



INNER NORTH
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

2025

PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT GRANTS PROGRAM

Supporting prosperous, connected and cohesive
communities in Melbourne's inner north since 2007



A note from IntoWork Group

CEO Poul Bottern

The Inner North Community Foundation has been supporting and empowering our local community through strategic grant-making since 2007. IntoWork Australia was instrumental in the establishment of the Foundation and has continued to demonstrate its commitment to fostering positive change by allocating \$260,000 to 13 Pathways to Employment grants across various organisations this year. Throughout our 18-year partnership, IntoWork Australia is proud to have worked with the Foundation and local councils to address critical barriers to employment faced by vulnerable populations in Darebin, Merri-bek and Yarra.

IntoWork's support through the Foundation for local projects is multifaceted, providing job training, mentoring and tailored support services to those who need it most. The grants enable organisations to implement innovative programs that cater to the specific needs of marginalised groups, including First Nations peoples, refugees and individuals experiencing homelessness. This year's recipients of our multi-year funding include Breakaway Youth's youth engagement program and Sustain's internship program.

They promote social inclusion and community cohesion while providing a meaningful pathway to employment.

The IntoWork Board continues to be closely engaged with the Foundation, including one of our Directors, Kevin Breen, also being a Director on the Foundation, creating a valuable ongoing link. The success of the Foundation's initiatives is a credit to the hard work and dedication of the Foundation team and volunteers. Led by Foundation Chair Carolyn Phiddian and Executive Officer Ben Rodgers, their focus on building partnerships with community organisations and to upholding our shared purpose is invaluable.

I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all members of our community who have generously donated to the Foundation, both through the Pathways to Employment Fund and other areas of the Foundation's work. Together, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it most, and we look forward to continuing this important work in the years to come.

Poul Bottern

Group CEO

IntoWork Australia

Foreword from Foundation Chair

Carolyn Phiddian

The Pathways to Employment Fund is a partnership with IntoWork Australia in collaboration with the Cities of Darebin, Yarra and Merri-bek, where grants from the Pathways to Employment Fund support community members on their journey to work. Grants are provided for this purpose to organisations with deep links to the community and we salute their care, commitment, and skill.

Thank you to IntoWork which, under the leadership of Poul Bottern, Elizabeth Board and the rest of the IntoWork Australia Board, continues to be one of Australia's leading providers of employment, skills, education and support for jobseekers.

This year, we are distributing \$260,000 to 13 organisations – all receiving grants of \$20,000. Six community organisations will receive multi-year funding.

We thank the members of the Community Advisory Panel which help us make the decisions about which programs to fund. The panel looks closely at all applications to ensure their recommendation for funding is spread across a mix of impactful organisations. Thank you, this year, to Foundation Directors, Rachel English and Siu Chan, and community members Anthea MacTiernan, Jonathon Zagler,

Matai Koch and Sheelagh Purdon.

We acknowledge the difficulties faced by organisations in the current economic climate. Unfortunately, Free to Feed could not weather the current storm. We thank everyone involved with Free to Feed who worked tirelessly to provide refugees with an empowering environment.

In this booklet, you may note the broad scope of activities that will be delivered to address the barriers which disadvantage and to support people in the Inner North on their pathway to employment.

Congratulations to all successful applicants and thank you as always to our partners and supporters who make this annual funding possible.

Carolyn Phiddian

Chair

Inner North Community Foundation

Margaret Hacken
Gardine Briggs
Emanuel Cooper



Pathways to Employment 2025

– GRANTS OVERVIEW





Local Aboriginal artist at work at Blak Pearl Studio

BLAK PEARL STUDIO

PROJECT TITLE:

STRENGTHENING YARRA'S ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY'S CAPACITY

Blak Pearl Studio is an Indigenous arts and culture service in the City of Yarra which provides a culturally safe space for Aboriginal people with limited access to mainstream creative sector opportunities due to socio-economic disadvantage, impacted by homelessness and substance addictions caused by systemic discrimination.

Developed in response to requests by local Elders, the Studio now allows participants to realise their values and skills and work towards achieving personal goals including sobriety, mental and physical wellbeing, housing and employment. Blak Pearl is

governed by local community leaders.

Over the next three years, through the employment of three part-time staff members, Blak Pearl hopes to increase the number of community members who can access their support, add specialist programming to meet specific needs and provide access to healing workshops and First Nation facilitated mental health and wellbeing services.



Carringbush Adult Education provides tailored support

CARRINGBUSH ADULT EDUCATION

PROJECT TITLE:

PATHWAY TO WORK

As an education provider with integrated support services, Carringbush Adult Education works with Richmond and Collingwood Housing estate residents to achieve their learning goals and access services for tailored career support. With a service gap created by the closure of the Jobs Victoria mentoring program, Carringbush is finding ways to continue supporting residents.

This project will provide tailored, accessible pathways, guidance and mentoring to residents through individualised counselling. Carringbush will employ a Pathways Mentor to support local

residents, working collaboratively with the Yarra Jobs Hub.

Practical supports will include development of resumes, support to register with apps and job-seeking platforms, research into available jobs or training required, completing job applications, job interview preparation and support to register for appropriate training or other Carringbush programs, such as English language classes and job-readiness courses.



FOR CHANGE CO

PROJECT TITLE:

STRENGTHENING PATHWAYS FOR CHANGE

For Change Co.'s flagship program, Pathways For Change, works with young people to break the homelessness cycle. This evidence-based program was co-designed by young people experiencing homelessness. Paid award wages, trainees are given access to skills such as speciality coffee, customer service, food preparation and cafe operations. One-to-one coaching and mentoring assist them to gain additional skills in financial literacy, independent living and job readiness.

For Change Co. works with the trainees to chart a path towards a career and future they choose. If they wish to continue in hospitality,

the organisation creates pathways into employment with their Open Shift partners. For Change Co is also working toward offering a new opportunity for trainees to be embedded in its Back of House team where they can deepen their experience in business operations and development, marketing and communications, advocacy and leadership.



James William, Killara Foundation

KILLARA FOUNDATION

PROJECT TITLE:

KILLARA COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND DEVELOPMENT

As a First Nations not-for-profit organisation, Killara supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into sustainable employment through culturally safe, wrap-around support.

The program aims to build capabilities and skills through a combination of culturally safe mentoring, pre-employment support, accredited training, and practical workplace experiences. People gain transferable employment skills, improve their confidence, and increase their readiness to work. Many are supported into employment within Killara's own social enterprise—

Ngarrgu Djerring Café — or through one of our partnering employers, ensuring a supported transition into the workforce.

James Williams, a proud Yorta Yorta, Wiradjuri, Gunditjmara and Gunai Kurnai man is the Foundation's Community Outreach and Development Officer. James initially came to Killara through his participation in the Homelessness to a Home (H2H) program which relocated people during the COVID lockdowns into long-term housing with wrap-around support services. James says his involvement in the program was crucial to where he is now.



Urban gardening for an inclusive future

REYNARD STREET NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

PROJECT TITLE:

SEEDS OF CHANGE

The Seeds of Change project responds to the urgent need for inclusive employment pathways for people facing significant barriers, including women over 45, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with mental health challenges or long-term unemployment.

Building on community interest within Merri-bek in sustainability, local food systems and climate-resilient skills such as urban agriculture, this program will provide participants with hands-on skills in horticulture, propagation, customer service, retail, and sustainable urban agriculture.

Taking place in the Neighbourhood House community garden – an inclusive, trauma-informed space – participants will be mentored by the Garden Coordinator and supported through individual plans.

Participants will access wrap-around services, including resume writing, career coaching, referrals to education and links to housing or mental health support. Graduates will be supported to transition into volunteering, further study, or other supported employment pathways through employment providers such as WISE Employment, Matchworks and Jobfind Coburg.



Left Write Hook heals and strengthens

LEFT WRITE HOOK

PROJECT TITLE:

SCALING SURVIVOR-LED TRAINING: BUILDING LIVED EXPERIENCE WORKFORCE CAPACITY IN THE INNER NORTH

This project directly supports women and gender diverse victim-survivors of child sexual abuse and gendered violence in the inner north. Many bring strong life experience, deep engagement in their own recovery, and a clear desire to give back to others.

This project is about creating a sustainable, survivor-led community model of care. It addresses not only a need for healing but also a gap in trauma-informed, peer-based employment pathways. While demand for survivor-informed services is

growing, few programs actively train and employ survivors to lead as experts of their own healing and recovery.

Some 10 participants will have access to a healing-centred, community-based group experience, with four going on to complete no-cost comprehensive facilitator training, equipping them with tangible, transferable skills and certifications. Once trained, these facilitators will be employed to deliver future programs in the inner north.



Supporting young inner north artists to lead

OUTER URBAN PROJECTS

PROJECT TITLE:

CREATIVE LEADERSHIP PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT IN COMMUNITY ARTS

Outer Urban Projects' community arts and cultural development leadership program will provide long-term mentoring of young artists facing complex cultural, social, economic and artistic disruption.

The immersive, three-year program aims to challenge systemic barriers based on race, class, education, geography and gender and enable young artists to collaborate with established creatives, producers and distributors. The artists' mentoring hours will sit outside their existing creative project work, allowing time for lateral ideas, conversation, connection,

investigation and network building beyond their involvement with Outer Urban Projects.

This program will develop, retain, and empower talented arts leaders from the inner north by equipping them with work ready skills, confidence and resilience to thrive in the arts sector. This support is vital as they navigate ongoing external challenges, including housing affordability, rising living costs and the lasting impacts of COVID-19 on youth employment.



Young people working to bring others with them

YOUNG ASSETS FOUNDATION

PROJECT TITLE:

NEXT STEPS MENTORING

The Young Asset Foundation (YAF) – whose Board and operational staff are all current or former public housing residents – is seeking to develop a mentoring program based on consultation with young people in Yarra public housing who expressed a strong interest in mentors who have navigated similar life journeys.

YAF proposes to pair young individuals with mentors who are current or former public housing residents, including those still in high school or university, to provide insights into both educational and career pathways.

The program will also incorporate formal workshops addressing critical topics such as resume building, career exploration, and wellbeing strategies to manage academic and employment-related stress.

The Next Steps Mentoring Program will support young people aged 15 to 24 living in public housing across the City of Yarra to build confidence, skills, and pathways into further education and meaningful employment.



Walking new pathways through Breakaway Youth

BREAKAWAY YOUTH

PROJECT TITLE:

BREAKAWAY AND ACHIEVE

Breakaway and Achieve will provide 30 children aged 10-16 years with adventure-based camps and activities designed to reduce school disengagement and reduce barriers to employment.

The program includes a 17 day culture and learning road trip to Central Australia to prepare participants for transition from school to employment or higher education and from the structures with which they have been familiar.

For many, this will be their first opportunity to travel outside Victoria or experience different cultures. Over the course of the trip, they will have the space

to consider their future and set achievable goals.

Other groups will take part in weekend camps, including in combination with newer and more established program participants. Activities are tailored to foster healthy attitudes to themselves and others and improved interpersonal and life skills that enable them to be resilient enough to pursue education and gain employment.



Nature provides a safe space, skills and a sustainable future

SUSTAIN

PROJECT TITLE:

GROWING FOOD JUSTICE COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Sustain's paid internship programs prioritise low socio-economic status communities, people with psychosocial disabilities, youth and First Nations people. The programs encourage social connection and self-growth while building horticultural and farming skills.

The Growing Food Justice Community Program is focused on revegetating pastureland at Bundoora Park Farm to create a safe and encouraging space for people to be in nature, feel part of a community and learn. The site is divided between a market garden and a First Nations food, fibre, and

medicine garden and gathering space.

Funding will help Sustain to run programs for 16 participants per year, one with a focus on gender diverse participants and young people with psychosocial disabilities and the other focusing on First Nations people.

Sustain will also manage, advertise and run weekly open volunteer sessions and hold an annual open-day event to engage with the broader community, including schools, families and community organisations.



JUNO

PROJECT TITLE:

EMPOWER: BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY

EMPower is Juno's flagship program for economic independence and trauma recovery. The program is designed to support trans and cis women and non-binary people on low income to build strong, economically secure and thriving futures for themselves and their families.

Juno's program is based on a proven model developed by EMPATH (Economic Mobility Pathways), a Boston-based organisation. Adapted for an Australian context, EMPATH has recognised Juno as a global "Knowledge Leader" for its work.

Connection and peer support groups, along with skill-building workshops, reinforce coaching goals and create a positive network of social support.

The program acknowledges the impact of structural inequality and discrimination on decision-making processes and supports participants as they rebuild skills and confidence to achieve long term goals.



THE SOCIAL STUDIO

PROJECT TITLE:

WORK2LEARN

Working to upskill participants to meet the needs of prospective employers in the garment industry, The Social Studio's Work2Learn project provides paid, supported traineeships which open up opportunities for former refugees to move into employment.

The Social Studio's strength-based approach recognises that the best way to combat the societal and systemic barriers faced by refugee and migrant communities seeking education and employment opportunities is to harness their skills, talents and interests to create pathways to success.

In doing so, the organisation has created a safe place of belonging and a dynamic hub for creative development, helping our new neighbours build professional and social networks in the process.

Trainees receive one-on-one support from The Social Studio's production team and holistic support from the organisation's pathways coordinator, which includes career advice, linkages to industry and information on Australian work culture and systems.



VACRO (VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE CARE AND RESETTLEMENT OF OFFENDERS)

PROJECT TITLE:

SECOND CHANCE CYCLES

Second Chance Cycles has been recycling bicycles, teaching bike mechanics, and giving away free bikes to people who need them since 2009.

What started as a place for people on community correction orders to complete work requirements quickly transformed into a small community hub. Participants work hands-on in a real workshop, with real tools, on real bikes, learning practical mechanical skills.

But they also work around others. They deal with customers, contribute to a team, and make sure the workshop is clean and safe. Coming together, participants

fulfil the hours required of their orders, while building the skills and confidence for a new chance at work. They can graduate from the workshop with hundreds of hours of hands-on experience and the confidence to seek employment at the end of their orders.

Since its beginning, the workshop has supported more than 2,800 people on community corrections orders to recycle and repair more than 6,500 second-hand bicycles.

BIKES AVAILABLE HERE!


\$50 EACH *UNLESS OTHERWISE LABELLED

HEALTH CARE CARD HOLDERS
ASK US ABOUT A FREE BIKE

WE'RE OPEN
TUESDAY & THURSDAY
10-1 *LATE FOR LUNCH
& 2-4

FIX-YOUR-OWN BIKE FOR FREE!

SECOND CHANCE CYCLES
IS A VALRO PROGRAM



Give with us

As a strong, independent and community based resource, the Foundation works to build prosperous, connected and cohesive communities. Our contributions build on the long tradition of Melbourne's north, wherein people collaborate to ensure shared opportunity and choice in life.

Our model allows local donations to be pooled to respond to emerging challenges and to have greater impact for the long term.

Over time, the Foundation has expanded its reach and relevance, with more than 850 people giving gifts, large and small, that have a positive impact on their local community. With \$13 million under management in funds currently under management, there's a growing momentum of partnership with donors of all levels of wealth, demonstrated by over 42 MyFunds giving people and businesses a deeper sense of their own legacy in the region.

Over the past 18 years, the Foundation has given \$6.5 million via more than 765 grants to community group across Darebin, Merri-bek and Yarra.



Neighbourhood House community garden

Get involved:



TO CREATE A LEGACY FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IN THE INNER NORTH

A growing number of individuals, families and organisations have established MyFunds that reflect their sustained commitment to the Inner North of Melbourne, and express their priorities as a donor.



TO INCREASE THE REACH OF EXISTING PROGRAMS BY WORKING TOGETHER

Our donors reflect the diversity of our community. They contribute for different reasons, but are connected by a sense of the importance of place-based giving and philanthropy.

Hundreds of contributions are received every year. Such as through regular workplace donations, gifts in wills, donations to specific causes supported by MyFund or the transfer of assets prompted by wind-up clauses.



TO SHARE OUR EXPERTISE

The Foundation can point donors to opportunities to invest in our region, provide links to partnerships and programs, and help bring money to life through place-based philanthropy.



TO VOLUNTEER WITH US

Join our team of talented and committed volunteers who relish sharing their time, talent and networks, to grow the impact and strength of our Foundation community.



OK... BUT WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Call us on (03) 8689 1967

The 2025 Pathways to Employment Grant Program is a proud partnership of the Cities of Darebin, Merri-bek and Yarra, IntoWork and the Inner North Community Foundation.

Since 2007, IntoWork has supported the 'Pathways to Employment Fund'. The commitment in 2021 re-affirmed this partnership, with IntoWork providing an annual contribution of over \$200,000 and additional funding that contributes to the core operational costs of the Foundation.



Merri-bek
City Council



intowork







INNER NORTH
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

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