

April 2026



*Pictured: Worick Davis & Derrick McKenzie in front of the new KMS road train.*

## From Humble Beginnings to a Multi-Million Dollar Business

**In less than a decade, Kokatha Mining Services (KMS) has grown from humble beginnings into a thriving and respected business supporting major projects across the region.**

KMS bought its first modest fleet - three water trucks, a roller and a grader during the 2016 -2017 Financial Year. Today the business has expanded to employ 27 staff, who operate a modern fleet of machinery, reflecting the strong demand for its services and the capability of its team.

The latest milestone in this journey is the arrival of KMS' very first road train – a Volvo prime mover that will transport potable water from Port Augusta to the Pimba Intermodal Facility seven days a week.

The new truck supports a major contract with BHP linked to the \$100 million Pimba Intermodal Terminal currently being developed by Aurizon.

Once complete, the facility will connect BHP's Olympic Dam and other mines to Port Adelaide via rail.

The road train is not only a valuable addition to the KMS fleet but also a powerful symbol of culture and pride. It features artwork by Kokatha artist Presten Warren, showcasing Kokatha culture as it travels across Country. KMS' growth is also creating new opportunities for Kokatha people. Four Kokatha team members have been contracted to work with Aurizon at the facility, supporting operations including dust suppression and unloading trains. These roles ensure Kokatha people continue to play an active part in major developments happening on their land. KMS Manager Mick Davis says the journey over the past few years has been remarkable.

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*From Humble Beginnings to a Multi-Million dollar Business; Following in her Grandfather's Footsteps; Chairperson's Report; KAC Sponsorship helps Rising Kokatha Basketball Star; Community Events Survey; Positions Vacant.*

## From Humble Beginnings to a Multi-Million Dollar Business (continued)

*Pictured below: Kirsty Sultan - the first female operator to be employed at KMS - in front of the Aurizon water tanker she drives, as part of a new labour hire arrangement.*

'When I look back, it's incredible to see how far we've come,' he says 'From our early days with a small fleet, to building the dome at Carapateena, and now expanding with our first road train. Our team has worked hard to get us here and I'm proud of what we've achieved together.'

Today, every KMS truck on the road is a visible reminder of Kokatha pride, capability and opportunity. As KMS continues to grow, it remains focused on creating jobs, building skills and delivering strong outcomes for the Kokatha community.



## Following in her Grandfather's Footsteps

**Growing up, Kirsty Sultan always looked up to her grandfather, respected Kokatha Elder and loader operator Abdul Sultan. 'I just always admired him and thought, I want to be like him when I grow up,' Kirsty says.**

At the time, many people told her operating machinery was 'a man's job'. But Kirsty never let that stop her.

'I've always liked proving people wrong,' she says with a smile.

Today, thanks to her determination, hard work and the support of her mum Tania Sultan, Kirsty has achieved her childhood dream – becoming the first female operator at Kokatha Mining Services (KMS).

'As a Kokatha woman, it feels really special to be employed by KMS and to be able to work on Country every day in a job I love,' she says. 'I could never have done it without my Mum though, she's been a constant support.'

Kirsty is one of four Kokatha people recently recruited to KMS and contracted to work with Aurizon as part of a new labour hire arrangement. She is currently driving a water truck and says she has quickly settled into the role.

'I love the work and I'm really proud to be part of the KMS team,' she says. 'All the guys have been really welcoming and positive about having me onboard.'

## Following in her Grandfather's Footsteps (continued)

Kirsty is no stranger to working in what has traditionally been a male-dominated industry. She began her career at Olympic Dam when she was just 25 years old, at a time when there were very few women working in mining.

'I actually started in admin, but it really wasn't for me,' Kirsty laughs. 'Before long I was driving trucks underground. These days there are a lot more women doing that work, but back then there weren't many at all.' Her career then took her to Iron Knob, where she operated dump trucks and loaders, before moving to the Whyalla steelworks to work in a production role.

When she saw a position advertised at KMS, the decision to apply was an easy one.

'I thought, well I love operating and I'm Kokatha, so why not?' she says.

Kirsty is mum to a teenage son and a four-year-old daughter, and says her family is incredibly proud of her new role.

'They come up and see me at work and it's really special to be able to tell them that Mum's working on Kokatha Country, doing a job she loves,' she says.

Kirsty hopes her journey will inspire other young Kokatha women to pursue careers in the industry too.

'If you're passionate about operating and working on your Country, just go for it,' she says. 'It's really rewarding.'



*Pictured: KAC Chairperson  
Nyani Thomas*

## Chairperson's Report

It's been a busy start to the year for the KAC Board, and we're sharing our first newsletter for 2026. Improving communication with the community is a priority, and this year there will be a stronger focus on keeping everyone informed about what's happening.

Over recent months, the Board has needed to prioritise several major pieces of work. This includes finalising the Strategic Plan, completing the CEO recruitment process, and addressing complex structural matters across KAC, Kokatha Enterprises (KE) and Kokatha Pastoral (KP). While this work has taken time and careful consideration, progress is being made. This newsletter reflects our commitment to more regular and clear communication going forward. We are pleased to confirm the appointment of a new CEO, Jason Davison, who has commenced with KAC this month. We welcome Jason and look forward to working with him. We also acknowledge transitioning CEO John Hender and the significant progress achieved during his tenure. A handover is underway and will be completed over the coming weeks.

Work continues on the structure of KAC, KE and KP. All Boards have participated in two joint sessions, and we are now moving into implementation, with a target to progress this work by the end of April.

The Strategic Plan remains a key focus. Thank you to community members who attended information sessions and provided input.

The plan is now being finalised and prepared for release, after which it will move into implementation.

The Board is also reviewing the current status of the Ranger Program and Healthy Country Plan, including documentation, staffing and compliance.

We welcome Sam Stuart as the newly appointed Head Ranger Coordinator.

Following the Station Manager stepping down, a handover has been completed with new station overseer Brian Boland. We thank Adam and Jolene Wagner for their contribution over many years and wish them well.

The Board is working to reconvene the Culture and Heritage Committee (CHC). A draft framework is being developed to guide how the CHC and Board work together, with the aim of holding the first meeting for the year soon.

Alongside this, the Board continues to focus on heritage matters, partnerships, agreement negotiations and financial oversight. This includes ongoing engagement regarding Cultana, working with Defence and other stakeholders on access, heritage and communication.

There is still considerable work ahead, but progress is being made. The Board remains committed to keeping the community informed and involved as we move forward.

Nyani Thomas  
Chairperson



## KAC Sponsorship Helps Rising Kokatha Basketball Star



*Pictured: top - Makayla Captaining the South Australian Team at the Indigenous Basketball Australia Nationals. Centre - Makayla today. Above - Makayla started playing when she was just six.*

**Since she was just 6-years-old, Kokatha teenager Makayla Colson has dreamed of becoming a professional basketball player.**

Now, thanks to a recently approved sponsorship from Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation (KAC), the 16-year-old is one step closer to achieving that dream. Makayla has been selected for the NBL1 squad at the Woodville Warriors, where she will train alongside elite players while playing in the Reserves competition.

'It's been a long-held dream of hers,' says Makayla's mum, Chantelle Young. 'This is really the first step into professional basketball. She'll train with the NBL1 squad and play Reserves, and if she performs well there, she could be called up.'

Despite her young age, Makayla has already built an impressive basketball résumé. She began playing social basketball with South Adelaide Panthers, before quickly progressing to district-level competition. She later played for Sturt Sabres, before trialling with the Woodville Warriors.

'She's quite a quiet person, so she needs a coach who is really supportive,' Chantelle says. 'We'd heard the Woodville coach was really good. When she went out to trial there, there was no pressure and the girls were really welcoming.'

Makayla has represented South Australia twice at the Indigenous Basketball Australia Nationals and was also named Captain of the team on one occasion. 'She might be the shortest on the team, but she's quick and she's a great shooter,' Chantelle says.

Makayla is currently training four times a week, while also studying in Year 11 at Sports College SA.

Chantelle says the support from KAC will make a real difference as Makayla continues to develop her game. 'The sponsorship will help Makayla continue to be part of the NBL1 squad, which will really build her skills and give her the chance to play alongside elite players,' she says. 'We're really proud of her and excited to watch her chase her dream.'

## Community Information



### ART AS THERAPY WORKSHOPS

Looking for a relaxed and welcoming space to connect, yarn and get creative? Join us for our Art as Therapy – Paint and Chat workshops. These sessions are a chance to slow down, express yourself through art and enjoy good company in a supportive environment.

Dates (Thursdays):

23 & 30 April

7 May

Time: 10.00am – 3.00pm

Location: 45 Press Road, Port Augusta West

Whether you're an experienced artist or just keen to give it a go, everyone is welcome.

Kindly supported by Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation.

For more information or to register, please call Yvonne on 0448 220 252.

Come along for a cuppa, a yarn and a creative day together.

### ABORIGINAL FAMILIES PLAYGROUP IN PORT AUGUSTA

Come along and join our Aboriginal family playgroup at the Port Augusta Children's Centre, proudly supported by Learning Together Communities and co-hosted by KAC Community Engagement Officer, Shonelle Reid.

Every Wednesday during term 2

(commencing 29 April)

10:00am – 11:30am

Building 1, 4 Rupert Street, Port Augusta  
Fruit is provided

This playgroup is a welcoming space for families to come together, with a focus on building children's early literacy, numeracy and development while supporting parents and carers to be part of their child's learning journey.

Taxi support is available for families who need help getting there – please call to arrange transport.

Check out the photos to see some of the activities we've been setting up!

Families can also stay up to date with sessions, photos and upcoming activities by following the Learning Together Communities Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61571471505427>

We'd love to see you there



# Community Information

## SO MUCH FUN AT THE KAC EASTER EVENT

The Kokatha Easter Fun Day was a huge success with more than 85 people coming along to join in the fun! Kids of all ages came with their families, and it was great to see everyone playing, laughing and spending time together.

One of the best parts of the day was the Easter egg hunt, where everyone searched high and low for chocolate eggs. There were lots of happy faces and full baskets by the end! A big congratulations to Myla Reid and Aaron Reid, who found the special golden eggs. There were also heaps of fun games, run by Jarrad and Shonelle from the KAC Community Development Team. The kids had a great time playing together and cheering each other on.

A big thank you to all the helpers who made the day happen, including Kym, Joanne, Jarrad, Shonelle and Erika, and all the parents who helped run the games. It was a fantastic day, and we can't wait to do it again next year.

Check out some of the photos from the day!



## Stay up to date

If you would like to stay up to date with the latest Kokatha news, check out the website and like and follow the Facebook Page.

[CLICK HERE](#) for KAC's Website

[CLICK HERE](#) for KAC's Facebook Page