

PUUYA
FOUNDATION

2023-2024
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

Puuya means “heart” or “life force” in the Kuuku Ya'u dialect

It is one of the six major language groups in Lockhart River.

The Puuya Foundation's work in the very remote Aboriginal Community of Lockhart River on the east coast of Cape York Peninsula, transforms the lives of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Australia.

The support of our community partners, Board and funders who share in the Puuya Vision and Mission:

- Encourages innovation;
- Builds community-led programs (especially in early years learning and parenting);
- Co-designs family wellbeing services;
- Facilitates women's leadership; and
- Develops skills-focussed men's empowerment program.

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1. Who We Are

The Puuya Foundation is a community-controlled organisation based in Lockhart River, delivering place-based, culturally grounded programs that strengthen families, build capability and support long-term community development. Guided by Puuya—our “heart” and “life force”—the Foundation works alongside families to create the conditions for children and communities to succeed.

In 2023–2024, the Foundation has deepened its role as a central support structure within the community. The Kuunchi Kakana Centre continues to operate as a trusted, high-engagement hub where families access early years support, participate in programs, and connect with services. Demand for support has remained strong, reflecting both the ongoing needs within the community and the trust placed in the Foundation.

A key focus this year has been strengthening local workforce participation, with deliberate investment in recruiting and developing Lockhart River-based educators and family support workers. This approach ensures that services are not only culturally appropriate but also contribute to local employment and leadership pathways.

2. Our Vision, Mission and Approach

Our Vision

A Lockhart River where children are safe, supported and thriving; where families lead their own development; and where community capability drives long-term social and economic outcomes.

Our Mission

To build everyday leadership and strengthen capability within Lockhart River through community-led, culturally grounded programs.

Our Approach

The Foundation’s approach remains centred on five pillars—Community, Country, Culture, Learning and Leadership—ensuring that all programs are holistic, integrated and aligned with community-defined success indicators.

In 2023–2024, this approach has been further strengthened through a renewed focus on local decision-making and ownership. The principle of “bringing it back home” has guided operational and strategic decisions, ensuring that programs are designed, delivered and led by the community.

The Foundation continues to leverage partnerships with government, philanthropic and corporate stakeholders to deliver capability-building outcomes, while maintaining strong community governance and accountability.





3. Our History

Since its establishment in 2008, the Puuya Foundation has evolved in response to community priorities, growing from early years programming into a multi-faceted organisation delivering family support, leadership development and community engagement initiatives.

The period from 2021 to 2023 saw significant expansion in workforce, programs and partnerships. In 2023–2024, the organisation entered a phase of consolidation and strengthening, focused on ensuring that growth is sustainable, efficient and aligned to long-term objectives.



A key milestone this year was the commissioning of a Functional Review, undertaken to:

This work supports the Foundation’s commitment to strong governance, accountability and continuous improvement.

4. Our Board

The Puuya Foundation Board provides strong governance, strategic oversight and cultural leadership, ensuring that the organisation remains accountable to community and aligned to its mission.

During 2023–2024, the Board focused on:

- Strengthening governance and organisational sustainability
- Supporting an operational restructure to align resources with strategic priorities
- Ensuring continued alignment with community priorities and the Puuya Approach
- Commissioning and overseeing the Functional Review
- Oversight of major funding agreements and capital projects, including childcare expansion



The Board’s leadership has been critical in guiding the organisation through a period of transition, ensuring that growth is both sustainable and impactful.

Board Members:

						
Dorothy Hobson Chairperson	Craig Jones Dept Chair and Director	Wayne Butcher Director and Mayor of Lockhart River	Marian Pettit Director	Kirsty Davis Director	Jason Cooling Director	Kate White Director



5. Our Team

The Puuya Foundation team continues to grow in capability, professionalism and leadership, with a strong emphasis on local employment and workforce development.

Workforce Development Achievements:

- Three staff commenced Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care
- One staff member completed Certificate III and progressed to Diploma-level study
- Staff completed Mental Health First Aid and Child Care First Aid qualifications
- Strengthened capability in program delivery, community engagement and service coordination

These investments directly support the establishment of a qualified early childhood workforce in Lockhart River, addressing a critical gap in service delivery and enabling long-term sustainability.

The team has also demonstrated strong leadership in delivering community events, cultural programs and family support services, reinforcing the Foundation's role as a central community institution.

6. Chairperson's Reflection

As Chairperson of the Puuya Foundation, I am pleased to present the 2024 Annual Report. This year has been one of continued commitment to strengthening our community from within.

Our focus has been clear—to build local capability and ensure that the future of the Puuya Foundation remains in the hands of the Lockhart River community. We have welcomed new leadership in Governance, commenced the year welcoming a new CEO, and continued to invest in our local workforce, creating real opportunities for our people.

The Board has taken deliberate steps to strengthen the organisation, including commissioning a Functional Review and progressing an operational restructure. These decisions have been made to ensure that the Foundation is sustainable, efficient and positioned for long-term success.

We are proud of the progress made and remain committed to building strong families, strong leaders and a strong future for our children.

Dorothy Hobson
Chairperson, Puuya Foundation





7. Chief Executive Officer's Report

In June 2023, I was appointed CEO of the Puuya Foundation, following my role as Director of the Kuunchi Kakana Centre. I am grateful for the trust placed in me by the Board and community to lead the organisation into its next phase.

The Foundation is in a strong position, with secure funding for core programs, growing partnerships and significant opportunities for expansion—particularly in early childhood education.

This year has focused on:



While the operational restructure has presented challenges, it has been necessary to ensure that the organisation is fit for purpose and positioned for long-term impact.

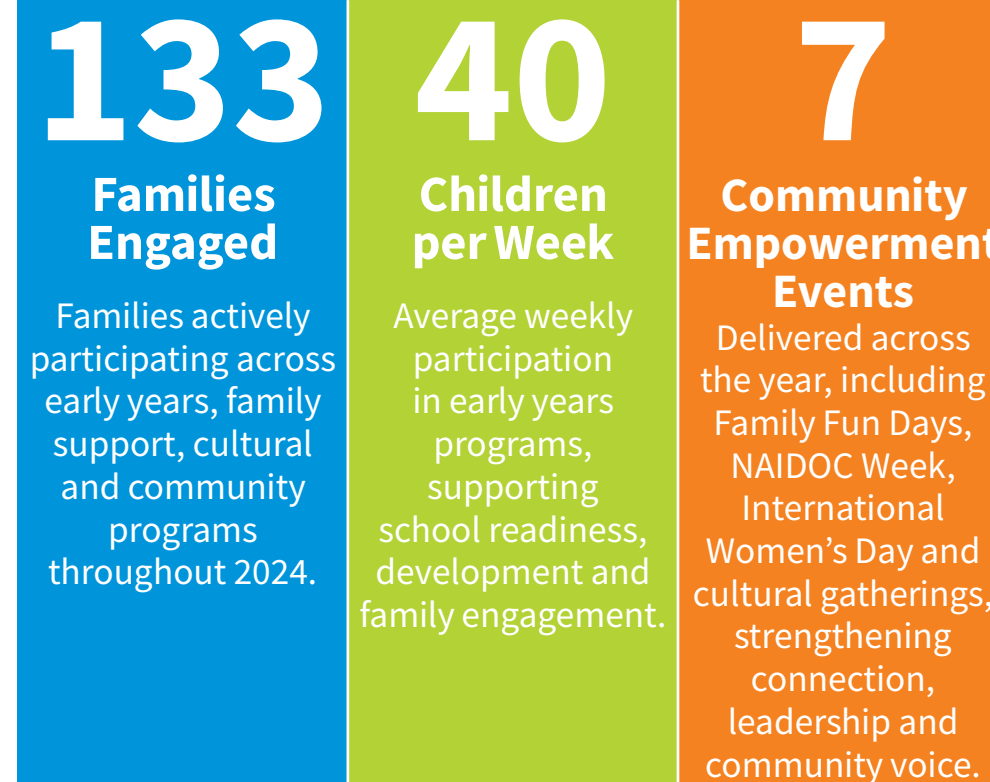
I am proud of the team's resilience and commitment, and confident in the Foundation's ability to continue delivering meaningful outcomes for Lockhart River families.

Emily Schuh
CEO, Puuya Foundation

8. A Year in Review – Programs and Social Impact

The Puuya Foundation continues to deliver integrated, community-led programs that strengthen participation, build capability and support long-term outcomes for families in Lockhart River.

2023–2024 Snapshot – Community Reach and Engagement



Boarding School Pathways (Years 7–12)

- 17 young people supported to transition to boarding school in 2024
- 6 students remained engaged through to the end of the school year

Early Years and Education

The expansion of early childhood programming continues to be a core priority, with strong and consistent engagement from families. Weekly participation of approximately 40 children reflects both demand for services and the trust families place in the Foundation.

The introduction of the SONG program has further strengthened school engagement, supporting children and families to prioritise attendance and educational pathways.

Family Support and Wellbeing

The Foundation continues to provide a consistent and accessible support system for families, with 133 families engaged across services.

This work includes:

- Ongoing case management and referrals
- Support during periods of vulnerability
- Creating a safe and trusted environment through the Kuunchi Kakana Centre

This level of engagement demonstrates the Foundation's role as a central support structure within the community.

Leadership and Workforce Development

Investment in local capability remains a priority, with training and development pathways supporting staff to step into professional roles.

This approach strengthens:

- Service delivery quality
- Local employment pathways
- Long-term community leadership



Youth Engagement and Pathways

Supporting young people to transition successfully into secondary education remains a critical focus.

In 2024:

- 17 young people were supported to attend boarding school
- 6 students remained through to the end of the school year
- While retention remains a challenge, these outcomes highlight both the importance of sustained support and the need for continued investment in transition pathways.

Community and Cultural Engagement

Seven community empowerment events were delivered throughout the year, reinforcing connection, identity and collective leadership.

These events provided opportunities for:

- Cultural expression and knowledge sharing
- Strengthening relationships across families
- Supporting community-led initiatives and leadership

Key Achievements

- Secured funding for childcare expansion and infrastructure upgrades
- Delivered consistent engagement across 133 families
- Maintained strong participation in early years programs (40 children weekly)
- Supported youth transitions into boarding school pathways
- Strengthened partnerships and secured significant philanthropic investment

2023–2024
Impact at a Glance



9. Financial
Reporting
2023–2024

The Foundation has maintained a stable and responsible financial position, enabling continued investment in programs, workforce and infrastructure.

Growth in funding—particularly through philanthropic partnerships—has supported the expansion of early childhood services and organisational capability.

The organisation continues to prioritise financial sustainability, transparency and accountability in the management of all funding sources.



Puuya Foundation
ABN: 431 345 210 65

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue	3	1,668,429	771,348
Other income	3	510,806	265,097
Employee benefits expense		(935,895)	(523,123)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(107,539)	(100,180)
Other Expenses From Ordinary Activities	4	(691,790)	(400,479)
Profit before income tax		444,011	12,663
Income tax expense		-	-
Net Profit for the year		444,011	12,663
Other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:		-	-
Total other comprehensive income for the year		444,011	12,663
Total comprehensive income for the year		444,011	12,663

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2024

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	1,484,513	1,009,738
Trade and other receivables	6	23,709	4,852
Other current assets	7	899	12,454
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		1,509,121	1,027,044
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	8	1,862,256	1,856,313
Other non-current assets		875	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		1,683,131	1,856,313
TOTAL ASSETS		3,372,252	2,883,357
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	9	59,947	49,191
Unearned revenue	10	186,354	173,237
Employee benefits	11	29,364	20,905
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		275,665	243,333

NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES

Employee benefits

11

TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES

TOTAL LIABILITIES

NET ASSETS

EQUITY

Retained surplus

TOTAL EQUITY

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

31,580	19,028
31,580	19,028
307,245	262,361
3,065,007	2,620,996
3,065,007	2,620,996
3,065,007	2,620,996



10. Future Directions

The Puuya Foundation is focused on delivering sustainable, long-term outcomes through continued investment in capability, leadership and infrastructure.

Key Priorities for 2024–2025

Early Childhood Development

- Establishment of a licensed childcare service
- Progress toward national provider status
- Completion of infrastructure upgrades
- Planned service commencement in early 2026

Organisational Sustainability

- Implementation of recommendations from the Functional Review
- Strengthening data collection and management systems
- Enhancing IT infrastructure and operational efficiency

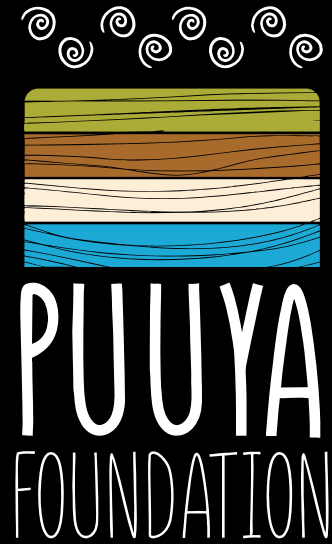
Learning and Leadership

- Continued workforce development and training
- Expansion of leadership pathways for community members

Community Engagement and Empowerment

- Ongoing delivery of women’s gatherings and leadership initiatives
- Continued support for cultural programs and festivals
- Strengthening community participation in programs and decision-making

The Foundation remains committed to walking alongside the Lockhart River community, building a future defined by strong families, strong leadership and strong Puuya.



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