

SHARING STORIES  
FOUNDATION

# ANNUAL REVIEW

2023-2024



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**Cover Image:** Purnululu Aboriginal Independent Community School student. Image Credit: Michael Torres







# CHAIR REPORT

**The past year has been a huge one for SharingStories Foundation. One that has seen the completion of several major long-term projects, new and exciting partnerships and changes in staffing through an enormous period of growth and evolution.**

Over this year we saw a change in our organisational leadership from a Co-CEO model to a single CEO model with Pitta Pitta woman Sharon Williams moving into this role as SharingStories' first Aboriginal CEO. We are so excited to see Sharon step into this significant leadership role, building on her success as Co-CEO. The Board extends our huge thanks to Taz Miller for her work in the Co-CEO role, supporting this important leadership transition for the organisation. Taz's support for our organisation over many years is legendary and she is and will continue to be such an important part of our own story.

The bedrock of our work continues to be the cultural knowledges shared by community partners and is the major reason SharingStories has grown in strength and diversity every year.

As we head into the new year the Board would also like to acknowledge the continued support of our sponsors, funders and partners. It is with this generous support we have been able to produce innovative ways of collaborating with communities to maintain and share cultural knowledges on a growing scale.

**Tim Goodwin**





# CEO REPORT

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the dedication of our amazing SharingStories Team, Board members, and funders, with a special thank you to our Community Partners who have continued to share and entrust us with their cultural knowledges, stories and languages.

2024 saw SharingStories continue its journey to support First Nations self-determination and the completion of our four-year strategy. Throughout this period, our work has expanded and our head office relocated to Brisbane to accommodate our growing team. This year has also seen internal changes to our staffing, and I was excited to be appointed SharingStories first Aboriginal CEO. This exciting transition is another important step for First Nations self-determination within our organisation.

We are grateful for all our sponsors, donors, and funders. However, we also take this time to acknowledge the impact multi-year funders like Creative Australia have on our ability to collaborate on elaborative long-term goals with Community Partners.

With other funding opportunities this year, we have completed several major projects with long-term Community partners, including *The Wamba Wamba Story Book* and the innovative new mobile app *Mungo Stories: Walk Together*. We also signed a major sponsorship agreement with Deloitte which has been critical in developing the online platform to house cultural knowledges and languages of the Dhurga, Djiringandj and Dhawa peoples on the Far South East Coast of NSW.

Jajoo Warrngara: The Culture Classroom has continued to grow with an estimated 18,060 students exposed to community-led educational content, multi-media and cultural protocols to support teachers to embed First Nations perspectives authentically, respectfully and confidently.

For the first time, we partnered with The University of Queensland to release a case study that overwhelmingly demonstrated that Jajoo Warrngara resources supported teacher confidence to embed First Nations perspectives and engaged students in deeper learning through the development of lessons that promote critical thinking.

As we continue our journey of First Nations self-determination, these are some of our key priorities for 2025:

- Continue to collaborate on creative practice, developing new ways to interpret and present culture with new and existing community partners.
- Broaden the geographical reach of Jajoo Warrngara: The Culture Classroom to increase our impact and highlight the rich beauty and complexity of First Nations cultures with new generations.
- Continue to distribute culture and language-rich content through the Arts, and Education, but also expand our reach into Tourism and corporate workplaces.
- Increasing First Nations representation across our team.

In closing, I'd like to thank Taz Miller, who is stepping away from SharingStories after 10 years. She has been a great support as Project Manager, CFO and Co-CEO. Her work and commitment have been invaluable for our successes to date. She will be very missed by all of us here at SharingStories and by community partners.

With all these exciting changes I'm looking forward to new challenges and new partnerships in the new year!

**Sharon Williams**



# 2020-2024 IN NUMBERS

## 1 Continuously evolve a CACD best practice that supports production of unique community driven content, building capacity for cultural continuity and participation

**750 First Nations people** across **30 communities** contributed **10840 hours** towards the teaching, creation, co-curation and public presentation of cultural knowledge.

**70 new cultural stories** mapped, creatively interpreted and outcomes accessible locally.

**Mungo Stories Walk Together App**

**Online interactive environments**

**Jajoo Warrngara: The Culture Classroom**

**2 pilot mentee programs** developed for training in language and arts media in the Kimberley and on the Yuin Nation.



3 experimental works developed with communities

## 2

**Positively influence Australian community attitudes and behaviour regarding First Nations people and cultural knowledge**



**11 published** Digital Interactive books engaging 6176 people



**2 Large scale exhibitions** and **5 permanent installations**



**Education distribution through Jajoo Warrngara: The Culture Classroom** to over 15 300 students.



**29 Bilingual films** presented publicly



## 3

**Build a well resourced, accountable, responsive organisation as a respected leader in the field of community arts/cultural development and education.**



**2.6 million** educated about First Nations cultural heritage through education portals, media and outreach programs



**Robust, sustainable executive team** with an Aboriginal CEO and 75% First Nations-led Executive Team.



**Annual review of systems** that support operational efficacy has resulted in a more streamlined way of communicating, storing and sharing information internally.



**A new financial model** that enables funding diversification has been developed and enacted for long-term financial stability.





# GIJA

## Jirraginy joo Goorrandal: Frog and Brolga Interactive Display Panel development and community launch at Purnululu National Park.

The Gija community has been working with SharingStories Foundation for more than a decade to share and transfer their cultural knowledge, and protect cultural heritage through the creative interpretation of the *Jirraginy joo Goorrandal: Frog and Brolga* story. Over the years, the work has been adapted into a multi-touch book, an animated film, and an interactive display panel for the Origins Gallery at Boola Bardip WA Museum.

In June 2024, SharingStories Foundation launched a second interactive display panel for the Purnululu National Park Visitor Centre in the East Kimberley. The project resulted from a collaborative partnership with the Gija Community, SharingStories Foundation, Parks and Wildlife WA through the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, and Purnululu School. Our partners, Senior Gija Custodian and Storyteller Shirley Drill, Purnululu School teachers and students, as well as several rangers and ABC Kimberley attended the launch event.

The *Jirraginy joo Goorrandal: The Frog and Brolga* Interactive Display Panel is the first Aboriginal cultural representation in the UNESCO World Heritage area and will be on permanent display for visitors to the National Park. The project recognises Gija Custodianship over thousands of years and supports the sharing of First Nations stories and narratives to promote cross-cultural understanding and rich cultural tourism experiences on Gija Country.

The panel also features an interactive map of Gawarre (Bungle Bungles), with several short films describing the connection to, and cultural significance of Gija Country, as well as many reflections from community members, each sharing personal feelings and reflections.

**“The Parks and Wildlife Service WA is privileged to share the important stories of Gija Traditional Owners through this interactive display at our state-of-the-art \$1.92 million visitor centre which officially opened in May last year. We look forward to inviting visitors to learn about the Traditional Owners groups who share a strong and continuing connection with this Country.”**

- Alex Bouma, Purnululu World Heritage Area Project Manager, Parks and Wildlife Service WA

We made the ‘Jirraginy joo Goorrandal: Frog and Brolga’ panel so people can know it’s sacred ground here for us mob. All us Gija mob want to know that visitors can be here the right way. We want them to know the stories for this place so they know the right way to be on this Country.

- Senior Gija Custodian and Storyteller, Shirley Drill



Image above: Sophia Mung, Shirley Drill and Purnululu School students with the *Jirraginy joo Goorrandal Frog and Brolga* Interactive Display Panel at Purnululu National Park. Image Credit Liz Thompson.



Image below: Sophia Mung, Shirley Drill and Purnululu School students at Purnululu National Park.

This is important to me because my ancestors passed the stories down to my great-grandparents. My grandparents passed it down to my mother’s, and now my mother’s passing it onto me and I’m passing it on to my grandchildren and my children. And with this SharingStories digital media, it’s gonna be here forever.

- Purnululu Aboriginal Independent Community School Assistant Principal, Sophia Mung







## Thirringgenji doo Joowijgarneny: The Owlet Nightjar and The Bowerbird animated film and multi-touch book Launch

Throughout 2022-2023, SharingStories Foundation partnered with Purnululu Aboriginal Independent Community School in the remote community of Woorreranginy (Frog Hollow), in Western Australia on the creative interpretation of an important Ngarranggarnim (Dreaming) story. *Thirringgenji doo Joowijgarneny: The Owlet Nightjar and The Bowerbird* is a Gija story from Jarlaloan in Gija Country.

Shared by Gija Custodian, Patrick Mung Mung, *Thirringgenji doo Joowijgarneny* is the story of two birds when they were both men in the Dreamtime. The Owlet Nightjar was an important senior lawman, responsible for making spearheads. The story teaches us about ecosystems, habitats, and co-existence.

This Ngarranggarnim story was originally told in Gija by Senior Custodians George (Magany) Mung Mung and Jack Britten in the 1980s. In 2010, Rusty Peters Dirrji Wandarrany retold it. This project included translating the story into English. A series of interviews with Gija Elders and linguists were recorded by Michael Jalaru Torres to document the significance of the work.

As part of the school curriculum and a week-long Digital Storytelling program delivered by SharingStories, students painted all aspects of the story and participated in acting, dancing, singing, green screening, shadow play, sound design & recording, and filming sessions to produce the animations in the final production. Three songs, written by Sophia Mung and Lucy Lemann at Purnululu School, were produced into animated film clips by SharingStories Foundation utilising the students' original artworks and sound design by Sean Lillico.

In late 2023, the community shared the *Thirringgenji doo Joowijgarneny: The Owlet Nightjar and The Bowerbird* animated film, a multi-touch book, and animated film clips in a community launch to celebrate the community's achievement. The community also had an opportunity to watch the bilingual animated film and read the multi-touch book for the first time. This creative work will be launched nationally in early 2025.



Image above: Purnululu School Students participating in a SharingStories' Digitalstorytelling Program.

**This work is really important because children in Gija country have such a rich repository of Dreaming stories and cultural practices and language that are central to their identity. And for the children in this school, to have the opportunity to not only hear the stories and have them read to them but to deeply embody them, and live them, and sing them, and dance them, and create them, gives them a really deep knowing.**

Purnululu Aboriginal Independent Community School Principal,  
Libby Hammond

**This is important to me because my ancestors passed the stories down to my great-grandparents. My grandparents passed it down to my mother's, and now my mother's passing it onto me and I'm passing it on to my grandchildren and my children. And with this SharingStories digital media, it's gonna be here forever.**

- Purnululu Aboriginal Independent Community School Assistant Principal,  
Sophia Mung

## Texas Downs Joonba Skills Development

Throughout 2023-2024, SharingStories Foundation partnered with Purnululu Aboriginal Independent Community School on a skills development program as part of the *Texas Downs Joonba* Project. Led by Purnululu School, The Joonba Project brings together traditional Gija arts and culture with contemporary digital media skills training. The project supports the upskilling of students in media production and the creation of cultural-educational content for young Gija people.

The *Texas Downs Joonba*, a Ngarranggarni (Dreaming) song cycle, contains significant social & ecological traditional knowledge. The Joonba and its story belong to the families of Patrick Mung and Betty Carrington.

**Image below:** Kimberley Benjamin being taught by Purnululu School Students. Image credit: Michael Jalaru Torres.

**Image below:** Purnululu school students with teacher and Gija Custodian, Sophia Mung. Image credit: Michael Jalaru Torres.

As part of this project, independent filmmaker and photographer Michael Jalaru Torres mentored Kimberley (Kimba) Benjamin in videography skills and together they ran a skills development program for young Gija students at Purnululu School and Purnululu National Park in July 2023.

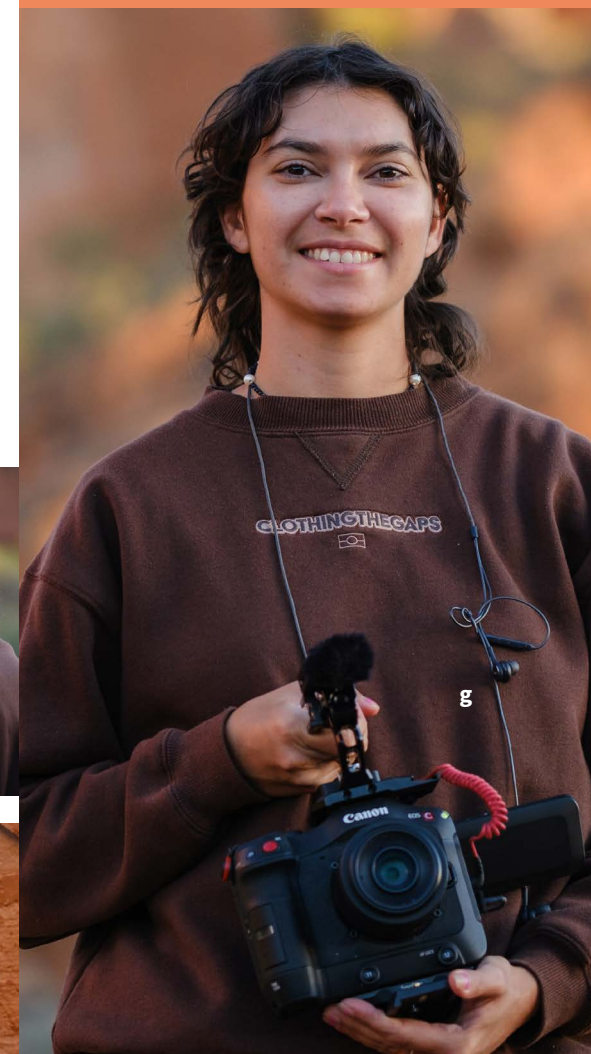
Students learnt the basics of shooting and editing on iPads, and produced a series of short films about themselves and a trip to Purnululu National Park. Under the direction of Michael Torres, students took part in a professional photoshoot at Echidna Chasm and Cathedral Gorge at Purnululu National Park, culminating in a series of stunning photographs.

In the first six months of 2024, Purnululu School undertook a series of school camps to learn about the cultural knowledge associated with the *Texas Downs Joonba*. Filmmaker Michael Torres once again worked with the school to record content through film and photography.



**The opportunity to be part of the SSF mentoring program is important to me in a number of ways. Firstly, building confidence in shooting and directing projects will foster my own creative voice and desire to pursue my own creative projects. Secondly, diversifying my skill set and expanding the types of projects I can be engaged in, will increase opportunities to attract paid videography work.**

- Kimberley Benjamin, Yawuru mentee







### Western Australian Regional Media Mentorships

In July 2024, SharingStories Foundation awarded three Regional Media Mentorships to Georgia King, Stanley Francis and Jake Powers. The Media Mentorships support the development of the next generation of First Nations content creators in the West Kimberley.

Djugun-Yawuru photographer/filmmaker/designer/poet and Lead Mentor Michael Jalaru Torres co-designed the mentorships to be delivered in a culturally safe learning environment in Broome, providing employment pathways for young First Nations peoples in cultural leadership and digital media roles.

Delivered across 12 months from July 2024, the mentorships will empower early career content creators to reach their full potential through the opportunity to grow life and industry-specific skills. Mentees will commit 6 hours a week and undertake 4 x local professional work experiences & site visits, designed to expose mentees to all potential opportunities and ways of working.

Mentees will gain confidence in diverse media production capabilities, and deepen their practice and understanding of the arts sector through one-on-one mentoring, group media production, peer review, peer networking, and online training.

#### The benefits of the mentorships include:

- Increased digital media skills in the region
- Pathways to self-representation and strengthened ownership over the media processes
- Pathways to live and work on Country
- Expansion of an Aboriginal media workforce for hire
- Expansion of culturally safe content creation teams



Image Above: Mentees Georgia King & Stanley Francis and Jake Powers with Lead Mentor Michael Torres.

The realisation of the need for more independent creative leaders in our region has been a significant catalyst for this undertaking. It is evident that there is a void in the representation of First Nation-created content, both within our community and in the commercial sector. By taking control of First Nation media and providing opportunities for emerging creators, we can foster the growth of diverse talents and ensure a more inclusive narrative.

– Michael Jalaru Torres

## NOONGAR

### Ballardong Noongar Teacher Resources Project developed in partnership with the Community Arts Network

In 2024, SharingStories Foundation and Perth-based Community Arts Network trialled a new partnership, combining our strengths to achieve greater impact for our First Nation community partners. Through sharing media resources, skills and networks, Community Arts Network were able to offer Ballardong Noongar Custodians an opportunity to share their existing media resources with a wider audience through Jajoo Warrngara: The Culture Classroom.

Both organisations travelled to York to consult with Ballardong Noongar Custodians on the potential to develop the resources for their stop-motion animated film *Welcome to Ballardong* produced by CAN in 2019. The Noongar Custodians were thrilled to have the opportunity to film an accompanying Welcome to Country as part of the collaboration.

A series of educational resources and classroom protocol guides have been co-developed with Custodians which will be available on Jajoo Warrngara by the end of 2024.

Image Below: Audrey Nettle. Image Credit: Credit Drew Kendell.



Image Below: L-R Elly Jones, Audrey Nettle, Gail Hill, Sharon Williams, Merle Narkle & Brooke Small. Image Credit Drew Kendell.



‘Welcome to Ballardong was such an amazing project when the animations were first created in 2019 and to have the opportunity for CAN to reconnect with community members and be able to provide an additional way to platform and showcase these animations has been fantastic. During CAN projects, group members often discuss how the final artistic outcomes can be shared as widely as possible, particularly with children and young people. This partnership with SharingStories Foundation has been a fantastic opportunity to make these claymations easily accessible for educators by developing lesson plans and correlating the themes and stories shared by the community with the curriculum, something which CAN would love to do but has not had the capacity or expertise to do ourselves. This has been a great partnership and we want to continue 100%.’

- Community Arts Network Program Manager, Elly Jones





**“Affirming cultural knowledge so Aboriginal people from the Far South East Coast have the tools to live and work in Culture on Country”**

- Synopsis of Project Working Group meetings in January 2023

# DHURGA, DJIRINGANDJ AND DHAWA

## Digital Keeping Place Project

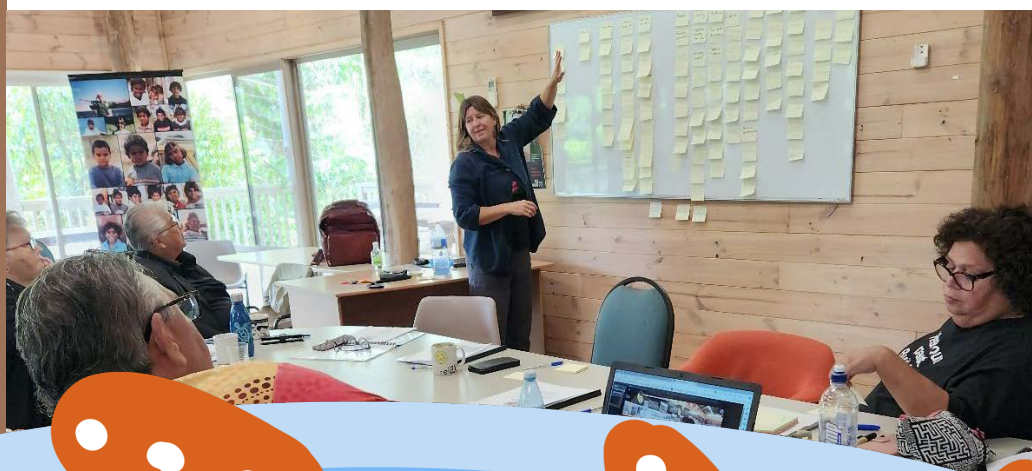
In 2022, SharingStories Foundation presented to the Guluga and Biamanga Boards of Management in NSW and received an invitation to collaborate on a new digital media project within the community. From 2022 to 2023, we consulted with 10 family groups in the Southeastern region of NSW, between Eden and Batemans Bay, leading to the creation of the Digital Keeping Place Project.

Funded through the NIAA, the Digital Keeping Place Project promotes ongoing partnership and consultation with the Far South East Coast communities and supports reaffirmation and intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge. The 10 family representatives have established a Project Working Group that will direct the project and advise on the collation, recording, and curation of cultural content into a Digital Keeping Place.

The project includes a mentorship program for three young people, the production of 20 short films, and the development of three online language dictionaries for the Dhurga, Djiringandj, and Dhawa language groups. The Project Working Group will curate content and design a beautifully engaging Digital Keeping Place that they will launch with the community at the end of the project. Pro Bono Partner Deloitte Digital has come on board to custom design and build the online Digital Keeping Place.



Image above and below: Yuin Project Working Group and SSF Program Manager Brooke Small.



# WET TROPICS (FNQ)

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area stretches along the northeast coast of Australia for some 450 km. Encompassing almost 900,000ha of mostly tropical rainforest, this area is immensely vital for its rich and unique biodiversity. This area is home to some of the world’s oldest continuously surviving tropical rainforests and one of the world’s oldest living cultures—Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

In November 2023, SharingStories Foundation began a partnership with the Wet Tropics Management Authority to create the Rainforest People Country Culture Interactive Map (Bama Country and Culture Project). This important project will be the first publicly available map to include over twenty Rainforest Peoples of this region. Eight community groups have shared traditional knowledge and images over the past 12 months.

In May 2024, SharingStories travelled to Cairns to work with Custodians and Wet Tropics Management Authority staff on the design of the map, video production, and to undertake animation training with the community groups.

In October, a full design of the interactive map was completed to share the culture of the region directly with Custodians and promote respectful tourism.

The final launch of the website is scheduled for November 2024.

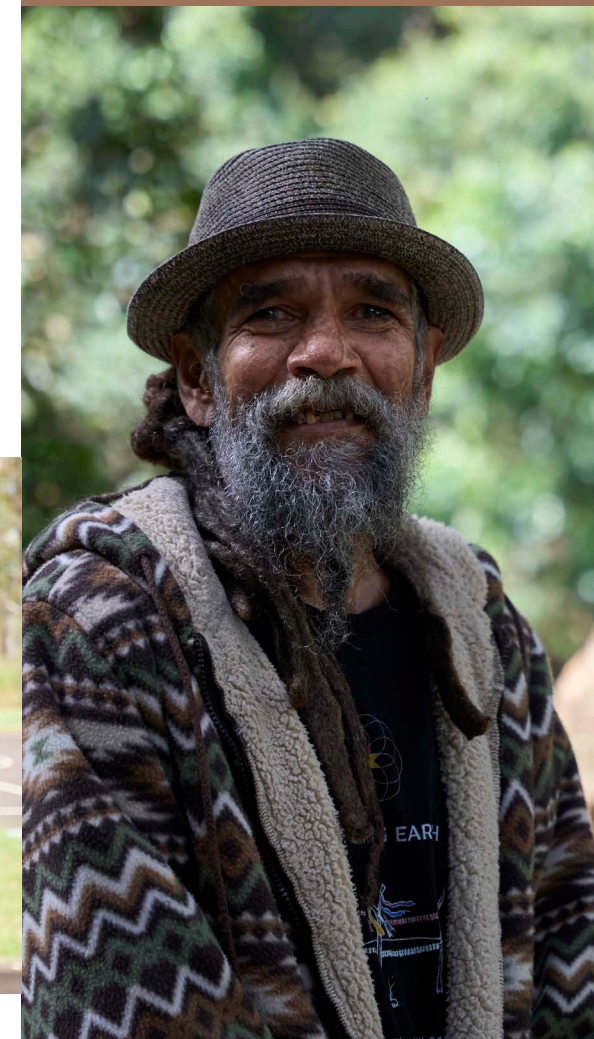


Image above: Traditional Owners Sonya Takau (Jirrbal), Aunty Betty Cashmere (Jirrbal) and Whitney Rassip (Djiru) from the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area.

**“You’ll get to see a rainforest world that is thorough the eyes of the First People that have lived theres in that one place for thousands and thousands of years.”**

- Sonya Kakau, Girringun Aboriginal Corporation

**“We had tracks all the way through our Country, right through, going into different areas for ceremonies, gathering different foods, hunting different animals. It was against the lore to step off the track. One of the biggest distributors of seeds in this forest is the cassowary. The cassowary was here before us. He the ones that made the tracks.”**

-Willie Brim, Buluwai Traditional Owner





# BARKANDJI/PAAKANTJI, MUTTHI MUTTHI AND NGIYAMPAA

## Mungo Stories Walk Together App

At the beginning of 2024, SharingStories Foundation began the final stages of production for the *Mungo Stories: Walk Together* app. SharingStories has worked in partnership with the Custodians of the Three Traditional Tribal Groups, Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Aboriginal Advisory Group, and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service since 2016, starting with the digital storytelling program at Mildura Primary School that resulted in the publication of the *Leave It There For the Next Little Fellas* multi-touch book.

Only accessible at Mungo, the animations and stories of *Leave it There For the Next Little Fellas* along with other animations and stories have now been re-imagined as part of the special app through the voices of Traditional Custodians of Mungo, the Barkandji/Paakantyi, Mutthi Mutthi, and Ngiyampaa peoples. The images you see were drawn and animated by the children of Mildura Primary School as well as by Ngiyampaa artist Nola Taylor and SharingStories Foundation.

The app has been a culmination of many years of deep storytelling and creative interpretation. In the coming year, we look forward to the continued collaboration with the Barkandji/Paakantyi, Mutthi Mutthi, and Ngiyampaa people as they continue to lead storytelling at Mungo.

Visitors can download *Mungo Stories: Walk Together* app from both the App Store and Play Store



“Willandra Lakes is a very special place, as it tells us about how our ancestors once lived, evidence of how they survived an ice age, and clues as to what animals they ate and how they hunted them. Not only is this place significant for Aboriginal people but also for non-Aboriginal people to learn about human history.”

-Senior Barkandji Cultural Custodian, Ivan Johnson



**Image above:** Mutthi Mutthi Custodian and Aboriginal Discovery Ranger Aunty Tanya Charles, Barkandji/Paakantyi custodian Uncle Ivan Johnston with Dan Rosenthal and Tressna Martin from NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service testing the Mungo Stories Walk Together



**Image above:** Ngiyampaa Custodians Aunty Joan Slade and Aunty Dawn Smith with Barkandji Paakantyi Custodian Uncle Ernest Mitchell on the boardwalk at Mungo National Park. Image Credit: Dan Rosendahl.

**Image below:** Video Still from Families animation, illustrated by Ngiyampaa artist Nola Taylor for the app Mungo Stories Walk Together.



“Cultural knowledge is really important to us because the ancestors always left their knowledge for the young ones, thousands and thousands of years ago...This is who we are today from all the pieces of knowledge and stories handed down through our family trees”.

- Barkandji/Paakantji Cultural Custodian, Ernest Mitchell





# QUANDAMOOKA

This year, we had the privilege of working with two new Custodians from Quandamooka Country, Uncle Joshua Walker and Uncle Raymond Walker, both Noonucal Elders whose generosity in sharing their stories and cultural knowledge has profoundly enriched our catalogue.

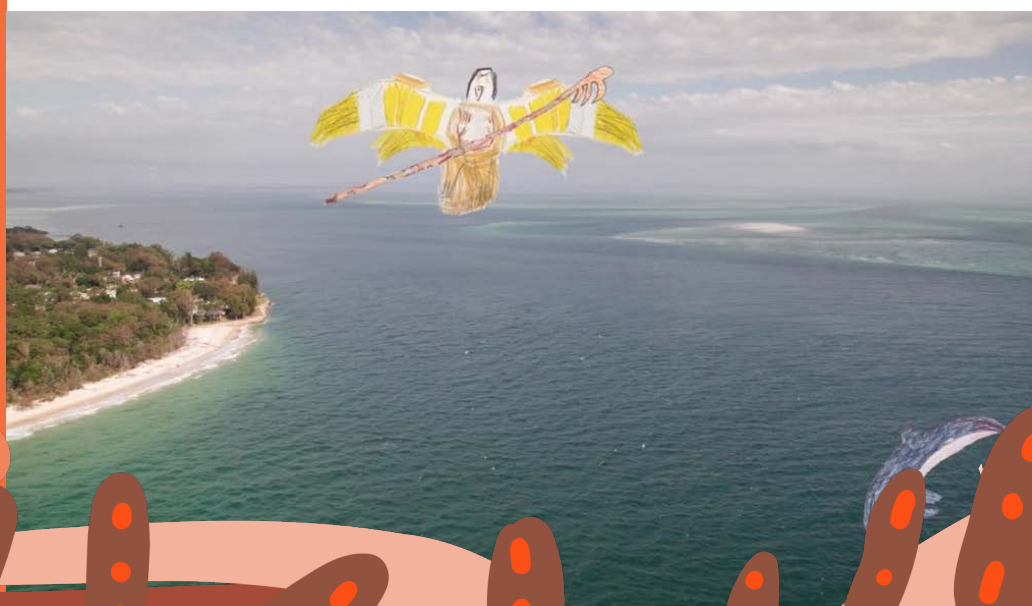
Their contributions have added incredible depth to the growing resource library on Jajoo Warrngara, bringing further insight into our work with storytellers from Minjerribah. These collaborations have resulted in the production of three new Quandamooka films, including a powerful Welcome to Country, *Dimboona and the Wail Rock* Creation story, and the *Moreton Bay* Creation Story. As Uncle Joshua beautifully shares, “These films are like storybooks written in Country.”

A set of educational resources that continue to preserve and share the invaluable cultural knowledge of the area accompanies each of these films. The creation story of “Dimboona and the Wail Rock” explores the rock formation at Point Lookout, named by settlers, and details its significance. The unit plans focus on the connections between language, imagery, and narrative structure, inviting learners to engage deeply with the storytelling traditions of the Quandamooka people.

**Image below:** Uncle Joshua Walker and Glen Maw on Quandamooka Country preparing for filming.



**Image below:** Image of the Quandamooka Creation Story animation shared by Uncle Joshua Walker.



“These films are like storybooks written in Country.”

- Uncle Joshua Walker, Noonucal Elder

# WAMBA WAMBA

We are happy to announce we published the *Wamba Wamba Storybook!* A bilingual multi-touch book that celebrates and preserves the rich cultural heritage of the Wamba Wamba people. This project is a true community collaboration, guided and narrated by Uncle Ron Murray, and brought together by Elders, Custodians, language workers, and students to honour and share their stories.

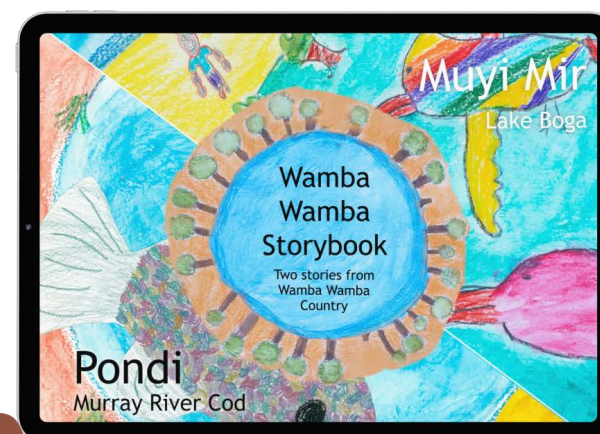
The multi-touch book documents two significant Creation stories—*Pondi* (Murray River Cod) and *Muyi Muir* (Lake Boga)—brought to life with beautiful illustrations, animations, and shadow theatre, all developed on Country with the Wamba Wamba Community.

In addition to the multi-touch book, our First Nations curriculum writer co-created a comprehensive set of educational resources alongside Uncle Ron Murray, Aunty Stephanie Charles, Sandra Kropinyeri, and with support from the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI). These resources span various learning areas, embedding Sustainability and First Nations perspectives, and aligning with the Australian Curriculum. Unit plans like *Muyi Mir Mathematics: Leaf it to Us!*, *Tree Huggers*, and *The Health of the Murray* offer hands-on, place-based learning experiences that enrich students' understanding of cultural and environmental stewardship.

**Image below:** SharingStories Foundation's Harmony Domaille and Wamba Wamba Senior Custodian Aunty Stephanie Charles.



**Image below:** Wamba Wamba Storybook.



“Building respect and understanding for those stories and our culture is critical to reconciliation and I consider it to be very important. Our stories need to be told, heard and experienced so that Koorie culture is a vital, living part of Victorian life and SharingStories is helping us make that happen.”

- Senior Wamba Wamba Cultural Custodian, Ron Murray







# WURUNDJERI

## Birrarung Multi-Touch Book

The Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation has continued to be a collaborative partner in the development of the multi-touch book *Birrarung*, which explores the cultural significance of the *Birrarung* (Yarra River) and includes a community voices section and multiple films exploring significant sites on Wurundjeri Country with Elder Uncle Bill. This project also includes four unit plans and a free activity booklet, with the final approvals process currently underway.

# GUNDITJMARA

## Kayap Kiling: The First Waterholes Multi-Touch Book

We have been finalising the *Kayap Kiling: The First Waterholes* project with the Gunditjmara Community. This bilingual multi-touch book records and creatively interprets a significant Creation Story of the Gunditjmara, brought to life through a collaborative effort involving Uncle Daryl Rose and students from Heywood and District Secondary College. The story shares the origins of the first waterholes on Gunditjmara Country and has been creatively interpreted by the students through artwork, animations, and interactive elements, drawing from cultural sites and historical references.

In addition to the multi-touch book, a set of accompanying educational resources has also been developed. These resources align with the Australian Curriculum and will provide students with hands-on, experiential learning.

The project is currently in its final community approval stages before its official release.

**Image below:** Isobel Knowles and Harmony Domaille with Gunditjmara Custodians, Troy Lovett and and Jenna Bamblett.



# GUNAIKURNAI

This year, we had the privilege of working with six Gunaikurnai storytellers to create several films, ranging from Creation stories like *Borun and Tuk* and *Mother Sky* to truth-telling stories about the impact of historical policies and the beauty of dance in reclaiming culture.

We were thrilled to collaborate with Bairnsdale West Primary School, working with Year 3/4 and 5/6 students, to create incredible illustrations for the *Borun and Tuk* animation. Their creativity brought the story to life and honoured the wildlife and beautiful landscapes of Gunaikurnai Country and the story shared by their Elders.

Educational resources accompany each film across different year levels and learning areas, including links to Code Club Australia, a recent collaboration that strengthens the resources by incorporating digital technologies. This partnership, involving expert STEM curriculum writers and our First Nations curriculum writer, enhances the learning journey for young people, giving them valuable opportunities to develop coding and digital technology skills.

The films and resources are currently undergoing community approval, and we look forward to releasing them for schools once the process is complete.

**Image below:** Aunty Glenys Watts. Image Credit: Ange Costes.



**Image below:** Still from the *Borun and Tuk* animation with narrator Hollie Johnson and the illustrations of children from Bairnsdale West Primary school.



‘Doing the story and showing the art, if they understand it a lot more they will respect it. Stories and painting are powerful.

-Gunaikurnai Custodian,  
-Alfred Hudson





# WÄGILAK

In 2006, SharingStories Foundation began work with Roy Ashley Waṇapuyṇu at his request, documenting the story and journey of the Wägilak Creation Ancestor, *Gaṇḍjaḷaḷa the Sugarbag Hunter*.

This year we've been collaborating with the Wägilak clan to consolidate nearly twenty years of work through co-curation of a film and book *Singing the Spirit Home*. These creative works are based on the life and teachings of Senior Wägilak Cultural Custodian, the Late Roy Ashley Waṇapuyṇu. Roy who led the work in collaboration with Senior Liya-Dhālinymirr Cultural Custodian Yingiya Guyula. Alongside them, over forty community members were involved in the work and travelling along the ancestral tracks and Songline of Gaṇḍjaḷaḷa, on Wägilak Country.

During these journeys, Senior Custodians passed important knowledge onto young people, teaching manikay (songs) and bungul (dances) from the Songline of Gaṇḍjaḷaḷa.

The culture and language-rich book is based on the life and teachings of Roy Ashley Waṇapuyṇu. Miko and Tony Cameron and Roy's brothers Russel and Derek Waṇapuyṇu, have produced a series of stunning artworks depicting the journey of Gaṇḍjaḷaḷa. These together with Roy's knowledge, and insights shared by Senior Liya-Dhālinymirr Cultural Custodian Yingiya Guyula will feature in the book alongside an extensive body of photographic work created over the last two decades of this important collaboration.

The storyline of the language-rich film is being mapped with direction from Russell and Derek and significant curated artworks animated as part of the storytelling process. These artworks include paintings depicting the sacred Bungul or Ceremony ground at Wuymul, the Gadayaka or Totemic Stringy Bark blossoms and leaves and Dhupuwamirri where the Yarpin Honey Bees dropped nectar into the water creating a river of sacred Yarpin Honey in which Gaṇḍjaḷaḷa left the Sugarbag Dreaming.

**The release of the film and book together is scheduled for 2026.**

**“You know the Gunduy (Sacred Totemic Stringy Bark Tree) - well that's the flower in this painting. The pollen of the flower is what we painted at Wuymul. The dot represents the pollen of the Gunduy seed flower. The bee goes inside and gets the nectar and goes back to the hive. When we paint it on the face we represent this one.**

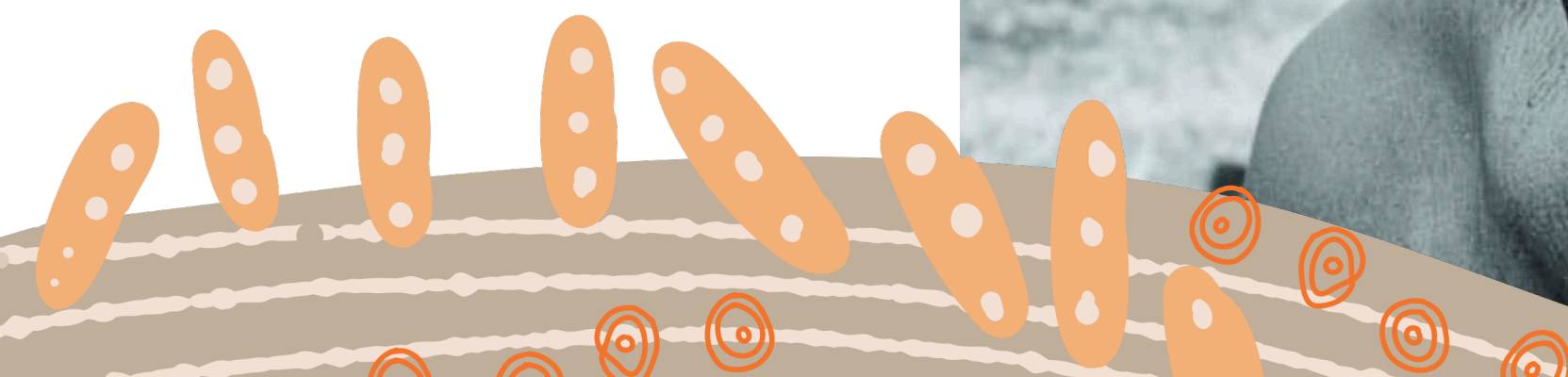
**Gaṇḍjaḷaḷa the Sugarbag Hunter carried the leaves from this tree when he was walking, he was holding it and looking for the bees and for the Sugarbag Honey.”**

**- Senior Wägilak Cultural Custodian, Russell Waṇapuyṇu**

**Image left:** A recent painting by Senior Wägilak Cultural Custodian Russell Waṇapuyṇu of the flowers and seeds of the sacred Gadayaka (Stringy Bark) Tree, part of the Gaṇḍjaḷaḷa (The Sugarbag Hunter) story.

**“It makes me strong to stay on the track and teach our next generation. It's important to share this story because we want to teach our children. I want Balanda (non-Indigenous) to learn this story too, to help them understand the Yolṇu story.”**

**- Senior Wägilak Cultural Custodian, Russell Waṇapuyṇu**







# JAJOO WARRNGARA

## The Culture Classroom

### Expanding Resources and Projects

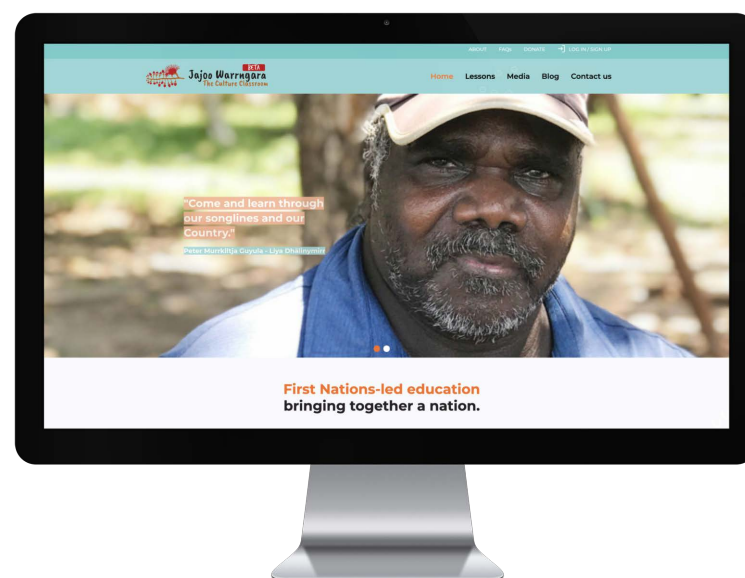
This includes films, protocol documents, activity sheets, and comprehensive unit plans, all designed to accompany the incredible cultural stories and knowledges that we've had the privilege to record and preserve.

### Partnerships and Digital Expansion

We've also formed new partnerships to enrich the platform's offerings, such as Code Club AU. Their extension activities will feature in upcoming resources, ensuring we integrate digital technologies and real-world skills for young people's futures. With Code Club's global reach, working alongside 67 other countries, we're excited to give our students the opportunity to connect with these digital futures on a global stage. Looking ahead, our First Nations curriculum writer is keen to launch a First Nations Teacher Working Group to expand the scope of our learning resources. The group will bring together First Nations educators and experts across specific subject areas to ensure our resources cover all ACARA learning areas with both cultural depth and academic rigour.

In addition to our curriculum-focused partnerships, we've established early-stage collaborations with like-minded organisations such as Ngarrngga, and Children's Ground. We look forward to deepening these relationships and continuing our shared mission of advocating for First Nations voices in education.

Image below: Jajoo Warrngara platform.



"This year has seen tremendous growth for Jajoo Warrngara. We began 2022 with 40 unit plans and now, as we wrap up 2024, we have over 160 detailed unit plans and nearly 250 resources."

- Harmony Domaille,  
SharingStories Education and Senior  
Program Manager

### The University of Queensland Critical Thinking Project

This year, we partnered with the University of Queensland's Critical Thinking Project on a research study. The study focused on the adaptability of the Jajoo Warrngara resources and how they addressed the cultural safety and confidence of educators to embed First Nations perspectives. The findings were overwhelmingly positive, with educators highlighting the platform's credibility, its role in boosting teacher confidence, and its ability to stimulate student engagement and critical thinking. We aim to expand on this research in 2025, applying its insights to further demonstrate the positive impact of First Nations voices in education on teacher confidence and student engagement.

### Presentations and Events

Throughout 2023-2024, we also shared our work at significant national forums. We presented at the VALTA Language Forum in Melbourne on Wurundjeri Country, where we discussed our contributions to language revitalisation through digital storytelling, and at AIATSIS, showcasing our work in preserving cultural heritage through education. Our presence at the Children's Ground Utyerre Apanpe First Nations education forum was a particularly meaningful opportunity to hear from First Nations educators who are leading reform to recognise First Nations learning systems as a legitimate system of education. As we look to the future, our goal is to expand our partnerships and continue fostering collaboration with new and existing communities, Elders and Custodians, and schools.

Image below: SharingStories Education and Senior Program Manager Harmony Domaille presenting at AIATSIS summit.



I didn't feel anxious at all. I felt really confident because I knew that it was coming from a place that was well researched, absolutely, culturally appropriate and authentic. For me, that was really important, that the resources were authentic.

- Sharon Williams, SharingStories CEO





# NEW TEAM MEMBERS

## Lakshmi Jayan

This year we welcomed Lakshmi Jayan to the SharingStories team as our Evaluation Officer. Lakshmi brings new skills and a fresh perspective to this role. Lakshmi has already integrated herself as a crucial team member, and we are excited about implementing her findings to achieve the KPIs of our Strategic Goals in 2025.

**“It is an enormous honour to work within a community-driven organisation like SharingStories Foundation that respectfully transforms Indigenous cultural knowledge into mainstream educational content for Australian students. In addition to enriching students’ learning experiences by showing them alternative ways of thinking and being, embedding First Nations perspectives within classrooms increases cultural sensitivity and safety within our communities. Representation truly matters - the positive ripples of SharingStories’ work cannot be overstated.**

**I look forward to supporting efforts to preserve and pass on ancient cultural knowledge through my work at SharingStories, while also deepening my understanding of Culture, Country, and its traditional Custodians along the way.”**

## Ocean West

We are delighted that Ocean West joined our team in 2024. With a background in arts, philanthropic fundraising and professional grant writing, Ocean will support our organisation in the way we sustain the vital work we do with partner communities.

**“I am thrilled to join the SharingStories Foundation in 2024 as such an important and leading organisation in the First Nations cultural space.**

**I recognise how central stories are to the experiences and cultures of First Nations Peoples. This is a fulfilling opportunity for me to deepen my knowledge of and experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.”**





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