



WINDA-MARA

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Annual Report

2024 - 2025



Contents

Who we are	4
Our Vision & Values	5
Chairperson's Report	6
Board of Directors	7
CEO Report	8
Strategic Plan	10
Social Media & Communications	11
Corporate Services	12
Quality Management	12
Governance	13
People & Culture	13
Infrastructure Assets Maintenance	14
Winda-Mara Housing Program	15
Our Organisation	16
Community, Wellbeing & Cultural Services	17
Community Services	18
Health	28
Family Services	32
Budj Bim Rangers	38
Financial Report	40
Partners & Supporters	42
Yarn with us	43

Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge the land which we live and work on – Gunditjmara Mirring (Country) and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We build on the work of our Ancestors and Elders to create a better future for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community.

Disclaimer

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be advised that the following document may contain images of deceased peoples.

Who we are

Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation (Winda-Mara) is a proud community-controlled organisation based in South-West Victoria, with offices in Heywood, Hamilton and Portland.

Established in 1991 by local Aboriginal community members who were determined to create better outcomes in health, education, and employment, Winda-Mara has grown into a respected and trusted voice in the region.

For over 30 years, we have walked alongside our community delivering culturally safe services, strengthening identity, and building pathways to opportunity.

Today, we employ over 80 staff, with 62% identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, reflecting our deep commitment to Aboriginal leadership and self-determination.

Our services continue to support positive change across generations by improving access to health care, creating stronger educational and employment outcomes, and fostering connection to culture and Country.

We take pride in being part of a resilient and vibrant community where culture is strong, voices are heard, and families are supported to thrive.

Every step forward is a reflection of community strength, cultural pride, and the determination to build a better future for generations to come.



Our Vision

Our vision is that Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation is recognised as a progressive leader for positive change enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria's far South-West to lead fuller lives.

Our Values

Our values and behaviours prepares us for sustainable success with our vision, our communities and each person.

Professionalism

Acting and practicing in a cultural, ethical, respectful, and inclusive manner

Responsiveness

Responding in a timely, engaging, respectful and culturally appropriate manner

Empowerment

Building, strengthening and empowering individual and community decision making

Partnership

Creating better client outcomes through strong partnerships

Accountable

Responsible monitoring and reporting systems ensuring transparent and accountable service delivery

Respect

Respect for those clients, work colleagues, community members and others that we meet and work with each day

Effectiveness

Effective 'results orientated' services meeting the needs of the community

Social Justice

Providing justice, equity, social equality, and human rights

Ngataniwarr,

On behalf of the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation Board of Directors, I would like to acknowledge the work we do on Gunditjmarra Country, I also acknowledge the Gunditjmarra people and pay my respects to Elders, past and present.

The Board continues to be proud of the work of Winda-Mara and is delighted to present the 2024–25 Annual Report, which provides an insight into the many highlights and achievements captured through our programs, initiatives, and events.

Our deadly Board includes Uncle Michael (Mookeye) Bell, Aunty Judy Powell, Staycee Charles, Braydon Saunders, Jakobe Walker, and Jacinta Kimber, who have during my first term as Chairperson provided me with great support, guidance, and confidence through their knowledge, passion, and impartiality.

Over the past 12 months, Winda-Mara has achieved many milestones, including expanding services, improving infrastructure, strengthening recruitment and retention, updating systems, and supporting our community to participate and achieve their goals. We continue to grow our reputation as a true Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, dedicated to practising self-determination in all that we do.

Two highlights from the year that stand out to me are the Koondoom Yarkeen Karweeyn Dance Group and our NAIDOC Week celebrations. The foundations for Koondoom Yarkeen began in February 1995 in the backyard of Winda-Mara, Heywood. Thirty years later, it continues to showcase and share culture with the wider community, with up to three generations of families strengthening their identity through the support of Winda-Mara and their families. We also celebrated another fantastic NAIDOC Week, led once again by our staff and community. Together, we embodied this year's theme 'Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud' through a week full of deadly events and somehow we continue to equal, if not better, the previous year's celebrations.

The Board thanks our staff for their dedication, our community for their engagement, and our stakeholders for their continued support over the past 12 months.



Troy Lovett
Chairperson

Board of Directors

CHAIRPERSON

Troy Lovett | Gunditjmarra

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

Uncle Michael Bell | Gunditjmarra

Aunty Judith Powell | Gunditjmarra

Staycee Charles | Gunditjmarra

Braydon Saunders | Gunditjmarra

Jakobe Walker | Gunditjmarra

RESIGNED JANUARY 2025

Jacinta Kimber | Gunditjmarra

Ngata,

I would like to acknowledge the Gunditjmara People, the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters on which we have the pleasure of living and working. I pay respect to our Elders, past and present.

I hope you enjoy our 2024-25 Annual Report. It captures another effective year of the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation addressing issues impacting Aboriginal People by providing Aboriginal people appropriate services, opportunities to strengthen cultural identity, community engagement initiatives, and capacity-building options for community in the far South West to live fuller lives.

Strengthening services, culture and community

Despite major impacts of the failed Yes Referendum, communities recovering from the COVID pandemic, State Government curbing spending and the costs of living impacting the state over the last five years, Winda-Mara continues to evolve by strengthening our services and reputation with our commitment to our wrap around services for our community.

Winda-Mara continues to adapt to the changing Aboriginal affairs environment with a focus on enhanced participation at statewide partnership forums, local and regional meetings, commitment to stakeholder initiatives and engagement with, but not limited to, the upcoming Treaty, Yoorrook and social housing opportunities.

Building strong foundations for community impact

In 2024-25, we completed the building of our new Heywood medical centre and will soon commence the renovation our Hamilton clinic. We've completed our new landscape project at 21 Scott Street, purchased a modern building to accommodate our Hamilton community and family services staff within metres of our

Thompson Street medical clinic, upgraded our use of systems including Employment Hero, Xero Finance System, launched LogiQC, expanded our Winda-Mara Housing Limited portfolio, skilled recruitment of new staff, along with providing community members meaningful opportunities within the workplace. And at the same time, we continue to advocate strategically and strongly for our community. This is only possible due to committed Directors, community, staff and stakeholders.

Planning for the future: our Strategic Plan

To ensure we hold ourselves accountable to deliver an agile, culturally appropriate and professional service to our community, we have worked tirelessly to consult and develop our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan.

This plan has been shaped to leverage off the hard work and success of Winda-Mara's previous decades and we will be utilising this five-year plan to further strengthen the Winda-Mara journey for future generations.

Each of our program areas have aligned their actions and timelines to our strategic plan themes of Nurturing Culture, Country and Identity, Caring for Our People, Growing Our Organisation, and Self-Determining Our Future.

We have created a productive accountability mechanism to ensure we complete Strategic Plan actions while fulfilling our employment responsibilities.

This plan will be implemented by individual staff members, teams, program areas, operations and the Board as we work towards the betterment of Winda-Mara and our community.

A year of growth, pride and community impact

Our organisation continues to provide opportunities for our community to address their needs through our services, engaging with our programs to strengthen their social emotional wellbeing, and participate in initiatives outside our organisation.

In the last twelve months we have continued to sponsor teams competing in statewide Aboriginal sporting carnivals and celebrated their success. We proudly support local sports clubs and our mob playing representative sports at local, regional, state and national level. Our deadly cultural dance group, which was formed in the Winda-Mara backyard, turned 30 years old and continues to provide our young people an opportunity to continue to share our culture. We continue to acknowledge our students graduating from primary and secondary school and are immensely proud of their achievements.

We are proud that five of our seven Board of Directors are under the age of 40 years old, being guided and supported by two very experienced Board Members, both possessing knowledge that is second to none.

In early 2025, we re-established the Hamilton Aboriginal Community Leadership Group following community consultations and an election process to strengthen the voice of the Hamilton community.

In the 2024-25 financial year, Winda-Mara peaked at 94 employees. We have increased our support for our staff through improved systems, monthly All-Staff Stand-Up information gatherings, access to Employee Assistance Program, two All-Staff In-services, and regular team and program area meetings.

Thank you and preparing for 35 years strong

On behalf of Winda-Mara, I want to thank community and clients for your engagement and support. I'd also like to sincerely thank the Board, staff and stakeholders for their hard work, dedication and passion to make the 2024-25 year a very productive and enjoyable 12 months.

In the next financial year, we will celebrate our 35th year. We will utilise that year to focus on key moments, people and initiatives that have shaped Winda-Mara to the successful organisation it is today.

We look forward to sharing the journey of our 2025-26 achievements with you this time next year.

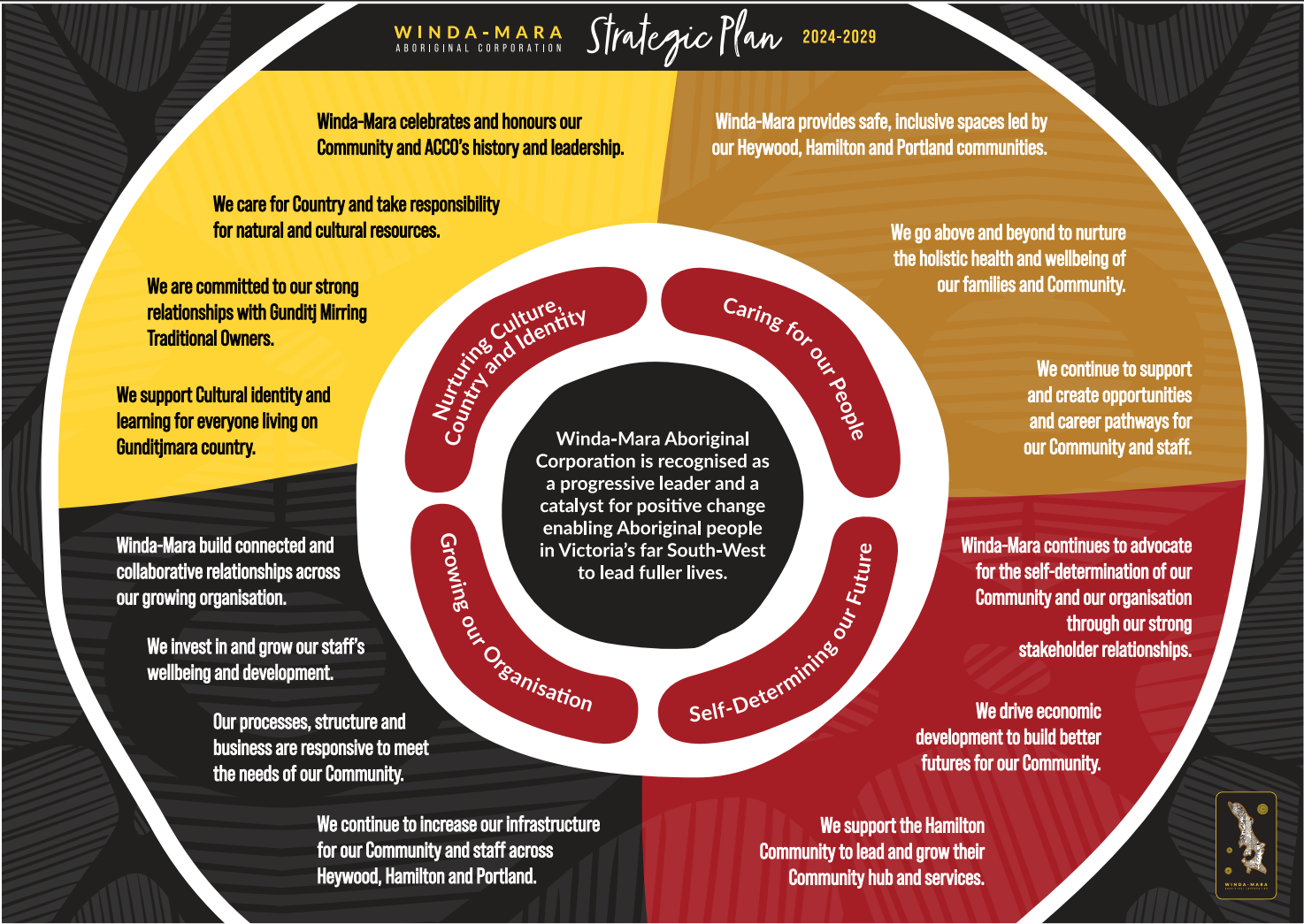
Wurruk,



Johnny Bell

Chief Executive Officer

Strategic Plan



The Winda-Mara Strategic Plan 2024-29 will guide our organisation over the next five years, building on more than three decades of service and preparing the organisation for the future.

Developed in collaboration with Create Space Consultancy and informed by the voices of our community, staff, and leadership, the plan is framed by four central themes:

- 1. **Nurturing Culture, Country and Identity**
- 2. **Caring for Our People**
- 3. **Growing Our Organisation**
- 4. **Self-Determining Our Future**

Each department will implement an Action Plan aligned with these themes to ensure delivery of measurable outcomes, transparency, and continued accountability.

Social Media & Communications

f FACEBOOK 3,253 followers

Posts	427	↑ 18%
Reach	54,722	↑ 38.4%
Interactions	9,352	↑ 79.5%
Visits	24,157	↑ 26%
Link clicks	677	↑ 11.3%
Follows	312	↓ 0.6%
Views (Jan-Jun 2025)	254,470	

Instagram 504 followers

Posts	369	↑ 17.5%
Reach	4,924	↑ 265%
Interactions	686	↑ 100%
Visits	974	↑ 10.8%
Link clicks	39	↓ 15.2%
Follows	121	↑ 27%
Views (Jan-Jun 2025)	35,237	

290k
views

60k
reach

33k
visitors

Some of our most popular posts this year were those celebrating the achievements of our mob including Winda-Mara being honoured with a Wurreeker Award, our NAIDOC Week highlights, the opening of our new Medical Centre, our young mob being recognised at the Ricci Marks Awards, and winning Best Float at the Wood, Wine & Roses Festival.

These moments, along with community events like National Sorry Day, were some of our most shared posts, showing how proud our mob is to spread the word and keep community connected and informed.



WINDAMARA.COM.AU 7,740 visitors, 444 returning

A strong number of returning visitors to our website shows that community members are regularly coming back to stay updated, access support, and stay connected with our services and events.

Our Employment page was the third most visited on our website, showing strong interest from community members in job opportunities and being part of the Winda-Mara team.

Our Health/Medical page was one of the most visited in 2024-25, showing how important access to local healthcare information is to our mob.

POPULAR PAGES

Home	5,549
Contact	1,618
Employment	1,326
Health	751
About	731

Corporate Services

Finance
Human Resources
Quality and Governance

Safety
Information Technology
Media and Communications

Strategy and Project Management
Facilities Management
Housing Program

Strengthening governance and internal systems

During the 2024–25 financial year, the department focused on strengthening internal management systems, embedding strong governance frameworks, and enhancing corporate performance across the organisation. These improvements have created a more resilient foundation for future growth and effective service delivery.

Winda-Mara remains committed to reviewing systems, investing in appropriate technologies, and applying best-practice processes to ensure efficiency, accountability, and cultural integrity across all operations.

Building a resilient foundation for future growth

The Corporate Services team will continue to strengthen organisational foundations through robust governance, strategic planning and quality management.

With the endorsement of the Strategic Plan 2024–29, the rollout of departmental Action Plans, and the integration of the LogiQC system, Winda-Mara is well positioned to deliver on its vision of strong, healthy, and self-determined Guditjmarra communities.

Quality Management

High standards of quality management remain at the core of Winda-Mara's operations. Accreditation provides assurance to funding bodies, community, and stakeholders that our services are safe, effective, and professionally managed.

In November 2023, Winda-Mara achieved ISO 9000:2016 Quality Management Accreditation for Human Services Standards—an important milestone demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement.

The Quality Control Committee oversees governance of quality across the organisation, ensuring accountability, compliance, and a strong culture of improvement.

A major initiative in 2024 was the implementation of the LogiQC Quality Management System (QMS). This system has transformed the way Winda-Mara manages quality and compliance by providing a centralised platform for:

- Tracking and managing risks, incidents, and audits.
- Monitoring continuous improvement initiatives.
- Enhancing transparency and accountability in reporting.
- Supporting staff with accessible and streamlined quality processes.

These improvements have strengthened governance, reduced risks, and enhanced client satisfaction across services.

Winda-Mara continues to maintain multiple accreditations and registrations, including:

- ISO 9000:2016 Quality Management Accreditation
- Human Service Standards (HSS)
- RACGP Accreditation for GP Practice
- Registered Community Service Organisation (DHHS)
- Commonwealth Home Support Program – Home Care Standards Accreditation

Governance

Winda-Mara is governed by a dedicated Board of Directors, supported by management and staff, in line with the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (CATSI Act)* and other relevant Commonwealth and State requirements.

The Board plays a central role in providing leadership, setting strategic direction, and ensuring compliance with regulatory and statutory obligations.

Over the past year, the Board has prioritised:

Strong governance practices to guide sustainable growth

Transparent decision-making through regular and well-facilitated Board meetings

Financial and risk oversight, supported by the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC)

Strategic planning to align organisational direction with community aspirations

The Board of Directors has formally endorsed the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation Strategic Plan 2024–29. Executive Management will now lead the development of departmental Action Plans to ensure alignment with the Strategic Plan and accountability for outcomes.

People & Culture

The People and Culture unit is responsible for the strategic and operational management of the entire employee lifecycle at Winda-Mara. This includes recruitment and onboarding, training and development, compensation and payroll, performance management, workforce culture, Fair Work legislative compliance, work health and safety, and industrial relations.

Throughout 2024–25, the focus has been on implementing new systems and processes while maintaining high levels of support to staff and leaders. These changes ensure that Winda-Mara continues to build a sustainable workforce that can meet and exceed the service delivery needs of the community.

New human resources information system - Employment Hero

On 1 July 2024, Winda-Mara successfully implemented a new Human Resources Information System – Employment Hero.

This all-in-one HR, payroll, and recruitment platform is widely used across Australia and now integrates with our Xero finance system.

This upgrade enhances data accuracy, security, and accessibility while streamlining HR and payroll processes.

Key features include:

- HR Management** | Online job listings, applicant tracking, digital contracts, onboarding tools, and performance review capability.
- Payroll** | Automated payroll with Single Touch Payroll (STP), direct integration of timesheet data, and award compliance to reduce errors.
- Employee Engagement** | A secure self-service portal and app where staff can submit timesheets, apply for leave, update personal details, and access payslips and superannuation records.

This transition has been a significant milestone in modernising Winda-Mara's workforce management, ensuring more efficient, transparent, and employee-friendly processes.

Infrastructure Assets Maintenance

Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation has continued to strengthen and expand its infrastructure base throughout 2024–25, delivering projects that directly enhance community services, cultural safety, and organisational capacity.

This year, we have focused on delivering modern, fit-for-purpose facilities that support our health, housing, and community programs while ensuring

that all developments reflect cultural values and meet rigorous compliance standards.

The breadth of our infrastructure works demonstrates a sustained commitment to long-term investment, ensuring Winda-Mara remains a leader in service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our region.

Key projects delivered or progressed in 2024–25

Heywood Medical Clinic – Completed

- The flagship project for 2024–25 was the completion of the new Heywood Medical Clinic, a state-of-the-art facility delivering expanded and culturally safe primary health care services.
- The clinic incorporates GP consultation rooms, specialist spaces, and allied health facilities, providing capacity for future workforce growth and improved community outcomes.
- This project strengthens Winda-Mara's long-term health infrastructure and represents a major milestone for the organisation.

Landscaping Projects – Scott & Lindsay Streets - Completed

- Completed landscaping works launched during NAIDOC Week flag raising, creating culturally safe and welcoming spaces.
- Design incorporates sustainability and cultural elements, with reporting finalised and acquittals closed out.

Housing Build Project – Scott & Lindsay Streets, Heywood

- Planning advanced for the construction of 16 new dwellings with Myers Planning and JG King Homes.
- Milestones include town planning submissions, GMTOAC approval of Cultural Heritage Management Plan, and geotechnical reporting.
- Current progress includes detailed design, compliance, and Homes Victoria deed requirements.
- This project will deliver culturally appropriate, sustainable housing for Aboriginal families.

12 Lindsay Street, Heywood, Office Upgrade – Near Completion

- Refurbishment progressed with demolition, framing, plastering, and electrical fit-out completed.
- Painting and flooring scheduled, creating a modern workplace to support staff and service delivery.

Thompson Street Medical Clinic – Refurbishment - Commenced

- Refurbishment works underway to establish a second culturally safe clinic.
- Partnered with Mossop Construction and architect Wendy Hastrich.
- Complex compliance phase entered due to Regulation 233 requirements and additional engineering needs.

Project completion expected November–December 2025.

Bridgewater Seaview Lodge - Ongoing

- Ongoing maintenance of the lodge as a community and visitor accommodation facility.
- Appointment of caretaker (June 2025) to oversee operations and future planning.
- Plumbing and structural works completed, with further improvements pending.
- Committee meeting scheduled to set future direction and strengthen viability.



Winda-Mara Housing Program

Expanding safe, culturally appropriate housing

The Winda-Mara Housing Program currently manages a portfolio of 32 properties, providing safe, affordable, and culturally appropriate rental homes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in Heywood, Hamilton, and Portland.

This year, Winda-Mara reached a major milestone by becoming a Registered Housing Provider under our new entity, Winda-Mara Housing Limited. Registration allows us to access State and Federal funding streams to expand our portfolio and address the urgent housing and homelessness crisis affecting our community.

Strengthening partnerships and operational systems

In addition to owned assets, Winda-Mara works in partnership with Housing Victoria, managing general, interim, and long-term lease opportunities. These arrangements ensure stable, secure, and culturally safe housing while expanding our capacity to respond to demand.

Operationally, we have strengthened our housing program through the successful upgrade to PropertyMe, a modern cloud-based property management system. This platform enhances our tenancy management, rent collection, maintenance tracking, and reporting capabilities, ensuring improved transparency, efficiency, and compliance.



We also secured funding through the Social Housing Growth Fund (SHGF) – Homes for Aboriginal Victorians Round, enabling us to construct new dwellings on Winda-Mara-owned land in Heywood. These homes will directly contribute to housing security and community wellbeing.

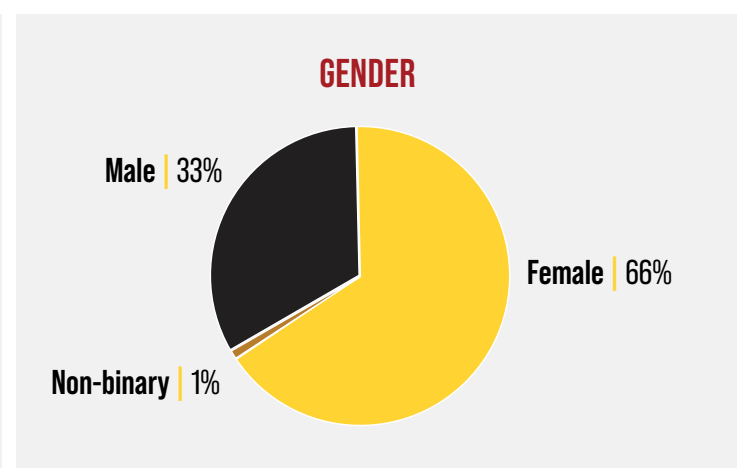
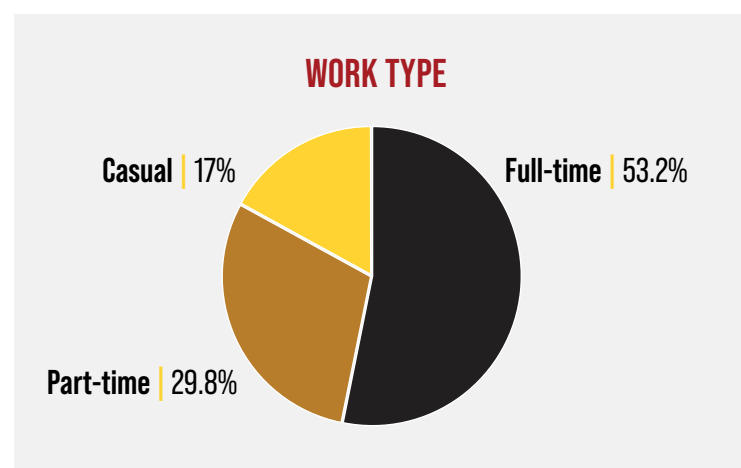
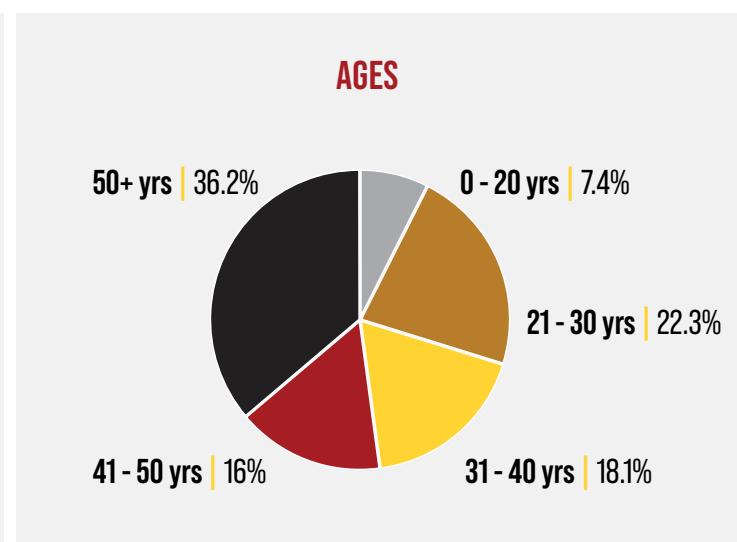
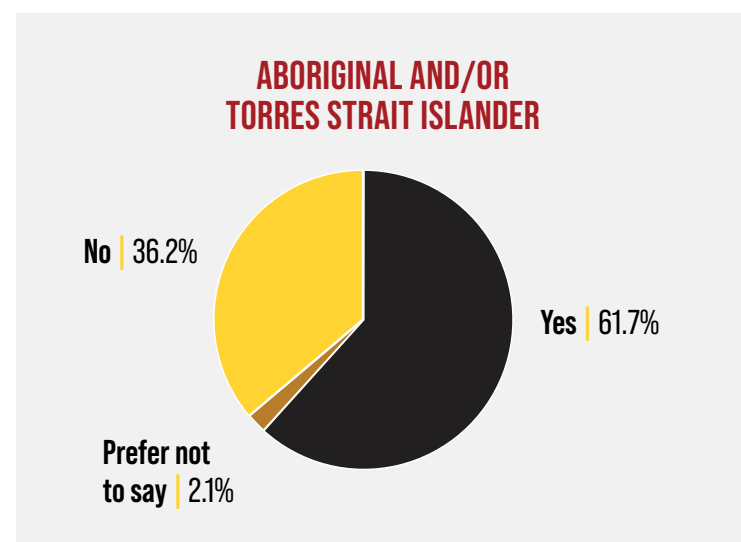
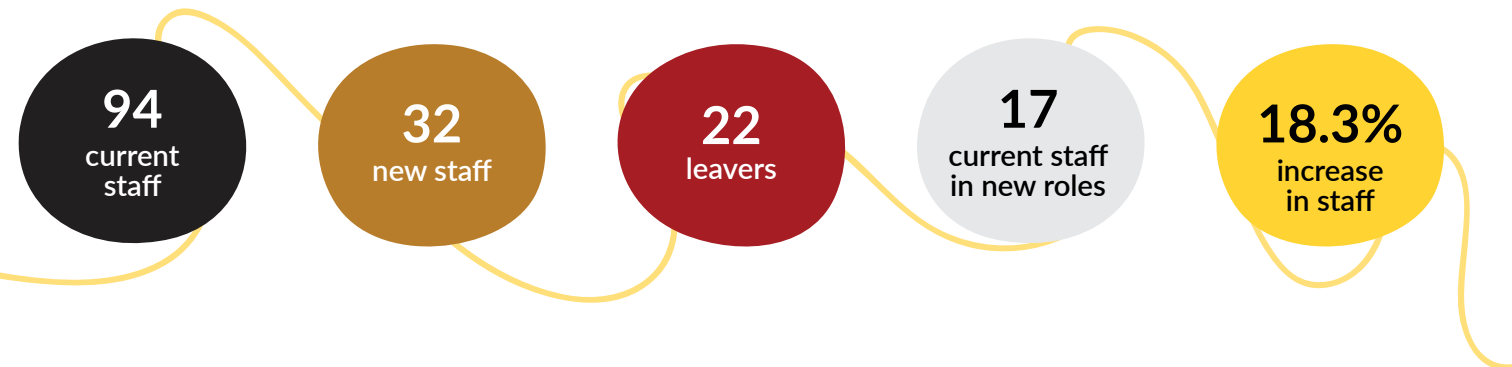
Engaging community and planning for the future

Engagement with the community has been a cornerstone of our housing strategy. Through tenant forums, community consultations, and workshops, Winda-Mara has ensured that housing initiatives remain responsive to the needs and aspirations of our people.

Looking forward, Winda-Mara will continue to grow its housing portfolio, explore additional development opportunities across Hamilton and Portland, and strengthen its role as a leader in addressing housing security for Aboriginal families.



Our Organisation



Community Wellbeing & Cultural Services

As Executive Manager of Community, Wellbeing & Cultural Services, I am proud to reflect on a year of growth, resilience, and cultural strength across our Health, Community Services, and Family Services units.

Each team has demonstrated unwavering commitment to supporting our community through culturally safe, responsive, and empowering programs.

Healing and cultural connection

This year has been one of transformation, healing, and deep cultural connection across our Community, Wellbeing & Cultural Services portfolio.

As we continue to walk alongside our community, the work of our Health, Community Services, and Family Services teams has reflected the heart of Winda-Mara's strategic vision nurturing identity, caring for our people, growing our organisation, and walking the path of self-determination.

New Heywood clinic and holistic care

The opening of our new health clinic in Heywood was a proud moment. Purpose-built and culturally safe, it stands as a symbol of what we can achieve when we listen to community and invest in their wellbeing.

Our health team has worked tirelessly to provide wraparound care from maternal health and chronic disease support to mental health and smoking cessation.

The Social and Emotional Wellbeing team, in particular, has responded to growing community need with compassion and strength, offering counselling, AoD support, and healing spaces.

Creating safe community spaces

In Community Services, we've seen the power of connection. The move to 21 Scott Street Heywood created a culturally safe hub for mob to gather, access services, and feel at home.

Our youth programs have flourished, with mentoring and leadership opportunities empowering the next generation.

Elders have been supported through CHSP and HACC-PYP, and our Wayipungitj and playgroup programs have helped our boorais transition into kinder with pride and confidence.

Family Services | Strength and reconnection

Family Services has shown incredible resilience and growth. Despite staffing challenges, the team has expanded its reach supporting families through kinship care, reunification, and family violence services.

Cultural camps, yarning circles, and return-to-country initiatives have helped families reconnect with culture and each other.

The work has been complex, but the outcomes of children returning home, carers feeling supported, and families finding stability are powerful reminders of why we do what we do.

Leadership and staff development

Across all programs, we've seen staff step into leadership, take on higher duties, and grow in confidence. Their dedication and cultural knowledge continue to shape the future of Winda-Mara.

Looking ahead with confidence

As we move forward under our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, our focus remains on strengthening our services, investing in our people, and creating spaces both physical and cultural where our community can thrive.

I'm deeply proud of what we've achieved together and excited for what's to come.

Wendy Lovett
Executive Manager



Community Services

New home, stronger connections: Our move to 21 Scott St

One of the many highlights for the Community Services unit has been our relocation to 21 Scott St. This move has not only benefited our team but has also had a positive impact on the broader community.

The new space offers a welcoming, culturally safe environment where community members can comfortably access services, participate in programs, or simply drop in for a yarn with staff and connect with other community members. We have seen the positive impact it has made, and we as a unit are excited to be working towards this also happening in the Hamilton community.

Annual Back to School Day: Growing support for local families

Winda-Mara's 2025 Back to School Day was a resounding success, providing vital support to local families ahead of the new school year. This year, 127 community members attended, including over 70 children from Heywood, Hamilton, and Portland, a significant increase from 38 students supported in 2024.

Children received take-home school packs, enjoyed free haircuts, and participated in fun, engaging activities, including a colour run hosted by the Winda-Mara Health Team. Entry surveys allowed Winda-Mara to collect valuable information to provide referrals for ATSI health checks and connect families with other local services.

This event highlights Winda-Mara's ongoing commitment to supporting children and families with practical resources and community engagement. The growth from 38 students in 2024 to 71 in 2025 demonstrates the increasing impact and reach of this important initiative.

Community Services Events

- Community dinners
- NAIDOC Week events
- Holiday programs
- Community christmas party
- Training
- Youth Justice Forum - Brisbane
- Community family camp - Dunkeld
- Statewide sporting carnivals
- Meetings - local and statewide

127
community
attended

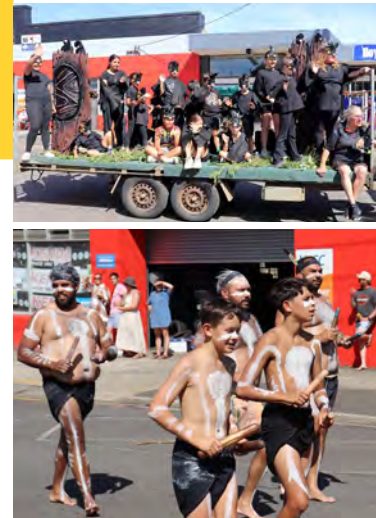
70+
children

87%
increase in
attendance

Wood, Wine and Roses Festival - 2025

Best float win celebrates Wilarn and Gunditjmara culture

The 2025 theme, Animals Big and Small, inspired Winda-Mara's float featuring the Gunditjmara totem, Wilarn (yellow-tailed black cockatoo). Winning best float was a proud achievement, celebrating community creativity and connection. This event is always fun to be a part of, as it brings the mob together. Everyone's input helped bring to life the award-winning float, while also creating lasting memories, with our young ones shining brightly and proudly showcasing their culture.



End of year celebrations -family camp & christmas break-up

To wrap up a busy and rewarding year, we hosted a combined family camp and community christmas break up in early December. Held at the stunning Grampians Retreat just outside Dunkeld, the event provided opportunities for families to come together, relax, and create some deadly memories. With plenty of space for kids to run around and a variety of fun activities on offer.

The feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, and we're excited about the possibility of making this an annual event.



Elder Care Support

The Elder Care Support team encompasses a Team Leader and two Connectors.

The program assists any Elders needing support with referrals and assessments, working through the My Aged Care system. My Aged Care can often be complex and culturally unsafe. Connectors ensure Elders receive appropriate, culturally safe services that align with their individual needs.

Ensuring culturally safe aged care for Elders

The Elder Support Program has been helpful in identifying and addressing service gaps affecting our Elders in the community, where our Connectors are ensuring that Elders are receiving the appropriate care and services they are entitled to under their My Aged Care packages.

Staff have actively supported Elders in:

- 👉 Reviewing and updating their My Aged Care plans
- 👉 Requesting reassessments to better align services with current needs
- 👉 Navigating the aged care system with confidence and clarity
- 👉 Empowerment and ownership: supporting Elders to be better informed and more engaged in decisions about their wellbeing.

Creating meaningful change for our Elders

This program has strengthened Winda-Mara's commitment to provide a culturally safe services that is sole focused around Elder-centred care. By advocating for reassessments and ensuring Elders understand their rights and options, the program is helping to close service gaps and improve quality of life for our senior community members.

CHSP – Elders program activities

The CHSP program works to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50, the main aim of this program is to ensure Elders live independently for as long as they can and are linked into appropriate aged care services.

HACC-PYP

Our HACC-PYP program works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under 50 with a disability. We support participants to engage in programs and offer social support when needed.

- 👉 Elders care support, individual/group
- 👉 Bus trips
- 👉 Group lunches
- 👉 Birthdays celebrations
- 👉 Winter hampers
- 👉 Christmas hampers
- 👉 NAIDOC Elders luncheon
- 👉 Women's group
- 👉 Arts and crafts
- 👉 Sing-a-long's
- 👉 Music concerts
- 👉 Op-Shop trips
- 👉 Community family camp
- 👉 My Aged Care referrals and assessments

Local Justice Worker Program

Culturally responsive support and community corrections

This role advocates and assists in improving justice outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by supporting clients to successfully complete their community correction orders and providing support in any justice related issues.

The Local Justice Worker (LJW) program provides culturally responsive support to Aboriginal clients involved in the justice system, including those incarcerated or transitioning back into the community. Support includes referrals to community services, assistance with corrections obligations, and court-related matters.

Creating opportunities through workspaces and partnerships

Five long-term community workspaces were established for clients to complete mandatory hours on their Work Development Permits (WDP), with an additional three sites negotiated by clients. The WDP scheme successfully supported 15 clients in resolving fine-related matters, reducing financial stress and long-term anxiety.

In partnership with the Sheriff's Aboriginal Liaison Officer, regular site visits to Heywood, Hamilton, and Portland continue to strengthen engagement. The LJW program also facilitates the transfer of ineligible court fines to corrections hours, allowing completion through Winda-Mara's services.

Advocating for wellbeing and future initiatives

The LJW continues to advocate for a community gym space, aligning with health and wellbeing strategies to address mental health and reduce antisocial behaviours.

- 7 Corrections referrals supported
- 32 Work Development Permit (WDP) clients supported
- 1 Clients graduated to employment (from court-mandated work hours to casual employment at Winda-Mara)
- 15 WDP clients successfully graduated

WORKSITE ENGAGEMENT

- 5 Worksites re-established for community work
- 3 Additional worksites negotiated and supported

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 8 Men's Group average monthly attendance
- 17 Men's Group peak attendance (including adult males and youth)

These stats highlight the program's strong engagement with our community members that are involved in the justice system. It's been a large success in supporting mob wanting to get back into the workforce.

- 👉 Corrections support
- 👉 Fines day
- 👉 WDP assistance
- 👉 LAJAC
- 👉 RAJAC
- 👉 Prison visits/support
- 👉 Client support
- 👉 Return to community support
- 👉 Cultural support

Family Centred Approaches

The Family Centred Approaches program provides a service model and delivery to empower and further strengthen Aboriginal families with an individual member at risk of or engaged in the justice system. The program caters to the whole family with assessments and supports tailored to strengthen families in a way that is culturally responsive, safe, and trauma informed.

- 👉 Family assistance
- 👉 Client support
- 👉 Care team meetings
- 👉 Men's Group/support
- 👉 Cultural support



Building the Dream/Education

These roles support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to develop aspirations for further education and employment.

It focuses on building goal-setting skills, resilience, and a strong sense of hope for the future but also keeping the young people connected through weekly programs that run engaging activities.

- Homework Centre
- Breakfast Club
- Lunches with school students
- LAECG input
- School support
- Tutoring
- Holiday program
- Scholarships
- Job applications
- Resume writing
- Community breakfasts
- Personal identification application support
- Back to school activities
- Staff attending education meetings, local and statewide



Youth Mentoring Program

Karreeta Koorng Maar

The Youth Mentoring Program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to be healthy and well, and to be confident and strong in their identity and culture.

The program is designed for young people to enhance life skills, relationships and connect to education, training, and employment.

- Drop-in centre
- Driver's license assistance
- Year 12 acknowledgements
- Short courses
- Learner hours assistance
- Mentor/Mentee catch-ups
- NAIDOC youth formal
- Treaty yarn
- Surf sessions
- Music workshops
- PT sessions
- Koorie statewide sport carnivals
- Holiday program
- Junior carnival training session
- The Koori Way youth program
- Year 6 & 12 graduation celebration and gifts
- Seasonal ride to school days

Cultural Strengthening

This program provides Cultural engagement with community with a strong focus on the importance of reviving language, strengthening identity and ensuring our community has a strong connection to country.

- Dance group support
- Cultural camps
- Junior Ranger program
- Dance ground input
- Playground input
- NAIDOC activities
- Story telling
- Language



Our youth leading the way at the Ricci Marks Awards

We're proud to share fantastic news from our Karreeta Koorng Maar program! Three of our incredibly deadly young people Braydon Saunders, Djakira Hope, and Lashay Blurton were invited to attend the prestigious Ricci Marks Awards in Melbourne, after being shortlisted as nominees.

The Ricci Marks Awards are held annually by the Victorian Government to recognise the achievements and leadership of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Victoria.

Braydon was honoured with the Ricci Marks Award, while Djakira received the Rising Star Award, an amazing achievement for both. All three nominees were put forward by our youth team in recognition of their leadership, community involvement, and commitment to culture.

Braydon, Djakira, and Lashay have each grown up participating in Winda-Mara's youth programs and continue to be involved in our Karreeta Koorng Maar program, both as active participants and inspiring mentors to others. We're so proud of their achievements and the positive impact they're making in our community.



Bupup Balak Wayipungang- Wayipungitj (KPSA)

The Wayipungitj role is dedicated to supporting Koorie families with young children as they transition into early childhood education, particularly kindergarten. This position promotes inclusive practices, ensures services are culturally safe, and strengthens engagement between Koorie children, their families, and early childhood services.

The core purpose of this role is to improve outcomes for Koorie children from birth through to school transition. It does so by fostering the inclusion of Koorie children and families in kindergarten programs and embedding Aboriginal perspectives into early childhood education environments and curriculum.

Supporting Koorie kids and families through transition

Our Wayipungitj worker has engaged and connected with over 19 early childhood services in Southern Grampians and Glenelg Shires, and also engaged in 11 face-to-face onsite visits to ensure services and centres are welcoming for our families.

It's great to see our local education centres taking the lead in ensuring our Koorie kids and families are well informed, feeling relaxed and welcomed in their spaces as these transitional stages can be very overwhelming.

Wayipungitj tasks

- Consulted with educators on their Reconciliation Action Plans
- Delivered cultural activities in kindergarten services
- Provided cultural resources to kindergarten services
- Participated in staff training
- Presented at Department of Education Community of Practice
- Assisted families with kinder enrolments
- Attended early childhood service staff meetings
- Support transition to school
- Back to school and kinder day
- Holiday program

19 Services engaged with across Shires

95 Students attending the Cultural Strengthening program

111+ Mentor sessions

29 Students supported with development of career pathways (Includes resumes and job applications and work placement. Students from Heywood and Hamilton attended an Indigenous specific career expo)

7 Youth completed their Barista course (and 2 mentors)

43 Attended school holiday program/cultural activities

105 Attended holiday program over July, September, and December

46 Regular participants that would attend sessions weekly which include, homework centre, breakfast club, youth drop-in or cultural activities

3 Youth shortlisted from our region for the Ricci Marks Awards (Braydon Saunders, Djakira Hope and Lashay Blurton)

Holiday programs activities

- Screen printing workshop (partnership with Glenelg Shire Council)
- Junior Rangers (partnership with Parks Victoria)
- Junior Rangers (partnership with Budj Bim Rangers and Glenelg Hopkins CMA)
- Games and crafts day
- Glenelg Hopkins CMA visit
- Junior sports carnivals
- Movie day
- Laser tag
- Warrnambool Big Day Out
- Pool day
- Fitzy day
- Surf day (partnership with Indigenous Surfing Australia)
- Halls Gap Zoo
- Easter craft
- Healthy cooking day
- Dreamtime @ the G
- School supplies support
- Individual youth support - youth art portfolio

Our Wayipungitj key areas of work are:

Participation

Supporting Koorie children's attendance in funded kindergarten programs.

Practice

Helping educators create culturally safe and inclusive kindergarten environments.

Community

Encouraging kindergartens to actively involve local community.

Family

Providing information to Koorie families to strengthen engagement with early childhood services and support smooth transition to school.

Bringing Them Home

The Bringing Them Home program offers culturally sensitive mental health support, guidance, and access to services for individuals and families affected by the Stolen Generations. While it continues to support first-generation members who were directly removed, adopted, fostered, institutionalised, or made wards of the state, the program also recognises the ongoing impact across generations.

Many of our clients are children, grandchildren, and extended family members of those originally affected, and the program plays a vital role in supporting their healing journeys and reconnecting them with family, culture, community, and Country.

- Assistance with Confirmation of Aboriginality
- Family tracing & connections
- Return to Country
- Repatriation assistance for Stolen Generations clients
- Training & conferences
- Family tracing workshops





Health

- 8117 Episodes of Care
- 903 Active patients – 47% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Patients
- 3.5% Elders over 70
- 38% Health Checks | 0-14 years old
- 65% Health Checks | 15 years and over
- 242 Transports to community members (134 female & 108 Male) to attend health appointments at Winda-Mara and other services across the state

New Medical Clinic opening

The health team has reached a significant milestone with the official opening of our brand new health clinic in Heywood (20 Hunter St).

This beautifully designed space is purpose-built to support the needs of our community, featuring multiple clinic rooms, a therapeutic garden, and a spacious reception area to welcome patients.

The doors were officially opened by Aunty Jan Lovett on Thursday 13 March 2025, a proud and memorable moment for all involved.



Supporting our community while our GPs transition

In early 2025, we farewelled two highly respected members of our medical team. Dr Frank Fox retired in January after many years of dedicated service to Winda-Mara.

In February, we also said goodbye to Dr Christine Wilson. Both doctors have made significant contributions to Aboriginal health.

Dr Nicole Kerr continues to provide care to our community, working two days per week. While recruiting a permanent GP has proven to be a challenge, we have ensured continuity of care through the engagement of locum General Practitioners.

Our efforts to secure a full-time permanent GP are ongoing and remain a key focus for the coming year.

Aboriginal Health Worker Trainees

This year, we welcomed two new Aboriginal Health Worker trainees Taryn Bell and Amber Foster, to the Winda-Mara team.

Both trainees have commenced the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice course through VACCHO.



Our new Health Worker scrubs

Yarning over good food

Our monthly healthy eating educational sessions with our visiting Dietitian Danielle Lee have been well received by our Elders and community members, trying new foods for the first time and enjoying delicious meals catered by Simply Tucker Aunty Jan while yarning about the important of nutrition and healthy eating.



Culturally safe care and community empowerment

Looking ahead, Winda-Mara will continue to expand culturally safe services and build community capacity.

We are excited to deliver Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Mental Health First Aid training across the region, while continuing to strengthen our SEWB and AoD programs.

The refurbishment of our Hamilton medical clinic reflects our commitment to high-quality, accessible primary health care.

A key focus moving forward will be growing our team to meet the needs of the community and supporting ongoing professional development for all staff through a range of training opportunities.



Accreditation

Winda-Mara Health successfully achieved accreditation under the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Standards for General Practices – 5th Edition.

This accreditation reflects our ongoing commitment to delivering safe, high-quality, and culturally appropriate health care to our community. It is a significant milestone that recognises the dedication of our health team and our continuous efforts to meet national best practice standards.

Integrated Team Care Program

The Integrated Team Care Program continues to provide vital support to clients living with chronic conditions. Through a collaborative, team-based approach involving GPs, specialists, nurses, and our Aboriginal Health Practitioner, the program ensured clients receive coordinated and culturally appropriate care.

12
referrals
received

Allied Health

Winda-Mara continues to provide a range of allied health services aimed at reducing barriers to access, such as cost and long wait times. These services play a vital role in supporting the overall health and wellbeing of our community.

Throughout the year, we have offered access to the following Allied Health services:

Podiatry

Optometry

Audiology

Dietetics

Respiratory
Clinic

Massage
Therapy

Dental trips
to VAHS

These services are delivered in a culturally safe environment and support early intervention, chronic disease management, and improved health outcomes for our clients.

Koori Maternity Services and Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health

Our Koori Maternity Services and Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health programs have continued to grow in strength and reach throughout the year.

This growth reflects our strong partnerships with local hospitals and Maternal and Child Health providers, allowing us to deliver culturally safe care from pregnancy through to school-age development.

To further support developmental monitoring, we welcomed a Maternal and Child Health Nurse to the team, working one day a fortnight as part of the AMCH program.

This role ensures that children are supported to attend Key Ages and Stages milestone appointments, promoting healthy growth and early intervention when needed.

We remain committed to working closely with families, advocating and providing culturally sensitive support, particularly for those engaged with child protection services.

Tackling Indigenous Smoking Program

The Tackling Indigenous Smoking Program at Winda-Mara has continued to deliver impactful health promotion and education initiatives.

The Koori Ways youth program was delivered over a five-week period in Heywood and Hamilton, educating young people on the dangers and impacts of smoking and vaping.

Our major community event, the Koori Karnival, held in March, attracted over 500 attendees coordinated by the four ACCHOs Gunditjmara, Dhauwurd Wurrung, Kirrae and Winda-Mara.

Additional activities included the release of culturally relevant video tutorials through "The Koori Way," providing one-on-one support and Quit Packs to community members seeking to quit smoking or vaping.



Social and Emotional Wellbeing

The Winda-Mara Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) team continues to deliver essential and culturally safe support services to our community, focusing on mental health, alcohol and other drug (AoD) support, and early intervention.

The multidisciplinary team includes AoD workers, a Youth Mental Health Worker, and a Mental Health Social Worker.

Over the past year, the Social Emotional and Wellbeing team has provided a wide range of services including individual counselling, case management, education, and coordination of referrals into rehabilitation and detox programs.

Our weekly Yarn Smart Recovery meetings have continued to offer a safe and supportive space for community members addressing AoD issues, gambling, or other behaviours of concern.

Aboriginal Youth Mental Health Worker

We also acknowledge the professional growth of our Aboriginal Youth Mental Health Worker, who has commenced a Bachelor of Social Work at Deakin University and completed her facilitator training in Aboriginal Youth Mental Health First Aid.

102 AoD referrals

122 Mental health referrals

1574 Client contacts with the AoD workers exceeding performance targets

437 Counselling sessions provided by our Mental Health Social Worker across Heywood and Hamilton, responding to strong community need and providing ongoing therapeutic support



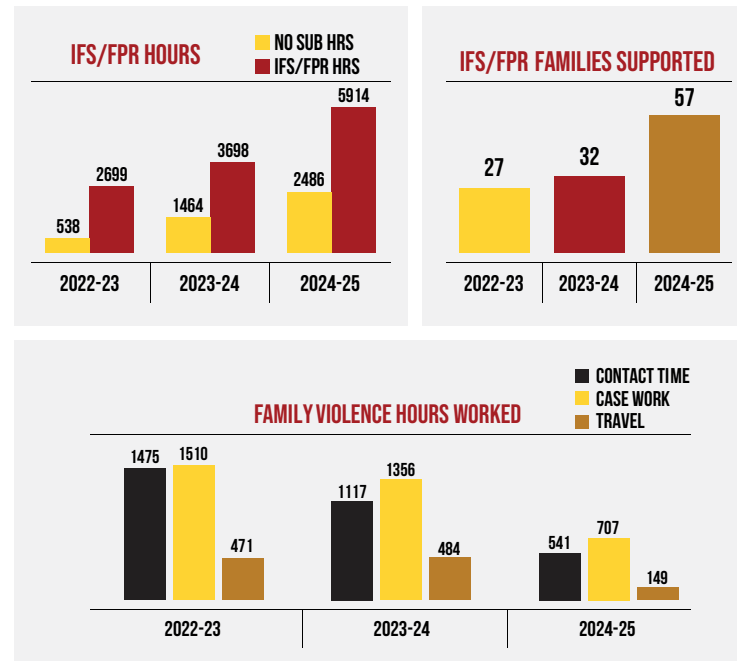
Family Services

2024-25 has been a year of rebuild within the family services unit, with lots of changes occurring in staffing and program delivery. Family Services continues to offer a wide range of programs that support, advocate and promote parenting capacity, rights and the safety and wellbeing of children.

There has been a significant change in staffing over the last 12 months, with only 6 staff remaining from the previous year. As a unit we have welcomed many new staff to the team as we continue to grow and expand services ensuring that families and community are supported.

Recruitment to some roles within the unit have been more challenging than others due to changes in qualifications and sector experience. Despite the challenges, the ability of the staff within the unit to take on new roles and challenges and to grow and adapt to the current environment has been amazing to watch.

We continue to work hard to explore and expand services that support and advocate for the rights of parents, carers, and children through a range of funding opportunities. This includes advocating for more culturally specific supports and ensuring Aboriginal voices are central in service planning and delivery.



New office space in Heywood

In Heywood our unit moved office spaces, allowing all services and programs within family services to operate under the same roof, providing the opportunity to work more collaboratively within our own unit and cross program. There has been a lot of building and activity in our new space and we are exciting that this is all coming together.

Cross program collaboration has improved and lead to better and more timely outcomes for families. We are looking forward to being able to provide similar spaces in Hamilton.

Kinship

KINSHIP CARE AGES



Kinship Yarning Circles

Over the past year, we have continued to provide spaces for ongoing connection and support through our Kinship Yarning Circles. These sessions offer a culturally safe and supportive environment for kinship carers to come together and share the joys and challenges of caring for kin and kith. There was period over the year that these sessions weren't occurring due to staffing numbers, but these are back and running with the first session back highlighting the importance of connection and peer support for kinship carers.

With one carer discussing that *"caring for my grandkids is socially isolating, I have really enjoyed coming to the yarning circle to get support from others in the same situation as me"*. Yarning circles support and honour the incredible role that kinship carers play in keeping children connected to family, culture, and Country.



Cultural camp

In April 2025, kinship families were provided with a valuable opportunity to attend a cultural camp in Mt Evelyn, where they were warmly welcomed with a traditional Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony led by Uncle Perry Wandin.

As part of the camp, families visited Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre at Melbourne Museum, where they explored rich histories and stories of Aboriginal peoples from across Victoria.

It was exciting to see some local and well-known Gunditjmara faces on the displays and talking videos reminding us of the strength and role of local culture and connection.

The camp was attended by six families and 14 children aged between 2 and 16. The children were treated to a presentation at the Hawthorn Football Club, where they got the opportunity to talk and take photos with Cody Anderson, Matthew Hill and Jarman Impey.

For some families this was their first experience and opportunity to attend and participate in cultural activities as new carers and the camp was well received.



Supporting families at the start of the care journey - First supports

Supporting the initial placement set-up and identifying placement needs, this service is short term and is an important support to families who take on care responsibilities for kin and kith. Taking on caring responsibilities can have a significant impact on families, financially and emotionally.

Our staff support carers to understand the role they play and support them while they develop an understanding as to CP processes.

- 12 new kinship placements (1 returning to parental care)
- 2 new placements with family on country
- 3 progressing to contracting
- 5 remaining in initial placements with work continuing to support these families
- 1 closed after support period completed

Supporting culturally safe transitions in case management - Contracting

Over the year our program has supported 21 children to have their cases transferred from CP case management to ACCO case management. This is a significant and positive step in ensuring that Aboriginal children are supported in a culturally safe, community-led way.

Through this case management, WMAC support the cultural rights and voice of the children and strongly advocate on case planning and progression, holding CP accountable for timely supports and better outcomes for our children.

- 21 children now ACCO case managed

Our children are also supported to engage and participate in a range of WMAC cultural activities.

Our program is passionate about the children and parents right to maintain relationships with parents and extended families, supporting meaningful contact and engagement that meet the children's need. This is achieved through providing flexible contact planning in natural environments outside of clinical settings.

Strengthening family and cultural connections

This year we supported a young person to reconnect with a parent who had not had contact for 18 months.

This contact is a wonderful experience for the child and the parent and despite what is occurring for the family. This contact occurs on a monthly basis, bringing consistency and renewed connection to their relationship.

Our contracting staff are proactive and dedicated, engaging in extensive planning, meetings, and written advocacy to ensure that the views and wishes of families are heard and respected.

They continue to work to support the safety, wellbeing, and cultural needs of children in kinship care, with flexibility and compassionate practice.

family contact, flexible funding, and assessments that strengthen the child and their support network.

TCPs are an exciting way to ensure that children and families are provided with a high level of support and can be short term or longer depending on the needs of the child or placement.

Targeted Care Packages (TCP)

Individualised, high-level support through TCPs

Targeted Care Packages (TCPs) are designed to provide individualised, high-level support tailored to meet the unique needs of each child.

These packages are complex and offer a range of supports such as therapeutic interventions, behaviour support, Return to Country planning,

Supporting stability and connection for children

Over the past 12 months, WMAC has supported four children through TCPs, ensuring that each child receives consistent, wraparound support and the opportunity for greater placement stability.

Building skills, identity, and future pathways

We have been successful in employing two staff members that support the children to engage and attend a range of activities from basketball, cooking sessions, attending a range of professional services, supporting connection and understanding of family history, supporting children to engage and explore activities that interest them and many others.

Our TCP workers have also supported children to have contact with disconnected family and are supported to develop personal keys that will support them as they progress to leaving care in the future.

Integrated Family Services and Family Reunification Preservation

The IFS/FPR team continue to work with families by advocating and supporting them. This program works to support the families while they navigate services and to reduce the intervention of statutory services. We work to address challenges in a timely manner.

All staff continue to engage and participate in training that is run internally and externally to ensure that they remain up to date with the latest practice and trends.

- 1144 hours of travel

Casterton to Portland, Hamilton to Penhurst and everywhere in-between.

Strengthening families through culture and connection

Through 2024-25, family services were provided funding for a Cultural Mentor and Community Engagement Support Worker. Through this program families engaged in cooking sessions and yarning. Feedback on these sessions were positive, and families were supported to develop and cook budget friendly meals for their children and talked about the importance of culture.

Other sessions were also run regarding routines that support the wellbeing of children and yarning about the importance of routines for children. These sessions occurred across Hamilton and Heywood providing access to families across the service delivery area.



Family Services camp

Our family services camp occurred in Geelong in September which saw 7 families (19 children aged 6 months to 15 years) attend. The group attended Werribee Zoo where we shared a picnic lunch and families got to experience a safari tour and had free time to explore all that was on offer.

Highlights of the trip for the children was the pool at the accommodation and the opportunity to see the animals at play. This saw many of the children and families within the group form friendships and make memories that will last a lifetime.



- ↑ Increased number of children engaging in educational program and services
- ✓ Supported families to secure long term accommodation
- 8 Families supported to access cognitive and educational assessment
- 19 Families supported working towards successful reunification
- ✓ Staff able to meet service hours despite gaps in staffing over the last year

- 57 Families supported through the IFS/FPR program
Some of these only requiring brief and short-term intervention and others requiring more complex support and services
- 38 Families have been closed
- 16 Children to be successfully returned to parental care (of 19 on FPR orders), with the remaining families continuing to work towards this goal

Family Violence

Rebuilding a responsive and community-led FV service

2024-25 has been a challenge for the FV unit, with many changes to training and qualifications having an impact on staffing and service delivery.

Despite this we have been able to re-establish a FV service that is grounded in practice and is more responsive to the needs of the community.

Expanding support across the region

Our FV team continue to provide a service that covers Heywood, Hamilton, Casterton, Portland and surroundings. We have also provided support for families experience FV in the Warrnambool area when required to ensure that all eligible families have access to culturally safe and supportive services.

Working in partnership for safer outcomes

We continue to work closely with internal and external service providers to ensure that families have access to timely supports, services and material aide that ensures immediate and personal safety and that supports their recovery from FV.

Elevating the child's voice through MARAM pilot

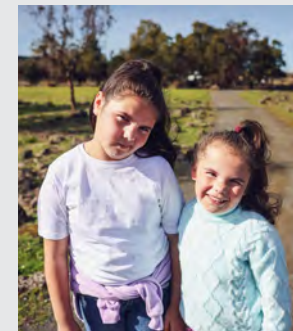
FV is working with VACCA in trialing a pilot MARAM that records and represents the Aboriginal child's voice. This pilot is in the early stages and our FV program is excited to contribute to the development of a template that better represents the child's voice.

Exploring housing pathways for families leaving violence

FV are also working to explore opportunities in transitional housing and emergency housing for those looking to leave FV situations, as housing access and affordability continues to be a challenge within the local area. Collaborative practice with key stakeholders within the services ensure that families are supported as they move across the area.

Supporting self-referral and culturally safe access

FV is the only family services program that maintains a self-referral stream, which allows individuals to access the service without having to undertake an external intake, creating a culturally safe space for people seeking help.



Events supported by our team

- Community dinner
- Kinship cultural program
- Kinship cultural camp
- Yarn and weave
- Family camp
- NAIDOC week
- Children's Day
- Christmas hampers
- 16 days of activism
- Walk against FV
- Carer yarnning circles
- Return to Country
- Family contact
- School holiday program
- Cultural plans and life story workshop
- Healthy cooking sessions
- Routine planning workshops

Budj Bim Rangers

The Budj Bim Rangers Program, delivered through the Land Management Unit, continues to play a critical role in protecting, managing, and enhancing the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape – a UNESCO World Heritage-listed site, and other key Gunditjmara Country properties including the Kooreelah property at Chetwynd.

Caring for country together with GMTOAC

Our Rangers partnered with Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (GMTOAC) to deliver a significant number of ecological and cultural protection activities across:

- Budj Bim Cultural Landscape Indigenous Protected Areas
- Kooreelah property, Chetwynd

Strengthening skills and cultural practice

Team Training & Development

Investment in workforce capability remained a key focus, with staff undertaking:

- Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management (South-West TAFE)
- Drivers licence upgrades and Tractor FEL training
- First Aid and Australian Chemical User Permit
- Agricultural training in soils and farm management

Learning together on Country

Junior Ranger Program

- 300 Children participated across four school holiday programs, learning about Country, land management, and cultural heritage protection.

Budj Bim Tours

- 245 Tertiary students hosted across 20 educational tours, sharing Gunditjmara knowledge and promoting cultural awareness.

Throughout 2024-25, the program focused on ecological resource management, cultural heritage protection, invasive species control, and education initiatives, while continuing to strengthen the skills and capacity of the Ranger team.



Fire Management Training

The rangers continue to engage with Gunditj Mirring's Weeyn Yarkeen (Fire Dreaming), attending strategy workshops with aspirations of completing the General Firefighting training with Forest Fire Management (DEECA) to enable participating with the Project Firefighting (PFF) during the summer fire season. This training supports Gunditjmara aspirations for self-determined, cultural burning practices and enhances local fire response capacity.



Biodiversity Monitoring

In collaboration with Rob Farnes from Portland Field Naturalists, bird surveys were conducted across all four seasons at Lake Condah.

- 9223 Waterbirds counted in November, the highest in 13 years of monitoring

Significant findings

- 171 Great Cormorants counted (new record)
New bird species recorded: Australian Crane

Lake Condah's broken muddy shorelines and ribbon weed beds continue to provide critical feeding habitat for waterbirds.

Protecting Country through natural resource management

Koala Program

The Budj Bim Ranger team continues to provide on-ground support to Gunditj Mirring TOAC in the development and delivery of the Koala Program. This collaboration aims to protect and monitor the local koala population, ensuring their ongoing health and sustainability across the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

Fish Surveys and Kooyang (Eel) Tagging

Budj Bim Rangers actively assist Gunditj Mirring TOAC in conducting fish population surveys and participate in eel tagging programs. These activities contribute valuable data to the long-term monitoring of aquatic ecosystems and support the cultural significance of kooyang (eel) within Gunditjmara Country.

Invasive Species Control

- Continued collaboration with Gunditj Mirring TOAC and DEECA as part of the Gunditjmara Invasive Species Team.
- Ongoing efforts are focused on controlling feral pigs and deer, which remain a significant threat to the cultural landscape, native vegetation, and overall biodiversity of the area.

Looking forward: Stronger country, stronger connections

Budj Bim Ranger Depot Development

- Continued work of the Depot Development Committee to plan and deliver a purpose-built site in Portland.
- Key focus on establishing an Indigenous Plant Nursery to support revegetation, habitat restoration, and enterprise development.
- Strengthening partnerships with GMTOAC, DEECA, and other agencies to scale up invasive species management and implement cultural burning programs.
- Expanding community engagement through education, tourism, and Junior Ranger initiatives, ensuring intergenerational transfer of Gunditjmara knowledge.

Livestock Operations

Managed grazing across three key properties

Head of cattle

- 245 Kooreelah 34 Allambie 72 Lake Gorrie

Despite a challenging year due to market corrections and early autumn dry spells, operations have remained sustainable with a focus on animal welfare and property condition.



STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
as at 30 June 2025

	Group 2025 \$	Parent 2024 \$
Revenue	12,274,400	12,775,415
Interest Revenue	336,232	344,044
TOTAL REVENUE	12,610,632	13,119,459
Accounting fees	(16,360)	(36,375)
Advertising expenses	(7,999)	(15,374)
Bad and doubtful debts	(10,031)	(40,332)
Brokerage	(213,004)	(57,032)
Contractors and consultants	(227,578)	(627,753)
Depreciation and amortisation	(616,712)	(315,406)
Employee costs	(6,759,378)	(6,836,382)
Finance expenses	-	(303)
IT and communication	(194,698)	(194,192)
Impairment of WIP	(623,813)	-
Livestock cost of sales	(177,633)	(449,775)
Medical expenses	(65,361)	(93,195)
Minor capital expenses	(93,806)	(31,835)
Motor vehicle expenses	(239,219)	(276,787)
Occupancy expenses	(229,018)	(281,815)
Other expenses	(193,898)	(445,086)
Repairs and maintenance	(90,127)	(52,187)
Supplies and consumables	(187,999)	(282,919)
Travel expenses	(128,293)	(94,036)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	(10,074,927)	(10,130,784)
Result for the year	2,535,705	2,988,675
Other comprehensive income		
Gain on revaluation of blue gum plantation	-	654,352
Total comprehensive income for the year	2,535,705	3,643,027

NOTE: Audited financial statements are available on request

BALANCE SHEET
as at 30 June 2025

	Group 2025 \$	Parent 2024 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	5,349,738	3,887,109
Trade and other receivables	744,275	665,289
Biological assets	1,360,602	1,217,017
Financial assets	7,294,658	6,998,781
Other assets	71,803	39,360
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	14,821,076	12,807,556
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	15,250,063	11,920,579
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	15,250,063	11,920,579
TOTAL ASSETS	30,071,139	24,728,135
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	893,607	457,222
Employee Benefits	590,154	640,963
Income in advance	5,419,567	3,018,129
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	6,903,328	4,116,314
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Employee Benefits	128,034	107,749
TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	128,034	107,749
TOTAL LIABILITIES	7,031,362	4,224,063
NET ASSETS	23,039,777	20,504,072
EQUITY		
Retained earnings	23,039,777	20,504,072
TOTAL EQUITY	23,039,777	20,504,072

Partners & Supporters

- 👉 Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- 👉 Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care
- 👉 Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- 👉 Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- 👉 Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- 👉 Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- 👉 Department of Justice and Community Safety
- 👉 Department of Health
- 👉 Department of Premier and Cabinet
- 👉 Family Safety Victoria
- 👉 National Indigenous Australian Agency (NIAA)
- 👉 Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
- 👉 Dhauwurd-Wurrung Elderly & Community Health Service Inc
- 👉 Gunditjmarra Aboriginal Corporation
- 👉 Kirrae Health Service Inc.
- 👉 Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative
- 👉 Western District ACCO Collective
- 👉 First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria - Treaty
- 👉 Glenelg Shire Council
- 👉 Southern Grampians Shire Council
- 👉 Alcoa
- 👉 Portland Aluminium
- 👉 Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership (PCP)
- 👉 South-West TAFE
- 👉 RMIT University
- 👉 Australian Communities Foundation
- 👉 University of Melbourne
- 👉 OCTEC Employment Service
- 👉 Bendigo Bank
- 👉 Westpac Bank
- 👉 Department of Veteran Affairs
- 👉 Workcover
- 👉 South-West Healthcare
- 👉 Western District Health Service
- 👉 Portland District Health
- 👉 Heywood Rural Health
- 👉 Medicare
- 👉 Regional Health Infrastructure Fund
- 👉 National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
- 👉 Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)
- 👉 Western Victorian Primary Health Network
- 👉 Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV)
- 👉 Deadly Choices
- 👉 Brophy Family and Youth Services
- 👉 Bethany Community Support
- 👉 Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority
- 👉 Greening Australia
- 👉 Agriculture Victoria
- 👉 Birds Australia
- 👉 Parks Victoria

Yarn with us

Heywood Main Office
21 Scott St (PO Box 42) Heywood VIC 3304
P 03 5527 0000

Heywood Medical Centre
20 Hunter St Heywood VIC 3304
P 03 5527 0060

Hamilton Medical Clinic
107 Thompson St Hamilton VIC 3300
P 03 5527 0090

Hamilton (Family & Community Services)
39 Hammond St Hamilton VIC 3300

Budj Bim Ranger Depot
598 Henty Hwy Portland VIC 3305
P 03 5527 0030

FIND US ONLINE

www.windamara.com.au

[f /windamara](https://www.facebook.com/windamara)

[ig /winda.mara](https://www.instagram.com/winda.mara)

www.budjbimtours.net

wmac@windamara.com

ABN 71 636 105 116 ICN 1239



WINDA-MARA

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Annual Report | 2024 - 2025

