

[00:00:07.050] - Bernard Namok Jnr

Hi and welcome to Yarning Disability, the FPDN podcast. I'm your host, Bernard namok, Jr. I'm a proud St. Paul, Badu and Erubian man from the Torres Strait. And I'm also the son of the designer of the Torres Strait Islander flag, Bernard Namok, senior and an advocate for the First People's Disability Network. Join me now on Yarning Disability as we showcase First Nations people living with the disability, as well as their families and carers and other industry professionals.

[00:00:44.750] - Carly Wallace

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that the following podcast may contain the voices and names of people who are deceased. The First People's Disability Network and the producers of this podcast recognize the traditional custodians of the land on which this podcast is recorded. They pay respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders past, present, and the future. Leaders of tomorrow. FPDN would like to acknowledge our founding elders and their lasting legacy, uncle Lester Bostock and Auntie Gail Rankin, and acknowledge all first peoples living with a disability.

[00:01:28.670] - Bernard Namok Jnr

And just a heads up, the following conversation may contain some coarse language. Hello. My name is Bernard Namok Jr. I'm an advocate for the First People's Disability Network. Today I would like to acknowledge my late father, Bernard Namok SR. The designer of the Torres Strait Flag, which was first launched on today's date to the people of Zenadth Kes Torres Strait 31 years ago. I also pay respect to my elders, past and present. In this week's episode of yarning Disability. I had a yarn with founder and CEO of Full Black Group Kanet Wano. Kanet is a Zenadth Kes man from the eastern island of Murray and the founder and CEO of Full Black Group based in Meeanjin, which focus for equality, inclusion, and advice around NDIS. Bala Kanet is also a gifted motivational speaker and he took me on a journey of learning and understanding.

[00:02:47.190] - Kanet Wano

Hello. My name is Kanet Keripo Wano. I am from I'm from the Kuwait village and also areb people of Mer Murray Island of Zenadth, otherwise known as Torres Strait. I now live in Brisbane. I'm a father, a grandfather, a great grandfather. I am also a sibling to two other Balas and many other brothers and sisters. And I live in Brisbane. I choose to live in Brisbane. And I've created my own business, the Full Black Group, which also runs a disability service under NDIS Services. But I also provide NDIS Community Development, which is looking at how we develop our communities to support and advocate better for our mob with disability because we are marginalized even more than the mainstream disability sector, not just in the physicality and geographic location, but it's also in the philosophies and the applications of treatments. So that's me and that's what I do. And I'm a lifelong advocate of social justice, fairness, access and equity. My bala is in a wheelchair. I've already taken my office block. I've taken my office block to task over their inaccessibility. And I had the CEO from sydney ring me because I advocated to the point where I wasn't backing down.

[00:04:53.680] - Kanet Wano

And we now have a mandate to assist to they've now called on George to assist them now make their building more accessible. They apologize, I now have to access. And just reminds me I've got access. I can get \$30,000 from an organization now for my business to make George, because he's my office manager, to make his transition to work more better, so I can get office equipment, I can assist with renovations of the bathroom. And now this company now want to partner with me because I've challenged them. It's called the WhatsApp group of companies. They're an international company, shared office space. I took them on, I just refused to because he couldn't use upstairs kitchen. I said, Why am I paying full rent when these other staff members, including myself, I can walk up there and access a full kitchen. My brother can't. It's just not equitable debated anyway, went straight to that. So I ended up dealing with the CEO direct the regional manager pay level scales didn't cut it. They could not compete against my debate. And he got to the point, had to go to the boss lady. We started knocking heads.

[00:06:14.390] - Kanet Wano

Next minute, sister says, hey, when you come to Sydney, come for a coffee with me. And I'll have a

cake too, please. Yeah, another kind of man, too. I advocate to a point of I advocate my background. I'm at an age where I don't look at I know, but I'm 60 next year. So my 60 years of age, I'm sort of finding myself spiritually trans generating into that level of leadership, which because all my old people are dead, only me and my brother now, which are two are now he's 64 now I'm 63, I'm 59, 60 next year. All them great grandkids, great grandkids grandkids nephew and nieces, they look for me too. And so what's come with that is I've found in the last, say, five years, my voice has got more clout. I've always been loud and noisy, but I find my voice now has more clout. So when I advocate for my big brother, it comes from a place of status, of where I am in terms of my life and my ancestry. And I choose to walk on this earth in an advocacy role, not just for family, not just for Zenadth mob, not just for First Nations mainland, but for everybody access and equity.

[00:07:40.060] - Kanet Wano

I have that mindset when I go sleep nighttime, I wake up in the morning. That's my mindset. So I now work in the disability sector, which NDIS. I own a company full Black service for disability. And I've also got the forensic NDIS. So now I'm working in the justice systems with our children and our adults who incarcerated. And their offending behavior is based on disability. They have a disability. So instead of going to the justice system to recycle and regenerate them as having a lifetime cycle of offending behavior. I'm now transitioning them to a health care cycle of NDIS and Mobile. What's happening is they are now readdressing their behavior because they get into the health care they need, or in that process of shaping that health care, because we don't know what that health care need is. But it's through traumatizes the disability sectors, because if you look at globally, globally, not just this country now, I've done research. I'm now affiliated with the University of Queensland and also the Wesley Research. Now, these organizations, when I say affiliated, we are now consulting each other because we are now in the process of linking up, because I've now managed to influence them to look at how we treat our disability sector.

[00:09:23.990] - Kanet Wano

So UQ, University of Queensland Allied Health School. And I just had breakfast with her this morning. Actually, I raced in my coffee shop in Brisbane, just around the corner, three minute drive. I've just come home here, set this up for this thing. Now, the research now around this is around recognizing colonization as another layer that comes with disability. But I'm not going to sit here and whinge and say, Sorry, ask Black. No. I've found a solution to it through my therapeutic practice. And the evidence is I have two major institutions in the white man's world, the Wesley Mission Mob and the University of Queensland Allied Health School have now got evidence that what I've provided and done as a business, as a company, has now impacted and changed lives of clients and patients of their people. So they chased me. I didn't chase them. The alumni's at Practicing have now fed back information that Kanet at 1 hour, and his program with these children, who are their clients, they've seen improvements in, what, three months, two months that they haven't seen in four, three, four years. There hasn't been a change. I've got parents now writing my testimonial from parents are text messages they've sent me sometimes eight or 11:00 at night, amazed at what their children are doing.

[00:11:13.380] - Kanet Wano

Amazed the children are going to school. The children are now wearing shoes to school. I got deputy principals now ringing me saying, what are you doing? This boy who's been here since grade five, he's now in grade ten, he's turning up to school, and he's participating in the classroom because I'm applying additional supports of disability because the colonization has given such it's another layer of disease. It's a it's a disease. It's an illness which isn't catered for. When you talk, when you go to a psychologist, when you go to OT, their Westernized concepts don't even touch on not only on the colonization impact, but on the history where our people come from. Now my law therapy, Lore Law. And I've now got First Nations law therapy. And people might say, who are you mindful making a thing? Well, who I am not to do it. I have a grounding, I have a bloodline, I have an appreciation. Plus, I work on my law system because I want to say something controversial here. Law is bigger than culture. Law is bigger than culture. And this isn't just for Zenadth people or for mainland aborigines mainland first nations.

[00:13:01.330] - Kanet Wano

Law is a global personal development system. Law, L-O-R-E-I worked for the United Nations for two years in 2008 and 2009. I was based in Miami. I know Miami, Tampa Bay, Florida. The Canadian Government. Seconded me To Go Across There and I Was Working With First Nations. North And South Canadian first Nations, Pacific Island, First Nations, even Sam Sami People. There was about maybe 80 to 90 of us. But when we come in that room, we were connected. And it wasn't our cultures that connected us, it was our sense of lore that connected us. I know Sabi Sami culture, an Osaba Navajo culture, but the table that was spread to bring up along that brotherhood and sisterhood is the table of law lore. And the only person who judges that, who keeps balance on that, is the person themselves. You wake up in the morning like I do. I wake up 03:00 a.m. In the morning. That's just me. 03:00 a.m. My bala. I get up, I thank amen baba, first and foremost. That's all. I wake up, then I think about, okay, what did I do yesterday that I can do better today? Because I made mistakes yesterday?

[00:14:59.550] - Kanet Wano

How can I be kinder? How can I make sure this place is better? What can I influence? I'm practicing a sense of loyal re. I know there's people out there, our own countrymen, who say, oh yeah, culture em nor sabe culture. Well, I doubt anyone would, because that culture has been contaminated by colonisation anyway. Who gives someone the right to determine who's got culture and who hasn't got culture but your own personal choice? I don't go home. And I know some of my countrymen that dance, and they might have culture, and they might have a go at me for not having culture. Then they go home and they bash their wife. They go home, or they bash their children or neighbour, whatever or whatever they do. But it's up to them. But the thing is, I'm working on myself to become a better human being. This one law, that's what sustained cultures way of living. The culture is there, but the law m set the mark. You take away this one, boom. Culture disappear. What we're seeing today is culture disappearing, because colonisation has done that. We have lost our sense of law. Not just this country globally, it's a human study.

[00:16:36.270] - Kanet Wano

When I talk like that, these universities, they're jumping over themselves. They want a piece of it. So that little preface there leads me to my practice in the disability sector. We are now seeing outcomes from 60 year old men who have been diagnosed and have been inflicted by brain injuries, who sit at home and just watch the may watch television or just not get involved in their healing. Who are now wanting to go for walks by the water with other men and Yarn, who now want to go to Physios, who now want to exercise. And the children and the grandchildren are saying essel for this one was my dad was slowly killing himself. But now we've ignited the law. We have now ignited the obligation, or that old man who has an obligation to his children and to his granny's law. So I've now put that into a therapeutic practice, and it also connects, it connects people. I've now working with six young people in detention centers or under child safety, not child safety, under youth orders. What they wanted, they want to belong. They want to belong. So colonization the background, and it's not their family's fault, it's not their grandparent, it's no one's fault.

[00:18:26.590] - Kanet Wano

When colonization, that evilness, that ulcer, that cancer, you become, these are the symptoms, but we can heal ourselves. So I'm not saying that someone's going to have a dispute, get up and walk, but it's about well being. The baseline is well being. You get a baseline of well being. And whatever your physical capacity, no matter what your physical capacity, you will have a quality of life in terms of your life experience. You can look out the window and think, oh, look at how green that tree is. Instead of looking at the window and saying, look at the dead grass there, look at that gray sky. Whether you're in a disability chair, if you can't walk, if you can't sit up properly, or if you can walk and you can sit up properly, we still look at the same window. What determines what we see is your level of well being. Now, well being comes from the self governance of law for you. Now, I've got to substantiate this, but I was yarning with the researchers head of research this morning, and I made a statement to say, chemically, our DNA is structured in law. Now, the human body, your mother, my mother, they are the first generation that is still connected to our ancient past.

[00:20:28.730] - Kanet Wano

That sociology. That sociology. I can talk about that in a spiritual sense, but the white person is scientifically developed. That when someone's colonized, it takes seven generations before the

physical, emotional, physical, emotional, spiritual. I'm throwing that in. Spiritual DNA, disconnection happens. Seven generations. So trauma. So for seven generations, well, I'm only the second generation, I believe, or third generation. So I've still got some DNA properties relating to my ancestry, bloodline. So what I'm saying there is that my therapy now taps into that. And when you talk about the first nations of this country, eso Bala, we're talking 65,000, the oldest living, surviving people on the planet. And the reason, when you think about it, when you think about all them tribes, multiple tribes, nations, this country. I'm in admiration of that because how do they survive so long without conflict? Because they all had different culture. The Tjapukai mob where you there now, in Cairns Tjapukai, the Wakka wakka, the Quandamooka, the coastal people, the Pitjantjatjara. Different cultures, they live different environments. But what do they share? My bala? They share L O R E boom mic drop. I rest my case, your honor.

[00:22:27.470] - Bernard Namok Jnr
Yeah, it's speechless.

[00:22:32.590] - Kanet Wano
I am starting a global movement. Law, wisdom. Law. My bala, I speak to you and I admire you too. Just quietly and your father I follow you, don't worry. We're going to become friends on Facebook just recently. But you have big shoes. You have big shoes. Big shoes. And whether I just admire you, no pun, no intention here. But the first words that come into my head my bala, is that you carried a flag by your dad. Your dad you carried a flag. And this one obligation blo you your law. L-O-R-E you must have speak you now my bala. I read what you said there on Facebook and I know the lady in question. I know the lady in question. But Bala, your law governs you. You know answer for anybody. I yarn were you now it's the first time I met you. Carly CJ talks very highly of you. Let me call you your bestie, your buddy, I see you on the red carpet. All these functions you do there, you do character. But your law bala, you got it. You can tell when someone's got law because it's not something that's finished product, it is a work in progress.

[00:24:10.290] - Kanet Wano
Another language we can use is good pass in it's good passenger. Not everybody gets good passenger. Because the good person by Yumi for Zenadth people is the good pasin blo the mainland first nations border, northern hemisphere, first nations, the other southern hemisphere first nations. They got their own good pasin, they got their own word because we're different cultures. But it relates to the same set of fundamentals. Now grabbing all that, putting it into a therapeutic practice for the disabled sector. There's a GP now who is there's a general practitioner, a paediatrician of a kids doctor who has used the word miracle. Miracle. I'm not saying my name to that miracle. I'm saying the law practice has created a miracle. They have to do re diagnosis because someone, a child that wasn't speaking, had a diagnosis of silent selective mutism has flipped the coin, has baffled medical science because I've just tapped into something that is 65,000 year old in the making. The vibrance, the vibrancy of law. She's now connected to it through my practice. Their kids now turning up to school. We have kids now wearing shoes for the first time in their life. We're talking grade four students who wake up and want to go to school, want to accomplish not living to the expectations set down on the negative, but going back to the disability sector.

[00:26:17.320] - Kanet Wano
We need to create a window. Not a window, the view out of that window, the well being. We need to connect people to law. This gentleman I'm working with now, he was slowly, slowly declining because he didn't want to go after exercise, he didn't want to do his even his GP. He went to his GP, but now he can't. He well, we look after him. He now texts, hey, am I going to go to this thing? His children are thanking us, but I don't think they should thank us. They should thank their family, their law, the principles of it. And once we apply that, we can change the world. Because, like I said, culture is a way of life and how we how we live. But law determines how we choose to live and well being, mother and the reason I share a lot of things, I'm a coach, too. I call myself a wisdom coach because I'm now at a stage in my life where I can look back. I'm not saying I'm all this, it's a learned process, as you go. But the thing is, a lot of the things I talk about is happened to my life.

[00:27:49.540] - Kanet Wano

I'm supposed to be on dialysis. I'm 59 this year, 60 next year. I'm supposed to be on dialysis. I decided I'm not going on dialysis. 18 months ago, I was turned away from the Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital specialist. They said, I don't know what you've done, Caynett. You don't need to be on this specialist. I'm supposed to be on dialysis. My big ball is on dialysis. I'm supposed to have gout another gout. My liver is no good. The GP 2000 during COVID actually, I went to an appointment in 2020 before we were locked down, had the blood done, and then we locked down and had a phone consult and she said, oh, my God. Her words were oh, my God. And I thought, what do you mean? Am I going to die? She says, gain it. Your liver has recovered. What are you doing? So we can heal ourselves. But I've created I'm not saying please don't think, I just know. My life is at 59 years of age. This is the most best I felt physically, emotionally, spiritually I felt in my life at 59. And I bring that into my therapeutic service for the disability sector.

[00:29:28.750] - Kanet Wano

And like I say, it might get people to walk from a wheelchair, but it certainly gives them, when they look out that window, hey, which way that bird they're singing so sweet. Which way that grass is clean? Well being. And who knows, one day they might be able to reverse their diagnosis. But that's in a nutshell. I don't know where this yarn was going, but that because that whole process of disability, because we've got to lose the indoctrination of white medicine. We are fearful from white medicine. We are frightened if we don't do this and do that, we're going to die. Well, we probably will, but at the same time, start thinking about your own self and your law. I've given up. I have a few drinks. Alcohol, I admit I gave it up for seven years. I have a few drinks, but I don't drink soft drink. I don't eat KFC. I eat fish and chips. I choose what I eat. I'm not quite all fatty things for breakfast. I used to eat rice in a stew for breakfast, I was 125 kilo. I'm now 103 kilo. My fat ratio has declined because I choose that.

[00:31:01.760] - Kanet Wano

I don't want to fit the expectation of a 60 year old indigenous man as being old, have a big belly and just lie around. No, I don't want to, because it's expectations. I exceed the expectations. And so in my therapy, like with Brother that I'm looking after, and these children in the disability sector, they've been set an expectation by their medical doctors. And I said, no. Believe them. One miracles can happen. Miracles can happen. One other patient said to me, I'm going to be 60 next year. He's in a wheelchair. He said, I'm going to be 60. And I think that's about Bala. He was a First Nations Mainland man. He said, Brother, I think I'm gonna be that's gonna be it for nothing. I'm gonna die. Because that's I said, no, you're not. No, you don't. No, you don't. 70 and over. I worked with him for about two days, and then he jumped on Facebook and he put on Facebook. He said, hey, people exceed expectations, because that's the same thing I told him, exceed the expectation. He's now telling others because now the lads, he's function. He's now 64. So it's the mindset, but it's also the mindset is driven by the sense of loyal.

[00:32:46.340] - Kanet Wano

That's the thing that kept us strong. So therapeutically, we need to be a lot more our vision needs to be extended past the Westernized concepts of health, well being, medicine. We come from strong grassroots people who have law, and that connects us globally. And lastly, if somebody is going through.

[00:33:21.150] - Bernard Namok Jnr

Like, somebody family or person living with a disability are going through a hard time in their life, is there a message you want to say to them.

[00:33:33.520] - Kanet Wano

yeah. My message to anyone going through an issue with disability or barrier or even anyone who may just be struggling with their own. I think we all share everybody shares a lack of self because this world has developed a very ugly system of who you are as a person, and it can very quickly marginalize or make you feel like you're on your own. If you've got a disability that's even another layer. So we all have mental demons to play with, and you're a human being, whether you're black, white or Brindle. This world has shaped a system. We're too competitive. And those mental barriers, spirit, those mental barriers can be beaten by a strong spiritual barrier. And what I say there is that we must spend time when we work, people work out. People work out all the time work out, I got to go to

the gym, I got to walk. And it's good that's 10% 90% of your time should be spent working in working on yourself, working on your self belief, working that you come from proper strong bloodline and whether you're a Christian or not a Christian, working on that sense of belief in faith.

[00:35:15.220] - Kanet Wano

I've seen my mother change things through mind. Application of faith. I call it faith. Some people call it affirmations. I'm now living affirmations. I predicted I was doing this thing, what I'm doing now, when I was 35 years old, I remember. So my advice to people is that start getting just sorting out all these barriers like we imprison ourselves with. And the thing is because when you walk out your front door, you're bombarded by labels, you're bombarded by people, and people call your names. Well, the thing is, forget that you only walk in your light. Walk in your light. Then all of a sudden, you develop an immunity, you develop a strong, you develop a mindset. Don't worry, I still have a mind. Because the reason I'm saying that is because that's what I've done. I've done it. I've done it. When I was first five years of my life, six, seven years of my life, we were hiding under beds at Northwood in Townsville because that white man coming to sell encyclopedia or washing powders or Readers Digest, the door to a salesman. My mother thought that was the government come to take us.

[00:36:47.630] - Kanet Wano

She was saying government. Government. We'd go and hide under the bed. And all the boys had to girls had to go and hide up in the trees, the mango tree in the backyard, because my parents, our aunties, our big sisters were frightened. Government come for take us. So that fear, that trauma, I've managed to flip it because I've applied. Everything I've said today is what I've applied in my life. And I'm just sharing it. I'm just sharing it. I flipped it to the point now that now drives me. Every day I wake up, that history, that trauma is to make sure that I influence a world that I can influence so that doesn't happen again. And that's my obligation. That's my law. I choose that law. Nobody else choose it. I choose it. I will monitor it, I'll measure it. And I only have myself and myself and my God to answer to no one else. Boom.

[00:38:17.420] - Bernard Namok Jnr

I really enjoyed our yarn, and I must say, I left feeling very, very inspired. You can check out bala kanet wano's website at www.fullblack.com.au. If there's anything you heard in today's episode that raises concerns for you, there is help available. You can contact one Three Yarn on 13 92 76 or beyond Blue on 1300 double 24636 or Lifeline on 13 11 14. Thanks for listening to Yarning disability. I'm your host, Bernard namok, Jr. Follow FPDN on our social media accounts to stay up to date with future episodes and information. You can also visit our website at www.fpdn.org.au.