

The Bedford Downs Stock Route Walk

A Youth Empowerment Initiative



wunan[®]
Choose your future

Corporate Sponsorship Prospectus

We need your help to protect our youth, reduce offending and keep our community safe.

Through your philanthropy, you can play a vital role in offering young individuals a promising future, ensuring they receive support, opportunities, and build strength in community, culture, and connection to their country.

If you are interested in making a philanthropic gift or would like to know more, please contact (08) 9168 3881 or WunanCeo@wunan.org.au.

For the final page, where we have the contact details we can have:

Through your philanthropy, you can play a crucial role in our ambitious work in reducing young peoples involvement in crime.

Ways to partner with us

As a philanthropic partner, join us in supporting young people to gain the life skills they need to disrupt anti-social or offending behaviour, to access meaningful opportunities and help them to recognise that they are valued members of the community. Your generous support can help fill the critical funding gap between the cost of undertaking our work and the income we receive from the government and fees for service.

Whether you are an individual, trust, foundation or private ancillary fund, we can guide you to direct your investment where it will have the best impact and meaning for you, and for the youth and communities you want to support.

You can choose to invest in a specific donation, or you can provide flexible funding that helps us build our capacity as an organisation so we help even more youth through this program.

Ways to Support - How You Can Help

- In-kind donations (tents, swags, camping equipment, food)
- Fuel support (purchase of fuel cards for 4-wheel drives)
- Team assistance (providing personnel/employees for the walk)
- Vehicle support (lending a vehicle for the duration of the walk)
- After-care assistance (providing items to support the health and well-being of youth post-program)
- Monetary donation

If you are interested in making a philanthropic gift or would like to know more, please contact Prue Jenkins on 0499 997 940 or WunanCeo@wunan.org.au.

Donations may be tax deductible.

Project Overview

“The Bedford Downs Stock Route Walk is a new initiative taking aim at breaking the cycle of offending behaviour in the Kimberley, and improving community safety, by providing at-risk youth with a transformative experience that reconnects them with country through culturally safe intervention.

The ‘walk’ has been successfully proposed as a alternate sentencing option with the hope of reducing the number of young people entering the correctional system, by showcasing the positives these individuals can offer back to their community.

The walk will be lead by local Aboriginal elders and traditional owners to connect participants with role models who can share cultural knowledge to build resilience from within.

The Walk

The program comprises two annual walks, one dedicated to a Boys Group and the other to a Girls Group, each consisting of up to 20 youth, grouped by age. Accompanying them on their journey are 15 Support Crew members trained in their respective areas. This recurring initiative unfolds along the historic 126-kilometre Bedford Stock Route, commencing at Bedford Downs Station.

The purpose is to provide a secure and culturally enriching experience for young participants, fostering physical, emotional, and cultural well-being. The program is strategically designed to facilitate healing, establish support networks, and uncover opportunities for a brighter future.

Participants in “The Bedford Downs Stock Route Walk” will engage in a series of immersive and skill- building activities aimed at enhancing their resilience, self-sufficiency, and connection to the land. These activities include navigation using both stars and maps, allowing participants to develop crucial orienteering skills. They will “learn (not earn) essential bush survival techniques, such as identifying sources of water and food in the natural environment.

The program also incorporates practical lessons in bush cooking, providing hands-on experience in preparing meals using locally sourced ingredients. Through these activities, participants will not only gain valuable survival skills but also forge a deeper connection to the cultural and historical significance of the Bedford Downs Stock Route for the pastoral industry.



Background

Sending children to youth detention centres such as Banksia Hill is not working in ‘healing/ rehabilitating’ the children or their families. This is a human tragedy which has a negative impact on the individuals, their families and the wider community as when they leave the detention centre they don’t come out as productive members of society. This is confirmed in the Australian Government’s Productivity Commission Report on Government Services 2022 on Youth Services that over 50% of the children who are released from sentenced supervision returned to sentenced supervision within 12 months.

From a financial perspective this is costing the Australian Government an exorbitant amount of money each year.

Financially, this costs the Australian Government significantly, with a national expenditure of \$723,940,000 in 2020-2021, averaging \$919,872.93 per child. In WA, detaining an average of 106 young people each night costs \$58,244,000 annually, averaging \$549,471.70 per child.

A policy shift towards Aboriginal service delivery, led by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organizations (ACCO), is evident in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Recognizing the over-representation of Aboriginal youth in the justice system due to past practices, the current policy reset creates opportunities for organizations like Wunan to collaborate with the government in delivering culturally competent services for Aboriginal families and communities.

This Project is an opportunity to develop an innovative and flexible youth-at-risk service model aligned with three of the Closing the Gap priority reforms:

Priority 1

Reform is about partnership and shared decision making: “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.”

Priority 2

Reform is about investing in building the service delivery capacity of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector and recognising the inherent strengths of ACCOs in providing a solid foundation for service provision.

Priority 3

Reform is about transforming government organisations to ensure they are “accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through the services they fund”.



Current Situation



Established in 1997, the Wunan Foundation stands as the largest Aboriginal Controlled Community organisation in the East Kimberley, operating with an annual turn over nearing \$25 million and net assets exceeding \$40 million. Committed to uplifting the community, Wunan employs 165 staff, of which 65% are Indigenous. Wunan's comprehensive services, funded by both state and federal governments and commercial enterprises, revolve around the pivotal pillars of education, employment, health, housing, and leadership.

Notably, Wunan's impact extends through youth projects like Swimming the River on Horseback, Journey to Empowerment and headspace. Our organisation's success lies in stable governance, a culturally competent workforce, and a commitment to co-designing place-based services with the community and strategic partners, ensuring consistent delivery of positive outcomes.

Wunan proposes a targeted intervention to address the over representation of young people in the justice system. Accompanied by Traditional Owners and Elders, Wunan has the capacity to lead at-risk youth on an annual, ongoing walk along sections of the historic 126-kilometre Bedford Downs Stock Route.

This transformative Walk, primarily staffed by Aboriginal individuals, provides a physically, emotionally, and culturally safe experience for youth to heal and redirect their life trajectory. Wunan's four-stage intervention model—Crisis, Stability, Ready for Change, and Flourishing—guides the process of empowering youth-at-risk, aiming to equip them with self-belief, confidence, drive, resources, and ongoing support necessary for a better life with a reduced risk of offending or re-offending.

Crucially, Wunan operates headspace and WunanHealth & Well-Being, making mental health support a prominent aspect of our intervention strategy. Our goal is to foster resilience in youth, ensuring they not only overcome challenges but thrive in building fulfilling, positive futures.

Methodology



The Walk

Wunan proposes establishing a Project Reference Group to guide the development of a co-designed and policy-aligned service model. The final Project Plan will incorporate a monitoring, evaluation, and reporting framework for evidence-based decision-making.

Aboriginal-led place-based service co-design meetings will be held across culturally relevant towns, ensuring local Aboriginal community input for the project. Wunan values community strengths, adopting a strength-based approach to mobilise existing resources and capabilities, avoiding a demotivating 'deficit' focus.

Aligned with WA's Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy, Wunan places culture at the core, fostering a culturally responsive workforce and reshaping government services respectfully. We build partnerships for shared decision-making, Aboriginal-led solutions, and community accountability.

Recognising the importance of early intervention, Wunan collaborates with stakeholders to address youth crime. Our trauma-informed approach acknowledges the need for intensive support for young people and recognises the significance of healing from grief and trauma.

Committed to safety, Wunan aims to embed a child-safe culture across the East Kimberley, reflected in our comprehensive Working with Vulnerable People policy.





Get Involved

Why Sponsor “The Bedford Downs Stock Route Walk”?

Your sponsorship will contribute to positive behavioural change, reducing the risk of youth offending or re-offending. This aligns with the Closing the Gap priority reforms, emphasising partnership, service delivery capacity building, and cultural safety.

Sponsorship of this project represents a cost-effective alternative to youth detention. Current statistics indicate that the Australian Government spends on average \$919,873 per child annually on detention, making “The Bedford Downs Stock Route Walk” a financially responsible and socially impactful intervention.

Your organisation will be an integral part of a co-designed, culturally relevant project that involves Aboriginal-led place-based service co-design meetings. This approach ensures that the project meets the specific needs of youth-at-risk and the broader community.

By sponsoring this initiative, you actively contribute to the well-being and empowerment of at-risk youth, fostering positive social change and building a safer community.

How You Can Get Involved

We invite your organisation to become a key partner in “The Bedford Downs Stock Route Walk.”

Your sponsorship can take various forms, including financial support, in-kind contributions, or the provision of specific services that align with the project’s goals.

Please contact Prue Jenkins for more information

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Our Partners



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