



Sharing stories, finding solutions

Annual Report 2024-25

CEO Report

Antoinette Braybrook AM, CEO

In 2024–25, Djirra's achievements were guided by the strength, courage and determination of the Aboriginal women we stand with every day. From community events on Country to national campaigns and global conversations, we showed what is possible when our voices are strong, and solutions are led by us.

One of the most powerful initiatives this year was Djirra's **16 Days of ACTIVEism® Festival**. The festival is part of the UN global campaign to eliminate gender-based violence. In our campaign, we took a stand, visibly and with commanding voices, against the devastating impact of violence on Aboriginal women and children.

Together with hundreds of Aboriginal women, allies, political leaders, and community champions, we hosted a festival that celebrated our collective strength and made our voices impossible to ignore. We amplified this message nationally with **Djirra's ACTIVEism® Walk** in Canberra. I was privileged to lead over 100 supporters – including then Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, Senator Jana Stewart and Senator Kerryne Liddle – on a symbolic walk around Lake Burley Griffin.

This was more than a walk. It was a movement in motion – a call to action urging everyone to 'get active in their activism'. We walked with purpose, demanding greater investment in Djirra's specialist, life-saving work. And we will keep walking – until every voice is heard, and every Aboriginal woman is safe.

One of Djirra's strategic goals is that no Aboriginal woman in Victoria should have to travel more than one hour or 100 kilometres to access our life-saving services. In 2023, Djirra took a critical step toward our planned regional expansion with the opening of **Djirra in the West** in Melton. Since opening in July 2023, demand for our services has surged. Client numbers have grown by approximately 20% every quarter in the 2024–25 financial year. Djirra in the West is a highly successful model that shows how the regional expansion of our services can – and will – work.

The strong links with community in Melbourne's West, which Djirra has established over many decades, made our **NAIDOC Family Day** event even more special. Over 400 community members – including 150 Aboriginal children – gathered in celebration. It was yet another powerful reminder that when Aboriginal women come together, we create spaces of joy, safety, and culture for ourselves and our children.

This year, Djirra continued to make an impact regionally and internationally.

Regionally, I travelled to Perth to speak at the **Ochre Ribbon Campaign's 10th Anniversary**. We celebrated this milestone, and I shared the many ways Djirra uses Ochre Ribbon Week to call for systemic change.

Djirra stood with many other First Nations women from across the Oceanic Pacific region to secure Naarm (Melbourne) as the host of the forthcoming **Women Deliver conference** in April 2026. This is a global platform upon which we will ensure the voices of Aboriginal women are front and centre.

This year saw me travelling across Canada, the USA, and Aotearoa New Zealand as a **Churchill Fellow**. I spoke with and learned from First Nations women who have built culturally safe and powerful spaces for their own communities. It was a great opportunity to share Djirra's self-determined solutions on the global stage.

What I saw, what I felt, and what I heard will stay with me forever. The experience has sharpened my thinking and inspired new possibilities for Djirra's future – especially in shaping our 23-year vision for an **Aboriginal Women's Centre** in Victoria. The Centre will be grounded in culture and strength, a place where women can heal, access support, and thrive. It will be a legacy for generations to come. Throughout the year, I shared Djirra's plans for the Centre with key stakeholders including government and major philanthropists. This initial engagement was very positive, and gives me confidence that we will secure funds to make our vision a reality.

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.



Antoinette at Djirra's
22nd birthday
celebration

Also significant this year, we saw our work advocating for an Aboriginal Women's Centre reflected in the **Yoorrook Justice Commission's** recommendations. Djirra drew on years of tireless work advocating for the safety of Aboriginal women and their children to again give evidence to the Commission in 2024. Yoorrook's findings recognised the urgent need to invest in specialist, self-determined solutions like Djirra's, which will keep women and children safe and together. We will hold government to account to ensure these recommendations are implemented.

Another of Djirra's key advocacy calls, picked up in the Yoorrook recommendations, saw real progress this year with the introduction of the **Child Protection Notification and Referral System**. This long-overdue reform will ensure that services like Djirra receive immediate referrals when Child Protection is notified about an unborn child or receives a substantiated report about an Aboriginal child. This self-determined solution ensures Aboriginal mothers affected by family violence have timely access to legal support. It is a vital step in preventing Aboriginal children being removed from their families, while supporting our women to deal with unfair treatment and to safely leave violent situations with their kids.

With Treaty underway in Victoria, and the Yoorrook report now tabled in the Victorian Parliament, the path forward is clear. Djirra will continue to fight for every Aboriginal woman across Victoria to have access to culturally safe, specialist support. We will continue to lead the way towards self-determined futures for our women.

We have achieved so much over the past year – and this would not have been possible without our professional, hard-working, and dedicated Djirra staff. I want to acknowledge all our Board members for their significant contributions, particularly our longstanding Chairperson, Marion Hansen.

Our work is far from over. But we are walking forward with strength, with purpose, and with the unshakeable belief that Aboriginal women deserve nothing less than justice, safety, and a future grounded in culture and strength.

A note from the Chairperson

Marion Hansen, Chairperson

As Chairperson of Djirra, I'm proud to share our 2024–25 Annual Report. This year marks a period of growth, stronger impact, and continued dedication to empowering Aboriginal women and driving lasting change to end family violence.

Our work remains grounded in listening to and centring the experiences of the many women who place their trust in Djirra. Their resilience continues to inspire and drive us forward. This year, we laid important foundations to bring our vision to life – reaching Aboriginal women across every corner of Victoria and establishing our Aboriginal Women's Centre. This Centre will leave a lasting legacy for Aboriginal women, their children, and future generations.

I extend my appreciation to our Board for their thoughtful leadership, cultural knowledge, guidance, and unwavering support. The Board and I extend our thanks to Djirra's staff. Their compassion, professionalism, and the culturally safe spaces they help to create sustain our services. A heartfelt thank you to Antoinette Braybrook AM, our Chief Executive Officer. Her unwavering leadership, bold vision, and fierce advocacy continue to inspire and drive real change – and this year, her impact was once again powerfully recognised and deeply valued.

Thank you to our partners, funders, and supporters. Your support for self-determination, cultural safety, and access to justice helps strengthen our voice and the voices of the Aboriginal women we stand with.

2024–25 has seen Djirra leverage 23 years of influence – within communities, with governments, and on global platforms.

Building on this momentum, we embark on the next phase of our journey with determination. We will continue to stand beside women, fight against racist systems, and advocate for positive changes so Aboriginal women and their children can be safe and can thrive.



Smoking ceremony at the ACTIVEism® Festival



About Djirra

Djirra is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation with over 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.

We deliver holistic, culturally safe, specialist family violence support, legal services and case management, alongside cultural and wellbeing workshops and programs. Our services have state-wide reach, touching every part of Victoria to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Self-determination is the foundation of everything we do.

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.

Djirra provides services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children, sistergirls, brotherboys, trans and gender diverse people, non-binary, intersex and queer folk who identify as women or who feel comfortable accessing a women's service. While Djirra does not provide direct services to Aboriginal men, we will always provide warm referrals to culturally safe services.

We are an active member of First Nations Advocates Against Family Violence, the peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are experiencing or at risk of family violence. Our CEO is also the co-chair of Change the Record, the only national First Nations led coalition of legal, health and family violence prevention experts, and she is a member of the Family Law Council.



Above: Walk Against Family Violence



Right: Getting active at the ACTIVEism Festival

Highlights



Djirra CEO Antoinette Braybrook AM **awarded the Deakin University Honorary Doctorate** in recognition of her outstanding commitment to social justice, advocacy and service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 20+ years.



Published our 20+ year vision and strategy for our **Aboriginal Women's Centre** in Melbourne.



Led and delivered a hugely successful **16 Days of ACTIVEism® campaign**, including our ACTIVEism® festival in Darebin and a walk with over 100 others around Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin to demand an end to violence against women.



Joined the Yoorrook Justice Commission's **Walk for Truth**.



10th Anniversary of Ochre Ribbon Week, which raises awareness about the devastating impacts of family violence on Aboriginal women.



Delivered our **200th Sisters Day Out®**.



Our **Reverse Advent Calendar Christmas appeal** resulted in us delivering over 300 hampers to women and children.



Continued to work with the **Centre for Innovative Justice on a major research project** examining the misidentification of Aboriginal women as perpetrators of family violence.



Delivered **Sisters Day In at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre** to provide individual and wellbeing support to our sisters in prison.



Koori Women's Place celebrated the delivery of 500 workshops.



Published our **Key Advocacy Priorities** for the year, articulating our strategic goals for systemic change for Aboriginal women and children to thrive.



Significant progress made on the Child Protection and Notification Referral System, which will be established in the next financial year.



The national report of the Senate Inquiry into **Missing and Murdered First Nations Women and Children** was tabled in the Australian Parliament. The Inquiry extended its hearings into Victoria based on Djirra advocating for the voices of Victorian First Nations women to be heard.



Above: Djirra Ambassador Kirby Bentley with Antoinette at the ACTIVEism Festival



Above: The incredible donations for our Reverse Advent Christmas Hamper appeal



Above: Djirra staff with Natalie Hutchins MP (centre) at the Victorian Community Legal Centre Exhibition

Key stats 2024-2025



Above: Participants at Dilly Bag – a residential program on Country



Above: Djirra staff on the Yoorrook Justice Commission's Walk for Truth



Above: Djirra merch at Sisters Day Out®

Legal services data



781 clients assisted

1,316 legal assistances provided

841 discrete legal assistances provided

475 ongoing legal assistances completed

193 non-legal supports provided

Cultural Programs



14 Yarnin About Cultural Safety workshops

312 participants – more than double that of 2023–24

Case management



434 women assisted

12,000+ total number of service hours

With recent growth, Djirra was required for the first time to report to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). Djirra's reports against six gender equity indicators, lodged in June 2025, are available on our website www.djirra.org.au.

Koori Women's Place

97 cultural and wellbeing workshops
680 women supported



Above: Craft activities at our NAIDOC Family Day event

Early intervention programs



199 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (aged 13–18 years) attended 17 Young Luv® workshops

123 women attended 13 Dilly Bag workshops

1,111 women attended 12 Sisters Day Out® workshops

Reach and visibility



20 submissions to national and Victorian inquiries and committees

659 media commentaries and interviews

2.1 million+

impressions (the number of times our content was displayed to users) across social media

42,145 followers on social media
12% higher than the previous year

Top performing post:

Invasion Day

Acknowledging that it's a tough day and encouraging our followers to remember the strength of Elders and be proud of our culture, stories and journeys.

230,893 impressions

42,580 engagements

642% higher than last year's top performing post.



Above: Antoinette with Aboriginal leader Christine Ross, at the 10th Anniversary of the Ochre Ribbon campaign in Perth



Above: Personalised totes at the ACTIVEism Festival

Stories from our services

Client names and any identifying details have been changed



Above: Antoinette with Senator Malarndirri McCarthy in Canberra

Sarah's story

Sarah, an Aboriginal woman, was experiencing family violence. She came to Djirra after her ex-partner filed an Intervention Order against her. It was his second attempt to do this, and it was clear he was using the legal system to control and harass her.

Djirra's legal team successfully had the orders struck out – twice. But the harassment continued. Her ex filed a parenting application in the Family Court, more intervention orders, complaints against Djirra, and contested rental bond payments. He frequently switched lawyers and delayed court matters, which forced Sarah to take time off work. This placed a huge strain on her employment, on top of the emotional toll.

To stop this systems abuse, Djirra applied for an Extended Litigation Restraint Order, which was granted. This prevented Sarah's ex from filing further Magistrates' Court applications.

However, he continued to pursue matters in the Family Court. At the final hearing, Djirra secured sole parental rights for Sarah, and Djirra was successful in having the court declare her ex a 'vexatious litigant' – blocking further filings. Djirra also helped Sarah secure a 15-year Intervention Order for her protection.

Shelly's story

Shelly was referred to Djirra's Prison Support Program (PSP) after entering Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, on remand for minor theft. Shelly had also recently experienced family violence and is a mum to a young son.

Within a week, Shelly met Bettsy, one of Djirra's PSP case managers. Bettsy conducted a holistic, culturally safe psychosocial assessment, using deep listening to hear Shelly's story. She identified urgent medical needs and concerns about the safety of Shelly's public housing unit, which Shelly described as a safe haven from past violence.

Through strong advocacy and collaboration with the prison's Koorie Liaison Officer and staff, Bettsy ensured Shelly received medical care and worked with the Office of Housing to secure her property.

Bettsy also coordinated with legal, housing, and health services, helping Shelly make informed decisions about her healing. She supported a family visit to reconnect Shelly with her son and mother.

Over the eight weeks Shelly was on remand, Shelly and Bettsy worked together to plan for release, using family violence and wellbeing safety frameworks. Post-release, Shelly continued engaging with Djirra, attending Koorie Women's Place – a culturally safe space to connect, yarn, and access support.

Bettsy, and Djirra's other family violence support staff, walked alongside Shelly as she healed, ensuring she had the tools she needed to recover from her experiences of family violence and incarceration.



Above: Sister's Day Out® in Werribee



Above: 16 Days of ACTIVEism Festival



Above: Djirra's ACTIVEism Walk in Canberra, from left to right at front: Cassandra Goldie, CEO of ACOSS, Kerry Staines, CEO of FNAAFV, then Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, walking with Antoinette.



Above: Dancing at NAIDOC Family Day in Melton

Trish's story

Trish experienced years of violence from her partner, Christopher. Following a violent incident, mutual Family Violence Intervention Orders (FVIOs) were issued – incorrectly identifying Trish as a person using violence. Without legal representation, Trish agreed to the orders, not understanding the implications.

Months later, Christopher was physically violent towards Trish while their children were home. Trish called 000, but Christopher also attended a police station and falsely reported her again.

Trish contacted Djirra for help. A Djirra lawyer provided legal advice on the FVIO, and with regard to Child Protection, who had been notified. Djirra began advocating for Trish with police, Child Protection, and Christopher's lawyer. Djirra appeared for Trish in court and wrote to police outlining how she had been misidentified, and that police had failed to follow their own Code of Practice in properly investigating the incident.

As a result, police withdrew their application and the Interim FVIO against Trish. A Final FVIO with full no-contact conditions was granted against Christopher for 10 years – protecting Trish and her children into adulthood.

Christopher was later charged with multiple offences and is in custody awaiting trial.

Trish and her children are now safe, and Djirra continues to support her with a Victims of Crime Financial Assistance application.



Above: Donations for our Back to School Drive ready to go out to kids



Above: Antoinette speaking at the QIFVLS conference in Queensland

"The team were very helpful. I felt completely supported, understood and respected. Communication was amazing and I want to thank you for your support".
– Djirra client

Financial Snapshot

Djirra's operations achieved a healthy surplus for FY2024–25, increasing operating revenue by 22% on prior year, with growth across both grant revenue and donations. This has enabled Djirra to grow its services through bringing on more employees to deliver outcomes, and expand its services and reach across Victoria. Djirra's retained surplus remains strong and will continue to support its goals in line with the 5 Year Strategic Plan.

Statement of Financial Performance for the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Operating revenue	19,847,032	16,291,270
Operating surplus/(deficit)	648,506	385,651
Accumulated surplus at beginning of the financial year	8,259,673	7,874,022
Accumulated surplus at end of the financial year	8,908,179	8,259,673

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Current Assets		
Cash assets	13,219,750	13,116,077
Receivables	1,758,989	274,214
Other	318,369	126,638
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	15,297,108	13,516,929
Non-Current Assets		
Other assets	84,572	52,684
Plant, property and equipment	2,372,174	2,351,723
Right-of-use assets	1,530,661	478,563
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	3,987,407	2,882,970
TOTAL ASSETS	19,284,515	16,399,899
Current Liabilities		
Lease liabilities	393,004	190,498
Trade and other payables	1,024,985	1,097,595
Other current liabilities	6,749,261	5,601,912
Employee benefits	1,020,553	939,590
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	9,187,803	7,829,595
Non-Current Liabilities		
Lease liabilities	1,188,533	310,631
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,188,533	310,631
TOTAL LIABILITIES	10,376,336	8,140,226
NET ASSETS	8,908,179	8,259,673
RETAINED SURPLUS	8,908,179	8,259,673

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.



Melton City Council • Respect Victoria • Holding Redlich Social Justice Fund
Creative Victoria • City of Melbourne



Sharing stories, finding solutions

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