

# NJERNDANEWS

"A SELF-DETERMINING COMMUNITY, STRONG IN CULTURE & WALKING TOWARDS A DEADLY FUTURE"

## Our Baroona wattleseed *hits the shelves!*



Story page 3

### Inside

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

MEET OUR TEAMS

PAGE 2

PAGE 6

PAGES 4-5

PAGE 7-14

**Njernda**  
Aboriginal Corporation

## COMMUNITY NOTICES



# NOTICE TO MEMBERS

The  
**NJERNDABORIGINAL  
CORPORATION**  
ICN 1274

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021-2022

Will be held on  
**SATURDAY FEBRUARY 4 2023**  
at the  
**ECHUCA EAST COMMUNITY FACILITY**  
**Sutton Street Echuca**

10 am - 11 am

Morning tea will be provided



## BAROONA WATTLESEED PASSES THE TASTE TEST!



### **Njernda's Baroona Wattleseed is a social enterprise project that began as an idea.**

It is now driven by a vision - of a business that supports our Mob, shares our culture, and preserves our traditions and knowledge for future generations. Our Wattleseed is locally grown, harvested and packaged on our 320-acre farm Baroona, on Wollithiga (Echuca) Yorta Yorta country.

Commercial production began in 2022 and we were proud, just before Christmas, to begin sales at local outlets. And the Baroona Wattleseed is certainly passing the taste test at our first retail outlet, Monkee and Co, 531 High Street Echuca (pictured below).

We have so far produced and distributed around 50 bags, and we will produce a further 150 during the next two months. Our Baroona wattle plantation also continues to grow. Each species offers subtle a variation of the earthy coffee aromatic flavours of wattleseed, with hints of sweet spices and chocolate.

Wattleseed enhances and complements damper (see the boys at left doing some damper-making), cakes, breads, biscuits, pastries, pasta, ice-cream, pancakes, marinades, curries, dry rubs, scones, panna cotta, crème brûlées, coffee and milkshakes.

It is also a nutrient powerhouse, full of iron, high in dietary fibre and protein, gluten free and certified as a low glycemic index (GI) food.

Every pod we pick, every seed we separate, every package we seal, is done on Country with pride.

We acknowledge and respect the journey our ancestors paved and we invite everyone to walk with us, the people of Wollithiga/Yorta Yorta Country.

For orders and information contact Keith Hearn (0412) 390 859 [keithh@njernda.com.au](mailto:keithh@njernda.com.au). Watch our video and check our growing list of distribution partners at

[www.njernda.com.au/baroonawattleseed](http://www.njernda.com.au/baroonawattleseed)

**Gaka yawal ngulla yenbena Wollithiga/Yorta Yorta woka**  
**Come walk with us, the people on Wollithiga/Yorta Yorta country**





## NJERND A YOUTH SERVICES SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

MAKING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS FUN!



A huge WELL DONE to our amazing Youth Services team, who are keeping the school holidays fun (and fed!), right to the end for our kids. Photos clockwise from top left: Chris Ferguson hard at work on the food production line; EchUCA pool was a popular spot all summer; and the kids loved the trip to Funfields at Whittlesea.





## NJERND A YOUTH SERVICES SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

MAKING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS FUN!



The Njernda Youth Services School Holiday Program was packed with highlights, starting with our Koori Christmas tree in December. Some favorite activities included; Funfields at Whittlesea; Aqua Island; the cinema; a waterfight at Apex Park; The Fun Zone in Bendigo; Billabong Ranch and more. Phew! We're exhausted! But it was heaps of fun! Thanks to all the deadly kids and families who came along and joined in.





## REFLECTING ON OUR STRENGTHS IN 2023

A new year is always re-energising and I am pleased to be starting out on a 2023 journey that will bring with it some very exciting times for Njernda, our staff and our Community.

We are doing some great work behind the scenes on exciting projects that the board, the executive and I know will carry us toward our vision of "a self-determining community, strong in culture and walking towards a deadly future".

Ending a year and starting a new one is a great time to reflect about the positives that are around you in your workplace and community.

Our Executive Directors and Managers at the end of the year took the time to think about, recognise and thank the individuals in their teams for their particular strengths and skills.

It's easy to feel overwhelmed or negative sometimes, and 2022 was a tough time particularly the end of the year. But thinking about each person in our teams, their skills and personalities was a great positive to end on. We have strong, dedicated people within Njernda, and there are so many ways we can use those skills to be stronger together.

I think the reflections our management team had are worth sharing.

So this month, on pages 7 - 14 meet some of the hardworking and committed people behind our Corporate, Health and Family Services teams and find out what their managers value in them. Once we have a new Director of Children, Youth and Community we will reflect a little more on those wonderful people as well in future newsletters.

I look forward to working closely with you all in 2023.

Tracey



**TRACEY DILLON - CEO**

### Njernda Board:

**Chairperson: Belinda Day**

**Vice Chairperson: Damian Morgan Bulled**

**Board Members: Jennifer Mitchell, John Kerr, Janice Muir**

### Chief Executive Officer

Tracey Dillon

#### Director Corporate Services

Robert Nugent

#### Director Health Services

Cindy McGee

#### Director Family Services

Hazel Hudson

#### Director Children, Youth & Community Services

TBA



Meet our...

# Executive Team

By Tracey Dillon



**Aunty Trisha Williams -  
Corporate Services Manager**

Has the ability to work outside her comfort zone and stretches herself on a regular basis. Aunty Trisha's tenacity and strength has seen her bring together and connect people in the workplace to work across generations for the outcome of the community. We're excited to see what Aunty Trisha will do in 2023, especially when it comes to working with our young people, and their peers, and including supporting Elders to mentor and guide our young ones. Aunty Trisha, as an Elder and Leader in this organisation has given Njernda good standing.



**Tracey Dillon - CEO**



**Cindy McGee -  
Director Health Services**

A strong woman who works with integrity and knows her stuff. She doesn't muck around and because of this, she commands respect. There's not many like her!



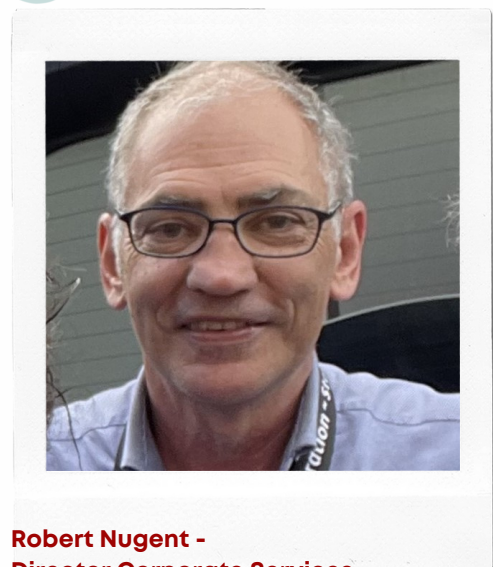
**Aunty Hazel Hudson -  
Director of Family Services**

Aunty Hazel's resilience, persistence and huge heart is what is needed when protecting the rights of our Boorai's /children to keep them safe. Working in Family Services can be challenging, but Aunty Hazel's values and commitment to our Community means while leading with her huge heart, our families have access to meaningful support. This sector requires a lot of stamina to wrestle with myths and stereotypes that are far from the truth, and Aunty Hazel's work reveals her steadfast nature. Our kids are safe in her hands and the interests of community are at the heart of whatever she does.



**Therese Shelley -  
Executive Assistant**

Therese works tirelessly and puts everything she's got into working as an ally for our community. As an executive assistant her knowledge of the leadership team and the support she provides is second to none, and it is an honour to work with such a genuine and heartfelt person, who we look forward to working with daily.



**Robert Nugent -  
Director Corporate Services**

Robert is an Aussie battler and HR warrior who shows stamina in working in a complex environment. When the going gets tough, Robert gets going! But he does it with empathy and generosity of spirit.



Meet our...

# Corporate Services Team

By Robert Nugent



Flexible



Energetic

Keith Hearn -  
Manage Special Projects



Robert Nugent -  
Director Corporate Services



Committed



Dedicated





Meet our...

# HealthTeam

By Cindy McGee

## Nicole Cooper

You have come such a long way in a short amount of time. I am so proud of what you have achieved so far. Don't ever lose sight of your dream.

## Brenda Grist

Although you are only here on a short-term contract I have already seen value of what you have achieved thus far with your project. You walked in day one and started to put things in place. Great work.

## Jackie Giles

You keep me on my toes and speak your opinion, which I am grateful for and admire. It takes an admirable person to question a decision and that's what I like about you. It took me a while to understand that behind the mask you are a great person who cares about their work and community.

## Viv Giles

I respect you, your wisdom, your calmness, and your concerns. You're as tough as nails and yet still make me laugh. I love watching the relationship you have with your siblings and the mother figure that comes out in you.

## Keana Kerr

I can honestly say that your smile brightens my day. You are such a lovely soul. You will achieve great things and I have no doubt an upcoming leader of this organisation and community.

## Eva Murray

Such a beautiful young lady with so much potential who loves working with our Elders and community.

## Megan Atkinson

Like a whirlwind you come and go, you're here and there. One minute your finalising reports, then you're driving patients around and then you're onto something else. I wish I had your energy. You have so much passion, it's exciting to watch you grow. You will most definitely be one of the next leaders of this organisation. I truly thank you for accepting me from day one and working with me and guiding me with your community knowledge with such positive and enthusiastic commitment. Don't ever lose sight of why we're here.

## Dr Catherine

You are the most kind and thoughtful person with such a caring nature. You have everything that makes a great ACCO GP and then some. I love that you never say no and do what you can to provide care to the community. You are a great leader and co-worker.

## Dr Madi

Thank you so much for choosing Njernda to complete your fellowship. You have been a breath of fresh air. I love your stories and your cooking is amazing. I hope Njernda will be the place where you'll call home for many years to come.

## Dr Naresh

Although we don't talk often, I see you as a quiet little achiever who accomplishes so much. I thank you for choosing Njernda for completing your fellowship and I know that you will be a very accomplished GP.

## Dr Klasine

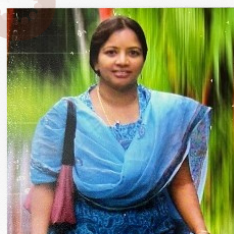
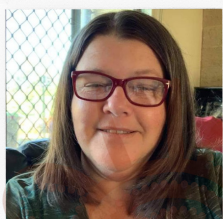
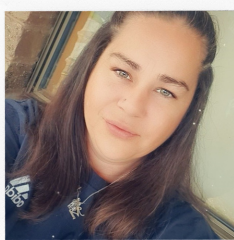
A farmer's wife from Ky with some amazing stories about cows that I love hearing! Thank you for taking the time from your farm to travel to Njernda to walk with us on our journey. You are a wonderful GP and I thank you for choosing us.

## Dr Mary-Lou

You are so versatile with a long, long history that brings me such an element of kindness and gentleness to our clinic. Although you are only here one day per week, I am so grateful for that. You are so passionate about the early years; I know our kids are in great hands.

## Kim Warde

We haven't worked together long but your story is amazing. To not only accomplish what you have and still be employed at this organisation for 20 years is a massive achievement. I admire your commitment and dedication to such a wonderful organisation and thank you for accepting me into this clinic.





Meet our...

# HealthTeam

By Cindy McGee



## Bec Tracey

You do so much and never complain. You ensure our clinics are functional, operational and provide that cultural lens where needed. I still don't know everything that you do, because when I ask, you say "stuff". You are a great leader, and you try to see every side to things and come up with a solution. I can go to you for anything. Thank you

## Sarah Phillips

"Stay in your lane"! Thank you Sarah for everything that you do and for all that you try and do. Although we can not always change the world, you make such an effort to change just one little thing that can make a difference to somebody's world.

## Margie Berryman

It's so hard when you only work part-time to truly get to spend some time with you and get to know you more. You are a wonderful caring person that has shown me you care for the community so much that you go above and beyond to ensure they receive the best care. As time goes on, I am sure we will spend more time getting to know each other.

## Hope Briggs

Where there is Hope there is hope! We've worked together for many years, and I am so grateful that you have chose Njernda to walk another journey. You are such a pleasant person with commitment and dedication to community. I am fortunate to have you a part of my team.

## Kendal Coogan

Thank you so much for all that you do for our community. When I first started, you were here on a short-term contract and I am so glad you have stayed on to provide the community with a quality of service that you bring to the early childhood team.

## Cookie Giles

Your work would have to be one of the toughest jobs of all. I admire your resilience and your strength to come into work each day. It's not always smooth sailing and I appreciate the hard work you do each day to ensure the clinic is fully supported.

## Maria Isgro

One of the first things you said to me when I first started has set my tone and helped me to establish my position. Although I did think to myself "omg" but we have grown a friendship and I totally respect and "get" your position. You are a hard dedicated employee, and we are so lucky to have your commitment that you bring each day. Thank you Maria, it never goes unnoticed.

## Bradley McGrath

You do a great job in ensuring our community get to and from appointments. I also appreciate the fact that you go above your PD to weed gardens, pick up mail and other stuff. Great work.

## Trish McGrath

Thank you for keeping our clinic clean and safe. We certainly notice when you're not here and appreciate the extra things you do that are not a requirement.

## Donna Trimble

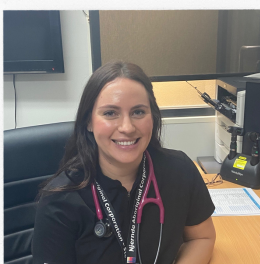
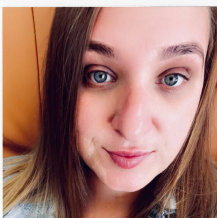
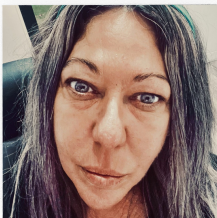
You are such a pleasure to work with and so positive. Your healing hands and friendly nature helps to support those that are not feeling the best.

## Courtney Blackley

I appreciate you and your position so much that you don't often get the recognition you deserve. Well done and good work

## Jane Wines

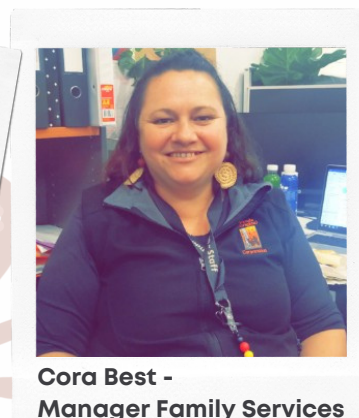
Thank you for your support and flexibility. Your induction has not been a smooth one, yet you've overcome the complexities of the clinic and have fitted in well.





# Meet our... Family Services Team

By Cora Best



**Cora Best -  
Manager Family Services**

"Dedicated and committed to clients and staff development. Always thinking of ways to improve the system and staff enjoyment. Your commitment and diligence to Njernda is greatly appreciated."  
Aunty Hazel Hudson -Director of Family Services



**Ashley Wickham**

Her dedication and commitment to our mob is evident in her work with our families and at community events. Ash is a cool, calm and collected, chilled out beautiful soul, who keeps walking alongside us in solidarity. Thank you our sister.

**Belinda Parry**

Belinda is a spirit that never ages and stays forever young. Wherever life takes you stay young at heart. You're only as old as you feel. Stay strong, our sister and follow your enthusiasm. It is deadly to see that within the community.

**Lani Hudson**

Silence is a gift. We learn something in your presence without a single word. You work hard and never complain. It has been a pleasure to work beside you. Strong in your culture and willing to share your knowledge.

**Craig Wickham**

Preserving your own but listening to what others have to say; then you take that information and turn it into something. Diplomacy is important at times and hopefully results in bringing people together to deal with a difficult issue.

**Louise Steve**

It's been a first class journey! Your commitment, diligence and what you have accomplished with the work you do with our families is energizing with witness. Always first in the office, running from the start time to clock off. You set the bar high and we admire your work ethic and dedication to our community.

**Paricia Hill**

Opportunities don't just happen, you work tirelessly with our women to support them. It takes a strong woman to work in your space, yet you do it with ease, dignity and grace. A strong Indigenous woman yourself, you walk beside us in solidarity and we walk proudly beside you too. Thanks for supporting our clients.

**Kally Mathewson**

A new member of the team, we got a kind, giving person. Don't change your qualities, it is something that we all need to see in our work. It takes a community to raise a child and you have become a valued worker thriving to be a part of this process within our community.

**Adam Kissell**

Words have energy and power with the ability to help, to heal, to hinder, to humiliate and to humble. Say no more! We know that when our people walk through the front door the right words come naturally with you for our mob. We value and thank you for all your support at Family Services, our deadly brother.





Meet our...

# Wala Yarka Team

(Family Services)

By Sandy Owen



**Kerrie Pisani**

Kerrie is a dedicated, companionate case manager who enjoys working with our families with a focus on keeping children connected to Community and family. Kerrie has a bubbly outgoing outlook on life and is very personable with staff and brings an element of healthy banter to the team. Working in the Wala Yarka team we are exposed to difficult situations that require a level of empathy, cultural understanding and advocacy. Kerrie is very good at getting things done by utilising community connections that provide sustainable outcomes. Kerrie is a very enthusiastic team member who enjoys new learnings around any Cultural practice. Thank you for always taking initiative in working with families and your dedication and hard work.



**Kitty**

Kitty is a dedicated strong advocate for our Aboriginal families and Community. She is very focused on providing Strength Based, Client Centred Practice when working with clients. Kitty is a very generous staff member who makes herself available to not only the Wala Yarka staff and internal staff but also the extended Community. Quite often Kitty will go out of her way to support staff with tasks and share her own knowledge of Cultural insight to benefit staff learning when approached. Kitty brings a level of Cultural wisdom and professionalism to her work within the Wala Yarka Program as a Case Manager. Thank you for your dedication and hard work and for your commitment in maintaining the safety and wellbeing of our children.



**Sandy Owen -  
Program Manager Wala Yarka**

'Dedicated to Wala Yarka and advocating for the best care to our children, brings a lot of knowledge to the team and supportive of other staff.'  
Aunty Hazel Hudson - Director Family Services

Meet our...

# ACSASS Team

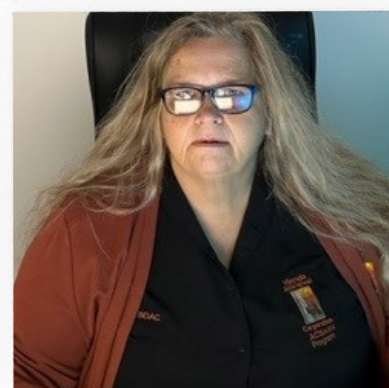
(Family Services)

By Tracey Morrison



**Natasha McLaughlin**

Nat has a quirky sense of humour and gives 110% to her role. She works tirelessly for the best interest of our kids.



**Tracey Morrison - Team Leader**

Dedicated to working and advocating for the best interest of our children, a strong leader who shares of herself to other staff.  
-Aunty Hazel Hudson



Meet our...

# Yakapna Team

(Family Services)

By Shelley Atkinson



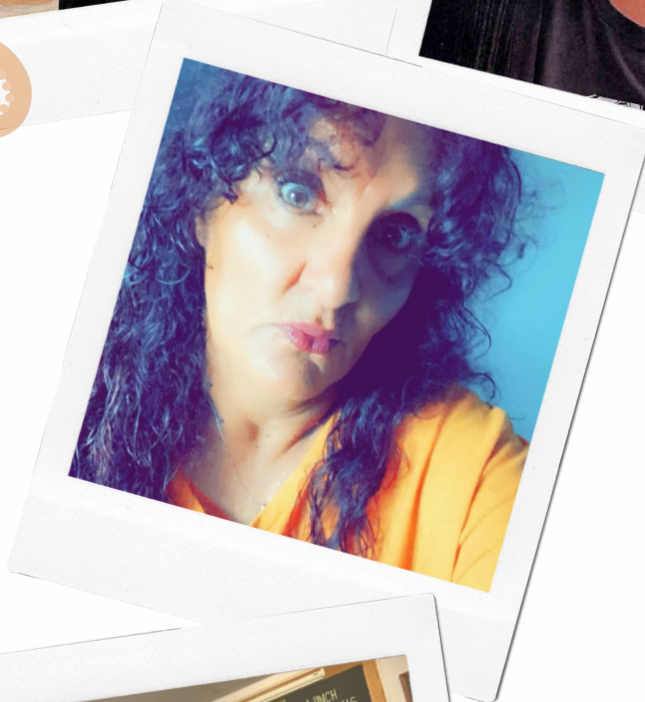
**Jo McGrath**

Thanks for your help & support when I was away with sorry business and also for the support you give our clients.



**Cheryl Taylor**

Thanks for all your help during the floods with cooking meals and fried scones and for all that you do for our clients.



**Jennine Atkinson**

Thanks for your help and support with everything you do for our clients

**Gail Hearn**

Thanks for your support in 2022 hoping 2023 is better. Thanks for helping the clients.

**Paula Thomas**

Thanks for your support through the year 2022 and hoping 2023 is a better year. Thanks for helping with our clients

**Debra Cowley**

Thanks for your support this year - hoping 2023 is a better year. Thank you for supporting our clients.

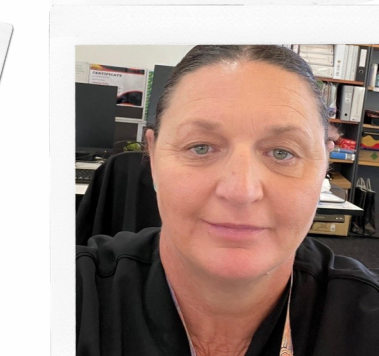




# Meet our... **Out of Home Care Team**

(Family Services)

By John Rengith



**John Rengith -  
Out of Home Care Team  
Leader**

John is a committed leader to his team, working tirelessly toward ensuring our children are cared for.

## **Aunty Vicki**

Every idea shared by you Aunty Vicki, and every opportunity you seized helped us to achieve the heights. Your dedication is imperative for the growth of Njernda.

## **Jameena Jackson**

Jameena and your dedication are so valuable to our team. You the utmost appreciation for your efforts with keeping our children safe in culture.

## **Brody Atkinson**

Brody always comes to work with a smiling face. Brody is very respectful with work, in our team and with community. We are glad to have him as member of team.

## **Rhonda Ronnan**

Rhonda is always determined and always advocating for clients to have their needs met. Rhonda has been here with Njernda for a long time, but her passion is still as strong as the day she started.

## **Mary Abraham**

Mary has exceeded our expectations as a team member, and we are proud to have someone like you. May you keep progressing, and best wishes.

## **Sharyn Kelly**

Sharyn, the efforts you put in to deliver high quality work for the organisation is commendable. May you continue to do the good work.

## **Trudi Kirchhofer**

Trudi, your attention to detail at work makes you unique and is so valuable to our goals. Trudi's work is commendable and I am proud to have you in our team.

## **Leanne Tucker**

Leanne's work is always exceeding expectations and providing a meaningful contribution to the team. Having a supportive colleague is what every team values in the workplace. Thank you for standing with us during all the ups and downs.



## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH SURVEY



**A huge thanks to these fellas!**

**Noel and Darren put in the hard yards to beautify the surrounds of our Njernda Wellbeing Unit during December.**

**What a transformation it was!**

**Well done to these two.**

**It gives a much warmer welcome to clients and visitors.**

**Thanks boys!**

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH SURVEY

**The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) is underway in our Echuca-Moama community through January.**

The NATSIHS is an important national survey that collects information about the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The NATSIHS was first collected in 1995. The last NATSIHS in 2018-19 collected information on a range of topics, including:

- long-term health conditions
- health actions and health service use
- physical measurements including a hearing test
- risk factors such as nutrition, physical activity, alcohol consumption, unfair treatment, smoking and substance use
- experiences of physical harm
- social and emotional wellbeing.

If you're asked to take the survey, please think about being involved – it helps improve services and health programs for our Mob and find better ways to support healthier and happier lives.

If you'd like to know more, have a yarn with our Njernda Aboriginal Health Workers.

Take part in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health surveys



*"By sharing your story, together we'll tell our story and help our future health"*

Kevin Kropinyeri  
Ngarrindjeri man  
Comedian





## WORK WITH US!

### MAKE AN IMPACT... GROW YOUR CAREER **HACC CHSP WORKER\***

**Find solutions  
Build resilience**

**Work with our Elders and Disability  
Clients to maintain their life at home  
and support their independence and  
quality of life**

- Supportive, person-centred workplace
- Salary packaging available
- Drive change with an innovative, growing organisation

*\*This is an "Indigenous Only" role under  
Special Measures of the EEO Act 2010, Section 12.*

**We encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, but unless stated, our jobs are available to all qualified applicants.**

**If you're interested in any of our listed jobs, or want to know more about what it's like to work at Njernda, have a yarn with Aunty Trish or the HR Team.**

**Get all the details of all our jobs and apply on our website. [www.njernda.com.au](http://www.njernda.com.au)**

A career at Njernda can take you anywhere!  
And we love to support our Mob to step up into  
real jobs that make  
a huge difference.

**Check our website and follow our social  
media channels to keep up  
with what's available.**



Facebook:  
njernda  
Instagram:  
njernda\_ac



## CONGRATULATIONS SANDY!



**A huge congratulations to Sandy Owen, who recently completed her Diploma of Community Services.**

Sandy is our **Wala Yarka Program Manager** and her completion recognises her success in achieving higher qualifications - meaning better services for our Njernda children and families.

## Don't forget enrolment!

We are now taking bookings at  
Berrimba for 2023 - please  
speak to us to check availability  
and to book your children in.

## CONTACT US:

Njernda Aboriginal Corporation  
51 - 55 Heygarth Street Echuca (Corporate Office)  
Phone: (03) 5480 6252  
[www.njernda.com.au](http://www.njernda.com.au)

**Njernda**  
Aboriginal Corporation