



2025

ANNUAL REVIEW

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**We acknowledge the diverse and complex societies of the lands on which we live and work.**

**We pay our respects to the past, present and future custodians who share these lands and their ancient knowledges.**

**We thank First Nations peoples for their friendship and trust as we work together to enrich lives, improve health and strengthen the future.**

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# WHERE WE WORK



# OUR IMPACT

## PROGRAMS



**15**  
remote and 2 urban communities engaged in building strong relationships



**170**  
community programs and sessions delivered with intergenerational engagement



**10,100**  
people accessing programs & employment opportunities



**1,980**  
participants working together, learning and inspiring each other



**21,527**  
hours engaged with resources



**270+**  
Indigenous volunteers supporting programs



**679,674**  
community views of our health promotion resources

The strong sense of synergy between everyone was absolutely beautiful - warm, generous, and welcoming. Each day offered meaningful learning and deep connection with the kids, the wider community, and Country.

Carmen, Facilitator

## RECONCILIATION




**3,856**  
program participants




**533**  
organisations engaged



**5,986**  
hours of education with two-way learning



**93%** participants satisfied our programs support them to take an active role in Reconciliation



**97%** participants satisfied our programs supported learning First Nations perspectives



**94%** participants satisfied our programs increased cultural competency




**92%** participants would recommend Red Dust

The workshop allowed me to relate, understand and share experiences on a deeper level and in a genuine and safe space. The content sparked great perspectives and reflections challenging the general status quo.

Participant  
Foundations for Reconciliation Workshop

## FY25 ECONOMIC




**80+** First Nations peoples with specialist knowledge and skills employed



**150+** meaningful, on-Country employment opportunities for local people



**20,290+** hours of employment fulfilled by First Nations peoples



**\$1,242,670+** Income earned by First Nations employees, contractors and suppliers to support themselves, their families, their communities

Red Dust are my family, I always look out for them and they always look out for me. I like the programs - music and culture, and I help all the young people to be strong one day like us, they are the next mob.

Michael Gallagher  
Strong Young Men & Boys Coordinator,

# OUR BOARD



**SIMON MCKEON**

PATRON

Simon McKeon is a member of the Big Issue Advisory Board and an Australia Day Ambassador for the Victorian Government. He previously served as Chancellor of Monash University, Chairman of In2Science, AMP and CSIRO and the Group of Eight's Industry and Innovation Board. He was Founding President of the Federal Government's Australian Takeovers Panel, as well as its Point Nepean Community Trust.

Previous roles include Founding Chairman of MS Research Australia and Business for Millennium Development. He was also Chairman of the Federal Government's Panel which in 2013 completed a Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research. Simon was also the 2011 Australian of the Year.



**MARTIN HIRONS**

PATRON

Martin Hiron is Managing Director of Solucio and a highly respected strategist, researcher, and business leader with over 35 years of experience across the sport, leisure, and community sectors. From his first role selling basketball sponsorships to guiding national strategies for leading organisations, Martin has built a reputation for seeing the big picture and turning it into action.

Before joining Solucio he held senior roles with Sweeney Research, where he became a Director. His diverse career also includes leadership roles in Canada, teaching roles at universities in Australia and North America, and on the frontlines of sport, directing a professional golf tournament on the Canadian Tour.

Community-oriented he's held board and leadership roles with Amputee Golf Victoria, State Baseball and Softball Centre and 16 years as Red Dust's Inaugural Chair.



**GAVIN REID**

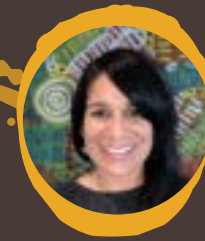
BOARD MEMBER AND  
CHAIRMAN

Gavin's successful career spans more than 30 years across large corporations and the philanthropic sector.

He brings extensive leadership, finance, accounting, and governance experience to the Red Dust Board. He has a long history of volunteering and is committed to recognising the cultural value and contributions made by the First Nations Peoples of Australia.

Gavin is a Fellow of CPA Australia, a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and has a Graduate Diploma in Applied Finance and Investment at Securities Institute of Australia (now FINSA).

Gavin is Chairperson of Red Dust and member of the Finance & Audit and Nominations Committees.



**TANIA CARLOS**

BOARD MEMBER

Tania Carlos is a proud Aboriginal woman of the Arrernte and Luritja peoples and Director on the Red Dust Board, with over 25 years' experience in Indigenous affairs, social impact, and community engagement across government and the energy sector. She is an advocate for cultural safety and brings that energy to talent strategies that strengthen recruitment, retention, and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A trusted relationship-builder, Tania brings deep expertise in stakeholder engagement, social performance, and community investment. She holds a Bachelor of Business from Queensland University of Technology and an Advanced Diploma of Business Management, and is an active advocate for inclusion through Pride, Reconciliation, and Indigenous employee networks.



**DR. JOHN WAYNE PARSONS**

BOARD MEMBER

John Wayne Parsons is a proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander man. He carries a rich cultural heritage through his Yagarabul and Narangawal / Gitabal father from southeast Queensland and his Maluligal and Kemer Kemer Meriam mother from the Torres Strait Islands.

As a singer-songwriter and cultural practitioner, John uses music to share First Nations stories. He was introduced to the Board by Uncle Raymond Minniecon, and has worked with World Vision Australia, Kinchela Boys, and Papunya youth on music-based healing projects.

His previous Indigenous identified roles in child protection in NSW and VIC include work in prisons supporting men. John recently completed a PhD at the University of Melbourne titled "Song as a Mode to Restoring First Nations Experience", and is currently Project Coordinator, Student Enrichment at University of Melbourne.

# OUR BOARD



**SHELLY MIDDELBOSCH**

BOARD MEMBER

Shelly Middelbosch is a proud Wodi Wodi woman of the Dharawal Nation with over 20 years of leadership experience in strategy, policy, and advocacy. Passionate about empowering communities, Shelly excels in driving systemic change, fostering innovation, and optimizing operational efficiency.

Her work is rooted in cultural competence, inclusion, and social responsibility, making a meaningful difference for families and communities. Shelly is CEO of Foundations Care and shares Red Dust values and commitment to sustainable solutions and inspiring positive change.



**JENNIFER VAN GRONINGEN**

BOARD MEMBER

Jen is a Registered Nurse and Midwife specialising in Maternal and Child Health and Lactation Consultancy. She currently works in community-based health and brings many years of experience working with families with children aged 0 to 5 years olds.

Jen is the wife of our late founder John Van Groningen. Jen has had the privilege of walking the Red Dust journey with John. She has been there from the early days in the 80s when John was a light aircraft pilot flying around the Tanami Desert to later years when as a sports Chaplain John first started taking sports role models out on Community. Through this, John and Jen both saw the power and influence positive role models have on kids and their families, the importance of two-way learning and the strength and beauty of Indigenous culture.



**CHRIS NAISH**

BOARD MEMBER

Chris is a former AFL player forging a successful career spanning over 150 games with Richmond and Port Adelaide. Following his football career Chris has taken on numerous executive roles in the sporting and nonprofit sectors including four years as CEO of The Reach Foundation.

Chris is passionate about innovation and brings a wealth of knowledge and insights to the Board and as Chair of Red Dust's Innovation & Aspiration Working Group.



**MIA LA BURNIY**

BOARD MEMBER

Mia brings extensive legal, governance and corporate strategy experience to the Red Dust Board, having worked in the professional services, major events and sporting industries. Throughout her career, Mia has been fortunate to work and volunteer with a number of Indigenous organisations and charities.

Mia currently holds a Victorian Legal Practising Certificate and a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice and is currently studying for her Masters of Business Administration.

Mia is Chair of Red Dust's Audit & Finance Committee.



**JEREMY ABBOTT**

BOARD MEMBER

Jeremy is a proud Aboriginal man of the Pini people from Western Australia. With over 18 years of corporate experience across various sectors in Western Australia and Victoria, he is currently the majority owner and director of Supply Nation certified commercial interiors company Zenith RBA. Jeremy brings a wealth of experience across sales, partnerships, marketing, strategy and business development

Jeremy is a member of various RAP committees, community organisations and a current Board member of the Polly Farmer Foundation who deliver academic enrichment programs for Indigenous students around the country. Jeremy is committed to honoring his family's legacy by actively supporting and uplifting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

# OUR COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUPS

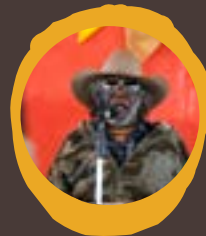
## CENTRAL AUSTRALIA



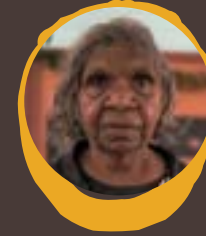
**DEREK WILLIAMS**  
YUENDUMU



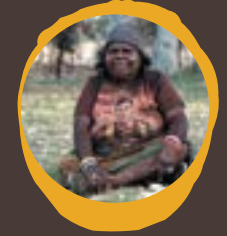
**DOROTHEA RANDALL**  
MUTITJULU



**JOE YOUNG**  
WALUNGURRU



**TARNA ANDREWS**  
UTJU



**LORNA JACKSON**  
WALUNGURRU

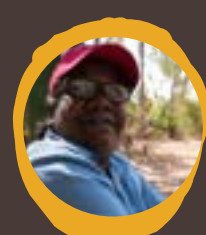
## TOP END



**ROBERTA RAYMOND**  
PEPPIMENARTI



**LATISHA MARRANYTYA**  
NAUIYU



**MAXINE BADING**  
BAGOT



**KEITH WARRIGAL**  
PEPPIMENARTI



**JUNE FEJO**  
MINJILANG



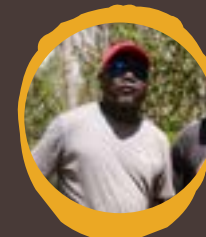
**ANDERSON DUDANGA**  
GUNBALANYA



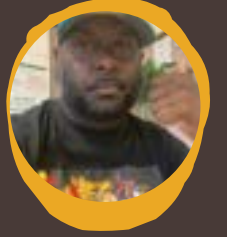
**ZIPORAH BUNDUCK**  
WADEYE



**DION WILISON**  
WURRUMIYANGA



**EDWARD DARCY**  
MILIKAPITI



**NATHAN FEJO**  
MINJILANG

## A message from **OUR CHAIRMAN**

**Our purpose remains clear, to support positive health and wellbeing outcomes through programs grounded in culture, delivered in partnership with community leaders, and built on the strength of First Nations role models.**

**This purpose continues to guide our decisions and the way we show up in community.**

**Every initiative we undertake is guided by cultural integrity, community ownership, and safety.**

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live and work together. I pay my respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations people connected to Red Dust Role Models.

It is my privilege to reflect on the past year and share the progress Red Dust Role Models has made together with our communities. 2025 has been a year of both consolidation and growth, strengthening our foundations while expanding our impact in places where culturally strong, community-driven health promotion is most needed.

This year also marked a significant milestone in our conciliation journey. The Board now comprises 50% First Nations Directors, reflecting our commitment to deepening First Nations ownership and control within the organisation.

We welcomed Jeremy Abbott and Michelle (Shelly) Middelbosch to the Board bringing invaluable experience and leadership. We also farewelled long-serving Directors Will Minson and Ros Johnson, whose contributions over many years have shaped Red Dust's success. We thank them both for their dedication and stewardship.

Financially, Red Dust remains sound. We closed FY25 in a stable position, supported by the final year of a major government contract and careful management of resources. This strong footing allows us to continue investing in programs that matter most to the communities we serve.

Looking ahead, we are developing a new Strategic Plan to guide us through to FY30. This plan will build on our achievements and ensure we remain responsive to community priorities for decades to come.

Our commitment extends well beyond delivering programs. Red Dust is dedicated to nurturing long-term, trusted relationships with communities built on respect, continuity, and walking together over many years. This long-term approach remains central to who we are and how we work.

Thirty years ago, John Van Groningen set out to improve health in remote First Nations communities. That vision became Red Dust Role Models in 2006 and still guides us today.

We've come this far with community, partners, our Board, staff, contractors and supporters. Since the referendum, support for First Nations initiatives has become harder to secure even for First Nations-led organisations while the need remains high.

This year, partnership and solidarity matter more than ever. If you believe in better health, stronger futures and genuine community-led change, please stand with Red Dust and partner with us, donate, advocate or connect. Your support directly powers life-changing programs in remote communities.

To our dedicated staff, passionate members, and all those who have partnered with us in communities across Central Australia and the Top End, thank you. Your commitment and collaboration make our work possible and meaningful.

It is an honour to serve as Chair of Red Dust Role Models. The year ahead promises to be a memorable one, and I look forward to celebrating this important milestone alongside you.

**Gavin Reid**  
Chairman



# A message from OUR CEO

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to our Board and to every member of the Red Dust team for your care and support.

Your response is a powerful reflection of our culture and values the Community-as-Family model at the heart of the Red Dust way of working.

It's a reminder that strong, healthy teams enable strong, healthy impact.

As we close out 2025, I'm reminded that growth and opportunity present themselves often at Red Dust—and with each step forward, our responsibility to prepare, adapt and stay true to who we are becomes even more important. When we lean into our values and our communities, we succeed.

This year also brought a personal chapter for me. I took time away for health reasons and remain in recovery.

The Red Dust way of working is a shared commitment to a human-centred workplace. Policies guide us, but our values, cultural principles and trust in one another shape how we bring them to life. It means looking after each other, stepping in when colleagues need support, and putting our hand up when we need help. As we grow, it's essential we continue to clarify and role-model what this looks like in practice.

In readiness for our next chapter, we have been consulting with staff to ensure we are best positioned from a structural and process perspective to continue growing our impact. The goal is to strengthen the environment around our program teams so they can do their best work. Growth at any pace is challenging for all organisations; we have faced many of the common growth challenges while still achieving significant outcomes which are important to recognise.

## Highlights from 2025

### BUILDING OUR TEAM IN THE NT

Every new program position is now Northern Territory based. We are prioritising First Nations recruitment with most of our contracted program workforce NT-based — a complete shift from five to six years ago.

### FAIR COMPENSATION AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

All local community-based staff are paid for their contributions, replacing historical expectations of volunteer time. We've also welcomed our first permanent community-based employee, with ambitions to grow this with new funding support.

### COMMUNITY VOICE

We have established community advisory groups in both Central Australia and the Top End, realising a long-held aspiration.

### GOVERNANCE PROGRESS

Our Board now has 50-50 First Nations representation, with a First Nations majority on track, and our membership is majority First Nations. This is a major milestone in our journey.

## Aspirations and continuous improvement

### A FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP

The key to a strong Red Dust future is strong leadership and especially First Nations leadership within and alongside our team. We have made good progress through recruitment and internal development while recognising that as we grow, we need a sustained and focused effort to identify and foster the positive role models who will lead Red Dust in the future.

### GENDER REPRESENTATION

A focus on leadership must also include a commitment to effective female representation in leadership. We are not currently meeting our own expectations for female leadership representation, and this is a significant priority to address in the coming period.

### COMMUNITY CAPACITY

We have our first community-based permanent employee, and our next step is to grow this capacity by supporting local staff and community-based businesses to drive more of our work. This requires good support structures including mentoring and training, and we will need new funding to achieve this.

### NT-BASED BOARD REPRESENTATION

We are proud to have achieved 50% First Nations board representation. Over time we want to increase NT-based board representation which will require us to identify and tackle existing barriers including addressing time demands, statutory director requirements and remuneration.

When asked about our biggest risk, my answer is leadership development — especially First Nations leadership. To be the Red Dust we aspire to be, we need a dedicated focus on leadership growth at every level. Over the next period we will be exploring opportunities for:

- An emerging leaders' program for Red Dust staff
- Strong internal mentoring and training, creating leaders from within the growing number of role models from the Red Dust
- A purposeful blend of First Nations and Western leadership traditions
- Identification of pathways for Community Advisory Group members

Funding is always going to be a challenge and for us this is about funding diversity. We are committed to broadening and strengthening our revenue base through corporate partnerships, philanthropy, trusts and foundations, government and our growing support from the community.

With diversified funding will come another period of growth; our priority will be to deepen relationships and impact in our current communities, with natural expansion to nearby places where relationships are already forming.

### What's next

The first half of 2026 is critical. Our new strategic plan will set the course for the next five years and our internal processes will be strengthened to ensure the Red Dust way of working reflects our values.

Through it all, our job is to be real — to ourselves and to the communities we work with and come from. We will prioritise what matters, including personal wellbeing. We will respect our place in Red Dust's story, bring our mastery and passion, and continue to learn from one another. We build on a 30-year organisational legacy and draw strength from millennia-strong knowledge systems.

**I am proud to lead this organisation and proud of our team. Thank you for your commitment, your care and your drive to make meaningful change. I look forward to the work ahead - together.**

**Scott Stirling**  
CEO



# Our programs



## A message from OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

This year has been one of meaningful connection, creativity, and community-led impact across all Red Dust programs.

As we reflect on our work, what stands out most is the strength of our partnerships and the ways communities continue to lead the direction, focus, and spirit of every program we deliver.

From strengthening cultural identity to hands-on learning and youth empowerment, each story in this review represents collaboration in action.

Our teams and community partners have created spaces where young people feel confident, proud, and excited to learn. In Minjilang, the Healthy Living Program supported students to connect wellbeing with culture, showcasing how local knowledge and good health practices go hand in hand.

Across programs, we saw consistent engagement and a willingness from young people to step forward as leaders—whether through gardening in desert environments, where students showed “strong attention” and ownership of their work, or through creative expression in community-driven arts projects, such as the Areyonga Primary School mural celebrating local values.

Culture remained at the heart of everything we delivered. Celebrations of language at Yuendumu highlighted the importance of bilingual education and the power of stories shared across generations. Communities reminded us again that “our old people and their stories are a key for us and our culture,” reinforcing why our programs prioritise storytelling as a major tool for education and identity.

The diversity of program experiences this year—from men’s camps fostering connection on Country, to the energy of dance, art, and sport weeks in Peppimenarti, to new creative journeys in Tiwi alongside AFLW role models—demonstrates what is possible when community aspirations guide our work. These moments are not just activities; they are pathways to empowerment, wellbeing, and pride.

We also witnessed programs inspire young people to imagine futures connected to culture and service. One young student told us, “I want to be a Red Duster when I am older... I could speak in language, have an office in Utju with the Red Dust Crew.” Comments like these remind us of the responsibility we hold—and the privilege—to walk alongside communities and help open opportunities that align with their strengths.

Long-term partnerships remain a cornerstone of the Red Dust approach. Communities like Walungurru (Kintore), celebrating 20 years of collaboration with Red Dust this year, emphasised that these relationships feel “like family.” Their trust in us is something we never take for granted. Combined with the overwhelming support from partners through initiatives such as our first-ever Matched Giving campaign, this collective effort strengthens our ability to show up consistently in communities.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to doing this work the right way: guided by culture, informed by community, and driven by the belief that every young person deserves the chance to thrive—connected, confident, and strong in identity. Thank you to our program teams, our community leaders, our partners, and the young people who inspire us every day.

Thank you for walking with us.

Together, we continue to create real, lasting change.



Jonathan Lindsay-Tjapaltjarri Hermawan  
Director of Programs and Strategic Lead

# RED DUST'S COMMUNITY-AS-FAMILY MODEL

Our Community-as-Family health model provides a modern framework for program service delivery in remote and urban communities of the Northern Territory (NT).

It fosters sustainable service development through inclusive consultation and a commitment to local capacity building. By tapping into established relationships - be it family, kinship, cultural, socio-historical, or language groups - it uses a strengths-based approach to inform and elevate our service delivery.



## Guiding Principles

### LOCAL EMPOWERMENT

We believe in nurturing local workers with employment, mentorship, and leadership opportunities, enabling them to inspire positive change within themselves, each other and their communities.

### FAMILY-BASED PROGRAMS

Our programming leverages family structures, outstations, governance, and referrals, helping us design and implement effective initiatives.

### LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Prioritising local management and employment, we value the unique cultural, community and linguistic expertise they provide, which otherwise would be unattainable.

### LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

Our programs are reliant on trust, respect, and accountability fostered through long-standing community and organisational relationships.

### COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

With time and trust, Red Dust employees transcend the boundary of being 'just visitors', learning to understand and perform their roles in the community beyond their job description.

### HOLISTIC SUPPORT

Our employees are supported to manage their work, health, and wellbeing comprehensively, acknowledging their personal and professional responsibilities that can extend beyond standard working hours.

### WORKING TOGETHER WITH FIRST NATIONS LEADERS

Red Dust defers to key family and cultural leaders to ensure fair and transparent management of programming, expenses and employment support, particularly during complex issues.

### WORKFORCE-LED INITIATIVES

Expanding our services into new communities is propelled by the directives and needs identified by our current workforce.

# OUR PROGRAMS TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS



## Healthy Living

We work alongside Elders, families, schools and young people to co-design programs that reflect local priorities and promote social, cultural and emotional health and wellbeing—turning community goals and aspirations into practical, achievable actions.

## Strong Young Women

Working together with young women to strengthen their identity, cultural connections and support aspirations through a trauma informed approach that nurtures healing and two-way learning.

## Strong Young Men & Boys

Working together to educate, advocate, support and learn from each other using a shared narrative approach and culturally appropriate yarning circles.

## Storytelling

Our Community Storytelling Program is at the heart of cultural preservation and celebration, providing opportunities for First Nations peoples to share their stories authentically. Through the unique expression of language and traditions on their ancestral lands, each project resonates with the distinct voice of its community.

## Reconciliation

In partnerships with remote Indigenous communities and Red Dust, every stage of your cultural learning journey is supported. From awareness and education to immersion and leadership programs on-Country.



## Realising Identity



Knowing who you are and where you fit. Your societal and community identity, your mob, your country, your Jukurrpa.

## Cross-cultural Competency

Walking strongly in all the worlds that surround you, be they cultural, community, school, work or play. Being confident in your identity in all those worlds and having the skills to code-switch effortlessly between them.



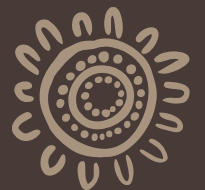
## Aspiration



Having the confidence to dream big for yourself and your community. Knowing what success looks like for you and your mob. Feeling like it's something you can strive for.

## Health

Being strong in your physical, emotional, spiritual and cultural health for yourself and your family.







## GROUNDING ON LARRAKIA COUNTRY: OUR MOB GET READY

Gathering on Larrakia Country set a clear direction for our program delivery team in 2025: uphold cultural integrity, strengthen local employment and leadership, and deliver community-led programs with consistency and care.

This gathering provided an opportunity to reflect on themes that guided our work and the impact we create. Themes included:

- Cultural integrity working on-Country
- Readiness
- Quality, safeguarding, and risk
- Partnerships and coordination
- Logistics and operations
- Community-led planning and local employment
- Workforce capability and wellbeing
- Impact, monitoring, and learning
- Ethical communications and consent
- Funding alignment and sustainability

Across all themes, one realisation stood out: our strongest platform for impact is the foundation we've built through local employment.

It is how we honour the vision of our founder, the late John Van-Groningen, and how we will deliver with integrity alongside partners, supporters, and the communities we serve in 2025 and beyond.



# OUR FIRST REMOTE COMMUNITY BASED EMPLOYEE

## Walungurru (Kintore), Central Australia

Michael Jangala Gallagher is a Warlpiri man living in Walungurru (Kintore), a remote community located 600 kilometres west of Alice Springs. A deeply respected cultural leader, Michael speaks four languages — Pintupi-Luritja, Warlpiri, Kukatja and English — and holds extensive cultural knowledge of Country, kinship, and law.

Despite these strengths, Michael has experienced chronic unemployment for much of his life. Like many Aboriginal men in remote communities, his leadership and cultural responsibilities were highly valued within community, yet rarely recognised or supported through meaningful employment opportunities. Outside of community obligations, there were limited pathways for sustained, purposeful work.

Through Red Dust, Michael is now employed as the Strong Young Men and Boys Program Coordinator in Walungurru (Kintore). This role has provided a genuine, viable employment pathway that aligns with his cultural authority, skills, and lived experience. Importantly, it is work that is grounded in community, rather than imposed from outside.

Michael is playing a key role in growing the Red Dust program from within Walungurru (Kintore), helping to reduce reliance on fly-in, fly-out contractors and strengthening local ownership of program delivery. His leadership ensures that activities are culturally appropriate, locally relevant, and responsive to the needs of young men and boys in the community.

Working part-time with Red Dust has also supported Michael to re-engage more broadly in the local workforce. Alongside his role with us, he is now also employed with the community Night Patrol safety group, further contributing to community wellbeing and safety.

Like many remote workers, Michael does not have access to a formal office space. Instead, he works flexibly across the local school, community clinic and council office — a practical reflection of how work happens in community and how relationships are central to effective service delivery.

Michael's greatest strength lies in his connection with young people. He takes young men and boys out on Country to hunt, visit sacred sites, and share cultural knowledge passed down through generations. Through these activities, he strengthens their identity, confidence and sense of belonging, while also supporting engagement in school and helping them build skills to walk confidently in both worlds — cultural and mainstream.

As a visible, employed Aboriginal man in a leadership role, Michael is a powerful role model. His presence sends a clear message to young people: meaningful work is possible, culture is valued, and leadership can come from within their own community. As the saying goes, you can't be what you can't see — and Michael ensures that young men and boys can see a future for themselves.

Michael's journey demonstrates the impact of culturally grounded employment pathways. Red Dust is not just providing a job — it is supporting long-term workforce participation, strengthening community capacity, and recognising the value of Aboriginal leadership as central to sustainable outcomes.



**Michael is playing a key role in growing the Red Dust program from within Walungurru (Kintore), helping to reduce reliance on fly-in, fly-out contractors and strengthening local ownership of program delivery.**

- Jonathan Lindsay-Tjapaltjarri Hermawan



# PRESERVATION AND CONNECTION THROUGH STORYTELLING

Before writing, stories were our libraries. Across the more than 600 Nations and language groups, gathering and sharing knowledge connected people to Country, sea and sky.

Stars guided seasons, travel and harvest; ancestors in the night sky shaped law and lifeways – a tradition grounded in spirit and observation. Aboriginal art holds knowledge, language, identity and Dreaming. Painted on bodies, rocks, sand and canvas, it preserves culture and stands as a powerful resistance to conformity.

Across cultures, storytelling preserves knowledge and binds communities. In Australia, First Nations peoples have kept culture alive for over sixty thousand years through story, ceremony, song, dance and art — practices still flourishing today.

The urgency is real. Stark gaps in health and life expectancy mean Elders — holders of lived experience and truth — are being lost. When an Elder passes, a library goes with them. Enabling them to tell and control their stories is essential to the continuity of the world's oldest living civilisation.

## MILLENNIA KNOWLEDGE IN A MODERN WORLD

Modern tools can help. Digital recording and archiving safeguard oral histories, languages and ceremony; multimedia gives young people access to ancestry, especially where colonisation has fractured continuity.

Sharing stories through social platforms and curated websites amplifies authentic voices, challenges stereotypes and grows respect. Animation, VR, music videos, apps and games provide an opportunity for youth engagement. These tools also support language revival, spark intergenerational dialogue and contribute to evolving school and university curricula.

## OUR STORYTELLING APPROACH

Our Storytelling Program explores local history, language, Country, culture and Dreaming, blending traditional and modern methods and tailoring formats to Elders and young people alike. Recent projects include:

- Filming Country and sacred sites for a VR experience so people can “visit” home when away, including for health reasons.
- Recording personal histories that honour resilience, connection and lived experience.
- Co-creating an animated children’s book from Areyonga students’ drawings.

## SUSTAINABILITY WITH LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

The program operates with and employs local people in Yuendumu, Utju (Areyonga), Walungurru (Kintore), Nauiyu (Daly River) and the Tiwi Islands — providing paid work to more than 40 community members over the past 3 years.

## CULTURAL PROTOCOLS IN PRACTICE

Trust and cultural rights are foundational. We follow community protocols, respect privacy and ensure storytellers decide what is shared, how and with whom.

Not every story is for public consumption and we commit to protecting knowledges and access to stories according to community wishes.

This is preservation in practice.

Our old people and their stories are a key for us and our culture.

Lorna Jackson, Kintore



# MENTAL FITNESS MATTERS

## Cultural brotherhood built through connection



Really great to get blokes together without beers and substances.

Participant



### HOW DO YOU YARN ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH WHEN SHAME AND STIGMA CREATE SILENCE?

It's an ongoing issue around the world, but our Strong Young Men and Boys Program recognises the importance and urgency of bringing hard truths to the table. The thing that many people probably don't realise is that once someone opens up, so does the flood gate of other people sharing their stories, experiences and grief. The collective can be healing, and striving to achieve that is at the forefront of the program mission.

For many First Nations Peoples our connection to the land not only nourishes our physical health but also provides boundless space for our mental health to unapologetically exist. Getting back to the land has become a staple for the Strong Young Men and Boys Program because it yields results.

This program brought men and boys together to learn, practice, live and breathe culture. Fishing, hunting, gathering, teaching and teamwork was the core focus of the super camp. But what followed when the day's work was done was deeply impactful.

Sitting around the fire brought on a sense of peace, and through that peace came the feeling of safety. Recognising that space was a safe one for men to exist in their truth allowed the men to speak their truth.

Time and thoughtful planning shaped the camp as it evolved through the year, and a signature element was bringing together members of two very different communities for a shared learning experience.

Nauiyu (Daly River) and Tiwi Islander Men working side by side, building brotherhood and learning each other's different ways of doing things resulted in both parties feeling proud of who they are, their country and their roles as men in their communities.

Spear making and hunting was at the core of the day's work and involved learning about the history and process of timber selection and preparation. Each community is different, so what may be used in one community for tools may vary to what is used in another.

Through each conversation, teaching and direction is where the trust between the men formed.

One of the participants from Nauiyu was O'Shea Johnson, a young fella who made the trip with his dad Wally and whose keen interest and participation in the camp had its own impact.

Progress was realised when father and son relationships opened conversations around mental health and wellbeing and the role fathers play in their families lives to support the holistic health needs of individuals and the family.



# WELCOME TO WALUNGURRU (KINTORE)

Celebrating 20 years of working together



At its core, the week was a tribute to community pride, self-determination and strength that honoured culture, history, and the enduring spirit of the people.



Walungurru (Kintore) is in the Western Desert of the Northern Territory near the NT/WA border. Local Pintupi people are strong and proud culturally and made history in 2004 when they became the first remote Aboriginal community to provide dialysis treatment locally.

Over multiple decades, Pintupi Health, Purple House and Red Dust have all played a role in working with community in health, wellbeing and connection. In 2025 the three organisations banded together in collaboration to recognise and celebrate three significant milestones:

- 40 years of Pintupi Homelands Health Service
- 21 years of Dialysis in Walungurru
- 20 years of Red Dust in Walungurru

Speeches were given, ceremony performed, meals shared, and memories revisited.

The unmistakable highlight of the entire event was live music every night with bands from across the central desert region performing including Running Water, Desert Mulga, Tjupi Band as well as Top End superstars Nathan Fejo and the Cruisers.

The Purple House website tells the story of how funds raised from the Western Desert Dialysis Appeal purchased a dialysis machine which was installed in the Kintore Clinic, with the first dialysis treatment taking place on 25th September 2004.

For those who need access to this life saving treatment, being able to remain on country has enormous benefits. Connection to country is an essential part of culture and health and there is great benefit in not needing to travel over 500kms to Alice Springs to receive treatment.

## Sustainable health initiative to combat Rheumatic Heart Disease

Red Dust delivered portable, recyclable beds—with fresh linen, pillows, and blankets—to remote households to help reduce infection risks such as rheumatic heart disease (RHD).

Walungurru (Kintore) residents helped build and deliver the beds, enabling our Healthy Living Program to continue education with schools and families on preventing RHD among Anangu People in the Northern Territory.

During the weeklong celebrations, primary students helped assemble the beds, which we distributed to young people across Walungurru.

## Strength in collaboration

Our Strong Young Women and Strong Young Men & Boys programs collaborated on programming for the event which create the foundation for an incredible gathering where mob connected through culture.

Both teams were able to get out onto country and provide their programs to people from the community, ranging from the students to the Elders. Watching everyone come together during this time was an incredible moment to not only witness but be a part of.

The strength of this community — their knowledge, culture and perseverance to preservation is both staunch and holds value for each generation.



## Plan-Ting for the future!

### WALUNGURRU (KINTORE)

While the red sands of Kintore might suggest difficulty in agriculture, primary school students at the local school embraced the challenging conditions and now as a result have a beautiful garden they are all incredibly proud of.

The school garden project that was first carried out earlier this year, and recently revisited, has had massive success in providing an opportunity for young students to learn more about the joy that comes with gardening.

The impact of giving students the chance to engage in an outdoor activity is still being felt. Not only has it increased attendance, but for some has opened up a keen interest in the activity.

Having our facilitator Chris Hagan on the team meant having a well experienced insight into the process of landscaping with this being his background. Chris was able to provide a proactive and effective lesson with the students who all showed a keen interest in what he was able to teach them. From clearing the spaces of buffel grass, to building garden beds and using math in a fun way, this is a way to inspire those who might want to explore this type of trade as a future career.



## The Story of Warramurrungunji in the eyes of Minjilang Students

### MINJILANG

The Healthy Living Program brought students together to explore creativity, culture, and storytelling through the creation of a children's version of the Warramurrungunji story, the First Woman of Northwestern Arnhem Land.

Guided by Minjilang Elder Uncle Jimmy Cooper, First Nations animator Molly Hunt, and local artist Nathan Fejo, students illustrated each page, interpreted the characters, animals, and landscapes, and helped rework the story in their own voices.

This hands-on, intergenerational approach strengthened students' connection to culture, language, and community, fostering pride, creativity, and a deeper sense of identity.

By participating in the retelling and illustration of this foundational story, students experienced the continuation of cultural knowledge firsthand, celebrating their heritage while building confidence and collective belonging.



## Reconnecting and celebrating with the Peppi Community

### PEPPIMENARTI

The Peppi Healthy Living Program brought students together for a week of dance, sport, art, and cultural activities that celebrated creativity, connection, and community pride.

Students led yarning circles exploring shame, belonging, and safe relationships; practiced cultural and hip hop dance with facilitator Rhys De La Cruz, and engaged in sports, art projects, and drone-flying activities that offered new perspectives and skills.



## Warlpiri classrooms celebrate local language anniversary

### YUENDUMU (YURRAMPI)

Yuendumu School celebrated 50 years of bilingual education, recognising the ongoing dedication to teaching Warlpiri alongside English.

The anniversary included an official opening by Elders, awards to key contributors, a photo display of historical milestones, and a special student performance of traditional Purlapa and Yawulyu dances.

Students also contributed to a new book, Jirrama Yimi-Jarraku, with their illustrations featured in murals around the school, celebrating their creativity and connection to language.

These celebrations reinforced cultural pride, literacy, and community engagement, highlighting the value of learning in students' first language.

Teachers, students, Elders, and community members participated in activities that strengthened intergenerational knowledge, recognised decades of educational innovation, and celebrated the preservation of Warlpiri language and identity.



## Feels like family for Red Dust

### UTJU (AREYONGA)

We were still in the car with doors closed as kids' smiles came towards us, the rest of the family waving. It was clear they saw our Red Dust shirts and knew it meant family had arrived.

When you work with Red Dust and are part of a program in a community that might be new to you, the warmth of the welcome defines the program engagement that follows. This is a clear result of the legacy that has been built throughout the years by Red Dust.

For Larrakia, Yolngu, and Darnley hip-hop dancer Rhys De La Cruz it involved highly engaged students as he taught a dance routine to perform in front of parents, elders and families.

Rhys was seen as a leader by the students; his teaching approach was encouraging and supportive, with a strong sense of safety, so that every student felt confident expressing themselves through movement.



## Strong Young Women's camp

### PIRLANGIMPI

Red Dust facilitated a Storytelling program in Tiwi, where Elders worked in one-on-one sessions to share stories about family, history, language, culture and country. Stories that belong to community to keep, to control and to archive.

The program itself uses both traditional and modern techniques ensuring the format is appropriate to the storyteller, whether it be an Elder or school aged child.

Recording individual stories provokes conversations about family history, lived experiences, and cultural strength and connection.



# MAINTAINING HEALTHY YOUNG PEOPLE

## Minjilang makes a mark

When it comes to improving young people's wellbeing, there's a lot to do. Our Healthy Living Program in Minjilang covered as many areas of this topic as possible within the timeframe available.

They created a program that included activities and conversations around emotional wellbeing, nutrition and the benefits of movement through physical activity.

The approach works because its delivered safely both in the morning and again in the afternoon. It opens up space for our program team to listen and then respond with actions and activities that can help either amplify or reduce the feeling they may be experiencing.

Red Dust uses a colour based system to approach the topic of emotional regulation, using the colours to represent emotions. It's a safe way for the students to express where they're at within themselves, whether it be upset, angry, happy, indifferent and so on.

The nutritional aspect of this program was a hit. In remote communities having access to affordable fresh produce can be difficult which can lead to only having access to food that is high in sugar, fat and salt.

To approach the conversation we spoke about Traditional and Western diets and discussed healthy items we can get from the shop and the benefits of local nutritional bush tucker.

Students had a series of interactive games where they practiced kindness and lifting each other's spirits.

The program team provided spaces for creativity which resulted in creating friendship bracelets to gift to someone who has been kind, who has helped, or who has listened to a friend. To go with the bracelets, students were recognised with awards to celebrate their participation and engagement throughout the program.

This program saw one of the highest rates of school attendance across the entire year, with more and more students coming to school to be a part of the program.

It was an incredible achievement of the program with teachers and families of the students coming together to celebrate health and wellbeing in Minjilang.



The kids engaged really well and more and more kids kept coming to school because Red Dust had people working that had family connections.

Emma  
School Teacher







## A creative journey with Tiwi

### TIWI ISLANDS

The Tiwi Healthy Living Program brought students together with First Nations artists Molly Hunt and Nathan Fejo to explore creativity, culture, and wellbeing through comic book creation.

Students designed their own superheroes, developed origin stories, and built skills in sketching, storytelling, and digital design using tools like Procreate.

Activities included comic quizzes, character development, and transitioning designs from paper to iPads, giving students a fun, hands-on way to build confidence, literacy, and creative expression.

AFLW players Emma King and Sarah Lampard added energy to the program, fostering teamwork, respect, and fitness, while cultural experiences such as clay painting connected students with Tiwi heritage.

The program strengthened cultural pride, collaboration, and self-expression, with students embracing creativity, leadership, and kindness. Teachers and facilitators observed strong engagement and skill development, and the community expressed interest in continuing the program, including expanding into film and music projects.



## Reconnecting and celebrating with the Peppi Community

### PEPPIMENARTI

The Peppi Healthy Living Program brought students together for a week of dance, sport, art, and cultural activities that celebrated creativity, connection, and community pride.

Students led yarning circles exploring shame, belonging, and safe relationships, practiced cultural and hip hop dance with facilitator Rhys De La Cruz, and engaged in sports, art projects, and drone-flying activities that offered new perspectives and skills.

The program strengthened confidence, teamwork, and cultural connection, with students taking active roles in shaping each activity.

A highlight was sharing the completed community music video Peppi Pride, celebrating students' creativity and collective identity.

Teachers and facilitators observed high engagement, strong relationships, and a deep sense of pride and belonging across the week.



## A Celebration of Fishing, Hunting and Culture in Community

### GUNBALANYA

Working alongside students from Gunbalanya Community School, the Red Dust team spent the week collaborating with young people to write lyrics, record the song and film the music video together. Students were involved in brainstorming the story and themes for the song before recording their vocals and taking part in the filming process.

The song shares a message about staying safe while out hunting and fishing with family, learning from Elders, listening to the language of Country, and sticking together. It's a celebration of culture, community and the knowledge passed down on Country.

Filming took place both at the school and on-Country, including a shoot at the billabong and Red Lily, with students performing and bringing the story of the song to life. At the end of the week, the whole school came together to watch a preview of the video celebrating the creativity and collaboration that went into the project.

# Community connections



# NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

## Role modelling new experiences: Our first Matched Giving Day

In a first for the Red Dust, we put the call out to double the impact and our supporters delivered.

Reconciliation Week saw Red Dust reach a new milestone - our first Matched Giving Day - a fundraiser that saw every dollar donated doubled thanks to our partner Evans & Partners, along with a generous private donor.

The goal was set, raise \$40,000 in one day. Spoiler alert, it was a success, and we achieved what we set out to do and a little more to reach over \$42,000.

Over 24 hours, the team rallied together, endless calls were made, text messages sent, and relationships with our staunch supporters were revisited.

On hand to offer his support was Red Dust Ambassador Dane Simpson who stepped up for the campaign, joining Reconciliation workshops, meetings with partners, journalists and radio hosts.

A big thanks to Red Dust Ambassador Mick Molloy from Triple M, Glen Morrow from Triple R and The Project for helping us spread our message.



Our Matched Giving Day was about more than doubling donations - it was about ensuring remote communities have the same opportunities as the rest of Australia.

We're humbled by the generosity of our supporters and the backing of Evans & Partners and a generous private donor.

Every gift on the day and year-round helps our team walk and work alongside communities and families to strengthen health, kinship, and identity.

Together, we're creating real, lasting change.

Roberto Pietrobon  
Director of Partnerships & Philanthropy

# Honouring 50 YEARS OF NAIDOC

NAIDOC 2025 marked 50 years of honouring and elevating Indigenous voices, culture, and resilience. The 2025 theme, "The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy," celebrated not only the achievements of the past but the bright future ahead, empowered by the strength of our young leaders, the vision of our communities, and the legacy of our ancestors.

The value of celebrating and nurturing the next generation is so incredibly crucial at this point in time, many young people across our communities have for such a long and ongoing period of time been told to fit into other people's moulds to succeed, but here at Red Dust we provide spaces for young people to be successful and feel supported in their own lives.

Red Dust has been passionate about this for twenty years, working alongside remote communities in the NT with a shared aspiration to strengthen the health and wellbeing of young people through the programs we provide.

In the NT, our young people are often under-represented, and that can lead to insecurity in a young person's identity. NAIDOC Week provided an opportunity to flip the narrative and highlighted the beauty that exists and radiates from First Nations youth. We used our platform to celebrate their strength, their vision, and the legacy which continues to exist.

Mikaela Simpson hosted our NAIDOC Week Yarn with Kirby Bentley, Kira Bain and Jonathan Hermawan. It was a true celebration of the extended Red Dust family with more than 2,000 people joining from the many Aboriginal Countries across Australia. Together, this incredible community of supporters and allies raised over \$30,000 to support remote community programs in the Northern Territory.



## Comedians Creating Connections

### ALICE SPRINGS (MPARNTWE) AND DARWIN (LARRAKIA)

Red Dust Ambassador Dane Simpson together with Isaac Compton brought the laughs and the confidence in their interactive Class Clowns workshops for young people in Mparntwe (Alice Springs, Arrernte Country) and a vibrant family fun day with Bagot Community in Darwin (Larrakia Country).

Workshops were designed to encourage self-expression, and empower young people to find their voice through humour and storytelling, creating safe and positive spaces for connection, culture, and community pride.

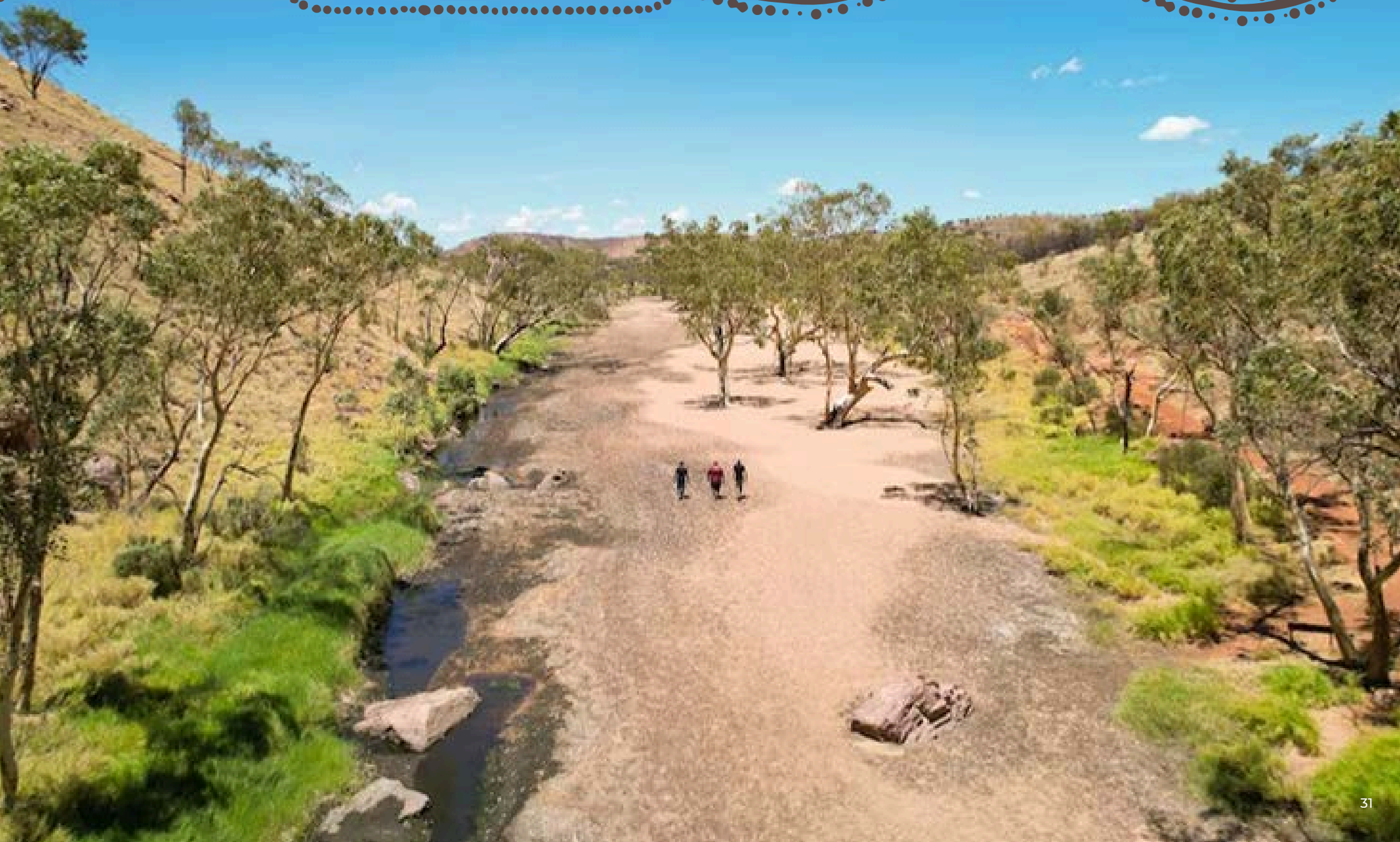
The intimate workshop allowed young people to connect on another level with Dane and Isaac as they learned some of the tricks of the trade, asked plenty of questions, learned how to refine their craft and showed the fellas a thing or two about bush comedy. Not only were the young workshop participants able to bring the confidence to the stage but also increased confidence in everyday life.



**THE NEXT  
GENERATION:  
STRENGTH,  
VISION &  
LEGACY**  
6-13 JULY 2025



# Active Reconciliation



# Reconciliation Programs

## BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH EDUCATION

In a year of growth, reflection, and renewed engagement, Red Dust Reconciliation Education Programs have continued to advance our mission: to cultivate an Australia that celebrates cultural diversity, honours its ancient heritage, and supports communities to define and achieve success on their own terms

Throughout the year, our programs have continued to create opportunities for individuals and organisations to deepen their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, and perspectives. Through workshops, online learning, and immersive experiences on Country, thousands of participants engaged with Red Dust programs, reflecting the ongoing importance of meaningful reconciliation education.

### OUR MISSION IN MOTION

The heart of our work lies in the belief that reconciliation begins with the individual — a journey of learning, reflection, and the willingness to engage in respectful and honest conversations.

This year also saw changes within the Red Dust team. These transitions provided an opportunity to refresh and update program resources while welcoming new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander facilitators into the program. Their knowledge, perspectives, and lived experience continue to strengthen the delivery of our programs and enrich the learning environment for participants.

Our workshops continued to provide an important space for dialogue and shared learning. Throughout the year, more than 2,600 participants engaged in conversations exploring culture, identity, history, and the pathways toward reconciliation. These sessions continue to foster meaningful discussions, encouraging participants to listen, reflect, and develop greater confidence in engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

Alongside this, Foundations for Reconciliation (FFR) workshops have continued to serve as an accessible entry point for individuals and organisations beginning their reconciliation learning journey. With a stronger focus on public workshops this year, many participants were able to engage with the program as a first step in building deeper understanding and awareness.

### ONLINE LEARNING AND REFLECTION

Our online learning modules, including Reconciliation Education Essentials, continued to provide participants with opportunities to engage with foundational learning in a flexible and accessible format. Participant feedback highlights the value of these modules as an introduction to reconciliation education, with many noting that the content encourages ongoing reflection and conversation within their workplaces and communities.

These digital resources complement our workshops by reinforcing key ideas and supporting continued learning beyond the classroom.

### ON COUNTRY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Our On Country Programs continued throughout the year, offering immersive learning experiences that reconnect participants with land, culture, and community. While delivered to a smaller number of groups, these programs provide extended opportunities for participants to learn directly from Aboriginal facilitators and community members.

Through time spent listening, walking on Country, and engaging in conversation, participants gain a deeper appreciation of cultural knowledge and the significance of place. These experiences remain a powerful part of our approach to reconciliation education.

I think the content was really great, have left feeling more confident to have discussions with my co-workers about our RAP plan.

Workshop Participant  
February 2025

Made us feel comfortable to share our stories and ask uncomfortable questions. Very knowledgeable and engaging.

Workshop Participant  
March 2025

Brilliant. The facilitators made the content come to life with stories, information, and facilitated conversations very well.

Workshop Participant  
March 2025

They were really easy to talk to and made me feel safe to ask questions. It's also inspiring to hear about their heritage and experiences as First Nations people and their passion for their culture. It made me want to be more curious and continue to educate myself.

Workshop Participant  
September 2025

The workshop allowed us to relate, understand and share experiences on a deeper level and in a genuine and safe space. The content sparked great perspectives and reflections challenging the general status quo.

Workshop Participant  
December 2025

## OUR VOICES, OUR STRENGTH

Central to the development and delivery of our programs are the diverse voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander facilitators. Each facilitator brings invaluable knowledge, lived experience, and cultural insight that ensures our programs remain authentic, respectful, and grounded in the perspectives of the oldest living cultures on Earth.

Their contribution enriches the two-way learning that sits at the centre of our work, strengthening connections between communities, organisations, and individuals who are committed to reconciliation.

## LOOKING AHEAD

As we look to the future, our commitment to educating, engaging, and empowering allies remains strong. The experiences of the past year have reinforced the value of accessible education, meaningful conversation, and community engagement.

With these lessons in hand, Red Dust Reconciliation Programs will continue fostering an inclusive, informed, and reconciled Australia — one conversation, one learning experience, and one connection at a time.

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 RECONCILIATION EDUCATION PROGRAM FACILITATORS, SPEAKERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS

- Alan Palmer
- Chris Hagan
- Dane Simpson
- Jonathan Lindsay-Tjapaltjarri Hermawan
- Jordan Owen
- Karno Martin
- Kira Bain
- Kirby Bentley
- Mikaela Simpson
- Nathan Daly
- Tyrone Lynch
- Veronica Lynch
- Pamela Lynch
- Damien Kunoth
- Shady Ridge Outstation
- Black Tank Outstation
- RDK Outsation



**Matthew Jolly**  
Reconciliation Programs Manager



**Mikaela Simpson**  
Communications Coordinator

# CORPORATE LEADERS ON-COUNTRY

## ANZ Bank committed to cross-cultural competency

Corporate leaders engage in Australia's ancient culture, not as tourists but to expand mindsets through education and immersion.

When we bring people from the city onto country we ensure that what those participants experience isn't cultural tourism, but instead an opportunity to look within at what it means to be Australian, to broaden one's mindset through education and an immersion into the world's oldest continuous living cultures.

Red Dust's on-Country Program took place in Central Australia and saw twelve participants from ANZ join our facilitators Alan, Chris, Tyrone and AJ who invited them to partake in a series of experiences, conversations and lessons on Arrernte Country.

The ANZ team got the chance to hear from our team on subjects that include land rights in the NT and the civilisations that have lived here for thousands of years. This type of conversation often highlights the lack of education throughout history, something so many are aware of but never took the opportunity to learn about themselves.

It's a crucial part of the Reconciliation journey all Australians must walk together which honours truth and experiences of First Nations people.

Listening is only part of this journey, learning is another, and that includes learning more about yourself. By giving our guests the opportunity to tell their own stories meant expanding how they talk about and share their own identities.

We ask people to do three things:

- Start with yourself
- Educate yourself
- Challenge yourself

At Red Dust we believe that everyone has a culture, everyone has an identity, and whether it's through our On Country Program, or in our Reconciliation Workshops, we offer you the space to experience this insight.



Alan was such a welcoming and authentic host, they were great, local experience and knowledge.

Outstanding workshop.  
Great immersive experience.

ANZ Participant

# WALKING CONFIDENTLY INTO THE FUTURE

## McGrathNicol leaders leading the way

Being on Country teaches you a lot about Australia but also allows someone to reconsider what it means to be Australian.

At Red Dust we strive to give our supporters and partners an in-depth experience of the things, places and people who we are passionate about working with, access to First Nations knowledge and cultural perspectives. This is something we believe is crucial in the shared journey of reconciliation.

Our immersion program on-Country with McGrathNicol, a longstanding partner of ours, was a moment of connection and awakening and as a result lifelong memories and friendships were cemented.

Hosted by Red Dust's Alice Springs team the program provided ten leaders from McGrathNicol a new experience to connect in new ways they've never connected before. During the program we were able to share with them sacred places, history and information regarding the lives of First Nations people from the Central Desert region. We showed them petroglyphs older than the pyramids, taught them how to make traditional bush medicine and shared its intended health benefits. Through this they were able to develop a personal appreciation for Country that they can now carry with them as they return to their own homes.

Seeing our facilitators, Alan Palmer and Tyrone Lynch provide an unforgettable experience was a highlight. Recognising the impact their presence had on each person from McGrathNicol resulted in giving the the team a renewed sense of identity and pride in being an Australian.

Being able to grow the partnership between Red Dust and McGrathNicol means walking together into a shared vision of the future and gives them a greater insight into the value of the work our program teams do.

Thank you for organising.  
One of the best experiences I've been invited to be part of.

McGrathNicol





Partner and Supporter  
Engagement

# LEADERS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

## Federal Government

In November Red Dust CEO Scott Stirling and Communications Coordinator Mikaela Simpson travelled to Canberra for an event hosted by Australian Government Health Minister Mark Butler, and Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health Rebecca White.

They also attended meetings at Parliament House with advisers for Ministers Marion Scrymgour, Malarndirri McCarthy and Luke Gosling.

It was a successful trip where they were able to highlight the important role Red Dust continues to play in remote communities across the Northern Territory and help secure ongoing funding to continue our work.

Being able to have face to face conversations with those in positions of political power is instrumental in creating lasting relationships and spotlighting our work.

## Northern Territory Government

His Honour the Administrator of the Northern Territory, Professor the Honourable Hugh Heggie AO PSM, and Ms Ruth Jones spent time with our Strong Young Men & Boys Program team in Alice Springs.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the team to share how our Community-as-Family model of health programming supports wellbeing, development and resilience of men and boys in Central Australia.

## School impact and practical reconciliation

In 2025, two schools took their commitment to Reconciliation to a new level. They swapped the usual chocolate drives for Red Dust bamboo toothbrushes—turning a healthy, planet-positive choice into meaningful action for First Nations youth.

Families purchased Family Packs and Big Family Packs, made tax-deductible community donations, and many chose to purchase-to-donate brushes directly to Red Dust partner schools in the Northern Territory.

The fundraiser aligned with Reconciliation Week supported with student-led learning and school communications to deepen understanding and respect.

Their efforts raised vital funds that supported Red Dust well-being and mental health programs in remote Indigenous communities, created First Nations jobs, and strengthened role-model programs for First Nations youth.

By choosing bamboo over plastic, they also cut waste—proving everyday habits can drive real change.

These schools showed what active Reconciliation looks like in practice: healthy fundraising, community learning, and tangible impact one toothbrush at a time.





# FINDING CONNECTION AND CULTURE: LOUIE'S VOLUNTEER JOURNEY

## Ever wondered what it's like to volunteer with Red Dust?

For 24-year-old Melburnian Louie Davidson, the experience was nothing short of transformative.

Louie first learned about Red Dust through a close family friend, long-time friend of Red Dust, Santo Cilauro. Santo recognised Louie's passion for psychology and sport—two elements that fit naturally within Red Dust's Healthy Living Programs. Encouraged by Santo's stories and sensing a meaningful opportunity, Louie joined a Red Dust program in Areyonga, ready to contribute, learn, and immerse himself in community life.

One of Louie's key roles was teaching young students about the Zones of Regulation, a colour-coded framework that helps children understand and communicate their emotions.

He explains that the program is all about building awareness—helping students pause, reflect, and recognise that every emotion is valid. "It's about taking a moment or two to ground yourself in how you're feeling, and learning how to move between the different zones," he says.

Despite some initial nerves, Louie quickly found his rhythm. The students were engaged from day one, embracing the activities and concepts with enthusiasm.

"The first presentation was interesting because I was a bit nervous, but the kids absolutely understood the concept," Louie shares. "By the last few days, they'd really bought into what we were doing. It was great to see that they were enjoying it and getting something out of it."

Beyond the classroom, Louie found himself deeply connected to life in Utju. He speaks with emotion about forming bonds with kids, Elders, women, and the land itself.

## Moments He'll Never Forget

Coming from an Italian background where culture and family play a central role, Louie found deep resonance in the community's own cultural values. "To see how much culture and family mean in community—I really connect to that. It felt special to be immersed in another culture," he says. He describes the overwhelming warmth and support from both the community and the Red Dust team: "Everyone here has been amazing."

Connecting with the kids and being taken to sacred places—that feeling is incredible. Learning to cook, hearing stories, dancing with aunties, and gaining new family figures - my "new nanna and mum" - have all left a lasting imprint on my life.

Louie

I honestly couldn't put into words how special it's been. The emotions I've felt personally have been really special.

Louie

# TOGETHER WE RISE

## Collaboration supporting Mental Health

Together We Rise' brought vibrant artwork by debut Mutthi Mutthi artist Tayla Donaczy to life.

The special collection supports Red Dust to continue working with young Indigenous people in remote communities, inspiring and supporting their mental health through the ups and downs of life.

Yarn is proud to support Red Dust's innovative health education programs, with \$2 from the sale of every item being donated.

## YARN RAISE

### MEET THE ARTIST: TAYLA DONACZY


"My name is Tayla Donaczy. I am 32 years old, Mother of 3 beautiful children and partner to an amazing fiance. My mob are the Mutthi Mutthi people.

I begun painting to connect with my ancestors and learn the ways to storytell through art. This is an ongoing journey for me, to be able to express myself, who I am and the messages I would like to share. I have found a deep connection to my culture through paint and expression.

For me, Mental Health means taking care of my mind and spirit just as I would for my body. It's knowing that it is okay to feel deeply and have big emotions – to have both days where I struggle to even think about my goals and days when I rise above and kick many. It means giving myself permission to rest, to ask for help, and to speak my truth without shame or stigma."



Partnering with Red Dust means every sale contributes directly to community programs doing incredible work on the ground.



It also connects our audience to that cause and that connection is what makes this partnership so meaningful to us.

Yarn Marketplace



# JOIN THE CLUB

## The Red Dust Circle: Backing the legacy

A growing number of our supporters believe that inspiring change is built through presence and consistency.

The Red Dust Circle is how some of our supporters choose to stand with Indigenous youth and families in remote communities. It's made up of people who choose to give a monthly or fortnightly gift of their choice so Red Dust can keep showing up—patiently, consistently, and alongside community. Regular gifts don't make the work louder; they make it steadier. Predictable funding means programs can be planned with care, relationships can deepen over time, and communities aren't asked to fit into stop-start cycles. It helps create the conditions for trust, learning and connection to grow.

Stay curious and visit [circle.reddust.org.au](http://circle.reddust.org.au)

## Australian Loyalty Association

Red Dust's Partnerships and Marketing Team represented by Thainara Biazini had the privilege to Acknowledge Country at the Australian Loyalty Associations' signature event – the Asia Pacific Loyalty Conference.

Thainara is of Brazilian Heritage and was able to articulate her deep and connected understanding of the important role First Nations People play across the world when it comes to truth telling, conservation, leadership and community.

The conference is the leading loyalty and customer engagement event for domestic and international professionals from top award-winning loyalty programs, who gather to discuss each critical stage of the loyalty journey and learn from each other about the latest initiatives and best practice for sustained customer engagement and loyalty. The Australian Loyalty Association was one of the first to get behind the launch of the Red Dust Bamboo Toothbrush providing one for every delegate.

## Recycle and turn containers into change

What if every empty bottle could do some good? Across Australia's Container Deposit Schemes, every eligible container can become a 10-cent donation to Red Dust. It's simple, planet-friendly, and once your total donations reach \$2, you'll receive a tax-deductible receipt.

Introducing this community fundraising initiative reminded us that meaningful change often starts in the smallest moments. Turning an everyday habit—returning a bottle or can—into a tangible act of generosity provides an invitation for more people to be part of our story. It's simple, practical, and genuinely empowering: every 10 cents becomes a choice to support community, and those choices add up quickly.

Most of all, this way of giving has shifted how we think about involvement. It's not only about fundraising; it's about building a culture of everyday action, where generosity is woven into routine.

Stay curious and visit [recycle.reddust.org.au](http://recycle.reddust.org.au)



# YOUR LEGACY, STRENGTHENS GENERATIONS

As one Elder told me  
"Red Dust is the one that cares,  
they visit and they stay".  
We're delighted to make a  
bequest in our wills so that  
remote communities like  
Kintore will benefit through the  
good work of Red Dust.

Andrew O'Keefe and Jude Tasker

The most significant gift of all, a gift in your Will, is a way to ensure your values support your legacy and can impact future generations.

Some of our supporters have used financial or Estate planners to connect and support writing their Will like Andrew and Jude.

But our life admin tasks often get thought about but often never actioned. When we teamed up with EveryWill by Gathered Here to provide a complimentary Will writing service for our supporters we were humbled by the response.

Roberto, our Director of Partnerships & Philanthropy, was one of many new supporters to create a Will online with EveryWill by Gathered Here and included a gift to Red Dust Role Models.

Seeing the impact of  
Red Dust change lives beyond  
any one moment or program,  
leaving a gift in my Will helps  
the opportunities that create  
this impact continue for  
generations.

Roberto Pietrobon

# URBIS REFRESHED GIVE BACK PROGRAM

We're proud to continue as a charity partner in Urbis' re-launched Give Back program. The refreshed approach is already translating into greater on-the-ground support for our work—since the re-launch, Urbis employee engagement and participation in the program has increased, with more volunteers, more matched donations, and more skilled support flowing to all of Urbis' charity partners.

## WHAT WE VALUE ABOUT URBIS' GIVE BACK APPROACH

- **People-powered volunteering:** Urbis team members give time to support their charity partners.
- **Matched giving:** Staff donations are amplified, unlocking more resources where they're needed most.
- **Pro-bono expertise:** Planning, research, and advisory skills strengthen our impact and capacity.
- **Direct funding:** Targeted contributions help deliver measurable program outcomes.
- **Clear governance and impact focus:** A transparent framework aligns effort with community needs.

This mix of hands-on involvement, matched generosity, and professional capability is a model we believe other partners can adopt to create meaningful, scalable impact alongside Red Dust.

We're excited to keep building on our partnership with Urbis—and to inspire more organisations to join us.

Urbis CEO, Benjamin Pollack, says the Give Back vision is clear: Urbis is committed to supporting vulnerable communities and places by providing direct, meaningful contributions with impact that matters.

We chose Red Dust as our Workplace Giving partner because of their strong, long-standing connections with Indigenous communities and the meaningful, on-the-ground benefits they deliver.

Their people-led approach aligns closely with our value of supporting better community outcomes in sustainable ways.

Urbis





# Our people

# OUR PEOPLE

In recent years we have focused significant effort on building a local Northern Territory based program and management team. At the end of 2017, we were a team of 5, including 1 Aboriginal staff member based in the NT and 4 staff based in Melbourne.

We began our 2025 program year as a team of 27 employees, with 11 based in the NT. Eleven of our staff identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, representing 39%.

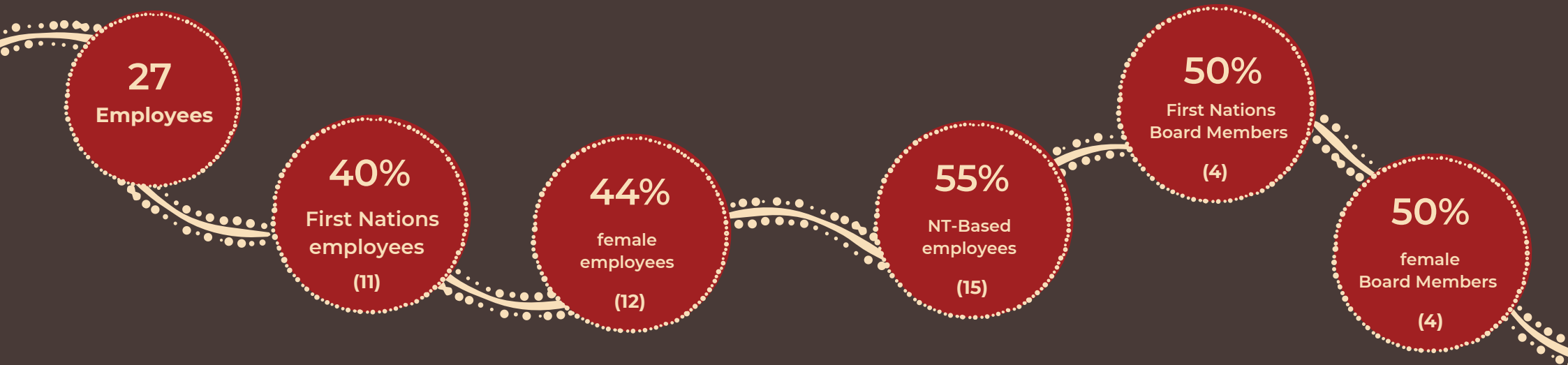
Twelve of our employees are women, including five First Nations women, with an additional First Nations women's program role in recruitment at the time of reporting.

Red Dust First Nations' employees play a key role in supporting programs to be culturally informed and be from the community – they bring the lived experience that strengthens our work and decision-making

Our Board also reflects stronger representation of females and First Nations Directors. By the end of 2025, our organisation's membership base also had more than 50% First Nations peoples based in the Northern Territory.

The Community Advisory Group comprises Elders and members from the communities we work with, and we meet multiple times per year to discuss organisational strategy and operational plans.

**Red Dust embraces employee diversity and representation. As at Jan 2026:**



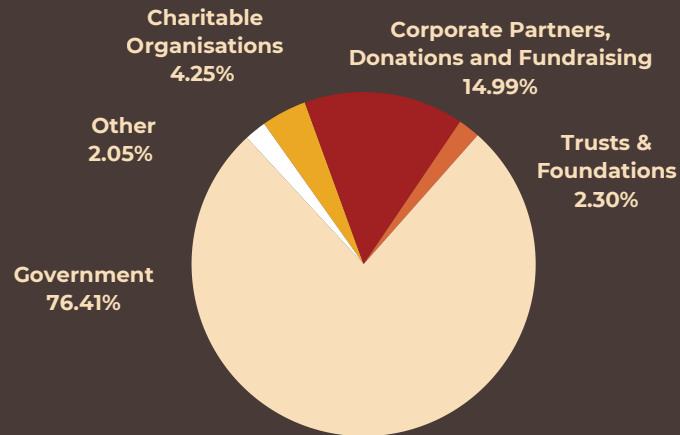


# FINANCIALS

REPORTING PERIOD 1 JULY 2024 TO 30 JUNE 2025

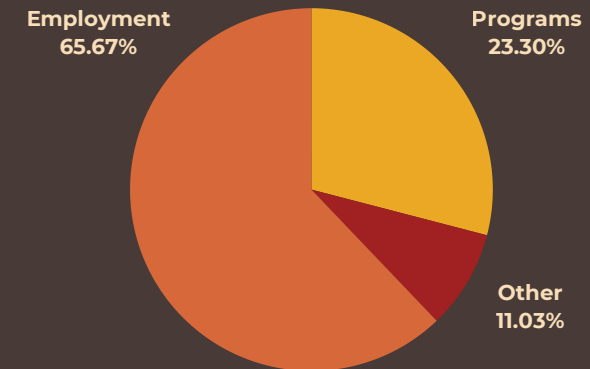
## Sources of income

\$4,874,142



## Funding our mission

\$4,805,629



### SOURCES OF INCOME

Funding Red Dust's mission is made possible thanks to the diverse group of donors and supporters who walk with Red Dust, alongside community Elders and leaders in pursuit of our mission.

Charitable organisations income includes grants awarded by a charitable organisation.

Corporate Partners, Donations and Fundraising income includes donations from individuals and corporates, grants awarded by a corporate foundations, program service fees, individual donations and fundraising events.

Government income includes Federal, State or Territory awarded grants.

Trusts & Foundations income includes grants and donations from philanthropic funders.

Other income includes revenue generated from investments.

### FUNDING OUR MISSION

Red Dust is committed to responsible and effective management of our resources that align with our values and guiding principles.

Our 2025 Audited Financial Report is available on our website. [reddust.org.au/about/reports](http://reddust.org.au/about/reports).

Programs include on ground delivery costs for urban and remote NT program delivery.

Employment includes wages for all Red Dust staff including remote-community based and Darwin, Alice Springs based program staff.

Other includes accreditation, consultancy, depreciation, marketing, office expenses, other expenses, travel and accommodation, interest.

# THANK YOU

## COMMUNITIES WORKING WITH US

Alice Springs (Mparntwe)  
Bagot  
Darwin  
Engawala  
Gunbalanya  
Kiwirrkurra  
Laramba  
Milikapiti  
Minjilang  
Merrapan  
Mutitjulu  
Nauiyu (Daly River)  
Papunya (Warumpi)  
Peppimenarti  
Pickertaramoor  
Pirlangimpi  
Utju (Areyonga)  
Wadeye  
Walungurru (Kintore)  
Wurrumiyanga  
Yuendumu (Yurrampi)  
Yuelumu (Mt Allan)

## EDUCATION

Areyonga School  
Gunbalanya  
Holtze Youth Detention Centre  
Mamaruni School  
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College Thamurrurr  
Owen Springs Education Unit  
Papunya School  
Peppimenarti School  
Saint Francis Xavier College  
Tiwi College  
Walungurru School  
Wooliana School  
Xavier Catholic College Wurrumiyanga  
Yipirinya School  
Yirara College  
Yuendumu School

## COLLABORATING ORGANISATIONS

Ampwerra Corporation  
Anindilyakwa Music  
Anindilyakwa Shire Council  
Arnhem Land Progress Association  
Central Land Council  
Daly River Buffaloes Football Club  
Granites Mine Advisory Council  
Green River Aboriginal Corporation  
Indigenous Communities Television  
Indigenous Literacy Foundation  
IPA Rangers  
Ironbark  
JDs Lash Bar  
Kuniya Tours  
Mala'la Health Service  
Mamanta  
Maruku Arts  
Mborinka Anarpipe  
Miriam Rose Foundation  
Mpwerre Corporation  
Murinbata Tribal Development  
Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation  
Ninni Health  
Papunya Tula  
PAW Media and Communications  
Pikilyi Band  
Pintupi Health  
RDK Outstation  
Stars Foundation  
Thamurrurr Youth Indigenous Corporation  
The First Creatives  
Tiwi Islands Training & Education Board  
Tjamu Tjamu Organisation  
Waltja Aboriginal Corporation  
WANTA Aboriginal Corporation  
Warlpiri Youth Aboriginal Development Corporation

## GOVERNMENT

Australian Government  
Central Desert Regional Council  
MacDonnell Regional Council  
Northern Territory Government  
National Indigenous Australians Agency  
Vic Daly Regional Council  
West Arnhem Regional Council  
Tiwi Islands Regional Council

## CORPORATE, TRUSTS & FOUNDATIONS

Agnico Eagle Community Partnership Program  
.au Domain Administration  
AFL Players' Association Limited  
AIA Australia Limited  
APM Aussie Broadband Limited  
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group  
Australian Loyalty Association  
Cardijn College Galilee  
Cornerstone Medical Recruitment  
Data#3 Ltd  
District  
DUAL Australia Pty Ltd  
Edgewise Insurance Brokers  
Edwards Lifesciences  
Evans & Partners  
Eku Energy Australia Pty Ltd  
Finity  
Gaineroo  
Gembridge Australia  
George P Johnson  
Gray Puksand Pty Ltd  
Hanes Australasia  
Inquisitive Pty Ltd  
Insignia Financial Ltd  
IOOF Holdings Trustee Pty Ltd  
IZZA Group  
Kao Australia Pty Ltd  
McCullough Robertson Lawyers  
McGrathNicol  
Medtronic Australasia Pty Ltd  
North Western Melbourne PHN  
Olympus Australia  
Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators RACMA  
SMEC Australia Pty Ltd  
Telco Together Foundation  
Tennis NT  
The Australian Superfood Co  
TP ICAP  
Urbis  
Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership  
Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
William Grant and Sons Australia Pty Ltd  
WSP Australia Pty Ltd  
Zenith RBA

## WORKPLACE GIVING

Australia Post  
AECOM  
Auto & General  
Cyberex  
Good Company  
Hanes Australia  
Hall & Wilcox  
Insignia Financial  
Mastercard  
Medibank  
Origin  
Red Dust Role Models  
Suncorp Group  
The George Institute for Global Health  
Urbis  
Westpac Group

## PRO BONO SUPPORTERS

Alphawhale  
Beauty Next  
Biz Collection  
Deloitte Australia  
FTI Consulting  
Hall & Wilcox  
Hanes Australasia  
Kmart  
KWM  
Smith Optics  
The Australian Superfoods Co

## CHARITABLE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation  
The Salvation Army (Northern Territory)

## AMBASSADORS

Ally Anderson  
Dane Simpson  
Jess Hosking  
Jy Simpkin  
Kirby Bentley  
Molly Hunt  
Mel Jones OAM  
Sarah Hosking

## PATRON AND BOARD

Martin Hirons (Patron)  
Simon McKeon (Patron)  
Gavin Reid (Chairperson)  
Chris Naish  
Jennifer Van Groningen  
Jeremy Abbott (commenced Jun 2025)  
John Wayne Parsons  
Mia La Burniy  
Roslyn Johnson (resigned Aug 2025)  
Michelle Middelbosch (commenced Aug 2025)  
Tania Carlos  
Will Minson (resigned Aug 2025)

## FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Gavin Reid  
Mia La Burniy (Chairperson)  
Yasmine Gill

## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Tania Carlos (Chairperson)  
Chris Naish  
Gavin Reid

## COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUPS

### Central Australia

Derek Williams (Yuendumu)  
Dorothea Randall (Mutitjulu)  
Joe Young (Walungurru)  
Lorna Jackson (Walungurru)  
Tarna Andrews (Utju)

### Top End

Roberta Raymond (Peppimenarti)  
Latisha Marranytya (Naiyu)  
Maxine Badin (Bagot)  
Keith Warrigal (Peppimenarti)  
Anderson Dudanga (Gunbalanya)  
Ziporah Bunduck (Wadeye)  
Freda Puruntatameri (Tiwi Islands)  
Dion Wilison (Tiwi Islands)  
Edward Darcy (Tiwi Islands)  
Nathan Fejo (Minjilang)

## INNOVATION AND ASPIRATION

### WORKING GROUP

Andrew Birkic  
Chris Naish (Chairperson)  
John Burgess  
Kris Ashpole  
Tanya Deans

### RED DUST TEAM

Alan Palmer  
Amber Shepherd  
Brett Wheeler  
Christopher Hagan  
Colin Gill  
Daniel Ormiston  
Emma Lake  
Erin Riddell  
Fiona Scicluna  
Harold Morgan  
Irene Pano  
James Ivill  
Jaylene Cooper  
Jonathan Hermawan  
Jordan Owen  
Lucas King  
Matt Carman  
Matthew Jolly  
Michael Jangala Gallagher  
Mikaela Simpson  
Nathan Daly  
Phyllis Nakamarra Rowe  
Rachael Jacobs  
Rev. Raymond Minniecon  
Rebecca Woodruff  
Roberto Pietrobon  
Scott Stirling  
Thainara Biazini  
Toby Langdon  
Tyrone Lynch  
Wayne Glenn  
Philip Allnutt

## FIRST NATIONS WORKFORCE

Aaron Daniels  
Anderson Dudanga  
Anthony Briscoe  
Awalari Teamay  
Baykali  
Billy Briscoe  
Brenton Watts  
Bundi Rowe  
Byson Kunoth  
Cecile Galiazzo  
Charles Rolls  
Charlie Michaels  
Jabanunga  
Cheryl Raggett  
Clara Rowe  
Clifford Tilmouth  
Coda Kunoth  
Craig Jimarin  
Cyan Earnshaw  
Cyril Rioli  
Damien Kunoth  
Daphne Puntjina  
David Stafford  
Debra Mummery  
Derek Kunoth  
Derek Williams  
Derissa Rawson  
Dhandrey Hagan  
Duncan Gallagher  
Dylan Minggun  
Ephraim Poulson  
Francis Collins  
Freda Teamay  
Hendrick Collins  
Hilda Bert  
Ingrid Williams  
Ishmael Windy  
James Collins  
Jamie-Leigh Parry  
Jerry Daniels  
Pepperill  
Jessica Woods  
Jonah Anderson  
Joseph Matheson  
Joshua Brown  
Katie Curtis  
Kerrilyn Gallagher  
Kieren Campbell  
Kirra Voller  
Layne Kunoth  
Leonard Kunoth  
Leyland Palmer  
Lindsay Rowe  
Lizaryl Wayne  
Lorna Jackson  
Malya Teamay  
Mamulbak  
Mario Munkara  
Martin Pascoe  
Michael Drover  
Michael Gallagher  
Mikaela Earnshaw  
Molly Marlene  
Nambajimba  
Nathan Fejo  
Ned Hargraves  
Neil Cook  
Nikisha Swan-Cole  
Patricia Skinner  
Paul Briscoe  
Pelita Wakuri Napurrula  
Peter Stafford  
Peter Wilson  
Phyllis Rowe  
Pirrawayingi Puruntatameri  
Rachel Giles  
Rashelle Curtis  
Regina Reid  
Rene Kulitja  
Rhys De La Cruz  
Rickeisha Henda  
Robin Brown  
Rubilee Rowe  
Sabrina Gibson  
Samuel Poantimilui  
Sarissa Driffen  
Sheritha Green  
Shirley Martin  
Stephanie Williams  
Steven Oldfield  
Tarna Andrews

**Thank you to all our individual donors and supporters walking alongside us.**

Walk with us, your way.

**Raise funds** – donate or hold a fundraising event.

**Fund the future** – include a Gift in your Will.

**Stay curious** – sign up for our workshops and events.

**reddust.org.au**



Red Dust Annual Review 2025  
admin@reddust.org.au  
reddust.org.au

Red Dust Role Models Limited (ABN 12 118 641 777)  
is a DGR1 registered charity with the Australian  
Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

