



Special Tribute

International Women's Day 2025

LVN Colour's FIRST  
101 NATIONS  
Leaders



# LVN Colour's 101 FIRST NATIONS Leaders

Today, we celebrate you and  
*give you your flowers.*

‘Alone, a woman  
has power.  
But collectively,  
women  
have impact.’

– Shelly Zalis.

Guyala Bayles model, radiating in a black ensemble, adorned with a  
stunning necklace of cowrie shells and beaded tassels.

Photo: Sam [www.businessbrother.co](http://www.businessbrother.co).

Following the overwhelming support, and renewed connections sparked by last year's *Living Colour Magazine* maiden spotlight on phenomenal African Australian women, we are building on that inspiration. This year (2025), we dedicate this platform to honouring the transformative achievements of First Nations women.

As the bearers of the world's longest continuous living culture, you have endured, travailed, and adapting. Your innate ancestral survival skills—woven intricately into your being—continue to serve you, bringing you to this pivotal moment in history. As warriors, innovators, and custodians of wisdom, you have forged paths of preservation, healing, and progress in your diverse spheres of influence. Your resilience, dignity, and unwavering spirit inspires us.

From the trailblazing efforts of your foremothers to the distinguished matriarchs, elders and achievers of today, and the rising generation of young leaders—this issue recognizes and celebrates the remarkable contributions of First Nations women across all walks of life (from governance, entrepreneurs, academia, sports, media, rangers on Country, fashion, tourism, and many more —attaining international recognition.

### Accelerate Action: A Call for Change

With the theme "Accelerate Action," this year's campaign underscores the urgent need to advance gender equality. While impactful initiatives have propelled progress, there remains much work to be done to drive meaningful and lasting change. Critical areas requiring continued focus include:

- Economic empowerment for women.
- Recruiting, retaining, and nurturing diverse talent across mainstream sectors.
- Supporting women and girls in leadership, STEM, and decision-making roles.
- Developing infrastructure that meets the needs of women and girls.
- Promoting health education and informed decision-making.
- Enhancing participation in sustainable agriculture, food, sport, and creative industries.
- Providing access to quality education and artistic expression.

### A Platform for Recognition, Collaboration & Legacy


The contextures of 60000 years of Indigenous stewardship, 215 years of British colonial legacy, and decades of multicultural immigration (Noel Pearson) are key. This platform serves as a unique opportunity to:

- Celebrate the continued successes and knowledge-sharing traditions of First Nations women, rooted in deeply creative, sustaining practices, and Elders' wisdom.

- Promote cross-cultural appreciation and self-determined achievements that inspire collective action.
- Highlight the profound and lasting impact of First Nations women on the wider community.

This issue is not just about acknowledgment and inspiration—it is a reminder of the essential role First Nations People play in advancing the rights, wellbeing, and futures of our communities across the nation and globally. Reimagining our world requires collective resolve—to dismantle lateral violence, stereotypes, challenge discrimination, and address both conscious and unconscious biases.

And as we continue to unearth and spotlight trailblazing women across the land, *Living Colour Magazine* envisions a future where leadership is not defined by gender or race—but by impact.

Together, we accelerate action. Together, we shape the future. Together, we drive legacy. 

This International Women's Day (IWD) feature section has been collaboratively curated through self-submissions, agency contributions, and an expansion of Dion Devow OAM's original 50 Amazing Tiddas Queens 2017 listing (see note, below), in partnership with the *Living Colour Magazine* editorial team.

Designed to be the first of many IWD tributes, this edition debuts the 101 *Inspiring First Nations Leaders*—honouring trailblazing forerunners, distinguished figures, and emerging changemakers. These individuals are featured in no particular order, celebrating their remarkable contributions and enduring legacies.

—Editor.

Please note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this feature contains images or names of people who have passed away.

### 1 Madison Cassady

**Mads is a Nywaigi and Manbarra**

**Woman** who has been raised on Yagara

and Turrbal Country in Magandjin and is currently living currently living on Bunurong Country in Naarm.



A Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor in the Indigenous Australia Program at the Fred Hollows Foundation, her work predominantly focuses on creating systemic change to improve eye health access and outcomes for mob around the Country. Mads graduated in 2024 earning a Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours) and recently ventured down to Naarm to commence her Doctor of Philosophy—Clinical Psychology at Monash University. A Director of Black Duck Group, an organisation aimed at investing in young mob to grow their job readiness and entrepreneurial skills, she is also a current Observership Program 'Observer' with Aboriginal Hostels Limited board.

[www.hollows.org/indigenous-australia/the-indigenous-australia-program/](http://www.hollows.org/indigenous-australia/the-indigenous-australia-program/)

[www.linkedin.com/in/madison-cassady-400104180/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/madison-cassady-400104180/)

[au.linkedin.com/company/the-fred-hollows-foundation](https://au.linkedin.com/company/the-fred-hollows-foundation)



## FIRST NATION LEADERS

- Professor Marcia Langton AO
- Professor Yalmai Marika Yunupirru
- Professor Megan Jane Davis AC
- Professor Bronwyn Fredericks
- Professor Lynette Riley AO
- Professor Julie Andrews
- Professor Larissa Behrendt
- Professor Valerie Cooms
- Professor Heidi Norman
- Dixie Link-Gordon
- Tanya Hosch
- Carly Stanley CF
- Dr Tracy Westerman AM
- Amy McQuire
- Nicole Brown
- Aunty Cheryl Buchanan
- Courtney Kelly
- Karina Maxwell
- Kate Thompson
- Erin Lang
- Danielle Ah Boo
- Cassie Lang
- Monique Proud
- Elaine Chambers-Hegarty
- Dr Jackie Huggins AM
- Karen Mundine
- Pele Ware
- Stacey Ketchell
- Steph Parkin
- Dr. Lilly Brown
- Haylene Grogan
- Sherry Holzapfel
- Narelda Jacobs OAM
- Aunty Delta Kay
- Meg Webb
- Danielle Leedie Gray
- Pat Turner AM
- Denise Bowden
- Anita Taylor
- Karina Lester
- Daisy Wanganeen
- Lilly Tjiweri
- Tjulyata Tjilya
- Anyupa Stevens
- Inawantji Scales
- Peggy Naylon
- Wanatjura Lewis
- Azaria Foster
- Janet Forbes
- Kunmanara Smith
- Maimie Butler
- Maureen Baker
- Alison Milyika Carroll
- Vickie Parry
- Fiona Jose
- Denise Bowden
- Yvette Henry Holt
- Jenni Kemarre Martiniello OAM
- Sue McPherson
- Ali Cobby Eckermann
- Lystra Rose
- Susie Anderson
- Tyliisa Elisara
- Nardi Simpson
- Claire G. Coleman,
- Alison Whittaker
- Jannali Jones
- Jane Harrison
- Teagan Chilcott
- and many, many, more.

## 2 Marley Morgan PROUD MEMBER OF WIRADJURI, GAMILARAAY AND YUWAALARAAY NATION

Marley is an impressive photographer who is resolved to advocating for diversity within Australian Fashion. The is a way about how she shoots First Nation talents. She observes keenly, drawing out beyond beauty—the dignity and sense of the person she observes. This passion moves her to mentor young Aboriginal women wanting to enter photography.

[www.marleymorgan.com.au](http://www.marleymorgan.com.au)  
@marleymorganphotography



## 4 Sandra King OAM PROUD MEMBER OF QUANDAMOOKA, BUNDJALUNG, AND TANNA ISLAND



Aunty Sandra King is a proud Yagara, Quandamooka, Bundjalung, and Tanna Island woman dedicated to empowering First Nations youth, women, and Elders.

A renowned Fashion Parade Director, Trainer, Event Manager, and Motivational Speaker, Aunty Sandra has over 30 years of experience in Indigenous fashion, leadership, and community engagement. As one of the few professional Aboriginal models of the 1970s, she worked with Myer, David Jones, and Sportsgirl. Today, she mentors emerging First Nations models and creatives, directing high-end fashion parades and empowerment programs. Aunty Sandra is also the founder of the thriving Black Bold & Beautiful Indigenous Women's Luncheon.

@sandrakingmanagement

## 6 Dr. Lilla Watson PROUD MEMBER OF GANGULU NATION

Dr/Aunty Lilla Watson, is a distinguished visual artist, activist, and educator dedicated to preserving and sharing Aboriginal knowledge and culture. Born in Gangulu country, she became The University of Queensland's first Aboriginal tutor and later co-founded Link-Up Queensland, reuniting Stolen Generation families. She also co-developed BlackCard, a business providing cultural education. A passionate advocate, she has influenced child welfare policies, Indigenous studies, and human rights movements. Her internationally acclaimed artwork, using innovative techniques, reflects her deep spirituality and cultural identity, with public installations featured at the State Library of Queensland, Brisbane Magistrates Court, and Roma Street Parklands.

[www.theblackcard.com.au](http://www.theblackcard.com.au)



## 3 Nyoka Morgan PROUD MEMBER OF YORTA YORTA NATIONS



Nyoka Morgan is a social entrepreneur, internationally certified life coach, and the founder of NYANYI Life Coaching Agency. Passionate about guiding individuals and families toward lasting transformation, she offers 1:1 life coaching for those seeking clarity, confidence, and success. Her family coaching helps strengthen relationships, navigate co-parenting, and support reunification. Nyoka's coaching is more than a service, it's a catalyst for empowerment, self-awareness, and real change. She creates a space where you can truly thrive.

[www.nyanyi.com](http://www.nyanyi.com)  
[www.instagram.com/nyanyi\\_coaching](https://www.instagram.com/nyanyi_coaching)

## 5 Sandy Greenwood PROUD MEMBER OF GUMBAYNGGIRR, DUNGHUTTI AND BUNDJALUNG NATIONS.

A proud Gumbaynggirr, Dunghutti and Bundjalung Custodian who grew up on Bowraville mission on Gumbaynggirr Country in a one room bush shack on Bundjalung country. Sandy was raised by mother who is a stolen generations survivor, and has worked in First Nations Theatre and film as an actor, filmmaker, writer, producer, director and cultural educator for over two decades. Striving to create change for her people through activism, education and artistic expression. Sandy is deeply connected to her elders and ancestors, inspired by authentic truth-tellers and believe in the power of nature and storytelling to heal our mind, body and spirit.

@sandyjgreenwood



## 7 Tegan Murdock PROUD MEMBER OF YORTA YORTA/ DUDUROA NATIONS

Tegan is a Yorta Yorta, and Dhudaroah woman, the founder of Ngumpie Weaving (pronounced Numbpie, meaning beautiful in Barkindji). Raised on Namatjira Mission, her deep cultural roots and family's resilience shaped her journey. Inspired by her mother, she turned weaving into a way to reconnect with culture, bring people together, and support her family. Through her handcrafted jewellery, wall art, and workshops, Tegan fosters connection, healing, and storytelling—using weaving to break barriers, strengthen communities, and celebrate the beauty of Aboriginal culture.

[ngumpieweaving.com](http://ngumpieweaving.com) | @ngumpie\_weaving



## 8 Sharron mirii Bell

**PROUD MEMBER OF TRIBE/ NATION: GAMILARAAY WIRADJURI**

Sharron mirii Bell is a proud Gamilaraay Wiradyuri woman, and founder of Indigenous Insights since 2005, which focuses on Cultural Education and Well-being.

Aunty Sharron has released two albums and also created Children's Rights QLD song, 'I Am Me,' which was nominated for a QLD music award. Sharron also featured on ABC Playschool's ShowTime series.

Sharron mirii Bell has an insatiable passion for sharing her continual dreaming story, in the hope that we all can walk together with respect.

[indigenousinsights.com.au](http://indigenousinsights.com.au) | @auntysarronmiriibell



## 9 Yolanda Finette

**PROUD YORTA YORTA WOMAN**

Yolanda Finette Holistic Coaching AND Consultancy

Yolanda Finette is a certified, multi-award-winning holistic life coach, facilitator, and consultant of First Nations (Yorta Yorta), African American, and Greek heritage. With over 25 years of experience in the child, youth, and family services sector in both the Melbourne/Naarm First Nations community and the United States, Yolanda's practice is grounded in trauma-informed care, anti-oppression principles, and First Nations ways of knowing and being. Yolanda empowers First Nations people to reconnect with their sacred strengths, break generational patterns, and live courageously, fostering transformative spaces for individuals and teams to embrace their purpose and create lasting change.

[www.yolandafinette.com](http://www.yolandafinette.com)

@yolandafinette/

Linkedin: yolanda-finette-78a15b18a/



## 10 Tania McLeod

**TMac is Torres Strait Islander, of the Western Island Group, Mabuiag Island and Aboriginal of Jawoyn/Mangarayi decent. Tania was born, raised and works in Darwin on Larrakia country.**



Passionate about improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, ensuring they have access to quality eye care. Through her various roles with The Fred Hollows Foundation over nearly 20 years, TMac has seen firsthand how better health services can change lives.

Her journey has taken her across communities, connecting people to care and advocating for culturally safe health systems. She believes in the power of knowledge, mentorship and strong leadership. This International Women's Day, TMac celebrates the strength of First Nations women and stresses the importance of empowering the next generation to create lasting change in our communities.

[www.hollows.org/indigenous-australia/the-indigenous-australia-program/#:~:text=One%20of%20The%20Fred%20Hollows,can%20to%20make%20this%20happen.](http://www.hollows.org/indigenous-australia/the-indigenous-australia-program/#:~:text=One%20of%20The%20Fred%20Hollows,can%20to%20make%20this%20happen.)

[www.linkedin.com/in/tania-mcleod-76512922](http://www.linkedin.com/in/tania-mcleod-76512922)

[www.linkedin.com/company/the-fred-hollows-foundation/posts/?feedView=all](http://www.linkedin.com/company/the-fred-hollows-foundation/posts/?feedView=all)

## 11 Tanya Morris

**PROUD MEMBER OF BAR-BARRUM/ THE ATHERTON TABLELANDS**

Tanya Morris is a proud Bar-Barrum woman from the Atherton Tablelands and the Acting Country Director for The Fred Hollows Foundation's Indigenous Australia Program. With a background in nursing and public health, she is passionate about addressing health disparities in rural and remote communities, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Inspired by her mother's legacy in healthcare, Tanya transitioned from early childhood education to nursing, driven by a deep commitment to improving access to quality healthcare. She now leads initiatives focused on Indigenous eye health, advocating for culturally safe, community-led solutions to reduce preventable blindness.

[www.hollows.org](http://www.hollows.org)



## 13 Makeeta Ratulevu

**PROUD MEMBER OF KULLILI, KOA, BUTCHULLA AND KABBI KABBI NATIONS**

Makeeta is a Kullili, Koa, Butchulla, and Kabbi Kabbi woman who takes great pride in being a wife, sister, daughter, aunty and mother to two awesome young men. She is deeply passionate about the arts, culture, and self-determination within our communities. Currently, Makeeta serves as the Indigenous Engagement Manager for the Copyright Agency, headquartered on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation in Sydney but is based on Yugambah Country in Logan City, south of Brisbane. In her role, she supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and authors in accessing the services offered by the Copyright Agency, ensuring they benefit from the use of their work through copyright licensing, statutory licensing, and resale royalties.

LinkedIn: Makeeta-Ratulevu



## 12 Carly Forrest

**PROUD MEMBER OF MANDANDANJI BASED ON KABI KABI COUNTRY**

Founder of The Dreaming Collective, a consultancy advancing the First Nations business sector. With over a decade in strategic business management, engagement, and governance, Carly empowers organisations to embed cultural integrity and Indigenous-led solutions, to foster economic empowerment, authentic partnerships and systemic change. Carly is a Board Director of Deadly Science, First Traders and Munimba-ja Arts Centre and centres her work around championing First Nations knowledge, self-determination, and collective prosperity.

Website launching next month.

Podcast: [thedreamingcollective.buzzsprout.com](http://thedreamingcollective.buzzsprout.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/thedreamingcollectivepodcast](http://www.facebook.com/thedreamingcollectivepodcast)





## 14 **Ebony Birks** PROUD MEMBER OF KAMILAROI AND DUNGHUTTI NATIONS

Ebony Birks is the visioner behind EB Studio, a First Nations jeweller, sculptor, and artist based in Meanjin/Brisbane. As a proud Kamilaroi and Dunghutti descendant, her work is deeply inspired by water and the natural world.

Through her studio, Ebony creates made-to-order jewellery and sculptural pieces, crafting works that tell stories and celebrate culture. Passionate about pushing the boundaries of her craft, exploring painting and drawing alongside jewellery, and curating playlists that reflect her creative process.

<https://eb-jewellery.com> | [info@eb-jewellery.com](mailto:info@eb-jewellery.com)



## 16 **Shantelle Thompson** PROUD MEMBER OF BARKINDJI AND NGIYMAPAA NATIONS

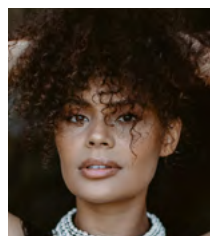
Ngayi, Shantelle Thompson, the Barkindji Warrior and Warrior Heart—a staunch Barkindji/Ngiyampaa woman, mother, warrior, guide, entrepreneur, and Dream Weaver. Culturally grounded, Ancestrally guided, and Dreaming-led. Shantelle's story is one of reclamation and remembrance—of her cultural sovereignty, power, and Warrior Heart. She refuses to prostitute her trauma to fit colonial narratives; her rise is through her voice, courage, and calling. From suicide to world champion, she became a Jiu-Jitsu black belt, 3x world champion, founder of Kiilalaana Foundation, author, and creator of the Warrior Heart movement. Shantelle's mission is to empower others to reclaim their power, take radical responsibility, and rise into their Warrior Heart—because when we shine, we give others permission to do the same.

[www.ShantelleThompson.com](http://www.ShantelleThompson.com) and [www.KiilalaanaFoundation.org](http://www.KiilalaanaFoundation.org)  
[linkedin.com/in/shantelle-thompson](https://www.linkedin.com/in/shantelle-thompson)

[@barkindjiwarrior](https://www.barkindjiwarrior.com) | [@shantellethompsonofficial](https://www.shantellethompsonofficial.com)



## 18 **Guyala Bayles** PROUD MEMBER OF BIRRI GUBBA AND WONNARUA NATIONS



Guyala is a model, actress, poet, singer/rapper, workshop facilitator, case manager, support worker and inspirational/motivational speaker signed to Chic management.

Born in Magandjin (Brisbane), then raised on Gadigal country (Redfern) and Dhungatti country (Kempsey), where she was exposed to drugs and alcohol, domestic violence, homelessness and discrimination from an early age.

A product of a broken home, Guyala was fortunate and privileged enough to be raised around culture, politics and the wisdom and knowledge passed down from her elders.

A passionate multidisciplinary artist who speaks openly about her experiences to break the stereotypes around Aboriginality and encourages others to do the same.

Guyala has gained quite a big following on her social media accounts as she uses her public platform to shed light on issues affecting First Nations people, but to also to inspire and empower all people from all walks of life to follow their dreams and to never give up on themselves!

[@guyala\\_lala](https://www.instagram.com/guyala_lala)

## 15 **Shamaiah Sullivan (aka Maya)** PROUD MEMBER OF WAKKA WAKKA, GUWA (KOA) AND MERIAM NATIONS



Born in Cairns on Yindinji Country and raised between Cairns, Goomeri and Brisbane.

Maya's passion is her country and people. Growing up she only ever wanted to play AFL for the Brisbane Lions and become a Marine Biologist. Well after moving to Brisbane Maya stopped playing AFL, got an opportunity and invitation to become an extra and

model. Choosing to take this opportunity to impact and change the stereotypes of everyday TV shows, and to encourage and support her younger Tiddas and Bunjis to love and respect who they are, where they come from, their skin colour, shape and size, ability and/or disability and to represent themselves with respect.

Maya believes she is impacting and changing lives through her modelling, and employment. Working as a part time Teacher Aid and Canoe Instructor for Stanley River Environmental Education Centre at Somerset Dam. Having students of all age, nationalities and abilities come to the centre to learn about our country, culture and waterways, instilled in her through her ancestors, is an honour. Educating one another truly is our future. With mob in her heart and serving culture.

[@Shamaiah\\_sullivan](https://www.instagram.com/Shamaiah_sullivan)

## 17 **Tara Croker** PROUD MEMBER OF THE WIRADJURI MOB

Tara Croker, a proud Wiradjuri woman, is a trailblazing entrepreneur blending her Indigenous heritage with business. With experience at Google, YouTube, and News Corp, she founded Yaala Sparkling, an award-winning beverage brand celebrating native Australian flavours. Committed to sustainability and First Nations participation, she sources ingredients from Indigenous harvesters and collaborates with artists. A Shark Tank success, Harvard alum, and reconciliation advocate, Tara's journey highlights the power of culture-driven entrepreneurship, inspiring leadership and impact in the native food industry.

[www.yaalasparkling.com](http://www.yaalasparkling.com) | [@yaalasparkling](https://www.instagram.com/yaalasparkling)



## 19 **Fiona Harrison** PROUD MEMBER OF WIRADYURI OF THE GALARI (LACHLAN RIVER) ON THE CENTRAL TABLELANDS OF NSW



Wiradjuri trailblazer Fiona Harrison channels ancient wisdom into sensory experiences through Chocolate On Purpose, Australia's first Indigenous chocolate company. Handcrafting sustainably sourced, fair trade certified, palm-oil free chocolate with native botanicals, she addresses systemic barriers through storytelling with chocolate. As a certified social entrepreneur addressing underrepresentation of Indigenous people in the \$300M bushfood industry through ethical First Nations partnerships, she's building culturally safe pathways and scaling to empower Indigenous women 45+ through matriarchal and economic sovereignty. A champion of People, Planet, Equity.

[ChocolateOnPurpose.com.au](http://ChocolateOnPurpose.com.au)

[www.linkedin.com/in/FionaMaryHarrison](https://www.linkedin.com/in/FionaMaryHarrison)

## 20 Erica Eurell

PROUD MEMBER OF YUGAMBEH AND WOLLUMBIN NATIONS



Indigenous owner of Dreamtime Artistry and Coralus venturer

Traditional Custodian from the families of the Yugambeh, Tweed River people, and Wollumbin. With a strong connection to Community, especially young people (including her two daughters). Erica has a strong desire to ensure our Aboriginal

Youth have space to tell their stories and learn the importance of telling them and connecting them with opportunities through commission pieces, workshops and cultural experiences.

A passion for connecting with community, her knowledge in culture has developed, extending to helping others within the wider community develop an increased understanding and respect for the culture.

Driven to ensure her children never have to endure the shame her Mother carried about her skin. Dreamtime Artistry supports the next generation of emerging First Nations Artists allowing them the opportunity to have pride and belief in their culture to the chance to tell their story.

[www.dreamtimeartistry.com](http://www.dreamtimeartistry.com) | @Dreamtime\_artistry

## 21 Sheryl Batchelor

PROUD MEMBER OF KUNJA NATION

A proud Aboriginal woman with ancestral connections to Kunja in Queensland.

Sheryl has over 30 years of teaching, training, and leadership experience in various educational, community and health settings. In 2019, Sheryl established Yiliyapinya Indigenous Corporation. Yiliyapinya is a not-for-profit registered charity addressing the decrease in brain health in vulnerable children, youth, adults, and seniors. Its unique service offerings are grounded in one purpose—to close the gap in learning and earning outcomes of people who have experienced adverse life circumstances and toxic stress in a culturally responsive and contextualised manner. Yiliyapinya Indigenous Corporation | [yiliyapinya.org.au](http://yiliyapinya.org.au)



## 23 Bernice Hookey

PROUD MEMBER OF WAANYI AND MURRAWARRI NATIONS

A Waanyi woman from the Lower Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland and Murrawarri from Norther NSW. Bernice is a proud mum and fur pet mum, an accomplished speaker, changemaker, author, facilitator, regenerative practitioner, mentor and leader. Her passion is to value-add and increase

people culture to transform inclusive representation and visibility in presence and voice for Indigenous People. She provides influence in a unique, culturally safe way, and envisions to achieve positive change and transform outcomes into the cross-cultural exchange as at the same time respectful boundaries. She's like the transformation scout challenging community innovation.

Business: MZB Empowerment  
[linkedin.com/in/bernice-hookey](https://linkedin.com/in/bernice-hookey)



## 22 Dr. Julie Ballangarry

PROUD MEMBER OF GUMBAYNGGIRR/ DUNGHUTTI NATIONS

Julie is a proud Gumbaynggirr/Dunghutti woman and academic passionate about First Nations rights and recognition, amplifying First Nations voices, as well as decolonising policy processes. She strives to drive transformative change toward more just and equitable policies by interrogating policy structures and systems in her research.

In recent years, she has shared her insights through policy roundtables, conferences, publications, and a podcast. Julie also contributes her expertise and advocacy as a voluntary Director for Reconciliation Queensland, an advisory board member for AP4D, and a member of the Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition (AFFPC).

[experts.griffith.edu.au/22565-julie-ballangarry/about](http://experts.griffith.edu.au/22565-julie-ballangarry/about)  
[www.linkedin.com/in/julieballangarry](https://www.linkedin.com/in/julieballangarry)



## 25 Mundanara Bayles

PROUD MEMBER OF WONNARUA, BUNJALUNG, BIRRI-GUBBA, AND GUNGALU NATIONS



Bayles is a woman with a deep-rooted commitment to Indigenous advocacy. Growing up in Redfern, NSW, before moving to her father's country in the 1990s, she continues her family's legacy of activism. With over 20 years of experience, she has worked across Indigenous and non-Indigenous sectors, including QUT, IUIH, and the Child Support Agency.

An award-winning entrepreneur, Mundanara is the Managing Director and Co-Founder of BlackCard Pty Ltd and host of Black Magic Woman, the first Indigenous podcast to join the iHeart network. She was named Indigenous Businesswoman of the Year at the 2023 Supply Nation Supplier Diversity Awards.

Recognised internationally as an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK), Mundanara sits on multiple boards, including The Murri School and Philanthropy Australia's First Nations Governance Committee. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Indigenous Business Leadership at Monash University, where she also partners with Monash Business School on her podcast.

[www.theblackcard.com.au](http://www.theblackcard.com.au) | [blackmagicwomanpodcast](https://blackmagicwomanpodcast.com)

## 24 Nartarsha Bamblett

PROUD MEMBER OF YORTA YORTA, WIRADJURI, WARLPIRI, KURNAI NATIONS

As a proud First Nations woman, devoted mother & committed entrepreneur.

Nartarsha has a deep passion for service as an authentic speaker, cultural facilitator & mentor. She has the honour of taking a journey with the participants as they learn, unlearn and rediscover the power of connection through First Nations wisdom, culture & storytelling. She is most passionate about healing and breaking generational cycles so the next generations are raised healthy, strong and connected so our people can thrive for another 60,000 years.

[www.queenacknowledgements.com](http://www.queenacknowledgements.com)  
[@queenacknowledgements](https://queenacknowledgements.com)



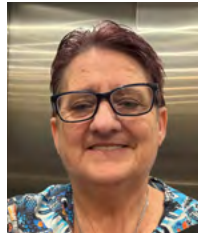


## 26 Jennifer Clough

### PROUD MEMBER OF YORTA YORTA NATION

Though she did not grow up with her Indigenous family, she has wholeheartedly embraced her heritage in her adult years. She is an active member of Wiyagal (Kinship), an Indigenous church, and a passionate advocate for improving Indigenous health. Committed to creating culturally safe healthcare environments, Jenny continually seeks new ways to uplift and support her people.

[linkedin.com/in/jenny-clough-32bb8486](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jenny-clough-32bb8486)



## 28 Delvine Petyarre

### PROUD MEMBER OF ALHALKERE NATION

Artist: Delvine Petyarre (1982) | Language group: Anmatyerre / Country: Alhalkere | Medium: Acrylic on Canvas | Subjects: MY Country, Antnwarre (Pencil Yam) /Alhalkere country.

Born in Alice Springs, growing up in Boundary Bore, Delvine is part of a family that includes two older sisters, artists Anna Price and Joy Petyarre, as well as two brothers, Alan and Steven Petyarre. Both of her parents, Michael Kngwarreye, and Glory Ngale have passed away. Another story of Delvines, Atnwarre was passed down to her from her father's country, Alhalkere. Delvine also owns other Dreamtime stories belonging to Alhalkere country. Her paintings incorporate fine dot work, beautiful colours and brushwork inspired by her two sisters. Despite her quiet demeanour, Delvine's art speaks volumes, resonating with the spirit of her ancestors and the timeless beauty of the Australian outback. Through her paintings, she invites viewers into a world of wonder and reverence, where the land whispers its secrets and the soul find solace in the embrace of nature's bounty. See Delvine's beautiful artworks at [www.mbantua.com.au](http://www.mbantua.com.au)



## 30 Jeannie Mills Pwerle

### PROUD MEMBER OF ALYAWARRE/ IRRWELTYE / ATNWENGERRP NATIONS

Artist: Jeannie Mills Pwerle (also spelled Apwerl, Pwerl, Pula) | Born: 1965 | Language Group: Alyawarre | Country: Irrwelye / Atnwengerrp | Medium: Acrylic on canvas and linen | Subject(s): Anaty (Bush Potato/ Yam), Anemangkerr (Bush Melon), Akarley (Wild Orange).



Paintings by Jeannie predominately represent the flower and seeds of the Anaty (desert yam or bush potato), which she enjoys collecting in her homeland. Jeannie's distinct style for her story was created in 2004 for Mbantua Gallery and its captivating energy has thrust her name throughout Galleries nationwide. In 2008, Jeannie's large Anaty painting was accepted in the 2008 NATSIAA, the most prestigious Aboriginal art award in Australia. Cheerful and good spirited, Jeannie has close family connections to some of Australia's top names in art. Her mother is well known Utopian artist Dolly Mills and her uncle Greeny Purvis, a successful entrant in the 21st NATSIAA. Her great aunt is the late Emily Kame Kngwarreye, dubbed by art experts as one of the world's best modern and abstract artists. It is quite evident that through these influences that Jeannie began to paint, bringing her own style and dynamic to the world of Aboriginal Art.

See Jeannie's beautiful artworks at [www.mbantua.com.au](http://www.mbantua.com.au)

## 27 Belinda Duarte AM

### PROUD MEMBER OF WOTJOBALUK AND DJA DJA WURRUNG NATIONS

Belinda is a Wotjobaluk and Dja Dja Wurrung descendant with Polish and Celtic heritage, is a visionary leader in elite sport, social equity, and First Nations communities. As CEO of Culture is Life, she champions Aboriginal-led solutions for preventing First Nations youth suicide.



Belinda serves on the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games Organising Committee, is a Western Bulldogs director, MCG trustee, and board member of AnnaMilla First Nations Foundation and Djaara Aboriginal Corporation.

A former elite athlete, she pioneers innovative projects to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. Her accolades include the CEW Vincent Fairfax Fellowship (2020) and Football Woman of the Year (2012).

[cultureislife.org](http://cultureislife.org)

## 29 Marie Ryder

### PROUD MEMBER OF EASTERN ARRERNT/ SANTA TERESA NATION



Artist | Born: 1966 | Language Group: Eastern Arrernte (also spelt Aranda) | Country: Santa Teresa area | Medium: Acrylic on canvas, linen and paper, decorative craft | Subjects: Variety of bush foods, Awelye (Women's Ceremony and Body Paint Designs), Owls.

Marie grew up in the Santa Teresa (Ltyentye Apurte) community, with her eight younger brothers and sisters.

Her mother Therese Ryder, is a highly respected illustrative and landscape artist. Marie is married to Kevin Bird Mpetyane grandson of Ada Bird Petyarre) and live happily with their children in Alice Springs and Mulga Bore.

As a child, she watched her mother painting, observing her techniques and from this developed her own style. Her paintings are a celebration of the bush foods from Central Australia. Her work is held in many private collections both interstate and overseas, and represented in many group exhibitions

See Marie's beautiful artworks at [www.mbantua.com.au](http://www.mbantua.com.au)

## 31 Dora Mpetyane

### PROUD MEMBER OF ANMATYERRE/ AHALPERE NATION

Artist: Dora Mpetyane (Mbitjana) | Born: 1965 | Language Group: Anmatyerre | Country: Ahalpere | Medium: Acrylic on canvas/linen | Subjects: Mother's Story, Ahakeye (Bush Plum), Awelye (Women's Ceremony)



Dora began painting for Mbantua Gallery in 2003. She paints the story of the Bush Plum Dreaming and her mother's story as does her sister, Betty Mpetyane — a well-known and respected artist from the Utopia region. Dora is the daughter of the late Minnie Pwerle and has four children and six grandchildren herself. Initially Dora worked in the medium of batik along with over eighty other women from the Utopia Region in Central Australia. Her work in batik is featured in "Utopia—A Picture Story". Barbara Weir is Dora's older sister. With the influences of Barbara, Betty and Minnie, Dora will undoubtedly share her artistic influences for many years to come.

See Dora's beautiful artworks at [www.mbantua.com.au](http://www.mbantua.com.au)



## 32 Kahlia Rogers

**PROUD MEMBER OF BUNUBA, GOONIYANDI AND WALMAJARRI NATIONS**

Language: Bunuba, Gooniyandi and Walmajarri

Kahlia Rogers is a mentor and model living and working in her hometown of Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley Region of WA. She began her modeling journey in 2019, making her debut at the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair's Country to Couture show. Since then, she has taken her career to international heights, walking at Paris Fashion Week in 2023—an experience that broadened her horizons and fueled her drive to reach even greater goals.

Beyond the runway, Kahlia is deeply passionate about empowering young people in her community. When she's not modeling, she dedicates her time to mentoring young girls at district high schools in Fitzroy Crossing, helping them build confidence and aspire to bright futures.

In 2024, Kahlia was honoured with the Cecilia Cubillo Young Achievers Award at the National Indigenous Fashion Awards, a milestone that reinforced her role as a leader and inspiration to the next generation. She is committed to continuing her journey as a role model, proving that distance is no barrier to ambition and success.

@kahlia.k\_



## 34 Philomena Yeatman

**PROUD MEMBER OF GUNGGANDJI (YARRABAH) NATION**

Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct Manager

Philomena Yeatman, born in Cairns in 1960, is a master weaver and cultural custodian with Gunggandji and Kuku Yalanji heritage. Raised in Yarrabah, her artistic journey began in 1991, focusing on weaving, ceramics, and painting. Learning the craft from her grandmother, she specialises in creating baskets and mats using natural materials and traditional dyes. Philomena's work merges ancestral techniques with contemporary artistry, ensuring the preservation and promotion of her cultural heritage. She is celebrated for safeguarding the traditions of her people for future generations.

[www.yarrabah-arts-centre.com.au](http://www.yarrabah-arts-centre.com.au)

[arnol@yarrabah.qld.gov.au](mailto:arnol@yarrabah.qld.gov.au)



## 36 Melissa Greenwood

**PROUD MEMBER OF GUMBAYNGGIRR, BUNJALUNG, DUNGHUTTI NATIONS**



Melissa Jarrett Greenwood, a mum of three beautiful Gamambi (children) she is the founder & Director of Miimi & Jiinda, a Visual Artist & Fashion Designer who creates Fine art and wearable art pieces. Melissa is also a published Author & Illustrator of 5 Australian children's books.

Caring for country through sustainability practices is a core principle for Melissa, she uses mindful production and cultural story telling through Art, Textiles, Weaving & Design. As a traditional custodian of Gumbayngirr country, Melissa takes inspiration from her innate connection between her matriarchal line, her ancestral stories and her Gumbayngirr Jagun (homelands).

[www.miimiandjiinda.com](http://www.miimiandjiinda.com)

@miimiandjiinda | @melissagreenwoodcreative

## 33 Simone Arnol

**PROUD MEMBER OF GUNGGANDJI (YARRABAH) NATION**

Simone Arnol, a proud Gunggandji descendant from Yarrabah, is committed to grassroots practices and honours Elders' wisdom. Simone works in mediums of: canvas, photography, textiles, and clothing design. Focused on cultural and environmental sustainability, she has contributed to fashion curation, event design, and artistic showcases. Simone participated in the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair's Fashion Performance for 6 years and co-curated it for three. Simone is proud to have won the National Indigenous Fashion Award—Fashion Designer category in 2024, blending contemporary aesthetics with her people's stories.

@simone\_arnol

Email: [simonearnol.desgins@gmail.com](mailto:simonearnol.desgins@gmail.com)



## 35 Denni Francisco

**PROUD MEMBER OF WIRADJURI NATION**

Denni has 20+ year history working in the fashion industry. Wanting to make a greater contribution to our First



Nations communities, she understood the challenges faced by our remote artists in expanding their reach and increasing their economic opportunities. Denni saw a clear pathway to help create an additional income stream for the artists in a culturally respectful way.

Importantly this business concept could congruently support the education of our children living in remote areas of Australia.

[ngali.com.au](http://ngali.com.au) | @Ngali\_Australia | [info@ngali.com.au](mailto:info@ngali.com.au)

## 37 Tori Clough

**PROUD MEMBER OF YORTA YORTA NATION**

A young Yorta Yorta woman raised in Brisbane, Tori is a dedicated youth advocate passionate about empowering young Indigenous people and helping them achieve their goals. She actively seeks opportunities to serve her community and create meaningful change. Tori has participated in the Queensland Indigenous Leadership Program and the Queensland Youth Parliament, demonstrating her commitment to leadership and advocacy. She is currently a Youth Ambassador for Mater Hospital, where she advocates for young people with chronic health conditions, and a Youth Advocate at the Queensland Family and Child Commission. In addition to her advocacy work, Tori is neurodivergent and balances her commitments with her work life.



A testament to her resilience and determination, Tori has also walked the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea—a significant achievement that reflects her strength and perseverance.

[linkedin.com/in/tori-clough-6857919b](https://www.linkedin.com/in/tori-clough-6857919b)

## 38 **Aunty Doseena Fergie** PROUD MEMBER OF WUTHATHI AND MABUIAG ISLANDER NATIONS



Aunty Doseena Fergie's life of faith transforms obstacles into opportunities.

Born prematurely on Thursday Island in 1953, she trained as a nurse and midwife before serving in Papua New Guinea for 15 years. A passionate leader, activist, educator, Churchill Fellow and

Victorian Women's Honour Roll inductee, Doseena champions Indigenous resilience and empowerment on national and global stages.

[www.artbysafina.com.au](http://www.artbysafina.com.au)

## 39 **Dr Denise Proud** Elder Representative — Early Childhood sector/ Reconciliation / Justice



Dr/Aunty Denise is a proud Aboriginal woman who was born and raised in Cherbourg.

Aunty Denise Proud has been acknowledged as an Honorary Senior Research Fellow of The University of Queensland and is an internationally renowned presenter, educator, author and artist.

[www.rqi.org.au/rqi-management-committee](http://www.rqi.org.au/rqi-management-committee)

## AUSTRALIA DAY 2025 HONOUREES

**40 Professor Megan Jane Davis** AC

**41 (Late) Professor Lyndall Ryan** AO

**42 Professor Robynne Melva Quiggin** AO

**43 Ms Joanne Margaret Hedges** AM

**44 Ms Leesa Ann Watego** AM

**45 Ann Weldon** AM

**46 Professor Emma Lee** OAM

**47 Clothilde Bullen** OAM

**48 Ms Stacey Elizabeth Campton** OAM

**49 Ms Deborah Rae Mellett** OAM

**50 Mrs. Nellie Beatrice Mooney** OAM

**51 (Late) Ms. Eunice Napanangka Jack** OAM

**52 Mrs Edna May Watson** OAM

## ORIGINAL TIDDAS QUEENS (DION DEVOW 2018 LISTING)



**53 (Late) Truganini**



**57 (Late) Shirley Colleen Smith** AM MBE

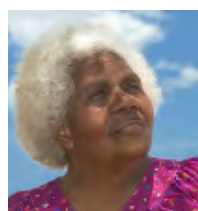
**54 (Late) Gladys Elphick** MBE



**58 (Late) Evelyn Scott** AO



**55 (Late) Joyce Clague** MBE



**60 (Late) Faith Thomas** AM



**56 Kirstie Parker**  
(Centenary Medal)



## ORIGINAL TIDDAS QUEENS cont.



**61** (Late) Rosalie "Ngarla"  
Kunoth-Monks OAM



**72** Bronwyn Bancroft  
AM

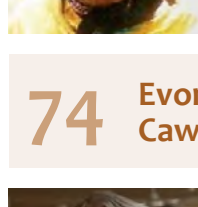
**62** Nova Peris OAM



**73** (Late) Emily Kame  
Kngwarreye



**63** The Hon. Linda Burney



**74** Evonne Goolagong  
Cawley AC MBE



**75** (Late) Lowitja  
O'Donoghue  
AC CBE DSG

**64** Patricia June "Pat"  
O'Shane AM



**76** Samantha Harris

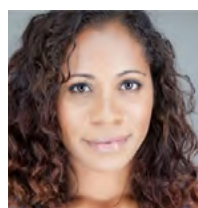


**77** Shareena Clanton



**65** (Late) Eleanor Harding

**66** (Late) Essie Coffey  
—the Bush Queen



**78** Carla McGrath



**79** Jessica Mauboy



**67** (Late) Faith Bandler  
AC MBE



**68** (Late) Pearl Gibbs



**80** Ella Havelka



**81** Tanya Orman



**69** Rachel Perkins



**70** Prof. Megan Davis



**82** Leah Purcell AM



**71** Dr Anita Heiss AM



## ORIGINAL TIDDAS QUEENS cont.

83 Narelle Long



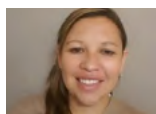
93 Dr Aunty Joyce Donovan



84 Marcia Ella-Duncan OAM



94 Maurita Cavanough



85 Olive Brown



95 (Late) Kathleen Jean Mary Walker



86 Dr Lisa Waia



96 (Late) Kathleen Petyarre



87 Deborah Mailman AM



97 Grace Sally Carberry



88 Dr Vinka Barunga



98 Narelle King



89 Catherine Freeman OAM

99 Lyn Devow  
(Dion Devow's Mum)

90 Dr Terri Jenke



100 (Late) Fanny Cochrane Smith



91 Sally Morgan



92 Keelen Mailman OAM



101 Holding space for all emerging and future leaders across the nations.

## Contributors

mbantua.com.au | bastionamplify.com | www.slq.qld.gov.au  
 www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/black-and-deadly  
 diondevow.com.au | www.supplynation.org.au  
 www.teaandbelle.com/single-post/2017/10/01/50-amazing-tidda-queens  
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 www.abc.net.au/news/2025-01-25/2025-australia-day-honours-list-recognises-indigenous-leaders/104854634  
 By Bronte Charles, (source, NITV): www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/these-are-the-first-nations-recipients-of-january-26-honours/4ds9imdw  
 www.npywc.org.au/about/leadership | www.koorimail.com  
 empoweredcommunities.org.au/our-leaders

**Yolanda Finette**, multi award winning Certified Life Coach

From a tiny vision that began in 2016, my coaching business has blossomed from a side-business to a full-time passion. Every day, I wake up feeling grateful to do this work, it is my soul's purpose.

Being a sacred leader is my guiding principle. It's about walking with integrity and intention. It is deep listening and drawing from ancestral wisdom. I am grateful to my Elders and Ancestors, who paved the way for me to do this work and I live my life and run my business in their honour.



Photo: Simply Gray Photography.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands/waters on which we work, live and play. We acknowledge the continuing deep connection First Nations peoples have to the lands, waters and places. We acknowledge and pay respects to First Nation Ancestors and Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

To contribute to curating this foundational work, please go to: [www.livingcolourmagazine.com.au/lvncolourwomenofimpact](http://www.livingcolourmagazine.com.au/lvncolourwomenofimpact)

For our diverse readership at *Living Colour Magazine* and its associated platforms, we aim to build greater knowledge of multi-cultural Australians who are helping to build a greater Australia. For more information on people mentioned on this list, and others that are making their mark, we suggest you take a look at the above organizations' websites. 