



# Narang Bir-rong



## ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporation

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Cover Photo: Narang Bir-rong children's artwork from the Cultural Hub classes.

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Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporation is a not for profit, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled family and child support service.

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporation would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land that we work on and all come from.

We pay our respects to the Ancestors, Elders past, present and future generations and to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will always hold a spiritual belonging and connection with this country and remain the Traditional Owners and first peoples of this land.

We also acknowledge the grave injustices that occurred for our people due to past government policies and those who were forever affected by forcible removal. We acknowledge the pain the Stolen Generations suffered and recognise those who will never make it home.

We dedicate our work to them to ensure we never again have our children wrongly removed and disconnected from their family, their culture and their rightful links to their identity.



**Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this publication may contain images and names of deceased persons.**

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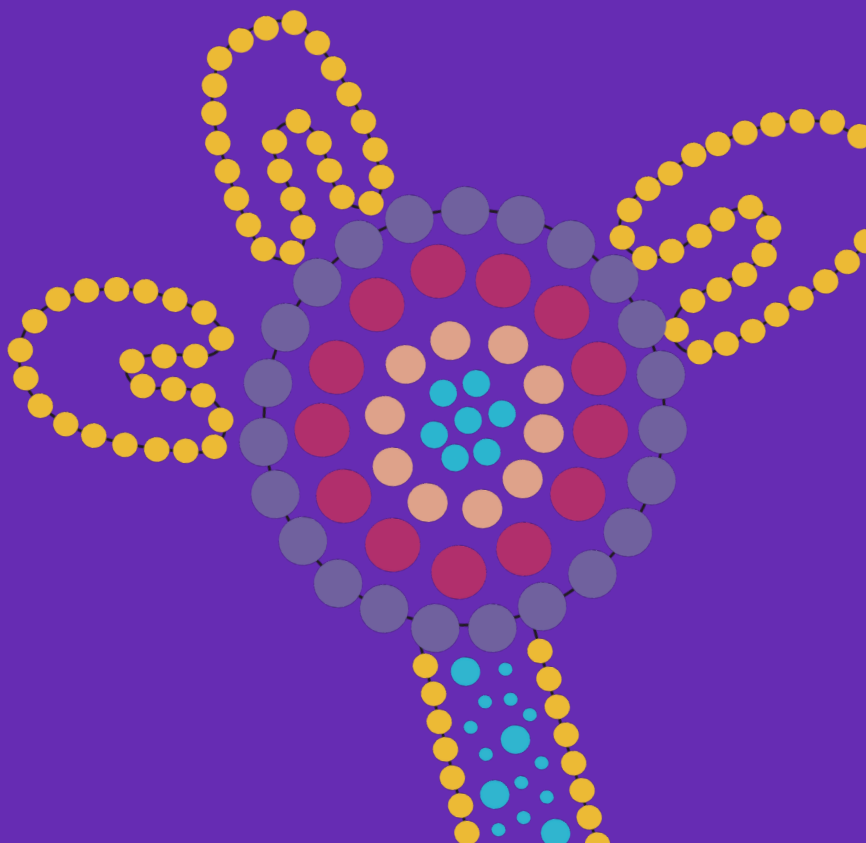
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# ABOUT THE ARTWORK

In our After School Cultural Hub, our children in Out of Home Care were guided to freely create artworks, drawing on their newfound knowledge of Aboriginal identity, animals, symbols, and storytelling.

Through this creative workshop, the featured piece below was crafted by one of our talented children and proudly showcased at our 2024 NAIDOC Charity Ball.



The original artwork (pictured above) was digitised and repurposed for creative use in this Annual Report.



**Celebrating five years of deadly work, creating lasting change in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.**

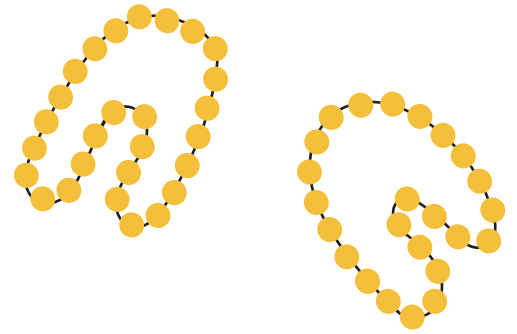


# INTRODUCTION

- CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT
- CEO'S UPDATE
- OUR BOARD



# CHAIRPERSON



## Ivan Clarke

As the Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporations Chairperson for the last 5 years, I am pleased to present this year's report, marking a period of remarkable growth, resilience and dedication. Guided by our previous strategic plan, we have made significant strides to enhance our programs, expand our reach and fortify Narang Bir-rong's foundations.



However, it has become clear that the impact of our work has allowed us to outgrow this strategy more quickly than anticipated; a testament to the dedication and capabilities of our team. We are therefore excited to announce that the development of a new, forward thinking strategic plan is well underway, positioning us to meet the evolving needs of our communities.

This year, our achievements have been numerous. We have successfully established a fourth new office in Sydney, tailored to better serve our staff, families, and communities. This new environment reflects our commitment to inclusivity, accessibility and a safe, welcoming space for all who interact with us. Additionally, our commitment to best practices in governance and financial management has resulted in a robust financial position and an unqualified audit, affirming our accountability and transparency.

A notable highlight has been our organisational culture. We are honoured to have received the Great Places to Work Certification for the second consecutive year, a recognition of the passion, unity and professionalism that our team embodies. This culture remains the heartbeat of our organisation and fuels our work to support families, carers and young people in our care.

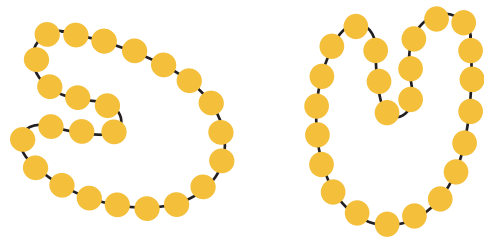
Recognising the rapid evolution of our services and the increasing complexity of the issues we face, the board has prioritised building a governance structure to support continued growth. We have embarked on a comprehensive recruitment strategy, aiming to attract individuals whose diverse skills and perspectives will guide us through this next chapter.

Looking ahead, our new strategy—soon to be announced—will set the course for an ambitious and sustainable future. This plan will address our organisational growth, service expansion and the strengthening of our community partnerships, ensuring that we are prepared to lead in a constantly changing landscape.

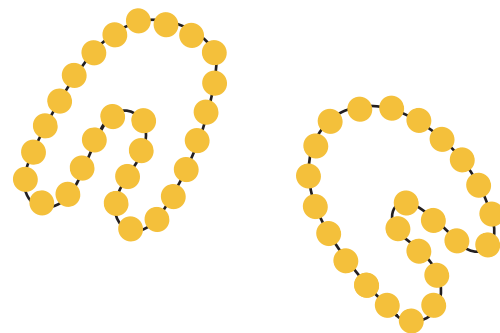
On behalf of the board, I extend my deepest gratitude to our staff, whose daily dedication to our mission is the reason for our progress, and to our carers, supporters and partners, whose belief in our purpose fuels our impact.

Together, as we enter this new chapter, we remain guided by a vision of care, integrity and service to our communities. Thank you for your trust and commitment to our mission.

Ivan Clarke  
**Chairperson**



# CEO UPDATE



## Heidi Bradshaw

The past year has been one of remarkable growth, resilience and progress for our organisation, as we continue our journey toward creating sustainable, positive outcomes for our community. Watching the organisation truly take shape and move in the direction needed to support Aboriginal children, families and carers has been both exciting and challenging.



Every step we take in this direction brings us closer to realising our vision of an empowered, connected future for all Aboriginal children and young people in our care.

This year also presented unique challenges, particularly around the national referendum. We worked tirelessly to advocate for the Voice, knowing the profound difference it could make for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the country. The outcome of the "No" vote was not only disheartening but has also left an undeniable impact on the community. I am immensely proud of the resilience shown by every member of our team through this time, with each person continuing to move forward, driven by the importance of the work we do and the lives we impact.

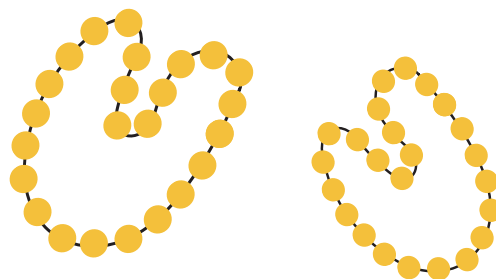
Despite these challenges, each of our program areas has continued to flourish. Our new Targeted Early Intervention program has already shown promise, helping families access the support and resources they need to build strong foundations. Similarly, our Restoration program has achieved early success, paving pathways for children and young people to return home where possible while maintaining vital connections to their culture, family and community. These programs underscore our commitment to holistic, culturally relevant care and support.



This year, we continued to embark on a vital transition effort, advocating for carers to transfer into Aboriginal organisations like ours where they and the Aboriginal children they support can access culturally appropriate care and resources. I firmly believe this transition holds tremendous potential for improving outcomes and fostering a sense of identity and belonging in every child. We know that strong connections to culture are key to their wellbeing and this is an opportunity to strengthen those ties in ways that will impact generations.

To every member of our team and every individual we support, thank you for your resilience and commitment. Together, we are making a difference that will leave a lasting legacy for our Aboriginal communities. It has once again been an honour to lead this journey and I look forward to the new opportunities and positive changes the coming year will bring.

Heidi Bradshaw  
**Chief Executive Officer**



# OUR BOARD

Our Board contribute diverse perspectives and innovative ideas, fueling creativity and forward-thinking in everything we do. With a commitment to collaboration and transparency, they guide us toward sustainable growth.

Their dedication to our mission shines through in their support for community initiatives and programs that strengthen Narang Bir-rong's work, ensuring our positive impact continues to grow.



## Ivan Clarke

Ivan is a Barkanji man, born and raised on Bundjalung country. Ivan is currently the Chairperson of Narang Bir-rong, and has had many years of experience as a counsellor, clinical and educational consultant and is a group leader in the Strong Aboriginal Men's Program.



## Annette Toomey

Annette is a Kabi Kabi woman, born and raised on Darug country in Western Sydney. Annette is currently a Director of Narang Bir-rong, and has had experience within the child protection and Out of Home Care system in NSW for more than 10 years.



## Patricia Flood

Patricia, a Ngiyampaa/Wiradjuri woman, has over 30 years in education, focusing on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Her career spans grassroots services to high-level training. With qualifications in community services and education, she is a respected leader whose role as Director greatly influences Aboriginal communities.



## Caitlin Marlor

Caitlin, a proud Wiradjuri woman, joins our Board to advocate for Aboriginal youth and culture. Her ethical leadership addresses intergenerational trauma, and her experience includes leading initiatives like the NAIDOC Charity Ball and Laptop Donation Drive. With a background in communications and digital strategy, Caitlin's collaborative skills will enhance our organisation and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



## Shannon Thorne

A proud Kamilaroi and Wiradjuri man with deep connections to culture and community, Shannon is a driven leader dedicated to uplifting disadvantaged children and youth. Inspired by his parents, who fostered over 280 children in NSW over 45 years, his core values center on advocacy and support for those in care. With over 18 years of experience in health services across the public and not-for-profit sectors, he brings extensive expertise as an Aboriginal Health Practitioner and senior leader.





# WHO WE ARE

- ABOUT US
- OUR TEAM
- ORGANISATIONAL CHART
- ADVOCACY



## ABOUT US

Narang Bir-rong supports and advocates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We deliver programs that strengthen family ties, edify youth and drive lasting change. Our partnerships with local organisations and community leaders allow us to deliver tailored services addressing education, mental health, skill development and promoting economic empowerment. Dedicated to our mission, we strive to inspire every child and family we work with, utilising a holistic approach to ensure they are equipped to thrive.



## Narang Bir-rong

The Narang Bir-rong logo features stars representing the children in our care, surrounded by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, dedicated stakeholders, and partners. Together, they empower young minds, promoting cultural connection and community engagement as the children grow into adulthood.



## OUR MISSION

We strive to create a nurturing environment where each child can thrive and embrace their cultural heritage with pride. Our dedicated team works closely with families and communities to ensure that the unique traditions and values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are celebrated and respected. Through collaboration, education, and support, we aim to empower families, fostering resilience and a sense of belonging that strengthens the fabric of our communities. Together, we are committed to making a positive impact, one child and one family at a time.

## OUR VISION

We believe in fostering a sense of belonging and identity, which is essential for their growth and development. Our dedicated team works closely with families and communities to ensure that each child is nurtured in an environment that respects their heritage and traditions. Through our programs, we aim to empower families with the tools and resources they need to thrive, creating a brighter future for generations to come. Together, we can make a profound difference, celebrating the rich cultures and histories that shape our vibrant communities.

## OUR PURPOSE

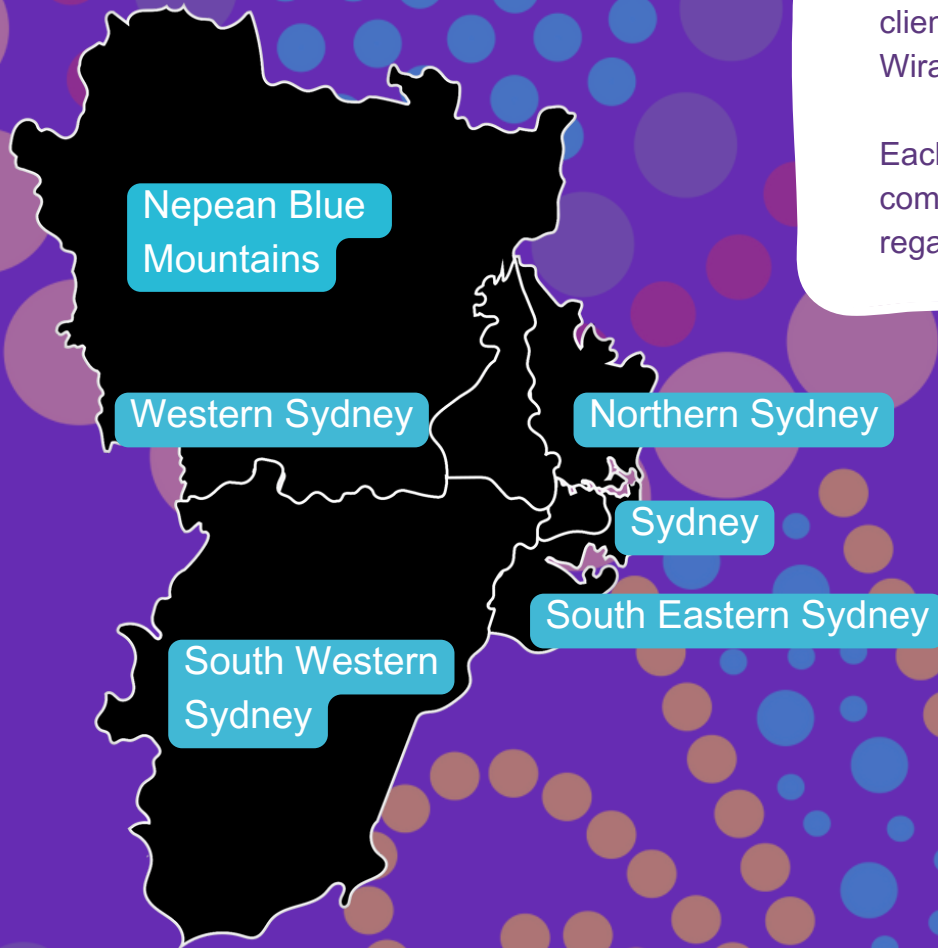
The Corporation has been formed with the charitable purposes of:

- Working with Aboriginal families, children and young people in need of care, support and protection to assist in empowering, nurturing and advancing their health and educational needs.
- To empower and support Aboriginal children and families to be resilient and to be proud of their Aboriginal identity.
- Promoting respect, trust and positive relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community.
- Promoting and protecting the Human Rights of Aboriginal children and their families.

# OUR SERVICE AREA

Our services cover various regions for client accessibility from Gadigal to Wiradjuri country.

Each area has a dedicated team, committed to providing quality support, regardless of location.



# OUR VALUES



**CONNECTIONS**  
We honour connections with family, culture and Country.



**EMPOWERMENT**  
We empower all those in our community through education.



**CONSISTENCY**  
We provide consistency of care and remain a safe refuge, always.



**BELONGING**  
We strive to build security and true belonging in our children.



**CONFIDENTIALITY**  
We ensure confidentiality to all those in our community.



## OUR TEAM

Narang Bir-rong is dedicated to nurturing its exceptional team, ensuring the organisation thrives and evolves. A key aspect of this evolution is the development of Aboriginal employees, providing opportunities for engagement in community focused events beyond daily work. The organisation values holistic growth, emphasising both professional expertise and the wellbeing and connectedness of all employees.

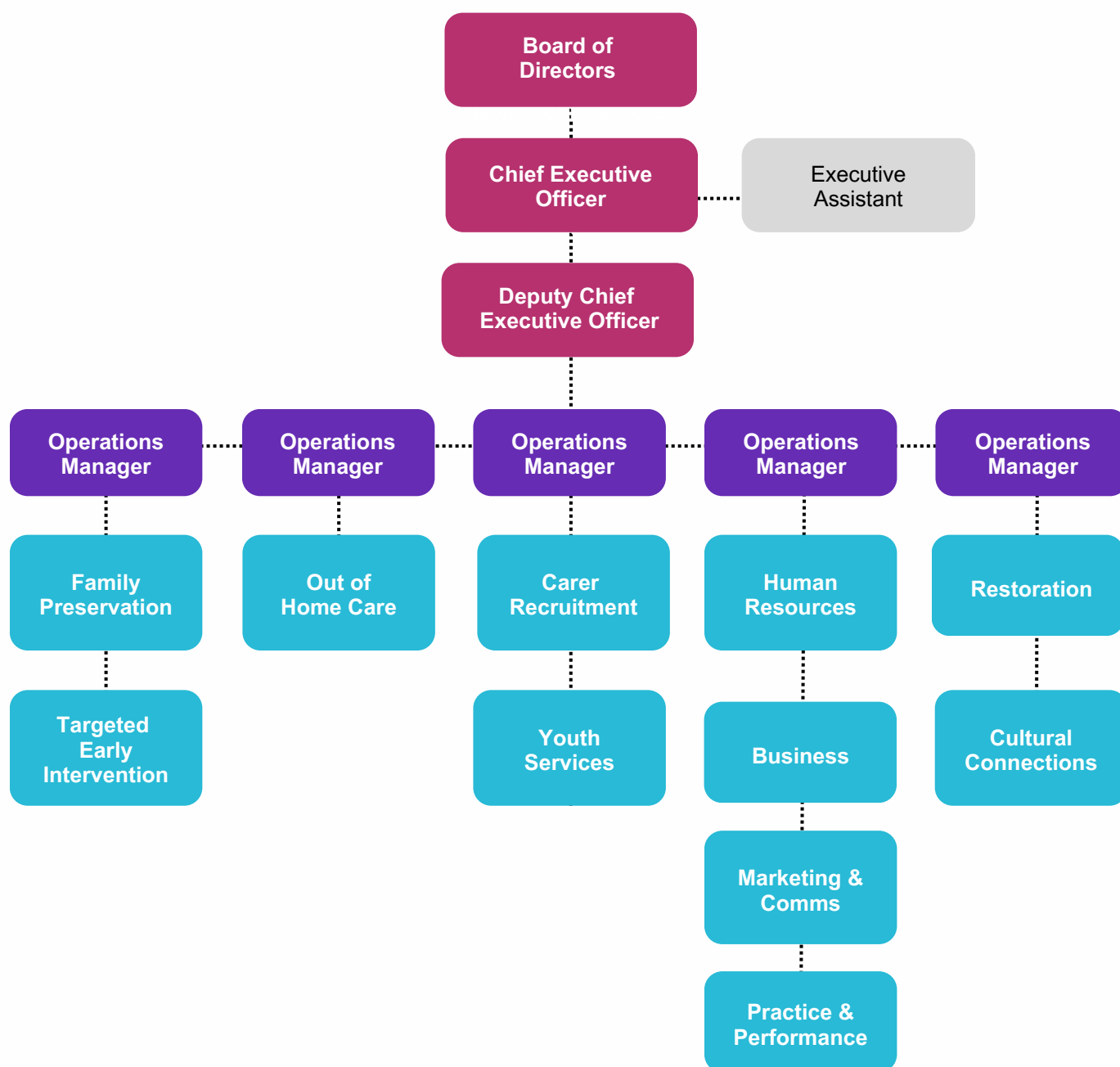
This interconnectedness extends beyond our immediate mission; it's about building a resilient, supportive and deeply engaged team. In doing so, we give our dedicated employees the vital chance to take a step back, breathe and momentarily disconnect from their daily responsibilities. This crucial respite grants them the space to recharge, fostering a renewed sense of purpose and a stronger bond with their colleagues.



**94%**

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees

# ORGANISATIONAL CHART



## STAFF TRAINING

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### **Engaging in Difficult Conversations:**

A session equipping all Narang Bir-rong employees with the practice principles and values for navigating difficult conversations, focusing on proactive rather than reactive approaches.

### **Manager's Guide to Employee Lifecycle Management (Part 1):**

Best practice processes covering employee onboarding, orientation, probation, performance management & leave management.

### **Manager's Guide to Employee Lifecycle Management (Part 2):**

A session focused on understanding responsibilities in employee supervision & appraisal processes.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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### **Narang Bir-rong Programs Presentation**

**Day:** Each Program showcased their achievements for the past 12 months.

### **Staff Cultural Development Day at Dalmarri in recognition of Sorry Day:**

Employees got the opportunity to work together, adding their artistic touch to 3 canvas pieces that are now displayed throughout the High Street office.

### **Diploma in Leadership:**

Two Senior Managers proudly achieved their diplomas in Leadership, marking a significant milestone in their professional growth and enhancing their capacity to guide and inspire within our organisation.

## EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

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### **Staff Kick Off Day 2024:**

Hosted at The Hydro Majestic in the Blue Mountains. An array of activities were organised, including a Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony performed by David King, traditional dance and an artwork workshop facilitated by Steve Triss, CEO Address and special guest presentation from Sasha Sarago, sharing her personal and professional experiences in the child protection space.

### **International Women's Day Morning Tea:**

Celebrating the resilient women in our organisation and community.

### **Great Place to Work Morning Tea:**

Celebrating our second year of accreditation as a great place to work.




**2024 STAFF  
KICK OFF DAY**



## ADVOCACY

We proudly stand as a champion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights, using our platform to elevate the voices of our communities and address the complex challenges they face. From campaigning for systemic changes in child protection to supporting the Voice Referendum, we work tirelessly to influence policy and create space for genuine representation.



The number of Indigenous kids in out of home care is at an all-time high. What is being done about it?

# ABC

## THE 7:30 REPORT

By Brooke Fryer & Ella Archibald - Binge

Narang Bir-rong had the opportunity to be spotlighted in an insightful feature on ABC's 7.30 Report. We highlighted our essential role in addressing the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Out of Home Care system. Our Family Preservation Program Manager, Amanda Klinar expressed the critical nature of our work: "We're that final stage before [removal]." Through culturally informed support, including establishing family routines and securing essential resources, we have proudly kept 119 children with their families over the past year. Our work powerfully affirms that culturally responsive, early intervention keeps children safe and at home, yet more funding is crucial to expand such successful efforts.



### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Aboriginal children represent almost half of all children in Out of Home Care, despite making up only 6% of Australia's child population.
- Narang Bir-rong's early intervention helped keep 119 children with their families in the past year.
- The rate of Aboriginal children in care is the highest on record, with over 22,000 in Out of Home Care as of 2022.
- Only 13% of child protection funding in New South Wales goes to early intervention, with Aboriginal organisations receiving a fraction of that.





**“I do think it is really important we do have Aboriginal workers working with Aboriginal families because we build trust based on cultural connections”**

- Amanda Klinar, Narang Bir-rong Program Manager



During the Referendum, Narang Bir-rong took a bold and assertive stance, using our platform to advocate for the recognition and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in decision making processes. To support this effort, we rolled out messaging across key touchpoints, including email signatures, social media posts, and a formal statement from our CEO and Board. The Referendum was a deeply personal issue for many employees, highlighted by a workshop with Dan Bouchier that spurred vital reflections on the Referendum’s implications for our sector and our ongoing role in advocacy.

In addition to our internal advocacy, Narang Bir-rong’s support of the Voice referendum extended actively into the community. Our CEO, Heidi Bradshaw, took our message to the ground by speaking at the Lindsay “Yes” Campaign Launch in September and assisting at polling booths in the lead up to the vote. This engagement reinforces Narang Bir-rong’s commitment to ensuring Aboriginal people have a seat at the table—especially where policies directly impact our communities. Our efforts reflect a longstanding dedication to amplifying Aboriginal voices on critical issues of self-determination and justice.





The aftermath of the “No” vote in the Voice referendum has left many in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with a profound sense of frustration and disappointment. There was hope in a shared belief that Australians would support a pathway toward Aboriginal led decision making, a fundamental step toward closing the gap in outcomes for First Nations people.

This outcome, however, feels like a setback, reflecting a lack of commitment to systemic change. Many now call on Australians to awaken to the pressing need for genuine solutions and unity, emphasising that the resources and strategies to create real impact are already within reach—yet remain untapped without political or societal support.

# Understanding THE VOICE

PENRITH COMMUNITY TOWN HALL



**Tuesday**  
26 September  
6.30 PM - 8 PM



**Multipurpose Space in Building O**  
Western Sydney University,  
Kingswood Campus (KW-O.1.20)



**Jade Appo-Ritchie**  
Yes Advocate



**Heidi Bradshaw**  
CEO of Narang Bir-rong  
Aboriginal Corporation



**Glen Liddiard**  
Indigenous education and  
wellbeing at the Panthers

**Come and have a yarn to find out more about the Voice, why it's needed and how it'll help improve lives.**

Come and have a yarn to find out more about the Voice, why it's needed and how it'll help improve lives.

RSVP NOW



Authorised by Dean Parkin, Australians for Indigenous Constitutional Recognition, North Sydney NSW

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, composed of various colored dots (yellow, orange, red, blue, grey) arranged to form a stylized, abstract figure. The figure has a head-like shape at the top, a torso, and a base with two curved lines extending outwards, resembling legs or arms. The dots are connected by thin black lines, creating a mesh-like structure.

# OUR PROGRAMS

- FAMILY PRESERVATION
- TARGETED EARLY INTERVENTION
- CULTURAL CONNECTIONS
- RESTORATION
- OUT OF HOME CARE
- LEAVING CARE
- CARER RECRUITMENT

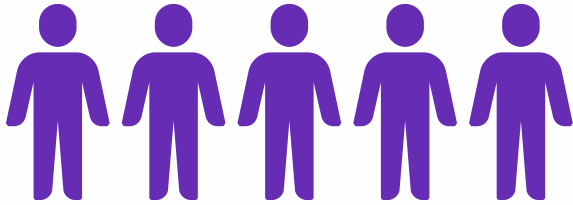
A man in a blue button-down shirt and khaki shorts is holding the hand of a young girl in a pink cardigan and dress. They are standing in a lush garden with large green leaves and colorful string lights in the background. The scene is bright and cheerful.

# FAMILY PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Our Family Preservation program aims to strengthen families by offering resources and support that empower parents and children. By focusing on their strengths and building confidence, we help families stay together safely. We provide a holistic service tailored to each family's needs, addressing child protection concerns while empowering them to achieve their goals.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

our year in numbers



**131**

**CHILDREN PREVENTED FROM ENTERING  
OUT OF HOME CARE**

**NEW CITY  
TEAM!**

**ESTABLISHED IN  
FEB 2024**

**11**

**CLOSURES WITH  
NO REMOVALS**



**2823+**

**HOME VISITS COMPLETED  
THIS YEAR**



## OUR FAMILIES

During the reporting year, Narang Bir-rong's Family Preservation program in the city has worked intensively with seven families, with 14 children engaged in the program. This year we've seen the program become more established with the recruitment of a full time caseworker to support the program reach it's capacity.

This Family Preservation team covers a large area from Sydney, South Eastern Sydney, and the Northern Sydney districts. Work this year has consisted of intensive family support, providing information/advice and referrals, working alongside stakeholders, and really empowering our families to have self determination and connection to community, (all possible because of the collaboration between our Western Sydney and Sydney Family Preservation programs). We have seen two families close within the program and have had a compliance of 100 percent over the year, with no removals, keeping 14 of our children at home.

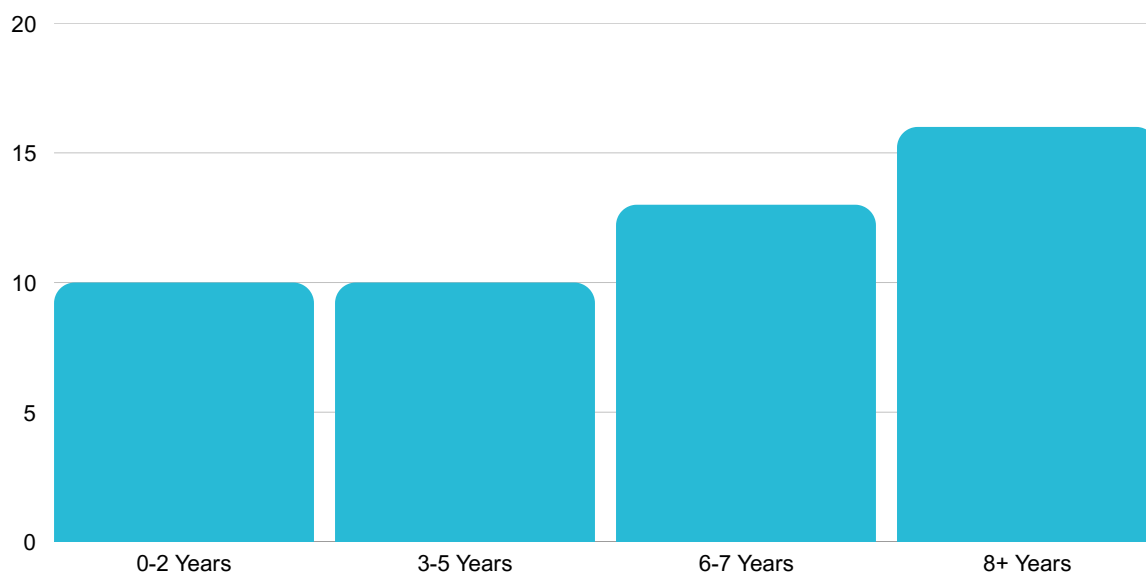
Our well established Western Sydney Family Preservation team has worked with 42 families this financial year with 133 children engaged in the program. This year we've seen our Western Sydney program receive additional Family Preservation packages allowing the program to work with up to 31 families. We've also seen 117 children stay at home with their families and not enter the Out of Home Care system, with the successful closure of six families this financial year.



Across both districts, most of our families have had long standing involvement in the child protection system and experience a wide range of child protection concerns. Our family Preservation team take a lot of pride in their work and find it very rewarding to support our community and families, to close with DCJ with positive outcomes that contribute to the fortitude of our families and communities.

This year we had the opportunity to showcase our Sydney Family Preservation Program and the hard work of one of our families for the ABC's 7:30 Report. The report highlighted the great work of Narang Bir-rong, showing the importance of having culture at the centre - an integral part of being able to keep our kids at home.

### TIMEFRAMES THAT FAMILIES WERE INVOLVED IN CHILD PROTECTION



Over the course of the 2023/2024 period, the Family Preservation Program unfortunately had four families affected by child removal. While all our caseworkers strive to empower our families, unfortunately removals still occur when the risk to children cannot be mitigated or eliminated. Caseworkers do provide advocacy and will always work collaboratively to prevent our children going into the foster care system unnecessarily.







# TARGETED EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Our Targeted Early Intervention Program is dedicated to creating change, early on. We connect with families in a way that is responsive and customised to their unique needs. By proactively supporting resilience and stability in households, we work to break down barriers that might otherwise lead to future challenges.



## NORTHERN SYDNEY TARGETED EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

The Northern Sydney Targeted Early Intervention Program (TEI) has been running for less than 12 months. We offer two service streams to North Sydney Aboriginal families consisting of Parenting Capacity Building and providing advice and referrals to our children and young people, parents, community members and stakeholders.

Our TEI caseworker spent the first half of the financial year connecting with over 200 services and providers, introducing our TEI program and developing fundamental, supportive working relationships with local stakeholders and community members. So far, we have seen some great success with the program and have worked with 10 families in total this financial year. Most of our clients will transition between these service streams as required, and the flexibility of the program provides the necessary support as it's needed and how it's needed throughout their time of need.

There has been a big focus on building and developing stakeholder relationships across the region to support incoming referrals, resource sharing and to provide holistic wrap around supports. These supports will allow for families to receive the appropriate services and supports to prevent them coming into contact with the child protection system.

The TEI program has also been a great addition to the Sydney programs as it is allowing our North Sydney Family Preservation families to transition to a less intensive support service, as they close with DCJ. This has been fundamental in providing a continuum of care to our families and children.



# CULTURAL CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

Our Cultural Connection Program collaborates closely with the Out of Home Care team to oversee cultural implementation for our kids, which includes community inclusion, excursions, events, partnerships and reviewing the children's cultural care plans.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

our year in numbers

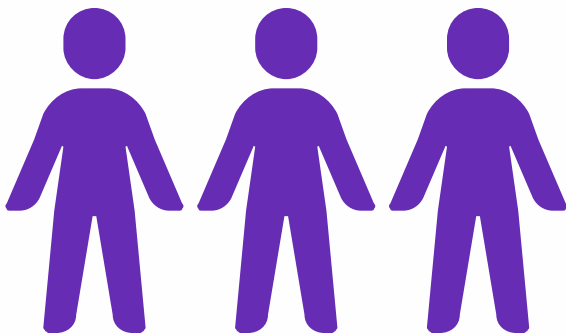


## EVENTS

HOSTED FOR CHILDREN IN  
OUT OF HOME CARE

69+

CULTURAL CARE  
PLANS EXECUTED



12+

COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS



The Cultural Connections Team is responsible for developing and implementing cultural care plans for all children and young people in our Restoration, Out of Home Care, and Leaving Care programs. This year, our plans prioritised setting meaningful cultural goals and deepening consultation with family, extended family, and Aboriginal organisations to strengthen each child's sense of connection. This tailored approach has driven significant quality improvement, bringing these cultural care plans to life in impactful ways.

## THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

- Cultural Fun Day in January: Hosted by Muru Mittigar at their Cultural Centre.
- Cultural Tour of Katoomba and Echo Point in April: For leaving care youth with Uncle David King.
- Cultural Fun Day in April: In partnership with Muru Mittigar and Djirabitty.
- NAIDOC Day in July: Narang Bir-rong led a cultural showcase with a variety of cultural and sporting activities.

## AFTER SCHOOL CULTURAL HUB

The After School Cultural Hub has been a great success, growing in scope and impact. Each term, children engage in diverse cultural activities such as cooking, Indigenous games, dancing, and art. Their artwork was proudly displayed at our 2024 Narang Bir-rong NAIDOC Charity Ball.



## KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Cultural care plans
- Cultural groups & events
- Cultural connections
- Family history and genealogy
- Partnerships with Aboriginal services





In Terms One and Two, the children participated in art classes, ochre crushing, and Indigenous games, which promoted cultural engagement and supported their motor skills, communication and social abilities.

## **CULTURAL COOKING CLASSES**

Cooking classes were especially popular, as the children learned about native herbs and spices. The team developed a cookbook featuring these recipes and native spices, which each child received at the end of the term, along with spice samples like bush tomato, mountain pepper berry, and lemon myrtle.

## **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AND EVENTS**

Our ongoing partnership with Wilmot Community Hub has provided an ideal venue for the After School Cultural Hub, and we look forward to expanding our use of this location for additional events, training and activities.

In celebration of NAIDOC Week, our team hosted an event at the Penrith Valley Regional Sports Centre for children, youth, carers, and families. Activities included cultural games, a live DJ, a pizza truck, and a barber who, as part of our sponsorship of the Under-17 Blacktown Red Belly Warriors Knockout team, offered free haircuts for all boys attending. The day was a huge success, drawing participants from both Narang Bir-rong and other NGO's, supporting the transition to our services.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our Cultural Connections team continues to foster relationships with local inter-agency organisations, including:

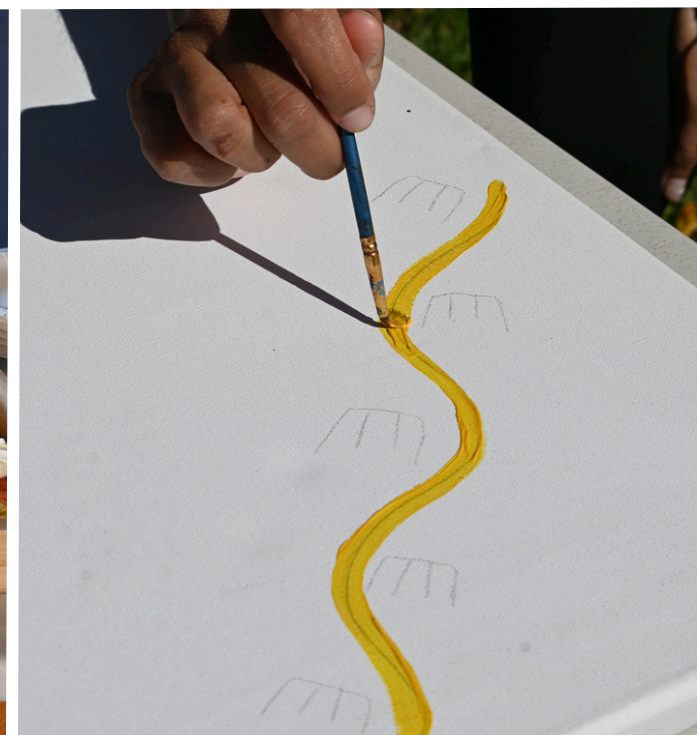
- Merana Aboriginal Community Association
- Koolyangarra Aboriginal Child & Family Centre
- Inner City Aboriginal Interagency Network
- Jannali Aboriginal Corporation

## LOOKING AHEAD

We're excited to share that Narang Bir-rong will soon offer cultural camps, with the first one set for early 2025. Recognising the essential role of cultural identity and connection, especially for children in care, we're also expanding our family history and genealogy resources. In the coming year, we'll provide specialised training and introduce new resources to enhance these areas.

Our updated cultural care plans, launching in 2025, will feature an innovative approach to cultural planning. With a rapidly growing Cultural Connections team, we're looking forward to the meaningful opportunities ahead.









## RESTORATION PROGRAM

The Restoration Program is dedicated to supporting families through the process of reunification. By providing culturally sensitive support, the program helps families overcome the challenges posed by child removal, focusing on healing and restoring relationships. The team works closely with families to address the effects of trauma and build resilience, ensuring children can safely return to their homes and maintain strong cultural connections.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

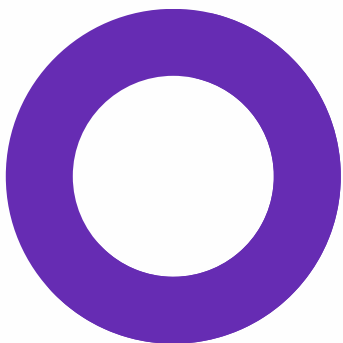
our year in numbers



**CHILDREN SET TO  
BE RESTORED TO  
THEIR FAMILIES**

**3X**

**INCREASE IN  
PROGRAM SIZE**



**100%**  
**PLACEMENT STABILITY**



Our Restoration team is dedicated to creating safe, stable and nurturing pathways for children to reunite with their families. At Narang Bir-rong, we address the enduring impacts of intergenerational trauma and systemic barriers, empowering families to heal and build resilience. We are steadfast in our commitment to reducing the impact of child removal on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, focusing on their safe restoration to parents. By centering cultural values and holistic support, we help families break cycles of adversity.

This year, the Restoration team achieved an outstanding 100% placement stability rate, a testament to our casework team's dedication to strengthening family bonds and ensuring each child feels a strong sense of belonging in their care home. Our approach involves developing tailored case plans, family action plans, and specific goals that support parents in fulfilling their court ordered commitments in meaningful ways. We delve into the underlying trauma and events that contribute to each family's unique challenges, facilitating deeper understanding and more sustainable, impactful change.

Our work's impact is evident in the multifaceted support we provide to children and young people in areas like education, culture, employment, housing and mental and physical health. We actively collaborate with parents, Narang Bir-rong services and external partners to improve family relationships and strengthen engagement across the board. The Restoration team works tirelessly to support family empowerment and self-determined outcomes.



Throughout the past 12 months, the program has nearly tripled in size, with a 32% increase in children served. We continue to exceed practice standards for parents, children, young people, carers and extended families. Our team remains focused on promoting safety, wellbeing, and generational stability, laying foundations that counter transgenerational trauma and cultivate positive change.



# Levi's Journey Home



In 2018, young Levi and his sisters, Kylie and Daisy, were removed from their mother Annabelle's care, with their father Warren incarcerated at the time. Levi was placed with a non-Aboriginal family, separate from his sisters, who were living with their grandmother. Despite the challenges and separation, Warren and Annabelle became determined to bring Levi home, beginning their journey toward restoring their family in 2021.

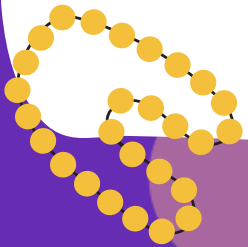
Their dedication led to a change of permanency goal to "Assess Restoration" in August 2021, marking a significant step forward. Working alongside Narang Bir-rong, Warren and Annabelle participated in the development of a Family Action Plan for change. They committed fully to the process, engaging in regular psychological support, domestic violence counseling, and parenting courses. They also pursued larger housing to provide a stable and supportive home environment for Levi.

Through perseverance, they addressed each new requirement, completed frequent testing, and remained engaged with support services. By August 2022, an independent assessment found Warren and Annabelle had taken accountability for past actions and made positive strides forward. The report recommended that Levi be restored to their care, commending Warren and Annabelle's dedication and growth as parents.

On 4 September, 2023, DCJ filed for a rescission of Levi's care order, and in early 2024, Levi began transitioning back into his parents' home. By May, Levi was happily living full time with his family, attending the same school as his sisters, and spending time with his grandmother and grandfather. Warren and Annabelle have since supported Levi through an ADHD diagnosis.

Seeing the progress with Levi has inspired Warren and Annabelle to begin the process for restoring Kylie and Daisy. They are working with Narang Bir-rong, preparing to take their case to court and they look forward to reuniting their family in a stable, nurturing home.

This journey exemplifies the resilience and strength of families, as well as the power of our partnership and support in reuniting children with their families. For Levi, Kylie and Daisy, this is a story of reconnection and the commitment to breaking cycles.







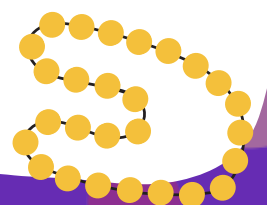
# A Father's Love & Resilience

In October 2022, Jannali was restored to the care of his father, Mark. Mark was living with his then partner and her three children, and it quickly became clear that Jannali was struggling to find a sense of belonging in the household. Clashes between Jannali and Mark's ex-partner raised concerns about Jannali's stability, especially since Mark's ex-partner was the primary caregiver while Mark worked. Jannali was treated differently from the other children, which weighed heavily on both him and his father.

When Mark and his partner separated in November 2023, he made the courageous decision to resign from his job to care for Jannali full time. The two of them faced significant challenges, becoming homeless and staying temporarily wherever they could find shelter. Determined to give his son a stable and secure home, Mark visited Housing daily, tirelessly advocating for assistance, and attended every open house he could. His resilience paid off in January 2024 when he secured a private rental, where he and Jannali could finally begin building a new life together.

Since the move, Jannali has been thriving. Transitioning to a new school marked a fresh start; previously known for behavioral challenges and frequent suspensions, Jannali has found stability, forming positive relationships with his teachers and peers. Mark has embraced open communication with Jannali's school, and the fewer calls he receives now speak volumes. "No news is good news," he says with pride. Recently, Jannali was even awarded at an assembly for his active participation in class. Mark has also come to recognise the importance of family connections in Jannali's life. Though initially distant from Jannali's mother, he now actively facilitates their contact, ensuring that Jannali has the opportunity to see and speak with her regularly. His commitment to keeping Jannali's best interests at heart has seen Mark reach out to provide updates to Jannali's mother and organise visits independently.

This journey demonstrates the power of resilience, love, and transformation. Mark's unwavering commitment to his son, coupled with Jannali's growth and newfound confidence, is a heartening reminder of the strength found within families, with the right support.





# OUT OF HOME CARE PROGRAM

The Out of Home Care team supports children and families by addressing trans-generational trauma and systemic oppression in the foster care system, focusing on healing the effects of removal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

our year in numbers

**98%**

**PLACEMENT  
STABILITY**

**9**

**TRANSFERS FROM  
OTHER AGENCIES**



**OVER**

**1400**

**HOME VISITS**

**14**

**YOUNG PEOPLE  
TRANSITIONED TO  
LEAVING CARE**

**2**

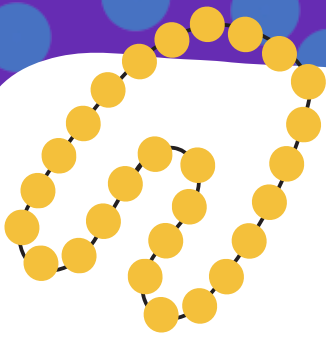
**CHILDREN  
TRANSITIONED TO THE  
RESTORATION TEAM**



The Out of Home Care program at Narang Bir-rong is dedicated to creating a stable, supportive, and secure foundation for the children, carers and families we work with. Recognising the challenging outcomes often faced by children in care, the program prioritises addressing the lifelong impacts of transgenerational trauma and systemic inequities within the foster care system. Our aim is to heal the wounds of removal and uphold cultural connections, which are so vital to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

With a 98% placement stability rate, the Out of Home Care team's efforts have centred around establishing enduring connections and promoting a sense of belonging. Each case is managed with a tailored approach, ensuring that each child and young person is at the heart of our work. Our support spans across various aspects of the children's lives, such as education, culture, employment, housing, and health—both physical and mental. These efforts are bolstered by close collaboration with community services to guarantee that children and young people in our care achieve the best possible outcomes.

The Out of Home Care team consistently embraces a “go above and beyond” approach, prioritising the safety and wellbeing of our carers, children, young people, and their families. As our largest program, Out of Home Care maintained an 87% compliance rate this year, underscoring our commitment to quality care.



# Tyrone's Story

Tyrone's journey in care began in 2020, originally under the oversight of DCJ. He joined Narang Bir-rong in 2022, where his established placement with a family member provided some stability until June 2023. However, due to allegations of physical abuse, Tyrone had to be removed from this placement, marking the beginning of an incredibly challenging period of instability.

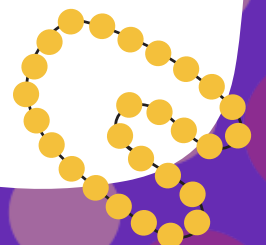
Between June 2023 and April 2024, Tyrone experienced five primary placements with different foster carers, with each placement lasting only two to five months. Additionally, he was placed in 10 respite placements with different carers, further disrupting his ability to feel supported and secure.

This instability profoundly impacted Tyrone's emotional and behavioural wellbeing, making it difficult for him to form positive and meaningful relationships. Expressing his emotions became a struggle and his behaviour reflected his inner turmoil. He exhibited signs of significant defiance, aggression and irritability - such as hitting, throwing objects and experiencing unpredictable outbursts. The lack of consistency also affected his schooling.

Due to developmental delays, he required an exemption from starting kindergarten at the typical age of five.

In recent months, Tyrone's life has turned around remarkably. Now placed in a long term, stable home where he is nurtured and loved, Tyrone is thriving. He has formed a strong bond with his carers, settled into a steady routine and displays a new sense of calm and independence. His emotional stability has improved, with no further episodes of aggressive or unpredictable behaviour. With support from an NDIS plan, Tyrone is now actively engaged in speech and occupational therapy, which has accelerated his development. His daycare reports that he is on track to begin kindergarten in the coming year.

Additionally, Tyrone is embracing new experiences like swimming lessons and other extracurricular activities, which he enjoys immensely. Narang Bir-rong's Out of Home Care team remains dedicated to supporting every child's journey, striving to provide a safe, nurturing space that enables them to heal and grow, no matter the challenges they have faced.





## LEAVING CARE PROGRAM

Our Leaving Care program is dedicated to empowering young adults as they transition out of care by supporting them in achieving their personal goals. Using a tailored leaving care plan for each individual, we focus on areas like accommodation, education, employment, health, family ties, and cultural connections - equipping care leavers with the skills and resources needed to thrive as they enter adulthood and navigate their future independently.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

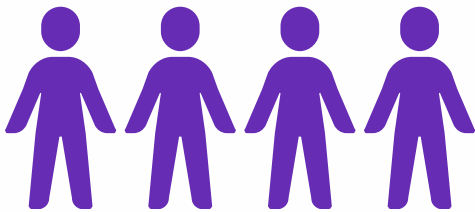
our year in numbers

**20+**

**LEAVING CARE  
WORKSHOPS RUN**

**100%**

**LIVING IN STABLE  
ACCOMODATION**



**80%**

**RECONNECTED WITH FAMILY, A  
14% INCREASE FROM LAST YEAR**

**80%**

**CURRENTLY ENGAGED  
IN THE PROGRAM**

**75%**

**ARE STUDYING IN  
FURTHER EDUCATION OR  
EMPLOYMENT**



Our Leaving Care and After Care team is dedicated to ensuring that our young people are prepared and empowered to transition from care with confidence.

We focus on six key areas to support their growth:

- Wellbeing
- Connection
- Culture
- Self-awareness
- Skills for Life
- Empowerment

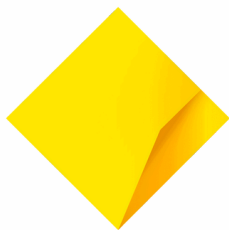
Narang Bir-rong operates a Life Ready program, to equip our adolescents with practical skills to live independently and give them the autonomy to make choices that will positively impact their lives. Participants have thrived in our cultural programs, stepping up as mentors for younger children and demonstrating their readiness to contribute to their communities. The targeted program has provided invaluable life skills in budgeting, cooking, job seeking, self-care, and overall health. With these tools, our young people are becoming self-sufficient community members—and future leaders.

Outside of the program, our young people have continued to stay connected and offer support, building lifelong friendships and a dependable network they can turn to. Through regular fortnightly meetups, strong peer networks have formed, offering essential emotional support. These bonds help break the cycle of isolation and foster a genuine sense of community, empowering our young people to lean on one another in times of need.

The Leaving Care caseworker supports our young people aged 15 and above, helping them create and implement their Leaving Care plans. This ensures they are on track to achieve their goals for independence once they turn 18. Additionally, they also support our After Care clients (aged 18-25 years) with housing, health and employment. This dedicated team has enabled a higher level of targeted, tailored support to young people in care.

## OUR PARTNERS

This program has established a range of successful partnerships, including with Mission Australia, Platform Youth services, Verita's House, the Commonwealth Bank, Voyager and the Family Planning Clinic. We have also built new relationships this year, with Voyer, Second Bite, Muru Mittigar, David King, Scenic World Katoomba and others. Working collaboratively helps to set up our young people for success, providing them with more opportunities.



Commonwealth Bank



## CARER RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

Our commitment to recruiting exceptional carers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people is a top priority. We focus on identifying and supporting individuals who can provide a nurturing environment that respects cultural identity and promotes holistic wellbeing. Alongside best practice casework, we offer extensive support to carers and their families, ensuring they feel prepared and valued.



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

our year in numbers

**150**

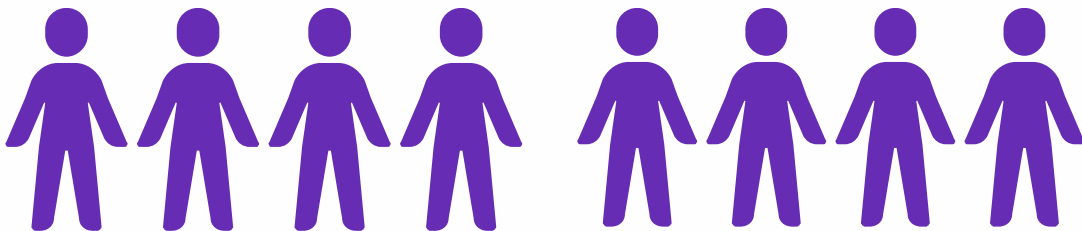
**CARER ENQUIRIES  
RECEIVED**

**19**


**NEW FOSTER CARE  
ASSESSMENTS**



**6 AUTHORISED CARER HOUSEHOLDS**



**12 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS**



“I think carers who have an Aboriginal child  
in their care have a moral and social obligation  
to do the best for that child...  
you can't grow and be the best person  
you can be if you don't know where you  
come from.”

Cecil, Narang Bir-rong Foster Carer





In alignment with Narang Bir-rong's mission to provide nurturing, culturally safe placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, our Recruitment team has focused on attracting and supporting prospective carers throughout the year. This report details our objectives, strategies, and achievements while addressing the challenges faced and highlighting the impact of our recruitment efforts on the community.

Our recruitment strategy involves proactive outreach, community engagement and continuous support for prospective carers. By leveraging social media, community events, and partnerships, we aimed to increase visibility and raise awareness about the urgent need for foster carers. The strategy also included streamlining the assessment process and providing structured training to ensure thorough and culturally informed recruitment.

### Wins

- Enquiries: We exceeded our target by generating 150 enquiries, achieving 500% of our objective. This highlights the strong interest within the community and the effectiveness of our outreach efforts.
- Assessments: Initiated 19 new care assessments, reaching 190% of our target. Among these, 9 provisional authorisations were achieved, with 2 progressing to full authorisation.
- Marketing and Community Engagement: Attended 12 community events, achieving 100% of our engagement goal. Events included Penrith NAIDOC, Blacktown NAIDOC, and the Mount Druitt Annual Reconciliation Walk, which helped us connect with community members and prospective carers.

### Challenges

- Application Conversion: Only 10% of enquiries progressed to the application stage. While initial interest was high, there remains a gap in translating interest into active applications. Addressing this challenge will involve refining support systems to help interested individuals navigate the application process more easily.



## TRANSFERRING TO ACCOS

Narang Bir-rong continues to tirelessly advocate for Aboriginal children in Out of Home Care to be looked after by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).

Since the second 10 year attempt to achieve this commenced on 1 July 2022, only 98 children and young people have transferred across NSW.

Our agency has led the redesign of the second transition project based on the principles of self-determination, data sovereignty and accountability. Implementation of processes informed by this approach has resulted in an increase of referrals and transfers to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

Narang Bir-rong welcomed seven children and six carers who transferred across from non-government organisations.

However, the NSW Auditor-General concluded in a 2024 report that the Department of Communities and Justice is not adequately safeguarding the rights of Aboriginal children and at the current rate it will take 57 years to transition the case management of Aboriginal children to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.



One of the standout campaigns this year was our Transfer Campaign, which focused on encouraging the transfer of Aboriginal children in care to ACCOs who provide more culturally appropriate care, such as Narang Bir-rong. To create a strong foundation for the campaign, we interviewed and spotlighted two foster carers who had successfully transferred from other agencies. Their experiences served as the cornerstone for the full campaign, which spanned social media (both paid and organic), a dedicated landing page, and a video and photo series. This initiative not only highlighted the importance of transferring children to ACCOs but also provided a platform to discuss and myth bust the misconceptions. Our targeted messaging aimed to drive community awareness and participation, with the campaign resonating strongly with our audience.

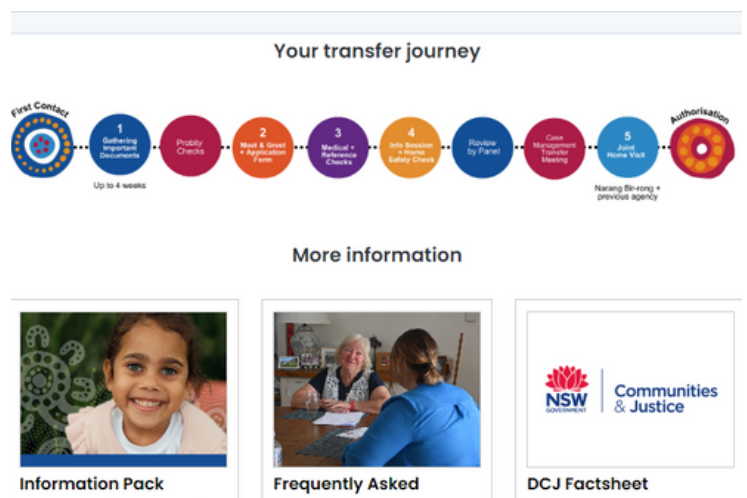
Out of 48 targeted transfers, we achieved 14.58%. The Recruitment Team encountered various external factors, including placement availability and case complexities, which affected transfer rates.

**Don't fear the transfer.**

Transfers don't break bonds, they strengthen them. Keep Aboriginal children connected to their culture.

Speak to us today.

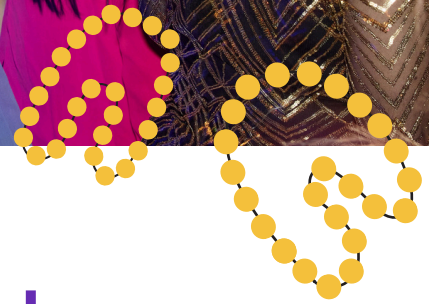
Narang Bir-rong



A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, composed of various colored dots (yellow, orange, red, blue, grey) arranged in a pattern that suggests a stylized human figure or a complex network. The dots are connected by thin lines, creating a mesh-like structure. The background is a solid purple color.

# HIGHLIGHTS

- EVENTS & HIGHLIGHTS
- NARANG BIR-RONG X JILYA FOUNDATION
- CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS



## 2024 NAIDOC CHARITY BALL

Our third annual Narang Bir-rong NAIDOC Charity Ball was an outstanding success, with over 300 tickets sold, marking it as a flagship event in Western Sydney's Aboriginal community. This year's theme, Blak, Loud & Proud, set the tone for a lively night celebrating culture, identity, and strength. The sought after event featured host Aaron Pedersen and standout performances by comedian Steph Tisdell and Castlereagh Connection.

We are immensely grateful to our sponsors—Kia, ABRs, Allies for Children, Penrith Panthers and Access Indigenous—whose generous support helped make the event and its impact possible. Attendees enjoyed a night rich with live performances, traditional dances, and contemporary displays. Proceeds from the ball provided crucial funds for our Cultural Connections program, ensuring every child in our care connects deeply with their culture.



Narang Bir-rong

**NAIDOC**  
**BALL 2024**

SATURDAY, 13 JULY 2024

**NAIDOC**    
**BALL 2024 LINE-UP**    
SATURDAY, 13 JULY 2024

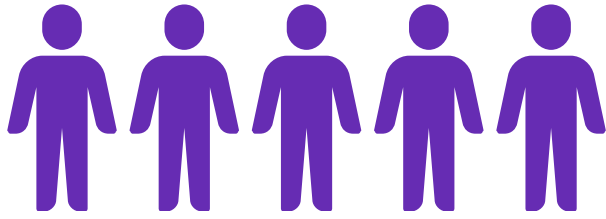
MC <b>AARON PEDERSEN</b>	<b>DIJIRABITTY DANCE GROUP</b>
COMEDIAN <b>STEPH TISELL</b>	<b>CASTLEREAGH CONNECTION</b>

+ DJ, RAFFLES, SPECIAL APPEARANCES AND MORE!









**317**

**TICKETS SOLD**

## OUR SPONSORS



**Allies  
for Children**

INSPIRING POSITIVE CHANGE

**abrs**

AUSTRALIAN BARNARDOS RECRUITMENT SERVICES



Great Western

**ACCESS  
INDIGENOUS**



**PANTHERS**



## NARANG BIR-RONG SPONSORS 2023 JILYA FUNDRAISING GALA

Narang Bir-rong were proud to participate as Platinum Sponsors for the Westerman Jilya Institute's 2023 Indigenous Suicide Prevention Fundraising Gala, held on October 21 in Perth, during World Mental Health Month. The event, aimed at addressing Australia's high rates of Indigenous child suicide, also celebrated the achievements of Indigenous psychology students supported by the Dr. Tracy Westerman Indigenous Psychology Scholarship program. Since its inception, the program has provided scholarships to 41 Indigenous students.

We have developed a meaningful partnership with the Westerman Jilya Institute over the years and we fully support their mission to increase the number of qualified Aboriginal psychologists, an initiative that aligns directly with our goal of employing one of these professionals within Narang Bir-rong (and potentially within other ACCOs across NSW). This initiative is critical for providing culturally informed support to Aboriginal children, young people, and families who have experienced trauma, neglect, or abuse. By enhancing access to culturally appropriate services, we aim to help address the cycle of intergenerational issues impacting our communities.

An excerpt from **Dr Tracy Westerman's** speech at the 2023 Jilya Fundrasing Gala:

“Perhaps the referendum is the nexus we needed; to see that we cannot rely on GOVT to save us. Change will never occur if we place all of our reliance on those impacted the least to tell us how change should look and the pace at which it should occur.”





**SORRY DAY 2024**



**KIDS BRANDING SHOOT**



**t**

The unmissable memoir  
of the last daughter  
to come home

Brenda Matthews the last daughter

Powerful and inspirational—a must-read.  
Taryn Brumfitt,  
Australian of the Year

**Brenda Matthews**  
the last daughter  
a true story of love, loss and reconnection

'Powerful and inspirational—a must-read.'  
Taryn Brumfitt,  
Australian of the Year

'The Last Daughter might be one of the most important books an Australian could read.'  
Books+Publishing

Read the book. See the film. Download the resources.  
[textpublishing.com.au](http://textpublishing.com.au) [thelastdaughter.com.au](http://thelastdaughter.com.au)



**VISIT FROM AUTHOR  
BRENDA MATTHEWS**



**NAIDOC 2024**

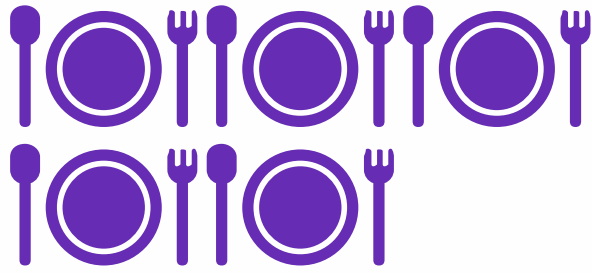


**OOHC KIDS  
CHRISTMAS PARTY**



**CORPORATE  
PARTNERSHIPS**





**360**

**ESSENTIAL FOOD PACKS GIVEN TO CLIENTS**

**46**

**WEEKLY FOOD  
DONATIONS  
RECEIVED**

**200**

**ESSENTIAL  
BACKPACKS  
DONATED FOR  
KIDS IN CARE**



**100+**

**Clothing and toys  
distributed to clients**



In 2024, Narang Bir-rong Business Services has made significant strides in enhancing its operations, securing essential donations, and strengthening key partnerships that support our mission. We are deeply grateful for the generous donations we have received from organisations like SecondBite, Westcare, Good360, and Share the Dignity, which have provided food, hygiene products, and home starter packs. These essential supplies have made a tangible difference in the lives of the young people in our care, particularly those transitioning to independent living. Additionally, the thoughtful contributions from My Forever Family, Optus and The Learning Jungle have provided children in our care with comforting essentials, such as backpacks, pyjamas and free Optus SIM cards - bringing emotional stability and warmth during difficult times.



Western Sydney University (Hawkesbury Campus) generously donated over 100 toys to Narang Bir-rong as part of their annual toy appeal, bringing joy for children in our care during a season that can be especially challenging for those still finding their sense of home. This thoughtful contribution provides tangible gifts that remind the children they are cherished and valued. We are deeply grateful for the university's commitment to supporting our most vulnerable.



# Narang Bir-rong