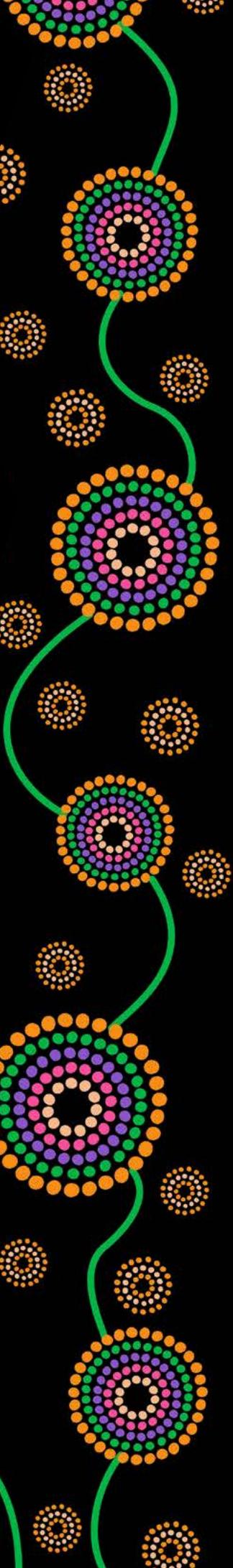




Sharing stories, finding solutions

Annual Report 2022-23



CEO Report



Antoinette Braybrook AM
CEO

Acknowledgement

Djirra acknowledges and respects the Traditional Custodians on whose lands we are fortunate to live and work, and we pay our respects to all Elders past and present.

This year marked many key milestones for Djirra. We celebrated 20 years of our unwavering commitment to bring voice and visibility to Aboriginal women and children. We held our 100th Dilly Bag workshop and commenced our regional expansion with the opening of our new centre in Melton – Djirra in the West.

Our 20th anniversary was a spectacular Gala event at the Grand Hyatt. Over 500 people joined us to celebrate including our partners, funders and community. This celebration would not have been possible if not for the thousands of Aboriginal women who have placed their trust in Djirra. On this night of nights we acknowledged the resilience of our women and shone a light on the organisation they have individually and collectively made what it is today – Djirra. In the lead up to this celebration, our Community Engagement team spun their magic securing donations of flash evening wear, sparkly shoes, glitzy handbags and earrings. They hosted a pop-up shop called 'Dress to Impress' and Aboriginal women from every corner of the state dropped in to choose their gown and dancing shoes for the night.

We launched our 20-year Anniversary Book, *Djirra: A Force to be Reckoned With Forever*, showcasing a beautiful collection of photographs of Aboriginal women who work with Djirra and our Djirra Keepers. The book shares Djirra's journey over the last 10 years of growth and our determination to keep Aboriginal women in focus as we continue to pressure governments and advocate for the provision of human rights for our people.

The official launch of Djirra in the West took place during NAIDOC Week. We started the day with a beautiful Welcome to Country by Aunty Joy Murphy who reminded us of the important theme, 'For Our Elders'. Over 300 people attended in person and we also livestreamed to Dame Phyllis Frost Centre so that our women inside were able to join the celebration. Djirra's presence in the west, and especially in Melton, is essential given the growing Aboriginal population, the high rates of family violence and the lack of culturally safe specialist Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations for our people. This day attracted substantial media coverage including a live-cross with Channel 10. The excitement at the launch was palpable, with this being the first step in realising our longstanding vision for regional expansion and an Aboriginal Women's Centre.

It is hard to believe that we have reached our 100th Dilly Bag workshop. In true Djirra style, our Cultural Advisor Wanda Braybrook and Manager of Community Engagement Kelly Faldon made it happen. Around 35 Aboriginal women gathered at Strath Creek to mark this milestone. The Dilly Bag workshop is a four-day residential program on Country, and is unique and deeply cultural; it draws on Aboriginal women's business. It brings women together to share their stories and it changes women's lives.

Djirra's holistic service provision for Aboriginal women's safety and wellbeing remained a top priority in this financial year. More clients than ever before attended our services, and our Individual Support Service – now in its third year of operation – saw a 25 per cent increase in clients.

Djirra's Five-Year Strategic Plan 2023–2028 was developed this year. We undertook a comprehensive review of our previous plan, reflecting on our achievements and looking forward to our next set of priorities. We spent many months talking to key stakeholders, internally and externally, including our senior management, frontline teams, corporate partners, funders, the women

and, of course, our Board. We are excited about what the next five years in particular will bring Djirra. We know we will see further growth and continue to build on our self-determined model to ensure a sustainable future.

During this year, we saw a new Federal Government elected. We immediately started to connect and build positive relationships with the new Federal Ministers. We wanted to make sure that they understood the importance of Djirra's work with and for Aboriginal women, and our strong advocacy for the development of a standalone National Plan to End Violence against First Nations Women and Children. Djirra has also remained an active member of the National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services forum and the National Change the Record coalition (CTR).

Our policy work continued to inform key inquiries, ensuring that we centred Aboriginal women's experiences to influence systemic change. This included our joint submission with CTR on the Senate Inquiry into Murdered and Missing First Nations Women.

Djirra's work at the State level remains equally important, especially given the Yoorrook Justice Commission Inquiry on Child Protection and Criminal Justice. Djirra submitted a comprehensive submission drawing on the unique experiences of Aboriginal women that we see through our 'on the ground' frontline work. Djirra also welcomed the opportunity to give evidence at this inquiry in December. Djirra's submission and evidence made key recommendations calling on the government to invest in our specialist work and Aboriginal women. A priority for Djirra going forward is to hold government to account and to call for the implementation of the recommendations of the final Yoorrook report.

Our achievements throughout this year would not have been possible without our dedicated staff and the leadership of our Board. I want to acknowledge all Board members for the significant contribution they continue to make and especially our longstanding Chairperson Marion Hansen. Djirra continues to focus our energy into ending family violence knowing that, together, we are 'a force to be reckoned with forever'.

A note from the Chairperson

This year has been one of growth, organisational transition and success for Djirra. We celebrated our 20th anniversary, opened a new centre in Melbourne's west, signed off on our next Five-Year Strategic Plan and advocated powerfully on critical issues impacting Aboriginal women. We also delivered our 100th Dilly Bag workshop – congratulations to Wanda and Kelly on this wonderful achievement. The commitment and loyalty shown by staff and management has once again provided vital support for the women who reach out to Djirra.

Our CEO Antoinette Braybrook's dedicated leadership was given extraordinary recognition this year. In November Antoinette was awarded Melburnian of the Year and is the first Aboriginal woman to receive this award. Following this, in June Antoinette was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for 'significant service to the law, and to family violence prevention'. Both honours, richly deserved by Antoinette, also reflect on the invaluable work of Djirra in positioning Aboriginal women's experiences and visibility.

The Board extends our gratitude to all Djirra staff for their dedication and hard work. As Chair I also wish to thank all Board and Committee members for their ongoing support and guidance.

Marion Hansen
Chairperson

Antoinette Braybrook AM
Chief Executive Officer



Marion Hansen
Chairperson

About Djirra

Djirra is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation with 20 years' experience accompanying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and their children, on their individual journeys. We find solutions through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women sharing their stories, journeys and experiences. Djirra celebrates women's strength and resilience.

We are committed to a future without family violence. Djirra offers services and supports to

- people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who have experienced, or are at risk of, family violence.

We deliver holistic, culturally safe, specialist family violence services and programs, including

- cultural, wellbeing and personal development workshops and practical support through our Koori Women's Place and signature early intervention and prevention programs Sisters Day Out™, Young Luv™ and Dilly Bag
- support and case management services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children
- legal assistance with intervention orders, child protection, family law and victims of crime matters for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing or at risk of family violence
- workshops, support and legal assistance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison.

Djirra amplifies the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. We advocate for system-wide change to improve access to justice, eliminate systemic violence, and strengthen women's resilience. We campaign to change racist attitudes, behaviours, and actions. We stand firm with women in their decisions about their own lives.

Self-determination is the foundation of everything we do. Our Board, leadership, and many of our key staff are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Our services have state-wide reach, touching every part of Victoria to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Our services operate out of our Melbourne head office and a growing network of regional locations, aiming to be accessible for all.

Djirra is funded through a range of sources, including state and federal governments, philanthropists and donors, and fundraising.

We are an active member of the National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services Forum, the peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are experiencing or at risk of family violence.

Highlights

Djirra continues its journey of growth and expansion, with many impactful moments and achievements over the year.

This year we:

- **Celebrated 20 years of Djirra** with 500+ attendees at an Anniversary Gala
- **Published an anniversary book**, *Djirra: A Force to be Reckoned With Forever*
- **Launched our new site in Melton**, *Djirra in the West* to meet growing demand in the area
- **Approved a comprehensive 5 Year Strategic Plan (2023–28)**
- **Celebrated our CEO Antoinette Braybrook being awarded Melburnian of the Year, along with her appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia**
- **Successfully completed the QIP Mid-Cycle Accreditation Review** audit of our Individual Support Services
- **Presented evidence at the Yoorrook Commission** on child protection and criminal justice
- **Established a partnership with Safe and Equal** to strengthen the mainstream specialist service organisations to safely work with our women
- **Delivered 200+ Christmas hampers** to women across Victoria in a *Reverse Advent Calendar* initiative
- **Increased outreach into the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre** through our Prison Support Program located at *Djirra in the West*
- **Commenced Victims Legal Service provision**
- **Delivered our 100th Dilly Bag event** in May – our first Dilly Bag was held in Gippsland in 2010
- **Received \$250,000 grant** for the first time from the Paul Ramsay Foundation, to fund a further two years of our Koori Women's Place online workshops

"I'm very grateful to have the opportunity to engage. It's very strengthening and has helped reveal and heal past domestic violence trauma." — Djirra client

"Workshops have been my lifeline for over 3 years. My anxiety meeting people is less, my mental health is much healthier." — Workshop participant

"I was referred to Djirra's counsellor for family violence counselling when I felt broken and alone, I thought everyone was out to get me. The counsellor really listened to me, didn't judge me and helped me to cope. My kids are rapt about the changes as well." — Djirra client



Legal services and non-legal support provided by our legal team

- 715** Clients assisted
- 1098** Legal assistances provided
- 493** Discrete legal assistances provided
- 605** Ongoing legal assistances completed
- 130** Non-legal supports provided

Koori Women's Place

- 27** cultural and wellbeing workshops
- 178** women supported

"Djirra is unlike other organisations where I'm not able to push myself because it's just too much. With Djirra I know it doesn't matter how I show up. As long as I show up, I'll be OK. I'm safe and I know that someone's going to totally understand me, know where I'm at and I'll leave totally different. And that impacts how I go out into society and how I see people and treat myself. So yeah, KWP is huge, it's a huge part of my life." — Djirra client



Our Counselling Service

- 86** Clients assisted
- 516** Counselling Sessions

Early Intervention Programs



- 73** young Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women (aged 12-17 years old) attended **10 Young Luv workshops**



- 146** women attended **14 Dilly Bag workshops**



- 537** women attended **9 Sisters Day Out workshops**

Reach and Visibility



- 14** submissions



- 66** media releases and interviews

Social media reach to over **1,800,000** accounts

continuing Djirra's work to amplify the voice and visibility of Aboriginal women.

Case Management



- 225** people supported under case management – over **4420 total service hours**

"It was so amazing you were able to get me home. I was lost for words about the help I received. I am very grateful and happy to be home and am looking forward to moving on with my life, no longer behind bars." — Djirra client

Djirra Clients' Stories

The client stories below provide an insight into the experiences of many women who approach Djirra seeking assistance. The stories illustrate the holistic, culturally safe support that clients receive when they engage with the service.

Client Story 1

Melinda, an Aboriginal woman with three children, endured a series of violent assaults by her former partner over a number of years. During one incident, Victoria Police was called and after a short interrogation of Melinda and her ex-partner in separate spaces, Melinda was arrested, denied bail and placed on remand in Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. Djirra's Prison Support Program team met with Melinda and quickly ascertained that she had been misidentified as the perpetrator. The team immediately began supporting and advocating for her release, which was successfully achieved within days. As well as needing legal support, it was clear that Melinda was traumatised by the violence and the interactions with the police system.

Melinda was linked in with Djirra's case management team and the Koori Women's Place (KWP). An immediate counselling appointment was made available and KWP staff provided the wraparound cultural contact which women value highly. As an outcome of Djirra's advice and support, Melinda sought an intervention order (IVO) protecting her and her children from her former partner, initiated proceedings to have her children returned to her care and took up the offer of ongoing counselling, case management and cultural support. Over the course of the next few months Melinda had her children returned to her care, a long-term IVO was granted, and compensation was awarded through the VOCAT tribunal. Melinda is still engaged with Djirra services and is feeling safe, supported and positive about her future.

Client Story 2

Sarah is an Aboriginal woman living in a Victorian regional town. She has been in a relationship with Tom for five years. Over the course of their relationship, Tom has become violent and controlling, attempting to limit or deny her contact with her family and friends and claiming that she is not Aboriginal. Tom routinely uses racist and abusive language and taunts Sarah with criticisms about her parenting, which always comes back to her Aboriginality. One night after a serious assault, Sarah was scared for her safety and the safety of her two-year-old daughter Charmaine. Sarah called the police, left the family home and moved in with her mother. Although an intervention order (IVO) was granted against Tom, Sarah was subjected to continued abuse and stalking. Sarah believes that property damage at her workplace was the work of Tom's sister, Daphne. Sarah also received a call from Child Protection and was worried Daphne had reported her, as she had so often threatened to do.

Sarah reached out to Djirra's Individual Support Services (ISS) fearful and anxious about her and Charmaine's safety. She was distressed that Charmaine could be removed from her care by Child Protection. Linking with an Aboriginal case manager, Sarah had immediate supports to keep her safe, which included improving her home security and connecting with Djirra's legal team for advice on applying for an IVO against Daphne. With Sarah's consent, ISS also started advocating on her behalf with Child Protection and offered to be present during the Child Protection visit to the house. Following the visit, Child Protection closed the case noting in their report "a safe and loving home environment" and recognising that a safety plan had been developed with Djirra. Now with greater understanding of her isolation from culture and community, Sarah has become a regular participant in the cultural workshops delivered by Aboriginal women for Aboriginal women in the Koori Women's Place. Sarah has linked Charmaine into a new Aboriginal playgroup at a local library and, together, mum and daughter are connecting in with community activities.

Financial Snapshot

Djirra achieved a small deficit result, which was within budget. A return to full service levels post-COVID, and a new organisational structure in line with Djirra's 5 Year Strategic Plan, both contributed to this result which leaves the organisation in a great position for future growth.

A full copy of the financial report and auditor's report is available on our website: www.djirra.org.au

Statement of Financial Performance for the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Operating Revenue	13,132,134	13,097,952
Operating Deficit	(261,485)	1,291,550
Accumulated surplus at beginning of the financial year	7,897,095	6,605,545
Accumulated surplus at end of the financial year	7,635,610	7,897,095

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Current Assets		
Cash Assets	11,561,900	12,600,395
Receivables	4,129,548	4,543,596
Other	187,249	218,433
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	15,878,697	17,362,424
Non-Current Assets		
Plant, Property and Equipment	2,030,834	2,068,130
Right-of-use assets	653,789	682,077
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	2,684,623	2,750,207
TOTAL ASSETS	18,563,320	20,112,631
Current Liabilities		
Payables	907,332	460,357
Financial liabilities	-	-
Lease liabilities	208,209	237,612
Current tax liabilities	6,018	826,022
Provisions	625,718	595,971
Deferred income	8,710,148	9,607,614
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	10,457,425	11,727,576
Non-Current Liabilities		
Lease liabilities	470,285	487,960
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	470,285	487,960
TOTAL LIABILITIES	10,927,710	12,215,536
NET ASSETS	7,635,610	7,897,095
RETAINED SURPLUS	7,635,610	7,897,095



Board of Directors

2022-23

Marion Hansen (Chair)
Karen Bryant
Gail Crozier
Darlene Thomas
Alan Thorpe

Staff

As at 30 June 2023

Adeline Thomas
Alice-Marie Kirby
Alice Pryor
Alicia Wright
Ally Gilbert
Amy Moore
Anna Wark
Anne Bambrook
Anne Lenton
Antoinette Braybrook
Casey Williams
Catherine Plunkett
Catherine Weir

Chanphyna Bou
Chloe Kenny
Christina Lynch
Christine Spence
Courtney Ugle
Echo Yu
Eleanor Gamble
Eliza Nowicki
Erryn Rosendale
Eyob Ghezai
Felicity Griffin-Clark
Ffion Doran-Gorman
Fiona Dundass
Gemma Taylor
Georgia Millington
Georgina Panetta
Hayley Harrison
Heidi Middleton
Hilary Glaisher
Jade Reid
Jaynaya Williams
Jessica Pocock
Joanne Kakafikas
Juliette Murray
Kaila Glare
Kate Lightfoot
Kathryn Robb
Kelly Faldon
Kritika Anand
Kylie Harcourtts

Lasi Kailea
Lilian Walker
Louise Monahan
Lulu Banay
Madison Morgan
Maggie Barford
Maree Overall
Maria Pejovski-Aleksovski
Mary Morison
Megan Graham
Melisa Veljan
Michelle Atkinson
Morgan Carey
Nahualli Portillo-Baskett
Nakita Allen
Natalie Larsek
Natalie Pejoski
Nick Toonen
Nidhi Sirohi
Nikalah Periorellis
Paris Rovedi
Polly Morton
Rawinia Pierce
Rebecca Richards
Rebecca Steunenberg
Rebekah Chhorn
Rhiannon Smith
Riley Cooper
Rose Hunt
Savanah Marques

Sheadeen Standley
Skye Gooch
Summer Medley
Tahnee Edwards
Tanayah Fernando
Taylor Morgan
Taylor Rawson
Tearra Charles
Teresa Kyprianou
Torie McWilliams-Murray
Trish Carberry
Vicki Clark
Wanda Bargo

Casual Staff

Jade Rigby
Mason Peter
Melina Ciavarella

Volunteers

Alessia Di Paolo
Andrea Drakulic
Cara Cross
Christine Nancarrow
Georgia Haggarty
Jasmine Cochrane
Madison Firman
Pat Brown
Scout Graham
Mary Smith
Sophia Tsigas



We are Djirra



Djirra is the Woiwurrung word for the reed used by Wurundjeri women for basket weaving. Traditionally, when women gathered to weave, important talks took place and problems were solved. The word Djirra symbolises our connection with Aboriginal women today, coming together to share stories, support each other and find solutions.

Djirra acknowledges the support of all our funders.

We thank all our members, supporters, generous donors and our pro bono lawyers, Lander & Rogers, for their ongoing support.



Respect Victoria • Holding Redlich Social Justice Fund • StreetSmart Australia
Victoria Law Foundation • Inner North Community Foundation • City of Melbourne



Sharing stories, finding solutions