



**ELEANOR DUNCAN**  
Aboriginal Services

[eleanorduncan.org.au](http://eleanorduncan.org.au)

# Annual Report 2023-24

Inspiring Strong,  
Healthy,  
Long Lives.

Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services would like to acknowledge that we operate and function on the lands of the Darkinjung people.

**Eleanor Duncan  
Aboriginal Services**

35 McPherson Road

Mardi NSW 2259

T. (02) 4351 1040

F. (02) 4351 1037





# Table of Contents

Chairpersons Message	4
Chief Executive Officers Message	6
Acknowledgement of Country	8
This Year’s Highlights	9
Organisational Review	12
Service Growth and Expansion	13
Financial Sustainability	14
Policy Advocacy and Resources	15
Data-Driven Storytelling	16
Workforce Capability	17
Communications and Community Engagement	18
Financial Overview and Governance	18
Partners and Collaborations	19
Research Excellence and Publications	21
Financial Performance Overview	22

# Introduction and Overview

Welcome to the Annual Report of Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services Ltd. for the year 2023-2024. This report highlights our achievements, initiatives, and ongoing commitment to serving the Aboriginal community on Darkinjung Country. We aim to provide comprehensive insights into our programs and operations, catering to a wide range of stakeholders, including Aboriginal community members, government funding bodies, and corporate partners.

## Our Namesake

### Dedication and History

We acknowledge Eleanor Duncan, our respected namesake and one of the first Aboriginal nurses in NSW. Her dreams and aspirations continue to be fulfilled through the work we do today. We are truly blessed to carry on her legacy and vision, supporting our community with the same strength, compassion, and dedication that she exemplified.





# Chairperson Message

Yaama Maliyaa,

It is with immense pride and excitement that I reflect on the achievements of Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services over the past year. The 2023-2024 financial year has been one of remarkable growth, progress, and significant milestones that affirm our continued commitment to delivering high-quality, culturally safe services to our community.

One of the most exciting developments this year was securing \$4.6 million in funding from the Commonwealth Health and Aged Care, in collaboration with NACCHO, to complete the refurbishment of our new Medical Centre at McPherson's Road. This milestone brings us closer to realising our vision of providing a central hub for healthcare that meets the evolving needs of our community. This refurbishment will enable us to better serve our community, creating a culturally safe space where health and well-being come first.

In our first year of implementing our five-year strategic plan, we have already achieved outstanding results. Our services continue to grow to meet the needs of our people, and the demand for our holistic, transdisciplinary model of care is a testament to the trust and connection we have built with our community over 29 years. We remain steadfast in our advocacy, working tirelessly to influence government policy, particularly around changing the workforce distribution status of our region. Securing adequate resourcing for our GPs continues to be a key priority, and I am proud of the work we do to ensure that our people have access to the health services they need and deserve.

I am also pleased to report that my fellow board members have provided exceptional strategic oversight, helping us to uphold best practices across all aspects of our organisation. The guidance and direction from the board has been instrumental in maintaining the high standards of care and governance that we are known for.

Our CEO, through her unwavering leadership and tenacity, has worked diligently on enhancing our organisational structure. These efforts are positioning us to scale up for continued growth, and we are now in a better place than ever to meet the needs of our community well into the future.

Financially, we have ended the year in a very strong position, with a substantial growth in our revenue of 21.57%, a significant increase from last year's 12.04%. This growth reflects not only the increased demand for our services but also the exceptional operational skills of our executive leadership team. Their dedication and operational know-how have been crucial to our success this year.

As one of the largest Aboriginal community-controlled organisations on Darkinjung Country, we are also one of the largest employers of Aboriginal people in the region, with over 75% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island staff members. This is a testament to our commitment to creating opportunities for our people and ensuring that our community has a direct hand in shaping the services that support them.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to our CEO for her leadership, our executive team for their operational excellence, and to my fellow board members for their unwavering support and direction. It has been a tremendous year, and I look forward to the continued success and growth of Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services as we move forward together.



*Vickie Parry*  
Chairperson  
Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services



## Chief Executive Officer's Message

walambayiwa, I am proud to share the remarkable achievements of our organisation over the past year. Securing \$4.6 million to refurbish our Mardi site marks a significant milestone in our journey. This investment will allow us to bring our Medical Centre into the main hub, enabling us to truly maximise our transdisciplinary model of care.

We are honoured to be the first Aboriginal Community Controlled organisation on Darkinjung country to deliver a Women's and Children's Healing Hub (refuge). This initiative ensures our dhanggan and gudjagang are safe, thriving, and living their best lives on country. Our healing and recovery services for survivors of family, domestic, and sexual violence now offer therapeutic support and navigation, furthering our commitment to holistic well-being.

Our strides towards our Horizon One ambitions, aligned with the first year of our 5-year strategic plan, are commendable. We are extremely pleased with our financial position, which enables us to provide a broader suite of services to our community and continually invest back into our organisation.

Despite the ongoing challenge of the GP shortage, I commend Jessica Wheeler and the Eleanor Duncan Health Centre for their ability to deliver superior primary health care to our 2,000 active patients. The board and I continue to lobby the Federal Government to reassess our location rating, advocating for a move from City to Regional status to secure appropriate funding and attract more GPs. Meanwhile, I express my sincere gratitude to all our specialist program staff who maintain and serve a client base of approximately 5,000.

The unity and collaboration within our Aboriginal community, galvanised by Barang Regional Alliance, are truly inspiring. Our partnerships with Central Coast Community Legal Centre and Oz Harvest ensure our community is well cared for and empowered to take charge of their lives.

We have been instrumental in leading the state in transferring our gudjagang in statutory out of home care from non-Aboriginal agencies to our organisation, upholding their cultural integrity and advocating for their restoration and reunification with kin.

I am particularly excited about delivering the health component of Connected Beginning in collaboration with Barang Regional Alliance. This initiative embeds our parenting ways into early intervention at the most critical juncture in a gudjagang's life, aligning with our strategic goal of Service Growth and Expansion.

Our data systems continue to evolve, positioning us to use data sets and key community markers to flip the narrative and showcase our achievements. We not only contribute to closing the gap but aim to exceed the gap across all social determinants.

I am especially grateful to our Chairperson - Vickie Parry, Board for their leadership, and our Executive Leadership Team for continually doing their best to drive our purpose forward.

dandayawa ngurabiyn



*Belinda Field*

Chief Executive Officer  
Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services



# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate, and pay respects to Elders past and present. We recognise the enduring connection to the land, culture, and community, which forms the foundation of our service delivery.



# This Year's Highlights

## Key Achievements and Milestones:

### Gurayi Biyn Yadha ITC Program:

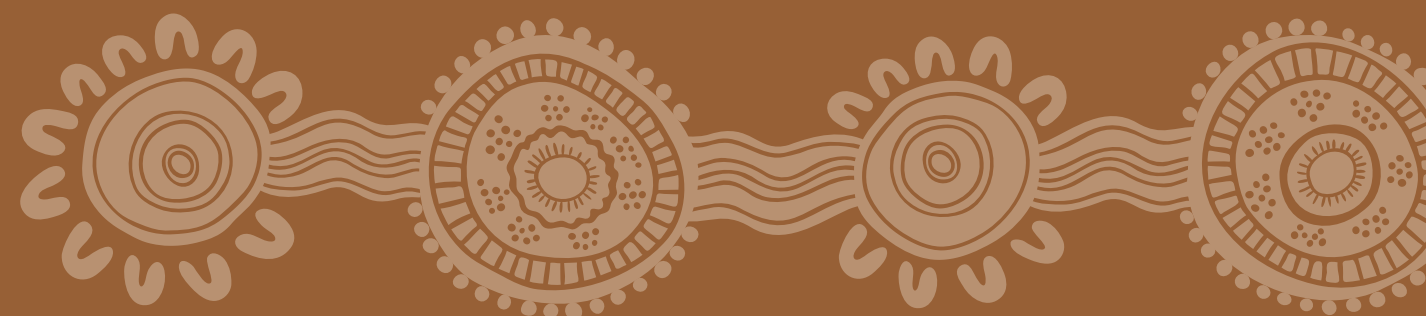
- Launched the Ganama Cook and Roast Program to promote healthy meal choices, engaging 71 community members in cultural and culinary experiences.
- Partnered with Oz Harvest distributed fresh food to 409 clients through an ongoing partnership with Oz Harvest, addressing food security within the Darkinjung community.
- Initiated the Waadbabiyn Swim Program to enhance physical activity and well-being, benefiting 31 elders and older.

71

Community members engaged in the Ganama Cook and Roast Program

409

Clients were distributed fresh food through partnership with Oz Harvest







## Cancer Navigator Program

- Developed the 'Never Walk Alone' Cancer Support Yarnin Circle to provide cultural connection and health education for those navigating cancer journeys.
- Facilitated end-of-life planning and cultural ceremonies, including Smoking Ceremonies and sorry business arrangements.
- Engaged 45 participants in the Ngnamus Breast Screen monthly program in partnership with Breast Screen NSW.
- Secured funding and built strong partnerships to support cancer care services, highlighted by participation in national campaigns and conferences.

45

Participants in the  
Ngnamus Breast Screen

96%

Of children prevented  
from entering the Out  
of Home Care System

## Warbangali Allied Health Team

- Expanded services to include a Behaviour Support Therapist, reinforcing our commitment to early intervention and holistic care.

## Family Preservation Program

- Increased family package allocations from 10 to 24, successfully preventing 96% of children from entering the Out of Home Care System through culturally responsive support.

## Muru Bara NDIS Program and Aunty's House

- Enhanced service accessibility through strategic partnerships and provided crucial respite care and support for families to prevent them from escalating to the Child Protection system.

40

Children currently  
supported

\$4.6m

In capital works  
funding for  
community hub  
renovation and  
strengthened  
data and systems  
management

## Ngaliya Permanency Support Program (PSP)

- Facilitated the transfer of 14 children into our care, promoting cultural reconnection and identity strengthening, and achieved significant family reunification outcomes.
- Currently supporting 40 children with the number to be expected to grow to 50 by October 2024.
- The ngaliya Permanency Support Program continues to build on its significant achievements, thriving in alignment with NSW Minister Washington's ACCO transfer initiative.

## Business Services:

- Secured \$4.6 million in capital works funding for community hub renovation and strengthened data and systems management through new roles and projects.





# Organisational Review

## Goal 1: Organisational Structural Enhancement

This year, Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services embarked on a significant organisational review aimed at enhancing our structural agility and responsiveness to better serve the community.

- **Organisational Assessments:** Since February 2024, we have conducted comprehensive assessments of roles, responsibilities, and workflows. This process involved identifying key areas for improvement and realignment to enhance operational efficiency.
- **Structural Realignment:** In collaboration with our partners at ROCHE, we are working towards implementing these changes by early 2025. This strategic realignment is designed to foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptability across the organisation.
- **Workforce Development:** We are investing in our staff by offering opportunities for role exploration, promotions, and leadership development. This initiative aims to build a resilient workforce capable of delivering high-quality services while reinforcing our commitment to the Aboriginal community.
- **Cultural Responsiveness:** Maintaining a culturally safe environment remains a priority. Our efforts focus on enhancing our cultural responsiveness across all levels, ensuring our services are responsive to the evolving needs of our community, funding bodies, and stakeholders.

# Service Growth and Expansion

## Goal 2: New Services and Innovations

Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services Ltd. has continued to expand and innovate its service offerings to address the diverse needs of the Aboriginal community:

- **Redevelopment of the Alcoholics Anonymous Program:** This year, we refreshed our sobriety support initiative to honour personal milestones within a culturally rich framework. This program aims to provide a more resonant and supportive environment for community members seeking sobriety.
- **Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) Program:** In collaboration with Yamurrah, we redesigned our DBT program to incorporate cultural elements, creating a therapeutic experience that aligns more closely with our Aboriginal community values.
- **Domestic and Family Violence Framework:** Launched a comprehensive framework to provide critical support and resources to those affected by domestic and family violence. This initiative is part of our broader commitment to holistic health and community well-being.
- **Early Childhood and Connected Beginnings Initiatives:** Our Early Childhood initiative, Connected Beginnings, focuses on providing a strong foundation for the youngest members of our community, especially the first 2000 days. By ensuring access to quality early childhood Health care and Education, we aim to foster long-term developmental success.
- **Elders Care Support Program:** This program has made significant strides in reducing barriers for our Elders and Olders in accessing aged care services, increasing access to care on Country, and expanding employment opportunities for Aboriginal workers in the aged care sector.



# Financial Sustainability

## Goal 3: Vertical Integration and Financial Strategies

Achieving financial sustainability and empowering the community through innovative economic strategies has been a core focus this year:

- **Social Enterprise Initiatives:** Our vibrant social enterprises, including the daralba kiosk and in-house catering services, not only provide quality products but also create meaningful employment opportunities within the Aboriginal community. These initiatives are central to our purpose of promoting health, cultural relevance, and community well-being.
- **Fee-for-Service Education Packages:** We have expanded our service offerings to include education packages such as language lessons and family group conferencing. These programs are designed to enhance knowledge, skills, and cultural understanding within the community.
- **Blak Economy Initiatives:** Our commitment to supporting local Aboriginal businesses and fostering economic strength is evident through our Blak Economy initiatives. These efforts not only enhance our financial sustainability but also reinforce our values of self-determination and cultural pride.
- **Light Services Delivery:** Services such as cleaning, yard maintenance, and respite care (NDIS/PSP/Aged Care) have been integrated to provide additional revenue streams while addressing community needs.

# Policy Advocacy and Resources

## Goal 4: Policy Advocacy Efforts

This year, our advocacy efforts have focused on securing the necessary resources and support to address critical health disparities within the Aboriginal community:

- **Lobbying for Reclassification of Health Centre:** We have actively lobbied for our Aboriginal Health Centre to be reclassified as a regional facility. This reclassification is crucial for attracting necessary incentives for healthcare professionals and aligning our funding and resource allocation with community needs.
- **Medicare Billing Adjustments:** We continue to advocate for higher Medicare reimbursement rates for General Practitioners, Nurses, and Aboriginal Health Practitioners working in Aboriginal Medical Services. Recognising their specialised training and culturally responsive care, we believe these clinicians should be compensated at rates that reflect their expertise.
- **Media and Government Engagement:** Our Senior Leadership and Board have engaged with government officials, travelled to Canberra, and submitted formal correspondences to advocate for increased funding and resource allocation. We have also maintained an active presence in the media to raise awareness of our community's needs.
- **Ministerial Visits:** Hosting visits from key government officials, including the Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care Minister Butler and the Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians, Linda Burney has been pivotal in showcasing our work and advocating for policy changes to support our community.



# Data-Driven Storytelling

## Goal 5: Business Intelligence and Data Collection

We have enhanced our data collection infrastructure to effectively demonstrate our impact and advocate for community needs:

- **Implementation of Power BI Dashboards:** Our new dashboards provide real-time data on our GP Practice, Dental practice, and community programs. This data warehouse has strengthened our ability to collect, analyze, and utilise data, ensuring accurate reflection of service outcomes.
- **Outcome-Based Narratives:** Our reporting focuses on outcomes and strengths-based narratives, showcasing Blak excellence. By highlighting positive impacts, such as successful housing initiatives, Aboriginal children being reunified with their family and mental health recovery programs, we present a holistic view of our community's achievements.
- **Key Community Markers:** We have adopted Key Community Markers to define meaningful outcomes, including increased self-management, stronger cultural connections, and language revitalisation. These markers guide our efforts and ensure alignment with community values and aspirations.

# Workforce Capability

127  
Dedicated staff

75%  
Identifying as  
Aboriginal or  
Torres Strait Islander

## Staff Overview and Development

Our commitment to workforce capability is reflected in our robust training and development programs:

- **Training Programs:** We have hosted several impactful training sessions, including Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid and Unconscious Bias training for our Executive Leadership Team and Team Leaders. These programs aim to enhance cultural responsiveness and foster an inclusive workplace.
- **Career Development Opportunities:** We provide pathways for staff mobility and leadership development, ensuring that our team is well equipped to meet the evolving needs of our community.
- **Community Engagement and Employment:** Employing 127 dedicated staff, with over 75% identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, we continue to prioritise local employment and economic development, ensuring that our services are guided by community knowledge and lived experiences.







# Communications and Community Engagement

Our Communications team has played a vital role in strengthening community ties through strategic engagement and sponsorships:

- **Social Media Strategy:** With a combined following of over 5,000 on Facebook and Instagram, our social media presence has been instrumental in connecting with the community and sharing our successes.
- **Community Sponsorships:** We proudly sponsored local Aboriginal sporting teams and events, fostering a strong sense of community and cultural pride.

## 722,466

Impressions across social media

## 161,334

Video views across social media

## 52,983

Post engagements across social media

# Financial Overview and Governance

We have maintained strong financial oversight and governance, ensuring effective service delivery and community support:

- **Financial Performance:** Detailed financial statements and audits reflect our commitment to transparency and accountability.
- **Board Governance:** Our Board continues to provide strategic leadership, ensuring our organisation aligns with best practices and community values.

# Partners and Collaborations

## Barang Regional Alliance

Our partnership with Barang Regional Alliance is critical as we collaborate to drive structural change and honour policies aimed at improving the lives of Aboriginal people, ensuring equity, self-determination, and community empowerment.

We are proud to partner with a diverse range of organisations that support our purpose and enhance our service delivery. Our partners and collaborators include:

- **Oz Harvest:** Providing food security and fresh produce to community.
- **Jawun:** A program where corporate, government and philanthropic organisations come together with our community affect real change.
- **ROCHE:** Assisting with organisational structural enhancement and workforce development.
- **Federal and NSW Government:** Providing essential funding and policy support for our programs and services.







## Peak Bodies

- **NACCHO** (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation)
- **AH&MRC** (Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council)
- **ABSEC** (Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat)
- **SNAICC** (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care): Working together to support child and family services and advocacy.
- **NCOSS** (NSW Council of Social Service): Collaborating on advocacy efforts for social justice and equity.
- **ACHIA** (Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association, a voice for Aboriginal community housing providers.

**Central Coast Local Health District and Hunter Central Coast Primary Health Care Network:** Collaborating to improve local health outcomes.

**Rural Doctors Network:** Supporting healthcare service delivery in regional and rural areas.

**RACGP (Royal Australian College of General Practitioners):** Partnering to enhance primary healthcare services.

**Social Futures:** Enhancing service accessibility to the NDIS for the Aboriginal community.

Together with our partners, we continue to work towards achieving better health and well-being outcomes for our community.



# Research Excellence and Publications

Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services Ltd. is committed to advancing the health and well-being of our communities through research excellence, driven by our ways of knowing and doing. Our team has contributed to several peer-reviewed journals, showcasing the impact of our work and the value of culturally safe practices. Key publications include:

1. **Exploring experiences and perceptions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples readmitted to hospital with chronic disease in New South Wales, Australia: a qualitative study** (Jayakody et al., 2021) - Australian Health Review, 45(4): 411-417.
2. **Culturally Safe and Integrated Primary Health Care: A Case Study of Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services' Holistic Model** (Coombes et al., 2022) - Journal of the Australian Indigenous Health Info net, Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 5.
3. **Building an Indigenous-Led Evidence Base for Smoking Cessation Care among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women during Pregnancy and Beyond: Research Protocol for the Which Way? Project** (Bovill et al., 2021) - Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, 18: 1342.
4. **Smoking cessation support strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women of reproductive age: findings from the Which Way? study** (Kennedy et al., 2022).
5. **Smoking and quitting characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women of reproductive age: findings from the Which Way? Study** (Kennedy et al., 2022).
6. **Which Way? Indigenous-led Smoking Cessation Care: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners – A National Cross-sectional Survey** (Kennedy et al., 2023) - 25(4): 788-795.
7. **“It Needs a Full-Time Dedicated Person to Do This Job in Our Local Communities with Our Aboriginal Health Services”—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners Perspectives on Supporting Smoking Cessation during Pregnancy** (Merasha et al., 2023).

These publications reflect our ongoing commitment to research excellence and the application of culturally safe, evidence-based practices to improve the health outcomes of our community.





# Financial Performance Overview

\$15.51m  
Total income

22.3%  
Increase in expenses

\$2.74m  
In increased revenue

## Key Financial Highlights

- **Revenue Growth:** The revenue for the year increased by **\$2.74 million** from **\$12.77 million** to **\$15.51 million**, representing a **21.4%** increase.
- **Expense Growth:** Expenses grew by **\$2.83 million**, from **\$12.67 million** to **\$15.50 million**, maintaining the organisation's commitment to delivering services to the Darkinjung Community.
- **Surplus:** The organisation ended the year with a **net surplus** of **\$7,932**.

21.4%  
Increase in revenue

\$2.83m  
Increase in expenses

\$7,932  
Net surplus

## 2023-2024

The 2023-2024 financial year has been another outstanding success for Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services Limited. The year was marked by significant growth in income, assets, and services to the community. We are pleased to report strong financial performance, underpinned by careful fiscal management and strategic investment in community initiatives.

### Total Income

The total income for the year reached **\$15.51 million**, a substantial increase from last year's income of **\$12.77 million**. This reflects a year-over-year growth of **\$2.74 million**, or **21.4%**, showcasing the continued expansion of our programs and services to the Darkinjung Community.

### Total Expenses

The expenses for the 2023-2024 financial year were **\$15.50 million**, reflecting the cost of the numerous services provided to the community. Compared to the previous year's expenses of **\$12.67 million**, this is an increase of **\$2.83 million**, or **22.3%**. The increase in expenses aligns with the expansion of programs and resources aimed at supporting the community's needs.

Despite the significant increase in both income and expenses, the organisation achieved a **net surplus** of **\$7,932** for the year, indicating a balanced financial performance with efficient resource utilisation.

## Statement of Financial Position

The financial position of the organisation reflects a strong and growing asset base, with well-managed liabilities and equity.

### Assets

- **Current Assets:** Total current assets as of June 30, 2024, are **\$7.64 million**, which includes cash, receivables, financial assets, and other assets.
- **Non-Current Assets:** The organisation has invested in property, plant, and equipment, bringing total non-current assets to **\$8.41 million**.
- **Total Assets:** Overall, total assets increased from **\$6.86 million** in 2023 to **\$16.05 million** in 2024, demonstrating significant growth and investment in the organisation's

\$7.64m  
Total current assets

\$8.41m  
Non-current assets

\$16.05m  
Total assets





**ELEANOR DUNCAN**  
Aboriginal Services

**Eleanor Duncan  
Aboriginal Services**

35 McPherson Road

Mardi NSW 2259

T. (02) 4351 1040

F. (02) 4351 1037



Visit our website  
[eleanorduncan.org.au](http://eleanorduncan.org.au)

