



Narang Bir-rong

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

Acknowledgment Of Country

Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporation acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work. We pay our deepest respects to our Ancestors, Elders, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We honour our connection to Country, culture, and community, and recognise the ongoing impacts of colonisation and past government policies, especially the Stolen Generations. Our work is guided by the strength of our people, we are dedicated to keeping our children connected to family, culture, and identity, so they can grow strong in who they are.

Warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this publication may contain images and names of people who have since passed away.

Throughout this annual report, names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy and confidentiality of our clients and children.



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Chairperson Update

Ivan Clarke

It is with great pride that I present this year's Chairperson's Report, reflecting a period of transformation, resilience and renewed strategic focus for Narang Bir-rong Aboriginal Corporation.

Guided by our previous strategic plan, we have made significant strides in strengthening our services, expanding our reach and deepening our impact. The momentum we've built has outpaced our expectations, and we are now actively developing a new strategic plan to guide our next chapter; one that reflects the evolving needs of our communities, the ambition of our organisation and our commitment to our mission.

Guided by our core values of Connections, Empowerment, Consistency, Belonging and Confidentiality, Narang Bir-rong is a values-driven, for purpose organisation committed to ensuring these principles are reflected in everything we do.

In line with this philosophy – Narang Bir-rong's AGM is a safe and welcoming space – open and



inclusive of our members, community representatives and valued employees.

Our AGM is key tenant of our governance framework. Board compliance and governance provide the foundations for Narang Bir-rong to maintain its operations and its ongoing positive impact across our communities. Our efforts to improve Board Governance is driven by this purpose.

A key milestone this year has been the successful recruitment of four new directors to our Board.

This process was undertaken with great care and purposeful intention, and we are delighted to welcome individuals whose diverse skills, lived experience and strategic insight which will enrich our governance and strengthen our leadership. Their appointment marks a new era of Board renewal and positions us well for the future. Director recruitment will remain a focus of the Board to ensure that we have the right mix of community representation and skill, experience and competencies to lead Narang Bir-rong sustainably into the future.

In response to the increasing complexity of our operating environment, the Board has engaged Gabriel Edwards as Strategic Advisor. Gabriel brings deep expertise in governance, organisational culture and strategic planning, and has been instrumental in supporting both the Board and management team through a difficult period of internal transition and sector changes.

This year has not been without its challenges. We have experienced a period of intense and sustained, external commentary and scrutiny. Social and mainstream media attention on allegations has had a deep impact on all levels of the organisation.

This has resulted in some unexpected temporary changes within our leadership team, and

while transitions of this nature can be difficult, they have been managed with care, discretion and a focus on continuity. The Board remains committed to upholding the integrity of our organisation and supporting our people through times of challenge and change.

Despite these shifts, our commitment to service excellence has remained steadfast and strong. We were pleased to have our accreditation from the Office of the Children's Guardian renewed for another five years, reaffirming our dedication to child safety and best practice standards.

At the heart of our work is a deep and enduring commitment to advocating for Aboriginal children and young people. We remain guided by culture, community and the strength of our identity; standing proud as Aboriginal people, determined to create safe, empowering pathways for the next generation.

Looking ahead, our new strategic plan will reflect our ambition to grow sustainably, strengthen partnerships and continue delivering culturally safe, high-quality services. On behalf of the Board, I extend my deepest gratitude to our staff, carers, community partners and supporters.

Your trust, resilience and commitment are the foundation of our success.

Together, we remain guided by our values and united in our mission to support Aboriginal children, young people and families with integrity, care and respect.

Ivan Clarke
Chairperson



Acting CEO Update

Penny Hood

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It's a privilege and honour to share this year's update as Acting CEO of Narang Bir-rong. I want to begin by acknowledging the trust placed in me to step into this role during this difficult time.

I do not take that responsibility lightly, and I remain deeply respectful of the cultural leadership that defines this organisation.

I would not be here, able to contribute as part of an amazing organisation, if it wasn't for Heidi Bradshaw. It was Heidi who bought me in as D/CEO and gave me this wonderful opportunity. I want to personally acknowledge her leadership, advocacy and dedication to the work we do day in and day out.

The outcomes achieved and impact Narang Bir-rong has had would not be possible without Heidi. We have since our inception as an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation been led by CEO Heidi Bradshaw, whose passion, commitment and unrelenting advocacy for Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities is unparalleled.

I would like to express my deep and



sincere gratitude to the Board directors and my senior management team for their unwavering support. To thank you all especially for your cultural leadership.

While I approach everything that I do with humility and curiosity – I couldn't perform in this role as an ally without the backing of my colleagues. In particular I would like to acknowledge Joshua Cullen, A/DCEO and my operations managers – Melissa Shaw, Jessica Smith, Brian DeVries, Shane Rice and Amanda Klinar. Thank you.

This year has brought impactful change, and challenges which has resonated throughout the organisation.

But we have also displayed unwavering strength and resilience. Our teams have continued to deliver high-quality, culturally safe services to Aboriginal children, young people and families. That is a credit to the staff, carers and community members who show up every day with heart and commitment.

As Narang Bir-rong continues to grow – my focus has been on ensuring that we have the systems, frameworks and processes in place to ensure that we continue to deliver high-quality, cultural care.

My passion is the people who lead this work on the frontline. If we don't invest in them and have the right supports in place, we cannot continue to achieve sustainable outcomes for our children and families.

One of the highlights this year was receiving Great Place to Work certification for the third year in a row. The only Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation to have achieved this honour. That recognition reflects the inclusive and supportive culture we've built together. It's a culture grounded in the values of connections, empowerment, consistency, belonging and confidentiality.

These values guide how we work, how we lead and how we care.

While this year has brought some unexpected shifts in leadership, I want to acknowledge the resilience and professionalism of our staff. Their ability to stay grounded and united has been remarkable, and I am proud to work alongside them.

We were also pleased to have during this turbulent period had our accreditation from the Office of the Children's Guardian renewed for another five years. That milestone reflects the quality of our care and the trust placed in us by the communities we serve.

Above all, our work is about advocacy. It's about standing beside Aboriginal children and young people, listening to their voices and supporting their journeys. It's about walking with respect, humility and a shared commitment to a better future.

To our staff, carers, community and Board, thank you. Your dedication is what makes Narang Bir-rong a place of hope, healing and strength. Let's keep walking forward together. Thank you.

Penny Hood

Acting Chief Executive Officer

Our Board

Our Board brings together diverse perspectives, culturally aware insights, and innovative ideas that inspire creativity and forward thinking. They promote a culture of collaboration and transparency, providing guidance that supports the organisation's sustainable growth. Their dedication to our mission is reflected through their involvement in community initiatives and their support of impactful programs, helping Narang Bir-rong continue to grow and make a lasting difference.



Ivan Clarke

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



Annette Toomey

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



Patricia Flood

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



Peter Hawkins

Peter is a Wiradjuri man and member of the Stolen Generation with over 30 years' experience in social work. He has supported individuals, families, and young people through trauma, grief, and mental health challenges, with a strong focus on culturally safe, trauma-informed practice. Having worked with DCJ, NSW Health, and Link-Up, Peter now serves as a Clinical Educator, sharing his knowledge to strengthen connections to culture and community.



Penny Hood

Penny brings over 25 years' experience supporting children, families, and communities across early intervention, child protection, and social services. With extensive leadership experience in government and the not-for-profit sector, she is driven by a commitment to social justice and best practice. Penny holds degrees in Arts and Law, a Master's in Policy Studies, and a Specialist Certificate in Implementation Science, and serves on the Board of Families Australia.



Our Values



Connections

We honour connections with family, culture and Country.



Empowerment

We empower all those in our community through education.



Consistency

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



Belonging

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



Confidentiality

We ensure confidentiality to all those in our community.



Our Team

Narang Bir-rong remains deeply committed to supporting and empowering our team, the people who drive our work forward every day. This year, we've continued to prioritise the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, encouraging participation in community driven initiatives that strengthen both cultural identity and professional growth.

Our approach recognises that true success comes from balance, strengthening skills, wellbeing, connection and a culturally safe environment for all. By investing in our people, we're building a workplace that is resilient, inclusive and united in purpose.



88%

Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait Islander
employees

Staff Training & Development

Employees actively engaged in a range of professional and cultural initiatives throughout the year, participating in training programs, courses, and workshops across the organisation. We also focus on building our staff members' skills and confidence to support their growth into new roles and career opportunities. Staff had the opportunity to showcase their achievements during this year's Staff Presentation Day, celebrating their dedication, development, and contributions to the organisation and our community.

Employee wellbeing

The Staff Kick Off was the perfect way to start the year, giving our team a chance to recharge, reflect, and reconnect with our shared purpose. The day featured an inspiring talk from Dr Tracy Westerman, providing valuable insights into wellbeing and resilience, and a fun Amazing Race activity that encouraged teamwork, problem-solving, and plenty of laughter. It was a meaningful opportunity for staff to strengthen connections, celebrate achievements, and set a positive tone for the year ahead.

Certified Great Place to Work

For the third year in a row, we're incredibly proud to be recognised as a Great Place to Work. This achievement reflects the commitment, passion, and strength of our team. Every team member plays a vital role in making Narang Bir-rong the supportive, culturally safe and empowering workplace that it is.



Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

Our Purpose

The Board is dedicated to providing strong governance and strategic direction to ensure Narang Bir-rong continues to deliver meaningful outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people, and families.

Its purpose is to:

- Guide and oversee the organisation's mission to empower, nurture, and advance the wellbeing, health, and education of Aboriginal children and families.
- Strengthen organisational resilience and ensure culturally safe, community-led decision-making.
- Foster respect, trust, and positive relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community.
- Uphold transparency, accountability, and the protection of human rights in all organisational practices.



Program Updates



Cultural Connections

Program Update

2025 has been a landmark year for Narang Bir-rong's Cultural Connections Program, with a wide range of initiatives and events that have strengthened cultural engagement for our children and communities. A highlight has been our After-School Cultural Hub, providing a safe and vibrant space for children to learn, connect, and celebrate their heritage. Committed to continuous improvement, we have enhanced the Program to ensure long-term success and meaningful community impact.

This year, we introduced our redesigned Cultural Care Plan booklet, equipping children with detailed information about their families, communities, and culture, and supporting their sense of identity and belonging. Children and families have also benefited from participation in cultural groups and events, camps on country, and opportunities to explore family history and genealogy.



76

Cultural Careplans



19

Camps & Events hosted



Continued...

A new position was also introduced this year, the Family History Research Worker who collaborates with our Cultural Connections Workers on a daily basis in the development of the Cultural Care Plans. Offering more in-depth family connections and lineage to their mob. Through this work, the Family History Research Worker has not only connected Narang Bir-rong kids in the program who otherwise had no idea they were related, have also connected them to ancestors that they can be proud of. Some of these being war veteran's, Warriors and "Kings" and "Queens" of tribes and even Aboriginal activists who fought hard for Aboriginal rights.

The Deadly Wagana's dance group was another outstanding achievement for Narang Bir-rong where the dance group was opened to the broader community and proudly performed at Penrith NAIDOC 2025, sharing culture through music and dance.

Overall, 2025 has been a year of growth, connection, and celebration, reinforcing our commitment to maintaining and strengthening children's ties to culture while creating a culturally safe and inclusive environment for all.

Key highlights:

- Yarramundi Camp
- Darkinjung Camp
- Deadly Wagana's NAIDOC Performance
- New Cultural Connections Booklet
- Introduction of the Family History Research Worker Position





Family Preservation & TEI

Programs Update

In 2025, our Family Preservation and Targeted Early Intervention teams continued to provide culturally safe support, including case management, structured home visiting, referrals, and collaboration with community stakeholders. Through this support, families are empowered to keep their children safe, encourage positive development, and access the resources and networks they need to thrive.

This year has been a significant success in keeping children safe and strengthening families. Over 150 children were supported to remain safely at home, and 54 families were able to reach a point where they were assessed as no longer at risk by DCJ. By equipping families with practical tools and culturally responsive guidance, we continue to help children grow up in safe environments while supporting parents to build resilience and manage long-term family wellbeing.

153

Children
prevented from
entering Out of
Home Care



54

Cases closed
without removal



4,322

Home visits
completed



Restoration Program Update

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

In 2025, we continued to support families in strengthening bonds and creating stable environments for children. Our team worked closely with parents through tailored case plans, family action plans, and goal-setting to meet court-ordered commitments in meaningful ways, while addressing the underlying trauma and challenges unique to each family. We also received restoration orders for four children and successfully closed three family cases, supporting a total of eight children in their restoration journeys.



4

Children restored
to family care



16

Currently being
assessed for restoration

Sisters Restored Home

Good News Story

In 2025, after 6 long years in long term care, sisters Kaylee and Brianna were restored to the care of their parents.

During these years, the girls parent's were able to address historic concerns raised by DCJ and the Children's Court by way of maintain sobriety, improving their overall mental health, demonstrating learnings from parenting courses and by obtain suitable, safe and stable housing for the children.

At the beginning of 2024, the girls' brother Liam returned home as he was placed in general foster care, without family connection. The children's parents were motivated to have their family whole again so following the successful restoration of Liam, and the parent's continued positive change the Children's Court granted restoration of Kaylee and Brianna after an expedited court process of three months. Both Kaylee and Brianna were ecstatic to hear they would be returning to the care of their parents and brother after 6 years, and had a swift and positive transition from their kinship placement to their new home.

Since their transition, Kaylee and Brianna have expressed they love being a whole family again, and rate it "a million out of 10". With the support of Narang Bir-rong, the family have recently moved into a larger property with additional space for each child and a backyard to play in.





Out of Home Care Program Update

The Out of Home Care program at Narang Bir-rong continues to provide a stable, supportive, and secure foundation for the children, carers, and families we work with. Recognising the ongoing challenges faced by children in care, we remain committed to addressing the lasting impacts of transgenerational trauma and supporting our jarjums through these experiences. Our focus is on healing the wounds of removal while maintaining and strengthening cultural connections, which are essential to the wellbeing of our children.

In 2025, we prioritised placement stability, cultural connection, and individual wellbeing, ensuring each child's care plan kept them at the centre of our work. Early in the year, we restructured our services, separating the Leaving Care, Specialist Aftercare, and Out of Home Care programs. This means the home visit figures below now reflect only the Out of Home Care team's work.

This year, the team achieved a 92% placement stability rate, reflecting our continued dedication to providing safe, high-quality, and culturally responsive care for jarjums, carers, and families.



1,039

Home Visits

12

Young people
transitioned to the
Leaving Care Program



Leaving Care Program Update

2025 was a successful year for our Leaving Care program, which continues to support young people aged 15 and above in preparing for a smooth and confident transition from care. Participants, referred either through agencies or via self-referral, engaged in tailored Life Ready plans to develop practical skills in budgeting, cooking, job seeking, self-care, and overall wellbeing. These plans are designed not only to build independence but also to give young people the confidence to make positive choices and navigate the challenges of adulthood.

Our young people also participated in cultural programs, mentoring opportunities, and a cultural camp we hosted at Yarramundi, helping them strengthen their connections to culture and grow into resilient adults. In 2025, 93% are in stable housing, 90% have reconnected with family, and 79% are engaged in education or employment, ensuring they have a strong support system as they transition to adulthood and pursue self-determined futures.



93%

Young people
living in stable
accommodation



90%

Increase in family
reconnections



79%

Young people
studying or
employed





Specialist Aftercare

Program Update

Our After Care program supports young people aged 18–25, through agency or self-referrals, offering practical assistance with housing, health, education, employment, and life skills. The program focuses on helping young people maintain independence while staying connected to culture, community, and supportive networks.

In 2025, our team continued to provide personalised guidance tailored to each young person's goals, from securing stable housing and employment to improving wellbeing and life skills. Young people were encouraged to engage with community, develop self-confidence, and strengthen meaningful relationships.

Through consistent support and connection, the After Care program helps participants navigate adult life successfully, make informed decisions, and build a foundation for long-term stability and personal growth.



83

Young people supported with housing, education and employment





Carer Recruitment Program Update

In 2025, our career recruitment strategy continued to grow through proactive outreach, strong community engagement, and ongoing support for prospective carers. By harnessing social media, participating in local events, and fostering meaningful partnerships, we expanded awareness and visibility around the ongoing need for foster carers.

We also refined our assessment process and delivered comprehensive, culturally responsive training to ensure every carer felt confident and supported from the start. This approach not only strengthened recruitment outcomes but also reaffirmed our commitment to creating safe, nurturing homes for children and young people in care.

19

Community
engagement
events
attended or
hosted



102

Carer enquiries
received

23



Foster care
assessments
undertaken



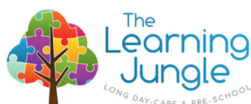
Highlights



Corporate Services

As we look forward to 2026, our organisation is eager to expand our impact through meaningful partnerships. We believe that collaboration is key to achieving our mission and serving our community effectively. By fostering strong relationships with like-minded organisations, businesses, and individuals, we aim to create sustainable and lasting change.

In 2026, we will continue to focus on leveraging our collective strengths, exploring innovative solutions, and addressing the most pressing needs of those we serve. Together, we are committed to building a brighter future and making a profound difference in the lives of those in our community.



Narang Bir-rong continues to partner with SecondBite, Westcare, Good360, and Share the Dignity, all of whom play a pivotal role in supporting our mission by providing essential supplies such as food, cleaning products, hygiene packs, Optus SIM cards, and Home Starter Packs. These contributions make a meaningful difference in the lives of children and young people in our Leaving Care program, helping them transition to independent living with greater confidence, comfort, and security.

Through these valued partnerships, Narang Bir-rong has been able to provide the majority of our clients with these vital resources, improving their quality of life and supporting their everyday needs.

Looking ahead, Narang Bir-rong remains committed to maintaining and strengthening these partnerships to ensure ongoing support for our clients. The impact of these contributions cannot be overstated—they not only meet immediate needs but also foster a sense of dignity, stability, and empowerment among the young people we serve.

As we continue to grow, we aim to expand the reach of our support, ensuring even more clients benefit from these resources while exploring new collaborations with like-minded organisations that share our vision of improving outcomes for young people leaving care. These partnerships form the cornerstone of our efforts, and we look forward to continuing this meaningful work together to create lasting, positive change.



Events



Throughout 2024–2025, we proudly hosted a range of events for our children, carers, families, staff and community, each one strengthening our connections and celebrating culture.

We are dedicated to hosting events that bring our community together, encourage cultural pride, and create memorable experiences for everyone involved. Some of the year's highlights included our Kids' Christmas Carnival, 2025 Staff Kick Off, Carers Morning Tea, and our NAIDOC Community Day.

In addition to these events, we also attended 19 community events, further strengthening our connections and presence across the community.

Kids Christmas Carnival

Our Kids' Christmas Carnival was a standout success, a fun-filled day with jumping castles, rides, a reptile show, face painting, carnival games, prizes and gifts delivered by Santa on a motorbike.

Carers Morning Tea

Our Carers Morning Tea provided a welcoming space for carers to come together, connect with one another, and share experiences. The event featured fun activities like bingo, along with opportunities to receive program updates, ask questions, and provide feedback. It was a valuable occasion to celebrate the dedication of our carers, strengthen their relationships with our team, and reinforce the vital role they play in supporting our jarjums and community.

NAIDOC Community Event

Our NAIDOC Community Day was a culturally significant and heartfelt event. The day included a powerful smoking ceremony by Jie Pittman, artefacts and storytelling with Uncle Dennis Dunn, and weaving workshops with Rhiannon Wright, creating a space to share culture, learn and celebrate our strength as a community.





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

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