

Halls Creek kids playing in the spray of the fire truck. Credit: VFES

New \$5.8 million fire station strengthens Halls Creek's emergency response

Following a surge in serious fire and emergency incidents in the Shire of Halls Creek, the new \$5.8 million fire station was instrumental in contributing towards the town of Halls Creek's emergency response.

Data from DFES (Department of Fire and Emergency Services) shows a sharp increase in major bushfires across the Kimberley, rising from 69 in 2020 to 240 in 2024. The town's existing station was identified as "undersized and outdated"

and no longer fit for the growing number of incidents, complexity and demands of this isolated district.

"It's definitely getting worse in the Kimberley and particularly Halls Creek for sure. We know the fires are increasing in size as well," said Matt Thomas, DFES District Officer Natural Hazards for the East Kimberley.

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Halls Creek cemetery records now online

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Featured artist: Dulcie Nanala

ART & CULTURE

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NewGround appointed to complete oval upgrade!

SPORT

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Halls Creek Emergency Contacts

Life-Threatening Emergency
000—Police, Fire, Ambulance

State Emergency Service (SES)
132 500
– Floods, storm damage, fallen trees, roof leaks

Halls Creek Police Station
9168 9777 (Use 000 for emergencies)

Halls Creek Hospital
9168 9222

Fire & Rescue / DFES Kimberley
000—Emergencies
9168 6000—General enquiries

Main Roads WA
138 138—Road conditions & closures

Shire of Halls Creek – After-Hours
9168 6007

Horizon Power
13 23 51—Power outages

Water Corporation
13 13 75—Water & sewer issues

Christmas at the Visitor's Centre

The Halls Creek Visitor Centre has fresh Christmas gifts now in store, with something for everyone. Browse Indigenous bush-medicine products made with traditional knowledge, a colourful range of Christmas tree ornaments, and plenty of locally inspired gift ideas.

You'll also find new clothing and handbags, offering stylish options for all ages.

Whether you're looking for meaningful presents, stocking fillers, or a Kimberley-themed touch for your home, the Visitor Centre has you covered.



Have a story to share? We want to hear from you!

This newspaper is a space for local voices, ideas and stories. Send us your articles, opinion pieces, event info, lifestyle tips, sports and cultural news, classifieds, photos, artwork and more.

Please keep submissions respectful and considerate.

To submit a story please email
watnanews@hcshire.wa.gov.au

Editor's Note

Only one edition of Wat Na! will be published over the December/January period, as many community members, staff and contributors take a well-earned break for the holidays.

Regular monthly editions of Wat Na! will return in February, and we look forward to bringing you more local news, events, culture and community voices in 2026.

Wishing everyone a safe, happy and restful holiday season, see you in the New Year!



Wat Na! is created and published by the Shire of Halls Creek with help from local contributors. Thank you to everyone who shared their stories, ideas and photographs.



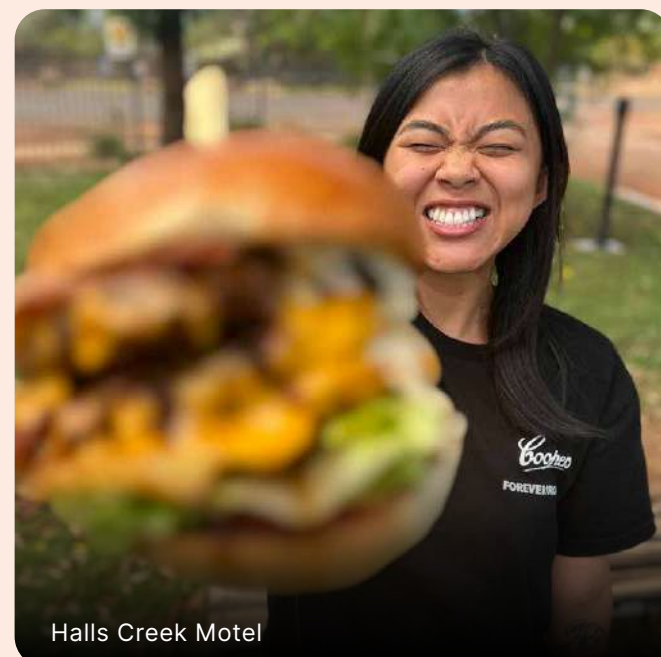
Captured in Halls Creek



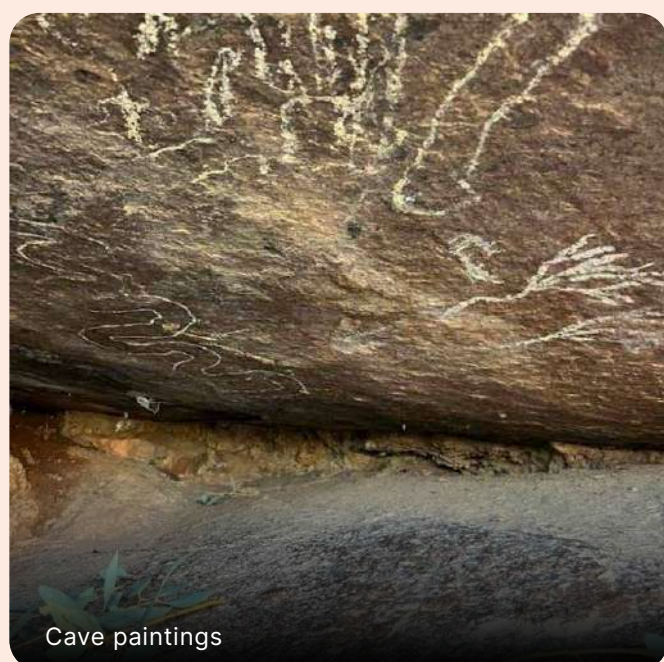
Dilly Butters Yiyili Art Centre



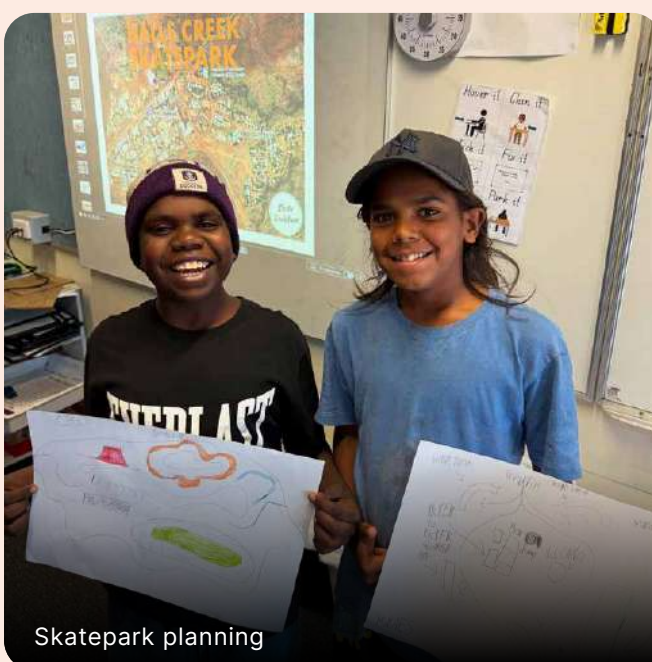
Chief Justice Peter Quinlan visits the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA's Halls Creek office



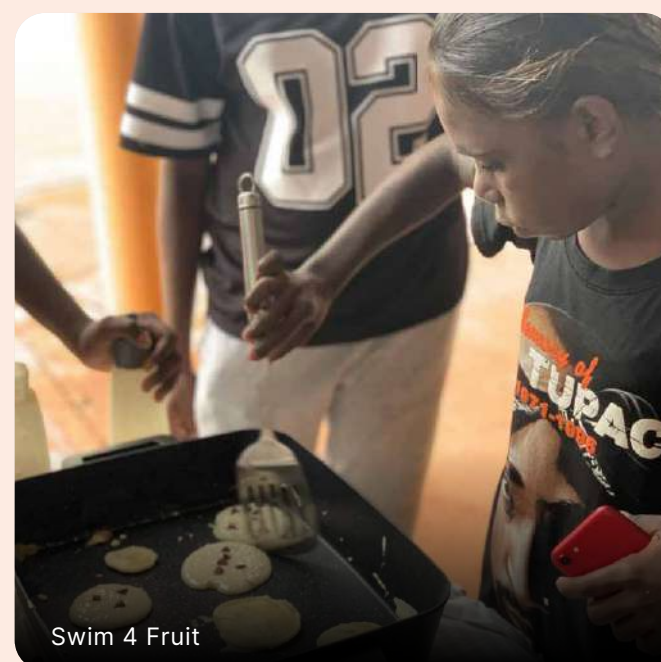
Halls Creek Motel



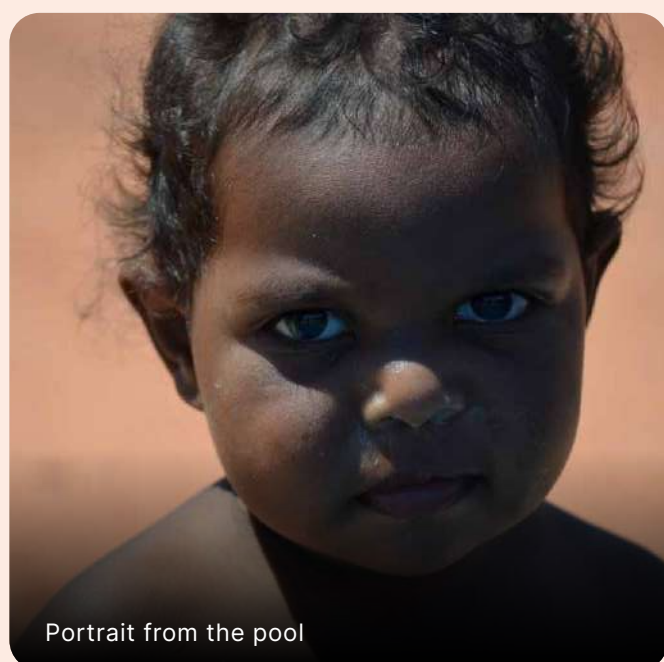
Cave paintings



Skatepark planning



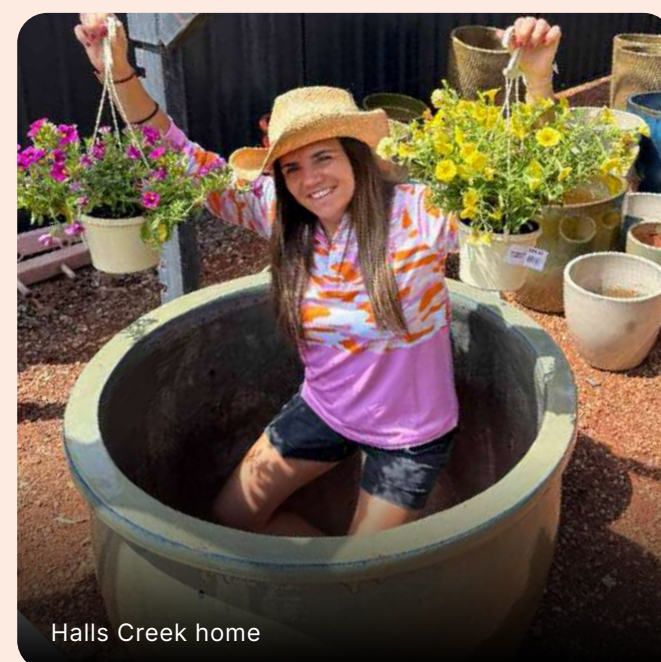
Swim 4 Fruit



Portrait from the pool



High School art



Halls Creek home

Share your adventures around the Shire of Halls Creek! Tag your posts with **#WatNaHallsCreek** on Instagram, or email your favourite shots to **watnanews@hcshire.wa.gov.au**

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which the Shire operates and pay our respect to Elders, past, present and emerging; for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of First Nations peoples across the country and are instrumental in shaping our collective futures.

Welcoming our new Council Members

The recent local government election has brought major change to our Shire, with four new Council members and one former councillor elected to represent the community. The Shire, in partnership with current councillors, Trish McKay and Raymond Simpson, would like to welcome Brenda Garstone, Judith Butters, Kenneth Martin, Paul Robson, and Rosemary Stretch to the Shire of Halls Creek Council.

Local government is the level of government closest to people's daily lives. Few people will get the opportunity to meet federal politicians in Canberra, but most have had a word or two with their councillors down the pub, through work

connections, or even visiting local services, such as the Post Office and health care providers.

On Council, local voices with deep experience of the Shire's towns, communities, land, and stories have the chance to shape policy, funding and long-term planning.

It's a big and important job.

Soon, the new Council will have their say on the draft Strategic Community Plan, major town and regional planning initiatives, and priority projects. These are decisions that will shape how our district looks, feels and functions for years to come.

There will be occasional disagreements, but that's democracy in action, working out the kinks in real-time.

My role as CEO is to support Councillors to carry out their duties and to ensure their decisions are enacted in a timely manner with good governance, transparency and responsible use of resources.

I congratulate the new Councillors and thank all community members who voted.



WORDS BY SUE LEONARD,
CEO, Shire of Halls Creek

Shire Holiday Closure

Our office will **close 4pm, 18 December, reopening 8am, 5 January.**
For urgent assistance, call our **After-Hours Ranger: (08) 9168 6007.**

Larvicide treatment deployed in remotes ahead of wet season mosquito boom

The Shire's Environmental Health team has begun mosquito-control preparations across the remote communities ahead of the impending wet season. Officers have placed slow-release larvicide blocks into sewerage evaporation ponds at Balgo, Mulan and Billiluna, with residents urged to begin their own prevention steps at home (more info below).

Large-scale mosquito activity brings significant health risk to the Kimberley each year. The Ross River Virus (RRV) is regularly

identified in the region, with 29 RRV cases notified in the Kimberley during January–March 2024, including one in Halls Creek. More serious threats, such as Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE), have also been detected in mosquitoes and sentinel chickens in our region, and a West Kimberley child died from the virus in 2023.

Shire Environmental Health team leader, Dean Graham, said the larvicide work is part of a broader effort to reduce risk well in advance of the wet season, when

mosquito breeding explodes after rainfall. "Our team is also inspecting yards, drains and standing-water zones," Graham said. "And we will begin large-scale mosquito fogging efforts as the season progresses. It would be great to have community members checking their blocks regularly too, tipping out containers and keeping their homes as free from standing water as possible."

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF



Credit: Shire of Halls Creek



Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy. Supplied.

Minister flags food insecurity, youth incarceration and housing concerns during Kimberley trip

Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians, Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, has listed food insecurity, youth incarceration, and overcrowded housing as urgent priorities following her recent visit to communities across the Kimberley.

Speaking to 6GME Radio, McCarthy said food costs in remote areas remain “so high” and outlined her government’s Low-Cost Essentials Subsidy Scheme, which has now been adopted by over 100 stores nationwide, including 13 in Western Australia.

“It worries me a lot around the prices that impact mob in community, especially our remote regions,” she said. “It’s not going to be on everything, but it’s going to be on those products that we know are everyday needs of families.”

Her trip included stops in Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and Broome. “There are a couple of areas that we’re doing very, very well, but the areas that we’re not doing well are

the ones that I’m focused on and that is the high rates of incarceration of our people,” she said.

“Also, the high rates of out-of-home care of our kids, the fact that our kids are still being removed.”

Senator McCarthy said the purpose of her visit was to understand what each community actually needs and to push for region-specific responses.

“Not every solution will fix every problem, but if we can work with each of the regions and identify with local mob as to what they actually need, the practical things that matter to them, then that’s what we should be getting behind.”

The trip also afforded the Minister a chance to highlight some wins for the region. In Derby, she visited the successful School Ranger Program at the local high school helping kids stay in tune with “self and identity”, and in Broome, she met with Yawuru Rangers to hear about environmental management in the region.

In the weeks following the Minister’s Kimberley visit, the Labor government announced a major boost in funding for Indigenous ranger programs around Australia. The expansion, part of a national plan to grow the workforce to around 2,500 rangers by 2030, will support Kimberley groups through long-term jobs, additional training funding and improved on-ountry conservation capacity.

Contact Minister Malarndirri McCarthy:

Tel: (08) 8941 0003

Email: senator.mccarthy@aph.gov.au

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF

PREVENT RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE!

Acute rheumatic fever is most common in children aged 5-14 years, and can lead to rheumatic heart disease.

REDUCE

Strep A infections

Wash with Soap



Cover with Band-aids



RECOGNISE

Any of these symptoms

REFER

To the local health clinic



Sick Heart



Fever

Sore Throat

Skin Sores

Sore Joints

For more information **ask your doctor, nurse or health worker TODAY!**

REDUCE, RECOGNISE, REFER!





Halls Creek Cemetery. Credit: Shire of Halls Creek.

Halls Creek cemetery records now online

The Shire of Halls Creek is pleased to announce that the main Halls Creek Cemetery is now publicly accessible online. Community members can search for graves and interments using the following link: map.chronicle.rip/main_halls_creek_cemetery

This new digital resource is part of the Shire's broader effort to modernise cemetery operations and make it easier for families to locate and honour their loved ones.

Aboriginal Environmental Health Coordinator Lawi Too at the Shire of Halls Creek, said the community's input will play an important role in improving the records.

"We know some of the older sections of the cemetery have missing or incomplete records," Mr Graham said.

"We're inviting community members to get in touch if they notice any discrepancies or missing information. Local knowledge is vital in helping us build a more accurate and respectful record for future generations."

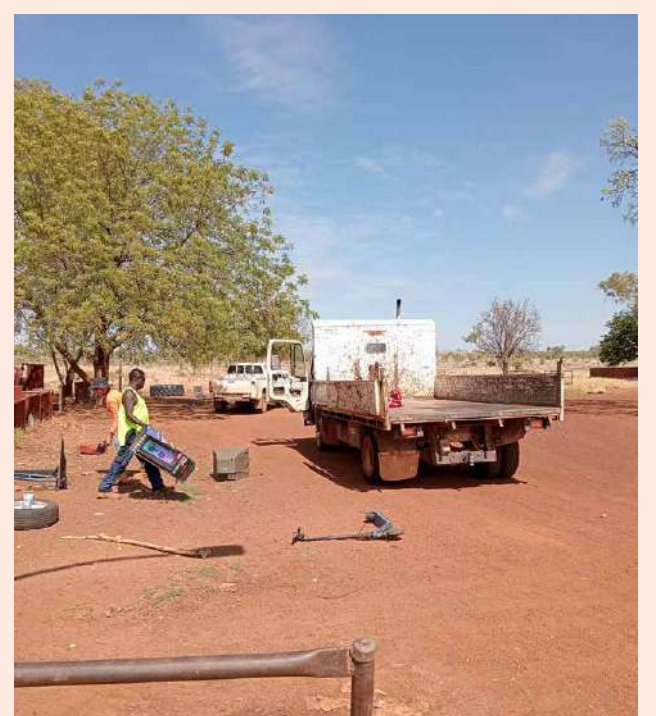
Residents are encouraged to share the link with family, friends and community groups to help ensure the information remains as complete and useful as possible.

Digitising cemetery records also protects them from heat, termites and flooding, a major threat to paper records in remote areas of Australia.

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF

Thank you, Halls Creek!

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in tidying up the streets of Halls Creek. Your hard work makes a real difference in keeping our homes, families and community safe as we head into Cyclone Season this December.



Cyclone clean up. Credit: Shire of Halls Creek.



Developing memory games in class. Credit: Warmun Art Centre

Multi-generation Gija language program kicks off in Warmun

In November Warmun Art Centre welcomed four groups of Gija children to help develop a new Gija language memory game, inspired by the original version created by Senior Gija Elder, artist, mentor, teacher, author and Traditional Owner, Ms Shirley Purdie.

In collaboration with Ngalangangpum School, the students drew and illustrated Gija animals, with each child bringing their own imagination, creativity and cultural knowledge to the project.

The initiative is part of a wider, ongoing effort to create locally designed learning resources that will help the language thrive for future generations.

According to the last census it is thought there are currently 200–250 active Gija speakers in the East Kimberley. Nationally, the 2021 Census recorded around 167 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken at home, although many are spoken by only a small number of people, making community-led language

projects like this essential for supporting ongoing cultural transmission.

For more information, take advantage of the wonderful **Kimberley Language Resource Centre** in Halls Creek.

Tel: (08) 9168 6005

Email: info@klrc.org.au

Address: 12 Terone Street
(PMB 11), Halls Creek WA 6770



Free Call: 1800 686 020
Email: office@kcls.org.au
kcls.org.au

You may have seen us around town this year—at YYMS, the Language Centre or even grabbing lunch at the Kimberley Hotel. We’re Kimberley Community Legal Services, and we’re here to provide legal help and social support across the region.

We offer support in person and over the phone, and we’re always happy to have a yarn, answer questions or point you to local services.

Our social support team works with each person to find the help that suits their needs. If you or someone you know could use a hand, drop by the Language Centre in Halls Creek—we’re here to help.



GRACE MACDONALD,
Kimberley Community Legal Service

In Halls Creek we assist with:

- Family Domestic Violence Support
- Elder Abuse Support
- Tenancy Advice and Advocacy
- Credit and Debts
- Restraining orders
- Criminal Injuries Compensation
- Care and Protection
- Family Law
- Other civil matters



**KIMBERLEY
LANGUAGE
RESOURCE
CENTRE**

Keeping our languages strong

Established in 1985, The Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) works with communities to keep local languages strong in one of Australia's most linguistically diverse regions. KLRC provides workshops, project support and resources, and continues to partner with language groups across remote and regional communities to maintain, revive and advocate for Kimberley languages.

Support our work:

- **Donate:** All donations over \$2 are tax deductible
- **Buy:** Books, colouring books, wordbooks and more
- **Hire:** Conference room and meeting spaces

What we do:

- Language programs guided by community knowledge
- Books and resources in language and English
- Translation services for Kimberley languages
- Cultural activities, including Welcome to Country and cross-cultural training
- Archive access following cultural protocols
- Room hire for meetings and community events

Visit us: 12 Terone Street, Halls Creek | Email: info@klrc.org.au | klrc.org.au



16 Days in WA

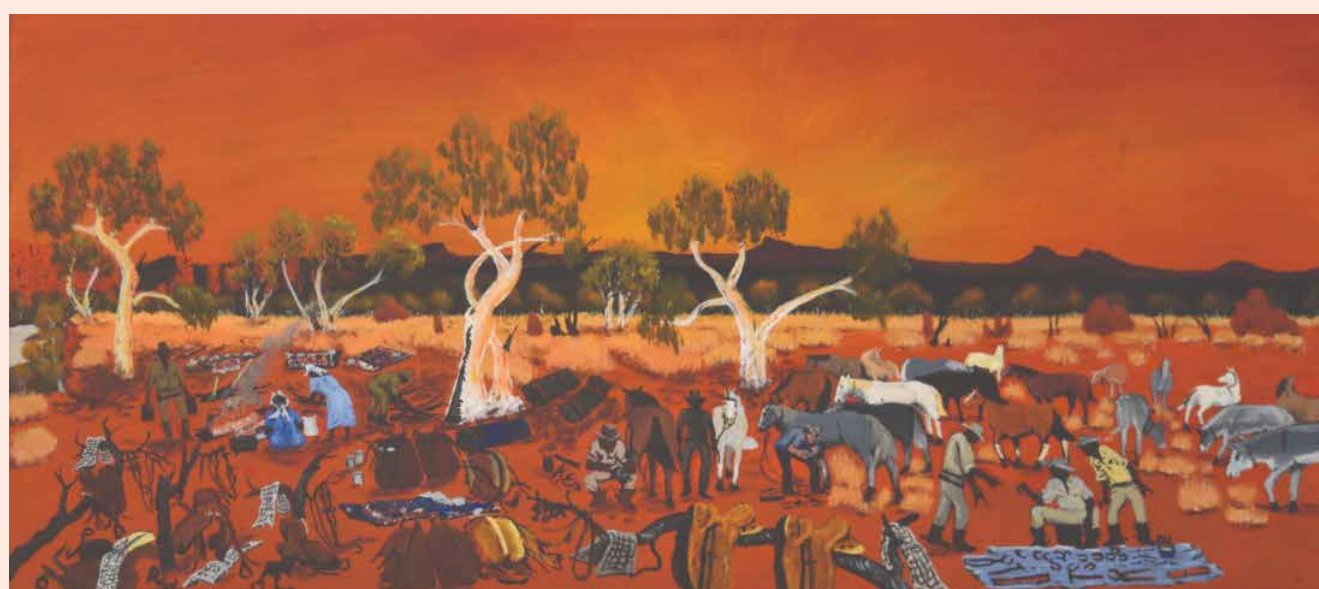
25 November – 10 December

Stopping Family and Domestic Violence:
#PLAY YOUR PART

16
Days
in
WA

Stolen wages payments roll-out as WA scheme nears end

Payments under the Western Australian Stolen Wages Class Action settlement continue to flow, with the scheme now in its final stages. Payments to 5,400 Descendent Eligible Claimants started in early November, according to Grant Thornton Australia, the administrator for the settlement. Payments to approximately 1,800 Original Eligible Claimants are also being processed, with further assessment work ongoing.



Mervyn Street Out in the Stockcamp acrylic on canvas. Credit: Artist and Mangkaja Arts.

The Federal Court approved the \$180 million settlement after years of legal action, agreeing that about 8,750 successful claimants should receive compensation for wages withheld from Aboriginal workers under historic government policies between 1936 and 1972.

The WA Government has confirmed that

the registration period for new claims closed on 30 September 2024, and no further applications can be submitted.

Applicants who have already registered and need assistance, updates or support can contact the **Stolen Wages WA Information Service** on **1300 373 388** or visit stolenwageswa.com.au



Local volunteers for Halls Creek Fire and Emergency. Credit: VFES

New \$5.8 million fire station strengthens Halls Creek's emergency response

Article continued from page 1

The need for a modern fire station was recognised nearly seven years ago after it became clear the old building could not safely house equipment or meet modern volunteer safety standards.

Thomas said the upgrade brings Halls Creek into line with current emergency service requirements around the State. The need for a new fire station was made even more urgent by the Shire's extreme isolation and the challenges in "bombing" additional staff during major events, staff who needed food, bed and toilets.

The new facility, located next to the Police Station and opposite the Shell service station, includes four drive-through vehicle bays to eliminate reversing risks, expanded PPE and decontamination areas, a dedicated operations room for coordinating major incidents, and a purpose-built training space. Thomas said the ability to train locally is a major improvement after years

of volunteers needing to travel to other towns for even basic skills development.

The station will also function as a fully-equipped and self-sufficient hub during major events, allowing DFES to bring in personnel from across the region and base them locally if communities become cut off or emergency conditions escalate.

Both climate change and arson are fueling the growing workload for fire services in the Kimberley, Thomas said. Arson remains a "significant contributor" in the rising number of fire call-outs in the Shire of Halls Creek, with Thomas noting community vigilance was needed in regards to arson, as "enforcement alone cannot address the problem".

"Community plays the largest role here, as you know, trying to set good standards in community as well as reporting things that don't look right".

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF

BOM predicts "uncertain" wet season and above-average heat

The Bureau of Meteorology says this year's wet season for the East Kimberley, including the Shire of Halls Creek, is looking unpredictable. There's no strong sign of a big or weak wet, with rainfall chances sitting close to average. However, BoM is confident temperatures will be hotter than usual, with warm nights and intense day-time heat expected across the region.

For Halls Creek communities, this means being prepared for sudden heavy downpours, late-arriving rains and possible tropical lows, even if the total wet season rainfall doesn't end up high. Check the Shire of Halls Creek website and social media for any severe weather warnings or alerts. The ABC and BoM website are also good tools to follow weather events.

Meet Tuitama Godfrey— Captain of Halls Creek VFES

For 54-year-old Captain Tuitama Godfrey, joining the Halls Creek Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service started out as a way to broaden his social circle. His day job as a paramedic makes him well-suited to the unpredictable nature of fire work, which, on one recent night, involved three burning cars and a backyard alight - with just him and his partner to cope.

"She took pity on me," he laughs. "Otherwise I'd have been out there alone."

Even Tui's 10-month-old Rottweiler has been called up to volunteer. To combat the constant threat of vehicle theft, Tui stations the large dog in the front seat of the Fire Truck to protect it from thieves while the volunteers are distracted fighting fires.

"She's got a ferocious bark on her," Tui says. "If she doesn't do it, one of the firefighters has to guard the truck, which makes us even more short-staffed."

There are ten active members in Halls Creek, but 20 would be a much better number, Tui says, particularly locals who know the land and country "way better"

than the more transient volunteers.

"We really need new recruits to at least come and have a look," Tui says (begs). "20 volunteers would allow one crew of 10 to be on-call each week, and allow rest and support for major events, which can take days to combat."

While Tui was a volunteer firefighter in New Zealand, he stresses that there are "heaps" of useful jobs at VFES for people who don't want to wield a hose, or attend confronting scenes, such as vehicle crashes.

"We need cooks, people good with planning and logistics - literally any skill you can think of, we'd welcome it".

"The coming fire season is looking spicy", Tui says, noting that the seasons are "lengthening and intensifying", and fires already burning in Kununura, Broome and Ringer Soak.

"We'll just do the best we can."

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF

Volunteer today!

Current crew

10-19 active members

220 hours of response last year

Roles available

Fire response, admin, training support, logistics, operations support

Who volunteers?

Local teachers, nurses, police, Shire staff, and community members, including more Indigenous recruits and support staff

Requirements

Basic health check and police clearance (training provided by DFES)

Why more volunteers are needed

More hands mean less fatigue, faster response times, and stronger support for our community



Tuitama with VFES Halls Creek Lieutenant Michael. Credit: VFES



Strong local interest in Stolen Generations Redress Scheme

Nearly a dozen people a day have approached the Shire following the opening of applications for the WA Stolen Generations Redress Scheme, explored in last month’s edition of Wat Na! News. The high level of interest shows just how important the scheme is for residents across the Shire, and how many families are looking for clarity and support to engage with the process. Staff have been assisting

with questions, helping people understand what’s involved, and guiding them towards trusted services who can offer further cultural, emotional and practical support. The Shire is committed to ensuring everyone feels supported as they navigate this significant and often sensitive process.

WHAT IS IT?

The scheme provides eligible survivors of the Stolen Generations with an individual payment of \$85,000.

It is open to living Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who were removed as children from their families in Western Australia before 1 July 1972.

If a Stolen Generations member passed away on or after 27 May 2025, a family member may apply on their behalf.

SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS

Please contact Margaret Mahony, Redress Officer at the **Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation** for support about your claim.

- **Phone:** (08) 9193 6502
- **Mobile:** 0497 925 988
- **Email:** redressofficer1@ksgac.com.au
- **Offices:**
PO Box 2775, Broome WA 6725
- **Opening Hours:**
Monday to Friday 8.00am to 4.30pm

BEWARE OF SCAMMERS

Scammers are contacting community members pretending to help with applications and asking for a percentage of future payments.

Please remember:

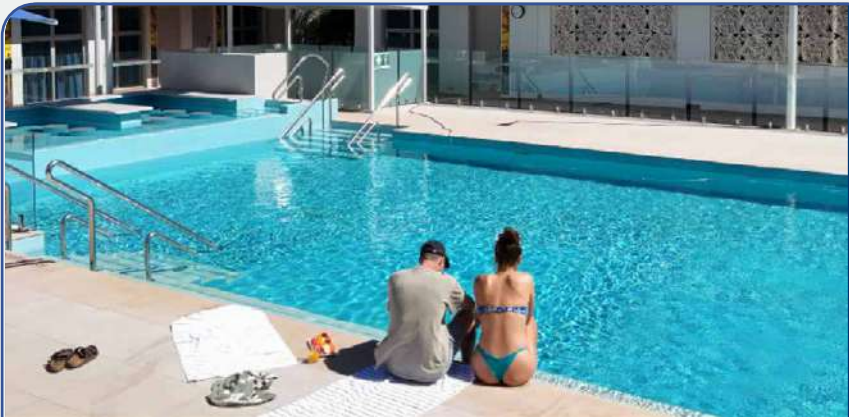
- You do not need to pay to apply
- You do not need to pay anyone to help you apply
- Nobody should ever ask for a fee or a share of your payment

Be cautious if:

- You receive unexpected calls, texts, or emails about applying
- Someone pressures you to sign documents or join a law firm

Protect yourself:

- Don’t share your personal information with people you don’t know
- Speak with family or someone you trust
- Contact the Department if you are unsure or want to report suspicious behaviour



Home for the Holidays

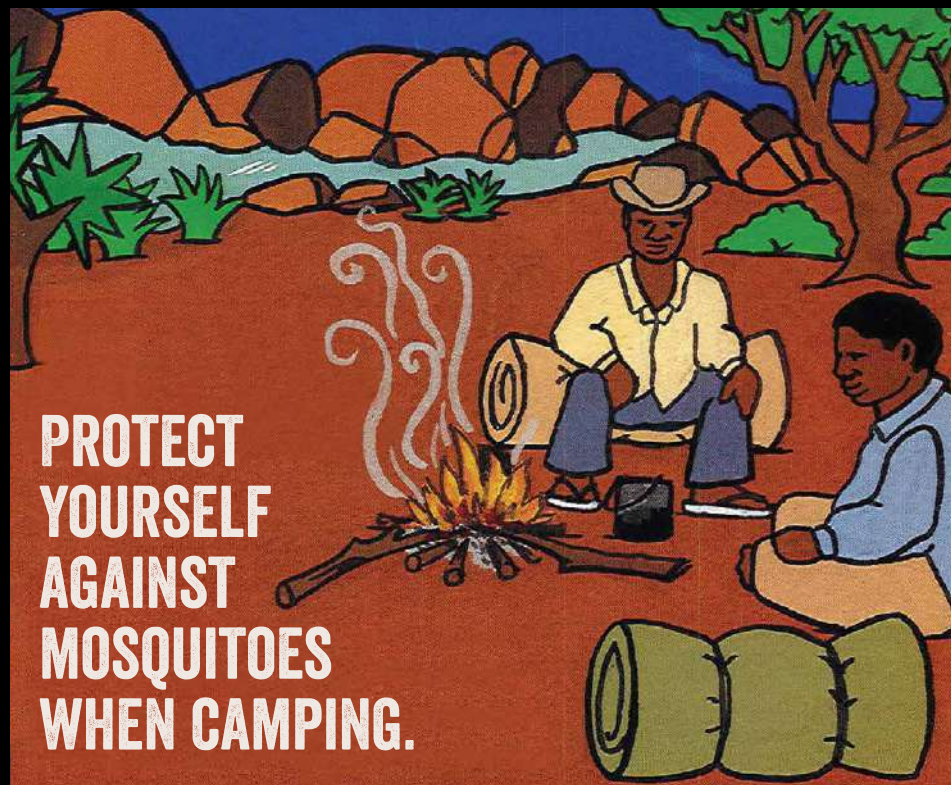
Celebrate the holidays in style from \$150 per night*. Plus get a \$30 dining credit for The Cambridge Brasserie 47.

Book now on our website, or call +61 477 727 568.

*Terms and conditions apply.
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PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST MOSQUITOES WHEN CAMPING.

★ FIGHT *the* BITE ★



PROTECT YOURSELF

against

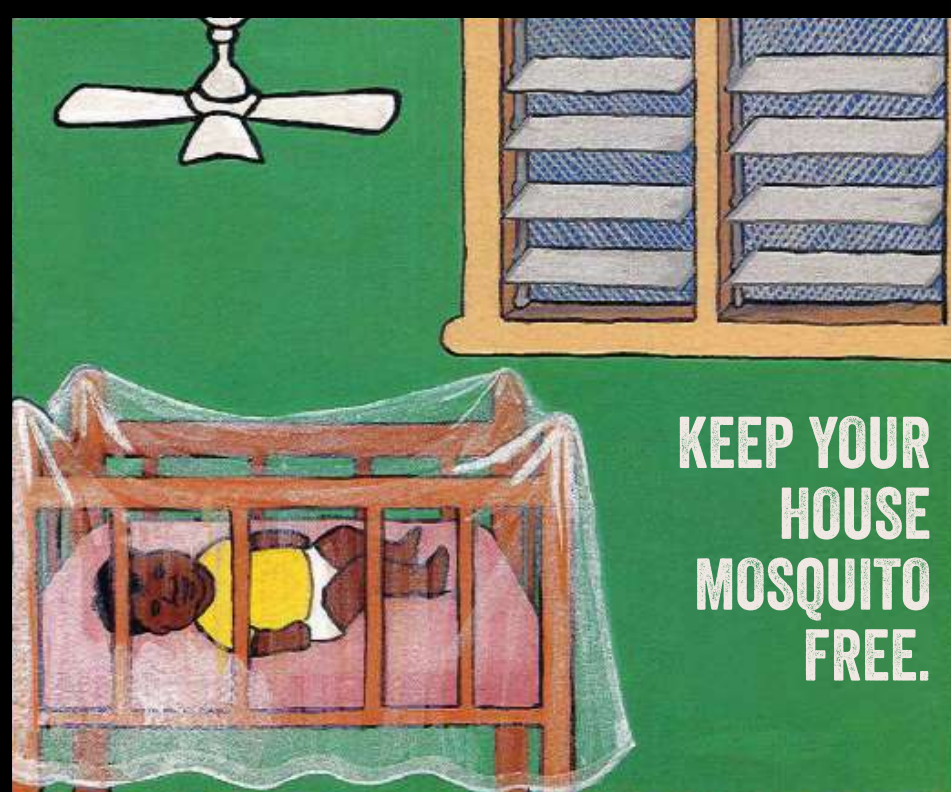
DISEASE-CARRYING MOSQUITOES



★ COVER UP. REPEL. CLEAN UP. ★



REMOVE THE WATER AND CONTAINERS MOSQUITOES BREED IN.



KEEP YOUR HOUSE MOSQUITO FREE.

For more information, contact the Kimberley Population Health Unit
9194 1630, your Community Health Clinic or Aboriginal Medical Service.

www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/ **FIGHTTHEBITE**



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health

This poster is supported by the WA Department of Health.
Fight the Bite is an initiative of the Government of South Australia.



In conversation with Divina D'Anna MLA

*Member for Kimberley; Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier;
Minister for State Development; Trade and Investment; Economic Diversification*

What attracted you to politics and becoming a politician, and why do you believe it is the best way to enact change?

I didn't grow up with politics in mind but I always knew one thing deep down—I wanted to help people. That is what always drove me from a young age because I saw the struggles in my community and I saw the strength in our young people and thought "What can I do? How can I make a difference?"

Before politics, I worked in community development and Indigenous affairs, with a real focus on empowering women, youth and remote communities. Being the Member for Kimberley provides me with the opportunity to advocate for our region and for our people so I see it as a powerful platform to give the Kimberley a voice.

What vision and aspirations for the people of the Kimberley motivate you in your work?

My vision for the Kimberley is one where our young people can thrive without having to leave the region to access opportunities. I want to see strong, self-determined communities, where culture and language are celebrated alongside economic growth. And I want to see a diversified economy

with continued investment in housing, local employment pathways, culturally safe health services and regional infrastructure.

Can you share with us some special memories you have of the Shire of Halls Creek and what you find precious about our region?

I've got a lot of special memories of Halls Creek. I spent time there over the years visiting family, and it's always felt like a second home in many ways. My mum actually used to live and work there—she was at Yuri Yungi and also spent time out in the remote clinics. I remember seeing how dedicated she was about looking after people, and that really shaped how I see community and care for others.

I always loved Halls Creek and its people. There was a strong sense of community and Culture, everyone looked out for each other. There were beautiful places we would go to also like Palm Springs and Mary Pool for picnics. It is such beautiful country with so many stories for locals and visitors alike.

You come from a strong line of Kimberley leaders. How do you balance your cultural responsibilities with political life and

family life, and how does that perspective shape the way you advocate for regional WA?

Balancing my political life with my family and cultural responsibilities can definitely be challenging. I absolutely do need to try and switch off more and make more time to go fishing with my family and reconnect with country.

My cultural identity is at the core of who I am and it shapes every decision I make. It keeps me grounded. I carry my responsibilities with pride and my connection to culture and community help me to advocate more genuinely and effectively for the Kimberley as I understand firsthand the unique strength and challenges of the people in this region.

You've spoken about having to "step up" as the eldest daughter of 9 children to young parents. What did this look like, in a practical sense in your childhood? And how has that early responsibility and caring role shaped who you are today?

I had to take on a lot of responsibility from a very young age. I had to help care for my younger brothers and sisters and I helped my parents to keep the family strong.

Those early responsibilities taught me resilience, patience and the importance of leadership grounded in care and empathy. They also shaped me into someone who understands the value of community and family.

Community safety remains a daily concern for many residents. What are your key thoughts on tackling youth crime in our Shire and across the Kimberley?

Community safety is a complex issue, and it can't be solved by policing alone. Whilst law enforcement has a role, long-term changes comes from understanding and addressing the root causes of youth crime. It is important to genuinely listen to community leaders and members who know what is happening on the ground and what solutions are already working.

I will continue to advocate for culturally safe, community-led diversionary initiatives and mentoring, such as night patrols and safe spaces. One powerful example of what works is the Marra Worra Worra Youth Night Place in Fitzroy Crossing that offers a safe after-hours space where kids can get a hot meal and engage in structured activities. This has made a huge difference in the Fitzroy Crossing

community. I recently met with the team at Jungarni Jutiya, who have launched the Night Patrol and are developing the Night Space in Halls Creek, and they are committed to providing those wrap-around supports and engaging activities for the town's youth. The program is already off to a fantastic start and I look forward to hopefully being able to call in and see the team in action soon.

Our Shire has one of the highest youth populations in the state. What future do you see for young people growing up in remote Kimberley communities—and what needs to change for that vision to be realised?

I see a future where young people in the Kimberley are proud, confident and empowered to succeed. Our young people are our greatest strength and I want young people in the Kimberley to have the same opportunities as people in metropolitan areas.

I strongly support the ongoing investments into access to quality education and strong pathways into training and employment. I met with Job Pathways in Halls Creek recently and we discussed the nationally recognised qualifications

and short courses available through the North Regional TAFE campus in the town. Having access to local training options in Halls Creek is incredibly beneficial for young people, as it allows them to build skills, gain confidence and create pathways to employment without them having to leave their country.

I will continue to advocate for real investment in youth—not just one-off programs, but long-term support that is community-led and culturally safe. Our government recognises the importance of investing in youth engagement and we recently launched the next round of Youth Engagement Grants to support longer-term strategic community-wide initiatives, with a strong focus on regional and remote areas.

Young people need to be included in shaping their own futures, they need to be heard, supported and celebrated for who they are.

Want to contact Divina D'Anna MLA?

Call: (08) 9192 3111,

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PO Box 3643, Broome WA 6725

Facebook: Divina D'Anna—Member for Kimberley



Davina out and about in the Shire of Halls Creek. Supplied.



King Charles meeting Anangu leaders. Credit: Buckingham Palace

King Charles meets Anangu leaders to mark 40 years since Uluru handback

King Charles has met with Anangu Indigenous leaders at Australia House in London to mark 40 years since the historic handback of Uluru to its Traditional Owners. The 1985 handback, considered a landmark moment in Australia's land rights movement, returned legal ownership of the sacred site to the Anangu people.

"In the past, when I was young, the Queen and the King before her, they did have ownership of Australia," Alison Carroll, a representative of the Anangu people, said.

"But now, we're in the process of saying, some of the lands has to come back to Aboriginal peoples, and that needs to be given back in a process of, you know, a sense of ownership where we belong."

In recent years, other major handbacks have occurred across Australia. In 2021, Queensland's Daintree National Park was formally returned to the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people under a historic agreement with the state government, along with Ngalba Bulal, Kalkajaka and Wundu

national parks. The agreement included new joint-management arrangements between Traditional Owners and Queensland Parks and Wildlife.

Carroll and her cohort said they would like King Charles to visit Uluru again, noting his last trip to the region was more than two decades ago and that a return would demonstrate continued support for cultural recognition and strengthened relationships with Traditional Owners.

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF

"Systemic" racism forcing Indigenous workers out of jobs and costing workplaces

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers are leaving their jobs at much higher rates due to racism and discrimination in Australian workplaces, a new report has found.

The Gari Yala, Speak the Truth study, released by the University of Technology Sydney, found Indigenous employees are three times more likely to resign because of workplace racism than other workers. Thirty-eight per cent said they had been treated unfairly because of their

identity, and many reported racial slurs, stereotyping and social isolation on the job. Researchers also reported that 63 per cent of First Nations workers experience high "identity strain", meaning they feel pressure to hide or minimise their culture to fit in, a factor strongly linked to burnout and early exit from employment.

Union leaders say the issue is "systemic" and costing workplaces talent, stability and long-term retention. Researchers warned it also leads to poorer health

outcomes, including chronic stress, anxiety and workers withdrawing from employment entirely. The findings are particularly relevant to communities like Halls Creek, where the latest census data shows that 25.8 per cent of Aboriginal people aged 15 and over are in the labour force, while 38.6 per cent of those employed are in full-time positions.

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF

World-first study finds learning language from Elders and connection to community boosts success for Indigenous kids

A world-leading 15-year study led by Queensland University of Technology (QUT) has delivered the clearest evidence yet: connection to culture is one of the most powerful predictors of Indigenous children’s wellbeing and success—more than income, remoteness or even school attendance.

The landmark study, Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children, followed 1,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from early childhood through adolescence. It is the largest and longest study of its kind globally, designed in partnership with Indigenous communities and researchers.

Data was collected through yearly interviews with families, teachers and community members, allowing researchers to track long-term patterns in health, learning and cultural identity with more detail than any previous national study.

The study found kids who regularly engaged in cultural practices—including traditional dance, art, hunting, fishing, language, and ceremonies—showed higher emotional resilience, stronger relationships, and better school outcomes than those who didn’t.

Speaking an Indigenous language in early childhood was especially significant. In remote areas, more than 70 per cent of children spoke a First Nations language, compared to just 6 per cent in major cities, and those who did had noticeably better social and emotional wellbeing into their teens.

The health of the family is another major driver, the study found. Children whose parents reported strong mental health, social support and connection to community consistently scored higher in literacy, numeracy and confidence. Emotional safety and support at home were also strongly linked to better school engagement and behaviour.

Early education mattered too. Kids who attended preschool or had parents read or play with them at home showed stronger

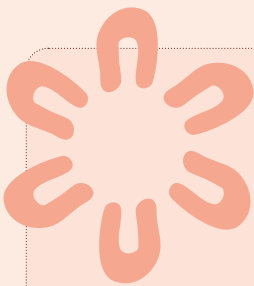
vocabularies, better self-regulation and smoother transitions into school, a critical factor for long-term success.

One of the starkest lessons from the study is the lack of internet access in remote regions like Halls Creek, with only 8 per cent of remote study participants reporting access to the internet.

Researchers found the digital divide showed up clearly in the data, with early digital access offering advantages in “reading, problem-solving and safe technology use later on.”

Perhaps the most moving part of the report is what children themselves say about “growing up strong,” including the poem below.

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF

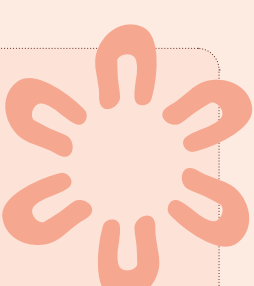


Being healthy and making good decisions.

Respect my Elders and culture.

Being resilient and persistent. Getting better at something.

You have learnt how to be a good person and be safe. Strong and brave.



Traditional Owners’ knowledge key to replica Juukan Gorge project

A full-scale replica of the Juukan Gorge rock shelter is being built in Western Australia, five years after the sacred site was destroyed by Rio Tinto.

The reconstruction uses more than 150 archival photos, 3D modelling, and virtual reality, guided by the memories of Traditional Owners. Funded by Rio Tinto as part of a redress agreement, the project aims

to honour the cultural significance of the 46,000-year-old site, used by Aboriginal people as shelter for tens of thousands of years. As part of the project, a delegation from the Puutu Kunti Kurrama (PKKP) and Pinikura Aboriginal Corporation has been in France visiting similar replicas of the famous Lascaux and Chauvet caves.

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF



Traditional Owners examining the replica Juunkan Gorge. Credit: ABC



Featured artist



On the left, Dulcie has painted 'Wilkinkarra', her family's traditional country, known to some as Lake Mackay. To the right, Dulcie has painted 'Karlyapilyirra', her Father's country, close to Piparr and Wilkinkarra. Credit: Warlayirti Artists, Balgo

Dulcie Nanala: artist, linguist and leader

Dulcie is the daughter of leading Balgo artist Ningie Nanala and step-daughter for Tjumpo Tjapanangka (c.1929-2007). She began painting in 1997, and since this time has developed a diverse repertoire of image making.

Like her famous parents, Dulcie often paints within the desert hues of yellow, orange and white but has more recently

extended her palette to include vibrant colours. Primarily, her works relate to that of her parents' country, recalling the vast tracks of land with its saltpans, claypans and plentiful mangarri (bushfoods).

Steeped within the Balgo tradition, Dulcie creates beautiful, contemporary and stylised works that invite the viewer to experience her heritage and country.

Dulcie lives in Balgo with her extended family, where she is a well-respected community member, and a primary linguist for the area. In 2019 Dulcie was the Warlayirti Artists chairperson; she continues today on the board of directors.

WORDS AND IMAGES COURTESY OF WARLAYIRTI ARTISTS, BALGO

Follow Warlayirti Artists - Balgo on Facebook for updates!

Nyiyaparli language game wins global awards in NYC!

A digital language game created to help revitalise the Nyiyaparli language has won five major international awards, putting an Australian First Nations project on the global stage.

The game, Nyiyaparli Widi, was recognised at the Anthem Awards—a competition that celebrates world-leading work in culture, education and social impact.

Developed by the Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre, the game features 90 Nyiyaparli words voiced by Elders and language holders. Players match spoken words with images, learning vocabulary through repetition, listening and memory. Senior Nyiyaparli man Michael Stream said the project has already made a powerful difference for families wanting to reconnect with language.

“If you don’t have language, what do you have?” Mr Stream told the ABC.

“We want our kids to grow up with pride and to hear the old people’s voices. This is how we keep it alive.”

The award-winning project comes at a crucial time. According to the language centre, around 80 per cent of Aboriginal languages in Australia are now considered critically endangered. Many communities are relying on digital tools, classrooms and on-Country programs to keep languages strong for younger generations.

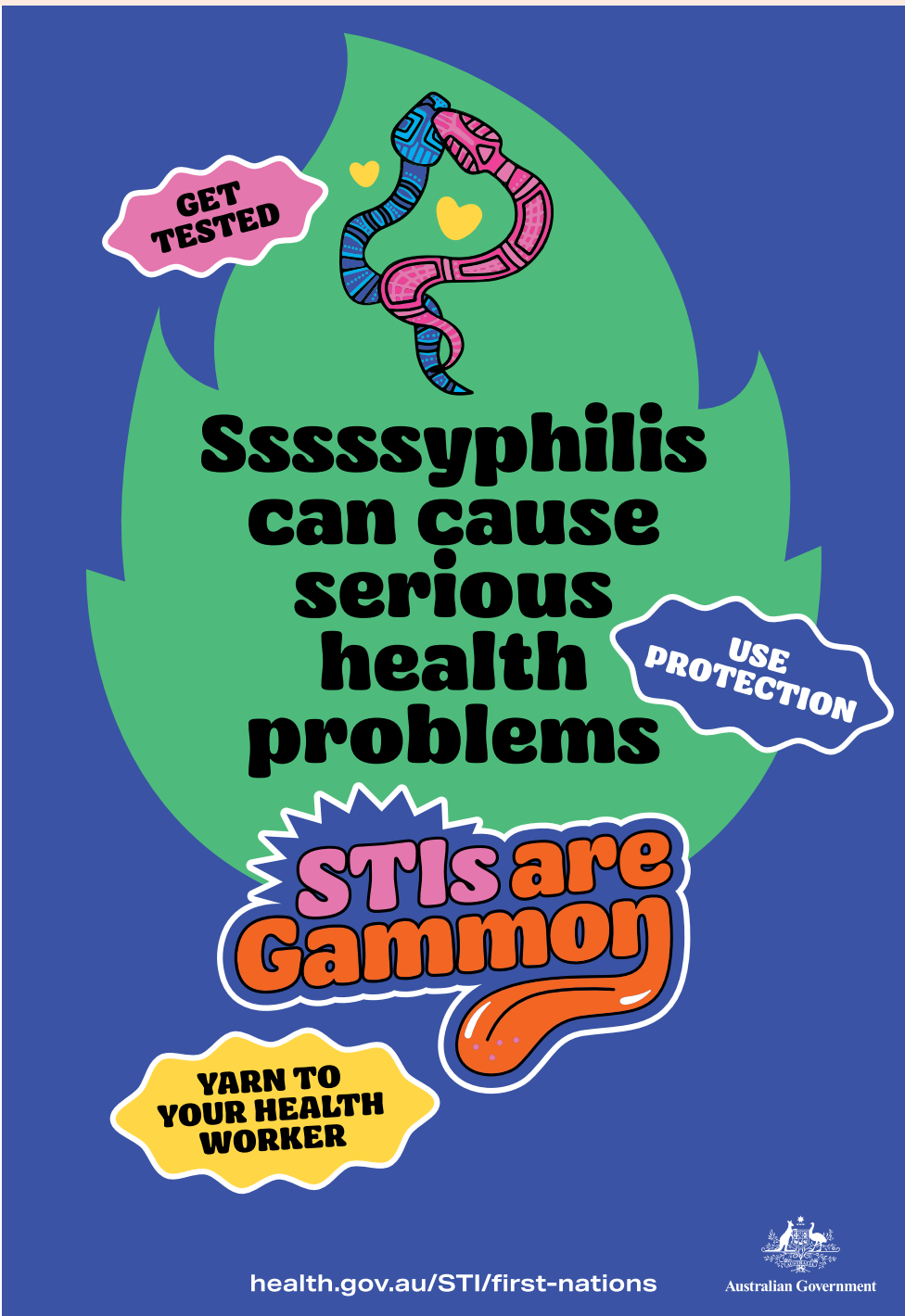
The Wangka Maya team hopes the awards will inspire further investment in community-led language projects, especially in remote regions.

Mr Stream said the next step is expanding the game with more stories and more Elders’ voices. “We’ve started something good,” he said. “Now we keep going so the next generations don’t miss out.”

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF



Screenshots from the Nyiyaparli living language project app. Credit: Nyiyaparli Widi



Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair records \$5.1 million in sales, supporting more than 1,800 artists

The Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair has recorded its strongest year on record, generating more than \$5.1 million in sales and confirming its position as one of Australia’s most significant Indigenous art events.

The 2025 fair brought together 78 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art centres and more than 1,800 artists, presenting over 12,000 works across three days. Organisers say the result reflects rising national and international demand for Indigenous art and delivers critical income directly to artists and remote art centres.

The fair also reported increased attendance from galleries, curators and buyers, strengthening opportunities for emerging and established artists.

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF



Mysery Road Promotional pictures. Credit: Screenwest

All Indigenous team wrote the latest Mystery Road

The ABC’s hit drama *Mystery Road: Origin* has made Australian screen history as the first instalment in the franchise to be developed by an all-Indigenous writing team.

“We had an entire First Nations writing team on this, and when I read the script I could see the care and consideration that had gone into telling a story that had never been shown on television before,” actor Coles Smith told The National Indigenous Times.

Mystery Road: Origin explores the early life of Detective Jay Swan. While the first Mystery Road series was filmed in the East Kimberley, Coles Smith – who portrays Jay Swan – grew up in the West Kimberley. He also recently presented the ABC documentary series *The Kimberley*, which highlights regional stories from a local perspective and showcases the strength of community storytelling across the north.

"Individualism and self-isolation are by-products of modernity, of Western culture, and Jay is a victim of it".

Coles Smith told NIT, "The reality is that we need each other. Our First Nations culture prescribed a sense of we, not me, working together."

The writing model behind *Mystery Road: Origin* is being hailed as a major step forward, moving beyond consultation to genuine creative ownership. The production has also brought tangible benefits to WA. According to ScreenWest, *Mystery Road* has boosted the state economy by \$25 million over four seasons, injecting an estimated \$18.5 million into regional communities, with local crews, businesses and cultural advisers all playing key roles.

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF

Major museum acquires Balgo artist's work

The Balgo-based Warlayirti Artists Centre has announced that the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) has acquired a suite of drawings by local artist Jimmy Tchooga, currently showing at this year’s National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) in Darwin.

Jimmy’s series responds to the historic Birrundudu Drawings—crayon works by Warlpiri and Gurindji men from the late 1940s. Through his drawings, Jimmy retraces the Waringarri songline, a ceremony passed down to him by senior men, sharing the journey of Luurnpa (the Kingfisher) and those who revived the tradition.

Warlayirti Artists described the acquisition as “a proud moment for our boss man,” celebrating Jimmy’s achievement and the growing recognition of Balgo art and storytelling.

STORY ADAPTED WITH THANKS TO WARLAYIRTI ARTISTS—BALGO.



Jimmy Tchooga pictured in front of his artwork. Credit: Warlayirti Artists—Balgo



Vogue Australia August 2025. Credit: Vogue Australia



Tatyana Perry at Chanel. Credit: GoRunway.com



Latahla Hickling at Chanel. Credit: GoRunway.com

First Nations models make history at Chanel’s Paris Fashion Week show

Two young First Nations women have made history on one of the world’s biggest fashion stages, becoming the first Indigenous models to walk together in a Chanel runway presentation.

Latahla Hickling, 18, from Casino (NSW), and Tatyana Perry, 19, from Darwin, appeared in Chanel’s Spring/Summer 2026 show at the Grand Palais in Paris. Both were “season exclusives,” meaning they were contracted to walk only for Chanel—a highly competitive position

within the international modelling industry.

The milestone follows their joint Vogue Australia cover in August 2025 alongside model Em Stenberg, which highlighted the growing presence of First Nations talent in global fashion. Their rapid progression from a national magazine cover to one of the world’s most high-profile runways has been widely noted within the industry.

Chanel’s creative director, Matthieu Blazy, has previously worked with Indigenous

models, including Yolngu model Tarlisa Gaykamangu, who he cast for a Milan show in 2023 while leading Bottega Veneta.

The appearance of Hickling and Perry marks a significant step for representation, with both models now positioned for major international careers. Hickling said earlier this year that her focus is on “working hard and making my family proud.”

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF



Winuba, by Evelyn Malgil 2024. Supplied.

Kimberley art takes centre stage at Washington embassy

A major Kimberley exhibition has opened at the Australian Embassy in Washington DC, showcasing work from a region twice the size of California to US audiences.

Designed to garner American attention for Kimberley talent, the exhibition places the region’s stories and art at the centre of international power. *All That Country Holds* features pieces by ten leading artists: Ben

Galmirri Ward, Angelina Boona Karadada, Mervyn Street, Evelyn Malgil, Jan Gunjaka Griffiths, Miriam Baadjo, Leah Umbagai, Marylou Orliyarli Divili, Pauline Sunfly, and John Prince Siddon. The collection will remain on display in the United States until the end of March 2026 before touring to Perth next year.

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF



Previous winner Tommy May. Credit: Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory

Entries open for Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards

Entries are now open for the 2026 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA), held each year on Larrakia Country at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) in Darwin. Established in 1984, the awards remain Australia’s most significant platform for celebrating First Nations art, culture and innovation.

MAGNT Director Adam Worrall said the awards continue to reflect the “extraordinary depth and talent within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art practice,” adding, “these Awards honour artists across generations, those who have shaped the

legacy of the Awards and those emerging with bold, new voices.”

Over the decades, NATSIAA has recognised some of the nation’s most influential artists, including 2025 winner Gaypalani Waṇambi (Yolṇu Matha, NT) and Kimberley local Ngarralja Tommy May, who won the award in 2020.

Artists can enter across multiple categories, including bark painting, general painting, works on paper, 3D work, multimedia and emerging artist. The top award carries a \$100,000 prize, with additional category awards supporting artists at all stages of

their careers.

First Nations artists from across the country—including the Halls Creek and East Kimberley region—are encouraged to submit work and share their stories in this nationally recognised exhibition.

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF

Entries close on the 23rd of February 2026

Yarliyiḻ Art Centre Christmas Sale

Big discounts across artworks, prints, jewellery and handmade gifts.
A great chance to pick up something special for Christmas.

1-12 December



Recipe of the month



Ingredients

Fried Rice

- 2 cups long grain rice (cooked to packet instructions)
- 1 medium brown onion, diced
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tbsp crushed garlic
- 1 tbsp crushed ginger
- 200g diced bacon
- 1 kabana stick, thinly sliced (swap kabana for prawns, chicken, or whatever you fancy)
- 500g pack of frozen peas, corn & capsicum
- 5 tbsp soy sauce

Marinated Chicken

- 600g chicken breast
- ½ cup store-bought teriyaki sauce

Teriyaki Chicken Fried Rice

RECIPE BY CHEF RAYMOND

⌚ 30 mins ✂ Serves 2-3 💰 Budget Friendly



Method—Fried Rice

1. Lightly whisk eggs in a small bowl
2. Heat oil in a medium pan on high
3. Pour in the eggs and swirl to cover the bottom of the pan
4. Cook until almost set, flip, cook briefly, then remove and set aside
5. In the same pan, add kabana, bacon, garlic and ginger. Cook until lightly browned
6. Add onion and cook for 2 minutes
7. Add frozen veggies and stir until soft
8. Add the cooked rice and mix everything together
9. Dice cooked egg and add it back in
10. Pour in soy sauce and stir well (try a taste, add more if you like it saltier)
11. Remove from heat and set aside

Method—Teriyaki Chicken

12. Trim chicken (remove sinew and fat) and butterfly breasts
13. Coat with teriyaki sauce and let it sit a few minutes
14. Heat oil in a separate pan over medium heat
15. Cook chicken halfway, flip, and cook through
16. Remove from heat and rest briefly

To Serve

17. Press fried rice into a bowl, then turn onto a plate
18. Slice the chicken and place next to the rice
19. Garnish with lettuce and tomato
20. Drizzle lightly with extra teriyaki sauce



New Pool operations manaGer Amanda (Picture right) and Eldean mccale (Pictured left). Credit: Shire of Halls Creek

Meet Pool Operations Coordinator, Amanda!

This month, the Shire welcomes our new Pool Operations Coordinator, Amanda Viljoen, who many residents may already recognise from her regular visits to Halls Creek since 2021.

Originally from Perth, Amanda has been travelling to the region for several years as a swimming instructor, teaching and supervising students from Yiyili, Red Hill and Halls Creek District High School. Those trips led to friendships, strong community connections and, luckily for us, a permanent move to the East Kimberley.

Amanda’s background includes more than a decade living and working in Fitzroy Crossing in her younger years, mostly

with Bayulu Community, before returning to swimming instruction while raising her two boys.

Wanting to trade “city life” for something more meaningful, she saw Halls Creek as the right place for both a lifestyle change and a new career challenge. She says living in a small town means “you feel the impact of your work directly”, and that this makes the role especially motivating.

She recently completed an intensive Aquatic Technical Operator course and is now a qualified lifeguard. Amanda is excited to make the pool a more welcoming and active community space through social sessions, parent and child swim

days, youth events, women-only and men-only swim times, and more opportunities for older residents to enjoy the pool.

“I am passionate about infants, children and adults learning to swim... If you see me at the pool, ask me for some tips!”

The biggest challenge has been being away from her teenage sons in Perth, but Amanda says her new “pool fam” is already filling the gap.

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF

Fancy hosting a deadly pool party this summer? Hire the Halls Creek pool!

The Halls Creek Aquatic Centre is encouraging local groups, families, services and organisations to make full use of the pool this season.

Community bookings are now available for women-only and men-only sessions, physio and health programs, group activities, birthday parties, events, and other tailored bookings.

The pool is a great space for community

gatherings, cultural groups, youth programs, fitness sessions and large family celebrations. Staff can help plan suitable times and make sure groups have everything they need on the day, including recommendations for catering and party supplies.

To plan your day contact Amanda:

Call: 0413 405 116

Email: amanda.viljoen@hcshire.wa.gov.au

Other pool news!

- Infant swimming lessons available every Wednesday morning - bring your Bub down, all welcome
- Monthly Bronze Medallion courses and requalifications are kicking off this month, with the first session starting Thursday 11 December
- School holiday activities and programs coming soon



Community Strength on full display in Halls Creek. Credit: Garnduwa

King of the Kimberley returns to Halls Creek

November saw the return of the annual touring basketball tournament, King of the Kimberley, to Halls Creek. King of the Kimberley is the pinnacle of basketball in the region, drawing teams from all over. This year's tournament, which spanned 3 days, hosted 16 men's teams and 9 women's teams.

Obviously, an event of this size requires a significant amount of planning and management. Halls Creek Basketball Association, along with Garnduwa, stepped up to this mountainous task – ensuring that the courts ran smoothly, the scheduling was tight, and, above all, it was a safe and supportive environment for all participants, volunteers and spectators.

This spirit of collaboration goes to the heart of what the event stands for. For Garnduwa Director and Halls Creek local Marmingee Hand, the carnival brings to life the true meaning of Garnduwa Amboorny Wirnan - a 'big mob' coming together for a shared purpose.

"King of the Kimberley is great because it brings the whole Kimberley together", she reflected. "That's what Garnduwa has always done, and what we do best."

On the court, that connection translated into high-quality basketball defined by athleticism, discipline, and pride. The Bulls proved too strong in the men's division, claiming the title, while the Lady Shakers were crowned Queens of the Kimberley

after a dominant display. Both teams set the standard for the weekend, maintaining their composure and teamwork right through to the final buzzer.

Ultimately, King of the Kimberley was a testament to what is possible when local organisations lead with intent. As Marmingee noted, highlighting the natural sporting talent in the region is crucial, and the Halls Creek Basketball Association provided the perfect platform to do just that. The courts were full, the energy was electric, and the successful return of the carnival proved that the future of both Halls Creek and the wider Kimberley basketball is in safe hands.

WORDS BY BILL LUCAS

Big respect to our deadly brother—Tyreece Tex

Massive shout out to Tyreece Tex, who picked up the Employment Award at the Clontarf Awards Night!

Tyreece has been with us since February, first rocking up just to volunteer, no pay, just keen to help and be part of something. From day one, he showed heart. Even when things got tough, he kept showing up, doing his few hours, and proving himself every time.

The Talent Pool saw what we saw, a young fella with drive, respect, and a solid work

ethic, and they wrapped him up quick. Since then, Tyreece has been showing everyone what hard work and commitment looks like.

This young man's come a long way, and he's only just getting started.

Deadly work, Tyreece, the whole mob is proud of you, brother! Keep showing the young ones what's possible when you back yourself.

WORDS BY ALDO MACALE



Aldo and Tyreece at Clontarf's Award Night. Supplied

Tylah Williams
Pick 39
West Coast Eagles

Latrellle Pickett
Pick 12
Melbourne Demons

Leon Kickett
Pick 8 (Rookie Draft)
Fremantle Dockers



First Nations prospects make their mark on the AFL Draft!

The 2025 AFL Draft has concluded, ending the nervous wait for the country's top junior footballers. This year's pool of prospects features a host of Indigenous stars, most of whom have now found their AFL homes. Famous footballing names were at the forefront, with both Pickett and Kickett continuing on their families' legacies.

For the West Coast Eagles and their Next Generation Academy stars, things didn't go to plan. While securing Tylah Williams with pick 39, they were unable to unite the trio that fans dreamt of.

WORDS BY BILL LUCAS

Tylah Williams Swan Districts / West Coast Eagles NGA

Destined to be the only Eagles NGA member to end up at the club, Tylah Williams had a tremendous year. He starred for Swan Districts in the Colts and earned two League appearances. This form continued into the State Championships, where he played all four games for Western Australia with consensus recognition as their third best player.

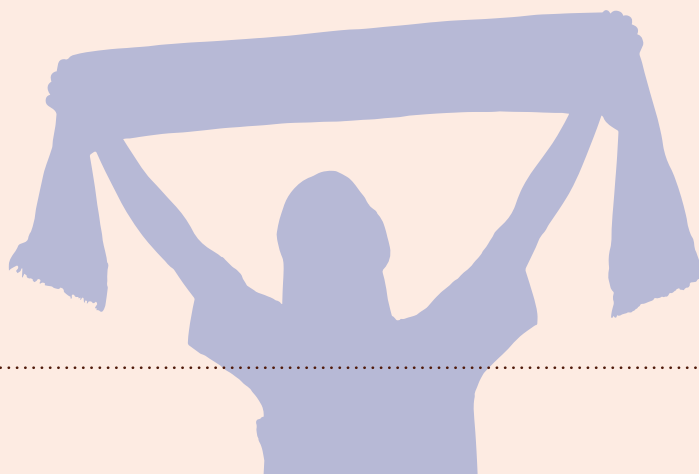
Williams gained even more favour at the National Combine, finishing second in the 20m sprint with a time of 2.89 seconds. He also achieved top 10 results in both the running vertical jump and the agility test, showcasing his athletic prowess.

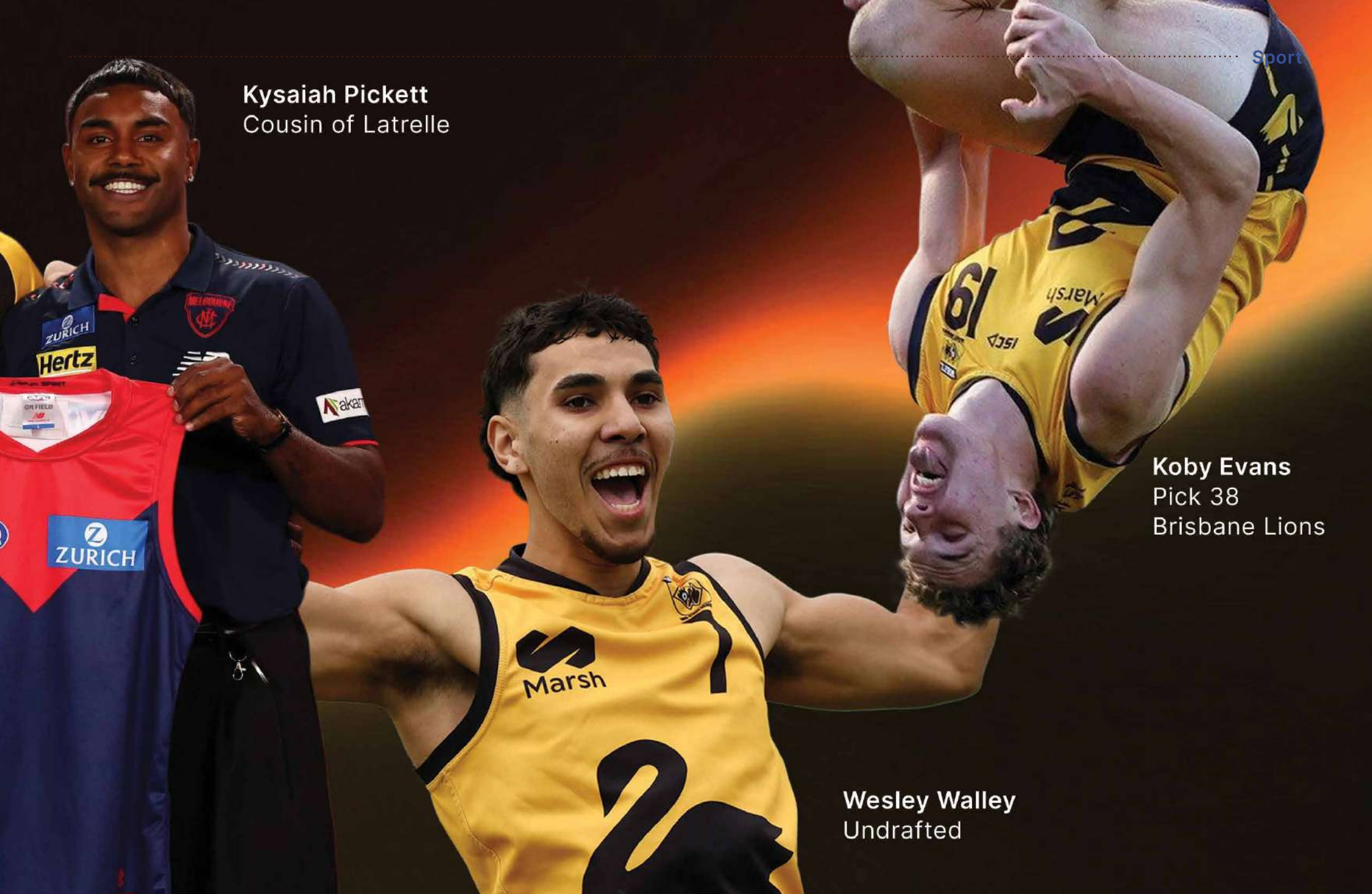
After electing to let Koby Evans go to Brisbane, the Eagles matched the Williams bid from cross-town rival, Fremantle, at the next pick.

Leon Kickett Swan Districts

Channelling the ghost of 'Neon Leon', Kickett is another player who enjoyed a dramatic late burst of draft hype. After kicking three goals across two late-season WAFL League games, he returned to the Colts to collect a bag of four goals in Swan District's elimination final loss. This performance earned him a late call-up to the National Combine, where he impressed with a top 10 vertical jump and sub-three second 20m sprint. Clubs were immediately drawn to this athletic profile, in addition to his elite pressure and natural X-factor.

Kickett, who recently celebrated his 19th birthday, enters a Fremantle squad that will provide plenty of opportunity, along with some fierce competition to prove himself to his Fremantle coaches and teammates. The Dockers are aggressively hunting an heir to recently retired great Michael 'Son Son' Walters' throne, evidenced by the eight small forwards recruited over the last two off-seasons - headlined by Indigenous All-Australian Shai Bolton and 2025 Rising Star Murphy Reid.





Kysaiah Pickett
Cousin of Latrelle

Koby Evans
Pick 38
Brisbane Lions

Wesley Walley
Undrafted

Latrelle Sumner-Pickett
Glenelg SANFL

Latrelle Pickett's story is one of determination and persistence. The cousin of All-Australian Demon, Kysiah Pickett, Latrelle shares many of Kozzie's traits: speed, flair, pressure, and a deadly goal sense. This, however, did not translate to immediate success.

Snubbed by Port Adelaide's NGA and the draft in 2023, Pickett initially quit football. He returned to SANFL club Glenelg for 2025, determined to prove himself. After dominating the Reserves with 32 goals in 18 games, he debuted for the Senior SANFL side. He announced his elite creativity and match-winning ability by kicking 4 goals from 16 disposals in his debut.

Latrelle's journey to the draft was a true fairy tale. Just three months ago, he was completely unranked, but football can change quickly. In a move that stunned everyone, the Demons selected him with pick 12, the same pick they used on Kozzie six years' earlier.

Wesley Walley
Subiaco Lions / West Coast Eagles NGA

One of the unluckiest players of this year's pool, Wesley 'Wes' Walley missed selection in both the National and Rookie Drafts. A former AFL Academy and West Coast NGA member, Walley is a highly evasive, modern goal-kicking small forward with genuine X-factor that has drawn comparisons to Michael Walters. His elite speed and agility allow him to create scoring opportunities. Walley also possesses a strong overhead mark for his 184cm frame.

A serious shoulder injury, which required surgery and significant rehab, hampered his 2025 season and limited WAFL League exposure, making him a high-upside draft gamble. Walley will look for a train-on-spot through the pre-season and make good on his undeniable talent.

Koby Evans
Perth Demons / West Coast Eagles NGA

Koby Evans is a powerful forward/mid-fielder hybrid and another intriguing former West Coast NGA talent. Along with Walley, Evans is a graduate of the AFL Academy.

Much of Koby's draft stock is based on previous form, especially a WAFL pre-season performance earlier this year. Eight months on, it still has AFL recruiters raving about it, salivating over Evans' explosive power and speed from the midfield with traits compared to stars like Shai Bolton and Isaac Heeney.

Unfortunately, Evans' top-age campaign was severely limited by a cruel run of injuries, including a serious back issue and a high ankle sprain that required surgery and prevented him from testing at the National Combine. Brisbane will be hoping that they can turn around his health and unlock his game-breaking potential.



WAT NA! SPORT



Balgo • Billiluna • Halls Creek • Mulan • Ringer Soak • Warmun • Yiyili

EDITION 2

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2025



A blank canvas in Busselton turned into a stunning multi-use oval by NewGround last year. This new Churchill Park oval was fully revamped for the community, complete with top-notch drainage, remarkable irrigation and fresh sports turf. Supplied: NewGround

NewGround appointed to deliver long-awaited town oval upgrade!

The Shire of Halls Creek is pleased to announce that the contract for the long-awaited Town Oval upgrade was officially signed with NewGround Water Services in November, marking a major step forward in bringing this important community space back to life.

NewGround Water Services is a respected Western Australian company, specialising in irrigation, turf management, and ground-water solutions to regional projects across the State. NewGround's team started work in late November, with specialist contractors living locally in Halls Creek to focus on the project throughout the wet season.

The Shire has been busy with weed control in preparation for the new works, while

NewGround will focus on reinstalling the sprinklers and reticulation system.

For safety reasons, the Town Oval will be closed to the public from 19 November 2025 until early March 2026, when the upgrade is expected to be completed. All gates will remain closed and locked during this period.

Shire of Halls Creek CEO, Sue Leonard, said the partnership with NewGround signals a positive turning point for the project.

"This is great news for Halls Creek", Ms Leonard said.

"The oval has been out of action for too long, and

securing a capable regional contractor like NewGround gives us full confidence that works will be completed by early March 2026".

"We're excited to see progress and look forward to welcoming the community back to a safe, green, and vibrant oval next year".

The Shire sincerely thanks residents for their patience and cooperation as the final stage of the Oval's renewal gets underway.

WORDS BY SHIRE STAFF