BREAKING CYCLES.
BUILDING LEADERS.
SIDE BY SIDE.

INDIGENOUS MARATHON FOUNDATION
#RUNSWEATINSPIRE

IMPACT REPORT 2024-25

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians on whose land we live, work, run and play and we respect their Elders, culture, lore and values. We value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as a national treasure, and embrace it as a vital and rich part of the Australian identity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ARTISTS

Shane Cook, proud Wulli Wulli and Guwa (Koa) man and IMP Graduate #87

Ray Landers, proud Dieri, Anmatajere, Pitjantjatjara man and IMF RAW Run Leader, Semaphore

This artwork was created for the Indigenous Marathon Foundation (IMF) to reflect the organisation's history and the impact of its programs. It incorporates themes from Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC, honouring culture, identity, and connection.

SECTION 01 - WELCOME 6
- Welcome from our Founding Director 6
- Message from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chief Officer 7

SECTION 02 - YEAR IN REVIEW 8
- 2024-25 Highlights 8
- Our Impact since 2010 8
- Our Program Impact 9

SECTION 03 - WHAT WE DO 10
- Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP) 10
- IMF Running and Walking (RAW) 14
- Indigenous Communities for Activity and Nutrition (I-CAN) 16
- FrontRunners 20
- IMF Warrior Program 22

SECTION 04 - IMPACT PROFILES AND CASE STUDIES 26
- Case Studies 26
- Impact Profile 27
- Warrior Profiles 28

SECTION 05 - PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDRISING 32
- Headline Achievements 32
- Partnership Highlights 32
- Key Fundraising Campaigns 35

SECTION 06 - COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND MEDIA 38
- Key Highlights 38
- Media Coverage 39
- Public Relations 39

SECTION 07 - WHO WE ARE 42
- About the Indigenous Marathon Foundation 42
- Our Board 44
- Our Team 46
- Our Ambassadors 49

SECTION 08 - FINANCIAL SUMMARY 50
- Revenue and Expenditure 50

SECTION 09 - STRATEGIC STATEMENT 51

WELCOME FROM ROB DE CASTELLA AO MBE

Welcome to our 2024-25 IMF Impact Report.

As a non-Indigenous Australian, I am proud to run, side by side with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. We run because there is urgency.

IMP is now in its 16th year, and the Foundation's activities and programs have developed and grown. All we do is based in a strong ethos of running and walking. We know that these simple activities are powerful drivers of physical and emotional health, wellbeing, resilience, and social connection. But, running can be challenging and difficult to do. We strive to make it a little easier by inspiring, supporting, rewarding, and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians so we embrace the small discomfort of running, and lace up your ASICS, and "get out the door". This report will provide you a brief overview of IMF's operations and programs, and the significant positive impact we are having.

Because the Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP) runs for most of the calendar year, we've included the last half of the 2024 IMP program and the first half of the 2025 IMP year.

It started in 2010 with a talent identification question – *"Can Aboriginal men run like the great Africans – given generations of hunting and gathering and running across the continent?"*. Inspired by the amazing, emotional and inspiring documentary, *Running to America*; things changed almost immediately when Charlie, Joseph, Juan and Caleb all crossed the finish line in Central Park, that fateful day in November 2010.

> *"Running is what IMF does. It is the trunk of our tree, with deep roots, branches and leaves."*
>
> *– Rob*

Today IMF has become something so much more than a sports Talent Identification program. It is more important, more powerful, and more impactful, as we strive for a reconciled, unified and healthy Australia through running.

Huge effort was made to keep this Impact Report succinct, but it was impossible because this year has been epic, and we must do justice to all the great outcomes and the inspiring stories must be told.

IMF has a strong culture, and I know you will feel it as you read through this report and enjoy the beautiful stories and photos of children, young people, and older adults, in communities, schools, and running events across this continent we call Australia. From north to south, west to east, and everywhere in between; all day, every day, we run.

Running is what IMF does. It is the trunk of our tree, with deep roots, branches and leaves. It is one of the most simple, fundamental and powerful activities our species has done for millennia; it is what we have evolved to do, and humankind is the best long-distance runner on the planet. Running addresses every single chronic disease and improves mental health and wellbeing, and social connection. It is just hard to do … so we make it a little easier … knowing that the "harder the struggle – the greater the reward" and through this we spread our message of RUN SWEAT INSPIRE.

Finally, thank our small, dedicated and talented team, our sponsors, partners and supporters, all our fundraisers, and our generous volunteers and supportive followers.

MESSAGE FROM IMF'S ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHIEF OFFICER, CHARLIE MAHER

I'm a proud Western Arrarnta man, long-time IMF Ambassador and Graduate #1 of the Indigenous Marathon Project. In June 2025, I stepped into a new full-time leadership role as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chief Officer.

In this role, I'll be providing cultural guidance, operational support, and on-the-ground presence at events where IMF runners are participating. I see my role as both a responsibility and a privilege – to oversee Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols and awareness, to strengthen relationships, and to support our leadership team in continuing to grow IMF's programs nationally.

The initial focus has been on engaging with our IMF team and gaining a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Having a sustainable and motivated team is vital to IMF's long-term success and growth, as we build resilience and stability to continue driving IMF's mission and impact for years to come. I've also been connecting with the IMF Board to establish clear priorities.

For those of you who know me, I'm big on bringing people together through my actions – and if you've been following my running journey this year, I set myself a goal of running eight marathons in eight states and territories in the Great Australian Indigenous Marathon Challenge (GAIMC), including my seventh Abbott World Marathon Major at the TCS Sydney Marathon in August 2025.

> *"... I'm big on bringing people together through my actions"*
>
> *– Charlie*

In closing, as a leader and a runner I believe in humility, faith and positivity – and that's how one inspires others to live a healthy and impactful life.

YEAR IN REVIEW

2024–25 HIGHLIGHTS

IN 2024-25, WE ACHIEVED THE FOLLOWING:

MILESTONES SINCE 2010

WE RUN. SWEAT. INSPIRE. SIDE BY SIDE.

- 1,500+ applications for the Indigenous Marathon Project since 2010.
- 208 marathons completed by IMP graduates.

Four IMP graduates have completed all Abbott World Marathon Majors (excluding Sydney), including Charlie Maher IMP Grad #1, Bianca Graham IMP Grad #7, Allira Jennings (nee Ludwig) IMP Grad #38, and Natasha Leslie IMP Grad #72.

100+ events per year

Each year, the IMF RAW Championships are one of the highlights – an opportunity for IMF RAW groups across Australia to go head-to-head in friendly competition while building connections.

73% physical literacy improvement

73% of students participating in our most recent I-CAN programs experienced improved physical literacy and behavioural performance during the eight-week program. Plus, school surveys indicate an up to 20 per cent point increase in school attendance during the eight-week period – an amazing statistic! *Based on school surveys conducted in Week 1 vs Week 10.

PROGRAM IMPACTS IN WORDS

– TJ Cora, IMF RAW Cairns Run Leader, (2017) IMP Graduate #68

"Thanks to IMF, I'm in a very different place than I was eight years ago. I'm a very confident man now, grounded in the community, doing a lot of coaching, and working as a youth worker within the youth justice system, mentoring in that space – using running to change people's lives."

– Brendan Larcombe, IMF Run Leader, IMF RAW program with Redlynch State College students

"I got involved with IMF RAW after leaving a drug and rehabilitation centre ... after a few attempts, I got the courage to turn up to a session. Now an IMF Run Leader, we have 18 kids minimum every Friday, and we've started a Wednesday session as well because they just love it. Watching the young fellas and girls, who didn't think they could run, are doing 5km events. It's just getting better and better."

– Jade Jackson, IMF RAW Darwin Deadlies

"When I was 11, I was on the path to being diabetic. I knew I needed to be healthy. It was my dad who got me into fitness. We started out doing, you know, circuit training, push-ups and sit-ups and all that. And then I found Darwin Deadlies. Joining them made me so confident and I love being here. It's not about being fast, It's about health, connection and personal growth.

– Rob Kennedy, 2025 IMP Corporate Runner and National CEO, Synergy Group Australia

"The best way to describe the IMP experience is it's had my eyes opened. For anyone considering becoming an IMF corporate sponsor, I can't recommend it more highly. You will not get another opportunity to have a life-changing experience such as this. The learning journey you'll be able to go on, the impact you'll be able to have – not just through the First Nations peoples you'll meet along the way – but through your networks and your communities in – will multiply impacts no end."

INDIGENOUS MARATHON PROJECT

SNAPSHOT

Founded: 2010

Graduates since inception: 156

Participants this year: 12

Applications in 2025: 323 applications (record)

PURPOSE AND APPROACH

The Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP) is a six-month health, wellbeing, and leadership program that uses running to support personal growth, resilience, and goal setting.

Each year, 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – aged 18-30 – are selected to train for and complete the TCS New York City Marathon in November, with no prior running experience required.

Throughout the year, squad members attend four intensive education and training workshops, gain nationally-recognised qualifications in leadership, health promotion, coaching, and first aid. The squad members also participate in running events to gauge progressive fitness, practice race plans, and build mental strength.

Graduates emerge as role models and change-makers, returning to their communities equipped to inspire healthy, active lifestyles. Since 2010, 156 IMP graduates have crossed an international marathon finish line and gone on to lead lasting impact across Australia.

2025 IMP squad members: Sharman Williams, Ellie White, Rhys Munns, Chanti McHenry, Arika Appleby and Beverlina Riley.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024-25

11 new leaders graduated from IMP, all completing the 2024 TCS New York City Marathon.

3 IMP graduates from the Unfinished Business squad completed their first marathons in 2025 – two in Melbourne and one in Berlin.

Received 323 applications for the 2025 IMP, highlighting the growing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders ready to drive change.

MEDIA

IMP's **national media coverage** across News Corp media, ABC and SBS, amplified the impact of the program and highlighted personal stories.

IMP IMPACT SINCE 2010

156 IMP graduates, each a **role model** for health and leadership in their communities.

Graduates have gone on to establish **nearly 50** IMF RAW (Running and Walking) groups across Australia.

208 marathons have been completed by IMP graduates.

The **'ripple effect'**: IMP graduates go on to lead change in their communities – becoming IMF RAW Run Leaders, founding businesses and social enterprises, and facilitating accredited workshops that inspire the next generation of IMP squad members.

RIPPLE EFFECT: SISSY'S STORY

Sissy Austin, a Gunditjmara, Keerraay Woorroong, and Djab Wurrung woman, , faced a life-altering challenge in February 2023 when she was violently attacked during a run in the Lal Lal State Forest near Ballarat. Despite suffering a severe concussion and facial injuries, Sissy's determination led her to complete the 2023 TCS New York City Marathon as part of IMP, earning her IMP graduate #138. In the following year, she completed two more marathons in Ballarat and Melbourne, demonstrating remarkable resilience and commitment.

Following her IMP experience, Sissy launched **Take Back the Track on Sunday, 9 February 2025**, a national movement advocating for the safety of women and gender-diverse runners. This impact project was developed as part of IMP's So What? camp. Her vision has been shared on local, state, national, and international media. Sissy's story is testament to the power of community, healing, and connection through running. The next **Take Back the Track Day is scheduled for Sunday, 16 February 2026.**

> *"I was so grateful this year when IMF supported the launch of **Take Back the Track**, being able to access the impact grant made a dream become a reality. I am now proudly the founder of Take Back the Track and really look forward to continuing to grow the movement. Thank you to Rob, Charlie and Jack in particular, for being authentic allies, supporting the launch of the movement, having men support a movement to end violence and harassment towards women and gender diverse runners is really important."*
>
> *– Sissy Austin*

SECTION 03 WHAT WE DO

WHAT'S NEXT?

In 2025–26, we will strengthen graduate support, expand further education opportunities, and continue evolving IMP's education offerings to ensure future squads and alumni are equipped and confident to lead lasting change in their communities.

IMF RUNNING AND WALKING (RAW)

SNAPSHOT

- **Established**: 2011
- **Communities engaged**: 42
- **Weekly participants**: up to 5,000
- **Qualified Run Leaders**: 70
- **School RAW Clubs**: 13

IMF RAW is a free, inclusive, community-led program tackling chronic disease by making walking and running accessible for First Nations Australians and all community members.

In 2024-25, IMF RAW delivered weekly sessions and events across participating communities, complemented by the **IMF RAW Event Series and the National Championships**, which brought people together to celebrate participation, culture, and perseverance.

Participation in IMF RAW is encouraged through milestone incentives, such as earning an IMF RAW t-shirt or singlet after eight weeks of consistent involvement, and a personalised distance goal.

The impact of IMF RAW has been felt through improved health and wellbeing, with participants reporting stronger fitness, resilience, and confidence. Sessions embedded local knowledge, language, and connection to Country, creating inclusive and culturally safe environments where families, Elders, and young people could be active together.

Leadership capacity was strengthened through targeted training and development opportunities, ensuring culturally safe guidance, enhanced wellbeing support, and sustainable community-led delivery.

By equipping local leaders, IMF RAW fosters safe, supportive sessions, strengthens community ownership, and reinforces connection and belonging across diverse communities. The program exemplifies best practice in First Nations health promotion.

IMF RAW supports Australia's Physical Activity Guidelines, recommending 150 minutes of activity per week and reduced sedentary time. It helps reduce risk factors for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and mental ill-health, while recognising holistic wellbeing – physical, social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual. By being community-led and culturally safe, IMF RAW achieves stronger participation and long-term impact.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- IMF RAW boosts physical activity and community connection.
- Many participants progress into leadership roles, including **Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP)** and **FrontRunners**, creating pathways for ongoing health and wellbeing initiatives.
- **IMF RAW** supports Australia's Physical Activity Guidelines and promotes holistic wellbeing – physical, social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual.

> *"I have genuinely met some of the most inspirational people, all at their own stages of their journey. It is undeniable to me now that the benefits of the program work and that bringing this to my community is the right thing to do."*
>
> *– IMF RAW Run Leader*

PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024-25

- **Expanded leadership capacity**: One National and three Regional Run Leader Forums trained senior leaders in **Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid, Athletics Australia Recreational Coaching (Athletics Australia) and First Aid and CPR**, ensuring culturally safe guidance and community sustainability.
- **New Groups**: 14 new IMF RAW groups were established in regional and remote communities.
- **Milestone incentives**: Participants earned IMF RAW t-shirts or singlets after eight weeks of consistent participation and meeting personalised distance goals.
- **Collective distance**: Participants logged **10,000+ kilometres** over the year, averaging ~7km per session per person.
- **IMF RAW Championships**: The 13th National Championships held in Brisbane drew **100+ runners** from across Australia.
- **School RAW Growth**: IMF expanded its School RAW program to 13 clubs nationwide, giving students a safe, inclusive space for regular physical activity, fostering confidence, celebrating culture, and strengthening community connections.

CASE STUDY: MPARNTWE RAW

IMF RAW empowers First Nations young people in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) to push themselves mentally and physically while positively impacting their community. Run by inspiring local women who are IMP graduates, the club provides a safe and inclusive environment for activity and cultural connection.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- **Kate Mar Fan** completed her marathon (continuing a journey started in a previous IMP squad).
- **2025 Take Back the Track event**: A community run/walk to reclaim public spaces for women and gender-diverse participants, raising **$3,000 for personal safety alarms.**
- The club fosters empowerment, leadership, and role modelling for youth, reinforcing the connection to Country, culture, and community.

LOOKING AHEAD – 2026 AND BEYOND

IMF RAW aims to:

60+

Expand to **60+ active groups** across Australia.

Increase **training opportunities for volunteer coaches and leaders**.

Strengthen cultural safety, community connection, and pathways for student engagement through School RAW Clubs.

SECTION 03 WHAT WE DO

"I have genuinely met some of the most inspirational people, all at their own stages of their journey. It is undeniable to me now that the benefits of the program work and that bringing this to my community is the right thing to do."

– IMF RAW Run Leader

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FOR ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FOR ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

The I-CAN program continues to deliver measurable outcomes for students and communities across Australia. This year, I-CAN expanded its reach, strengthened Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment pathways, and embedded cultural and curriculum-aligned practices into schools. Through a combination of leadership development, physical activity, cultural knowledge, and national connection, I-CAN is shaping healthier, more engaged, and more empowered communities.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

1. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT AND LEADERSHIP

- **Increased employment** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, with IMF RAW Leaders and IMP graduates engaged as **Measure Team Leaders (MTLs)**.
- Local community members delivered the eight-week I-CAN program in their own regions, building sustainability and local ownership.

2. PROGRAM DELIVERY AND COMMUNITY REACH

- **APY Lands, North Queensland, and East Kimberley:** Successful delivery of I-CAN programs and Colour Fun Runs, with 10 schools completing the program in September/October.
- **Western Cape (Napranum, Mapoon, Pormpuraaw):** First-time delivery including community fun runs and integration into the Mapoon Cross Country event. Significant stakeholder participation included health services and local government.
- **Back-to-School Colour Fun Runs** in six communities boosted attendance in Week 1 of Term.

"Games leaders were amazing with the students. All games were inclusive and information accompanying games was engaging and informative. It was a highlight seeing the sharing of cultural items from other schools and seeing students connect and form friendships with other children from remote Indigenous Australian communities."

"It has made a huge difference to our students' emotional, social and physical wellbeing. This positive effect has also rubbed off on us as staff. Our IMF RAW Leader will be sorely missed as an advocate for our First Nations students and for the knowledge and understanding he has provided for our college."

– Teacher

"It is so great our kids can have this opportunity to go to other places and see the world outside of our community. Some parents have said they would like to start attending Mimili RAW Club to get back into running to be healthier like their children."

– Parent

3. CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- I-CAN aligned with Australian Curriculum and ACARA Physical Literacy standards.
- Yarning Circles embedded to emphasise school attendance, healthy lifestyles, and cultural knowledge.
- Traditional Indigenous Games (TIGs) introduced, strengthening mentorship, inclusion, and cultural sharing.

4. STUDENT OUTCOMES

- **73% of students** improved in **physical literacy and behavioural performance** across the eight-week program (Week 1 vs Week 10 assessments).
- Students reported stronger emotional, social, and physical wellbeing.

5. I-CAN CHAMPIONSHIPS – CANBERRA, NOVEMBER 2024

- **11 communities** represented, led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors from IMP and IMF RAW programs.
- Activities included leadership training, TIGs, Colour Fun Run, cultural excursions, and participation in the **Stromlo Running Festival**.
- Supported by **PACER** to enhance engagement in civics, STEM, and leadership.

6. PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Partnership with Health & Wellbeing Queensland supported nutrition education in Western Cape communities.
- Participation in the **Ruchook Cultural Festival** in North Queensland showcased IMF's program links, provided ASICS shoes to students, and created cultural immersion opportunities for partners.

IMPACT

- **Employment and pathways**: Expanded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and employment opportunities.
- **Student growth**: 73% of participants improved their physical literacy and behaviour, with schools reporting positive ripple effects on staff and families.
- **School engagement**: Culturally grounded activities improved attendance and participation.
- **Community ownership**: Programs delivered by local leaders ensured relevance, trust, and sustainability.
- **Cultural pride and belonging**: Yarning circles, TIGs, and cultural exchanges strengthened identity and connection.
- **National Opportunities**: I-CAN Championships inspired students to connect with peers, explore civics and leadership, and participate in national sporting events.

LOOKING AHEAD

The I-CAN program will continue to expand its reach and deepen its impact by building new school and community partnerships, scaling employment and leadership pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, enhancing curriculum alignment with embedded cultural priorities, and growing the I-CAN Championships to create more opportunities for students to lead, learn, and thrive.

WARRIOR PROGRAM

IMF WARRIOR PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

In 2024-25, the IMF Warrior Program gained significant momentum as a transformative initiative engaging young people and adults connected with the justice system. The year was marked by the delivery of new activities, expansion into detention facilities, strengthened partnerships, and the refinement of the program model to enable long-term sustainability and national scale.

The IMF Warrior Program has been designed by our IMP graduates and IMF RAW Leaders, many of whom are experts in their relevant fields. Their insights, experience and ideas were instrumental in the development of a program that is culturally relevant and addresses the unique needs of individuals while fostering pride, resilience, and pathways for positive change within communities.

KEY ENGAGEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES (2024-25)

YOUTH DETENTION DELIVERY

Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC, Qld): The centre now hosts an **established running group**, grounded in the **IMF RAW model**, providing structure, motivation, and connection for participants. A colour fun run was also delivered by IMF staff members Rob de Castella, Charlie Maher and Renata Hickson, accompanied by IMF mentor Brendan Larcombe, building pride and celebration among young people.

Tivendale Youth Detention Centre (NT): A running group has been established using the **IMF RAW model**, alongside physical training sessions that build strength, resilience, and teamwork.

Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre (SA): See dedicated section on page 23.

- **Impact example:** A participant, previously disengaged and reluctant to join programs, said completing a session was "the first time I felt proud of myself in years", highlighting the program's role in boosting self-esteem and wellbeing.

Athletics Australia Recreational Run Coaching

- Delivered to young people in detention facilities, providing structured coaching aligned with Athletics Australia standards.
- **Impact example:** For many participants, this is their first experience of structured, positive physical activity. Coaching helps them set and achieve goals, develop discipline, and recognise their capacity to succeed.

Emerging National Footprint

- Initial footholds established or anticipated across:
  - South Australia (youth and adult facilities)
  - Queensland (youth)
  - Northern Territory (youth)
- Interest from the **ACT and NSW** is increasing, with engagement discussions underway for both youth and adult centres.

FORWARD PATH (2025-26 AND BEYOND)

Engagements to occur within adult and youth detention facilities across the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory, and South Australia, establishing strong foundations for a 12–18-month national roll-out.

The progress achieved in 2024-25 highlights the leadership and expertise of IMF Run Leaders and IMP graduates, whose lived experience ensures the IMF Warrior Program is culturally safe, community-owned, and responsive to the needs of justice-connected communities.

KURLANA TAPA YOUTH JUSTICE CENTRE (SA) – IMF WARRIOR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Program delivery and activities

I-CAN based running group	Provides structure, motivation, and personal growth, helping participants build routine, resilience, and a sense of achievement, while introducing young people to Traditional Indigenous Games.
Colour fun run	Celebratory, inclusive events fostering participation, teamwork, and self-confidence.
Cultural training	Mentors
Athletics Australia Recreational Run Coaching	Structured coaching develops discipline, goal-setting skills, and physical literacy.

Funding and support

I-CAN based running group	The Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing (ORSR) in South Australia has committed funding for the next two years, ensuring continuity and enabling program expansion to reach more participants.

Program impact

IMF RAW and I-CAN Framework	Combines IMF RAW and I-CAN framework to deliver engaging and culturally relevant physical literacy sessions, supported by colour fun runs, and structured coaching to address physical, social, and emotional wellbeing. Reinforces positive habits and behaviours that support rehabilitation and reintegration. Complements Kurlana Tapa's focus on cultural safety, inclusion, and youth development and introduces strong positive First Nations mentors to the young people.

FRONTRUNNERS

PURPOSE AND APPROACH

FrontRunners supports IMP graduates and IMF RAW Run Leaders beyond the finish line. Grounded in the belief that **"it's people that drive change, not programs and policies. We play a crucial role in helping young Indigenous people become powerful, impactful leaders who deliver outcomes."** The program provides tailored mentoring, professional development, and small grants to assist alumni-led initiatives that drive change in their communities.

By investing in lived experience and cultural strength, the FrontRunners program sustains a growing network of First Nations leaders who are impacting health, sport, and social outcomes across Australia.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024–25

Strengthening community engagement in the Northern Territory: FrontRunners deepened IMF's connection with remote communities through a strong presence at the Barunga Festival. IMP graduates and the Unfinished Business Squad led Traditional Indigenous Games (TIGs) and cultural activities, engaging hundreds of participants and reinforcing IMF's role in promoting health, leadership, and cultural pride.

Empowering second-chance marathoners: The Unfinished Business Squad provided renewed opportunities for past IMP squad members to complete their marathon journeys. Workshops in Darwin, Thursday Island, and Melbourne offered tailored support including mental health first aid training, coaching accreditation, and milestone runs. The successful graduation of Christopher Alchin and Tara Liddy as IMP #145 and #146 reflects the program's commitment to long-term personal growth and resilience.

Global representation and cultural pride: FrontRunners supported IMP graduates to compete in major international marathons – Berlin, Chicago, and New York – elevating Indigenous visibility on the global stage. Kate Mar Fan's graduation in Berlin as IMP #143 marked a significant milestone, while others showcased the strength and spirit of First Nations runners worldwide.

Investing in grassroots leadership: FrontRunners Grants were awarded to multiple IMP graduates and IMF RAW Run Leaders, enabling grassroots initiatives in coaching, health promotion, and community engagement. These grants are building sustainable leadership capacity and driving positive change across diverse regions.

Jack Stevens appointed Head Coach of IMP: Jack Stevens, a proud Gunggandji man and 2023 IMP graduate, was appointed Head Coach of IMP in early 2025. His rapid progression from graduate to coach highlights his leadership and dedication to mentoring the next generation of First Nations marathoners.

OUR IMPACT

IMP GRADUATES COMPLETE AOC INDIGENOUS COACHING SCHOLARSHIP

In 2024, four graduates of IMP successfully completed the **Australian Olympic Indigenous Coaching Scholarship (AOICS)** – a national initiative by the Australian Olympic Committee, in partnership with Toyota, Athletics Australia, and IMF.

Through accredited training, mentoring, and leadership development, these graduates are now equipped to lead and inspire the next generation of First Nations athletes.

AOC INDIGENOUS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Andrew "Googz" Thorpe	(Gunnai and Gunditjmara) – IMP graduate #109; ultra-marathoner and mental health advocate; first Aboriginal Australian to complete seven marathons on seven continents in seven days.
TJ Cora	(Kuku Yalanji) – IMP graduate #68; 2025 Warrior Run Medal recipient; coach and mentor across Far North Queensland.
Tiana Brockhurst	(Kamilaroi) – IMF RAW Leader; emerging coach supporting community-based running programs in Queensland.
Libby Cook-Black	(Saisarem and Samsep Tribes) – IMP graduate #106; Former Jillaroos; transitioned to athletics coaching in Cairns through IMF RAW and founder of 'Female Co'.

LOOKING AHEAD

As the FrontRunners network continues to grow, IMF is committed to deepening its support for alumni through expanded leadership pathways, increased access to grants, and stronger national coordination.

With a focus on cultural leadership, community wellbeing, and visibility on national and global stages, FrontRunners will continue to elevate First Nations role models who are driving change through running and beyond.

CASE STUDY: HAROLD MATTHEW OAM – WAIBEN MAN | 2014 IMP GRADUATE #37

In recognition of his service to the First Nations community of Thursday Island (TI), Harold was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours. Through Harold's leadership, TI has seen a visible shift toward healthier lifestyles – with more people walking and running, greater community connection, and increased youth participation.

When Harold joined IMP in 2014, he became one of the first Torres Strait Islanders to complete an international marathon. After returning home from the program, Harold co-founded the TI Deadly Runners, a local running and walking group that brings people of all ages together to get active and support one another. He also helped establish the Thursday Island Running Festival, now a highlight of the local calendar that celebrates community, culture, and wellbeing.

Harold's story embodies the IMF ripple effect – where one person's marathon journey inspires an entire community to embrace movement for better health, leadership and cultural connection.

CASE STUDY: ANDREW "GOOGZ" THORPE – RUNNING THE WORLD FOR MENTAL HEALTH

In November 2024, Andrew "Googz" Thorpe, a proud Gunnai and Gunditjmara man and IMP graduate #109, became the first Aboriginal Australian to complete the Great World Race – running seven marathons on seven continents in seven consecutive days.

Starting in Antarctica and finishing in Miami, Andrew covered 295km across the globe, spending over 60 hours in transit. More than a physical feat, his mission was to raise awareness and over $10,000 for First Nations mental health, in partnership with the Black Dog Institute.

Motivated by personal experience, Andrew used running as a tool for healing and resilience. He dedicated the challenge to his late friend Kelvin McGuinness, who supported him through difficult times.

Andrew's journey is a powerful example of the life-changing impact of IMF, combining endurance, advocacy, and leadership to inspire change in communities across Australia.

IMPACT PROFILE: RAY LANDERS

IMF RAW RUN LEADER, IMF SEMPAPHORE RAW, SA

RAY IS A PROUD DIERI, ANMATAJERE, PITJANTJATJARA MAN

Ray lives and breathes our IMF values – making an impact through the power of running and choosing to do hard things. He became involved with IMF as a participant and is now an IMF Senior Run Leader with Semaphore RAW, where he supports community members of all ages to pursue personal growth, social connection, and adopt healthier lifestyles through consistent running and walking.

Through his leadership and actions, Ray has become a role model and mentor to many – and the ripple effect of his dedication is felt far and wide. Ray has contributed to improvements in student engagement and attendance, positive behaviour, confidence, and health literacy. Most notably, Ray radiates inspiration, enthusiasm, and kindness in every interaction.

Leading by example, Ray continues to step outside of his comfort zone by regularly competing events running and multi-sport events, including the ASICS Gold Coast Marathon, Husky Ultimate Triathlon, TCS Sydney Marathon and Nike Melbourne Marathon in 2024-25. His motto: Put in the work, get the results.

He is also an IMF Warrior Program facilitator at Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre.

"IMF is important to me because it's very supportive – it has changed my life."

> *"What inspires me is seeing the IMF ripple effect happening around the country seeing mob making healthy impacts in their communities and inspiring others to make the right choices. This drives me to be the better version of myself."*
>
> *– Ray Landers*

WARRIOR FEATURE:
SARAH LANDERS

CELEBRATING SARAH LANDERS

OUR 2025 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD) WARRIOR

In 2025, Sarah Landers was named the Indigenous Marathon Foundation's International Women's Day (IWD) WARRIOR. A proud Dieri woman from South Australia, Sarah spent 14 years in Alice Springs before settling in Darwin. Since crossing the finish line of the TCS New York City Marathon as IMP Graduate #42 in 2014, her determination and resilience have continued to define her journey.

Now 40, the mother of two is still chasing new goals – training for her next marathon and finding renewed strength through community. Joining the IMF RAW group Darwin Deadlies has become a source of motivation and belonging, helping her balance fitness, family, and self-discovery.

Life hasn't been without challenges.

Navigating divorce and embracing her identity as a queer woman, Sarah has found running to be both grounding and empowering – a pathway to healing and growth.

Today, Sarah channels that purpose into her work as Academic Coordinator for CSIRO's Young Indigenous Women's STEM Academy. In this role, she supports and uplifts the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female leaders in science, technology, engineering, and maths – helping young women see what's possible when they're supported to dream big.

For Sarah, being named IMF's 2025 International Women's Day WARRIOR carries deep meaning: "International Women's Day is a powerful opportunity to recognise and celebrate women's achievements across all divisions – national, ethnic, cultural, and political," she says. "It's also a moment to reflect on our shared values and work together toward women's equality. I am the woman I am today because of the incredible women who have helped me grow."

Sarah's story is one of resilience, leadership, and love – for her culture, her community, and herself. She continues to embody the spirit of IMF: creating ripples of change that reach far beyond the finish line.

Sarah's journey, and the inspiring impact of women across Australia, came to life at IMF RAW's series of IWD fun runs.

SECTION 04 IMPACT PROFILES AND CASE STUDIES

> *"As an Aboriginal woman and mother, my lived and working experiences with Aboriginal people have shaped my true purpose in life," she says. "IMF has changed my life, creating a ripple effect of positive change for others."*
>
> *– Sarah Landers*

> *"What might seem impossible is only the starting line. I want every young person to know they can push past their limits."*
>
> *– Adrian Dodson-Shaw*

WARRIOR FEATURE: ADRIAN DODSON-SHAW

CELEBRATING ADRIAN DODSON-SHAW

OUR 2024 FATHER'S DAY WARRIOR

In 2024, Adrian Dodson-Shaw was honoured as the face of the Indigenous Marathon Foundation Father's Day WARRIOR Run Medal, honouring him as a great father and man.

Adrian, a proud Kaytetye, Yawuru, and Arrernte man, has always believed in the power of possibility. Since graduating from the Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP) in 2014 as IMP Graduate #35, he has transformed what started as a personal challenge into a remarkable journey of endurance, leadership, and community impact.

Just a year after completing his first marathon, Adrian made history as the first Indigenous Australian to run the North Pole Marathon, braving temperatures of minus thirty degrees across 42.2 kilometres. The icy, unforgiving landscape was a world away from his hometown in Broome, Western Australia. Not one to shy away from extremes, he took on another monumental challenge in 2017, conquering the Volcano Marathon in Chile near the Lascar volcano, pushing his body through intense heat and altitude.

Adrian's remarkable achievements, however, extend far beyond his own personal feats. In 2017, he stepped into the role of IMP Head Coach, relocating his family to Canberra and dedicating himself to mentoring the next generation.

Over four years, he guided more than 40 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to their first marathons – showing them that what might seem impossible can, in fact, be achieved.

Today, Adrian continues to champion health and wellbeing through his work at Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services, sharing the lessons of resilience, discipline, and determination that have defined his own journey.

Adrian's story is a testament to the power of leading by example. Through endurance, courage, and unwavering commitment, he inspires others to break through barriers, believe in their potential, and run toward their own version of the impossible.

Through his leadership and actions, Ray has become a role model and mentor to many – and the ripple effect of his dedication is felt far and wide. Ray has contributed to improvements in student engagement and attendance, positive behaviour, confidence, and health literacy. Most notably, Ray radiates inspiration, enthusiasm, and kindness in every interaction.

PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDRAISING

OVERVIEW

In 2024–25, IMF continued to demonstrate the extraordinary power of running to inspire change, uplift communities, and build pathways for the next generation of First Nations leaders. Our impact this year has been made possible through the unwavering generosity, commitment, and shared purpose of our partners, donors, and community fundraisers.

Together, we are shaping healthier, more connected communities and expanding opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the country.

HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS 2024–25

KEY STATS

$1.49M
Raised through partnerships and fundraising activities.

14
Partnerships established with corporate, community, and philanthropic organisations.

50
Support from partners helped us deliver programs in more than 50 communities nationwide.

35%
First national peer-to-peer fundraising challenge exceeded its target by 35%.

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT

ASICS PARTNERSHIP: A SHARED COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING

ASICS has extended its partnership with IMF for three more years, reflecting a shared commitment to health, wellbeing, and opportunity in First Nations communities.

The partnership provides 300 pairs of shoes annually for IMF programs, including I-CAN and RAW, supporting fitness, confidence, and resilience. In 2024–25, ASICS and IMF brought this impact to Napranum during the Ruchook Cultural Festival, fitting shoes and celebrating movement, culture, and community with a vibrant colour run.

asics

CORPORATE PARTNERS DRIVING OUR I-CAN PROGRAM

Our I-CAN program would not be possible without the generous support of our corporate partners. Thanks to these partnerships, IMF can deliver I-CAN in more remote communities, breaking cycles, improving school attendance and providing new opportunities through running and physical literacy.

ASPEN MEDICAL FOUNDATION

In 2024-25, Aspen Medical Foundation funded the I-CAN program at **Peg's Creek Primary School**, supporting students in Karratha through running, health, and leadership programs.

> *"We partnered with the Indigenous Marathon Foundation because we could see the real impact they were having in very remote communities. The I-CAN program was a perfect fit for the Aspen Medical Foundation, as it allowed us to fund a program in Karratha where our own team members could also get involved. The sense of community that IMF builds with squad members is truly inspiring and uplifting, and we are proud to support such meaningful work."*
>
> *– Craig Fitzgerald, CEO, Aspen Medical Foundation*

aspenmedical

DURACK CIVIL

Thanks to Durack Civil's generous support, IMF delivered a series of culturally grounded engagement activities on Palm Island for the first time. Partnering with Bwgcolman Community School (primary and secondary), St Michael's Catholic School, and PCYC **Palm Island**, the program focused on:

- Traditional Indigenous Games (TIGs)
- Motivational yarning sessions
- Community engagement initiatives.

DURACK

J.P. MORGAN

For more than **12 years**, J.P. Morgan has been a cornerstone supporter of IMF, providing critical funding, advocacy, and visibility to strengthen our programs nationwide. This enduring partnership is guided by the leadership of **Rob Bedwell**. Rob's vision has deepened the relationship, inspired other corporate partners, and ensured that J.P. Morgan's support delivers lasting impact for First Nations communities.

J.P.Morgan

KEY FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS 2024-2025

TCS SYDNEY MARATHON PRESENTED BY ASICS

The TCS Sydney Marathon became the seventh Abbott World Marathon Major in 2025. IMF was privileged to be a headline partner for this landmark event.

We were thrilled to have 283 fundraisers, including 56 charity runners proudly representing IMF. Together, they generated 1,132 donations and raised an incredible $158,470 to support our programs.

BRISBANE MARATHON FESTIVAL

The Brisbane Marathon Festival in June 2025 once again showcased the strength of our corporate partnerships. For the second year in a row, Spiecapag led the charge, driving an incredible fundraising outcome and rallying their teams behind IMF's mission. Their commitment set the benchmark for corporate engagement, proving the power of business to create meaningful community impact.

With leaders like John Walsh championing the cause, IMF has been able to deepen connections in the corporate sector – an area where engagement is often challenging but immensely valuable.

CANBERRA TIMES CANBERRA MARATHON FESTIVAL

The Canberra Times Marathon Festival was a key feature for 2025 fundraising for IMF, showcasing the dedication of our supporters on one of Australia's most iconic running stages. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) proudly stood out as IMF's biggest fundraising team, going above and beyond to champion our mission.

MAKE YOUR MARK FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

In 2025, IMF launched Make Your Mark, a national fundraising campaign calling on all Australians to help raise funds raised to expand IMF's life-changing programs, which supports young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to become role models, community leaders, and agents of change through health, resilience, and cultural pride.

2025 IMF AMBASSADORS

In 2025, two of Australia's most celebrated sporting icons – Johnathan Thurston and Lance "Buddy" Franklin – joined IMF as ambassadors, running side by side in support of our mission. In November, they proudly completed the TCS New York City Marathon, alongside the 2025 IMP squad as the runners achieved their first marathon.

Their involvement brought national attention to IMF's work, amplifying the message of the transformative power of running, doing hard things, and choosing an active and healthy lifestyle. As respected role models and First Nations leaders, Thurston and Franklin mentored the IMP squad and inspired others through their actions.

CORPORATE AMBASSADORS

Each year, IMF recognises a Corporate Ambassador – a leader who demonstrates exceptional dedication to creating change, championing our mission, and amplifying IMF's message of health, resilience, and reconciliation.

In 2025, we are proud to acknowledge Robert Kennedy, Executive Chairman of Synergy Group, as our Corporate Ambassador. Rob has gone above and beyond in his commitment, pledging to raise $42,195.00 – a symbolic amount representing $1,000 for every kilometre of the TCS New York City Marathon. Rob raised a record-breaking $70,000+!

In 2024, Lucy Hovanec, General Manager, GHD ACT SNSW & PNG, proudly represented IMF as our Corporate Ambassador, raising an incredible $50,000!

Thank you to our Corporate Ambassadors, Rob and Lucy, who believe in the transformative power of running and lead through action.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Looking ahead to 2025-26, IMF is excited to announce a powerful new project in partnership with Good Shout Productions. Together, we are creating a feature documentary that will follow the journey of the 2025 IMP squad, alongside ambassadors Johnathan Thurston and Lance 'Buddy' Franklin, as they train, transform, and ultimately take on the TCS New York City Marathon.

Stay tuned. This is one story you will not want to miss.

CELEBRATING OUR FANTASTIC EVENT PARTNERSHIPS

ATLAS EVENTS

- Brisbane Marathon Festival
- Cairns Marathon Festival
- Sunshine Coast Marathon Festival
- Hobart Marathon Festival

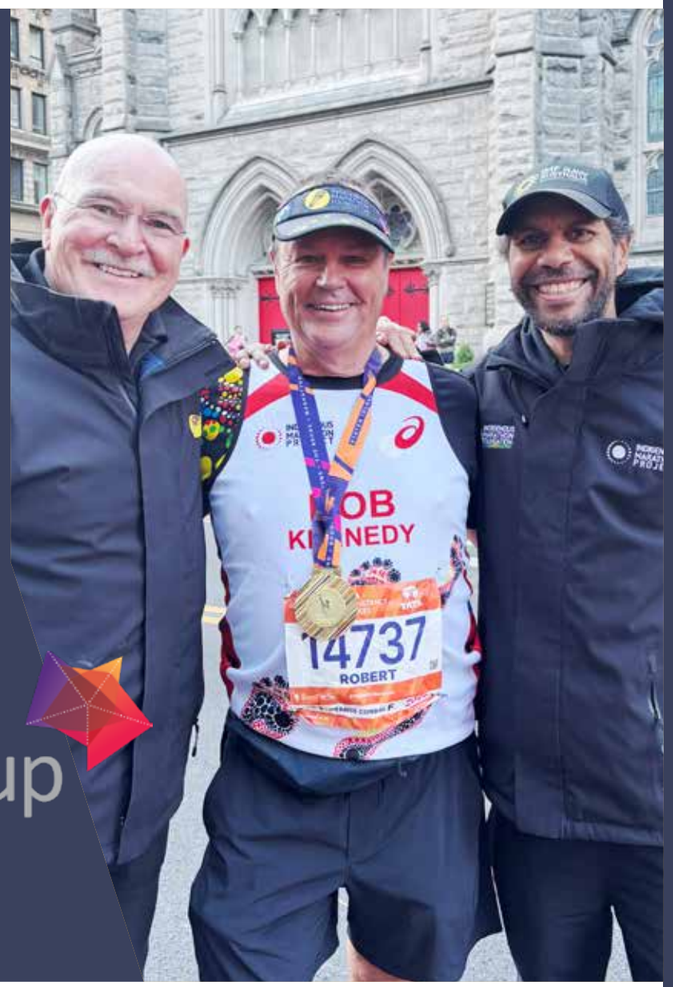
ATLAS EVENTS

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

SYNERGY - MAJOR PARTNER

A special thanks to Synergy Group Australia. We are deeply grateful for your ongoing contribution to our programs. Your investment has enabled us to reach more people, deliver stronger outcomes, and build sustainable impact

SynergyGroup



TATA tcs TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES

THE ARMY AUSTRALIAN Run Army

RUN PORT DOUGLAS

saRRC SA ROAD RUNNERS CLUB

pont³

KEANE our people. our clients. our ethos.

BHP

SPIECAPAG

Queensland Government

Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Government of South Australia Preventive Health SA

Government of South Australia Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

IN 2024–25, OUR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, MEDIA AND MARKETING APPROACH ENABLED IMF TO REACH MORE PEOPLE THAN EVER BEFORE.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **1040 media mentions** across print, online, TV, and radio, **up 63%.**
- Total audience reach: 177 million through earned media, **up 1075%.**
- Total potential editorial reach: **214 million, up 2148%.**
- Total Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE): **$3.07 million AUD.**
- Activate monthly IMF Update:**12,472 subscribers.**
- **Website visits (or sessions): 21,717 sessions,** organic search the leading source of traffic.*

**No available comparative data from 2023-24.*

SECTION 06 COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND MEDIA

COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND MEDIA

OVERVIEW

In 2024–25, our strategic communications, media and marketing approach enabled IMF to reach more people than ever before. We built greater awareness of our programs, increased visibility nationally, and expanded our community of supporters – all of which strengthened fundraising outcomes and amplified our work.

Our efforts focused on two priorities: broadening our reach to engage new audiences, while continuing to nurture relationships with our long-term supporters.

MEDIA COVERAGE HIGHLIGHTS

Strong national and regional media coverage was secured, amplifying IMF stories and achievements to new and wider audiences. As noted previously, total audience reach in 2024–25 was 177 million, with a daily average of 484,000, up from 41,000 in the previous period. Coverage highlights include:

- **National exclusive:** News Corp publishing an exclusive story on the announcement of Johnathan 'JT' Thurston and Lance 'Buddy' Franklin joining IMF as ambassadors on Saturday, 5 July 2025: ***Buddy Franklin and Johnathan Thurston take on marathon program for young Indigenous Australians.***

The story was syndicated across News Corp's print and digital network.

- **Print and online:** ABC published a story on Chanti McHenry, 2025 IMP Squad member on Friday, 9 May 2025: ***Pilbara woman to tackle New York Marathon as part of national project,*** with a reach of 14.7 million.
- **Radio and online:** ABC published a story on the announcement of the 2025 IMP Squad Friday, 9 May 2025: ***Run, sweat, inspire with a new Indigenous Marathon Project squad,*** with a reach of 14.7 million.

SECTION 06 COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND MEDIA

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

There has been significant media interest in Charlie Maher's Great Australian Indigenous Marathon Challenge (GAIMC), with strong support from National Indigenous Times: *Charlie sets out to complete eight marathons nationwide to raise awareness of Indigenous youth.*

PAID DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS

Two major paid digital campaigns

- **2025 IMP recruitment**: A national paid digital ad campaign was executed on Meta (Facebook and Instagram), with the aim to increase the number of applications. The targeted campaign delivered an 82% increase year-on-year with 323 total applications – a record.

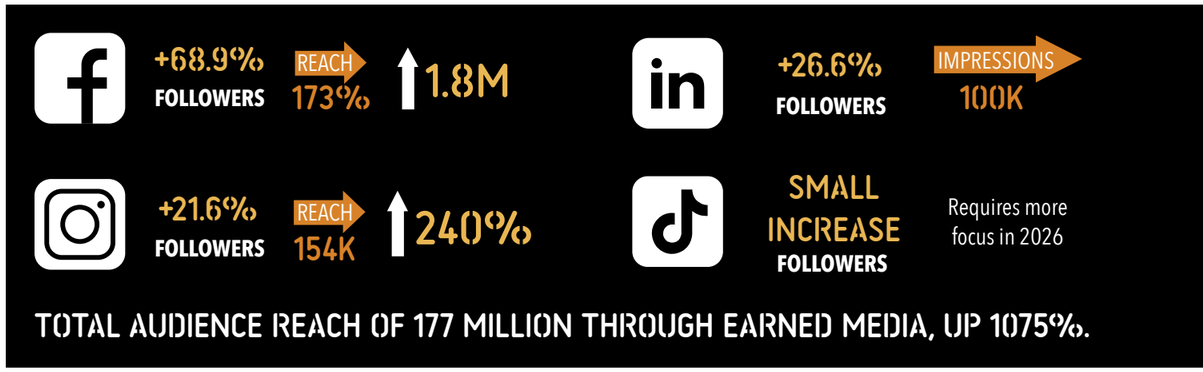
Total ad spend was $1,500, across the Single Image Ad and Carousel.

- **2025 EOFY campaign**: Designed to drive donations, the ad campaign on Meta centred around sharing impact stories – Charlie Maher, TJ Cora, Elsie Seriat OAM, and Campbell Darwin, son of Juan Darwin, IMP Grad #3.

The total ad spend was $3,532 on Meta, with a small spend on LinkedIn to reach a corporate audience.

DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH

In 2024–25, our online presence continued to grow, with a video-first approach.



In 2024–25, our online presence continued to grow, with a video-first approach.

PR ACTIVATION

- On Sunday 3 August, IMF officially launched Make Your Mark, a bold fundraising campaign, with a monumental artwork on the shores of Alexandra Headland Beach, Qld, crafted by award-winning First Nations sand artist Lowell Hunter – created entirely with footprints: a symbolic act of "mark-making", with permission and blessings from local Elder, Uncle Lance.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In 2025–26, we will:

- Develop IMF explainer video, for paid and organic execution, highlighting who we are and what we do, to support storytelling and brand awareness.
- Develop curated videos to amplify our programs and impact. Explore different ways to highlight the impact of IMF's work.

WHO WE ARE

ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS MARATHON FOUNDATION

The Indigenous Marathon Foundation (IMF) is a health promotion charity, with DGR (Deductible Gift Recipient) status, which delivers running and physical literacy programs designed to inspire First Nations people to choose an active lifestyle and become leaders and changemakers in their communities across Australia.

Founded by Robert de Castella AO MBE, former World Marathon Champion and Australian of the Year (1983), IMF's work is underpinned by the ethos that running and walking is a vehicle for addressing chronic health conditions while inspiring personal growth, building leadership qualities, and contributing to community good.

Through our five programs – IMP, IMF RAW, I-CAN, IMF Warrior Program and FrontRunners – IMF is working to help close the unacceptable health gap between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

Since 2010, IMF's proven programs have delivered measurable impact, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve health outcomes, develop self-discipline, and foster meaningful social connections.

OUR MISSION

WE'RE STRIVING FOR A RECONCILED, UNIFIED, AND HEALTHY AUSTRALIA.

OUR VISION

TOGETHER, WE USE RUNNING TO CELEBRATE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES, CULTURES, STRENGTH, AND ACHIEVEMENTS, TO EMPOWER INSPIRATIONAL LEADERS.

We strive for a reconciled, united and healthy Australia – guided by the spirit of a marathon, calling on us to dig deep, stay the course, and keep moving forward through life's challenges. At IMF, we do this through the lens of celebrating First Nations excellence and achievement.

IMF TRANSFORMS LIVES

Through our key programs, we can change the lives of individuals, families, and communities nationwide, through the power of running.

INDIGENOUS MARATHON PROJECT — Delivering leaders and changemakers

IMF RAW AUSTRALIA — Binding communities together through running and walking.

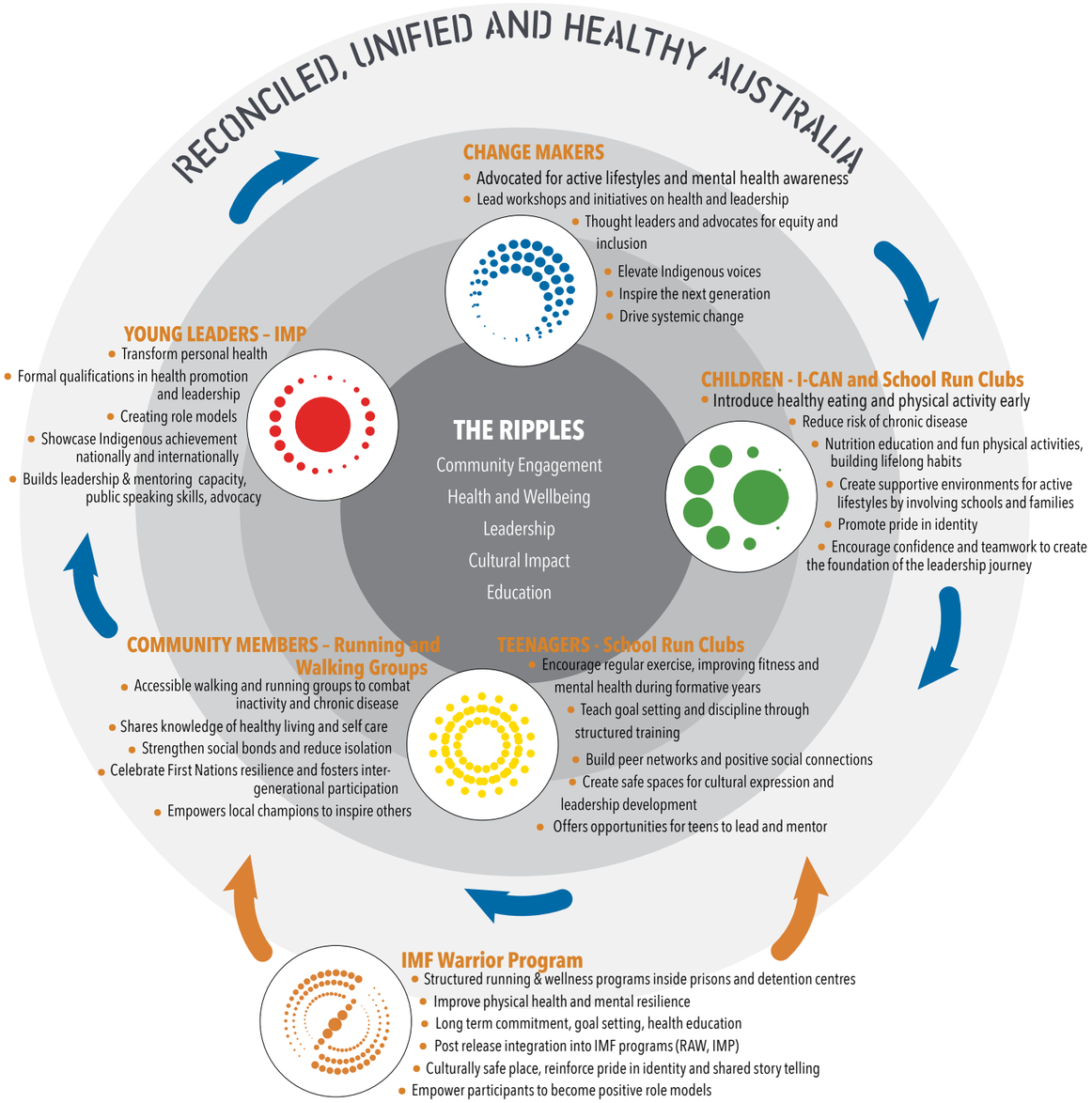
FRONT RUNNERS — Furthering opportunities for IMP graduates and IMF RAW Leaders to have greater impact.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FOR ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION — Supporting education and healthy habits for children to flourish.

WARRIOR PROGRAM — Delivers prison-based running programs that build health, discipline, connection, and pride.

THE IMF MODEL

INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS REACHING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL
WHILE CREATING A RIPPLE EFFECT OF CHANGE IN COMMUNITIES



OUR BOARD

PATRON IN CHIEF: HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE MS SAM MOSTYN AC, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

ROBERT DE CASTELLA AO MBE, FOUNDING DIRECTOR

Robert graduated with a BSc in 1981 and became Director of the Australian Institute of Sport in 1990, later serving on the Australian Sports Commission Board. He chaired the ACT Health Promotion Board for eight years and has been patron of several organisations, including the ACT Heart Foundation. He founded SmartStart for Kids in 1997, led recovery work after the 2003 Canberra fires, and later established the IMP (2010) and IMF (2013). Robert founded the IMF in 2013 and the IMP in 2010.

PETER GORDON

Peter Gordon holds a Master of Education Leadership and was the founding CEO of Hands Across Canberra, leading the organisation from 2010 to 2024. He maintains a strong commitment to community service in the Canberra region and chairs several NSW community engagement committees in renewable energy and industrial infrastructure. He serves on the Board of the National Centre for Australian Children's Literacy and has held senior public administration roles in the Federal, WA and ACT Governments.

AYESHA RAZZAQ

Ayesha Razzaq is a senior energy-industry executive with deep commercial expertise and a strong customer-focused approach, delivering strategic and operational results across transformational programs. Passionate about diversity and inclusion, she has served on several community organisation boards and is committed to the values and impact of the Indigenous Marathon Foundation. Ayesha is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and was the ACT recipient of the 2017 Corporate Telstra Women's Business Award.

BIANCA GRAHAM

Bianca Graham is a corporate affairs professional specialising in community relations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs across the mining, energy and public sectors. As First Nations Manager at Windlab, she delivers shared value through RAPs, ILUAs and community engagement. A proud Torres Strait Islander woman and IMP Graduate #7, she ran the 2011 New York City Marathon and in 2025 became the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander runner to complete all seven Abbott World Marathon Majors.

STIRLING SHARPE

Stirling Sharpe, a proud Awabakal man, is Senior Lecturer in Sport Management at the University of Canberra. He holds a Bachelor of Sport Management, an Honours in Sport Studies, and is completing a PhD. Stirling has published over 40 academic manuscripts and four children's books. He serves on multiple advisory boards, maintains a strong connection to the Indigenous Marathon Foundation, and has completed four marathons inspired by IMP graduates.

SIMONETTA ASTOLFI

Simonetta Astolfi is a founding partner of Maddocks' Canberra office, Sector Leader – Commonwealth Government, Maddocks Board member, and Chair of Canberra Grammar School. A highly regarded public and administrative lawyer, she has received multiple national awards, including Government Partner of the Year (2019) and recognition in Doyle's Guide and Best Lawyers. Since joining the IMF Board in 2023, she has actively championed Maddocks' longstanding pro bono partnership with the Foundation.

EOGHAN O'BYRNE

Eoghan O'Byrne is CEO of Ronald McDonald House Charities ACT & SE NSW and Director, Advancement at the University of Canberra, providing strategic leadership to maximise engagement. With over 22 years in the radio industry, including GM of Canberra FM, he has served on multiple boards and committees, including Brand CBR, Snowy Hydro SouthCare, and the Frontrunners Grant Committee for the Indigenous Marathon Foundation. He is a long-time community volunteer.

OUR TEAM

ROBERT DE CASTELLA
AO MBE

Robert de Castella holds a Bachelor of Applied Science and was Australian of the Year in 1983. Rob has also been a world champion and world record holder in the marathon. He has represented Australia at four Olympic Games and has won two Commonwealth Games marathons. Member since incorporation.

CHARLIE MAHER
IMF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHIEF OFFICER

Charlie Maher, a proud Western Arrarnta man, was appointed IMF Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Chief Officer in June 2025. He began running in 2010 with the inaugural IMP squad, becoming the first First Nations runner to finish the New York City Marathon. In 2025, he became the first First Nations male to complete all seven World Marathon Majors. Guided by faith, Charlie inspires connection, unity, and positive change through running and community.

STEPHANIE CROSBY
FINANCE, HR AND GOVERNANCE MANAGER

Stephanie Crosby is Finance, HR and Governance Manager at IMF, focused on process improvement, workplace culture, and organisational effectiveness. A Chartered Accountant, she began her career at KPMG and spent 12 years at Qantas in accounting and business transformation roles. Most recently, as Head of Operations at the ACT Council of Social Service, she strengthened governance and operational frameworks. Stephanie holds a Commerce (Accounting) degree and is committed to driving positive change in the not-for-profit sector.

OLIVIA MARON
EVENTS, MERCHANDISE AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

Olivia Maron is IMF's Events, Merchandise and Administration Officer, with experience in both private and public sectors, including coordinating social club events and managing merchandise for the Canberra Raiders. Raised in Canberra, she is pursuing a Bachelor of Events and Tourism Management and holds a Certificate IV in Government. Highly motivated and organised, Olivia is dedicated to supporting First Nations communities and enjoys sports, travel, music, and family time.

JACK STEVENS
IMP HEAD COACH AND PROGRAM MANAGER

Jack Stevens, a proud Gunggandji man raised on Larrakia Country, moved to Wurundjeri Country to study at RMIT and Monash universities. A 2023 IMP Graduate #137, he has over five years' experience in First Nations community engagement within higher education. Passionate about distance running and marathons, Jack is committed to supporting the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, inspired by the resilience and consistency embodied in the marathon.

RENATA HICKSON
NATIONAL OPERATIONS AND IMPACT MANAGER

Renata Hickson is IMF's National Operations and Impact Manager, leading programs that improve First Nations health, education, leadership, and reduce incarceration. A former Australian Army Tank Squadron Commander and the nation's first female combat officer, she brings 17 years of military leadership and strategic expertise, including roles with US Special Operations Command. Raised in Hobart, Renata holds law, arts, and teaching degrees and is dedicated to empowering First Nations voices through culturally grounded initiatives.

KATIE BROWN
NATIONAL MANAGER – PARTNERSHIP, PHILANTHROPY AND STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNS

Katie Brown is an accomplished executive leader with over 15 years' experience in partnership development, philanthropy, fundraising, and communications. A former professional cyclist representing Australia internationally, she raced and trained globally, including in Italy, developing discipline and perseverance that guide her leadership. Katie is committed to driving positive, sustainable change, empowering organisations to achieve their mission, and building resilient communities through collaboration, delivering meaningful impact across the sectors she serves.

SUE GILBERTSON
IT MANAGER

Sue Gilbertson holds a Bachelor of Social Science and has nearly 15 years' experience at IBM in technical, reporting, team lead, and delivery roles. She began volunteering with IMF in 2015 and has supported the Foundation for over ten years. Inspired by IMP graduates, Sue took up running and completed all seven Abbott World Marathon Majors. She is dedicated to creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities nationwide.

THERESA DE CASTELLA
DESIGN MANAGER & IT

Theresa de Castella has extensive experience across private and government sectors and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences, a Bachelor of Design with Honours, a Master of Applied Linguistics, and a Graduate Diploma in IT – Database Management. She brings design expertise and industry experience to marketing, advertising, and design projects at IMF. Combining creative and technical skills, Theresa contributes meaningfully to IMF's programs and initiatives.

XAVIER MOLONEY
I-CAN OFFICER

Xavier Moloney, born and raised in regional South Australia, began his career as a Physical and Outdoor Education teacher after studying Human Movement and Education. He transitioned into youth development through AFL pathway programs, including First Nations initiatives, and held roles with Essendon Football Club, AFL Victoria, and the AFL National Office, focusing on Diversity, Inclusion, and First Nations pathways. Inspired by IMP, Xavier is committed to reconciliation and leadership development, completing executive education at Harvard Kennedy School.

TIFFANY BONASERA
COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA LEAD

In 2025, Tiffany Bonasera served as Communications and Media Lead. A sports journalist with marketing and communications experience across agency, in-house, and freelance roles, she co-hosted the podcast SportsParenthood. Tiffany has worked with ninemsn, WIN Television, Seven Network, Network 10, and not-for-profits like Can Assist and ARACY. A former distance runner, she is ethusiastic about sport, community, and promoting First Nations leadership and education through running.

GAIL NOBLE
SA IMF RAW OFFICER

Gail Noble is SA IMF RAW Project Officer, known for building trusted relationships within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through cultural sensitivity, empathy, and evidence-based practice. With over 30 years' experience designing health-promotion programs across Australia, including Calm Active Kids and Noble Wellbeing, she fosters wellbeing through movement, mindfulness, and connection. A former Australian Shotokan Karate Champion, Gail practices Tai Chi, Qi Gong, yoga, Reiki, Shiatsu, and therapeutic massage, and enjoys art, meditation, nature, and time with family and animals.

JASMINE BROOKS
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER (SOUTHERN REGION)

Jasmine Brooks, a proud Darkinyung and Wonnarua woman from Wollombi, Yengo Country, has over 15 years' experience working across remote Indigenous communities in Central Australia, the Kimberley, and the Northern Territory, leading youth and family support programs. She holds qualifications in Youth Work and Community Development and is completing a Bachelor of Human Services. Motivated by cultural integrity and community wellbeing, Jasmine enjoys drumming, bushwalking, running, and photography, and values her work with IMF.

OUR 2025 IMF AMBASSADORS

JOHNATHAN (JT) THURSTON
2025 IMF INDIGENOUS AMBASSADOR

Jonathan Thurston, a proud Gamilaraay man and 2025 IMF Ambassador, is an NRL legend and respected community leader known for determination, teamwork, and a never-give-up attitude. In 2025, he ran the TCS New York City Marathon with the IMP squad, mentoring, connecting to culture, and supporting the Make Your Mark campaign. JT inspires as a role model, amplifying IMF's story and strengthening connections between non-Indigenous and First Nations Australians.

LANCE 'BUDDY' FRANKLIN
2025 IMF INDIGENOUS AMBASSADOR

Lance 'Buddy' Franklin, a proud Noongar man and 2025 IMF Ambassador, is an AFL superstar and respected community leader known for his athleticism, courage, and skill. In 2025, he ran the TCS New York City Marathon with the IMP squad, mentoring and inspiring others. Buddy uses his platform to champion IMF's work, supporting initiatives that improve health outcomes and empower First Nations peoples, making him a powerful role model.

ROB KENNEDY
2025 IMP CORPORATE RUNNER, CEO, SYNERGY GROUP AUSTRALIA

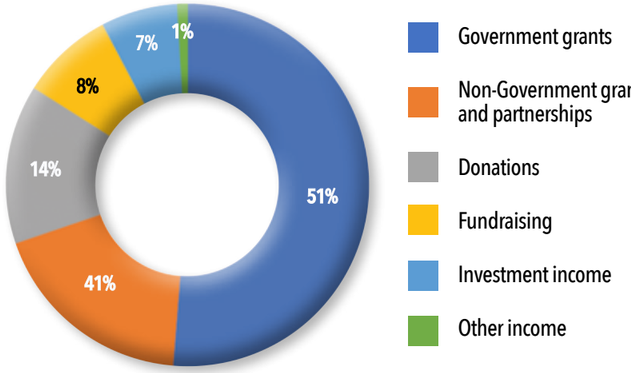
Robert Kennedy, National CEO of Synergy Group, has a distinguished background in professional services. After 10 years at Deloitte in Sydney, Toronto, and Canberra, he founded Acumen Alliance, which later joined ASX-listed Oakton. Since joining Synergy Group in 2011, he has grown the firm to 400 staff across four offices. With over 25 years' consulting experience, Robert raised a record $70,000+ for IMF in 2025.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2024-25

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE 2024-25

In 2024-25, IMF recorded a surplus of $151,476, with revenues of $3.63m and expenses of $3.47m. This was a significant turnaround from the prior year's operating loss of $269,660, driven primarily by strong growth in funding, donations and fundraising.

REVENUE 2024-25 AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME

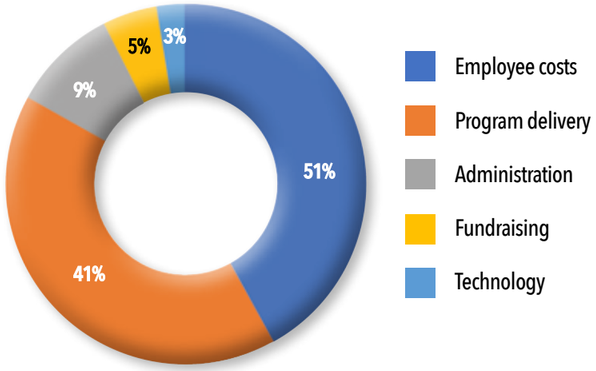


IMF revenues grew by 35% overall, with increased income through non-government grants, sponsorships and fundraising accounting for $700,000 of revenue growth.

Expenditure grew 19% on the prior year, as the IMF continues to invest in it staffing, public awareness and growing program delivery around Australia.

Continued growth, diversification of funding and expansion of program activity across Australia sees the IMF in a strong financial position.

EXPENDITURE 2024-25 AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL COST



STRATEGY STATEMENT

OUR MISSION. OUR PLAN.

At IMF, we deliver proven running and physical literacy programs that drive our mission to contribute to a reconciled, unified, and healthy Australia. Through these programs, we develop First Nations leaders, role models, and changemakers who break cycles, and build capability and opportunity in their communities.

Guided by our ethos that running and walking side by side is a powerful way to unite First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians, our strategy focuses on several key areas to bring this ethos to action:

Culture. Strengthening cultural protocols and awareness across IMF's programs, policies, and events, incorporating First Nations voices and perspectives in our work.

Grow a culturally competent workforce. Developing a team who understands, respects, and reflects the strengths and needs of First Nations people and communities.

Program delivery. Embedding tangible metrics into our programs to measure impact and strengthen accountability.

Amplify all IMF programs. Representing all IMF programs consistently across all communications.

Build financial sustainability. Diversifying funding sources to include non-government streams, corporate and private-sector support.

THANK YOU

2024 IMP squad after the TCS New York City Marathon

Back row from left: Beth Cooper, Angelica Gee, Dakota Manton, Shannon Stack, Elle Jarman, Jye Murray, Pio Kelemete

Middle row: Lucy Hovanec, IMP Corporate Ambassador, 2024

Front row: Brooke Carson, Della Bedford, Millie Telford, Jermaine Stuart

CONTACT US

For more information about our products, services, or inquiries regarding partnerships and sustainability initiatives, please feel free to reach out to us through the channels listed here.

HEAD OFFICE

Level 1, 50 Colbee Court
Phillip ACT 2606

Phone: +61 477 111 477

Email: info@imf.org.au

Website: www.imf.org.au

Scan this QR code to make a donation: