



COMMUNITY FIRST  
DEVELOPMENT

# COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT

## ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020





# OUR VISION

First Nations peoples and communities are thriving.

# WHO WE ARE

Community First Development is a First Nations community development and research organisation that creates positive change in and with First Nations communities.

# WHAT WE DO

We undertake social and economic development, and research projects in partnership with First Nations communities, businesses and people. Communities have control; they name the priorities and choose the design, assets, capabilities and approach to achieve their vision. We provide tailored support through community partners, skilled staff, trained volunteers, key supporters and service providers.

# WE VALUE

VALUES	WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US
ETHICS	We commit to ethical actions and decision making.
CULTURE	Recognition and respect for culture are at the centre of everything we do. Self-determination and agency are the foundations of our practice.
CARING FOR COUNTRY	We honour the relationship and responsibility we have to the earth in all of our business practices and relationships.
PARTNERSHIP	Everything we do is in partnership; it is only through collaboration and working together, that we can achieve genuine change in our lifetime.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this publication may contain the names and images of people who may now be deceased.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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## COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT

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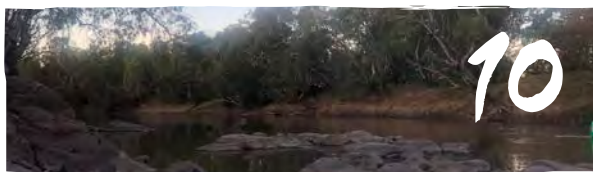
MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



OUR NEW NAME



ACKNOWLEDGING  
RETIRED CO-CHAIR



ACTIVITY REPORT



MEASURING OUR IMPACT



OUR RESEARCH



INNOVATION AND LEARNING



COMMUNITY STORIES



FINANCIAL REPORT



THANK YOU

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

KAREN MILWARD



## CHAIR MESSAGE

Our key focus each year is sustainability of the organisation. This is difficult to achieve with short-term grant cycles and the length of time spent waiting for outcomes on grant proposals. This often translates into adapting our plans, putting important projects on hold and, this year, a secondary focus on consolidation.

We continue to work with the Commonwealth government to achieve adequate funding to meet community demand for the support we offer. This year, Australia had its first Aboriginal Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt. It has been beneficial to have a Minister that talks in our language and understands the importance of our strength-based approach. We were, however, disappointed to have a significant reduction in government funding this year. As a national organisation, it is incredibly important that we maintain a relationship with the Commonwealth government and continue the conversation about funding our approach as one that affirms the self-determination of First Nations people.

We do amazing work, we step up to the challenges presented and we come out shining. We work in partnership with community to solve the challenges community have identified themselves. We source the best skills and appropriately trained people available, even sending people from interstate to achieve this. We do this incredibly well and see great outcomes. That's why we are here. We want to see our communities across the country succeed. We want them to thrive. We want them to be happy and healthy. I continue to hear firsthand from communities how good our team are, about the impact we have and their continued strong demand for further support.

## STRENGTH IN CRISIS


Of course, the restrictions of COVID-19 created challenges for the organisation this year, including the challenge of developing meaningful and engaging connections via videoconference. As a national organisation we adapted quickly as using technology to stay connected with each other and communities was already a strength. We've responded with strength, we've adhered to restrictions and health advice and put policies in place to carefully manage the health and wellbeing of our team and our interactions with the wider community.

This year our people truly shined. I saw their strength and resilience in the face of a challenge, and the relevance and flexibility of our approach for communities in a time of national crisis. We support each other, and community, and get through things together.

## CONVEYING THE RIGHT MESSAGE

Among the challenges this year, there were some real highlights. One was changing our name and branding. It's a name that opens possibilities for us, and a brand that resonates well with people. We have received great feedback and it has brought a better understanding, particularly for government, about who we are.





It's important we send the right message out. We are committed to putting community first, acknowledging that our approach connects communities with a range of stakeholders to achieve their goals including our dedicated and skilled volunteers. It also allows us to better showcase the variety of things we do, including our monitoring, evaluation, research and unique impact measurement database and reporting application.

## **STRONGLY GOVERNED**

Another major achievement was some changes to the Board. We've recruited some strong individuals and increased First Nations representation. Lauren Ganley and Ian Hamm joined us, they are skilled professionals and well connected to community. Stan Kalinko continued to lead our strong Audit, Risk and Management Committee and John Jeffery, some of our strong financial community partnerships. We also shifted our governance from a Co-Chair to a singular Chair arrangement. This is a significant change after many years of working alongside retired Co-Chair, Bill Armstrong, who departed from the role this year. Bill played a significant role in shaping the organisation and he will be greatly missed. Our new Board has since approved a three year Strategic Plan, setting out some powerful strategic priorities, emphasising our vision of First Nations people thriving.

## **YEAR AHEAD**

As an organisation, we're intentionally developing our products. This includes reporting and how we capture information and share the evidence base we have accumulated. We are a well-established, data-rich organisation and will continue to explore how to use these assets to the benefit of community.

A key challenge we face in the coming year is the limitation around being out in community, and keeping relationships strong in the restricted COVID-19 environment. We will communicate clearly with all of our stakeholders that it is "business as usual" for us. Only now, when health advice requires, this will occur online. We have already demonstrated this is possible, and now more than ever communities will need support to adapt First Nations programs, activities, businesses and policies to thrive in this challenging environment. We can play an important role in providing opportunities and tailored support to address the impacts of COVID-19 as well as building motivation and positive momentum in community while these restrictions are in place.

## **THANKS**

We are incredibly grateful for the financial support of the Allan and Gill Gray Australasian Philanthropy Foundation, as well as their commitment to building a strong relationship. A big thank you to the financial donors and those who bequest money to us in their will. We can't do what we do without you and we welcome your continued support. Thanks also goes to the Commonwealth government for its support.

We have a highly effective executive. Thank you to Steph, and her leadership team, for holding the fort during a challenging year. Thank you to all the staff and the community development team and volunteers for the incredible way you support each other and the fantastic work you do.

And of course, I thank our Board for their support and strategic direction this year, particularly in navigating through the impacts of COVID-19.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

STEPHANIE HARVEY



## A STRONG ORGANISATION

We maintain our focus year on year not just on what we do, but how we do it. Whether it's community development, research or engaging with our supporters, our practice is underpinned by strong values of respect for all people and cultures and the unmovable principle of self-determination. What does evolve each year is the mechanics of what we do. We carefully consider how we can innovate and further stretch our resources to meet demand. As a lean organisation, we are always exploring ways to do more with what we have.

Despite the difficult circumstances of the last year with bushfires and COVID-19 affecting our communities, we've still achieved enormous gains in community development, research and our strong monitoring and evaluation practice. Our key achievement has been maintaining relationships with our supporters, our volunteers, and communities through some really difficult and uncertain times. We temporarily adjusted the way we work to accommodate the pandemic restrictions and, while we couldn't deliver a complete program, we still managed to deliver the majority of our operational plan. We invested considerable time into a business continuity plan and it paid off. We continued to operate while keeping communities, staff and volunteers safe.

Our challenges have all been external, uncertain funding, COVID-19 and bushfires. We're not able to control our external environment so instead we focus on what we can do, best practice people management. We have met these challenges by having a strong organisation that operates with clear values, we care for the well-being of our people and we operate in a way that supports our natural environment and wider community.


I'm humbled by the trust communities and supporters have placed in us to deliver, even in these uncertain and difficult times. I'm humbled by the commitment and dedication of our team who pivoted quickly to work on-line, away from the office. I'm humbled by their resilience and positive attitude and their willingness to support each other. We're a strong organisation only because our people stick together, support each other and hold a higher purpose to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

## A FORWARD FOCUS

Of course, this year we also changed our name. Community First Development is a name that strongly reflects who we are, our identity and the way that we work. We put community first in our methodology. In discussion with staff and supporters we had received feedback that the Indigenous Community Volunteers name wasn't well understood and didn't clearly convey the work that we do. With our 20 year anniversary approaching, it was time to reflect on our successes and learnings and refresh our identity. Our new name builds on a strong platform of 20 years' experience to take us into the future. We have been delighted to receive support from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community on our new name and an overwhelmingly positive response from our supporters and volunteers.

This year, as mentioned by our Chair, we have a new three year strategic plan. It's a mature evolution of the key priorities the Board has focused on for some time now. It aligns with our new name and identity.





Our focus is to see communities thrive. We work to a transparent and ethical model, supported by sound research, monitoring and evaluation and we are committed to building a strong sustainable organisation. To achieve this we're looking to further diversify our revenue streams. I'm excited about this new iteration because it incorporates our responsibility to care for Country and a strong acknowledgement of the role our culture plays in our practice. It also acknowledges the importance of the emerging leadership of our young people and further incorporates their participation. It is a forward focusing plan that builds on our historical priorities and stretches us further.

### SHARING OUR RESEARCH

We have had an exciting year, further developing our research capability. We launched the inaugural Community First Development Fellowship for Research and Evaluation. The Fellowship is a fantastic pathway for First Nations academics to explore, design and deliver evaluation and research projects that are driven and led by First Nations peoples and communities. I'm really excited it was awarded to Donna Stephens, a Murran/ Iwaidja woman who brings a wealth of experience to our team.

We also published our first action research report in March 2020. It aims to evaluate the effectiveness of our community development approach and explains and explores why self-determination, leadership and governance are important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. The action research project is embedded in the work that we do. It marks our commitment to sharing our learnings and data and evidence of good governance practices in First Nations settings. We have 20 years of experience to draw on in this space. To be recognised as a credible, authentic research organisation means we can provide evidence and information to people charged with making policies that impact First Nations people.

We take a sophisticated approach to recording our engagement, projects, monitoring, evaluation and impacts arising from our community development work. The analysis of this data enables us to rapidly identify where positive impacts are occurring or gaps are emerging. It allows us to evaluate our practice and provide sound evidence based information to Government and others to inform policies that impact our people and communities. Our customised database is one of the key tools that we use to achieve this. This year we commenced a project to take the database further, and share it with others. We're really proud of the innovation that we're bringing to this.

### THANK YOU

I would like to thank our people, our communities, volunteers, supporters, the Board, fellow leaders and the corporate foundations who believe in us, and Government for its financial assistance.

I thank my friend and mentor, Bill Armstrong, our retired Co-Chair. I've learned much from Bill, as have my colleagues within Community First Development. He has left a lasting legacy with the organisation, to put people first.

Finally, this year we received a bequest from someone who wasn't a known supporter. They have made a significant contribution towards the empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to help us continue our work. It's people like this that I want to honour and thank. Without their ongoing belief and commitment in us we couldn't do the work that we do and achieve positive impacts for First Nations people. I want to take this opportunity to give thanks to all our supporters who honour us by leaving us a bequest in their Will.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2020-2023

### 1 THRIVING COMMUNITIES

We will achieve thriving communities, with our people, for our people, through successful development and research initiatives, designed and delivered in partnership. This includes a focus on youth and their emerging leadership.

### 2 ACTION LEARNING

We will value and develop our people by providing a rewarding and satisfying place to work. We will continue to improve our development and research practice and methodology, through lessons learnt with our people.

### 3 INFLUENCE POLICY

Increase communication and accessibility to our work, share our impact and grow our evidence base, to influence policy.

### 4 GROW

While staying true to our community development approach and organisational culture, diversify and create new First Nations opportunities that grow our organisation and allow us to innovate, expand and share knowledge, learning and success.



# OUR NEW NAME

In March 2020 we changed our name from Indigenous Community Volunteers to Community First Development.

We have long recognised the need for our name to better reflect the unique way we work with community – to put Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities first.

Our belief in our people and their right to determine what they need to create better conditions for their communities remains as always.

Same philosophy, same values, and the same unique approach to working with communities. Now with a new name to reflect our focus on putting community first.

## OUR STORY IN A PAINTING

Our 20 year celebrations have commenced with an artwork especially painted for us by Krystal Hurst, a Worimi artist and Creative Director from Gillawarra Arts. The painting tells the story of our connection with community. The circles represent different communities and tell us that every community is different with their own language, knowledge and way of life. We respect and acknowledge those differences. It shows the pathways of connection and collaboration between communities and Community First Development, our supporters and volunteers.

It shows the different landscapes of our people and the meeting places where we gather to listen, yarn, learn and plan. The painting is rich and vibrant with the colours of land, sea and sky; it represents the respect, recognition and optimism we have for our people.



The Artwork by Krystal Hurst telling the story of Community First Development.

## INSPIRATION FOR A NEW LOGO

The painting inspired a new direction for our logo and identity. It was co-designed by Kimiah Alberts, a Gungalu, Koinjmal, Yiman and South Sea Islander woman from Queensland alongside communications agency contentgroup. The new logo and identity captures the essence of Community First Development. Our work is one of connection and collaboration, building respectful partnerships to achieve the positive changes determined and directed by each community.



COMMUNITY FIRST  
DEVELOPMENT

# ACKNOWLEDGING RETIRED CO-CHAIR

## BILL ARMSTRONG, AO

This year our highly respected Co-Chair, Bill Armstrong, retired after 20 years with the organisation, and 13 years in the role of Co-Chair.

Bill commands much respect in the community development field, both within Australia and internationally. We have learned much from him. Alongside other board members, Bill was instrumental in the significant change to our community development practice 10 years ago. His influence and legacy is strongly felt within the organisation.

During his time with Community First Development, Bill always put people first, whether this was staff, community partners, our supporters or volunteers.

We consider Bill one of the greatest humanitarians of our time. With the great respect we have for him, and his lasting contribution in mind, Community First Development created on his retirement the Bill Armstrong Human Rights Award. The award will be presented annually to a staff member, supporter, volunteer or community member who has made an outstanding contribution to human rights. We thought this would be the highest honour we could make to show our respect and support of Bill, knowing that he is a humble man and wouldn't want any accolades. The first recipient of the award will be announced in October 2020.



Chair, Karen Milward, presents Bill with the Bill Armstrong Human Rights Award, to be awarded annually to a staff member, supporter, volunteer or community member who has made an outstanding contribution to human rights.







# COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT 2019-2020

159

COMMUNITIES



Community First Development partnered with 159 different communities across the 2019-2020 financial year. These communities are diverse, from initiatives that support First Nations people through not-for-profit or businesses, to geographic communities that invited Community First Development to partner with them.

209

PROJECTS



Across the 159 communities, Community First Development partnered together on 209 projects in the 2019-2020 financial year. Some of these projects were ongoing, some were newly commenced, and a number were completed across the year. Each project is shaped by the community, with ownership being held by the community. Community First Development partners alongside these communities by providing volunteers with skills in areas that they have identified will enable their community's dream to become a reality.



63

PROJECTS  
COMMENCED

63 projects were commenced during the financial year, 15 of which (24%) were also completed in that year.



94

PROJECTS  
CONTINUED

94 projects that had commenced in previous periods were continued through the 2019-2020 financial year. 75 of these (80%) were completed in the 2019-2020 year.





90

## PROJECTS COMPLETED

Of the 209 active projects, 90 were completed in the financial year.

40



283

## DREAM INDICATORS

had a positive change, with a median increase of

70 growth points.

## PROJECT INDICATORS

had a positive change, with a median increase of

71 growth points.

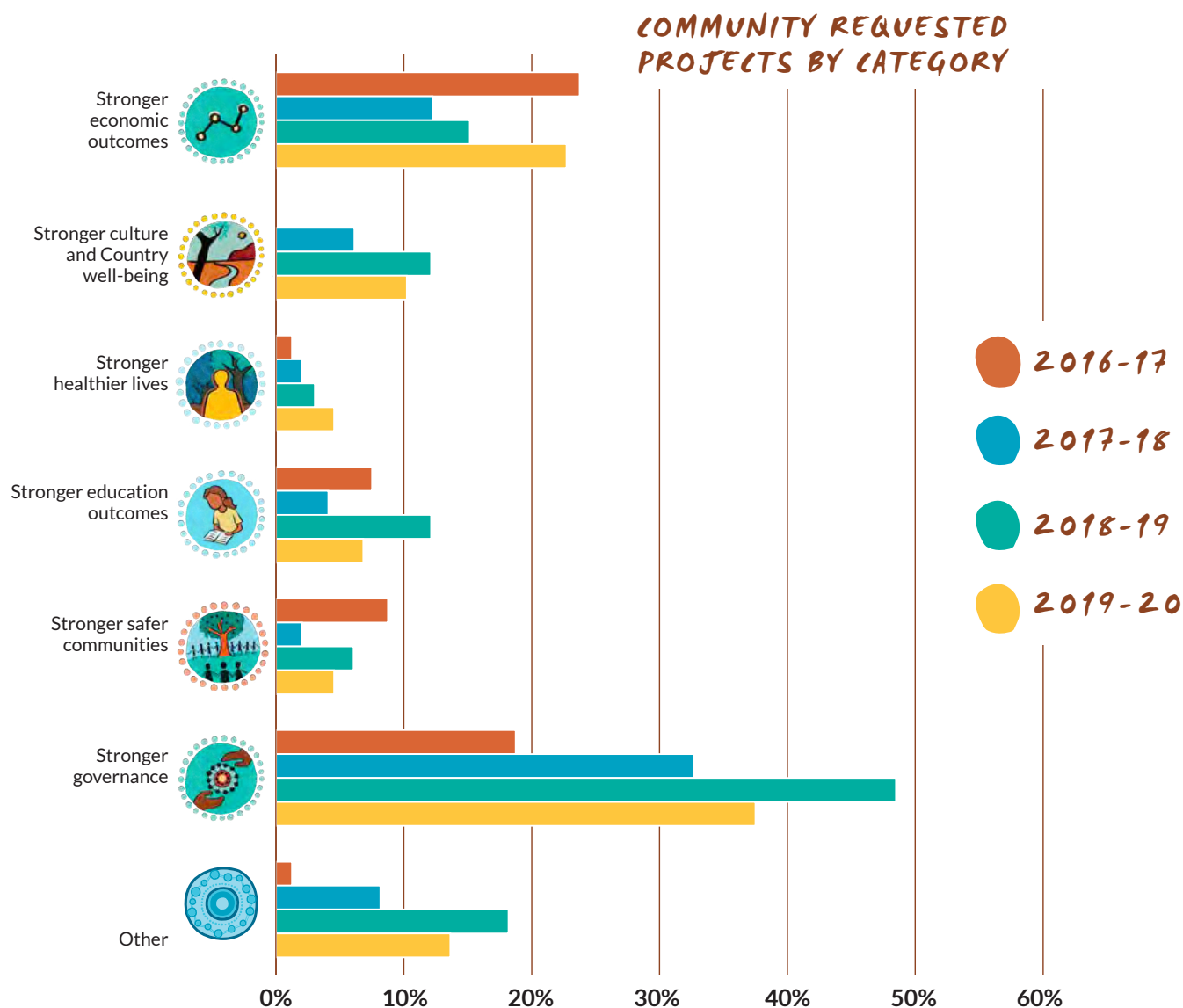


# ACTIVITY REPORT

Over 2019-20, we engaged with 159 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities on 209 community development projects. Of these, 90 community projects were completed during the year, directly assisting each community to move confidently towards a broad range of goals. Quality of life and wellbeing improved in these communities, as did the economic, educational and organisational position of many.

Our strength based community and human development approach is evaluated against a range of development outcomes listed below.

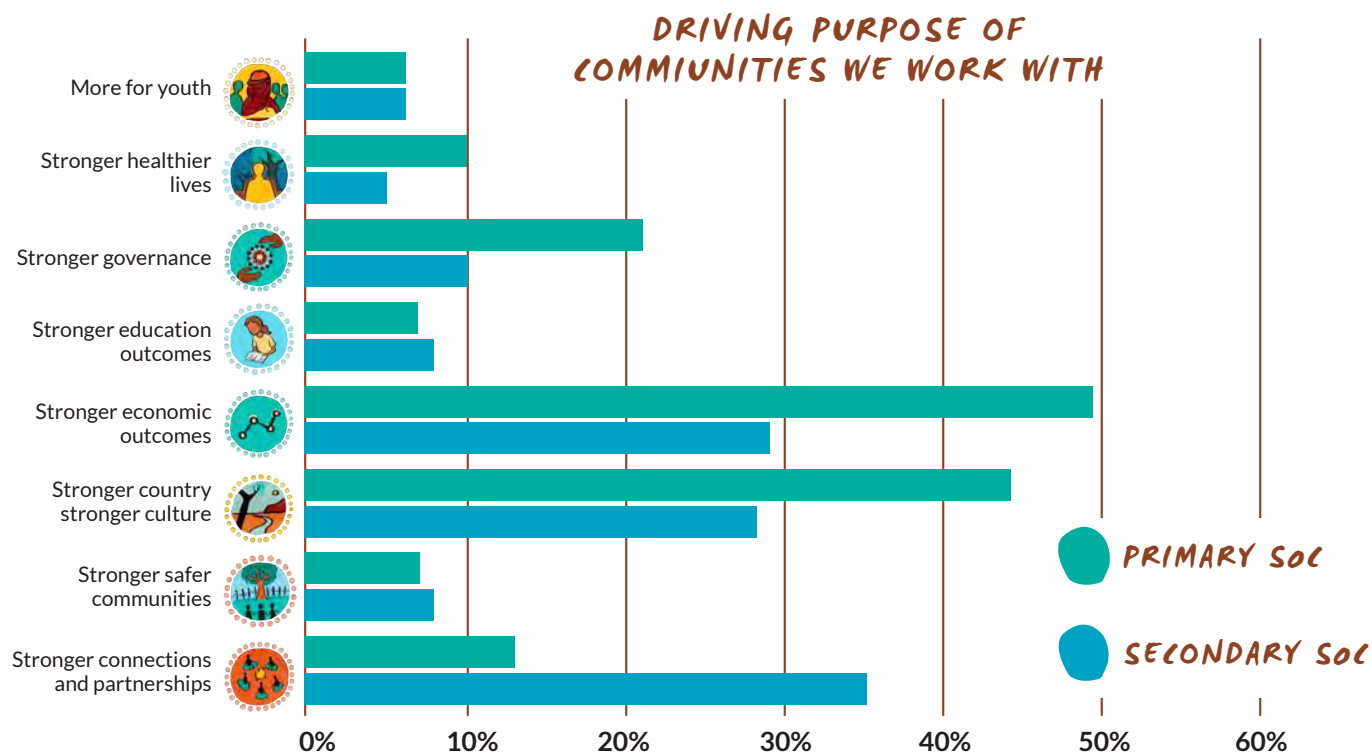
As in previous years, projects leading to stronger governance are still the most sought after, followed by *stronger economic outcomes*, *stronger Country*, *stronger culture* and those leading to *stronger education* outcomes. The 'other' category in the graph, which has been on the increase over the last few years consists of a mix of categories including *more for youth* and *stronger connections and partnerships*.





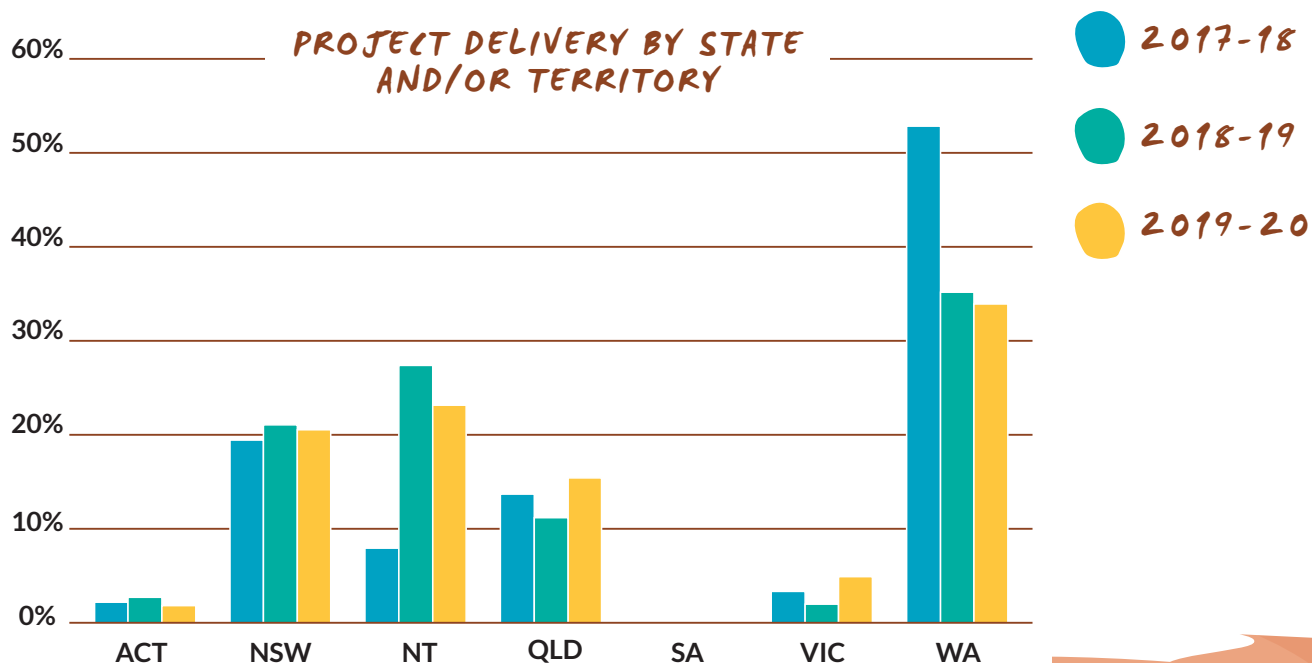
## FOCUS OF THE COMMUNITIES WE WORK WITH

Communities each have a unique vision and purpose, with a focus on different aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing. The primary and secondary purpose of the 159 communities we supported this year is outlined below. As per last year, improved economic outcomes remained the top focus for communities we engaged with, followed by cultural wellbeing and then community participation.

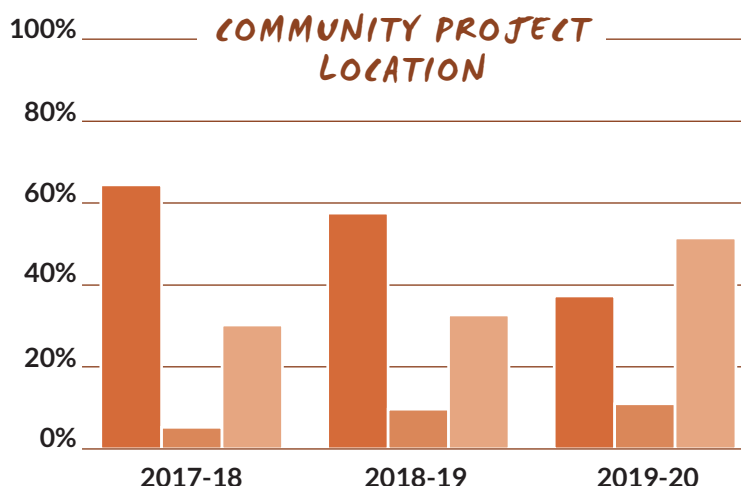


## WHERE WE WORK

In 2019-20, the distribution of projects across Australian states and territories was similar to last year. As shown below, project activity in Western Australia remains the highest, followed by the Northern Territory, then New South Wales and Queensland.



Urban based projects overtook regional based projects as the highest proportion of projects by location this year. The figure on the right illustrates this is the result of an upward trend in urban projects over the last few years, and a decline in the proportion of regionally based projects. There has also been a gradual increase in remote based projects.



## VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

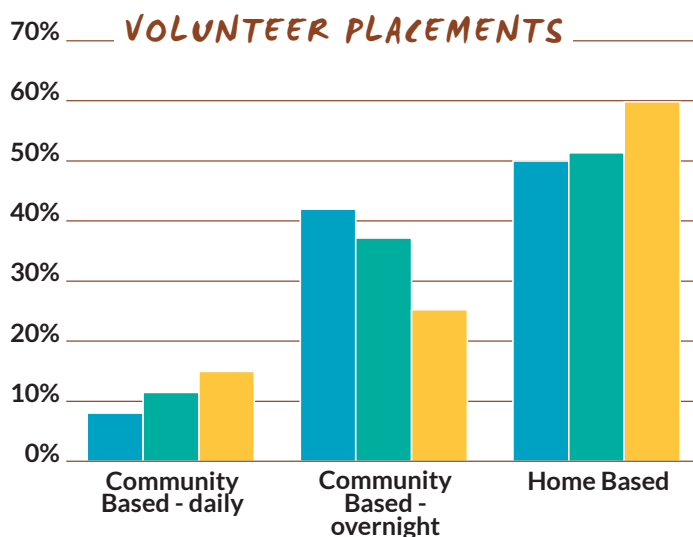
At the end of the financial year Community First Development had 381 active and 241 prospective volunteers who spent a total of 3288 days year working with First Nations communities across Australia.

There were a total of 289 volunteer project placements over the year, highlighting that in some cases more than one volunteer is assigned to a project, a model used to bring a variety of skills to deliver one project. As has been the case for some time, the majority of volunteers continue to be female (58%) and the majority of volunteers are in the 56-70 age group category (33%), followed by those aged between 26-39 (24%).

Early in the financial year we had the opportunity to hear and learn from our volunteers via a survey. The findings of the survey provided guidance on areas to prioritise in our volunteer induction, targeting areas volunteers are interested in learning about. We have since applied these learnings by running a pilot revised induction, and work has commenced to develop an interactive and accessible online volunteer induction.

Using the survey data, we also identified the key skills our volunteers have to offer, and areas where further recruitment was required. As a result, targeted recruitment through our website has seen a steady rise in volunteer inquiries throughout the financial year.

As in previous years, desktop and home based volunteer project support continued to dominate the type of volunteer placement this year. As shown above, there was a noticeable rise relative to previous years that could (along with the decline in volunteer community based placements) in part be attributed to our response to COVID-19. The proportional representation of volunteer daily commutes continued to trend upwards, while the proportion of community based overnight placements continued to trend down.







## STORY OF CHANGE

Our Story of Change is the theory we work to. When we hold self-determination at the heart of all we do, First Nations people lead the way in creating more for youth, stronger economic and education outcomes, safer communities and stronger, healthier lives. We see the community as an eco-system, where everything is connected. Not one thing is more important than another. When one aspect of community life changes, it impacts other areas as well.

By nurturing unique community environments the skills, knowledge and willpower of First Nations people shine and communities grow stronger.



STRONGER  
GOVERNANCE



STRONGER  
ECONOMIC  
OUTCOMES



STRONGER  
CONNECTIONS  
& PARTNERSHIPS



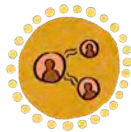
MORE FOR  
YOUTH



STRONGER  
COUNTRY,  
STRONGER  
CULTURE



STRONGER  
HEALTHIER  
LIVES



DATA  
SOVEREIGNTY



STRONGER  
EDUCATION  
OUTCOMES



STRONGER  
SAFER  
COMMUNITIES



STRONGER  
CROSS-CULTURAL  
COMMUNITY

## MEASURING OUR IMPACT

Our approach to evaluating impact takes into account both long and short-term performance indicators, which are co-designed with communities. As self-determination is at our core, communities that we work with tell us what success looks like to them in the medium to longer-term. We then co-design 'dream indicators & project indicators' with each community to measure the progress towards these aspirations.

We partner with communities and through a process of listening and yarning, we collaborate to find out what their dreams and visions are for their community. We listen and identify what main areas their stories of change align with.









EXAMPLE DREAM INDICATOR	PROJECT STORY OF CHANGE INDICATOR	COMMUNITY FOCUS
A business plan that accurately reflects the vision, goals and objectives of the organisation.		
Lobby and attain support from [Local Council] to develop a Youth Forum.		
Business being successful and providing employment for the Local Aboriginal Organisation.		
Multiple generations of community members involved in community cultural projects.		
Increased health and wellbeing of Aboriginal Men in [Community] engaging with [Program] services.		



## PROGRESS IN 2019-2020

### DREAM INDICATORS WITH A MONITORING POINT IN 2019-2020 THAT SHOWED OVERALL CHANGE

From all the data gathered, team members work with communities to identify the degree of change across each indicator and give it a score. From the 40 indicators that showed change in 2019-2020, the average overall change was 61 (out of 100). When categorised against the Story of Change outcomes, the most significant positive change occurred around stronger cross-cultural community (80), followed by stronger governance (71), more for youth (61) and stronger economic outcomes (58).

STORY OF CHANGE OUTCOME	AVERAGE OVERALL CHANGE
	58
	47
	61
	71
	18
	80
	54
	75

### DREAM INDICATOR MEASUREMENTS

373

The total number of Dream Indicators for engaged communities

127







The total number of Dream Indicators with a Monitoring Point in 2019-2020

40

The total number of Dream Indicators with a Monitoring Point in 2019-2020 and an overall change

### PROJECT INDICATORS: MEASURING PROGRESS

In addition to the larger aspirational dream indicators, each specific project has indicators that are monitored. These project indicators are also developed in collaboration with the communities and relate to the specific outcomes they are desiring to see from the project. Across the Story of Change project indicators, the greatest overall change was across the stronger, healthier lives indicator (87), followed by stronger cross-cultural community (80) and data sovereignty (73).

STORY OF CHANGE OUTCOME	AVERAGE OVERALL CHANGE
	65
	61
	64
	60
	87
	71
	80
	73
	56
	81

### PROJECT INDICATOR MEASUREMENTS

209

Total number of Projects with a Monitoring Point in 2019-2020

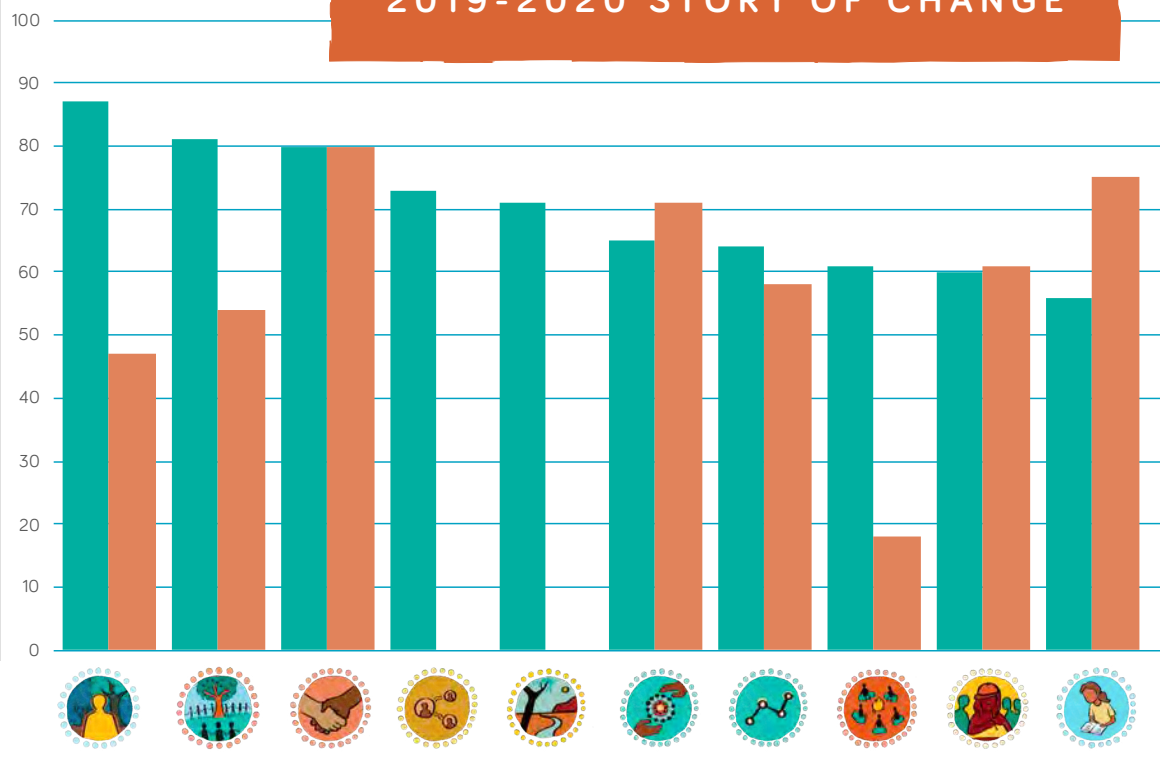
697

The total number of Project Indicators with a Monitoring Point in 2019-2020

286

The total number of Project Indicators with a Monitoring Point in 2019-2020 and an overall change

## 2019-2020 STORY OF CHANGE

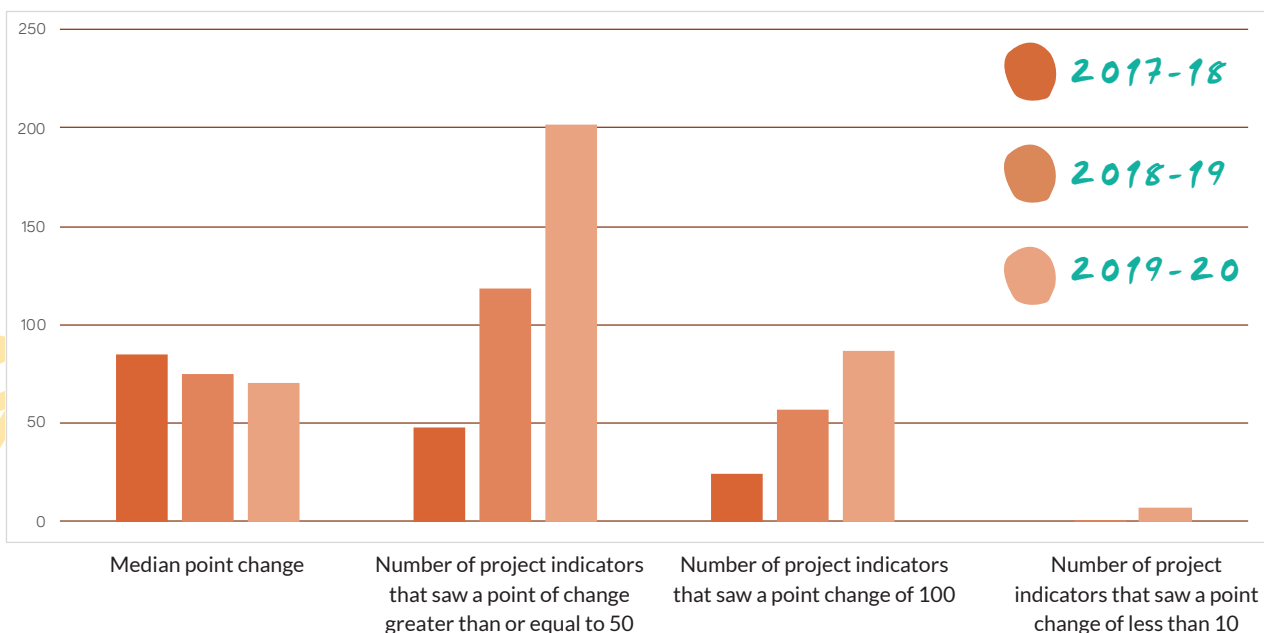


● AVERAGE OVERALL CHANGE IN PROJECT INDICATORS

● AVERAGE OVERALL CHANGE IN DREAM INDICATORS

## TRACKING CHANGE OVER TIME

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Total number of projects with a Monitoring Point in the financial year	49	109	209
The total number of projects indicators with a Monitoring Point in the financial year	133	341	697
The total number of project indicators with a Monitoring Point in the financial year as well as an overall change	57	160	286
Median point change	85	75	70
Number of project indicators that saw a point change of greater than or equal to 50	48	118	202
Number of project indicators that saw a point change of 100	24	57	87
Number of project indicators that saw a point change of less than ten	0	1	7







# OUR RESEARCH

## INAUGURAL FELLOWSHIP FOR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

This year we launched our inaugural First Nations Fellowship for Research and Evaluation. The Fellowship is a pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics to explore, design and deliver evaluation and research projects that are driven and led by First Nations people and communities.



The Fellowship has been awarded to Ms Donna-Maree Stephens (Dip.T, BEd, Med), an Iwaidja woman of the Muran clan, northwest Arnhem Land with 26 years' experience in education and research in the Northern Territory; focused on community engagement, educational and workforce outcomes for First Nations people. She has a long family history in the health and education sectors and brings a rich knowledge of community-based research and evaluation practice to the organisation.

Donna has been supporting our current Action Research Project and is providing learning and development support to our Community Development Team to strengthen community-led outcomes and the quality of evidence captured. She has facilitated and contributed to our six-weekly Community of Practice sessions with staff across Australia, providing specific training on semi-structured interviewing and data analysis and coding.

## ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT FIRST REPORT

We published our first official research report in April, an important milestone for our organisation.

The report marks our continuing commitment to share our learnings, data and evidence of good governance practices in First Nations settings. The report focuses on the research project design and initial work that we have done, which includes some new insights around research methodology and our initial understandings about creating Bridges in Governance. It also includes four co-authored case studies that tell the story of change in four communities.

The key themes we see emerging from the data can be grouped into the following areas:

- Governance, particularly the concept of 'bridges' (tools, strategies and pathways) to navigate into the intersecting space where First Nations Governance and Western Governance meet; and
- Community First Development ways of working, particularly the importance of trust and how communities see us as an 'instrument' that can support them to achieve their goals.



This year, we were proud to showcase our Participatory Action Research findings at the Australian Evaluation Society (AES) conference in Sydney. From left to right: Doyen Radcliffe, Belinda Gibb, Sharon Babyack, Emily Lapinski and Jackson Hunt.

Through this project, we have also been strengthening our research practices. We have created, piloted and adapted a Seed to Tree monitoring and evaluation tool and experimented with a new approach to program theory and logic (described further on the next page).

We have also learnt that yarning is the most effective research approach to use to talk deeply with people about governance practices. Yarning is a legitimate research method that our Community Development Team use.<sup>iii</sup> The first round of interviews used a more formal semi-structured interview approach, one that felt a bit foreign to both our team and the Communities. As a result of this finding, we modified our approach for the second round of interviews, and developed a yarning tool to spark more genuine conversations.

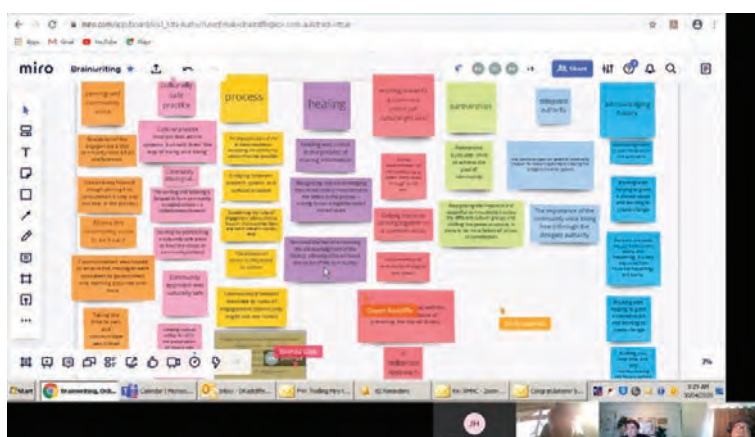
Following publication of the report, we commenced the final phase of our research plan. Through yarning interviews, we checked the emerging themes with Communities to ensure we were on the right track.

## CODING AND ANALYSIS

Our Community Development Team has been applying knowledge gained through the Community of Practice sessions to analyse and code round one interview data. This has been done collaboratively as a team, but also within smaller regional teams, using videoconferencing and online whiteboards to facilitate the process.

This has been a learning journey for everyone and also one of discovery.

The knowledge, skills and experience gained are not only applicable to this Action Research Project but also to our community development practice. Thinking critically about data and using data to strengthen our practice will result in stronger outcomes for the communities we work with.



Screenshot of the Western Region Team using Teams and Miro to collaboratively code interview data

**WE FOUND THE EXERCISE VERY BENEFICIAL IN NUTTING OUT AND YARNING ABOUT KEY MESSAGES TO ANALYSE AND WE ARE LEARNING MORE EACH DAY AS WE GO THROUGH THE PROCESS. WE ARE DISCOVERING NEW THINGS. THERE IS SO MUCH RICHNESS OF INFORMATION COMING OUT IN ANALYSING THE DATA.**

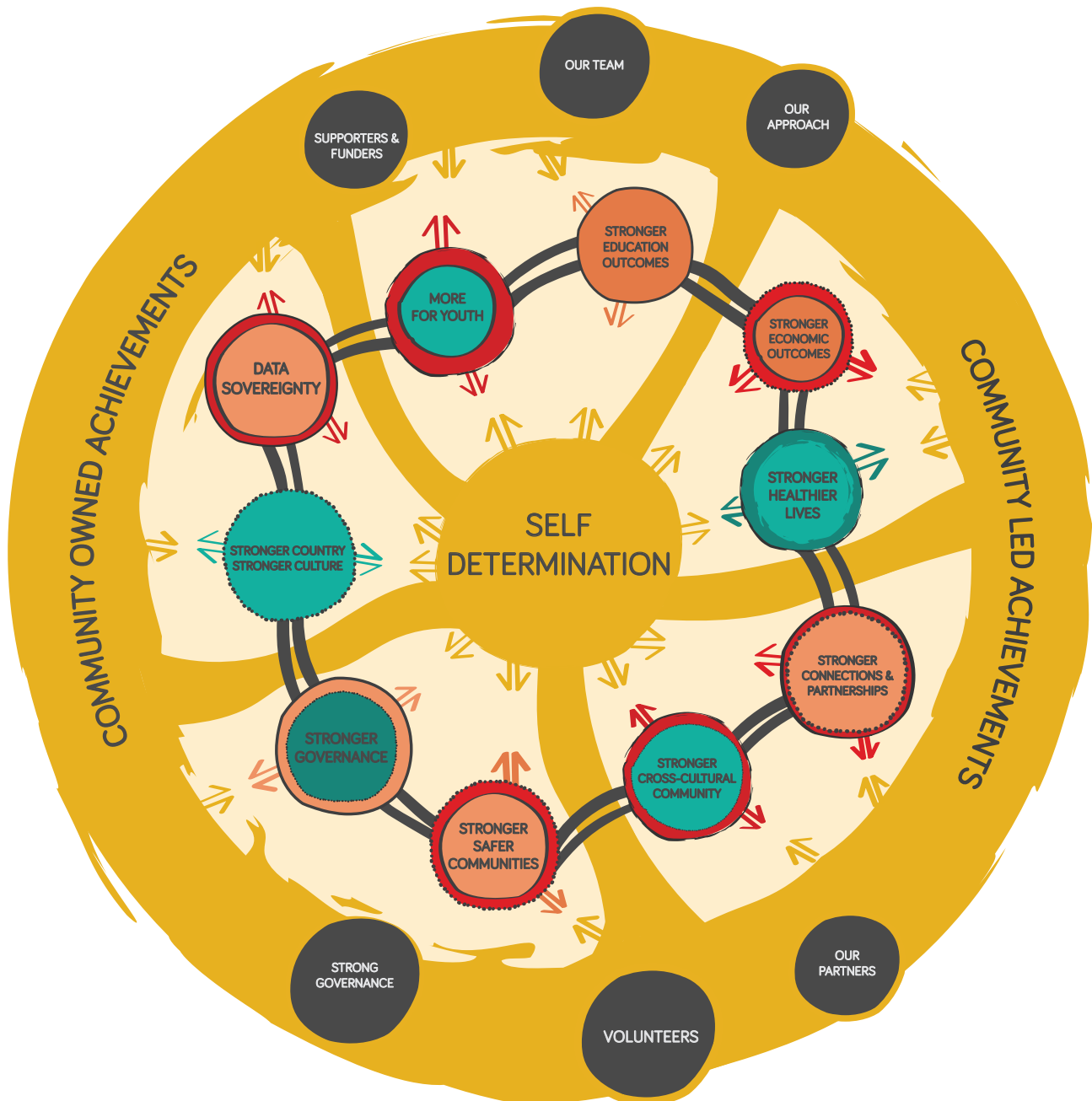
DOYEN RADCLIFFE, REGIONAL MANAGER WESTERN AUSTRALIA

i Bessarab, D., & Ng'andu, B. 'Yarning about yarning as a legitimate method in Indigenous research.' International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies, vol 3, 2010, pp37-150.

ii Laycock, A. (with Walker, D., Harrison, N., & Brands, J.) 'Researching Indigenous health: A practical guide for researchers.' Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: The Lowitja Institute, 2011.

## RE-THINKING OUR STORY OF CHANGE

Our Story of Change is the theory behind the outcomes we achieve with communities. Through many yarning sessions we challenged the linear approach to our previous Story of Change, and the Western approach and assumptions to designing program theories. This year we developed this concept that privileges First Nations perspectives. It is a circular approach to program theory that is interconnected, holistic and organic.



Similar to an ecosystem, our Story of Change has a core (self-determination), organisms (the 'outcomes' that contribute to making communities stronger), and elements that contribute to the ecosystem flourishing (Community First Development's people, approach and governance). All outcomes are interconnected and of equal importance, and all elements need to be strong for the ecosystem to flourish. Changing one element of the ecosystem impacts on other elements and the ecosystem's overall function.





We see each community we work with as an ecosystem. By nurturing unique community environments, the skills, knowledge and willpower of First Nations people shine and communities grow stronger.

This approach to developing a program theory may provide a tool for non-First Nations evaluators and policy-makers to better understand First Nations people and communities.

In line with our commitment to share our research findings, we worked with First Nations creative agency, 33Creative, to develop an animation to promote our Story of Change.

We launched an animation this year to promote our Story of Change.



# INNOVATION AND LEARNING

## USING TECHNOLOGY FOR THE GREATEST IMPACT

Our data base project, affectionately titled 'D4', was launched in 2020. The vision of the project is to create a cloud based platform of our existing custom impact measurement database. The database will have improved accessibility, enhanced capability, user friendliness and visual design.

As awareness of our work and methodology grows, there is increased interest in our approach to partnership, development and research with First Nations communities. We have started to test the product for commercial potential and trial options for external organisations. Providing access to the platform is one way we can extend our impact and provide additional support to First Nations organisations. It may also be a way we can provide additional capability and education to mainstream organisations looking to work more effectively with First Nations communities.

The platform will be accessible via computer and device applications and integrates with the Microsoft suite of applications. To build the product we're working together with Towcha Technology, a First Nations technology, strategy and support agency based in Melbourne. We also acknowledge the support of Microsoft in our decision making and strategy for the platform.

We're excited about this project. It will transform the way we utilise technology to support and strengthen our work with First Nations communities.



## OUR COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

### COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

As part of our commitment to action learning and strengthening outcomes with communities, we established a six-weekly 'Community of Practice' involving staff from our Impact and Strategy and Community Development teams. The yarning-based sessions aim to facilitate a learning environment where staff support each other to undertake high quality community development, including monitoring and evaluation. The main goal is to improve outcomes for the communities we work with through regular reflection and shared learning.

With staff based across Australia, our initial Community of Practice sessions occurred by teleconference but quickly moved to videoconferencing. While this was a bit of an adjustment, we have found engaging face-to-face to be much more effective and engaging.

As part of the Community of Practice, Donna, our inaugural Fellow for Research and Evaluation provided specific training on semi-structured interviewing and data analysis and coding. We have also used the forum to formalise feedback loops, identify data gaps in our Action Research Project; revise our Story of Change diagram; and collaboratively solve monitoring and evaluation challenges.

Our Community of Practice has evolved substantially over the last year. We will continue to build on the strength of the group to achieve continual improvement in our practice.



## LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS

To thrive as an organisation we recognise the importance of supporting our employees to grow and work on their goals. A number of our team achieved significant milestones in personal academic endeavours and scholarships, reporting a direct benefit to their work practices.

### DEMONSTRATING SOCIAL IMPACT

Emily completed a Graduate Certificate in Social Impact on a partial scholarship from the Centre For Social Impact.

*ONE OF THE UNITS, DEMONSTRATING SOCIAL IMPACT, REALLY ALLOWED ME TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT THE THEORY OF CHANGE AND OTHER EVALUATION CONCEPTS THAT I USE IN MY JOURNEY WITH FIRST NATIONS ORGANISATIONS WHO ARE STRIVING TO ACHIEVE BETTER OUTCOMES FOR THEIR COMMUNITY. THE COURSE ALSO OPENED MY EYES TO THE UNIQUE WAY THAT COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT OPERATES, WORKING COMFORTABLY IN A SYSTEMS CHANGE ENVIRONMENT AS AN ADAPTABLE AND INTUITIVE FIRST NATIONS RUN ORGANISATION."*

EMILY, SENIOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER



Emily, Senior Community Development Officer

### AN MBA INTENSIVE

In early 2020 Tom completed an MBA with Ducere Global Business School with the support of a partial scholarship.

*THE COURSE WAS DAUNTING — A 13 MONTH INTENSIVE ACROSS THREE TRIMESTERS WITH TWO FIVE-DAY BREAKS DURING THE PERIOD! I CHOSE THE COURSE BECAUSE OF THE INNOVATIVE DESIGN AND STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM.*

TOM LAYTON, GM BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION



Delivered online, a key component of the course is an industry project where students participate in an industry project group. As part of the scholarship program, Community First Development became an industry partner. To date, this has supported university project teams to look at further development of our programs and to provide advice on our recent rebranding process. Tom is now applying course learnings every day in his role as General Manager of Business Development and Innovation.

## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION TECHNIQUES AND MENTORING

Four of our Community Development Team were given the opportunity to complete training with the Menzies School of Health Research. Menzies provided Jackson and Tania with a full scholarship to complete a Certificate II in Community Health Research focusing on monitoring and evaluation. This included flights to attend several workshops and funding towards community development projects.

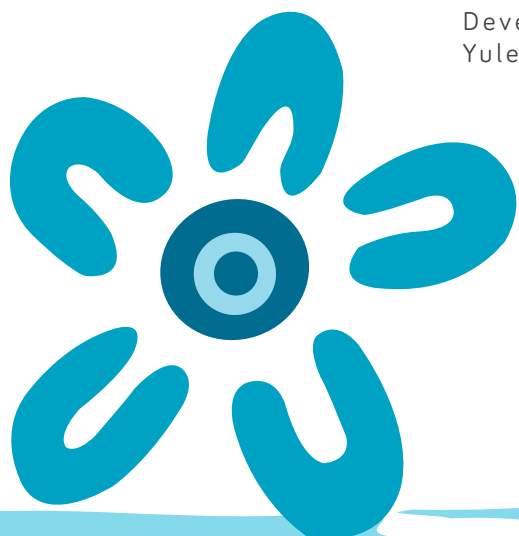
Tania was able to purchase an iPad, voice recorder and a camera for monitoring and evaluation. This equipment was used to produce a video promoting school attendance in the remote community of Kalkarindji, Northern Territory. Jackson used the funding for flights for himself and a Community First Development volunteer to facilitate a project in Port Hedland, Western Australia where he conducted detailed evaluation interviews with community members and Elders.

Nina and Gwen were also provided a full scholarship to complete three units of an accredited Course in Indigenous Mentoring. We would like to thank the Menzies School of Health Research for these capacity building opportunities and project support.

*THE CERT. II WITH MENZIES WAS INCREDIBLE FOR ME PERSONALLY, TO BE ABLE TO MEET FANTASTIC PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE NT AND LEARN MORE ABOUT SPECIFIC RESEARCH TECHNIQUES IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING. DONNA, JODI AND CLARISSA WERE FANTASTIC IN EXPLAINING, INSTRUCTING AND SHOWING APPROPRIATE TECHNIQUES THAT I HAVE USED MORE THAN ONCE SINCE THEN IN MY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE USE OF LEADING QUESTIONS IN DATA COLLECTION AND THE ABILITY TO ANALYSE DATA FROM A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW.*

JACKSON HUNT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

George Pitt, Wangka Maya Board Member, and Jackson, Community First Development CDO, at the Yule River meeting, WA.



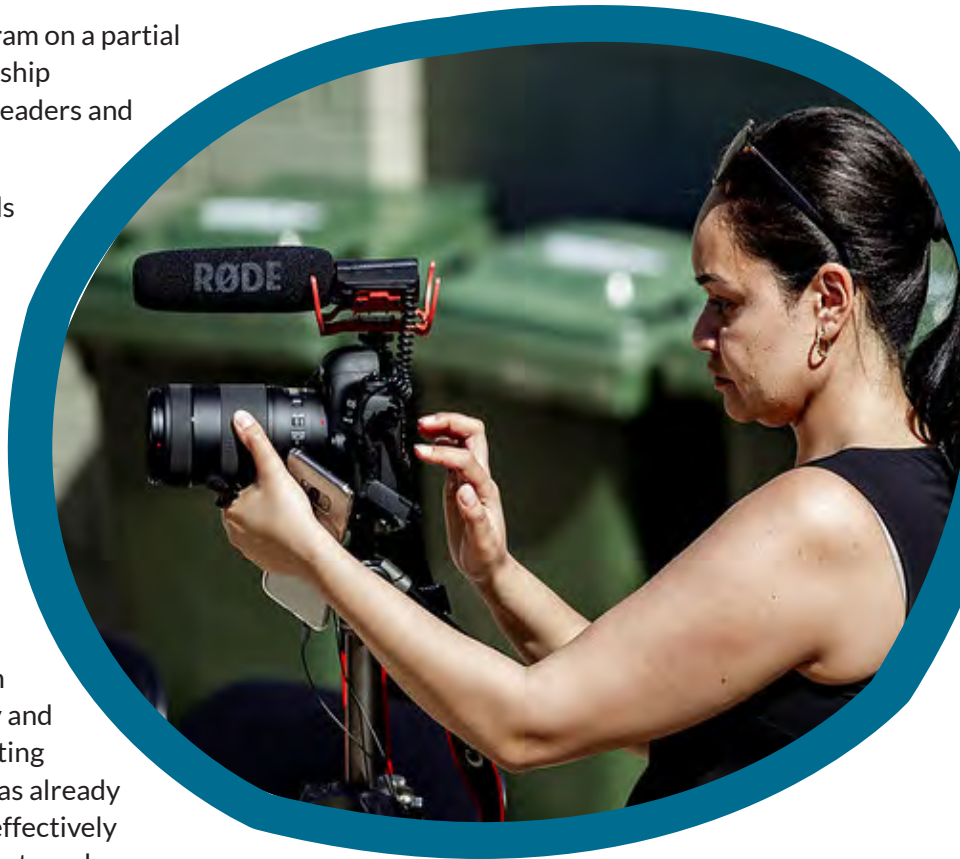


## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Keisha completed a Leading Edge Program on a partial scholarship. This is a four-month leadership development program for early career leaders and managers.

The course focused on the fundamentals of leadership and management and explored and challenged individual leadership traits. It covered topics including presence and presentation, elements of a successful team, leading in times of change, emotional intelligence and conflict.

Keisha also completed a four-day Storytelling for Factual Workshop with the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) in Perth. The workshop developed and honed skills in producing factual stories (documentary and digital) through story structure and writing skills. These are valuable skills Keisha has already put to use to develop video content to effectively communicate about who we are and what we do.



THE HIGHLIGHT WAS MEETING LIKE-MINDED WOMEN WHO ARE ON A SIMILAR LEADERSHIP JOURNEY. THE COURSE GAVE ME SELF-AWARENESS ABOUT MY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES THAT I NEEDED TO IMPROVE ON IN THE WORKPLACE AND AS AN INDIVIDUAL. IT CHANGED MY MINDSET FOR THE BETTER. WHILE LEARNING ABOUT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND CONFLICT, I LEARNED NEW TECHNIQUES TO USE WHEN FACING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS. I WORK WITH DIFFERENT TEAMS ACROSS THE ORGANISATION, ON DIFFERENT PROJECTS, AND I FEEL LIKE THE COURSE HAS GIVEN ME THE TOOLS TO BETTER MANAGE PROJECTS AND PERFORM BETTER IN MY ROLE.

KEISHA MILLER, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



# INNOVATIVE AND RESPONSIVE THROUGH COVID-19

With Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at particular risk from virus infection, COVID-19 left many communities isolated and vulnerable. Working with the COVID-19 restrictions posed challenges and also created new opportunities to test the resourcefulness of our organisation and the communities we work with.

We took swift action when the restrictions were put in place to keep communities safe yet still connected to crucial projects. Communities responded just as quickly and, together, we came up with innovative ways to keep projects moving.

There is nothing more powerful than face to face meetings and the opportunity to yarn with community members – but through video conferencing, we could get on with our jobs and progress critical community projects.

**IN APRIL ALONE, DURING THE HARSHTEST LOCKDOWN MEASURES, THERE WERE 57 ACTIVE COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

## HEALING FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

One crucial project that continued to progress was the Aboriginal Male's Healing Centre (AMHC) in the Newman township of the Pilbara in Western Australia.

The AMHC is a not-for-profit organisation owned and led by Aboriginal community members motivated by their vision 'that all Aboriginal women and children live safe and healthy lives free of family violence.' The AMHC provide culturally appropriate family and domestic violence services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Pilbara.

With Community First Development's support, AMHC has been able to use video conferencing to continue the planning and construction of AMHC Healing Centre, as well as the development of their important services.



Working on construction plans for AMHC *before* COVID-19.

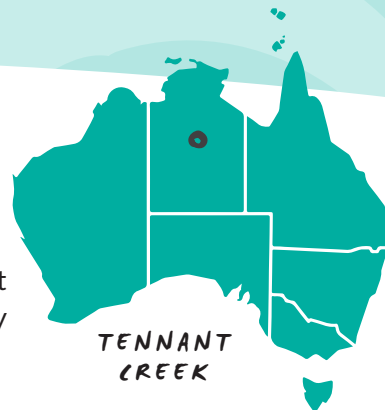


Working on construction plans for AMHC *during* COVID-19.

*This project would not be possible without the collaboration and support of the following companies: ARUP, Matthews McDonald Architects, Allied Projects Pty Ltd, TAG Architects, PM+D ARCHITECTS.*

## MASTERING E-COMMERCE FOR COMMUNITY SUCCESS

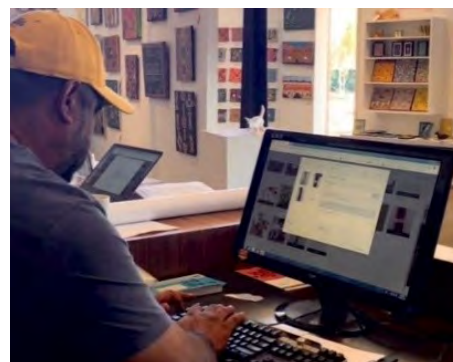
Nyinkka Nyunyu in Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, have a beautiful retail space at their Cultural Centre. Now, as a result of a Community First Development website project completed this year, and the community's ongoing hard work, they also have an online store to expand their customer base.



A project to prepare for the busy tourist season was quickly adapted to an online project with a focus on digital literacy and keeping Nyinkka Nyunyu on the map during the COVID-19 pandemic. This required a thriving website, an active blog, a well-stocked e-commerce store, and an energised and active team with interesting projects to work on while the Centre remained closed to tourists.

Together, the Nyinkka Nyunyu team and a Community First Development volunteer bravely navigated Zoom, shared screens, used remote access databases and shared drives to achieve some significant outcomes.

When Nyinkka Nyunyu's website was first developed, Joseph had never edited a website or seen the back end of one. Now, he's got the confidence to add events, write blogs, upload artworks, and add new pages. Joseph came into the project with some great existing skills, and has built from there:



Joseph when he first started learning about the website.

*HAVING THE CONFIDENCE, IT'S IMPORTANT IF I'M GOING TO JUMP ON THERE (THE WEBSITE) MYSELF. SOMETIMES I DON'T HAVE THAT CONFIDENCE THOUGH... I CAN PROBABLY DO IT IF I REALLY TRY, BUT I JUST HAVE SO MUCH MORE CONFIDENCE WORKING WITH SOMEONE WHEN I'M WORKING ON NEW THINGS THAT I HAVEN'T DONE BEFORE.*

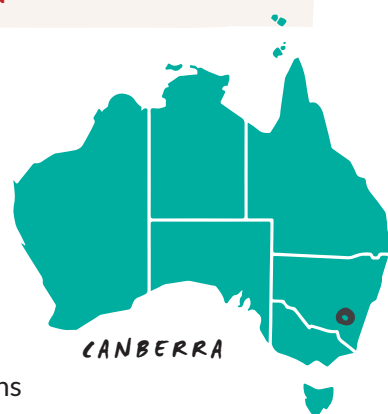
JOSEPH WILLIAMS, NYINKKA NYUNYU'S CULTURAL LIAISON AND MEN'S ART FACILITATOR

Joseph and artist, Frieda, have now independently uploaded many of their own works to the website. Their efforts are already bearing fruit, with a number of artworks and artefacts already sold. You can see the latest artwork from the community at [nyinkkanyunyu.org.au](https://nyinkkanyunyu.org.au)

## SUPPORTING TALENTED FIRST NATIONS ARTISTS

Talented Wiradjuri and Ngardi musician, Dale Robert Huddleston, invited us to support in the set-up of his new website that went live during the restrictions.

Community Development Officer, Ruth, shared, "It's so wonderful to see these projects thriving as we work through new ways of communicating and connecting."



Dale has been greatly affected, like so many performing artists, by the COVID 19 restrictions with the cancellation of festivals and events across the country. He has used this time to experiment with new musical genres and has developed creative ways to share his music online, doing regular performances with his band and also as a solo artist. You can tune in to hear Dale's music at [riverbankenterprises.net](https://riverbankenterprises.net)

Talented Wiradjuri and Ngardi musician, Dale Robert Huddleston, has been able to use his new website to promote his music during the COVID-19 restrictions.







## WALPIRI-LED, CULTURALLY SAFE: GROWING CHILDREN UP STRONG

YUENDUMU, NT  
(REMOTE)

Yurrampi Child and Family Centre (CFC) is located in the thriving remote community of Yuendumu, approximately 290km northwest of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. They connect services, programs and cultural initiatives for young children, ensuring an integrated and holistic experience for children and their parents. The CFC is led by a Reference Group – Malpa Jungu Jintangka – comprising strong Yapa (Warlpiri) women who provide direction and advise on the best ways to ‘grow children up strong.’

While the CFC is officially led by the Department of Education, the Reference Group drives direction and plays a critical role in creating a culturally safe, self-determined early learning and childhood development space.

The Reference Group requested Community First Development’s support to develop branding that clearly established the centre as Warlpiri-led.

### A WINNING ARTWORK

The Reference Group ran an art competition in search of the right artwork to inspire the new brand and logo. The CFC then selected a volunteer to work with them to adapt the artwork into branding.

The volunteer worked collaboratively with the Reference Group and Jason, a young Warlpiri artist and graphic designer in community, to digitise the artwork. They created logos, branded templates, icons, and other promotional materials.

Marion also worked with Warlpiri educators, Ormay and Barbra, to digitise icons for each stage of the Warlpiri Theme Cycle intended to keep culture strong and promote two-way learning.<sup>i</sup> The icons form part of a broader plan to improve access to digital learning.

i. Disbray S., Martin B. (2018) Curriculum as Knowledge System: The Warlpiri Theme Cycle. In Wigglesworth G., Simpson J., Vaughan J. (Eds.), Language Practices of Indigenous Children and Youth. Palgrave Studies in Minority Languages and Communities. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

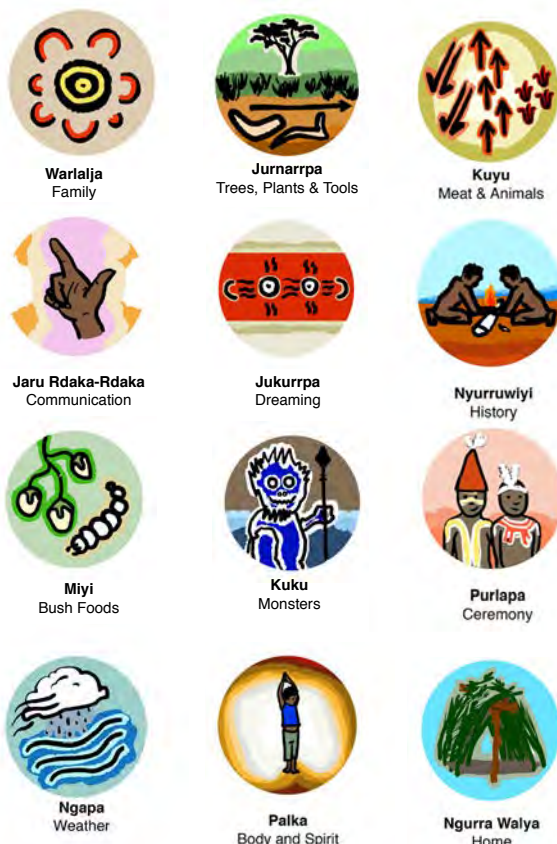


WE JUST HAD WORDS BEFORE. ONE KARDIYA (NON-INDIGENOUS PERSON) FELLA MADE SOME YEARS AGO, BUT HE DIDN'T TALK TO US, AND THE PICTURES HE CAME UP WITH WERE NOT APPROPRIATE. WORKING WITH (COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT) WAS DIFFERENT.

WE DID IT TOGETHER. IT'S REALLY GOOD THAT YOU HELPED US - NOW WE CAN LOOK BACK ON EACH THEME AND THE PICTURES OF EACH THEME HAVE MEANING, AND ARE CONNECTED TO WHAT WE ARE TEACHING.

ORMAY - BRDU WARLPIRI LITERACY WORKER

## ICONS DEVELOPED WITH ORMAY AND BARBARA - BILINGUAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT UNIT



Progress has been significant. The logo is complete and the CFC has a digitised version now printed in a range of formats to suit different purposes. The longer-term impacts of the project are starting to be realised. Widespread recognition of the logo is resulting in community ownership, pride for Warlpiri leadership, and greater respect for the place and people working there.

The CFC car, now branded with the new logo, receives a warm welcome when it visits families.

### KURDUNGURLU GOVERNANCE TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CULTURE

The Marlpa Jungu Jintangka have now shared aspirations to formalise their Warlpiri governance structure. The group identify themselves as kurdungurlu<sup>ii</sup> or “guardians” of young Warlpiri children in Yuendumu, a traditional role of female Elders in the community.

By documenting their governance structures in a Warlpiri way they seek to highlight the cultural relevance of the selected members and better enable them to speak on behalf of the full community. Creating a complimentary English version of the document would enable other organisations to work with the Marlpa Jungu Jintangka. This will enhance their ability to safeguard children, families and culture and provide direction to Early Years programs in Yuendumu.

The project provides a good example of how the process of community development can improve structures to strengthen community ownership. Kenny describes community development as an approach that aims “to enable communities to have effective control of their own destinies. Effective control requires the development of ongoing structures and processes by which communities can identify and address their own issues, needs and problems within their own terms of reference”.<sup>iii</sup>

ii. Kurdungurlu is a Warlpiri term that can be roughly translated as “guardian” or “manager” and originates from the concept of kurdungurlu and kirda ‘traditional owner’ as their roles and responsibilities in relation to jukurrpa.

iii. Kenny, S. (2006) ‘Developing communities for the future.’ Third Edition, Thompson, South Melbourne as cited in Campbell, D. and Hunt, J. (2010) ‘Community Development In Central Australia: Broadening the Benefits from Land Use Agreements, CAEPR Topical Issue 7.’ [https://www.clc.org.au/files/pdf/Paper\\_Broadening\\_the\\_benefits\\_of\\_Land\\_Use\\_Agreements.pdf](https://www.clc.org.au/files/pdf/Paper_Broadening_the_benefits_of_Land_Use_Agreements.pdf).



## MURRI'S ON THE MOVE, FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Murri's on the Move Driving School Limited (MOTM), is a not-for-profit Indigenous organisation that aims to eliminate barriers and assist their mob to gain a learner licence and transition to a full provisional driving licence. Based on the Sunshine Coast, they were established in 2012 following a successful learner driver pilot program. MOTM's understands the value of a person obtaining a driver licence.

*HAVING A DRIVER LICENCE CREATES OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK AND SECURE FULLTIME EMPLOYMENT. FOR MANY JOBS AND TRADES, HOLDING A LICENCE IS MANDATORY AND FOR MANY APPRENTICE POSITIONS, BEING ABLE TO TRAVEL TO SECURE WORK IS A BASIC REQUIREMENT. A DRIVER LICENCE IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF LIFE.*

KERRY, MURRI'S ON THE MOVE FOUNDING DIRECTOR AND PRINCIPLE DRIVING INSTRUCTOR

MOTM first approached us for support in 2014. They were a small driving school run by Founding Member and Principle Driving Instructor, Kerry, and a volunteer Board. During the previous three years, they delivered subsidised training to more than 500 people. With demand for places far outstripping what they could supply, they wanted assistance to expand their program.

### CONNECTING WITH VOLUNTEERS

Community First Development's Senior Community Development Officer, Eddie, connected MOTM with Community First Development volunteer, David. With his transport industry experience, David supported MOTM to submit two grant applications to the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads. These aimed to expand MOTM's program, strengthen their governance and administration, and ultimately assist more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to gain their drivers licences in order to reduce the road toll, unlicensed driving and incarceration rates.

MOTM's applications were successful and they expanded their training program and purchased a new vehicle fitted with dual controls and signage. In late 2016, as their business ramped up, they again requested support to strengthen MOTM's financial management and capabilities. Two Community First Development volunteers mentored and worked alongside Kerry as part of this project: Marella, with Excel and bookkeeping skills, assisted with data input; and Roy (pictured here) assisted Kerry to set up and use the MYOB accounting package.

*I HAVEN'T LOOKED BACK. I'VE ALSO TAKEN ON HIS (ROY'S) ADVICE AND EMPLOYED A PART TIME BOOKKEEPER TO FREE UP MY TIME. AND TO DO SO MOVE MYOB TO ONLINE ACCESS SO WE COULD SHARE ACCOUNT FILES.*

KERRY, MURRI'S ON THE MOVE FOUNDING DIRECTOR AND PRINCIPLE DRIVING INSTRUCTOR







## COMMUNITY-DRIVEN SUCCESS

Since then, MOTM has gone from strength to strength. They now have five driving instructors, three vehicles with dual controls and signage, and their service area has expanded one hour north to Gympie and one hour south to cover the Moreton Bay region. Their services extend beyond that of just driving tuition. MOTM is very involved in the local community, connecting their students to additional support through their collaborations with a myriad of providers and job agencies. Kerry and her team build trusting relationships where they can mentor students as well as provide driving instruction.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In 2020, MOTM approached us for support as they embarked on the next stage of their journey. They want to measure their results, map out the future direction of their business and strengthen their operations. Eddie connected MOTM with Community First Development volunteer, Russell, who has business development expertise. Russell has been working closely with MOTM to develop a draft Strategic Plan that is now very close to being finalised. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this has occurred via Zoom videoconferencing.

Eddie has also connected MOTM with Community First Development volunteer Ian, a politician and former senior lecturer in political science, to support them to seek funding to purchase two more dual control vehicles to meet community demand.

It has been a pleasure working with MOTM over the years and watching them go from strength to strength.

MOTM would also like to acknowledge the following individuals who have been instrumental to their development and success: Uncle Norm (Cultural Learner Licence Program); Jason Carr, Lance and Sally from EQ who Initiated the pilot program; and Nelly from Tjiltjapuna Web Designs who is their Information and technological wizard.

COMMUNITY  
FIRST DEVELOPMENT  
IS OUR 'GO TO PEOPLE'  
TO CONNECT US WITH  
SKILLED VOLUNTEERS. WE  
ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE  
ASSISTANCE THAT EACH PROVIDES  
US. THANK YOU TO COMMUNITY  
FIRST DEVELOPMENT TO HELP  
US ACHIEVE OUR GOALS AND  
CONTRIBUTE TO OUR EVER  
GROWING STORY AND  
SUCCESS!

## BROKERING CONNECTIONS FOR A NEW COMMUNITY PLAYGROUND



Based in Western Australia, Kurrawang Aboriginal Christian Community Inc (Kurrawang) is a unique, self-governing Aboriginal community consisting of approximately 90 residents who are working hard to create positive change in their community. The community is governed by an executive board (all volunteers) and has one full time staff member to manage community facilities.

Their vision is to strengthen social and economic well-being and achieve financial independence through town planning and enhanced services and infrastructure; affordable, safe, well-managed housing; education and business opportunities; and new and upgraded sports and recreation facilities.

### A LONG STRING OF SUCCESS STORIES

Kurrawang first invited Community First Development to work with them in 2013. Since then, they have made substantial progress towards achieving their dream. With our support, they have focused on strengthening their financial sustainability and administrative capabilities, successfully secured access to a telecommunications facility to deliver wi-fi to the community, delivered a home renovation scheme, and continue to work to source funding to upgrade their housing stock which is a key source of income.

### FLEXIBILITY AND A SOLUTIONS-FOCUS REWARDED

Most recently, Kurrawang has taken on a project to upgrade their playground and sports facilities to create a space for sport and community activities. This has proven to be a complex and lengthy process, working with multiple Community First Development volunteers and directly with a Community First Development Community Development Officer.

Following an unsuccessful application, Kurrawang decided to embark on a staged process to secure funding for the project. Working directly with a Community Development Officer, they submitted four applications to refurbish the sports court. Due to a change in policy, one of these funding bodies was unable to provide funding for the sports court and instead requested more detail about the playground element.

With a short deadline to provide this information, the Community Development Officer worked with Kurrawang to finalise the playground concept design and source potential companies that could meet their requirements. A Community First Development volunteer who happened to be in community assisting with another project, completed a land survey, and with the wider community's approval, Kurrawang sent the final design and quote to the funder.

At the same time, the Community Development Officer continued working with Kurrawang to secure the full amount of funding required to enable the sports court refurbishment to go ahead.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies has used a range of sources to identify key principles underpinning effective community development in First Nations communities. Kurrawang's achievements, and the approach taken is exemplary of good community development practice, including:

- adoption of a solutions-focused and asset-based approach to generating change; and
- a flexible approach to implementing and achieving short-term outcomes.<sup>i</sup>

i. Australian Institute of Family Studies (2015) 'What works in effective Indigenous community-managed programs and organisations', CFCA Paper No. 32 available at: <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/what-works-effective-indigenous-community-managed-programs-and-organisations/critical>





## NEW OPPORTUNITIES NOW IN SIGHT

By March 2020, Community First Development had supported Kurrawang to complete a total of nine successful funding applications. Under a Community First Development volunteer's supervision, the new playground equipment was installed and has quickly become a favourite place for Kurrawang kids. The volunteer has also spent considerable time liaising with contractors about the sports court refurbishment. As of June 2020, the asphalt is now down and completion of the sports court refurbishment is now in sight.

With a new playground and the sports court refurbishment close to completion, the wider community can see what's possible and are now thinking about other opportunities.

*YEAH THEY GOT IDEAS NOW BECAUSE THEY CAN SEE THE CHANGES IN THE COMMUNITY, EVERYONE'S FEELING PRETTY GOOD ABOUT IT. WELL WHAT THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE.*

DENISE, KURRAWANG ABORIGINAL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY INC

The community has already discussed a potential playgroup and running youth and holiday activities. They also hope to invite other community organisations to have sporting competitions at Kurrawang. It is likely this area will become a community hub, a place for children to grow up safely and learn about culture surrounded by their families and Elders.



### BEFORE:

Existing playground and identified area for new playground



### AFTER:

Kurrawang kids using the new playground equipment.





# FINANCIAL REPORT

for the year ended 30 June 2020

Reduced Disclosure Requirements

## Directors' Report

Your Directors present their report for the year ended 30 June 2020.

### Directors

The names and details of each person who has been a director during the year and to the date of this report are as follows. Directors were in office for this entire year unless otherwise stated.

#### Bill Armstrong AO

Bill has over 40 years experience in International Development and Not-for-Profit organisations. Bill was appointed CEO of Australian Volunteers International (AVI) in 1982 and held the position until retirement in 2002. Bill is life member of AVI, The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and Action Aid Australia.

In 2003 Bill was made an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AO) "For service to the international community and the provision of overseas aid relief through Australian Volunteers International, and to fostering greater understanding of different cultures and raising awareness of social justice and human rights issues."

**Co-Chair (up to 31 October 2019)**  
**Resigned 31 October 2019**

Director - YCW (Holdings) Melbourne

#### Karen Milward MBA, Williamson Fellow, Certificate IV Training and Assessment and Business Administration

Karen is a Yorta Yorta woman from Victoria and has extensive experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at grassroots and organisational levels. She regularly undertakes projects commissioned by government departments and their agencies, assisting those who have lead responsibility for policy and program development and service delivery impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Karen is a member of the Melbourne Business School Master Class Alumni, has attended the Australian Institute of Company Directors board and governance training and completed a Fellowship for Indigenous Leadership in 2014-2017.

**Karen Milward cont.**

**Chair (from 1 November 2019)**  
**Co - Chair (up to 31 October 2019)**  
**Chair, Governance Committee**  
**(up to 3 February 2020)**  
**Member, Governance Committee**  
**(4 February to 10 June 2020)**

Owner and Operator - Karen Milward Consulting Services  
Chair - Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place  
Chair - Kinaway Chamber of Commerce Victoria Ltd  
Director - Yarra Valley Water

#### Stan Kalinko, B.Com, LLB, Higher Diploma in Tax FAICD

Stan has been a professional company director of many companies, including public listed companies, Government owned enterprises, Not-for-Profit and private companies, before and after his retirement from law on 30 June 2007. He practised law for 38 years and specialised in corporate and commercial law. He was an investment banker for 6 years and is a Fellow of The Australian Institute of Company Directors and is an accredited mediator.

**Company Secretary**  
**Chair, Audit and Risk Management Committee**

## Directors' Report

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### John Jeffery

John is an Aboriginal man of the Wiradjuri Nation of central New South Wales. John specialises in providing corporate and public-sector groups with Indigenous employment and training solutions, with a strong focus on local people for local jobs. This involves working nationally with Indigenous communities, government agencies and industry groups to identify and realise joint venture partnerships, resulting in both new and enhanced employment and training opportunities.

**Member, Governance Committee**  
(from 11 June 2020)

**Managing Director - Yarra Custom Wear**

**Lauren Ganley** GAICD, FARLF, Graduate Australian Government Indigenous Leadership Program and Graduate Telstra Corporate Affairs Professional Development Program

Lauren has had an extensive corporate career having spent more than 30 years with Telstra. She led the corporation's Indigenous strategy delivering programs focused on digital inclusion, procurement, employment and cultural awareness. Following Telstra, Lauren was the CEO of Desert Knowledge Australia working on community programs that focused on positive and sustainable social change. In May 2019, Ms Ganley was appointed Northern Territory Director of PwC Indigenous Consulting (PIC) - a national Indigenous profit-for-purpose organisation.

**Member, Audit and Risk Management Committee**

Director - Kakadu Tourism

Chair - Telstra Indigenous Advisory Committee

Council Member - Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education

Director - Aboriginal Foundation of South Australia

### Ian Hamm

Ian is a Yorta Yorta man who has been actively involved in the Victorian Indigenous community in a personal and professional capacity for over 30 years. He has had a wide exposure to, and led, policy reform and program implementation for both the State and Federal Governments at executive level, most notably in Aboriginal Affairs. His work as a board member includes leading organisations through change and adaption to ensure they are well placed for the challenges of improving the lives of people in a rapid changing environment.

**Chair, Governance Committee**  
(from 4 February 2020)

**Member, Governance Committee**  
(up to 3 February 2020)

Chair - First Nations Foundation Ltd

Chair - Connecting Home Ltd

Chair - Koorie Heritage Trust Inc

Chair - Community Broadcasting Foundation

Board Member - Aboriginal Housing Victoria Ltd

Board Member - National Trust Australia (Victoria) Ltd

Board Member - Australian Red Cross

Board Member - Inclusive Australia Ltd

Board Member - Killara Foundation

Board Member - Yarra Valley Water

Board Member - Holmesglen TAFE



# Directors' Report

## Objectives

Community First Development is a First Nations community development and research organisation that creates positive change in and with First Nations communities. We promote the skills, talents and cultural strength of our people, and facilitate activities where they lead positive changes for their communities. We acknowledge our responsibility to contribute to a more just and equitable world for First Nations people.

As detailed in the Constitution, the objects, summarised here, are to:

- (i) undertake community development activities in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,
- (ii) link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with volunteers who have expertise to share,
- (iii) provide opportunities for Australians to make contributions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by working in partnership with these communities, and
- (iv) undertake fundraising activities in order to support the work of Community First Development.

## Strategy for achieving objectives

Community First Development has four strategic priorities as part of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023. The strategic priorities are:

1. Thriving communities: We will achieve thriving communities, with our people, for our people, through successful development and research initiatives, designed and delivered in partnership. This includes a focus on youth and their emerging leadership.
2. Action learning: We will value and develop our people by providing a rewarding and satisfying place to work. We will continue to improve our development and research practice and methodology, through lessons learnt with our people.
3. Influence policy: Increase communication, and accessibility to our work, share our impact and grow our evidence base, to influence policy
4. Grow: While staying true to our community development approach and organisational culture, diversify and create new First Nations opportunities that grow our organisation and allow us to innovate, expand and share knowledge, learning and success.

The above listed strategies have been developed to support the company's operations in future financial years and are expected to support the on-going operations of the company.

## Principal activities during the year

This year marked the 20th anniversary of Community First Development working with First Nations people. On 27 March 2020 the company name changed from Indigenous Community Volunteers Limited to Community First Development Limited.

During the year, Community First Development achieved the following outcomes:

- engaged with 159 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on 209 community development activities;
- finalised our first Action Research report, marking Community First Development's continuing commitment to share our learnings, data and evidence of good governance practices in a First Nations setting; and
- fundraised a total of \$3,142,658 in financial support from our supporters.

This year saw Community First Development working through the COVID-19 global pandemic. In March 2020 the Australian Government introduced restrictions that ceased travel and temporarily closed some businesses. Community First Development moved quickly to relocate our staff to work from home and was able to continue operations, engaging with First Nations people and communities. Travel to communities did cease from March 2020, however our Community Development officers continued to work with Communities on their projects.

Community First Development had an operating deficit for the year ended 30 June 2020 of \$337,097 (2019: \$346,288 surplus).

There were no other significant changes in the state of affairs during the financial year.

## Auditor independence

The Board has received a declaration of independence by the auditor. A copy is included in the following Financial Report.

## Member contribution if Community First Development is wound up

Community First Development has one class of member. Each member is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding \$20 if the company is wound up. The total amount that members are liable to contribute if the company is wound up is an amount not exceeding \$100.

# Directors' Report

## Directors' meetings

The number of meetings directors (including meetings of the committees of directors) held during the year and the number of meetings attended by each director were as follows:

	Directors' Meetings		Audit and Risk Management Committee		Governance Committee	
Number of meetings attended by:	A	B	A	B	A	B
Karen Milward	4	4			4	4
Stan Kalinko	4	4	4	4		
John Jeffery	4	4				
Lauren Ganley	4	4	4	4		
Ian Hamm	4	4			4	4
Bill Armstrong	2	2				

A - Number of meetings held to which the director was eligible to attend

B - Number of meetings attended

## Benefits and interests in contracts with Board Members

Members of the Board declare that they have no interest in contracts, transactions, arrangements or agreements with Community First Development, other than contracts entered into, in the ordinary course of the company's business.

Community First Development is covered by Directors and Officers Liability Insurance.

## Events subsequent to year end

There were no significant events occurring after 30 June 2020 which require adjustment or disclosure in the financial report.

## Directors' Declaration

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In accordance with the resolution of the Directors of Community First Development Limited, we state that:

In the opinion of the Directors of Community First Development:

- (a) The financial statements and notes of Community First Development are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012, including:
  - (i) Giving a true and fair view of Community First Development's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its performance for the year ended on the date; and
  - (ii) Complying with Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Regulation 2013;
- (b) There are reasonable grounds to believe that Community First Development will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable;
- (c) The provisions of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1946 (Western Australia) and the regulations under the Act and the conditions attached to the authority have been complied with;
- (d) The provisions of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (New South Wales) and the regulations under the Act and the conditions attached to the authority have been complied with;
- (e) The statement of profit and loss and the statement of financial position give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the organisation with respect to fundraising appeals; and
- (f) The internal controls exercised by the company are appropriate and effective in accounting for all income received and applied by the company from any of its fundraising appeals.

Signed on behalf of the Board this 12th day of August 2020.



Karen Milward  
Chair



# Independent Auditor's Report



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## Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Statements to the Members of Community First Development Limited

### Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020, the summary statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, summary statement of changes in equity and summary statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited financial report of Community First Development Limited (the Company) for the year ended 30 June 2020.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report, as prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements.

### Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012*. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

### The Audited Financial Report and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial report in our report dated 12 August 2020. The audited financial statements and the summary financial statements do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date our report on the audited financial statements.

### Responsibility of the Directors for the Summary Financial Statements

The directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements that are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report, as prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements.

### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

Ernst & Young  
Canberra  
21 September 2020

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# Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	Notes	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>Revenue</b>			
Donations from the public	4	3,142,658	3,121,153
Federal Government funding		500,000	2,000,000
Other Government funding		5,000	1,885
Federal Government subsidies		309,500	-
Philanthropic grant		400,000	-
Services revenue		57,080	179,464
Interest income		6,869	32,629
Other income		11,867	16,902
<b>Total revenue</b>		<b>4,432,974</b>	<b>5,352,033</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Community development activities		(2,435,116)	(2,282,385)
Direct costs of fundraising appeals	4	(612,599)	(1,013,848)
Compliance and governance		(158,672)	(159,031)
Enabling services		(715,217)	(688,502)
Supporter engagement		(445,667)	(397,367)
Awareness and education program		(377,880)	(321,112)
Business development and innovation		(24,920)	(143,500)
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>(4,770,071)</b>	<b>(5,005,745)</b>
<b>Net operating surplus/(deficit)</b>		<b>(337,097)</b>	<b>346,288</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year</b>		<b>(337,097)</b>	<b>346,288</b>

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements contained in the full financial report available through the Community First Development website [www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/annual-report-archive](http://www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/annual-report-archive)

# Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2020

	Notes	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash		3,198,746	3,478,478
Receivables	6	108,448	72,211
Prepayments		34,629	36,948
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>3,341,823</b>	<b>3,587,637</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Plant and equipment	7	2,099	6,722
Intangible asset	8	-	18,654
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>2,099</b>	<b>25,376</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>3,343,922</b>	<b>3,613,013</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	9	276,346	221,237
Employee benefits	10	311,954	289,659
Grants in advance		-	5,000
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>588,300</b>	<b>515,896</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Employee benefits	10	89,164	93,562
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>89,164</b>	<b>93,562</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>677,464</b>	<b>609,458</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>2,666,458</b>	<b>3,003,555</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>			
Accumulated funds		2,666,458	3,003,555
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>2,666,458</b>	<b>3,003,555</b>

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements contained in the full financial report available through the Community First Development website [www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/annual-report-archive](http://www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/annual-report-archive)



# Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	Total Accumulated Funds
	\$
Opening balance at 1 July 2018	2,657,267
Operating surplus	346,288
Other comprehensive income	-
<b>Balance at 30 June 2019</b>	<b>3,003,555</b>
Opening balance at 1 July 2019	3,003,555
Operating deficit	(337,097)
Other comprehensive income	-
<b>Balance at 30 June 2020</b>	<b>2,666,458</b>

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements contained in the full financial report available through the Community First Development website [www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/annual-report-archive](http://www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/annual-report-archive)

# Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	Notes	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>Operating activities</b>			
Receipts from donations and supporters		3,142,658	3,121,153
Government and corporate funding		1,173,000	2,207,574
Fee for service		62,788	197,410
Interest income		9,220	32,740
Net GST refunded/(paid)		155,512	(193,686)
Other revenue		28,127	2,419
Payments to employees		(3,047,318)	(2,925,205)
Payments to suppliers		(1,803,719)	(2,045,932)
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	11	(279,732)	396,473
<b>Investing activities</b>			
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		-	-
<b>Financing activities</b>			
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		-	-
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash held</b>		<b>(279,732)</b>	<b>396,473</b>
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		3,478,478	3,082,005
<b>Cash at the end of the financial year</b>		<b>3,198,746</b>	<b>3,478,478</b>

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements contained in the full financial report available through the Community First Development website [www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/annual-report-archive](http://www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/annual-report-archive)



# THANK YOU AND *ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*

This year 14,982 donors gave generously to enable First Nations people to undertake projects that prioritised community goals including economic and business planning, cultural preservation and learning, education, and health.

Our work is only possible because of these individuals and the generous support of our partners; donors, philanthropic trusts and foundations, federal and state government funding and corporate bodies.

We also receive much-needed in-kind support from a range of organisations.

We are forever grateful for the support we receive.



We also gratefully acknowledge the support of Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropy Australasia, the Millet Family Foundation and H2 Cairns Foundation.



COMMUNITY FIRST  
DEVELOPMENT

**1800 819 542**

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