



2025

# IMPACT

# REPORT



# Acknowledgement



A special acknowledgement must go to the communities who hold the young people long before they meet us, and the families who trust us to walk alongside them.

To the Aunties and Uncles, Nannas and Poppas, who hold so much for all of us - who answer the phone, share our burdens, and offer guidance even when their own load is heavy - thank you. Your cultural strength, your courage, and your quiet insistence that we keep going have shaped this Foundation as much as anything we have built. Your presence is not merely symbolic; you are present when we are developing our processes and policies, you shape our credibility, our cultural safety, and the way the young people see themselves reflected in positions of influence.

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“We really love what the Foundation is doing for our young boys. They return home as leaders for their siblings and communities, helping to lead the way toward a better future”



# Our Origin Story

Eddie & Anna  
(Foundation Founders)

Our program reflects the spirit of Eddie's own journey from Kalgoorlie to Melbourne - while removing the systemic barriers that hindered him, and that continue to limit how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people pursue their aspirations in sport, education, and employment.

Formally established in 2023 (informally for 11 years) by AFL legend Eddie Betts, the Eddie Betts Foundation is an Aboriginal-led and Aboriginal-owned not-for-profit that has supported young people from more than 40 communities across Australia. Our purpose is to improve education, wellbeing, sporting, and employment outcomes by removing barriers to success and participation.

Drawing on Eddie's 17-year AFL career and lifelong commitment to community, our model harnesses the power of sport and holistic development - encompassing personal growth, leadership, education, sporting skill development, and pathways to employment.

“

Eddie's journey. Our shared future.

”

# What we do

We pride ourselves on being a trusted organisation across Australia - grounding all we do in respect and taking a strengths-based approach, recognising that Aboriginal young people are born natural leaders.

Our work is underpinned by a case management framework that puts the young person at the centre of everything we do, while creating a culturally safe environment where they can thrive. This model harnesses the power of sport and Eddie's successful work over his 17-year career to nurture and develop Aboriginal talent - focusing on holistic development including personal development, leadership, education, sporting skills, and employment.

Activities range from high performance experiences and showcase games, wrap-around personal support and advocacy, scholarship provision, and connection to professional networks.

It is a model that is culturally safe, trauma-informed and inclusive.

“

Removing barriers.  
Backing Aboriginal  
excellence. ”



# Values Statement



Our work is guided by values that ensure every young person is supported with dignity, cultural safety, and genuine opportunity:

## **(1) Community-centred and culturally safe**

We work in partnership with communities, Elders, families, and local organisations, ensuring all programs reflect cultural context, identity, and community priorities.

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## **(2) Strengths-based and youth-led**

We recognise that young people are already leaders. We walk alongside them, not ahead of them, supporting their goals on their terms.

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## **(3) Holistic and intergrated support**

We understand that barriers are interconnected. Our support spans personal development, education, wellbeing, sport, and employment - ensuring wrap-around care.

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## **(4) Leadership through Lived Experience**

Our team brings deep community knowledge and lived experience. We understand the challenges young people face because many of us have walked the same road.

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## **(5) Connection through Sport**

We use sport as a powerful tool for building confidence, wellbeing, and connection - whilst also supporting young people to develop skills that reach far beyond the field.

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## **(6) Strong, trusted networks**

We leverage strong relationships across education, sport, community, and various industries to unlock opportunities that would otherwise remain out of reach.

# A MESSAGE FROM EDDIE & ANNA



## Hello all,

This year, the Eddie Betts Foundation took more meaningful steps toward a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people can pursue excellence in education, football and leadership - not despite the systems around them, but with those systems reshaped to meet them where they are.

Our work is grounded in a simple truth: talent is universal but opportunity is not. Across every corner of Australia, there are young people with the same spark Eddie once had - the same brilliance, the same hunger and potential. Too often, young people face inequity long before they reach the football game, the classroom, or a decision-making table.

Through our Foundation, we have set out to change that.

Across our academies, scholarships, and mentoring programs, we served young people with a model intentionally designed to nurture not only their development, but their dignity.

This year we successfully delivered high-performance football academies that were culturally safe, connected, and built around happiness and safety as much as rigour and high standards. Families and communities were drawn to the program through word of mouth and the autonomy to choose the pathway they felt was safest for their young people.

We expanded our Education Access Scholarship program to more recipients this year. Our Third Party Scholarship provider status - awarded by the Department of Social Services after a rigorous 16-month assessment of our Foundation - enables us to connect academy members and their families with hard-to-access opportunities in education. Our selection process is led by Eddie's ways; of taking the time to know a young person and their family, and allowing space for them to make the decisions that will impact their futures.



We continue to strengthen our 1:1 mentoring model, ensuring academy members receive consistent guidance and advocacy, and feel the support of a community of care behind them. The labour is high volume, but by investing in the individual stories of academy members we are acknowledging that one model does not fit all, and the backgrounds of each young person, with all their variations in circumstance, must shape how we work with them.

The impact of this work doesn't stop with any one scholarship recipient or academy member - every young person who steps into our programs strengthens their families, their schools, their football clubs, and their communities. Every young leader we support becomes a role model in a much bigger story.

Every system we engage - from football to schools - becomes more capable of welcoming and retaining Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander excellence.

As we move into the next chapter of the Foundation, we remain guided by three commitments:

1. To unlock opportunity early, not repair lost opportunity later.
2. To ensure cultural identity is centred, not compromised.
3. To walk alongside young people until they no longer need us and celebrate them when they lead.

We know the challenges are real but we also know the talent, ambition, and resilience of academy members far outweighs those challenges.

Together with community, partners, families, and supporters we will keep building a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander excellence in football, education, and leadership is expected, not exceptional.

Thank you for believing in this work, and in the young people who drive it.

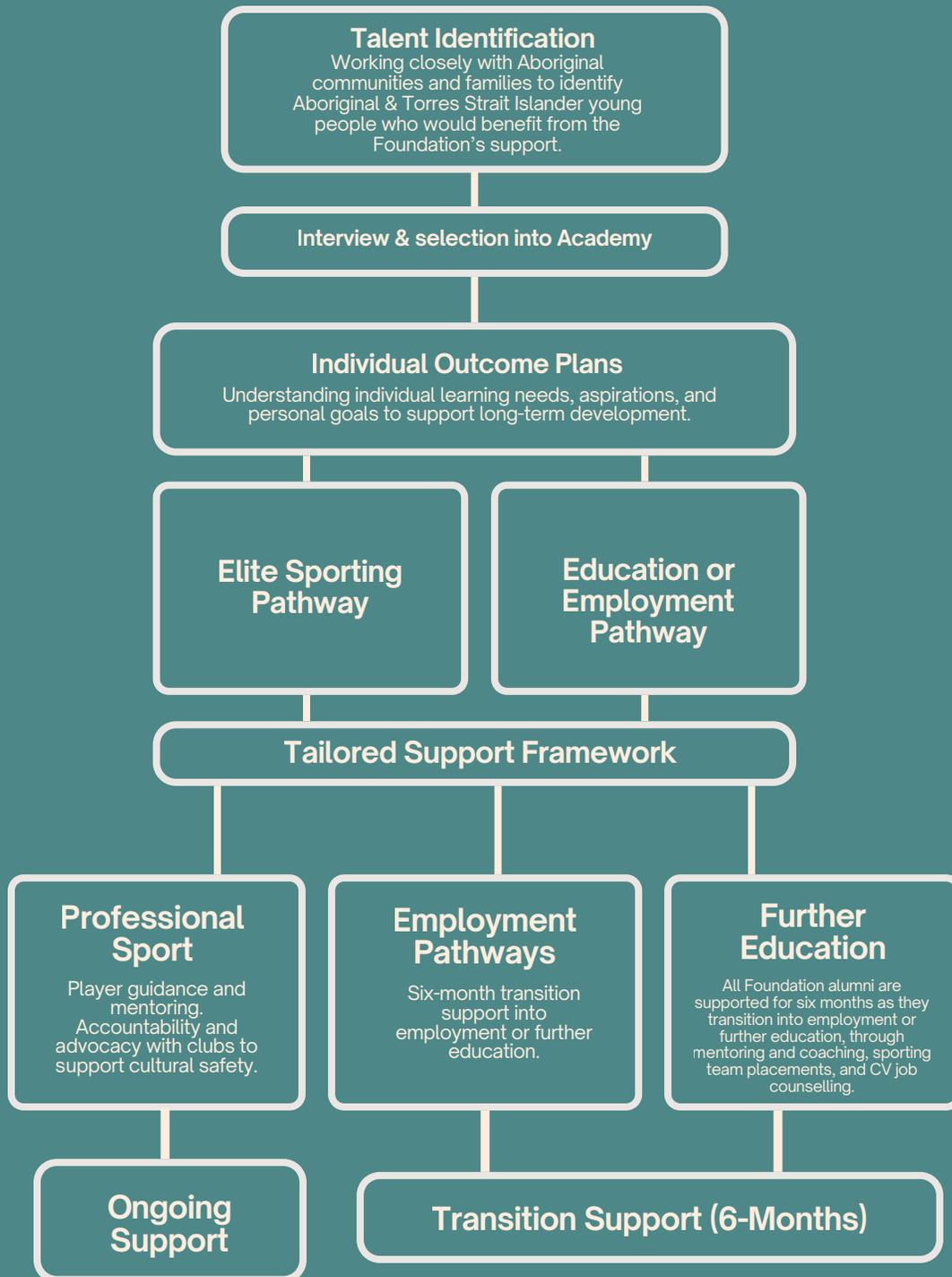
Anna Scullie  
Founder/CEO  
Eddie Betts Foundation



“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people don’t need to be taught resilience - they already live it. What they need are systems that honour their strength and make space for them to thrive.”

- Founder, Anna Scullie

# Our Theory of Change



# Our Approach



## INDIGENOUS WAYS OF WELLBEING

In our program, we don't talk about "building resilience" — because Aboriginal young people are already resilient. They carry generations of strength, courage, and survival in the face of ongoing challenges.

To suggest they need more resilience overlooks the deep endurance already embedded through culture and family. Instead, our programs take a strength-based approach — focusing on amplifying what is already strong: connection, pride, leadership, and belonging.

When Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander youth feel culturally safe, valued, and supported, their natural resilience flourishes into confidence, identity, and purpose. Our role is not to "fix" young people, but to walk beside them — creating the conditions where their existing strengths can thrive.

Our model draws on Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander concepts of Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB), recognising that mental health is inseparable from culture, family, and community.



# Youth Voice



By Shaquarn Cox

The Eddie Betts Foundation helped in several different aspects of my life including but not limited to my football, a move to Melbourne and even personal development.

Since meeting Eddie on my first camp with the Foundation there was instantly a constant stream of support with my football and personal needs. I have attended all five camps since the beginning of the Foundation, and every single one has helped me to develop my football in many ways including my skills, knowledge of the game, mindset, etc. The Foundation has helped me understand the way the AFL system works and supported me on all aspects of reaching the goal of playing the best footy I possibly can.

The Foundation has been the reason for my move to Melbourne. They first created the opportunity for me to play in the Coates Talent League which was a major development with my football. They supported me for the move over here including meetings with me and my partner before the move to discuss all options. They found us accommodation until we could move into a rental. Eddie and Anna even opened their home to both me and my partner whenever we needed it and made room for us to stay.



Eddie and Anna have made sure I know that their home is always open to me and have made their place feel like a home away from home. The Foundation became guarantors on the rental I moved into as it was otherwise very difficult to find a place of my own so young with no rental history. They now support further into 2026 with finding me and my partner another rental that we will share with another boy from the Foundation. The Foundation also used its contacts to get me a job in Melbourne straight out of high school as an Educational Support worker, while studying a Cert III.

From when I first started with the Foundation, they have helped me become a lot more confident in myself when it comes to footy, socialising and just have really helped in my own personal development. From being around other boys at camps that have similar goals to me, to meeting idols and learning and developing from the talks and encouragement from them.

All the staff that are part of the Foundation are always a constant support and are always kind, welcoming and helpful with everything. They really show the Foundations main values and care about every single boy that is a part of it. They have all been huge role models to me and encouraged the best out of me.

The Foundation continues to support me into 2026 even though I am no longer eligible due to age. I have not felt a single drop off in support and know that Eddie and Anna will always be people I can go to no matter what. A huge thank you to The Eddie Betts Foundation, Eddie and Anna for giving me this opportunity in life.



# Program Inputs

(01) Education

(02) Football

(03) Mentoring

01

## Education

### Program Inputs

Scholarships

School Relationships

Stakeholder Management

Campus Site Visits

Extra-curricular support

Pathways planning

ILP supports

Exeat weekends

Intermediary support with Services Australia

We support young people to stay engaged in education and plan for their future. Through scholarships, school partnerships, and case management, we remove barriers to learning.

Support extends beyond the classroom, wrapping around wellbeing, access, and opportunity.

# Program Inputs ↖

(01) Education

(02) **Football**

(03) Mentoring

02

## Football

### Program Inputs

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Academies

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Showcase Games

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Combine Testing

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Elite Pathway Connections

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Recruitment Education

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AFL Player Workshops

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Nutrition

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Strength and Conditioning

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Physio Care (OSVi)

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Draft Nomination Support

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Relocation Support

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Club Interviews

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Football is used as a powerful pathway for development and opportunity.

We provide elite training environments, exposure, and education around professional pathways. Support spans performance, wellbeing, and transition into clubs or further opportunities.

# Program Inputs

(01) Education

(02) Football

(03) **Mentoring**

03

## Mentorship

### Program Inputs

One-on-one mentoring with Eddie Betts and staff

Individualised case management

Leadership opportunities

Life skills workshops

Progress and pathway planning

Alumni support and engagement

Employment pathway support

Network activation

LGBTQI+ education

Respectful relationships

Mentorship for our Foundation means guided learning.

Eddie, Anna and their staff team walk alongside academy members towards agreed goals, always grounding the journey in values, centring the needs of the young person, and remaining unwavering in our expectations of each other.

# The Deep Dive

## EBF Leadership & Football Academy

Academy camps offer a culturally safe experience of the high-performance life, incorporating showcase matches broadcast nationally, combine testing, workshops with football industry professionals and players, strength and conditioning coaching, nutrition and hydration education, and intensive 1:1 mentoring with Eddie.

There is a huge focus throughout these events on peer-to-peer connection and the embedding of an environment which nurtures the innate joy, empathy and cultural pride that lives within academy members.

Players are provided individualised reviews post-academy which incorporate data from testing, coaches insights, and overall assessments of strengths and areas for improvement that they should continue to address between academies. Game reviews are carried out remotely, with game vision and coaches notes presented by Eddie directly to the group.

More detailed plans are made for academy members engaged in, or considered ready to be connected to, elite pathways, including the creation of player profiles that are shared with recruitment teams nationally. When appropriate, EBF staff will attend meetings with recruitment teams in person alongside young people as a support and sounding board.



## EBF Education Access Scholarships

The Eddie Betts Foundation holds Third Party Scholarship Provider status under the Department of Social Services (DSS) ABSTUDY Scholarship Program. This funding supports schools and boarding providers directly by covering educational and accommodation costs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying away from home.

The Eddie Betts Foundation provides essential identification, preparation and wrap around supports that enable young people to engage fully and remain connected in their schooling. These crucial services, including wellbeing, mentoring, advocacy and cultural safety support are delivered by EBF.

The Foundation ensures that students are not only placed in education programs but are supported to succeed within them, by:

- Liaising with schools, families and communities to ensure culturally safe placements and environments.
- Providing ongoing wellbeing, mentoring and connection support for students.
- Advocating within schools to improve inclusivity and cultural responsiveness.
- Delivering national and local leadership programs to strengthen belonging and confidence.

Students supported by EBF primarily attend mainstream boarding schools and independent education programs across Australia, which typically have small cohorts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

EBF plays a unique bridging role, supporting students who attend schools where cultural safety and inclusion are still developing, and where dedicated Aboriginal support services may not exist.

## Mentorship

Walking with academy members toward their goals in education, football and employment, is central to what we do as an organisation. Whether it is the intensive contact of camps, regular check-ins remotely or in person between camps, or via reach-outs in response to particular events, we are a resource that academy members know they can freely avail themselves of.

Mentorship is reinforced by a case-management model adjusted to the individual needs of academy members. This involves well-being check-ins; stakeholder management with schools, football clubs and families; goal-setting sessions; alumni pathway planning; logistics management with Services Australia; and much more.

Academy members receive individualised mentorship from Eddie and Anna on their football pathway, and are supported by the wider EBF staff on their parallel engagement in education and long-term employment goals.

Mentorship encompasses access to the deep networks that the Foundation maintains across the football industry, education and commerce, in Melbourne and nationally.

Our mentoring in the football space will be further enhanced in 2026 when we welcome Harmit Singh as EBF Head of Football Development. Harmit has spent over twenty years in football, including more than a decade in the AFL and APS systems in coaching and development roles, and is passionate about the role football can play in developing young people into thriving adults.



## Systems renovation

In 2025 we continued to work for change that supports the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people that have to navigate systems that were established without them in mind.

This work includes consultation with executive level staff of the AFL, with clubs at state level, with clubs in talent pathways, with local leagues where EBF associates and academy members play and coach, and with schools where EBF academy members attend or seek to attend.

Similarly, we continued to advocate to the highest levels of State and Federal government where we know that injustice and entrenched racism create barriers for the young people of EBF.

These conversations, consultations and agitations are central to the work that we do, and contribute to levelling the playing field in sport, employment and education for aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander athletes at the beginning of their journeys.

And while EBF academy members are at the centre of our actions in this space, we know their ripple effect will have a far wider impact on the nation and its psyche.





# Impact by Numbers



**06**

Leadership & Football Academies delivered

**58**

Leadership capacity building activities delivered

**40**

Elite Football Pathway touch points

**06**

AFL Club interviews

**33**

High performance testing sessions

**26**

Academy days delivered

**79**

Funded Academy placements

# Impact by Numbers



**8200+  
Hours**

Mentoring Youth & supporting families

**8**

Youth public speaking opportunities

**97%**

Avg. school attendance by 2025 scholars

**100%**

Positive participant family feedback

**8**

Employment pathways opened

**88%**

Youth in Academy completed year 12 in 2025

**5**

Returning alumni re-engaged as Youth Mentors

**100%**

Retention of academy participants



# Capability → Influence → Demand

More than programs: building systems, leadership and influence

**850+**

Direct inquiries received for the Foundation & Eddie

**200+**

Aboriginal male youth on waitlist for Academy

**11**

Aboriginal people engaged in employment or contracts with EBF

**7.55 mil**

Social & digital media reach

**26**

Aboriginal communities reached in 2025

**57**

Partner engagements delivered incl. guest speaking, consultation, cultural safety awareness

**53%**

Foundation income went to direct program delivery

**100%**

Co-Founder's time donated to the Foundation & Community Football Clubs (Eddie & Anna)

**1.4 mil**

Reach through broadcast, print and media



# Our 2025 Milestones



1) Foundation moves into new Melbourne Park headquarters.



2) Sir Doug Nicholls Round curtain-raiser at Adelaide Oval broadcast on Fox Footy.



3) EBF granted Third Party Scholarship provider status by Department of Social Services.



4) Toyota commits to a three-year partnership.



5) AFL grand final Eve game V BHF broadcast on Fox Footy.



6) 20 EBF Academy members attend AFL GF thanks to Coles.

# Local community project



## Mallee Park FC, Port Lincoln SA

Eddie's football journey first began with the Mallee Park Aboriginal Football Club, with whom he has maintained a long and proud relationship. The club has fostered many AFL talents across the years, with players such as Eddie, Shaun Burgoyne, Daniel Wells, Lindsay Thomas and Isiah Dudley all hailing from this Port Lincoln powerhouse.

In 2025, EBF **upgraded the kitchen and canteen** at Mallee Park Football Club, modernising the facility and updating its functionality in order to:

- feed and fuel local youth participating in sports and mentoring programs;
- serve as a community meeting point for health education, meals, and community connection;
- provide a platform for skills training in hospitality, nutrition, and food handling; and,
- allow for better economic outcomes for the football club selling food on game day through the canteen.



# Family Feedback



Community voices underpin our evaluation approach, with positive family feedback recognised as the primary indicator of program success



“The Foundation truly understands what these young people need. It has created a safe pathway where our sons can be their authentic selves while learning and experiencing everything on offer. It is delivering on its purpose, and many of these boys will form lifelong friendships. The networks and experiences provided are incredible, and we are extremely grateful for these opportunities.”

“The Foundation went above and beyond to support our family during a relocation process. With their support, we were able to secure schooling and navigate the complex process of accessing financial assistance for living away from home.”

“The Academy is extremely supportive of families, particularly when it comes to funding flights and accommodation. These costs are significant barriers for many families, and this support gives young people life experiences they never thought possible. For those coming from bush and remote communities, visiting major cities is truly eye-opening.”



# Partners & Supporters

*We extend our sincere thanks to the partners, supporters, and families who make this work possible. Your commitment enables the delivery of culturally safe, high-impact programs and strengthens outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.*

*We also acknowledge the private individuals whose continued generosity provides vital, long-term support. Together, this shared commitment allows us to create meaningful, lasting impact across communities.*

Our deepest thank you.





**Hope lives here.**

We believe that young people hold the future in their hands.



**Opportunity lives here.**

Through immersive high performance experiences and showcase games, wrap-around personal support and advocacy, and connection to professional and educational networks, we walk with Foundation members toward their dreams.



**Change lives here.**

Where hope and opportunity meet, change is possible. We are not here to change the young people in our programs. We are here to support them as they change the world.



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