, joined Fortescue's VTEC program in November 2025.

"The reason I chose VTEC is because it was a good opportunity to kick start my mining career and to get knowledge of fly-in-fly-out life," he said. Ky had previous experience working in the Pilbara as a contractor, but not the FIFO life.

"I'd worked in mining before, but I'd never done FIFO, so it was still new to me," he said.

Fortescue's VTEC program combines practical training with personal and cultural development. The first four weeks focus on onboarding, leadership and personal development, fitness, financial literacy and workplace readiness. The program concludes with a one-week site orientation, allowing participants to experience daily operations and life on site.

"I really enjoyed the site orientation because it helped me get comfortable with FIFO life and working out in the field," Ky said.

After graduating in December 2025, Ky moved straight into employment as a fixed plant operator with Fortescue's ore processing facility team at Eliwana, a milestone he describes as both exciting and empowering.

One of the most meaningful aspects of Ky's journey has been connecting with people.

"My highlight was meeting new people and making friends, and learning Fortescue knowledge and culture, especially the Fortescue values," he said.

Ky says the support he received in the program helped him grow personally and professionally.

"Fortescue helped me get out of my comfort zone and I'm glad I made the decision to join VTEC."

As VTEC marks two decades of creating pathways to employment and strengthening communities, Ky hopes others considering the program take that first step. "I'd tell people thinking about applying that it's a great opportunity to kick off your mining career," he said.

Twenty years on, VTEC continues to walk alongside First Nations people through creating opportunity, building confidence and supporting strong futures.

This report was produced with the support of Fortescue.



Ky Hayes

SPORT

Evonne paves way

Indigenous pathways well served

JARRED CROSS

Every January tennis champion Evonne Goolagong Cawley is recognised for her contributions to the game and beyond.

The former world No.1 won four Australian Open singles titles in as many years during the mid-to-late 1970s, with triumphs also coming at Roland Garros and twice at Wimbledon throughout her career.

Goolagong-Cawley also boasts seven doubles grand slam titles, the bulk coming in Naarm within an era of dominance.

In 2025, the annual First Nations Day at the Australian Open was renamed to recognise this legacy.

The second Evonne Goolagong Cawley Day took over Melbourne Park on January 21.

For Tennis Australia First Nations lead Kyah Jones, it's one of the best days on the 12-month calendar.

"To honour Evonne and celebrate her achievements while celebrating our people, our history and our culture."

In a jam-packed schedule, First Nations ballkids take to the courts for matchplay with the world's best with more younger ones getting up early to have a hit on Margaret Court Arena.

Outreach projects, art, weaving and more installations also form part of celebrations.

As gates opened and the crowds flooded in, Wurundjeri Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin hosted a Welcome to Country



Bundjalung professional tennis player Laquisa Khan and Tennis Australia First Nations lead Kyah Jones. Inset: First Nations ballkids set to take the court. Pictures: Jarred Cross

ceremony, joined by her son Craig leading a smoking ceremony, on the steps of Margaret Court Arena adorned with Barngala man Thomas Croft's art.

ARIA Award winner Budjerah also performed.

Speaking on the steps, Goolagong Cawley's daughter Kelly explained her pride of seeing her mother's recognition.

"To look out and to know this is Mum's day, it makes me really, really emotional," she said.

Goolagong Cawley could not be there on the day.

Her impact within the sport and for Indigenous people has continued well after calling time on her career four decades ago.

In 2005 she founded the Goolagong National Development Camp for First Nations youth utilising promoting health, education and employment opportunities through tennis, also founding State camps and the scholarship in her name continuing to help develop the next generation of top talent.

She remains a key figure at the National Indigenous Tennis Carnival for players aged 12-18

in Darwin each year. Jones was handed her first tennis racquet by Goolagong Cawley.

"I was on a scholarship with her when I was a very young girl. She flew me to Melbourne and I lived here on her scholarship for a few years," she said.

"Evonne has made a huge impact on my own life, personally but I know she has also done that with a lot of other First Nations tennis players.

"But not only us, she's made an impact on the whole world (by) how beautifully she played the game of tennis, and how

beautiful she is off the court as well."

In 2022, Ash Barty became the first Australian to win a home Slam singles title in over 40 years and second Indigenous player to lift the trophy after Goolagong Cawley.

It's Laquisa Khan's dream to be the third.

The Bundjalung woman, 23, made her professional debut as a wild-card entry to the Adelaide International earlier this month, becoming the first Indigenous woman since Barty to feature at a WTA event.

Cricket champs locked in for two years

JARRED CROSS

The National Indigenous Cricket Championships will continue to be held on Yuwibara Country for the next two years – including this coming April – when the tournament notches 10 years as a standalone Cricket Australia pathway competition.

Cricket Australia announced this month Mackay's soon to be Test – and recent international white ball venue – Great Barrier Reef Stadium at Harrup Park will host the tournament in 2026 and 2027.

The list of players to have featured at National Indigenous

Cricket Championships (NICC) level and gone on to play Test cricket for Australia increased this summer when Worimi quick Brendan Doggett helped Australia go two-nil up in Perth and Brisbane in the recent men's Ashes series. He joined Scott Boland and Ash Gardner as those to earn a baggy green after taking part at the NICC as part of their cricket journey.

D'Arcy Short, Dan Christian and Hannah Darlington have also played at the tournament before going on to represent Australia.

Strong performances at the Championships can open the door

to cricket's top level and a professional career, similar to what's being seen already, Darlington told *National Indigenous Times*.

The Sydney Thunder, NSW Breakers and Australian white-ball bowler played her first National Indigenous Cricket Championships a decade ago.

"I was actually reminiscing over the WBBL with (Thunder and NSW teammate) Anika Learoyd that it was 10 years since we met up in Alice Springs . . . I'm glad it's getting the celebration it deserves," Darlington said.

"We're seeing players from that

tournament now get recognised in State programs."

Darlington missed the first year in Mackay, however, pending injury recovery and the Women's National Cricket League schedule, is eager to this year's tournament.

Birthing out of the Imparja Cup, the NICC transitioned to a standalone State and Territory representative carnival for the first time in 2016.

It moved from Mparntwe/Alice Springs for the first time for last year's tournament in Mackay, where Queensland claimed the title on home turf in the men's draw while Western Australia's

women's team lifted their maiden trophy.

Darlington believes the move provides new opportunities for learning and connection with Country, Elders and culture.

This year's carnival is scheduled for five days of T20 matches from April 14-19, with a dedicated day for cultural activities also on the schedule.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cricket Advisory Group (NATSICAG) co-chair, Justin Mohamed, hopes the upcoming NICC carnivals would include future international cricketers.