



NALDERUN

EDUCATION ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We would like to Acknowledge the Djaara People, the custodians and caretakers of this land. We thank them for the care the ongoing care taken of Country; the rivers, mountains, trees and animals. We would like to honour this Country, the Elders of the past and present and most importantly the young proud Aboriginal people as they are our leaders for tomorrow.

WHO WE ARE

Nalderun is a not-for-profit Aboriginal run and led organisation, on Djaara Country in Castlemaine, under the guidance of Elder Uncle Rick Nelson.

Nalderun is a Dja Dja Wurrung word which means 'all together', because we believe by moving forward together we can make the change needed for our children, local mob and the wider community in the region to thrive. We know what our Community needs, as we are a part of it. Over 12 years we have seen our children become stronger, proud and deadly.

Nalderun came about through the work and legacy of Uncle Brien Nelson who believed that sharing is the way forward for everyone. Aunty Julie McHale has also worked tirelessly for over 40 years and has carried on this legacy which we continue today.



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CHAIR REPORT

Congratulations everyone for what a great year it has been and thank you to everyone for your support!

We want to thank all the Nalderun key office staff Kath, Bee, Janet, Zoe, Polly. We're building a really great team and acknowledge the work can be tricky and full on but that you do extremely well, it's very much appreciated. We also have lots of good mentors and mentees engaged through our Cyclical Mentorship Philosophy and it's feeling good – with our awesome First Nations youth such as Chase, Maya, Grace, Cohen, Zepp, Taniesha, Tom, Ben, Al, Tahlia, and Kohen working in a space of two way learning with non-Indigenous staff and allies.

It feels like we're growing and consolidating at the same time, which is really important. We've got a good group of Directors now who now meet monthly, which is great and really important. It's really nice to have Uncle Ron and Kelly Ann Blake with us this year as new Directors. Kelly stepped in for 12 months as Kath stepped down as a Director which is great because now Kath doesn't have to keep playing this Director and CEO role which was quite tricky.

Benjamin Reid is another Director and he's currently on leave. We look forward to Ben coming back because it's very important to have a younger person's voice around our table. It's great because we need to always be making sure that we've got younger First Nations people supported coming through.

Directors Report for AGM by Chair Uncle Rick Nelson and Pauline Bolch.

A word from New Director Uncle Ron Murray.

When Uncle Rick asked me to come on board, I just love the work that you all do and if it's anything to do with supporting youth and bringing these young ones up then I'm in!

What I love about this group is that you come to the meeting and there's no arguing, you know, we're on the same direction. We've got our own little town here and with youth that we've got to look after. So that's the main thing, and Kath and Uncle Rick do an amazing job.

It's great sitting around the circle with all you legends and longtime supporters like Fae and Vic too.

You all have the kids at heart. So that's why we've got to move forward and one day there'll be a cultural center sitting out here at Me-Mandook Galk.

I'd like to see that before I go, with the young ones out here running it. You're all good people and that's the main thing!

CEO REPORT

This year has been an amazing year. We've really gone from strength to strength, the amazing ability and sense of family that we have in coming together. It's been a quite tricky year this year, in a lot of ways as well but we are not ones that shy away from such situations.

We've always been a grant based small org, but the financial report has really shown how we've grown. Because we move with what mob needs, especially our kids, all our programs really targeted what's most important to them. That's keeping our kids feeling connected to each other as family, to Country, and to their Culture. For them to move around in the world proud of who they are, but also move around with honesty. I think the more of us adults hold ourselves to account for our own individual issues and challenges its modeling the way that we can try to break that inter-generational poverty and trauma cycle from colonization.

Despite being a small org, we have around 20 staff, 80% mob, with very part-time positions, which is the equivalent to three full-time positions. We currently spend a lot of our budget making sure our kids get through high school with individual support and tutoring, as well as with teachers, principals and the broader community. We not only work with young ones in Castlemaine now, but we also work with young mob from Maryborough and Bendigo Senior. A lot of people rallied around to make sure we had these kids graduate, especially through to year 10,11 & 12 across all three schools. We had tutors and teachers that work for us go in and regularly support our kids to get them through.

That's always been the core of our programs, helping our kids get through school.

I want to finish on two notes, one is about the prison system and how there's still so much of our mob in there. I really appreciate the work Uncle Ron Murray has been tirelessly doing all his life in this space, as well as gorgeous Bee who has been working in Middleton Prison and the mob in there, getting the bushtucker out to Me-Mandook Galk. We've still got a long way to go in that space.

The other thing that's so crucial is the school system itself has still got so much to answer for. We have a lot of our young kids that pretty much don't attend regular school programs, they only turn up and engage when we're there. So, we're constantly pushing back on the school saying something's not working when you can't engage our kids in the classroom and the only time, they actually engage in school is when we're there. So, there's still a lot of work to be done here and in trying to push back.

And we're always busy this time of year making sure we have enough money so we can support our kids. But we know now, from when we first started 12 years ago, that what we're doing works. What we're doing is getting our kids through.

There's a huge movement forward and we do it together and we're there for the whole person. It's such a beautiful way of being. It's our way of being in this space. Because there's so much disconnect from Country and each other out in the world, time and time again we try and set an example of how we should be in the world - **and that is connected and together.**

- KATH COFF, CEO

SBAT

PROGRAM REPORT

NALDERUN WRAP AROUND SERVICE FOR SCHOOL BASED APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Through our SBAT program we were able to provide additional wellbeing & tutoring support, as well as food & transport support to remove barriers for participants. This enabled us to also build staff capacity, and support to First Nations youth – one to do a post-school traineeship with Dhelkaya Health, completing a Certificate III in Community Services. The SBAT crew also felt support & connection by joining in with some of Nalderun's other programs including All Together Cultural Days the First Nations Youth Cultural Camp at Gariwerd in May.

It was also great to see our SBATs from the 2022 program all employed, with one securing a full-time role at DEECA! We even had Chase one of our co-ordinators win the 2022 Mount Alexander Shire Youth Award in the STEM & Trades category for his outstanding personal achievement within his traineeship and employment; and his leadership supporting others to achieve success in the SBAT program.

On Country Land Management Activities Included: Freshwater Mussel monitoring with Barapa Barapa & Wemba Wemba, Soils session with Agriculture Victoria, Axedale Landcare Planting, Post flood trail restoration & track maintenance in various locations and Djaara Rock Art Surveys, small machinery operations at the DELWP depot, Ky Fauna Park, turtle survey with Turtles Australia, Soils Day with Agriculture Vic, and Eltham Copper Butterfly/ fauna surveys with Wetland Revival Trust.

Host and Partner Orgs included:

Parks Vic, DEECA, NCCMA & Nalderun Cultural Leadership/ Business Administration with host orgs Coliban Water, CVGT, Victoria Police & Nalderun.

Participating Schools: Castlemaine Secondary College, Bendigo Senior Secondary & Maryborough Education Centre

Participating Registered Training Organisations: Bendigo TAFE - Certificate II in Horticulture, Integrity Training - Certificate III in Business, Skill Invest - Certificate III in Business, VETis – Certificate III in Community services.

- **Nalderun SBAT Co-coordinators:** Chase, Maya & Bee

100%
SUCCESS
COMPLETING YEAR 12
WITH SUPPORT INTO
THE WORKPLACE



WARARAK BUSINESS

For young Aboriginal women and gender diverse people to connect with Country, Community and Culture.

There are approximately 8 First Nations youth who attended the Warrarrak group each fortnight. The majority are students at Castlemaine Secondary College, as well as students who grew up in the community but currently are attending other schools.

We use the time with the students to check in and support them with school. We also like to use this space for the youth to reflect, to share food and experiences, celebrate, connect and be in a place of comfort with other young mobs.



The group had a great time going a variety of On Country trips, based on the desires of the group, as well as going to Nalderun's All Together business Cultural Days and First Nations Youth camp to Gariwerd. We shared food, learned cultural and life skills, built connection and support. There has been wonderful, powerful sharing of Cultural knowledge during these trips, which has led to rich discussion on Culture and how group connects to Country. The group is becoming incredibly close now and everyone is very open and supportive.

Healthy Country, Healthy Mob!

Our on Country and Cultural activity included visits to wombat garden in Daylesford, to Lalgambrook (mt Franklin), the Reservoir in Chewton, The Black Hills Reserve, Leeanganook, Jonay Farm, The Cascades, as well as a cooking class at Castlemaine community house and visit to the Boorp Boorp Bundjil exhibition.

Wararak coordinators: Grace and Polly



KULI BUSINESS

Men's business for 12-25 year-olds, guided by Uncle Rick Nelson.

This years Kuli Business program has been consistently gathering over the past 12 months and continues to develop. The program is a collaboration between Uncle Rick Nelson, Nalderun and Castlemaine Secondary College (CSC) with the aims of giving young Indigenous men at CSC access and learning of their Culture, to build strong connections to their Indigenous peers, particularly as they move into the upper years and out of highschool, and to a positive personal growth mindset that can help keep them engaged with education.

With the use of the council bus we have visited the following places in the past 12 months - Terrick Terrick Park, Merin Merin Swamp and Tumpenyeri Growers Farm.

CSC reduced its support from 20 paid days a year to 15 days for its CSC coordinator role from 2022 to 2023 (currently run by Justin Marshall) . This has meant a few less sessions during the colder winter months. It would be great to be able to go further afield to places like Corranderk, Lake Tyrell and connecting with other groups and also have a budget for skilled people to contribute to the program like Uncle Ron, Pete Curly or others.

- **Kuli Business coordinators: Uncle Rick, Justin and Chase**

IMPACT - BEING THE CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE

"The Kuli Program has been running really well, we've gone out and seen lots of cultural occupation sites in region. The boys really like it, we've made stone tools which the boys really liked, and we are still in the process of trying to finish those off. We have to use outside people to help do that, so it's been a bit of a process but, the boys like the hands-on stuff, touching scar trees, grinding stones, the water in rock wells."

UNCLE RICK NELSON

Participants:

"I like Kuli business because we learn about the Culture and how the land used to be and in the future I hope we see more of it."

"I like hanging out with friends and seeing different places and learning more."

"I like to go out on Country, learn about scar trees and all that. I'd like to see more white people learn about our Culture. Going out to the res and catching fish was good."

" I've loved meeting new people."

"I like Kuli Business because meeting all the people and growing connections with them and going around seeing Aboriginal sites and I'd like to be a part of this one day as a mentor. "



NALDERUN YOUTH MENTOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM REPORT

Overview

This program was led by First Nations Youth Mentors who regularly visited local First Nations high school students and hosted them at a Cultural Day on Djaara Country and a two-night camp on Djab Wurrung Country.

We have had over 4 years of connections with students at both Castlemaine Secondary (CSC) and Maryborough Education Center (MEC) and a little bit less time but still strong connections with students from Bendigo Senior Secondary College. Given these stronger connections students felt increasingly comfortable to engage and talk with us on our weekly visits into the schools. In the past students have expressed shame around not knowing enough about their cultural identity, which can lead to anxiety around self-identification and potentially students de-self-identifying. We also know through discussions with students that they continue to have little to no contact with other First Nations students at the school. We therefore knew that the program this semester would need to be focused around getting the students together at constant times. We consistently aimed to point out the consequences of ongoing settler colonisation one of which being, through no fault of their own, students lack of cultural knowledge and the shame they felt around this. In direct response to this we aimed to keep bringing culture and teachings from Country into the classroom. We also recognised that the classroom can often be an uncomfortable space for First Nations students and aimed to spend more time out on Country.

Camp

This camp was the culmination of the semester which brought students together from four different schools that all work with Nalderun in different capacities. The camp spanned three days and was held in Gariwerd (the Grampians Mountains) at Halls Gap. The camp program was created by the students and Nalderun Youth Mentors. This made the camp incredibly engaging for each student as it was their intentions that drove the camp. From activities, games and making dinner, to a collaborative banner painting and small group bush walks, the camp had a lot of student-led activities. As well as this, a Cultural tour with local mob to spiritual and historically significant sites gave the camp the foundation to be continually beneficial to students beyond the end date.

Summary

Our program demonstrates the benefit of having First Nations youth supporting First Nations youth.

There is a double fold beneficial experience that occurs in this program that cannot be underestimated. The connections and relationships that develop between students, and between youth mentors and students, is integral to the creation and continuation of our proud strong First Nations identities. We hope to be able to facilitate this program in the future and listen more closely to what our students would like to see in the future days and events of the program.

**Nalderun Youth-Mentor:
Benjamin Reid (he/him)**



ME-MANDOOK GALK

REPORT

Our Home Away From Home



Over the past year we have been on a wonderful journey, our shed is up and connected power. We have also been able to connect plumbing to allow us to capture and store water. Having a sound base has allowed everyone to establish a strong connection with Country and a real sense of purpose.

We have been strengthening our partnership with the mob at the Middleton prison and have been on a wonderful learning journey about native plants that the farm will be producing and hoping to propagate over in the upcoming year. This mentorship has allowed everyone thrive and support each other in many different ways.

Our dream is to establish a sound revenue stream going into the future. This year we have continued a strong connection with local Elders and were lucky enough to inherit an extensive collection of plants from Aunty Julie McHale which we are currently in the process of learning from. 2023 has been the first year of us hosting a School Based Apprentice Traineeship which has been wonderful to share our knowledge with them and watch them grow.

Our main highlight of the year came from us securing funding for the next three years from the William Buckland Foundation to kickstart our First Nations led Bush Tucker Enterprise. This level of security will allow us to plan for the future and work towards our dream of making the farm self-sustainable both in terms of knowledge learnt and knowledge shared to help everyone grow.

THE MEETING PLACE

A place to come together on Country

31 First Nations kids participated in the Meeting Place program over the second half of 2022. An extra 10 children attended Bring-a-Friend day.

Kids come together from South School, Campbells Creek PS, Winters Flat PS, St Mary's, Harcourt PS and Castlemaine Secondary College. Meeting Place always checks in with Chewton and the local Steiner School to see if there are any kids wanting to come along.

As well as a range of activities at the Meeting Place's home base in Yapeen, the class travelled by bus to some great places nearby. Kyabram Wildlife Park, where they got up close and personal with the birds.

The kids visited the special water holes near Chewton where water was stored for visiting community. Chase one of the Nalderun Youth Mentors showed them where the holes were hiding. Everyone climbed up to look at the view to hear the Two Mountains teaching was a special excursion. Mucking around in the dam next door was also a hit!

Visiting puppeteers introduced the children to some simple puppet making skills and explored the art of play time story-telling.

Kooroocheang was a hit in the bracing wind with an outdoor picnic and everyone collected sticks to be included in the display nest for Bundjil in the Permanent Exhibition at the Market Building in Castlemaine.

The group then visited the Grand Opening of "Boorp Boorp Boondyil" the Dja Dja Wurrung Exhibition at the Market Building Castlemaine – with a special pre-Launch tour with Uncle Rick Nelson. Afterwards the kids visited the Three Creek Meet site and planted trees with great enthusiasm.

Bring-a-Friend day was as usual a huge hit. With the place a buzz, the local CFA truck showered the kids with water. Kids did weaving with Aunty Kath, damper cooking over an outside fire and silent creature and insect tracking on the verandah. The kids created ochre art to represent the creatures they found. Kids also explored the Aboriginal art of sign language and secret signals, introducing physical literacy, and we all considered how the skills of sign language could be useful for hunting and survival.

Volunteers attended a 4 hour working bee out at the Meeting Place, Yapeen School, making safe nails on the verandah, managing rodent damage and a general tidy up and clean.



STUDENT SUPPORT REPORT

A tailored student support program for First Nations Students at Castlemaine Secondary College.

Highlights of the program include:

- Weekly tutoring for students across literacy and numeracy. This allowed many students, particularly from VCAL to achieve academic outcomes, and was reflected by the growth and graduation rates of the senior students.
- All First Nations students were engaged with our student support program, however some received more than others, based on need.
- Driving lessons were conducted with students that, for a variety of reasons, had difficulty getting hours outside of school.
- Applied learning projects allowed students to use hands-on activities to meet academic outcomes; this was achieved through planning excursions, building a shed, and going out on Country.
- Constantly engaging with families to discuss the best way for students to undertake their schooling. This was facilitated by relationships being built over several years.
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Want some more? (stats)

- First Nation Youth support, Student support engaged with First Nations youth to run programs once per term.
- Students engaged with Culture through Kuli business with Uncle Rick Nelson and Wararak with Auntie Kath Coff.
- Students that were having difficulty in their subjects were identified through teachers liaising with Nalderun staff. There was then an individualized learning plan and goals were set to improve academic and attendance outcomes.
- Students were assisted in their undertaking of their Indigenous School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeships.
- Nalderun staff and teachers implemented and maintained a food program for Indigenous families in the area, this was conducted at the Etty street campus at Castlemaine Secondary College.
- Overall Castlemaine Secondary has been very supportive of our programs and presence within the school, we look forward to strengthening that relationship in the years to come.

INDIGENOUS RELATIONAL WORLD VIEWS AND PEDAGOGIES

This training run by Nalderun is primarily for early childhood, schools and educational purposes. It discusses Indigenous ways of seeing and being in the world, Indigenous pedagogies and using Indigenous protocols to introduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content.

This year we trained the Kangan Institute, Teach for Australia and Outdoor Education at La Trobe University. We tailored the training for organisations such as Mt Alexander Shire Council, Castlemaine Library, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria, and other local groups. We also partnered with Castlemaine Self Reflection Conversations group who focus on allyship and systemic racism and with Uncle Rick Nelsons Cultural Tours on Country.

Nalderuns trainings take a personalised, conversational, welcoming and anti-racist approach based on the needs and experiences of those in the room. Participants are asked to reflect on and discuss the beliefs, values, privileges and cultures they bring.

We believe that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities are supported by non-Indigenous Australians who have open hearts and minds, amazing things can happen for the whole community and the way forward is together, walking side by side.

We also partnered with Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC) through the Victorian Government's Public Intoxification trail to train First Responders in this Shire in response to the tragic death in custody of Aunty Tanya Day here in Castlemaine in 2017. Those that were invited to participate was Dhelkaya Health, Ambulance Victoria, Victorian Police, and the General Practitioners in this Shire. All organisations participated except for the Victorian Police.

FOODSHARE REPORT

Healthy (and not hungry) Mob!

We've been delivering food to 13 families once a fortnight all year, and now Kohen has joined us as a volunteer in 2023.

The families we deliver to love seeing us - they enjoy us being part of their lives to help them out. They tell us we're their saviours, and we love doing it and seeing the smiles on their faces.

We pick up the food from Bendigo Foodshare each time. Foodshare are really happy to partner with us because we are so organised and we know what we're doing. Foodshare are keen to find out how to support us & our families better into the future.

According to Foodshare statistics, last year we delivered a massive 4000kg of food!! That's 8000 meals!!

We're going to continue doing it, because families are only going to need it more.

Foodshare team: John, Chase & Kohen

SNAPSHOT

13

Families

4000KG

Of Food

8000

Meals

This financial year we have had another increase in income, this time of 25%, which is similar to last year's increase. If this continues, we will have a million-dollar turnover in 2024!

Our Total income was \$713,419

Grants \$394K – including School Based Apprenticeship and Training (SBAT) - Agriculture Vic and Victorian Women's Trust
Donations \$21K – including one of \$15K, which we have allocated to develop Waaman Tours as a social enterprise
Service Revenue \$130K Training – Bendigo District Aboriginal Corporation and Bendigo Technical School
Funding \$150K – National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)

Our Expenditure was of course commensurately higher too at \$645K, with Salaries and Wages at around two thirds of our income at \$530K (including Super & Workcover).

Our Equity sits at \$430K, including Me Mandook Galk land, buildings and equipment, and we recorded a Surplus of \$68K.

The Finding of the Auditors picked up five (5) Low lever risks and one (1) Medium level risk to the corporation, most of which either have been, or are, easily remedied.

Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation

Statement of Profit or Loss

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue			
Revenue from operating activities	4.	693,848	536,114
Other Income	1	19,571	6,621
Total revenue	4. 1	713,419	542,735
Expenses			
Employee benefits expense	5.	530,632	440,858
Depreciation	1	5,897	11,831
Administration and general costs	5.	87,655	39,268
Occupancy expenses	1	886	1,120
Marketing expenses		-	1,208
Program Support expenses		13,419	2,070
IT expenses		510	63
Other expenses		6,044	120
Total expenses		645,043	496,538
Surplus for the year		68,376	46,197
Total comprehensive income for the year		68,376	46,197

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	8.	342,257	170,70
Trade and other receivables	1	30,094	0
Total current assets	7.	372,351	170,70
	1		0
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	6.1	183,161	160,863
Total non-current assets		183,161	160,863
Total assets		555,512	434,033
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	7.	108,120	54,24
Employee benefits	2	14,591	5
Total current liabilities	5.	122,711	15,898
	2		3
Non-current liabilities			
Employee benefits	5.2	2,122	1,592
Total non-current liabilities		2,122	1,592
Total liabilities		124,833	71,730
Net assets		430,679	362,303
Equity			
Retained earnings		430,679	362,303
Total equity		430,679	362,303

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

STAFF & DIRECTORS

The Family That Makes Nalderun

Directors:

- Uncle Rick Nelson
- Uncle Ron Murray
- Kelly Ann Blake
- Pauline Bolch
- Benjamin Reid (on leave)

Staff:

- Kath Coff – CEO
- Uncle Rick Nelson - Cultural Advisor and Kuli Group
- Aunty Paulette Nelson - Elder and Cultural Advisor
- Janet Philips - Programs Manager
- Zoe Scogilo – Admin/ Board support
- Chase Norfolk – Food deliveries/ Kuli Business/ Youth Mentor/ SBAT Coordinator
- Grace Coff – Warrarrak Mentor/Coordinator
- Jean McMahan - First Nations Mentor
- Ben Reid – Youth Mentor
- Bee Postill – SBAT Program Coordinator
- Maya Coff – Youth Mentor
- John Nickleson – Food deliveries
- Kohen Williams – SBAT/First Nations Youth Mentor
- Cohen Nelson – Landcare Management/ SBAT co-coordinator
- Zeppelin Valentine - Wellbeing Trainee and Bush Tucker Crew
- Al Coff - Meeting Place Cook
- Polly Cotton – Homework club/ First Nations Youth Mentor
- Keenan Lucas – Bushtucker/ SBAT/ Mentor/Meeting Place
- Justin Marshall - Kuli Group teacher
- Jess Connoley - Meeting Place Teacher
- Tom Norfolk - Bush Tucker Trainee

AND
HUGE
THANKS
TO OUR DEADLY
VOLUNTEERS, ALLIES
AND MEMBERS
WHO MAKE OUR
WORK POSSIBLE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Partners and Funders

National Indigenous Australians Agency
Mount Alexander Shire Council
Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative
William Buckland Foundation
Neighbourhood House Victoria
Castlemaine Community House
Castlemaine Secondary College
Maryborough Education Centre
Bendigo Senior Secondary College
Middleton Prison
Kangan Institute
Parks Victoria
Coliban Water
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
Connecting Country
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Friends of Nalderun
Castlemaine Self Reflection Conversations
Agriculture Victoria
Victorian Women's Trust

We are an Aboriginal led not-for-profit organisation and registered Charity with Deductible Gift Recipient status. All donations are tax deductible.

We invite you to support our vision for a future where local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are strong, proud, and empowered.

Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation

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Or find us on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#)!

WE THANK YOU
OUR COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS
FOR YOUR SUPPORT