

**Groundswell**



# **CARING FOR COUNTRY**

**GRANT ROUND**

# Caring for Country Grant Round

The Caring for Country Grant Round is a First Nations led and run grants program that supports the work of First Nations communities throughout Australia and the Pacific focussed on climate justice and caring for Country.

This program engages First Nations community leaders to manage the decision making process of this grant round and direct funding to address climate justice in the way they choose, on their own terms, in accordance with the right to self-determination. This ensures culturally appropriate outreach and engagement with the changemakers we are seeking to support, and strengthened decision making overall.

It is backed by generous philanthropic partners committed to modelling a power shift towards authentic self-determination in philanthropy, including the Eisen Family Private Fund, Oranges & Sardines Foundation & the Dusseldorp Forum.

## PROTECTING COUNTRY

Prevention of fossil fuel expansion eg. advocacy and campaigning.

## CARING FOR COUNTRY

Land, sea and water management eg. preserving and protecting carbon sinks.

## HEALTHY COUNTRY SOLUTIONS

Supporting climate solutions eg. agriculture to sequester carbon and energy transition initiatives.

## PRESERVING CULTURE

Strengthening community to ensure ongoing generational care for Country eg. cultural heritage campaigns.

## 2024 Grants Committee

Each year, a First Nations leadership committee administers the Caring for Country grant round. The diverse knowledge, expertise and cultural connections of the 2024 committee across climate, First Nations & philanthropic initiatives ensured robust, thoughtful and culturally informed decision making.



Tishiko King, Caring for Country Manager



Benjamin Abbatangelo - Writer, Strategist and Investor.



Marlikka Perdrisat - Storyteller, Founder of Martuwarra & Lawyer



Jacynta Fa'amau - Regional Pacific Campaign Specialist



Lala Gutchen - Storyteller, Language Coordinator, Climate Advocate



Tiarne Shutt, Program Lead, First Nations Finance - Australian Sustainable Finance Institute



## Why we fund Caring for Country

**Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Pacific Islander people have sustainably cared for Country for millenia, and we continue to do so today.**

Indigenous people globally only make up 5% of the population but care for 80% of the world's global biodiversity. By caring for and protecting Country we have been able to preserve priceless natural areas that are our answers for our futures. But invasion and colonisation have devastated this system.

Western systems of land and water management have degraded our ecosystems to such an extent that within 200 years we have arrived in a climate crisis.

Here in Australia, that destruction is particularly obvious. Australia ranks world number 1 for mammal extinction, and world number 2 for biodiversity loss. We also hold the title as the world's largest exporter of coal and the 2nd largest exporter of gas, and are ranked dead last on climate action among UN nations worldwide.

From rising sea levels to dangerous heat waves in remote communities, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Pacific Islander people are feeling the impacts of the climate crisis first and worst, whilst holding the frontlines of resistance by protecting Country from the threats of fossil fuel extraction.

Climate justice demands that those most affected by the climate crisis – Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Pacific Islander people – are empowered and resourced to continue our leadership protecting and defending Country, as we have done since time immemorial.

Today there is so much that young mob are doing with the help of their elders and communities to continue to lead the way towards a sustainable future.

Yet First Nations led advocacy is still chronically underfunded.

Supporting and resourcing First Nations people to continue to care for and protect Country is a fundamental – and urgent – climate solution.

*Lille Madden, First Nations Director at Groundswell*



## How we evaluate for lasting impact

We encourage you to be guided by the following criteria when evaluating grant applications:

-  **Well reasoned theory of change:** Can clearly communicate why this (strength of project/ organisation), why now (timing), and why us (why they're the right group to do the work).
-  **Scale of impact:** What positive effects will this have on people, Country, politics and community in both the short and long term.
-  **Opportunity:** Why now when not before? Is there a timely opportunity for this organisation or project? Does it need to happen now or can it wait?
-  **Cultural and community competency:** Is this the right organisation to carry out this work? Are they directly connected to the community or communities they are organising? Do they hold the right relationships and consult in the right ways?
-  **Capacity to deliver:** Is their proposal realistic? Can they deliver what they say they will? Does the organisation have the right people for the task with the right skills and approach for what they're trying to do?
-  **Community building:** Do they take a community organising approach, building people power and strengthening the power of the community?
-  **Budget:** Do they have a convincing budget? Will our grant make a substantial impact on their organisation?

## Why co-grant with Groundswell

- Groundswell offers five years of experience and robust, established grantmaking processes that were informed by Australia's best experts in climate advocacy and climate philanthropy.
- We have built established and trusted relationships with First Nations campaigners, organisers and strategists across the climate, environment and First Nations justice movements, and we are supported by strategic advisors who provide us with expert insight into climate movement strategy, gaps and needs.
- The Groundswell team have a strong track record of facilitating positive engagement experiences for First Nations members' within our collective funding program, where First Nations people hold 10% of our membership places.
- Groundswell First Nations committee and membership holds a great depth of relationships and knowledge across different cultures, geographic regions and language groups which enables them to evaluate which people and organisations will be best positioned to deliver the strongest impact outcomes for both community and Country.
- Groundswell offers support for organisations beyond funding such as: Platforming stories and events across Groundswell socials and Journal; Grant writing support, legal support, connecting with pro bono volunteers; Design and communications support; Ongoing advice from Groundswell team and First Nations Directors.

***“SUPPORTING AND RESOURCING FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE TO CONTINUE TO CARE FOR AND PROTECT COUNTRY ON OUR OWN TERMS IS A FUNDAMENTAL – AND URGENT – CLIMATE SOLUTION.”***

Lille Madden

# 2023 Caring for Country Grant Winners



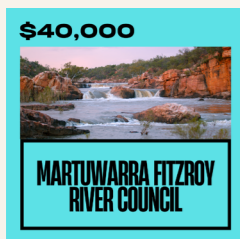
With it looking like COP31 will be held in Australia in 2026, co-hosted with the Pacific, **The Veilomani Project** is an opportunity to mobilise Pasifika youth based in Australia via a series of events and empowerment workshops held throughout 2024-2025, fostering climate collaboration and strategic planning with the youth to amplify Pacific voices and ensure we are able to shift the narrative and provide Pacific Islands with the best possible chance of survival.



Binybara (Lee Point) is a location of sacred Larrakia law, Dreaming and cultural significance actively under threat of being destroyed by Defence Housing Australia to build 800 houses for the military and privatisation of Aboriginal land. This grant to **Protect Binybara** is supporting Larrakia young people and Elders to protect Country and strengthen relationships across Larrakia Nation through movement building.



**Gudanji For Country** was formed to help elevate the voices of their Clan group, the Kurrunjini Rrumburriya (part of the Gudanji Nation), in speaking for and caring for Country. As a grass roots First Nations organisation, they are fighting to protect our Country from the damaging effects of overgrazing, mining and now fracking. This grant will help bring a team of researchers out on Country to document the interconnectedness of our people, culture, Country and and demonstrate how important it is that we protect Country from imminent destruction through fracking.



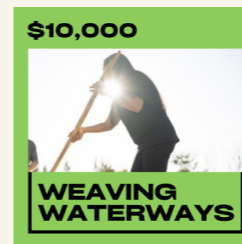
The **Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council** is an entirely Indigenous led organisation, guided by a diverse representation of senior elders with cultural authority and knowledge holders on the front line, defending against the destruction of cultural heritage, ecological damage, poverty, and climate change. They're working together to ensure Martuwarra – a living ancestor and a global treasure – retains a right to live and flow through education, research, storytelling, community outreach, legal and policy venues.



**Willum Warraun Pun Pun** is an Aboriginal gathering place in Hastings on the Mornington Peninsula with over 600 members, creating a safe cultural space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living locally to connect around culture. This grant will support the revegetating of a creek at the back of their property, which is an important ecological wetland habitat for endangered species under threat from climate change.



The **Karrkad Kanjdji Trust** brings together First Nations ranger groups, communities and philanthropists to address some of our nation's most pressing issues. These include regenerating our natural environment, taking action on climate change, creating meaningful and equal employment opportunities, and supporting the continuation of the world's oldest living culture This grant will support a dedicated team of Warddeken rangers working to protect what is believed to be the largest body of undocumented rock art in the world.



**'Weaving Waterways'** is a program that will empower First Nations people to reinvigorate weaving practices through the restoration of their waterways. One of the limiting factors for this revival has been the lack of access to traditional weaving materials and this grant will go towards procurement of plants, fencing of riparian areas where necessary and maintenance of these areas, helping restore health to Country, supporting the revival of cultural practices and empowering community.



**Currie Country Social Change Aboriginal Corporation** is deeply committed to preserving and stewarding Country and have identified two historically significant fish trap sites – Cabarita and Fingal Head in Bundalung Country NSW – that face degradation, endangering delicate ecosystems. Their objective is to restore and safeguard these sites, ensuring their significance for Traditional Owners and the wider community and this grant will support two weekend projects, led by Traditional Owners, focused on rebuilding and revitalising these fish trap sites. This hands-on approach ensures ancestral knowledge is passed down, deepening our connection to the land, sea, and waters.



**Multi-year grant winners:** 2024 will mark the final instalment of a 3 year commitment to these powerful organisations. Read more at [groundswellgiving.org/caring-for-country-grant-round](https://groundswellgiving.org/caring-for-country-grant-round)

# Our time is precious, just like our Country.

## Further reading

[The Elusive Craft of Evaluating Advocacy](#), Stamford Social Innovation Review.

[Original Power Timeline of Resistance](#), a snapshot of the history of resistance from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the stories of individual actions and collective campaigning.

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities for climate and environment](#), Indigenous Peoples Organisation 2021

[State of the Environment Report 2022](#)

[AEGN Climate Funding Framework](#)

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