

Hearing Australia Corporate Plan FY 2027–30

Providing world leading research and hearing services
for the wellbeing of all Australians.

Acknowledgement of Country

Hearing Australia would like to acknowledge and pay our respect to the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live and work.

We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the longest continuing culture on Earth.

We extend our acknowledgement and respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples we work with and serve, now and into the future.

Our Commitment

We commit to empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at every opportunity to advance their health, wellbeing, and self-determination.

We commit to listening, learning, understanding, respecting, and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' diverse cultures and perspectives, and to reflecting this in how we work with community.

We commit to co-designing our services with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, peoples and communities to ensure they are holistic, culturally safe, and free from racism and discrimination, so communities can access the help they need, when they need it.

We will continuously improve the way we work and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, so that all people feel safe and respected.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers are critical to closing the gap in health outcomes. We are committed to increasing the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working with us, particularly in remote and regional communities.

We will demonstrate these commitments in our work across Australia, every day.

We will show this in how we engage with and serve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, through our corporate and business planning, and through implementing our Reconciliation Action Plan.

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Foreword

This Corporate Plan outlines Hearing Australia's delivery of world leading research and hearing services over the next four years.

Since our establishment in 1947 Hearing Australia has helped over two million children and adults experiencing hearing loss and driven research which has changed the lives of many more around the world.

From babies to the most senior members of our community, we work tirelessly to support those who live with a hearing loss and strive to prevent avoidable hearing loss.

Each week we help thousands of children and adults to hear better and to communicate with their families, their colleagues, and their communities. This is an important responsibility and a great privilege.

At the time of preparing this Corporate Plan we are on track to meet our commitments to our clients and to government for 2025-26 and to continue to grow our commercial operations.

Over the next four years we will build on this foundation to deliver even better services for our clients, partners and government.

We play a national leadership role in hearing health care, providing world-leading research services. We proudly invest some of our commercial profits into our Social Purpose Fund which supports vulnerable people who are ineligible for government-funded services.

We will enhance and expand our government-funded hearing services and continue to play a key role in improving the hearing health of First Nations children and adults.

We will strengthen the quality and breadth of our commercial services to enhance the support we provide our clients while ensuring our long-term financial sustainability.

Our people are our strength and we will continue to invest in them, our hearing centres, and in new products, technologies, data and artificial intelligence to help improve the services we provide now and into the future.

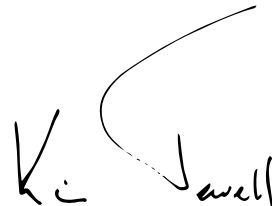
We maintain a strong focus on lifting productivity and financial management, allowing us to deliver annual profits that we can invest in enhancing services for our clients and the communities we support.

We're excited by what we can achieve over the coming years and thank the Australian Government and our partners for their support, guidance and shared commitment to improving the lives of children and adults living with hearing loss. It is only through partnerships that we can achieve our objective of improving the hearing health of the many Australians who rely on us.

Thank you again for your support.



Elizabeth Crouch AM
Chair



Kim Terrell
Managing Director

27 April 2026

Introduction

The Board of Hearing Australia (the Board), as the accountable authority, advises that:

- this Corporate Plan (the Plan) has been prepared in accordance with the *Australian Hearing Services Act (1991)* (the AHS Act), the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act (2013)* (the PGPA Act) and with section 16E of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (PGPA Rule)*
- the Plan covers the four-year period from 2026–27 to 2029–30, and
- the reporting period for the Plan is the year beginning on 1 July 2026 and ending on 30 June 2027.

Overview

The AHS Act requires the delivery of the Plan to the responsible Minister and the Minister for Finance at least 60 days before the start of the first reporting period to which the Plan relates.

This Plan outlines how Hearing Australia will achieve its goals over the next four years by:

- playing a national leadership role in hearing healthcare
- enhancing our government-funded services
- growing our commercial business, and
- strengthening our organisation.

This public version of our Corporate Plan has been edited prior to publication to remove commercially sensitive information, consistent with Section 16E(4) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.

Why we exist

Our purpose and functions

Hearing Australia is a corporate Commonwealth entity and accountable to the Minister for Health and Ageing and Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Our functions are defined under Section 8 of the AHS Act. These include:

- the provision of hearing services to eligible clients under the Australian Government's Hearing Services Program (HSP) and to designated persons eligible under the Community Service Obligations (CSO) Program – including children, young adults, adults with complex needs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- the provision of hearing services to Comcare clients and Commonwealth employees
- entering into arrangements for the supply, research, design and development of hearing services, including providing services to anyone with a hearing loss
- carrying out research
- providing advice, education, training and consultancy services in relation to hearing services, and
- any functions incidental to these functions.

The AHS Act also sets out a range of governance obligations and operational requirements for the organisation.

This means we work closely with Australian Government departments, agencies, and numerous partners to ensure our research and hearing services are of the highest standard and deliver improved hearing health outcomes for the community.

We support initiatives to prevent hearing loss and advocate for improved access to, and quality of, hearing services across Australia.

Our First Nations Services Team coordinates the delivery of our services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities nationwide, including in metropolitan, regional and remote areas.

We also run campaigns and events to raise public awareness of the importance of good hearing health.

Our research division – the National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL) – regularly produces internationally recognised research on hearing health and collaborates with global partners on innovative products and clinical resources.

Our Operating Environment

Introduction

The Australian hearing healthcare market is valued at around AUD \$1.6 billion per annum, with about 42 per cent of services funded by the Australian Government through the Hearing Services Program with the remaining services paid by individuals¹.

It is also a rapidly changing and highly competitive marketplace. As such, we must anticipate and respond to:

- global economic trends and a marketplace dominated by several large, multinational manufacturers and retailers and their subsidiaries, as well as emerging non-traditional competitors
- ongoing technological advancements, particularly in artificial intelligence (AI), enhancing hearing solutions and business operations
- the increasing use of data to inform and personalise healthcare, coupled with changes to service models
- the evolving needs and expectations of Australia's ageing population, which is living longer, remaining more active later in life, and shifting from reliance on the age pension to self-funded retirement
- broader Australian Government budgetary and policy priorities
- a tighter labour market, where the demand for people with the skills critical to our success is high and likely to remain so into the future, and
- the need to focus on integrity, reconciliation and support for our First Nations peoples, and
- our environmental, social and governance responsibilities.

Hearing loss

Over 3.6 million Australians have some level of hearing loss and this is forecast to double to 7.8 million people by 2060².

This is a major economic, social and health care challenge impacting all levels of society and compounded by increasing evidence of the risks associated with untreated hearing loss.

It is also estimated that around 40 per cent of Australians aged 50 and over have some form of bilateral hearing impairment³.

Untreated hearing loss can profoundly impact individuals, their ability to communicate and their access to education and employment. It can also result in social isolation, loneliness and stigma, and has been associated with increased risks of cognitive impairment and dementia.

Hearing loss also has a disproportionate impact on First Nations children and adults, with 37 per cent of young First Nations children having undiagnosed ear health disease and 20 per cent having undiagnosed hearing loss⁴. Recent data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare highlights the considerable burden of ear disease and hearing loss on First Nations communities across Australia, especially in regional and remote locations⁵.

Our clients

In 2025-26 Hearing Australia will provide care to approximately 260,000 children and adults living with hearing loss, including helping ten babies each week hear for the first time.

Our clients are at the heart of everything we do. We deliver accessible, high-impact hearing solutions tailored to diverse needs, ensuring exceptional service, regardless of financial circumstances, age or location.

1. Dept of Health, HSP program statistics and internal estimates

2. Deloitte Access Economics (2017). The social and economic cost of hearing loss in Australia

3. The Australian Eye & Ear Health Survey, Sep2025

4. HAPEE Review 2019-2025

5. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2025).

Our national leadership role

Hearing Australia delivers important services on behalf of the Australian Government and is committed to working with government and our partners to help shape and deliver policies and programs which improve Australian's hearing health.

Our research division – the National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL) – conducts a wide range of projects funded by the Australian Government, partners, and Hearing Australia. NAL's research spans real-world listening from infancy to older adults, smarter clinical tools including AI, and culturally appropriate solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. NAL is at the forefront of the latest applications of research and technology and recently launched the NAL-NL3 fitting system, now adopted across 90 per cent of the global hearing aid market and set to benefit millions of people with hearing loss.

We also seek to support vulnerable people who cannot access government-funded hearing help through our Social Purpose Fund. During

2025-26 we will invest over \$1 million in providing services via the Social Purpose Fund to children on temporary visas, First Nations adults who have hearing loss and were otherwise ineligible for government-funded services, and unemployed adults who hold a Health Care Card. We are committed to expand these services over the next four years.

Our government-funded services

We provide government-funded hearing services to over 67,000 people each year under the Community Service Obligations Program. Our clients include:

- children and young adults under the age of 26 years
- adults with complex hearing needs, and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults aged over 50 years or who are participating in Community Development Programs.

We also provide government-funded services to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants.

Our First Nations Outreach Services team is dedicated to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and partners to prevent and treat hearing loss in First Nations children and adults. The team visits more than 300 First Nations communities each year to deliver hearing services and support.

We also provide government-funded diagnostic screening services to First Nations children aged 0 to 6 years and who have not yet started school. We have seen over 60,000 young First Nations children over the past seven years in urban, regional and remote locations across Australia finding that approximately 37 per cent of these children have undiagnosed ear disease and 20 per cent have undiagnosed hearing loss.

Our First Nations Action Plan, which has multi-year commitments, guides us to work in partnership with Australia's First Nations peoples to improve the hearing health of First Nations children.

This involves working closely with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and more than 100 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, along with a range of early education community partners.

Our commercial services

In 2025–26 we will provide commercial hearing services to over 178,000 clients across Australia.

This includes people who are eligible for services under the Hearing Services Program such as:

- pension concession card holders
- recipients of Centrelink sickness allowance
- holders of a Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold and White Card,
- current and former members of the Australian Defence Force who have tinnitus.

In addition, we provide high-quality hearing services and solutions to those adults who are not eligible for the HSP, for example, self-funded retirees.

We also run campaigns and events to raise public awareness of the importance of good hearing health, providing education and resources to treat and help prevent avoidable hearing loss.

Our people and our organisation

Our people are at the heart of our success and our values – Care, Excellence, Integrity and Relentless Improvement – reflect the behaviours and culture we desire and exemplify.

We also strive to be an employer of choice, fostering a highly engaged, skilled and dedicated workforce. We are committed to investing in our people, recognising and rewarding high performance and creating an inclusive workplace. We will be finalising our sixth Reconciliation Action Plan over the coming months, reflecting our long and deep commitment to advancing reconciliation within our organisation, our partners and our community.

We are committed to further strengthening Hearing Australia through the use of current and emerging technologies. We've recently implemented an AI tool to support our clinicians and will continue to use AI and data to deliver better client services and solutions for our people.

Our partners

Hearing Australia collaborates closely with a diverse network of partners across Australia and internationally.

We are committed to working with the Australian Government and our partners to increase the impact, reach and value of our services.

Our success is due to the support of many individuals, organisations and partners. We thank them for their support and remain committed to continuing to grow, strengthen and deepen these relationships.

Our Strategic Focus

This Plan sets out how Hearing Australia will achieve its strategic objectives over the next four years and build on our success to date.

Strategic Pillars

Hearing Australia's four strategic pillars will be the foundation for the organisation's success over the next four years.

These remain as:

- providing national leadership in hearing healthcare
- enhancing our government funded services
- growing our commercial business, and
- strengthening our organisation.

Table 1: Our Immediate Priorities

National leadership in hearing healthcare	Enhance our government funded services	Grow our commercial business	Strengthen our organisation
A1. We will work with the Australian Government and our partners to improve the hearing health of the nation.	B1. We will improve the hearing health of First Nations children.	C1. We will deliver sustainable commercial revenue growth through improved productivity, performance, and client experience.	D1. We will invest in our people, processes and systems to improve performance and engagement.
A2. Through NAL, we will deliver an outstanding research program to improve the lives of people living with hearing loss.	B2. We will optimise the delivery of the CSO program.	C2. We will grow our commercial client base by optimising investment in centres, marketing, referral and digital channels	D2. We will deliver against strong commitments to social responsibility, governance and sustainability
A3. We will invest in and expand our Social Purpose Fund activities to support vulnerable people ineligible for other Government funded hearing services.	B3. We will provide current and former serving members of the Australian Defence Force with outstanding tinnitus treatment.		

Strategic Pillar 1: Providing national leadership in hearing healthcare

Hearing Australia delivers important services on behalf of the Australian Government and is committed to working with the Government and our partners to help shape and deliver policies and programs which improve the hearing health of Australians and increase the value of these services to the taxpayer.

Our key priorities under this pillar are:

A1. Working with the Australian Government and our partners to improve the hearing health of the nation. We will provide leadership on key issues critical to national hearing health, advocating for policy settings and funding arrangements which support better hearing health outcomes.

A2. Advancing research to improve the lives of people with hearing loss. We will continue to invest in and support our research division, the National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL), to conduct world-class research which delivers meaningful impact. By continuing to strengthen NAL's role as a leader in hearing health research, we aim to deliver outcomes that benefit Hearing Australia, the Australian Government, our partners, and people living with hearing loss in Australia and overseas.

A3. Re-investing profit for purpose. We will expand our Social Purpose Fund activities, reinvesting some of the profit generated from our commercial operations, to support vulnerable people who are ineligible for other government-funded hearing services.

Strategic Pillar 2: Enhancing our government funded services

Hearing Australia is dedicated to enhancing the delivery of its government-funded services to provide even greater value to the Australian Government and taxpayer. We are committed to improving the hearing health of First Nations children, meeting the needs of CSO clients and maximising the value of the CSO program.

Our key priorities under this pillar are:

B1. Improving the hearing health of First Nations children. We will maximise the value of the government's investment in the HAPEE program and ensure it continues to improve the hearing health of young First Nations children. We will also work with the government to ensure that there is ongoing funding for the delivery of this critical program and services.

B2. Optimising the delivery of the CSO Program. We will continue to refine the delivery of the CSO Program to ensure that our services and resources are maximised across our network of hearing centres and Outreach communities. We will also strengthen activities which build awareness and understanding of the CSO Program. We will continue to work with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to ensure the Program remains appropriately resourced and sustainable into the future.

B3. Providing current and former serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) with outstanding tinnitus treatment. We will work closely with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the ADF to ensure our tinnitus services and support are accessible and help those impacted to improve the management of their condition and their health and wellbeing.

Strategic Pillar 3: Growing our commercial business

We are committed to growing our commercial business by making it easier for our commercial clients to access our services. This will support our financial sustainability and provide greater opportunity for us to invest our national research and our Social Purpose Fund.

Our key priorities in this area are:

C1. Driving strong commercial revenue growth and profitability. We will maximise the value and sustainability of our commercial business by improving productivity, performance, and client experience. This includes evolving how we retain and serve clients, shaping our service and product offerings to better meet commercial client needs, competitive pricing, and maximising the client experience and performance of our hearing centres.

C2. Increasing client reach and value. We will grow our commercial client base by making it easier for new clients to access and choose Hearing Australia. This includes building brand value and lifting the effectiveness of our marketing strategies. We will target areas of growing commercial demand, strengthening referral channels, establishing new commercial partner agreements, and investing in our network of hearing centres, our call centre and our digital services to attract new clients.

Strategic Pillar 4: Strengthening our organisation

Hearing Australia aspires to be a high performing organisation that delivers on its commitments to its people, our clients, the Australian Government and the broader community. Over the next four years we will continue to strengthen our organisation and contribute to social and environmental sustainability.

Our key priorities in this area are:

D1. Enhancing our workforce and digital capabilities. We will continue to invest in our people and provide training to uplift their capability. We recognise and reward our people for high performance and provide an inclusive workplace which reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. We will continue to invest in digital and ethical AI capabilities to simplify and automate our processes, and improve access to and the quality of, our services.

D2. Upholding integrity, social and environmental responsibility. We will maintain our reputation as an organisation that values integrity, including meeting in full our governance, legal and policy requirements, strengthening our commitments to social responsibility, promoting reconciliation with Australia's First Nations peoples, and reducing our environmental impact and greenhouse gas emissions.

Our Governance Arrangements

The Board of Hearing Australia is established under the AHS Act and consists of a Chair, the Managing Director, up to four Non-Executive Directors and additional Special Purpose Directors.

The Board's functions under the AHS Act are to decide the objectives, strategies and policies to be followed by Hearing Australia and to ensure that the organisation performs its functions in a proper, efficient and economical manner.

The Board reports to the Minister for Health and Ageing and Minister for Disability and the NDIS, who is responsible for making appointments to the Board.

The Board is currently supported by four committees:

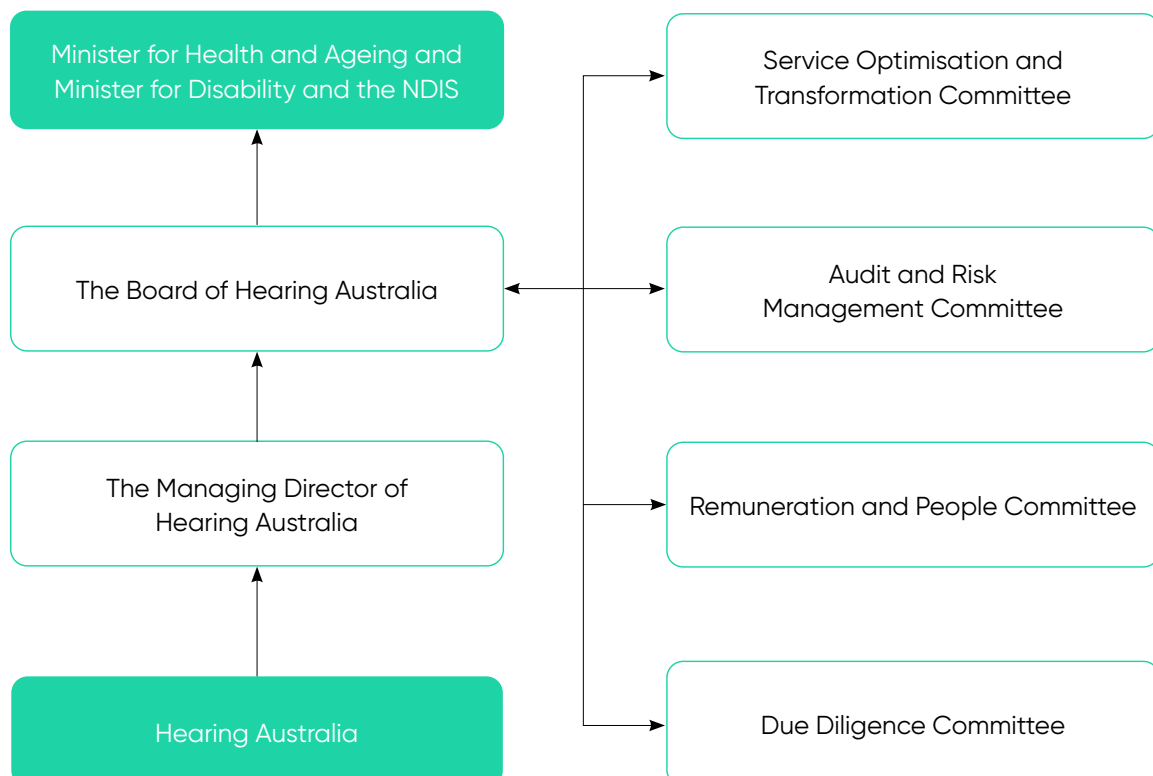
- the Audit and Risk Management Committee,
- the Service Optimisation and Transformation Committee,
- the Remuneration and People Committee, and
- the Due Diligence Committee.

The Board and its Committees meet on a regular basis and maintain a strong level of guidance and oversight of the organisation and its operations.

This includes a focus on Hearing Australia's:

- operational and financial performance
- progress against key initiatives and key performance indicators
- clinical quality and client outcomes
- risk management and compliance programs, including in relation to fraud and corruption
- internal audit program and compliance with Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)
- requirements and PGPA Act requirements, and
- reporting to the Minister for Health and Ageing and Minister for Disability and the NDIS.

The Board is committed to ongoing professional development and is updated regularly on emerging governance issues, government policy changes and the implications for Hearing Australia. The Board may also appoint additional independent members to Board committees, where required, to ensure that it has timely access to key skills and experience.



Risk Management

Hearing Australia manages risk in accordance with section 16 of the PGPA Act, the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy, and the international standard ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management—Guidelines.

The Board and the Audit and Risk Management Committee oversee risk management, with the support of the Chief Risk Officer. Members of the Executive Team are also responsible for managing risks within their business and operational units.

Our approach to risk

We recognise that risk management is an integral part of good business and are committed to building a culture where conscious and deliberate consideration of risk is an integral part of our way of working.

Hearing Australia manages risks as part of our strategic and operational business planning. Risks are assessed and mitigation actions taken in line with the Board's Risk Appetite and Hearing Australia's purpose and strategic priorities.

Hearing Australia's Risk Management Policy ensures a clear and consistent approach to risk is applied across our business. The Risk Management Framework also helps our people actively manage risk in their day-to-day work.

Our strategic risks

The Executive Team regularly reviews the organisation's strategic risks and reports to the Audit and Risk Management Committee on a quarterly basis. All strategic risks are assigned a risk owner from the Executive Team and reported to the Board. Risk owners must ensure risks are actively managed, with emerging threats and opportunities identified, escalated as appropriate and addressed.

Our Performance Measures

This section of the Plan is prepared in accordance with item 4(c) of the table in subsection 16E(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* and Section 38 of the AHS Act.

The tables in **Attachment A** outline the performance activities and targets which Hearing Australia will use during 2026–27 to 2029–2030. The indicators used this year have been updated to better align with our growth aspirations and our overall strategy and will provide the framework we use to measure our business performance.

These performance indicators and metrics will be monitored regularly by management and the Board.

ATTACHMENT A – Performance metrics

The following table outlines Hearing Australia’s key performance metrics for the next four years. These metrics are adjusted each year to ensure they remain aligned with, and support, the key priorities in the Corporate Plan. These measures have been developed based on the assumption that Australia will not experience any significant economic shocks over the next four years.

Strategic Pillars	Performance Measurement	Estimates 2025-26	Target 2026-27	Target 2027-28	Target 2028-29	Target 2029-30
National Leadership role in hearing health reforms	1. Quality of advice and support to government and partners	On Track	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved
	2. Dissemination of NAL research through Papers and Conference presentations	30	30	30	30	30
	3. Social Purpose Fund	200	230	280	Subject to arrangement	Subject to arrangement
Enhance delivery of government funded programs	4. Combined client satisfaction rates	86	86-90	86-90	86-90	86-90
	5. Number of CSO clients seen	68,000	70,000	71,000	72,000	73,000
	6. Number of First Nations children aged 0-6 years seen	13,000	6,000	Subject to funding	Subject to funding	Subject to funding
	7. Number of First Nations communities visited	270	270	270	270	270
Grow our Commercial business	8. Number of commercial clients seen	178,000	183,000	188,000	195,000	201,000
Strengthen our organisation	9. Staff engagement survey results	70+	70+	70+	70+	70+

Key Assumptions:

- These figures are best estimates as at March 2026.
- These estimates assume ongoing funding for the delivery of the Australian Government Community Service Obligations Program.

About the artist

Artwork created by Davinder Hart who is an Aboriginal artist born in Perth, Western Australia. His family roots connect from Bibbulmun and Katanning in the south west region of the Noongar people.

