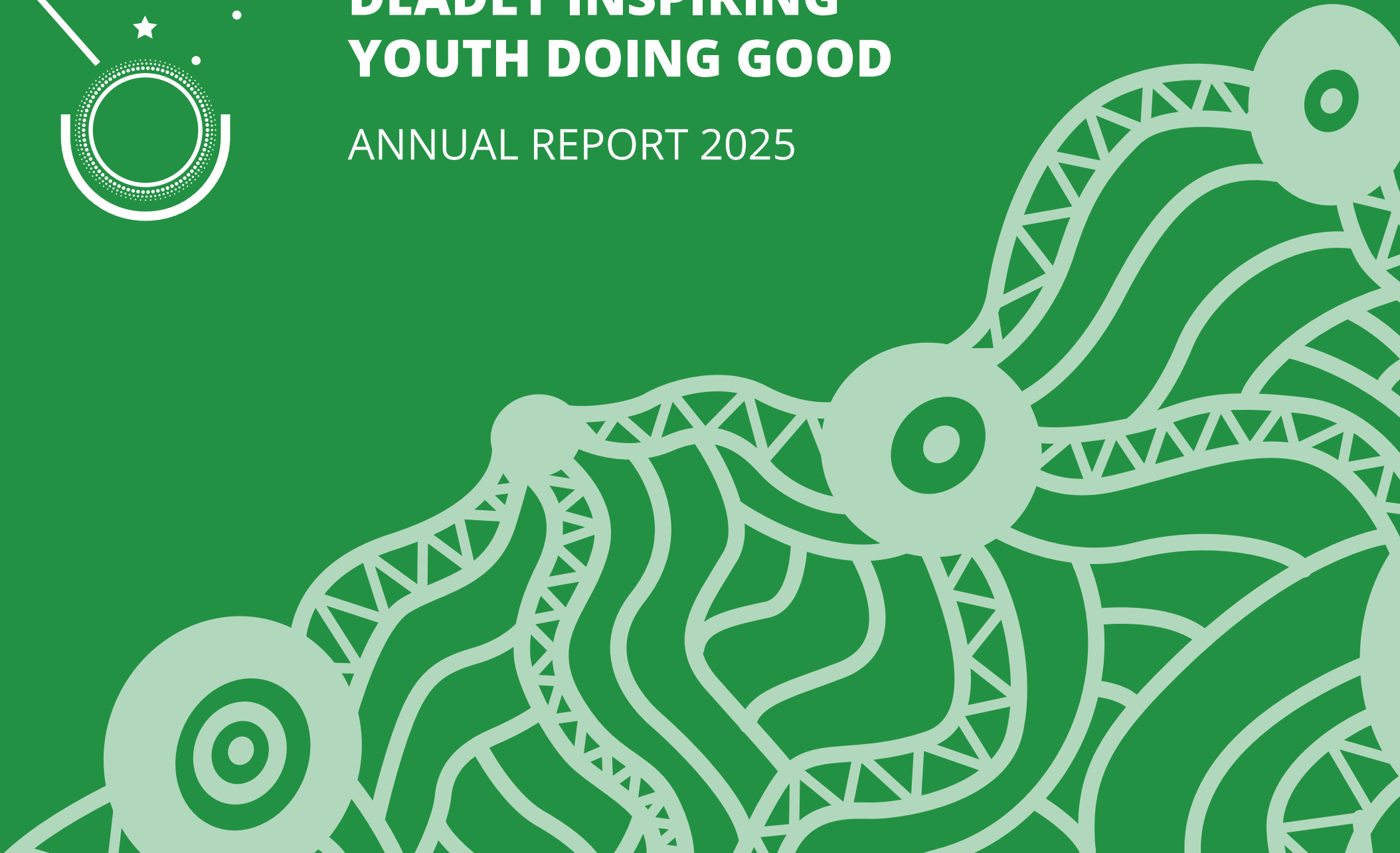


DEADLY INSPIRING YOUTH DOING GOOD

ANNUAL REPORT 2025





Acknowledgement

As we forge our way to a stronger future, we embrace the millennia of footsteps that came before us. We feel the presence of our ancestors and their guidance, as we navigate our continued responsibility to the lands, seas and skies in which we connect to. Their spirit will carry on in the generations to come as we inspire, equip and empower our people and our community.



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About the artist

Tre Yanner (Yeeliwagu Balyarinyi)
Cultural Background: Gangalidda/Jirrbal

Tre Yanner is a Gangalidda artist with cultural roots extending to the Jirrbal people through his maternal lineage. He is passionate about bringing his culture alive through art in various mediums.

Artistic Philosophy

Tre's work is embedded in the principles of respect for the land, cultural continuity, and the empowerment of the next generation. His artistic endeavours are not just about creating visual art but about weaving together community, culture, and identity.

About the artwork

The DIYDG ecosystem

The DIYDG ecosystem is a powerful visual representation that encapsulates the way Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good (DIYDG) operates within and for the community. The Eco System serves as both a cultural map and a blueprint, guiding the organisation's work in empowering youth and strengthening community ties through a holistic and culturally grounded approach.





*Yeeliwagu
Balyarinyi*

Message from Chair

This year has been one of growth and impact for Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good (DIYDG).

Throughout the 2024–2025 year, DIYDG has remained focused on creating opportunities for young people and their families to be heard, to heal, and to build pathways grounded in culture, identity, and community. Whether through our mentoring programs, community events, leadership camps, or creative projects, DIYDG has continued to deliver meaningful impact across the region.

Our Board of Directors and Custodians have worked hard to build a solid foundation that ensures DIYDG can continue to grow sustainably and continue to deliver high-impact programs. This year we reviewed our organisation’s risk management strategy, updated

policies and procedures, enhanced board capability, and invested in leadership development within our governance team. These improvements will ensure DIYDG remains strong, transparent, and accountable as we move into the next chapter of our journey. We are proud of how our team, staff, and volunteers have continued to show commitment, compassion, and resilience in their work with our young people and their families. Despite the ongoing injustices, systemic challenges and perpetuating ideologies across our region and the nation, DIYDG has stayed true to our name, empowering our youth and their families to be deadly, inspiring, and doing good!

As we look ahead, we are excited to continue building on our governance foundations, strengthening community partnerships, and expanding our reach to ensure every young person across our region has the opportunity to thrive.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to sincerely thank our staff, volunteers, community partners, our funders and, most importantly, our young people. You are the heart of this organisation, and your strength and spirit continue to guide our work and inspire us every day.

Koeyma Eso, Au Esoau



Stacey Ketchell
Waikaid and Meuram
Chairperson

Message from Chief of Good

This year has been one of reflection, growth, and transformation for Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good (DIYDG). As we continue to listen deeply to our communities, we have taken on their feedback with open hearts and strong determination. Every insight shared with us has guided the way we strengthen our systems, improve our practice, and honour our responsibility to do good.

Strengthening Our Foundations

At DIYDG, we recognise that strong systems create space for strong people and strong culture. Over the past year, our team has worked tirelessly to build sound, ethical, and transparent systems that enhance how we deliver programs and support our communities. We have refined our governance, developed quality assurance processes, and laid the groundwork for accreditation, ensuring DIYDG stands proudly alongside other established organisations while staying true to our grassroots identity.

Growth Through People and Purpose

Our organisation has grown, not just in size, but in spirit. We have welcomed new and passionate people into our team who bring wisdom, skills, and heart to our collective mission. Together, we've continued to deliver programs that inspire, empower, and create belonging. Each new member strengthens our eco-system, helping us remain connected to community and grounded in our shared purpose.

Innovation and Learning

As we build, we also learn. This year, we continued to embed continuous improvement across everything we do, from program design to cultural governance. Our investment in technology, training, and internal systems has created more opportunities for innovation and collaboration. These changes are not just operational mechanisms; they represent our ongoing commitment to excellence and self-determination.

Looking Ahead

The road ahead is filled with possibility. DIYDG is entering a new era, one defined by sustainability, leadership, and community-driven change. We are excited for what's to come: new partnerships, stronger collaborations, and continued growth that reflects the voices and values of our people.

We remain guided by our belief that when we do things the right way - OUR WAY - we create lasting change. As we move forward, DIYDG will continue to walk alongside community, ensuring that every young person and family we connect with feels seen, heard, and supported.

Together, we are building a future where our ways of being and doing are celebrated as the foundation of excellence.



Merrissa Nona
Gudjula, Eastern-Kuku
Yalanji and Darnley Island
Chief of Good (CEO)
and Custodian of
Eco Systems

Board of Directors



Kai Lowah
Torres Strait Islander
Youth Director

Re-Appointed:
21/12/2023



Stacey Ketchell
Waikaid and Meuram
Chair Person

Re-appointed Director
31/11/2024
Appointed Chair
31/11/2024



Porsha O'Brien
Wuthathi
Youth Director

Re-Appointed:
21/12/2023



Lucy Deemal
Thiithaarr Warra
Treasurer

Re-Appointed
21/12/2023

Dexter's Story

I'm Gudang/Yadhaykenu man from the tip of Cape York, a little community called Injinoo. I'm also connected to the Gulf of Carpentaria, (Wanyi Garawa) to another small community called Doomadgee very connected to my culture live by my cultural

I work at DIYDG in the Kunjur Men's Program.

I never grew up with my mum and dad, so I had to figure out my journey by myself, alongside my little sister. We had a few families who reached out and helped to look after us, but the biggest obstacle I've had to overcome (and I am still overcoming) is finding my way through my own journey. I don't think I've fully overcome that yet. I'm still working through it, and I am grateful for every step.

I first came to DIYDG because my uncle had connections with some of the mob here. He noticed that I was a leader, that I was good at looking after the young people and helping in the community, so he reached out to DIYDG family to see if they needed any workers.

Since joining, I've been so grateful to be part of Kunjur men's group, learning about men and the cycle that our mob are stuck in for generations and guiding myself thought it all. I've grown from being one of the mischief ones at school to now being pulled up by random people in the community who say I'm doing good work and to keep it up helping our mob.

“Being at DIYDG has taught me resilience, patience and the importance of reconnecting with who I am and the experiences I've been through. I'm seeing things through a different lens now from young man to man.”

I see other young people going through what I've experience and understand them. It's changed me a lot, seeing parts of my life and experiences from the outside and now looking in.

Looking ahead, I want to give back to my family and community. I come from a broken home, a family that's lived through an ongoing cycle that I want to break. I want to help educate our mob about the cycle and to show that it can be broken, that we can change our mob lifestyle.

For anyone thinking about coming to DIYDG, I'd say it's a very family-oriented service. They look after you make you feel welcomed and comfortable and they will feed you well! You learn a lot about your community, and who you are as an Indigenous person. If you want a future helping others and giving back to your community, DIYDG is a good place to start. You can move forwards here and even reach out to help for your family. We're just deadly like that!



In Honour of Uncle Gudju Gudju (Seith Fourmile)

This year, DIYDG takes a moment to honour and remember the life of Uncle Gudju Gudju (Seith Fourmile), a respected Gimuy Walubarra Yidinji Elder who sadly passed away last year. Uncle's passing was felt deeply by all who knew him, including our DIYDG family.

Uncle Gudju Gudju will be fondly remembered for his generosity of spirit, his uplifting attitude, and the wisdom he shared through his stories and yarns. His gift for storytelling brought people together, helping to strengthen culture and community.

DIYDG is deeply grateful for Uncle's support over the years and were honoured to support his family in celebrating his remarkable life and legacy.



A New Seedling

This year we were also blessed with a special addition to the DIYDG family, as our board member Porsha and Will welcomed the arrival of their second beautiful baby girl (Naraya), baby sister to (Yindi).

We congratulate them on this wonderful occasion and wish them love, health and happiness. Moments like these remind us that what we do is for the next generation and the bright futures they carry.



Our People

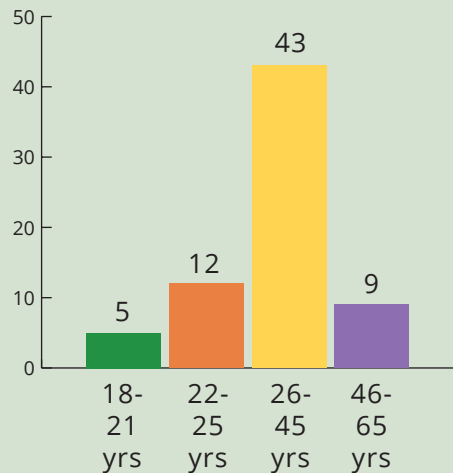
Grounded in shared purpose and kinship our teams strengths and backgrounds reflect the community we serve.

Volunteers

Fifty-nine volunteers

Thankyou to our volunteers! Your time, energy and generosity help create safe, welcoming spaces for young people to connect, learn and grow. We appreciate you!

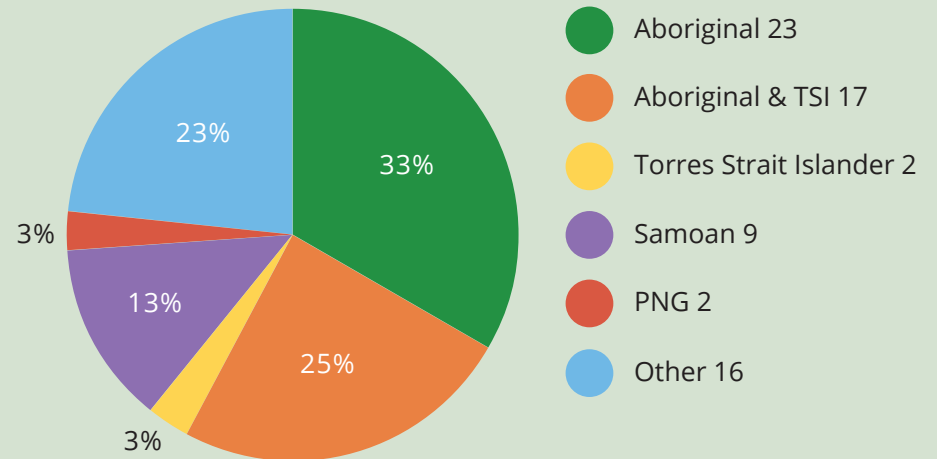
Employees by age



Employees

69 community members were employed by DIYDG.

Employees by Ethnicity



Staff demographics

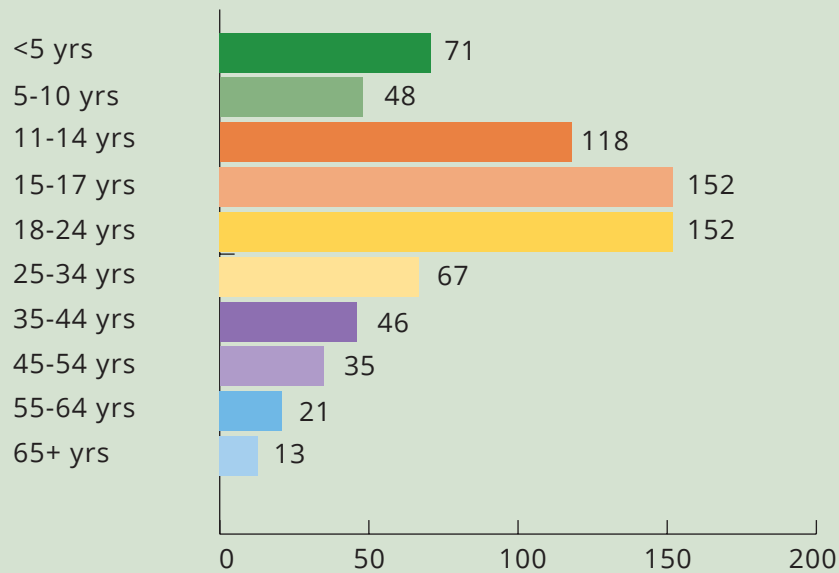


Our DIYDG Family 2024

Participants

723 participants engaged with DIYDG programs.

Table. Number of participants by age, 2024-2025.



Grounded Together



Participants from Grounded Together attending the Binalmal theatre training with Jute Theatre.

MJ's story

Hi, my name is MJ. I'm a Gubbi Gubbi (Kabi Kabi), Gooreng Gooreng and St Paul (Moa) Island woman, with connections to Vanuatu and Badu as well. I was born and raised here in Cairns, and I come from a deadly, strong family.

At school, I worked really hard. I was involved in school leadership, school council, ILT and performing arts. I actually scored top in the state for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies! Being in those leadership roles came with a lot of pressure, I felt like I had to represent in a good way and not act in a way that played into stereotypes. I put a lot of pressure on myself, but it paid off. Now I'm just happy to take a break, not go to uni straight away, and just work for a while. I'm working here at DIYDG as a Marketing and Media support officer.

I first connected with DIYDG when they came to my school (T-bay) through the SHELLS program. They told us about a youth night they run on Tuesdays called Good Vibrations (GV). My cousin and I decided to check it out together and we've been going ever since.

GV has had a big impact on my life. Before I joined, I knew a lot about culture, like I could answer questions about our people's history and smash tests. But GV helped me understand that there's a big difference between knowing culture and embracing it. I wasn't actually getting out and experiencing many community events for myself until I started going to GV.

One of the big highlights has been volunteering at community events like NAIDOC and visiting places like the Human Rights Commission. Having those kinds of experiences has really helped me connect more deeply with my culture.

“One powerful moment I'll never forget was on a GV camp, when Abi introduced herself to Country in language. It gave me goosebumps.”

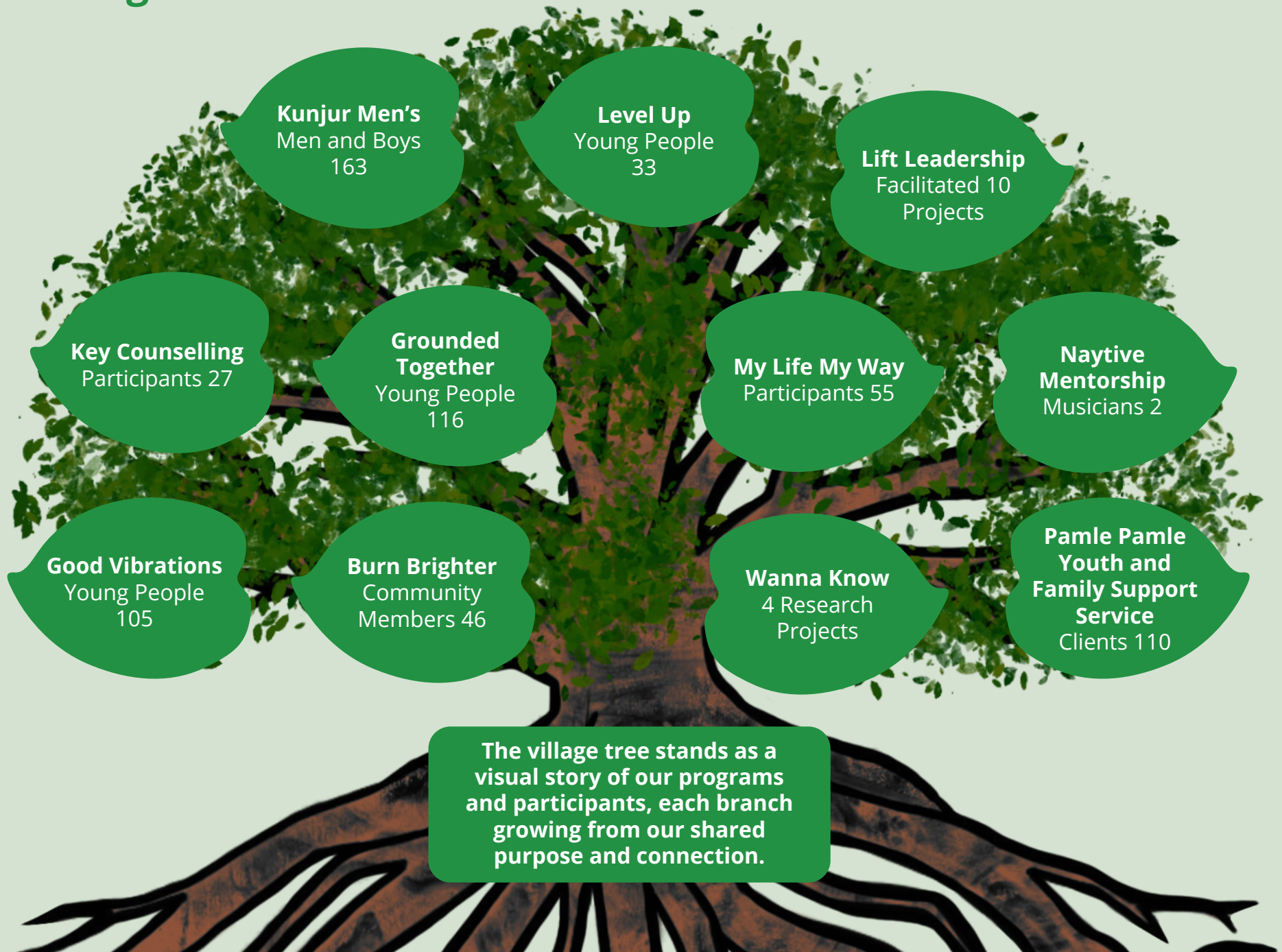
Being part of GV has also made me feel more gratitude and respect for my Mum and Dad. I've learned more about what they went through growing up, and I can see how their struggles have made things easier for me today.

If you're thinking about coming to GV, my advice is: just come. We have fun, you get a lift, and sometimes we get Maccas, lol. You've got nothing to lose... and if you're feeling shame, bring a friend.

Youth member Manthalou Laifou (MJ)



The Village Tree



Moesha's Story

My name is Moesha. I am Maori and Torres Strait Islander (connections to Central Islands and Badu Island). I am 20 years of age and currently living in Youthlink Housing. Over the years, I've been homeless, used and abused. But since I've started counselling at Key Counselling Services with DIYDG, I've been able to forgive a lot of things in my past and move on in life.

Last year, on 14th September 2024, I lost my daughter. She was born stillborn. I had a lot of mixed emotions. I was angry, sad, depressed, but then I took someone's advice to go and talk to someone about everything. At first I didn't talk to anyone, but then I did talk to Melissa and it helped me and benefited myself. It helped me on my journey in life.

I have been through Child Safety from the age of 15 to 18. I was constantly moving in and out of different residential care homes. I was always in trouble with the police for stealing from shops. I also went through domestic violence problems as well as had problems from my childhood.

Aunty Nicole Lampton from Nintiringanyi referred me to Key Counselling Services at DIYDG. I was in the Mental Health ward at Cairns Base Hospital at the time. I was there for about a month.

Getting counselling has helped me a lot. I've been able to communicate with people, my loved ones, and people I don't get along with. I couldn't communicate with them before. Counselling has given me more hope, peace of mind and gratefulness that I'm still here on this earth. I'm slowly getting on with life. With the death of my daughter, I am coping better. I was angry with God for taking her and had to forgive the Lord. I wake up every morning and look at my daughter's ashes and think to myself, you might not be here on earth, but you are here with me in spirit.

It was very hard losing her. I did go downhill at first. I started abusing hardcore drugs like ice and methamphetamine. I eventually came to my senses and said this isn't me. I felt like my daughter was with me throughout the whole experience.

One of the biggest things was learning to hold my anger in when I couldn't before. I'm better at managing it these days. I've learned to let people say what they want to say and stand there and smile. I've learned to walk away and cool down.

My future goals are to get my own house, car and get a job.

One thing I can say from experience for someone who is going through a similar situation to me is to take the opportunity to go to counselling. At first, it feels scary. You don't know what the counsellor is thinking or they may be judging you. However, at the end of the day, they are there to help you overcome challenges.

“It is okay to not be okay. It is okay to talk to someone when you're not okay.”



Elijah's story

Hi, my name is Elijah. I am of Aboriginal heritage, with family connections to both Blacktown and Tasmania. I was a participant in the Level Up program at DIYDG.

Before coming to DIYDG, I really struggled to stay motivated to go to school, so I was referred to the Level Up program. My time at Level Up was positive and had a good impact on my life. I was able to understand myself better and feel more motivated to think about my future. I have also learned how to manage my anger and have more control over my emotions.

“One of the things I really enjoyed in Level Up was learning to paint and express myself and my culture through art and the cooking. I think I have grown as a leader in that I now want to be supportive, positive and set a good example for others.”



In the future, I would like to do an apprenticeship in construction or a similar trade. I want to own a house, make money and my dream is to buy a twin turbo Falcon.

My advice for any young people thinking about coming to DIYDG would be to just join, face the program head-on and give it a try.

Since completing Level Up, Elijah has continued his journey through Fresh Start Academy, where he is gaining hands-on experience and training in automotive skills.



Highlights of the year



“The Voice: A Journey to be Heard” cast enjoying the spotlight at the premiere of the documentary at the Melbourne International Film Festival.



No Shame in My Game participants performing at the Tanks for CIAF 2024 supporting Indigenous hip hop star Barkaa.



Annual Good Vibrations Wellbeing Camp: Murray Falls, September 2024



Winners of the Youth Week Ultimate Games 2025



Kunjur Men's
Collective Camp



DIYDG women collaborating
with community for the
Young Indigenous Women's
Leadership Gathering



Youth volunteers Kim and
Nayila from Good Vibrations
assisting with media capture
at the Ultimate Games.



Kunjur First Nations Men's Collective Annual Mental Health Forum

Strategic Plan Review 2024-25

Youth Empowering Youth

DIYDG has continued to expand and diversify its service offerings, strengthening its impact and reach across communities. The organisation grew its portfolio of youth-focused programs — including Kunjur, Level Up, Thrive, and Wanna Know — and enhanced specialised offerings through NDIS and counselling services, ensuring alignment with community priorities and national standards. Young people across the nation have been engaged in diverse leadership and advocacy opportunities, from NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week to national forums and campaigns. A key development this year has been the ongoing work to formalise the Council of Innovators, a framework that nurtures youth innovation and leadership. This initiative represents a major step toward embedding youth-led design and decision-making in every level of the organisation's work.



DIYDG Mentors, Nicole & Tre join Mental Health and Wellbeing Roadshow

Connection and Partnerships

DIYDG has deepened its partnerships and strengthened its relationships with funders, ensuring the sustainability and growth of its programs. Through values-aligned collaborations with organisations such as QFCC, VFFF, and I&SNF, DIYDG has secured increased external contracts and funding support, while building a stronger foundation for long-term impact. The organisation continues to champion intergenerational collaboration, with multiple leaders and Elders contributing to its growth and direction. This is reflected in the emerging Council of Wisdom, a structure designed to guide the organisation's cultural integrity and leadership. The Council of Wisdom framework will be formally launched as part of DIYDG's next strategic vision, symbolising the strength of community guidance in shaping the organisation's future.



Uncle Graham Brady sharing cultural knowledge with Kunjur Men

Innovation, Governance, and Storytelling

Innovation and accountability remain central to DIYDG's success. The organisation strengthened its governance through continued collaboration with the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute and implemented robust operational systems to support efficiency, compliance, and continuous improvement. A refreshed Sustainability Strategy and stronger funder engagement have supported financial resilience and capacity building across programs. Meanwhile, the Powerful Storytelling stream has advanced impact measurement through Power BI reporting and new program logics, allowing clearer demonstration of outcomes to stakeholders. The Marketing and Communications Strategy has further elevated DIYDG's visibility and voice, ensuring that the organisation's story — and the stories of its young people — are shared with integrity, evidence, and pride.



Winners of the Youth Week Ultimate Games 2025

Maurice's Story

I'm originally from down south, my mum's mob are Gooreng Gooreng from Bundy region.

Some of the challenges I've had to overcome are depression and the everyday stresses of life, like relationships.

I heard about Kunjur from one old fella called Heda. I met him at Relationships Australia and he told me about Kunjur, about 2 years ago. I was shame at first, so it took me a while to come but I've been here ever since.

“Just sitting down and yarning and listening has helped me through some negative stuff. The yarning circle has helped me come out of my shell.”

There's people here to talk to and listen too and having the uncles here is special. Getting back to culture and learning those skills because I never had that growing up, but I've got it now.

Coming from a big city, all my old people have gone now so I'm depending on Uncle Berny and everyone else here at Kunjur. I've grown a bit and taking notice now. You know, to make a decision to give back- I give back now wherever I can.

The future is looking really good for me now. I'm shooting goals. Finally got a stable job and just keeping at it and keeping positive.

Kunjur is deadly, it's a safe place for us men to sit down and have a yarn. Whatever's been said stays there. It's good. Kunjur mob help big time and even if we don't do anything, we can still reach out, you know, and there's always someone there.

Maurice first connected with DIYDG through the Kunjur Men's Program and later engaged with Key Counselling Services. Throughout his journey, Maurice has shown incredible resilience in the face of extended family conflict and significant childhood trauma. Despite these challenges, Maurice continues to show up, drawing on the tools and lessons he learned through Kunjur to strengthen himself and create positive change in his life. Securing stable work has been one of his biggest achievements, reflecting his commitment to growth and his determination to build a better future.



Gratitude and Acknowledgement

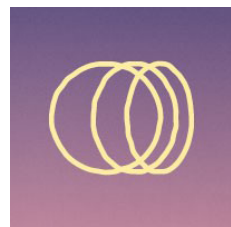
DIYDG extends our heartfelt gratitude to our community — to the Elders past and present who guide our steps, the families who share their stories and strength, and the young people who continue to inspire us with their courage, creativity, and determination. We acknowledge the lands we walk upon and the unbroken cultural knowledge that continues to ground our work. To our partners, supporters, and community members — thank you for walking alongside us, for believing in our vision, and for helping us create spaces where connection, healing, and hope can grow strong.



DIYDG Staff Wellbeing Day and Scavenger Hunt

Acknowledgement to our funders

We would like to thank the following agencies and organisations for their contribution to funding our programs:



Our Financials

“DIYDG has experienced remarkable growth over the past five years, transforming from a small organisation into a major community-driven force.

Income surged from just \$87k in 2019/20 to over \$3.9M in 2024/25, reflecting rapid program expansion, increased partnerships, and greater sector visibility.

Expenditure rose in parallel as services scaled, while total equity strengthened overall—most notably jumping past \$1M in 2024/25.

These trends show a maturing organisation investing heavily in capability while sustaining financial resilience. DIYDG’s rapid expansion is evident in its accelerating revenue, growing operational footprint, and continued ability to convert investment into community impact.

Financial year	Total Equity	Income	Expenditure
2019/2020	\$44,032	\$87,549	\$53,583
2020/2021	\$114,750	\$639,746	\$569,028
2021/2022	\$720,647	\$1,536,760	\$913,049
2022/2023	\$743,154	\$1,884,608	\$1,777,486
2023/2024	\$688,130	\$2,535,304	\$2,558,654
2024/2025	\$1,073,419	\$3,906,465	\$3,491,805

**For more information
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