

BURRUUGAA
CULTURAL CENTRE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2030

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Bundjalung People, and their lands and waters on which we live and work. This Country is where the river meets the sea, it holds the stories, knowledge, and the languages of the Bundjalung people, who have cared for this land for millenia.

We pay our respects to Bundjalung Elders, past and present, whose wisdom continues to guide our work. We also extend that respect to all Bundjalung peoples, including our young people who continue to learn and revitalise culture, language, and Country.

As we undertake our work here in Ballina, we honour the ongoing connection our people have to this Country, its waterways, and its vast ecosystems. We are committed to listening, learning, and walking together to ensure the continuation of Bunjalung language and culture.

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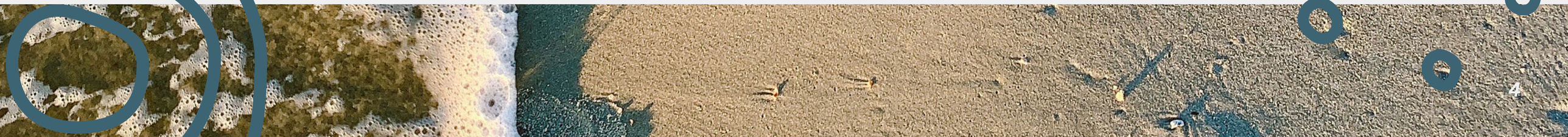


ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & THANKS

This plan was developed through the support of the NSW Aboriginal Language Trust, we recognise their commitment to revitalising Aboriginal languages has made the plan a reality. We extend our gratitude for their ongoing support and dedication to empowering communities like ours to strengthen culture through language.

Written by Nathan Brennan of Waagayamba Consultants, a proud Gumbaynggirr, Bundjalung, and Gamilaraay man, this plan reflects the collective vision of the members and directors of Burruugaa Cultural Centre. Burrugaa Cultural Centre aims to revitalise Bundjalung language and culture and ensure these flourish for generations to come.

Aboriginal Languages Trust



WHERE OUR JOURNEY BEGAN

Burruugaa Cultural Corporation's journey began to revitalise Bundjalung language, culture, and identity, ensuring these thrive for future generations. Established by Bundjalung community members in Ballina, the corporation was created to empower our people to reconnect with language and strengthen connections to Country.

Our corporation was founded on five simple objectives:

1. **Revitalising Bundjalung Language and Culture** – Ensuring the language and cultural practices of the Bundjalung people are revitalised, continued and celebrated across the community.
2. **Strengthening Connections to Country** – Ensuring our knowledge and practices are at the forefront of protecting our lands and waters through sustainable and culturally grounded practices.
3. **Empowering Our Community** – Providing opportunities for education, cultural leadership, and growth to develop strong relationships between communities and Country.
4. **Creating Economic Opportunities** – Developing pathways for self-sufficiency, employment, and sustainable development for our people.
5. **Fostering Unity and Wellbeing** – Building a strong, connected community that thrives through its Bundjalung values and traditions.

Our membership is made up of committed Bundjalung community members who share a vision of revitalising Bundjalung cultural values, philosophies and ways of being. As a community we can create a future where culture, language, and our practices remain at the centre of our way of life.

Burruugaa Cultural Centre Philosophies

1. **Revitalisation** (Ensuring our language, culture, and identity thrive)
2. **Connection** (Strengthening connections between people, Country, and community)
3. **Inclusivity** (Creating spaces where everyone feels valued and supported)
4. **Empowerment** (Developing a strong sense of self, leadership, and resilience)
5. **Innovation** (Balancing traditional practices with forward-thinking approaches to learn and grow)

GET TO KNOW US

Our Personality (Who we are)

At Burruugaa Cultural Centre, we are grounded in Bundjalung philosophies and worldview. We are inclusive and innovative which draws strength from our deep connection to Country. We honour the knowledges and stories passed down from the old people, while embracing forward-thinking approaches to revitalise language and culture. We are community-focused organisation which is guided by the aspirations of our community to create meaningful change. We strive to create welcoming spaces where everyone feels valued and supported. Through our work we will empower our young people and community to use language and culture as a vehicle to create a shared vision for the future. We are committed to ensuring that the legacy of Bundjalung culture continues to thrive, enriching the lives of both present and future generations.

Our Purpose (Why we are here)

At Burruugaa, our purpose is to revitalise Bundjalung language and culture, to empower our community to reconnect with cultural knowledge and strengthen connections to Country. We exist to ensure our knowledge are carried forward, enriching lives and fostering a strong, connected community.

Our Processes (How we do things)

At Burruugaa Cultural Centre, we believe in community-led decision-making, collaboration, capacity building, and intergenerational knowledge sharing, ensuring the continuation of our Bundjalung traditions while embracing innovation to create sustainable impacts for our community.



GET TO KNOW US

Our Products (What We Do)

At Burruugaa Cultural Centre, our work centres on language, culture, and community. We deliver programs that revitalise Bundjalung language and culture, creating opportunities for learning, sharing, and celebrating who we are. Through education, workshops and culture camps, we will nurture our young people and their families to connect with Country.

Our initiatives focus on strengthening community connections and promoting cultural continuity. By investing in creative mediums like photography, filmmaking, and storytelling, we ensure that Bundjalung traditions continue to be celebrated by future generations.

Collaboration is central to what we do. We work with organisations, schools, and communities to achieve shared goals, ensuring that our efforts benefit both the Bundjalung community and those who support our vision.

Our Values

At Burruugaa Cultural Centre, our values are the foundation to all we do. They reflect our commitment to Bundjalung Country, culture, and the community to ensure our work is meaningful and enduring. These values shape our approach and drive our vision for a thriving Bundjalung future.

1. **Empowering** - We foster leadership and resilience by equipping individuals and communities with the tools and knowledge to take ownership of their cultural journeys, ensuring they can confidently carry traditions into the future.
2. **Inclusive** - We create welcoming spaces where everyone feels valued and supported, embracing diversity and ensuring our programs are accessible to all members of the community, regardless of age, ability, or background.
3. **Collaborative** - Burruugaa Cultural Centre thrives on strong partnerships with schools, organisations, and community groups, working together to amplify our impact and share responsibility for preserving and revitalising Bundjalung culture and language.
4. **Innovative** - While honouring tradition, we embrace modern technologies and forward-thinking approaches, such as digital tools for language revitalisation, to ensure our cultural practices remain dynamic and relevant for future generations.
5. **Sustainable** - We are committed to practices that protect and nurture our land, culture, and knowledge systems, ensuring they remain vibrant and enduring for generations to come.

These values underpin our work and inspire us to strengthen Bundjalung culture, language, and identity, ensuring they flourish now and into the future.

OUR BOARD



KRIS COOK

Kris is a proud Bundjalung man deeply connected to Cabbage Tree Island and Ballina, with a passion for revitalising Bundjalung language and culture. As a highly experienced language teacher and cultural practitioner, Kris has worked extensively within schools and the wider Bundjalung community, sharing his knowledge and fostering pride in cultural identity.

Kris's innovative and creative approach to cultural education includes a keen interest in photography and filmmaking, which he uses to document and celebrate Bundjalung traditions and stories. His dedication to preserving and promoting Bundjalung culture drives his work, inspiring individuals and communities to reconnect with their heritage and carry forward their rich cultural legacy.



ELI COOK

Eli is a proud Bundjalung man with strong ties to Cabbage Tree Island and Ballina. As an experienced language teacher, Eli has dedicated his career to revitalising Bundjalung language and culture. He works across schools and the broader Bundjalung community, delivering impactful language and cultural programs that inspire pride, identity, and connection.

Eli's passion for education and cultural preservation drives his commitment to ensuring Bundjalung traditions and language continue to thrive for generations to come. His work plays a vital role in empowering the community and strengthening ties to Country and heritage.



GLEN COOK

Glen is a proud Dunghutti, Bundjalung, and Nyangbal man from Northeastern New South Wales. He spent his childhood on Cabbage Tree Island before moving to Ballina in the early 1970s. With over 32 years of experience as an educator, Glen has dedicated his career to empowering Aboriginal communities and fostering educational opportunities.

Glen began his work in education as an Aboriginal Education Assistant from 1983 to 1990. He became a Classroom Teacher at Tabulam Public School in 1991, where he taught for seven years. In 1998, Glen was appointed Principal of Cabbage Tree Island Public School, a role he held until 2005. He then became an Assistant Principal at Evans River K-12 School, continuing to inspire and support Aboriginal students and their families.

Currently, Glen serves as the Head of School at the Gumbaynggirr Giingana Freedom School, New South Wales' first bilingual school in an Aboriginal language. In this role, he leads efforts to revitalise Aboriginal languages and embed cultural practices within education, helping to shape the future of bilingual education in Australia.

Glen's unwavering commitment to language revitalisation and cultural preservation makes him a leading figure in Aboriginal education, inspiring pride, identity, and connection within his community.

SHARING OUR VISION WITH THE COMMUNITY

Our Vision
A connected and resilient community where Bundjalung language, culture, and identity are revitalised and embedded in everyday life, ensuring that our culture, knowledge, and stories continue to inspire future generations.

We Will Know Our Vision Is Achieved When...
When the our community is united through a shared purpose
When Bundjalung language and cultural practices are flourishing as an integral part of everyday life.

Our Mission
Our mission is to revitalise Bundjalung language and culture through programs that embed traditional knowledge, language and stories into the lives of our community. We strive to deliver meaningful programs, cultural camps, and on-Country experiences that nurture a sense identity, self, and connection

Through innovation and commitment to sustainability, we aim to support our people to actively engage with their culture, strengthen connections to Country, and build pathways for leadership and growth. Burruugaa Cultural Centre is dedicated to making cultural revitalisation a part of everyday life for current and future generations.



SWOT ANALYSIS FOR BURRUUGAA CULTURAL CENTRE

Strengths

- Cultural Leadership: Strong commitment to revitalising Bundjalung language and culture through community-focused initiatives.
- Community Connections: Strengthening connections to community, family, and participation across generations.
- Expertise and Knowledge: Access to Elders and knowledgeholders, and skilled practitioners who guide cultural revitalisation efforts.
- Collaboration and Partnerships: Established relationships with organisations, schools, and community groups that can amplify the corporation's impact
- Adaptive Approach: A balance of cultural knowledge and modern tools, includingdigital technology for language and cultural revitalisation.

Weaknesses

- Resource Limitations: Insufficient funding and resources to expand programs and services to their full potential.
- Workforce Challenges: Need for more skilled staff and volunteers to meet community demand and efforts required.
- Capacity Building: Gaps in infrastructure and organisational capacity to scale initiatives sustainably.
- Geographic Barriers: Challenges in engaging all Bundjalung communities, particularly in discrete communities

Opportunities

- Language and Cultural Revival: Increasing opportunities and interest in Bundjalung language which provides a strong foundation for expanded programs and outreach.
- Technology Integration: Use of digital resources and online platforms to make language more accessible.
- Tourism and Cultural Events: Potential to develop cultural tourism initiatives that showcase Bundjalung language and culture while generating income.
- Youth Engagement: Growing interest among younger generations to learn and take up leadership roles in cultural revitalisation efforts.
- Partnership Expansion: Opportunities to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new relationships with organisations and funders with shared goals.

Threats

- Cultural Loss: Passing of elders and knowledgeholders leading to the loss of language and cultural practices, if these knowledges are not adequately recorded.
- Funding Competition: Limited availability of grants and funding opportunities amidst competition from other organisations.
- External Pressures: Economic, political, and social challenges that may impact the corporation’s ability to operate effectively.
- Environmental Degradation: Threats to Country from climate change and unsustainable practices, impacting cultural sites and communities.

FORGING THE ROAD AHEAD: OUR CORE GOALS

In order to achieve our purpose, vision, and mission, Burruugaa Cultural Centre has established four Core Goals that we strive to achieve over the lifetime of this strategic plan. These goals are designed to drive long-term solutions that ensure the revitalisation of Bundjalung language, culture, and community for future generations.

1

Revitalise Bundjalung Language & Culture

Burruugaa Cultural Centre is committed to revitalising and continuing Bundjalung language and cultural practices, ensuring they are celebrated and shared across our community.

2

Strengthen Connections to Country

We aim to protect and nurture our lands and waters, guided our cultural stories and elders, ensuring these are grounded in Bundjalung ways of being and knowledge.

3

Empower and Unite Our Community

Burruugaa strives to develop cultural leadership amongst our young people, nurturing resilience within our community, creating opportunities for growth and connection.

4

Build a Sustainable Future

We are dedicated to creating enterprises for economic independence and sustainability, to ensure our culture and community thrive for generations to come.

GOAL 1

REVITALISE BUNDJALUNG LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

By creating accessible programs, resources, and learning opportunities, Burruugaa Cultural Centre aims to reconnect the community with their language and culture, creating pride in their cultural identity.
Through intergenerational knowledge sharing, cultural events, and education, we aim to make language and culture a vibrant part of everyday life. This goal is central to strengthening community bonds and preserving the unique stories and traditions of Bundjalung Country.

Objective 1

Develop Accessible Language Programs

Design and implement Bundjalung language programs tailored to different age groups and learning levels. This includes in-person classes, online learning tools, and culturally rich resources like videos, apps, and interactive materials. These programs will ensure that language is not only preserved but actively used in daily life, connecting community members to their identity and heritage.

Year 1

Objective 2

Promote Cultural Awareness and Celebration

Create spaces for Elders, cultural leaders, and younger generations to come together through workshops, storytelling, and hands-on activities. By fostering these intergenerational interactions, we ensure that traditional knowledge, language, and practices are passed down authentically, strengthening community bonds and preserving our cultural legacy.

Year 2

Objective 3

Facilitate Intergenerational Knowledge Sharing

Organise regular cultural festivals, exhibitions, and community gatherings to highlight the richness of Bundjalung traditions. These events will serve as platforms to celebrate cultural achievements, showcase local talent, and educate the wider community about Bundjalung heritage, promoting unity and pride among our people.

Year 4

Objective 4

Build toward creating a Bundjalung School

Laying the groundwork for establishing a Bundjalung School that will serve as a dedicated space for language learning, cultural education, and intergenerational knowledge sharing. The school will provide immersive, culturally grounded education, ensuring Bundjalung traditions, values, and teachings are central to the learning experience.

Year 5

GOAL 2

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

By connecting people to the land and waters through immersive activities like excursions, camps, and storytelling, we aim to nurture a sense of belonging and responsibility.
Strengthening these connections ensures that Bundjalung ways, values, and practices remain at the heart of how we care for Country. This goal supports the spiritual, cultural, and environmental wellbeing of both the community and the land, preserving these ties for future generations.

Objective 1

Deliver On-Country Educational Programs

Develop and implement immersive educational programs designed to connect participants with Bundjalung Country. These programs will focus on teaching cultural protocols, traditions, and the spiritual relationship with the land and waters. Through storytelling, interactive activities, and cultural demonstrations, participants will gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and environmental significance of Country.

Year 3

Objective 2

Organise Excursions and Cultural Camps

Plan and facilitate excursions and multi-day cultural camps that allow community members, especially youth, to experience and learn on-Country. These camps will include activities like cultural storytelling, bushwalking, traditional skills workshops, and language learning, providing a safe and supportive space for participants to connect with Country and each other.

Year 1

Objective 3

Promote Intergenerational Knowledge Sharing on Country

Create structured opportunities for Elders and cultural knowledgeholders to share their knowledge and wisdom with younger generations in an on-Country setting. These activities will include traditional practices such as weaving, tool-making, and cultural storytelling, ensuring that vital cultural knowledge is preserved and passed on in an authentic and meaningful way.

Year 3

GOAL 3

EMPOWER AND UNITE OUR COMMUNITY

Through inclusive programs, cultural initiatives, and leadership opportunities, Burruugaa Cultural Centre aims to empower individuals and families to take pride in their heritage and contribute to the collective wellbeing of the community.
By bringing people together to share knowledge, experiences, and traditions, we seek to build a connected and supportive community that values collaboration and cultural continuity. This shared vision of empowerment and unity will ensure a brighter future for current and future generations.

Objective 1

Showcase Community Stories Through Media

Develop photography and filmmaking projects to document and celebrate Bundjalung stories, traditions, and contemporary experiences. These projects will engage community members, especially youth, to learn media skills and actively participate in capturing and preserving cultural narratives. By sharing these stories through exhibitions, films, and digital platforms, Burruugaa Cultural Centre can foster a sense of pride and unity within the community and raise awareness beyond the region.

Year 2

Objective 2

Plan for the Establishment of a Cultural Centre

Begin strategic planning and consultation for the creation of a cultural centre that will serve as a dedicated space for education, workshops, exhibitions, and community events. The centre will act as a hub for sharing and celebrating Bundjalung culture, ensuring the continuation of language, traditions, and practices. This includes identifying potential funding sources, partnerships, and community needs to establish a sustainable and inclusive space.

Year 5

Objective 3

Support Creative and Cultural Skills Development

Provide workshops and training in creative fields such as photography, filmmaking, storytelling, and other arts. These programs will empower community members, particularly youth and aspiring artists, to develop the skills needed to share their perspectives and contribute to cultural preservation. Through creative expression, participants can strengthen their connection to their heritage while building confidence and new opportunities for employment or personal growth.

Year 3

GOAL 4

BUILD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Burruugaa Cultural Centre aims to secure resources, develop economic opportunities, and foster leadership that supports self-sufficiency and independence. By investing in education, training, and innovative initiatives, we seek to empower our people and ensure a thriving, secure future for generations to come.
Through strategic planning and collaboration, this goal will lay the foundation for a future where Bundjalung culture, language, and identity are not only preserved but also flourish within a framework of economic and social stability.

Objective 1

To Develop Strong Organisational Policies

These policies will cover governance, financial management, cultural safety, community engagement, and human resources. By creating clear frameworks, Burruugaa Cultural Centre will promote accountability, consistency, and compliance with regulatory requirements, fostering trust within the community and among stakeholders.

Year 1

Objective 2

To Build Organisational Capacity and Governance

Invest in developing strong leadership and operational capabilities within the corporation. This includes governance training for directors, skills development for staff, and creating systems to improve efficiency and accountability. Strengthening organisational capacity will enable Burruugaa Cultural Centre to manage projects more effectively, adapt to challenges, and grow sustainably.

Year 2

Objective 3

To Secure Sustainable Funding and Partnerships

Develop a robust strategy to diversify funding sources, including grants, philanthropic contributions, and income-generating initiatives. Burruugaa Cultural Centre will also focus on building meaningful partnerships with organisations that share its vision, enabling collaboration on cultural and educational projects. Securing financial independence will ensure the corporation can deliver on its mission for the long term.

Year 3

Objective 4

Establish an Office Facility & ongoing staffing structure

We understand that in order to successfully operate a business we must have the appropriate amount of time and resources to make it a success. We therefore intend to secure an office facility to house staff and develop a staffing structure that is appropriate and sufficient to administer current and future programs.

Year 3



THANK YOU