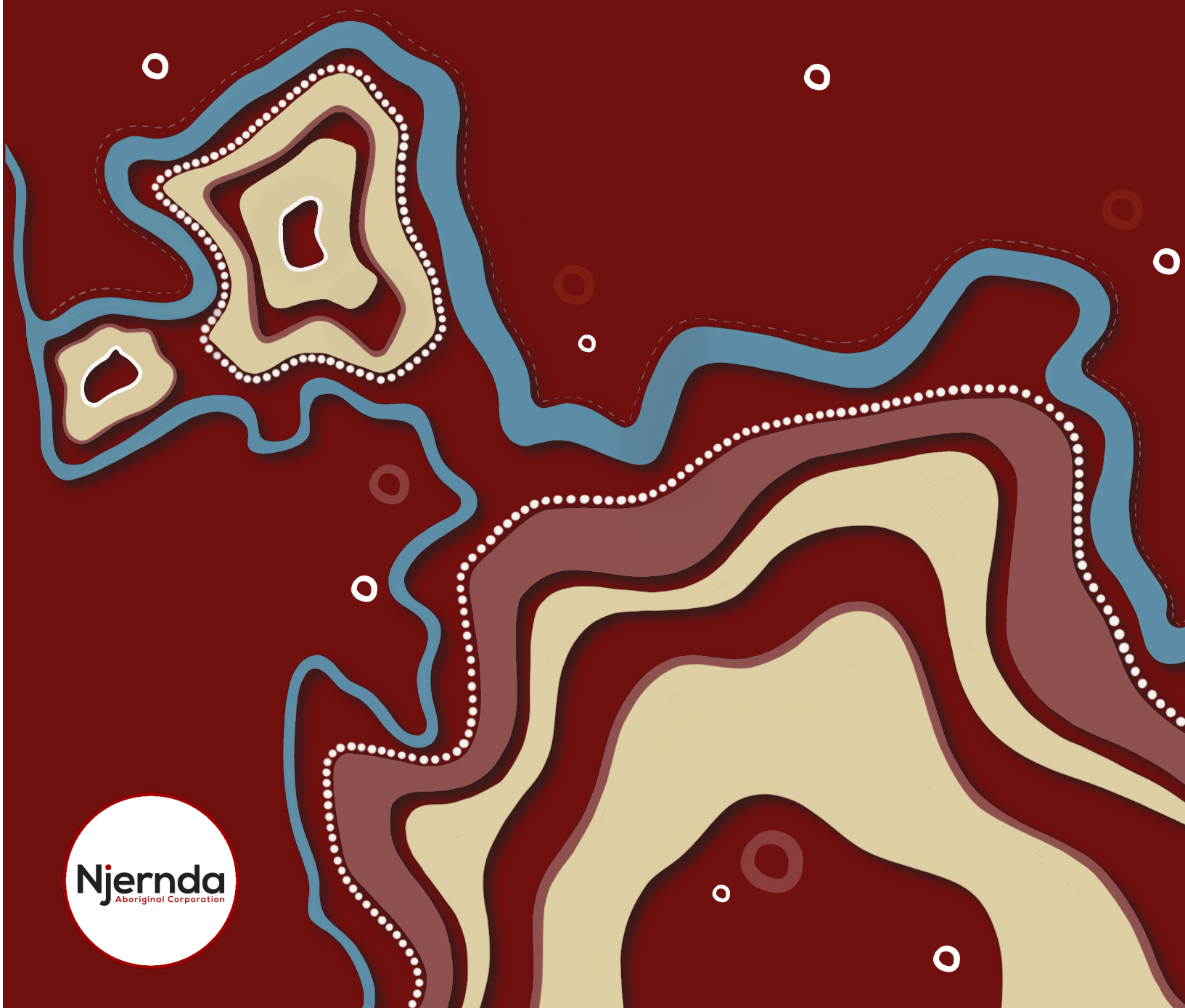


2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT

NJERENDA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Njernda
Aboriginal Corporation

**"A self-determining community, strong in culture
& walking towards a deadly future"**

We respectfully acknowledge the Wollithiga & Yorta Yorta Peoples
as the traditional custodians of the land of the communities
that the Njernda Aboriginal Corporation service.



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NJERNDA: To Know Our Living Culture

The Echuca Aboriginal Co-operative was established by the hard work and political efforts of so many of our Elders who saw a need for a community-controlled organisation to run culturally appropriate services. The Echuca Aboriginal Co-operative was originally set up in 1974 and in 1990 the name was changed to Njernda Aboriginal Corporation.

Njernda means “to know our living culture” in the Wemba Wemba language of northern Victoria and southern New South Wales.

Like many other Aboriginal co-operatives across Australia, we believe in a holistic view of health that recognises the inter-connectedness of body, mind and spirit – not just of the individual but of their family and the Community. This means we work across a range of program areas including housing, employment, cultural heritage, education, childcare and health.

We believe our kids need to learn the power of their cultural heritage within our Community from our respected Elders. We believe that children who develop identity through their Culture will be able to move in and out of the broader community and to achieve their aspirations without losing their cultural identity.





OUR VISION...

A self-determining community, strong in culture & walking towards a deadly future.



OUR PURPOSE...

Njernda's purpose is to deliver community controlled, holistic services & programs which improve the physical, emotional, cultural & spiritual wellbeing of the Aboriginal Community of Echuca & surrounding areas.



we do this by...

- Regularly providing opportunities for Community members to come together for socialisation & to celebrate our Culture.
- Continuing to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people every day.
- Supporting our Elders / mentors / role models to provide leadership & direction to our children & young people, to help them become strong in Culture, spirit & Community & to enhance future generations.
- Delivering services in a safe environment.
- Promoting self-empowerment & self-determination.
- Using continuous improvement strategies to ensure that Community can access the best evidence-based programs.





OUR **ASPIRATIONS...**

Njernda board, managers & staff will know they are making progress towards the vision when:



- *Our kids and young people are proud, they know who they are & where they come from.*
- *Our children, young people & community are enriched through life-long culturally-safe learning.*
- *Our community is represented in positions across all sectors, at every level.*
- *Aboriginal men & women are strong cultural leaders speaking up on issues that matter to community.*
- *Elders are supported & have a respected place and visible influence in our community.*
- *Aboriginal people are the architects of their future on Country.*
- *The Traditional Owners have a strong presence in everything we do.*





OUR VALUES...

Respect:

Establishing relationships based on respect & trust



Accountability:

Taking ownership & initiative of Njernda values to ensure trusted collaborations are formed



Resilience:

Encouraging cultural & spiritual growth to enable personal growth



Advocacy:

Working to transform the disadvantaged & challenge the causes that impact on our community



Cultural Sensitivity:

Welcoming & serving our community with understanding & without judgement





ADMINISTRATORS' REPORT

Jack James & Paula Smith

The Njernda Chief Executive Officer was Aaron Wallace-Peters until his resignation in October 2021. Acting Chief Operations Officer Kelli Bartlett oversaw the operations of the organisation until Special Administration began on November 15.

On 15 November 2021, the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) appointed us as special administrators of Njernda Aboriginal Corporation (Njernda). Our names are Jack James and Paula Smith and we are from Rodgers Reidy in Perth.

The special administration ended on Friday 17 June 2022 and we were pleased to announce the following Njernda members Belinda Day, John Kerr, Jennifer Mitchell, Damian Morgan-Bulled and Janice Muir were appointed as Director members on Friday 17 June 2022. These directors will have the responsibility of making strategic decisions about Njernda to ensure financial stability and long term-sustainability. They will have stewardship over the organisation until the 2024 AGM.

The other responsibilities involved maintaining effective governance and addressing the governance challenges which put Njernda into administration. The Board of Directors will ongoing:

- 1-** Take control of the assets, including bank accounts; build a complete picture of issues and challenges; and establish a clear plan of action.
- 2-** Restore good operational order.
- 3-** Assess the current governance challenges and identify what strategies and resources the organisation will use and seek out to meet those challenges.

The areas of work which transpired whilst under administration involved setting up an advisory committee, the recruitment of the new CEO and HR consultant, the review of budgets, hosting community meetings, and gathering input from members regarding the governance, input into the redevelopment of Barooka and other issues.

We would like to thank the committee Debra Cowley, Damian Morgan-Bulled, Colleen Atkinson, Bernadette Atkinson and Michael Saunders, who worked tirelessly on the governance structure and rule book, including those community members who also provided input. The revised rule book is available on the ORIC website.

EXECUTIVE STAFF STRUCTURE

A review of the organisation structure was undertaken to ensure it aligned with Njernda's operations and program offerings. We consulted with staff to obtain input and feedback. As a result, a new executive structure was designed.

The directors' roles are all new, and recruitment for these positions were undertaken over the coming months. We wish to thank the advisory group, staff and stakeholders for their support and assistance during the special administration.



OUR 2021-2022 MILESTONES



JULY 2021

NAIDOC WEEK

It was deadly to be able to gather for NAIDOC Week & celebrate culture & community after missing so many events due to COVID-19. Our Winter Community Carnival was a great success.



AUGUST 2021

SERVICES RELOCATED

During August we moved several of our teams, including Youth Services & Wellbeing to new premises to better serve our community.



SEPTEMBER 2021

FUNDING FOR MEN'S SHED

We were thrilled that our application was successful to receive close to \$80,000 from the Victorian government for our Men's Shed project, with the opportunity to bring together men from across the community to build friendships & learn new skills.



OCTOBER 2021

PROTECTING OUR MOB

We continued to deliver hundreds of vaccines to the community, supporting public health & protecting each other from COVID-19. It was pleasing to see such a positive response to our services & to know we were making a difference to so many lives.



NOVEMBER 2021

ADMINISTRATORS APPOINTED

The administrators Jack James & Paula Smith, from insolvency & business consulting firm Rodgers Reidy, were appointed to oversee our organisation & help us to better support our community.



DECEMBER 2021

SPIRIT OF THE SEASON

Our Youth Services team hosted a fantastic day ahead of Christmas, allowing local families to meet Santa & have their picture taken. The effects of COVID-19 meant a simple event such as this was extra special.



JANUARY 2022

SUPPORT DURING TOUGH TIMES

As COVID-19 lockdowns & restrictions returned, our team continued to support the community, providing a home testing service for those suffering symptoms of the virus. These were crucial visits to support people's health & to ensure our Mob was not cut off during periods of isolation.



FEBRUARY 2022

KIDS CLINIC

The focus during February was on boosting vaccination rates among our children, with a few sweet incentives on offer for those who got the jab. Again, the way the community responded to our program showed our willingness to support each other during tough times.



MARCH 2022

NEW CEO APPOINTED

After a thorough search and recruitment campaign, we were delighted to appoint experienced leader Tracey Dillon as our new Chief Executive Officer. Tracey hit the ground running and is having a big impact on how we deliver services to the community & respond to our Mob's needs.



APRIL 2022

EASTER FUN

With gatherings once again possible, we hosted two great events – an Easter Carnival and Easter Egg Hunt – giving local families a chance to come together and celebrate. The feedback from parents & participants was fantastic & showed the power of connection & community.



MAY 2022

RECONCILIATION WEEK

It was a privilege to help lead Reconciliation Week events in Echuca-Moama, with the flag-raising ceremony taking place on a cold & foggy morning. Tracey used her speech at the event to urge the community to come together & improve people's lives.



JUNE 2022

KEEPING OUR KIDS ON COUNTRY

Some familiar faces appeared on the big screen as we used local stories to promote the benefits of foster care & keeping our kids connected to their community. An ad on TV & in the local cinema featured three Echuca locals – Aunty Neva Takele, her son Brody Atkinson & grandson Joel Atkinson – who have faced having one of their own Mob being cared for in the city.

ORGANISATION BACK INTO HANDS OF COMMUNITY AND NEW BOARD APPOINTED

Our new board members are:

Belinda Day - Chairperson

Damian Morgan-Bulled - Vice-Chair

Jennifer Mitchell

John Kerr

Janice Muir

OUR PURPOSE...

As an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Njernda's purpose is to deliver holistic services & programs to improve the physical, emotional, cultural & spiritual wellbeing of our Mobs.

We do this in the spirit of our Njernda Values:

Accountability | Advocacy | Cultural Sensitivity | Resilience | Respect

At Njernda we strive to build respect & trust with our Community through...

LIVING OUR NJERNDAL VALUES:



Belongingness & Connection:

We want to ensure everyone has a connection to Njernda, by ensuring all community members can access services fairly & equitably.



Voice & recognition:

Our staff ensure people's voices are heard & their ideas are appreciated & considered.



Purpose:

Our community has a clear understanding of an Aboriginal Community Controlled organisation's purpose & how they can contribute be engaged & productive.



Dependability:

We honour commitments which are within our control & our budget.



Cultural Sensitivity:

Welcoming & serving our community with understanding & without judgement





21-22

ORGANISATIONAL REPORTS

Njernda Aboiginal Corporation



Njernda Aboriginal Corporation
Health Services:



MEDICAL & HEALTH

- GP
- Nurse
- Aboriginal Health Practitioner
- Outreach workers
- Chronic Disease management
- Maternal Child Health
- Maternity
- Health assessments
- Transport
- Health Promotion



SPECIALISTS SERVICES

- Psychologist
- Maternal And Child Health Nurse
- Podiatrist
- Australian Hearing
- Pediatrician
- Optometrist
- Audiologist
- Diabetes Education
- Endocrinologist



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

- Alcohol & other Drugs
- Bringing them Home
- SEWB Access
- Mental Health Counselling
- Dual Diagnosis (Mental Health & Alcohol & Drug)



AGED & DISABILITY

- Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)
- Home and Community Care Program (HACC)



Medical Clinic Report

Megan Atkinson | Acting Manager Health Services

Our Njernda Medical Clinic has 24 staff including GPs and nursing staff, chronic illness and diabetes management support, an early years clinic with specialised midwives, vaccination and COVID vaccination and allied health such as optometry, endocrinology, dietitian, paediatrician, podiatry, audiology, diabetes education and child maternal health midwife.

Njernda Medical workers go above and beyond to help our community in any way they need to.

Our biggest challenge in 2021-22 continued to be COVID-19 in our community and Njernda Medical, as frontline staff, helped and supported everyone we could. Our Aboriginal Health Practitioner Rebecca Tracey completed training as a Point of Care testing operator of the GeneXpert testing machine for COVID-19.

Finally, after two and a half years we were able wind down our COVID-19 vaccination clinic after sustaining and achieving a successful high percentage of our Mob vaccinated.

HELP DURING COVID

Melbourne nurses Soraya and Cecile were contracted to Njernda Medical from the Department of Health in Melbourne during this year.

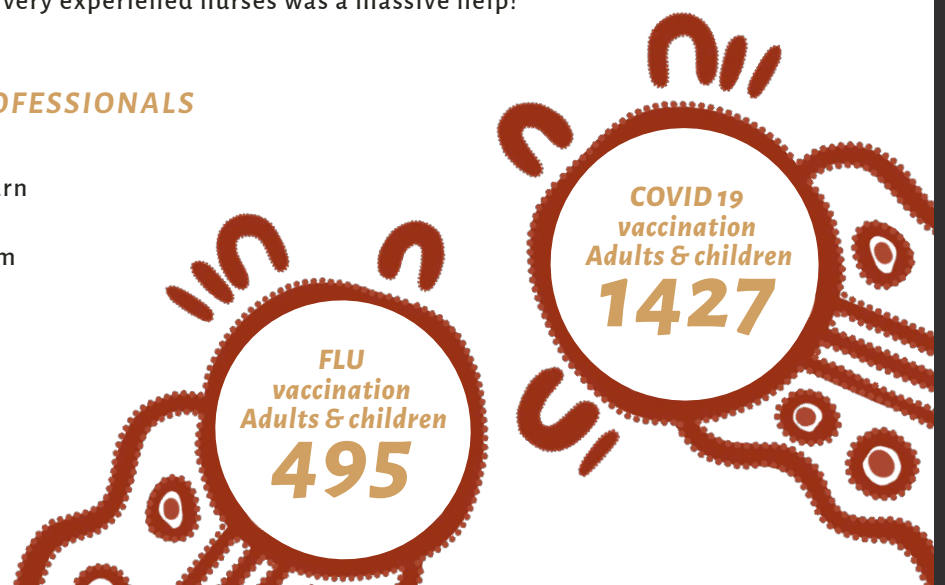
They were amazing in their support to the community, doing COVID testing in-home and at the clinic, vaccinations and other nursing duties to support the health needs of our community.

Soraya remained with us for five weeks traveling from Melbourne every week to help us deliver a program to allow community to get tested at home.

The support of this program and these two very experienced nurses was a massive help!

SUPPORTING FUTURE HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

We were proud to host 40 students & five teachers from the Monash University to learn about Njernda & highlight some of the differences between working in mainstream health & Aboriginal Health.





Njernda at work: Our Health Team

Rebecca Tracey | Aboriginal Health Practitioner

"I'm proud to be part of a very professional & committed team that played a big role in vaccinating our Mob in the fight against COVID 19. When we finally wound down the COVID clinic during the year, a big percentage of our Mob was fully vaccinated."



Viv Giles | Aboriginal Health Practitioner

"We're excited to have secured a female paediatrician for our clinic, which was a high priority for us. Our new paediatrician comes in once a month, meaning we are able to see far more children"



Maria Isgro | Medical Reception

"I love my role in helping our Mob as best I can, whether it be medical appointments, listening to their good and bad stories or just being there for a general chat. Making our clients happy make me feel I achieve something worthwhile"



Vicki Walker | Aboriginal Regional Development Officer

"One of the highlights for me this year was organizing the Yapaneyepuk Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Forum and Expo for the 96 Agencies I support across the Loddon Mallee and Hume Regions. There were 128 people in attendance, with almost every organisation sending at least one participant."



Aboriginal Maternal & Child Health Report

Kim Warde



The Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health Service provides support, services and advice to Njernda families, ranging from birth to five years.

Among services in our 2582 contacts with families during the year included immunisations to babies, children and their families. We do health assessments on babies and children from ages of six months to four years. Our key age and stage visits include home visits at two-weeks, four-weeks, eight-weeks, four-months, eight-months, 12-months, 18-months, two years and three-and-a-half years.

All of this was achieved during 2021-22 through the challenges and constraints of COVID-19. We continued to work on solutions for a lack of a designated vehicle for the AMCHI program, using a KMS vehicle for home visits, hospital visits, attendance at meetings, etc.

During the year we were happy to build stronger working partnerships with Koori Maternity Services (KMS) program, GPs, paediatricians, Berrimba childcare, Cradle to Kinder, Best Start, Family Services, audiologist, Enhanced Maternity Care Program at Echuca Regional Health (ERH), Campaspe Shire MCH service and child protection. We have strong working relationship with Njernda services, Echuca Regional Health, the Enhanced Maternity Care Program, maternity ward, mental health and dental services, as well as with Campaspe Shire Maternal Child Health, playgroup and kindergartens.

Our supports to families include referrals to the GP, audiologist, speech therapist, Berrimba childcare, dental, optometrist, lactation consultants as needed. We ordered cots and car seats for families through MCH nursery equipment program.

85%

of babies at normal
birth weight

44

new babies

2582

contacts



Aged & Disability Services HACC PYP-CHSP

Keana Kerr | Team Leader



COVID

Over the past 12 months, the Home and Community Care Program for Young People with disabilities (HACCPYP) and and Commonwealth Health Support Program (CHSFP) team working with our Elders achieved great successes and faced many challenges – COVID being one.

During the period of July to December 2021, group activities had to be put on hold due to large COVID outbreaks in the community. During this time, the HACC/CHSP team was able to provide clients with activity bags and food relief for 114 people, with assistance from Berrimba and Youth Programs.

We worked hard to maintain ongoing contact during a difficult time, keeping clients in the loop with the ever-changing COVID rules and restrictions, providing Elders and families with support and information and monitoring the number of people who were testing positive.

Eighty gift and Christmas sweets hampers were provided to clients, and bulk meals were delivered to clients during lockdowns, including pumpkin soup, sausage roles and casseroles.

We supplied COVID tests and medication pick-ups, and we created links along the way with the Shire of Campaspe, Echuca Neighbourhood House and Echuca Regional Health. We had food parcels donated from the Red Cross, plus assistance from Murray River Council. We say a huge thank you to all who assisted our community in this time.

PLANNED ACTIVITY GROUP

We were thrilled to be able to resume our Planned Activity Group activities and outings in the New Year. Our clients were happy to be back together during luncheons, two big days at the Werribee Zoo and a Barmah Lakes cruise with Rumbalara. We also helped to get Elders to the Yoorrook Justice Commission yarning group, the Elvis exhibition in Bendigo, the movies, and the Dreamtime AFL game.

We were also able to commence our regular Friday groups doing craft, weaving, painting and yarning.





"We don't look after the client, we work with them to improve their independence."

Njernda at work: **HACCPYP-CHSP**

Dennis's story: *Not his real name

"Dennis*" came on board with us in late 2021 after suffering from a stroke and spending a prolonged period in hospital. He was discharged on a 12-week restorative package; however, this was only temporary so it was arranged that after the package ended, services would commence with a CHSP worker.

Arrangements put in place for four hours a week of services, included shopping assistance, domestic assistance, transport to appointments such as doctors, physiotherapy, rehabilitation and assistive technology. During this time, while Dennis was adjusting and dealing with the severe changes to his mobility, the CHSP worker was able to help him get used to the walker and offer general support.

Dennis's trust in the CHSP team increased significantly and he came to appreciate the time spent together. He felt that without the help he would not have been able to adjust to a new lifestyle as well.

Not only did the worker support Dennis with practical services, they also formed a friendship. Many barriers were broken down, giving our team a better insight into what Dennis was struggling with. The worker identified the need for additional services such as personal care.

Where our CHSP team excels is making the client feel like they are talking to a friend or family member. Our services are so client-centred and personalised that we can have tough conversations and figure out the bigger picture to provide a better service. We don't look after the client – we work with them to improve their independence. This was certainly the case with Dennis. Once his time with us was finished and a Home Care package was assigned, Dennis transitioned very well and kept in regular contact with the CHSP worker.



Wellbeing Unit Report

Keana Kerr | Wellbeing Unit Manager



The Wellbeing Team relocated during 2021-22 to 34 Annesley Street.

We faced ongoing challenges in keeping up with a ballooning wait list and restrictions limiting face-to-face contact and appointment times, so we made do with what we could, which often meant clients attending appointments via telehealth or over the phone.

In early 2022, we were pleased to welcome new staff on board, helping to get the adult wait list down. Community members needing mental health services were able to get in sooner without an extended delay.

Uncle Gilbert was a central part of bringing the Dardi Munwarro men's behavioural change group to Echuca. Many men have taken up this opportunity and are participating.

We collaborated With Share the Dignity and had 60 bags donated to us to support women in the community who needed sanitary products. When someone is doing it tough, the last thing on their mind should be dealing with their period. Share the Dignity is a women's charity in Australia that works with women experiencing homelessness, fleeing domestic violence, or doing it tough.

BRINGING THEM HOME REPORT

Bringing Them Home clients have been impacted by either themselves or family members having been removed from family.

Supports include help to obtain birth certificates, government ward files and information from homes, to find other family members. We also provide support to get Aboriginality certificates. A lot of this information is vital to be able to help clients access the National Redress scheme, as well as obtain legal representation for Common Law claims and the Reparation for Stolen Generation and Stolen Wages Scheme.

There have been several success stories, although this program is severely hampered by a lack of brokerage funding that would allow us to access necessary documents, such as birth certificates and will kits, and to hold activities.

During the year we have partnered with both Rumbalara in Mooroopn and VAHS in Fitzroy help with service delivery to our Stolen Generation clients, including family reunion.

30

stolen generation
first applications
completed

50

wellbeing client
received xmas
hampers

Njernda Aboriginal Corporation
Family Services:



FAMILY SERVICES

- *Family Violence Worker (Male and Female)*
- *Intensive Family Services*
- *Integrated Family Services*
- *Intensive Early Years Family Services*
- *Integrated Early Years Family Services*
- *Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification*
- *Orange Door Practitioner*
- *Care Hub-Family Worker*
- *Care Hub-Community Worker*
- *Yakapna*
- *SAAP (housing support)*
- *PRAT/Crises Accommodation Worker (housing support)*



OUT OF HOME CARE

- *Kinship Care & Case Contracting*
- *Kinship Placement and Support*
- *Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making (AFLDM)*
- *AFLDM Diversion Program*
- *Foster Care Recruitment, Assessment & Training (Home based care)*
- *Foster Care Case Contracting (Home based care)*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Culture*
- *Kinship First Supports*
- *Wala Yarka (Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care)*
- *Berry Street Practitioner (attends Njernda Family Services every Tuesday)*
- *Therapeutic Counsellors*
- *Aboriginal Children Specialist Advice Support Service (ACSASS)*





Family Services Report

Hazel Hudson | Manager of Family Services

The Family Services team continued to support Aboriginal families and children experiencing child safety concerns and family hardships.

However Family Services' intensive and early intervention programs underwent a significant change during 2021-22 stemming from major reviews by Government and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH).

This resulted in the merger of key programs (Stronger Families, Cradle to Kinder (C2K), 200 Hours Intensive Support) into the Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response program (Response Program) and Intensive Family Service Program.

The programs aim to promote strong families with children who are safe, healthy, resilient, and thriving, and parents and caregivers who are supported to create a safe and nurturing home environment.

Since November 2021, the team has been implementing and embedding into practice the rigorous process required by this new program as well as filling vacancies and training staff around the new process required by the Response program.

Although many of our programs have been understaffed during the year, they have nonetheless provided a quality service to our Aboriginal community, while embedding sound practice into their everyday work.

2

families with
reunification
children
supported

77

family violence
clients supported

53

Aboriginal Families
assisted with
accommodation
support



Njernda at work: **Family Preservation & Reunification Program**

Family Preservation is a family intensive response program that commenced in November 2021. The program aims to keep Aboriginal children with their families and reunify children who have been placed in out of home care with their family. Families are intensively supported with allocated hours for each family entering the program. Referrals into this intensive program come from Child Protection (DHHS)



This is a strengths-based approach that understands the importance of culture and contributes to the protection and strengthening of our Aboriginal families. The program aims to actively support children to identify risks and address them. It is a pathway for connections to other services within Njernda. It also externally aims to seek the assistance families need as they strive to be safe and strong. Njernda has supported two families with reunifications of children since its commencement and continues to support seven families currently under this program.

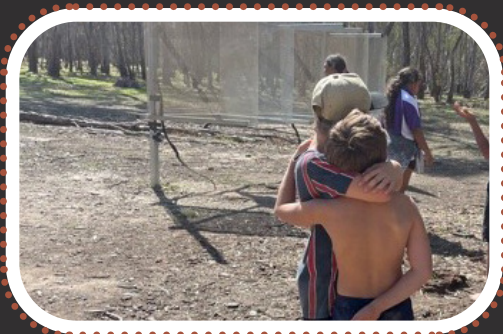


Intensive/integrated Programs

As an Aboriginal community-controlled child and family service provider, we want our Aboriginal families to be strong.

Njernda delivers a range of programs that provide culturally specialised services, including support for our vulnerable families under the Intensive program.

This program is designed for families with children at risk of being removed from their home or are in out-of-home care for the first time. Supports are centred around access to specialist services, including therapeutic supports. It also aims to address the reasons children are at risk of being removed and helps parents build their capacity to safely care for their children.



The Integrated program is a short-term response program supporting families to strengthen their immediate needs and capabilities, so they do not enter the child protection system.

Njernda has seen great results in this program with its holistic approach. Referrals into these programs come from Orange Door, internally through other Njernda programs, or self-referral.

Family Violence Program

Cora Best | Family Services Team Leader



Our family violence team worked with 27 families/individuals during the year, 24 of these families had children under the age of 18. Overall Family Violence had 77 clients, 24 male and 53 female.

Njernda is deeply committed to addressing family violence and we continue to work, united with our Mob to eliminate family violence. Njernda has a range of specialised and preventative programs that help families or individuals.

Last financial year, Njernda provided therapeutic, financial, legal, emotional, spiritual and educational support. We also supported families living with family violence to access pathway referrals to external services for additional intensive family violence resources.

If anyone is experiencing family violence, they can call 000 or access a range of culturally appropriate services directly via contacting Orange Door on 1800 512 359 or Safe Steps on 1800 737 732.

Njernda at work: Orange Door

A highlight of the year was the introduction of an Orange Door worker based in Echuca and located at the Anglicare and Njernda sites.

The Orange Door is a free service for adults, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence. Orange Door is a referral service to help best direct a client's family violence matters. Families who require extra support with family violence or wellbeing and development concerns for children can access this service.

Clients can come into the office at Echuca 486 High Street, or access the Orange Door worker at Njernda Family Services. The contact number is 1800 512 359. Orange Door accepts referrals via Victoria Police, Child Protection, third-party or self-referral. Orange Door is committed to ensuring Aboriginal people, families and communities are stronger, safer, thriving, and free from family violence.

199

**Aboriginal Clients
serviced in
Echuca**

Housing Services

Belinda Parry & Lani Hudson | Housing Workers

During 2021-22 our Njernda housing workers assisted 53 Aboriginal Families with accommodation support that ranged from sustaining accommodation, emergency accommodation and crisis accommodation to private rental supports.

Of those families, 39 had children under the age of 18 years.

It was a massive effort by our staff during difficult times to ensure the safety of our Aboriginal families.

Njernda at work: Rental Programs

We continued to have unexpected challenges and growing demands for housing across 2021-22.

Homelessness is one of the largest contributing factors to Aboriginal disadvantage in Victoria – a major driver of family violence, child removal, incarceration rates, youth homelessness, low educational outcomes and poor health and mental health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (APRAP) provides housing supports specific to the private rental market by supporting our Mob to find or sustain their current tenancy. To be eligible for APRAP, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households must either have no income; have Centrelink as their main source of income; their income is unable to sustain their personal financial commitments; they have defaulted in the payment of rent, utility bills or other personal debts; or are experiencing family violence.

Njernda also delivers the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), which supports people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This work has also given rise to the increase in applications for social housing in Victoria.

This year we introduced regular Office of Aboriginal Housing visits to Njernda to assist Mob tenancy or maintenance issues.



53

families provided
with
accommodation
support

138

people assisted with
crisis support &
emergency
accommodation



Out of Home Care Report

John Rengith | Out of Home Care Team Leader

Njernda's Out of Home Care team works with the child, young people, families, carers and their support networks to ensure care arrangements are culturally safe and meet the ongoing needs of the children for safe stability and development.

We work with Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection) and Njernda services such as Medical, Youth and Social Emotional Wellbeing teams. Work includes facilitating contact between children and their families and coordinating and facilitating care team meetings to ensure the case planning for the child is implemented into their day-to-day care.

Our kinship care team has 33 children in their care whom they have provided an outstanding level of care for during COVID-19. Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making (AFLDM) meetings allow families to have a voice in the decision-making process for their children in the care system and supports involvement with early intervention and prevention services. We had 18 AFLDM meeting over the financial year.

This year we also began a trial of the Aboriginal Family led Decision Making (AFLDM) Child Protection Diversion Program. We engage families who need support aim to reduce the involvement of statutory services. Under the program we develop a culturally safe support plan and offer families a structured plan, including making support services available during 2021-22.

Our foster care program is still growing, and we currently care for four children. This program also supports four carers in their development and care of our children. Unlike kinship program, foster care program has a responsibility to case manage the carer as well as the child.

Our Kinship Care program had a target of 44 children currently in out of home care transferred into Kinship Care arrangements. We filled 32 of the target numbers but had difficulty in achieving this goal for the remaining children, due to issues including them being on orders – such as being on reunification or preservation orders – that cannot be transferred over to a kinship program, or moving towards long term or permanent care. Most of the clients are on Long Term Care Order (LTCO) and Care by Secretary order (CBSO).

Our First Supports program helps newly established kinship care placements with comprehensive assessments at the time placements are first made and linking carers and children into necessary services and supports. We build the capacity of the kinship carers to better understand and respond to the needs of the children in their care. The program had a target of 19. We filled nine of the placements but had difficulty because of a lack of referrals from Child Protection.

A cultural support plan is required for every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child in care within 19 weeks of entering care. The Keeping Children Safe in Culture team provides consultation to Child Protection and other agencies in the development of cultural plans by ensuring each plan is developed with input from the child, family, and their Aboriginal community. The plan needs to support and nurture a child's connection to Country, Family, clan, and community. Our Keeping Children Safe in Culture program endorsed nine cultural support plans.



"Keep Our Kids On Country!"

Njernda at work: Keeping Kids on Country

Our Foster Care program continued to grow, with our staff working hard to recruit new carers and to ensure culturally safe placements which maintain our children's connection to Country.

The campaign "Help keep our kids on Country" resulted in unprecedented expressions of interest from people who wanted to be foster carers.



THE CAMPAIGN INCLUDED:

- A television, Cinema, Facebook and Instagram video advertising campaign
- Fostering Connections media campaign adverts on our social media
- Media coverage in district newspapers
- Foster care stall for NAIDOC Week Family Day at Aquatic Reserve.
- Fostering Connections media campaign adverts on Njernda's social media.
- Video about meeting the Victorian Minister for Child Protection & Family Services
- Foster care information sessions x 5
- Foster Care Alliance meeting
- Keep Our Kids on Country book development
- Connecting Communities regional meeting



The team is responsible for the recruitment and assessment of new carers and provides training to support carers to meet the needs of children. This program prioritises the recruitment of Aboriginal carers to provide placements for Aboriginal children. Where we are unable to do this, training and ongoing support is provided to ensure non-Aboriginal carers provide culturally appropriate care for children.

Currently, Njernda has five registered foster carers and 10 Aboriginal children had respite during this from 2022.



Wala Yarka

Sandy Owen | Wala Yarka Program Manager



Njernda's Wala Yarka program continues to support our families to empower positive change for our families.

Wala Yarka is our local name for what is known state-wide as Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care –it means “water children” in Yorta Yorta language. The program works under section 18 of the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 giving the Aboriginal Organisation control of Child Protection Orders for specific children. Practice is guided by the Children Youth and Families Act of 2005, the Best Interest Case Practice Model and Cultural practice principles.

Wala Yarka case managers support and care for our children by working intensively with family in a holistic, culturally appropriate and non-judgemental way. Families are provided with resources and information in line with their case plan and goal setting. We are committed to support our community in keeping our children within community and with family.

Wala Yarka currently has 18 children allocated to the program on a range of statutory orders including Family Preservation Orders, Family Reunification Orders, Care By Secretary Order and Interim Accommodation Orders.

Wala Yarka supports families through the court process and provides information to reduce confusion and prevent additional trauma. Our aim is to help our children stay within their family domain wherever possible.

Our team has experienced staffing issues this year, however we have been able to overcome this and continue to provide support to our families with minimal disruption. Our program continued to work proactively to strengthen families' outcomes and we are on target with our KPIs.

"We are pleased to say through self-determination, Wala Yarka was this year able to close involvement with one family through the hard work they did and continue to do."

We also reconnected a family through the reunification process, with children returned home after a long period in kinship care. Careful consideration was put in place to support everyone during this journey. Three families have successfully participated in the reunification process and maintained a stable a safe environment to date.

Wala Yarka promotes self-determination with all families, so the decision-making process supports positive outcomes and stability within home environments. Wala Yarka continues to provide support with connecting children with their extended families we believe that this should be led by families were ever possible."

Njernda Aboriginal Corporation

Early Years & Youth Services:



EARLY YEARS

- Early Years Education – Childcare (Berrimba)
- Early Years Education – Kindergarten 3 and 4 year old
- Best Start Facilitators
- Koori Pre School-Assistant (KPSA)
- Play group
- After School Care
- School Holiday Programs
- Specialist Services - Speech/ Audiologist / Dental Health
- Learn to Play Therapy



COMMUNITY

- Community Engagement
- Culture and Tourism
- Gymnasium (Nyini)
- Exercise Physiologist
- Personal Trainers (Nyini)



YOUTH

- Youth Support Programs
- Youth Justice
- Barooka
- Day Program Service
- School Holiday Programs
- School Assistance
- Homework Club
- Healing



Early Years Report

Joyce Ward | Early Years Manager

We believe that all Aboriginal children should be able to access a high-quality service that provides childcare and education in a safe, stimulating and enriching environment that strengthens their cultural identity.

Berrimba Childcare Centre provides a culturally safe space for all who enter by providing a loving, caring, family environment which is non-judgmental and confidential. Berrimba stays true to its history and ensures its stories are at the heart of every program and shared with staff and families.

We want our children to grow up proud and strong, and to know who they are and where they come from. We want them to be well educated and know their worth to be able to advocate for our future generations, for they are our Elders of the future.

We had many highlights this past financial year, as well as more challenges given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Our enrolments are steady, and we are proud to have a large number of staff who have started further training this year to progress their careers, skills and the next level of their formal qualifications.

Berrimba provides access to a range of early years services, including maternal and child health nurse, audiologist, speech therapist and occupational therapist. We also refer into Njernda Medical's Early Years Clinic and Njernda's Family Services.

GIVING OUR KIDS THE BEST START!

Emma Taylor - Best Start Facilitator

The Victorian Government has set up Best Start Program partnerships to lead reform at the local level. They play a key role in bringing local services together to ensure the best outcomes for our children and families. Best Start partnerships work in a culturally inclusive manner with Aboriginal communities and families.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

Njernda's Aboriginal Best Start Partnership includes representatives from local Early Years agencies and service providers. Our current partnership group includes delegates from Njernda (Family Services, Medical, Berrimba, Youth Services), Echuca Regional Health, Shire of Campaspe, Shine Bright, Department of Education, Intereach, Save the Children, VACSAL and Anglicare. Our partnership group meets once per term with working group meetings on focus key areas in between.





Njernda at work: Growing Our Own Success

- Alliyah Cooper began as a trainee in Early Years & is studying Certificate III in Early Childhood
- Keyarny Lamb is studying Certificate III in Early Childhood
- Kyeema Lamb is studying Certificate III in Early Childhood
- Our casual staffmember Kiwa Stanton is also studying Certificate III in Early Childhood
- Jasmine Roberts is studying her Diploma of Early Childhood

ENROLMENTS

- Borpa Room (Little yabbies) 6 month–2 years: **10**
- Dhuk-an-dirra Room (Wombat) 2-3 years: **13**
- Bayaderra Room (Long neck turtle) 3-5 years: **25**
- Gurranyin Room (Eagle) 3-year-old bush kinder: **14**
- Bigarrumbdja Room (Emu) 4-year-old bush kinder: **12**
- Holiday Program: **15**
- After School Program: **8**

Njernda at work: A Milestone for Bush Kinder

This year was a big milestone for Berrimba Bush Kindergarten.

Since opening we have now seen over 100 students attend.

To celebrate, we hosted a bush kinder reunion at our new site on the Baroona property. This year we had three-year-old and four-year-old bush kindergarten groups. We have faced challenges this year of not being able to recruit a full time Bush kindergarten teacher, with Leona Cooper and Joyce Ward teaching the groups.

As our original Bush Kinder site was a no go zone due to the new bridge being constructed, and we began using a paddock at Baroona. Thank you to Rick Ronnan for our natural play equipment that he built and for ensuring the site is mowed and safe.

Youth Services Report

Chris Ferguson | Youth & Justice Services Team Leader



It's been a busy year for the Youth team, which has seen some changes and some exciting new programs.

Our experienced youth/justice worker Chris Ferguson was appointed to the Team Leader role this year. Another of our team, Sissy Cooper stepped into the KKE worker role this year. We welcomed Colin Atkinson as our local justice worker and our new youth worker, Damaar Hearn. This year we appointed a youth trainee Lucy-Pearl Harrison, who was a great addition. We also said goodbye to long-term employee Wade Austin.

The Team moved from behind Family Services into the old community hub and transformed it into a Deadly Youth hub with a pool table, gaming set up and board games for our youth to drop in and keep them from roaming the streets.

The Christmas tree event was held by Youth Services and was a huge success. Santa was here at the hub handing out gifts to our mob and getting photos with our community families. Over 400 presents were handed out. We provided back-to-school assistance for our community with schoolbooks, uniform and fees, helping 144 families with the cost and the stress of returning to school for another year.

This year we ran an intensive after-school activities program, as well as a packed program of school holiday activities for our young people.

Njernda at work: **Growing our own success: Lucy Pearl Harrison**



Lucy-Pearl Harrison began as our Youth Trainee this year, and we're proud to see her growing professionally into her new role with mentoring and by her development of her own capabilities. It was great to see a young, strong community member have an opportunity to give back to her community and be a role model for all youth.

She currently is studying her Diploma in Community Services to upskill in her role and has been able to connect with youth that she had grown up with. Thanks to VACCHO for helping with the traineeship – this was a huge feel-good story for our community.



Njernda at work: Reaching our kids, Connecting with our Elders

We've tried new ideas this year to reach and connect with more of our young people. We welcomed the Baroona uncles to our Youth team and began developing a workshop for our youth to learn skills in mechanics, welding, and tool handling at the Baroona farm's shed.

We have regularly interacted with our kids at school to ensure they are engaging and attend to any areas they find difficult. We have also been engaging with kids disengaged from education to try and encourage them to participate in positive activities. A proposed camp is being organised for our disengaged youth. Sissy stepped into our KKE worker role this year.

The focus has been traditional cultural workshops within the schools and working with youth individually, doing cultural arts, communicating with the youth, and forming bonds them using art. Teaching the youth cultural art and showing them how to tell a story has been an awesome process to watch.



Njernda at work: Shout out Uncle Rick!

Thanks to Uncle Rick Ronnan for doing the Welcome and Smoking ceremonies at any every event we hold. He donates his time, and we are forever grateful.

The same goes to Sissy and her Dhungala Yalka dancers for performing during NAIDOC Week, Uncle Desi for the river rat cultural story, and to Narjiic for all your support and cultural sharing.



Njernda Youth Services: Yearly Highlights

- After school music, cultural arts, digital arts, homework class
- Auskick
- A deadly day at the Youth Easter carnival at the harness track. Free rides, food and entertainment by Benny Walker...and a closing song by the youth music group they had been practicing all term
- Murray Life Adventures ran over two days, and 50 children attend both days
- Youth easter egg hunt – 70 youth and family attended
- Brett Rainbow's Tomorrow's Stars Basketball two-day camp had 40 youth participating – three of the five "All Stars" team picked at the end of the camp were Njernda youth - Justina Harrison, Mungharra Kerr and Allira Stephens
- Dreamtime Game at the MCG – 12 kids got to run out onto the MCG for a grid game at half time
- Purchase of iPads to allow digital art program to commence after school
- The L2P program was introduced, with four mentors helping young drivers complete their 120 hours of practice and teach the fundamentals of driving. So far, three participants in our program have successfully got their Ps.
- Changing Gears program helped community members obtain their Ls with over 90 percent of those attending passing their Ls
- New leadership program for year 11 and 12 students. We aim to celebrate their achievements and encourage them to remain in school and become the next leaders. A weekly study day with a qualified teacher supported the leadership group. Attendance was not what we hoped, but we will continue to offer this support and believe attendance will pick up
- Term 2 School Holiday program our most successful ever with an average of 60 plus youth attending each day (Billabong Ranch, Scienceworks, a scavenger hunt, Sovereign Hill, and a movie day)
- NAIDOC Week arts and crafts day at the Youth hub and family day event down at the Aquatic Centre in Echuca with lunch and drinks and a performance from singer Lily Walker and rapper Tru-Bluud.



Njernda Aboriginal Corporation **Corporate Services:**



CORPORATE SERVICES

- *Finance*
- *Payroll*
- *Accounts Rec Pay*
- *HR*
- *IT*
- *Facilities, Assets*
- *Communications and PR*
- *Economic Development*
- *Quality and Risk Management*
- *Training and Development*

Corporate Services

Aunty Trisha Williams | Human Resources Manager



Corporate Services has had an extremely busy year providing administrative support to the organisation.

Njernda spent part of this year under the guiding hands of Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations and administrators and much of our work was around transitioning the organisation out of administration and back to normal operations.

The corporate services staff have provided dedicated, timely and quality support to the Njernda staff and management and have carefully and thoughtfully supported staff and management through this difficult period.

HUMAN SERVICES

There has been a lot of activity with recruitment this year. The current economic situation has resulted in low unemployment and as such finding qualified, experienced, Aboriginal staff has become very difficult. This has affected our employment rate of 57% down to 53% of staff being Aboriginal. The unit has responded with an Aboriginal trainee recruitment process rolling out in the 22-23 period.

Human resources has dealt with a large number Workcover claims and Reportable Conduct issues this year which, through effective management, are now nearly all completed. The unit has placed greater sight on preventative measures for the organisation going forward. A great deal of attention has been paid to training and guiding managers and supervisors in handling staff issues, the review of policies and procedures, and setting of boundaries around how staff interact within and the organisation and its client base.

Human resources has reviewed a number of processes around the recruitment process and standardized many documents and simplified processes to ensure quicker onboarding. Important to this has been the redevelopment of the employee induction training which means staff now have a better understanding of the organisation and its cultural origins. Going forward the human services functions of recruitment, onboarding, and document control will be included in a software upgrade which will enable staffing records to be updated quicker and more easily, and result in more streamlining of recruitment processes and handling of staff enquiries.

Our team has also adapted to the introduction of a new organisational structure. We also added a new staff member to help us manage our workload with some IT duties also outsourced.

We are thrilled to see members of our Finance team continue to study for their Cert IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping. Overall, we have seen some very positive developments as our organisation's structure and leadership evolves. HR processes have been streamlined, allowing us to provide training to all of our fantastic staff here at Njernda.



Our Njernda Team: At a Glance

147
Current staff



84
Aboriginal

63
non-Aboriginal



23
Aboriginal New Staff

22
Non-Aboriginal New Staff



98
Full Time Staff

32
Part time Staff



Finance Report

The finance team has had to be extremely flexible this year, dealing a huge amount of work out the administrative period. In addition to that the team has provided ongoing payroll, accounts and asset management services. Our team with the involvement of Peats Accounting have refined their financial procedures to ensure that all payments were made on time and financial data was accurately recorded. Currently the finance processes are largely paper based with minimal usage of advanced software solutions. This results in double handling of documents, carrying data across systems and manually re-entering data.

An example of this is taking data from the time clock system and manually entering it into the payroll system. The process is antiquated, time consuming and takes an immense amount of human effort and concentration to prevent errors in a process that occurs 52 times a year and one that must be accurate. There are changes afoot and the finance team is looking forward to this next period where the finance information system will be upgraded. This will provide many advantages not least the ability to provide greater reporting capability and reduced processing times.

Information Technology Report

The IT area has powered ahead this year with much needed upgrades to the hardware and networking capabilities. This work is to be completed in the forward period however changes are already been positively experienced in terms of reduced dropout rates, excellent security of data, and flexibility in the use of the MS 365 suite of products. The work this year will continue into the next financial year and will result in more robust IT system in the background and will lead to efficiency add-ons such as secure printing, Sharepoint productivity capabilities, improved ease of use for staff. In the next phase additional help-desk services will be provided to take full advantage of system capabilities. The integration of devices has become more and more pronounced in Njernda and this is largely due to the lessons learnt during Covid. Staff are becoming more used to using their phone and PCs in tandem to get through their workload and daily communication requirements. Paul has provided innovated solutions to ensure that could be done.

Corporate Services has been busy planning for the next period with these goals going forward:

- Rolling out the Aboriginal Trainee program starting with four in year 2022/23
- Build the finance, HR, compliance systems with greater utilization of advanced online software as a service information systems. Each of these areas will be a major block of work and as such a great deal of planning and development work is to be done.
- Training of corporate services staff to meet the future challenges that in new information systems
- Develop the SharePoint system to improve staff access and easy navigation to important documents, information and shared worked.
- Further streamlining of HR, finance, quality assurance and training processes to ensure to provide efficiency gain
- The development of the Quality Assurance team. The Development of the quality team and gain efficiencies by reducing duplications and interlocking skill sets from different staff to deliver better outcomes in managing standards and accreditation processes





FINANCIALS

Njernda Aboriginal Corporation



Njernda Aboriginal Corporation

ABN 17 334 858 388 - FINANCIAL REPORT - 30 June 2022


The Directors of the corporation declare that, in their opinion:

The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 7 to 32, are in accordance with the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* and:

- comply with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures
- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the corporation as at 30 June 2022 and of its performance for the year ended on that date.

There are reasonable grounds to believe that the corporation will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Directors and is signed for and on behalf of the corporation by:


Belinda Day
Chairperson


Damian Morgan-Bulled
Vice-Chairperson

15 December 2022

Njernda Aboriginal Corporation

ABN 17 334 858 388 - FINANCIAL REPORT - 30 June 2022

Andrew Frewin Stewart
61 Bull Street Bendigo VIC 3550

afs@afsbendigo.com.au
03 5443 0344

Independent auditor's report to the Directors of Njernda Aboriginal Corporation

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Njernda Aboriginal Corporation's (the corporation), which comprises:

- Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2022
- Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year then ended
- Statement of changes in equity for the year then ended
- Statement of cash flows for the year then ended
- Notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes
- The directors' declaration of the corporation.

In our opinion, the financial report of the corporation is in accordance with the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*, including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the corporation's financial position as at 30 June 2022 and of its financial performance for the year ended on that date, and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the *(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Regulations 2017*.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Other information

The corporation may prepare an annual report that may include the financial statements, director's report and declaration and our audit report (the financial report). The annual report may also include "other information" on the corporation's operations and financial results and financial position as set out in the financial report, typically in a director's report and reports covering governance and other matters.

The directors are responsible for the other information. An annual report has not been made available to us as of the date of this auditor's report. Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we will not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Njernda Aboriginal Corporation

ABN 17 334 858 388 - FINANCIAL REPORT - 30 June 2022

Andrew Frewin Stewart
61 Bull Street Bendigo VIC 3550

afs@afsbendigo.com.au
03 5443 0344

Our responsibility is to read the other information identified above when it becomes available and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If we identify that a material inconsistency appears to exist when we read the annual report (or become aware that the other information appears to be materially misstated), we will discuss the matter with the directors and where we believe that a material misstatement of the other information exists, we will request management to correct the other information.

Directors responsibility for the financial report

The directors of the corporation are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the corporation's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the corporation or cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Independence

We are independent of the corporation in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's *APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

Auditor's responsibility for the audit of the financial report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatement can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.



Njernda Aboriginal Corporation

ABN 17 334 858 388 - FINANCIAL REPORT - 30 June 2022

Andrew Frewin Stewart
61 Bull Street Bendigo VIC 3550

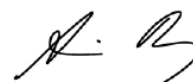
afs@afsbendigo.com.au
03 5443 0344

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the corporation's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the corporation's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the corporation to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Communicate with the directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



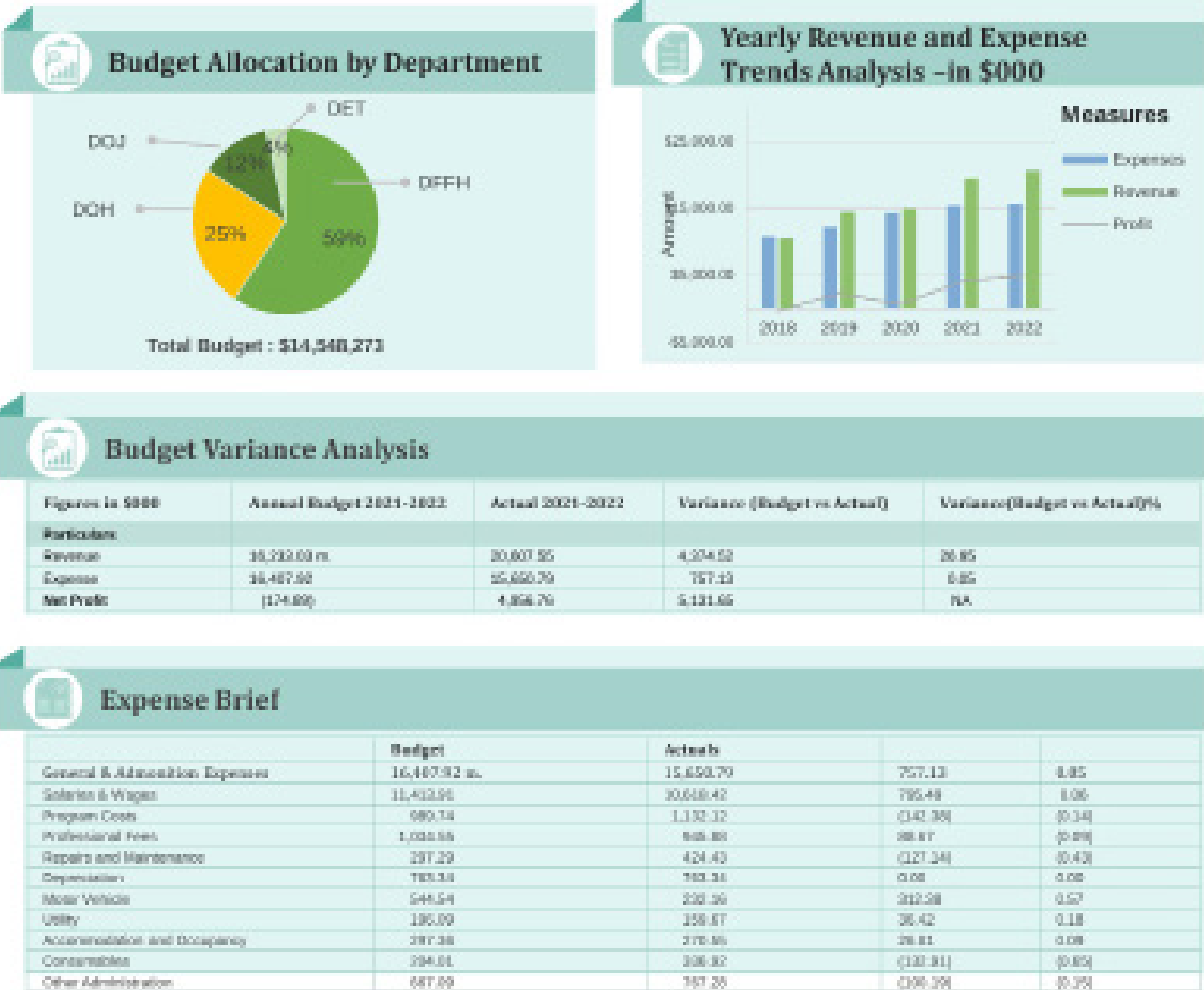
Andrew Frewin Stewart
61 Bull Street, Bendigo, 3550
Dated this 15th day of December 2022



Adrian Downing
Lead Auditor

Annual Budget Executive Summary Overview

The following one page depicts the synopsis of corporate yearly budget to review budget structure and optimize spent management. It includes elements such as budget allocation by department, yearly revenue & expense trends, variance analysis etc.



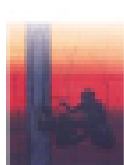


BALANCE SHEET POSITION COMPARISON In \$000

	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Current Assets	16,936	12,172	9,742
Non-Current Assets	32,552	30,969	14,617
Total Assets	49,488	43,241	24,359
Current Liabilities	11,565	9,149	7,883
Non-Current Liabilities	714	839	488
Total Liabilities	12,279	9,988	8,371
Net Assets	37,209	33,252	15,988

Balance Sheet Position yearly comparison –In \$000





Vision: Empowering our Aboriginal Community

Purpose: Njernda's purpose is to deliver community controlled, holistic services and programs which improve the physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of the Aboriginal Community of Echuca and surrounding areas.

NJERENDA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Date: 15 June 2022 **Time:** 5:00 pm **Location:** Echuca Moama Uniting Church, 115-117 Hare St

Chair: Special Administrator Jack James

Minute Taker: Therese Shelley

1. **Welcome & Acknowledgment of Country** - Debra Cowley did the Welcome to Country.
Chairpersons Welcome – Jack James

1.2 Attendees – As per list (Appendix 1a)

1.3 Apologies NIL

Jack James acknowledged visitors to the meeting including Gerrit Wanganeen and Eddy Longford from the Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations (ORIC).

Njernda Auditors from AFS - Adrian Downing and Lachie Tatt

Observers present: Jim O'Shea / Karen Hagan / Joyce Ward / Trisha William / Robert Nugent

Any objections to Observers present: NIL

Question from the floor as to whether a quorum was present to proceed with meeting. It was confirmed there was quorum present (as per Rule Book 7.7.1)

Members were advised of two registers being maintained for people attending at the meeting to sign, as applicable:

- Members register
- Observers register

2. Minutes of the previous meeting of Members – *Minutes tabled*

Minutes From previous meeting

1. **Proposed resolution:** "The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 31 March 2021 be approved"

Seconded: Sissy Cooper. **CARRIED**

3. Presentation of Audited Financial Statement for FY 2020/21

In summary:

- The Corporation recorded a surplus in FY21 of \$2,099,423 which was an increase from \$640,317 in FY20.
- Total revenue of \$16.5m was higher than \$14.1m in FY20.
- Net Assets in FY21 of \$18.1m which was an increase from \$16.0m in FY20.
- Working Capital of \$3.0m was higher than \$1.9m in FY20.
- Audit Report expressed a qualified opinion – comparatives (did not audit previous year) and PPE (need updated valuations).
- Financial Statements have been lodged with ORIC
- Adrian Downing and Lachlan Tatt from AFS & Associates if you have any questions

4.Appointment and Remuneration of Auditor

The current auditors of the Corporation are AFS & Associates Pty Ltd.

The audit fee for the FY22 Audit will be \$37,300 plus GST and disbursements.

Appointment of Auditor

1.Proposed resolution: "That AFS and Associates PTY LTD be appointed as auditor for the year end 30 June 2022 at a fee of \$37,300 (+GST) and disbursements"

Seconded: Debra Cowley

Resolution approved by Members by majority vote by show of hands

CARRIED

5. SPECIAL ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

The Chair Jack James acknowledged the previous Board Directors and their work he also noted that the organisation contacted ORIC seeking support to govern the organisation.

He informed the membership of the appointment of Advisory Committee. He also noted during that time the recruitment for a new CEO was being conducted and introduced Tracey Dillon who was the incumbent.

Prior to Special Administration a forensic audit was carried out by Victoria Police. The Police undertaking the investigation decided to close the investigation due to no findings. The Police then did a handover of the investigation to ORIC.

Questions were raised about previous complaints. It was acknowledged that there were approximately 40 complaints and four were active. A review of WorkCover matters is ongoing and the majority are in the final stages.

There has been ongoing conversations and meetings with funding bodies to ensure funding is not jeopardised for the organisation .

The organisational structure has been reviewed and some movement to the upper Managements will take place in July. There will be 4 new Executive Director positions, plus additional changes as some department align under these new Directors.

There are currently lots of vacancies and recruitment will be a focus moving forward.

Another question from the floor regarding the ongoing maintenance of the Gym for the community. It was proposed that community chip in to keep the gym open as it was a well utilised and important resource for Community.

This will be carried over to a Community Meeting discussion.

Additionally changes to the rule book have occurred with consultation with Advisory Committee, ORIC and recommendations received from staff/community.

6. CEO REPORT

Tracey acknowledged the hard work of the staff of Njernda. As the CEO had recently taken up her role managers were on standby to answer questions.

The CEO provided a presentation on the areas of success for the Early years, Health, Youth and Family Services.

Challenges

- recruiting and retaining qualified staff, underspends on positions to be filled
- Aspirations – increase Aboriginal workforce
- Increased staff skill base
- COVID proved to provide a lot of Home-schooling challenges
- Wala Yarka – Aboriginal Children, Aboriginal Care progress on full authorization behind
- Meeting the demand with limited resources and sometime skill or workforce base
- longer than normal wait time for potential clients to receive services. Development and implementation of policies and procedures.
- A functioning and stable board in place
- Housing – Shortage, Huge rent arrears, Repairs and maintenance
- Organizational Infrastructure
- Staff Shortage – Recruiting and retaining skilled workforce

AREAS OF SUCCESS

- Enrolments increasing at Berrimba
- Growth of the Bush Kinder program
- Intensive services were still being provided to families
- Baroona – grants received for re-developing the healing centre as a fit for purpose building
- Youth/Justice - still offered schools and holiday groups – working with schools to increase attendance.
- Supporting families in sports and recreations activities
- Health consultations continued using online tools such as iPad for telehealth and meetings
- Integrated Family Services
- Wala Yarka workers undertook the first full year of case management, achieving one reunification.
- Wala Yarka several presentations were provided to community
- 2 cases changed from removal to preservation and reunification
- 4 staff completing Diploma of Community Services
- Supporting families during trying times of pandemic challenges
- increased patient numbers, supported of community during lockdown, COVID screening rules enabled Njernda to move to a new Telehealth platform
- Flu Vaccinations are higher this year, with an in-home service provided. Monthly Elder's Lunches, and lunch deliveries. 300 drop offs.
- Mobile vaccinations to Elders

Future Aspirations

- Continue to deliver our key services. Reset on the Baroona Redevelopment Project
- Engage members to look at a master plan for the organisation

- Facilitate community consultations, across serviceable area, with the goal to identify regional needs and how NAC can improve on service delivery
- Review and evaluate service delivery based on community feedback
- Aspirations to meet the RAGP and Aged Care Quality Standards in upcoming Accreditation

Community Comments

Further discussion is required on the structure of homes (tenant numbers) and housing shortages?

The CEO acknowledged there is a demand and shortage for suitable accommodation for Community. A scheduled Community (plus tenants) meeting is being held next week and into the future to discuss these issues.

Several members made comment that consultation with Community needs to transpire if changes were made to Berrimbah.

7. Proposed Rule Book Changes – Rule Book Changes Document tabled

A summary of the key details of the proposed new Rule Book was enclosed with our 3rd newsletter issued in May 2022. A draft new Rule Book was also uploaded to the ORIC website.

As Special Administrators, they have authority to submit the draft Rule Book to ORIC and ask for it to be registered.

As such, no resolution is required.

Some of the major changes that Members will notice are:

The inclusion of Independent/specialist directors is a new addition to the rule book.

Gerrit W (ORIC) emphasised the process of appointment of the Board. Moving forward Board will appoint the independent directors. (noting these Directors will be in place until the AGM 2024 AGM).

NO employee will be a director.

Cannot become director if you owe the org money or have serious offences to your name.

The addition of Mathoura into the allocated region to be eligible as Director.

Detailed notes of changes were contained in the Member newsletter (May) but can be located from Njernda website also.

Rule book will be registered with ORIC and comes into effect as of 15/6/2022.

Post administration -ORIC is the regulator – they will have post Board appointment follow up and oversight for approximately 12 months.

8. Questions/ Other business – contained above.

9. Meeting Closed: 7:30pm

Confirmation of the minutes- Minutes to be accepted at the 2022 AGM

These minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed Chairperson _____

Date _____

Copy of minutes to be forwarded to ORIC at info@nwc.gov.au

Njernda Aboriginal Corporation ICN 1274

Annual General Meeting

Members/Observers Attendee List

Appendix 1a

Coleen Atkinson	Member
Megan Atkinson	Member
Damian Bulled-Morgan	Member
Sissy Cooper	Member
Debra Cowley	Member
Turiliwa Dodds	Member
Tanika Edwards	Member
Karlisha Egan	Member
Kellie Egan	Member
Darren George	Member
Shirley Handy	Member
Hazel Hudson	Member
Lani Hudson	Member
Teresa Jasper	Member
Brendan Johnson	Member
John Kerr Jnr	Member
Jennifer Mitchell	Member
Vicky Mitchell	Member
Larry Mongta	Member
Latoya Morgan	Member
Simone Ronnan	Member
Robert Russell	Member
Jess Smith	Member
Warren Stevens	Member
Wade Williams	Member
Jim O'Shea	Observer
Karen Hagan	Observer
Gerrit Wanganeen	Observer
Eddie Longford	Observer
Tracey Dillon	Observer
Adrian Downing	Observer
Lachlan Tatt	Observer
Joyce Ward	Observer
Trisha Williams	Observer
Robert Nugent	Observer



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