

# Jawun and Cape York

A 20 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE



MARCH 2021



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Disclaimer: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this report may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

Jawun pays respect to our Elders past and present. We acknowledge the generations of emerging leaders, now and in the future, and their role in continuing to maintain connection. We honour the resilience and continuing connection to country, waters, culture and community by all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia. We recognise that the decisions we make today will impact the lives of generations to come.

Throughout this document the term Indigenous refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Unless otherwise acknowledged, photographs in this report were taken by Jawun staff.

Cover: Noel Pearson holds a 'burnie bean' painted with the Jawun logo, to be shared with a secondee as a symbol of lasting connection and friendship. Photo: Daniel Linnet



This report is dedicated to Kuku Yalanji elder Ronnie Harrigan, now deceased, who honoured us with the name *Jawun* in 2009. Mr Harrigan was a dear friend to us, as well as a respected statesman in his community, a recognised cultural healer, and the owner of many beautiful and culturally important stories and songs.



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# Prologue by Noel Pearson, Jawun Patron

Jawun was about social change, about transformation. An agenda, leadership, and relationships and commitment that last the distance.

We had the agenda, based on strong belief in the right of Indigenous people to take responsibility for our own lives, lives we have reason to value. We had the leadership, throughout our communities. But we needed relationships, sustained over a long time, to build the capacity and capability to put our agenda into action.

The most valuable thing our early partners gave us was their people. Through them we gained skills to create empowerment and wealth from our ideas in a way that leaves our children and grandchildren better off. While their eyes were opened and they gained friendship and understanding, they brought practicality to our reform. With them we made real the community's solutions to start-up enterprise and quality education.



Along with leadership and strong organisations, we now have the capacity to take charge of our problems and seize our opportunities. It comes down to Indigenous Australians taking a fair place in the economy, taking a fair place in our own country, and making a fair contribution too.

Ten years ago, Jawun had achieved something many thought it couldn't, transposing a model of business-philanthropic partnership with Indigenous communities to Redfern and Shepparton - a long way away from the Cape where it began. When I reflected on that, I dared to imagine a day when Jawun might be a model for partnerships with Indigenous communities all around the country.

That day is here now. The partnerships and commitment at the heart of Jawun have been sustained for 20 years, and are vibrant still. What we have built is a unique combination of vision and analysis, policy advocacy and practical

implementation, all on the back of extraordinary partnerships between Indigenous, corporate, philanthropic and government Australia.

The history we reflect on here gives us cause for real optimism. There is much to be done, but I believe the partnerships we have built - which embody the friendship that the very word *Jawun* stands for - will have a decisive role to play in the years to come.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Noel Pearson".

Noel Pearson





Jawun Cape York Executive Visit 2015. Photo: David Rennie



# Foreword

Twenty years on, we look back on the origins of Jawun at the country's most northern tip: Cape York.

It was the turn of the millennium, and local Aboriginal community members were frustrated. They wanted a better future for their families, their children, and their people.

Passive welfare had left a trail of alcohol abuse and destruction on the world's oldest continuous living culture. It had become a 'way of life'. But along with the feelings of powerlessness came a common strength, a motivation.

The Aboriginal people of Cape York mobilised to take back their own destiny, be active participants and reap the benefits of the modern economy. This movement for change was led by Hope Vale Indigenous leader Noel Pearson.

Noel and other Aboriginal leaders were heard by influential change-makers from some of our best-known companies: Westpac, Boston Consulting Group and The Body Shop. Their shared vision was the birth of what would become Jawun, an organisation championing an Indigenous-led empowerment approach that is led by local people, for local people.

*Jawun*, in the Kuku Yalanji language of Cape York, means *to be a friend*. Working with Indigenous leaders, organisations and communities, Jawun facilitates long-term partnerships between corporate, government and Indigenous Australia. The vision and aspiration for change is led by Indigenous partners, with skills and human capital provided from corporate and government partners.

It's a connection that has seen more than 3,500 corporate and government employees from the banking, management consulting, resources, insurance and public sectors live and work in Indigenous communities in 11 regions across the country, transferring skills and knowledge of success to accelerate community initiatives and enterprises. Together this represents 17,000 weeks of work and more than \$130 million in in-kind contributions.

There have also been successful leadership development initiatives. Eight Indigenous leaders have undertaken a one-year 'reverse secondment' in corporate organisations, sharing their unique knowledge, skills and culture in the workplace. Nearly 50 young Indigenous leaders have been on the immersive Emerging Leaders program, and over 80 Indigenous women are active members of the cross-sectoral Stories of Female Leadership network.

Jawun has gone from a novel idea to an established and effective broker of change. Today it represents a meeting of cultures, where two-way exchange of knowledge drives understanding. Understanding leads to respect and genuine relationships built on trust.

All this rests on our origins in Cape York. The story of that beginning is at the heart of not only who we are, but who we want to become. Join us in this retrospective, as we look back to look forward.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KBaylis'.

**Karyn Baylis AM,**  
Managing Director and CEO

# Executive summary

This retrospective captures the history and impact of a 20-year partnership between the non-profit organisation Jawun (formerly Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships) and the Indigenous leaders and organisations of Australia's Cape York region. It looks at how a breakthrough approach to Indigenous-led empowerment began, what it has achieved, and how it has spread across the nation.

The story begins in 2000 in a richly diverse region devastated by colonisation and then welfare dependency, but vibrant with strong leadership and aspiration. Indigenous leaders met corporate executives willing to champion a new model of support where they provided not money but people, in an approach to capacity building that was firmly Indigenous-led and place-based. This bold experiment became known as the Jawun model.

Jawun seconded skilled individuals from a range of corporate partners, particularly BCG, Westpac, IBM and KPMG. After 2011, the Australian Government became a major secondment partner. Over **1,100 secondees** have now lived and worked in Cape York, spending **6,660 weeks in community** and supporting **28 Indigenous organisations**.

Secondees worked in sequence, applying specialist skills to provide support in 3 areas: **reform and leadership, education, and economic development**. Outcomes include new initiatives, services and institutions; gains in individuals' skills, confidence and resilience; and contributions to economic and social development through the rise of Indigenous enterprise, employment and entrepreneurship.

Today Cape York's Indigenous organisations are strong and capable, and continue to bring capacity, confidence and opportunity to communities. Their work has led to several iterations of powerful reform agendas, and to today's reform movement Pama Futures, part of Empowered Communities, which lays a foundation for land rights, empowerment and economic development. The region is at the forefront of the national Indigenous agenda.

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Today we have a conversation, we have a leadership cohort, and we have a reform agenda that is shared by Indigenous regions right across the country.

Noel Pearson, Jawun Patron

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Through Jawun's partnership in Cape York, a unique model for social change has emerged, demonstrating how capacity building supports and strengthens the concept of empowerment. This model is built on 3 concepts:

1. **Resources for innovation.** Indigenous leaders and organisations are the engines driving change in communities. Secondees and executives inject skills and corporate and policy know-how to incubate their bold new ideas to become reality, at speed and at scale. This approach to enabling innovation is especially powerful for reform initiatives intended to tackle complex, long-running problems ill-suited to solutions designed for other communities and delivered 'top-down' by government.
2. **An enterprise approach to community development.** Indigenous people who lead big and small change are at the heart of an Indigenous-led development agenda. Their access to business skills and entrepreneurial thinking, as well as confidence and networks, brings their visions of social change to life. Applied to Indigenous businesses, this support helps create opportunities for sustainable employment opportunities and a broader set of gains for community, culture and country.

3. **Multisectoral collaboration.** Connections and networks can be powerful enablers of success for Indigenous-led ideas and initiatives. Jawun convenes an unprecedented group of partners from all sectors, forging connections between Indigenous, corporate, philanthropic, government and academic sectors. This collaboration benefits all partners, driving Indigenous-led change as well as a two-way transfer of knowledge that generates a ripple effect for reconciliation.

Overall, the Jawun partnership in Cape York has shown how change can be achieved by putting community in the driving seat – a change powerful enough to influence policy at local, regional and even national level.

Through the long-term commitment of its partners Jawun has evolved and stretched. It has proved itself replicable, growing to encompass **11 partner regions where over 100 Indigenous partner organisations have been supported by around 3,500 secondees and over 1,000 executives from corporate and government Australia.** Jawun has gone from facilitating secondments and Executive Visits to implementing leadership development initiatives and brokering support for regional and nationwide policy reform. And as the partnership has grown, it has created a ripple effect for reconciliation.

Hand-in-hand with its partners, Jawun continues to innovate. Today, Jawun and Cape York are embarking on a new chapter of partnership, as innovative and ground-breaking as the first. A co-design process identified that Jawun's support should be more flexible, higher level, and strategic. Spurred by the digital adaptation that occurred as a result of COVID-19 inhibiting in-place connections, the Jawun – Cape York partnership now inhabits a shared digital platform and an initiative known as *Milbiwi*, which

means 'talking together' in the Guugu Yimithirr language of Hope Vale. This adaptation provides our long-running Cape York partner organisations, and our secondee alumni, with an online portal to connect and collaborate in a self-service engagement approach. It enables our partners to stay strongly connected into the future as they build and expand on 20 years of learning and mutual growth.

With the story continuing, we see that the thinking that emerged in Weipa 20 years ago shaped a model that is:

- scalable and adaptable
- sustainable and impactful
- proven to accelerate Indigenous-led reform
- true to its roots, an **Indigenous-led partnership.**

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Jawun is now a relationship broker, an enabler, and an influencer between corporate Australia and Indigenous Australia, and indeed our partnership with both state and Commonwealth governments is another critical plank to our model. Ours is a model of sustainability, built on connection to place, people and reform.

Karyn Baylis, Jawun CEO

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# Twenty years of Jawun and Cape York

## ACHIEVEMENTS



**1,112**  
secondees

**6,660**  
weeks in  
community



**16** Executive Visits

**194** corporate,  
government and  
philanthropic  
Executive Visit  
attendees

**47** secondments  
to Empowered  
Communities  
(EC)

**93%** of Indigenous  
partners felt  
skills were  
transferred

**97%** of Indigenous  
partners felt the  
secondment  
drove long-term  
outcomes



**98%** of Indigenous  
partners very  
satisfied or satisfied

**28**

Indigenous organisations

**28**

secondment partners



**13** Indigenous leaders in Emerging Leaders

**13** Stories of Female Leadership (SoFL) members



**50%** of secondments supported economic development




**96%** of secondees more motivated to follow Indigenous affairs

**98%** of secondees improved their understanding of Indigenous Australia

**97%** of secondee partners very satisfied or satisfied





## Part A: The Cape York and Jawun story

Jawun was created in Cape York as a new way of working with Indigenous communities. In 2001, in response to calls from local Indigenous leaders, a handful of Australian companies began lending skilled employees to Indigenous organisations to progress their enterprises and ideas. It was an experimental model, place-based and Indigenous-led.

This section traces the history of the partnership from a set of particular socioeconomic conditions in Cape York and their coincidence with a period of raised social conscience in corporate Australia. It looks at how the model began to work, how it stuck to a set of principles for true partnership, and how its footprint grew not only in Cape York but across the nation.

# A1: A brief history of Cape York

## A richly diverse region devastated by colonisation and then welfare dependency

Cape York is on the northern tip of Queensland, encompassing the area north of Cairns. Over 15,000 people live in Cape York, of whom over half identify as Indigenous.<sup>1</sup>

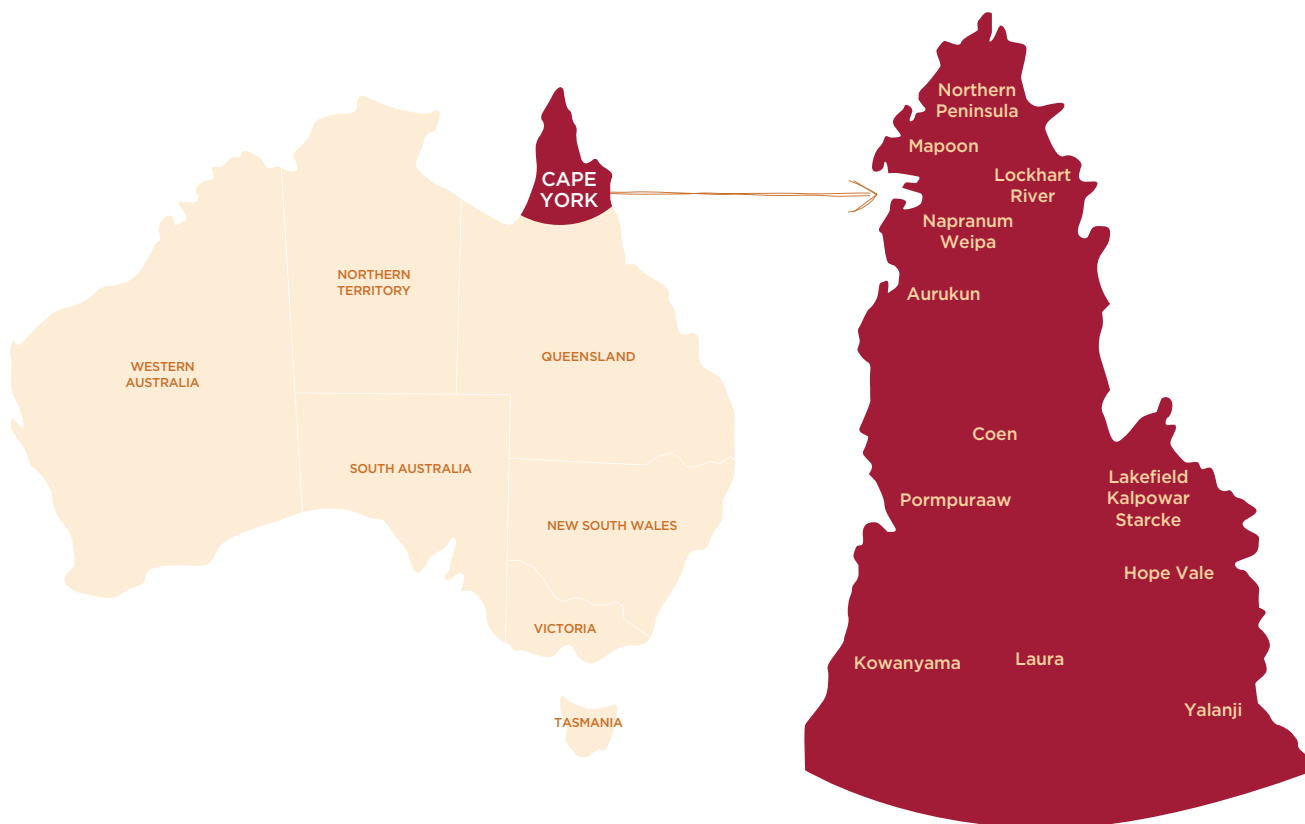
The region is rich in linguistic, cultural and environmental diversity. Before colonisation, it was densely populated and its people maintained complex kinship networks. They traded across the continent and had sophisticated land management practices, including those involving fire.

Colonisation decimated the population through conflict and disease; the arrival of pastoralists, a gold rush, and forced labour in maritime trades then brought further dislocation. Extreme government and missionary control

stripped Indigenous peoples of their rights, reducing them to economically, culturally and physically restricted lives on created 'communities' off their traditional lands.

The 1967 referendum was a watershed moment in that it recognised the basic right of citizenship for Indigenous people. But it also brought the right to drink alcohol and gamble, and the right to equal wages triggered mass unemployment as many Indigenous pastoral workers were laid off. Welfare receipt became welfare dependency, and government intervention in the lives of Indigenous people increased. For many, these changes eroded the fundamental values of responsibility and self-reliance, and broke down basic standards of behaviour.<sup>2</sup>

FIGURE 1. MAP OF CAPE YORK AND ITS SUBREGIONS





## A2: Jawun's creation

### Indigenous leadership ignited corporate willingness to test a new model of support

#### Visions for change

Cape York leaders, driven by the conviction that passive welfare had destroyed their communities, identified the need for a new type of empowerment. They envisaged a future for their children where self-responsibility and a set of basic social norms were reinstated, and where they had the right to make decisions about development on their lands. As community leader and Jawun Patron Noel Pearson put it:

*Our communities are victims of oppression and political violence. We had to make sure new generations of kids had a chance – we don't have the right to give up on people.*

In the 1990s and early 2000s, economic development was proving a key opportunity for Indigenous empowerment. The land rights movement was well under way, and land was returning to its traditional owners. Indigenous leaders, preoccupied with welfare dependency and rising social issues, asked how their returned land could support a better future for the next generation.

There was motivation for long-term and structural change through home-grown solutions from capable local organisations run by skilled local people. Leaders began asking how this could be done, and what new partnerships might support it. An initiative called the Indigenous Business Institute (IBI) was formed in 1995 as a partnership between The Body Shop and Cape York Indigenous leaders, to support and incubate local businesses.

At the same time, the corporate sector in Australia was becoming increasingly interested in contributing to social justice issues, and many businesses felt that resolving the inequity of first Australians was an important cause to champion. Jawun Board Director and former Chair Tony Berg AM, who at the time was Executive Director of Gresham Partners, remembers the impact of the 2000 Walk for Reconciliation, and the founding of Reconciliation Australia the following year. BCG Australia's co-founder Colin Carter AM remembers:

*Australia dealing with its First People was as big an issue for our country as any on its agenda.*

Companies began to show their support, among them Jawun's earliest partners. This included The Body Shop working with 2 Cape York communities to source fair trade tea-tree oil and support producers to run a viable enterprise, and Westpac providing seed funding for the first Garma festival in Arnhem Land.



**Jawun Patron Noel Pearson calling for support to Indigenous-led empowerment**

In 2000, Noel Pearson published his seminal book, *Our Right to Take Responsibility*, which articulated the 'passive welfare' crisis in Indigenous communities and the need to create a 'real economy'. It aligned with community leaders' calls to government to end the dispossession of 'welfarism', such as those at the Wujul Wujul Land and Health Summit in 1999. That same year, Noel gave a speech to several hundred community, government and corporate attendees at the Weipa Summit.

As Ann Sherry AO, Group Executive at Westpac at the time, remembers:

*For me that was the genesis of all of this. It was one of Noel's first real speeches about how welfare was killing his people and it was incredibly powerful. Afterwards, a small group of us were sitting together around the fire, and we started talking about what we could do to shift the dial.*

Among those inspired by the clarity of Noel's vision to end welfare dependency and the strength of the leadership behind it were representatives of Jawun's founding partners: BCG, Westpac and The Body Shop. Building on the concept of the Indigenous Business Institute, they committed to trial a broader partnership model where skilled corporate professionals were seconded to Indigenous communities that were trying to turn this vision into real change.

Jawun's guiding philosophy was born.



Early Cape York secondees have an 'in-place' experience

## Key principles: Place-based and Indigenous-led

From the start, key principles were agreed: partners would support Indigenous leaders and communities to achieve *their* agenda, facilitating rather than leading the change; and they would live and work *in community*, to create the relationships and understanding necessary for the support to be relevant and sustainable.

A couple of months after Weipa the first 3 'secondees' travelled to live and work in Cape York Indigenous communities, far from the routine and comfort of their normal lives. This carried risk and required a good degree of trust, but was vital for the partnership to be truly Indigenous-led, and place-based. As former Jawun CEO and Cape York Partnership (CYP) Manager for Conservation Mike Winer remembers:

*In those early days, senior corporate executives were sleeping in swags on the floor of the Aurukun guest house. They weren't just staying in Cairns. There was no other way it could have worked. Corporates with no background to the region needed to understand the context, the issues, the environment. They had to trust the Indigenous leadership wholeheartedly.*

Trust also needed to be felt by Indigenous partners asked to share their lives, hopes and dreams with non-Indigenous corporate professionals. An early secondee remembers the local cynicism about what 'random outsiders' were doing in Aurukun asking questions, and what was in it for the community. As with other aspects of the model, for it to be a true partnership the trust had to be firmly two way.

The first secondees worked to develop specific businesses and to support the governance and legal requirements of fledgling Indigenous organisations. They spent months in communities, including Hope Vale, Cooktown, Aurukun, Coen and Mossman Gorge, listening to individuals and groups and working alongside them to set up appropriate solutions for their visions of a better future. After the first cohort, the supply of secondees became steadier and more systematic. Individual secondees picked up where previous ones had left off, 'like links in a chain'.

Partners supported many different projects, responding to communities that felt strongly that only a multidimensional approach could tackle the difficult and deep-rooted social issues they faced. They seconded employees with a breadth of skills. As one early partner put it:

*We sent the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker – not just the butcher, because leaders wanted a broad range of projects supported.*

In addition, Noel Pearson's vision was for a platform whereby Indigenous priorities could be translated into clear policy agendas for the empowerment of Indigenous people in Cape York. To support this, secondees began working on the formation of an organisation that went on to become nationally recognised, the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership.

Looking back, several factors stand out to early partners as the ingredients of success. The flexibility of a model whereby secondees brought different skill sets, for different lengths of time, in sequence. The focus was on strategic support, or harnessing business thinking for social issues. And crucially, on the emergence of a partnership where two-way trust and relationships became the foundation for bringing to life Indigenous-led ideas of empowerment and change.

Part B gives further detail on the specific work and its impact, while Part C describes how a unique model for social change was formed around these key principles.

## Sharing learning to accelerate change

As the years progressed, Jawun realised that the lessons and successes of its partnership model could be shared with Indigenous communities beyond Cape York, right across the country.

As Jawun Chair Ilana Atlas AO, then Group Executive at Westpac, remembers:

*That first decade of Jawun's experience in Cape York allowed us to bed down a sophisticated model of operations which we saw could be adapted to the circumstances of other regions.*

Ann Sherry recalls how those involved felt an obligation to share the learning and broaden the impact across the nation:

*If you work in just one community at a time over 20 years, the change is too slow. The aspiration to expand from Cape York into other communities was about accelerating change and creating a network of communities who could learn from each other. When you accelerate the learning, you accelerate the change.*

Jawun's corporate partners were excited by the outcomes of this new model of support, and so too were Indigenous partners in Cape York. Reflecting true partnership, their role in articulating and sharing learning was critical in allowing the model to evolve, to be understood, and to attract new partners in order to move to other regions. As Ant Roediger, Managing Partner of BCG, remembers:

*Without Cape York sharing their journey with Jawun, other regions would not have signed up, corporates would not have signed up, and government would not have signed up.*

## A3: Jawun today

Around 3,500 secondees and 1,000+ executives connected to 100+ organisations in 11 regions

### A multiregion model

Twenty years later, Jawun remains in Cape York but also operates in 10 additional regions across Australia. These range from the inner-city blocks of Redfern to the vast NPY lands of Central Australia, and include regional communities in Victoria and New South Wales as well as remote communities in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Jawun has retained its unique four-way partnership model between Indigenous, corporate, government and philanthropic agencies. By the end of 2020, around 3,500 skilled professionals from 50 corporate and government agencies had been deployed on secondment to over 100 Indigenous organisations in these regions.

As well as the secondment program, Jawun facilitates shorter visits to Indigenous communities for senior executives. More than 1,000 executives have forged new understanding and connections on Jawun Executive Visits, consolidating a powerful network that spans geographical regions as well as Indigenous, corporate and government sectors.

Jawun also facilitates a range of Indigenous leadership development opportunities. By 2020, around 50 up-and-coming leaders have been part of Jawun's Emerging Leaders program, and nearly 100 Indigenous women have been exposed to leadership development opportunities including through membership of the Jawun-facilitated Stories of Female Leadership network.

FIGURE 3: 20 YEARS OF JAWUN - KEY MILESTONES

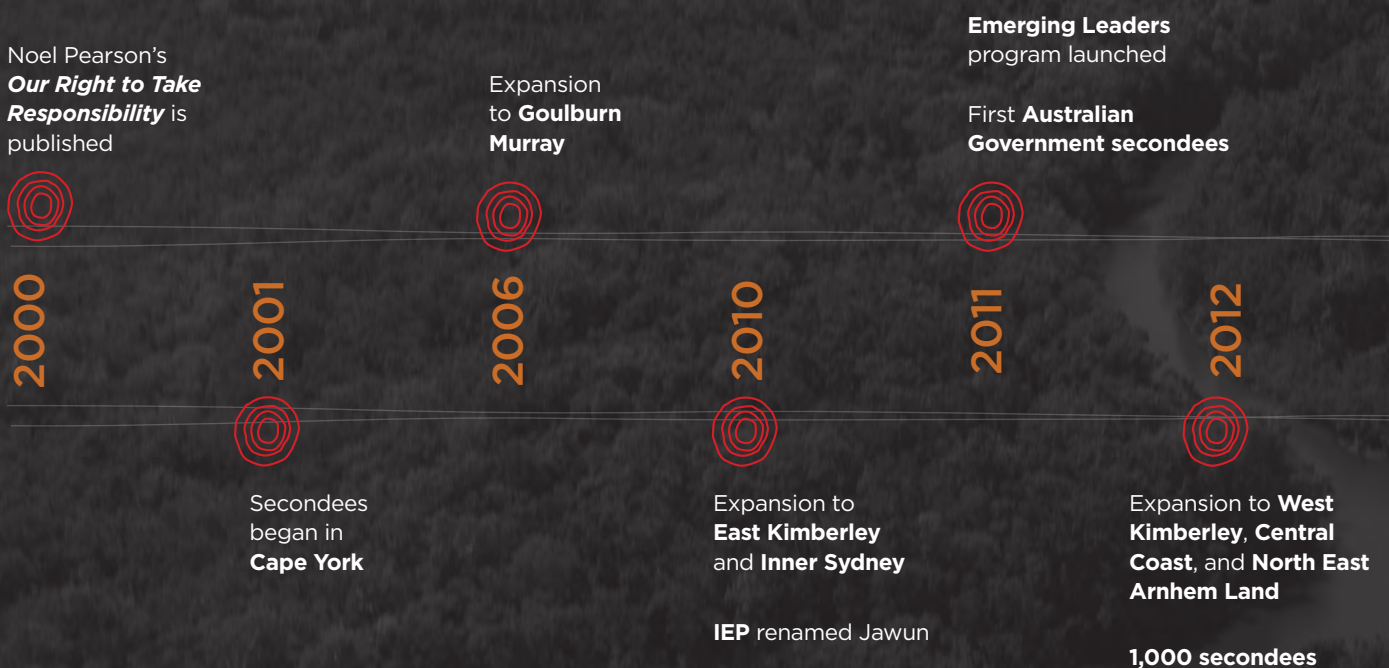
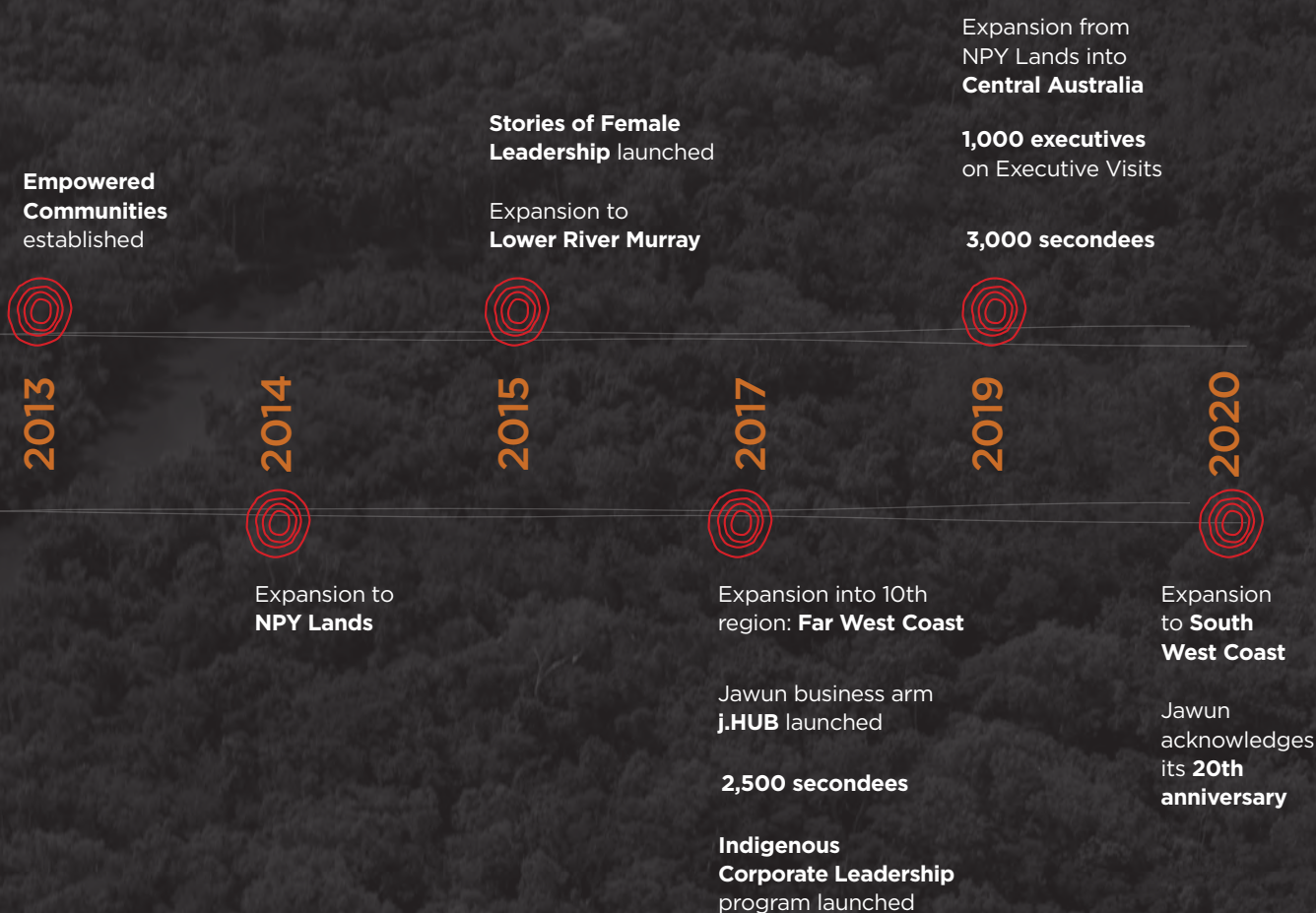


FIGURE 2: THE REACH OF THE JAWUN MODEL, CAPE YORK AND AUSTRALIA-WIDE (2000-2020)

	Cape York	Australia-wide
Number of secondees	1,112	3,491
Number of corporate and government partners	28	59
Number of Indigenous partners	28	138
Senior executives hosted on Executive Visits	194 (9 Indigenous)	1,067 (47 Indigenous)
Participants on Emerging Leaders program	13	48

Note: 2020 saw the placement of 'virtual' secondees in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.  
Source: Jawun secondee data base





Jawun now operates in 11 regions (clockwise from upper left): Central Australia, Inner Sydney, North East Arnhem Land, Cape York, Far West Coast, Lower River Murray, Central Coast, South West Australia, West Kimberley, East Kimberley, Goulburn Murray

## A long-term commitment

Jawun partners are in it for the long term. In Cape York, many of the same Indigenous organisations supported in the early days remain part of the partnership. Founding corporate partners Westpac and BCG remain key partners, having been among the largest contributors in Cape York over the last 20 years. Philanthropic partner The Myer Foundation, whose initial donation of seed funding was instrumental in getting Jawun off the ground, has remained a funding as well as a strategic partner (through presence on the Jawun board) ever since. And federal and state/territory government partners who came on board in the last 10 years have continually expanded their support since joining the partnership.

This longevity of partner support is key to the sustained learning and success of the model, and for many is what makes Jawun unique. Colin Carter remembers how, unlike today, supporting Indigenous issues was regarded as hard and not particularly enticing:

*It wasn't flavour of the month, it was long-term intergenerational stuff where you had to commit to the long term - which is pretty unusual for companies.*

Former BCG consultant and City of Melbourne CEO Ben Rimmer agrees that in hindsight the length of the Jawun partnership is exceptional:

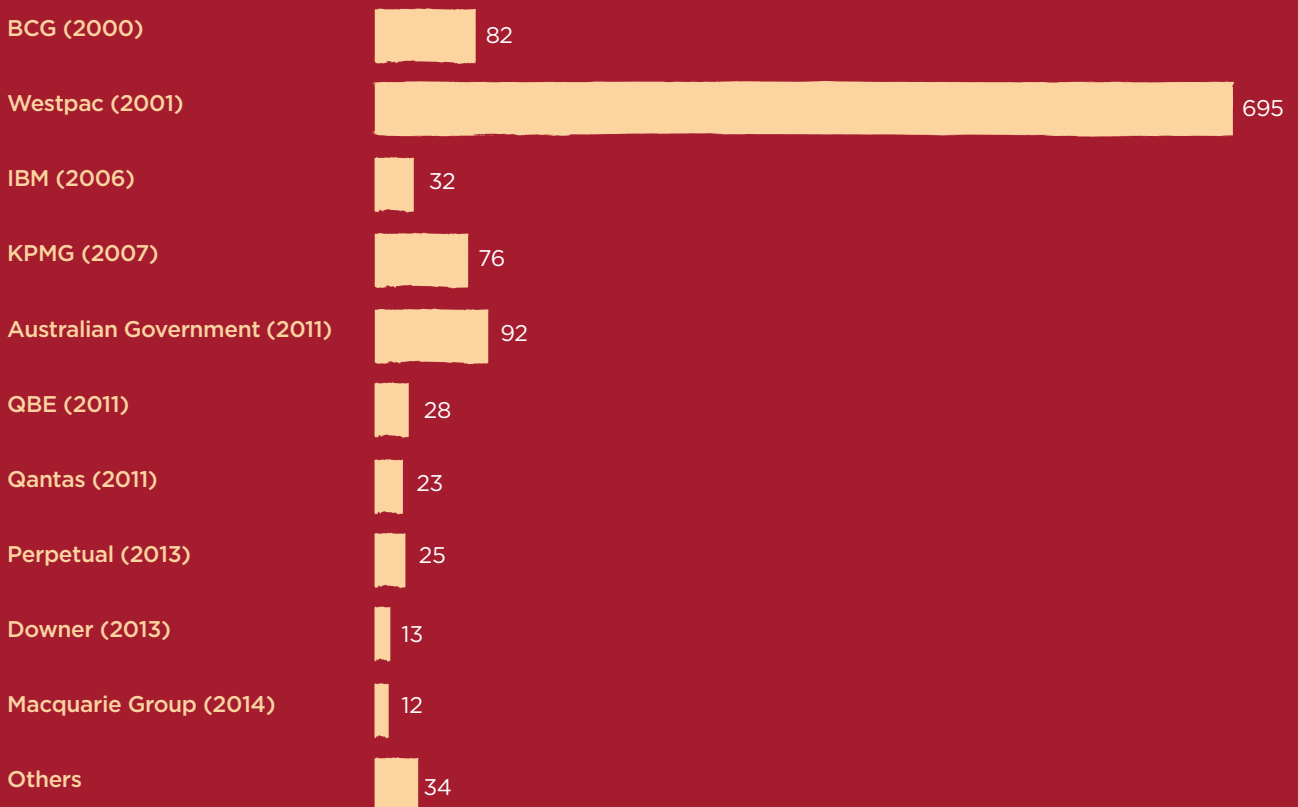
*It is incredibly rare to see partnerships last this long, and deliver so much value. Because it is incredibly easy to kill something good. To me Jawun is among the most impressive examples for corporate-community partnerships anywhere in the world.*

From an Indigenous partner perspective, long-term partnerships add special value. As Fiona Jose, CEO of Cape York Partnership, says:

*Several Jawun corporate partners have been with us since the very beginning, like Westpac and BCG. They know us, and we know them, and we've grown together.*



FIGURE 4: SECONDEES PER PARTNER BASED ON YEAR PARTNERSHIP COMMENCED, CAPE YORK (2000 - 2020)





Tim McGreen and Fiona Jose



## Evolving support

As the needs of Jawun's Cape York partners have changed over time, so too has the way Jawun supports them.

In the early days secondees spent up to a year living and working in the community, applying strategic thinking to support the foundations of long-term economic and social change. This was followed by a wave of shorter-term secondees who spent a few months providing practical support to get businesses, projects or initiatives up and running. In later years, as Indigenous organisations grew in their own capabilities, the model shifted again to fewer, longer-term secondees.

By the end of 2020, over 1,100 skilled corporate and government employees had spent over 6,600 weeks living and working in Cape York as Jawun secondees.

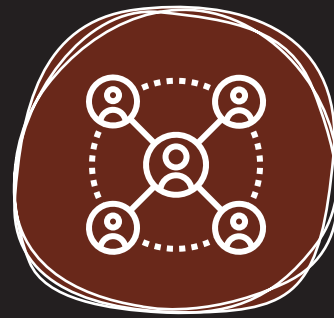
Over the years Jawun's support in Cape York expanded beyond the secondment model, with Executive Visits and leadership development initiatives fostering connections across Indigenous, corporate and government partners. To date there have been almost 200 Executive Visit participants to Cape York, and 26 leadership program participants from the region.

Part D gives further detail on Jawun Executive Visits and leadership development initiatives.

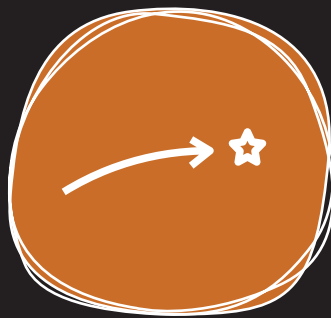
FIGURE 5. PARTICIPATION IN EXECUTIVE VISITS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES



**16** Executive Visits to Cape York



**194** Corporate, government, philanthropic and academic participants in Executive Visits



**13** Emerging Leaders



**13** Stories of Female Leadership

## A4: Cape York today

### Cape York leaders proud of reform achievements, motivated for the future

#### A sense of achievement

Cape York leaders in communities who have been part of the welfare reform agenda are proud of the last decades' achievements. As Fiona Jose states:

*You would not recognise the welfare reform communities today if you saw them 15 years ago. Clearly, they are in a much better place.*

Community members themselves see the improvements that have occurred, and most importantly they see their children achieving more and aiming higher. Community leader Harold Ludwick reflects:

*Children nowadays are thinking, 'I don't care where I'm coming from, I can do it'.*

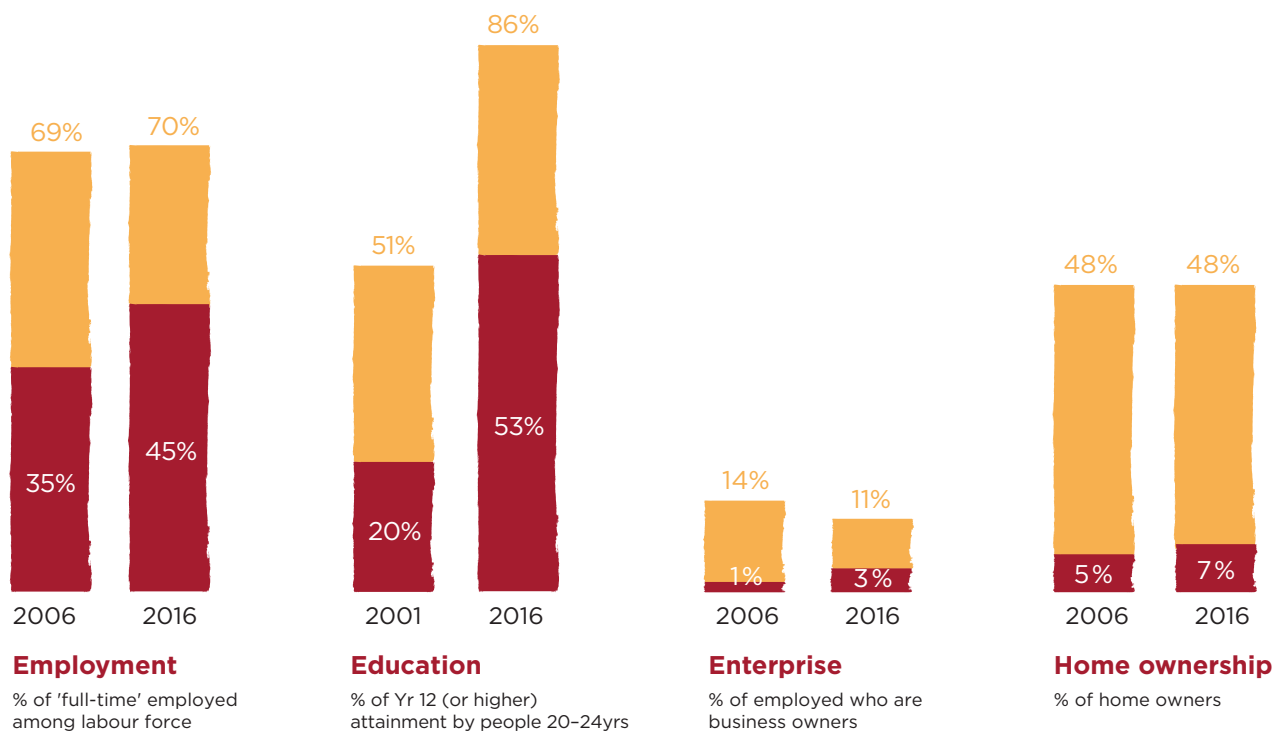
These perceptions are reflected in a 2018 review by Queensland University of Technology,<sup>3</sup> which concluded:

*There is a general feeling, both from the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC) Commissioners and from Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) community members, that their communities have improved since the introduction of CYWR, the FRC and Cape York Income Management.*

Quantitatively, census data for the whole of Cape York shows a persistent gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, but definite improvements in key indicators such as jobs, education, and business and home ownership (see chart below).

Part B gives detail on the impact of specific initiatives in education, enterprise, leadership and governance.

FIGURE 6: IMPROVEMENTS IN KEY INDICATORS, CAPE YORK



Source: ABS Census data

■ Non-Indigenous ■ Indigenous

## Pama Futures: A long-term social change agenda

Bringing lasting change requires consistent effort over generations. Cape York leaders are unwavering in their emphasis that the change they need is 'impossible in election cycles'. Others stress that tackling issues that have become intergenerational *takes generations*. Fiona Jose feels that projecting the impact of future investments in complex social issues requires looking at past efforts:

*We need to sign up to 10-20-30 years. It will take that long. What Jawun committed to 20 years ago, this is the type of commitment we need to go forward.*

The Cape York social change agenda, now under the umbrella of Pama Futures, focuses on education, economic development, empowerment and home

ownership. Drawing directly on the history of the Cape York Welfare Reform and on the capability of its now strong organisations and different layers of leadership, Pama Futures has a strong Indigenous voice and clearly identified local priorities. With resolutions including 'the time is now' and 'what our old people started, we will finish', Pama Futures will continue to invest in the capability-building work supported since 2000 by Jawun – and aims to do so right across the region. As Fiona Jose explains:

*Pama Futures today is a whole of Cape Agenda. The only way we can close the gap is if our communities lead it and do it. The targets are what make sense for us, and Pama Futures is all about how we build the capability of our people.*

Part B gives detail on Pama Futures' vision, achievements and plans.



Pama is the word for the original peoples of Cape York Peninsula. Photo: pamafutures.org.au



## Part B: Impact in Cape York

This section looks at the impact of Jawun's partnership in Cape York for Indigenous communities in the region, highlighting key initiatives driven by local priorities and advanced through various forms of support.



From the start, Jawun provided support in line with Cape York’s holistic development agenda, which was as broad as ‘making sure a new generation of kids had a chance’. Even where economic development was the priority, there was agreement that it would only be achievable by tackling underlying social conditions first. BCG Australia’s co-founder Colin Carter AM remembers:

*We realised early on that you need to tackle the social issues first if businesses were to be successful. Because if you want to talk about business creation, you also need to work on a whole variety of other things like people getting education, being capable of being employed, having drivers’ licences etc.*

Within this expansive vision for empowerment, 3 key investment areas emerged:

**1. Reform and leadership**

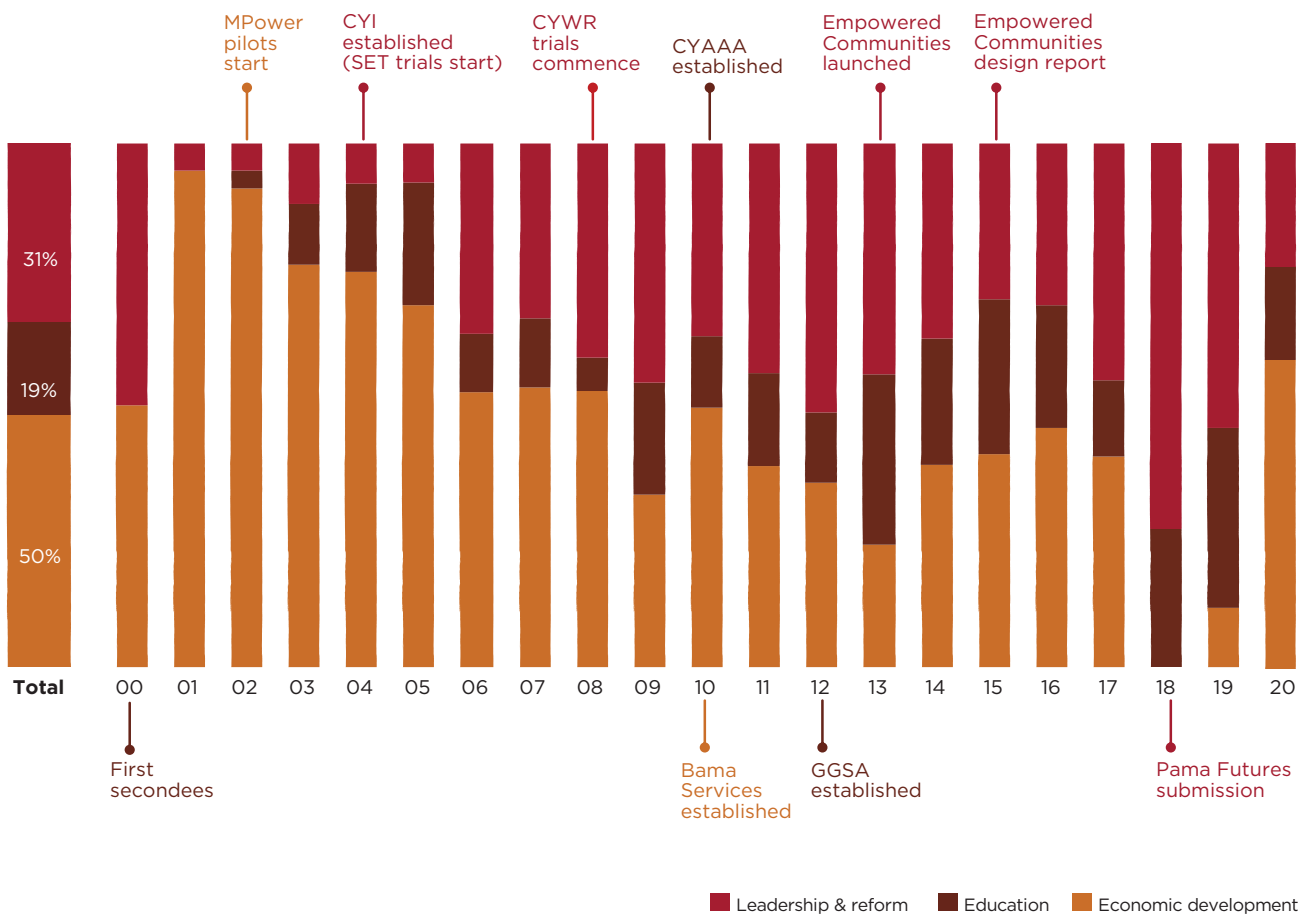
**2. Education**

**3. Economic development**

The chart below shows how Jawun secondees were distributed over time according to these 3 key areas. It clearly shows distribution over the first decade in favour of economic development, shifting steadily over the second decade to leadership, reform and organisational capacity building. It also shows how investments in education have been made consistently over time.

The following sections explore specific initiatives and programs within these 3 key areas.

**FIGURE 7: SECONDEE SUPPORT BY FOCUS AREA AND YEAR, %**



Note: Some secondees have supported both leadership and reform projects, and education or economic development projects.  
Source: Jawun secondee data base (Excel: Jawun Secondee data base\_Cape York)

# B1: Reform and leadership

## Priorities set around financial management, alcohol reform, policy and leadership

### Cape York Welfare Reform agenda

*If we are to survive as a people, we have to get passive welfare out of Aboriginal governance in Cape York.*<sup>4</sup>

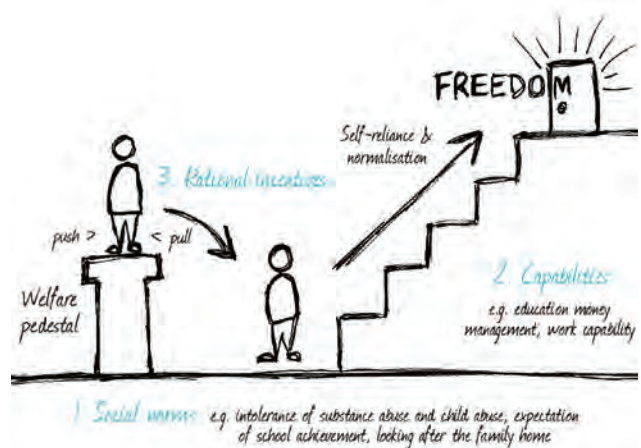
In Indigenous affairs, the terms passive welfare dependency and welfare reform gained currency with Noel Pearson's *Our Right to Take Responsibility*, the book whose argument attracted the attention of Jawun's corporate founders among many others.

While stating clearly that the dispossession of Australia's Indigenous people is ultimately the cause of their welfare dependency, *Our Right to Take Responsibility* traces how the non-reciprocal transaction of a person passively receiving welfare payments from the state puts the rights and responsibilities in the hands of the giver. It generates a mentality whereby this method of governance and the power dynamic behind it is internalised. Recipients feel it is their right to have assistance without reciprocation, and feel incapable and relatively powerless; and in turn they are seen as incapable and irresponsible. Payments are not enough to transform an individual's situation, and over time destroy initiative and breed dependency. Social values and norms are eroded, the situation is easily reproduced in the next generation, and the end result is social crisis.

Against this backdrop, the Cape York Welfare Reform (CYWR) agenda was formed. It was a call to arms by Noel Pearson and other Indigenous leaders of the Cape – including a cohort of visionary older women who saw

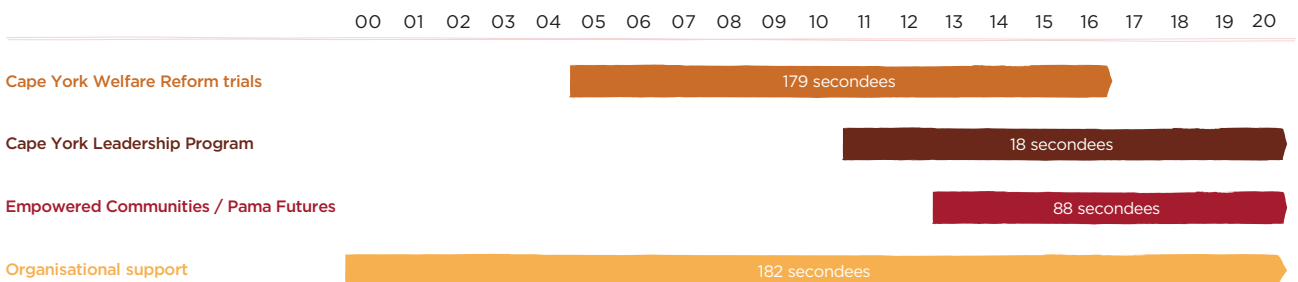
too clearly the community's crisis and were holding families together. They were prepared to lobby for unpopular measures to be trialed in communities as part of a 'welfare reform' effort aimed at reinstating positive social norms and behaviours. Four communities elected to participate in the trial: Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen, and Mossman Gorge. When the first cohort of Jawun secondees arrived in Cape York ready to turn their visions into action, this effort became the priority.

FIGURE 8: THE CAPE YORK WELFARE REFORM'S THEORY OF CHANGE



Source: CYP

FIGURE 9: REFORM AND LEADERSHIP SUPPORT, BY TYPE (2000-2020)



Source: CYP

## CYWR: Alcohol reform and income management


An important aspect of the reform vision was tackling the widespread problem of alcohol – as *Our Right to Take Responsibility* put it, ‘facing the social and cultural pathology of grog’.<sup>5</sup> It was at the core of the dysfunction seen in many communities. Welfare payments intended for children and families were being spent on alcohol, which in turn eroded wellbeing, safety and the ability of families to save for their needs.

Alan Tudge, now a federal minister but at the time BCG’s and indeed Jawun’s first secondee, remembers discussing an ‘alcohol strategy’ with Noel. He was moved by what he saw as ‘breakthrough thinking’, but saw that local organisations would need further resources to execute these new ideas. Alongside Noel, other leaders, and fledgling Cape York community organisations, Alan and other secondees began to help leaders define their vision in actionable terms, while also building local capacity to test solutions that had emerged.



The first ever FIM, open for business in community. Photo: Jac Curran





Solutions centred on making welfare payments conditional. Those receiving payments would be obliged to meet parental and community responsibilities, including school attendance, child safety, and non-offending and responsible public housing tenancy. They would be supported to access services for drug and alcohol management, mental health and relationship counselling, and to manage their money.

The financial literacy component was, and remains, a cornerstone of this intervention – as Noel Pearson explains:

*So many opportunities hang off a family's ability to take control of their domestic budgets.*

Between 2000 and 2010, around 200 secondees worked with Cape York's Indigenous leaders to define the approach, and then gave hands-on support to get it started in the 4 welfare reform communities. In particular, around 20 BCG secondees worked on the design and around 170 Westpac secondees lent project management support to get it up and running.

Interactions between secondees and community members helped to set the direction of the work. Early secondees remember sitting with women in Aurukun in late 2001, discussing what they'd like to change to feel more in control of their lives. The women described a wish to set aside some of their weekly welfare payments. One woman in particular, Hersey Yunkaporta (now deceased), began bringing the team regular savings instalments of \$50, to be kept in a safe in the council CEO's office and put towards a headstone on her son's grave. It became clear that a formal system was needed to support women like Hersey and their families to save for their needs. The team spent a month in Aurukun conceptualising such an initiative.

The end result was the Family Income Management Scheme (FIMS – later FIM, and then MPower), accommodated in an organisation that still spearheads reform efforts today: Cape York Partnership (CYP). Based in community, FIM offered general advice about basic financial matters and supported savings schemes for people tailored to their goals. It became a flagship initiative of the CYWR agenda.

At first, FIM accounts tended to be set up to help individuals save for something specific-- football boots, a lawnmower, a headstone or a car. As the initiative became embedded in communities, and more and more accounts were opened, the aspirations of community members changed. When the transformative power of this money management initiative was apparent, people started to use it to help them make more significant changes in their life – for example, by saving for retirement costs, funeral expenses, or home ownership.

In 2008, this unique approach to welfare reform proved itself beyond the Cape York community. The Australian and the Queensland governments, with the newly established Cape York Institute (see below) began working together to tackle alcohol abuse and reinstate positive social norms through establishment of the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC), based in

Cairns. In each welfare reform community, the FRC Local Commissioners could refer people to support services, like FIM, for support to build their capabilities. As a tool of last resort the FRC also had the power to apply income management conditions to a person's welfare payments.

For some, the solution was a tough one, and community Elders or respected members who acted as FRC Local Commissioners had a challenging task. Former Queensland Magistrate David Glasgow AM was the FRC Commissioner from 2008 to 2019. He remembers how they 'went out on a limb to stand up for communities'. The Family Responsibilities Commission became an important vector for embedding the FIM scheme within communities, as trusted local leaders could explain the value and significance of the program.

Since its inception, 140 secondees have supported Family Income Management or MPower, which extended FIM from a capability development service to a fully integrated money management program encompassing key behavioural change elements of welfare reform: Responsibility, Capability, Access and Incentives. MPower remains a vital offering of CYP today and is accessed at what are known as Opportunity Hubs (O-Hubs).<sup>6</sup> Cape York community members continue to be supported to manage their finances – from savings accounts to welfare payments to super funds – and access funds if needed.

FIM/MPower's success, for many, has been demonstrated by its community uptake. As one of the early Westpac secondees put it:

*We could see that FIM was successful when it became self-generating. People in communities were recruiting other members of their community, knowing it was making a difference in people's lives.*

To date, around 2,500 people from across Cape York have been members of FIM/MPower, and over 80% of these remain active today. The impact goes beyond individuals – as Westpac secondee Mark Scott remembers:

*I saw individuals and their families uplifted in their sense of self. I think that had enormous flow-on effects through the community.*

The O-Hubs that house MPower are now integral for providing an environment where individuals and families take up opportunities that are key to family development – 'the heart of the community', as one young woman describes them. Secondees continue to support the model, and it continues to be 100% Indigenous-led.

## Cape York Institute: A platform for better policy

From the start, Noel Pearson and other Indigenous leaders in Cape York sought to take charge of their own destiny by influencing public policy. They imagined a professional, Indigenous-led organisation that would champion their vision for bold social change and Indigenous empowerment. The new organisation would be focused on Cape York's social and economic agenda but, if successful, would also have national influence.

In 2002 Jawun secondees, particularly those from BCG, brought their strategic thinking and business acumen to Cape York to support this idea. By 2004, after initial support for its design, funding and launch from over 100 Jawun secondees, in particular from BCG, Westpac and KPMG, the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership (CYI) opened its doors.


Since it began, CYI has influenced all major reforms in Cape York. The Cape York Welfare Reform trial has been the centrepiece of its work, building on the design recommendations laid out in its 2007 publication *From Hand Out to Hand Up*.<sup>7</sup> Cape York Institute acted as broker between local Indigenous leaders and government, providing a platform for getting ideas not only heard but funded and running. It oversaw consultations, provided a design, and proposed the trial which was agreed to by community leaders and funded by federal and state governments.

Beyond Cape York, CYI led significant advocacy efforts for Indigenous empowerment nationally. Importantly, this included the 2015 *Empowered Communities: Design Report*,<sup>8</sup> which set out structural reforms for more equitable partnerships between Indigenous communities and government. The report underpinned the national platform Empowered Communities, which in turn informed the Cape York Pama Futures initiative. Today, Cape York Institute continues to influence Indigenous empowerment nationally, largely through participation in the debate on constitutional recognition for Australia's Indigenous peoples.

Jawun has facilitated 138 six-week secondments in support of CYI initiatives. Secondees provided a sounding board and strategic advice as ideas were tested, and hands-on support to get initiatives up and running. Initially, secondees were deployed in 2 streams: strategic, senior secondees (usually from BCG) who worked for up to a year; and a series of project management secondees (from Westpac) who supported projects for up to 6 weeks at a time. With 12 organisations seconding their staff, from the Commonwealth Government to mining, legal, financial and consultancy firms, a diverse range of skills has been deployed in the realisation of the CYI vision. This consistent support was described in a KPMG evaluation as instrumental to 'the maturing of the Cape York Institute into the sophisticated entity it is today capable of delivering on a politically challenging social change project'.<sup>9</sup> CYI staff remember that while

The Baninh Yeeum building in Cairns, home of Cape York Partnership and the Cape York Institute





professional skills transfer became more important over time, secondees also brought passion and a 'can-do attitude' to execute projects.

Cape York Institute is known for both innovative policy thinking and pragmatism. Subho Banerjee, who was employed there from 2004 to 2006 and has held leadership roles in several departments of federal government, considers CYI's effectiveness to be its 'merging of strategic policy thinking with pragmatic project delivery'. He also notes:

*CYI has done a lot of great thinking about reform, and about the structural issues. It is very rare in Australia to think about structural drivers. A powerful part of the Cape York Institute is its capacity to address the broader drivers of behaviours with a broader theory of change.*

In 2011, Cape York Institute became an independent entity under the umbrella organisation Cape York Partnership (CYP), having previously been established with federal and Queensland government support at Griffith University. Of around 370 current CYP employees (almost half of whom are Djarragun College employees), 86 work at Cape York Institute and 4 of these form a dedicated policy team.

Today, CYI focuses on welfare reform, policy research, and leadership. It is actively supporting constitutional reform efforts and advocacy efforts around an Indigenous Voice to government. As a long-running, highly competent, completely Indigenous-led public policy thinktank, CYI is a source of much pride. Current Cape York Partnership CEO Fiona Jose remarks:

*The impact is much bigger than we could ever have imagined. Even than what we as the aspirational leaders have planned. Look at how the conversation has changed - from Our Right to Take Responsibility, to the birth of CYI, to welfare reforms and FRC, Empowered Communities and now the Pama Futures Cape York Agenda. There has been this multiplier effect that we could not have foreseen back then.*

As former Cape York Land Council Acting CEO, and a Jawun Emerging Leaders participant, Kirsty Broderick describes:

*CYI represents our strength and our resilience. The Regional Organisations were born out of a vision for unity and strength and established to support the journey to empowerment in Cape York. The Baninh Yeeum building is a physical symbol of this proud journey.*

## Cape York Leaders Program: Investing in local leaders

To drive and sustain a social and economic reform agenda, strong local leaders are required. As Cape York's reform vision took shape, established Indigenous leaders knew they needed to think about succession. With chronic welfare dependency, and a sense of disempowerment and disillusion among many younger people, they could not be confident that the next generation of leaders were willing or ready to step into their shoes.

As General Manager, Cape York Leaders Program James Fa'Aoso describes it:

*Elders viewed the landscape of current and emerging leadership, and realised there was a gap emerging that would become more problematic with the next generation. There was a shortage of leaders to take up the issues. They formed the idea to create a leadership centre, to create a pipeline of leaders.*

Originally named the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, CYI became the obvious choice to house a formal leadership development program. Noel Pearson communicated this vision to early Jawun secondees, who worked to develop a feasible program structure, accompanying marketing plan and evaluation strategy.

In 2005, the Cape York Leaders Program (CYLP) was launched as a formal initiative with the vision to support Indigenous leaders 'to walk with confidence in two worlds and become leaders in their families, communities, workplaces and beyond'. Programs were developed to support current and emerging leaders (academic, youth, skilling and excelling), including through skills development and scholarships.

In total, 13 secondees supported the creation and development of the Cape York Leaders Program, from organisations including Westpac, BCG, Qantas, QBE, Perpetual, NewsCorp and the Australian Government. Their inputs were applied to all its aspects - from program strategy and design to marketing, governance and case management.

The program remains a flagship initiative of Cape York Institute today, and has an impressive reach. There are over 800 alumni of the Adult Leaders and Academic (i.e. secondary or tertiary education) phases. Many have taken up leadership roles within their school, university, workplace, or community, and a number have gone on to important leadership positions in the region and beyond.

Fiona Jose, a CYLP alumna, is a proud supporter of the program:

*Most of the current Indigenous leaders in CYP have been through the program.*

Of its contribution to her own personal development, Fiona adds:

*Without CYLP I simply wouldn't be working here [at CYP]. It provided an avenue, and connected me to the CY agenda. It connected me to our movement.*

Audrey Deemal is another younger leader in Cape York who took part in the program. She remembers a process of self-discovery for herself and other budding leaders,

*It made us aware of who we really are, where we need to go, and how we will do that.*



Audrey returned home to Hope Vale changed. She hadn't previously seen herself as a leader, but she remembers how at that time a relative said to her, 'You'd better lead the way. People look up to you.' She went on to become part of Jawun's national leadership development program, Emerging Leaders, which also helped strengthen her leadership confidence and capacities (see Part D1). Today, Audrey is a General Manager at Cape York Partnership and a highly respected figure in the community, regional and national reform contexts.

The Cape York Leaders Program has become intergenerational, with some of its early participants now witnessing their children join the program. It has also inspired a suite of other Indigenous leadership development programs within and beyond Cape York, including Jawun's own Emerging Leaders initiative (see part C1). The program has played an important role in establishing Cape York as a region where strong Indigenous leaders can look to the next generation for succession.



James Fa'Aoso, General Manager, Cape York Leaders Program (right), with Uncle Alex Tui of the Tony Mundine gym, Redfern

## Pama Futures: The next evolution of Cape York's empowerment agenda

With lessons learned from Cape York Welfare Reform, and strengthened capacity among leaders and organisations, Cape York looked to progress from reform trials in select communities to a reform agenda for the region. At a 2017 Cape York Summit, several hundred leaders and community members agreed to work together for empowerment. Extending the focus of the national Empowered Communities movement,<sup>10</sup> they prioritised Indigenous-led decision making and a rebalancing of the power dynamic with government. The movement was named Pama Futures.

Cape York's long-term ally BCG and a series of Jawun secondees worked with Indigenous leaders on a governance structure and business case for Pama Futures. Land rights and reform, empowerment, and economic development were focus areas identified to advance the overarching goal of closing the gap between Indigenous people and mainstream Australian society. Cape York's 12 subregions would each have a tailored set of priorities depending on their needs, resources and capacities.

Secondees from Westpac, the Australian Government, KPMG, Qantas, Macquarie and Perpetual helped facilitate community consultations known as 'design labs' for each subregion. These consultations resulted in a second summit and an action plan drafted in early 2018. Secondees then focused on evidence-based planning and

project implementation, integration of community inputs, and building the capacity of organisations and their staff.

Around 30 secondees have supported Pama Futures to date. Results include a number of new business proposals submitted to federal and state governments. Funding has been secured for initiatives, including a major Cape York tourism venture that will provide jobs and showcase the region's culture to national and international visitors. As a crucial part of long-term change and what Noel Pearson calls 'structural reform', a joint decision-making process has been established to ensure that Indigenous communities will have a formal and equal say with government in decisions around socioeconomic development in Cape York.

Today, Pama Futures identifies 15 key capabilities that need to be built in order to close the gap, from prenatal foundations for health to infrastructure that sustains economic development. In the coming years, it will work to put in place the programs and structural reforms to build each of these. Jawun will continue to be a strategic partner, largely through facilitating skilled corporate or government support to help define and accelerate the vision.

The Australian Government has acknowledged the success of Pama Futures. At the 2018 Garma Festival in North East Arnhem Land, former Minister for Indigenous Affairs Nigel Scullion described it as follows:

*We've got to get this right to provide the people of Cape York an opportunity to self-determine in every possible way. This is the road to success.*



Pama Futures Summit, 2018. Photo: PamaFutures.org.au

## Reform and leadership – community outcomes

When it comes to ground-breaking leadership and reform, Cape York's Indigenous community is rightly proud. They have demonstrated the effective use of partnership to put in place the strong, articulate vision of their leaders, and a steadfast commitment to rebuilding community wellbeing and investing in the future leaders who will maintain it. Where Jawun offered access to high-level skills from corporate and government Australia, they harnessed these to a clear and ambitious agenda for change and built on progress made, year on year.

Cape York's experience in reform and leadership was one of innovation. Family Income Management, for example, was not only a completely new form of community-led money management, but one that arose through a completely new model of partnership. Visionary Indigenous leaders sought the backing of some of Australia's sharpest corporate minds to define and trial an Indigenous-led, radical and ultimately effective approach to a complex social issue. As community leader Doreen Hart, who went on to play an instrumental role in the formation of national reform movement Empowered Communities (see section D1), put it:

*We knew what we wanted but we didn't know how to get there. We needed the people with the expertise to get us there step by step.*

Today's reform agenda for Cape York, Pama Futures, is a bright light for the next generation of Indigenous people. It is vibrant proof that over 20 years of reform thinking and action have resulted in significant learning and capacity, as well as confidence and resolve. It is testament to the depth of strong Indigenous leadership that the region values and invests in. Cape York Elder and CYP board member Fiona Wirrer-George calls Pama Futures 'a new season', and in their 2018 submission to government, leaders describe it as follows:<sup>11</sup>

*Pama Futures is the distillation of everything we have argued for almost 2 decades, all of the lessons we have learnt, all of the policy arguments we have won and lost, all of the initiatives that have succeeded and failed, and all the learnings we have accumulated in this period.*

Looking back, the individual reform initiatives are connected in an arc of change from the ideas in *Our Right to Take Responsibility* to the Pama Futures movement under way today. And while these initiatives may have begun in Cape York, they stretch far beyond (see Part D for national impact).

## B2: Education reform

### Reconstructing the education system to achieve better outcomes in Cape York

#### ‘The most important reform’

*Can we see a future where our young people move successfully between both worlds with confidence and complete facility?<sup>12</sup>*

Education was a first priority for Cape York’s vision for empowerment through reform, seen as ‘the place to start’ in a long-term change agenda. Yet, at the time, investing in Indigenous education in Cape York was challenging and, in some ways, unprecedented. Bernardine Denigan, CEO of Good to Great Schools Australia (formerly of CYP and Balkanu) recalls:

*They were debating whether you could teach Indigenous children in remote communities at all, and whether you could engage parents at all.*

Shaped by determined Indigenous leadership and as part of the holistic welfare reform agenda, the 2000s saw several innovative education initiatives designed and trialed in Cape York. These were built on the understanding that to achieve better education outcomes for children, you need the support and investment of *families*.

The formation of CYI in 2004 brought together much of the thinking around education reform. In 2009, a position paper titled ‘*The most important reform*’ described a new model for early childhood education focusing on attendance, teaching quality and results.

Several hundred Jawun secondees supported education initiatives at their early design, implementation and expansion phases. Commenting on the overall contribution, Bernardine Denigan recalls:

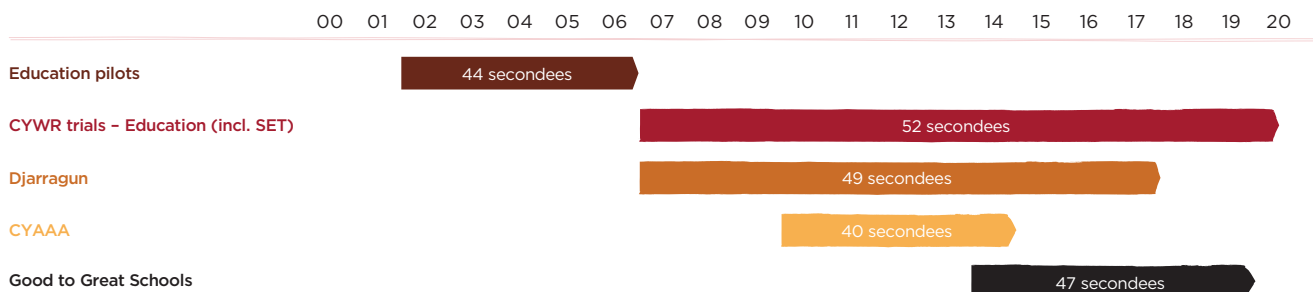
*Jawun helped us to get organised and to become a doer, not to wait for the Government to do things for us.*

Secondees heard the vision of leaders and parents and helped communities think through how to translate this into actionable policy and programming. They provided strategic support by helping to set up organisations, their operating structures and processes, and lent practical support on the ground by spending time in communities to explain and promote programs directly with parents and families.

Key education initiatives have included Student Education Trust (SET), Computer Culture, Attendance Case Management Framework, Making Up Lost Time in Literacy (MULTILIT), Djarragun College, Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA), Cape York Leaders Program (CYLP), the Cape York Girl Academy, and Good to Great Schools Australia (GGSA). Most of these continue to operate today, and together they are changing the face of Indigenous education in Cape York.

The chart below shows how secondees have been distributed across key education initiatives since Jawun’s partnership with Cape York began.

FIGURE 10: SECONDEE SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT, BY TYPE (2000-2020)



Source: Jawun secondee data base (Excel: Jawun Secondee data base\_Cape York)







## The Student Education Trust: Saving for change

One of the first initiatives trialed was the Student Education Trust (SET), designed to help parents engage in their children's education by investing regularly in a dedicated savings account. It was a form of money management designed to increase school attendance, based on the simple principle that *the most powerful people in education are parents*.

Over 50 Jawun secondees supported SET, from concept phase to pilot to roll out across Cape York's welfare reform communities. From various organisations they brought different and complementary skills in sequence.

The trust became operational in all welfare reform communities. It was integrated into MPower and is now accessible at O-Hub centres. Today over 800 parents and carers are contributing to SET accounts to ensure the success of their children's education. The total invested exceeds \$3.7 million, saved and spent by Cape York parents on their children's education.

Having a SET account is transformative. A young adult whose grandmother set up his account looked back and reflected:

*If I didn't have a SET account, I don't think I would have graduated high school.<sup>13</sup>*

Parents in turn find that the structured savings program, and the assurance it provides that their children will access education, reduces their worry. As one mother put it:

*It's flexible, if we're facing a hurdle we can stop or decrease payments. But it gives us one less thing to worry about. We feel prepared, and that reduces the stress we feel.*

Vit Koci, a Cape York local, has been Westpac's coordinator of Jawun secondees since the earliest days of the partnership. Twenty years after he began working with fledgling partner organisations and guiding the first secondees to support education reform, he reflects on what the Student Education Trust represents:

*Westpac has been involved with SET since it began in 2003, with a secondee working on the initial concept design, right through to 2020 when a secondee supported their marketplace expansion project. Twenty-two secondees have contributed more than 3 years of support overall. It's a point of pride for us, seeing how SET continues to be valued by families in Cape York. It's simple but powerful, transforming education and lives for young people.*



Classroom at Hope Vale State School, Cape York. Photo: Frederic Courbet

FIGURE 11: THE STUDENT EDUCATION TRUST (SET) JOURNEY



Source: CYP

## A whole new, Indigenous-owned model of education

Around the time of the 2009 publication of *The most important reform*, Cape York's leadership began questioning their local education model. They agreed that to improve school performance, as well as parental engagement, they would have to redesign what was on offer. Their vision was for schools to fit better with families' cultural choices.

Cape York leaders enlisted Jawun's support to research and design a new approach. Their plan was to develop a strong business case, built on firm evidence and with robust cost and logistical details. They imagined it would take a year and a team of highly skilled and diverse professionals to pull it off. They knew they had to get it right before they entered into negotiations with a state government that was unlikely to embrace a bold and untested idea for public education reform.

Corporate partners BCG, KPMG, IBM and Westpac were among those who agreed to staff this vision. For most of 2009, around 30 secondees lived and worked in Cape York. Guided by local leaders, they drew on community inputs and global best practice in education for marginalised children.

Initiatives were established to trial new approaches. MULTILIT, or Making Up for Lost Time in Literacy, was developed with the Macquarie University Special Education Centre as an approach to teaching students experiencing difficulty with literacy. An intergenerational initiative called Computer Culture was rolled out, which not only generated learning, but sparked a community-wide desire to invest more in transforming education.

A research and design phase involved secondees facilitating community consultations with parent groups, in which FRC Local Commissioners played a key role. They also organised study tours, with philanthropic funding from Jawun's early partners including the Myer, Colonial and Vincent Fairfax Family foundations. These included taking the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Aurukun to the United States to observe the 'No Excuses' model, high-expectation schools for disadvantaged children, and an approach known as Direct Instruction (DI).<sup>14</sup>

Danielle Toon, a managing consultant and project manager on extended leave from IBM at the time, led the secondee team supporting CYP and the community to design a business case for a new approach to education in Cape York communities. Reflecting on the research trip to the United States, Danielle remembers:

*It was a pivotal moment to see the penny drop for [Deputy Mayor] Phyllis Yunkaporta, to witness what her community's children could be achieving.*

A desired model took shape, based on Direct Instruction, to support a child's bicultural identity and ability to function in 'two worlds'. It was based on 'six Cs': childhood, class, club, culture (including Indigenous language teaching), civics, and community. The model was designed to improve the quality of formal education while also targeting behaviours.



Cape York children on a school camp. Photo: Danielle Toon

When this model for an alternative primary education approach was presented back to the Cape York welfare reform communities, all four opted in.

The leaders and secondees knew that for the approach to have traction, its evidence base and implementation detail needed to be bulletproof. As Alan Tudge articulates, the DI component is what made the model radical:

*The Direct Instruction method is based on several core principles, including having tightly scripted lessons where teacher discretion is minimised; grouping students by ability not age; and regular and frequent testing so that problems are picked up early and students only advanced to a higher level when there is mastery of the previous one. These principles appear common sense but in many schools, it would constitute a radical change.*

The team drew on their varied professional skill sets to articulate the evidence and community perspectives, and to provide a curriculum, a teacher training proposal, a governance model, and detailed budget options. Lawyers, management consultants and project managers sat with Noel Pearson and other community leaders to design a model and understand its predicted outcomes, impact over time, and potential for scale. BCG secondee Peter Goss went through large datasets of education outcomes for Direct Instruction approaches, working with a team of Westpac secondees to understand costs per child and school.



The result was a 200-page business case for the creation of what would become the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA), a home for a whole new model of teaching. At the end of 2009 community leaders, accompanied by the secondee team, made a formal presentation of the case to the Queensland Government. The presentation reflected 9 months of hard work spanning community consultations and study tours, a research and evidence base, cost projections and governance structures. It was rigorous, professional, and primed for presentation *by community to government*.

The Queensland Government was impressed by the comprehensive proposal. The extensive negotiations that followed were a 'minefield', as Danielle remembers, and a far cry from her corporate context:

*In the corporate world, funding is usually a given; lobbying and negotiating funding and contracts across government stakeholders is a massive undertaking and a very different experience.*

Just before Christmas 2009, the CYAAA model became government policy. With \$7.7 million in start-up funding, it was initiated in the welfare reform communities of Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale. To deliver the approach, the non-profit organisation Good to Great Schools Australia (GGSA) was established through a formal partnership with Queensland's Department of Education and Training.

In the following years, more secondees built on the work, including three-month secondees from BCG and six-week secondees from Westpac. They carried out research into how to develop the approach, preparing proposals and business plans for expansion to new communities and new components (such as teaching cultural knowledge and local, traditional oral and written language).

The results for CYAAA have been impressive: school attendance has been stable for the last 4 years at 81 to 85%, closing in on the Queensland state average of 92%. There are currently 151 CYAAA students, all of whom are Indigenous.<sup>15</sup>

Improvements in literacy and numeracy have been evidenced by Australia's National Assessment Program (NAPLAN tests) and international standardised measures such as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).<sup>16</sup>

One of the greatest measures of GGSA's success has been its expansion beyond Cape York. Around 40 schools in remote parts of the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland deliver Direct (or Explicit) Instruction, usually in challenging contexts. Half of these schools are now making strong progress, particularly in reading. As a result, the model is gaining recognition as a way to close the gap between the outcomes of students in marginalised contexts and those in 'mainstream' Australia.

## Djarragun College

CYP established Djarragun College in 2001 with 50 Indigenous students from across Cape York. It was dedicated to improving educational outcomes for children, including through use of Direct Instruction for Year 9 and below, and providing vocational education to support quality employment. It offered comprehensive pastoral care to students as well as life skills education intended to build confidence and resilience.

Jawun began supporting Djarragun in 2007 and has since facilitated over 50 six-week secondments to support it.

There are now over 350 students receiving primary, secondary and vocational education at Djarragun; more than a quarter are full-time boarders.

## Cape York Girl Academy

In 2016, Cape York Partnership launched the Cape York Girl Academy, an independent boarding school for Indigenous mothers aged 13-17. The first of its kind in Australia, the Girl Academy provides education, accommodation and opportunity for young Indigenous women disengaged from education, training and employment, and it accommodates their babies too.

Jawun began supporting the Girl Academy well before its launch, focusing on skills transfer to the team. Since then, 3 secondees have lent support, including provision of strategic advice to the founding Principal, development of Standard Operating Procedures, and development of a support and wellbeing program that is now in place at Djarragun College as well as the Girl Academy.

Twenty students are currently enrolled at the Girl Academy, and there are 2 babies in residence.

Early secondees worked on realising community visions for education reform. Photo: Jac Curran



## Education reform – community outcomes

Cape York is host to a suite of education reform initiatives that work together to improve outcomes for children. Together, the Student Education Trust, the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy, Good to Great Schools Australia and other programs including the Cape York Leaders Program (Academic phase) have been a success in terms of school attendance and performance. The process and content of the approach has also contributed to a renewed sense of confidence, resilience and identity for children, their families and their communities. Over 20 years, Cape York's education reform has demonstrated not only the ability of children to succeed given the right conditions, but also the ability of communities to shape their own services and future, and of leaders to effectively benefit from Jawun's partnership.

### **Gains in skills, confidence and resilience**

Both the delivery methods and content of education can have a powerful influence on confidence. Asked about the impact of education reform, community leader Harold Ludwick reflects:

*The children seem to hold themselves better in the conversation, they seem to be more confident in speaking and they speak well. Our children can stand on their own two feet and mix with the best of them.*

Across a wide range of contexts, there is strong evidence to support the positive influence of a quality education on an individual's psychosocial health<sup>17</sup>. This includes the ability of children to regulate their emotions, form relationships with others, and have hope for the future. These 'secondary effects' strengthen individuals' capacity to cope with adversity and rise above difficult circumstances. Community members observe the enhanced optimism and resilience demonstrated by children attending CYAAA schools.

Kade Wallace attended the Hope Vale CYAAA school from 2007 to 2014, and was awarded a scholarship (as part of the Cape York Leaders Program) to a secondary school in Brisbane. He explains his journey:

*Going from primary school in Hope Vale to a secondary boarding school in Brisbane was pretty overwhelming at first. It was the big city and I was homesick. I overcame it though, and surrounded myself with people I had things in common with.*

*Coming from a small Aboriginal community, I know how limited opportunities can be. But CYLP has opened up so many doors and allowed me to chase my dream. I want to become a detective!*

This sense of increased resilience in children is also mirrored in community members in general. Vit Koci is one who feels he has seen a change:

*People have more confidence in those communities today. They have the ability to do stuff in difficult circumstances, even where they have had bugger all experience in the past.*

### **Contribution to economic and social development**

Academic achievements and skills, coupled with increased confidence and resilience, can help safeguard an individual's future in terms of their ability to provide for themselves and their family.

Investments in education are also investments more broadly in a child's community, society and nation in terms of economic growth: economists estimate that each additional year of schooling increases an individual's potential income by as much as 10% (15% for girls), and increases annual gross domestic product (GDP) by 1%.<sup>18, 19</sup>

In Cape York's welfare reform communities, children who have received the innovative CYAAA model of education are certainly planning their futures. In a region where economic limitations and entrenched welfare dependency sustains low expectations, their ambition is noteworthy. As Vit Koci noticed:

*If you speak to children today about their plans for the future, they have big plans and the confidence to share them. They speak of wanting to be doctors, engineers, machine operators. It's a big shift.*

### **Putting community in the driving seat**

Like other initiatives under the Cape York welfare reform agenda, the presentation of the CYAAA business case by community to government reflected a rebalancing of power, where parents and communities positioned themselves as agents in their children's lives and their communities' futures. Drawing on the professional know-how of secondees, Cape York Indigenous communities were not just engaging in their children's education but designing a new model for delivering it. This approach reflected the uniqueness of Jawun's cross-sectoral partnership model. In bringing together Indigenous community leaders with non-Indigenous business experts, a diverse group of skill sets was leveraged to allow communities freedom from relying on government for basic service delivery.

Looking back, champions of Indigenous empowerment through education are rightly proud of what has been achieved. Bernardine Denigan, CEO of Good to Great

Schools Australia, recalls the 'immense challenge' of education reform in the early days.

For Cape York's leaders and parents, securing a quality education for their children has been an empowering journey. As expressed by community leader and parent Harold Ludwick:

*I want my children to have the opportunity to be authors of their own destiny.*

### **Influencing national policy**

Cape York's experience of education reform has affected education policy nationally. It has set a precedent for an approach to education that involves the community, and raised the bar for Indigenous education, including cultural aspects. It has also brought 'explicit instruction', including Direct Instruction, back into mainstream education policy conversations (see Part D for more on national impact).





## B3: Economic development

### Down to business – supporting long-term growth in Indigenous enterprise and industry

#### Reshaping an Indigenous economy

*The most significant political question for our people is not in fact the reconciliation process ... It is the reshaping of the economy and our place in the new economy.<sup>20</sup>*

The initial vision of Cape York leaders was around economic development. For change to occur, leaders wanted investments in money management, education, community safety, leadership and more. Together, they saw these enabling Indigenous people to take what Noel Pearson calls ‘a rightful place’ in the economy.

In the early 2000s, there was a natural synergy between the corporate skills of Jawun’s partners and the desire of Cape York organisations and leaders to create businesses. Over 500 Jawun secondees pitched in at all stages of this movement, bringing senior skills from sectors including corporate banking and consultancy. Guided from the start to follow an ‘Indigenous-led’ way of working, they responded to the specific requests of entrepreneurs or businesses. These requests, early versions of what Jawun today calls secondment briefs, covered everything from opportunity scoping to drafting business plans, governance structures, procurement strategies, marketing plans and more.

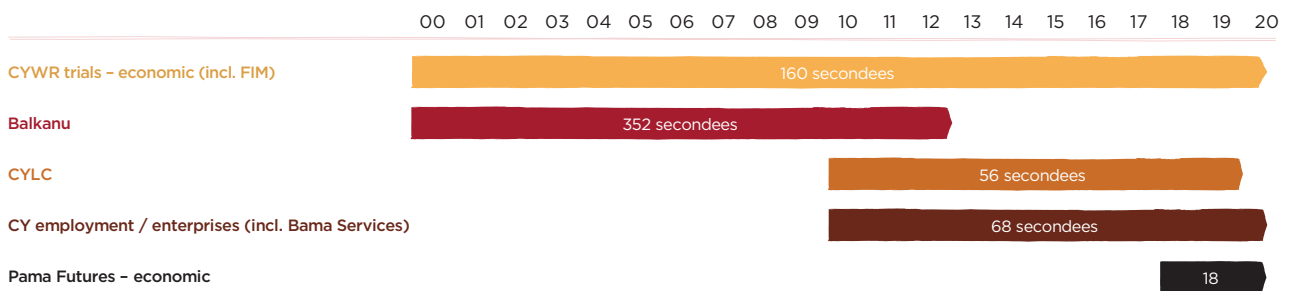
The chart below shows how secondees have been distributed across key economic development initiatives since Jawun’s partnership with Cape York began. The following section gives further detail.

#### Indigenous micro businesses: Building blocks of empowerment

In its first decade, the Jawun partnership supported many small, Indigenous-owned enterprises, or ‘micro businesses’. Some of these were part of the broader welfare reform agenda, designed to complement individual and family money management, education and positive behaviour change. Others were purely commercial enterprises, auspiced by the ‘business unit hub’ of Balkanu, an Indigenous organisation that was leading economic development efforts at the time. Overall, a wide range of micro businesses received Jawun support – among them horticulture projects, tourism initiatives, pastoral and fishing cooperatives, a saw mill and a bakery. They reflected the diverse ambitions to be found in Cape York, and validated leaders’ assertions that Indigenous communities were keen to partake in the ‘real economy’ on their own terms.

Despite strong Indigenous-led vision and skilled secondees support, the success of these micro businesses has been mixed. As well as the usual hurdles for any small business trying to get off the ground, they faced remoteness from markets, a 6-month wet season cutting the region off, extreme weather events that further block access and damage infrastructure, and structural challenges around native title legislation. There was also the reality of limited local business skills and experience, and setbacks linked to complicated personal lives and community realities. Nevertheless, the will to succeed was there. Just as important, the ability to learn from failure was too.

FIGURE 12: SECONDEE SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CAPE YORK (2000–2020)



Source: Jawun secondee data base (Excel: Jawun Secondee data base\_Cape York)



Lynton 'Porky' Woibo (deceased) with the beginnings of his magnificent passionfruit farm. This was one of the great successes of the Hope Vale horticultural lighthouse project, which was later dedicated to Lynton. Photo: Sean Gillen

Sean Gillen, an employee of St George Bank, was seconded in 2009-10 to Balkanu. As a financial planner with a background in agricultural science and economics, Sean helped Balkanu develop the concept of a Hope Vale horticultural project, helping families to capitalise on the rich soil and tropical climate.

Over a decade later, Sean has remained with Balkanu and is its Business Development Manager. Of those early days working on a range of projects with the Traditional Owners of Cape York, Sean recalls:

*I was supporting projects in Cooktown and Hope Vale. One was the Hope Vale horticultural lighthouse project, where we thought if we had 7 projects, 6 might fall over but we'd get one! So we went into everything- passionfruit farms, bush food trials, connecting farms to power, drilling bores ...*

Many fledgling projects were blighted by the complexity of native title, short-term funding cycles, water shortage, cyclones and even wild animals. Yet there were successes too. Several projects linked to tourism and rangers got off the ground and did well. What is now known as the **Mossman Gorge Gateway**, an impressive and expansive cultural interpretation centre at the edge of the Daintree rainforest, began as the determined vision of community leader Roy Gibson to create jobs for his people and, through secondee support, became a viable cultural tourism initiative. A number of successful ranger projects, including Lama Lama, Coen and Yuku Baja Muliku, arose from Indigenous business ideas supported by the Jawun partnership in Cape York.

## CASE STUDY

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**Yuku Baja Muliku** is an Indigenous ranger project combined with a small art gallery in Cooktown. It was established through Balkanu's business hub, and began in 2008 with 2 part-time rangers living under a tarpaulin and cooking over an open fire. Secondees provided support for funding submissions, feasibility studies, the development of a business plan, and the articulation of a strategic direction that remains relevant today.

Through this support and the direction of its founder Larissa Hale, Yuku Baja Muliku has grown to employ 11 rangers to practise sustainable land and sea management, and establish visitor infrastructure, including walking tracks that will eventually be part of the Great Dreaming Track (see below). The organisation also runs a junior ranger program, which reaches over 60 Indigenous and non-Indigenous local children. Its vision is to provide active, positive connections to Country via jobs, skills and economic opportunities.

Today Larissa remains central to the organisation, serving as its Managing Director. She is a respected role model in the community and was the first Indigenous member of the Cooktown Council. Larissa's passion for conservation as well as for community and her prioritisation of strong systems and governance for her organisations have enabled the growth of Yuku Baja Muliku into the competent organisation it is today.

Secondees have helped bring enterprise visions to life.  
Photo: Daniel Linnet



## Indigenous industries: Creating the environment for business success

With the focus on economic development unwavering, Cape York's Indigenous micro businesses grew. Yet several years after welfare reform and the IEP-Jawun partnership began, the local economy still comprised largely government services and mining ventures with minimal Indigenous participation. To support Indigenous business and employment, and enable Indigenous participation, a shift in scale was envisaged. There was a need to develop *industries* to support businesses and employment in the long term. As described by Ranjan Rajagopal, former General Manager of Bama Services:

*You can't take a rightful place in the real economy with just a collection of little businesses – you need an Indigenous-led industry! One that will engage with and procure goods and services from Indigenous-owned businesses, which are much more likely to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. That creates a sustainable ecosystem supporting careers (not just jobs) and businesses of scale (not just small enterprises).*

Jawun secondees were briefed to help make this vision a reality. In 2013, Tim Beasley was a Perpetual secondee who wrote a business case for a sawmill that went on to become Cape York Timber. After a second secondment, he came to work directly for CYP in a business development role. He saw that momentum was building to grow the business environment:

*With the leaders, we wanted to create industries that could support a microcosm of Indigenous employment and support Indigenous subcontractors.*

Helping to make the vision a reality.  
Photo: Daniel Linnet



## CASE STUDY

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**Bama Services** is an example of the push to create greater economic momentum. Now an entity of Cape York Partnership, in 2010 it was created as Djarragun Enterprises to provide employment pathways for young Indigenous school leavers. The contracts were largely in landscape gardening and maintenance, and later in construction. Over the years Bama took an increasingly holistic approach to employment, and looked for ways to increase its business footprint and overall impact.

Jawun supported Bama as it gained contracts in civil construction, building and landscaping, and employed more Indigenous staff. Around 20 secondees from major corporate organisations and the Australian Public Service worked on WHS, policies and procedures, employee support and business strategy and development. Over time the profile shifted: from secondees with a general finance or other corporate background who could help set up systems and provide foundational business support, to secondees from the construction and related sectors who understood the specifics of the industry's WHS requirements, opportunities for funding, partnerships, and market expansion.

With secondee connections and Jawun Executive Visits (14 of which have visited Cape York), Bama grew its corporate network and its confidence in leveraging it. Its board today comprises impressive and influential individuals, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who bring strong industry as well as community experience.

Through this sequence of support Bama achieved pre-qualification status with a number of tier 1 contractors and Top 100 companies, including Rio Tinto and Lendlease. In 2017, Bama agreed to a joint venture with construction giant Downer, one of Jawun's corporate partners, to deliver major infrastructure for the Peninsula Development Road in Cape York.

Today, Bama is a multimillion-dollar construction and civil engineering company. In line with its ambition to establish an industry and not just a single business, it is supporting an ecosystem of Indigenous businesses and employers. As well as engaging Indigenous owner operators as subcontractors, it now enables smaller Indigenous businesses.

Taking a holistic approach to Indigenous employment, Bama runs a Support and Wellbeing program for its 36 employees, 72% of whom are Indigenous. This provides them with health, legal and professional training support. Around 305 Indigenous employees have been supported this way by Bama. Recognising its impact, Bama won Best Workplace Health and Wellbeing Initiative at the 2018 Queensland Safe Work and Return to Work Awards, and Small Employer of the Year at the 2020 Queensland Training Awards.



## The future for economic development in Cape York

Indigenous-owned business and economic development has come a long way in Cape York over the last 20 years. And yet, as Fiona Jose states:

*The job is not done.*

Foundational challenges remain, including the persistent issue of welfare dependency. Yet there is optimism about economic development in Cape York among the current and emerging generations of Indigenous leaders. This has gained momentum as a key pillar of the reform agenda, Pama Futures, is focused on creating the conditions for long-term economic development, in particular 'investment-ready' land tenure and the governance conditions for business success. Regional and subregional economic development plans are being developed to ensure the region grows as a whole and not in isolated pockets.

While existing businesses aim to grow, attract investors and develop local capabilities, there are plans for major

new initiatives too. One of these is The Great Dreaming Track, which aims to be an Indigenous-owned world-class tourism offering. Based on an interlinking tourist track network, it will offer experiences of nature, adventure and culture. A series of Jawun secondees supported the business case development, working with Indigenous leaders to provide an incubator for their vision of a unique cultural tourism experience.

As the region's infrastructure and connectedness develops, so too will its economy. The road network into and across Cape York is becoming more extensive and of better quality. This development is providing opportunities for construction and related industries. Further, it creates links for tourism and trade, prompting increased initiatives and infrastructure.

A united regional native title claim, known as 'Cape York United #1 Claim', was lodged by Traditional Owners in 2014 through Cape York Land Council. This huge claim, which will take time to process, will help to resolve many of the land tenure challenges hindering economic development.



Jawun Executive Visit, Cape York.  
Photo: Daniel Linnet

## Economic development – community outcomes

Over the course of Jawun's partnership in Cape York, many micro businesses and burgeoning industries have been supported. Looking back, many of those involved in the partnership feel the results have been broader than the success or failure of individual businesses. They see results ranging from the establishment of the conditions necessary for a region's economic success to the creation of skills and entrepreneurial attitudes.

In Cape York 20 years ago, there was limited employment, let alone business awareness and experience. Even secondary education, for many, was limited in quality and accessibility. As explained by former Jawun Chair Tony Berg AM:

*In communities where there aren't jobs, let alone businesses, you are asking a lot to expect people to become entrepreneurs. Many of us grow up with a parent or parents who are working – we learn a huge amount through sheer absorption. Unfortunately, most of the people in Cape York do not get that vicarious education.*

Colin Carter saw the same gap in work experience:

*Very few kids had experience. Going to school they never had any work experience. You need to have both – education can only do so much, you need to learn on the job.*

Today, a good number of young people have had the opportunity to work in the proliferation of businesses and initiatives seen in the Cape in the last 2 decades. Many have worked alongside one of the more than 1,100 corporate and government professionals seconded to the region to share their skills. Community leader Harold Ludwick explains the advantage of exposure to a corporate community in terms of business acumen: 'people that come on secondments really have a finger on the pulse'.

At the same time, education is improving as reforms pay off. Young people are more likely to leave school with qualifications, capacity and confidence. Unlike

earlier generations, they see Indigenous businesses in local towns, proof positive of Indigenous participation in the real economy of Cape York. As Mick Schuele, a former policy staffer at Cape York Institute points out, describing the town of Hope Vale:

*You struggled to find any functioning Indigenous-owned business in the early days. Now there is a quarry, a silica mine, a campground, an art centre, and several small businesses.*

Many describe a 'culture of entrepreneurship' that not only drives revenue and jobs, but has symbolic importance. As Traditional Owner Tim McGreen said of an Indigenous horticultural project supported by Jawun secondees:

*It's really important for our young people, it gives them employment opportunities and a chance at a career. For the older people, it gives us pride that our community has an Indigenous-owned business of this size. For our community empowerment it is very important – it gives us the opportunity to create our own future.*

As in any region, small enterprises face challenges sustaining themselves. Cape York's remoteness from national markets also makes the region a difficult business environment. Firmly on Pama Futures' agenda for improvement is increasing Indigenous participation in an economy historically dominated by government services and mining, and tackling limitations on how land available through native title can be leveraged to raise capital.

In spite of challenges, the vision and conditions for Indigenous-led enterprise are in place, and Cape York's leaders and organisations have demonstrated their ability to continuously learn, harness opportunities, and push for *long-term* economic empowerment. Sights are set on the years and generations ahead, as the Indigenous people of Cape York shape a regional economy in which they proudly take their rightful place.





A man in a light-colored shirt and dark trousers stands in a forest, looking towards the camera. The background is filled with trees and foliage, creating a natural and serene atmosphere. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

## Part C: A unique model for social change

Twenty years ago Jawun began as a vision, a partnership of two-way trust, and an experiment. Indigenous leaders set out to leverage the skills and knowledge of corporate and government professionals to enable their agendas of change.

With each secondment, initiative, and business, the model grew stronger. Today, 20 years after it began in Cape York, Jawun operates in 11 regions across Australia, supporting around 100 Indigenous organisations and dozens of Indigenous leaders.

Jawun's expansion demonstrates that a key outcome of its partnership in Cape York, beyond achievements at community level, is establishment of a **unique, replicable model for social change**. This section looks at key features of that model: resources for innovation; an enterprise approach to community development; multisectoral collaboration; and Indigenous-led partnership.

## C1. Resources for innovation

### Secondees incubating bold ideas to become reality, at scale, in community

Through the Jawun partnership, Indigenous organisations and leaders have had access to resources to develop and trial new approaches. Secondees work at both strategic and operational levels to support Indigenous leaders to articulate, challenge, refine and test their ideas. Through this, innovative approaches to social change are made possible.

As Danielle Toon reflects, having worked on Cape York's innovative education reform:

*To change the status quo we knew we had to go beyond government, whose default position is to sustain the current system. Indigenous people drove the agenda but the Jawun partnership equipped them with resources to successfully implement an idea that was completely new.*

Ultimately, the partnership was effectively used by communities to turn their dreams of education reform into reality. As Noel Pearson puts it:

*Without secondees' support for our programs, education reform on the Cape wouldn't have got up; it's as simple as that.*

## C2. An enterprise approach to community development

### Secondees applying corporate and policy know-how to visions of social change

On secondment, employees from major Australian companies bring their corporate mindset to the community organisations and leaders in Cape York. In translating visions for social change into organisational plans designed to be sustainable, they are doing something largely unprecedented at the time: applying a business methodology to social issues.

In the early years of the Jawun-Cape York partnership, secondees were mainly from 2 major corporate organisations, BCG and Westpac. Those from BCG nurtured the development of strategic business thinking among partners, and often established long-running relationships of support with organisations and leaders. In total, over 80 secondees and around 1,200 weeks of work have been provided to Cape York through BCG secondments. This support has clarified and advanced the thinking and planning of the region's leaders and organisations. Jawun Patron Noel Pearson says:

*BCG secondees brought thinking and problem solving that advanced our ideas to reality years faster than they might have otherwise.*

These secondees were complemented by a high volume of shorter-term secondees from Westpac who brought financial, operational, customer service and other skills. Westpac also seconded a number of longer-term

'Fellows' who lived and worked for up to a year in Cape York. Overall since Westpac became a Jawun partner in 2001, the support amounts to over 3,500 weeks of work, through an incredible 700 Westpac secondments to Cape York.

Over time, other corporate organisations – including KPMG, IBM, QBE and Qantas – became major supporters of Cape York, providing skilled employees to advance and embed reform initiatives.

In 2011, Jawun began facilitating government secondments, first from Commonwealth Government departments and later from state governments (South Australia, Western Australia). Since then, around 100 government secondees have lived and worked in Cape York. These secondees bring a valuable attribute – a policy lens. Their knowledge of the mechanisms of government, from the intricacies of tenders or proposals to the dynamics of policy change, has been enormously valuable. And in exchange they saw, as one secondnee put it, 'what policy looks like for those on the receiving end'. Noel Pearson explains:

*Government secondees get to see the effects of existing policy in real life, and can take what they've seen and learnt directly back to the places where future policy is shaped.*

### C3. Multisectoral collaboration

#### Convening an unprecedented group of partners, from all sectors

In Cape York, Jawun has grown into a unique model of multisectoral collaboration. Indigenous, corporate, government and philanthropic organisations work together with a shared vision of Indigenous-led empowerment.

On the ground, a corporate or government secondee works not only with colleagues from the Indigenous organisation they are placed at, but also with other secondees from a range of professional backgrounds. For most, this is a challenging but valuable experience.

Philanthropic partners played a significant role too, largely through seed funding. Major partners have included the Colonial, Vincent Fairfax Family and Myer foundations, who supported Jawun from the very beginning.

Andrew Brookes, CEO of the Colonial Foundation from 2000 to 2010, looks back proudly on the commitment:

*The quintessential question of any adventure is to ask if the proponent would do it again. Yes, it was a grant we would make again. Colonial is proud of IEP/Jawun's achievements and the Foundation's multi-year commitment.*

Rupert Myer AO, President of The Myer Foundation and a former Jawun Board Director, remembers the Foundation's motivation for supporting the organisation then known as Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships with its first seed grant of \$100,000:

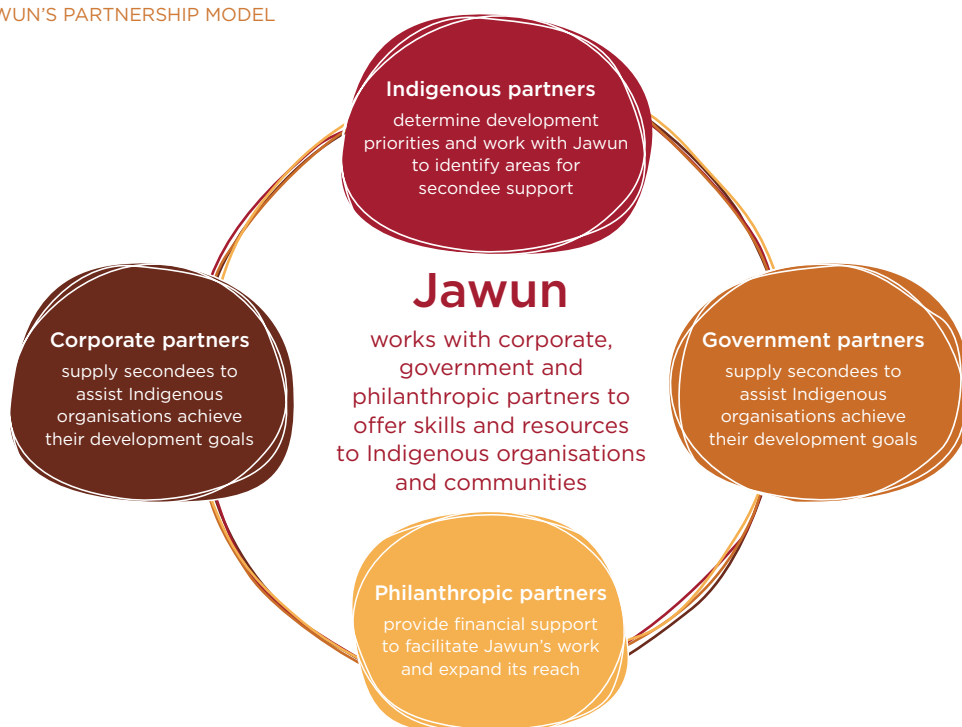
*We wanted to give this model an alternative to government funding, a means to be nimble and quick footed in order to achieve change. That's why we provided the original grant to IEP, and have been supporting on and off ever since.*

Philanthropic support has been instrumental in enabling the Jawun model to innovate and evolve. As additions to the model were considered based on changing Indigenous partner needs, Jawun's philanthropic supporters stepped forward to enable them. Leadership development programs, for example, beginning with Emerging Leaders in 2011, were made possible through the generous grants of philanthropists.

By leveraging the support of different sectors in this way, Jawun formed the central unit in a 'hub and spoke' business model. As a former secondee describes it:

*Jawun's support of the Cape York agenda not only gave access to corporate skills for innovation, it brought philanthropic support too. It provided the bridge.*

FIGURE 13: JAWUN'S PARTNERSHIP MODEL



## C4. An Indigenous-led partnership

### Guided by one sacred principle: Indigenous-led

The Jawun model, in Cape York and beyond, is Indigenous-led. That principle is held sacred by the many stakeholders or partners who have seen the limited success of initiatives done 'to' or 'for' Indigenous communities. The 'co-design' approach now adopted in joint government-community approaches in the Cape, for example as part of Pama Futures (see section B1), draws on the Indigenous-led approach to partnership embodied by Jawun, but stretches back much further. It is a collaborative way of working that communities proudly acknowledge as ancient. As one Indigenous partner put it:

*We have been doing co-design for 60,000 years.*

Several interviewees for this retrospective, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have pointed out that Indigenous-led does not necessarily mean faster, but

does mean more sustainable. Fiona Jose, whose inputs and direction have helped shape the course of Jawun for a number of years, is strong on the value of an Indigenous-led model:

*Jawun shows that you can facilitate and enable by providing a platform, but not take over the space. It's a great example for others including government.*

The proven successes of the Indigenous-led model in Cape York have also resulted in a well-founded increase in confidence among Indigenous leaders. The success of income management initiatives, for example, has shored up the belief of local leaders in their right to lead. As community leader Doreen Hart puts it:

*We are the people that need to decide what happens in our community and how it happens.*

## C5. A replicable model

### Evolving into a unique social impact model with presence right across the nation

Jawun's experience in Cape York led to the consolidation of a unique corporate-social partnership model. Over the years the principles of, and learnings from, the partnership between Jawun and Cape York have developed into a theory of social change that shapes Jawun's partnerships with other regions across Australia.

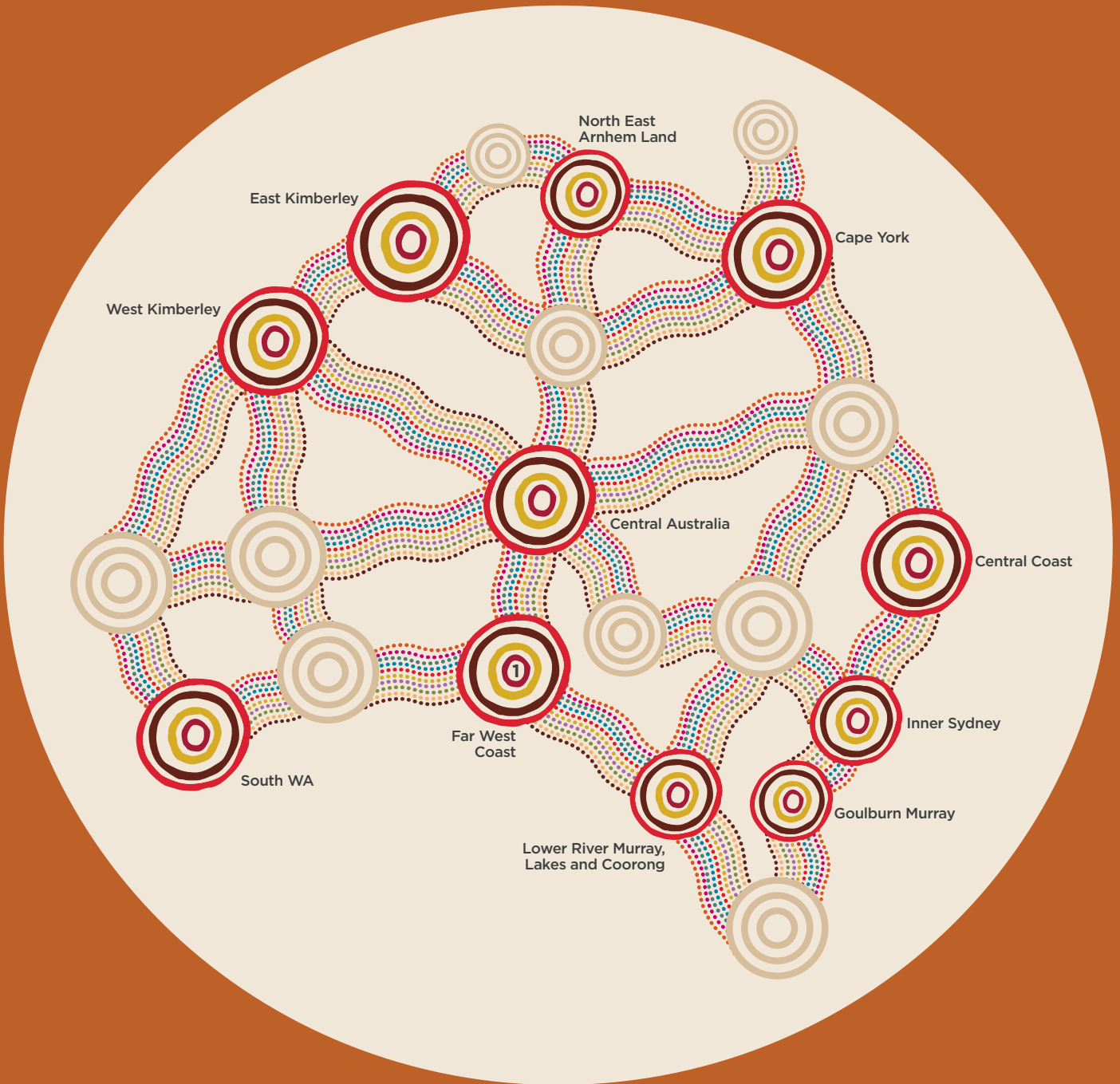
This model, built on the lessons and principles of engagement with Cape York, is now being successfully applied across 10 additional Jawun partner regions across Australia.

Today this reads:

#### Theory of change

Jawun empowers Indigenous communities to achieve their own development goals, including increasing the capacity of Indigenous leaders, organisations and communities. To do this Jawun works with corporate, philanthropic and government partners to deploy their capabilities and provide services, in support of Indigenous-led initiatives. Ultimately, this translates to lasting and measurable improvements in the lives of Indigenous people in those communities. Jawun also enables connections between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people, improves two-way understanding, and fosters greater practical insight and recognition of Indigenous affairs. As the number of these meaningful connections grows over time, this will strengthen the conditions for Indigenous empowerment.

FIGURE 14: JAWUN'S 11 PARTNER REGIONS







## Part D: National impact

Part D looks at how Jawun's partnership with Cape York has had influence at the national level – from helping to connect a network of Indigenous leaders across Australia, to influencing the landscape of policy and facilitating a ripple effect for reconciliation through direct corporate engagement on social issues.

# D1: A network of strong Indigenous leaders

## Establishing leadership programs that empower and connect

Jawun's experience in Cape York has demonstrated that the capacity and connectedness of leaders, both established and emerging, is a priority for communities. The Cape York Leaders Program, a leadership centre set up to address local elders' concerns about succession planning, has grown from strength to strength. By 2008, Jawun was looking at formal ways to support the capacity of Indigenous leaders.

### Jawun Executive Visits

Jawun created an initiative called Executive Visits, where senior corporate and government executives visited Cape York as the guests of local Indigenous leaders. The first of these visits took place in 2009, with 7 prominent figures from banking, consultancy, business and philanthropy traveling to the Cape for 4 days to see, hear and feel the reform movement under way.

Former Queensland magistrate and FRC Commissioner David Glasgow AM witnessed numerous Executive Visits. He explains:

*Those visits by those CEOs are very well regarded by the communities because they know people are listening to them. They know those people are decision makers at a national level, and are the people government listens to.*

Indigenous leaders shared local histories and explained the initiatives and solutions they had put in place or were planning. Executives learned, and sometimes shared, insights and guidance. Connections were forged that spanned the vast distances between the communities of Cape York and Australia's biggest cities.

Younger Indigenous leaders who took part in early Executive Visits in Cape York found they offered an important development opportunity. As Audrey Deemal explains:

*For younger leaders, presenting during Executive Visits helps build self-esteem and confidence. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on changes, on achievements we've made in the community.*

Today, over 1,000 senior executives from corporate, government, academic and philanthropic Australia have been on a Jawun 'exec visit' (194 to Cape York), and thousands of community members and leaders have shared insights about local realities and initiatives.

As Jawun's model expanded to other regions, the opportunity arose for Indigenous leaders to travel as guests to these communities and to grow their network of, not only corporate and government connections, but Indigenous ones too. To date, 75 Indigenous leaders have travelled to other regions through this program (including 9 from Cape York).





## Jawun Emerging Leaders

Echoing the priority of the Cape York Leaders Program, supporting younger and 'up-and-coming' leaders became the focus of Jawun's next initiative in leadership development. There was an opportunity to help future leaders take forward their local reform agendas.

One of Jawun's earliest visions was to facilitate an Indigenous network for collaboration, with many of its non-Indigenous founders considering this essential for cross-pollination of ideas and formation of partnerships for success. Realising this vision, however, proved less straightforward in practice, as BCG Australia's co-founder Colin Carter AM explained:

*In the corporate world, if someone did something well, you would try to copy it. This was something that seemed missing in Indigenous Australia, even though many of the issues faced in different regions were in fact common. We saw deep reservation about*

*travelling on other peoples' land, a strong sense of humility and awareness that each Indigenous region has a unique history and context. We thought about how Jawun could be a broker for people to meet, share and collaborate.*

As a result, Jawun sought to create a leadership offering that would not only support the development of individual Indigenous leaders, but also facilitate the emergence of a national network to support, share and learn.

The Emerging Leaders program began in 2011 as a way for rising Indigenous leaders to understand and meet the opportunities and challenges of leadership roles. Since then, 48 people have participated (13 from Cape York), meeting competitive criteria including nomination by their community based on their role in driving local initiatives that support positive change. In groups of 9 to 15, they embark on a two-year journey that develops individual leadership and promotes leadership behaviour.



Jawun Emerging Leaders cohort outside Parliament House, Canberra, 2017

The program facilitates connections in several ways: between the participants, who experience an intense learning journey together; between participants and Indigenous leaders in the regions visited during the program; and between participants and corporate or government allies who lead or attend sessions in Canberra and Sydney, and are invited to the final presentation by the participants.

Audrey Deemal, an Emerging Leader in 2017, drew learnings from seeing Empowered Communities across the country while travelling with the program:

*EL connected me to other regions. That highlighted that what we are going through, other regions are also going through.*

Tamara Hunting, an Emerging Leader in 2019, gained new knowledge and confidence:

*Being taken out of my comfort zone, I've developed knowledge in government workings and discovered I have the ability to contribute to broader conversations.*

Emerging Leaders groups have now visited 10 regions supported by Jawun as part of the program. A significant number of program alumni have gone on to formal community and organisational leadership roles, and many look back on the program as transformative.

James Fa'Aoso, General Manager Cape York Leaders Program and an Emerging Leader in 2013, explains:

*You get taken out of your comfort zone, your potential is stretched, and you set new standards for yourself. The Jawun Emerging Leaders program grows leaders. It did that for me.*

James also values the network he formed:

*Now, eight years on, we are connecting and supporting across regions on projects, and are coming together to discuss and coordinate as national Jawun Emerging Leaders alumni.*

Over almost 10 years, the networks facilitated by Emerging Leaders have grown. As younger cohorts of leaders became empowered, including through regional leadership initiatives such as CYLP, the cross-pollination of ideas has become more normalised and gathered pace. The importance of networks has also become ever more apparent, and the vision of a sustainable pipeline of leadership more possible. As Noel Pearson articulates:

*It's not going to happen naturally or as a matter of course. Somebody has got to be deliberate about cultivating the next generation of leadership, and that's what these programs have done.*



Across Cape York, empowerment of the next generation of leaders is a priority



Stories of Female Leadership: Jalbu Jalbu Convention, Cape York, 2017

## Jawun Stories of Female Leadership

Around 2015, Jawun CEO Karyn Baylis reflected on the strength of connections between Indigenous and corporate or government Australia. While proud of the many high-level, enduring examples, she saw they were mostly between men, despite the growing number of female Indigenous leaders rising to prominence in many regions, including Cape York. The idea for a proactive, women-only network was born.

Since 2015, several events have gathered groups of influential women, usually roughly half Indigenous from community organisations, the other half non-Indigenous from corporate businesses or government agencies. They have organised speakers, panel discussions, workshops and gatherings to share and celebrate stories of female leadership.

With a common purpose, the group grew and gave rise to strong connections spanning mentoring and friendship. The first large convention was held in 2017 at the site of Jawun's beginning: Mossman Gorge, Cape York. Female traditional owners hosted an enriching cultural experience combining art, guided walks and storytelling. These women gave the gathering a name in their Kuku Yalanji language: *Jalbu jalbu*. Literally, these words are the plural for women. Symbolically, they stand for the power of women brought together.

Conventions held around the country since then have strengthened the shared belief that connecting with other women can be a vital source of support, solutions and succession planning.

There are 13 women from Cape York in the Stories of Female Leadership (SoFL) network to date, a number that reflects the region's long-running emphasis on nurturing female leaders (and leaders in general). One of these is Audrey Deemal, who says:

*SoFL brought in women from everywhere, non-Indigenous and Indigenous. It helps us understand different leadership styles. It's great to sit down and hear all the different women's struggles, wins and successes. Having those connections is important – if you are struggling, you can call someone from SoFL. We struggle with the same things.*

In Cape York today, many of the topmost roles in Indigenous community organisations – including Cape York Partnership, Cape York Land Council and Pama Futures – are held by women who are part of the Stories of Female Leadership network. One example is Kirsty Broderick, former Acting CEO of the Cape York Land Council. Explaining why the network is so valuable, Kirsty says:

*Being the only female in a management group is lonely at times—challenging norms, attitudes and the 'usual way of doing business' in a male-dominated space.*

*I am now part of a network of strong women who support each other through professional and personal achievements as well as hurdles.*

*The strength of these networks is life changing. They support and encourage you when in doubt, and are your cheerleaders to remind you of how far you have come.*

## Empowered Communities

### Enabling and inspiring Empowered Communities – a national reform agenda

In 2013, 25 Indigenous leaders from 8 regions supported by Jawun gathered on the Central Coast of New South Wales. Echoing the Cape York reform agenda years earlier, they spoke of a motivating sense of powerlessness, specifically around decisions and funding investments in their communities. They sought to drive responsibility-based reform, increase collaboration within and across regions, and set out principles for reform based on key social norms: children in school, adults in work, safe care of children and the vulnerable, freedom from domestic violence and crime, and family responsibility for public housing tenancies.

Among these leaders were 3 Cape York luminaries: Noel Pearson, and Fiona Jose and Richie Ah Mat (current CEO and Co-Chair respectively of the Cape York Partnership). They spoke of drawing inspiration from Elders and leaders in Cape York, and a desire to see their approaches and triumphs adopted nationally for the betterment of all Australia's First Peoples.

In 2015, a report detailing how transformation could be delivered was put to government: the *Empowered Communities Design Report*. It drew on the vision of powerful Indigenous thinkers from across Australia: Noel Pearson (Cape York), Ian Trust (East Kimberley), Nolan Hunter (West Kimberley), Wayne Bergmann (West Kimberley), Chris Ingreay (Inner Sydney), Sean Gordon (Central Coast), Paul Briggs (Goulburn Murray), and Andrea Mason (NPY Lands).

From the start, Cape York's experience in reform provided a major contribution to what former Empowered Communities Taskforce Design Lead Dean Parkin describes as 'a marketplace of ideas'. Leaders shared (often for the first time) what their regions were doing and, as Parkin remembers,

*The organisation of Cape York, and their ability to be well resourced, to build capacity, and to maintain a reform push over a period of time, is something that other regions observed.*

Collaboration within Empowered Communities centred around the formation of relationships of trust and shared experience. Holistic reforms in the East Kimberley, education reform in Arnhem Land, land use reform in Central Coast – these and other examples of localised empowerment agendas were brought together.

Jawun provided support in several ways: facilitating collaboration between and within each region's leadership; supporting implementation of governance and service integration arrangements in regions; facilitating Indigenous leaders' engagement with government; educating decision-makers in government; and bringing influencers together.<sup>21</sup>

To date Jawun has deployed almost 400 six-week secondments (47 to Cape York) to establish an implementing structure for this reform, work at

'backbone' organisations set up in regions to coordinate regional Empowered Communities' agendas, and help advance development priorities.

Empowered Communities leaders found common ground in what Parkin describes as 'the asymmetry in their relationships with government'. This power dynamic, and how to shift it, became the key objective of a reform movement now in implementation phase in 10 regions.

Cape York's branch of Empowered Communities, Pama Futures, is growing in momentum at community level (see part B1). Like all regional Empowered Communities, it is unique to a people and a place, but its experience serves as an important guide to other regions. Critically, its early formulation, built on decades of local reform, helped the government see the potential of the movement across the nation. Urging others to learn from and support Pama Futures, former federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs Nigel Scullion declared:<sup>22</sup>

*It is the single most exciting thing, and we've just got to try so hard to get this right and to provide the people of Cape York an opportunity to self-determine in every possible way ... I think this is the road to success.*

Government engagement with Empowered Communities is strong and constructive. A national Empowered Communities leaders group meets regularly with senior government ministers and officials, and with the federal Minister for Indigenous Australians. The movement links into major national policy issues such as co-designing local, regional and national Voice arrangements, and supports Indigenous empowerment to close the gap on the social and economic disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians. The implementation of regional Empowered Communities plans is well progressed in most regions, covering sustainable governance, joint decision-making with government on regional investment, and engagement with communities and partners to deliver real results on community-identified priorities.

As Empowered Communities leader Ian Trust describes:

*Empowered Communities is an important vehicle for advancing the aspirations of Indigenous Australians. Whether it's housing reform for a specific community or constitutional reform for the nation, it's a means for us to speak as one. It allows us to connect on a more even playing field with government, and ultimately to get things done.*

## D2: Influencing the landscape of policy

### Embedding local perspectives into policy, and igniting social impact leadership

#### Shaping national policy on Indigenous Australia

Cape York's experience of reform shone a light on complex issues and the need for locally led, innovative and long-term solutions. It set a direction, instilling a confidence among Indigenous leaders (and their government, corporate and philanthropic allies) that became part of the enabling conditions for the national agenda of Empowered Communities.

Together, these experiences have had an undeniable influence on government policy. Most of all they demonstrated – with a uniquely long history of evidence – that communities can and should play a significant role in decisions and initiatives affecting them.

As explained by Finn Pratt AO, former Secretary of the federal Department of the Environment and Energy and former Jawun Board Director:

*[Empowered Communities] has had a flow through benefit into [The National Indigenous Australians Agency's] general approach to working with Indigenous communities. It has enabled the provision of more and more autonomy and authority to local communities in terms of program implementation in their areas. It's got a long way to go, and government*

*needs to stick at it, but the concept [of Indigenous-led empowerment, as espoused by Empowered Communities] is mainstream today. It seems quite obvious that this is what needs to be done.*

Cape York has now seen decades of dedicated commitment to Indigenous-led reform, providing learning for government policymakers around the lengthy timeframe (and often non-linear direction) of change. As Finn Pratt explains:

*A huge lesson we've learnt from [Cape York Welfare Reform] is that government needs to be in it for the long term. It will take time.*

Experience has showcased the importance of a holistic approach to change. As early philanthropic backer and former Jawun Chair Tony Berg AM said of Cape York's multiple focus areas:

*Any one of those things can undermine the whole. If there aren't jobs to go to, you don't see the benefit in education. If you can't hear, you can't learn. I think that Cape York understands that better than anywhere else.*

Finally, the way transformative change initiatives are described and approached has been shaped by Cape York's experience. Former Cape York Partnership CEO Rose Manzini remembers Noel's earliest use of the word 'reform' itself: 'at the time it was novel and awkward to



Secondee Melodie Potts Rosevear working with Noel Pearson on education reform. Photo: Melodie Potts Rosevear



some; today it is well accepted in the context of complex social change'. Fiona Jose, who was at the forefront of the *Empowered Communities Design Report* and plays a pivotal role in Pama Futures, sees the same in government:

*Fifteen years ago we were alone in our conversations on welfare reform. Now the language of government has changed - they talk of empowerment, place-based and local decision-making. It might not be fully implemented but it's a positive start and it demonstrates significant influence on national policy.*

Emerging agendas around national, regional and local Voice,<sup>23</sup> arguably the most significant policy issue for Indigenous Australia since land rights, are seen by many to reflect Cape York's 20-year focus on locally driven empowerment. Former Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretary Terry Moran AC explains:

*[The Cape York experience showed that] you need to take responsibility for doing things down to the lowest practical level. The aim should be to give appropriate governance arrangements as much authority and funding as possible to enable them to get the job done in a flexible way. Only if there is local accountability will it work.*

The lessons learned through Cape York's experience and the Jawun model apply equally to public policy outside Indigenous affairs. As Finn Pratt reflects:

*There is a broader lesson here about having those who are affected by government interventions not only having a stake in and opportunity to input and to be consulted, but going beyond that to having a greater role in determining themselves what happens to them. This approach is highly useful in Indigenous affairs, but also applies to other areas - such as disability support and [the National Disability Insurance Scheme]. It's about working with people to identify what it is they need, and putting resources in their control.*

## Influencing the next generation of leaders in social impact

Jawun offers meaningful, in-place connections with Indigenous Australia through secondments, Executive Visits and leadership initiatives. For government, one consequence of this approach is systematic and long-term exposure to Indigenous Australia for its people, including those who make policy.

Since 2013, when the partnership with government began, Jawun has facilitated Cape York secondments of 6 weeks or more for

**92**

federal and state government employees

**11**

Executive Visits for senior leaders

This number rises if all Jawun partner regions are included:

**620**

secondees

**72**

Executive Visits

With each connection, an individual with a place in government gains exposure to issues and histories of Indigenous Australia. They are also immersed in Indigenous norms of communication, collaboration and leadership. Terry Moran explains what he sees is so powerful about this process:



Executive Visit, Cape York

*[Secondees] get to touch the ground, to see the reality of a part of Australia very different to the leafy suburbs of Sydney or Melbourne. The people who control the institutions are ever more insulated from the population. Secondees will actually see how things are working, or not, at the local level.*

It is hard to estimate the cumulative impact of these individual experiences on policy insight and practice. As former BCG consultant and City of Melbourne CEO Ben Rimmer explains,

*Giving over 600 public servants firsthand experience working in Indigenous Australia would have been hard to achieve in other ways. This has had a significant impact, including through exposure for public servants to Jawun's engagement model, one where the Indigenous organisations are the leaders, and that we are there to support them. This changes the way that government thinks about Indigenous issues.*

It is not just government employees who have been influenced by Jawun's experience in Cape York, but social impact leaders more generally. Over the years Jawun secondments became competitive, drawing in the most intellectually able and socially conscious talent from some of Australia's most influential companies. Many former secondees went on to do extraordinary things, informed and inspired by their Jawun-facilitated experience. Peter Goss, seconded from BCG to Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy, went on to work in education policy at Australian think tank the Grattan Institute. He believes the secondment experience defined his perspective:

*In Cape York I gained an awareness that people don't really understand just how big the gaps [between Indigenous and non-Indigenous education] are. Our work was to find language to bring it home to them.*

*I spent that 9 months reading and discussing with people and trying to make sense of this really complex area. We were asking, how can we intervene, what would it take? It left me thinking, at the end, that I would really like to work in education.*

Another example is Melodie Potts Rosevear, seconded by BCG to Cape York in 2004. Melodie became a founding staff member of Cape York Institute, working with Noel Pearson to articulate and advance the region's reform agenda. After 2 years, she went on to draft the business plan for Teach For Australia,<sup>24</sup> which gets the country's top talent into teaching and focuses on areas of highest need. She remains its CEO.

Collectively, the experiences of secondees have strengthened organisational approaches to social impact as well as individual careers. BCG Managing Partner Ross Love describes how he and many others at BCG forged 'deeply embedded, multiyear relationships' with community organisations. This approach, which drew on lessons learned through his and other BCG colleagues' experience at Jawun, starting with the firmly Indigenous-led approach to social transformation demonstrated in Cape York, has become the predominant mode for BCG social impact work throughout the world, currently worth approximately USD350m a year in terms of committed professional time.

Referring to corporate reconciliation initiatives and other support to Indigenous Australia, including the current movement around the Uluru Statement from the Heart and national/regional Voice agendas, former Jawun CEO and until recently Cape York Partnership Manager for Conservation Mike Winer summarises:

*The greatest achievement of Jawun was helping to build a conscience in the boardroom.*

## D3: A ripple effect for reconciliation

### Re-educating, connecting and motivating partners to become allies of Indigenous Australia

Jawun acts as a facilitator, using its network to connect corporate Australia with Indigenous leaders, organisations and communities. As it works with individual secondees, Executive Visit participants and leadership initiative participants, it creates what's been described as a 'ripple effect' expanding exponentially to those individuals' coworkers, family, friends and networks. Personal, emotional connections with Indigenous Australia are shared, new understandings transferred, and over time these create a groundswell of support for reconciliation. Since it began in Cape York 20 years ago, Jawun has seen this effect spread throughout corporate and government meeting places as much as at social gatherings and in living rooms.

#### A practical education for individuals

Individuals who engage with Indigenous Australia through Jawun gain new understanding of issues of history, culture, policy and society. Jawun's focus on facilitating an immersive and place-based experience has been important to this. End-of-secondment surveys show that many feel motivated to raise awareness within their circles of influence as shown below.

An example of the ripple effect in action is Kate Chaney, seconded to Balkanu from BCG in 2004, who went on to become Wesfarmers Manager Aboriginal Affairs and in that role oversaw their first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Kate established Wesfarmers' relationship with Jawun and facilitated the participation of a number of senior Coles executives on an Executive Visit, which resulted in the creation of thousands of Indigenous jobs at Coles. As Kate explains:

*You can go through the motions of a RAP, or you can live it and believe it. What was magical about the Jawun formula is that it makes that personal human connection that is far more likely to create change in the long term - you need to have your world view shifted.*

For some, the motivation comes from a Jawun experience that highlights the misinformation and bias underpinning their understanding of Indigenous Australia. Mark Scott was seconded from Westpac to support Family Income Management in 2001 and then Balkanu in 2006, and went on to become a vocal supporter of Australia's reconciliation agenda. He even



**99%**

of secondees feel they improved their understanding of Indigenous people/contexts



**98%**

feel more motivated to actively follow and learn more about Indigenous affairs after their secondment



did a third secondment, to Alice Springs, in 2019. Of his original experience in Cape York, Mark remembers:

*I realise I went to Aurukun with an unconscious bias, only to see that the key challenge facing people was a very real lack of opportunity. There was a great learning for me in getting rid of prejudice. And for me the power of the experience was it was hands on, a practical involvement in reconciliation. That was very satisfying.*

Indigenous partners have seen and acknowledged how secondees raise their awareness and educate themselves through the connection and exposure offered. Community leader Harold Ludwick explains:

*The secondees were there not because they were forced to come, but because they wanted to. They saw they could do something special and also educate themselves in a different way.*

Many Indigenous partners enjoy being part of this process, investing time and energy into sharing personal stories and community history. Community leader Doreen Hart, who has guided many secondees while at CYP and Balkanu, says:

*A highlight for me is guiding secondees that come through, introducing the [Family Responsibilities Commission], talking with them about expectations from community, sharing our culture and our world with these people that want to come in and support us.*

## Motivating corporate and government partners

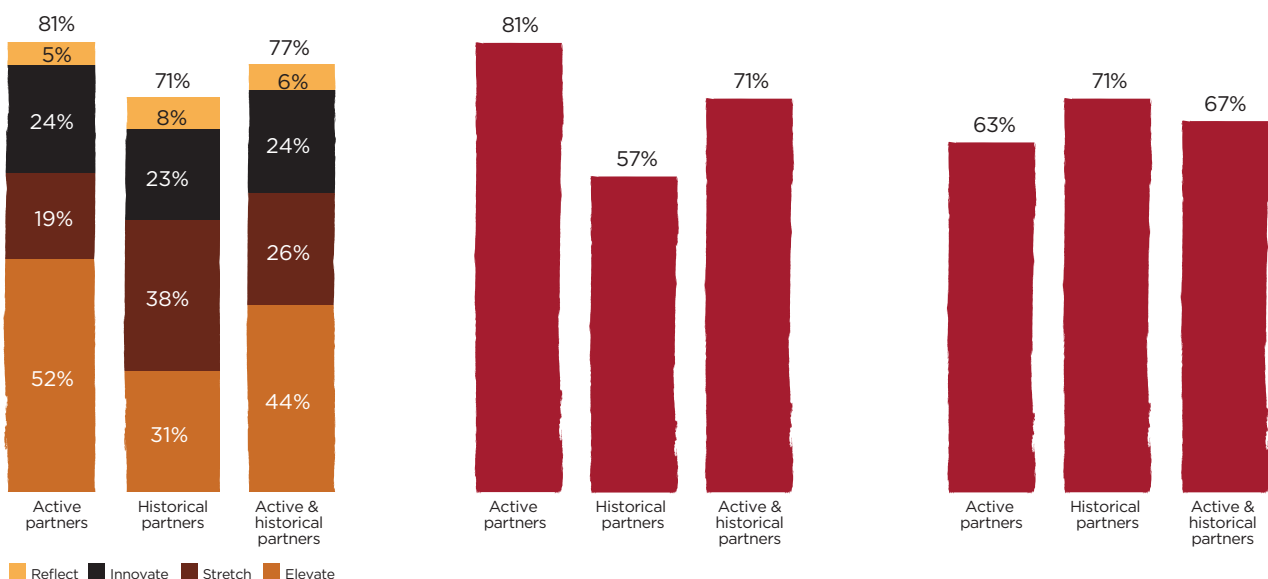
For corporate and government organisations, partnership with Jawun can contribute to broader positive engagement with Indigenous Australia, whether through ambitious RAP actions internally, direct financial investment in Indigenous business ventures, or corporate advocacy on Indigenous issues.

The majority of Jawun’s corporate partners engage significantly in Indigenous affairs:

- 81% of Jawun’s corporate partners have a RAP, with 71% an Elevated or Stretch RAP<sup>25</sup>
- 81% of Jawun’s current secondment partners, and 57% of historical partners, are listed as members of Supply Nation (a non-profit that connects corporate Australia and government with Indigenous suppliers)<sup>26</sup>

Catherine Hunter, Partner Corporate Citizenship at KPMG, sees how Jawun has enabled over 300 of their employees to engage meaningfully with Indigenous Australia and go on to lead the whole organisation to grow in what she refers to as ‘cultural competency’. This, she feels, was a precursor to KPMG Australia’s first Reconciliation Action Plan, and an influence as it designed successive plans over time. The organisation has been awarded the highest ‘Elevate’ status for 2 of its plans, which emphasise economic and social outcomes as well as individual rights and leadership for reconciliation.<sup>27</sup>

FIGURE 15: THE RIPPLE EFFECT: BUILDING THE CULTURAL CAPABILITY OF CORPORATE AUSTRALIA



### Jawun corporate partners with a RAP, %

81% of Jawun’s corporate partners have a RAP, with 71% an Elevated or Stretch RAP

### Jawun corporate partners on Supply Nation, %

81% of Jawun’s current corporate partners, and 57% of historical partners, are listed on Supply Nation

### Jawun corporate partners supporting the Uluru Statement, %

63% of Jawun’s current corporate partners, and 71% of historical partners, have made public statements in support of the Uluru Statement

Source: Corporate websites, Supply Nation, (Excel: Jawun corporate partners reconciliation 27 Nov 2019)

Joint ventures, or commercial partnerships between corporate/government and Indigenous organisations, are another manifestation of increased awareness and conscience. As detailed in section B3, long-term Jawun partner Downer Group entered into a joint venture with Bama Services in 2017 (after having seconded a number of employees) to deliver major infrastructure for Cape York's Peninsula Development Road. For both sides, this represents a commercial relationship which is in equal proportion, with skills transfer and capacity building pledged by Downer to Bama's Indigenous employees.<sup>28</sup>

## Towards a national agenda of reconciliation and empowerment

Jawun has facilitated a growing movement for stronger mutual understanding and meaningful connections between Indigenous and corporate/government Australia. By design, it has driven a passionate form of advocacy, based on experience and intended to shape a better nation.

Jawun Chair Ilana Atlas AO explains how this ripple effect was foreseen in terms of Jawun's overall impact on Australian society:

*Ultimately, we knew that in creating this huge pool of people who had experienced life in community, we would create a pool of advocates for change in Australia.*

At a national level, Jawun's corporate partners have convened around significant issues or causes related to Indigenous Australia, lending their voice and support.

In 2019, many of Jawun's corporate partners (notably KPMG, Herbert Smith Freehills, Qantas, IAG, Woodside, Curtin University) publicly supported the Uluru Statement from the Heart.<sup>29</sup> In 2020 and early 2021, a number were lending their support to the emerging regional and national Voice agenda, which advances recommendations generated by the Uluru Statement and draws on lessons from Empowered Communities' Indigenous-led agenda.

For many, taking a stand on this issue was a way of shaping the values and systems of contemporary Australia, a contribution to nation building. Ann Sherry AO, current Chairman of Eneko Group and a protagonist at Jawun's beginning, spoke of the role of the corporate sector:

*We can't claim as business to be underpinning national prosperity if we don't have a role in talking about nation-building issues. The role of Indigenous Australians and their prosperity and recognition is part of that conversation. We now see business taking a view, having a role, on issues that they once said nothing about. We've got an eye to issues such as what sort of a country, nation or community we want to be. It's a completely different attitude now to 20 years ago.*

Jawun's contribution to the emergence of this corporate conscience vis-à-vis Indigenous Australia sits alongside plenty of other factors, including rising corporate social responsibility, shared value agendas, and a growth in opportunities to engage (Reconciliation Australia, Supply Nation, Career Trackers and more). But there is no doubt that what began in Cape York 20 years ago, as an experimental means of adding corporate manpower to Indigenous reform and enterprise efforts, is now an established course of action for individuals and organisations who want to make a contribution to reconciliation. Jawun's formal secondment program has been taken up by thousands of corporate and government employees, and over 100 Indigenous organisations in 11 regions across the country. Colin Carter explains:

*It's not an accident that the business community is as progressive as it is on Indigenous affairs, for example in support for the Uluru Statement. Look at the thousands of people who've had a Jawun experience. The long-term effect of that has been profound.*

Jawun's role in advocacy for reconciliation and Indigenous-led empowerment may take place behind the scenes, but is felt nevertheless. As former Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretary Terry Moran AM describes it:

*Jawun is a facilitator, cheer squad, and insistent pusher of companies and governments to get things done.*

KPMG summarised the cumulative effect of Jawun's initiatives and advocacy in a government-commissioned impact evaluation as follows:<sup>30</sup>

*Jawun is considered to have made an important contribution to practical reconciliation between corporate and Indigenous Australia.*



# A future Jawun – Cape York partnership

## Looking forward: an evolved partnership model, for big wins in empowerment policy

Jawun was forged by a strong Indigenous vision for empowerment and remains so to this day. The Cape York leaders who dared to imagine a new model are still guiding change today. Their vision is still bold and articulate, and has grown to be part of a national narrative with the promise of hope for all Australia's First Nations peoples.

Fiona Jose is one Cape York leader dreaming big:

*My vision for 2040 is that we have a Voice to parliament. The country is reconciled. We have told the truth and all sides of the truth. We have agreement making with First Nations people. We are independently running our communities. We have individual and tribal wealth. We are fully functioning and delivering on the empowerment, economic and land plans that we have designed ourselves – which means we have delivered on Pama Futures.*

Fiona adds that much has been achieved, but there is a lot left to consolidate:

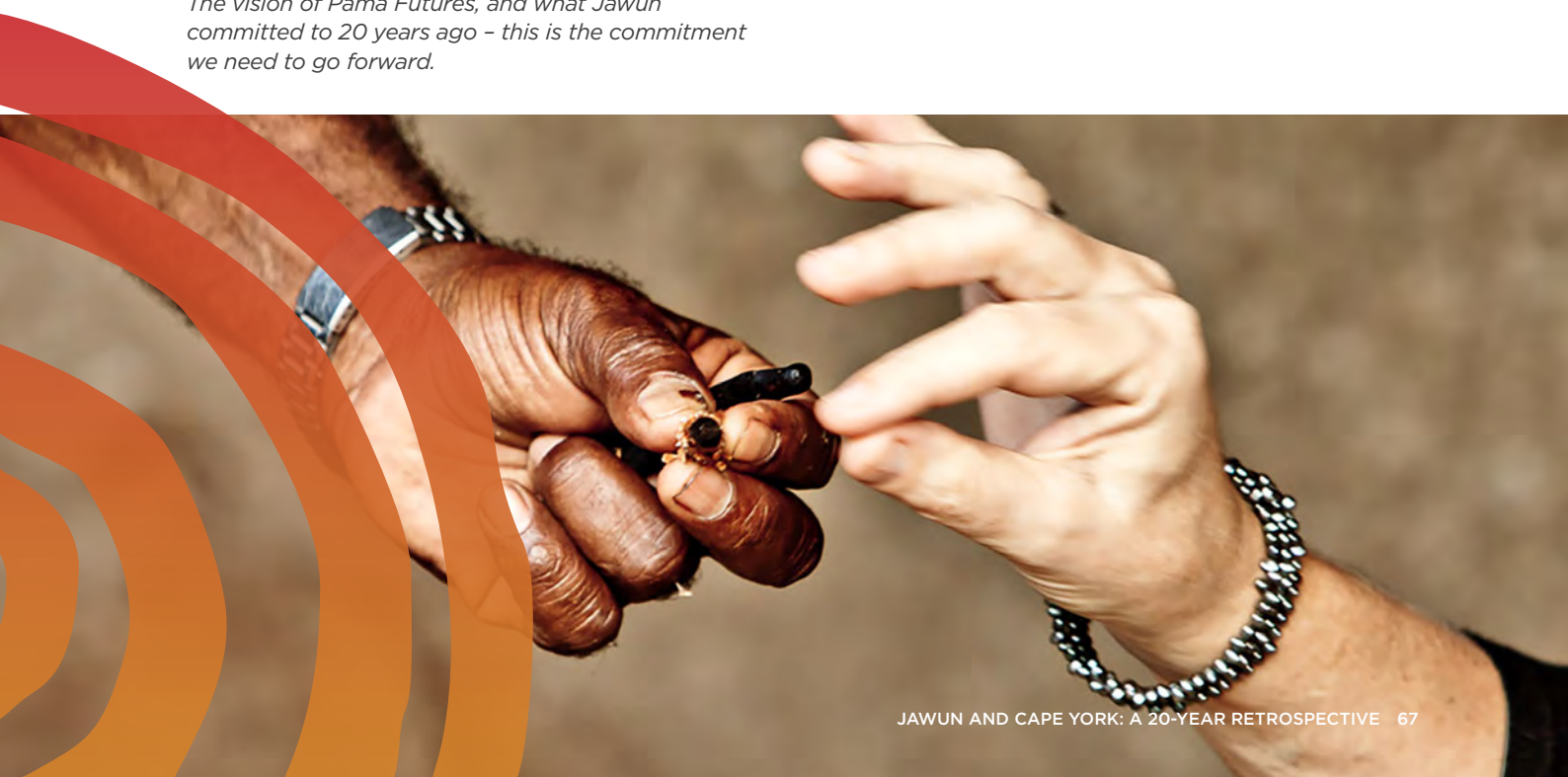
*We have rebuilt social norms. We have been really successful in welfare reform communities. We have land and sea claims and an Indigenous Investment Centre. But if we don't deliver on jobs and enterprises there is no guarantee that things won't go backwards. That people won't have better options than welfare.*

*The vision of Pama Futures, and what Jawun committed to 20 years ago – this is the commitment we need to go forward.*

Partnering with this vision and the long-term commitment it requires, Jawun has spent the last several years working with Cape York's Indigenous leadership to design an evolved model of partnership. After 20 years, capacity is high in partner organisations. Jawun has identified higher-order forms of support. This includes new strategic offerings, advanced skills transfer and project work, and support for leadership and innovation. Responding to the priority placed on achieving long-term and systemic shifts, as espoused in Pama Futures, future support will also focus on advocating and enabling national policy reform.

Jawun's support will be delivered in ways more flexible than the six-week in-place secondment model, including via a digital platform and an initiative known as *Milbiwi* – meaning 'talking together' in the Guugu Yimithirr language of Hope Vale; this word was given to Jawun by Patron Noel Pearson. This new engagement model provides our long-running Cape York partner organisations, and our secondee alumni, with an online portal to connect and collaborate in a self-service engagement approach. It enables our partners to stay strongly connected into the future as they build and expand on 20 years of learning and mutual growth.

From 2021, Jawun will roll out this new way of working for Cape York partners, and a new era of partnership for Indigenous-led empowerment will begin.



# Postscript: Cape York's adaptation to the pandemic

## With COVID-19, Cape York organisations innovated to protect health, wellbeing and economy

In 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic posed a significant threat to Australia's Indigenous communities. The response of local leaders and organisations was extraordinarily swift and proactive. Elders went bush, communities sealed their borders, and businesses and services innovated to stay open.

The Indigenous organisations of Cape York were no exception. Cape York Partnership was quick to organise information sharing, and used the opportunity to establish a food security initiative called Mayi Market.

This initiative had been under consideration for some time: remote communities have relative lack of access to affordable healthy food, with community-based stores typically stocking limited and expensive options for fresh fruit, vegetables and meat. Government subsidy or price control measures are not in place, so families have little choice when it comes to buying more processed and packaged food - with a direct adverse effect on their health and wellbeing.

Kickstarting when the pandemic took hold and restricted movement, Mayi Market delivers affordable fresh food boxes on a fortnightly basis to Cape York communities, continually growing its reach. As pledged on their website, designed for easy ordering and payment:

*Mayi Market is here to take back control of our food network and provide families with access to healthy food and fair prices.*

Other community organisations focused on connection, organising presentations by leaders or weekly 'yarning' sessions on Zoom, and ensuring their staff and websites could inform communities on the latest developments and recommended safety measures.

Community arts e-commerce was strengthened to mitigate the lack of visitors and tourists. Hopevale Arts and Cultural Centre set up its first-ever online shop, for example.

Perhaps most significantly, reform efforts continued apace. Pama Futures, and the broader Empowered Communities movement, continued to convene and progress visions of Indigenous-led empowerment.



Mayi Market delivering affordable healthy food to communities. Photo: Mayi Market

# Conclusion: Looking back to look forward

Twenty years ago, few could have foreseen the direction Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships would take. Founder Noel Pearson, alongside Colin Carter and Ann Sherry from BCG and Westpac respectively, took a leap of faith in sending corporate employees to Cape York to become the first cohort of what we now call Jawun secondees.

If Cape York secondments were Jawun's first chapter, the second saw the model rolled out across an increasing number of regions, eventually reaching 11 today. This expansion was driven by the realisation that Jawun's founding philosophy of Indigenous-led empowerment applied across the country, owned and articulated by local leaders who gave it local meaning.

The third chapter saw the alignment of a coalition of regions whose intent was to drive a consistent agenda of transformative Indigenous-led change. This includes Empowered Communities, a set of bold national reforms for an Indigenous empowerment agenda.

Development through empowerment has been at the core of Jawun's mission throughout, articulated by Indigenous partners as a mechanism for social and economic transformation on their terms. Born in Cape York and iterated across the nation since, this philosophy is unchanged as Jawun looks to its future.

In a fourth chapter, Jawun sees its expansion in three areas:

- the geographical footprint of its operations
- support for Indigenous leadership
- Indigenous, corporate and government relationships, which not only strengthen Indigenous capacity but also accelerate Indigenous-led reform including the regional and local governance framework.

This vision reflects Jawun's role as an established relationship broker, enabler and influencer between corporate Australia, state and territory, and Commonwealth governments, on the one hand, and Indigenous Australia. It reflects a model with genuine connection to place, people and reform, and the ability to foster meaningful collaboration and connection between partners. For as Jawun CEO Karyn Baylis says:

*We are the sum of our partners.*

Today is a momentous time for Indigenous Australia, and by extension our nation. More than ever Indigenous people are striving to regain control of their futures. Forged in the vision and determination of Cape York's extraordinary leaders and enabled by corporate and government allies, Jawun's empowerment model aims to support that vision for many years to come.

So the story continues, and Jawun continues to find new friends and partners to walk the path communities have lit. From the Kuku Yalanji language, spoken in Jawun's birthplace Cape York, Elders shared the word for *together*, to describe this future direction:

*Our People. Our Future. Muruku.*



# Notes

- 1 ABS 2016.
- 2 *Empowered Communities Design Report*, accessible at <https://empoweredcommunities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/EC-Report.pdf>
- 3 Queensland University of Technology, *Strategic Review of Cape York Income Management 2018*, accessible at <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6650/70c739b511b076a17bf61c60f6829b09cbd1.pdf>
- 4 N. Pearson, *Our Right to Take Responsibility*, 2000.
- 5 N. Pearson, *Our Right to Take Responsibility*, 2000.
- 6 <https://capeyorkpartnership.org.au/our-partnership/o-hub/mpower/>
- 7 <https://capeyorkpartnership.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/from-handout-to-hand-up-welfare-reform-report.pdf>
- 8 *Empowered Communities Design Report*: <https://empoweredcommunities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/EC-Report.pdf>
- 9 KPMG Impact Evaluation of Jawun 2015: <https://jawun.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Jawun-Executive-Summary-Extract-REVISED-8Dec15.pdf>
- 10 <https://empoweredcommunities.org.au>
- 11 Cape York Partnership & Cape York Land Council, *Pama Futures: empowerment and development agenda to close the gap on Indigenous disparity in Cape York Peninsula*, March 2018, at [https://capeyorkpartnership.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/FOR-DISTRIBUTION-180312\\_PAMAFUTURES\\_REPORT-1.pdf](https://capeyorkpartnership.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/FOR-DISTRIBUTION-180312_PAMAFUTURES_REPORT-1.pdf)
- 12 N. Pearson, *Our Right to Take Responsibility*, 2000.
- 13 Cape York Partnership, *Family Empowerment Report*, 2019, accessible at [https://issuu.com/cyoinstitute/docs/cyp780\\_fer\\_jan-jun\\_2019\\_email](https://issuu.com/cyoinstitute/docs/cyp780_fer_jan-jun_2019_email)
- 14 Direct Instruction (DI) is an education program based on scripted lessons and complementary teacher training to ensure student outcomes are maximised – see GGSA explanation, <https://goodtogschools.org.au/our-products/effective-instruction/>
- 15 Source: CYP FER 2020, accessible at [https://issuu.com/cyoinstitute/docs/cyp\\_fer\\_jan-jun\\_2020\\_issuu](https://issuu.com/cyoinstitute/docs/cyp_fer_jan-jun_2020_issuu); and CYAAA Annual Report 2019 (most recent available), accessible at <https://cyaaa.eq.edu.au/supportandresources/formsanddocuments/annualreports/annual%20report%202019.pdf>
- 16 <https://cyaaa.eq.edu.au/our-school/history>
- 17 The contribution of education to children's psychosocial wellbeing and resilience is discussed in: Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979) and Joel Reyes, *What Matters Most for Students in Contexts of Adversity: A Framework Paper* (Washington: World Bank, 2013) – both cited in *A New Agenda for education in fragile states*, accessible at, Brookings: <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/08-education-agenda-fragile-states-winthrop.pdf>. Some specific examples in Brookings 2016: a Northern Uganda study using a quasi-experimental design on the effects of participating in educational activities on children's psychosocial well-being found that students that participated in education were safer, more able to form healthy relationships with others, and better able to cope with their circumstances than children in the control group. Two rigorous studies of children and youth's psychosocial well-being in Palestine found that participation in education led to higher levels of optimism, a sense of purpose, and abilities to cope with restricted movement and uncertain violence.
- 18 From Brookings 2016: 8 - Eric A. Hanushek and Ludger Woessmann, *Do Better Schools Lead to More Growth? Cognitive Skills, Economic Outcomes, and Causation*, Working Paper 14633 (Cambridge, Mass.: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2009).
- 19 World Bank The Girl Effect: From Brookings 2016: 12 - Jad Chaaban and Wendy Cunningham, *Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing in Girls: The Girl Effect Dividend*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 5753 (Washington: World Bank, 2011), 2.
- 20 N. Pearson, *Our Right to Take Responsibility*, 2000.
- 21 KPMG Impact Evaluation of Jawun 2015. Executive Summary accessible at <https://jawun.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Jawun-Executive-Summary-Extract-REVISED-8Dec15.pdf>
- 22 Speech at Garma Festival 2018, accessible at <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=327397821162236>
- 23 <https://voice.niaa.gov.au>
- 24 <https://teachforaustralia.org>
- 25 <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation-action-plans/#ra-elevate-rap>
- 26 <https://supplynation.org.au/about-us/supply-nation-members/>
- 27 <https://home.kpmg/au/en/home/about/citizenship/reconciliation-with-indigenous-australia/reconciliation-action-plan.html>
- 28 <https://jawun.org.au/2019/08/road-to-success-downer-and-bama-services-join-forces-in-cape-york/>
- 29 <https://newsroom.kpmg.com.au/australian-organisations-unite-support-uluru-statement-heart/>
- 30 <https://jawun.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Jawun-Executive-Summary-Extract-REVISED-8Dec15.pdf>

# List of acronyms

APS	Australian Public Service
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AMP	Alcohol Management Plan
BCG	Boston Consulting Group
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CY	Cape York
CYAAA	Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy
CYI	Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership
CYLC	Cape York Land Council
CYLP	Cape York Leaders Program
CYP	Cape York Partnership
CYWR	Cape York Welfare Reform
DI	Direct Instruction
FIM	Family Income Management (now referred to as MPower)
FRC	Family Responsibilities Commission
GGSA	Good to Great Schools Australia
IBI	Indigenous Business Institute
IEP	Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships
MULTILIT	Making Up Lost Time in Literacy
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NPY (Lands)	Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
SET	Student Education Trust
SoFL	Stories of Female Leadership
WHS	Work, health and safety







5 KEY ACTORS



INDIGENOUS



SECONDMENT



PHILANTHROPIC



GOVERNMENT



