



# Annual Report

Hope Vale Foundation

2023-2024







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# Chair's Overview

Katherine Steffensen



In my first year as Chair, the 2023-2024 period began with governance training led by Bob Frazer, a former colleague from my time with Cape York NRM.

We also welcomed 11 new employees as a part of our paid work trial, but sadly we had to say goodbye to Angela McIvor who resigned as a Director. Angela was a valuable member of the rebuild of the company.

Some of my personal highlights from this year include:

- Partnering with James Cook University to plant experimental crops
- Governance training
- Expanding our reach by launching our social media campaign
- Bringing back the Arthur Beetson Foundation (ABF) Immortals Tour to Hope Vale
- Successful grant application for our aquaculture project

As always, we are grateful to the Joint Venture Partnership with Gungarde Community Centre Aboriginal Corporation, Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council, and My Pathway.

The backing we receive from each organisation is invaluable, providing constant and ongoing support with training and employment opportunities for our workforce.

Our success is also linked to our team. We have made extraordinary progress this year and I would like to thank the Board of Directors, our management team and partners for their commitment and consistency in driving our business forward.

This year, we look forward to expanding our business, including:

- A new office space in Hope Vale
- Planting new crops, expanding to trees
- Further investments into building a skilled workforce

There are also some plans we are exploring, and I look forward to sharing more information in the coming months.

Thank you for your dedication and hard work throughout the past year. I look forward to sharing a productive 2024 together.

*K Steffensen*



# General Manager's Summary

Rachelle McIvor



The 2023–2024 year was full of promise. Not to sound cliché—but it really was a new beginning.

The Foundation's Board is committed, passionate and consistent in its approach to governance and management, with a very clear vision for our future. We are rebuilding a farm.

We had a strong management team, and a strong support network surrounding us, including independent subcontractors, universities, government departments and community stakeholders.

Having a firm understanding of our vision makes it easier for all involved to be clear about how we work together and the part we play in achieving our aspirations.

Our goal is to build and develop a commercial farm to grow and sell Indigenous produce in preparation for the 2032 Olympics in Brisbane.

The company had to be rebuilt from the ground up, we stayed disciplined and focussed to achieve the following goals:

- Restructuring the governance structure of the company, including changing its Constitution
- Rehabilitating the image of the company with funding groups
- Governance training and professional development for the board and employees to have high expectations
- Develop a workforce strategy to have a local skilled workforce

- Develop policies and procedures to ensure greater transparency and accountability.

The Board of Directors adopted a new style of governance and leadership to comply with legislative requirements. Not an easy task, especially trying to navigate all of this in a community of family and close relationships. It is a new era of operations in Indigenous policy, but we are prepared for it.

All this is only possible because of the team we have in place—we focus on people. We are incredibly fortunate to be a part of the Joint Venture Partnership with Gungarde Community Centre Aboriginal Corporation, Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council, and My Pathway. We were able to employ eleven (11) long term unemployed people in Hope Vale to participate in a paid work trial program. The trial included work on the surrounding farms, community work, and our farm.

The Joint Venture Partnership provided access to training in heavy machinery and leadership, to name a couple. The Foundation is focussed on continuing to build a skilled workforce this year.

We used the workforce as a driving factor in our community engagement initiatives this year. We continued to support the local community and offer sponsorship to activities that contribute to the benefit of the Hope Vale community.

Some of the activities we sponsored:

- Hope Vale Pig Hunt
- Bingo at the Hope Vale Aged Care

- Dhurrpil Orchids Women's Rugby League team
- Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy – Hope Vale Campus
- Hope Vale United Rugby League Team
- Distributing a \$100 Food voucher for each household during the Christmas period
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council, return to community celebrations
- Yard cleaning in preparation for Cyclone season

Our workforce cleaned the yards of many low-income community members in preparation for cyclone season.

We are thankful for the partnerships we have established over the year, with James Cook University, various departments of both the State and Federal Government, Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) and the generosity they have shown to us.

Our partnerships with Grubers Beckett Accountants, Confio Insurance, ANZ bank, Lord Commercial Lawyers, Forte Marketing, and Future IT Services have been instrumental in our rebuild. It is because of them we have been able to demonstrate to others that we have strong systems in place.

Thanks to our hard work, we were thrilled to secure a grant from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to establish an aquaponics system.

With all of our successes for the year, we were excited to host a Government Champion visit in June to share our progress. It was particularly exciting to show them our newly planted crops.

Unfortunately, after the visit, the Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council served us with a letter calling in the lease. It was a disappointing end to a very successful year. We are currently negotiating with the Council to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

We are looking forward to a couple of new projects, which we will share as they develop.

I would like to acknowledge Robyn May from Selkie Shore, who has been instrumental in raising our profile on social media and working on our website. Robyn works very closely with me and keeps me on track. Thank you, Robyn.

On a final note, I would like to acknowledge Sylvia Robb, from Sylvia's Mobile Bookkeeping.

Sylvia was with the company from the Foundation's very beginning until recently, and is passionate about the power of good bookkeeping. Hope Vale Foundation is very grateful for her dedication and expertise during her time with us.

*As I reflect on the Foundation's achievements and challenges this past year, I remain committed to driving progress and creating a meaningful impact. Together, let's look forward to new opportunities and continued growth in the year ahead.*

Rachelle McIvor









# Project and Advocacy Manager Update

Shaun Nancarrow



It has been a year of incredible highs and unexpected lows—more ups than downs placing the Foundation in front for the year.

I'm incredibly proud of what's been achieved as a team, and as a Board.

I couldn't perform in my role without everyone's hard work. All duly noted and appreciated. I am grateful for the support you have given the Farm project this year.

Significant highlights for this period have been:

- The clearing of the debt with Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), removing that historical burden from the Foundation so the organisation can move forward.
- The works crew and Tony Matchett from James Cook University (JCU) erected a fence inside the Farm boundary to protect experimental plantings from wandering animals. I would like to acknowledge and thank Tony for his support this year. He has been a wonderful addition to the JCU team.

- We were also the recipients of grant funding from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) to set up an aquaponics system allowing us to begin testing the model to grow fresh fruit and vegetables in the Hope Vale region, using nothing but water and fish to make plants grow. Thank you Rod Ingersoll for providing guidance and expertise to enable this project to become a reality.

The Foundation has been working closely with educational facilities such as James Cook University, the University of Queensland, and the University of Central Queensland. These relationships, and the support they provide, are giving the Foundation credibility in the wider education and scientific community.

We are also collaborating with the CSIRO, which has generously supported the Hope Vale Foundation by providing 100 tropical fruit trees for a new orchard. The planting is scheduled for the upcoming wet season.

In June 2024, the Hope Vale Foundation hosted a Queensland Government Community Champion visit. During the visit, we showcased innovative seed treatment technology from Rainstick, an Indigenous company. This technology, inspired by First Nations knowledge of how lightning enhances crop growth, represents a fusion of traditional understanding with modern agricultural advancements.

The Government party was impressed by what we had achieved and very supportive of what the Foundation is trying to build. Unfortunately, that visit was followed by notification that Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council was looking to review the lease. This review was unexpected, especially after such a positive visit.



We are collaborating with the Council with an aim to reach a mutual agreement regarding the Farm's future. I met with the new CEO to initiate discussions on how we can work together ahead of the Council's lease decision on 31 December 2024.

I am hopeful that we can make suitable arrangements that align with both parties' interests. The Foundation is committed to preserving the vision and progress of our projects.

Due to the uncertainty at this point in time, the funding strategy the Board approved earlier this year has been put on hold until we have a resolution with Council. We still intend to engage with our project partners in the State Government, Federal Government and higher education partners, to deliver an educational precinct proposal, and hopefully we will get approval to start this exciting phase of our operations. The proposal aims to establish demonstration models for various types of agriculture, aquaculture, and mariculture, providing opportunities to trial these practices across the Cape.

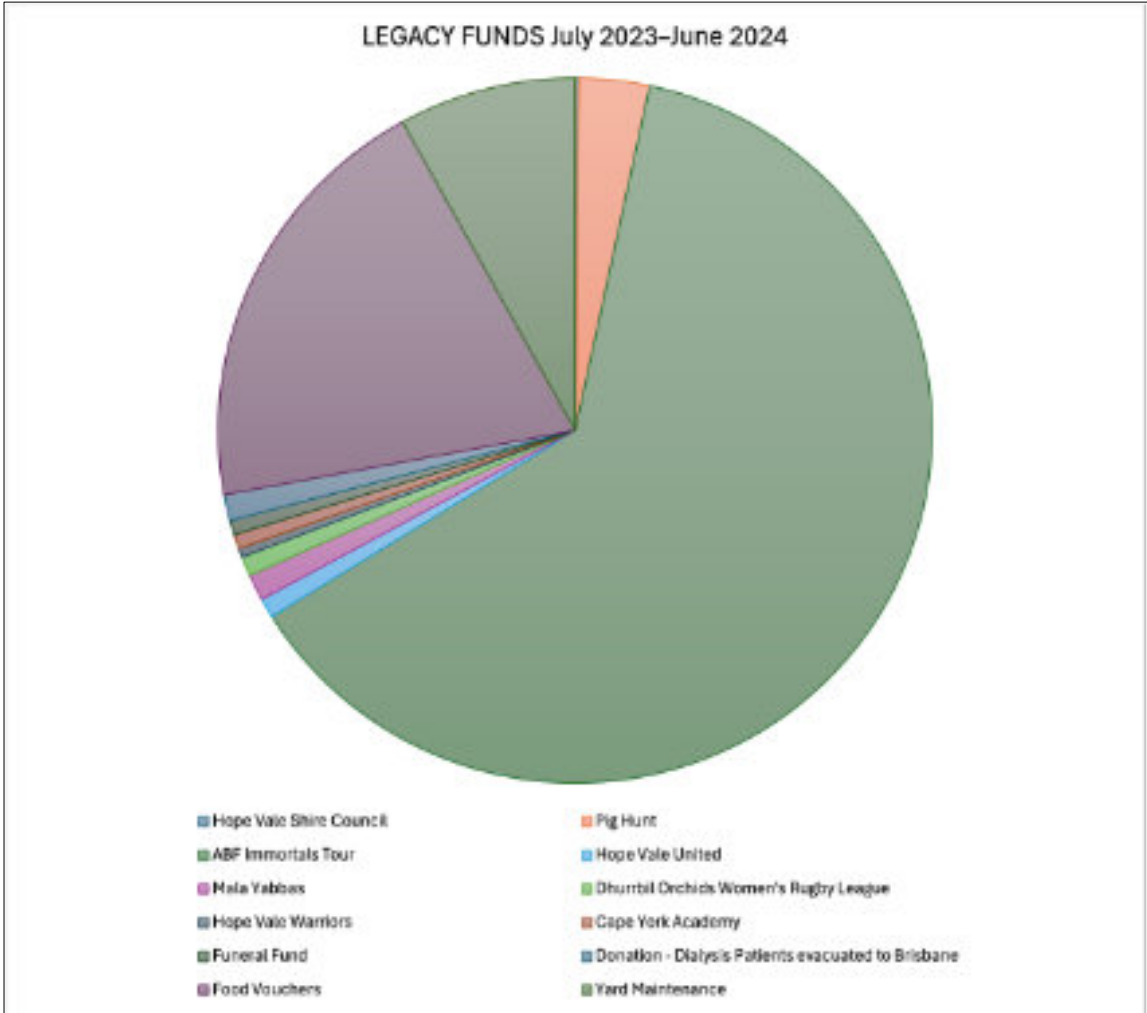
*S Nancarrow*



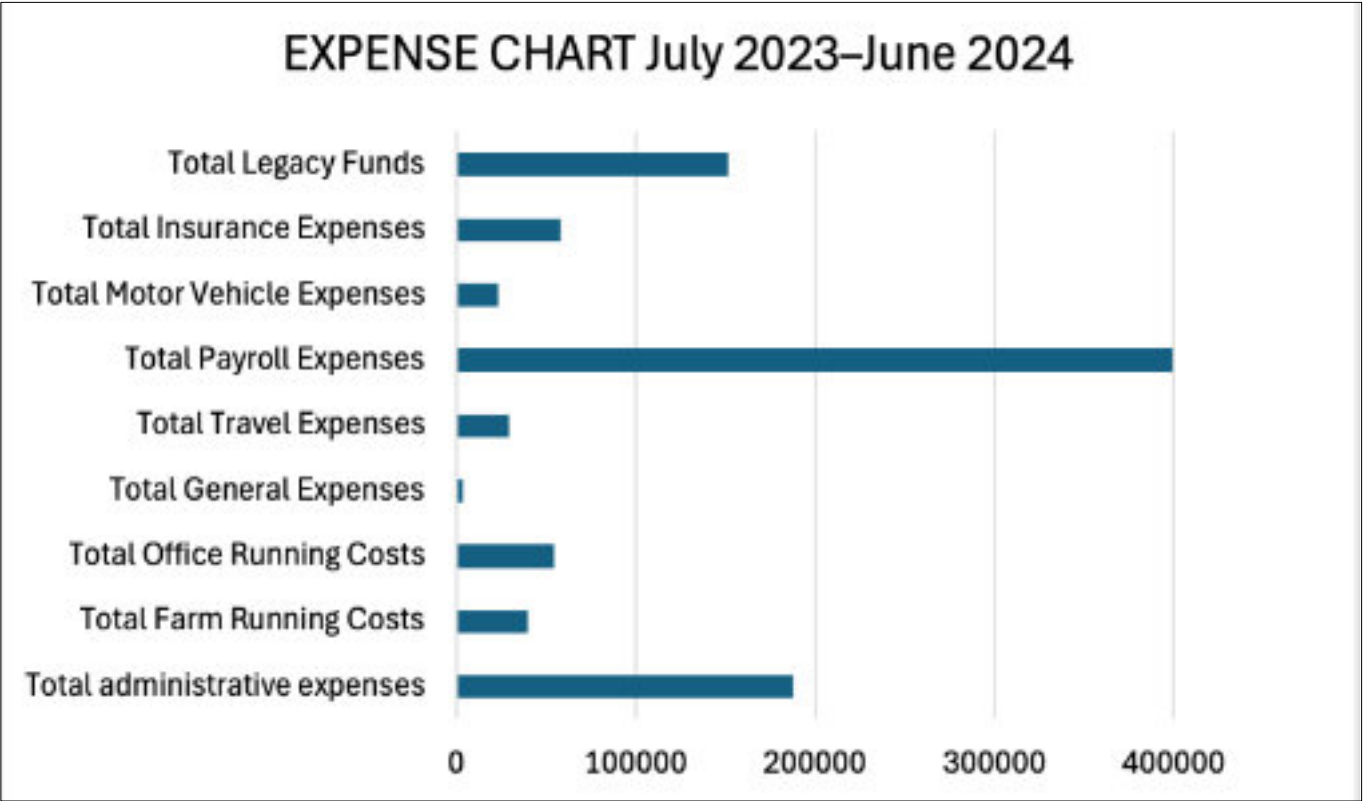


# Community Engagement — Legacy Funds

EXPENDITURE TOTAL	151,497.23
Expenditure Breakdown	
Hope Vale Shire Council	269.76
Pig Hunt	4,808.82
ABF Immortals Tour	95,132.20
Hope Vale United	1,363.64
Mala Yabbas	1,818.18
Dhurrbil Orchids Women's Rugby League	1,363.64
Hope Vale Warriors	613.44
Cape York Academy	1,000.00
Funeral Fund	1,010.31
Donation—Dialysis Patients evacuated to Brisbane	1,818.20
Food Vouchers	30,132.37
Yard Maintenance	12,166.67



# Community Financial Report



## Treasurer's Overview

Angela Mclvor

This year was an exciting year for us. In previous years, we have had to be circumspect in our spending, diligently saving to ensure we could cover our overhead.

The Board of Directors recruited experts to help us understand how to govern and manage effectively, and it has paid off. Having strong leadership on the Board and in our management team has helped us achieve the following:

- We cleared an historical debt with Indigenous Business Australia (IBA)
- We have savings to invest in us rebuilding the farm
- We were successful in securing a grant

We are proud that as an Indigenous governing body, we knew it was important to demonstrate that we are effective leaders, especially focusing on financial literacy, which is why we are thrilled to be partnering with Grubers Beckett Chartered Accountants to ensure we continue being transparent and accountable. It gives us confidence for the future.

Unfortunately, I have resigned as a Director and will not finish my term. I have enjoyed being a Director and am thankful for the experiences and skills I have gained. To the Board of Directors, I wish you all the best for your continued success.

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