

NJERENDA ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Njernda

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

to know our living Culture

GOAL

Our goal is to support a partnership approach that aims to improve Aboriginal health status of local Aboriginal people in Campaspe and Murray areas.

OBJECTIVES

Our objectives are to

- To develop a local Aboriginal profile (including demographic and service data; identify needs and priority areas of action)
- To identify local capacity to support implementing the National Closing the Gap priority reform areas
- To maximise opportunities between members to work together and make linkages
- To develop partnerships with other providers/groups to address issues as required
- To seek additional resources to support the local priority action areas.

“We respectfully acknowledge The Wollithiga and Yorta Yorta Peoples as the traditional custodians of the land of the communities that the Njernda Aboriginal Corporation service”

to know our living Culture

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ABOUT US

The Echuca Aboriginal Co-operative was established by the hard work and political efforts of many of our Elders who saw a need for a Community Controlled Organisation to run culturally appropriate services.

The Echuca Aboriginal Co-operative was originally set up in 1974 in the Milewa Chambers. In 1990 the name was changed to Njernda Aboriginal Corporation.

Njerda means “to know our living culture” in Wemba Wemba language of Northern Victoria, Southern NSW.

“We believe our kids need to learn the power of their cultural heritage within our Community from our respected Elders. We believe that children who develop identity through their culture will be able to move in and out of the broader Community and to achieve their aspirations with our losing their cultural identity”

*Empowering Our
Aboriginal Community*

NJERENDA'S VISION

Njernda's Purpose

Njernda's purpose is to deliver Community controlled, holistic services and programs which improve the physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of the Aboriginal Community of Echuca and surrounding areas.

We do this by

- Regularly providing opportunities for Community members to come together for socialisation and to celebrate being Aboriginal.
- Continuing to support Aboriginal people every day.
- Supporting our Elders / mentors / role models to provide leadership and direction to our children and young people, to help them become strong in culture, spirit and Community and to enhance future generations.
- Delivering services in a safe environment.
- Promoting self-empowerment and self-determination.
- Using continuous improvement strategies to ensure that Community can access the best evidence based programs.

NJERNDAS VALUES

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY – Welcoming and serving our Community with understanding and without judgment

RESPECT – Establishing relationships based on respect and trust

ADVOCACY – Working to transform the disadvantaged and challenge the causes that impact on our Community

RESILIENCE – Encouraging cultural and spiritual growth to enable personal growth

ACCOUNTABILITY – taking ownership and initiative of Njernda values to ensure trusted collaborations are formed

MEET OUR BOARD

to know our living Culture

Kelli Bartlett
CHAIRPERSON

**Richard
Ronnah**

**Paul
Clarke**

**Barbara
Day**

**Nolita
Edwards
(resigned)**

**Sonia
McLaughlin
(resigned)**

**Wayne
Cowley**

**Judy
Atkinson
(resigned)**

*self-determination
remains at the
heart of everything
we do.*

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Dear Community Members,

What a rough second part of the year it has been with the lockdowns and restrictions that has come with the outbreak of the pandemic COVID-19. I hope Community are staying safe during this time and continue to abide by government directives. As a Community I hope we can continue to look after and support each other through this period, together we will get through this trying time!

Firstly, I would like to thank the Njernda staff who remained onsite all through the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank you for your dedication and support to our Community ensuring that we still had quality health services and protecting and nurturing our Elders. We thank all of the

Community support workers who each week delivered meals, activities and supported our elders and most vulnerable people during this time. Your hard work, dedication and selflessness to assist and keep others safe has been truly inspirational and is the true definition of Community spirit.

As a board the past 12 months we have had a major focus on implementing stronger financial controls and practices, improving areas such as compliance and governance. During this period, we were audited by Oric and have worked extremely hard to correct any past practices and ensure the organization was 100% compliant. During this period we also undertook a complete financial audit of the organization to ensure our financial controls were compliant with government standards. As discussed at the last AGM any findings will be reported to the authorities.

One of the major achievements this year was the introduction and relocation of the gym to the NYINI Health and Wellness Centre. Never would we have thought we could produce such an amazing Centre that would be inclusive to all Community members and families. We hope that this Wellness Centre will give our Community members a sense of pride and motivate people to live a healthy lifestyle. We are extremely excited to see the progression of the Health and Wellness Centre over the next 12 months.

Another major achievement was reviewing and conducting consultations for our new strategic plan. Our strategic plan has been sent to Community for feedback which has never happened before. As a board we welcome input into our plan as it will form the basis of the service delivery and future direction of Njernda. We hope to do further consultations with the Community in the upcoming months.

Whilst we haven't been able to meet our Community face to face during this period, we will ensure that our board provide updates to the our Community members and keep you informed of any major changes/developments throughout the rest of the year via the Community newsletter.

On behalf of our board, we would like to thank our CEO Mr Aaron Wallace for his leadership given to the organisation over the last 12 months.

On a final note, to our Community, we have faced many challenges over the past 12 months, but we are committed to continue to build the strength of the organization, guarantee transparency with Community, and ensure that self-determination remains at the heart of everything we do.

Kind Regards,

Kelli Bartlett

Chairperson

*We hope that this Wellness Centre
will give our community members a
sense of pride and motivate people to
live a healthy lifestyle.*

COVID-19 has been an excellent opportunity for us to evaluate many of our practices and how we could deliver services in a more effective and efficient way, whilst still maintaining a high level of service delivery to Community.

CEO REPORT

I would like to respectfully acknowledge The Wollthiga and Yorta Yorta Peoples as the traditional custodians of the land of the Communities that the Njernda Aboriginal Corporation service. I would also like to acknowledge and pay respect to our Elders both past and present, and to the members of Aboriginal Community and to the Community.

The end to the 2020 financial year is like nothing that we as an organisation have experienced before and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Njernda Board of Directors for their ongoing support and guidance during this difficult time. As an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation we have a commitment to Aboriginal culture and self-determination and continue to work with our members and our

stakeholders to achieve gains in health and wellbeing for our Community.

Throughout the last financial year, we have continued to deliver community controlled, preventative, holistic services and programs to improve the physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of the Aboriginal Community of Echuca and surrounding areas. We are very proud of the growth in our service provision, and growth in Community members utilising our services despite the challenges of the second half of 2020.

I would like to acknowledge the exceptional work and leadership of the Njernda management and staff throughout COVID-19. Of course, it was not without challenges, however your resilience and dedication is to be commended. During this time, we were required to adjust the way we worked with many of our staff working from home to meet COVID-19 density guidelines.

We have ensured that we are compliant with COVID-19 guidelines whilst maintaining the best possible service delivery across all units. One of the significant ways we were required to change service delivery was in the accessibility to our health services. Our clinic moved to a tele-health platform which enabled us to provide consults with Community from the safety of their home. We were able to move over 90% of our consults to this platform between February and June 2020.

COVID-19 has been an excellent opportunity for us to evaluate many of our practices and how we could deliver services in a more effective and efficient way, whilst still maintaining a high level of service delivery to Community. Whilst the way we have interacted with our stakeholders has changed due to COVID-19, Njernda continues to maintain a high profile, ensuring that we advocate and are strong a voice for our Community at various levels of government, project control and working groups.

This financial year we commenced the review of the Strategic Plan, ensuring that as an organisation we are continuing to meet the needs and services of our Community and looking at opportunities for growth and development. The process this year involved consultation with Community, Njernda Board, Management, staff and stakeholders through a variety of methods.

As Community may be aware, a Forensic Audit was conducted and a number of recommendations were made pertaining to the financial controls, policies and inner workings of our financial processing and management. I can report that all recommendations have been addressed and that our financial controls are strong. I also report that the Corporation went through a restructure to clear up reporting lines and to ensure that we are doing our best to

steward and manage Community resources. Further to this, we have continued to employ more and more Aboriginal people and have seen an increase in this area.

The Corporate Services building has relocated to 34 Annesley Street and now houses the following roles: CEO, COO, Executive Assistant, Corporate Manager, IT Officer, Corporate Receptionist, Corporate Services Officers (Finance), Accreditation and Compliance Officer, Training Officer, Project Manager and a Maintenance Officer. This space has a board room for board meetings, job interviews, managers meetings and other stakeholder meetings and two small meeting rooms to be used for audits, small meetings, and any other activities in instances where the room is booked.

Our Family Services team has officially located to the 208 Building on Hare Street. An official opening for this will take place once COVID-19 restrictions allow. The space is beginning to look amazing. Well done to the staff who have been so flexible. The Wellbeing Unit building has been renovated and the counselling and waiting rooms re-carpeted and refurnished all the inside rooms were repainted.

We continue to support children at Berrimba Childcare Centre through culturally attuned educational programs that link children to Community. One of the key highlights that we continue to demonstrate is the outstanding work that goes on at Berrimba as we prepare our kids for Early Years and Primary education. We've continued to support staff in undertaking tertiary qualifications in the early years education. A highlight throughout this financial year was also our opportunity to host the Minister for Education and Training at the centre.

The Minister commended the staff at Berrimba for their dedication and commitment to providing such high quality care and education to our children.

Our Cradle to Kinder program continues to act as a preventative approach, and remains successful in keeping our families together.

Yakapna and Baroona have continued to thrive and provide a healing program for Aboriginal young people and families that are referred to these services.

Yakapna continue to reunify families thus empowering parents and children to exit and/or stay out of the Child Protection system.

Baroona Youth Healing Centre has increased in its intake of clients that are referred, as an alternative to incarceration. We have been successful in receiving extra funding to assist in expanding and improving the infrastructure of the Centre in order to provide a Culturally Safe and effective healing program for our young people.

Ensuring that our Aboriginal Children remain in Aboriginal Care continues to be a key priority for Njernda. We are currently in the pre-authorisation phase of Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care which is a huge step forward for us as a Community in the direction of self-determination and keeping our kids safe, on country and connected to family. There are a range of mechanisms that we have put in place to ensure that our practice and approach to the implementation of this program is in the best interests of our children. Fairly soon, Njernda can apply for full authorisation which will allow us to continue our work towards having Aboriginal children in the care of the Aboriginal Community.

I would like to thank everyone for their patience and support as I balance the challenge of maintaining a fair and consistent approach in the operations of the organisation whilst working hard to ensure that our services continue to achieve outcomes for Aboriginal people. Once again, it is an honour to serve the Community in this capacity. We may not always “get it right” but we are super committed to getting better for the sake and benefit of our amazing Aboriginal Community.

Kind Regards,
Aaron Wallace

CEO

*Ensuring that our
Aboriginal Children
remain in Aboriginal
Care continues to
be a key priority for
Njernda.*



NJERNDAL MEDICAL CLINIC REPORT 2019-2020

As COVID-19 swept the nation in Early 2020 the Medical Centre was forced to adapt and implement new COVID-19 Rules. We would like to thank all our medical staff and frontline workers who remained at work and operated the clinic to ensure our Community was able to access medical care and treatment throughout the pandemic.

COVID SCREENING

COVID-19 screening has become the daily part of life at the clinic. Patients are required to fill in a pre-COVID questionnaire and have temperature taken on arrival.

TELEHEALTH CONSULTS

During COVID-19 our clinic moved to a telehealth platform which enabled us to provide consults with community via phone from the safety of their houses. Over 90% of our consults were moved to this platform between February-June 2020.

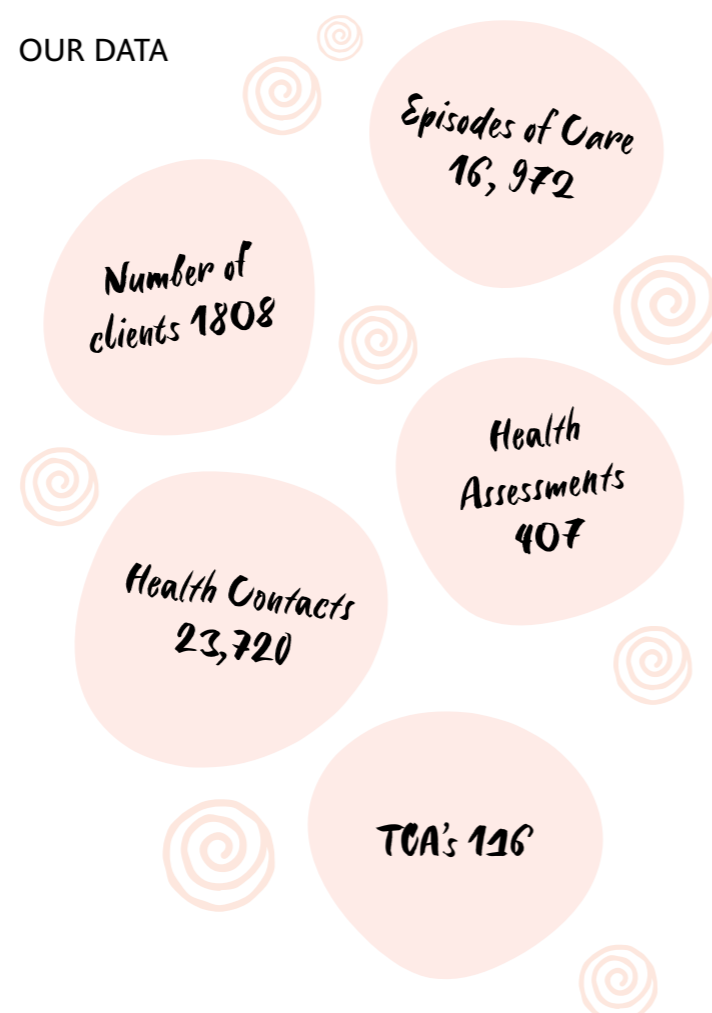
FLU VACCINATIONS

Over 300 flu vaccinations were provided this year. This is significantly higher than those in previous years. A home vaccination service was provided to our Elders, so they did not have to leave their homes.

TRANSPORT

Our medical transport driver offers our clients a pickup and drop home service as well as transport to medical specialist appointments in Shepparton, Bendigo and Melbourne.

OUR DATA



OUR SPECIALIST SERVICES

We continue to offer the following services:

- **General Practitioners**
 - o Mon-Thurs (Dr Shihab Raman) Mon-Wed (Dr Hiran Edirisinghe) Wednesday (Dr Jessica Hetherington) Thurs-Friday (Dr Marylou Loughnan) Friday (Dr Jerry Wong) Friday Fortnightly (Dr Sujay Chandraiah)
- **Speech Pathologist** Melissa Sproal - 1/2 Day per week
- **Dietician/Diabetes educator** Amy Burrows - every second Wednesday
- **Dentist** Rumbalara visiting service, for general check-ups, cleaning etc. Every second Wednesday (NOT VISITING DURING COVID)

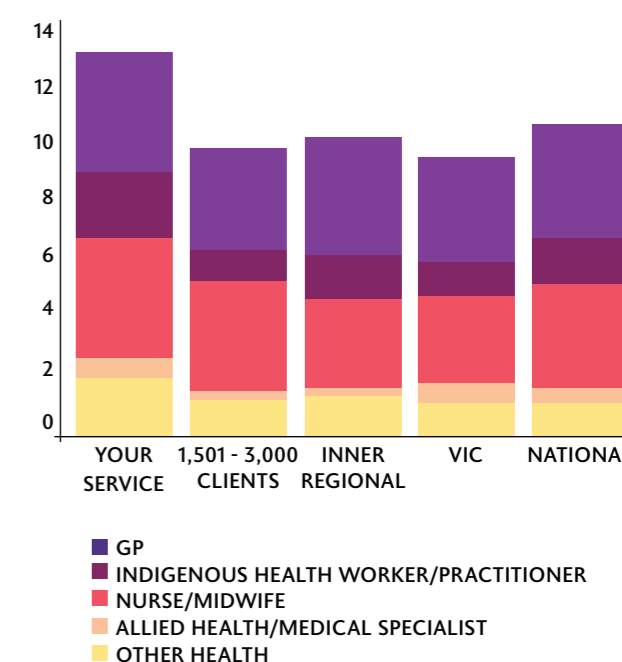


- **Endocrinologist** Richard Obrien - 1 Day every 3 months
- **Audiologist** Joanna Nesbit - 4 Hours per week
- **Audiologist** Patrick Tyler - 1 day every 6 weeks Podiatrist: Morgan McEwen - Fortnightly
- **Optometrist**
- **Once a month Paediatrician** Reece Parry Fortnightly (Referral Only)

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Njernda Aboriginal Corporation meets a variety of accreditation standards to provide quality services which align with industry funding guidelines and requirements. Assessment is undertaken at scheduled intervals. For our staff, meeting accreditation standards is a daily practice with all staff working towards compliance. In 2020 we have been working towards our medical accreditation which will be undertaken in 2021.

Figure 4: Average number of contacts per client (all clients), by health position, 2019/20





MATERNITY REPORT

KMS Maternity Program: Kim Warde, Trish Ebert, Marg Berryman, Jenny Brown & Renae Walsh

16 women have used the KMS program so far this year (two more due before Christmas). We have seen all our pregnant women and their partners, which has kept our Fridays busy. Four used Bendigo for the birth.

Jess also works on Wednesdays as General Practitioner | Obstetrician which allows us to see women during their pregnancy, up until 36 weeks. Shaihab also catches up with antenatal clients.

The results of families in our care were excellent, with all babies being born at term (one was growth restricted and another needed special care for 3 days). The remainder, went straight into the arms of their parents.

4 women with complications birthed their baby in Bendigo, the other 12 here in Echuca. Kim and Jenny followed them all up once they returned home.

We have 5 women using the Cradle to Kinder program which continues after the birth until baby is aged 4. Our services also care for families who use Njernda for MCH but who did not come through our Maternity Program, along with undertaking most of the domiciliary midwife visits. Once mum and baby are home, they all have a home visit, and we liaise with ERH Maternity midwives.

They are also involved with immunisations up to age 4, Key Ages + Stages checks to age 4, Berrimba and Cradle to Kinder program along with sourcing cots and car seats through a program run by MCH.

Renee has been a great resource, ensuring all our antenatal clients know her. She regularly

liaises with the team to ensure all are kept up to date..

We have transported our clients to appointments around town, Renee has done all the Bendigo appointments. We still saw our women face to mask, hand to belly.

COVID-19 has been challenging for all of us, and scary for a lot of people. Not being able to have their loved ones as support in labour ward, or visiting the hospital, was challenging. Only one support person was allowed during labour. Normally there are a lot of women in the labour ward cheering the mum-to-be on, supporting the dad-to-be, and lots of fun during the birth – it is a family celebration. Beautiful time.

We still saw our women face to mask, hand to belly.

CHRONIC ILLNESS REPORT

CHRONIC CARE

Workers: Garry Giles & Vivianne Giles

The Chronic Illness Program was set up to provide support to Indigenous clients who have a chronic disease or long-term condition that last for more than six months. We have two workers, a chronic care coordinator and an outreach worker. **We currently have 60 clients on this program.** Our role is to coordinate and support our clients to access specialist and allied health appointments at no cost. We also provide transport to and from appointments. Since the program started, we have seen significant improvement in the health of our clients.

To be eligible for the chronic illness program you must have a GP management plan in place and a review every three to six months. Further

information can be obtained by contacting the Chronic Illness Workers at Njernda Medical.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER REPORT

Aboriginal Health Worker: Rebecca Tracey

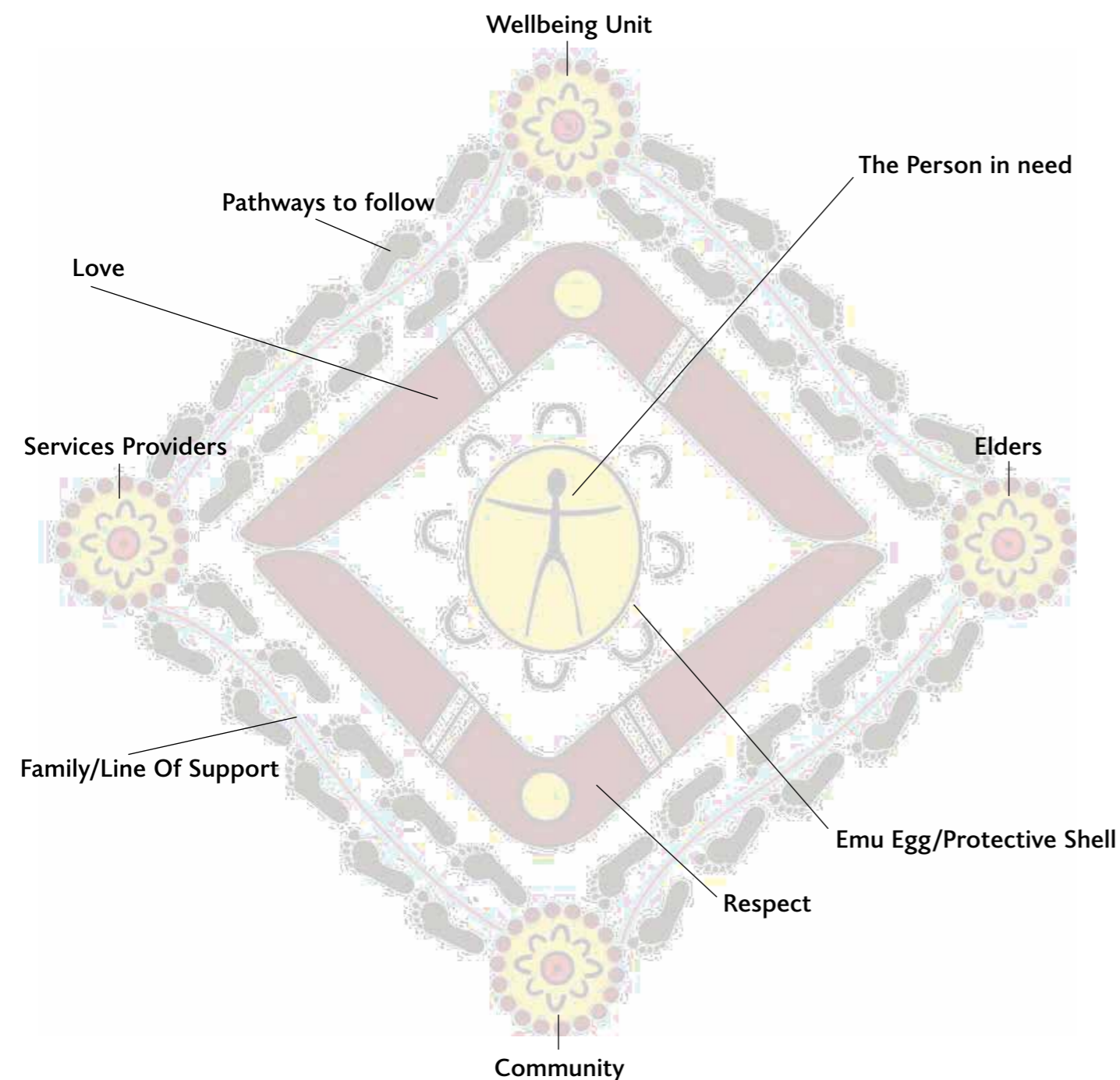
During COVID there were many changes that were made from a clinical perspective in regard to mask wearing, hand hygiene, social distancing, the cleaning of the GP rooms, during this pandemic. As the only Aboriginal Health Practitioner working clinically, I was in charge of the ordering of PPE and making sure all GPs had what they needed to run the clinic as safely and efficiently as possible for staff and clients.

My role as an AHP can take on many forms. Whilst performing my clinic duties during COVID I also helped reception with the overflow of phones and many clinical questions in regards to results, referrals and follow ups. This can take up a lot of my time as all of these things are need to be documented as required by ethical and privacy standards.

During COVID-19, GP appointments were typically a phone consult rather than face to face unless requested by the GP. We had procedures in place to ensure we were COVID-19 compliant should a client be required to enter the building (e.g. temperature checks, social distance protocols, wearing of masks). We still offer phone consults as a patient preference e.g. for scripts.

COVID-19 has enabled us to evaluate our practices especially around health assessments (especially via telehealth | phone) e.g. difficulties in obtaining all the necessary information to meet criteria checking weight, height BGL etc.

We will look back at 2020 and know that as a team we did an exceptional job to continue to provide health service options to meet the needs of our Community.



NJERND A WELLBEING UNIT

This year the Wellbeing Unit has introduced a new logo. In the centre is the person in need, surrounding them is an oval shape, which represents the emu egg, or a protective shell we put around a Community member. Outside of that is the persons family, their first line of support and care. Next are the two boomerangs, one representing love and the other respect: both carry the ideal that, the harder you throw them out, the more people

they will encircle and that both love and respect will come back to you. The four corner circles, or gatherings around a central fire symbolises the four key components in caring for our clients which are the Wellbeing unit, the Elders, the Community and finally one representing other service providers. The black line that links the fire gatherings together represents the pathways that we must follow, and the footprints show us following those pathways from gathering to gathering ensuring the health and wellbeing of our Community.

Highlights of Njernda Wellbeing Unit

The Wellbeing Unit building was renovated during May, the counselling and waiting rooms re-carpeted and refurnished all the inside rooms were repainted. A program underspend allowed the Unit to take over and refurbish the old Baroona bus, purchase a barbeque trailer and fishing gear and some art supplies. We hope to commence group activities utilising the bus and trailer and art supplies in the new year. The Wellbeing Unit is working well as a team, the ability to link clients into the range of Njernda services provides a supportive wrap around service for our clients.

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING AND DUAL DIAGNOSIS

Counsellors: Luke Ryan, Melissa Dillon, Dr Cara Tucker and Jennine Atkinson

COVID-19 has had an impact on the Counselling services, particularly on the number of play therapy sessions we were able to offer children.

A major improvement activity has been the active management of our Mental Health Counselling waitlists which at 30 November 2020 was Adults (over 13 years) - 6 weeks and Children - 35 weeks.

Luke Ryan has commenced in two positions as Mental Health Counsellor 2 days and Dual Diagnosis worker 3 days. The role-sharing with the full time Dual Diagnosis worker Jeannine Atkinson has seen Luke able to take on some of the clients on the mental health waitlist with Jennine undertaking more of a Community engagement and support role.

Recently Dr Cara Tucker has joined the counselling team one day per fortnight. This together with Luke's roles are having a beneficial impact on the waitlists

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Social Emotional Wellbeing Worker: Gilbert Wanganeen

Gilbert continues providing service to the Community with regular follow up's with the Echuca Community Mental Health Service. When a client is released back into Community from the Bendigo Psychiatric Centre it is important that the client stay engaged (due to a CBO) until the client is released back into the Njernda Wellbeing Unit where the client is case managed in a cultural safe environment by the Community Mental Health Service. This can either be done either by video conference or face to face and through the partnership the client is also seen by a psychiatrist.

We value our partnership with the Echuca Community Mental Health Service to assist with Community members reviews while they are on medication. Due to the COVID-19 virus these contacts have been by video conferencing, however since restrictions being eased, clients can be seen face to face at the Wellbeing unit.

We welcome the addition of Headspace services to support our youth or families who may be struggling with young persons in the family.

BRINGING THEM HOME

Fay Halatanu

Fay has recently joined the team. In the main her clients have been impacted by themselves or family members having been removed from family and are needing help to obtain birth certificates, ward files from institutions and files from homes, finding other family members and support to get their Aboriginality certificates. A lot of this information is vital to be able to help clients navigate access to the National Redress, the Reparation for Stolen Generation Family and Stolen Wages Schemes.

There have been several success stories, with clients being able to obtain documentation and proceed to submitting and having their reparation documents approved. This is a lengthy process as this program does not have brokerage funding that would facilitate timely accessing necessary State, Federal or Institution held documents, to provide will kits, to hold group activities or provide phones or phone credit.



ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

AOD Counsellors: Kerri Brown & Neva Takele

We have had some great success with people who have attended detox and rehab and have remained substance free and a couple of clients

have also completed detox and rehab at home. Waiting times for detox and rehab have been affected by the COVID-19 lockdown and this has added to the stress for people not being able to access these services in a timely manner. We participated in the University of Sydney research program, The Effects of Alcohol in the Indigenous Community.

Neva began the year running some art classes in the medical meeting room, these were taking off beautifully when COVID-19 brought all group activities to a halt. Several clients who were mentally ready to proceed to detox and rehab have had to put these plans on hold due to the reduction in intake at detox and rehab.

It has been a frustrating COVID-19 period, having to undertake a large amount of counselling over the phone, while this does suit some clients, most prefer face to face counselling.

During COVID-19 our very successful AA/DA service had to go online. Prior to restrictions coming in group gathering were averaging 20 to 25 clients each meeting. We continue to have many enquiries as to when we can get this up and running again.

A special note to staff members who each week would stay back to allow this to happen. This is one of many examples where unit members are working as a team to support clients.

ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

Megan Atkinson & Brenda Fehring

Megan and Brenda provided admin support services to the Wellbeing unit members.

The Wellbeing unit is working well as a team. One of our strengths is the ability to link clients into a range of Njernda services and external services to provide a supportive wrap around service for our clients.



HEALTH PROMOTION REPORT

Health Promotion Worker Keith Hearn

The year in which the Coronavirus swept across our nation and more recently our state has seen many changes in how we conduct business. I feel as an organisation we have pulled together and were able to offer a diverse array of support to community during this trying time.

Once we were made aware of the severity of the pandemic and as areas went into lockdown, we immediately developed a service to ensure our Elders and most vulnerable were taken care of. Health promotion was given the lead to implement the program with support from Community Engagement and Youth Services staff.

From the initial ZOOM meeting to discuss a plan we decided the following actions:

- Collate a list of our Elders, HACC/CHSP and our most vulnerable community members.
 - o Utilise current lists provided
 - o Discussed most vulnerable
- Develop a support plan
- Meals to be provided
- Self-isolation packs
- Weekly phone support
- Information support
- Referral and connection to other support/programs

- Implementation of each section of the support plan
- Youth Services to offer phone support up to 3 times per week
- Other Njernda programs to support meal delivery
- Health Promotion and Community Engagement to provide meals and isolation packs
- Health Promotion to provide updates and information support

So, what does this mean in numbers and support provided

Over 1500 meals were cooked, packed and delivered during this period

100/150 phone calls a week to have a yarn with community members

450 support packs delivered

All Njernda services pulled together and supported all programs

With the employment of the new HACC Coordinator the program continued, and Health Promotion was able to continue with implementing the initial plan previously developed.

Over the past several months we have been fortunate enough to have found the perfect location to open our new Nyini Health and Wellness Centre.

What does this mean for community?

- A facility to provide a healthier lifestyle, health promotion and programs

- Move It Program with Troy Walker
- QUIT Smoking support
- Chronic care information days
- 6/12 week healthy lifestyle program
- Boxing Program with Rick Ronnan
- Personal Training Program
- Allied health services
- Access to a full equipped gymnasium



As we look forward to 2021, we can do so with confidence. As at the time of writing this report we have 243 members with around 60 community accessing the centre each day.





FAMILY SERVICES REPORT

Our family services team is committed to providing a holistic service to our Community. Since February 2020 this has been a major challenge while working in the COVID-19 conditions.

Despite the challenges presented, we continued to offer services to our most vulnerable Community members, with our client numbers and hours of support doubling over the COVID-19 months. Our new client intake continued to increase with a high number of increased hours.

During this time we saw an increase in the number of highly complex clients across the family violence and family services area.

We are very proud that even when staff members were at capacity, no person was denied family service support.

Our Aboriginal and Child Specialist Advise Support Services (ASCASS) continue to provide specialist advice based on the best interest of Aboriginal children and young people. DHHS is mandated to consult with ASCASS regarding Aboriginal children and young people's safety and wellbeing. Advice by ACSASS to Child Protection focuses on all aspects of the Aboriginal children and young peoples' safety, including their cultural safety, the right to grow up with their family and Community.

Our Kinship care program continues to provide vital culturally appropriate support to relatives or members of a child's social network to care for a child or young person when they cannot live with their parents. Kinship care can

either be a statutory care arrangement where a court has ordered it.

Njernda's kinship care team, work with the child or young person and their networks, including carers, government child protection services and the child's family to ensure the care arrangement meets their ongoing safety, stability and developmental needs. We aim to support the safety, wellbeing and health of children, young people, families and carers.

Our kinship workers also provide intensive support for new placements when at 3 months the placement looks like it will extend past 6 months.

During 2019/2020 Njernda kinship team support 5 first supports to ensure that the placement stabilised and to mitigate the risk of placement breakdown.

Njernda Foster care program is still in its infancy our staff work hard to ensure our carers provide a culturally safe foster care placements for our children and youth, which fosters our children connection to country. We currently have 5 registered carers who are caring for 7 Aboriginal children. Prior to our foster carer being registered to Njernda foster care program they must:

- Undertake the shared lives training which is a course for new and prospective foster carers and
- Be assessed using step by step Assessment tool to determine if they are appropriate carers

It takes a Community to raise a child. Njernda is committed and dedicated to keeping our children within the community either by placing them in kinship care or foster care.

Wala Yarka is a Yorta Yorta word meaning “water children” we use it to define out ACAC (section 18) program. Wala Yarka aims to create greater self-determination for families, children and young people and our Community. For us true self determination is reflected in our ability to make decision about the care of our children and not government.

Wala Yarka will have increased responsibility and decision making for our children and young people and work with families, Community and other professionals in a culturally safe way that will support the best interest of children and young people and empowering families to be part of the decision making process.

Njernda made the decision to establish the Wala Yarka program after experiencing and living with the impact of child protection practices on our Community. Having children removed from Community was one of the most disempowering actions that families, Community members and Njernda staff have ever experienced.

Each time a child is removed from our Community, the resilience of this Community is weakening. History shows us that children are not returned to Community until they become of age and that is a significant lost that we must endure. Through the Wala Yarka program, Njernda plan to take on a leading role in the decision making and case planning for our Children and young people. We believe one of the fundamental rights of self-determination is making decisions for our children and to empower families to have a voice in the decision making for their children.

What is Wala Yarka currently working on:

- All Wala Yarka staff have completed Beginning Practice training, which is a requirement before staff are able to work with their own clients.

- In the process of developing a 3 series training called Our Practice, A Koorie Lens which embeds building cultural practice in case management and case planning of Aboriginal children and young people.
- Having monthly yarning sessions with BDAC’s Mutjang Bupuwingarrak Mukman (S18) Program to share our practices and experiences.
- Establishing a Cultural Practice group for Community members to be a part of developing how we work with our families.
- Consulting weekly with Berry Street Take Two Therapeutic Counsellor to do reflective practice on clients that we are working with. This also sometimes include consults for young people and carers
- Our Practice Leader, Sandy is working with our case managers to build their Cultural Capability and Understanding when working with our families.

Our program currently has 2 Case managers, 1 Practice Leader, 1 Team leader and a Program Manager. In our first phase of our program we will work with 18 children and young people. We currently have 4 children and young people in our program.

Njernda made the decision to establish the Wala Yarka program after experiencing and living with the impact of child protection practices on our Community. Having children removed from Community was one of the most disempowering actions that families, Community members and Njernda staff have ever experienced.



I am proud of the service provided by staff to our community and want to acknowledge that they are committed people who work in the best interest of our community, often with very little recognition.

Training

Njernda family Services is currently working in partnership with Go-Tafe in the delivery of a Diploma of Community Services (equivalent to qualification required by Department of Community Service DHS). This programme will ensure our family services staff and other Njernda staff have the opportunity to develop

and enhance their skills. This course will finish in September 2021. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has played a major role in delaying the completion date.

During COVID-19 our staff has received numerous training for MARRAM, trauma informed practice and service other professional development courses.

Family Services New Home-208 building

We have moved. Family services is now located at the old 208 building. We made the move into the property in May 2020 after renovation was completed.



NEW STRONG PARTNERS FOR VULNERABLE FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS EXPERIENCING FAMILY VIOLENCE - THE ORANGE DOOR and NJERND A FAMILY SERVICES

Last year a strong collaborative partnership was established to coordinate and develop the establishment of the Orange Door. The Orange Door is a free service for adults, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence and families who need extra support with the care of children and keeping the perpetrator in view.

This service brings together workers from Centre for Non-Violence, Anglicare, Bendigo and District Aboriginal Corporation, Njernda Aboriginal Corporation, and DHHS Child Protection and Community Bases.

It is designed to make it easier for Community members to be safer and supported. As such Orange Door has developed a holistic team of Specialist family violence services, Family services, Aboriginal services and services for men who use violence.

To ensure services are delivered to Aboriginal Communities the Orange Door is developing a strong and experience team of Aboriginal practitioners to enhance cultural awareness and develop of culturally appropriate services. In March 2021, the Orange Door Access point will open in Echuca ensuring that services are available locally.

Strong partners in the Foster Carer sector

Our foster care program is supported by two strong partnerships. The first relationship is with VACCA who funds a senior project worker to support ACCO including Njernda who are developing a foster care program. This worker sits at Njernda once a week and trains our staff on training and assessment of foster carers and the accreditation requirements of a foster care program

Our second partnership in foster care is with Anglicare who allow Njernda to use their foster care accreditation panel to review and approve the foster carers assessment for registration as a foster carer with Njernda. This is a critical service which means that Njernda hasn't needed to establish its own foster care accreditation panel

Berrimba Childcare Staff

Berrimba Childcare Staff team is made up of:

- Joyce Ward – Acting Early Years Manager
- Sharnie Celli – Assistant Coordinator
- Amba Rhind, Narjiic Day-Burnes & Leticia Day – Bush Kindergarten
- Emily Cheep – 3-5 year old Room Educator
- Kylie Goddard & Jasmine Roberts – Toddler's Room Educators
- Jennah Ferris & Molly Handy – Babies Room Educators
- Cath Andrews – Afterschool Care and Holiday Program Educator
- Dyanna Bray – Breaks Person
- Tamika Morgan – Cook
- Graeme Kissell – Bus Driver
- Kaiella Bulled – Receptionist
- Casual Staff – Robert Tyrell, Tania Rose, Alison Jaworski, Khayla Wanganeen

2020 ENROLMENTS

Babies Room	8
Toddlers Room	17
3-5 Year Old Room	14
3 Year Old Bush Kinder	8
4 Year Old Bush Kinder	7
Afterschool Care	10
Holiday Program	14

Acting Early Years Manager – Joyce Ward

This year we have seen many rewards and challenges at Berrimba Childcare Centre. We started off the year as normal, very busy with many children enrolled. Then COVID-19 came and sent many people into worry.

Berrimba closed its doors for 6 weeks throughout the first wave of the pandemic. Staff were still very busy, organising learning from home packs for children to do at home during lockdown.

All Staff were fortunate to use this time for Professional Development, delivered by our Lead Practitioner, Anne Luke. We learnt all about the development of the child's brain and the nervous system. It was an amazing opportunity to reflect on ourselves as educators and embed an

approach to reflect individual children's needs throughout our programs for best outcomes reflective of our children at Berrimba. The training was mind blowing and we couldn't get enough of it.

When Berrimba re-opened, we crossed many hurdles: these included, being open three days a week instead of five, monitoring temperatures when families and staff arrived, being extra cautious with sick children, asking parents to drop children into the foyer, screen checking every family, and even staff changing shoes before entering the main rooms.

In June, Leona Cooper was the successful applicant for the COO position within Njernda. We were so excited for her, knowing she will do amazing thing for our Community. The time and effort she has dedicated to Berrimba for the last nine years has been so valuable to our Early Years, in how far we have come for our children. As Berrimba staff do, they welcomed me back with open arms and have been so supportive while I have been the Acting Early Years Manager.

Children's Day was also celebrated differently this year. We began with inviting Uncle Rick and Aaron Wallace to be a part of it through a zoom meeting, dragging the big television outside so they could be included in the celebration. We began with a flag raising and an acknowledgement performed by Uncle Narjiic.

NAIDOC week looked very differently this year, being held in November and still needing to abide by restrictions. Berrimba celebrated by holding a virtual art exhibition in the foyer, performing an acknowledgement to country with Auntie Skye at Berrimba and performing traditional dance with Uncle Narjiic and Auntie Sissy. Every single child makes us proud and are strong in culture! What an amazing week had by all.



All children love being involved in our beautiful weekly flag raisings and acknowledgements, acknowledging our land, using Yorta Yorta language led by Auntie Skye then followed on by a special song, Dhama Yenbana performed by Uncle Narjiic. All credit to the amazing Berrimba staff who go above and beyond in incorporating Yorta Yorta language into everyday practices at Berrimba. It is absolutely beautiful to hear the songs being sung in language by the staff and children when walking through the building.

We have been grateful to have the support from Njernda Medical Clinic and have had continual visits from Johanna Nesbitt – Audiologist, Mel Sproal-Portwine – Speech Therapist and Amy Whitten – Occupational Therapist.

We have recently began a Transition to School project with Echuca East School and have received amazing feedback from outside networks about the importance and value of all going into the project. We are fortunate to have Molly Handy involved as our Transition support worker one day a week to work very closely with the school, to give children a sense of belonging and supporting them and their families on their transition to school journey. This has included extra visits between Berrimba

Bush Kinder and Echuca East. The prep teachers were also visiting Berrimba to develop a relationship with the children and families. We have employed John Prent to evaluate the project.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the amazing Berrimba Community and anyone involved with Berrimba for being so supportive and understanding during this challenging crazy year. You have all been amazing while we navigated our way through a very different 2020. It will definitely be one to remember for years to come! Thank you!

Little Borpas (Babies Room)

Jennah Ferris & Molly Handy

We as educators in the little Borpas room at Berrimba believe in having a safe, warm, calming, nurturing and inviting room is so important to a child's first experience in the early years. We have enjoyed many activities in the year. These include excursions to the park, where the babies love exploring all the play equipment and running freely in a large area. We also went to the Gravity Shack. All the babies were so excited and enjoyed every minute there playing in the ball pit, going down the slides and of course practicing their jumping skills on the trampolines. Most recently, children have been very crafty, joining in on NAIDOC artwork for the art exhibition and making gorgeous Christmas craft to finish 2020.

We encourage our babies in Berrimba to become strong and independent learners, building on strengths and promoting self-agency and personal autonomy.

The Aboriginal 8 ways of learning framework is embedded into our program and planning to align with the EYLF Being, Belonging and Becoming.

Our Babies love learning their culture. This is reflected in their song and dance time and the way they have been easily learning words in language.

We have had a great year, with lots of fun, welcoming many new babies to our Berrimba family. We have enjoyed building relationships with children and families and hope to continue building partnerships next year with families and the community.

Toddlers Room

Kylie Goddard & Jasmine Roberts

Galnya yilbuga,

Here in the toddlers room, we pride ourselves on the importance of relationships and interactions through creating close, trusting, secure attachments with our children and families.

We believe it's our number one priority to always meet the needs of our children. We do this through predictability and playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy. We support and implement emotional literacy and regulation skills through co-regulation, how this looks:

- By greeting our little friends with a big warm smile, by telling them we have missed them, loving them up with lots of cuddles, rubbing their backs at sleep/rest time, throughout every conversation of the day, including – change times, meal times, assisting with putting on socks and shoes. We also implement a calmer environment by using meditation music and a diffuser, adjusting the lights according to emotions.
- We maintain eye contact, holding and rocking to regulate emotions. We ask that all adults sit with and are at the childrens' level upon entering our room. We acknowledge

childrens' efforts by providing praise and encouragement, smiling and interacting warmly. Responding and acknowledging to their emotions e.g. 'you look really sad, are you ok?' 'would you like a cuddle?' We have discussions about our big emotions and let the children know that it is ok to be feeling how they are and that there is a way they could express their feelings. We also let them know that we will wait for them when they are ready to talk or have a cuddle.

- We provide a warm and welcoming environment whilst providing a program that nurtures each child's development and incorporates culture, interests, stimulation, love and care to each toddler entrusted to us.

This year has been a difficult year with COVID-19 and the many challenges we have faced, however, we have adapted extremely well. Our toddlers have enjoyed many new experiences, this year one of them being a change of room. We now have our own yard and are enjoying our new space that includes a veggie garden and a truck area.

We have learnt about the cycle of a chook egg, incubating our own eggs at Berrimba and watching the chickens hatch out.

We love sharing music and songs – these include: Inanay Capuana, Taba Naba and Tiny Tim, these have been our favourites! We also love watching our mob on youtube singing Culture, Three Rivers Flow and Chasing Dreams.

We cant wait to begin the new year and look forward to welcoming new and existing families into our toddler room!

3-5 Year old Room – Emily Cheep

Since I started, I have built strong relationships with all the children. We have a pet turtle in our

room and the children love watching it eat, swim and get bigger. We have learnt about the life cycle of a chook, incubating the eggs, watching them hatch and seeing how quickly the baby chicks grow. All children were so excited for their Berrimba chickens. The 3-5 year old room children learnt how to be quiet and gentle while holding and petting them. We loved this so much, we grew chickens twice!

NAIDOC was a massive hit for our room, children made magical artwork for our art exhibition, enjoyed a visit to Gravity Shack to show off their jumping skills and enjoyed celebrating culture.

Some children in the 3-5 year old room have been involved in transitioning to school, meeting the teachers at Berrimba, being involved in extra transitions in the school space and being supported to feel safe and secure in their new environment.

During the hot days, you will hear the 3-5 year old room kids out enjoying the sprinklers.

All children have loved being involved in making special Christmas craft to take home.

We have all grown so much and continue to grow each day with new challenges.

After School Care & Holiday Program

Cath Andrews

Holiday Program and after school care has looked a lot different this year as many children were learning from home due to COVID-19.

We did not see our big school kids for some time which was hard as we missed them so much. We were happy when the government announced that children would be returning to onsite learning and we could get back to the new normal.

It was difficult to plan for the holiday program due to restrictions and social gatherings, seeing our holiday program capped at 10 children and finding alternative activities where we were not breaking any guidelines. Our holidays were mainly filled with bus trips to different bush's and not entering into NSW due to every child needing a permit. Were we happy to see that restriction go!

After school care children have been busy going out to Barooka to dance for NAIDOC celebrations, creating Christmas craft and enjoying the warmer weather with a lot of water/sprinkler play. The children are looking forward to the end of a busy school year with all the ups and downs of COVID-19. They are also super excited for the arrival of Santa .

We have been also busy working on our holiday program activities with some great ideas, these include: Swimming, fishing, yabbing Gravity Shack, Nyini -Gym just to name a few.

Bush Kinder

Wow what an interesting year 2020 has been for bush kinder.

We started Bush kinder with a morning tea, welcoming all families to come in, yarn with the Educators and look at the kinder room. This was a positive way to start our year and gave us the tools to begin building relationships with our kinder families. We had a very successful attendance which was fantastic.

COVID-19 did impact on our children's attendance for terms 2 and 3, and in Term 4. We have been getting back to some normality in that children are regularly attending again.

During our COVID-19 lockdown, we were able to create some positive ways to support our children and families. We made education packs and sent these home fortnightly which aligned with children's interests, building on the kinder program for children who were attending on site kinder, engaging all children in these learning experiences. We sent home texters, scissors, crayons, threading beads, lego and a lot of other items to enhance children's fine motor, a number of sensory activities to support children's sensory development, books, puzzles and activities to promote literacy and numeracy skills.

We also sent home information for families to support the emotional wellbeing for their child and themselves such as breathing techniques to help during this pandemic. I really loved this concept of sending learning packs home and will still incorporate it next year to encourage children's learning and development in their home environment also.

I called families weekly to have a yarn and check in with them all, they were all really appreciative of the calls and learning packs. I also asked them what they would like in there for their child to make it more personal for them. Through this process I was lucky to purchase a work phone which has supported me to contact families easily. Some families have sent messages to say their child is away etc. It is just another level in continuing to build and establish relationships with our families as I don't get to see many families because a lot use our bus service.

When we reopened, our numbers were low, however this worked well in supporting children's emotional wellbeing as we were able to really have some positive one on one interactions resettling children into a new kinder room.

I noticed children who were shy or struggled to play in large groups thrived through this time

and now with having most of our kids back they are leading group play and developing healthy relationships with their peers.

It was unfortunate we could not get out the bush as much as we would have liked to, however we created learning experiences using natural bush resources for children to explore e.g. ochre painting with uncle Narjiic. We incorporated koori dancing as part of our daily routine to support children's connection to culture.

Our NAIDOC videos were amazing and we received a lot of positive feedback from these which we may extend on this concept next year, with videos out the bush etc to share with families, schools and kinders to support children's transition and to feel proud when they share these with their peers in a new classroom environment.

We have been busy working closely with East Primary School and John Prent to support children's transitions as much as we can. This has been very positive, building relationships in our community to support our children.

We are thankful for all the support we have had from staff, management and community all being understanding and keeping us all safe during these crazy times.

Best Start Facilitator Mariah Johnson and Emma Taylor

Needless to say, 2020 has seen many social and health challenges for so many individuals in our community. Which in turn is shining a light on the importance of the Best Start program which is still a vital program to ensure that all Aboriginal Victorian children reach their full learning and health potential. Through Best Start, facilitators engage positively with early childhood services which are inclusive of a range of allied health services and maternal health services along with



early childhood education programs of Kindergarten and Primary school learning environments representing on behalf of individual children and their home network. The design of the Best Start program is aimed to improve the overall health, development, learning and wellbeing of all children. Equally important, is to develop strong kinships with service providers in our local community through partnership agreements ensuring that all services are striving to achieve meaningful and positive services to our children. Continuing into 2021 with the same Best Start partnership team will see bimonthly meetings take place allowing the continuation of shared ideas and potential practice solutions that can be barriers for children to access appropriate services. 2020 has seen support provided by Best Start to assist with enrolments and Birth registration which will still be a focus in best Start 2021 Logic Model.

Best Start enjoy working with a range of others Njernda services including Berrimba Childcare centre, Koori Preschool Assistant and Aboriginal Cradle to Kinder. Outside Njernda's organisation Best Start work closely with The Department of Education Victoria, Campase Shire, Victoria Aboriginal community and Services Association, Echuca Regional Health, Intereach, Shine Bright Kindergarten and Koorie Education Coordinators. Looking towards 2021 will see Best Start provide individualised supports that cater appropriately and adequately to our children to achieve the best possible outcomes.

When we reopened, our numbers were low, however this worked well in supporting children's emotional wellbeing as we were able to really have some positive one on one interactions resettling children into a new kinder room

K.P.S.A

Skye Cemino

This year we have had 42 of our children enrolled into 3 and 4 year old kinder across the region.

27 of our children will be transitioning from kinder into school in 2021 and the remaining 15 will be rolling over to 4 year old group and 2 of them will be having a second year of 4 year old kinder.

Due to COVID-19 presenting such a risk and with restrictions in place it has been challenging getting into the kindergartens around our area.

I have been supporting our families with their enrolments and additional documentations, we have also assisted with transport barriers to ensure our mob are attending their transitions to kinder and school. Due to COVID-19 I was unable to implement as many additional transitions as we would normally have with other kinders and schools.

The toddlers who will be doing bush kinder in 2021 have started their transition to Bush kinder in November the last transitional day for this mob will be the 10th of December.

I have been working in positive partnerships communicating and collaborating with DET, SHINEBRIGHT EYM, SCHOOLS, KINDERS, KESO's, BEST START to ensure the best outcomes for our mob.

Embedding and sharing our culture within programs and kinder/school environments, learning experiences, everyday language and children's interests.

I have not had the opportunity to visit/enter SHINEBRIGHT Kinders since March due to

COVID-19, however throughout this challenging time I have enjoyed joining Kinders via zoom, sharing our culture, history, learning experiences and deadly language.

In main-stream, services are doing a deadly job embedding our language within their daily practices.

Here at Berrimba the children take pride in sharing acknowledgement of country and taking turns of raising the flag. Our children are thriving in their cultural identities.

I am currently in the process of creating reward stickers to distribute and share with the schools and kinders around the region.

I am looking forward to getting back into the kindergartens around our region and supporting our mob and educators again in 2021.

Aboriginal Cradle to Kinder 2020

Kylie Russe & Tara Jane Priest

Cradle to kinder is an early intervention program, working with young mums from pregnancy through to (the youngest child) four (4) years of age.

We have a target of 18 clients (counting only the parent and not the children) between two workers Tara-Jane Priest and Kylie Russell. Families are supported intensively throughout the program and linked into services when needed, services we can link clients into include but not limited to:

- AOD counselling
- Family violence
- Family counselling
- Yakapna

- Njernda family services

- CNV

- Berrimba childcare

- Medical (including speech and hearing services)

- Best start

- KPSA

- SAAP

- Early years clinic (Maternity project worker, MCHN, doctors)

- Enhanced Maternity Program (Through ERH)

- Lead Practitioner (working on attachment, routine and parenting needs)

2020 Started well with play group moving back into Berrimba with families excited to come, due to COVID-19 our play group ceased. We are hoping to start this back up in 2021.

C2K hosted the Baby Welcome to Country this year, the Boorai's were welcomed with a smoking ceremony by Uncle Rick Ronnan and presented with a possum skin, headband, certificate, clap sticks for the girls and a didgeridoo for the boys made by Yorta Yorta man Arron Nicholls. The Boorai's were presented with a certificate by Aunty Vicki Walker. Thank you to Narjiic and the Berrimba kinder children for participating in the event with dancing and singing.

Lead Practitioner

Anne Luke

The Lead Practitioner position is to work with Parents, family members, and Staff on a one on

one basis to assist them to develop a deeper understanding of the development of their children's brains and internal workings. This work gives children within the early years an opportunity to achieve optimal development outcomes. My work is around the caregivers as the key to developing relationships that repair and restore children in the early years from the effects of Trauma.

The Lead Practitioner works with Parents and main caregivers (Early Years Staff) and their individual capacity to develop reflective practice. This means they begin to develop the ability to acknowledge their past experiences and the experiences of the children they are caring for.

The Lead Practitioner works alongside Parents and Early Years staff to gain a greater understanding of Secure Attachment with children and how this promotes intimate connection in the early years which leads into friendships into adulthood.

The Lead Practitioner has consistently worked alongside other outside services and have professionally consulted, completed observation, provided supporting documentation for funding, and assisted in the reunification of Parents and children.

2020 Started well with play group moving back into Berrimba with families excited to come, due to COVID-19 our play group ceased. We are hoping to start this back up in 2021.



Baroona Youth Healing Centre is a 16 week residential healing Journey, which hosts a number of programs which aim to reduce alcohol and drug use among young Aboriginal males 13 – 17 in the Echuca and surrounding areas by providing a safe and culturally-specific healing environment.

Baroona Youth Healing Centre has the availability of 6 beds.

Young Aboriginal youth who attended Baroona: 14

Youth Successfully completed Program: 13

Currently we have 4 residents in the program.

Current Staff at Baroona Youth Healing Place:

Manager: Simone Ronnan

Senior Project Manager: Sally Olle

Team Leader: Brodie Dorgan – Mark Colville - Acting

Full Time Shift Workers:

Mark Colville, Darcy Ronnan, Brody Atkinson, Noel Scott, Uncle Des Morgan, Uncle Rob Saunders, Jirrah Day, Dean Kruger

Casual Workers:

Brendan Emmerson, Craig Bernotti, Jamie Wright

Baroona offers the following programs:

- Cultural Healing
- Gym Sessions
- Martial Arts
- AOD Counselling
- Mental Health Clinician
- Individual Counselling
- Group Counselling
- Chiropractic Care
- Nutritional Guidance
- Music Programs
- Woodwork/Arts and crafts
- Lifestyle skills
- Literacy & Numeracy

Training:

Baroona Staff have completed the following training:

- Certificate IV in child, youth, and family intervention
- Above and below the line behaviours
- First Aid course
- COVID 19 Training

OHS

- Brody Atkinson – OHS Representative
- Jamie Wright – OHS Deputy

Accreditation:

Baroona team have been working with Karen the compliance coordinator to ensure accreditation is up to standard.



CORPORATE SERVICES REPORT

TRISH WILLIAMS

HUMAN SERVICES

As per our policy statement:

The Njernda Aboriginal Corporation aims to recruit, select, and appoint staff who have values and attributes that are consistent with the organisation's directions and culture, and who will help the organisation achieve its strategic direction.

The objectives of the Njernda Aboriginal Corporation Staff Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy are to:

- Attract and retain good quality staff by positioning the organisation as an 'employer of choice'.
- Ensure equitable, transparent, timely and fair recruitment practices.
- Appoint the most suitable person for the position, based on careful and consistent application of the principle of merit.
- Comply with legal requirements and good practice human resource management principles.

Since taking on this role earlier this year there have been many challenges that we have had to overcome. COVID-19 being the biggest challenge that impacted on our work environment and staff morale. I am pleased to say that as an organisation we coped quite well, and most staff are now back working in the office.

The Corporate Services staff worked from home for several months and during this time we also packed up and moved to another work sight.

During this past year we have engaged Employure who provide employment relations and work health and safety advice. We have had some challenging staff issues this year, and Employure have provided sound advice and support on all aspects of the Fair Work Act and National Employment Standards which covers Employment Relations, Work Health and Safety and the compliance requirements under industry awards.

We have also engaged Happy HR a software business that assists organisations such as ours to stay compliant with HR processes. We are still in the early stages of inviting all staff to this system and once completed staff will be able to access the benefits of Happy HR.

There has certainly been challenges with retaining and recruiting qualified staff this past year. We have been fortunate however, that community members are returning home to Echuca and are taking up positions with Njernda. Some of these positions are at senior levels and will allow for them to take up Management positions in the future.

We currently have 143 staff, with an Aboriginal Employment rate of 64%.

Staff turnover rate for this past year has been 25%.

We have employed 27 staff during the past year, 17 being Aboriginal.

There have been 10 new positions in the past year and several student placements.



Finance

Our finance area has undergone a new restructure and staff are more confident and comfortable in their new roles. We have currently engaged the services for 1 day a week of Trevor Borg – Accountant from Peats Accounting Firm. Trevor has been instrumental in the re-structuring of the finance area, also working with all Managers to assist them with their budgets.

Accreditation/Compliance and Administration Officer

We are in the process of preparing for our full accreditation which takes place in January 2020.

We have been working alongside other programs to ensure that they are on track to meet the required standards for the accreditation.

Information Technology

It's been very challenging during the past few months with the resignation of our IT Officer.

We have now engaged a fully qualified IT Administrator who has taken on the role under very difficult circumstances due to a backlog of IT issues.

Training, Learning and Development Officer

Training continues to take place across the whole of Njernda.

Online training became necessary due to COVID, and staff were able to do additional training when working from home. The training office also concentrated on mandatory training due to the upcoming accreditation.



**NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 1274
ABN 17 334 858 388**

DIRECTORS' REPORT

Your directors present their report on the corporation for the financial year ended 30 June 2020.

Directors

The names of the directors in office at anytime during or since the end of the year are:

Richard Ronnan
Denise Morgan-Bulled (resigned 28/05/20)
Gordon Johnson (resigned 24/01/20)
Barbara Day
Kelli Bartlett
Paul Clark
Sonia McLaughlin(re -elected 24/01/20. resigned 11/08/20)
Nolita Edwards(elected 24/01/20. resigned 26/05/20)
Wayne Cawley (appointed 17/06/20)
Judith Atkinson(appointed 17/06/20)

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

Review of Operations

The profit of the corporation for the financial year after providing for income tax amounted to \$640,317.

A review of the operations of the corporation during the financial year and the results of those operations are as follows:

Significant Changes in the State of Affairs

No significant changes in the corporation's state of affairs occurred during the financial year.

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the corporation during the financial year were:

Provision of health, social and welfare services to the Aboriginal communitiy.

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the financial year.

Events Subsequent to the End of the Reporting Period

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the corporation, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the corporation in future financial years.

Likely Developments and Expected Results of Operations

Likely developments in the operations of the corporation and the expected results of those operations in future financial years have not been included in this report as the inclusion of such information is likely to result in unreasonable prejudice to the company.

Environmental Regulation

The corporation's operations are not regulated by any significant environmental regulation under a law of the Commonwealth or of the State.

**NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 1274
ABN 17 334 858 388**

DIRECTORS' REPORT

Indemnification of Officers

Proceedings on Behalf of Corporation

No person has applied for leave of court to bring proceedings on behalf of the corporation or intervene in any proceedings to which the corporation is a party for the purpose of taking responsibility on behalf of the corporation for all or part of those proceedings.

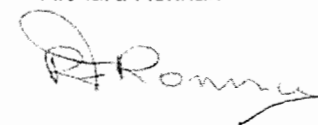
The corporation was not a party to any such proceedings during the year.

Auditor's Independence Declaration

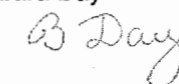
A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under Section 307C of the Corporations Act 2001 and the Corporations(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) act 2006 is attached to this financial report.

This directors' report is signed in accordance with a resolution of the board of directors:

Director Richard Ronnan



Director Barbara Day



Dated: 14-Dec-20

**NJERnda ABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 1274
ABN 17 334 858 388**

**INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue	2	14,116,804	13,760,859
Other income	2	845,730	746,801
Employee benefits expense		(9,542,898)	(8,335,824)
Impairment losses from financial assets		(10,836)	-
Depreciation and amortisation expenses		(336,729)	(279,715)
Finance costs	3	(1,837)	-
Other expenses		<u>(4,429,917)</u>	<u>(3,624,364)</u>
Profit before income tax	3	640,317	2,267,757
Tax expense		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Profit for the year		<u><u>640,317</u></u>	<u><u>2,267,757</u></u>
Profit attributable to member of the corporation		<u><u>640,317</u></u>	<u><u>2,267,757</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**NJERnda ABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 1274
ABN 17 334 858 388**

**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Profit for the year		640,317	2,267,757
Other comprehensive income:			
Profit on revaluation of assets	10		<u>1,755,655</u>
Total other comprehensive income for the year		<u>-</u>	<u>1,755,655</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year		<u><u>640,317</u></u>	<u><u>4,023,412</u></u>
Total comprehensive income attributable to member of the corporation		<u><u>640,317</u></u>	<u><u>4,023,412</u></u>

NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 1274
ABN 17 334 858 388

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 30 JUNE 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	8,159,101	6,182,777
Trade and other receivables	6	1,582,753	511,991
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>9,741,854</u>	<u>6,694,768</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	7	14,617,240	14,224,556
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		<u>14,617,240</u>	<u>14,224,556</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>24,359,094</u>	<u>20,919,324</u>
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	8	6,881,881	4,514,898
Provisions	9	1,001,464	865,850
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>7,883,345</u>	<u>5,380,748</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	9	488,130	191,275
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>488,130</u>	<u>191,275</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>8,371,475</u>	<u>5,572,023</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>15,987,619</u>	<u>15,347,301</u>
EQUITY			
Reserves	10	8,795,033	8,795,033
Retained earnings		7,192,586	6,552,268
TOTAL EQUITY		<u>15,987,619</u>	<u>15,347,301</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 1274
ABN 17 334 858 388

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

		Retained Earnings \$	Reserves \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2018		4,284,511	7,039,377	11,323,888
Comprehensive income				
Profit for the year		2,267,757	-	2,267,757
Other comprehensive income for the year	10	-	1,755,654	1,755,654
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to the member of the corporation		<u>2,267,757</u>	<u>1,755,654</u>	<u>4,023,411</u>
Transactions with the owner, in capacity as owner and other transfers				
Other				
Balance at 30 June 2019		<u>6,552,268</u>	<u>8,795,033</u>	<u>15,347,302</u>
Balance at 1 July 2019		6,552,269	8,795,033	15,347,302
Comprehensive income				
Profit for the year		640,317	-	640,317
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to the member of the corporation		<u>640,317</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>640,317</u>
Balance at 30 June 2020		<u>7,192,586</u>	<u>8,795,033</u>	<u>15,987,619</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 1274
ABN 17 334 858 388**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipt of grants		12,429,778	12,369,158
Other income		2,528,514	2,131,935
Payments to suppliers and employees		(12,256,797)	(10,725,615)
Interest received		4,242	6,566
Net cash provided by operating activities	14	2,705,737	3,782,044
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payment for property, plant and equipment		(729,413)	(2,313,616)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		(729,413)	(2,313,616)
Net cash provided by financing activities		-	-
Net increase in cash held		1,976,324	1,468,428
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		6,182,777	4,714,349
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	14	8,159,101	6,182,777

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 1274
ABN 17 334 858 388**

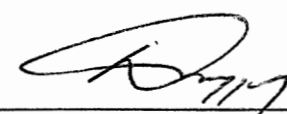
**AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION UNDER
SECTION 307C OF THE CORPORATIONS ACT 2001**

**TO THE DIRECTORS OF
NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 1274**

In accordance with section 307C of the Corporations Act 2001 and section 339-50 of the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) act 2006, I am pleased to provide the following declaration of independence to the directors of NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 1274. As the lead audit partner for the audit of the financial report of NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION ICN 1274 for the year ended 30 June 2020, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of:

- No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act 2001 and the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) act 2006 in relation to the audit; and
- No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

RP & RG Pty Ltd T/As Wyndham Audit
Chartered Accountant
78 Wyndham Street
Shepparton, VIC, 3630


Director: Russell Guppy

Shepparton

Dated: 15 December 2020

NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Njernda Aboriginal Corporation

ICN: 1274

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Time: 4.17pm
Date: Friday 24 January 2020
Place: Echuca/Moama Uniting Church 115-117 Hare Street Echuca
Chair: Kelli Bartlett
Minute Taker: Michelle Scali

Agenda item 1: Chairpersons Welcome

Kelli Bartlett welcomed community to the Annual General Meeting and acknowledged the traditional owners. The meeting was declared open at 4.17pm and a quorum was present.

Ms K Bartlett also acknowledged the contribution of former staff members, Karlene Mitchell and John Mitchell, and wished them well for the future. Ms K Bartlett’s report noted that it had been a busy year for Njernda and there have been some major changes, and there has been a lot of achievements made in a short period of time.

Agenda item 2: Attendance & Apologies

2.1 Attendees as per list

	Name:	Member/Non Member
1	Howard Armstrong	Member
2	Bruce Atkinson	Member
3	Clive Atkinson	Member
4	Colin Atkinson	Member
5	Colleen Atkinson	Member
6	Desmond Atkinson	Member
7	Judith Atkinson	Member
8	Brody Atkinson	Member
9	Neva Atkinson	Member
10	Shelley Atkinson	Member
11	Kenneth Atkinson	Member
12	Wade Austin	Member
13	Mirissa Bamblett	Member
14	Kelli Bartlett	Member
15	Yazmine Bausch	Member

NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION

16	Brandon Bausch	Member
17	Cora Best	Member
18	Jamiah Clarke	Member
19	Eisha Clarke	Member
20	Christopher Cooper	Member
21	Leona Cooper	Member
22	Sissy Cooper	Member
23	Byork Cooper	Member
24	Debra Cowley	Member
25	Colleen Day	Member
26	Janice Day	Member
27	Jirrah Day	Member
28	Koorine Day	Member
29	Muriel Day	Member
30	Stuart Day	Member
31	Gladý’s Docherty	Member
32	Turilwa Dodds	Member
33	Nicole Cooper	Member
34	Mick Cannon	Non-Voting-Member
35	Arthur Edwards Snr	Member
36	Nolita Edwards	Member
37	Teresa Edwards	Member
38	Timani Edwards	Member
39	Kyle Egan	Member
40	Joan Firebrace	Member
41	Norma Firebrace	Member
42	Alice Giles	Member
43	Garry Giles	Member
44	Verona Giles	Member
45	Vivianne Giles	Member
46	Fay Halatanu	Member
47	Baymos Handy	Member
48	Janelle Handy	Member
49	Molly Handy	Member
50	Montana Handy	Member
51	Shirley Handy	Member
52	Felicity Hawkett	Member
53	Mayson Hawkett	Member
54	Gail Hearn	Member
55	Keith Hearn	Member
56	Kristie Hearn	Member
57	Lynette Hearn	Member
58	Sheadeen Hearn	Member
59	Hazel Hudson	Member
60	Laura Hudson	Member
61	Phillip Hudson	Member
62	Lani Hudson	Member
63	Theresa Jasper	Member
64	Gordon Johnson	Member
65	Sharlene Johnson	Member
66	Adam Kissell	Member
67	Caitlyn Kissell	Member

NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION

68	Bradley McGrath	Member
69	Darren McGrath	Member
70	Taylah McGrath	Member
71	Sonia McLaughlin	Member
72	Jennifer Mitchell	Member
73	Tomothy Mitchell	Member
74	Vicki Mitchell	Member
75	Felicia Morgan	Member
76	Tamika Morgan	Member
77	Tracey Morrison	Member
78	Rual Munatunga	Member
79	Merring Jippa-Murray	Member
80	Merinda Nikkelson	Member
81	Sonya Parsons	Member
82	Rachael Thomas	Member
83	Darcy Ronnan	Member
84	Joyce Ronnan – Warde	Member
85	Richard Ronnan	Member
86	Simone Ronnan	Member
87	Richard R Ronnan	Member
88	Tania Rose	Member
89	Robert Russell	Member
90	Christine Ryan	Member
91	Michael Saunders	Member
92	Robert Saunders	Member
93	Noel Scott	Member
94	Zeke Scott	Member
95	Jess Smith	Member
96	Rachael Stewart	Member
97	Nola Talent	Member
98	Maureen Tang	Member
99	Jennifer Schiminello	Non- Voting Member
100	Anthony Russell	Member
101	Diane Taylor	Member
102	Paula Thomas	Member
103	Melissa Tracey	Member
104	Rebecca Tracey	Member
105	Donna Trimble	Member
106	Jamie Trimble	Member
107	Aaron Wallace	Member
108	Donna Walsh	Member
109	Jane Walsh	Member
110	Renee Walsh	Member
111	Trevor Walsh	Member
112	Gilbert Wanganeen	Member
113	Khayla Wanganeen	Member
114	Lee Wanganeen	Member
115	Teagan Wanganeen	Member
116	Alkina Wilkinson	Member
117	Brayden Williams	Member
118	Denise Williams	Member
119	Kevin Williams	Member

NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION

120	Tamba Wordly	Member
121	Dion Williams	Member
122	Nadine Wright	Member
123	Diana Stephenson	Visitor – Non Member
124	Russell Guppy	Visitor- Non Member
125	Michelle Scali	Visitor- Non Member

2.2 Apologies
Aunty Barb Day, Paul Clarke, Wayne Cowley Junior, Karlene Dwyer, Leon Handy, Joe Day, Aunty Melva Johnson, Kasey Johnson.

Agenda item 3: Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising
The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 30 January 2019, as set out in pages 4-7 of the Annual Report. Please note the date of the minutes reads that the AGM was Friday 29th January which was a typo.

3.1 Confirmation of minutes
Proposed resolution: That the minutes of the general meeting held on 30 Jan 2019 be accepted as true and correct.

Moved by: Gail Hearn

Seconded by: Simone Ronnan

Decision: Resolution carried

3.2 Matters arising from the previous minutes
NIL

3.3 Action items from previous minutes
NIL

Agenda item 4: Finance/Audit Report:
Copies of the financial report are available on page 19 in the tabled Annual Report. Mr Russell Guppy noted that \$1.9million had been spent on the purchase of the primary school which is being developed for Njernda Family Services. The Meeting noted since settlement and further inspection this building was found to have asbestos. A firm has been engaged to remove the asbestos. Early planning with the architect is underway.

Questions: The chair invited all those present to ask questions about how the corporation is managed.

Shirley Handy asked what is happening with the 208 building as we have spent \$1.9M. AW mentioned that the building was under renovation and subject to asbestos removal.

Proposed resolution: That the audit report delivered by Mr Russell Guppy be accepted

Moved by: Gail Hearn

Seconded by: Fay Halatanu

Decision: Resolution carried

NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Appointment of auditor:

Proposed resolution:	That Wyndam group be appointed as the corporation’s auditor for the year ended 30 June 2020
Moved by:	Felicia Morgan
Seconded by:	Sonia McLaughlin
Decision:	Resolution Carried

Agenda item 5/6: CEO / Corporation Reports

Interim Chief Executive, Mr Aaron Wallace read his report including key program and management highlights. Following a question, the meeting attendees were advised the position of Chief Executive Officer of Njernda Aboriginal Corporation will be advertised in the near future. Community members in attendance asked about the new Family Services Building, and it was noted that the building process will take approximately 5 weeks to complete once approvals are in place. The position of youth support worker will also be advertised.

Mr A Wallace’s report is available on from page 11 of the distributed Annual Report.

Ms Hazel Hudson, Family Services Manager spoke to her report and received questions. Ms H Hudson’s read is available from page 34 of the distributed Annual Report.

A full report on all services is available in the Annual Report.

Questions: The chair invited all those present to ask questions

SH asked who Joe Day was and questioned why he was paid by the organisation and asked that his position be reviewed.

The CEO responded that Njernda was one of the only organisations that had a fully funded position as a pastor. He advised uncle Joe works a lot for the community with funerals etc.

KE questioned the medical clinic and asked if they were getting any more Doctors

Kelli Bartlett responded that it is hard to get Doctors to come to Echuca. She advised that she acknowledged a shortage and would try to get extra GP’s moving forward.

CEO report

Document/s tabled: Mr Wallace’s report is available from page 11 of the distributed Annual Report.

Proposed resolution:	That the CEO report be accepted for the year ended June 2019
Moved by	Sonia Parsons
Seconded by	Debra Cowley

NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Decision:	Resolution carried
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Agenda item 7: Election of directors

Expiring/vacant directorships

The chair advised that the terms of appointment for the following people have expired:

- Sonia McLaughlin
- Gordon Johnson

Nominations

The chair advised that nominations in writing were received prior to the meeting for the following people.

- Judy Atkinson
- Sonia McLaughlin
- Shirley Handy
- Laura Hudson
- Emma Lou Harrison Egan
- Tegan Wanganeen
- Tracey Morrison
- Nolita Edwards
- Christopher Cooper
- Teresa Jasper
- Fay Atkinson-Halatanu

Result

An election was held by Ballot papers: The following people were elected as directors:

- Sonia McLaughlin
- Nolita Edwards

Agenda item 8: General Business

The chair invited all those present to raise any matters of relevance that may have not been dealt with on the agenda.

NIL general business was recorded

Agenda item 9: Next meeting / Meeting close

The next meeting of members will be held within five months after the end of the corporation’s next financial year. The directors will determine the time, date and location closer to the date and issue a notice.

The meeting was declared closed at 5.28pm

NJERNDABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Confirmation of the minutes- Minutes to be accepted at the 2020 AGM

These minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed by:

..... (signature) (name) (date)

Services

MEDICAL CENTRE 84 Hare Street, Echuca Phone: 03 5480 6252 Option 1 Fax: 03 5480 6116 In case of emergency please call 000 or visit Echuca Regional Hospital, Service Street, Echuca	BERRIMBA CHILD CARE CENTRE 94 Hare Street, Echuca Phone: 03 5480 6252 Option 5 Fax: 03 5480 2595 BAROONA YOUTH HEALING CENTRE Murray Valley Highway, Echuca Phone: 03 5481 3100 Fax: 03 5480 9522
NJERNDABEING CENTRE 86 Hare Street, Echuca Phone: 03 5480 6252 Option 1	YAKAPNA HEALING CENTRE C/O 103-109 High Street (Rear), Echuca (Old Primary School 208) Phone: (03) 5480 6252 Option 4
FAMILY SERVICES 103-109 Hare Street, Echuca (Old Primary School 208) Phone: 03 5480 6252 Option 3 Fax: 03 5482 1066	CORPORATE SERVICES (ADMIN & FINANCE) 34 Annesley Street Echuca Phone: (03) 5480 6252 Option 2
YOUTH, RESIDENTIAL & JUSTICE SERVICES 103-109 High Street (Rear), Echuca (Old Primary School 208) Phone: (03) 5480 6252 Option 4	NYINI HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTRE Unit 2/55 McMillan Road, Echuca Opening soon

“We respectfully acknowledge The Wollithiga and Yorta
Yorta Peoples as the traditional custodians of the
land of the communities that the Njernda Aboriginal
Corporation service”



Njernda

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

to know our living Culture

Produced by Njernda Aboriginal Corporation

Location 84 Hare St, Echuca VIC 3564

Phone 03 5480 6252

Website www.njernda.com.au

Email reception@njernda.com.au