



COMMUNITY FIRST
DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



OUR VISION



First Nations' peoples and communities are thriving.

WHO WE ARE



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

WHAT WE DO

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



THE STORY BEHIND OUR NAME AND ARTWORK

In March 2020 we changed our name from Indigenous Community Volunteers (ICV) to Community First Development. We have long recognised the need for our name to better reflect the unique way we work with community – to put Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities first.

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

The painting also inspired a new direction for our logo. It was co-designed by Kimiah Alberts, a Gungalu, Koinjmal, Yiman and South Sea Islander woman from Queensland alongside communications agency content group.

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

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

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"WE ARE A FIRST NATIONS' COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH ORGANISATION.

WE PROMOTE THE SKILLS, TALENTS AND CULTURAL STRENGTH OF OUR PEOPLE, AND FACILITATE ACTIVITIES WHERE THEY LEAD POSITIVE CHANGES FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE JUST AND EQUITABLE WORLD FOR FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLE."



KAREN MILWARD

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The past year presented a challenging operating environment for many organisations, including Community First Development. Despite the difficulties, we achieved significant impact, working with 111 communities on 149 community-led development projects across Australia. Together with our community partners, volunteers and supporters we continue to contribute to successful outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in a meaningful and lasting way.

COVID-19 took a heavy toll on the way communities were able to interact with each other and access support. The first few months of the year were focused on ensuring we had a robust COVID plan in place to safeguard communities, our staff and volunteers. We have persevered through some challenging times and demonstrated that we have a strong and adaptive team who have maintained connection with our

communities throughout the COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns. A personal highlight for me was our celebration with Mervyn Eades, the first award recipient of the annual Bill Armstrong Human Rights Award. Being together for moments like these, when COVID restrictions allowed, was important for the organisation.

The value we place in creating genuine and lasting relationships has played a key role in maintaining momentum, motivation and energy this year.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Thanks to a number of one-off, generous gifts, this year we had greater financial security than we have had in many years. This is a testament to the generosity of our financial supporters, and those who have left a lasting legacy through our bequest program. Financial fluctuations in previous years have caused us to delay projects, including recruitment. This year we were able to fill several vacancies and begin to re-engage with some communities in northern Australia after several years of limited to no contact. It is particularly important in this time that our field team are strategically placed across Australia to ensure consistent support is available to communities, even through regional lockdowns. Filling these vacancies highlights once again the importance of our regular financial supporters who provide continuity of support to communities.

We are proud to have finalised three significant reports over the past year, the 2020 Impact and Activity report, the Three-Year Macro Analysis 2017-2020 report and the Action Research Final Report on Governance. The reports provided an opportunity to showcase the impact of our work and action research with communities in a new way, including engaging with a range of parliamentarians to discuss the findings. It was also greatly encouraging to have some of our financial supporters commit to invest in our action research. We are so grateful for their support.

Another significant project was the development of the next iteration of our database that has been designed in-house to capture data in First Nations' settings. The database is now cloud-based and integrated with our existing software system. This opens up a range of opportunities for greater accessibility for our field staff, and functionality for reporting to our funders.

In a year where connecting and engaging in-person has been challenging, we have continued to grow our relationships with community partners and government, supporters, and volunteers. Cultivating quality relationships is vital for all



Mervyn Eades (left), is recognized as winner of the Bill Armstrong AO Human Rights Award at our Perth office.

aspects of our work. With the economy under greater pressure due to the global pandemic, I have also been blown away by the generosity of our financial supporters who have allowed us to keep doing the work we do.

YEAR AHEAD

A key focus continues to be working with the Commonwealth Government to positively influence policy that impacts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We will also continue to work with Government to achieve adequate funding to meet community demand for the support we offer. This year, we have appreciated the support of the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt MP. A highlight was welcoming Minister Wyatt to launch our Action Research Final Report on Governance. We have enjoyed building a positive working relationship with Government and will seek to pursue the opportunities the Minister has extended to us, such as co-facilitating a forum on First Nations' Governance and Leadership.

A key challenge will be continuing to adapt in the difficult operating environment created by COVID-19. The safety of communities, staff and volunteers will be prioritised and ongoing strategies developed to ensure communities are receiving the vital support they need in this time.

Finally, the financial sustainability of the organisation will remain a priority. While we are pleased to end the year in a strong financial position, we acknowledge that this was achieved through a number of non-ongoing financial investments. We will continue to work closely with our financial supporters to ensure we can meet community demand for our support.

THANKS

I extend my thanks to fellow Board Directors for their support, they continue to lead with strategic vision and skill. I am thankful for CEO, Stephanie Harvey, who has shown consistently positive leadership, and the Executive Team who have been a constant strength during a turbulent year. I offer my thanks to the whole team, who keep us moving forward through their loyalty and hard work.

A special thank you to all our volunteers who stuck with us this year, persevering through the many lockdowns. You continued to provide vital support to communities while also navigating an online environment and the challenges of travel restrictions. We are incredibly grateful for your passion and dedication to supporting First Nations' communities.

We appreciate and recognise the support of our major funders, the Alan and Gill Gray Australasian Philanthropy Foundation and the National Indigenous Australians Agency. Your investment and support have allowed us to support many communities to achieve their aspirations for economically stronger, safer and healthier communities.

My sincere thanks to all of our financial supporters. Your continued support translates into meaningful outcomes and concrete steps forward for First Nations' communities across Australia. We couldn't do this without you. We are encouraged and stronger knowing that you are part of our team.

To our communities – you continue to inspire us. Congratulations on what you have achieved. We are honoured to be part of the story and look forward to working alongside you this year.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



STEPHANIE HARVEY

This year we focused on a number of key strategic priorities. Primarily, it was to elevate the visibility of our organisation so people could see the robust and rigorous methodology behind our core business and new brand. We successfully continued to build a sustainable thought leadership organisation in times of real difficulty. We also focused on keeping our people safe. If COVID is able to reach our communities, it holds not only a potential loss of people, but a loss in culture, language and stories; the loss of our old people, our knowledge holders. Finally, while we navigated through quite a difficult operating environment, we stayed true to the principles that underpin our organisation while doing as much as we could to be sustainable.

We have successfully stayed on track to deliver on our long-term strategic vision. The origin of our Strategic Plan is in accord with the model of how we work. Communities, volunteers, some of

our staff, ambassadors and board came together and we asked the hard questions. We spent a whole day on Country at Standley Chasm, just outside Alice Springs, listening to the people who are at the heart of why we do this work. It was a robust, collaborative and enriching conversation. The Strategic Plan we now have is a stretch plan based on that initial gathering. This stretch plan celebrates, and places a greater emphasis, on our cultural obligation to care for Country. As an organisation our goal is to tread lightly on the face of the earth. We are doing this, and we are striving to do it better. Through nurturing Country, our own spirits get stronger, and we can do more to support our people.

WE THRIVED

Despite the challenges this year, we actually leapt ahead. We thrived. Thanks to our amazing financial supporters, we bucked the trend for not for profits in Australia and experienced ongoing financial support. As a member of the Not-For-Profit Advisory Group to the National COVID Coordination Commission I engaged with the not-for-profit sector right across Australia. I saw firsthand the impact that COVID was having on funding, volunteer accessibility and resourcing and the subsequent impact on beneficiaries of programs. It's humbling that people rallied around us and kept believing in us and the importance of creating a positive impact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I can only attribute this to the clear alignment of values that resonate with people, that we're doing things the right way.

Throughout the year we were strongly governed, for which the Board should take full credit. We had 100 per cent attendance at all Board and Committee meetings. That's significant. Our Board was highly committed in this challenging operating environment, and present for every strategic and risk conversation for the organisation.

Our people showed extraordinary emotional intelligence and resilience. They supported each other, embraced new technology and displayed leadership and agility. We had to enact quick decisions, and people were responsive and supportive. Our community partners displayed commitment and resilience, they were diligent around their safety and social and emotional well-being through COVID, and COVID was successfully kept out of Aboriginal communities. Our volunteers were amazing, they understood that we had to work differently and committed to that, demonstrated through a record number of volunteer days recorded this year to support communities.

The collective efforts of our supporters, staff, volunteers and communities is resulting in real and tangible outcomes. This year we had an independent assessment of our social and economic impacts undertaken by leading economics, policy and advisory firm, ACIL Allen. Through an analysis of completed projects this year (excluding other engagement and support activities), it estimated that Community First Development generated \$17.4 million in total benefits and \$12.8 million in net social and economic benefits.

A personal highlight this year was being selected as one of two charities for the Parliamentary Giving Tree program. We were selected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate to stand proudly at Parliament House and share about our work, and to be able to thank all of the people that have stuck with us through

this time and to acknowledge our strong community partners. This was a good indicator that we're achieving cut through in our thought leadership and the impacts that we're bringing about with our community partners. It was a significant moment for us, to be accepted as a strong First Nations' organisation.

"OUR PEOPLE SHOWED EXTRAORDINARY EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND RESILIENCE. THEY SUPPORTED EACH OTHER, EMBRACED NEW TECHNOLOGY AND DISPLAYED LEADERSHIP AND AGILITY."

STEPHANIE HARVEY, CEO

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

The challenges this year were quite clear, in terms of COVID. One of the significant challenges that remain though, is people's understanding of the way that we work. We're doing a lot in that space in terms of thought leadership, research, strategic conversations and reports. This remains an ongoing challenge. Indigenous Affairs in Australia has followed a fairly consistent course of action and it hasn't yet achieved the Closing the Gap targets. I am committed to do everything I can for people to understand that the way we work is crucial to addressing disadvantage. Self-determination is the enabling mechanism for us to thrive as people and communities. I have absolute faith that the way that we work is one of the strongest solutions to achieve this. It's not new. It's just the commitment to doing it consistently, every time. We need breakthrough across the nation on understanding why self-determination is fundamental, it is then that we will thrive.

We are providing rigorous evidence for the efficacy of our program. We know this works, and we know why it works. We will keep talking about it so that people who are working in this space, are doing things the right way for the right reasons. The more people doing this, the greater the collective impact and potential to see communities thrive socially and economically.

Navigating the financial uncertainties and impacts of the pandemic will require careful planning and engagement with our supporters. This year we greatly benefited from a number of non-ongoing financial commitments to the organisation. We know that we need the help of others to overcome the financial challenges in the current pandemic landscape. We will be engaging closely with supporters to ensure we are able to continue to offer the vital support that communities are requesting in this time.

THANKS

I am very grateful to our people, our staff, our community partners, our supporters, Ambassadors and our Board. I also extend my sincere thanks to the volunteers that have been with us and believed in us through all the significant changes. It is through our collective efforts that we are achieving real and lasting community-led change with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Lastly, I want to extend my deepest thanks to our financial supporters. We know some of our supporters were experiencing difficult circumstances themselves this year and yet they continued to financially support us. Despite a loss in salary, some told us that supporting Community First Development was their only connection to supporting First Nations' communities. That is really powerful. I'm forever grateful for your support.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023

FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLE HAVE **GLOBAL SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATIONS** THAT ADDRESS MANY OF HUMANITY'S GREATEST CHALLENGES, INCLUDING CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.



OUR VISION

FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLES AND COMMUNITIES ARE THRIVING.

WE VALUE

ETHICS

We commit to ethical actions and decision making.

CULTURE

Recognition and respect for culture are at the centre of everything we do. Self-determination and agency are the foundations of our practice.

CARING FOR COUNTRY

We honour the relationship and responsibility we have to the earth in all of our business practices and relationships.

PARTNERSHIP

Everything we do is in partnership; it is only through collaboration and working together, that we can achieve genuine change in our lifetime.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2020-2023

1. THRIVING COMMUNITIES

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

2. ACTION LEARNING

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

3. INFLUENCE POLICY

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

4. GROW

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

“... AT THE HEART OF WHAT WE DO, IS OPERATING IN A WAY THAT SUPPORTS SELF-DETERMINATION SO THAT WE CAN MAKE OUR OWN DECISIONS ON OUR HEALTH, EDUCATION, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES. AND THE CONTINUATION OF OUR CULTURE INCLUDING LANGUAGE.”

STEPHANIE HARVEY, CEO

COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT IN 2021

WE ENGAGED WITH

111

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER COMMUNITIES

ON

149

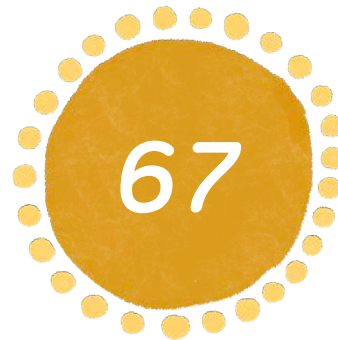
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.



PROJECTS WERE COMMENCED DURING THE YEAR, **19 OF WHICH (39%)** WERE ALSO COMPLETED THIS YEAR.



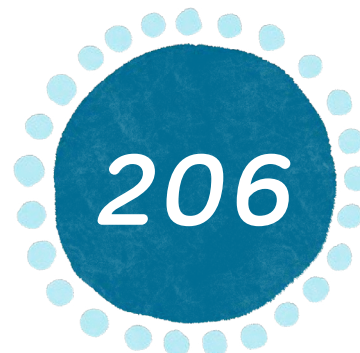
PROJECTS WERE CONTINUED, **48 OF WHICH (81%)** WERE ALSO COMPLETED THIS YEAR.



OF THE **149 ACTIVE** PROJECTS THIS YEAR WERE COMPLETED.



DREAM INDICATORS HAD A POSITIVE CHANGE, WITH A MEDIAN INCREASE OF **60 GROWTH POINTS.**



PROJECT INDICATORS HAD A POSITIVE CHANGE, WITH A MEDIAN INCREASE OF **71 GROWTH POINTS.**

ACTIVITY REPORT

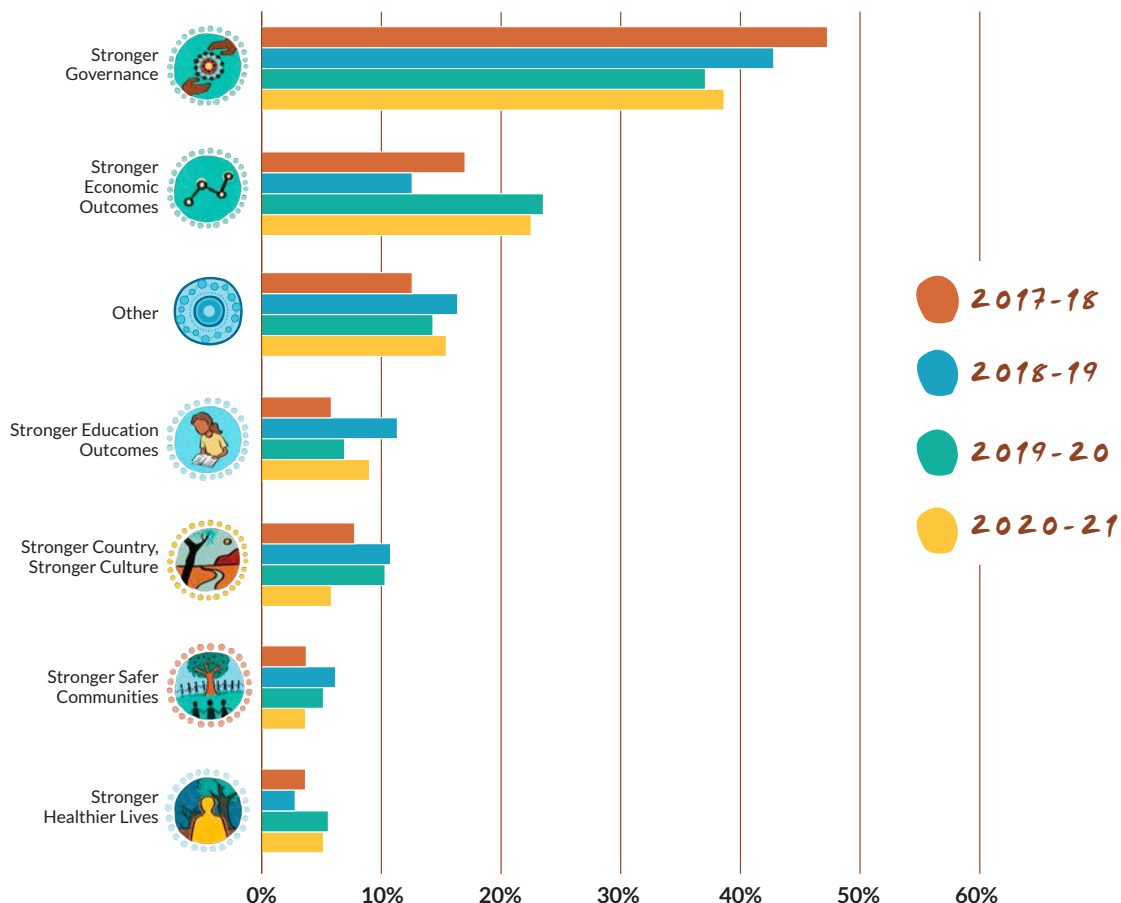
Over 2020-21, Community First Development engaged with 111 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on 149 community-led development projects. Of these, 67 community projects were completed during the year, directly assisting each community to move confidently towards a broad range of goals, despite the challenging operating environment.

COVID-19 left many of our communities isolated and vulnerable and saw our team and communities quickly adapt to embrace creative and innovative ways to keep projects moving. COVID-19 is still impacting communities and the way we work with them. While some projects are occurring in person, many are continuing to occur via video conferencing due to ongoing COVID-19 concerns and uncertainty created by jurisdiction-based snap lockdowns. This has only served to highlight the resilience and creativity within our team and the communities we work with, and the willingness to continually try different ways of working together.

Project numbers for the year reflect ongoing momentum and progress working with communities. The impact of the global pandemic has not changed the dominance of economic development and governance strengthening activities nationally. Our strengths-based community and human development approach is evaluated against a range of development outcomes listed in Figure 1 below.

As in previous years, projects leading to Stronger governance are still the most sought after, followed by Stronger Economic Outcomes, Stronger Education Outcomes and those leading to Stronger Country, Stronger Culture. The 'other' category in the graph, which has been on the increase over the last few years consists of More for Youth, Stronger Connections and Partnerships, Data Sovereignty and Stronger Cross-cultural Community.

FIGURE 1: COMPLETED COMMUNITY REQUESTED PROJECTS BY CATEGORY (3 YEAR COMPARISON)



ACIL Allen, a leading independent economics, policy and strategy advisory firm, undertook an analysis of Community First Development's operations and finances for the 2020-21 financial year, and resulting social and economic impacts. In alignment with the high volume of governance and economic activities requested by communities, ACIL Allen summarised Community First Development's value proposition in the following two statements.

GOVERNANCE-RELATED SUPPORT – ACIL ALLEN'S VALUE PROPOSITION ASSESSMENT

Community First Development recognises the importance of establishing good governance practices in a way that bridges Western and First Nations' contexts. The way governance operates will vary by organisation, but it is always a key requirement to achieving enduring outcomes by effectively defining, organising, operating and monitoring an organisation's activities.

Community First Development places governance at the core of its project delivery philosophy. The organisation's strategy and operational priority are centred around promoting practices of good governance. Community First Development values continuous improvement and has invested in identifying ways to enhance its capacity to provide effective governance support. Community First Development's strong reputation among its partner volunteers and community recipients supports the organisation's ability to deliver governance-related supports.

ECONOMIC-RELATED SUPPORT – ACIL ALLEN'S VALUE PROPOSITION ASSESSMENT

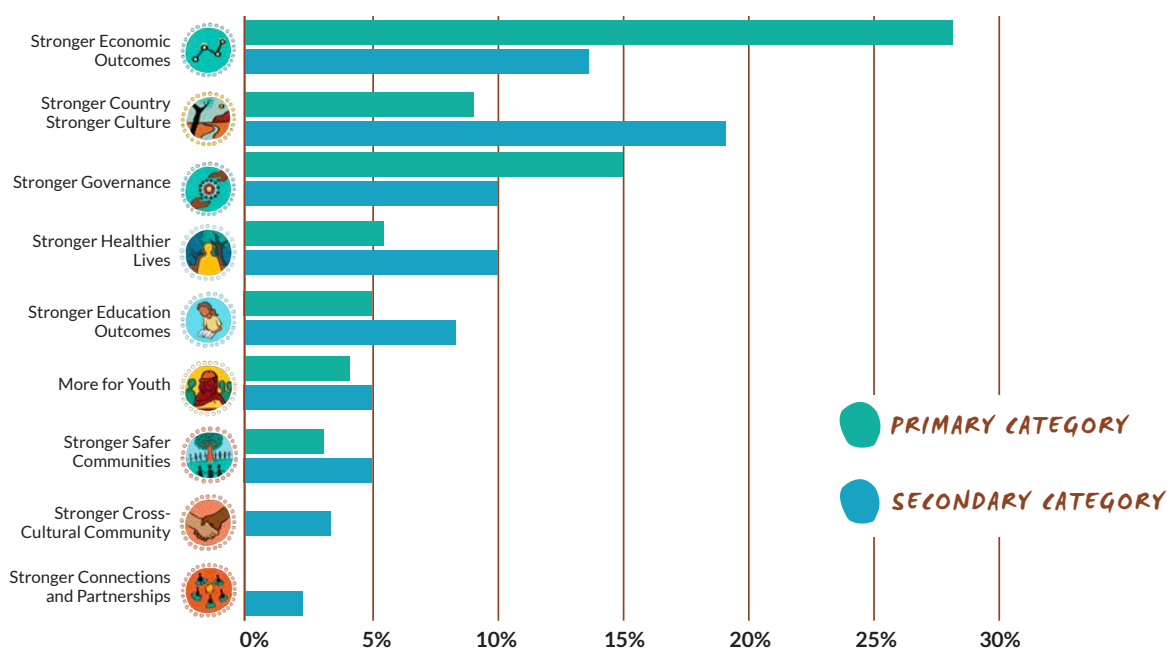
Community First Development recognises that improving the economic outcomes of First Nations' communities leads to direct and flow-on economic benefits as well as supporting better outcomes in the areas of health, justice and education. In this way, Community First Development's projects support the significant investments made by government in economic-related policies for First Nations' people.

Over recent years, Community First Development has demonstrated through numerous project examples and advocate endorsements both the breadth and reach of the organisation's impact in providing economic-related supports. Stronger Economic Outcomes have been the second most common area of focus for the organisation's project-work and account for a significant time and skill contribution from its staff and volunteer network.¹

FOCUS OF THE COMMUNITIES WE WORK WITH

Communities each have a unique vision and purpose, with a focus on different aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing. The primary and secondary purpose of the 111 communities we supported this year is categorised in Figure 2. As per last year, improved economic outcomes remained the top focus for communities we engaged with, followed by Country and cultural wellbeing.

FIGURE 2: CORE BUSINESS OF COMMUNITIES WE WORK WITH

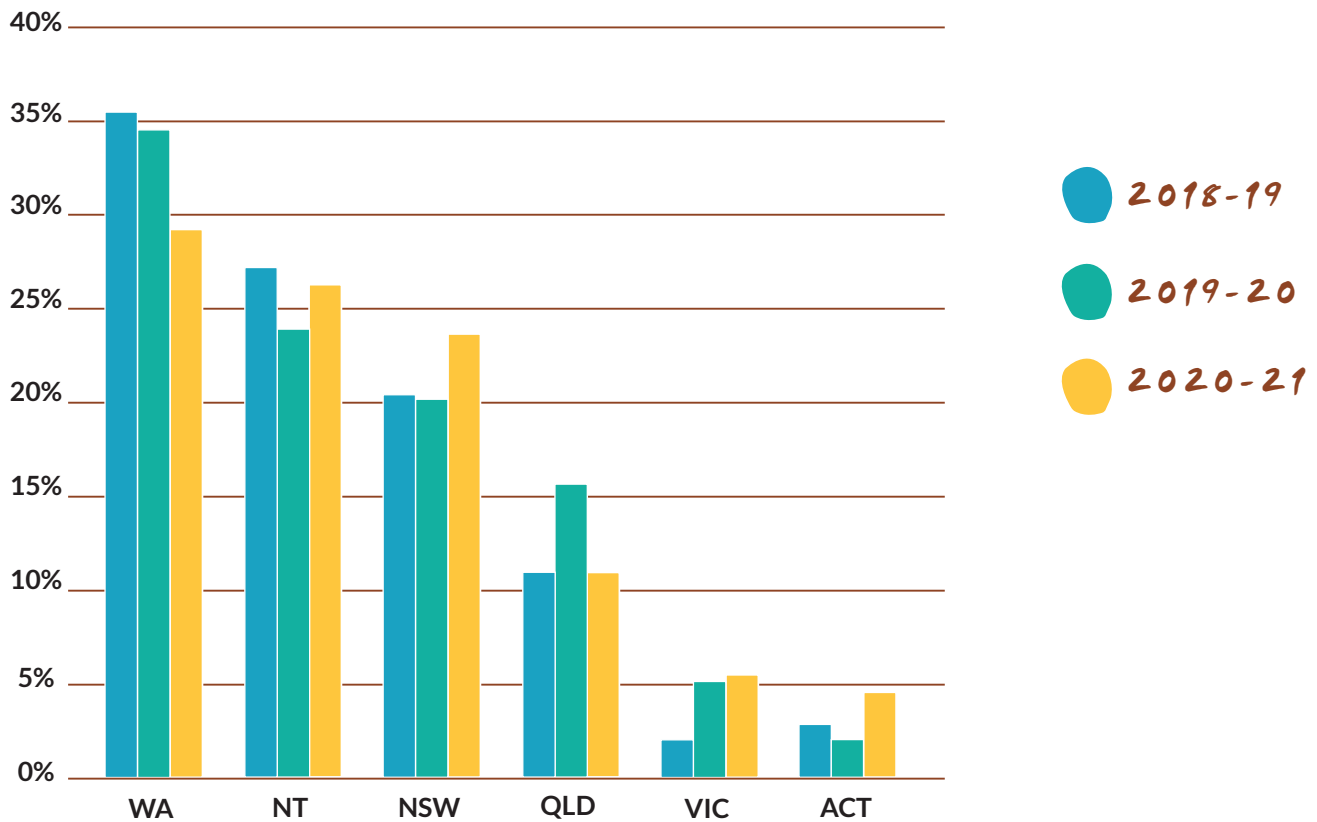


¹ACIL Allen (2021), Social and Economic Impact Assessment of Community First Development, Report commissioned by Community First Development.

WHERE WE WORK

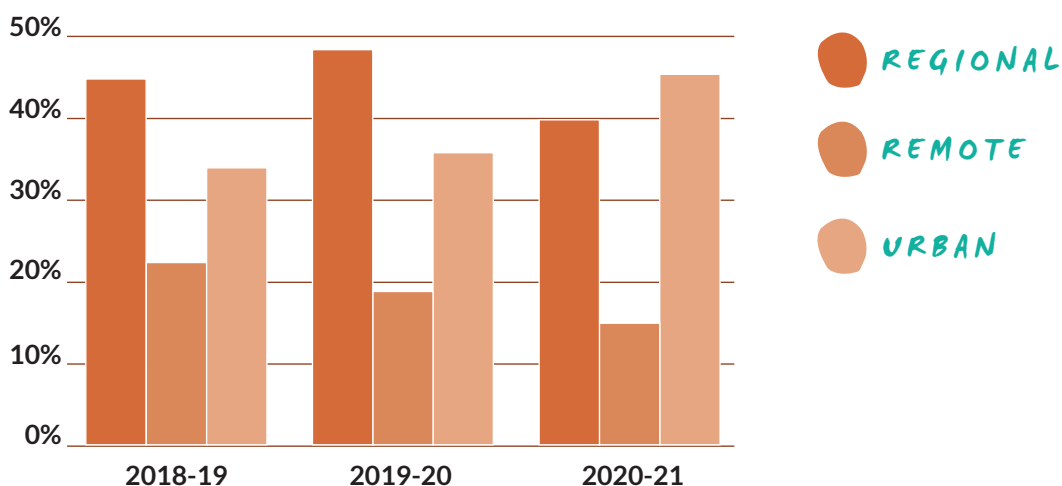
In 2020-21, there was moderate change in the distribution of projects across Australian states and territories. The activity levels in each jurisdiction correlate closely with staff numbers and movement. As shown in Figure 3, project activity in Western Australia remains the highest, followed by the Northern Territory, then New South Wales and Queensland. The size of the NT team increased this year with a correlating increase in activity.

FIGURE 3: PROJECT DELIVERY BY STATE AND TERRITORY



Over previous years there has been an upward trend in urban projects. As Figure 4 illustrates, there has been less fluctuation in regionally-based projects and, proportionately, a small decline in remote based projects.

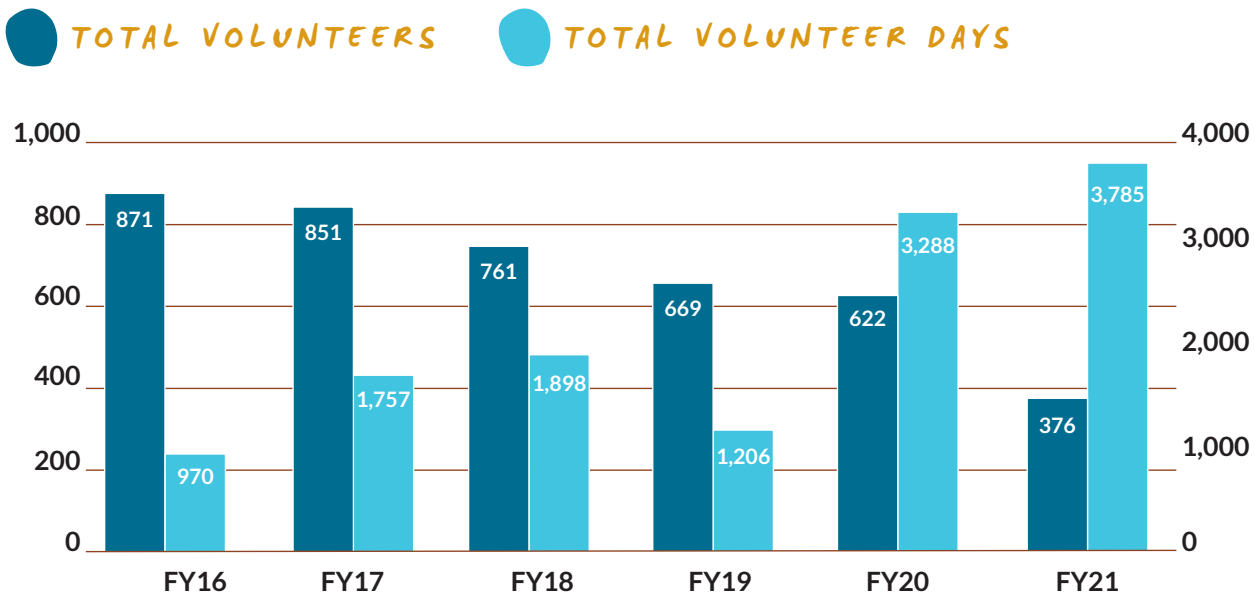
FIGURE 4: COMMUNITY PROJECT LOCATION



VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

At the end of June 2021 Community First Development had 286 active and 90 prospective volunteers who spent a total of 3,785 days working with First Nations' communities. Despite a significant drop in the number of active volunteers registered this year, and number of placements, this is an increase of close to 500 days of activity compared to last year. Figure 5 provides some insight into the significance of this achievement within the context of the past five years of volunteer activity.

FIGURE 5: PROSPECTIVE AND ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEER DAYS (FY 16-FY21)



Source: Community First Development's Annual Reports FY16-FY21

Between December 2020 and January 2021, Volunteering Australia, the national peak body for volunteering conducted the 'Re-engaging Volunteers and COVID-19' survey and received almost 600 responses. It found that Volunteering has not fully recovered. Nearly three quarters (72%) of respondents reported that their volunteer programs were either only partially operational (60%) or not operational (12%). Demand for services has increased and more volunteers are needed. Four out of ten (43%) reported experiencing an increase in demand for services, with over half (56%) reporting that they need more volunteers.² Despite this, we have maintained a strong volunteer pool and we continue to adapt and implement strategies to ensure we can continue to meet demand and support communities to achieve their goals.

Targeted recruitment through our website continued. Historically recruitment has been targeted by skill set, this year it has been targeted by region. With restrictions in travel, opportunities to utilise volunteers based in the same state or territory as a community were prioritised. This allowed some face-to-face, in-person, projects to occur. However, this approach was more challenging in our Western and Central regions with many of our skilled volunteers based in Eastern Australia. Targeted volunteer recruitment by region addressed some of these impacts, with an increase of applications in WA and the NT. Onboarding volunteers was the next step in the process.

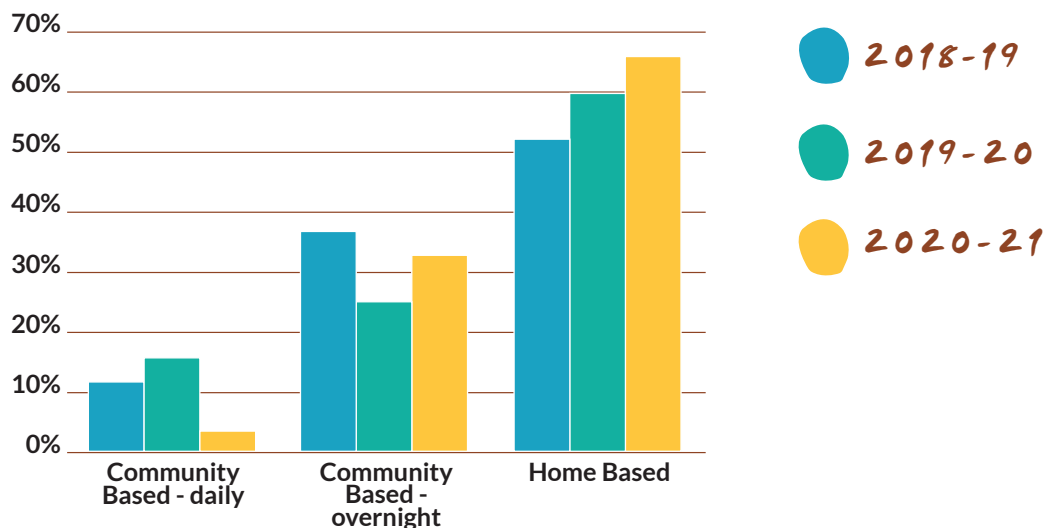
The regional teams took a strategic and carefully considered approach. Inductions are time and resource-intensive due to their comprehensive nature and the need to tailor them to specific



The blended approach to our volunteer induction workshop in WA, commencing with an on-screen introduction from CEO, Stephanie Harvey.

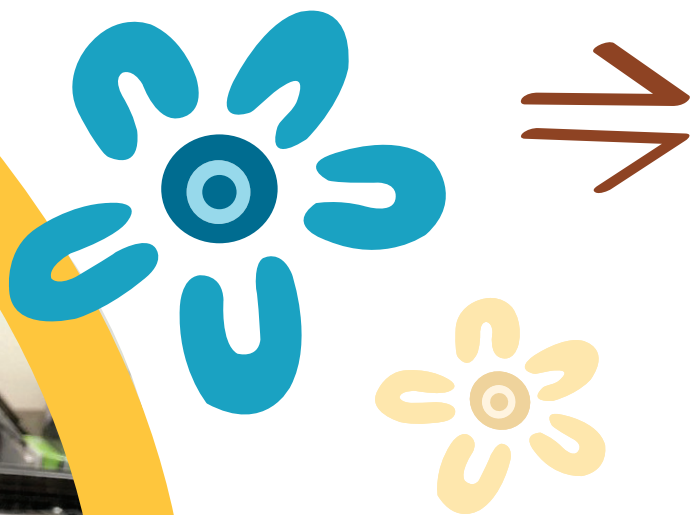
locations. The WA team held two face-to-face inductions, and the NT undertook preparations for their induction scheduled for August 2021. Volunteer workshops used a blended model of in-person and on-screen interactions with our team situated across Australia. In addition, significant progress was made towards the online volunteer induction (read more in the Innovation and Learning section).

FIGURE 6: VOLUNTEER PLACEMENTS



There were a total of 160 volunteer project placements over the year, the vast majority of these were home based (108), reflecting the impacts of restricted travel due to the global pandemic. Again, this year there was a higher number of volunteer placements, than total projects underway. This highlights that in some cases more than one volunteer can be assigned to a project, a model used to combine a variety of industry skills to deliver one project.

As has been the case for some time, the majority of volunteers continue to be female (55%). The majority of volunteers are in the 56-70 age group category (33%), followed by those aged 71+ (23%) and 40-55 (21%). This is a slight shift in age demographics to last year, where the 26-29 age category was the second largest (24%).



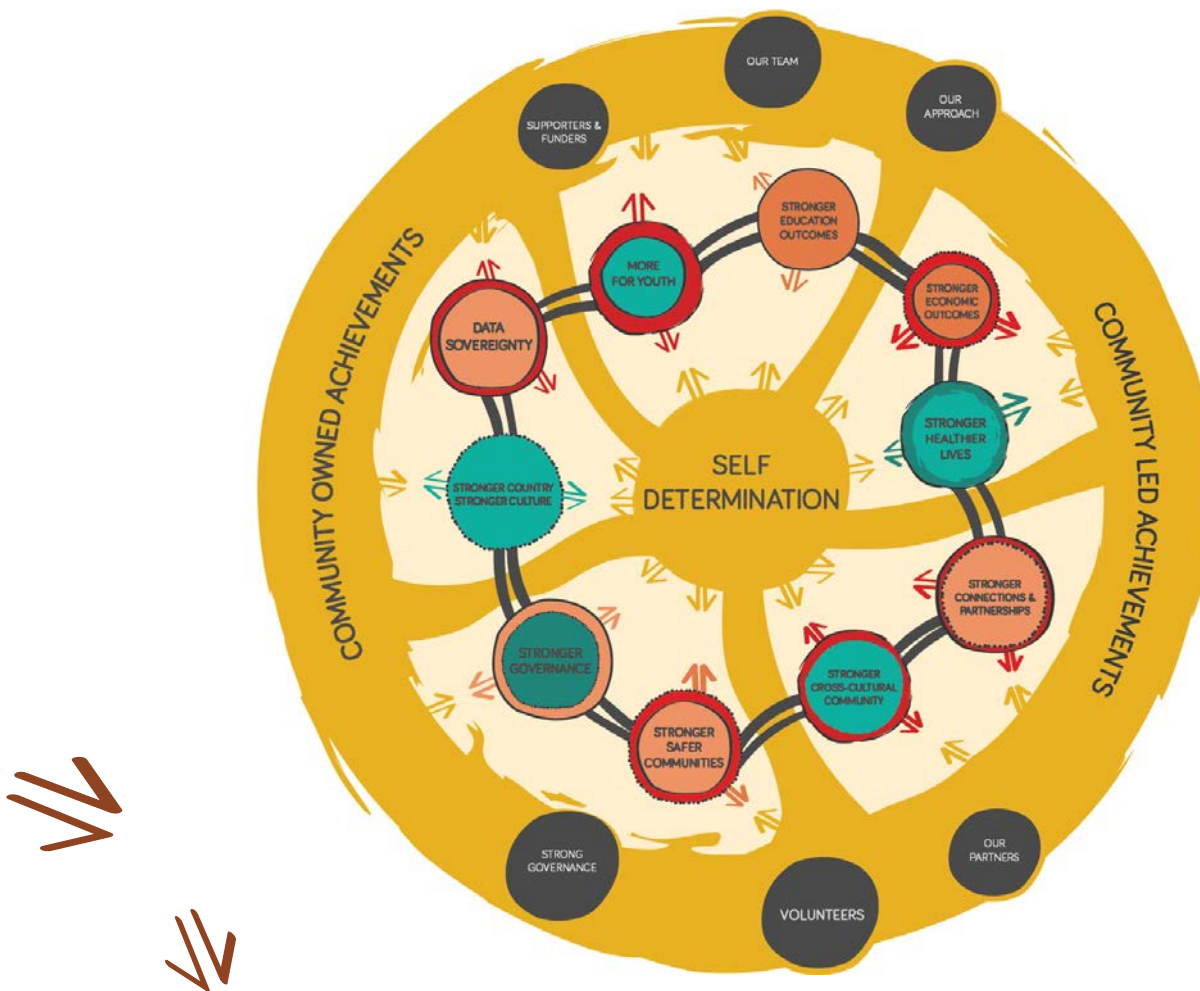
²Volunteering Australia. (2021). Re-engaging Volunteers and COVID-19. 2021.02.08-Re-engaging-Volunteers-and-COVID-19-Report.pdf (volunteeringaustralia.org).

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

The theory we work to is our Story of Change. We see the community as an eco-system, where everything is connected. Not one thing is more important than another. When one aspect of community life changes, it impacts other areas as well. Every positive action within a community makes a difference. By nurturing unique community environments, the skills, knowledge and willpower of First Nations' people shine and communities grow stronger.

Through many yarning sessions we developed this program theory that privileges First Nations' perspectives. It is a circular approach to program theory that is interconnected, holistic and organic. The different circles in the centre of the ecosystem represent the types of outcomes achieved through our work in partnership with communities. This also allows us to group like outcomes together for an aggregate reading of outcomes and impacts occurring nationally.

FIGURE 7: STORY OF CHANGE



Our approach to evaluating outcomes and impact takes into account both long and short-term performance indicators, which are co-designed with communities. We call these dream indicators (long-term) and project indicators (short term). Communities tell us what success looks like to them, we design the indicators together and then measure the progress towards these aspirations. Each indicator is categorised by a different Story of Change outcome area.

We monitor progress and measure impact through listening and yarning together with communities as part of community development activities. Team members work with communities to identify the degree of change across each indicator and give it a score. We anticipate the growth point changes occurring in the shorter term (project indicators) will be greater in a year, than the longer term change measured in dream indicators.

DREAM INDICATORS

This year 21 dream indicators recorded a monitoring point and overall change across four Story of Change outcome areas. An average increased overall dream indicator change occurred in four of the ten outcome areas this year.

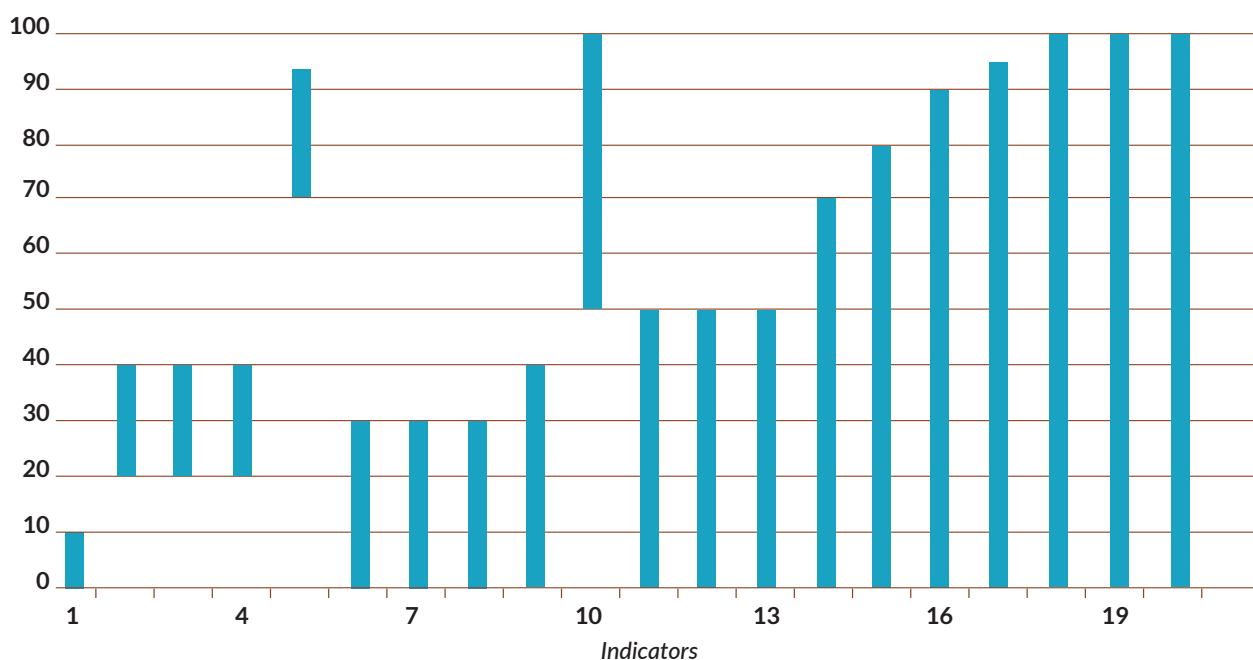
Figure 8 shows the growth points achieved across the 21 indicators. The three indicators that achieved 100 growth points this year occurred in three different communities.









COMMUNITIES CELEBRATING DREAM INDICATORS WITH 100 GROWTH POINTS

- To be self-sustainable and have a clear and structured plan for the organisation to the benefit of the community, through the services and programs run.** A key component of the dream was achieved through the development of a strategic plan. This was completed in two stages, with two different volunteers. Importantly, the process was used to strengthen the relationships and capability of a relatively new board and their ownership of the strategic vision for the community organisation.
- Develop a promotional film to share with community, stakeholders and government about our programs and approach.** The community worked with three different volunteers with different cinematography and film making skills. This involved multiple site visits and interviews and resulted in a high quality short film which has now been shared widely.
- Develop a website to promote First Nations' musicians and house an e-commerce site for art sales and cultural awareness training services.** The community member leading this project achieved everything he wanted, working with two skilled volunteers including the creation of original videos and marketing materials to industry format to allow for networking with industry contacts. Training in editing and managing the website was also provided.

In some cases, communities will choose to monitor an indicator that they have already progressed before we start partnering with them. We include the capacity to record this data as it is one way to illustrate the independence and strength of our community partners, and the different stages that they may request our support. This is clearly reflected in Figure 8 where the baseline reading does not start at zero.

FIGURE 8: DREAM INDICATORS

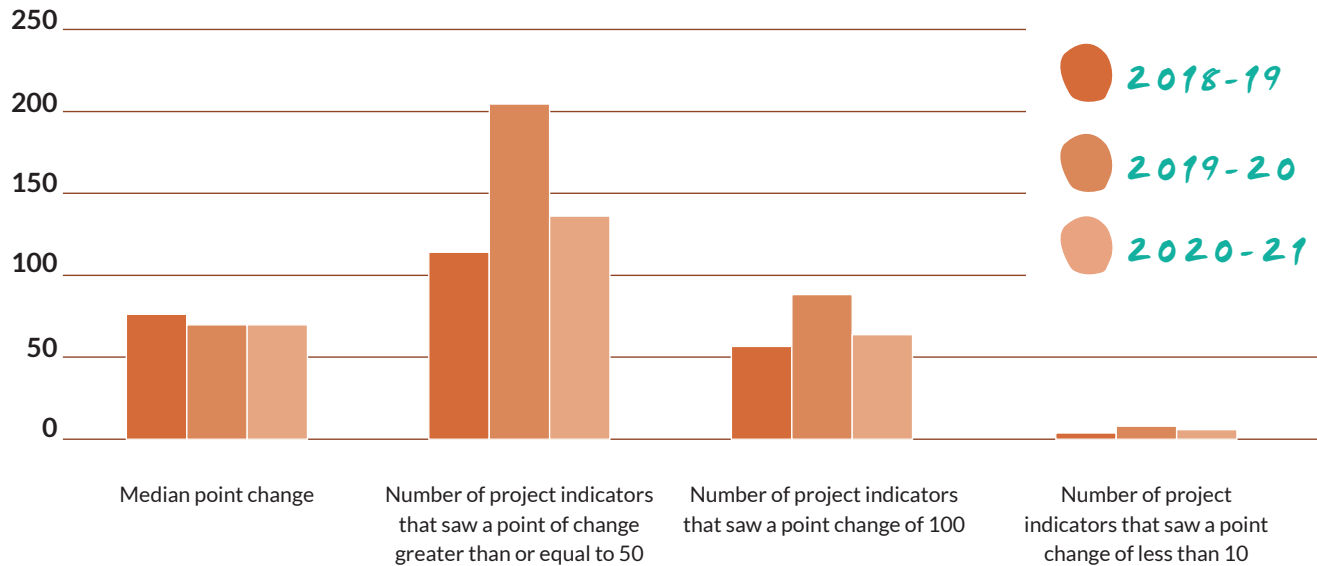


STORY OF CHANGE OUTCOME	AVERAGE OVERALL CHANGE
 Stronger Economic Outcomes	 61.5
 Stronger Safer Communities	 20
 Stronger Governance	 46
 Stronger Connections & Partnerships	 52.5

PROJECT INDICATORS

Figure 9 shows the median point change in project indicators over the last three years has been consistent, also reflecting the iterative approach to the program. Projects commence at different times throughout a year, driven and requested by community demand. As a result, project indicators are not necessarily completed (or will reach a reading of 100) within a financial year.

FIGURE 9: CHANGE IN PROJECT INDICATORS



PROJECT INDICATOR MEASUREMENTS

The total number of project indicators with a Monitoring Point in the financial year as well as an overall change.

2018-19 2019-20 2020-21

160

283

206





INDEPENDENT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Leading independent economics advisory firm, ACIL Allen, developed a cost-benefit analysis to estimate the value, and savings to Government, generated through Community First Development’s project support activities in 2020-21. Using this methodology limited the analysis to only completed projects. Therefore, the full extent of the value of projects in early engagement and scoping, or delivery phases are not included in the assessment.

FIGURE 10: ACIL ALLEN’S ANALYSIS: COMPLETED PROJECTS ONLY



Community First Development partnered with 111 communities on 149 projects. The analysis explored the benefits of the 67 projects completed within the 2020-21 time period. It found that through these completed projects, Community First Development generated a return of \$3.73 in health, social and economic benefits for every \$1.00 of contributions invested. Of particular note, Community First Development generated an estimated \$9.5 million of value in improved health status alone. This is a significant impact and return on investment that forms only part of the total benefit generated.

A summary of the quantitative component of their findings is provided below. The full report is available on our website. The results reveal the considerable economic and social impact generated through the analysis of the 67 completed projects this year, estimated at \$17.4 million in total benefits and \$12.8 million in net benefits.



Improved health outcomes accounted for over half (55%) of the total benefits, a benefit estimated to be twice that of the organisation’s total cost. Other key sources of benefits include higher rates of employment (14%) and lower rates of justice service utilisation (14%).

ACIL Allen noted that, “Importantly, the impact of Community First Development is realised across a range of other benefits, including increased business success and volunteerism and lower reliance on welfare and housing supports. While these benefits carry lower value estimates, they are important measures of social welfare and demonstrate the breadth of Community First Development’s impact.”¹

Some of the qualitative measures identified as part of the assessment are outlined below.

QUANTATIVE ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

ACIL Allen developed a cost-benefit analysis assessment framework to estimate the value Community First Development generates through its project support activities. The assessment found:

For every
\$1.00
 in operational costs and
 volunteer contributions



An estimated
\$3.73
 is returned to the community in
 social and economic benefits

\$2.5M	Higher rates of employment and volunteerism
\$1.6M	Higher rates of business success
\$9.5M	Improvement in health status
\$2.5M	Lower rates of justice service utilisation
\$0.9M	Lower rates of welfare dependence
\$0.5M	Lower rates of housing support
\$17.4M	Total Benefit
\$12.8M	Net Benefit (Costs=\$4.7M)

¹ACIL Allen (2021), Social and Economic Impact Assessment of Community First Development, Report commissioned by Community First Development.

INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT (CONT.)

Community First Development also identified the following qualitative benefits that applied to a number of the 67 projects completed in FY21





ESSENTIAL TRANSPORT FOR A REMOTE COMMUNITY



Robert Robertson is a senior Warlpiri man based in the remote community of Yuendumu, 330km's north-west of Alice Springs. He is a youth worker, an educator, a mediator, a pastor for the local church, a board member for many local organisations, a father, grandfather – a role model for many in the community.

Robert knows firsthand the challenges the Yuendumu community face and has seen the need for a Warlpiri-owned transport company for years. He intends for the business to provide regular transport to/from Alice Springs, a 330km distance from Yuendumu, charter buses for community events, NDIS patient transport, and ultimately vehicle recovery.

TURNING IDEAS INTO REALITY

Robert was referred to us by the Central Lands Council (CLC). This referral shows an interesting new partnership approach between the CLC and Community First Development that harnesses resources and maximises both organisations' abilities to support community members seeking to strengthen their initiatives. Robert pinpoints the moment his ideas turned to action as when he first reached out to us in April 2019.

"I WAITED 7 YEARS, JUST TALKING AND THINKING ABOUT THE BUSINESS, BUT THEN I WAS INTRODUCED TO YOU MOB, (COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT), AND THAT'S WHEN THINGS STARTED TO GO, STARTED TO HAPPEN. I WOULDN'T HAVE DONE THIS WITHOUT YOU MOB YOU KNOW, I'M GRATEFUL."

ROBERT, XTRA MILE TRANSPORT

Since then, we have worked with Robert on three projects aimed at supporting the launch of his business, Xtra Mile Transport. Most recently, Robert worked with Community First Development volunteer and graphic designer, Marion, on logo and brand development. This was a highly collaborative process involving many yarning sessions, sketches, and the development of multiple logo options. Robert, his family, and the community are very happy with the outcome.



Robert, his wife, Lisa, and son, Tyrell, celebrating finalising the logo.

"PEOPLE ARE SO HAPPY ABOUT IT! I HAVE TO EXPLAIN WHAT THE LOGO IS ALL ABOUT, AND EVERYONE REMEMBERS THE STORY OF WALKING FROM WATERHOLE TO WATERHOLE WITH OUR PARENTS. A LOT OF US HAVE THOSE MEMORIES, AND THE LOGO HELPS TO BRING BACK THE MEMORIES AS WE GREW UP WALKING AS OUR MAIN TRANSPORT. IT REALLY TELLS A STORY, AND IT REMINDS EVERY ONE OF US ABOUT OUR FAMILIES, AND THE OLD WAYS."

ROBERT, XTRA MILE TRANSPORT

After supporting Robert to secure funding for Xtra Mile Transport's start-up costs, Robert invited long-term Community First Development volunteers, Taffy and Marella, to work with him on another project. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this project occurred entirely online. The volunteers worked with Robert to finalise an auspice arrangement to support Xtra Mile Transport with administration and financial assistance in its first years of operation. They also supported Robert to secure a second grant from the Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation for operational costs, a Remote Passenger Transport Program subsidy from the Northern Territory Government, as well as some smaller grants to support training and other start-up costs. Robert has also recruited several drivers to undertake training to obtain an endorsement to drive a commercial passenger vehicle. Nine participants turned up for training and testing by DriveSafeNT – a high number for a remote community.

ON THE WAY TO ACHIEVING THE DREAM

With the support of Community First Development and other stakeholders like the CLC, Robert has made significant progress towards achieving his dream. He has developed a business plan, secured start-up and some ongoing funding for Xtra Mile Transport, finalised an auspicing arrangement, purchased his first bus and developed a suitable logo and brand. As Robert remarks, the journey to date has been one characterised by learning, with Robert keen to pass on knowledge gained to others in the future.

"SOMETIMES I DON'T BELIEVE THAT IT'S ACTUALLY GOING TO HAPPEN, THAT ALL THAT HARD WORK HAS PAID OFF! I THINK THAT WORKING WITH YOU (MADDI- COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT), CARL (CLC), MARELLA AND TAFFY, IT'S BEEN A REALLY EXCITING JOURNEY OF LEARNING NEW KNOWLEDGE, I'VE GAINED MORE KNOWLEDGE NOW THAN WHEN I FIRST STARTED. AND NOW, I'VE LEARNED HOW TO SET IT UP SO THAT ONE DAY I CAN SUPPORT OTHERS COMING THROUGH. THAT'S SOMETHING I WANT TO DO IN THE FUTURE, WHEN XTRA MILE TRANSPORT IS UP AND RUNNING AND CRUISING ALONG, WE WANT TO START EDUCATING OUR PEOPLE ABOUT CARS, ABOUT MONEY MANAGEMENT, ABOUT ALL THIS STUFF THAT I'M DREAMING ABOUT."

ROBERT, XTRA MILE TRANSPORT



Xtra Mile's first bus!

GETTING READY TO LAUNCH!

After finishing these recent projects with Community First Development, Xtra Mile Transport has focused on finalising negotiations for the bus service licence, as well as undertaking other activities required to launch the service.

Robert's individual case demonstrates the power of partnerships and pure determination to better his community. His desire to start his own business stems from a desire to show young people what self-determination and leadership look like at a grass-roots level.

MIRALARRINGU - 'IT BECOMES VISIBLE': TOWARDS A HOLISTIC HEALING APPROACH

Aboriginal Males Healing Centre (AMHC) is a not-for-profit, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, based in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Newman has two traditional owner groups who have a connection with each other and to the land: the Niyiyaparli people are the traditional owners of the land and the Martu people are the caretakers or custodians of the land.

AMHC's dream is for all Aboriginal women and children to live safe and healthy lives free of family violence.



Uncle Colin Peterson, AMHC Council Elder; Devon Cuimara, AMHC CEO; and Djeran Cuimara, Devon's son

"THE WHOLE THING IS SIMPLY ABOUT PREVENTING THE ONGOING INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA AROUND VIOLENCE."

DEVON, AMHC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AMHC wants to build an Aboriginal Community Controlled Healing Centre that can serve as an alternative to incarceration for Aboriginal men who engage in family violence. Taking a holistic approach, the Centre draws on Western clinical care and rehabilitation methods (the Duluth model), underpinned by Aboriginal culture and Lore as the key healing element. An outreach program geared towards early intervention and prevention will sit alongside the Martu Mirna Maparn Ngurra Healing Centre.

HOLISTIC SUPPORT FOR A STRONG COMMUNITY WITH A BOLD DREAM

AMHC first invited us to work alongside them in 2016 and we have since completed several projects with them. Community First Development forms part of a collaborative pro-bono team led by AMHC that includes COLAB, Arup Engineering, Avlon Surveyors, PM + D Architects, Paul McDonald and Associates, Allied Projects, Infinity Actuaries, Empowering-Communities, Indigenous Psychological Services and many others.

Most recently and as part of the AMHC Working Group, Community First Development volunteer, Russell, supported AMHC to develop two comprehensive submissions aimed at securing funding for the Healing Centre. These submissions were lodged simultaneously with the National Indigenous Australians Agency's (NIAA) Indigenous Advancement Strategy and the Department of Infrastructure's Building Better Region Funds (BBRF). AMHC is currently awaiting the outcome of the BBRF and the NIAA funding submission.

Russell also supported AMHC to refine three social enterprise business cases into one document. The final business case focuses on social benefits rather than on market-based strategies to accomplish AMHC's social mission of justice reinvestment.

In addition, AMHC invited Community First Development volunteer, Rebecca, to support them to navigate the process of seeking heritage clearance to undertake a cultural survey on the site proposed for the Healing Centre. After reviewing relevant documentation, Rebecca discovered that legally, a cultural survey was not required. These findings were discussed with the Department of Lands which agreed that AMHC could submit its development application if specific mitigation strategies were put in place. AMHC has sought formal approval to not undertake the cultural survey and is currently awaiting a response.

To Devon, words such as 'partners' and 'ownership' come to mind when reflecting on our approach to working with communities. He also sees us as a "bridge" to "specialists" AMHC would normally not have access to.

"YOU ARE A BRIDGE BETWEEN US AND A SPECIALIST THAT NORMALLY WE WOULD NECESSARILY HAVE TO TRACK DOWN AND THEN APPROACH AND INVITE. THAT'S A LONG PROCESS TO GET A SPECIALIST TO COME ON BOARD TO ASSIST YOU. WHEREAS IN ESSENCE, THROUGH COMMUNITY FIRST DEVELOPMENT, WE'VE BEEN GIVEN ACCESS TO THE REQUIRED SPECIALIST TO BRING US WHERE WE ARE TODAY. WITHOUT THAT, LOOK, I CAN ONLY SAY ONE THING, WE WOULDN'T BE WHERE WE ARE TODAY."

DEVON, AMHC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

STEPPING STONES TOWARDS ACHIEVING DREAM

With Community First Development's support and the pro bono support provided by AMHC's key stakeholders, AMHC has taken several key steps towards achieving their dream:

- Secured funding to design and trial the Strong Spirit Strong Families Strong Culture program;
- Acquired land, in principle, from the Shire of East Pilbara to build the Healing Centre;
- Created a Vision Document, a website and a suite of collateral that have enhanced their ability to apply for funding;
- Applied for funding to build the Healing Centre; and
- Secured Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status.

The final challenge for AMHC is to secure funding to build the Healing Centre. With the work that has been achieved to date and their strategic approach to bringing on board key stakeholders, we are confident they will achieve their goals.

SKILLS TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Taribelang Aboriginal Corporation (Taribelang) is a traditional owner group for the custodial land of Bundaberg in Queensland, providing services in cultural heritage, land management, and tourism. Taribelang's dream is to diversify their income and achieve self-determination through branching out into the tourism industry and acquiring an aquaculture farm. They want to establish a cultural tourism business that also creates employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Bundaberg region.

THREE COMPLEMENTARY PROJECTS, ONE COMMON OUTCOME

Often, one community development project leads to another. Taribelang recently approached us about a project which soon expanded into three inter-connected projects running alongside each other. These projects were facilitated by two Senior Community Development Officers (SCDOs) and utilised the complementary skills of three Community First Development volunteers.

For the initial project, and to connect in with their plans to establish a cultural tourism business, Taribelang wanted to develop an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Employment Program in Tourism aimed at providing soft skills training to young people aged 18-25 and mature aged people who want to upskill or change careers. Taribelang chose Gwen, SCDO, and skilled volunteer with training and facilitation expertise, to work with them on this project.

Gwen, worked alongside Taribelang and engaged local Elders to design the training program focused on tourism employment. As part of the program, participants will complete a Certificate III in Tourism, as well as units of competency from the foundation program of the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways. The program will include several support mechanisms including mentoring from Taribelang Elders.

It soon became clear that funding was required to get the program off the ground. So, our second project came to life as we were invited to build the capacity of Taribelang staff and Board members to write funding submissions and assist with the development of a template to streamline the application process. Taribelang chose to work with skilled volunteer, Ian, a politician and former senior lecturer in political science, on this project. As part of this project, Ian supported Taribelang to develop two submissions: one focused on Taribelang's cultural tourism business and the other on their employment program. Taribelang also drew on the expertise of skilled volunteer, Deb, who was working with Taribelang on a separate project, to provide detailed program costings for the funding submissions.



Taribelang Board members discuss how they can create tourism employment opportunities for the Bundaberg community.

STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS FOR A STRONGER FUTURE

With Community First Development's support, Taribelang lodged a funding submission with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) for their cultural tourism business. They also developed an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Employment Program in Tourism and lodged a funding submission with the Skilling Queenslanders for Work Program. To strengthen this submission, they secured letters of support from their federal, state and local council members.

The projects also saw Taribelang work closely with, and secure, the support of a range of key stakeholders including the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Qld), the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (Qld), Bundaberg TAFE and Bundaberg Tourism. This was a project highlight for Peter, Taribelang CEO, Elder and local community leader within Bundaberg.

"A HIGHLIGHT WAS HAVING COMMUNITY, GOVERNMENT AND THE MOB COMING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER OUTCOME TO A PROJECT."

PETER, TARIBELANG ABORIGINAL CORPORATION CEO

As part of this process, Taribelang Board members and staff strengthened their knowledge around grant application and advocacy processes.

"WE ARE NOW MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE PLANNING THAT NEEDS TO GO INTO LODGING A GRANT APPLICATION."

PETER, TARIBELANG ABORIGINAL CORPORATION CEO

Taribelang recently found out that their funding submission to NIAA for their cultural tourism business was successful, a huge win for them! Unfortunately, their funding submission for the employment program was unsuccessful. However, after follow-up discussions with the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Board has decided to take up their suggestion to re-lodge their submission for a new funding round.

With the strong stakeholder partnerships they have developed, including agreement from some to provide participants with employment opportunities upon course completion, Taribelang are in a strong position to secure this funding.

We wish Taribelang all the best and are excited to see what the future holds for them.



A sunny day in Taribelang.



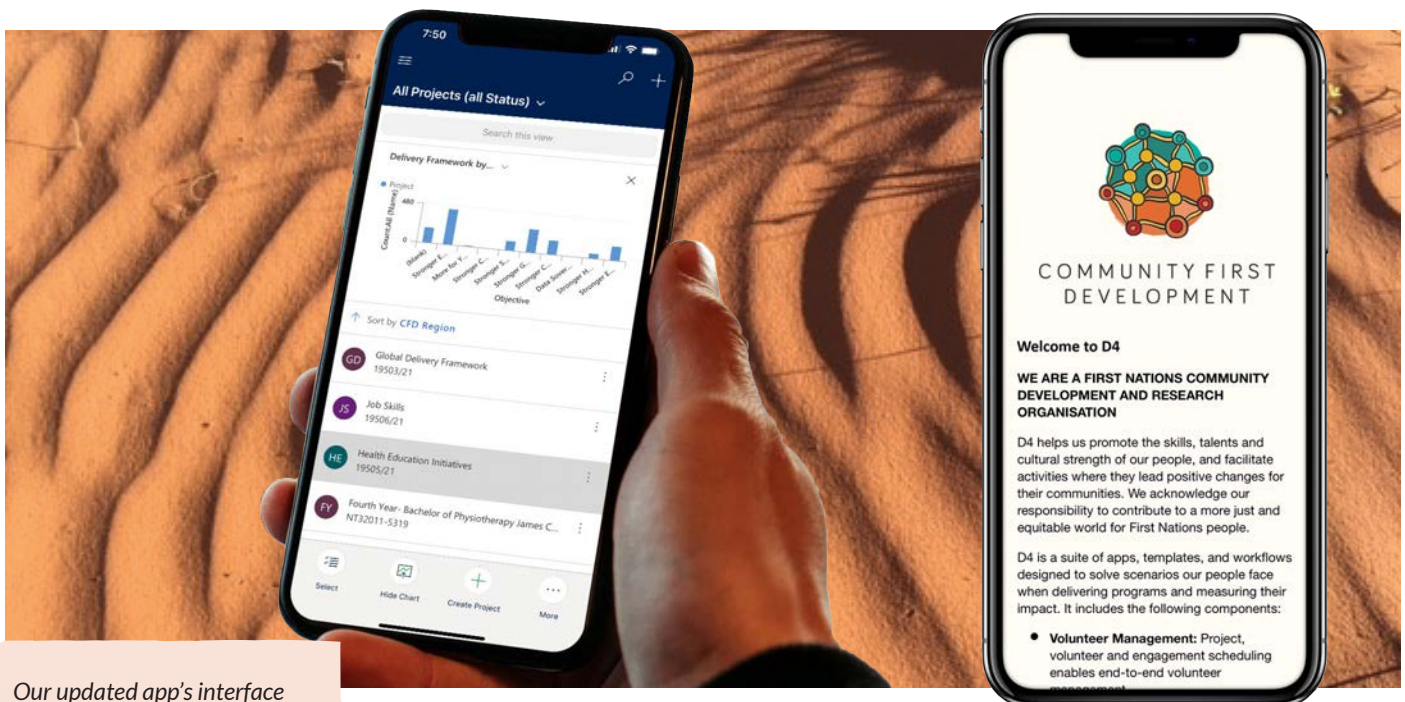
INNOVATION AND LEARNING

DEVELOPMENT OF CLOUD-BASED IMPACT DATABASE

A key project for the year has been enhancing our purpose-built database to effectively capture the activities, outcomes and impacts of our community development activities. This involved developing a fourth, cloud-based, iteration of the database that better integrates with our existing IT platforms.

The database incorporates the monitoring and evaluation framework we designed and refined over a number of years, suited to First Nations' context. It is flexible, strengths-based, and has the capability to monitor long and short term outcomes in partnership with communities. It also has unique reporting capabilities, including looking at the aggregate trends in outcomes and impacts over time. The purpose-built database holds the evidence base of our work, as well as operational and relationship management records.

Prior to this iteration of the database, we custom-built each version in-house. We've been fortunate to have the capability to do this through the skills of our developer, Bidjara man and Systems and Information Manager, Wayne Harvey. The previous version provided a major change in capability through integrating data capture with our then newly developed Community Development Framework, Story of Change and monitoring and evaluation techniques. In 2019, we made the decision to take advantage of the greater capability, accessibility and security provided by cloud-based digital solutions and upgrade the database.



Our updated app's interface

With the plethora of options available, we needed to find a platform that would give us as much longevity and capability as possible to enhance the capabilities of the existing system. We engaged an external specialist, Towcha Technology, a First Nations' technology specialist, to work with us on the project. After undertaking a research phase with Towcha Technology in early 2020, we moved to build the system utilising Microsoft Dynamics. This year the new system was completed in a unique partnership between Wayne and the team at Towcha Technology. The new cloud-based platform provides a quantum leap in IT capability and support for our team.

The unique functionality of our database has been increasingly recognised externally. With that in mind, the database is built with the potential for other organisations to access the system to support their own work. The early part of the new financial year will focus on staff training and bedding down and refining our new system. In future, we will explore its potential to provide the same support and enhanced capability to other organisations, both in Australia and internationally.

ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORM FOR VOLUNTEERS

As part of our volunteer strategy, we have transformed elements of the volunteer induction into an online platform. This approach will increase accessibility to training for our geographically dispersed volunteers and support our current strategy of targeted regional recruitment. While travel restrictions associated with COVID-19 have created challenges, they have also brought opportunities. At a time when volunteers and field staff in some regions have limited options to engage, online training presents a welcome and different approach to learning within our organisation.

Beyond induction, the online training also offers greater opportunities for continual learning and ongoing engagement with our volunteers.

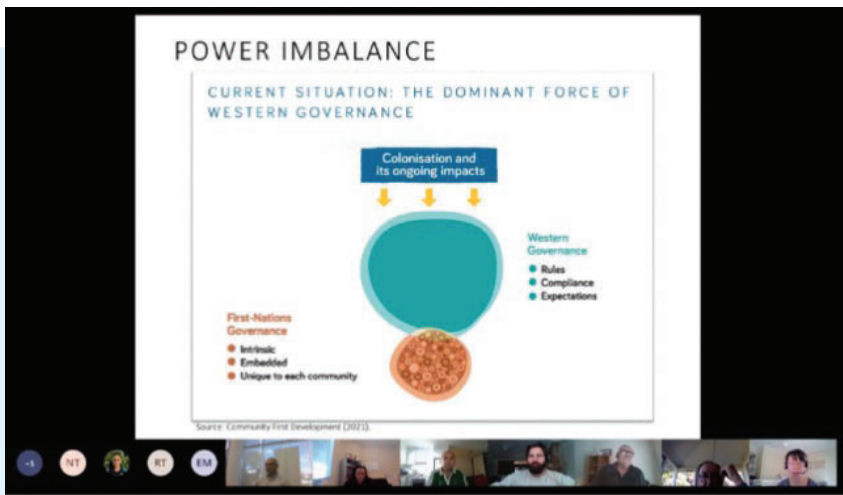
To develop the induction, we have leveraged the services and systems of Moodle and eCreator's Learning Management System (LMS). This has allowed us to focus on content development. The online training includes interactive and engaging multimedia elements, videos, exercises and links to external learning resources. The LMS will be ready for testing by staff and volunteers in the latter half of 2021.

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

A key theme this year has been ongoing creativity and innovation in community engagement and community development. This has been driven in part by COVID-19, but most importantly by our staff, volunteers and the communities we work with – continually adapting to our changing environment. A commitment to learning is the foundation of our ability to adapt, improve our practice and pivot when required.

A key and cost-effective approach to continual learning continues to be our six-weekly Community of Practice sessions. A community of practice is intrinsically Indigenous. Communities of practice have existed for as long as people have been learning and sharing their knowledge and experience through storytelling. This has been passed down through generations and is a lived practice that continues today in First Nations' communities.

The yarning-based sessions facilitate a supportive learning environment with the main goal to improve outcomes for the communities we work with through regular reflection, shared learning and strengthening the way we work. Over the past year, we have used these sessions to discuss our Action Research Project draft findings and work through identified data gaps; to strengthen our approach to capturing longer-term impact data with communities, and; to build on our knowledge around Western Governance.



A Community of Practice session, discussing the findings of the Action Research Report.

The latter saw us trial a new approach that drew on the expertise of our skilled volunteers, Richard, Russell and Michelle, to design and deliver tailored professional development to our Community Development team. Sessions focused on incorporation and associated governance requirements, strategic planning, registering as a charity, and Deductible Gift Recipient endorsement.



RESEARCH

Our research focuses on First Nations'-driven, Participatory Action Research that results in meaningful and timely change for our people and communities. Our research activities are built into our community development activities and are conducted in-house, ensuring that learnings can be quickly acted on and used to strengthen our community development practice and strengthen the research capability of the team.

At Community First Development, we explore opportunities to decolonise research – what it is, how it's done, and what 'research success' looks like.

This year, we increased the visibility of our research through the finalisation of three reports and presenting at a native title and research summit. We also created a research portal on our website showcasing our reports, case studies and practice resources.





We published two reports which highlight the impact of our work with communities over the last three years.

Our Impact and Activity Report 2020 provides a comprehensive update on our work and impact for the 2019-20 financial year. It provides a birds-eye view of what has been achieved, as well as greater insight into our monitoring and evaluation approach. Three community success stories bring the data to life.

Our 3-Year Macro Analysis Report 2017-2020 provides an opportunity to take a step back and see the cumulative effect of our community development activities over the past three years, and how strong and capable communities are addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia. It also illustrates our contribution to the wider landscape of national government programs.

Excitingly, this report generated considerable interest among a number of Federal, State and Territory parliamentarians. It has provided the opportunity for Directors and our CEO to meet with a range of parliamentarians across parties and discuss the work that we are undertaking in partnership with communities and, importantly, how we go about doing community development, evaluation and research activities.

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT FINAL REPORT

We recently completed our first Action Research Project and published our Final Report. This report is the culmination of conversations shared, relationships nurtured, and activities undertaken within the realms of our first formal research project, a key milestone for our organisation.

Our inaugural First Nations' Fellow for Research and Evaluation, Donna-Maree Stephens, provided invaluable learning and development and advisory support throughout the final phase of our research project, including in relation to the Final Report.

The Final Report provides a summary and analysis of findings and lessons learnt from this research project undertaken together with 11 strong First Nations' communities. The research findings focus on two key areas: Bridging Governance⁴ and Community First Development ways of working. The key learnings can be summarised as follows:

- First Nations' Governance is working. Support whole of community engagement, including delegated authorities.
- Western Governance needs to make more effort to do Right Way Governance.
- The Community First Development approach has the potential to inform partnership and genuine co-design in other programs and policies.
- Decolonise research by incorporating First Nations' research methodologies and flexible approaches into research design.

The Final Report also includes a chapter on our lessons learnt in relation to data collection, data analysis and case studies. When combined with the key findings, these learnings offer valuable insights for people and organisations working with First Nations' communities on creating a culturally safe space in evaluation and research.

As part of the Action Research Project, we also worked with several communities to develop co-authored case studies. The Case Studies were ideally designed for communities to strengthen their own evidence based on their practices and to assist with supporting funding applications and partnership development.

⁴There is a third, intersecting space where Western and First Nations' governance meet where First Nations' organisations operating in that space have developed 'Two-Way' Governance practices. Bridging Governance are the practices required to enter into, and operate in, the intersecting space.



The Final Action Research Report provides a summary and analysis of findings and lessons learnt from projects undertaken together with 11 strong First Nations' communities, five of whom are pictured here.



Doyen Radcliffe (Regional Manager WA), Sharon Babyack (Manager Impact & Strategy), and via zoom, Donna Stephens (Research and Evaluation Fellow) presenting at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Summit held on Kurna Country, Adelaide.

Following the acceptance of our abstract, we presented at the 2021 AIATSIS Summit on Kurna Country, Adelaide. This is a unique forum for experts across various sectors to come together and collaborate on strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledge, and governance, while also providing an opportunity to address challenges in the native title and research sectors.

Community First Development was represented by Donna-Maree Stephens, First Nations' Fellow for Research and Evaluation, Doyen Radcliffe, Regional Manager – Western Region, and Sharon Babyack, General Manager Impact and Strategy. Their presentation titled *Creating bridges to stronger governance* focused on sharing findings from our Action Research Project – particularly new understandings and strategies to navigate the intersecting space of First Nations' Governance practices and Western Governance requirements.

PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION'S INDIGENOUS EVALUATION STRATEGY

The Productivity Commission released its final Indigenous Evaluation Strategy in October 2020. The objective of the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy is to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by having policy and program decisions informed by high quality and relevant evaluation evidence.

The Strategy applies to all Australian Government agencies with responsibility for designing and/or implementing policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Strategy covers First Nations'-specific policies and programs as well as mainstream policies and programs that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We provided a submission to the Commission's related Issues Paper in August 2019 and a supplementary submission on the draft strategy in August 2020. We were also invited to meet with Romlie Mokak, Commissioner, and members of the Productivity Commission to discuss our submissions. We are pleased to report that the majority of our recommendations were addressed: six were addressed, six partially addressed and three were not addressed.

We look forward to continually engaging with the Commission and Government on this important strategy.



INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

"WE HAVE FOUND THROUGH EXPERIENCE THAT OUR CULTURALLY-BASED DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, RELATIONSHIPS, EXPERIENCE, AND UNDERSTANDING OF FIRST NATION'S COMMUNITIES PROVIDES A STRONG FOUNDATION TO FACILITATE AND MANAGE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND INTERNATIONAL FIRST NATIONS' COMMUNITIES."

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

Our international program connects First Nations' communities in Australia to First Nations' communities in the Pacific region and around the globe to share skills, knowledge, and capabilities to create positive change and community opportunity.

With international travel not possible as a result of the global pandemic, we have continued to work with the Australian Federal government on our engagement in the Pacific. Our relationship with the Papua New Guinea National Volunteering Service (NVS) has focused on strengthening capability to increase impact. Currently, we are co-designing strategies and solutions with NVS across a range of operational areas.

Communities are best placed to succeed when they set their own agendas and lead the development of solutions, inviting support as it is needed. We have found through experience that our culturally-based development framework, relationships, experience, and understanding of First Nations' communities provides a strong foundation to facilitate and manage partnerships between Australian and international First Nations' communities.

Connecting First Nations' communities with other First Nations' communities produces potent seeds for positive change. Our role is to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, capabilities and talents between First Nations' communities in our region and globally, to find solutions to common challenges and provide the framework and support for successful community partnerships, project management and project evaluation methods.

We will continue to work with Government on options to support First Nations' communities in the Pacific region.



Members of the Papua New Guinea National Volunteering Service (NVS) on Dharug Country, when they visited in 2019 as part of a knowledge and practice exchange on community development and volunteering.

GROWING OUR REACH

As a result of a number of non-ongoing financial gifts, we have ended the year in a strong financial position. As a charity, we recognise the ongoing challenge of seeking continued funding over the longer term and will continue to engage closely with our financial supporters to ensure we can provide continued support to communities.

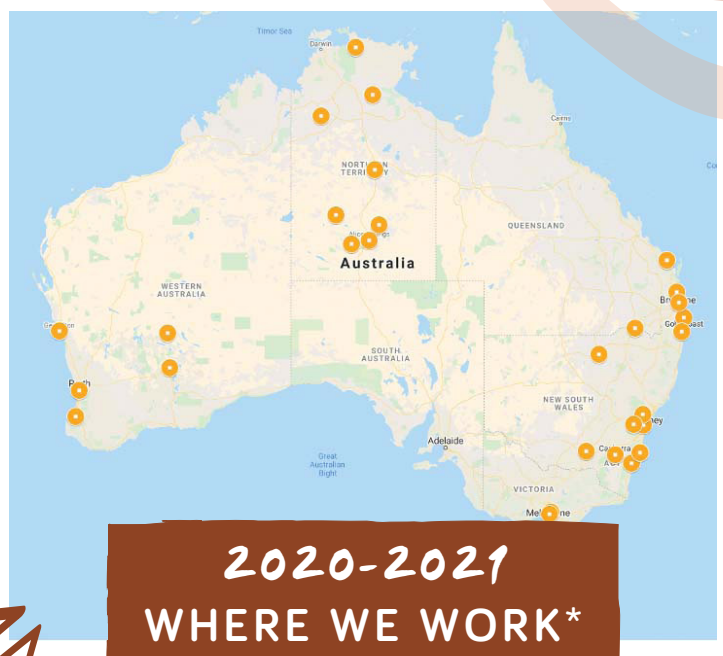
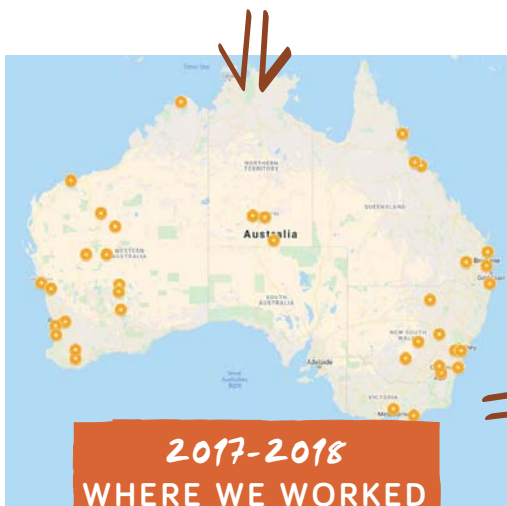
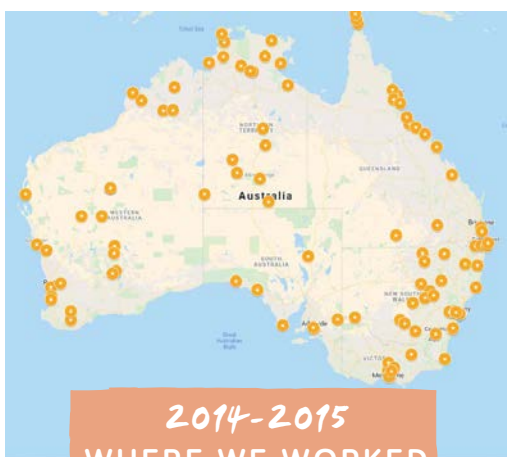
This year we were able to fill several staff vacancies and accommodate some staff requests to move interstate. This allowed us to place two field staff in Darwin for the first time since late 2015 and begin to re-engage with a number of communities.

The maps below provide some insight into our geographical reach over the past six years. The reductions in our footprint below coincided with sector-wide changes to government funding. To manage this change we made the difficult decision to reduce our impact in northern Australia. This allowed us to continue working to our model, albeit with a smaller number of communities.

The maps provide a stark image of the direct impact on communities when funding sources cease.

It is particularly important in this time that our field staff team are strategically placed across Australia to ensure consistent support is available to communities, and placed strategically to continue operations during extended regional lockdowns.

Filling some of the staff vacancies this year highlights once again the impact and importance of our financial supporters who provide continuity of support to communities.



*Active projects as at 30 June 2021



FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

Reduced Disclosure Requirements

Directors' Report

Your Directors present their report for the year ended 30 June 2021.

Directors

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

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

Karen is a proud Victorian Yorta Yorta woman, born and raised in Melbourne. She owns and operates Karen Milward Consulting Services and has done so since 2004. Karen holds an MBA, and is also Chair of Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, Chair of Kinaway Chamber of Commerce Victoria Ltd, and a Director of Yarra Valley Water. She has extensive experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at grassroots and organisational levels - right through to peak body representative level. She regularly undertakes complex projects commissioned by government departments and their agencies. This involves assisting those who have lead responsibility for policy and program development and service delivery impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Chair

Owner and Operator - Karen Milward Consulting Services

Chair - Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place

Chair - Kinaway Chamber of Commerce Victoria Ltd

Director - Yarra Valley Water

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

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

Company Secretary

Chair, Audit and Risk Management Committee

John Jeffery

John is a proud Aboriginal man of the Wiradjuri Nation of southwestern New South Wales. John is an experienced professional that is confident working, consulting and engaging with a diverse representation of stakeholders and communities, designing strategic Aboriginal engagement initiatives to achieve mutually beneficial community, economic and environmental outcomes that lead to positive social change and economic opportunities. He has extensive experience in delivering innovative Aboriginal engagement, employment, training and enterprise development solutions across a diverse industry mix including: Government (Local, State and Commonwealth), mining and resources, not for profits and corporates.

Member, Governance Committee

Managing Director - Yarra Custom Wear

Directors' Report

Your Directors present their report for the year ended 30 June 2021.

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

Lauren is the Head of Telstra's First Nations' Strategy and Engagement, where she leads the strategy and ongoing governance of engagement with First Nations' peoples and communities. Previously, Lauren had a successful 30-year career with Telstra, and during a five-year hiatus from the corporation, Lauren worked with Desert Knowledge Australia and PwC's Indigenous Consulting.

Member, Audit and Risk Management Committee

Director - Kakadu Tourism

Council Member - Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education

Director - Agency

Ian Hamm

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

Chair - Governance Committee

Chair - First Nations' Foundation Ltd

Chair - Connecting Home Ltd

Chair - Koorie Heritage Trust Inc

Chair - Community Broadcasting Foundation

Board Member - Aboriginal Housing Victoria Ltd

Board Member - National Trust Australia (Victoria) Ltd

Board Member - Australian Red Cross

Board Member - Inclusive Australia Ltd

Board Member - Killara Foundation

Board Member - Yarra Valley Water

Board Member - Holmesglen Tafe

Directors' Report

Objectives

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

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

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

Strategy for achieving objectives

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

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

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

Principal activities during the year

Community First Development has continued to operate with a core commitment to genuine partnership and collaboration, working with First Nations' communities based on the principle of self-determination.

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

- engaged with 111 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on 149 community development activities;
- published our 3-year Macro analysis 2017-2020 Moving beyond the gap report;
- finalised the development of the "D4" database, built-in Microsoft Dynamics, with the assistance of Aboriginal ICT Specialists, to provide a cloud based activity record keeping, monitoring and evaluation platform;
- published our first Action Research report;
- fundraised a total of \$4,740,905 in financial support from our supporters, from generous individuals to philanthropic funds.

Community First Development continued working through the COVID-19 global pandemic. While travel to communities was often restricted, our Community Development Officers and volunteers continued to work with communities on their projects.

Community First Development had an operating surplus for the year ended 30 June 2021 of \$1,727,935 (2020: \$337,097 deficit).

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

Auditor independence

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

Member contribution if Community First Development is wound up

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

Directors' Report

Directors' meetings

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

Number of meetings attended by:	Directors' Meetings		Audit and Risk Management Committee		Governance Committee	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
Karen Milward	5	5				
Stan Kalinko	5	5	4	4		
John Jeffery	5	5			5	5
Lauren Ganley	5	5	4	4		
Ian Hamm	5	5			5	5

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

B - Number of meetings attended

Benefits and interests in contracts with Board Members

Members of the Board declare that they have no interest in contracts, transactions, arrangements or agreements with Community First Development, other than contracts entered into, in the ordinary course of the Company's business. (See note 15)

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

Events subsequent to year end

There were no significant events occurring after 30 June 2021 which require adjustment or disclosure in the financial report.

Directors' Declaration

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

In the opinion of the Directors of Community First Development:

- (a) The financial statements and notes of Community First Development are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012, including:
 - (i) Giving a true and fair view of Community First Development's financial position as at 30 June 2021 and of its performance for the year ended on the date; and
 - (ii) Complying with Accounting Standards - Reduced Disclosure Requirements (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Regulation 2013;
- (b) There are reasonable grounds to believe that Community First Development will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable;
- (c) The provisions of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1946 (Western Australia) and the regulations under the Act and the conditions attached to the authority have been complied with;
- (d) The provisions of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (New South Wales) and the regulations under the Act and the conditions attached to the authority have been complied with;
- (e) The statement of profit and loss and the statement of financial position give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the organisation with respect to fundraising appeals; and
- (f) The internal controls exercised by the Company are appropriate and effective in accounting for all income received and applied by the Company from any of its fundraising appeals.

Signed on behalf of the Board this 11th day of August 2021.



Karen Milward
Chair

Independent Auditor's Report



**Building a better
working world**

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Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Statements

To the Members of Community First Development Limited

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, the summary statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, summary statement of changes in equity and summary statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited financial report of Community First Development Limited (the Company) for the year ended 30 June 2021.

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

Summary Financial Statements

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

The Audited Financial Report and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial report in our report dated 11 August 2021. The audited financial statements and the summary financial statements do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date our report on the audited financial statements.

Responsibility of the Directors for the Summary Financial Statements

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

Auditor's Responsibility

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ernst & Young'.

Ernst & Young
Canberra
28 September 2021

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Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$	2020 \$
Revenue			
Donations from the public	4	3,957,705	3,142,658
Philanthropic grants		783,200	400,000
Federal Government funding		1,000,000	500,000
Federal Government subsidies		573,800	309,500
Other government funding		2,500	5,000
Services revenue		-	57,080
Interest income		1,164	6,869
Other income		318	11,867
Total revenue		6,318,687	4,432,974
Expenses			
Community development activities		(2,132,381)	(2,435,116)
Direct costs of fundraising appeals	4	(677,562)	(612,599)
Compliance and governance		(133,079)	(158,672)
Enabling services		(667,604)	(715,217)
Supporter engagement		(539,583)	(445,667)
Awareness and education program		(440,543)	(377,880)
Business development and innovation		-	(24,920)
Total expenses	5	(4,590,752)	(4,770,071)
Net operating surplus/(deficit)		1,727,935	(337,097)
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year		1,727,935	(337,097)

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the attached notes to the financial statements.

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$	2020 \$
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash		4,933,132	3,198,746
Right of use asset	6	9,552	-
Other receivables	7	59,695	108,448
Prepayments		34,381	34,629
Total current assets		5,036,760	3,341,823
Non-current assets			
Plant and equipment	8	106	2,099
Intangible asset	9	90,319	-
Total non-current assets		90,425	2,099
Total assets		5,127,185	3,343,922
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	298,604	276,346
Lease liabilities	11	9,609	-
Employee benefits	12	322,251	311,954
Total current liabilities		630,464	588,300
Non-current liabilities			
Employee benefits	12	102,328	89,164
Total non-current liabilities		102,328	89,164
Total liabilities		732,792	677,464
Net assets		4,394,393	2,666,458
FUNDS			
Accumulated funds		4,394,393	2,666,458
Total funds		4,394,393	2,666,458

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the attached notes to the financial statements.

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 30 June 2021

Total Accumulated Funds

\$

Opening balance at 1 July 2019	3,003,555
Operating deficit	(337,097)
Other comprehensive income	-
Balance at 30 June 2020	2,666,458
Opening balance at 1 July 2020	2,666,458
Operating surplus	1,727,935
Other comprehensive income	-
Balance at 30 June 2021	4,394,393

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the attached notes to the financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$	2020 \$
Operating activities			
Receipts from donations and supporters		3,957,705	3,142,658
Receipts from philanthropic grants		783,200	400,000
Government and corporate funding		1,763,670	773,000
Fee for service		-	62,788
Interest income		1,499	9,220
Net GST refunded/(paid)		12,008	155,512
Other revenue		318	28,127
Payments to employees		(2,919,690)	(3,047,318)
Payments to suppliers		(1,768,569)	(1,803,719)
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	13	1,830,141	(279,732)
Investing activities			
Payments for intangible assets		(90,900)	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(90,900)	-
Financing activities			
Repayment of lease liabilities		(4,855)	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		(4,855)	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		1,734,386	(279,732)
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		3,198,746	3,478,478
Cash at the end of the financial year		4,933,132	3,198,746

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the attached notes to the financial statements.





THANK YOU AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



THIS YEAR 14,270 DONORS GENEROUSLY GAVE 76,289 GIFTS TO ENABLE FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLE TO UNDERTAKE PROJECTS THAT PRIORITISED COMMUNITY GOALS INCLUDING ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS PLANNING, CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND LEARNING, EDUCATION, AND HEALTH.

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

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

We are sincerely grateful for the support we receive.



We gratefully acknowledge the support of Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropy Australasia, Millett Family Foundation, Baxter Charitable Foundation and H2Cairns Foundation and The Wood Foundation.

We acknowledge the following Community First Development supporters whose generous contributions assisted us to undertake the action research project: Concomitance Foundation, Mrs Florine Simon and Dr Silke Hesse, who contributed to the research in memory of Arnold and Nane von Koch.






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