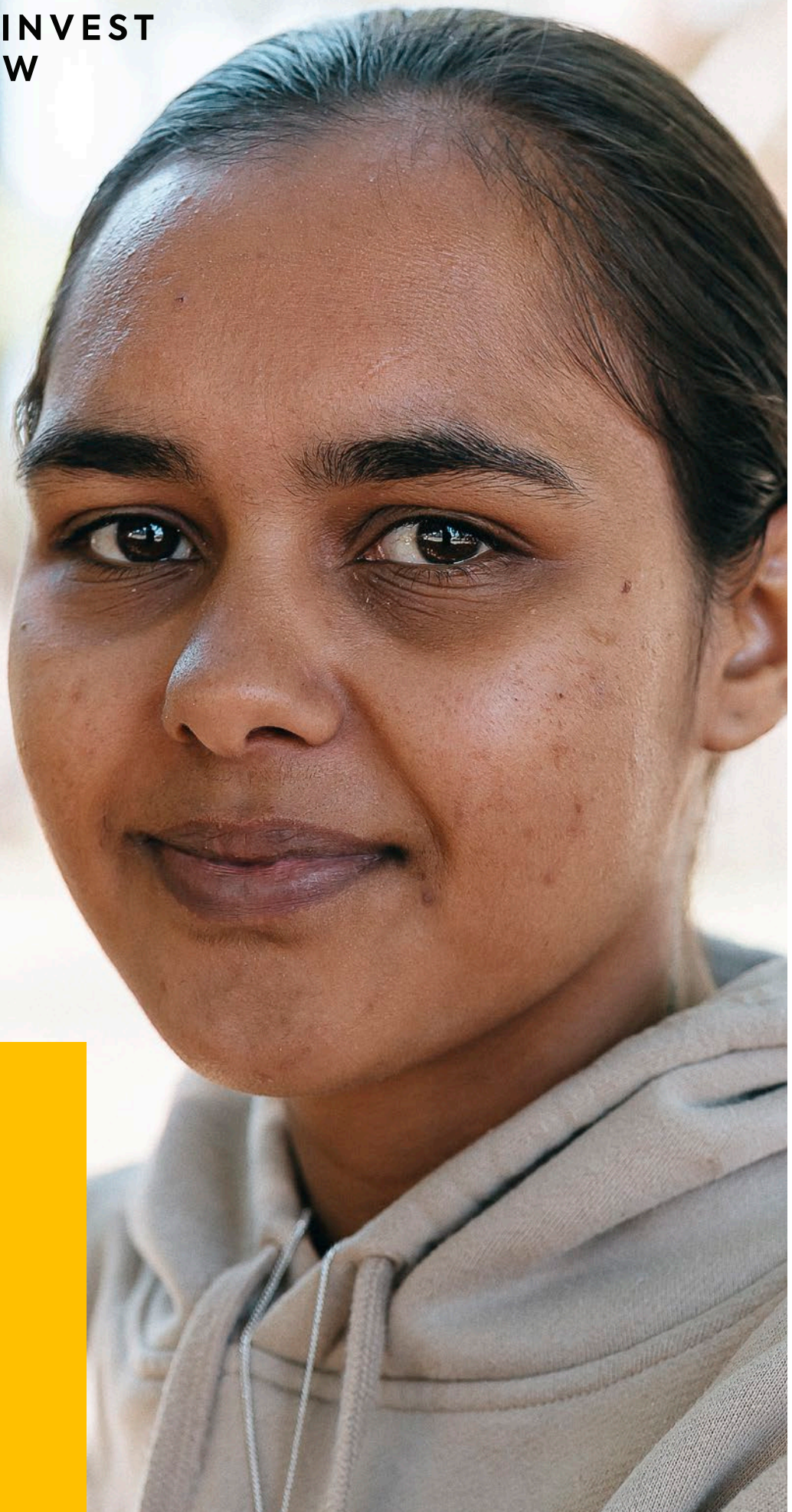




JUST  
REINVEST  
NSW

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
**2024**  
**/25**







Mouny Yarns Aboriginal Youth & Community Services  
Cover photo: Shontay Russell, youth ambassador for Mouny Aboriginal Youth & Community Services in Mt Druitt  
Photo credit: Thanadon Films/JRNSW

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Geoff Scott

## Introduction from the CEO

*This past year has shown us both the urgency and the promise of justice reinvestment in New South Wales.*

Justice reinvestment, when true to its principles of being community-led, place-based, and grounded in data, continues to grow across the state and nationally. But growth in interest is not success. Success will be when Aboriginal communities see fewer of our people in prisons, fewer of our children in detention, and stronger foundations for community safety and wellbeing. On that measure, governments across Australia continue to fail.

As of June 2024, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults were imprisoned at a rate of 2,304 per 100,000. For young people, detention rates remain at crisis levels, with most held unsentenced. Despite the commitments of Closing the Gap Targets 10 and 11-reducing adult incarceration by 15 per cent and youth detention by 30 per cent by 2031-incarceration rates are rising. Reports

from the Productivity Commission, NSW Ombudsman and University of Technology (UTS) make clear that governments are not meeting their obligations to Aboriginal people.

In this context, Aboriginal communities and their allies are leading the way. Justice reinvestment is being recognised as a credible, evidence-based alternative. The NSW and Commonwealth governments have together committed over \$118 million to pilot initiatives. Yet what makes justice reinvestment powerful is not government funding-it is the knowledge, leadership and determination of Aboriginal communities themselves.

In Nowra, Waminda has built a strong foundation for its local strategy and will host the JR Community of Practice Forum for NSW in September 2025, bringing together

representatives from 10 sites. In Bourke, Maranguka-the longest-running JR initiative-prepares for a review of its impact while continuing to demonstrate how community-led change can reduce contact with the justice system.

Mt Druitt stands as one of the most significant examples since Bourke. With youth at its centre, the Mt Druitt team has secured diverse funding, influenced policy, and built strength toward independence. In December 2026, it will transition to an Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation, Mouty Aboriginal Youth & Community Services Ltd (MAYCS). This will mark an historic milestone for JRNSW and the community.

In Moree, our backbone team continues to walk alongside the community through an especially difficult period.

Heavy-handed policing, bail reforms and "post and boast" laws have increased incarceration of Aboriginal children. Community voices have been strong in response, demanding government investment in services, housing, education and diversion rather than more punitive measures. JRNSW has stood with them, making submissions to inquiries and ensuring Aboriginal perspectives are heard.

Our work also continues in Kempsey with Learning the Macleay, and with new partnerships through our growing Community of Practice. Across all ten sites, JRNSW is committed to supporting local leadership, strengthening data use, and ensuring communities have the tools to drive their own change.

This year we also consolidated our Supporting Body in Redfern, filling all key roles and expanding capacity in research, data and engagement. Our data hub and forthcoming JR Community Dashboard will equip communities with accessible, place-based evidence on crime, incarceration costs, and the savings that can come from prevention. Our research agenda-ranging from reinvestment policy modelling to analysis of system costs and legislative reform-remains focused on the bigger picture: embedding justice reinvestment into law and policy in New South Wales.

Our partnerships remain vital. We are grateful to the Paul Ramsay Foundation, The Charitable Foundation, Dusseldorp Forum, Bill and Patricia Ritchie Foundation, and many others whose financial and in-kind support make this work possible. Relationships with the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR), NSW Treasury, Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) and the Justice Reform Initiative (JRI) are strengthening the credibility and reach of justice reinvestment.

Looking ahead, our new Strategic Plan 2025-2028 centres on five priorities: creating a reinvestment policy mechanism; deepening community partnerships; strengthening data infrastructure; shifting public narratives; and securing sustainable funding.

*Success will be when Aboriginal communities see fewer of our people in prisons, fewer of our children in detention, and stronger foundations for community safety and wellbeing.*

The work of justice reinvestment is not easy in a climate where disadvantage is too often punished, and evidence-based approaches dismissed. Yet Aboriginal communities continue to lead with courage, resilience and vision. Our role is to amplify their voices, provide the data

and research that supports their solutions, and show that justice reinvestment is not only possible but essential.

Justice reinvestment began with communities like Bourke daring to imagine something different. That imagination is spreading. Our challenge-and our commitment, is to keep walking alongside Aboriginal communities until justice reinvestment is embedded as policy, practice and truth across New South Wales.

Geoff Scott  
Chief Executive Officer

## Message from the Chair

*Having grown up myself in a regional town it was easy to see how those who ended up on the wrong side of the law were also victims and the children of victims themselves.*

Last year the team at Just Reinvest NSW and the four Aboriginal communities engaged in justice reinvestment were focused on their people and developing the preventive strategies that might help steer their young people away from the criminal justice system.

This year, Geoff and the Supporting Body team have started to focus on understanding the root causes of crime, the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) has helpfully taken more time to zero in on what it might take to reduce overrepresentation in prison, breaking down the known data about the current cohort in custody; and it paints a very interesting picture which I can personally relate to.

Having grown up myself in a regional town where there was a clear demarcation between white and blackfullas and a corresponding gap of wealth, resources and access to services, it was easy to see how those who ended up on the wrong side of the law were also victims and the children of victims themselves.

Looking at BOCSAR data as at June 2022, in New South Wales there were 98 Aboriginal young people in custody, 78 per cent of whom were on remand and 82 per cent were victims (77 per cent victims of a violent offence and 15 per cent had been victims of a property offence). Thirty-eight per cent of them in custody had already spent time in out-of-home care; 76 per cent have had a ROSH (at risk of significant harm) report; and 5 per cent were victimised by the age of 5 and 30 per cent had been victims before the age of 10 (see next page).

Unfortunately, because of growing up in disadvantaged situations this picture is also characterised by social and

economic determinants that can push young people to the edge; for example of the 98 young people in custody 56 per cent had lived in social housing and 42 per cent had accessed a homelessness service in the past. These are awful numbers and point directly to the failure of multiple systems to address it.

The larger point is that even just by using this data that we can easily gather and analyse about our inmates; we can understand that usually Aboriginal youth offenders are victims of crime and disadvantaged themselves *before* they offend.

And yet, we also find ourselves where the media daily describes young offenders as “thugs”, “young criminals” etc. however they could just as easily be characterised when they were younger as victims of DV assault (30 per cent). When we look at young Aboriginal people in prison the media often points to them as “the problem” but we never point to the determinants of the problem – ie. what might be the root causes of “the problem”? Is “the problem” really about how we look after our most vulnerable in society, regardless of who they are or where they come from?

Here is an idea: could we perhaps attempt to triangulate local health, education and socioeconomic data that might help us and the government understand better how we can tackle offending in certain places by providing better support; better services at the right time and in more culturally appropriate ways? This is the dream that we are all working towards I guess but I think justice reinvestment provides a pathway for us to do that; and it gives Aboriginal communities agency over their data, their stories and their solutions.



I very much look forward to the new strategic period that Geoff and the team have developed that could really embed the JR approach into more policy approaches and an emerging design of a justice reinvestment policy. With the growing partnership with government agencies such as BOCSAR, Treasury and the Department of Communities & Justice, this job will made infinitely easier

and with the amazing long-term commitment from our philanthropic supporters such as Paul Ramsay Foundation, I can see the determination in the JR teams in Redfern,

Prof. Jack Beetson  
Chair



# Taking a closer look at Aboriginal young people in custody

AS OF

JUNE 2022

## CHILDHOOD VICTIMISATION

**5%** were victimised before the age of 5

**10%** were victimised before the age of 10

**77%** had been the victim of a violent offence

**15%** had been the victim of a property offence

**82%** history of prior victimisation

**4** average number of prior victimisations

## DV OFFENDING

**46%** had appeared in court for a DV offence

## OUT-OF-HOME CARE

**38%** had spent time in out of home care

**98** Aboriginal young people in custody (June 2022)

**78%** were on remand

## DV ASSAULT

**30%** had ever been the victim of a DV assault

**23%** ever been victim of DV assault by a family member

**76%** have had a ROSH report (at risk of significant harm)

## SOCIAL HOUSING

**56%** had lived in social housing

## HOMELESSNESS

**42%** had accessed a homelessness service in the past

**11** median age at first victimisation

Source: NSW BOCSAR

# Looking back

Strategic plan

**SUPPORT, ADVOCATE FOR AND PROMOTE SELF-DETERMINATION** through Aboriginal-led justice reinvestment

*"Data belongs to communities. The Hub ensures they control it and benefit"*

**ADVOCATE FOR SYSTEMIC POLICY REFORM**, including a shift of decision making power from government to community

*"65% of police actions against Aboriginal youth in Mt. Druitt were for fare evasion"*

**ENSURE WE ARE A STRONG ORGANISATION** that convenes dynamic network to support Aboriginal community-led justice reinvestment

COMMUNITY-LED JR is now embedded

YOUTH VOICE shifted the agenda

JUSTICE CIRCUIT BREAKER moved from pilot to practice

MEASUREMENT, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

REINVESTMENT CO-DESIGN underway

POLICY AND SYSTEMS change

FUNDING AND DELIVERY capacity grew

PARTNERSHIPS AND MOVEMENT-BUILDING

Youth-led programs like Mounty Yarns reached 700+ at launch, with young people presenting in courts and TEDx

*"Mounty Yarns showed our young people have the solutions - they just need to be heard."*

Theory-of-Change and MEL frameworks completed; Data Hub in development to share tools and training with communities.

*"The Reinvestment Forum marked a turning point - government is now at the table."*

Raise the Age of Criminal Responsibility advocacy, parliamentary submissions and stronger relationships with Police, DCJ, Education and courts.

*"Partnerships are shifting from transactional to genuine shared leadership"*

*"Kempsey's "Learning the Macleay" shows healing, educating and aligning must go together."*

Forums, partner networks and national JR deepened collaboration and scaled the work

Bail projects, after-hours programs, learner-driver and cell-support initiatives reduced breach risks and created safer pathways.

*"In Moree, 83% of services ran only in business hours. That's why after-hours programs matter."*

The 2022 Reinvestment Forum convened community, government and philanthropy to progress reinvestment models with NSW Treasury input.

Youth On Track secured in Mt Druitt; Kempsey and Nowra JR work funded; philanthropy remain engaged.

## OUTCOMES

# 2020-2024

# Looking forward

Our strategic pillars

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030

STRATEGIC PILLAR

1

Advocacy and Policy Influence

JRNSW will champion key justice reforms by leading targeted campaigns that push for legislative and systemic changes that reduce over-incarceration and strengthen community-led alternatives

JRNSW will build accountability and alignment to closing the gap by embedding justice reinvestment initiative within national and state frameworks

JRNSW will drive public awareness and generative narrative change by shifting the conversation to focus on evidence-based, community-led solutions

JRNSW will strive to influence policy in priority areas by providing clear evidence, expert advice and community insights to shape government commitments where reform is most needed

JRNSW will prioritise and elevate community voices in reform by ensuring those with lived experience are at the forefront of decision-making and advocacy.

STRATEGIC PILLAR

2

Data Development and Evidence Base

JRNSW will engage with strategic research to generate high-quality evidence that identifies drivers of incarceration and demonstrates the effectiveness of community-led alternatives

JRNSW will build trust and support capacity building within communities to ensure that data and research processes are inclusive, culturally safe and strengthens indigenous data sovereignty practices

JRNSW will create frameworks for measuring impact that allows progress to be tracked, outcomes validated evidence disseminated to support sustained reform

STRATEGIC PILLAR

3

Sustainability and Governance

JRNSW will endeavour to secure sustainable funding streams by embedding long-term investment models that prioritises stability.

JRNSW will strengthen governance and cultural integrity by ensuring decision-making structures are community-led, culturally grounded and accountable

JRNSW will support capacity building and staff development by equipping communities and organisations with the skills and resources needed to sustain justice reinvestment

JRNSW will convene network gathering and 'build the movement' through fostering collaborations across communities, sectors and governments

JRNSW ensure transparency and accountability by implementing reporting mechanisms that build trust and demonstrates impact

What we're trying to do:

Reduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' interactions with the NSW criminal justice system through Justice Reinvestment



JUST REINVEST NSW ORGANISATIONAL Values

Leadership, Innovation, Caring, Accountability, Truth Telling, Strong Relationships, Resilience, Driving Change, Collaborative

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT Principles

Community-led Place-based, Data-driven, Collaborative, Economically Sustainable



# NSW Year in Review

By the numbers

127

## ABORIGINAL YOUNG PEOPLE IN DETENTION IN NSW

In December 2024, 127 Aboriginal young people were in detention — an increase of 21 people (19.8%) in 12 months, according to NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR). This is primarily because the number of young people held in remand increased, which is due to the rise in bail refusal rate.

85%

## OF CHILDREN SENTENCED TO DETENTION RETURN TO CUSTODY WITHIN 12 MONTHS

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) show that over the last decade nationally, the number of children aged 10 to 16 released from sentenced detention has more than halved – from 680 in 2014-15 to just 309 in 2022-23, but the rate of return has barely shifted (around 85%).

34%

## INCREASE IN NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW IN CUSTODY SINCE JUN 2023

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR).

60%

## OF CHILDREN IN DETENTION IN NSW ARE FIRST NATIONS

despite only making up just 8% of young people in NSW

1,936

## ADULT ABORIGINAL REMANDEES IN NSW

BOCSAR confirmed divergent trends of convictions (increasing) and remand (increasing) of Aboriginal people in NSW – in the five years to March 2025, the number of adult Aboriginal remandees grew by 74% to 2010.

\$2,814

## PER DAY COSTS TO LOCK UP A CHILD IN NSW

According to 2022-2023 Productivity Commission data youth incarceration in NSW costs \$2,814 per child, per day, with the state spending more than \$223 million to imprison children and young people.

130

## ORGANISATIONS CALLED ON THE NSW GOVERNMENT TO RAISE THE MINIMUM AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY FROM 10 TO AT LEAST 14

Just Reinvest NSW is one of the lead agencies of the Raise The Age campaign coordinated by the Justice & Equity Centre. A major awareness and advocacy campaign was launched in November 2024

54%

of people surveyed who saw the 'A Happier Tenth Birthday' advertising by the Raise The Age campaign

## AGREED THAT THE LEGAL AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD BE INCREASED.



# Supporting Body

*The Supporting Body provides governance, financial management, and operational support that strengthens accountability and sustainability.*



## Human Resources & Staff Profiles

Our Human Resources support us by building safe, fair, and effective workforce systems. The team enables staff and leaders through strong governance, recruitment, and people-focused support.

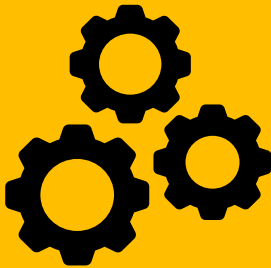
They embed culture, wellbeing, and performance across the organisation, and ensures staff are empowered to deliver meaningful outcomes for communities.



## Data & Research

Data & Research strengthens community-led justice reform by turning data into practical tools for decision-making, advocacy and systemic change; building culturally governed data systems that uphold Indigenous Data Sovereignty and empower communities to control and use their own information.

Through policy-driven research, it quantifies the true costs of incarceration and demonstrates the impact of JR, and drives evidence-based reform by connecting community knowledge with government and sector systems.



## Communications

Our communications drives visibility and influence by sharing community-led JR stories across media, digital platforms, and publications; strengthening public awareness and policy dialogue through targeted campaigns, social media, and storytelling.



## Policy & Advocacy

Our Policy & Advocacy drives structural reform by influencing legislation and government responses to youth justice and community safety and community-led solutions through parliamentary inquiries, evidence-based submissions and campaigning. We translate research into practical policy change to reduce criminalisation and support prevention-focused responses.

## Supporting Body / Human Resources

*The 2024–2025 period marked a transformative year for our Human Resources (HR) function, as we laid the foundations for efficient, consistent, and compliant workforce management.*

The 2024–2025 period marked a transformative year for our Human Resources (HR) function, as we laid the foundations for efficient, consistent, and compliant workforce management. We have established a professionalised HR function and implemented key systems and processes to ensure consistent, compliant, and efficient workforce management. Key achievements included the establishment of a dedicated HR function, and the implementation of Employment Hero to centralise and modernise HR administration.

In September 2024, we appointed our first HR Manager, marking a significant investment in building internal HR capability. This role was created to establish consistent and professional HR practices, drive compliance across all people-related processes, and align HR operations with the organisation’s strategic objectives.

To reduce manual handling, improve accuracy, and strengthen compliance, we implemented Employment Hero, a cloud-based HR platform, in January 2025. Employment Hero now manages employment agreements, position descriptions, policies and procedures, key compliance documentation and recruitment. This has replaced inconsistent and manual processes, ensuring efficiency, transparency, and improved employee experience.

Looking ahead, HR will play a central role in facilitating the transition of the Mt Druitt site to MAYCS, optimising

operational administration, supporting strategic workforce planning, and implementing a performance framework.

Collectively, these initiatives position the organisation to deliver its services effectively and sustainably, reinforcing our capacity to meet current and future program objectives and supporting a compelling case for continued funding. Why is HR, or more broadly speaking, ‘People and Culture’ as a function important? This function looks after all things related to the workforce – managing the employment relationship between the organisation and its employees. In any organisation, people are the ones who work to realise the organisation’s mission and strategies. In a sector like the one JRNSW operates in, our people deliver critical and life-changing support to people in community. Our people can literally make the difference between someone making a quick decision that has lifelong consequences.

Our workforce is comprised of people with varied backgrounds. Some come from a corporate background, some have worked in the wider NFP sector for their entire careers, and others bring lived experience of interaction with the justice system to their roles. Each person has something unique to contribute to the wider mission of reducing incarceration of Aboriginal people in NSW, by way of justice reinvestment.

One factor in the wider picture of ensuring someone stays on a good path in life is employment. Not only is it a means by which we can put food on the table and a roof over our



heads, employment can also help us thrive by giving us purpose, structure and meaning, it can also be a way of contributing positively to society.

And in our space, employment is a circuit-breaker. Both for our employees, who often come to our organisation as Youth Ambassadors with lived experience and then go on to develop their careers. But also, for the lives they touch in the day-to-day work – employment at JRNSW allows people to work directly in and for communities.

This year, we want to share career stories of some of our employees. We hope to showcase their success, their development and their aspirations.

*Youth on Track team members, Mt Druitt  
L-R: Jim Bell, Kam Ghavamzadeh, Dillon  
Saunders-Carr, Damien Morrison.  
Photo credit: Thanadon Films / JRNSW*





Staff profiles /

ARCHIE

**A**rchie Darcy is a dedicated member of the Youth on Track team at the JRNSW Mt Druitt site, where he brings passion, lived experience and deep community ties to his work with young people. Archie began his journey with JRNSW as a Youth Worker, supporting young people with essential welfare needs such as arranging birth certificates and Medicare cards, and helping them engage in programs like group exercise, boxing and cultural activities. After a year in the role, he stepped into a Case Worker position, where he now works closely with young people and their families, providing early-intervention case management, advocacy and referrals aimed at preventing or reducing their involvement with the justice system.

As the third oldest of seven siblings, Archie has always embraced the role of a leader and mentor. He speaks with pride about how his nieces refer to him as their “idol,” and he actively encourages them to explore sport, art and positive opportunities. This sense of responsibility, of setting an example and showing the way drives Archie’s commitment to supporting the next generation.

Archie’s connection to JRNSW began long before his employment. In his younger years, he knew Jess Brown (Youth Engagement Manager) and Daniel Daylight (Manager, Mt Druitt) from his own experiences going through the Parramatta Children Court system. When approached about joining JRNSW, he welcomed the opportunity to use his lived experience to relate to and positively influence young people facing similar challenges.

Before entering the Just Reinvest space, Archie gained varied work experience across the NDIS sector as an Aboriginal support worker, in traffic control, agricultural (digging and searching for Aboriginal artifacts) and farming

roles, warehousing, and general labouring. He holds a Certificate IV in Youth Work and had intended to pursue a Diploma in Community Services before the pandemic shifted his plans. Through these diverse career paths, he came to recognise that Just Reinvest is where he is truly meant to be.

Archie understands the weight of his role: the chance to reach a young person before they make a life-altering decision. He believes many young people know what they want but face barriers that derail their path, and he sees himself as someone who can help remove those barriers. The possibility that one day a young person might look back and remember him as the person who guided them towards the right path is what motivates him.

*This is critical for connection and relatability with young people – it’s about normalising the not-cool stuff to be cool to talk about, because you’ve been through similar situations as them.”*

Seen within his community as a natural role model, Archie describes himself as “a shepherd, not a sheep.” Families often reach out to him for support with young people in their lives, and some parents have

even requested that their children work alongside him; something he holds in high regard. Cultural and community connection has always been central to Archie’s life, and through Youth on Track he is now able to share this with young people, facilitating weekly cultural activities and helping them build a sense of belonging.

JRNSW provides ongoing opportunities for professional development, and Archie has embraced training in areas such as mental health awareness, narrative therapy, and “My Journey, My Life” - a framework that helps staff positively integrate their personal stories into their work. For Archie, this training strengthens his ability to connect with young people through honesty, relatability and shared experience. “It’s about normalising the not so-cool stuff to be cool”.

For Archie, working at JRNSW is ultimately about standing up for his mob and being someone young people can look up to. Guided by the belief that tomorrow is never promised, he strives to be remembered simply as a good person, and one who made a difference when it mattered most.

“This is critical for connection and relatability with young people – it’s about normalising the not-cool stuff to be cool to talk about, because you’ve been through similar situations as them.”

For Archie, his work at JRNSW allows him to work for his mob. He believes that tomorrow is never promised, and when it all comes down to it, it’s about being known as a good person.



Archie Darcy

[Staff profiles cont. /](#)

DILLON

You might recognise Dillon Saunders-Carr as one of the stars of the Mounty Yarns film. He is the newest member of the Youth on Track team in Mt Druitt and started out with JRNSW as a Youth Ambassador. Dillon now works as a full-time Youth Worker. A typical day for Dillon as a Youth Worker is “full on”. You might be mistaken for thinking that it’s all about running programs and youth engagement (the fun stuff) – but there’s a significant administrative responsibility in the role, such as keeping case notes. Clients are referred to the service via various avenues, and Youth Workers need to call and check up on them, pick them up and transport them to ensure they’re at the right place and time for their appointments.

For Dillon, the Youth Worker role allows him to build confidence, as well as setting a path for the next generation and being able to help his community. He had a goal to move up from Youth Ambassador to Youth Worker, and this gave him a sense of purpose. Being open and observing how things worked played a big part in this, such as taking in as much as he could from the other Youth on Track team members. Dillon has developed wisdom, the ability to have conversations with young people, and help them in ways that he never used to be able to. He’s undertaken narrative practice training, which is all about digging deep and finding out whatever the problem is for the young person, then being able to figure out the right way to deal with it.

Prior to joining JRNSW, Dillon was undertaking an apprenticeship in landscaping. He watched the Mt Druitt service come together and is pleased to know that there’s an Aboriginal-controlled service helping the Mounty community, the first of its kind in Mt Druitt. The service provides an option for all young Aboriginal people and young people in general to come to for help and support. He describes it as a “privilege”, an “honour” and “lucky” to be in this situation at this stage in life where he is leading young people. When asked about any moments of pride or achievement that stand out for Dillon, he says that being in his position and being able to help the young generation

and community who are in need is an achievement. If someone is considering a career in the sector, Dillon says it’s a big role to take on but if it’s what you want and you’re passionate about it, it could be worth considering as you can help young people.

What’s next for Dillon? He would like to see the organisation keep growing, helping young people achieve what they want in life after accessing the service. For himself, he wants to climb up the ranks in the industry, next as a Case Worker and then into management positions. Study might be on the cards at some point in the future as well.



Dillon Saunders-Carr



Ian Brown

IAN

Moree and Gomeroi boy Ian Brown first became involved with JR NSW in a voluntary capacity in 2021-22, when he was nominated to be on the first executive leadership group in Moree. Fast forward a few years, and Ian came across an opportunity to join the organisation in a full-time capacity as the Community Data Manager. Ian was impressed at seeing a collective of Aboriginal panelists asking questions related to Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles in NSW, advocating for access to data at a local level. The job aligned perfectly to all his values and passions, so Ian came onboard and joined the Research and Data team.

Prior to joining JR NSW, Ian held various positions at the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). Working in the child protection sector, Ian provided Aboriginal insights on the full remit, from policy to targeted early intervention

to out-of-home-care. It was at DCJ that Ian discovered his passion for Indigenous Data Sovereignty, and transitioned into a data-focused role, specifically on building a responsive policy environment within DCJ to respond to the need of Aboriginal communities to access culturally responsive and relevant data.

No two days are ever the same as the Community Data Manager. Coming into the office in Redfern of a morning involves having yarns about how everyone is going, greeting the office dog, and settling into admin tasks and emails to kick off the day. The Research and Data team checks in with tasks for the day and how work on bigger projects is progressing.

Then it’s all about how to better connect with communities and allowing them to feel supported from a data perspective. This might be taking phone calls, video calls, or representing JRNSW in various forums that require a data lens from an Aboriginal perspective. It also involves being out on the ground to get a full understanding of how communities do their work, bearing in mind that all communities are culturally different and distinct, and each has its own way of going about justice reinvestment. “The most enjoyable part of the job is connecting with different communities across NSW; hearing their great stories, how they’re going about the work, and how they’re getting more excited about data.”

He has had the opportunity to present at the NSW JR Community of Practice, and get mob engaged with and thinking about data sovereignty and how they engage with data systems, telling stories from their own perspectives, and largely encouraging community to think about data in a different way.

At the core of what JRNSW does and motivates Ian most, is the fact that Aboriginal people are overrepresented within the criminal justice system. Seeing the great work that’s happening in our local and partner sites across NSW fuels his passion for social justice for Aboriginal people.





[Staff profiles cont. /](#)

Ian sees his role as a translator for the great work that communities are doing with circuit breaker activities, and how these active efforts are captured within a data context.

“I feel like my job is crucial to ensuring that we’re telling the stories of the work communities are doing, and making sure it is always from a strengths-based and community-led approach.”

Ian’s journey at JRNSW has been one of quick growth and learning. Being surrounded by senior executive leaders from community and within JRNSW itself has allowed Ian to take on qualities that he sees are crucial to building on his profession, as well as how he goes about engaging in his personal life.

Learning from both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous leaders in the organisation has exposed Ian to other practice areas such as HR, and communications and media. The CEO has helped Ian navigate the complex environments of government and community. Ian has developed technical skills, such as learning the foundations of coding in the R computer programming language; and gained an understanding of business analytics and how systems talk to one another. He is passionate about sharing his knowledge and skills with communities to strengthen their data practices within their own community context.

The job allows Ian to be home in his community more often, connecting with family and kin which is great for his sense of cultural belonging. The role also allows Ian to connect with other nations and learn about their cultural practices, especially as they relate to the work of justice reinvestment. It gives Ian the chance to develop a better understanding of the experience young people face and capture those stories through data. Ultimately Ian hopes that this will impact the overall pathways in which the NSW government goes about engaging with young people.

To anyone considering a career in the space, Ian says that “the sky is the limit. If a young boy from Moree can learn these systems, anyone can do it.” He encourages anyone to become more active in the data space, especially with the advancements in technology and where we’re going as

a society. To a young people Ian says “you can be anything you wanna be within this world”, even when the odds are against you as an Aboriginal person and coming from the communities.

What’s next for Ian? He wants to take on a more senior role, and one day be a CEO. In the meantime, he wants to continue to grow knowledge and interest in data in Aboriginal communities and deliver a reinvestment model that’s fit for purpose for Aboriginal communities across NSW.

*I feel like my job is crucial to ensuring that we’re telling the stories of the work communities are doing, and making sure it is always from a strengths-based and community-led approach*

MEKAYLA

**M**ekayla Cochrane was in a government organisation when she first interacted with JRNSW in Moree, building relationships and connections to support her in her role. She found the idea of working hands on with mob and community appealing.

Mekayla did a trial with JRNSW during the pandemic and found that the ways of doing things and ways of working challenged the norm. She enjoyed seeing community-led initiatives take place rather than the local government driven ones, when those who wouldn’t usually; step up, lead and had a platform.

Mekayla joined JRNSW as the Moree Administration officer, moved onto our Youth Lead and was promoted to the role of Manager this year. She describes the way of working at JRNSW as “very responsive”. While there is a long-term strategy, things can happen quickly in the Moree community, so she needs to be able to be flexible, adapt and react to whatever the situation demands. There

is no red tape, so she is able to offer help when people need something, and JR has a reputation for being reliable for this reason. People aren’t turned away if they’re not a client or don’t have a referral, or they’re of a certain age or background. However, navigating community politics doesn’t come without its challenges, and there can often be pressure for JRNSW to lead and respond to incidents in town.

Being in this role has opened Mekayla’s eyes to a whole new world. Working towards the concept of justice reinvestment is rewarding – it’s about doing what’s best for community, seeing young people grow and explore opportunities they otherwise wouldn’t have.

Mekayla sees her role in community as being important outside of her role as the Manager. She stresses the importance of relationships with young people and their families encountering the system, and those who work with these young people, as being a contributing factor to lowering incarceration.

It’s also rewarding for Mekayla to see young people in community have access to different types of role models, and for new young people to be coming through the door.

*To succeed, you need to be adaptable and independent. You have to be ready for the lows, but the highs do balance it out. Community can be hard work, but it’s so rewarding.*

When they first come in young people can feel reluctant to engage, asking who the boss is, and being afraid of being growled

at. Mekayla does things differently – she believes that there doesn’t have to be a person in power, so she operates from an angle of being supportive. Being the Manager also allows Mekayla to have a seat at the table. She is invited to more events and is taken seriously by other organisations.

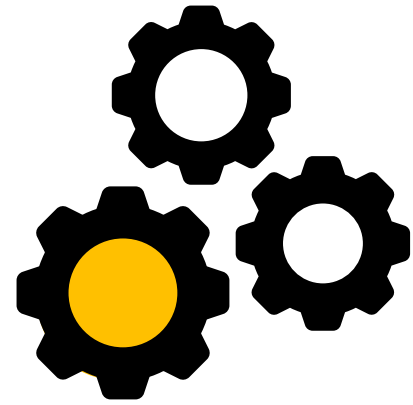
Mekayla values professional development, both for herself and others. She enjoys hearing that team members ask for more work, showing independence and growth. She has completed a pathway course of narrative therapy and is currently studying a graduate certificate which she draws on working with people from a therapeutic angle. While the

role can be very challenging in terms of the highs and lows, Mekayla has to maintain balance, and this is a skill. She knows that the only thing she has control over is how she reacts. Mekayla has no plans on leaving JRNSW, but in her ideal world she would grow herself out of a job, meaning community is in a position where they support themselves. To achieve this, she wants to grow community-led foundations, such as a youth voice and community voice. In other words, long-term sustainable community-led spaces.

To anyone considering a career in justice reinvestment Mekayla encourages them to come on board if they’re willing to do things differently and try something new. “To succeed, you need to be adaptable and independent. You have to be ready for the lows, but the highs do balance it out. Community can be hard work, but it’s so rewarding.”



Mekayla Cochraneis (ABC News: Shaun Kingma)



## Supporting Body / Communications

*Despite a difficult media environment, JRNSW strengthened its role as a trusted, evidence-based voice in public debates on youth justice. We expanded our reach through data-driven storytelling, national campaigns, and strong digital engagement—while continuing to champion Aboriginal community-led solutions to overincarceration.*

### STRATEGY & PUBLIC VOICE

Throughout 2024–25, JRNSW maintained a steady communications strategy with a growing emphasis on data, research, police relations, and community voices. In a challenging media environment dominated by “tough on crime” narratives, JRNSW worked to provide a balanced, evidence-based perspective. We prioritised moments where our contribution could add value—whether through constructive criticism, sharing lived experiences, or highlighting community-led solutions. A clear and urgent need remains to shift the public conversation on youth crime and Aboriginal overincarceration, and JRNSW is positioning itself to play a stronger role in advocating for reinvestment.

### MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Mainstream coverage of youth justice was often negative, particularly in regional NSW. Against this backdrop,

JRNSW provided a moderate but consistent voice. We issued key statements—including on youth bail law extensions and alarming Aboriginal incarceration trends—and our leaders were regularly quoted across national outlets (e.g. Sydney Morning Herald, National Indigenous Times, ABC Radio, Koori Radio). JRNSW staff also featured in interviews and programs that showcased diversionary and community-based approaches.

### SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL IMPACT

On social media, LinkedIn proved our strongest engagement platform, followed by Facebook and Instagram. Content celebrating community, highlighting data, and showcasing JRNSW advocacy performed best. Our most successful post—the soft launch of the JR Data Hub—drew wide interest from Aboriginal communities, the justice sector, and data specialists, achieving a high engagement rate. Posts challenging dominant media narratives on youth crime, particularly with ABS data, also resonated strongly.



*Photo credit: Maranguka*

Our newsletters and blogs continued to provide in-depth analysis and updates. Open rates averaged around 50 per cent, well above sector norms, showing strong subscriber interest in JRNSW's research, advocacy, and community stories.

### PUBLICATIONS & CAMPAIGNS

This year saw the release of Designing a Justice Reinvestment Mechanism for NSW: A Discussion Paper, alongside regular reports and newsletters. JRNSW also contributed to national campaigns, including Raise the Age, where we supported creative development and benefited from \$3M+ of pro bono advertising placements across TV, radio, digital, and outdoor media.

### EVENTS & CONFERENCES

JRNSW contributed to major sector events, including the WA Justice Reinvestment Summit, BOCSAR's Applied

Research in Crime and Justice Conference, and the NSW JR Community Forum. Our staff presented research, shared community experiences, and strengthened partnerships with policymakers, researchers, and Aboriginal community leaders.



## Supporting Body / Policy & Advocacy

*Ensuring Aboriginal communities pursuing justice reinvestment have a voice that is listened to, now and into the future*



### APPEARANCE BEFORE THE NSW LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE

on Law and Safety's inquiry into community safety in regional and rural communities

Geoff Scott and Emma Whitnall appeared on a panel with representatives from the Justice Reform Initiative to answer the committee's questions on our submission. Our submission (delivered last year) advocated for a justice reinvestment approach to youth crime, arguing that strengthening communities and preventing the occurrence of future youth offending will be more effective than increasing the severity of punitive responses.

The interim report was submitted by the committee in May, with the Government response due on 29 November 2025.

### RAISE THE AGE CAMPAIGN

As one of the lead organisations in the NSW Raise the Age Campaign (of minimum age of criminal responsibility), JRNSW was pivotal in the development of the public advertising campaign a; 'A Happier Tenth Birthday' which has achieved saturation coverage and reach across traditional media channels. Thirty media partners provided pro bono ad placement via the UnLtd. creative media agency collaboration.

The market value of the two phases of advertising was more than \$6 million. Placements included major shopping centres in the lead up to Christmas, TV and Radio placements across Metro and Regions, mass digital placements from far and wide and billboards in Metro public transport and major roads.

The public awareness campaign has proven to change audiences' minds and has provided a strong platform for the second political phase of the campaign which will be directly targeting members of the political parties in the NSW Legislative Assembly.



*Ian Brown presenting at the WA Justice Reinvestment Summit in Boorloo (Perth) in July 2025 Photo credit: SRWA*

*Geoff Scott, CEO, JRNSW  
Ian Brown, Community Data Manager, JRNSW  
Lawrence Gilbert, Community Engagement Manager, JRNSW at the National Justice Reinvestment Stakeholder Forum in Canberra on 28 March 2025*

### SUBMISSION TO THE NSW GOVERNMENT

review of operation of doli incapax in NSW for children under 14

Just Reinvest NSW were invited to provide a submission to the NSW Government inquiry into the application of doli incapax. Our submission urged the government to keep doli incapax as a common law principle, as this has seen a decline in those under 14 years of age being charged in court. Children under 14 need rehabilitative programs and increased support services, not prison.

The findings of this review are due by the end of the year, and we are closely monitoring this for any updates.

### CONCEPT PAPER RELEASE

We published our research paper produced in conjunction with academics from University of Technology, University of Sydney, Macquarie University, which will be used to further support our advocacy work around developing a justice reinvestment mechanism. We are currently working on an accompanying summary guide of this paper that will incorporate more visual elements and charts.



## Supporting Body / Data & Research

*“Community data is the foundation of justice reinvestment—it tells our story, guides our advocacy, and drives systems change.”*



### DATA AND RESEARCH: Strengthening the Evidence Base for Justice Reinvestment

The past year has seen remarkable progress in the Data and Research team’s mission to embed data sovereignty, strengthen community capacity, and position Just Reinvest NSW (JRNSW) as a leader in ethical, community-led data practice. Our work continues to provide the evidence base that underpins systems reform, ensuring Aboriginal communities have the tools, data, and authority to drive change from the ground up.

### BUILDING THE DATA INFRASTRUCTURE Foundations for the Future

JRNSW’s six-phase Data Infrastructure Plan is creating a sustainable, integrated data environment that supports justice reinvestment efforts across NSW. With Phase 1 nearing completion and efforts moving into Phase 2, the team is transitioning from design to implementation—bringing new data tools, training, and research directly into community hands.

At the core of this vision is the **JRNSW Data Warehouse**—a centralised, secure repository that brings together publicly available and community-generated datasets. The Data Warehouse is designed to store historical data, automate regular updates, provide a data security framework, and link datasets to enable consistent monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) across all JRNSW sites. This platform will also integrate with the Power BI Community Dashboards, allowing dynamic data visualisations that communities can use to track progress and advocate for systems change.

### DATA SOURCES Feeding the Warehouse

The Data Warehouse will bring together a diverse range of datasets from both government and community partners, including:

- **Public Data Sources:** Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Human Services Dataset (HSDS), Productivity Commission (RoGS), and the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC).
- **Community Data Sources:** Locally gathered and securely stored data from MEL Frameworks, Program Logic Templates, and Outcomes Matrices, alongside new data generated through circuit-breaker activities and community evaluations.

This combination of public and local data will support cross-site comparison, policy evaluation, and reporting—while maintaining a strong commitment to Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance (IDS&G).

### COMMUNITY DASHBOARDS and Tools for Change

**The Community Dashboard**—the first major product of JRNSW’s data plan—is nearing completion. It includes five key pages: Community Reflections, Community Profile, Map View, Persons of Interest, and National Comparison. Together, these pages allow users to explore crime and justice data, view demographic and socio-economic trends across Census periods, map changes across NSW, and compare state and national expenditure patterns.

Once community feedback has been gathered, the Dashboard will be refined and relaunched in a 2.0 version as part of Phase 4. This process ensures that the tool remains culturally relevant, accessible, and community-driven.

Complementing this is the **Data Location Mapping Tool**, a Power BI-based platform incorporating AI functionality. This innovation allows users to ask natural language questions about where to find datasets, dramatically simplifying how data is located and accessed. Together, these tools will form the backbone of the publicly accessible **JRNSW Data Hub**, which will include both dashboards and research publications.

### RESEARCH DELIVERABLES and Advocacy Impact

JRNSW’s research program has continued to advance the national conversation on justice reinvestment through high-quality, collaborative research:

- **Designing a Justice Reinvestment Mechanism for New South Wales** (released August 2025): Co-authored with academics from UTS, Macquarie University and the University of Sydney, this foundational discussion paper sets out a framework for policy reinvestment mechanisms in NSW. The Visual Guide and Infographic, which distils the highly technical and theoretical work of this paper into more accessible graphs and charts for a wider audience, will soon be released.
- **Cost of Criminal Justice Paper** (forthcoming 2025): Quantifies the financial costs of the NSW criminal justice system—tracking expenditure across arrests, courts, remand and incarceration—to demonstrate the economic case for justice reinvestment.
- Future research papers will address:
  - The reduction of carceral resources
  - The economic opportunity cost of imprisonment
  - Minimum legislative and policy changes to reduce incarceration
  - Potential time horizons for reducing incarceration and recidivism rates

Each paper draws on datasets from BOCSAR, Corrective Services NSW, DCJ, Treasury, and ABS, alongside international comparisons and policy analysis. Collectively, they strengthen JRNSW’s evidence-based advocacy for systemic reform.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT and MEL Framework Development

Community engagement remains central to JRNSW’s approach. The **Community Data Manager**, appointed in late 2024, has been instrumental in enhancing data capacity across the four core JRNSW sites: Mt Druitt, Moree, Nowra, and Kempsey.

Key achievements include:

- Youth Survey (Moree): Developed to capture young people’s experiences of safety, services, and wellbeing. This data informs community planning and supports youth-led initiatives.
- Program Logic Template: Provides a consistent method for mapping local initiatives to measurable outcomes, linking community actions to JRNSW’s strategic objectives.
- Outcomes Matrix: Standardises indicators across sites, enabling shared reporting frameworks that align with funder requirements and the NSW Department of Communities and Justice outcomes bank.
- Community Health Indicators Matrix: Developed to integrate community-level health data (from ABS, AIHW and NSW Health) with justice outcomes—supporting circuit-breaker design and cross-site evaluations.



Participants at the JR Community of Practice forum  
Photo credit: Smith Media



SUPPORTING BODY

MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning) frameworks for Mt Druitt and Moree will be revisited in 2025 following disruptions caused by staffing changes and Sorry Business. These reviews will ensure that evaluation processes remain culturally grounded and aligned with the new JRNSW **Strategic Plan 2025–2030** and **Theory of Change**.

The Community Data Manager has also supported access to key datasets for partner organisations, including youth bail data for the Kempsey region, data sharing through the DCJ Community Service Connector in Shoalhaven, and participation in the **Location-Based Reporting Trial**—a pioneering project allowing data to be reported by community-defined boundaries.

**PARTNERSHIPS AND LEADERSHIP**  
in Data Governance

Through representation across key state and national forums, JRNSW continues to shape the future of ethical data use in justice reform. These include:

- **BOCSAR Aboriginal Governance over NSW Justice Data Committee**
- **DCJ Justice Reinvestment Steering Committee**
- **Taylor Fry Evaluation and Ethics Aboriginal Reference Group**
- **KOWA Gilibanga Network – a First Nations data practitioner network**
- **National Closing the Gap Data Policy Partnership Group** (commencing October 2025)

JRNSW's active involvement ensures that Aboriginal-led organisations influence how justice and social data are collected, governed, and interpreted.

**TRAINING**  
and Capacity Building

Capacity building remains a cornerstone of JRNSW's data strategy. Training in **Data Security, Data Storytelling**, and **Power BI** has commenced, with community participants developing the skills to build and

manage dashboards locally. These efforts decentralise data ownership, reduce dependency on external analysts, and embed sustainable capacity across all JRNSW sites. Advanced training in **R Coding** and **Data Wrangling** will be offered in 2026 as communities become more confident in their analytical practice, ensuring continuity and growth in local data expertise.

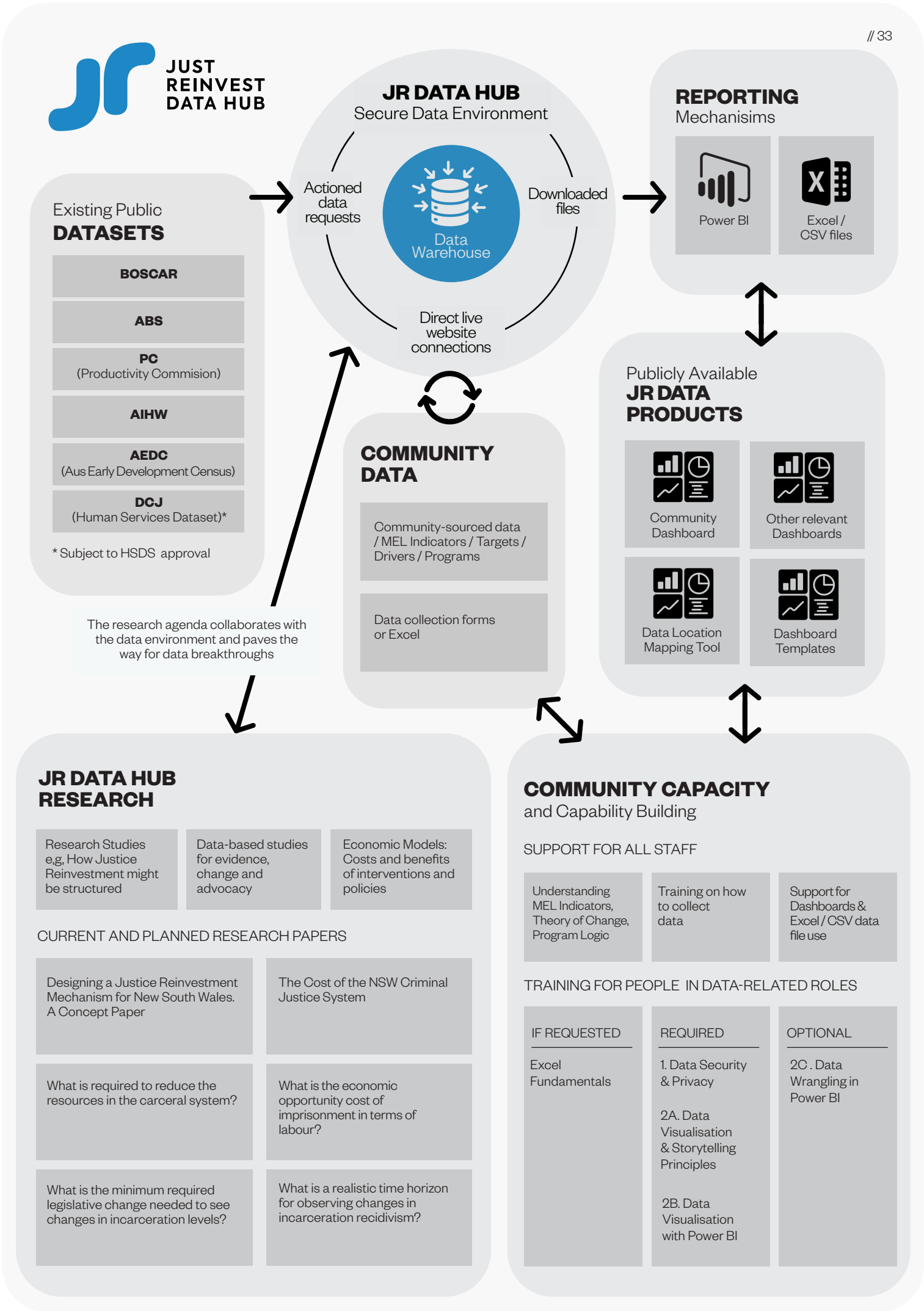
**LOOKING AHEAD**  
Milestones and Impact

The next phases of JRNSW's Data Infrastructure Plan will continue to deliver transformative tools and insights:

- **2025:** Data Location Mapping Tool release; Cost of Criminal Justice Paper; community MEL visits.
- **2026-2028:** Completion of Data Warehouse; release of Dashboard Templates; research into reducing carceral resources; expanded Power BI training and community visits to further data platforms and develop requirements, expansion of community dashboards; research into legislative change, economic costs of imprisonment, and long-term recidivism trends

Every element of this plan reinforces JRNSW's commitment to Indigenous Data Sovereignty—ensuring that Aboriginal communities have control over their data, can analyse it independently, and can use it to shape a fairer, more effective justice system.

**Together, these efforts represent a major leap forward in JRNSW's capacity to measure impact, influence policy, and amplify Aboriginal community voices in the national justice reform agenda.**









# JRNSW Communities

*Just Reinvest NSW continues to directly support  
four communities in NSW*



Mt Druitt  
*Darug  
Country*



Moree  
*Gomeroi  
Country*



Kempsey  
*Learning  
the Macleay*



Nowra  
*Waminda*



## Communities / Mt Druitt

*A Year of Growth, Culture and Community*

**T**his past year has been a turning point for Mt Druitt. Young people and community have led the way in building a stronger, safer and more connected future. At the heart of this journey is the creation of Mounty Aboriginal Youth & Community Services Ltd (MAYCS) — a new Aboriginal community-controlled organisation that will carry this vision forward. keep walking alongside Aboriginal communities until justice reinvestment is embedded as policy, practice and truth across New South Wales.



Bradley and Dillon, Mt Druitt

## Programs That Made a Difference

### CULTURE, SPORT & LEADERSHIP

Culture kept young people strong and connected:

- NAIDOC celebrations across Whalan, Baabayn and Willmot
- On Country days
- Girls' fitness and boxing programs
- Oztag celebrating its 5th year
- Youth Ambassadors stepping into leadership roles

### LEARNER DRIVER MENTOR PROGRAM

A licence opens doors to study, work, and independence. This year, we proudly took on the Learner Driver Mentor Program, offering safe driving skills, practice hours, and confidence. We're now working to expand with more mentors and cars.

### EARLY INTERVENTION & CASEWORK

Our team worked with young people aged 10–17 who are at risk or in contact with the justice system. With a focus on culture, family, and practical goals, we built trust and opened pathways to education, housing and health supports.

**New this year:** funding for early diagnostic testing so young people can access assessments and supports without long waits.

## This year's highlights

### YOUTH-LED AND COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

Young people continued to shape programs, from sport to cultural camps, proving again that they are leaders of solutions.

### NEW COMMUNITY HOME

MAYCS held its first board meeting and opened its base at Beames Avenue, with 13 dedicated staff and a pool of Youth Ambassadors

### TOGETHER IN 2770

A major grant from the Paul Ramsay Foundation will fund youth-led projects and stronger networks from July 2025

### PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Expanded early intervention and casework, with new funding to cover diagnostic testing so young people can access help faster

### DRIVING INDEPENDENCE

The Learner Driver Mentor Program transitioned locally, breaking down barriers for young people getting their licence

### RAISING OUR VOICE

From national conferences to local roundtables, Mt Druitt youth are influencing justice, housing, and community policy





Leah Knight and Shontay Russell  
Photo credit: MAYCS

*We are still here*

*They took our land,  
they tried to silence us.  
But our land remembers us.  
Our feet still touch the red earth.  
No storms can wash our foot prints off  
the dirt.*

*We listen to our Elders tell stories  
about our dreamtime.  
Stories rescued from the edge of  
forgetting.*

*We're reclaiming our language and dance.  
We speak the voice of the fire,  
dance with the dust of our ancestors,  
In every child our culture rises.*

*Not lost  
but Rescued  
and Strong.*

*By - Leah Knight and Shontay Russell  
Mouny Aboriginal Youth & Community Services  
Youth Ambassadors*

The Mouny Yarns team took part in a Level 1 Intensive in Narrative Therapy & Community Work workshop – ‘Telling Our Stories in Ways That Make Us Stronger’ with Tileah Drahm-Butler.

Narrative Practice is a respectful, non-blaming approach to counselling and community work that recognises people as the experts in their own lives. It creates space for individuals to tell and re-tell their stories in ways that bring hope and healing.

Thanks to Ngroo Corporation Literacy for Life and the Aboriginal Legal Service for joining us.

## Stronger Together

### PARTNERSHIPS & NETWORKS

With support from the Together in 2770 grant, we are building the Mouny Aboriginal Youth & Community Network alongside Baabayn, Ngroo, ALS and others. Together, we're creating safe spaces, shared tools, and youth-led initiatives to keep young people connected.

### ADVOCACY & CHANGE

Mt Druitt voices were heard far and wide this year. We co-hosted the Youth Justice Roundtable with UNSW, spoke at national conferences, and pushed for stronger housing and aftercare supports. Plans are underway to create a statewide Aboriginal Youth Peak, giving young people a platform to shape decisions that affect them.

## What We Learned

### YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE LEADERS

When they take charge, change happens faster and safer.

### CULTURE COMES FIRST

Sport, camps and music aren't extras, they are the heart of healing and belonging.

### COMMUNITY MAKES SYSTEMS CHANGE POSSIBLE

Our networks are closing gaps and building better pathways.

## Looking Ahead

### THE YEAR AHEAD WILL FOCUS ON:

Finalising the transition to MAYCS.

Expanding casework to include young adults up to 28

Growing the Learner Driver Mentor Program

Securing housing and aftercare pathways

Hosting more cultural camps, school programs and community days.

Launching a community complaints register and youth-led data portal

Building long-term sustainability through government, philanthropy and community support

This year has been about building — building an organisation, building trust, and building a future led by young people. From cultural camps and sports programs to shaping statewide reform, Mt Druitt is proving that when youth and community lead, real change happens.

**MAYCS** is the next step for Mt Druitt young fullas. It belongs to Mt Druitt. It belongs to young people and the future they are creating.



# Communities / Moree

*Working alongside Elders, families, and community organisations*

The Moree Justice Reinvestment team has continued to champion young people and community voices, despite a year of transition. Working alongside Elders, families, and community organisations, the team has sought to create safe spaces for healing, leadership, and advocacy — ensuring Aboriginal voices are shaping the future of justice in Moree.



Moree - Just Reinvest NSW

## Achievements

### YOUTH VOICE AND PARTICIPATION

- Relaunched the Youth Advisory Committee, with new incentives building trust and engagement.
- Developed plans with Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF) to secure funding for a long-term, sustainable youth voice in Moree.
- Hosted the Mini Youth Forum (Nov 2024), engaging young people in shaping the upcoming Education Summit.

### COMMUNITY EVENTS AND HEALING

- Partnered with Mad Proppa Deadly to deliver another Moree Block Party, bringing hundreds together to celebrate culture and community.
- Supported the Freedom Rides 60th Anniversary commemoration, amplifying historic voices of justice and resistance.
- Facilitated Community Data Sessions (on BOCSAR and Child Protection data) to increase transparency and build trust.

### CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INITIATIVES

- Launched a youth-led podcast project on youth crime, giving young people a powerful platform for change.
- Delivered school holiday programs with Elders and service providers, including camp-overs, music workshops, and fishing competitions.
- Established a Women's Group, creating a healing space for women and young women to share, empower, and support each other.

## Key Developments

### LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Mekayla Cochrane returned from leave to take on the JR Manager role, ensuring continuity and strong local leadership. Recruitment is underway to rebuild the team and strengthen capacity.

### YOUTH ENGAGEMENT REBUILT

The Youth Advisory Committee was relaunched after a period of pause, providing a safe hub where young people connect, create, and lead projects of their own.

### COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

While the Aboriginal Leadership Group faced disruptions, JR Moree continues to advocate for collaborative governance with ACCOs and remains active in the Premier's Youth Crime Governance Group.

### PARTNERSHIPS AND ADVOCACY

The team contributed to the Moree Council's Reconciliation Action Plan, ensuring community perspectives shaped priorities, and publicly challenged punitive "Adult crime, adult time" narratives in favour of healing and support.





The march in Moree for the Freedom Rides 60th Anniversary in February 2025.  
Photo credit: Moree Local Aboriginal Land Council

Achievements cont.

**ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC VOICE**

- Submitted recommendations for the Reconciliation Action Plan, pushing for truth-telling, cultural safety, and practical outcomes.
- Participated in a community rally to challenge punitive justice messaging and advocate for holistic, therapeutic approaches.
- Featured on ABC Radio National's Speaking Out program, highlighting the impact of youth bail law changes.

**CAPACITY BUILDING**

- Staff undertook Narrative Therapy training with colleagues from across JR communities, embedding decolonising and healing practices.
- Mekayla Cochrane is progressing postgraduate study in Narrative Practice, strengthening local expertise.
- Staff contributed to the James Martin Institute's Reinvestment Project, shaping new approaches to reinvestment mechanisms.

Looking Ahead

Though the year brought challenges, it also brought resilience, renewal, and inspiration. With recruitment underway, new partnerships forming, and youth voices growing stronger, the Moree Community Team is poised to build on its achievements.

The vision remains clear: a Moree where Aboriginal young people lead with strength, families are supported, and justice is reimagined through community power.





## Communities / Kempsey, Learning the Macleay

*Building the team across data, youth, education and justice*

**T**he focus of Learning the Macleay in FY 2024-2025 has been building the team including the Data and Research team, a new communications strategy, and the community connector team across youth, education and justice. The Data and Research team has been building the Data Roadmap which is about getting access to school suspension data between private, Catholic, public, Indigenous and Independent schools and the Department of Education.

The Yuwa Nyinda Dream Academy and Youth Summit were created as spaces for that leadership to emerge. The name Yuwa Nyinda – “Yes, You” in Dunghutti – is both a call to action and a statement of belief. You belong here. You matter. You can. While the name Yuwa Nyinda comes from Dunghutti language, this work belongs to all young people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who call the Macleay Valley home.



The young people gathering on Dunghutti Country at the Yuwa Nyinda Dream Academy  
Photo credit: Learning the Macleay

“

*I want to learn culture properly, not just for show.*

Young person, Yuwa Nyinda Youth Summit

“

*We don't just want to be heard, we want to be involved*

Young person, Yuwa Nyinda Youth Summit

Photo credit:  
Learning the Macleay



### COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND BELONGING

*We need to be surrounded  
by people who actually get us*

Such as Aboriginal leadership roles in schools; cultural camps for all students to grow mutual understanding; role of extended family as key support network; better support to young people in custody and coordinated services for post release integration.

### YOUTH SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

*Some of us carry weapons to feel  
safe. That shouldn't be normal*

Start night patrols again; racism and discrimination in schools and public spaces; employ Aboriginal staff at PCYC and review cultural practices.

### LEADERSHIP, CULTURE AND VOICE

*We don't just want to be heard  
we want to be involved.*

Left out of decisions; leaders to show up in community, not just events; youth advisory groups for council and services; Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander young people on regional planning committees; more youth summits and storytelling events; cultural events and language programs year-round.

### MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

*We bottle things up.  
Then it explodes*

Access to trauma informed and Aboriginal counsellors; accessible and trusted services; more youth hubs for safety, support and cultural grounding; responses to bullying, youth violence, trauma; life skills and spaces for release (through music and storytelling).

### COST OF LIVING RELIEF & ESSENTIALS

*People think we're just angry,  
but we're hungry too.*

School uniforms, transport and food support; more sports funding for after school/weekends; community gardens to reduce food costs; overcrowded and damaged homes.

### SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

*When learning is fun, we  
want to come to school.*

Hands-on flexible learning; breakfast clubs open longer; fewer suspensions more support for kids with trauma; build supported learning centres in schools; adapt lesson plans to cultural perspectives.



## Communities / NOWRA - WAMINDA

*Providing women and their Aboriginal families an opportunity to belong and receive quality health and wellbeing.*

**W**aminda South Coast Aboriginal Women's Health Cooperation has been successfully operating in Nowra and South Coast region for 40 years providing women and their Aboriginal families an opportunity to belong and receive quality health and wellbeing by utilising a tailored strength-based care model.

Waminda has established strong women's health and family services such as maternity (Birthing on Country and Minga Gudjaga); cultural enterprise (Blak Cede café) and Wiyanga Yanaga Cultural Programs, community support (case management, family preservation & restoration known as 'Balaang Gunyah' and 'Waranj Dhurawarga'); and health and wellbeing (clinical services, social, emotional and wellbeing services called 'Midthong Muru').



## Midthong Muru (YOUTH PROGRAM)

The youth program which is now supported by a significant government funded justice reinvestment grant from the Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ) has six separate initiatives reaching a large proportion of the Aboriginal young population, including:



## BULWUL BALAAANG (‘STRONG WOMEN’)

Young Women's Cultural Wellbeing Program  
146 individual clients supported through after-school and in-school programs, gym programs, holiday programs, and camps.

## MIRRIRAL BULWUL (‘STRONG SPIRIT’)

Youth Suicide Prevention Program. 94 individual clients supported with after-school programs, gym programs and holiday programs.

## GUMAN NANGA-MAI (GRANDFATHER DREAMING)

Young Men's Cultural Wellbeing Program  
87 individual clients supported through afterschool programs, morning gym sessions, in-school programs, wellbeing health-check days and cultural camps.

## NGAI MURU (ADVO AND FAMILY DV SUPPORT)

Youth Justice program. 80 advocacy instances, 25 court support/attendances, youth justice conferences, 38 young people from 20 families supported, attended national youth justice conference in Brisbane, DV Cup sponsorship for St John's Catholic High School team.

This program works in partnership with DCJ, ALS, NSW Police, and Community Corrections – youth are supported at every stage of the youth justice system.



# Our partners

JRNSW's strategic partners are vital for sustainable systems change and reducing Aboriginal people's contact with the criminal justice system.

## STRATEGIC PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS







## PRO BONO





Flame coals Mungindi



# Our people

## REDFERN-GADIGAL



**GEOFF SCOTT**  
Chief Executive Officer



**SYLVIA HOWES**  
Research and Data Manager



**JAMES NICHOLS**  
Head of Communications

## MOREE-GOMEROI



**MEKAYLA COCHRANE**  
JR Manager



**PAUL O'BRIEN**  
Chief Financial Officer



**EMMA WHITNALL**  
Policy & Data Analyst



**IVY WYNTER**  
Head of People & Culture



**SAHARA COCHRANE**  
Administration Officer



**(TALIA HAGERTY)**  
*Research and Data  
Manager On parental leave*



**IAN BROWN**  
Community Data Manager



**LAWRENCE GILBERT**  
Community Engagement  
Manager

## MT DRUITT-DARUG



**DANIEL DAYLIGHT**  
Manager



**ISAIAH SINES**  
Youth Engagement Coordinator



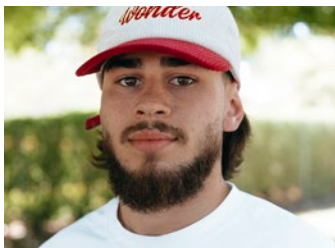
**JULIE WILLIAMS**  
Community Engagement Lead



**JESSICA BROWN**  
Youth Engagement Manager



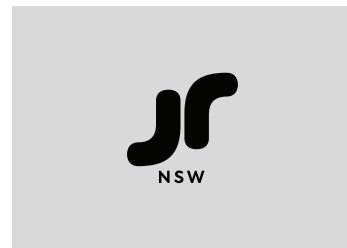
**TERLEAHA WILLIAMS**  
Administration Officer



**ADAM DOOLE-MCKELLAR**  
Youth and Community  
Advocacy Connector



**NICOLE MEKLER**  
Youth Advocacy and  
Implementation Lead



**SADINI HANDUNNETTI**  
Senior Caseworker and  
Project Officer



**LYNETTE FORD**  
Learner Driver Program  
Co-ordinator



**PETER COHEN**  
Manager Youth On  
Track Program



**ARCHIE DARCY**  
Caseworker Youth On Track



**DAMIEN MORRISON**  
Caseworker Youth On Track



**KAM GHAVAMZADEH**  
Caseworker Youth On Track



**DILLON SAUNDARS-CARR**  
Youthworker Youth On Track



**JIM BELL**  
Youthworker Youth On Track



**VACANT**  
Data Officer



OUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



**PROF. JACK BEETSON**  
Chair



**GINO VUMBACA**  
Treasurer



**PAUL WRIGHT**



**KARLIE STEWART**



**PAUL MORRIS**

Photo credit: Sylvia Howes/JRNSW



OUR ORG CHART



JR NSW  
SUPPORTING BODY

- CEO /**  
Geoff Scott
- CHIEF FINANCE MANAGER /**  
Paul O'Brien
- HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS /**  
James Nichols
- RESEARCH & DATA MANAGER /**  
Sylvia Howes
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER /**  
Lawrence Gilbert
- POLICY & DATA ANALYST /**  
Emma Whitnall
- COMMUNITY DATA MANAGER /**  
Ian Brown
- HEAD OF PEOPLE & CULTURE /**  
Ivy Wynter



# Financial Summary

## STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
<b>Income</b>		
Grant funding and donations	4,157,921	3,294,117
Interest received	282	329
<b>Total income</b>	<b>4,158,203</b>	<b>3,294,446</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Employee benefits expenses	2,920,974	2,175,454
Operational expenses	816,636	711,573
Depreciation & amortisation expenses	603,951	584,138
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>4,341,561</b>	<b>3,471,165</b>
<b>Loss for the period</b>	<b>(183,358)</b>	<b>(176,719)</b>
Other comprehensive income/(loss)	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive loss for the year</b>	<b>(183,358)</b>	<b>(176,719)</b>

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,872,254	4,675,068
Trade and other receivables	103,929	20,625
Other assets	97,728	35,115
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>4,073,911</b>	<b>4,730,808</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Security Deposit	-	74,479
Property, plant and equipment	152,130	460,942
Intangible assets	16,511	28,868
Right-of-use asset	205,212	318,823
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>373,853</b>	<b>883,112</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>4,447,764</b>	<b>5,613,920</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	2,095,715	3,091,663
Employee entitlements	135,133	153,227
Contract Liability	1,268,985	1,122,556
Lease liability	84,231	268,930
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>3,584,064</b>	<b>4,636,376</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Lease liability	106,268	47,777
Employee entitlements	21,565	10,542
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>127,833</b>	<b>58,319</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>3,711,897</b>	<b>4,694,695</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>735,867</b>	<b>919,225</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained earnings	735,867	919,225
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>735,867</b>	<b>919,225</b>



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Retained Earnings (\$)
Accumulated surplus as of 30 June 2023	1,095,944
Deficit for the period	(176,719)
Other comprehensive income/(loss)	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(176,719)
Accumulated surplus as of 30 June 2024	919,225
Deficit for the period	(183,358)
Other comprehensive income/(loss)	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(183,358)
Accumulated surplus as of 30 June 2025	735,867

	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Operating Activities		
Receipts from donations and grant funding	4,429,494	4,513,370
Payments to suppliers and employees	(4,928,079)	(2,613,267)
Interest received	282	329
Interest paid	(9,133)	(17,188)
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities	(507,436)	1,883,244
Investing Activities		
Payment for property, plant and equipment	(169,170)	(45,091)
Net Cash Flows used in Investing Activities	(169,170)	(45,091)
Financing Activities		
Repayment of lease liabilities	(126,208)	(252,271)
Net Cash Flows used Financing Activities	(126,208)	(252,271)
Net Cash Flows	(802,814)	1,585,882
Cash and cash equivalents, 1 July 2024	4,675,068	3,089,186
Cash and cash equivalents, 30 June 2025	3,872,254	4,675,068







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We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional owners  
and custodians of the land on which we walk, work & live.

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
**2024**  
**/25**