



DEG convenes Youth Plan Subcommittee of the Walgett Interagency

The Walgett Interagency created a Youth Subcommittee, convened by the Dharriwaa Elders Group to further the development of youth services in Walgett after a survey of existing and needed youth services was completed (at the request of the DEG). Areas for action include: a new youth centre and program of youth activities, supported

accommodation for 16-24yr olds, a safe house for children, employment and training mentoring and facilitation, crime prevention and workfarm (i.e. the Walgett Wellbeing Centre proposal reported in other sections of this document). Below is an account of some of the work of the committee in the last year.

Interagency Subcommittee consults youth

Representatives of the Walgett Interagency Youth Plan Subcommittee consulted with the Walgett High School Student Representative Council, on its Strategy for Walgett Youth Centre and Activities in August 2005. The students supported the efforts of the subcommittee to attract the PCYC Organisation to Walgett and gave valuable advice about the sorts of activities they would like to see in a Walgett youth program. They also prioritised these activities which included:

- 1) PCYC incorporating discos, performance area/stage, indoor sports, gym, dancing classes, skills workshops, pool tables, movies;
- 2) Swimming pool open all year round, with different activities for different age groups, including water polo, lifesaving, swimming lessons, diving etc;
- 3) Computers and internet: live gaming sessions would be popular;
- 4) The Duff St basketball courts renovated and activities conducted there for different age groups.



Youth off the streets overtures



Chris Reilly, of well-known organisation Youth off the Streets, visited Walgett at the invitation of Shire Administrator Hugh Percy. The DEG had requested that Council pay urgent attention to the need for good youth activities and services in Walgett. Above left: George Rose joined



him for dinner in July 2005 to assess the man and his service. Above right: Lee Willis, Aboriginal Program Manager for Youth Off the Streets, visited with two youth workers in September 2005 to investigate Youth Off the Streets offering services in Walgett.

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We will remember them

Active DEG members Jenny Wright and Nellie Copeland passed away in December 2005 and April 2006 respectively. Tom Lake departed this life in December 2005. Yanaaya Baayaamibiyaay - Go with Biami

Fundraising activities begin



DEG developed fundraising activities in January 2006 after receiving a permit and began operating housie with the assistance of the Walgett RSL Club in February 2006. Above is the fundraising committee of volunteers. Special thanks to Coral and Peter Wright, Leslie Tighe and Glenda Simpson who all contributed their time to help. Funds provide food vouchers for funerals.

Cultural treasure purchased



Above: DEG's Treasurer Val Collis looks at a first edition copy of Katie Langloh Parker's "Euahlayi Tribe" presented by Dept of Communications Information Technology and the Arts project officer Lorraine Rogge in June 06. The DEG serialised this invaluable cultural record in monthly magazine Yundiboo.



Multimedia site register production

The Dharriwaa Elders Group was assisted by NSW Heritage to complete Stage One of its multimedia site register. Until now funds had been unsuccessfully sought to edit the many recordings and data collected over 2001,2002 and 2003. The site register is designed to be used by the Dharriwaa Elders Group and its approved guests, to manage Aboriginal cultural heritage in the region. The user interface is the GIS "Map Info Professional v.7". DEG's mapped sites link to html pages about each site, which in turn contain links to video clips of elders speaking about the places and their significance, and useful documents and other materials. Over 200 sites are mapped so far, but there is still lots to map in Stage Two. Stay tuned.

staff training

Right: Richard Lake met with teachers and others involved in teaching Yuwaalaraay Gamilaraay around the region, in Moree June 2006. He learnt about language teaching resources and other language work and found it a good introduction to the language learning and teaching scene.



DEG assists production of "In Living Memory" – NSW State Records photo exhibition



Members and staff of DEG visited State Records in June 2004 and discovered there photos of Angledool and Gingie that were mostly unidentified. After assisting staff with this information, the DEG was asked to assist staff to create the "In Living Memory" exhibition in 2006, so that Australians will better understand life in Walgett and the lives of Aboriginal people in NSW.



Above: Merv Bishop, Susan Charlton and Sue Williams met with members of the Dharriwaa Elders Group to identify photographs from the Aborigines Protection Board for use in a State Records exhibition called "Living Memory", February 2006. Right: State Records staff Mervyn Bishop, Susan Charlton and Sue Williams working with Margaret and George Rose, Mrs Evelyn Peters, Dulcie Dennis and George Fernando, and Lola Dennis, in the DEG office.

Elders school program trial



The new Dharriwaa Elders Group Elders School Program began its trial in September 2005, with a lunch put on by teachers and students for the Elders Group. Left: The Walgett Community College Director Maree Angus and Richard Lake introduce the trial to teachers, students and elders.



Below left and centre: As a warm up for the program, the DEG took a Primary class to Angledool Aboriginal Station Reserve in August 2005.

George Rose with student Blake Whittaker during the delivery of one of the many classroom components of the syllabus developed by the DEG with the College.



In October and November 2005 a series of cultural learning trips were conducted by the weekly Elders School Program for Yrs 5/6. The class is seen above right and below left, visiting the historic Walgett Aboriginal Station at Gingie. Below centre and right are images taken during the program's excursion to the Aboriginal Station camp at Dunglear.

offered learning about family ties and relationships, language and meats, recent and ancient history. It incorporated art and video, computer use and site trips. It encouraged public speaking opportunities and appropriate learning behaviours. The Program was evaluated in the first half of 2006, with the aim of providing a revised program with the newly appointed College Director in the second half of 2006.

The DEG's Elders School program's weekly syllabus



DEG partnership with college



Left: George Rose OAM made a speech in April 2006 to the Community College end of term assembly about the importance of ongoing learning.



Above: Community College Director of Programs Carmen Ryan made regular visits, this time to inform the DEG of the "Paint the West Read" literacy promotion activities in October 2006.



Left: During Education Week April 2006 a Certificate of Appreciation acknowledging the ongoing and valuable contributions to the Walgett Community College High School by the DEG was presented to the Group. This certificate was accepted by Elder Lewis Beale. Elder Hazel Winters had the honour of helping to cut the Harmony Day cake.

Principal arrivals and departures



Above: Returning Walgett Community College Director Michael Cavanagh said goodbye to a DEG Elders Council meeting before he left Walgett in June 06



Above: Newly appointed Walgett Community College Principal Peter Partridge, visited the DEG in June 06. Clinton Gibbs, the Walgett Community Working Party Secretary is also seen visiting at the time.

DEG exclusively publishes historic photos

Throughout the year DEG serialised the minutes of the proceedings of the 1937 Inquiry into the Aborigines Protection Board, in our monthly magazine Yundiboo and included photos we found at the NSW Parliament Archives.

We have received enthusiastically positive feedback from our readers.

Right: Brewarrina Aboriginal Station: Entrance to station showing part of plantation (c. 1935). Middle left: Brewarrina Aboriginal Station: showing two old huts in foreground and the new huts for the ex-Angledool people (c. 1935). Middle right: Brewarrina Aboriginal Station: Corner of plantation, auxiliary water tower and new huts in background (c1935).

George Rose: "These photos were taken before I went there. I was in Angledool at this time. These photos prove what I've argued for a long time - that the move from Angledool to Brewarrina was planned for a long time by the Aboriginal Protection Board - the main reason was to destroy the culture of Brewarrina, Angledool and later, Tibooburra. That's what it was all about. This is the truth."



Photos published with permission from the NSW Parliament House archivist.



Yundiboo survey of readers

Early in 2006 DEG conducted a survey of readers of its monthly magazine Yundiboo. Results found overwhelming support for the content of the magazine. Readers all agreed that their knowledge of Yuwaalaraay / Gamilaraay language had increased from reading the magazine, and reported that at least 5 other people read each copy of the magazine sent to their household. This means our estimated readership is a minimum of 1000, excluding readers in the school, state and national libraries. Helpful suggestions were made about layout and we were assured that the types of stories included should continue.

The survey had another positive result - readers began actively contributing more magazine content and news.



Dharriwaa Elders Group promotes Literacy



Dharriwaa Elders Group participated in the Paint the West Read promotion in October 2005 by decorating its office window with pictures of members reading Yundiboo magazine, and by staff wearing red clothes that day. We believe Yundiboo magazine is an important literacy resource in the community as is DEG's Language promotion work in general. The window was so popular that the Walgett Community College commissioned two banners like it for each Walgett public school campus. Below: Lewis Beale and George Rose presenting a reading banner to the College in June 2006.



DEG moves office

The Dharriwaa Elders Group finally moved premises to 37 - 39 Wee Waa St over April and May 2006. We waited two years for the owner to renovate the building (providing a toilet block and air-conditioning). Banners were produced from the DEG's photographic archive to provide privacy and to promote cultural identity and the work of the Group.



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walgett makes the news

Circle Sentencing finally began in Walgett in June 2006. The first circle participants were chosen from a wider group, by the offender. They are from left to right, back to front: Virginia Robinson, Richard Lake, George Williams, with Project Officer Lesley Tighe, Valerie Collis, George Rose, Tom Martin. The DEG was closely involved with the introduction of the circle to Walgett and has high hopes for its crime prevention success.



Dialysis victory result of DEG Lobbying



At the Walgett Health Forum 3 March 2006 Greater Western Area Health Service announced it will place dialysis machines and facilities in areas other than regional dialysis sites like Brewarrina. This means that they will provide machines to Walgett and other towns as the need arises. They will also provide training in providing dialysis to registered nurses in Walgett, Collarenebri and other areas. The Renal Services Co-ordinator stated that they still believe home dialysis is the best option for patients, but recognise that this is not always the case.

The Dharriwaa Elders Group claims large credit for this victory as staff and execu-

tive have spent considerable energy lobbying and letter writing. We would like to thank Health Forum Chairperson Dr Ian Cameron from NSW Rural Doctor's Network for working behind the scenes, and anyone else who influenced this policy change that we don't know about.

Sadly this victory is too late for our departed member Jenny Wright and her family who began the most recent struggle for Walgett dialysis which the DEG supported and carried through.

Right: Jenny Wright at the Jenny Wright Netball Shield tournament she began and hosted every year.



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Walgett Wellbeing Centre development work



The Dharriwaa Elders Group developed a proposal this year for a Walgett program which improves the capacity and health of Aboriginal families and reduces crime by providing support for Aboriginal men upon returning from jail or detoxification. It proposed that a Shared Responsibility Agreement be negotiated for its implementation, as the involvement of many government, non-government and community stakeholders are required for its success.

The proposal was initiated by the Speaker of the Dharriwaa Elders Group (DEG) to address a need identified in the Walgett Youth Priorities Plan developed by the Dharriwaa Elders Group with the Walgett Interagency from February 2004. Since then support has been sought and gained from Walgett Interagency (see July 05 minutes), the Walgett CDAT (see minutes August 05), and the Walgett Community Working Party (see July 05 minutes) where it was commended to the COAG team for attention.

The DEG met with MPs Ian Slack Smith and John Anderson, MLC Rick Colless and Nationals candidate Kevin Humphries to promote the project, as well as with the Walgett Shire Administrator and the NSW Dept Lands regarding the location for the program. The NSW Outback Division of GPs agreed to refer their Managing the Mix Aboriginal Mental Health clients to the Centre, for social connection and activities. One of these activities will be their "Pfizer Garden" market garden project. The Walgett Shire Council has indicated its support for the project and that a currently derelict building – Walgett "Skillshare" located on a Crown Reserve shall be used for the project. NSW Lands at a meeting in March 2006 indicated that a submission for that department's "Reserve Management" funding would be successful and would cover the cost of renovation materials. In

March 2006 the Walgett Shire Council Administrator offered the services of a building surveyor to estimate the work that is required to repair the "Skillshare" building for the project. See photos of Len Smythe undertaking this activity with DEG's project officer Richard Lake. Western Institute of TAFE indicated interest in delivering a building renovation on-the-job training course to renovate the building. Meanwhile DEG continues to make funding submissions for the project itself. Two submissions were written to Commonwealth Dept of Attorney General crime prevention, diversion, rehabilitation and restorative justice initiatives.

The project aims to establish a Walgett Wellbeing Centre which would provide voluntary programs for men living in Walgett, returned from detoxing at Bloomfield (Orange), men returning from jail, men who have been sentenced by the soon-to-start-up Walgett Circle Sentencing and clients referred by Walgett doctors and other services. The program would provide support for these men so that they can return to their Walgett community and lead sober, active, crime-free, socially-connected independent lives. The proposed Centre will have an Aboriginal cultural program incorporating arts and crafts and other forms of cultural learning. The program will incorporate a shed and art materials and assist the men to sell their work in a local retail space, according to an elders' accreditation process. The program will offer gardening activities in a market garden project, AA meetings and a project of activities incorporating parenting and financial management, literacy and other skills workshops offered by local government and non-government agencies.

This proposal has been recommended to COAG for support by the COAG team and is awaiting action.



NSW Uni offers town planning

Left: In March 2006 Dr Catherine De Lorenzo and Maryam Gusheh from the University of NSW visited Walgett. They offered to work with the DEG and others to assist us plan for a better built environment. The DEG has enthusiastically welcomed their support and looks forward with interest to their input into the new community infrastructure projects DEG is trying to start-up.

Dharriwaa Elders Group working to address unmet community needs



Above: Dharriwaa Elders Group members beginning to plan activities regarding crown land reserves. This year the DEG developed a proposal for the Walgett Wellbeing Centre, a support program for men returning from jail and rehabilitation. Three funding submissions were written for the project (two so far unsuccessful). Walgett Shire Council and NSW Lands agreed to contribute the derelict Skillshare Building for the proposal which was supported by the Walgett CDAT, Interagency and Community Working Party.

Below: DEG met with GHD's Samantha Coley in June 2006 who began to undertake a feasibility study which will assist the group to become less reliant on Government funds. This year the DEG received assistance to contract an experienced project management company to provide it with advice to secure the organisation's financial future. Government contributes towards most costs of the DEG but the organisation needs to find new ways to support its important activities.



DEG attempts to revive Walgett's culturally significant community hall



Murdi Paaki Housing Corporation determined at a board meeting in April 2005 to give the derelict Walgett community hall to the Dharriwaa Elders Group. While waiting for the Federal Government to approve this decision, the DEG completed a business plan for the building in June 2006. The plan was sent to the NSW Dept of Aboriginal Affairs which has undertaken to prepare a scope of works. The DEG is now working to attract funds for the extensive structural and decorative renovations required to make the building safe according to today's building standards. DEG's plans for this building have been endorsed by the CWP and by the Walgett CDAT of which the DEG is a valuable member.

