

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

A close-up photograph of a hand with dark skin and visible veins resting on a rough, reddish-brown rock surface. The rock is covered in intricate Indigenous Australian art, including ochre-colored patterns and symbols. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the skin and the rock.

celebrating
20
years



First Peoples
Disability Network
Australia



OUR WORK IS GUIDED BY THE WISDOM OF OUR ELDERS

First Peoples Disability Network Australia (FPDN) would like to acknowledge the traditional owners past, present and emerging of the lands on which we journey. We pay our respects to our Elders, the knowledge holders of our stories, in continuing our traditions and their ongoing connection to and caring for our lands, waters and community.

FPDN values the wisdom and knowledge shared by our Elders in guiding our work. We pay our deepest respects to our founding Elders Uncle Lester Bostock and Aunty Gayle Rankine, the warriors who built the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Rights movement here in Australia and Internationally. As Aboriginal people with lived experience of disability, we continue their legacy for current and future generations and acknowledge the important responsibility of giving voice to the most vulnerable members of our communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with Disability.

We acknowledge our National Elder's Advisory Council, Elders Living with Disability Australia (ELDA) and Chairpersons Uncle Brian Tennyson and Aunty Louisa Uta for guiding our work, for their leadership and continuing commitment to upholding the rights of First Peoples with disability.

Cover photo @ Luke Campbell

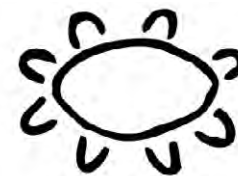
Background artwork: *Elders Gathering* © Uncle Paul Constable Calcott

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this report contains video, images and names of people who have passed.

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[Click to view FPDN Building 20 years of resilience and representation](#)



**WE ARE FIRST PEOPLES
DISABILITY NETWORK
AUSTRALIA (FPDN)**

Our Mission

FPDN Australia is a national organisation of and for Australia’s First Peoples with disability, their families and communities. Its purpose is to promote respect for human rights, secure social justice, and empower First Peoples with disability to participate in Australian society on an equal basis with others. We are the custodians of the narratives of First Peoples with disability, their families and communities and we recognise this important responsibility.

Because ours is an oral history, we continue this by recognising the value of our peoples’ narratives and collecting this as data, which informs our work and the work of others.



Our Core Values

Recognition and respect for human rights, and in particular for the human rights of First Peoples and First Peoples with disability.

Equality of outcomes for First Peoples with disability with other members of Australian society through equal opportunity, non-discrimination and affirmative action.

Empowerment of First Peoples with disability and their families to direct their own lives and to secure the resources that they need to participate on an equal basis with others in Australian life.

Inclusion of First Peoples with disability in all aspects of Australian life.

Respect for the Elders of First Peoples nations across Australia and for their efforts over time to secure justice for their peoples and communities. In particular, we honour those Elders who have worked to secure justice for First Peoples with disability and their families.

Respect for the culture and history of Australian First Peoples and recognition of the ongoing importance of that culture in our contemporary lives.

Recognition and respect for the lived experience of First Peoples with disability and their families as the central driver of our work.

Recognition of the richness and diversity of Australian First Peoples communities across Australia.

Our Core Principles

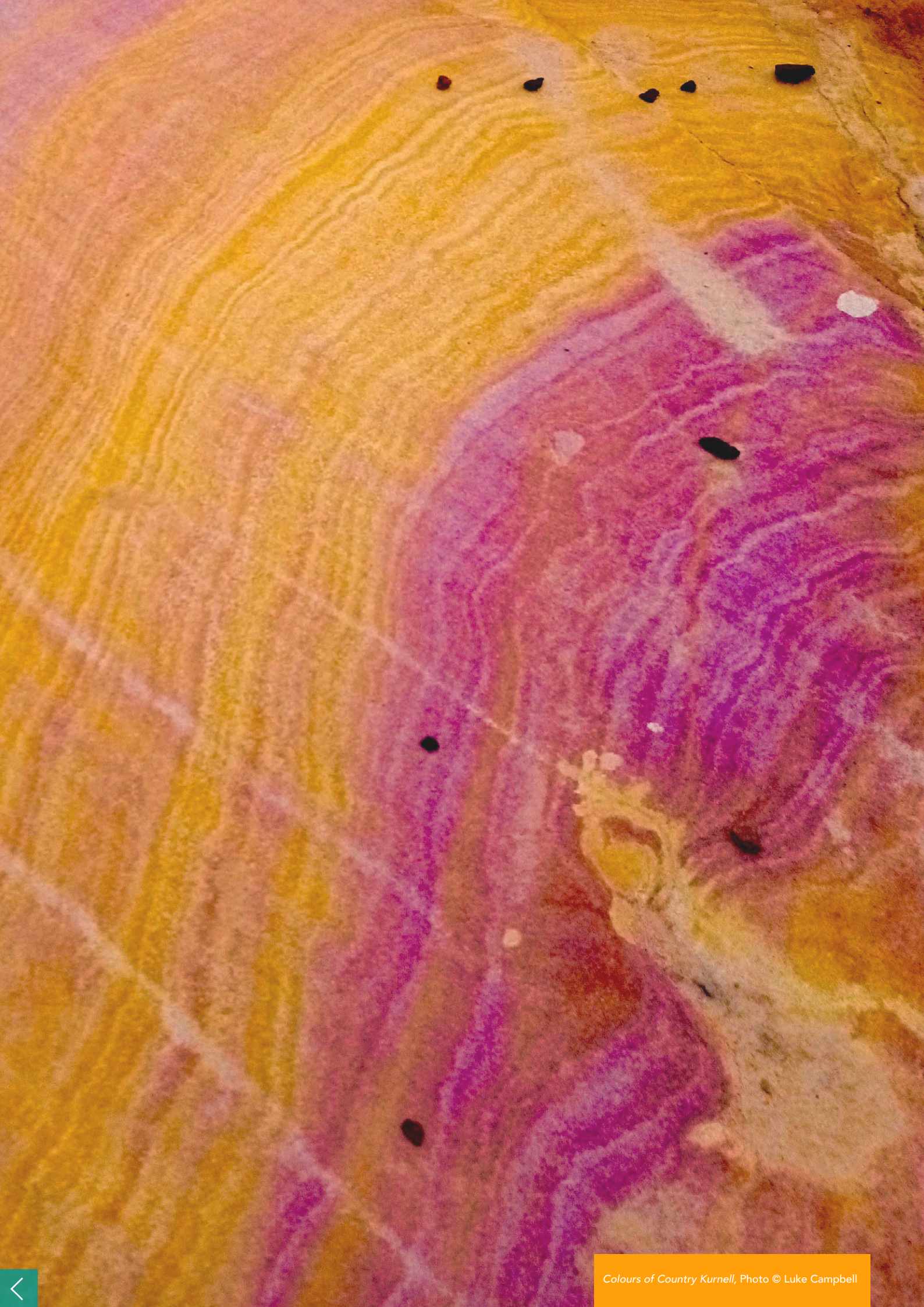
We work with all First Peoples communities to create and maintain a safe and secure place for the exchange of ideas, the building of alliances, and the formulation of priorities, between and across community divides.

We are passionate, determined, and committed to our work.

We lead change, not react to it.

We are innovative, creative, and solution-focused.

We are accountable in all aspects of our work to First Peoples with disability and their families, our communities, and to the community generally.



OUR LEADERS



Chairpersons Report

Guudjii yiigu (Hello to all), Nyiirun wakulda maraliyn (we are all coming together as one).

Firstly, I would like to pay my respect to our Elders past, present and to our future leaders, our young people.

2020/2021 was a year that continued to present many new challenges for us as an organisation and our communities with the continuing impact of COVID-19. The COVID-19 restrictions imposed across the country prevented us from engaging face to face with community. As a result we focussed beyond the scope of our core work to break the additional barriers experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and our communities, ensuring access to critical services and supports, basic essentials and supplies and equal access to COVID-19 vaccinations.

This is who we are, culturally, as First Nations Peoples and people with lived experience of disability. The needs of our communities are always our first priority. This is displayed by each and every one of our staff and the way they conduct themselves in community, with each other and the respect they show to our Board and Elders. I miss each and every one of their spirits and the lack of connection from not being able to meet face to face, as is the way we conduct our business. That is something that we, as First Nations people are missing out on because of COVID. I cannot wait until I can see all your faces in person and give you all a big hug.

I have continued to chair the meetings of the Board remotely, ensuring that Damian, June and the Staff are safe. The volume of work we have been doing over the course of this year is extraordinary, and we have had to do it alone, without being amongst our colleagues in the office.

As our 20th anniversary came about in November, I have had a good amount of time to think about the incredible impact of our work over the years and where we have come from. In recognising our 20th birthday, I will share some of these memories with you now.

In the beginning, we didn't have many platforms for a voice back then. It all began with Uncle Lester Bostock. Uncle Lester had the most unique affiliation with a lot of people, if you mentioned his name, he was well known through his commitment to communities, youth and his work in film and media. He had a lot to do with many people including ministers and government and agencies. That is where our story began.

Uncle Lester and Damian started up the Aboriginal Disability Network NSW and worked tirelessly trying to build a membership. Damian collated a form and set about to sign up as many Aboriginal people with disability in our regions as possible, which was mainly Sydney as we had no funding to travel. Uncle Lester was the inaugural Board Member and Damian the Chief Executive Officer, supported at the time by PWD. We operated on the smell of an oily rag with dedicated volunteers. It was always about trying to find funding to get out and work with the community.

Uncle Lester and Damian did the door knocking around Sydney to speak with Ministers and with the support of PWD allowed us to rent an office and also supported the position of CEO. Uncle and Damian travelled around NSW to speak with Aboriginal people with disability for the first time and released the first report of its kind with 'Telling it like it is'.

I would also like to acknowledge and pay my respects to Aunty Gayle Rankine, who came onto the scene in 2010 when FPDN was formed. Aunty Gayle became our first Chair of the board and remained chair until her passing. Her work at the United Nations was phenomenal, a real voice to be reckoned with, she always made her voice count. Aunt put the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability on the map internationally. Her work was vital to First Peoples of Australia, being recognised as a leader of human rights for Indigenous peoples with Disability from across the world.

The first big barrier that we broke was when we formed the Pacific Disability Forum which was instigated by Uncle Lester who lent his expertise to support the building of a Human Rights movement of Indigenous peoples with Disability in the Pacific region.

From here, we started to gain some traction through our representation on multiple committees and governments began to work with us and look to us for our expertise. Dr Scott Avery brought his expertise to our organisation with his community-led research producing a publication of his research called 'Culture is Inclusion' which has significantly lifted our work and profile, and continues to support us in growing work through our community partnership. Scott's research which included building and publishing data sets, and narratives of First Peoples with Disability, meant that for the first time these stories, backed by evidence, were shared in the mainstream.

Our growing presence in the media across print, TV and radio interviews, that we are sought out for our expertise and opinions, and the respect we are shown in this space is a credit to the work of our CEO Damian Griffis, our Deputy CEO June Riemer and everyone at FPDN.

We have now grown to a team of 19 staff across Australia and will continue to move from strength to strength because of the support we receive from governments and organisations who we partner with. We also would not be where we are today without our philanthropic supporters and donors, and we are very thankful for their support.

In 2022 and beyond, I would like to continue to connect with our Elders with lived experience of disability from across our many Nations to share their voices, knowledge and experiences as we work towards expanding our Elders Council – Elders Living with Disability Australia (ELDA). The contributions of our current Elders council members, that sits within our organisational framework, is invaluable to our work and we invite Elders from all over Australia to join us in building, leading and guiding our important work.

The future in 2022 and onwards definitely looks brighter than the experiences of the last two years. I would like to personally thank Damian and June for their passion and commitment to our communities and for their ongoing leadership as the head of the snake and to our team, the body, for their contributions to our work. I would like to also thank Lisa for her work in always collaborating and communicating to keep our team connected.

I would like to finish by acknowledging that Uncle Lester would be honoured and so very humbled by how our movement has grown and how Damian has progressed in his role as CEO and his achievements. He would also be humbled by the fact that we are doing so much for Aboriginal people with disability and their communities. Uncle's first priority was always to make sure that people who did not have the proper care or connection to services were supported. He would always take a stand, make the government take notice and hold them to account. I know he would be awe inspired from where we started to where we are today and he would be so proud of the work Damian and June have done in building on his legacy, the First Peoples Disability Network Australia movement.

Marrunggangbu, Gapu

(Thank you very very much, goodbye)

Aunty Kay Sadler

Gathang language



A Message from our CEO

When I was part of that first gathering of First Peoples with disability, 20 years ago, little did I know that we would grow into a national organisation, working hard to make sure our people with disability continue to have a strong voice. Uncle Lester Bostock, one of our founding Elders, believed passionately in the power of First Peoples with disability to know what we need and our capacity to fight for that change. Aunty Gayle Rankine added her incredible voice and passion and FPDN was born. They are both loved and missed in all the work we do.

I have thought often of them both during this year, as COVID disrupted so much of our lives. People with disability and First Nations people were not prioritised for vaccinations, as they should have been, with First Peoples with disability again, doubly disadvantaged. FPDN has been involved in many national, state and territory discussions, fighting hard to make sure the voices of First Peoples with disability are heard and that we are not forgotten. I worked again, with Professor Cameron Stewart, to raise the key issues in the treatment of First Peoples with disability in hospital, making sure we aren't left behind. At the same time, we've been providing practical help to communities suddenly in lockdown, delivering supplies in Western NSW and getting information about the vaccine out widely.

We walk in three worlds - the First Nations world, the disability world, and the mainstream world - and all three worlds rarely understand the intersectionality of our lives as First Peoples with disability. This work includes being part of making the National Agreement on Closing the Gap come to life, making sure disability has a part in the Indigenous Voice to Parliament, speaking at Senate inquiries about disability and talking with mainstream health organisations about vaccines for our community.

FPDN has had another year of hard work, with all our staff dedicated to the inclusion of First Peoples with disability. Our Disability Business Training has moved online, and reached even further, while our Disability Royal Commission advocates are sitting with community, in community, getting their stories heard. We have again engaged strongly with the Disability Royal Commission, giving evidence ourselves, and making sure community members can have their say.

We have worked with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Sector Strengthening in Disability, and I'm excited about what this will mean for our community. Finally, there is recognition of the needs of First Peoples with disability, and some investment in building up our organisation and our capacity to do more.

FPDN was part of the big disability advocacy sector campaign against the independent assessments proposal that would have been a disaster for First Peoples with disability, who are already disadvantaged when it comes to access to the NDIS. I spoke at rallies and forums, we all talked to the media, we made a submission about the harm they would cause, and gave evidence to the inquiry. We joined with Every Australian Counts and many other organisations to speak out about the proposed changes, and I'm very glad they were stopped. Now, we need to get on with fixing the NDIS for our mob.

FPDN partners with many organisations, including NATSILS and VALS to work on legal issues, and the Australian Centre for Disability Law.

I'm really pleased that FPDN has continued to receive investment from a variety of generous supporters. The Perpetual Foundation has continued their support for our Community Hub and community engagement at Tennant Creek, as well as the Cages Foundation for their support for advocacy Services around NDIS and culturally appropriate and accessible disability services, especially in the early childhood space. The Westpac Foundation, through their Rural Community Grant Program supported Headphone Hustle while and we worked to develop cultural resources and a training workshop to support the National Injury Insurance Agency, Queensland in engaging with First Nations people with disability. We worked with Ernst Young contributing to the evaluation of the Justice Advocacy Service.

Thank you again to all of the Board and the support of Chairperson Aunty Kay Sadler throughout what has been a challenging year dealing with the Covid pandemic whilst at the same continuing to grow as an organisation. I also want to acknowledge the work of our Deputy CEO June Riemer who has been a great support to me personally and across the organisation. I also would like to acknowledge each and every staff member for continuing to be formidable advocates for our people with disability. Throughout 2020/2021 there have been again numerous selfless acts of commitment to our cause by staff and I am deeply proud to be the CEO of an organisation that continues to lead with such integrity. I know that Uncle Lester and Aunty Gayle would be very proud of what we have achieved and where we are heading as an organisation.

Thanks again to all in the FPDN family.

Damian Griffis



**CELEBRATING
20 YEARS OF FPDN**

November 2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the First Peoples Disability Network (Australia). We not only celebrated this momentous occasion, but also took the opportunity to look back and reflect on our journey. We pay tribute to our founding Elders Uncle Lester Bostock and Auntie Gayle Rankine for their vision and leadership, alongside our CEO Damian Griffis, in establishing and building our movement, and to those who have been and remain a part of our story.

We proudly acknowledge not only how far we have come as an organisation in the past two decades, but also the impact that we have made in the lives of First Peoples with disability, their families and communities that we have connected with and supported through our work. In many ways our journey is just beginning, with much work still needing to be done with governments to ensure the human rights of First Nations people living with disability, their families and communities across Australia are fully realised.

Our 2020/2021 Annual report is a testament not only to our achievements as an organisation but also to the legacy of our Founding Elders.

Our Journey – Where it began

FPDN was born out of a community movement. Our community has, and always will guide our work. We were born of the efforts of advocates who were working from the early 1980s to bring attention to the specific needs of First Peoples with disability and their families.

There are many heroes of the First Peoples Disability Network movement we acknowledge for their contribution to our work. We pay tribute to Uncle Lester Bostock a proud Bundjalung man with physical disability who was a pioneer of the First People’s Disability Rights Movement. In 1991 he publicly introduced the concept of “double disadvantage” when he gave the Meares oration entitled [‘Access and equity for people with a double disadvantage’](#) and how it relates to First Peoples with disability experiencing discrimination based on racism and/or disability. His highlighting of this issue 20 years ago was the first time anyone publicly had made a call to recognise the human rights of First Nations People with disability.

The origins of First Peoples Disability Network Australia (FPDN) can be traced back to a national gathering in Alice Springs in 1999. At this gathering, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability united under a shared purpose for the first time. The movement to highlight the social inequity faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and advocate for change, goes back many decades.

Our core purpose –to advance the rights and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability – remains as relevant today as it was at the national gathering in 1999. Since that watershed moment, FPDN has been an active advocate on practical matters of rights and policies that affect our people daily.

The organisation has endured through changes of government, the demise of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, and significant changes in both the disability and Indigenous sectors. FPDN became an independent incorporated entity in 2014.

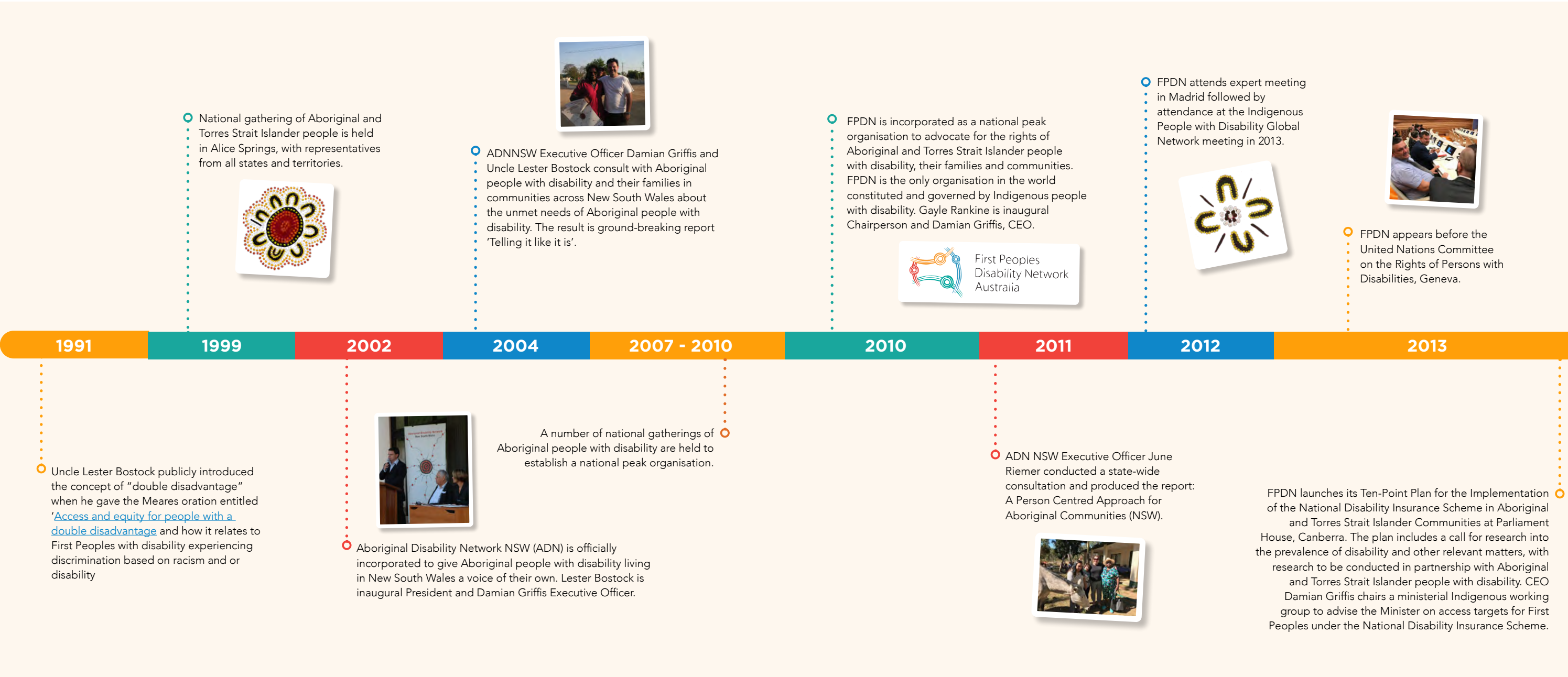


Our journey has been long and difficult. Because of the intersection of race and disability, we have had to confront and overcome apathy, neglect and prejudice, both in the general community and in our own communities. That struggle continues.

FPDN has represented Australia and First Peoples with disability at the United Nations in Geneva and New York at high level reviews, forums and meetings including: the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Universal Periodic Review on Human Rights and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues



MILESTONES 1991 - 2013



MILESTONES 2014 - 2016

- FPDN Chairperson, Auntie Gayle Rankine, invited by the European Union NGO Forum to participate in 'Equal in rights worldwide – European instrument for democracy and human rights.'



- FPDN has represented Australia on the Indigenous People with Disabilities Global Network (IPPDGN) since 2013 and attended its international meetings each year.

- The Federal Government announced the formation of Disabled People's Organisations Australia, a coalition of Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), with FPDN as a member organisation.



- FPDN was represented, in 2015, at United Nations Universal Periodic Review of Australia's Human Rights in Geneva, and in 2016, at the Conference of State Parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in New York, and the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Geneva.

- The Aboriginal Disability Network NSW and First Peoples Disability Network merged.



- Commenced a two-year research grant funded under the National Disability Research and Development Agenda to collect narratives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability - the first research grant of its type to be led by a First Peoples disability community organisation.

- FPDN gives evidence at the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

2014

2015

2015 - 2016

2016

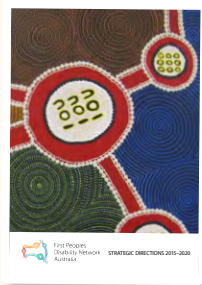
- FPDN chairs an interagency meeting of government departments to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability action plan under the National Disability Strategy.

- FPDN appears before the United Nations Committee Against Torture, Geneva.



- FPDN wins the Improving Advocacy and Rights Promotion Award at the National Disability Awards. CEO Damian Griffis is awarded the Tony Fitzgerald Memorial Community Award at the 2014 Human Rights Awards, in recognition of his advocacy for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.

- FPDN launches its Strategic Directions 2015–2020.



- FPDN publishes Senate Inquiry submission: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives on the Recurrent and Indefinite Detention of People with Cognitive and Psychiatric Impairment, as part of a consortium.



- The FPDN ELDA's (Elders Living with Disability Australia) caretaker council was formed and met in Alice Springs, NT. The Inaugural FPDN ELDA council prepared a statement to governments about respecting traditional lore and doing business our way highlighting their serious concerns that government is overriding disability business in the community. "We speak as Elders living with disability and we know that disability business is important and must guide all conversations in our communities for change."

MILESTONES 2016 - 2018

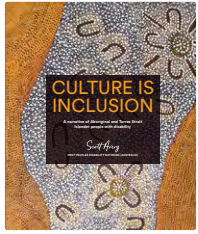


- FPDN partnered with the Australian Bureau of Statistics to increase the availability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific disability data. This partnership has resulted in the publication of an official paper which presents the best available data on the prevalence and profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability.



- Chairperson, Aunty Gayle Rankine appointed to the Government's new National Disability and Carers Advisory Council.

- Rehabilitation International World Conference Edinburgh – Create a More Inclusive World
 - Presentation at the Indigenous Knowledges Research Conference, Auckland NZ, in November 2016
 - Participation at the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), Geneva, Switzerland (July 2016). At EMRIP, FPDN hosted a seminar on justice issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.



- The publication [Culture is Inclusion](#) is an outcome of a research project that promotes the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability within research and policy. The research project is an exploratory study into the issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, as told by them through their testimony. Led by the First Peoples Disability Network it creates a 'narrative' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability by combining their personal testimony gathered through interviews with statistical data sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics.

2016 - 2017



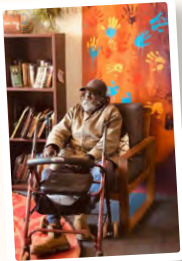
- This year FPDN hosted The Redfern Statement disability workshop in partnership with the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples and The Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

2017

- FPDN launches the Our Way planning tool in Townsville, a national NDIS planning resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability. These resources were developed to start the conversation and support people to identify their individual needs as a person living with a disability.



- United Nations Conference of State Parties (COSP), NY, USA. FPDN Deputy CEO, June Riemer led the FPDN delegation and participated as the FPDN representative voice at meetings and events. DPO Australia hosted a side event, LGBTI people with disability & implementation of the CRPD. This was the first time that inclusion of LGBTI people with disability has been discussed at COSP.



- The Paterson Street Hub, Tennant Creek, was established in response to community expressing that a place in town, on main street, to rest, drop in, meet with family, participate in talks and meetings, and bring ideas to contribute and share was needed.

2018

MILESTONES 2019 - 2020

The creation of the Royal Commission into abuse, neglect and violence of people with disability which was established during the later part of this financial year has the potential to be a watershed moment of the country. FPDN has been at the forefront of the advocacy over the past decade that has resulted in the Royal Commission being established. A great outcome is the strong focus upon First Peoples with disability and also the appointment of an Aboriginal Commissioner.



International Day of People with Disability Novotel twin waters Nuunaron exhibition & Launch of Benny Boy Goes bush 'Benny boy goes bush' resource.

Federal Election Policy Platform 2019. In the leadup to the federal election in May 2019, FPDN developed a bipartisan Federal Election Policy Platform as a recommendation to incoming government on disability policy reform and government investment required to address the serious inequity experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and their families. This election policy platform was created with the context of four key reforms that commenced or are being reformed during 2019. These are:

1. Reform of the National Disability Agreement
2. Reform of the National Disability Advocacy Program
3. Further implementation of the National Disability Strategy
4. Closing the Gap

Launch of the Lester Bostock Human rights training Program.



FPDN hosted our 'Building the Aboriginal Disability Service Sector Gathering over two days, August 16 & 17 In Tamworth NSW attended by Aboriginal service providers, professionals and community interested in service sector career opportunities.

In December the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations, made up of nearly 40 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Bodies including FPDN, formed a partnership with government to finalise the Closing the Gap refresh framework and share decision making as a joint council to Closing the Gap over the next 10 years. As a coalition member FPDN advocated strongly for disability to be included as a Closing the Gap target and will continue this campaign into the future.



FPDN launches Disability Business training - Utilising the traditional method of art and storytelling and in a conversational yarning style, FPDN have developed a range of Indigenous Disability Perspective (Disability Business) training programs and educational resources.



2019

Conference of State Parties (COSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). FPDN attended the Sixth Pacific Regional Conference on Disability as a member of thePDF held in Nadi, Fiji from 25 February until 01 March 2019. The theme for the forum was 'From Recognition to Realisation of Rights: Furthering Effective Partnership for an Inclusive Pacific 2030 for Persons with Disabilities' and hosted the following events:

1. PDF General Forum
2. Pacific Regional Forum on Youth with Disabilities
3. Pacific Regional forum on Women with Disabilities
4. Research Symposium
5. Pacific Disability Conference

FPDN presented at the Pacific Disability Conference on 'Indigenous persons with disabilities as a marginalised group within the disability movement'. FPDN is a founding Member of the Pacific Disability Forum which is composed of Disabled Persons Organisation Members and Associate Members that are based or operate in the Pacific region.

Building on our 'Ten Point plan for the implementation of the NDIS in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities', received with bipartisan support in 2013, FPDN launched an updated document in 2018: 'Ten priorities to address disability inequity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities for the National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme' to include all First Peoples with disability.



2019



As a founding member of Disabled Peoples Organisations Australia (DPOA), FPDN's advocacy was pivotal in the formative stages of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of persons with disability ensuring a culturally safe and inclusive platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples voices to be front and centre.

The 22nd session of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) was held in Geneva in September 2019. NuunaRon, an art group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and emerging artists living with disability, were invited to display their 'Culture is Inclusion' Exhibition at the Palais De Nations, United Nations Headquarters in Geneva, supported by FPDN. The Exhibition was also shown at Parliament House, Brisbane.



2020



JUNE RIEMER – 2021 ABORIGINAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

FPDN Deputy CEO and Gumbaynggirr Dunghutti woman June Riemer was honoured for her life’s work, dedicated to creating systemic change to improve the lives of First Peoples with disability, as this year’s winner of the 2021 [NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year](#) Award.

A true activist and a humble champion for our people, June took the opportunity to use this platform as a vehicle for change, speaking widely across the media to highlight the extreme disadvantage experienced by First Peoples with disability and how much more needs to be done to address the barriers to meaningful improvement in their lives.

Raised by strong and fierce women and activists, this little girl from the bush with her big dreams, hard work, passion, and commitment to change for our communities is now a leader and a change-maker, playing an integral role in solidifying the growth and continuing strength of FPDN the only Peak National Representative body for First Peoples with disability.

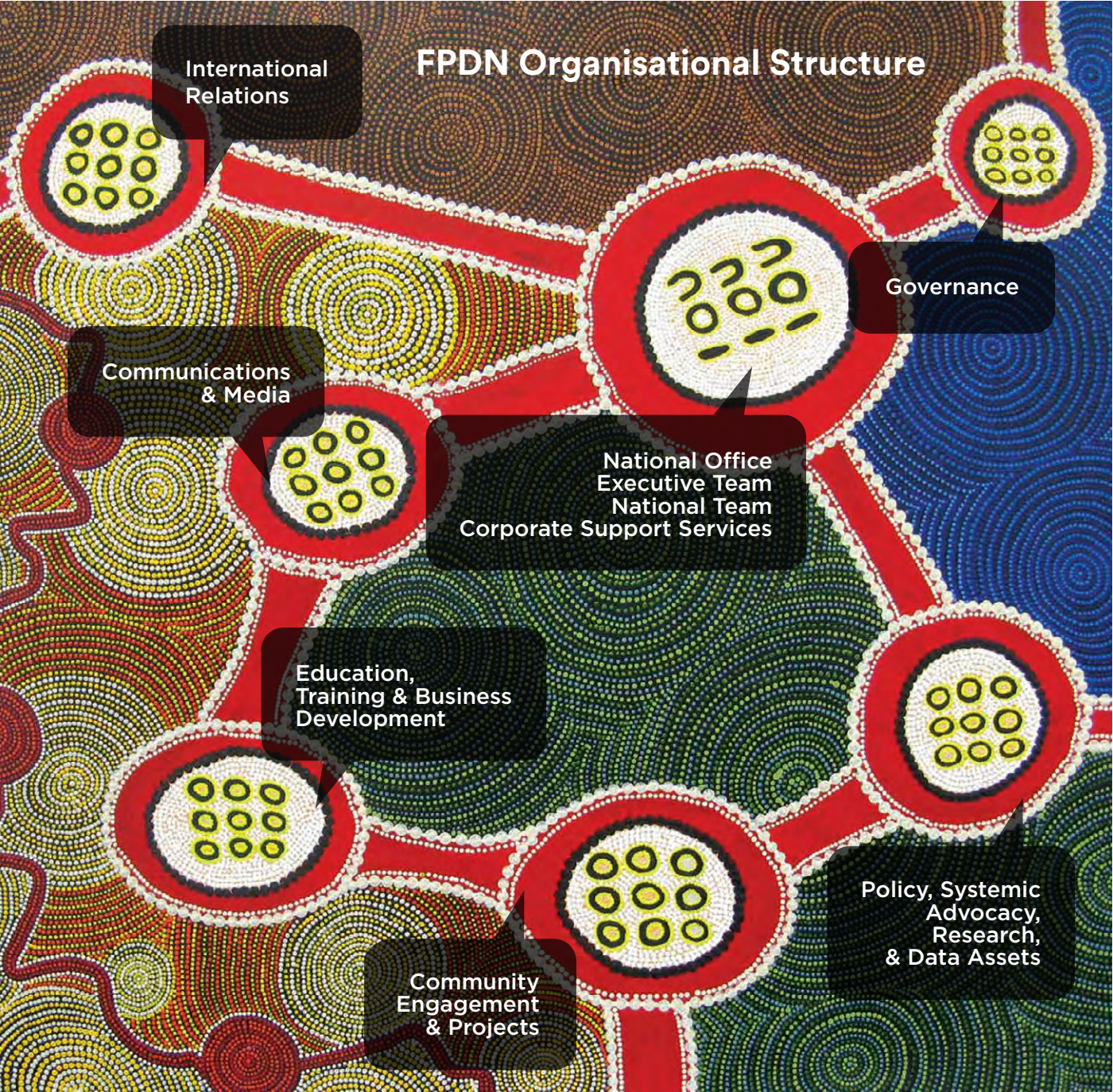
June’s message to all young girls and women with big dreams is clear:

“Never give up, listen, learn and believe in yourself.”

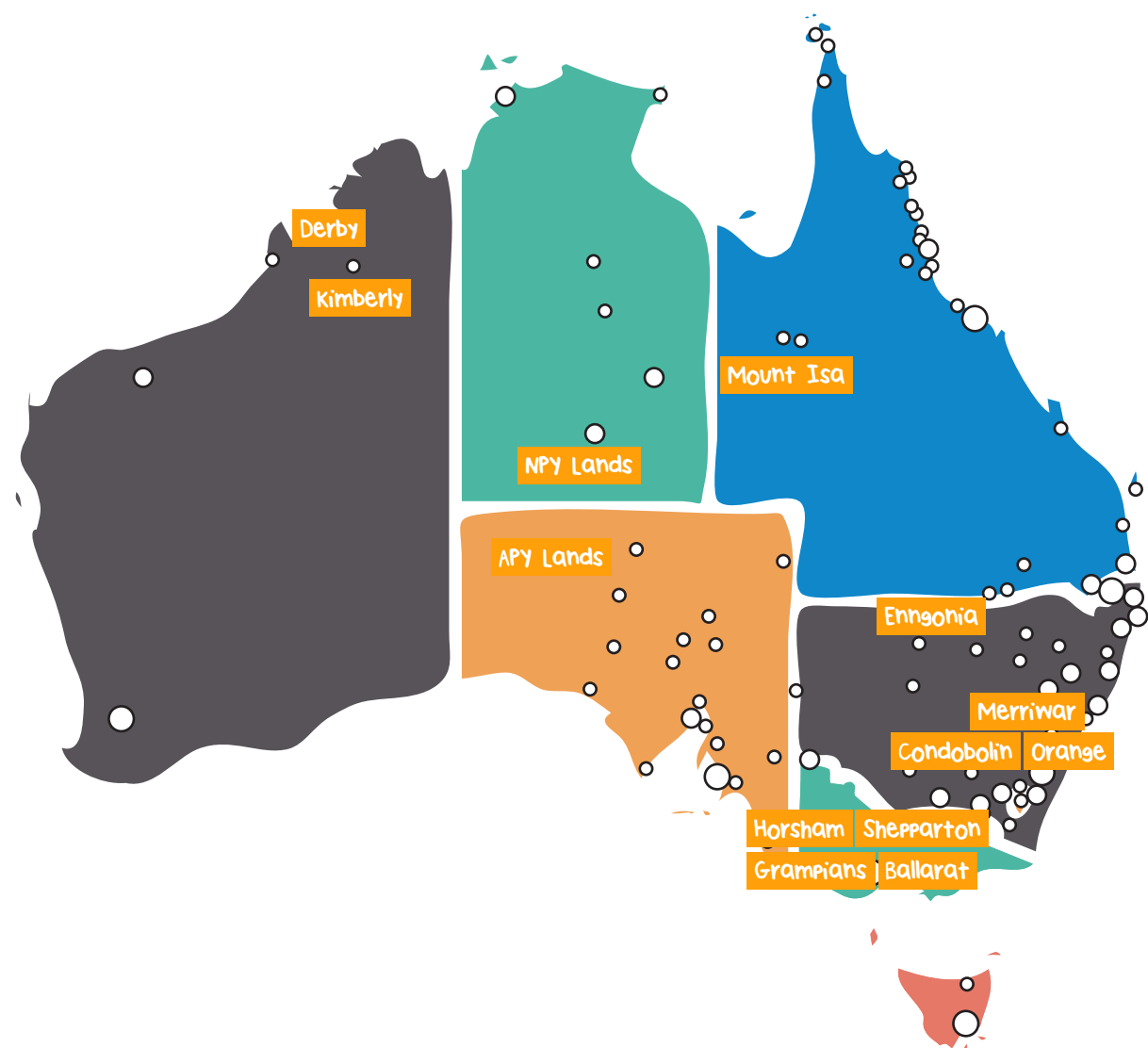


OUR ORGANISATION

How we work



Where we work



Click to view the animated story of where we work

PRIORITY PROGRAMS
2020/21

FPDN is funded through a wide range of programs to represent the voices of First Peoples with disabilities, their families and communities and for specific projects and initiatives. We thank all the following organisations for their support of our work.

Australian Government –
Department of Social Services, Canberra

- Sector Development – Disability Representative Organisations
- Disability Royal Commission Advocacy Support
- Partnership with EY – Boosting the Local Care Workforce

Australian Government –
National Disability Insurance Agency

- National Disability Insurance Agency - Community Connectors Program (NCCP)
- Coalition of Peaks – Closing the Gap

NSW Government Funding

- Department of Communities and Justice - Transitional Advocacy Funding Supplement

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Victoria

- Consultancy Agreement – Disability Services

Northern Territory Government –
Territory Families, Housing and Communities

Office of Youth Affairs – Youth Engagement Program
- Hub Guitar101 Summer 2020-21

Perpetual Foundation

- Community Hub and Community Engagement, Tennant Creek

Cages Foundation

- Advocacy Services around NDIS and culturally appropriate and accessible disability services, especially in the early childhood space

Partnerships with:

- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Services (NATSILS) and Victoria Legal Service (VALS)
- Australian Centre for Disability Law (ACDL)

University of NSW

- Lowitja Research Project

Ernst & Young

- Evaluation of Justice Advocacy Service

Westpac Foundation –
Rural Community Grant Program

- Headphone Hustle

National Injury Insurance Agency, Queensland

- Development of cultural resource and training workshop



A REPRESENTATIVE VOICE FOR FIRST PEOPLES WITH DISABILITY

FPDN continues to drive change as a strong and uncompromising voice of and for the rights of First Peoples with disability across systemic advocacy and representation.

We represent the interests of First Peoples with disability on multiple committees and advisory groups, regularly chair national consultative forums at the invitation of Australian Government Ministers and work with other Community controlled organisations to lend our expertise as the peak national body of and for First Peoples with Disability.

We have and continue to prepare submissions to appear before numerous Commonwealth and State government enquiries and represent to advance the rights and entitlements of First Peoples with disability in Australia and Internationally.

FPDN has represented Australia and First Peoples with disability at the United Nations in Geneva and New York at high level reviews, forums and meetings; including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Universal Periodic Review on Human Rights and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. FPDN is a founding member of and continues to be an integral part of the Pacific Disability Forum and Indigenous representee of Australia to the Commonwealth Disabled Peoples Forum.

International representation

Commonwealth Disabled Persons Forum
Commonwealth Disabled Peoples Forum Indigenous representative for Australia
Commonwealth Disabled Peoples Forum – Disability Rights in the Commonwealth
Commonwealth Disabled Peoples Forum - Sub Committee/anti - racism
Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities Committee Asia Pacific Pacific Disability Forum Board Member
Pacific Disability Forum Finance Committee

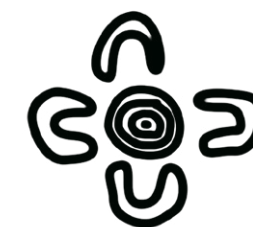
National representation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities Expert Panel to inform the NDIS Workforce Capability Framework
Advisory Committee - Management and Operational Plan for COVID-19 for People with Disability
Advisory Committee - COVID-19 Vaccine rollout update For People with Disability
Aspect First Nations Advisory Council
Aboriginal reference Group New Public Management, Aboriginal Organisations, and Indigenous Rights' project
Closing the Gap Commonwealth Implementation Plan Joint Working Group
Closing The Gap Senior Governance Group
Closing the Gap Sector Strengthening Disability working group
Closing the Gap Justice Policy working group
Closing the Gap Housing Solutions Innovation Group
Coalition of Peaks Partnership Working Group Member
Coalition of Peaks Closing the Gap reference Group
Coalition of Peaks Disability Sector Strengthening Advisory
Change the Record Black Caucus & Steering Committee
COVID-19 Disability Community of Practice
COVID-19 and particular risks for people with disability roundtable
Disability Royal Commission First Nations Peoples Strategic Advisory Group
Disability Support Services Committee (DSSC)
Disability Representative Organisations (DRO)
Disabled Peoples Organisations Australia (DPOA)
Disabled Peoples Organisations Australia Fund Committee
Disability Act Review Advisory Group
Disability and Health Sector Consultation Committee (DHSCC)
Indigenous Voice to Parliament Co-design Group
National Disability Strategy Reform Steering Group
National Disability Insurance Scheme Reform Forum
National Disability Insurance Agency - remote early childhood program development

National Disability Data Asset Advisory Council
National Disability Data Asset Aboriginal Perspectives Expert Panel
National Indigenous Australians Agency Standing Committee on Disability
National Indigenous Australians Agency National Co-design Group Structure and Membership Working Group
Personal Care in Schools (PCIS) stakeholder consultation

State representation

Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations NSW (CAPO)
Coalition of Aboriginal Peaks NSW Senior Governance Group – Closing the Gap
Disability ACT Review Advisory group
Men's Behaviour Change Network NSW Advisory Group (MBCN)
Murri Court, Sunshine Coast
NSW Joint Council on Closing The Gap
NSW Partnership Working Group on Closing the Gap
NSW Disability Community of Practice COVID-19 Committee
NSW Disability Stakeholders Forum
Northern Territory Disability Advisory Committee
Sunshine Coast Arts Advisory Council
Victorian Government Taskforce Meeting of Aboriginal people with disability and their representatives responding to COVID-19
Voice of Aboriginal people with disability in Victoria - disability advocacy and COVID-19 DHHS
Western Sydney University Aboriginal Reference Group
New Public Management, Aboriginal Organisations, and Indigenous Rights



SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

COVID-19 and the vaccine

FPDN has worked tirelessly to make sure that First Peoples with disability can be safe from COVID-19, and have equal access to the vaccine. We have been part of two national advisory groups, asking questions and bringing the experiences of community to the attention of decision makers. There has been intensive work with the Department of Health and other departments and agencies about the management of COVID and the vaccine rollout for First Peoples with disability.

FPDN continues to raise our concerns about triage guidelines, building on our work on the *Ethical Decision-Making for First Peoples Living with Disability* statement with Professor Cameron Stewart.

FPDN has also worked with community partners to continue providing direct and practical assistance to many First Peoples with disability on the ground, including food parcels and disability supplies.

FPDN has updated our website with the latest information, as much of the COVID and vaccine information has not been delivered in accessible or culturally appropriate formats.



FPDN gave evidence to the Senate Committee on COVID several times, as well as to the Disability Royal Commission hearings on COVID and the vaccine.

We produced COVID warrior resources about the vaccine, and have distributed them widely across Australia.

Independent Assessments and the NDIS

FPDN was strongly involved in the campaign against independent assessments, with CEO Damian Griffis speaking at a number of rallies and forums, and in many media interviews. FPDN made a [submission to the Joint Standing Committee](#) on the NDIS inquiry, and gave evidence to the MPs and Senators about our concerns, including that there had been zero consultation with First Peoples with disability about the impact of independent assessments. We worked with the rest of the disability advocacy sector in the campaign, releasing joint statements and attending roundtables with Ministers and the NDIA.

FPDN has continued our advocacy work to make the NDIS work better for First Peoples with disability, urging the adoption of our 10 point plan to reduce disability inequality. We spoke a number of times with the Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS, including about the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

Poverty and Employment

FPDN made a large submission to the National Disability Employment Strategy consultation. This strategy has been a goal for many years, to address the barriers that people with disability experience in trying to get into paid work. This is a significant contribution to the poverty levels of First Peoples with disability. FPDN called for coordination with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and specific attention to the needs of First Peoples with disability in the development of the strategy.



Australia's Disability Strategy

FPDN has been a central part of consultations about the next national Disability Strategy, which is now to be called Australia's Disability Strategy, to make sure that First Peoples with disability are front and centre and that the strategy can bring real change. Building on the community consultations we did in 2019, FPDN has been part of national discussions about what should be part of the Strategy and how it will deliver for First Peoples with disability. The Strategy will be released in December 2021.

Victoria's State Disability Plan

FPDN also consulted with First peoples living with disability in Victoria to have a voice in the development of the new Victorian state disability plan due to rollout in 2021-2025 ensuring that it was inclusive of the needs and views of First Nations people living with disability.

United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review of Australia (UPR)

Representing the voices of First Peoples with Disabilities from across Australia, on the 6th November 2020, FPDN CEO Damian Griffis [gave a statement](#) via weblink to the United Nations Human Rights Council as part of the Universal Periodic Review of Australia (UPR).

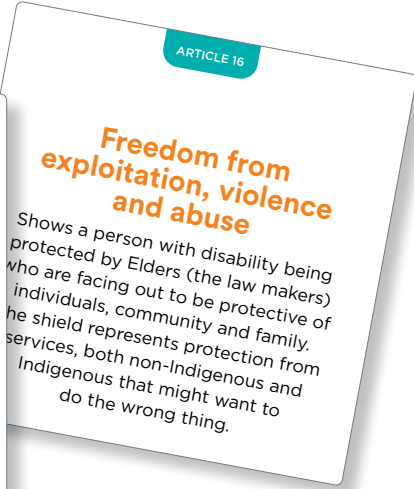
Damian's statement centred on issues impacting First Peoples with disability in contact with the justice system and spoke to the very serious concerns on the increasing incarceration of First Nations people with disability in Australian prisons.



Damian highlighted the lack of progress made by the Australian Government to implement Australia's previous UPR voluntary commitment to address the indefinite detention without conviction of people with disability in the criminal justice system, reiterating to the Council that in 2019, The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was extremely critical of Australia's lack of action to address these issue at its September 2019 review noting previous unimplemented recommendations from the Committee where Australia was found to breach the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

FPDN made the following recommendations urging the UPR process to continue to raise these issue with the Australian government in the strongest possible terms:

- Australia must end the imprisonment of unconvicted people with disability.
- Australia must enforce safeguards against indefinite forensic detention.
- Australia must pay immediate and particular attention to the situation of First Nations people with disability with regard to indefinite detention.
- Australia must implement the recommendations of the *Inquiry into indefinite detention of people with cognitive and psychiatric impairment in Australia*.
- Australia must implement the recommendations of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*.





FPDN represents the interests of First Peoples with disability and their families to all levels of government - within disability policy frameworks and the disability service system, within the First Peoples rights sector, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy frameworks and the Aboriginal community-controlled service system.

This year, we were front and centre leading change for First Peoples with disability within policy development and were part of the National Disability Research Partnership contributing to the National Disability Data Asset development.

FPDN contributed to the inclusive education policy development in a variety of states and territories for First Peoples with disability.

As a member of the black caucus of Change the Record campaign, FPDN contributed to campaigns on criminal justice reform.

We worked with the Council for Intellectual Disability and many others on the Justice Matters campaign to make sure there was funding to support people with intellectual disability in contact with the criminal justice system.

FPDN hosted a series of webinars to consult with First Peoples with disability about the Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

Voice to Parliament

FPDN CEO Damian Griffis was appointed to the Indigenous Voice to Parliament Co-design group to ensure the voices of First Peoples with disability were represented in the design of a National Voice.

The proposed Indigenous Voice would be made up of two parts, a Local and Regional Voices and a National Voice to make sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have more of a say on the laws, policies and services that impact their lives resulting in real changes on the ground and to create a shared responsibility where Indigenous Australians can work in partnership with governments.

Damian’s work was instrumental in establishing that the proposed National Voice have a permanent Disability Advisory Group made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with lived experience of disability. This group would give advice to the National Voice on how laws and policies impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability. The Disability Advisory Group would also bring issues to the attention of the National Voice.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including people with disability, were consulted across the country to have a say on how the Voice could provide a mechanism for Indigenous Australians in communities around the country to have a say on how to improve their lives to inform the [Indigenous Voice Co-design Interim Report](#) which was released on 9 January 2021.

FPDN hosted two Indigenous Voice to Parliament Webinars to provide an opportunity for community to have a say on the voice and to brief the disability sector on the proposal.

Minority Rights report

FPDN Deputy CEO June Riemer and Associate Professor Karen Soldatic, Western Sydney University, worked in partnership to publish an Australian Case Study on ‘The essential role of community action for First Nations people with disabilities during the pandemic’ in the [International Minority Rights report](#).

The case study focussed on ‘the leadership role of First Nations communities, organisations and services that have sustained community members living with disabilities, keeping them safe, well and supported throughout the pandemic, thanks to their respectful decision-making and democratic safeguarding’.

Minority Rights Group International launched their report in June 2021 on the impact of COVID-19 on the world’s most marginalised communities. The report ‘Minority and Indigenous Trends 2021, Lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic’ focuses on minority and Indigenous communities and their experiences during COVID-19 and includes case studies from across the world.

The essential role of community action for First Nations people with disabilities during the pandemic’ featured in Lesson 1 of the Minority Rights report, *Universal Health; Ensure the right to health for all, including full and equitable access to care, is a priority not only during the pandemic but also a central element in the global recovery*.

Closing the Gap – Sector Strengthening National Disability Footprint

FPDN is a member of the Coalition of Peaks, a representative body of around fifty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled peak organisations and members. The Coalition of Peaks came together on their own as an act of self-determination to be formal partners with Australian governments on Closing the Gap.

The Coalition of Peaks and governments agreed that the National Indigenous Reform Agreement – an Agreement signed by Australian governments in 2008 that set out the original Closing the Gap strategy – needed to be replaced by a new National Agreement built around what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been saying is needed to improve their lives; and to be signed off by the Coalition of Peaks and Australian governments.

On the 3rd of July 2020, the Closing the Gap Joint Council met to discuss the final draft of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. It is the first National Agreement of its kind; it has been developed in genuine partnership between the Coalition of Peaks and Australian Governments, and is a commitment to set out a future where policy making that impacts on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is done in full and genuine partnership.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been saying for a long time that they need to have a much greater say in how programs and services are delivered to their people, in their own places and on their own country, community controlled organisations deliver the best outcomes for Closing the Gap, government needs to address systemic racism and transfer power to communities, and they need greater access to information and data.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap is built around four Priority Reforms that have been directly informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- 1. Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making
- 2. Building the Community-Controlled Sector
- 3. Transforming Government Organisations
- 4. Shared Access to Data and information at a Regional Level

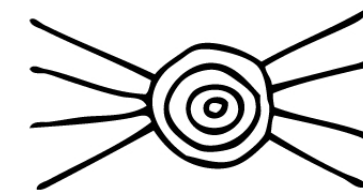
Disability Sector Strengthening Plan

FPDN successfully campaigned to have disability included in the Closing the Gap National Agreement, and is one of the four key priority areas identified (disability, housing, early childhood and development, and health) for a joint national sector strengthening effort for Priority Reform 2 (Building the Community-Controlled Sector) FPDN are leading the Sector Strengthening Plan for disability.

Four ‘pillars’ were designed by FPDN, and endorsed by the Coalition of Peaks. The design of these is based upon lived experience and the expertise of First Nations people with disability themselves.

- Build the capacity of the national peak body and other peaks to influence policy and build the sector at a national and jurisdictional level, including to engage across sectors particularly in health, early childhood, and housing, to respond to the needs of First Nations people with disabilities
- Build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations to deliver a full range of culturally responsive disability support services that achieve much greater social and economic participation of First Nations people with disabilities
- Grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability workforce and improve training and professional development for workers
- Support the capacity of the national peak body and other peaks to engage with governments to develop a dedicated, reliable, and secure national funding model

FPDN has developed a National Footprint Plan to align with these pillars, and will continue to work to ensure the voices of First Peoples with disability are privileged in Closing the Gap developments.



DISABILITY ROYAL COMMISSION

FPDN has been working hard this year to make sure that First Peoples with disability give testimony to the Disability Royal Commission. We have done this by being in community, directly supporting people with disability, making submissions and doing briefing papers, holding events, and training the broader disability advocacy sector.

We developed and sent two briefing papers - one on long term detention and interactions with the criminal justice system experienced by people with disability, and the other on the experiences of First Nations people with disability and their families in contact with child protection systems. We also submitted a response to the Promoting Inclusion issues paper.

CEO Damian Griffis and Deputy CEO June Riemer gave evidence about the neglect of our community during the public hearing on COVID-19 in August 2020, and we made a video submission to the public hearing on the child protection system in 2021.

FPDN live tweeted several public hearings of interest to our community, as well as spoke to the media and posted on social media about key aspects of the hearings. We worked with other disability advocacy groups on campaigns to introduce legislation into the Australian Parliament to protect the confidentiality of information given to the Royal Commission. We were also part of the Disability Royal Commission Respectful Listening commercial run on NITV, 9Gem, 9Go and Imparja television.

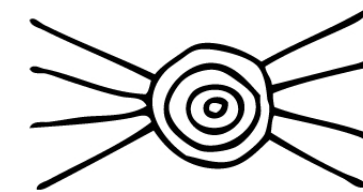
We held a number of community information forums in person and online, including some with other advocacy organisations and Your Story Legal Services in Tennant Creek NT, Taree NSW, Berri SA, Barmera SA, Kangaroo Island SA, Central Coast NSW, Western Sydney and Far North Queensland, as well as the All Abilities Expo in Darwin.

FPDN is part of the First Nations Advisory committee and we work closely with the Disability Royal Commission First Nations Engagement Team and the Office of Solicitor Assisting to address gaps in engagement, support First Nations witnesses and provide advice. We provided ongoing consultancy, resources and collaborative approaches with Your Story Legal Services.

We were successful in obtaining funding from the Department of Social Services for five FPDN Indigenous Community Advocate (ICA) positions. These positions will complement the placement of eight ICA positions in other disability advocacy organisations; FPDN identified the organisations for these placements and have been providing ongoing pre and post-recruitment support. The Indigenous Community Advocates are people connected in communities, and engage and support First Peoples with disability in submitting their stories to the DRC.

FPDN rolled out our innovative and highly regarded Disability Business Training, both online and in person, COVID permitting, to disability advocacy organisations, to increase their understanding and awareness of the needs of First Peoples with disability. There were 28 online training sessions, and ten face to face, with over 500 people participating. We sent out resource packs to every disability advocacy organisation delivering DRC supports nationally

We collaborated with Health Justice Australia for the Health Justice Changefest in Tennant Creek highlighting the social/justice issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, and the community led solutions that may be possible.



Disability Business Training



28 training sessions held online



>500 people participated in our training sessions

Our Disability Business training is designed to support organisations to build their disability-related competence and capacity to provide culturally safe and appropriate disability services and supports for First Peoples with disability and their families. The training is designed to ensure that First Peoples with disability are connected to the services and supports they need in the general community and receive equitable access to the supports and services available under a human rights framework.

FPDN developed and rolled out the 'National Community Connector training' programs. The programs are designed with a suite of culturally appropriate resources to support community connectors in engaging with community on pathways to the NDIS and how to identify resilience based models of support in their NDIS plan. Our training program supports community connectors in having a stronger understanding of disability from the perspective of First Peoples and communities.

Our Disability Royal Commission Project team continued to deliver our Disability Business training and resources to National Disability Advocacy Providers (NDAPs) who are providing support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, their families, carers and communities to engage with the Disability Royal Commission.

Our Disability Business training programs can be delivered both online and face to face to allow flexibility for our participants during the ongoing restrictions imposed by COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

When we were able, we delivered face to face workshops for our Disability Business training and held a Respectful Listening meeting for Community in Taree about the Royal Commission to hear their stories and feedback on our program and resources.

We continued to work with organisations to develop and delivering custom training solutions and resources including:

- Disability Business Training/Human Rights Training - Your Story Disability Legal Supports
- Getting Strong Again Training - National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland (NIISQ)
- NDIS Principles and VET Practitioners leadership program – TAFE QLD

We also delivered our culturally safe Lester Bostock Human Rights training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with disability in Victoria, holding face to face workshops in Horsham and Ballarat where we launched our new film 'Rights on Country' created by Luke Campbell about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights Of Indigenous Peoples being used by community on Country.

We also shared our Human rights training online with the Coalition of Peaks Closing the Gap Sector Strengthening working group.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

FPDN has developed resources to provide information to First Peoples living with disability, across multiple communication and cognitive abilities, in the most respectful and culturally relevant format possible.

Resources for service providers have been developed to support individuals in feeling comfortable and more confident in engaging with First Peoples living with disability, and their carers. We feel that respectful and productive engagement is a key step to assisting our community in accessing culturally appropriate supports and services.

We incorporate symbolism and art styles in our resources that have been used for thousands of years by our ancestors in passing down stories and recording cultural knowledge. We have developed new symbols that reflect these ancient styles to represent contemporary issues and incorporated this with current technologies, creating a new generation of storytelling we call 'disability business'.



MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

In a challenging year that demanded strong leadership, FPDN were well and truly in the spotlight across mainstream and First Nations media and communications platforms.

Our social media followers continued to grow as we shared our voices, expertise, opinions in the media and information targeted to support community through COVID-19 .

In Celebration of our 20 years, FPDN shared our 20 years in 20 Days campaign celebrating our highlights and achievements over the last 20 years.

FPDN also delivered a total of 16 webinars through our Taking Care of Disability Business webinar series. Through this series we welcomed a range of speakers who shared their expertise across thematic areas of the Disability Royal Commission from a First Nations disability perspective. We finished off the series with a celebration showcasing the FPDN team and our work on International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. We thank all of our inspiring guest speakers for their contribution to this series and our attendees for their support.

We also developed and implemented a database designed by our team around the unique experiences of First Nations people with Disability as a central driver of our work.



COMMUNITY-LED
DECISION MAKING



FPDN facilitates opportunities and exchanges of knowledge focussed on First Peoples living with disability leading their own decision making, having a voice on matters that impact on their lives, and to know and speak up for their rights and entitlements.

FPDN projects and initiatives are designed and developed in consultation with and to advance the rights of First Peoples living with disability, their families and communities and to translate their voices into policy and practice.

OUR PROJECTS
& INITIATIVES



Headphone Hustle

Headphone Hustle is an FPDN community initiative based on Gumbayngirr Country (Coffs Harbour, New South Wales) and is an inclusive program to empower Indigenous youth and diverse learners using Hip Hop workshops and creative expression as a tool to engage youth with disability at risk of homelessness or falling through the gap in the Justice and Education system.

Headphone Hustle incorporated workshops focussed on building transferable skills in song writing, numeracy and literacy, audio, video recording to address bullying and build confidence creating opportunities in employment and education.

Through a series of Headphone Hustle Workshops, young people living on Gumbayngirr Country wrote and performed a song with an important message in line with the NAIDOC Theme for 2021 – [Heal Country](#).



Paterson Street Hub, Tennant Creek

Mappu, Mappirri Akarrirreyel. Welcome to Paterson Street Hub, a place where people come together.

[Paterson Street Hub](#), a community-led initiative of FPDN, has been successfully operating in the main Street of Tennant Creek since 2018. The Hub is a safe, inclusive and independent space for the Barkly community to meet, share ideas and stories, connect with each other, and seek advocacy and support. The hub offers events, courses, sessions and sit down talks and workshops that benefit community.

Marnbu Nyinjiki, you and me sit together. The Hub facilitates opportunities for community to have a say in matters that impact on their lives, connecting organisations and community to collaborate and share information in a safe space. This year, the Hub hosted Victims of Crime NT to have a yarn with community who have been, or may be, affected by crime by providing them with support, advocacy and prevention strategies. Relationship Australia NT's Disability Royal Commission and redress team also came to the hub to meet with people and offer their assistance.

The Hub also ran a guitar lessons program over the summer holidays young people interested in learning how to play guitar.



ILC Talk Up for your Legal Rights Project

Talk Up is a project developed in partnership with FPDN, the Australian Centre for Disability Law (ACDL) and People with Disability Australia (PWDA).

The Talk Up project provided a safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability to have a yarn about legal problems that might be affecting them and their communities. Through a series of workshops, community are engaged and supported to create educational resources to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability to know and use their legal rights in everyday life. The Talk Up project is for community in Western Sydney and select regional locations in NSW.



Boosting the Local Care Workforce Program

The Boosting the Local Care Workforce Program (BLCW Program) is delivered by Ernst & Young, with First Peoples Disability Network (Australia), and the Community Services Industry Alliance. The BLCW Program is funded by the Department of Social Services and aims to develop the capacity of disability and aged care service providers to operate effectively and expand their workforce with a focus on connecting with NDIS providers within our communities.

Regional Coordinators based around Australia work with NDIS providers to provide support advice and connect with stakeholders in the sector and communities to grow the NDIS services in the regions. Specialist Coordinators provide additional support in the areas of Remote and Rural Support, Allied Health and Employment Services. FPDN, through the BLCW project, is working to achieve outcomes for: Culturally competent services and supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people living with disability.



NuunaRon Art Group

Apart from FPDN's work on national and international systemic advocacy and human rights, we also invest in local and social capital within our communities running art groups for people with disability. Our NuunaRon art groups address issues such as social isolation and also support some artists in economic participation through the sale of their work which often goes beyond just the local market with some artists having works in embassies and private collections around the world.

The NuunaRon art group also supports the development of resources by having insight into what resources may look like and identifying the barriers that they face every day allowing us to develop ways to overcome these barriers and address these different issues through our resources.

The NuunaRon art group also provides the opportunity for the artists to contribute to their community on a cultural level and raise the profile of people with disabilities and the valuable contributions that they make both culturally and economically to their local communities.

This year, the NuunaRon art group continued to showcase their Culture is Inclusion exhibition that they first presented to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2020. The NuunaRon art group has also shown the exhibition at an online Virtual Art Exhibition for NAIDOC week at the University of NSW, the Maroochydore Botanical Gardens as part of the Sunshine Coast Arts Tour and the Butter Factory Sunshine Coast.

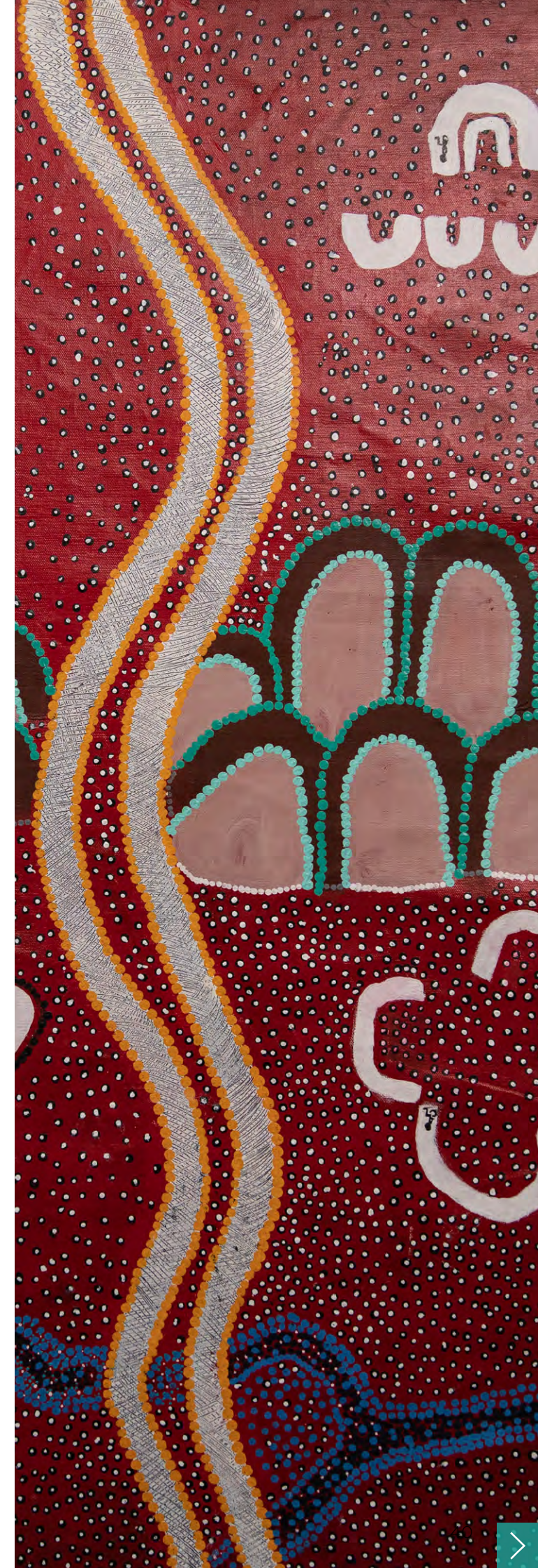
NuunaRon artist Brendan Ball's artwork 'Tracks on the sand' also featured on the cover of the 2020 Close the Gap report 'We nurture our culture for our future, and our culture nurtures us' prepared by the Lowitja Institute.



Many Spirits Dreaming - Better Together Conference

FPDN hosted a 'Many Spirits dreaming' session to a full house at the Better Together Conference, Australia's 4th national LGBTIQ+ conference held in Adelaide. FPDN presented on LGBTIQ+ First Nations people living with disability and the intersectionality between these multiple cultural identities. 'Many Spirits', a term developed by FPDN, is based on the concept of many First Nations people around the world identifying that there were multiple genders within the community and that they were celebrated. 'Many Spirits' specifically identifies our First Peoples LGBTIQ+ community that are living with disabilities.

FPDN created a [Many Spirits Dreaming resource](#) which was presented at the conference to engage and include the First Nations many spirits community living with Disability.





ALLIANCES & PARTNERSHIPS



Coalition of Peaks
(National)



Coalition of Aboriginal
Peaks NSW



Disabled Peoples
Organisations Australia



Kapo Maori,
New Zealand



NATSILS (Your story and
Victorian Aboriginal Legal service)



Australian Centre for
Disability Law



Self-Advocacy
Resource Unit



Western Sydney
University



NIISQ

PATRON

Jeff McMullan



COMMUNITY RESEARCH PARTNER

Dr Scott Avery, Western Sydney University

FPDN RECEIVES
FUNDING FROM:

Australian Government –
Department of Social Services, Canberra

Australian Government –
National Disability Insurance Agency

Australian Government –
National Indigenous Australians Agency

Cages Foundation

Department of Health and Human Services
(DHHS) Victoria

Ernst & Young

National Injury Insurance Agency, Queensland

Northern Territory Government –
Territory Families, Housing and Communities

NSW Government –
Department of Communities and Justice

Perpetual Foundation

Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU)

Westpac Foundation –
Rural Community Grant Program

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First Peoples Disability Network Australia (FPDN) values the wisdom and knowledge shared by our Elders and communities in advising our work. We would also like to acknowledge and thank our funding bodies, donors and supporters for their generous contribution and support as we work toward a common goal of a just and equitable society for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities, their families, and communities.

