##### **[00:00:02.540] - Bernard Namok**

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. I'm also the son of the designer of the Torres Strait Islander flag, Bernard Namok snr, and an advocate for the first People's Disability Network. Join me now on Yarning Disability as we showcase First Nations people living with a disability, as well as their families and carers and other industry professionals.

##### **[00:00:44.770] - 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 Bustock and Auntie Gail Rankin, and acknowledge all first peoples living with a disability.

##### **[00:01:26.000] - Bernard Namok**

This episode of Yarning Disability features Jordan Wishart, a bidjara man from central Queensland, but spent all his life on Arrentre country in Alice Springs. Jordan is FPDN's training and engagement officer for Northern Territory and struggles with severe dyslexia and ADHD. But to him, he doesn't see that as a disability. This episode, we're on location to do some community engagement in the remote town of Maningrida, 500K from Darwin in Arnhem Land at the mouth of the Liverpool River.

##### **[00:02:11.740] - Jordan Wishart**

Yes, my name is Jordan Wishart. I'm a bidjara man from Central Queensland, but I was raised on our own country in Alice Springs most of my life. I have an older brother and an older sister.

##### **[00:02:25.980] - Bernard Namok**

How long you grew up in Alice Springs?

##### **[00:02:28.270] - Jordan Wishart**

I was born in Woolangong, New South Wales, which I don't like to admit because I go for Queensland. But six months after I was born, I moved to Alice Springs with my grandfather. And since I was raised in Alice Springs. And then I moved to Adelaide. I went to boarding school there in 2010. I went to Penbrook for four years and then went to Flinders Union after that. That, and then stay down in Adelaide for a total of about 10 years, I reckon, and then moved back to Alice Springs.

##### **[00:03:08.270] - Bernard Namok**

You're an advocate for First Peoples Disability Network. How long have you been working for FPDN?

##### **[00:03:16.250] - Jordan Wishart**

I've been working for FPDN for the last two years, two and a bit years now. I think maybe it might have been closer to two and a half now. I started out in the disability advocacy team for the Royal Commission, and then now I've been pushed over to this new position as the training and engagement officer for the Northern Territory and then the engagement team for the FPDN. But my time in FPDN has been amazing and very eye-opening. I think it's the first... Actually, second job I worked in the disability sector. I used to work for Disability SA back in the when the NDIS just first initially come out. But I think this is the first time I've actually been working with mob, with disability professionally, and it's been amazing.

##### **[00:04:13.460] - Bernard Namok**

You're part of the training and engagement team. And we're currently out here in West Arnhemland in Maningrida. Tell me about the community and what have you been seeing so far and some of the people that you've been talking to here.

##### **[00:04:29.510] - Jordan Wishart**

Yeah. We're currently out in Maningrida for phase one in this area, but phase two for Darwin within the project we're working on. We're currently doing some engagement to run some human rights training. We've developed some human rights training from Uncle Lester's training package, and we're doing some engagement out in Maningrida to hopefully run some more workshops out here next year to do some community workshops and hopefully some community org workshops. But I think the first time in Maningrida, I think it's a beautiful, beautiful place. I've never been in any community out in Darwin, top-end. So it's a great experience. But the community mob are a lot different, I guess, to Alice Springs and communities I'm used to. I think here they're a lot more welcome. They're a lot more friendly. Not saying that in Alice Springs, it's not like that. But I'm just saying it just feels like I can feel like a real community vibe here. And I've been speaking to... We've spoken to a few different arms of the Malala Health Service here. We've spoken to the NDIS coordinators, the age care coordinators, and the community wellbeing and community center mob, and all very, very keen for us to come out next year and to get some training for not only the staff members, but also in the community.

##### **[00:06:15.970] - Jordan Wishart**

We've seen a fair bit here while over here. We've seen firsthand some of the struggles the communities have and heard firsthand from the workers and stuff around the struggles that they're having with, I guess, accessibility issues, with NDIS services and getting the right support they need to their clients here. And I think it is across the board with remote communities. But here we can see that it's a real issue. But the community is, I guess, very supportive and supports each other here, which is really good to see. And I think the human rights training is going to be very beneficial. But I guess we're going to come out with a different... I think there are a lot of barriers that the community is facing, and we're going to come out and come out with a new strategy to implement the human rights training to be most beneficial for this community.

##### **[00:07:14.840] - Bernard Namok**

And like for mob that don't know where Maningrida is, it's a couple of hundred Ks of Darwin and I guess whatever mob are facing, it's similar across the Northern part of Australia where remote community are facing with accessibility, housing and also NDIS package too for mob here in the community. And that's what mob is saying too in the community here too.

##### **[00:07:47.370] - Jordan Wishart**

Yeah, 100 % is that accessing. I guess the information is just understanding what they can and can't access. And yesterday, they were talking about their plans to just get rolled over without actually any consultation or consideration on what's actually happening within the community. We're hearing some of the case workers saying their plans aren't getting used up at all because they don't have anything to spend it on Addy or they want things, but they're not able to purchase those things through their plan. So it's not actually working. And you can see the frustration on their eyes and the case worker's eyes around, if if they just listened or if they could speak to the right person or just that constant frustration with being passed around to different services or constantly passed around to... Like they were saying yesterday they couldn't get onto the down office that they kept getting passed on to the national office because they were so remote. It's just that frustration within community around their plans and all that information, just knowing where they could go.

##### **[00:08:54.470] - Bernard Namok**

And then again, the national office, they know the needs for the community, so they have no idea on what mob need in the community like wheelchair and all them things that people with disability require.

##### **[00:09:08.860] - Jordan Wishart**

Yeah, 100 %. They should be doing... Especially when they're delivering or making these plans for their clients, they should come out and actually witness and see what the community is like and what the actually circumstance of these clients are, like what's actually out for them, what they actually want, and make sure that information is understood from their clients and on both ends. There is a massive language barrier here and that plays a part in when they are saying what they want or they are trying to get across on what they want in their plan or what they want in life or what is good for them. They should have that choice and they should have that choice and they should have that say.

##### **[00:09:53.080] - Bernard Namok**

For mob idea, especially in West Arnhemland, English can be seventh or eighth for some mob here and delivering training, especially for mob, knowing what rights they have or what rights is out there for people with disability will have to look at that and, I don't know, find mob in the community as a spokesperson to be that person in between us and the community to relay that message on. So that message is being delivered out to mob here.

##### **[00:10:31.190] - Jordan Wishart**

Yeah, it is a very hard one. As a few of the people said, there's about 24 different dialects or something of different languages spoken here. And on average, yeah, most people speak about seven or eight. I think our strategy with here is getting a representative or community representative in first and maybe engaging them, educating them about what we're trying to do and the training that we're trying to deliver, and then asking them to assist us with the training delivery within the community so that we can ensure that the information is received properly and actually fully understood any of the information we're trying to share. It is hard, especially working in communities like this where we're trying to talk about human rights. But across the board, we can see just by coming in here that there's so many human rights barriers that aren't addressed in these communities. So it is a very hard one and we want to be able to do the best job we can. And we're looking at maybe bringing other members of our team in their feet, maybe some policy teams to come out and see firsthand what the communities are like and what their struggles are, and then even giving their opinion.

##### **[00:11:46.990] - Jordan Wishart**

But I think it's going to be a whole community approach, whole service collaborative approach with all the Aboriginal services here in Manningreetah to be on board. And I think everyone has shown interest and is keen for us to come along. So yeah.

##### **[00:12:06.720] - Bernard Namok**

Now, as a training and engagement officer, how do you plan a trip like this to go out and visit community and tell community about who we are with FPDN and what are we trying to do out in community?

##### **[00:12:23.280] - Jordan Wishart**

It is a hard one, especially for me not being here before. I have the benefit of Bernard, obviously, being has lived some time here in Manningrita. But I guess the hard bit is getting here. Once you're here, it's a lot easier to just go and try and find community, like going into the services and just asking, Well, while we're here on the ground, emailing and ringing up has shown a bit difficult where people won't get back to you or some people on leave. When you're working in the communities, it works at a different time. There's normal time and then community time, which you hear a lot is it's not also like those emails aren't getting back to you. We might have time frames that we have to abide by while we're in town and stuff. But out here, it's a different story. So it can be a lot harder to engage from afar. But I think the best way is once you can either meet or get a hold of two or three people maybe that are interested in meeting with you and then just going off by their instruction or having some point of reference within the community and then getting on in there, it's a lot more easier once you're here on the ground to actually engage with the mob.

##### **[00:13:43.550] - Jordan Wishart**

Whereas over the phone or email, it's so much harder because people actually don't know who you are, what you do. There's so much with distrust within service providers coming in and out of community, not actually providing what they need to. We can see that across the board or see that back home in Alice and a lot of the communities around there, and especially in Tenochree and stuff where services are coming and they've promised one thing but delivered another. So we can see that with any community we try to tread lightly and try to do as best as we can to engage with many people and build that understanding before trying to come and deliver anything. We try our best to get an understanding of the community, what's a bit about the region and making sure we're speaking to the right people and understanding what the lay of the land is like in the community before we actually come out and engage. Yeah, it's the best way we can do it.

##### **[00:14:43.540] - Bernard Namok**

And when you're out doing engagements like do you put your advocacy out on and see what barriers, I guess, mob in community are facing? Is it different to Central Australia and other places that you've been to?

##### **[00:14:59.700] - Jordan Wishart**

It's not really that different. Once you're out in the community, you see there's so much similarities between communities, especially remote communities, that everyone seems to be dealing with the same issues, where there's accessibility support, enough services, equipment. It's all really sometimes across the board that everyone's struggling with the same type of stuff. But I think the biggest thing that we're trying to get across is that there's such a lack of education around what supports are out there, where people can actually go to seek support or to escalate things that are really needing to be addressed. And I guess that's what we're trying to get across. Central Australia is the same as the community out there, I guess the Aboriginal Augs do the best they can do with the funding that they get. And a lot of people when you see... What I see across in the communities is that the community workers are doing above and beyond their positions, and they are there for the right reasons most of the time. And yeah, they are the ones that are there day and they are trying to advocate and try to get as much as they can for the people they're working with.

##### **[00:16:24.160] - Bernard Namok**

Are you feel comfortable talking about, I guess, your, ADHD, and how long back you realize that?

##### **[00:16:36.570] - Jordan Wishart**

Yeah. It's hard because I don't actually see it really as a disability, but that might be just my perception of it. But I've struggled with, because I have severe dyslexia and I guess ADHD, and I've only realized that within the last, I guess, few years, after my sister and nephew were diagnosed and then seeing the difference that they've had once they seek the right support, which has been life-changing. I guess for me, it is a struggle when it comes to work and interacting. I can have ups and downs on different days. My attention level, especially working from home, is just another story on itself. I get distracted a heap, and I've always just thought that was just a normal thing, like people just get distracted or whatever. I always just played it off as just the way I am. But after researching and hearing more about it and actually seeing the difference between once my sister and nephew were diagnosed from a psychiatrist and the steps that they've taken to address that. It's been amazing. It's been. And it's the strategies that they've put in place with not only medication but addressing it early. Yeah, it's good, but it is also hard when it comes to professional, when you're on your own and you've got to try to like- Occupy.

##### **[00:18:19.590] - Bernard Namok**

Yeah, occupy and- Distract yourself.

##### **[00:18:21.380] - Jordan Wishart**

Not only to distract yourself, but stay on point and motivate yourself to do these things when you've got so many other things going on in your head. It can get... It can become hard. Sometimes I think that's why this job suits me as well because there's so many things to do. We are on the road a lot and we get to go out in community. So it's not always just jagged in the office, going mad, but we are. We do to get the opportunity to go out and meet a heap of people and go out and see a lot of things, which I think does really help and it does suit me, I guess. I like being out and about. I like being out in the community. I like meeting people. And I think our job actually really matters and what we're doing can make a difference within community. I guess my struggles with Midas XC and ADHD has been, I guess, lifelong and I've never seen it as a barrier or something to stop me from doing what I wanted to do. It's just one of those things I've just got to constantly got to overcome every day.

##### **[00:19:35.650] - Jordan Wishart**

It's just one of those things that I wouldn't want it to make a backstep for me or something in my way. It's just one of the things I struggle with. I forget everything. You just said that. I've probably got my bottle, I forget I lose my wallet, and everything. And that memory can be a struggle in work as well. I can forget a heap of things to do with work, or I can lose track of time or lose track of tasks. Yeah, it's just one of those things. It's a constant battle to keep on top of. I see the difference between how it is with, I guess, work colleagues and even my partner at home. What's the struggle with dealing with me when I'm in one of those moments where I'm just frazzled all over the place and I'm just going to actually take that time to come back and center. Come and reassess and get back on task. But yeah, it can be a struggle. It has been a struggle. But yeah, I don't let it, I guess, determine or be a barrier.

##### **[00:20:39.170] - Jordan Wishart**

Because I think the only thing we can do is if we make a mistake, just don't take it too much, just reassess the situation and then move on. How do you deal with when you're on the road?

##### **[00:21:01.880] - Jordan Wishart**

On the road, it's actually good. I don't know. It's fine other than the forgetting stuff. But when I'm out and about and actually, it doesn't… Yeah, I don't know, it just comes in. It's just a part of life now. I've actually had to deal with it for so long that it's just become a part of who I am. I just got to remember that, I guess, how my actions are around other people. Or if I'm up and down or if my mind's running a thousand miles that other people aren't, they're not actually perceiving the same things that I am. So I've just got to stay in tune with that sometimes, especially when I'm on the road or I'm engaging with people, especially in a community where it's a lot slower. I've just got to remember that the way I am is in the way everybody else is as well. So I've just got to take that on board and make sure that maybe if I'm running too fast or if I'm going thinking about 10 million other things that I've still got to stay centered or who I'm engaging with or who I'm actually talking with and stay focused on them and making sure that either they feel heard or whatever I'm delivering is about the people I'm with instead of everything else running around in my mind.

##### **[00:22:19.820] - Jordan Wishart**

I guess, yeah, that's just a part of everyday life with these struggles. We've been working with over the last two years. I've been put in a few different projects. We started off in the DRC, and then once coming over to the engagement team, we got to work on developing resources, which was really cool. So we got to go over... Yeah, we travel a fair bit. I got to go over to... We did Darwin, Alice. We got to interview a few of the team members went to Derby, Broome, Adelaide. I'm trying to think where else.

##### **[00:23:09.380] - Jordan Wishart**

Port Macquarie.

##### **[00:23:10.310] - Bernard Namok**

Yeah, Port Macquarie and up to the islands

##### **[00:23:12.880] - Jordan Wishart**

Yeah, you went up to the islands. Yeah. It was good. I love that aspect of taking a film crew with us and getting to interview mob from different areas and hear from different people's experiences with disability and what their stories are with... Even then, you hear similarities between mob from different regions of Australia, where a lot of the times they had to move to regional city, metro cities to access the appropriate support and move off country and really hear their stories about wanting to be back home or having the support they have in the cities out in community would be a game-changer for them. But yeah, things like that was really interesting and I loved being a part of that part of the project. I'm really interested to see what the training looks like when it comes out, where we can look at delivering to services and and Arcos and and see when the video has come finalized. I think it's going to be really interesting and really powerful.

##### **[00:24:28.830] - Bernard Namok**

Because I think one of the things that I took away from visiting all them places that we've been to and talking to mob is that no matter where you are around Australia, whether you live in remote or regional or big cities, everything is the same. Every mob, they've got the same struggle, especially like you mentioned there with accessibility, housing and just I think, mob wanting to go back to country and for that healing.

##### **[00:24:58.890] - Jordan Wishart**

Yeah, 100 %. And I think it should be afforded to all of having their appropriate support out on country would be the best thing for them. If it'd be an ideal world where we could do that and have everyone back on country and have that choice, allowing that choice for to be at and where they want to be with family instead of being isolated on their own and having to move away to get the support they need.

##### **[00:25:31.880] - Jordan Wishart**

And you want to talk about some of the services that you think would work for other places that you see that's working, especially around Alice Springs?

##### **[00:25:43.580] - Jordan Wishart**

I think the original orgs and stuff, they do an amazing job, especially back home. Congress does a great job out in the communities and does the health. But I think big one for me would be more jobs, opportunities for locals within the community. Like even here, when we first come here, we're seeing other work sites full of people that weren't from here. I think there was a Greek crew or something like we're here, I'm speaking a different language that have been come over to do all the work that could be full of locals doing that, could be trained up and have that opportunity within these orgs. Even some of the services go in. There's a lot of them aren't locals, but I think a big step would be filling those roles with the locals, having appropriate training out on country so that we can have more jobs, we can have more money, staying in the community and being paid and money in pockets out in communities. So we have a proper economic thing for the communities. I think that'd be the biggest step for all communities around Australia. So we wouldn't have to be flying people in or flying services in, flying followers in from the cities or whatever to come out and do things that the locals could be trained up to do.

##### **[00:27:15.630] - Bernard Namok**

What are you looking forward to for, I guess, 2024?

##### **[00:27:20.200] - Jordan Wishart**

I think 2024, it's going to be a busy year for our team. With both trainings with the human rights training and the sector strengthening training being completed, hopefully next year, we'll be on the road a lot more as well. So be visiting a lot more communities and hopefully engaging with a whole more home-a lot more mob on communities and different augs to deliver our training. And I'm excited to see a whole heap of communities and getting out and about. I think it's going to be a very busy year, but it's going to be a massive learning opportunity to go out and see how everyone's doing, what everyone's struggling with, and seeing what support we could offer, if not just by delivering our training or sharing information. And I'm very excited to see what next year holds for not only FPM, but our team.

##### **[00:28:25.310] - Bernard Namok**

And if there's mob struggling and I guess, or just have hit that barrier, don't know where to go, what to do. Is there anything that you want to say to them?

##### **[00:28:39.420] - Jordan Wishart**

I guess there are a lot of services out there trying to do the right thing and getting out there. So I think I guess seeking help or if you're in those situations where you don't know who to turn to, it's just about trying to find the right information or trying asking if it's there or trying to get help from whoever's available. If not, in our packages, we have a whole heap of information about people you can talk to and where to access these supports. We do refer on to advocates and other services within their regions, whichever communities we do go to. And if.

##### **[00:29:25.740] - Bernard Namok**

You do feel that pressure, how do you relax and get your mind off things?

##### **[00:29:34.040] - Jordan Wishart**

I just rely on family, really. I've got a really tight-knit family at home and family and friends. Alice Springs community is really, I guess, really good to me as well. I've got a good social life, good community that I surround myself with. And if anything's going wrong, I just chuck it back on my boss, which is good. But no, Carly is really good. I know I stress her out a fair bit, but no, she's really good to work with and she's been a massive support for me over the last couple of years working for FPDN.

##### **[00:30:11.100] - Bernard Namok**

There was FPDN training and engagement officer for Northern Territory, Jordan Wishart on Yarning Disability. If there's anything you heard in today's episode that raises concerns for you, there is help available. You can contact 1-3 Yarn on 1392. 76 or beyond on 1-300, Double-2-4636 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.