



**cages**  
FOUNDATION

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2025



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CAGES Foundation acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and respects Elders past, present, and future. They hold the stories, the knowledge, the traditions, the culture, and the hopes of Aboriginal Australia.

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This Annual Review may contain images of people who have passed away.

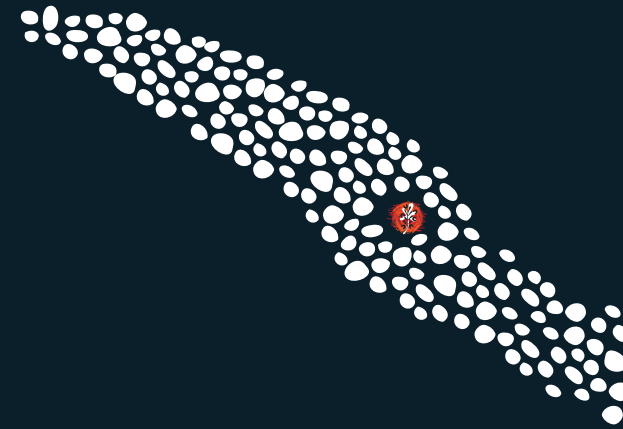




Image courtesy of SevGen Indigenous Corporation

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Paul Salteri, Founder

I am pleased to share with you our 2025 Annual Review.

This year has been one of reflection, renewal and deepened connection for the CAGES Foundation. As our partnerships continue to grow, we remain focused on supporting initiatives designed, led and controlled by First Nations peoples.

Our board brings together a breadth of expertise in finance, philanthropy and strategic leadership. It is this combination of skills and perspectives that helps shape our direction and ensures we remain thoughtful, responsible and aligned with the communities we support - centring First Nations perspectives and remaining open to learning from the experts that sit in the communities we support. It is this collective expertise and shared commitment that provides the foundation's strength as we enter a significant moment of transition.

After fifteen years of dedicated service, we farewell our founding Director, Paul Biancardi, who has been with CAGES since the very beginning in 2009. Paul's expertise, steady leadership, and

unwavering commitment have helped guide the foundation through every chapter of its journey. His influence can be seen across our strategy, our relationships, and our culture — and his legacy will continue to shape CAGES for many years to come.

At the same time, we warmly welcome Grant Lovett to the CAGES Foundation Board. Grant brings extensive experience in finance, strategy and governance, along with a strong commitment to community-led initiatives through his work with organisations such as The Black Dog Institute and Story Factory. His expertise will help strengthen our board as we continue to support First Nations families, children and communities.

Another important focus for the year ahead is our intention to explore the role of an Indigenous Data Governance Committee, which will provide Indigenous-led guidance on how data is collected, managed, and interpreted. This committee will guide the development of an IDS protocol and support our commitment to responsibly holding the data entrusted to us.

As always, we remain committed to listening deeply, learning openly and supporting First Nations voices and leadership in all that we do.

**Paul Salteri AO** Chair



Rachel Kerry

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Once again, we are delighted to reflect on a year that saw First Nations-led organisations achieve great outcomes in the Communities they work in.

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This year, we have had the privilege to see notable and positive benefits of trust-based philanthropy, where funding is grounded in flexibility, strong relationships and autonomy. Through this practice, we have seen that First Nations organisations most profound accountability is to the Communities they serve (and not to funders). To invest in these organisations to be responsiveness to emerging community needs, strategies, opportunities, and innovations maximises impact. Impact that is too often constrained by prescriptive, inflexible funding practices.

This is why CAGES Foundation went into a learning partnership with Kowa Collaboration, who worked with CAGES' grant recipients, to develop a community-led Understanding Measurement Evaluation and Learning Framework (UMEL). The UMEL was developed in the spirit of reciprocity and two-way accountability, enabling Community organisations to define their own measures of success and share their achievements in whatever way best suits them, while also ensuring that CAGES is held accountable to its own funding principles and values.

We hope to capture and share the outcomes made possible through flexible funding to organisations deeply connected to Country, Community, and Culture. These stories will provide the most compelling demonstration of the effectiveness of trust-based philanthropy. While our approach is firmly grounded in principles of investing in self-determination, we have also learnt that this style of funding unlocks responsive support and innovation, giving full autonomy to those with the real expertise and authority to lead in their Community.

**Rachel Kerry** CEO

## OUR PURPOSE

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We **acknowledge** the ongoing impact of colonisation.

We **support** initiatives designed, led and controlled by First Nations' peoples.

We **amplify** First Nations' voices by investing in strong communities connected to culture and country.

We **influence** the philanthropic sector to disrupt the historical power imbalance of funders.

## OUR VALUES

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### LISTEN AND LEARN

CAGES Foundation is a values driven organisation and our values underpin how we work

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We take time to get to know the communities we fund in, to understand their objectives, and are guided by what they need.



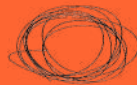
### HUMILITY

We recognise that we do not have the answers or hold the knowledge. We will be guided by First Nations people.



### HONESTY

We strive to be open and honest in our two-way communication to build trusting, respectful and successful relationships. We will acknowledge our limitations.



### TRANSPARENCY

We are transparent and share our learnings, our failures, and our successes.

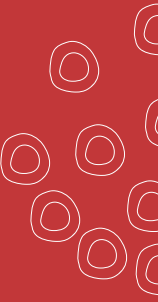


### ACCOUNTABILITY

We are accountable and committed to good governance in the administration and management of our foundation and our funding decisions and advocacy. We are accountable to the communities we fund.



CAGES Foundation has learnt that the most effective investment is one into the assets of culture, leadership and connection through Aboriginal controlled or led organisations and community-led initiatives.



CAGES Foundation distributed **\$3,064,106** in 2025.

CAGES donated **\$2,689,106** in our key focus areas of Early Years and Economic Development. 96% of donations went to Aboriginal controlled or led organisations with remaining funding supporting community-led initiatives with non-Aboriginal organisations.

Through this investment First Nations people's expertise will ensure communities flourish and thrive.

We provide flexible funding to community-led solutions through our strategic partnerships and community grants in two focus areas; early years and economic development. We also provide funding, at times, for initiatives outside these areas which will support community led systems change within the philanthropic, government or not-for-profit sector.

#### FY25 DISTRIBUTION

In 2025, we distributed a total of **\$3,064,106**.

Our priority funding area remains the Early Years where we gifted **\$941,000** in long-term strategic grants. A further **\$830,106** was donated in one-off community grants to organisations working with families and children in the first five years of their life.

Our additional priority funding area is Economic Development where we gifted **\$918,000** to organisations creating and/or furthering wealth creation, enterprise opportunities and employment.

Sector Development gifts totalled **\$255,000** for organisations furthering opportunities in community-led systems change and First Nations philanthropy and government partnerships.

Finally, **\$120,000** was distributed across **14** organisations nominated by family members and employees as part of our program to encourage intergenerational philanthropy and employee engagement.



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Our Early Years funding supports Aboriginal-controlled or led organisations who have the skills, knowledge and expertise to create nurturing spaces for children, their families and communities.

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**OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS** provide long-term funding to organisations working on community-driven early childhood initiatives.

### AWABAKAL PRESCHOOL

*AWABAKAL COUNTRY (NSW)*

**FY25 \$30,000**

*Total funding: \$370,000 over 5 years*

Awabakal Ltd is dedicated to advancing the wellbeing of the Awabakal Community. Within their whole of community strategy, Awabakal Preschool has been providing a culturally appropriate and supportive learning environment for children in the community for over 35 years. CAGES contributed general operational funding for Awabakal Preschool to provide culturally safe early intervention to over 60 Aboriginal children, while also strengthening family engagement and supporting educator professional development.

### CONTACT INC AND GAINMARA BIRRILEE PRESCHOOL

*WIRADJURI COUNTRY AND ACROSS NGEMBA AND WAILWAN LANDS (NSW)*

**FY25 \$75,000**

*Total funding: \$305,000 over 4 years*

Gainmara Birrilee Preschool in Brewarrina has an established partnership with Contact Inc called Murra in Murra (Hand in Hand). Contact Inc partners in communities to define and develop responsive early years services. Gainmara Birrilee Preschool designs services to support children, families, and Community in Brewarrina. CAGES funding has supported this ongoing partnership to build sustainable pathways for Brewarrina children and strengthened the Preschool as a community hub. As a result over 200 Aboriginal children, families and Elders and 450 community members benefited, succession planning progressed, and additional funding was secured.

### CULLUNGHUTTI ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE

*WADI WADI WANDANDIAN COUNTRY (NSW)*

**FY25 \$130,000**

*Total funding: \$706,000 over 6 years*

Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre provides early childhood, health, and family support services to Aboriginal children and families in Nowra. Cullunghutti continue to be a key partner of CAGES. The untied approach of the CAGES funding proved valuable in meeting the gaps identified by staff and Community. It allowed Cullunghutti to redirect funding to shifting priorities from providing emergency relief for families in crisis to facilitating full-day cultural immersion training with Elders. Other key outcomes have emerged from CAGES funding, including new on-site infrastructure that will create 40 additional places for children, support for educators in the Boori Milumba program and unlocking additional investment for Cullunghutti to be involved in family plans for children in the child protection system.

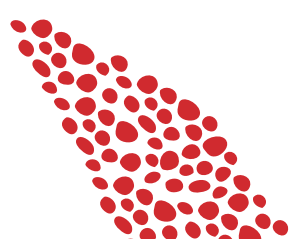
### DALAIGUR PRESCHOOL

*DUNGHUTTI COUNTRY (NSW)*

**FY25 \$100,000**

*Total funding: \$649,075 over 15 years*

Dalaigur Preschool and Children's Services Aboriginal Corporation own and operate two Early Childhood Services in Kempsey, providing culturally safe, early childhood education and care to children and their families on Dunghutti Country. CAGES funding continues to support Dalaigur's Aboriginal-led playgroup, including staff wellbeing activities such as art therapy sessions and the expansion of the playgroup workforce. This investment has enabled the playgroup to support up to 10 families and extend its services to include a Dad's/Uncle's playgroup at Scribbly Gum. The flexibility of the funding has strengthened staff capacity, improved workplace cohesion, and allowed Dalaigur to continue working toward community-led goals such as opening more days and reducing a 50-child waitlist.



### DEADLY CONNECTIONS

GADIGAL COUNTRY (NSW)

FY25 \$100,000

Total funding: \$741,000 over 6 years

Deadly Connections Community and Justice Services aims to positively disrupt cycles of systemic racism, disadvantage and systems involvement. CAGES Foundation funding supported the Deadly Families Project, delivering early intervention support for Aboriginal parents of children aged 0–5 to strengthen social and emotional well-being. Well-being facilitators worked alongside community to provide intensive, culturally safe, and responsive holistic support, contributing to improved family engagement and strengthened parenting confidence.

### JARJUM CENTRE

BUNDJALUNG AND WIDJABUL COUNTRY (NSW)

FY25 \$100,000

Total funding: \$482,929 over 6 years

Jarjum Centre integrates a transformative approach to early childhood education which is based in culture and connection to community. CAGES Foundation contributed towards Jarjum Centre to partner with a trusted local community member in the Box Ridge community to establish and lead a supported playgroup for families with children aged 0–5. This partnership resulted in the playgroup transitioning to independent community leadership and the development of a sustainability plan to support long-term outcomes.

### MAARI MA HEALTH ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

WILYAKALI AND BARKINDJI COUNTRY (NSW)

FY25 \$106,000

Total funding: \$1,472,875 over 14 years

Maari Ma is an Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation supporting individuals and families across Wilyakali and Barkindji country (far west region of NSW). CAGES Foundation has provided ongoing support for various initiatives within Maari Ma’s comprehensive and holistic Early Years Strategy. This contribution supported the Early Years and Healthy Start Programs and their wrap around family support, allowing them to extend beyond Broken Hill to Wilcannia and Menindee.

### MUDGIN-GAL

GADIGAL COUNTRY (NSW)

FY25 \$50,000

Total funding: 275,000 over 6 years

Mudgin-Gal Women’s Service is an Aboriginal organisation on Gadigal country (Redfern) run by and for Aboriginal women. Their work strengthens Aboriginal women’s connection to culture and community, fosters healing and supports self-determination. CAGES Foundation contributed to the operational funding of Mudgin Gal’s 1000 Days Program, supporting culturally appropriate activities for children, support for expectant mothers, community outreach and connection and organisational capacity building. This all contributes to the critical outcome of keeping newborn babies safely with their mothers.



Image courtesy of Njernda Aboriginal Corporation

**MUDYALA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**

*YAEGL COUNTRY (NSW)*

**FY25 \$100,000**

*Total funding: \$431,105 over 6 years*

Mudyala supports young people and their families on Yaegl country (in the Clarence Valley) to connect and engage with education in a comfortable and culturally appropriate manner. CAGES Foundation has supported Mudyala to build local Aboriginal workforce capacity in early childhood care through traineeships to Certificate III Early Childhood Education, while also funding sensory play sessions with allied health workers. This support strengthens community skills and cultural leadership, enhances family support programs and contributes to the long-term goal of establishing the first Aboriginal run community preschool in the Clarence Valley.

**SNAICC**

*WURUNDJERI WOI WURRUNG COUNTRY (VIC)*

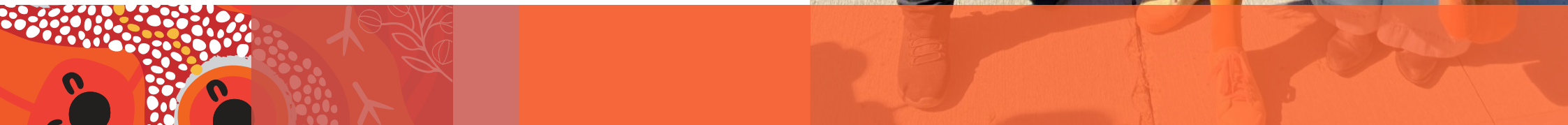
**FY25 \$150,000**

*Total funding: \$1,430,000 over 12 years*

SNAICC is the national voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. CAGES Foundation continues to support SNAICC’s leadership team, communications capacity and advocacy, enabling the organisation to deliver outcomes that help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive and remain connected to culture and community. Over the year SNAICC has strengthened its media and advocacy presence and taken a leadership role in shifting policy, notably the legislation passed in February 2025 to remove the Activity Test, which served as a barrier for early education enrolments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.



Image courtesy of Contact Inc and Gainmara Birrilee Preschool



## Children growing strong in culture

A team of language and cultural educators and researchers are working alongside community, Elders and knowledge holders to keep Dharawal culture strong.

The Gujaga Foundation is the peak organisation leading language, cultural workshops and experiences, and consultancy within the Dharawal nation, reaching from Sydney Harbour down to the Shoalhaven River and as far west as Campbelltown.

Chief Operations Officer Jessie Longbottom says Gujaga is 100 percent owned and governed by Dharawal people.

“We know what our community needs and the community leads, develops and designs our plan to achieve our vision which is to create a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging into the children of the La Perouse Aboriginal community.”

“Our programs also support the broader community – increasing their knowledge of Dharawal language and culture, an unbroken connection since time immemorial.”

Gujaga has been operating for nearly 7 years, and its defined goals and geographic area has often meant attracting financial support can be challenging.

“Organisations like us are not guaranteed funding. We have to seek and make our own revenue and often funders have specific criteria, and they want you to align with them. This takes away our self-determination.”

“CAGES funding delivers meaningful impact – allowing us to continue to drive our priorities and respond to our community needs without restrictive conditions.”

“It’s a model fostered by genuine collaboration, trust-based relationship – rather than a financial transaction.”

Jessie says this allows Gujaga to build capacity and make a real positive difference for future generations.

“We are not only growing in staff and programs but opportunities for young Dharawal people in the community and in their career.”

Gujaga sent a delegation to Auckland for the World Indigenous Peoples’ Conference on Education, inspiring the next generation.

“They returned excited at the connections they made and wanting to present at the next world event to showcase the deadly work of Gujaga.”

by **Kerry Klimm**



“We have 30 staff delivering a range of programs from language revitalisation and community camps to family history workshops and cultural experience events.”

**COMMUNITY GRANTS** provides one-off grants to Aboriginal controlled or led organisations providing early years services.

**ABSEC- NSW CHILD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PEAK ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**

*GADIGAL (NSW)*

**\$50,000**

AbSec is the peak organisation concerned with the welfare of Aboriginal children, young people and families. CAGES funding contributed toward the Know Your Rights Project, a website which aims to increase self-determination and self-empowerment for Aboriginal parents and families navigating the NSW child protection system.

**BOURKE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION HEALTH SERVICE**

*NGEMBA (NSW)*

**\$45,000**

Bourke Aboriginal Corporation Health Service (BACHS) aims to provide holistic, comprehensive, and culturally appropriate health and dental care to the Aboriginal community. CAGES funding supported BACHS Connected Beginnings Program.

**COMMON GROUND**

*WURUNDJERI (VIC)*

**\$30,000**

Common Ground exists to bring connection, truth and deeper understanding through storytelling. CAGES funded toward First Nations-led storytelling projects, including Bedtime Stories.

**DEADLYSCIENCE LTD**

*BIRIPAI COUNTRY (NSW)*

**\$25,000**

DeadlyScience aims to create STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. With the support of CAGES, we have provided STEM resources and opportunities to 683 schools, 123 day care centres, family day care and OOSHC services, as well as sports groups across remote Indigenous communities.

**DHARAWAL PUBLICATIONS (AUSPICE: 3BRIDGES)**

*DHARAWAL (NSW)*

**\$25,000**

Dharawal Publications was established in 2016 with the expressed aim of reviving Dharawal knowledge/ language and culture by producing books that could be used for educating, and educational services, particularly for early childhood educators and the early childhood years. CAGES supported the adaptation of Ezy books into video format for preschoolers and educators.



Image courtesy of AbSec

**GARI YALA ABORIGINAL CULTURAL FUNDRAISING INDIGENOUS CORPORATION**

*WIRADJURI (NSW)*

**\$10,000**

Gari Yala Aboriginal Cultural Fundraising Indigenous Corporation coordinate cultural workshops for 1–5-year-olds in schools and tell stories about Aboriginal culture. CAGES provided support toward Gari Yala’s cultural learning and healthy eating program.

**GROOTE EYLANDT BICKERTON ISLAND PRIMARY COLLEGE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**

*GROOTE EYLANDT (NT)*

**\$50,000**

GEBIPCAC is tasked with implementing the Local Decision Making Agreement Education Implementation plan. This agreement aims to return the control of Education to the Anindilyakwa people as the Department has failed to deliver an education which meets the needs of the children across Groote Archipelago. CAGES funding contributed toward teacher trainee costs.

**GUJAGA FOUNDATION**

*DHARAWAL / GAMAY (BOTANY BAY, NSW)*

**\$20,000**

The Gujaga Foundation aims to instil a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging in Dharawal children and young people. CAGES contributed toward Dharawal language revitalisation programs.

**HEALTHY DREAMING (AUSPICE: FAY FULLER HEALTH CHARITY FOUNDATION)**

*(SA)*

**\$40,000**

Healthy Dreaming is an Aboriginal-owned and operated organisation that plays an important role in building community capacity that strengthens the voice of Aboriginal community in Port Augusta, South Australia to rethink local systems and reimagine justice for healing. With CAGES Foundation support, Healthy Dreaming engaged a Community Connector role bringing together community elders to reclaim eldership and be part of the early stages of the Justice Reinvestment journey.

**ILLAWARRA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**

*DHARAWAL (NSW)*

**\$50,000**

Based in Wollongong and working across the Illawarra region, IAC provides services to meet the social, cultural, and economic needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. CAGES contributed toward IACs social impact evaluation to support the business case for the redevelopment of the IAC Service Hub in Port Kembla.

**JUMBUNNA INSTITUTE FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY**

*CADIGAL COUNTRY (NSW)*

**\$50,000**

The Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research aims to produce the highest quality research on Indigenous legal and policy issues and to develop highly skilled Indigenous researchers. CAGES provided funding toward the International Symposium on Self Determination in Indigenous Peoples Child Protection.



Image courtesy of Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative

**KINCHELLA BOYS HOME**

*GADIGAL (NSW)*

**\$30,000**

Unlocking the past to free the future is the aim of Kinchella Boys Home. CAGES supported the Uncle’s storytelling for healing program.

**MOORDITJ KOORT ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**

*(WA)*

**\$25,000**

Moorditj Koort Aboriginal Corporation supports the health and wellness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in WA. CAGES funding contributed toward Cultural support for the ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat) program.

**NAMATJIARA HAVEN**

*BUNDJALUNG COUNTRY (NSW)*

**\$25,000**

Namatjira Haven provides integrated, culturally grounded, evidence -based support for Aboriginal people with substance use disorders and related issues. CAGES supported strategic capacity building and community consultations.

**NGAMBAGA BINDARRY GIRRWAA COMMUNITY SERVICES**

*GUMBAYNGGIRR NATION (NSW)*

**\$50,000**

Ngambaga Bindarry Girrwa Community Services is a not-for-profit organization who will be offering quality care and lifestyle support to vulnerable, disabled and disadvantaged members of our communities. CAGES supported the employment of a Plan Manager and the CEO to acquire qualification in Internal Auditing.

**NJERENDA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**

*YORTA YORTA (VIC)*

**\$25,000**

Njernda’s purpose is to deliver community controlled, holistic services and programs which improve the physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of the Aboriginal Community of Echuca and surrounding areas. CAGES funding contributed toward the Baby (Burrai) Welcome To Country.

**NORTHERN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CHARITABLE TRUST (TRADING AS ABORIGINAL INVESTMENT GROUP)**

*LARRAKIA (NT)*

**\$25,106**

AIIG builds stronger Aboriginal communities across the 7 Northern Regions of the NT, through health, economic and social development. CAGES supported education workshops in remote communities.

**PERTAME SCHOOL (PROJECT OF BATCHELOR INSTITUTE OF INDIGENOUS TERTIARY EDUCATION)**

*PERTAME (SOUTHERN ARRERENTE) COUNTRY - PERTA RRWETENGA AND CENTRAL ARRERENTE COUNTRY - MPARNTWE (NT)*

**\$30,000**

The Pertame School is a community-led language revival program empowering Pertame Elders to pass their language and cultural knowledge onto the next generation. CAGES funded toward Pertame Ngetya Untya (Language Nest) Immersion Playgroup.

**THE FRONT PROJECT (AUSPICE: JARJUM CENTRE)**

*BUNDJALUNG NATION (NSW)*

**\$50,000**

The Apiary Fellowship is a national collective impact initiative that brings together early childhood development professionals who are passionate about transforming the sector, to develop their system leadership capacity. CAGES supported travel and cultural safety costs of First Nations participants.

**THE WESTERMAN JILYA INSTITUTE FOR INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH**

*BOORLOO (WA)*

**\$50,000**

‘Jilya’ which means ‘my child’ in Nyamal language reflects our underlying purpose, to provide a world in which our most vulnerable Indigenous children, people, and communities, can have at an equal opportunity to thrive. CAGES funded toward capacity building of clinicians to provide early interventions towards strengthening family bonds using culturally-informed, attachment-based strategies.

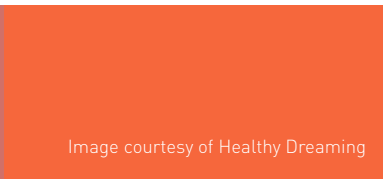


Image courtesy of Healthy Dreaming

**WAHLUU HEALTH ABORIGINAL CORPORATION BATHURST**

*WIRADYURI COUNTRY (NSW)*

**\$25,000**

Wahluu Health Aboriginal Corporation Bathurst provide, or arrange where possible, free medical and dental services to Aboriginal people. CAGES supported early intervention programs 0-5 years for Aboriginal babies and children.

**YALU ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**

*GALIWINKU (NT)*

**\$25,000**

Yalu Aboriginal Corporation's objective is to better the lives of Yolŋu people with a focus on children and families. CAGES contributed toward the purchase of Aqua Ubique, a water from the air device to provide free drinking water for the community.

**YENU ALLOWAH ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**

*DARUG NATION (NSW)*

**\$25,000**

Yenu Allowah Child and Family Centre respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultures. CAGES funded toward speech, occupational therapy and cultural awareness initiatives.

**YILIYAPINYA INDIGENOUS CORPORATION**

*MEANJIN (QLD)*

**\$50,000**

Yiliyapinya is an Indigenous led, not for profit organisation focused on Brain Health and Healing for children, young people, and their families. CAGES provided funding to purchase a second-hand eight-seater car allowing families greater access to attend playgroups and the Yili program.



Image courtesy of Yiliyapinya Indigenous Corporation

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First Nation people are the first entrepreneurs and business people in Australia. Colonisation created structures that continue to prevent and exclude Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from wealth creation.

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Our Economic Development grants are designed to support Indigenous-led or owned intermediaries and enterprises. The organisations we fund are working on a range of innovative economic solutions that celebrate First Nation thinking, encourage wealth creation and systems change.



### ASSI-PJ (AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS – PORT JACKSON) (AUSPICE: TORRES HEALTH ABORIGINAL CORPORATION)

(NSW)

**\$10,000**

ASSI-PJ advocates for truth telling around the social and economic injustice relating to legacy of 'blackbirding'. CAGES funded toward travel costs for traditional performers from the Torres Strait to attend 'Healing on Country ASSI 30th Anniversary workshops and Dignitary event' hosted at the Botanical Gardens Sydney NSW.

### DHINA DURRITI ABORIGINAL CORPORATION (AUSPICE: DALAIGUR PRE-SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES ABORIGINAL CORPORATION)

DUNGHUTTI COUNTRY (NSW)

**\$50,000**

*First year funded*

Dhina Durruti Aboriginal Corporation (DDAC) supports local young people and the local community in social and emotional wellbeing, education and culture. CAGES contributed funding toward a social enterprise opportunity in Kempsey.

### ESPARQ VENTURES (AUSPICE: FIRST AUSTRALIANS CAPITAL)

GIMUY (QLD)

**\$86,000**

*First year funded*

Esparq Ventures is rooted in lived experiences and a deep understanding of building enterprises as First Nations people through redefining the entrepreneurial landscape by providing the capital, mentorship, and resources

necessary for Indigenous businesses to thrive. CAGES provided funds toward a kickstarter initiative to support four to six First Nations businesses, helping them take their first steps toward financial independence. CAGES also provided untied funding toward growing systems, process and evaluation, including impact measurement and relationship management.

### FIRST AUSTRALIANS CAPITAL (NATIONAL)

**FY 25 \$112,000**

*Total funding: \$895,000.00 over 10 years*

First Australians Capital's (FAC) aim is to empower First Australians to create and drive their own prosperity through the strength and assets of First Australians' cultural, creative and economic capital, and in turn, contributing to the nation's economic growth. As a long-term partner, CAGES Foundation has supported operational expenses allowing FAC further autonomy in decision making, systems change and investment.



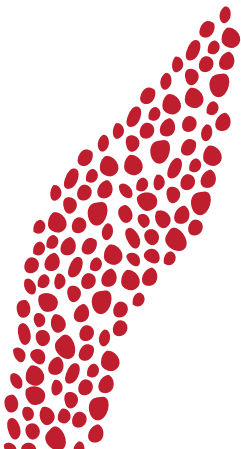
Image courtesy of Aboriginal Investment Group

### FIRST HAND SOLUTIONS GADIGAL AND BIDJIGAL COUNTRY (NSW)

**FY25 \$80,000**

*Total funding: \$380,000 over 7 years*

First Hand Solutions improves the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through employment and training, financial inclusion and economic development underpinned by culture, connection to country and caring for country. CAGES funding enabled First Hand Solutions to employ a young local Aboriginal person. This supported a more responsive, community-focused approach that strengthened workforce development and leadership pathways across Blak Markets, Indigigrow and National Indigenous Art Fair. It also contributed to deeper engagement with apprentices, the successful delivery of key programs, and helped position the organisation for additional funding.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### FIRST NATIONS FUTURES FOUNDATION

*(NATIONAL)*

**FY25 \$75,000**

*Total funding: \$275,000 over 4 years*

First Nations Futures provides a new funding platform that drives economic justice for First Nations communities. CAGES funding supported the co-design of First Nations Foundation's (FNF) evaluation framework, enabling the organisation to strengthen its operational capacity and expand support for community-driven projects. This investment allowed FNF to take on 10 community partners, grow its corpus and increase philanthropic support for its programs and initiatives.

### FIRST NATIONS PROJECTS GROUP (AUSPICE: GROUNDSWELL GIVING)

*(NATIONAL)*

**FY25 \$50,000**

*First year funded*

First Nations Projects Group exists to advance the economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspirations of First Nations people in Australia. CAGES provided funding toward their organisational start-up costs, working capital and for their Directors to convene at a strategic planning session in Sydney.

### ORIGINAL POWER

*(NATIONAL)*

**FY25 \$75,000**

*Total funding: \$495,000 over 7 years*

Original Power builds the skills, capacity and collective capability of First Nations peoples to determine what happens in their communities and on their country. CAGES funding supported Original Power to engage communities on renewable energy projects, including work in Borroloola and Broome. Funding also enabled the ongoing development of the First Nations Clean Energy Network and the establishment of the First Nations Clean Energy Hub, providing resources, advice, and support to strengthen community-led renewable energy initiatives.

### PERRYS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION (AUSPICE: FIRST AUSTRALIANS CAPITAL)

*AWABAKAL (NSW)*

**\$50,000**

*First year funded*

Perry's was established to reconnect young Worimi people to culture through language, dance and food. CAGES Foundation funding was utilised toward the procurement of a General Manager to manage an opportunity from NSW Department of Environment Biodiversity Agreement which has offered Perry's contracts to carry out conservation and land management works over the next five years. This work is projected to generate sustainable revenue and employment opportunities for young people in Community.

Image courtesy of SNAICC



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### SALTWATER COUNTRY

YAWURU (BROOME, WA)

**FY25 \$50,000**

*First year funded*

Saltwater Country is a First Australians led charity committed to the social, emotional and economic advancement of First Peoples through people-centred place-based solutions with global reach. CAGES funding contributed toward explorations of increasing economic access for First Australians.

### SEVGEN CORPORATION

KABI KABI COUNTRY (QLD)

**FY25 \$60,000**

*Total funding: \$562,500 over 10 years*

SevGen's objective is to honour the full, true and creative self and to celebrate, validate and reinvigorate Indigenous ways of being. CAGES Foundation continued funding has supported SevGen's operations, enabling sustainable leadership and growth of the D-Time Enterprises which encompasses three social enterprises. This growth has created additional employment and training opportunities for young people. Funding also contributed to the success of Galeru Farm, which is producing 5 tonnes of fruit annually and Deadly Espresso Café, which operates on 100% earned revenue.

### THE FUNDING NETWORK

(NATIONAL)

**\$20,000**

The Funding Network Australia (TFN) make giving simple, collaborative and fun, inspiring everyday Australians to give through the power of story, connection and community. CAGES contributed funding toward event support and First Nations enterprises showcased at the First Nations Funding Network event.

### TRANBY ABORIGINAL CO-OPERATIVE LTD

GADIGAL AND WANGAL (NSW)

**FY25 \$50,000**

*Total funding: \$90,000.00 over 3 years*

Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd (Tranby) is Australia's oldest independent First Nations education and training provider. Tranby has partnered with Welcome to Country for their Marketplace Project. The Marketplace Project supports First Nations entrepreneurs and businesses in the retail and tourism sectors. CAGES funding enabled stock procurement, improved cash flow resilience and strengthened a sustainable marketplace platform enabling First Nations suppliers to thrive.

### WANTA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

ARRERENTE (NT)

**FY25 \$50,000**

*First year funded*

Wanta Aboriginal Corporation exists to provide Indigenous youth in remote communities with opportunities for education, business development, and employment through youth-driven social enterprises. CAGES provided funding to establish business administration processes and conduct community consultations.

### WARRAMA LI

GAMILAROI NATION (NSW)

**FY25 \$100,000**

*Total funding: \$210,000 over 3 years*

Warrama-Li is a social enterprise providing opportunities for young people to engage with training and employment opportunities in Moree. CAGES Foundation funding supported local construction work in the community by enabling the purchase of materials to service eight houses in the mission. The funding also replaced equipment damaged in a fire, ensuring contracts were maintained, and provided full-time and casual employment for eight young people under 30.



Image courtesy of SevGen Indigenous Corporation

## Backing blak businesses

From tropical rock lobster farming, to a skin care range and community op-shops, Esparq, a First Nation's lead venture builder is supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to succeed in business.

In just under two years, Esparq, led by First Nations' man Darryl Majid has supported 21 Indigenous business, created 112 jobs and secured 13.8 million in capital.

"This is more than just about numbers and finding solutions to a problem. This is about systems changes, Mr Majid said."

"Business barriers can be complex and interlinked with individual, family and community challenges. We cannot solve all of these in isolation."

Esparq aims to not just help Indigenous entrepreneurs take their ideas to market and win, but to build the infrastructure for a resilient, connected Indigenous economy.

"We back people. It's about creating a future for mob shaped by self-determination. Communities create wealth, solve problems and build systems that reflect who they are and how they live."

"We see the opportunities. The innovation. The resilience. The entrepreneurial spirit in our communities. We connect them with the right business tools, networks or capital."

CAGES Foundation is one of those connections that acknowledge the racial systems embedded in wealth creation, preventing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from participating and succeeding in business.

"Communities trust us. So we need to work with people like CAGES Foundation, that we can trust, who have a shared purpose and truly

understand the barriers for our mob in business," Mr Majid said.

Esparq support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs with business plans, pitching for capital on their behalf, chasing government for answers, or pooling business support so they can focus on what they do best. Each business is different and requires a tailored approach.

"First Nations' business are guided by, answerable to and support communities. We are there to support these business to thrive, grow, last and lead to create intergenerational wealth for our children and grandchildren."

by **Kerry Klimm**



Image courtesy of Esparq Ventures

“People want to forge their own path, their ideas are limitless, but the barriers are what often hold our mob back to take the leap and turn a business idea into reality, or stop them from growing.”





**COMMON THREADS (AUSPICE:  
CENTRE FOR AUSTRALIAN  
PROGRESS)**

*(NATIONAL)*

**FY25 \$100,000**

*Total funding: \$225,000 over 5 years*

The objective of Common Threads is to drive transformative change for First Nations justice by building the power, capability, and collaboration of First Nations social movements. CAGES funds towards organisational costs contributing to Common Threads becoming an independent entity, recruiting new Board members and building a majority First Nations team.

**MANNIFERRA**

*(NATIONAL)*

**FY25 \$100,000**

*Total funding: \$460,000 over 5 years*

CAGES Foundation participated as a member of Mannifera, a collective of Australian funders supporting civil society organisations focused on strengthening our democracy and building a more inclusive economy. The collective is also committed to respectfully funding in the First Nations space through its First Nations-led grant-making practice.

**THRIVING QUEENSLAND  
PLACES NETWORK (AUSPICE:  
AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH  
ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE)**

*(QLD)*

**FY25 \$50,000**

*First year funded*

Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership has been co-developing a Queensland place-based network, aimed at ensuring that kids and places in Queensland have what they need to thrive. CAGES contributes funding to invest in shared infrastructure to support coordination, learning and capability, leveraging existing capabilities and facilitate rich learning environments to catalyse system innovation.

**SPINIFEX FOUNDATION  
(AUSPICE: FAY FULLER  
COMMUNITY HEALTH  
FOUNDATION)**

*(SA)*

**FY25 \$5,000**

*First year funded*

An Indigenous-led philanthropic foundation, the Spinifex Foundation SA was established to address the needs, aspirations, and challenges faced by all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in South Australia. CAGES funded toward a professional development opportunity to attend the 2025 International Funders for Indigenous Peoples conference.

## Connecting to a global community of Indigenous funders

Rachel Kerry attended the International Funders for Indigenous People Conference in Naivasha Kenya in February 2025. This conference provided an opportunity to connect with the global funding community to share and learn about practice and impact.

Together with Jocelyn King (Chair, First Australian's Capital) and Stephanie Harvey (CEO, Community First Development), Rachel presented a session titled "Unlocking impact: The importance and potential of giving autonomy with funding and investment". In this session Jocelyn and Stephanie discussed the importance of re-building and growing the First Nations economy which leads to genuinely self-determined opportunities and sustainable impact.

Rachel was able to share the impact a foundation can unlock by playing a dual role as donor and investor and how a foundation moved towards giving autonomy with funding.



Image courtesy of Indigenous Funders for Indigenous People



#### CAGES Foundation Board

Paul Salteri AO, Founder and Chairman

Sandra Salteri, Founder and Director

Gemma Salteri, Executive Director

Grant Lovett, Director (commenced 6/2025)

Paul Biancardi, Director (retired 6/2025)

#### Team

Rachel Kerry, Chief Executive Officer

Sime Knezevic, Grants Manager

Kerry Klimm, Guguu Yalanji and Koko Lamalama,  
Strategic Communications Consultant

Debbie Sollitt, Administration Manager

CAGES investments portfolio is managed by the Finance Committee appointed by the CAGES Board. The Finance Committee is Chaired by independent Director, Grant Lovett.

Our audited financial statements are available upon request or on our ACNC page.



[www.cagesfoundation.org](http://www.cagesfoundation.org)



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