



**Polly  
Farmer**  
Follow the Dream



**Successful Education. Successful Life.**

Highlights from the 2024 *Follow the Dream*  
Social Impact Report



# Measuring What Matters

## Independent Research by ThirdStory

The Polly Farmer Foundation partnered with ThirdStory to research the social impact of *Follow the Dream*, our academic enrichment program for aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students.

The evaluation reached hundreds of people across Australia, including:



**130**  
current  
students



**24**  
recent  
alumni



**42**  
family  
members



**19**  
Program  
Coordinators

Participants came from metro and regional areas across Australia where *Follow the Dream* is delivered. Their stories build a national picture of *Follow the Dream*'s reach, relevance and long-term impact.

# What the Evaluation Told Us

*Follow the Dream* is delivering lasting impact in the classroom and beyond.

Grounded in culture, driven by purpose and backed by community—the program continues to show what's possible when the right supports are in place.

## Here's what stands out:

- Students in *Follow the Dream* attend school more often and achieve better results than their non-participating peers.
- More students are completing Year 12, attaining WACE and qualifying for ATAR.
- Confidence, cultural identity and a sense of connection are clear outcomes of the program.
- Alumni are pursuing university, TAFE, and meaningful careers.
- Families and Coordinators see the impact lasting well beyond the classroom.



The results are clear. *Follow the Dream* is empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to succeed on their own terms and is shaping a stronger, more equitable future in the process.

“Without *Follow the Dream*, I wouldn't have built my resume, finished Year 12. I'd probably still be living with my grandmother or brother. I definitely wouldn't have the life I have now if it wasn't for *Follow the Dream*.”

– *Follow the Dream* alumnus



# The Evidence Is In

Real results from a program that works.

## This is what impact looks like:



**72%** of *Follow the Dream* Year 12 students achieved WACE in 2024. [Compared to 43% all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students\*]



**96%** of alumni said the program encouraged them to aim higher after school



**100%** said *Follow the Dream* helped them follow their dream

“*Follow the Dream* has given me a support system within school and encouraged me to aim for pathways I never thought I was capable of before joining the program.”

– *Follow the Dream* student





**88%** said it made them more confident

“Being able to graduate school—I attribute most of that to *Follow the Dream*. I know I wouldn’t have finished school without that after-school tutoring.”

– *Follow the Dream* alumnus



**75%** of alumni and **55%** of current students said it made school more enjoyable

“I really like the community *Follow the Dream* provides — the ability to connect to culture and learn from other Indigenous people.”

– *Follow the Dream* alumnus



**74%** of students said they know they can turn to program staff for help

“If it wasn’t for *Follow the Dream*, I might not have finished school... I would’ve gotten into more trouble than I did.”

– *Follow the Dream* alumnus

“I wouldn’t have gone to uni if it wasn’t for *Follow the Dream*.”

– *Follow the Dream* alumnus

**These outcomes show what’s possible when students are backed by a program that’s aspirational, academic and culturally responsive.**

# What Makes the Dream Work

*Follow the Dream* delivers results because it combines academic support and trusted relationships.

## Why it Works:



### Local leadership

Coordinators know their schools and build trusted relationships that help students thrive.



### Long-term support

The program supports students across multiple years. That consistency makes a difference.



### Personalised approach

Support is shaped to each student's goals.



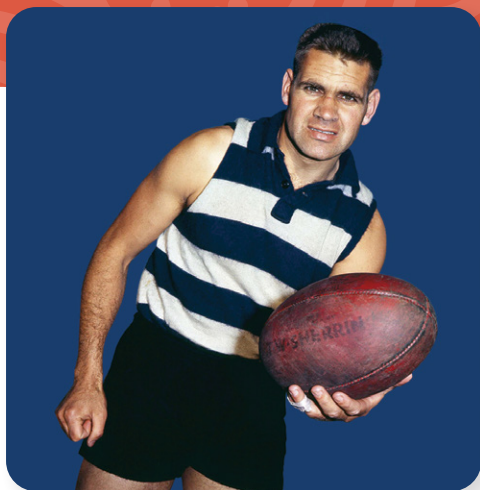
### Strong partnerships

Schools, families and partners work alongside the program to back student success.



"Critically, the evaluation praises the *Follow the Dream* program as 'a best-practice model for Aboriginal education support', noting that it delivers outcomes through consistent, long-term investment and strong local partnerships."

– 2024 Impact Evaluation Report Summary



## **Polly Farmer & Follow the Dream**

We see what you can be

Established in 1994, the Polly Farmer Foundation empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through education.

Our *Follow the Dream* program supports students to build confidence, achieve at school, and pursue meaningful post-school pathways. Today, we operate in more than 150 schools across the country, supporting over 3,000 students each year.

We work in close partnership with families, schools, and communities to create inclusive, culturally responsive environments where students can thrive.



"Education is the key for Aboriginal people to take their rightful place in modern Australian society."

– Graham "Polly" Farmer, Foundation Founder





Polly  
Farmer  
Foundation



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