

# NGEN

AWARD

## CHARITY BRIEF

In support of



**Down The Track**  
#Wevegotthis

## BACKGROUND

Lake Cargelligo is one of those towns most Australians have never heard of. Yet it holds one of the most powerful stories of community-led change in the country. Down The Track (DTT), a grassroots youth charity working alongside vulnerable and disengaged young people, is transforming the town's historic Royal Mail Hotel into a hub for jobs, training, culture and opportunity. But before the doors open in 2027, the story needs to be told.

Our challenge is to get Australians to care about Lake Cargelligo long before the hotel reopens. Not just to pass through. But to show up, spend time, and support something bigger than themselves.

## ABOUT DOWN THE TRACK

Down The Track is a youth charity based in Lake Cargelligo and Murrin Bridge in regional NSW. The organisation works with young people aged 8-24 who are disengaged from school, employment, or community. Approximately 90% of participants are Aboriginal young people, making Country, culture and community leadership central to the program's success.

Their work focuses on early intervention, practical support and real opportunity, including:

- Back to Basics - helping young people access IDs, bank accounts and licenses
- Helping Hand Mentoring - youth justice support and connection to services
- Trackin' Good Work - experience, training and employment pathways through social enterprises

They also reconnect young people with Country through agriculture, land care and environmental regeneration.

Down The Track doesn't just prevent harm. It restores dignity, connection and future opportunity.  
Website: [downthetrack.org.au](http://downthetrack.org.au)

## A NEW CHAPTER: THE ROYAL MAIL HOTEL

Down The Track has taken ownership of the historic Royal Mail Hotel in Lake Cargelligo. Once a central part of the town's identity, the building had fallen into disrepair. The restoration project will transform it into a community hub, a pub with no beer, designed to create jobs, training and pride for the region.

When complete in mid-2027, the Royal Mail will include:

- Hospitality training and employment spaces
- Social enterprise café and restaurant
- Community and event spaces
- Art gallery and cultural programming
- Accommodation for visitors and workers
- Youth transition-to-independent living accommodation
- A greenhouse and aquaponics system producing fresh food year-round
- Community gardens and cultural spaces

The project has received support from government and philanthropic partners and has been described locally as "the best thing to happen in the town in the last decade." It is more than a pub restoration. It is a symbol of what happens when communities invest in their young people.

## THE STRATEGIC CHALLENGE

Australia is full of small towns with good intentions but few capture national attention. Lake Cargelligo has a remarkable story of youth leadership and community change. Yet today:

- Most Australians have never heard of the town
- The Royal Mail Hotel will not open until 2027
- Regional travel is driven by known destinations

So, our challenge is clear: How do we get Australians emotionally invested about a place they've never heard of before it's even ready to welcome them?

## THE CULTURAL INSIGHT

Australians increasingly want their travel to mean something. They want experiences that connect them to people, culture and place, not just scenery. But most tourism marketing still sells destinations as places to consume, not communities to support.

Lake Cargelligo offers something different. A destination where visiting is not just about seeing somewhere new. It's about standing alongside a community rebuilding its future.

## THE OBJECTIVE

Build national awareness and interest in Lake Cargelligo and the Royal Mail Hotel story. Inspire Australians to:

- Follow the journey before opening
- Support Down The Track's work
- Visit Lake Cargelligo once the project is complete

This is tourism communications with intent. Generating interest for travel that backs community, culture and young people.

## A PROVOCATION

Most tourism campaigns invite Australians to visit beautiful places. This brief asks something different: How do you get Australians to care about a place before they ever go there?

## THE TARGET AUDIENCE

Primary Audience: People who believe travel should mean something. They are likely to:

- Seek out regional or slow travel experiences
- Care about Indigenous culture and community outcomes
- Value purpose-driven tourism
- Discover destinations through stories and recommendations
- Share meaningful travel experiences with others

## THE TARGET AUDIENCE (CONT.)

They are not traditional tourists. They are curious explorers, cultural participants and storytellers.

### Secondary Audiences

- Tourism platforms and travel operators
- Media and editorial outlets
- Regional communities
- Brands interested in purpose-driven partnerships

## THE TASK

Develop a bold communications plan that builds national interest in Lake Cargelligo and the Royal Mail store before the hotel even opens.

Your response should include:

- A clear communications idea
- How the idea works across channels
- A realistic implementation approach
- A measurement framework

## OWNED ASSETS & CHANNELS

Website - <https://downthetrack.org.au/>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/LCMBDownthetrack/>

LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/down-the-track>

Instagram - [https://www.instagram.com/downthetrack /](https://www.instagram.com/downthetrack/)

## TONE OF VOICE & PRINCIPLES

### Yes:

Respectful  
Inclusive  
Grounded  
Honest  
Proud but not performative  
First Nations leadership  
Place-based storytelling

### No:

Poverty porn  
Extractive storytelling  
White-saviour narratives  
Simplistic "regional Australia" clichés

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Ideas should demonstrate how they could deliver against the following:

### Future Impact

Build a **qualified audience of potential future visitors** who have demonstrated intent to visit Lake Cargelligo

### Awareness (Cut-through at a national level)

Increase national awareness of Down the Track from 0% to 5% prompted awareness

### Engagement (Building an active following, not passive reach)

Grow social audience from **1.9K to 5k followers**

### Action (Driving meaningful intent, not just interest)

Drive **15,000 visits** to Down The Track

Generate **5,000+ high-intent actions**, such as:

- Itinerary views or trip planning behaviours
- Email sign-ups or updates to subscriptions
- Extended time spent engaging with the story

### Important Note

Targets should be considered in line with the proposed communications idea and channel approach. Entrants are encouraged to define how they would measure success in a way that reflects both **cultural impact and real-world outcomes**, not just reach.

## BUDGET & TIMING

Total communications budget: \$250,000

Timing: Early to mid-2027

Current partnerships include UnLtd.

## FINAL THOUGHT

You won't find Lake Cargelligo on most bucket lists.

But once you hear the story, you may want to be part of it. This isn't just a tourism idea. It's an invitation for Australians to support a community rebuilding its future.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

### JOB TO BE DONE

**(20%)**

- Is the challenge or opportunity clearly defined?
- Are the objectives specific, measurable, and relevant?
- Do we understand exactly what success looks like, and why comms matters?

### STRATEGY: AUDIENCE AND INSIGHTS

**(35%)**

- Is there a clear understanding of the target audience?
- Does the entry uncover a genuine, compelling insight?
- Is there a single, strong communications idea driving the approach?
- Is the idea distinctive and innovative within the category?
- Does the strategy clearly link back to the objectives?
- Is there a coherent channel strategy flowing from the idea?
- Does the thinking feel sharp, intentional, and hard to replicate?

### COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

**(25%)**

- Are the roles of each channel clearly defined and connected?
- Does the idea meaningfully shape how each channel is used?
- Is the plan integrated, not just a collection of tactics?
- Is the approach feasible and appropriate to the budget?
- Could this realistically be executed, and does every channel earn its place?

### MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

**(20%)**

- Is there a clear, robust measurement framework?
- Are metrics directly linked to the stated objectives?
- Does the entry demonstrate impact, not just activity?
- Is there evidence of effectiveness and contribution?

## SCORING GUIDE

SCORE RANGE	RATING	DESCRIPTION
90-100%	Exceptional	Truly groundbreaking; exceeds all expectations; sets a new standard.
80-89%	Excellent	Highly impressive; strongly meets criteria with notable strength.
70-79%	Outstanding	Very strong entry; solid work with meaningful impact and creativity.
60-69%	Commendable	Good effort; meets basic standards with potential for growth or refinement.
50-59%	Developing	Shows promise but lacks in key areas such as impact, innovation, or execution.

## AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON THE USE OF AI

The judges will consider if AI has been used as a tool to enhance thinking, rather than replace it. Entries should demonstrate original, human-led strategic thinking, not generic or templated outputs that could be generated from the same prompt.



## ENTRY RULES AND CONDITIONS

You must be a registered member of NGEN at the time of the entry deadline (28 July 2026).

Entries must be submitted on an individual basis or as a team (maximum two people) via <https://mfa.awardsplatform.com>. Please note, one trophy will be presented to the winner(s) on the night.

The NGEN category is not eligible for the Grand Prix Award.

No entrant company branding including reference to company name and/or logo is allowed. Do not include your name anywhere within your entry written submission.

Entries must not exceed 1000 words. Appendices, graphs, and media schedules are not included in the 1000-word limit.

More than one entry may be submitted into the NGEN category however each entry will incur a \$160 incl GST entry fee. Entries are due by 5pm 28 July 2026. No Extensions will be given.

The information contained in this brief is commercial in confidence and entrants should act with utmost integrity in how they treat the charities insights.

Shortlisted entrants will be asked to present live to a panel of judges at NGEN Award Day on 19 August. During this time entrants will present their response to the brief, take questions, and receive feedback.

NGEN Award Day will take place in-person in Melbourne and Sydney on August 19, locations will be confirmed nearer the date.

Those selected from the NGEN Award Day presentations will progress as this years' finalists and will be notified after NGEN Award Day.

Finalists will be required to provide a summary of their entry to be used for NGEN Award promotion. Details on the parameters will be provided to the relevant entrants when finalists are notified.

The entrant grants MFA permission to show the entries at The MFA Awards Presentation and at such times as deemed appropriate. The entrant agrees that The MFA will not accept responsibility for errors or omissions reproduced in the Presentation or for work lost or damaged under any circumstances.

All entries and their content will become the property of the charity following the Awards.