ATSSSI External Advisory Committee

Impact & Activity Report 2026



MR FIRST NATION
IMAGE: JOSEPH MAYERS

Pride Foundation Australia

By Jennie Toonen (Gooreng Gooren, Kabi Kabi) and Damien Ralphs (Gunnai/Kurnai /Wotjobulok)
Co-Chairs ATSSSI External Advisory Committee

In line with our ‘nothing about us without us’ approach, Pride Foundation Australia is working closely with an ATSSSI advisory committee to develop and manage granting to support ATSSSI projects. The committee is made up of LGBTQIA+ ATSSSI people located all over Australia.

ABOUT THE ATSSSI PORTFOLIO

Our Vision

A philanthropic landscape where Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander Sistergirl, Brotherboy and LGBTQIA+SB peoples lead, shape and benefit from culturally grounded, community-led investment.

Our Purpose

To strengthen cultural governance, elevate community leadership, and support initiatives that advance wellbeing, cultural pride, and self-determination for ATSSSI LGBTQIA+SB communities.

Who We Are

The ATSSSI External Advisory Committee (EAC) is a national cultural governance body within Pride Foundation Australia. The Committee is led by Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander Sistergirl, Brotherboy and LGBTQIA+SB leaders who guide the ATSSSI portfolio through cultural authority, lived experience and community-led decision-making.

Our Values

Cultural Integrity
Community Leadership
Self-Determination
Accountability
Visibility

Chairperson’s Foreword



CO-CHAIR: JENNIE TOONEN GOORENG GOORENG, KABI KABI, NIVAN WOMAN

As a proud Gooreng Gooreng, Kabi Kabi, Nivan woman and Co-Chair of the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander External Advisory Committee (ATSSSI EAC), I am honoured to present this report on our first full year of operation. The Committee has demonstrated the strength, cultural authority and leadership that exists across our communities, and has set a powerful foundation for culturally grounded philanthropy within Pride Foundation Australia.

The Committee’s work this year reflects a clear truth: meaningful investment in Sistergirl, Brotherboy and LGBTQIA+SB communities must be led by those with cultural knowledge, lived experience and deep community connection. The Committee upheld this responsibility with integrity, care and collective decision-making, ensuring that every aspect of the ATSSSI portfolio was guided by cultural governance.

Our work was strengthened by national evidence showing significant health inequities for LGBTQIA+ people in rural and remote Australia, and by global insights into resilient, community-led philanthropy. These findings reinforce what our communities have always known — that cultural authority, community leadership and self-determination are essential to creating safety, inclusion and long-term change.

This report outlines our collective insights, strategic directions and recommendations for strengthening the ATSSSI portfolio. It reflects our commitment to building a philanthropic model that honours culture, centres community, and supports the self-determination of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander LGBTQIA+SB peoples.

Jennie Toonen Co-Chair, ATSSSI External Advisory Committee Pride Foundation Australia.

Chairperson’s Foreword



CO-CHAIR: DAMIEN RALPHS GUNNAI/ KURNAI, WOTJOBULOK MAN

As a proud Gunnai/Kurnai and Wotjobulok man it is a privilege to share this report as Co-Chair of the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander External Advisory Committee (ATSSSI EAC) and to reflect on a year of significant achievement, learning and growth.

The 2026 ATSSSI Grant Round marked an important milestone for Pride Foundation Australia, demonstrating the Foundation's commitment to increasing philanthropic investment in Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander Sistergirl, Brotherboy and LGBTQIA+SB communities. Through this process, we supported projects that celebrate culture, strengthen community connections, develop leadership, foster inclusion and create opportunities for our people to thrive.

What stands out most from this year is the depth of talent, innovation and resilience that exists across our communities. The applications received highlighted not only the challenges faced by our people, but also the extraordinary community-led solutions already being developed in response. The diversity of projects funded reflects the many ways culture, creativity, healing and visibility contribute to stronger and healthier communities.

The Committee also strengthened relationships across Australia, increasing awareness of the ATSSSI portfolio and building connections with community organisations, leaders and partners. These relationships will be critical as the portfolio continues to grow and evolve.

I am grateful to my fellow Committee members for the knowledge, generosity and commitment they bring to this work, and to Pride Foundation Australia for its ongoing dedication to supporting Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander LGBTQIA+SB communities through targeted and meaningful investment. The Foundation's commitment to working alongside our communities and increasing funding for community-led initiatives provides a strong platform for lasting change. While this report celebrates our achievements, it also points to the opportunities ahead.

Together, we will continue building a future where our communities are visible, valued and empowered, and where philanthropy contributes to lasting social, cultural and community outcomes.

Damien Ralphs Co-Chair, ATSSSI External Advisory Committee Pride Foundation Australia

Our Activity in 2026



Establishing Cultural Governance

The Committee completed its first full operational year, embedding cultural authority into PFA's philanthropic processes and establishing a national model for culturally grounded grantmaking.

Strengthening National Engagement

Committee members engaged with communities across states and territories, strengthening visibility, cultural connection and awareness of the ATSSSI portfolio.

Delivering the ATSSSI Grant Round

The Committee assessed a diverse national pool of applications representing cultural healing, arts, leadership, youth programs, community connection and organisational inclusion.

Building Evidence and Partnerships

The Committee's work was informed by PFA's Rural Health & Wellbeing Report (2025) and global insights from the Churchill Fellowship Report (2026), aligning ATSSSI with national and international best practice.

Diversity of Applications

Applications Reflected:

- Sistergirl & Brotherboy leadership
- Cultural healing and identity programs
- Arts and performance
- Youth wellbeing
- Regional and remote community initiatives
- Organisational inclusion and cultural safety

Applications came from QLD, WA, VIC, NSW, ACT and SA — demonstrating national reach and strong demand.



DECOLONISE

Funding Allocation – Analysis and Overview

The 2026 ATSSSI Grant Round reflects the cultural strength, diversity and leadership of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander Sistergirl, Brotherboy and LGBTQIA+SB communities across the country. The distribution of funds demonstrates a balanced investment in cultural visibility, community wellbeing, leadership development, arts-based storytelling, and organisational inclusion.

The funded projects span multiple states and regions, including the Kimberley, Canberra, Brisbane, Melbourne and Naarm, and represent a mix of grassroots initiatives, established community organisations and emerging cultural leaders.

Key priority areas funded:

- Cultural festivals and gatherings
- Leadership development
- Arts and performance
- Organisational inclusion
- Cultural safety and decolonisation



KIMBERLEY BLAK PRIDE FESTIVAL

ATSSSI Grant Round Funding Allocation 2026



GRANT DATE	GRANTEE	AMOUNT	PROJECT NAME
22/06/2026	Kimberley Blak Pride Limited	$20,000.00	Kimberley Blak Pride Festival
22/06/2026	Canberra Burlesque Academy Incorporated	$14,510.00	SBLBGTIQA_ First Nations Burlesque Mentorship Program
22/06/2026	BRG Productions (Auscpice: Brisbane Powerhoure Pty Ltd)	$10,000.00	Mr First Nation
22/06/2026	Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency (VACCA)	$20,000.00	LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Initiative
31/07/2026	DECOLONISE	$20,000.00	BLAQ | Fashion as Resistance
31/07/2026	Koorie Heritage Trust	$17,940.00	Providing a safe and welcoming LGBTQIA+ visitor and staff experience

Total grants awarded: $102,450.00

Collective Insights & Reflections

Cultural Governance as a Strength

Cultural authority strengthened the integrity of the grant round and aligned with global best practice.

Identity Guidance Requires Cultural Nuance

Identity processes must be culturally grounded and respectful.

Cultural Visibility Builds Trust and Accountability

Visibility strengthens trust and cultural responsiveness.

Leadership as a Core Capability

The Committee demonstrated resilience, cultural strength and national leadership.

National Representation Deepens Cultural Authority

Broad representation strengthens cultural insight and decision-making.

Strategic Directions & Recommendations

Strengthen Cultural Governance Structures

Formalise a Ways of Working Agreement.

Expand National Membership

Increase representation across states, territories and remote communities.

Provide Predictable Coordination Support

Light-touch coordination from PFA.

Refine Grantmaking Processes

Clear identity guidance, streamlined assessments, proportionate reporting.

Increase Funding Capacity

Explore multi-year grants and expanded funding pools.

Strengthen Cultural Visibility

Align communications with key cultural dates and events.

Build ATSSSI-Led Knowledge and Evidence

Commission community-led research.

Deepen Collaboration with the PFA Board

Embed cultural governance across organisational decision-making.



MR FIRST NATION
IMAGE: JOSEPH MAYERS

Conclusion

The first operational year of the ATSSSI External Advisory Committee has demonstrated the power and necessity of culturally grounded, community-led philanthropy.

Through cultural authority, lived experience and collective decision-making, the Committee delivered a national grant round that honoured community priorities and upheld cultural integrity.

The ATSSSI portfolio is still in its early stages, yet its impact is already visible. The demand for culturally safe funding, the quality of applications received, and the engagement of community members all demonstrate the importance of this work.

This report represents not only what we achieved, but what is possible when cultural authority is centred, when community leads, and when philanthropy is grounded in respect, accountability and self-determination.